



**WATER
MUSEUMS**
GLOBAL NETWORK



ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE GLOBAL NETWORK OF WATER MUSEUMS (WAMU+NET)

A Flagship Initiative of the UNESCO-IHP

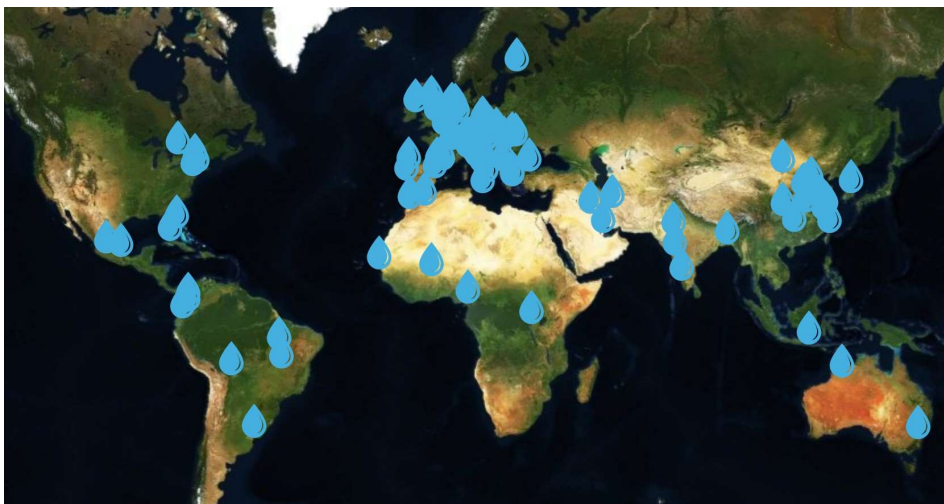
REPORT 2024-2025

UNESCO INTERGOVERNMENTAL HYDROLOGICAL PROGRAMME (IHP)
27th Session of the Intergovernmental Council
Paris, 1-4 June 2026

Executive Summary

This report outlines the significant achievements made in 2024-25 by the **Global Network of Water Museums (WAMU+NET)** and its potential strategic evolution for the period 2026-30. As a formally recognized **Flagship Initiative of IHP**, WAMU+NET serves as a primary vehicle for enhancing the visibility of IHP's water mandate, in particular among the general public.

Representing over **120 water museums in 45 countries**, the Network reaches an estimated **15 million visitors annually**. Through high-impact research, dissemination, international exhibitions, and youth engagement, WAMU+NET makes a tangible contribution to **bridging the gap between water governance, scientific data, and wide audiences**, thereby advancing global Water Sustainability Education (Priority 2 IHP-IX). As such, WAMU+NET generates a unique "public appeal" for UNESCO-IHP.



Interactive map of WAMU+NET members (+120 in +40 countries): <https://www.watermuseums.net/network/>

1. INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP, MEMBERSHIPS AND GOVERNANCE

The institutional strength of WAMU+NET lies in its grassroots connectivity with its members (120+ institutions in 40+ countries globally) and rigorous governance, ensuring that the IHP is represented with integrity across six continents. Legally based in Venice with an operational office in Ala (Trento, Italy), WAMU+NET is a **registered non-profit organization** operating in line with EU regulations.

The Network's core mission, enshrined in its Charter, is to build a 'new culture of water' globally:
<https://www.watermuseums.net/about/mission/>

Governance: The Network convenes semi-annual General Assemblies to approve its annual budget and ensure full compliance with Italian fiscal regulations. A **Management Board (MB)**, a President and an Executive Director, who are elected among its members, ensure that planned activities are implemented smoothly. General Assemblies are held online and in presence and engage all members to ensure full transparency in decisions:

<https://www.watermuseums.net/activities/general-assemblies/>

New Leadership (2026-2027): Following the conclusion of Professor Eddy Moors' (Rector of IHE Delft) three-term maximum period (2020-2025), at its 18th GA held in December 2025 the Network elected **Philippe Pypaert** as the new President. **Eriberto Eulisse** has been reappointed as Executive Director. A new Management Board has been instated for the 2026-7 period to lead the next phase of growth:

<https://www.watermuseums.net/about/team/>

Elected members of the MB include 11 representatives of museum partners: Abdennabi El Mandour (Director of the Museum for the Water Civilization in Morocco "Mohammed VI"); Ruben Fernandes (Executive Board Member at Águas e Energia do Porto, Portugal); Pia Parolin (PhD scientist, Germany); Fabiana Pica (Senior researcher at TE.AM. International Study Center, Italy); Elham Raei (Senior researcher at ICQHS, UNESCO C2C, Iran); Antonio Apolinário Rebêlo Figueirêdo (Director, ADASA, Brazil); Ellen Freedman Schultz (Fairmount Water Works/Philadelphia Water Department, USA); Sushmita Singha (President of MA My Anchor Foundation, JAL Water Museum, India); Chen Yongming (Director, National Water Museum of China). External observer: Abou Amani, Director of IHP. See:

Statutory Evolution: To ensure the Network remains "fit for purpose" in an evolving international arena, WAMU+NET is currently **updating its Charter** (originally drafted in 2019). This review aims to streamline the decision-making process while aligning more effectively with UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy and the strategic objectives of IHP. It also aims to encourage and support network members to take on greater responsibility for promoting, developing, and disseminating WAMU+NET's activities.

Membership in the network is maintained through an **annual subscription fee**, determined each year by the General Assembly (GA). Annual membership fees range from \$20 to \$800 USD and generate an income of approximately 35k USD per year. Annual fees are instrumental to run the basic institutional activities of WAMU+NET and its Secretariat (to partially remunerate its staff).

Benefits of membership: the membership grants registered partners access to a number of opportunities provided by WAMU+NET, including participation in international conferences of water museums, online webinars and training sessions, development of collaborative projects and network initiatives, participation in educational activities and youth award competitions. Furthermore, each member is entitled to get a **dedicated profile page** on the official network website and the opportunity to promote its own activities globally through the WAMU+NET quarterly Newsletter and institutional communication through social media.

- Updated list of members per country (*bottom of the page*) with detailed pages for each museum:

<https://www.watermuseums.net/network/>

- Newsletter archive:

<https://www.watermuseums.net/media/newsletter-archive/>

2. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2024-2025

Projects, Research, Exhibitions, Education, and Awareness Raising Activities

WAMU+NET specializes in promoting public engagement, exchanges, research activities, projects (in collaboration with its partners) and organizing events at the international level — transforming complex hydrological data into compelling narratives for large audiences, inspiring behavioral change.

YEAR 2025

Contribution to the Virtual Science Museum of UNESCO

The traditional concept of the "museum" as elaborated in the Western world does not fully reflect the vast and diverse variety of natural and cultural water-related heritages found across different regions. Recognizing this limitation, WAMU+NET has adopted a broader, more inclusive definition of "museum". This approach encompasses not only traditional indoor collections but also landscape-based heritage and the local and Indigenous communities that continue to practice Ancient Hydro-Technologies (AHTs) and management practices — whether for irrigation, traditional boat building, or the construction of hydraulic systems and structures. These ingenious practices and techniques have allowed humanity to manage water sustainably for millennia. Today, many of them remain alive in many parts of the world, demonstrating resilience and long-term sustainability through Nature-Based Solutions *ante litteram* and also unique combinations with new technologies. They include both tangible and intangible heritage.

Nevertheless, preserving this heritage is faced with increasingly urgent challenges. To address these challenges and bridge ancient wisdom with modern challenges, WAMU+NET developed for the Virtual Science Museum of UNESCO the exhibition "**The Voices of Water: Ancient Knowledge for Ecological Transition.**" The exhibition is made by 8 short videos and related educational materials.



Unveiled at the **10th WWF** in Bali with a multi-channel video installation, the exhibition on the VSM invites global audiences to rediscover ancient water practices not as static relics of the past, but as viable, inspiring solutions for the future, enabling people to better understand the value of water. In a world where modern, one-dimensional technologies frequently reveal their ecological limitations, the exhibition advocates for a crucial shift in perspective: learning from our predecessors to build a more sustainable future based on holistic approaches and full recognition of Indigenous knowledge. Under the auspices of UNESCO, this well-documented digital journey reconnects science, memory, and water-related values for future governance. The exhibition highlights **eight emblematic examples of ancient hydraulic technologies** from across the continents, including living practices and heritages from **Morocco, Algeria, Ghana, Iraq, Peru, Brazil, Indonesia, and Australia**. This unique collection of short videos illustrate concrete living models rooted in a respectful, balanced relationship between humans and their environment.

<https://www.unesco.org/en/virtual-science-museum?hub=196669>

50th Anniversary of IHP: WAMU+NET Awarded for its "Long-Standing Contribution" to IHP

On the milestone occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP), UNESCO presented WAMU+NET with the prestigious "**Long-Standing Contribution**" recognition. This high-level recognition served as a powerful endorsement of the network's authority among governments and international institutions, validating its ongoing efforts to transform the global paradigm of water education and heritage preservation.

This institutional milestone directly translates into unprecedented international visibility and prestige **for all WAMU+NET members**. Affiliation with this UNESCO-IHP Flagship Initiative has enabled network partners to significantly increase their influence over stakeholders and decision-makers at local, national, and international levels. Ultimately, this enhanced stature strengthens members' capacities to protect local hydraulic heritage. It's also demonstrated that membership facilitates the pursuit of strategic sponsorships and long-term institutional partnerships for all members.

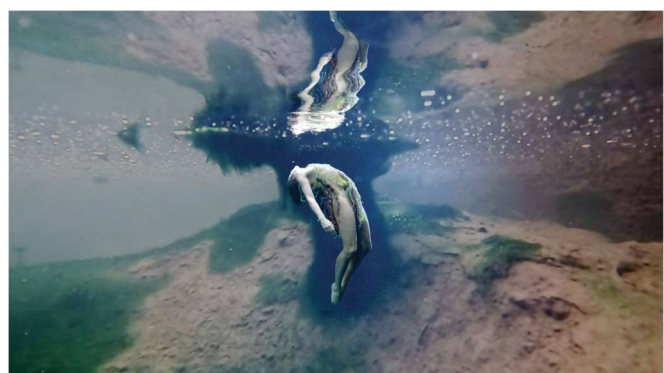
EU-Funded Projects for Innovation and Financial Stability

The year 2025 marked a significant milestone for WAMU+NET with the launch of three major projects funded by the European Commission. These initiatives have provided the network with enhanced financial stability while opening new avenues for strategic international collaboration:

"Soil Art Tales" & "AQUA MOTION" (Horizon Europe and S+T+ARTS Programs): Centered on fostering an innovative dialogue between science, technology, and the arts, these projects explore new methodologies for environmental education. Demonstrating the network's high global appeal, seven international artists were selected from a competitive Call that received 196 applications. Project deliverables include specialized art residencies hosted directly by WAMU+NET member institutions and high-profile exhibitions presented at the Venice Biennale.

Planned exhibitions:

- **Soil Art Tales:** travelling exhibitions with 4 artists in 7 European countries (2026-7)
- **WATER DREAM MEMORY:** exhibition with 2 artists at UNESCO Office in Venice during the 61th International Venice Art Biennale (May-June 2026).
- **Aquatik-EU** This EU-funded project focuses on the development of a standardized methodological toolkit designed to map endangered water heritage and foster active community participation. The primary objective is to create frameworks for eco-museums and "extended" water museums. A key component of this project is the ongoing pilot activity in Northern Greece, which focuses on the co-creation and piloting of the **Extended Museum of the Acheron River**. In this frame, another activity co-designed by the WAMU+NET team is the **Oasis Eco-museum of Douiret-Sbaa**, Morocco, leading to a significant improvement of water social management promotion and resilience.



The award presented to WAMU+NET on the occasion of the IHP 50th anniversary, and one of the highlight from the "Thermal Alchemy": the video by Sara Bonaventura who captures emotional and scientific meaning of thermal waters.

International Conferences of Water Museums

Physical dialogue remains essential for cultural diplomacy. Following successful summits since 2017 (1st International Conference of Water Museums organized in Venice, Italy, in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Venice), the **5th and 6th International Conferences** were held in **Portugal (2024)** and **Brazil (2025)**, hosted respectively by the water agencies **Aguas do Porto**, Porto, and **ADASA** and **CAESB**, Brasilia. The average cost of each of these major international conferences - which consist of a packed 3-day program featuring themed presentations, discussions, workshops, training sessions, networking activities, etc. - is approximately 100k USD, depending on countries and activities. Conferences are funded entirely through independent fundraising efforts, demonstrating the Network's capacity to mobilize its partners and external resources under the UNESCO-IHP banner.

2024: At the **5th International Conference of WAMU+NET (9-11 October 2024, Porto, Portugal)**, WAMU+NET explored how water can serve as a catalyst for peace and prosperity, showcasing how in societies where freshwater plays a central role, cooperation through museums improves the conditions of rivers and also enhances the well-being and livelihoods of local communities. Methodological improvements for mapping water heritage is a prerequisite to understand its value and safeguard freshwater ecosystems.

2025: At the **6th International Conference of WAMU+NET (15-19 November, Brasilia)**, WAMU+NET explored the vital role of local and Indigenous communities in climate change adaptation through participatory processes, and how these processes can help to establish "extended museums" to safeguard and revitalize local water heritage.

The winners of the *Back to Our Future*, the short film contest (developed in cooperation with *Let's Talk About Water*) were presented during the conference and then promoted also at the UN Climate Change Conference in Belem (COP30), amplifying the network's voice in the world's critical decision-making arenas concerning water governance.



The infographic layout of the conclusions of the 5th International Conference of WAMU+NET (Porto, 2024) and the group of WAMU+NET participants at the 6th Conference in Brasilia (2026).

Communication outreach

Channel type	N. of subscribers / people reached / followers	Description of the channel (contents, target groups, etc.)
Website	<i>The website highlights the activities of the WAMU+NET Secretariat and provides a detailed overview of all members</i>	The website is constantly maintained and updated to showcase the growing number of affiliated water museums (over 120 museums and institutions affiliated from more than 40 countries), and to disseminate international projects and activities promoted by WAMU+NET (projects, conferences, webinars, exhibitions, research and educational activities addressed to a general audience and to professional networks)
Social media – Instagram: Engaging Youth and Expanding Digital Outreach	<i>No. 1.083 followers No. 35.700 impressions in the last 30 days</i>	This channel strategically targets younger people, global museum audiences, and WAMU+NET members. The platform’s content strategy focuses on the visual dissemination of international good practices in both water heritage management and education. While communication campaigns are maintained on a baseline monthly schedule, publishing frequency is strategically intensified around major institutional events and international water observances to maximize global engagement.
Social media – LinkedIn: Professional Networking and Institutional Advocacy	<i>No. 474 followers No. 1.474 impressions in the last month</i>	The LinkedIn platform is leveraged as a strategic tool for institutional advocacy and high-level professional networking. Regular communications focus on disseminating key network milestones, achievements, and capacity-building initiatives—such as international conferences, expert webinars, and digital exhibitions. By targeting a specialized global network of water professionals, policymakers, and institutional stakeholders, this channel actively drives high-level engagement, knowledge exchange, and cross-sector collaboration.
Newsletter	<i>+1.300 subscribers (international general public)</i>	The newsletter goes out quarterly to disseminate news from the Secretariat and WAMU+NET members (educational and outreach activities, projects, publications).
Ad hoc mailing list (for all e-mail addresses on our lists)	<i>+1.300 subscribers (international general public)</i>	This mailing list is used regularly (2-3 times a month on average) to target WAMU+NET international public, including museum professionals, researchers, school educators and the general public. Via this mailing list, WAMU+NET circulates not only newsletters but all kind of news about upcoming public programs, webinars, conferences, and events organized by WAMU+NET or its members
Ad hoc mailing list (only WAMU+NET members)	<i>+280 subscribers (only WAMU+NET members)</i>	This channel is used AD HOC communications only to WAMU+NET members (e.g. Calls for General Assemblies or collaborative projects and networking opportunities, for the annual youth contest TWWW, digital exhibitions, international conferences, training courses etc.

YEAR 2024

Pioneering Multi-channel video installation: "The Voices of Water" at the 10th WWF

At the **10th World Water Forum in Bali, Indonesia**, WAMU+NET launched a landmark video installation that served as an official preview of the forthcoming **Virtual Science Museum of UNESCO**. Hosted by AICS (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the contribution featured a high-impact, **multi-channel video installation** (with 5 synchronised screens) titled **"The Voices of Water: Ancient Knowledge and Ecological Transition."** This digital exhibition advocated for a crucial shift in perspective, framing ancient water cultures not as static relics of the past, but as active, inspiring sources of innovation for contemporary sustainable water management and ecological transition. The installation showcased **eight emblematic case studies of Ancient Hydro-Technologies (AHTs)** across different continents, featuring indigenous practices and traditional water systems from **Indonesia, Australia, Morocco, Algeria, Ghana, Iraq, Peru, and Brazil**. By reconnecting science, memory, and future water governance, the installation demonstrated how holistic approaches in water governance and nature-based solutions offer viable models for a more balanced relationship between human communities and their environment. The institutional significance of the installation was further underscored by its high-level political visibility, receiving official visits from **three international ministers** and generating substantial engagement among delegates at the Forum. The total development cost of approx. **40k USD** was sustained in 2024 entirely by the WAMU+NET Network, providing the UNESCO's VSM with a premium launching event in an international arena. What began as an exhibition will expand through research projects and exchanges on various topics.

Contribution to COP16 (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification)

Expanding its global advocacy into critical climate and land-degradation frameworks, WAMU+NET actively participated in **COP16 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)** held in Saudi Arabia in December 2024. The network's contribution featured a dedicated institutional side event that advocated for the pivotal role of museums in preserving endangered water heritage and advancing scientific research, with a specific focus on water-scarce and arid regions. In parallel, WAMU+NET in collaboration with LTAW officially launched the international **Water Film Prize, titled "Back to our Future."** Developed and managed in strategic partnership with *Let's Talk About Water*, this film prize is specifically dedicated to highlighting Ancient Hydro-Technologies (AHTs) and the resilience of arid lands. The long-term objective of this initiative is to establish a permanent international observatory designed to document and promote AHTs, actively engaging and mobilizing the next generation of filmmakers, citizens, and researchers to safeguard this unique global heritage.



The speakers at the side event organized by WAMU+NET as part of COP16 and the poster for the "Back to Our Future" AHTs contest

AQUAPLAY Interactive Online Edu-Tool

In alignment with its commitment to advancing innovative water sustainability education, WAMU+NET launched 'AQUAPLAY', a new digital tool designed to engage students worldwide. Developed as part of the **CREDIT (Creative Digital Tools)** EU funded project, this **interactive online platform for coloring** utilizes creative digital technologies to help children explore critical environmental issues and learn about pressing water challenges through interactive coloring activities.

To guide students and educators, the tool is structured around four interconnected environmental and cultural themes:

- Biodiversity and Freshwater Ecosystems
- Water Heritage and Living Waters
- Climate Change, Pollution and Water Scarcity
- Peace and Cooperation through Water

AQUAPLAY offers a flexible educational approach: children can color chosen illustrations directly online via a dedicated platform and export their artwork as a PDF, or download black-and-white versions for traditional artistic techniques. Young artists are all selected by water museums affiliated to WAMU+NET. The artworks available on this platform, capture the voice and thoughts of younger generations, showcasing their perspectives on preserving water heritage, combating pollution, and proposing futuristic solutions to water scarcity and climate change.

This interactive educational tool is freely available through the website and for exhibition purposes:

<https://www.watermuseums.net/education/aquaplay/>

International Youth Contest and Award "The Water We Want" (TWWW)

This competition aims at empowering youth aged 6 to 25 to express their relationship with water through creative media. Together, TWWW and AQUAPLAY strengthen global sustainability education, fostering new water perceptions and behaviors by equipping students to become effective water ambassadors and storytellers. The comprehensive results and methodologies of this initiative have been synthesized and published in a dedicated project toolkit.

Now in its **7th edition**, TWWW is a cornerstone of WAMU+NET educational strategy that involves all museum members. All editions of the youth contest TWWW received exceptional artistic contributions from students (ages 6-25) worldwide. The resulting **digital exhibitions** (made by **hundreds of artworks** submitted by partners for the past 6 editions) are available to IHP and all WAMU+NET members. Digital exhibitions can be easily adapted into local physical exhibitions to engage local communities and schools. Organized with an **annual budget of approximately 10k USD** (secured by WAMU+NET), the contest has generated a massive digital archive of youth perspectives on water sustainability.

Global Visibility: Winning artworks and videos are curated into touring exhibitions. Recently, these displays in **Greece, Croatia, Romania, Italy, China, Ecuador** and other countries have brought the UNESCO-IHP name to the forefront of local public discourse.



AQUAPLAY operates in synergy with WAMU+NET's annual Youth Contest and Award, TWWW.

“Water Ambassador” Program

On the occasion of World Water Day 2025, which coincided with the inauguration of WAMU+NET's new operational office in Ala (Trento, Italy), the network officially launched its international **“Water Ambassadors”** program. The title of first Water Ambassador was conferred upon the world-renowned guitarist and music composer **Andrea Vettoretti**, following the dedication of his album *“Quantum One - Breath of Water”* to the network. As a WAMU+NET Ambassador, Vettoretti is committed to promoting the network's ecological values to international audiences through concerts and performances worldwide. The mandate of WAMU+NET's Water Ambassadors extends beyond general awareness; their core mission is to actively foster the creation of new educational programs, water-related museums, and interpretive centers globally. Utilizing their respective fields of expertise, the Ambassadors' strategic activities are currently focused on three primary environmental pillars: **pollution mitigation, biodiversity conservation and youth education**. Through this high-profile cultural diplomacy initiative, the program leverages the universal language of art and music to build peace, cooperation, and coexistence through sustainable water management.

3. OPERATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY AND STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS

Over the past two years, all implemented projects and initiatives within WAMU+NET have been realized exclusively through competitive fundraising activities. Without these external funding streams, the network currently lacks the baseline financial capacity to execute any autonomous projects. This intensive resource mobilization spans a wide operational spectrum, ranging from the submission of complex European Union grant applications (such as Horizon Europe) to ad-hoc fundraising campaigns for specific high-level international events, including the World Water Forum. Crucially, these external revenues are fundamental to supporting the professional staff required to implement the projects themselves; without these additional funds, the very operational survival of the network would be compromised.

However, these funding mechanisms carry rigid structural limitations. Because the vast majority of resources are secured through EU-funded grants, they are strictly earmarked. This implies that the involved staff must be dedicated entirely to the execution of specific project deliverables, leaving minimal resources or operational flexibility for the core, day-to-day institutional activities of WAMU+NET and its broader alignment with the mandates of UNESCO-IHP.

To ensure long-term stability and institutional continuity, WAMU+NET formally requests the Intergovernmental Council's support and assistance in reinforcing and scaling up WAMU+NET core capacity-building and fundraising capabilities.

LOOKING AHEAD: STRATEGIC FUNDRAISING FOR ESD AND CLIMATE EDUCATION

WAMU+NET has the capacity to deliver important contributions to UNESCO's efforts in the framework of the “Greening the Curriculum” initiative/partnership as well as its Intersectoral Programme II dedicated to ESD and Climate Education. However, limited resources constrain its operations.

Advancing Water Security and ESD: Two Strategic Projects Seeking Partnership

To strengthen water education and dissemination of water values to large audiences, based on the experience of its members, WAMU+NET is working to initiate two main strategic projects:

(1) the **Water Cloud**, an open-source digital **repository of educational materials** developed through museum members to encourage schools and institutions to develop their capacity to provide water and climate education. This project has the potential to make a key contribution to ESD.

(2) an **International Monitoring Platform on AHTs** (Ancient Hydro Technologies). This project is a natural extension of the work already carried out for UNESCO's Virtual Science Museums and aims to maximize the research impact by expanding the number of good practices to new countries.

A development cost of approx. 1,3 million USD is estimated for these two projects (respectively 0,5 and 0,8 millions). Both have been submitted to various potential sponsors and institutions, and WAMU+NET is currently negotiating with public/private sponsors to realize these global public goods.

4. ALIGNEMENT WITH THE IHP FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES GUIDELINES

During its initial development phase (2017–2023), the WAMU+NET network received fundamental financial support from Civiltà dell'Acqua International Centre, a non-profit NGO based in Venice, Italy. Today, in alignment with the **2022 Guidelines for IHP Flagship Initiatives**, WAMU+NET is actively transitioning its Secretariat to be hosted by a formal member of the **UNESCO Water Family**.

Institutional Strengthening: WAMU+NET New Operational Office in Ala (Trento, Italy)

A major structural reorganization was achieved in 2025 with the inauguration of WAMU+NET's new operational headquarters in Ala (Trento, Italy), in the prestigious Baroque Palazzo Pizzini. This was made possible by the approval of a specific Provincial Law (No. 13/2025, Art. 15), which provides for the temporary secondment of provincial staff to the WAMU+NET office in Ala.

Established through the institutional support of the Autonomous Province of Trento, the new office is equipped with 2 full-time dedicated staff units. This significant reinforcement of the network's administrative infrastructure ensures greater operational continuity, enhancing technical support, and expanded coordination capabilities for all members globally.



PROVINCIA AUTONOMA DI TRENTO

Professor Eddy Moors, President of WAMU+NET, inaugurates the new Ala office in Trento with Claudio Soini, President of the Provincial Council of Trento, and other institutional representatives from the province of Trento.

Secretariat Transition and Relocation under the UNESCO Chair (University of Trento, Italy)

After initial consultations with the UNESCO Chair in Venice (2018-2022), the Network is now moving its interests toward the **UNESCO Chair in "Engineering for Sustainable Living"** at the **University of Trento**. This is a gradual transition that involves a Cooperation Agreement, also considering the potential relocation of the WAMU+NET Secretariat. A strategic MoU is about to be signed (June 2026). In this framework, WAMU+NET is working to secure funding for projects that will provide the network with the resources needed to maintain its Secretariat and Executive Director.

In-kind support: Over the past 24 months, significant progress has been made thanks to the agreement with the **Autonomous Province of Trento**. Thanks to its special autonomy, the Province has seconded at no cost for the network both the current WAMU+NET Director, Dr. Eriberto Eulisse, and a senior officer, Dr. Fiorenza Tisi, to the new office located in Ala. Following the Province's vision, the Secretariat that is now hosted by the Municipality of Ala could move to the **University of Trento**. This institutional framework will ensure full compliance with IHP Flagship regulations and provide a robust institutional and academic foundation.

Cooperation with the UNESCO-IHP Water Family

The Network maintains fruitful collaborations with other **Category 2 Centres C2C** (IHE Delft, NL, and ICQHS, IRN) and **UNESCO Chairs** in Barcelona (SP), Strasbourg (FR), and Delft (NL), contributing to an interconnected "Water Family" network. These partnerships with UNESCO Chairs enabled WAMU+NET to develop and implement strategic projects, activities, events, and exhibitions at the global level.

5. PLANNING FUTURE STEPS: STRATEGIC VISION AND IMPACT 2026–2030

WAMU+NET is more than a network of museums; it's a strategic tool in the hands of IHP to enhance the reach of IHP into the spheres of education, research and intersectoral cooperation.

A. High-Level Global Presence

Over the last years, WAMU+NET supported IHP in raising its voice in major global stages such as:

- **9th WWF (Dakar, 2022):** Collaborative exhibition and side event @ UNESCO Pavilion.
- **UN Water Conference (New York, 2023, @UN Headquarters):** Collaborative exhibition "The Walk of Water" in cooperation with the **World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP)**.
- **10th World Water Forum (Bali, 2024):** Large-scale video installation hosted by the Italian Pavilion and AICS (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

B. Intersectoral Synergy with MAB & IHP

There is a fundamental opportunity to strengthen **UNESCO's Intersectoral Programme 2** by linking the **Man and Biosphere (MAB)** program with WAMU+NET. WAMU+NET's roadmap includes:

- **EuroMAB 2026 (Canada):** EuroMAB is developing a "Water-related Biosphere Reserve Network" and WAMU+NET could expand its development strategies in connection with this new initiative.

C. Ongoing art exhibitions on art and water

- **Venice Art Biennale (May 2026):** inaugurated during the 61st Art Biennale, and hosted by the UNESCO Office in Venice, the exhibition "Water Dream Memory" features two artists highlighting key water values at the intersection between art, technology and science.
- **Soil Art Tales:** A touring exhibition on water-soil nexus that already started visiting 7 different European countries (2026 and 2027). Funded by the EU (Horizon Programme), the exhibition features 4 artists who developed specific artworks on soil biodiversity and literacy.

D. Next Milestones

- **Euro-Mediterranean Forum (Rome, 29-30 September 2026)**, organized by One Water on behalf of the Italian Government. WAMU+NET is planning (in cooperation with MASAF - Italian Ministry for Food Sovereignty and Forests) a high-visibility exhibition and side event focusing on **Oases and ancient AHTs** as potential UNESCO's extended museum sites.

- **11th World Water Forum (Riyadh, 2027):** A major exhibition is planned to showcase global water cultures to a Middle Eastern and international audience. Ongoing fundraising activities.

CONCLUSION

At present, WAMU+NET is undergoing a significant evolution to fully align itself with the official guidelines for IHP Flagship Initiatives. WAMU+NET remains committed to its role as a Flagship Initiative of IHP that delivers **concrete results on promoting water education and literacy, research, and heritage**, thereby making a concrete contribution to Phase IX. It engages a broad audience through outreach programs, activities in museums and schools, exhibitions, and media dissemination designed to target the widest possible public. By reaching approx. **15 million people annually** through its members and securing independent funding for its activities, the Network provides UNESCO-IHP with public engagement and high-level political visibility that complements scientific rigor.

WAMU+NET is looking for support for joint **fundraising initiatives dedicated to IHP goals and water museums' key projects on ESD**, such as the global repository of educational materials on freshwater ecosystems, "Water Cloud", and the international monitoring platform on AHTs "The Voices of Water".

WAMU+NET kindly requests the Intergovernmental Council to acknowledge WAMU+NET's efforts and continue to support water museums as a vital partner in achieving the goals of IHP-IX and beyond, particularly considering the **strategic horizon of 2030** and the **upcoming phase of IHP-X**. In this context, and in response to the Council Resolution XXIV-7 (2021), titled "UNESCO-IHP in support of developing WAMU+NET", the Global Network of Water Museums kindly requests the Council to foster support to the network **through funding from Member States**. This financial backing will enable the Secretariat to fully implement the activities outlined within the IHP-IX Strategic Plan (2022–2029).