

Water sector: an emerging force in south of France

This emerging centre for water excellence presents a set of structured and coordinated tools to work towards a single objective:

To build Languedoc-Roussillon into a world reference regarding concerted water resources management; knowledge and sustainable development of complex aquifers; and in climate change impacts on water resources and adaptation.

A dedicated tool for interfacing and coordination: VERSeau Développement/Water Cluster

www.verseaudeveloppement.com



VERSeau Développement is a non profit association that aims to bring together researchers, private industry and public authorities to work together to address water issues (particularly institutional, technical and legal aspects). In order to achieve this, Verseau Développement initiates and coordinates the following actions:

- Accompanying and implementing international programs on institutional aspects in water management;
- Coordinating scientific and communications programs;
- Actions to facilitate and synergise scientific, industrial and public authority partners;
- Promoting the means and capacities of its members and the water community in the qualitative and quantitative water management (Institutional, technical and legal);
- Monitoring the latest techniques, legislation, institutional systems and management methods for water resources management at the national and international levels;
- Disseminating reliable, timely and pertinent information to its partners; and
- Bringing together capabilities and develop partnerships between public and private organisations in order to lead expertise, advice and training and implement projects of common interest

VERSeau is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

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The Water Centre initiative is supported by regional public authorities, State services, public establishments (Water Agencies, National Agency for Water and Aquatic Environments etc.).

Through this water dynamic, Languedoc-Roussillon aims to foster creative and innovative drive for regional economic development; and to promote the emergence of a strong and healthy scientific environment for sustainable development.

The premier centre in France for water sciences: the Languedoc Research Institute on Water and the Environment (IFR-ILEE)

www.ifr-ilee.org



- Over 600 scientific personnel.
- Bringing together 12 scientific establishments (AgroParisTech/Engref, BRGM, CEMAGREF, CIRAD, CNRS, Ecole des Mines d'Alès, IAM.M, INRA, IRD, Montpellier SupAgro, Universities Montpellier I & II) and 10 Research Units. ILEE and its related establishments are partners with Agropolis International.
- ILEE is the only Federal Institute in France that covers all the scientific research fields regarding water resources and its environment.
- ILEE is a highly respected institute supporting tertiary and higher education from bachelor to doctorate levels, and is at the heart of universities and multiple engineering schools. ILEE is a major driver in an ambitious project (Plan Campus) to create the *Montpellier Sud de France Greater University* which will be based on a few key thematic pillars, including that of water.

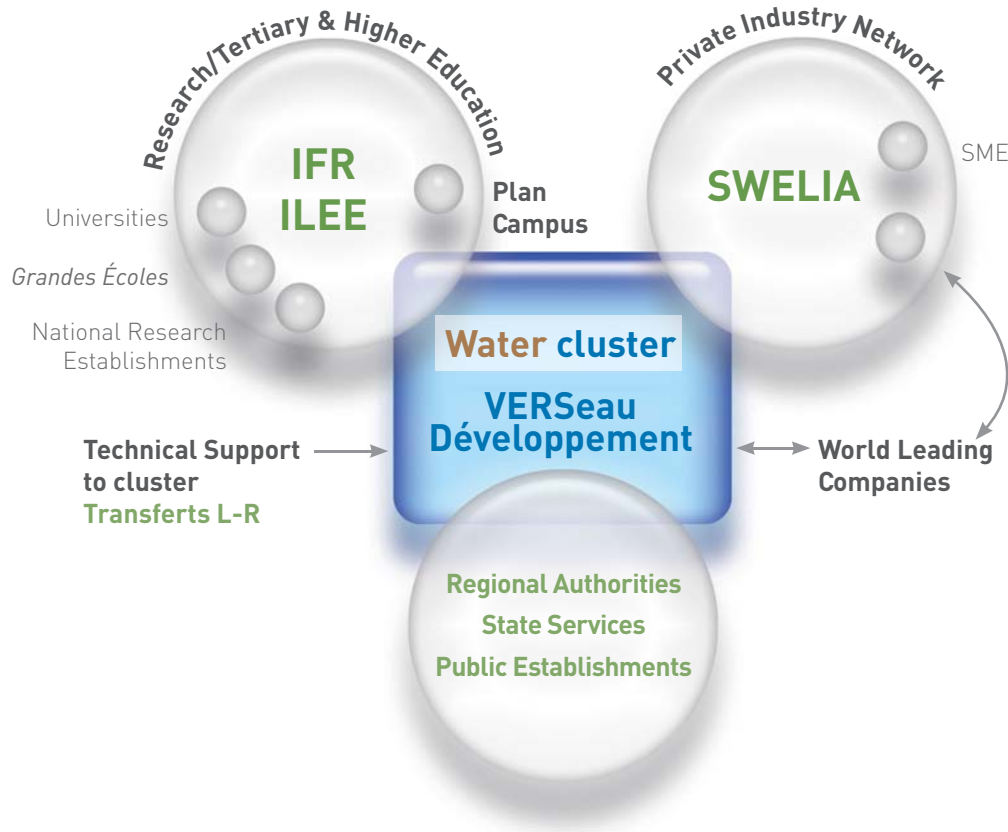
A unique network of private sector companies: SWELIA

www.swelia.com



- 58 regional companies (Small and Medium Enterprises and Blue Chip leaders), representing over 700 M€ in turnover and more than 4000 direct employees in the region.
- *A space for valuable exchanges / global, holistic and high performance solutions:* The companies of Swelia act on a regional, national and international stage, and are implicated in all the major phases of the water cycle. Over and above the panoply of services offered by its members, the originality of the Swelia network lies in its ability to conjugate knowledge and mutualise technical and human resources and means, in order to provide solutions that are perfectly adapted to global needs or to requests for expertise in the water sector. Swelia offers better management of water resources by providing optimal solutions in terms of time, cost, flexibility, sustainability and efficiency.

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Highlights

An example of the value of this water dynamic is the effective collaboration that brought about the successful hosting of XIIIth **World Water Congress of the International Water Resources Association (IWRA), which was held from 1 to 4 September, 2008**. This event was organised by ILEE and VERSeau Développement in close collaboration with and with strong support of institutional partners and the whole of the water community.

VERSeau Développement hosts the governance structure of the "Water Cluster"

www.verseaudeveloppement.com/doc/plaq_cluster_GB.pdf

This is preparatory structure whilst we await the announcement of a nationally recognised "Pôle de Compétivité Eau" in Montpellier – a National Centre of Excellence for Water). The objectives of this *Pôle* are to:

- Build Languedoc-Roussillon into a centre of excellence in the field of concerted water resources management, knowledge and sustainable development of complex aquifers; and in climate change impacts on water resources and adaptation. This *Pôle* focuses on eco-technologies in the water sector;
- Promote innovation and economic growth, especially through the development and creation of Small and Medium size Enterprises that offer services and products of high added value, and that are adapted to conquer the major Euro-Mediterranean, Asian and American markets;
- Promote and develop the regional offer in education related to water by making the most of the opportunities presented by the *Campus Project*, within the greater "Université Montpellier Sud de France"; and
- Become the national coordinator of a network of regional clusters by promoting synergies and collaboration.

The founding members of the Water Cluster are: BRL (www.brl.fr), IFR-ILEE (www.ifr-ilee.org), SWELIA (www.swelia.com), Veolia-Eau (www.veoliaeau.com) and the Association VERSeau Développement (www.verseaudeveloppement.com).

The Cluster enjoys technical support from Transferts-LR (www.transferts-lr.org).

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