

## Road to Bari — City Water Leaders Workshop

# THE FUTURE OF WATER IN CITIES: NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

28 May 2026 | Auditorium Botín Foundation | Castelló, 18 C, Madrid, Spain

Hosted by the City of Madrid in partnership with IAHR and the National Organising Committee of the 42nd IAHR World Congress, which already counts on the partnership of Acquedotto Pugliese and three Italian universities from Puglia, Sicily, and Abruzzo, and with the collaboration of the Water Observatory of the Botín Foundation, the workshop is a key preparatory milestone of the “Road to Bari” Global Framework and initiates the pathway towards a dedicated city track at the 2027 Congress. The workshop brings together city water leaders, experts and solution providers from around the world to discuss current and future challenges in urban water management. It provides a platform for sharing experiences, identifying the most urgent needs, and exploring practical and innovative solutions.

Through peer-to-peer exchange and sector contributions, the event supports the development of globally relevant approaches. The collective inputs from participating cities will contribute towards a global ranking of the most urgent challenges to address. This will be used to inform cities, global processes, investors, funders and solution providers of the critical pathways required to ensure resilient and sustainable water for cities, their populations and environments.

### Urban water challenges

Challenges in urban water management are addressed through the exchange of needs and experiences between city water leaders and water sector stakeholders. Emphasis is placed on innovation and on identifying practical, forward-looking solutions to respond to evolving water-related challenges.

### Key thematic areas

Topics addressed include water supply quantity and quality, wastewater treatment, resilience to extreme events, service efficiency and financing, water reuse, within the broader context of urban population growth and climate change.

### International cooperation

The participation of major cities from all five continents, together with national and international water sector organizations and companies, enables the exchange of experiences and the development of approaches with clear global relevance.

### Informed policy making and integrated approaches

Issues are examined from technical, environmental, economic, and public health perspectives, considering both new and existing infrastructure, urban planning, and interventions in flood and drought-prone areas, in line with the major global processes such as the UN 2030 Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction as well as Regional and National directives.

## Road to Bari — Global Framework

The **Road to Bari initiative**, launched at the IAHR World Congress and SIWW Singapore Spotlight in June 2025, brings together 2,000 authorities, experts, and representatives from 50 cities around “Innovative Engineering for Sustainable Development”. It provides a global platform for results-oriented exchange among experts, decision-makers, engineers, and solution providers.

Water authorities at city, basin, and national levels address evolving water challenges.

The **Road to Bari framework**, operates continuously, helping cities identify specific real-world needs, fostering peer-to-peer exchanges, and leveraging the expertise of thousands of global experts to tackle these challenges.

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## PROGRAMME

### 28 May 2026 | Technical Sessions

Registration 09:00—09:30 H

Opening Session 09:30—10:00 H

**Lucia De Stefano**, Deputy Director of the Water Observatory of the Botín Foundation

**Borja Carabante**, Delegate for Urban Planning, Environment and Mobility of the Madrid City Council

**Philippe Gourbesville**, IAHR President

**Orazio Giustolisi**, Representative and Chair, Organising Committee of the 42nd IAHR World Congress Bari (Italy)

Morning Session 10:00—14:30 H

#### City Water Leaders

This session is a closed event dedicated to invited city water leaders to raise and discuss the water issues of highest priority, and exchange experiences on solutions, innovation and policy and regulatory frameworks.

The collective output will contribute to a ranking of the world's most important urban water issues that require urgent global and local attention.

10:00—11:30	Presentations
11:30—12:00	Panel Discussion / Workshop
12:00—12:20	Coffee Break
12:20—13:50	Presentations
13:50—14:30	Panel Discussion / Workshop
14:30—16:00	Lunch

Afternoon Session 16:00—18:00 H

#### Trends and solutions for a Water-Secure Future

This session is an open event enabling exchange with city water leaders, leading solution providers, global experts and the latest science and innovation to contribute to those critical pathways towards a more resilient and sustainable water resources for cities, their populations and environments.

16:00—18:00	Presentations and Panel Discussion General Directorate for Water and CEDEX New WasteWater Directive Aquadutto Pugliese Canal de Isabel II Madrid Water Public Utility ARUP DHI Veolia
18:00—18:15	Closing Remarks
18:15—19:00	Drinks reception
20:00	Institutional Dinner

Registration form for the afternoon session (until capacity is reached).

### 29 May 2026 | Technical Visits

Technical Visits for City Representatives 10:00—13:00 H

Arroyofresno stormwater retention tank

Arroyo Culebro wastewater treatment plant

Transportation will be provided for representatives of cities wishing to participate in the visits, subject to prior registration. Participants will be required to provide their name, affiliation, and an identity document.