

Flow Forward within the Connected River

Accelerating innovation – an explorative process

UNDER PRESSURE

Rivers and their functions in urban areas are under pressure. There is an increase in activity both along the water (urban development and recreation) and on the water (increased recreational traffic, ferries, and commercial shipping). Partly due to the rapid changes and the involvement of numerous stakeholders with different values and priorities in these areas, pressure, interaction, and complexity in these areas are increasing. This congestion leads to new problems in the areas of safety, accessibility, and liveability when not properly managed.

This also puts the current development and management approach under pressure. Long-term plans do not align with these rapid and unforeseen changes. Area users are becoming more assertive and are eager to contribute to supported solutions that address both the challenges in the area and the user's needs.

A NEW WAY TO INNOVATE

There is a need for new, participatory innovation approaches that can adapt flexibly to problems and opportunities. Innovation approaches where more value is created in less time and with a smaller budget: for the organization, its partners, and the users of rivers and waterways. Emerging digital solutions can play a crucial role in this regard. Adapting to these changes requires a transformation of organizations, in its role, assets, and people, as well as in collaboration with other organizations and users.

However, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. The current (digital) society is too complex to design new innovation approaches that are suitable to all areas, contexts and challenges. Through learning, experimenting, and experiencing with limited costs and risks, functional solutions can be developed that fit the context in which they are applied. Learning, trying, and experiencing are important principles for efficiently addressing the challenges of tomorrow.

BE LIKE WATER

In the Connected River project, we recognize the importance of developing and embracing a new approach to innovation. Innovation rarely happens in a vacuum. It often involves interdisciplinary efforts and collaborations that bring in varied perspectives and skills. Our project, encompassing multiple cities and partners, serves as a rich ecosystem for learning and collaborative innovation.

Together with our partners, we can efficiently experiment with emerging digital technologies, new working methods and new forms of collaboration, to:

- Better align with (new) users and the local situation
- Solve problems faster
- Make innovation less expensive

The Connected River project will strengthen participating organizations and its partners in terms of the ability to experiment, learn and become more agile as an organization. This is established by jointly conducting digital experiments, linked to the social issues associated with integral river management.



The approach developed within the Connected River project is called Flow Forward. Flow Forward is centralized around collaboration with partners and creating added value for (end) users. The approach focuses on short-cycle experiments that enable rapid learning. Flow Forward combines Design Thinking with Lean Start-up and Agile Design elements. This approach enables to move like water: agile, unafraid of untrodden paths, and flexibly adapting to the changing environment, in other words: Flow Forward – “Be like water”.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME

Whether you're an individual organization or part of a collaborative effort working on the improvement of the safety, accessibility, and liveability of waterways and waterfronts, with the Connected River initiative we empower you to kickstart your initiative.

Overcome the typical self-interested bargaining and conflict dynamics between stakeholders and:

1. get everyone on board of a joint initiative to develop your local waterfront area in a sustainable way
2. with the involvement of all stakeholders in a user-centred team
3. that covers the entire range of ideating, experimenting and scaling new solutions

The Connected River platform provides you all the knowledge, network and tools to start innovating with your waterfront stakeholders. No need to reinvent the wheel or repeat all the things that usually go wrong in innovating with stakeholders. Learn from our case-studies, implement the bespoke tools and reach out to waterfront actors with similar contexts to jumpstart your ecosystem and build your custom solutions quicker.

*Don't miss the opportunity to drive impactful change and innovation alongside like-minded partners
Join us now!*