

## Exploring the Social Layer of the Smart Water Journey

This report focuses on how four international utilities decided to embark on their smart water journeys, how they monitor implementation, and the challenges and benefits along the way. Bellevue Utilities (USA), Coliban Water (Australia), Bristol Water (UK), and Aguas do Porto (Portugal) were interviewed due to their known involvement in innovative company transformation and data management. Each utility was questioned about the role of people, processes, and policy in their company; collaboration with different stakeholders; return-on-investment of smart water projects; financing smart water projects; and customer engagement.

These case study participants provided concrete strategies and suggestions for best practices in indicator development and smart water technology adoption, including a focus on smart metering and customer engagement. They also provided insights into the unique challenges faced by companies around the globe, and how they internally and externally measure success. The utilities viewed the innovation process very differently, especially with regards implementing new digital technologies. Some featured insights from the utilities include:

- *“As a water utility that manages the entire urban water cycle, we must be open to all the innovative and smart solutions that are available, as well as promote the experimentation of new solutions in the field and support creativity in local new companies.”*  
-Frederico Fernandes, Aguas do Porto
- *“Being mostly government controlled, we like to have policies and procedures for everything, even for the creative processes. As a water industry we are perhaps too much turned inward and fail to learn from outside the industry.”* -Peter Prevos, Coliban Water

Smart Water Networks are often described using a five-layered model first posited by the SWAN Forum; however, one can also consider a sixth layer- the social layer- that can be made more intelligent with innovative technologies and by encouraging behavioural water efficiency techniques. Especially given current water consumption trends, now is the time for utility companies to integrate customer behavior more fully into their business models.

The full report is available for SWAN Forum members. For more information, please contact Liora Hostyk at [liora@swan-forum.com](mailto:liora@swan-forum.com)