

The Water-Positive Economy: Delivering Abundance at Scale

1st-3rd February 2027 in Madrid, Spain



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WEX GLOBAL 2027 – WORKING PROGRAMME DOCUMENT

The Water-Positive Economy: Delivering Abundance at Scale

Madrid | 1–3 February 2027

SUMMIT OVERVIEW

WEX Global 2027 marks the next phase in the evolution of our global water-positive agenda. Having moved from vision to action in delivering "A World of Water Abundance" in 2026, the focus now shifts towards scaling solutions, investment and impact.

Water abundance should not be interpreted as unlimited supply. Rather, it describes the ability of a system to consistently meet environmental, social and economic needs through greater efficiency, regeneration, circularity and effective governance. In this context, abundance emerges not from removing constraints, but from managing them more intelligently and collaboratively.

Achieving water abundance at scale requires more than reducing harm or improving individual assets. It requires water-positive outcomes in which organisations, communities and economic systems contribute more to the health, resilience and regeneration of water systems than they consume or degrade. This demands a shift from managing water as a resource to actively restoring and strengthening the systems upon which water security depends.

However, water-positive outcomes cannot be delivered through isolated projects or individual corporate commitments alone. They depend upon a broader system in which infrastructure, finance, technology, governance and market mechanisms work together to deliver abundance at scale.

This is the foundation of the Water-Positive Economy: an economic model that aligns investment, innovation and stewardship to generate net positive outcomes for water systems whilst delivering water security, climate resilience, sustainable economic development and social prosperity.

The emergence of a Water-Positive Economy is increasingly becoming an economic, environmental and societal imperative. As pressures on water resources intensify through climate change, population growth, urbanisation and industrial development, traditional approaches based solely on compliance, infrastructure expansion and resource allocation are proving insufficient. Delivering a Water-Positive Economy will require a systems-based approach capable of creating measurable improvements across entire basins rather than individual assets or projects.

WEX Global 2027 therefore examines how organisations move from ambition to implementation, from implementation to verified impact, and from isolated initiatives to system-wide transformation. A central objective of the summit will be the development of the **Madrid Water-Positive Economy Framework**, a practical reference point for organisations seeking to accelerate implementation.

Our agenda is structured as an integrated framework rather than a series of standalone sessions. The programme is organised around five interconnected building blocks that together define the foundations of a Water-Positive Economy:

- 1. Stewardship & System Design** - How do we define, design and deliver desired outcomes at basin-scale?
- 2. Digital Intelligence** - How do we measure, optimise and verify performance?
- 3. Circular Infrastructure** - How do we create environmental, social and economic value from water systems?
- 4. Finance, Markets, Policy & Sustainable Development** - How do we mobilise investment and scale implementation?
- 5. Collaboration, Innovation & Governance** - How do we align stakeholders, share accountability and deliver lasting impact?

Together, these five building blocks provide a practical framework for understanding how a Water-Positive Economy can be designed, financed, governed and delivered in practice.

Block 1 – Stewardship & System Design: How do we define and deliver desired outcomes at basin-scale?

A Water-Positive Economy is an economic system in which infrastructure, finance, technology, governance and market mechanisms are aligned to generate net positive outcomes for water systems whilst supporting sustainable economic and social development.

It begins with a clear understanding of the outcomes we are seeking to deliver. This stream explores how water security, basin resilience, ecosystem health and long-term prosperity can be defined, measured and governed.

- *What is a Water-Positive Economy?*
- *What outcomes should it deliver?*
- *How do we measure success?*

- *How do we ensure credibility, accountability and verified impact?*

Outcome: A shared framework for defining water-positive outcomes and the governance systems needed to support them.

1.1 Defining the Water-Positive Economy

The Water-Positive Economy is increasingly emerging as a distinct economic model. Understanding what differentiates it from related concepts such as water resilience, stewardship and circularity will be critical to its adoption and scale.

Stewardship, resilience and circularity are components. The Water-Positive Economy is the system that connects them and scales their impact. What are the characteristics, metrics and governance models required for a water-positive economy to function effectively?

- What qualifies as a Water-Positive Economy?
- Relationship with resilience and circularity
- Economic value creation from water-positive outcomes
- Shared metrics and indicators
- Governance and accountability models
- Pathways to adoption at regional, national and global scale

1.2 From Watersheds to Water Systems: Scaling Regenerative Models

As climate pressures intensify, the focus is shifting from managing watersheds to actively redesigning them as resilient and regenerative systems. Within the Water-Positive Economy, this represents a transition from managing individual assets to delivering measurable environmental, social and economic outcomes at basin-scale.

Achieving these outcomes will require the integration of nature-based solutions, infrastructure, digital intelligence and governance into coordinated systems capable of restoring water cycles, strengthening resilience and improving long-term water security.

- Integrated watershed and basin planning approaches
- Scaling nature-based solutions alongside infrastructure
- The role of digital tools in monitoring, optimisation and verification
- Governance models for multi-stakeholder coordination
- Delivering measurable basin-level outcomes through integrated water systems

1.3 Water Positive 2.0 – Attribution, Additionality and Verified Impact

As the Water-Positive Economy evolves from vision to implementation, the focus is increasingly shifting from commitments to outcomes. Organisations are under growing pressure to

demonstrate that their actions deliver measurable improvements to water systems whilst creating genuine environmental, social and economic value.

How can water-positive outcomes be measured, validated and governed to ensure that claims are credible, transparent and capable of supporting the long-term growth of the Water-Positive Economy?

- Ownership and accountability for basin-level outcomes
- Demonstrating additionality beyond business-as-usual
- Attribution, contribution and shared ownership of basin-level outcomes
- Avoiding double counting and over-claiming
- Verification, assurance and governance
- Building trust through transparent methodologies

1.4 Nature as Infrastructure – Delivering Resilience at Scale

Nature-based solutions are increasingly being recognised as core infrastructure capable of delivering resilience, reducing risk and creating long-term environmental and economic value. Within the Water-Positive Economy, they play a critical role in restoring water systems, strengthening climate resilience and supporting basin-scale outcomes.

Realising this potential will require natural and engineered assets to be planned, financed and deployed as integrated systems rather than standalone interventions. Moving from pilot projects to large-scale implementation will depend on robust investment frameworks, supportive policy and the ability to demonstrate measurable value.

- Positioning nature-based solutions as investable infrastructure
- Integrating grey and green assets to enhance resilience
- Quantifying environmental, economic and risk-reduction benefits
- Policy, regulatory and financing frameworks for scale
- Delivering basin-scale outcomes through integrated natural and engineered systems

Block 2: Digital Intelligence - How do we measure, optimise and verify performance?

Water-positive outcomes cannot be delivered without the ability to understand, manage and optimise increasingly complex water systems. Digital intelligence provides the visibility, control and verification capabilities that comprise the operating system of the Water-Positive Economy.

- *How do we move from data to decision-making?*
- *How do we optimise performance across entire systems?*

- *How do we build trust in digital infrastructure?*
- *How do we engage customers as active participants in water-positive outcomes?*

Outcome: The tools and intelligence needed to measure, optimise and verify performance at scale.

2.1 From Pilots to Platforms – Scaling Digital Transformation Across the Water Sector

While digital innovation in water is accelerating, many utilities remain trapped in pilot programmes that fail to deliver organisation-wide impact. The challenge is no longer access to technology, but the ability to embed digital capabilities within operations, decision-making and investment strategies.

Within the Water-Positive Economy, digital intelligence provides the visibility, optimisation and verification capabilities needed to deliver measurable outcomes at scale. Success will depend on moving beyond isolated solutions towards integrated platforms that align technology, people and governance whilst creating operational, financial and environmental value.

- Overcoming the "pilot trap" and scaling digital solutions across organisations
- Building interoperable platforms rather than isolated tools
- Aligning digital strategy with operational and financial outcomes
- Workforce transformation and digital capability building
- Procurement, partnerships and new delivery models
- Lessons from utilities that have successfully scaled digital transformation

2.2 Digital Twins to Decision Systems – Turning Data into Control

The next evolution of digital water is moving beyond visibility towards active system control. While digital twins and monitoring platforms have transformed insight into network performance, the real opportunity lies in converting data into real-time decisions that optimise outcomes across the water cycle

Within the Water-Positive Economy, this capability is essential. As water systems become increasingly interconnected, utilities must be able to anticipate change, optimise performance and respond dynamically through the integration of digital twins, IoT and advanced analytics into unified decision systems.

Success will depend on embedding intelligence within operations and moving from observation and reporting towards automated, adaptive and increasingly autonomous management of water systems.

- Integrating digital twins, IoT and advanced analytics into unified platforms

- Real-time optimisation of networks, assets and operations
- Overcoming interoperability and data integration challenges
- Embedding decision intelligence into operational processes
- Moving from reporting and insight to automated control
- Lessons from utilities implementing system-wide digital management

2.3 Cybersecurity, Data Governance and Trust

As water systems become increasingly digital and interconnected, cybersecurity, data governance and trust are becoming fundamental to the reliable operation of critical infrastructure. While digitalisation creates new opportunities for optimisation, efficiency and control, it also introduces risks that must be actively managed.

Within the Water-Positive Economy, secure and trusted digital infrastructure is essential for delivering resilient, data-driven water systems at scale. This session explores how utilities and technology providers are balancing innovation with risk through robust governance frameworks, strong cybersecurity practices and transparent data management.

- Protecting critical infrastructure from cyber threats and system vulnerabilities
- Ensuring data integrity, quality and reliability across interconnected systems
- Managing cyber risk in increasingly digitalised environments
- Data governance, ownership and ethical considerations
- Building organisational and public trust in digital water systems
- Lessons from leading organisations on securing digital transformation

2.4 Tackling Non-Revenue Water – From Loss Reduction to Water-Positive Value Creation

Non-Revenue Water (NRW) remains one of the most significant challenges facing water utilities worldwide, resulting in the loss of valuable water, energy and financial resources. Within The Water-Positive Economy, reducing NRW represents one of the fastest and most cost-effective ways to increase water availability, strengthen basin resilience and create measurable environmental and economic value.

Realising this opportunity will require utilities to move beyond loss reduction towards system-wide water recovery through a combination of digital intelligence, operational excellence and innovative financing models. As recovered water becomes recognised as a water-positive outcome, new opportunities are emerging for corporate participation, investment and basin-scale impact.

- Embedding NRW reduction into operational processes and culture

- Measuring water recovery, financial savings and energy efficiency
- New financing models for NRW reduction programmes
- Corporate participation in water-positive water recovery initiatives
- Linking NRW reduction to basin resilience and water security goals
- Case studies of utilities delivering NRW reduction at scale

2.5 Digital Transformation and the Customer Interface – Engaging Customers in the Water-Positive Economy

As utilities embrace digital transformation, customer relationships are evolving beyond service delivery towards active participation in water stewardship and resource management. Within The Water-Positive Economy, customers are not simply consumers of water services but partners in delivering water-positive outcomes through more informed decisions, responsible water use and participation in efficiency, conservation and demand management initiatives.

Delivering water-positive outcomes will increasingly depend on utilities using digital technologies to connect operational systems with customer interfaces, transforming customers from passive users into active contributors to water-positive outcomes.

- Integrating customer platforms with operational and asset management systems
- Using real-time data to improve customer engagement and transparency
- Enhancing billing, metering and consumption visibility through digital tools
- Leveraging AI and automation to improve service responsiveness
- Enabling customer participation in water stewardship, efficiency and demand management programmes
- Building trust through transparency, data access and shared outcomes
- Lessons from utilities creating more engaged and water-aware communities

Block 3: Circular Infrastructure, Bioeconomy & Value Creation – Turning Water Systems into Economic Assets

*The Water-Positive Economy demonstrates how water systems can move beyond treatment and compliance to become platforms for value creation. **The circular bioeconomy is one of the principal value creation mechanisms within the Water-Positive Economy**, transforming wastewater, biosolids and organic waste streams into energy, nutrients, materials and other productive resources. Through resource recovery, industrial collaboration and circular infrastructure, water systems have become active contributors to economic development, climate resilience and resource security.*

- *How do we recover value from waste streams?*
- *How do we integrate water, energy, agriculture and industry?*
- *How do cities, agriculture and industry participate in the Water-Positive Economy?*

- *How do we scale resource recovery into viable economic systems?*

Outcome: Environmental, social and economic value generated through circular infrastructure, resource recovery and the bioeconomy.

3.1 Biosolids to Bioeconomy: Unlocking Value at Scale – Transforming Waste Streams to Resource Systems

Biosolids and organic waste streams are increasingly being recognised as valuable resources capable of generating energy, recovering nutrients and supporting the production of bio-based materials. As pressures on water, energy and food systems intensify, they are becoming critical building blocks of the bioeconomy.

Within the Water-Positive Economy, resource recovery represents an opportunity to transform wastewater systems from cost centres into value-generating assets that contribute to energy transition, agricultural productivity, climate resilience and resource security. Realising this potential will depend not only on technology, but also on market development, regulatory alignment and the ability to scale solutions beyond pilot projects.

- Transforming biosolids and organic waste streams into valuable products and resources
- Energy recovery pathways, including biogas, biomethane and emerging fuels
- Nutrient recovery and links to sustainable agriculture
- Technologies enabling value extraction from biosolids and organic waste streams
- Market development challenges for recovered products
- Regulatory, environmental and public acceptance considerations
- Scaling resource recovery from pilot projects to full deployment

3.2 Blue-Green Economic Hubs that Integrate Resource Recovery into System-Level Infrastructure

Building on the recovery of value from wastewater, bio-refineries represent the next evolution of water infrastructure. By integrating resource recovery, energy generation and circular production systems, they transform wastewater facilities into hubs that connect water, energy, agriculture and industry.

Within the Water-Positive Economy, these integrated platforms create environmental, social and economic value by turning waste streams into productive resources and supporting regional growth. Realising this potential will require coordinated investment, enabling policy frameworks and strong partnerships across sectors.

- Designing integrated resource recovery systems at facility and regional scale
- Co-location and system integration across water, energy and waste streams
- Economic models for bio-refineries and circular infrastructure
- The role of public-private partnerships in delivery and operation
- Policy and regulatory frameworks supporting circular systems
- Case studies of bio-refinery development and deployment

3.3 The Climate-Resilient City: Embedding Circular Water Systems into Urban Environments

Cities sit at the centre of the global water challenge as they face growing pressure from population growth, climate variability and ageing infrastructure. They also represent one of the greatest opportunities to integrate circular water systems that enhance resilience, improve resource efficiency, deliver abundance at scale and support sustainable urban development.

Within The Water-Positive Economy, cities can become platforms for delivering environmental, social and economic value by connecting water, energy, resource recovery and digital infrastructure within a single urban system. Success will depend on integrating circular water strategies into wider planning, investment and climate resilience frameworks.

- Designing adaptive and resilient urban water infrastructure
- Integrating water reuse, circularity and resource recovery into city systems
- Using data and digital tools to support planning and real-time management
- Collaboration between utilities, city planners and technology providers
- Addressing climate risks including drought, flooding and variability
- Case studies of cities implementing circular and resilient water strategies

3.4 Regenerative Agriculture and the Food-Water-Energy Nexus

Agriculture is the world's largest consumer of freshwater, but also one of the greatest opportunities to improve water efficiency, strengthen resilience and support regeneration at basin scale. As pressures on water, food and energy systems intensify, integrated approaches to the food-water-energy nexus are becoming increasingly important.

Within The Water-Positive Economy, agriculture has the potential to move from being a source of pressure on water resources to a driver of water-positive outcomes through more efficient water use, healthier soils and the adoption of regenerative practices. Realising this opportunity will require innovation, investment and supportive policy frameworks capable of scaling solutions across regions and supply chains.

- Precision irrigation and digital agriculture
- Water reuse and alternative water sources in farming

- Regenerative agricultural practices and soil health
- Balancing food security with water sustainability
- Technology, policy and investment frameworks supporting adoption
- Delivering water-positive outcomes across agricultural systems and supply chains

3.5 The Industrial Water Transition: Compliance to Circularity

Industry is one of the largest users of water globally and plays a critical role in driving demand, investment and innovation within the Water-Positive Economy. As regulatory pressures, resource constraints and ESG commitments intensify, industrial sectors are increasingly adopting circular approaches that reduce water consumption, recover resources and create new sources of value.

Realising water-positive outcomes at scale will depend on stronger collaboration between industry, utilities and technology providers to develop shared infrastructure, create markets for recovered resources and accelerate the transition from pilot projects to mainstream adoption.

- Transitioning from linear to circular water use in industrial operations
- Closed-loop systems and on-site water reuse strategies
- Industrial symbiosis and shared infrastructure with utilities
- Resource recovery from industrial wastewater streams
- Regulatory drivers and ESG commitments shaping industrial behaviour
- Building the business case for circular water systems at scale
- Creating demand for recovered resources and circular value chains

Block 4 – Finance, Markets, Policy and Sustainable Development: How do we Mobilise Investment and Scale Implementation?

The transition to a Water-Positive Economy requires more than technology. It requires investment, market creation and policy frameworks capable of accelerating deployment and rewarding positive outcomes. Alongside investors and development institutions, insurers and risk-transfer mechanisms will play an increasingly important role in reducing risk, improving bankability and supporting investment in long-term resilience.

The ability to finance Water-Positive Outcomes depends upon trusted metrics, transparent governance and credible verification systems. As markets for water-positive value emerge, investors, governments and industry will increasingly require confidence that outcomes can be measured, validated and linked to real environmental, social and economic benefits.

This stream examines how finance, policy and market mechanisms can mobilise capital, reduce risk and accelerate the implementation of water-positive solutions at scale.

- *How do projects become investable?*
- *How do we mobilise public and private capital?*
- *How do PPPs evolve to deliver system-level outcomes?*
- *How do we create markets for Water-Positive Outcomes?*

Outcome: Investment models, market mechanisms and policy frameworks capable of scaling implementation and accelerating the transition towards a Water-Positive Economy.

4.1 Beyond Capital – How IFIs Are Shaping the Future of Water and Climate Resilience

As water stress intensifies across emerging and developing economies, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), development banks and sovereign funds are evolving from funders into strategic partners capable of accelerating large-scale transformation. Beyond capital, they are helping shape projects, de-risk investment and build the partnerships needed to deliver long-term impact.

Within The Water-Positive Economy, these institutions play a critical role in aligning investment with water security, climate resilience and sustainable development outcomes. Their ability to mobilise capital, technical expertise and cross-sector collaboration is increasingly determining the pace and scale of implementation.

- The evolving role of IFIs and development funds as strategic partners
- Aligning financial viability with environmental and social outcomes
- Blended finance models for scalable impact
- De-risking investment through guarantees and technical assistance
- International partnerships supporting water and climate resilience
- Linking water investment to broader development and economic goals

4.2 Blended Finance at Scale – What Actually Works?

Delivering the Water-Positive Economy will require significant investment in infrastructure, technology and resource recovery systems. Yet many projects continue to struggle to reach bankability or attract capital at the scale required for implementation.

The challenge is no longer simply raising finance but structuring it effectively. Success will depend on aligning public and private capital, allocating risk appropriately and creating investment models capable of supporting long-term environmental, social and economic outcomes, particularly in emerging and high-risk markets.

- What makes a water project truly investable?
- Structuring blended finance to crowd in private capital

- Risk allocation that works for both public and private partners
- Unlocking investment in emerging and high-risk markets
- The role of insurance and risk-transfer mechanisms in improving project bankability
- Aligning financial returns with environmental and social outcomes
- Examples of successful blended finance models

4.3 Delivering at Scale: Transformative PPP Models for the Water-Positive Economy

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have long been a cornerstone of water infrastructure delivery. Within The Water-Positive Economy, their role is expanding beyond financing and asset delivery towards enabling integrated solutions that support water security, climate resilience and sustainable economic development.

Delivering water-positive outcomes at scale requires partnerships capable of aligning investment, innovation and operational expertise whilst sharing risk and accountability across the full water cycle. As water challenges become increasingly complex, PPPs are emerging as a key mechanism for connecting infrastructure delivery with broader environmental, social and economic objectives.

- Evolving PPP models from asset delivery to system-level outcomes
- Aligning PPP frameworks with water-positive, circular and climate resilience goals
- Structuring partnerships that balance risk, performance and long-term value
- Mobilising private capital and innovation at scale
- Lessons from SWPC and other leading PPP programmes
- Adapting successful models across regions and market contexts

4.4 Creating Markets for Water-Positive Outcomes

Delivering a Water-Positive Economy will require more than investment in infrastructure. It will require markets capable of recognising, valuing and rewarding positive environmental, social and economic outcomes.

The challenge is to translate basin resilience, ecosystem restoration, resource recovery and water stewardship into investable opportunities that attract corporate participation, institutional capital and long-term investment. Creating these markets will be critical to scaling water-positive solutions and accelerating implementation.

- What constitutes a water-positive asset?
- Creating economic value from basin-level outcomes
- Corporate participation in The Water-Positive Economy
- New market mechanisms and incentives
- Measuring return on impact

- The future of water-positive investment

4.5 Corporate Action In The Water-Positive Economy – From Commitment to Participation

As The Water-Positive Economy evolves from concept to implementation, organisations are increasingly seeking practical ways to participate in the systems, partnerships and markets that deliver water-positive outcomes. The challenge is no longer defining ambition but identifying credible pathways for action.

For many organisations, participation will extend beyond operational water efficiency towards supporting basin resilience, creating demand for water-positive outcomes and integrating water stewardship into investment, procurement and business strategy. Success will depend on establishing clear participation models that create measurable value whilst reducing risk and strengthening long-term water security.

- How companies participate in the Water-Positive Economy
- Water-positive procurement and supply chain strategies
- Creating demand for verified water-positive outcomes
- Corporate roles in basin-scale stewardship and resilience programmes
- Purchasing, funding and co-investing in water-positive outcomes
- Integrating water-positive objectives into ESG, risk and business strategy
- Lessons from leading organisations moving from commitment to implementation

Block 5: Collaboration, Innovation & Governance – Turning Vision into Action

Delivering water-positive outcomes requires collaboration across utilities, governments, industry, investors, technology providers and civil society. This stream focuses on implementation, accountability and collective action.

- *How do stakeholders align around shared outcomes?*
- *How do we accelerate innovation and deployment?*
- *How do we build effective partnerships?*
- *What actions are required to accelerate the transition?*

Outcome: A practical roadmap for implementation, partnership development and collective action.

5.1 WEX Global Utilities Rotational Round Tables

A flagship WEX Global session bringing together senior utility leaders to define priorities, share challenges, and engage directly with partners in a highly interactive round table discussion format.

This is a fast-moving rotating round table session in which 20 leading utilities each host a discussion to present their challenges for the future.

- Choose a utility and join the table.
- Meet the utility table host and exchange contacts with your fellow guests.
- Learn about the challenges and plans of the utility and exchange ideas with your fellow round table members
- Joining three separate discussions will leave you with new contacts, new ideas and new business opportunities.

5.2 Partnerships for Progress – From Collaboration to Delivery (Rotational Round Tables)

A solution-focused format designed to accelerate collaboration and move from dialogue to delivery by enabling the partnerships required to scale The Water-Positive Economy.

Structured as a series of separate expert-led roundtables hosted by leaders from across industry, agriculture, and regulatory bodies, the session focuses on the practical realities of delivery, from managing water risk and ensuring compliance, to enabling circular systems, financing infrastructure, and achieving measurable water-positive outcomes at basin-level.

Each table is designed to move beyond discussion toward identifying actionable solutions, partnership models, and pathways to implementation.

With three table rotations during the session, participants gain exposure to diverse perspectives while building the cross-sector relationships needed to align policy, production systems, and investment around shared water challenges.

5.3 WEX Global Basin Simulation Lab: From Allocation to Abundance

This immersive, role-based simulation places participants inside a live basin-level crisis where competing demands from cities, agriculture, industry and the environment must be balanced in real time. Faced with scarcity, uncertainty and political pressure, participants are challenged to make difficult decisions on water allocation, investment and risk management whilst experiencing first-hand the realities of governing complex water systems.

Through successive rounds, participants must move beyond simply managing scarcity and begin redesigning the basin using stewardship, digital intelligence, circular infrastructure, finance and governance interventions. As new solutions are introduced, the simulation demonstrates how coordinated action can transform constrained systems into more resilient, productive and regenerative ones.

Within the context of the Water-Positive Economy, the session explores a fundamental question: how do we move from allocating limited resources to delivering long term water abundance at scale? Participants will discover that abundance is not simply a function of supply, but the result of better decisions, stronger partnerships, innovative technologies and more effective governance.

By stepping into the role of decision-makers, participants will experience how choices made today shape environmental, social and economic outcomes tomorrow, revealing both the trade-offs and opportunities involved in building water-positive systems at basin scale.

This is not a discussion. It is a real-time test of how we make decisions, build consensus and create value when not everyone can win.

5.4 WEX Global Innovation Forum

A regular and very popular session at WEX Global. This interactive forum features a discussion on innovation by our expert panel followed by short presentations by 6 innovative technologies from invited companies.

Each presentation is followed by questions, analysis and debate involving both the audience and jurists. The panel will ultimately decide upon the winner of the annual Innovation Forum Award at WEX Global to be presented at the Gala Dinner on the 2nd of February

5.5 Delivering Abundance at Scale a Roadmap for Action

This closing interactive plenary session brings together representatives from across each programme stream to reconnect the key themes, insights and priorities that have emerged throughout the Summit.

While The Water-Positive Economy provides a compelling vision for the future, its success will ultimately depend on the ability of stakeholders to move beyond discussion and translate ideas into coordinated action. This session is designed to identify the practical steps required to accelerate implementation and establish a shared agenda for the years ahead.

Drawing on discussions from stewardship and basin systems, digital intelligence, circular infrastructure, finance and policy, collaboration and governance, participants will explore the critical barriers that continue to limit progress whilst identifying the opportunities, partnerships and enabling conditions required to scale impact.

The session will challenge participants to consider not only what The Water-Positive Economy should look like, but what actions are needed to build it in practice.

- The most significant barriers to achieving The Water-Positive Economy at scale
- Priority actions for utilities, industry, governments and investors
- Partnership models capable of accelerating implementation

- Investment requirements and financing mechanisms
- Governance frameworks and accountability structures
- Defining measurable outcomes and indicators of success
- Opportunities for international collaboration and knowledge exchange

Summit Outcome: The Madrid Water-Positive Economy Framework

The outputs from WEX Global 2027 will form the basis of the Madrid Water-Positive Economy Framework. Developed by the international WEX Global community, the Framework will serve as a practical implementation roadmap and reference point for organisations seeking to build and participate in The Water-Positive Economy.

Structured around the Summit's five building blocks, the Framework will identify the priorities, partnerships, investment requirements, market mechanisms and governance structures required to accelerate the transition towards The Water-Positive Economy.

Drawing on insights from utilities, governments, industry, investors, technology providers and civil society, it will establish a shared understanding of how water-positive outcomes can be defined, measured, financed and delivered at scale. The challenge is no longer simply managing water-related risks but actively contributing to outcomes that strengthen the resilience, health and productivity of water systems.

For all stakeholders the **Water-Positive Economy is not simply an environmental agenda but an economic development model designed to deliver water security, climate resilience and sustainable prosperity simultaneously**. By aligning environmental outcomes with economic value creation, it provides a pathway through which water systems can become drivers of resilience, productivity and long-term growth rather than constraints upon them.

The Framework will provide a reference point for organisations seeking to move from ambition to implementation, from implementation to verified impact, and from isolated initiatives to system-wide transformation.

Key Outputs will include:

- Defining the core characteristics of a Water-Positive Economy
- Identifying priority actions for utilities, industry, governments and investors
- Creating pathways to finance and scale water-positive solutions
- Establishing principles for market creation and water-positive value generation
- Recommending governance, accountability and verification mechanisms
- Identifying opportunities for international collaboration and knowledge exchange

- Defining the environmental, social, economic and governance outcomes that success should deliver

The Madrid Water-Positive Economy Framework will be published as the collective contribution of the WEX Global community and serve as a practical guide for organisations seeking to design, finance, govern and deliver water-positive systems. In doing so, it will establish a common reference point for accelerating the emergence of The Water-Positive Economy to deliver water abundance at basin, regional and national scale.