

Independent research and finance of Aquateam COWI AS as a research institute

Aquateam COWI AS is an independent, non-profit R&D company owned by COWI. The company is conducting research projects in the area of water and the environment. It identifies new challenges at an early stage, identifies knowledge gaps, and delivers essential research-based knowledge. Aquateam COWI disseminates research-based knowledge as an integral part of its R&D activities.

To maintain a position as an independent research company, an external funding from COWIfonden has been and will be crucial. The donation from COWIfonden is and will be used to develop new methods and gain new competences which cannot be covered by customers and public funds. However, they are crucial to stay in front of the development. This brings benefit to the COWI organization and the society. COWI has direct access to the competences at Aquateam and can use it to deliver innovative solutions to their customers and the society.

One of the focus areas in the coming three years will be “Contaminants of emerging concern (CECs)”. CECs is a term used to describe man-made chemicals that are currently not regulated under environmental laws. The continuous production and consumption of hazardous chemicals has contributed significantly to the occurrence of CECs in the environment, largely via municipal wastewater treatment plant discharges. Other minor sources but worth considering include aquaculture wastewater, landfill leachate, livestock, and sludge for agricultural use. Yet, regular monitoring for future regulations is needed and done. In that focus area, Aquateam will work on effective solutions, i. e. water treatment technology.

Also, Aquateam has made considerable impact and will continue to focus on the assessment of the microplastic presence in the environment. The current microplastic content evaluation methods are highly complicated and costly. Only a few research centres can perform it properly. Aquateam COWI will continue their work on the development of a method for characterization of microplastics particles with respect to properties relevant for their removal.

Furthermore, Aquateam puts efforts into a treatment of surface runoff water and tunnel wash water in relation to COWI's activity associated to road construction and solutions for sustainable development in urban areas.

Aquateam will maintain and develop the broad basic and interdisciplinary expertise by using high quality laboratory and experimental facilities and other research infrastructure that support the needs and make Aquateam an attractive partner for research collaboration. Aquateam will increase participation in international activities, both EU projects and other projects where our expertise is requested.