

## **Preface**

As former rector at Universidad Regional Amazónica Ikiam, I can say that the relevance of the project *Hi-Water, Efficient and affordable water treatment technologies to minimize waterborne diseases*, goes beyond the excellent science developed by the consortium, conformed by Riga Technical University, Leibniz Institute for Research in Polymers and Ikiam.

The focus of the project was the development of decentralized technologies for water treatment in rural communities, to reduce the viral and bacterial charge of storage and distribution systems. The project had two main lines of research, BIOX, oriented to the design of nanoparticles and photocatalytic coverings activated by visible light, and VIREZONE, exploring the viromes of river systems in the surroundings of Tena, in the Ecuadorean Amazon. The research led to the development and testing of prototypes that were ultimately installed at Ikiam.

The Amazon region, despite having huge water resources, suffers from poor capture, treatment, and distribution systems for drinkable water. The result is the high morbidity of its population related to gastrointestinal diseases. Hi-Water provides research, development and application of low-cost technologies that can be easily implemented by communities, improving the health and quality of life of its citizens. It is, then, a perfect example of science-for-governance.

Hi-Water was the first EU-funded research project in which Ikiam was involved, encouraging the university to develop management practices that will bring further returns to the university. This is an invaluable outcome of the project that is worth mentioning.

The project has also involved several undergraduate students who have been exposed to high-quality research and research teams, with the result of many research theses conducted, scientific papers and presentations at international conferences, giving those students opportunities that are usually beyond their expectations.

These activities were complemented with carefully designed outreach activities, including the surrounding communities as beneficiaries of the technologies developed, but also including technical secondary school students who contributed to the manufacturing of the prototypes, allowing them to implement, in a real case study, the knowledge acquired during their formal education. Again, this is an example of how to conduct participatory science oriented to solving real-life problems.

The outputs of this project are, therefore, comprehensive, and it is clear to me that the outcomes will not only benefit local communities, but also the young researchers involved, as well as the partner institutions. This is the beginning of a long-term cooperation that will bring many more benefits for the region and lots of high-quality science.

My congratulations to everybody involved in this excellent project.

### **Jesús Ramos-Martín**

Associate Professor – Serra Hunter Fellow

Department of Economics and Economic History

Autonomous University of Barcelona - Spain