nôva tech
Stormwater | Science & Management
12th International conference
2026

CONFERENCE REPORT

Organized by the Graie, the OTHU and the Metropolis of Lyon, the Novatech international conference is dedicated to integrated and sustainable stormwater management and to the adaptation of regions to climate and environmental challenges.

The 12th edition of Novatech was held from June 29 to July 3, 2026 at UCLy in Lyon.

Highlights of this edition

- **145 oral** presentations and **95 posters**
- 1 **opening plenary** conference session with Rhys COLEMAN, Peter BACH and Kotchakorn VORAAKHOM.
- **5 themes:** Source control measures (Understanding & acting, Monitoring and modeling) - Governance & development - Catchment perspective - Knowledge transfer.
- **3 poster sessions**: a different program each day, fostering fruitful exchanges between speakers and delegates.
- **Workshops** on Monday to explore specific topics in depth - a dedicated time for communities to come together
- **4 technical tours and 2 serious games** on Friday to discover integrated stormwater management in action across the Metropolis of Lyon.

650 participants from more than 35 countries

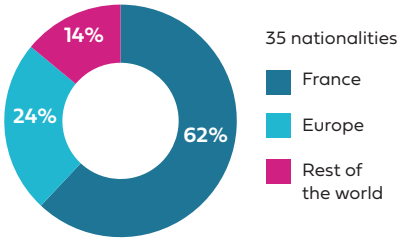
Who attended?

- **646 registered participants from 310 organizations**: researchers, local authorities, developers, engineering consultancies and utility managers.
- **210 speakers** and 436 delegates, including 41 partners and 183 Graie members
- Half of the registered participants attended at least **3 days**
- 78% of international participants were scientists.
- 80% of French participants were operational practitioners.

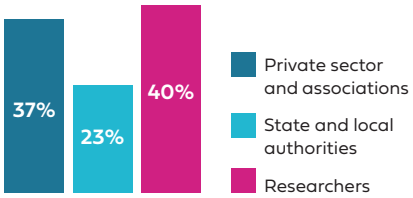
A new and renewed audience

- 413 people were discovering the conference for the first time.
- **113 young professionals** and young researchers.

Geographic origin

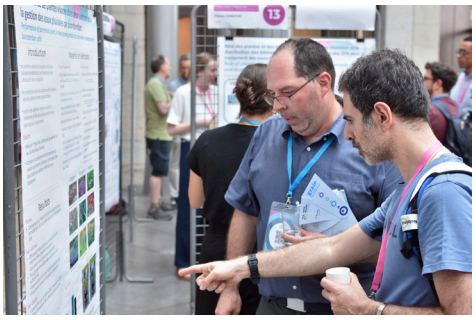


Professional profile









The lasting tranformation of regions through integrated stormwater management

What did we learn collectively at Novatech?

More than thirty years after the first edition of Novatech, integrated stormwater management has entered a new phase of relative maturity. Scientific knowledge is extensive, feedback from experience is multiplying on every continent, and digital decision-support tools are becoming increasingly refined. Territorial strategies and nature-based solutions demonstrate their ability to simultaneously address flood risk, water quality, climate adaptation, biodiversity, urban development and quality-of-life challenges. The exchanges often showed that the challenges are no longer primarily technical and scientific. They now rather concern our capacity to plan, decide, maintain, govern and roll out these new practices at a large scale. Questions are also focusing on the long term, taking into account the future evolution of our climate and our societies.

In our view, the major challenges revealed by this edition of Novatech are the following:

1. **Moving to scale.** Mainstreaming nature-based solutions.

2. Thinking of **Water-Soil-Vegetation as one system**. Continuing to understand and monitor in situ how this triptych functions, as it is highly dependent on the local context.

3. **Designing for future climates** and maintaining performance over time.

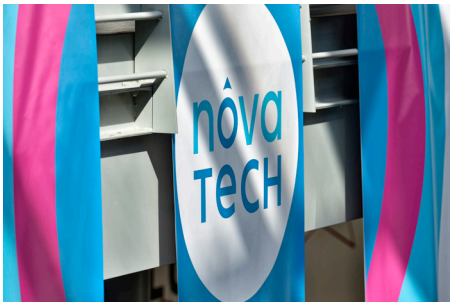
4. **Making data a common good**, shared internationally and enriched by the diversity of climatic contexts, but also fed by failure, by sharing the difficulties encountered.

5. Developing **multicriteria indicators** beyond hydrology, to highlight the multifunctionality of stormwater facilities and territorial strategies.

6. **Getting tools and human expertise to work together**, in particular within multicriteria planning approaches.

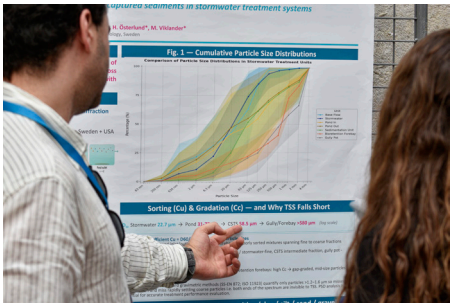
7. **Breaking down silos and strengthening cooperation among all stakeholders**: between scientists and operational practitioners, between public services, between urban development actors through a cross-disciplinary approach, and between public and private actors - and, last but not least, mobilizing citizens and users.











After more than forty years of research in urban hydrology, the 12th edition of Novatech confirms that integrated stormwater management is no longer an experimental innovation. Scientific knowledge is sound, feedback from experience is multiplying and tools are diversifying. **The major challenge is no longer to demonstrate the value of nature-based solutions, but to turn them into common practice and create the conditions for their widespread adoption.**

Research today aims to gain a fine-grained understanding of the processes that determine the performance of nature-based solutions, in order to design facilities that are more effective, more robust and better suited to the diversity of urban and climatic contexts. It also develops tools to move to scale: assessing the effectiveness of source control strategies at the territorial level, in a context of climate change and high uncertainty.

Large-scale deployment of these solutions calls for **new forms of governance** and their integration into public policies, ownership and capacity building among all stakeholders, better articulation between research and practice, **an integrated vision linking water, soil, vegetation, urban development and uses,** and management that is sustainable and adapted over time.

The success of this transition now depends on our collective ability to share knowledge and tools, train stakeholders, structure communities of practice and build a genuine common culture of integrated stormwater management. It also depends on our ability to anticipate, in order to build for the long term.

Trophées Thierry Maytraud

Through the Thierry Maytraud Awards, the Novatech international conference celebrates transdisciplinary initiatives led by professionals who, without being stormwater specialists, know how to integrate it in a relevant and innovative way into their projects.

For this 12th edition of Novatech, **13 projects were selected** by a jury bringing together representatives of the various professions involved. Project leaders were invited to present their project orally during the conference, in front of the jury. Choosing between the finalist projects was no small task: the quality of these exemplary projects made the jury's deliberations particularly tricky!

The 2026 winners of the Thierry Maytraud Awards

Territorial strategy category

The «Eau en ville» (Water in the City) approach in Geneva
Presented by the **Cantonal Water Office** - Switzerland

Multi-stakeholder engagement and support category

The «Water» strategy, an opportunity to reinvent the city
Presented by **Bouygues Immobilier** - France

Urban renewal project category

The wooded swale of a residential condominium, rue Dugueslin, Lyon 3rd arrondissement
Presented by **INDIGÈNE paysages** - France

Jury's Special Award

The Swaminathan «sponge» park in Chennai, India
Presented by **Sponge Collaborative** - India

People's Choice Award

Le Grand Chemin, linking 9 towns of the Oarisian Est Ensemble area
Presented by **Est Ensemble** - France

The committees

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The conference is organized by

www.graie-novatech.org

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