



PRESS RELEASE
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Excelia Business School addresses the issue of WATER to amplify the effectiveness of its commitment to the urgent challenges of ecological and social transition

Following a process of reflection, which began 18 months ago, and consultation with all its stakeholders, Excelia Business School has chosen Water as its additional focus of commitment and innovation in order to raise awareness and act for the ecological and social transition. As a particularly visible aspect of global warming and a potential risk for 77% of companies, the theme of water will underpin three areas of action at Excelia Business School from the start of the 2023 academic year: an enhanced pedagogical offer known as the Blue Education Experience, a dedicated interdisciplinary research project, and an exemplary approach on its campuses. This powerful commitment by Excelia Business School is part of the group's strategy to position itself as a national and international reference in the ecological and social transition.*

* [CDP Worldwide – Treading Water Report: corporate responses to Rising Water Challenges - 2018](#)

A SHARED COMMITMENT IN LINE WITH EXCELIA'S MISSION

Water... an important commitment shared by Excelia's communities

18 months ago, research-active Faculty at Excelia Business School identified the key issues associated with water as part of a series of workshops designed to strengthen Excelia's action in the field of ecological transition. This finding is shared by the IPCC report of March 2023, which points out that one in two people in the world is already suffering from water shortages. It also stated that with global warming in excess of 1.5°C, chronic water shortages could affect up to 4 billion people, 8% of land will become unsuitable for farming by the end of the century, and 1 billion people will live in coastal areas at risk by 2050.

With this in mind, and to enable all its stakeholders (students, employees, research-active Faculty, companies, graduates) to take part in this process of reflection, Excelia launched a large-scale consultation. More than 15,000 contributions confirmed a keen interest in the topic of water as a

THE CONSULTATION: 'EXCELIA TOMORROW'

- Water management is one of the Top 5 challenges of the ecological transition
- A high level of concern: 3.01 on a scale of 1 to 4

Several challenges identified:

- For 63%: improving water management (reducing consumption, increasing collection, limiting unnecessary waste, etc.)
- For 47%: protecting water quality, in particular preserving sensitive areas such as the oceans, and reducing pollution
- For 37%: access to water for all

major issue in the ecological transition. This choice has also been validated by Excelia's governance.

Water, a challenge for the companies of tomorrow and their future managers

Water crises are cited as the 3rd global threat after weapons of mass destruction and extreme weather events. They are a challenge for companies. Water is at the heart of most stages in the corporate value chain. All industry sectors are affected (food, pharmaceuticals, energy, fashion, chemicals) and 77% of companies say they are exposed to major water-related risks such as disruptions to production and supply chains, increased costs, reduced performance, as well as reputational or regulatory risks, etc.

Faced with these threats, the role of managers and their knowledge of water issues will be decisive in transforming the impact of companies on water resources. In keeping with its commitment to educating agile and responsible managers capable of meeting the challenges of tomorrow's world, and consistent with its geographical location, Excelia Business School has chosen water as a focus of commitment and innovation in order to raise awareness and act for the ecological and social transition.

From the start of the 2023 academic year, Excelia Business School's commitment will focus on three key areas:

- **An enhanced pedagogical offer: the Blue Education Experience**
- **Dedicated research with an open approach to other disciplines**
- **An exemplary approach on its campuses**

BLUE EDUCATION EXPERIENCE... ENHANCED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

A unique initiative by Excelia Business School

The Blue Education Experience is an educational project aimed at exploring the ecological and social transition using water as a focal point. As one of the most visible indicators of global warming, Excelia Business School considers water as a means of raising awareness of the challenges of global warming and the need for economic, organisational, social, and ecological transitions. The aim of Excelia Business School's latest educational initiative is to ensure students have a better understanding of the complexity of the issues involved and to enable them to develop a positive approach to action to help them identify solutions for change.

A more comprehensive knowledge base on the themes of water and transitions

From the start of the 2023 academic year, Excelia Business School will be strengthening its academic offer on water-related issues. The course content developed by the school is based on work by the OECD, it is in line with the future core knowledge base of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESRI) and is consistent with the new skills reference framework of the CDEFM (*Conférence des Directeurs des Ecoles Françaises de Management* - Association of French Management School Directors) and the CEFDG (*Commission d'évaluation des formations et diplômes de gestion* - Commission for the Appraisal of Management Programmes and Qualifications).

The Blue Education Experience will encompass a host of new developments including the following:

- 800 Bachelor Year 1 students will benefit from **two new environmental science modules on the theme of water**: 'The challenges of climate change: the case of water' and 'Climatology, Water & the Environment'. A further 8 modules, to be made available to undergraduate and postgraduate students, will be introduced at a rate of two per year and per academic level.
- For the very first time in a management school, a **Water Fresk** will be offered to Bachelor Year 1 students.

- **New case studies** on this theme are also underway including the *Esprit de Velox* that combines interdisciplinary and environmentally responsible management of the ocean. Another case, focussing on the company CMA/CGM, deals with port-related issues and responsible maritime transportation.
- **Masterclasses** will be offered to help students understand the geopolitical repercussions of the battle for water. They will also have the opportunity to take part in the **Ocean Hackathon®**, an international event focussing on the protection and preservation of our oceans.

Digital technology to raise student awareness

In line with the group's strategy of digitalising its teaching, Excelia Business School will be supplementing lessons with a number of new features, including the following:

- A **metaverse entitled Blue ILE**, focussing on the responsible management of water and understanding the challenges of climate change linked to this precious resource (2023/24).
- The **Ecosphere United Nations** immersive learning experience, which will be incorporated into lessons (2023-2024).
- **Digital Learning capsules**, being developed to disseminate knowledge and raise awareness among all the school's students on the challenges of the ecological and social transition, with a focus on water-related issues and, in particular, SDG n°6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG n°14 (Life below Water). Four capsules to be available at the start of the 2023 academic year, and a further 6 in environmental sciences and management to follow in 2024-2025.
- The **AXA Climate platform**, with some 100 scientific research publications on the ecological transition, to be incorporated into our pedagogical activities.

Experiential learning through tangible actions

To enable students to experience real-life situations, Excelia Business School's experiential initiatives will explore the theme of water:

- Compulsory Consultancy Projects for undergraduate Year 3 and postgraduate Year 1 students
- Environmental (Climacité®) and social (Humacité®) initiatives, with a target of 10% of projects being water-related by 2025
- Internships, Learning Expeditions, and company projects to enable students to explore a wide range of water-related issues

The Blue Education Passport... certifying professional skills and competencies

Excelia is introducing the Blue Education Passport so that future Excelia Business School graduates can highlight their unique water-related studies and experience to recruiters. This passport will complement a student's qualification and will be based on the acquisition of 3 skill blocks:

- Understanding and managing the various aspects of climate change along with its environmental and societal impacts, in a systemic way: the issue of water
- Working autonomously or collaboratively on a water-related project
- Incorporating environmental transition issues into business and management activities

The aim of the Blue Education Passport is to certify that the students have completed a comprehensive syllabus on the theme of water: lessons (environmental science modules, CSR eModules, CSR fundamentals), hands-on water-related experiences (Climacité®, Humacité®, company-based assignments - impact and transformation through CSR, etc.), and the Sulitest TASK™.

EXCELIA'S MULTI-FACETED COMMITMENT

Promoting the emergence of an interdisciplinary research trend on the theme of water

With 9 intellectual contributions having been published on the subject of water, Excelia Business School was already actively addressing this topic.

Two further publications are in the pipeline (due in 2024):

- A collective work entitled 'Blue and Water Economy', published by World Scientific
- A special issue of the journal Review of Accounting and Finance, piloted by research-active Faculty from the school, on the theme of 'A Sea of Possibilities: Navigating the Blue and Water Economy for a Sustainable Future'

New pedagogical cases on the water economy and its major players are also being prepared within INNOV Case Lab, Excelia's case centre.

Furthermore, Excelia Business School aims to accelerate its impact by supporting the development of an interdisciplinary research trend on the ecological transition and sustainable water management. Tailored to the complexity of these issues, interdisciplinarity will encourage the emergence of innovations and comprehensive solutions. Excelia Business School will therefore be recruiting 10 additional Professors specialising in the ecological and social transition, in 2023 and 2024. They will also contribute to the project of uniting the major players in the water sector around a chair entitled 'Water Issues and Sustainable Management'. Finally, the school will build on its current involvement in the PRME (Principles for Responsible Management Education under the aegis of the United Nations Global Compact) to promote its approach on an international level by establishing new research collaborations on these subjects.

Excelia's duty to set a good example on its campuses

Leading by example is the most effective way of teaching, Excelia is therefore committed to an ambitious water management policy on all its campuses.

The following actions are being implemented:

- 20% reduction in water consumption
- Reuse of water, with a vast rainwater collection system to be installed on campus within the next 2 years
- Replacement of throwaway plastic water bottles with water fountains and reusable bottles from September 2023
- Promoting a culture of water conservation among students, employees, and the wider community

A commitment in conjunction with the business world

Excelia Business School's commitment to companies is demonstrated on several levels:

- A range of **continuing education courses** on the theme of water, with access for employees to the Blue Education Passport
- The signing of **institutional partnerships** with the economic players most affected by the water shortage; among the first to come to fruition are partnerships with the *Cluster Maritime Français*, which groups together all the players in the maritime sector, and with the ELIS group, the leading provider of cleaning and hygiene services in the workplace, for which water is an essential resource
- An **awareness-raising initiative** on water issues, aimed at companies and Alumni, through the organisation of related lectures

A commitment in harmony with Excelia's strategic priority of ecological transition

Within the framework of its 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, Excelia has developed a rigorous roadmap for ecological and social transition, with the ambition of becoming an international benchmark within higher education in this domain. This strategic orientation is based on 4 levers that create value and meaning – Inspire, Innovate, Include, Impact – which permeate the commitment adopted by Excelia Business School on the subject of water. This commitment complements the many initiatives undertaken by the group in recent months: a training partnership with *Ateliers du Futur*, educating the Faculty in the Sustainability Mindset with a view to incorporating sustainability into all its teaching, the creation of a stakeholder committee on this subject, etc.

Excelia's unfailing commitment has recently been rewarded by its success in the Times Higher Education international 2023 Impact Rankings, being featured for the first time in its history and ranked 2nd amongst French business and management schools.



"The urgent threat of climate change means that we need to speed up the transformation of organisations, business models, and management practices. Excelia Business School has chosen water as a focus for its commitment and innovation, with the aim of increasing its impact and inspiring innovative solutions for the world of tomorrow. Raising awareness and taking action for the ecological and social transition is at the heart of our approach. This ethical commitment is consistent with the school's mission to educate agile and responsible managers capable of meeting the challenges that the next generation will have to face. This strengthened commitment is essential because the mission of a major higher education establishment like Excelia Business School is to give young adults the means to take action and to be able to look to the future with confidence."

Tamym Abdessemed, Dean Excelia Business School

About Excelia

Created in 1988, Excelia is one of the leading French Higher Education groups. With a strong international dimension, it comprises Excelia Business School, Excelia Tourism School, and Excelia Digital School. It currently educates some 5,500 students on its 4 campuses and boasts an alumni network of 42,000 members. It holds the following labels and accreditations: EESPIG, AACSB, EQUIS, AMBA and EFMD, as well as UNWTO.TedQual (United Nations) in the field of tourism.

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