



The [ATHENA](#) project addresses emerging risks for the water sector in operational technology created by digitalisation. The project responds to Digital Europe call [DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03-UPTAKE-CYBERSOLUTIONS](#) – Uptake of Innovative Cybersecurity Solutions. The project started in September 2023 and will run until November 2026.

What does the project aim to address?

The project aims to increase awareness of cyber risks for critical infrastructures in the water sector, a sector in which a cyber attack on operational technology can potentially have significant impact. In the water sector, public institutions and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) traditionally are closely intertwined, meaning that they are jointly in the procedures and responsibility for counteraction in case of cyber attacks.

What does the project do?

The project develops a Europe-wide cyber risk training and awareness programme by creating innovative training methods targeted at personnel in operational technology. This training programme is supported by sound scientific methods and values. The training modules are developed by partners in critical infrastructures, academics and security experts, and simulate attacks on critical infrastructures to evaluate the response using mixed reality, gamification and other innovative teaching methods.

What was the motivation to join the project?

The [Flemish Waterway](#), waterway manager in Flanders, is participating in the European project ATHENA for various reasons. The primary goal of this project is to develop training materials and methods to increase security awareness among personnel involved in (particularly) the remote operation of bridges and locks.

The participation of the Flemish Waterway in ATHENA offers the opportunity to explore and implement innovative technologies, such as AR/VR demonstrations by project partners like Virtual Rangers from Luxembourg. This not only helps improve the safety and efficiency of operations, but also enhances the awareness and knowledge of the staff. Additionally, the project provides a platform for collaboration and knowledge exchange with other European partners, contributing to strengthening the international position and reputation of the Flemish Waterway.

More information can be found on the [project website](#) and the project's [LinkedIn profile](#).