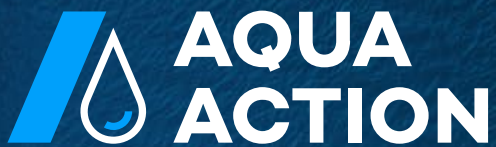


/ 2025-2026

Impact Report

Empowering Leaders to
Solve the Freshwater Crisis



Established by



Fondation
de Gaspé Beaubien
Foundation

Powered by



Accelerated by



Bringing water to life



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Message from the President



Soula Chronopoulos
President of AquaAction

In the 2025/26 fiscal year, AquaAction crossed an important threshold. We evolved from being a Canadian innovation leader into **North America's first truly binational freshwater innovation platform**, connecting entrepreneurs, industry and communities on both sides of the border to accelerate solutions when they are needed most. Against an increasingly **urgent backdrop of escalating droughts, floods, PFAS contamination, and infrastructure strain**, we scaled what we do best: **building bridges between innovation and real-world impact.**

We expanded our high-performing network of water-tech companies, opened our U.S. headquarters in Detroit, launched a first-of-its-kind national water literacy project, and introduced a new ISO-aligned standard for measuring avoided water impact. Today, **AquaAction's innovation network includes more than 120 active water-tech companies** working across agriculture, mining, municipal services, manufacturing, healthcare, and energy. These innovators are tackling some of the most complex water challenges of our time, but innovation alone isn't enough.

We often say that getting that first pilot is like a golden ticket for an entrepreneur. That initial real-world test can unlock credibility, customers, and growth. Yet for many startups, that moment sits on the far side of a daunting "valley of death". Over the past year, AquaAction has worked tirelessly to help bridge that gap, facilitating hundreds of pilots and deployments that transform promising ideas into proven solutions. **Every one of these pilots marks the beginning of a journey that can fundamentally change how we protect and manage water.**

One of my favourite stories from last year was that of Louis-Philippe Noël. He joined our AquaHacking Quebec challenge with a friend and co-founded Sulys, a company that went on to win the \$20,000 grand prize in seed funding. Their technology detects trace amounts of DNA by analyzing water samples. They give early warning for biological threats such as zebra mussels and Eurasian milfoil, allowing communities to intervene before ecosystems are irreversibly damaged. Since winning AquaHacking, Louis-Philippe has taken Sulys to the next level, with pilots now underway. When we started recruiting for our next challenge, he returned to his alma mater, Université Laval, to speak with students about why they should get involved. **At that moment, everything came full circle.**

His story captures the essence of what we are building at AquaAction: **a self-reinforcing water innovation ecosystem where each generation of innovators lifts the next.** It is a movement, and one that would not be possible without the commitment of our partners, sponsors and supporters.

We invite you to continue this journey with us.



Message from the Chair of the Board

The seeds of change often begin quietly. Yet, with care, conviction, and a shared sense of purpose, they can grow into something truly powerful. That is the story of AquaAction.

What started as a simple but profound idea, sparked by the youngest generation of my family, who recognized early that protecting water must be a defining priority—has evolved into a dynamic organization that is pushing boundaries and bringing people together across borders. At a time marked by uncertainty, AquaAction is building something rare: a binational bridge that unites communities, innovators, and leaders around a common mission—to empower those capable of addressing the accelerating freshwater crisis.

This past year was also one of profound personal loss. My father, Philippe de Gaspé Beaubien II, passed away. Throughout his life, and in building successful technology enterprises, he held an unwavering belief in the power of entrepreneurship to drive meaningful change. His vision was grounded in action, in mobilizing talent, ideas, and courage to confront the world's most pressing challenges.

It is a source of deep pride for our family to see his legacy carried forward through AquaAction. The organization he helped inspire and which my mother started continues to embody their belief in a new generation of leaders committed to protecting the water that sustains us all, and to shaping a more resilient future for generations to come.

Please join us in supporting this much needed movement to help solve our freshwater challenges.

If not now, then when? If not you, then who?



François de Gaspé Beaubien
Founding Chair of AquaAction

AquaAction at a Glance



We envision a future where every community across Canada and the United States has access to clean freshwater and we secure the health of our lakes and rivers.

We believe that innovation and entrepreneurship are essential to building a water-secure future, and that bold ideas need the right support to become real-world solutions.



Through our programs and partnerships, we bring together innovators, researchers, communities, and industry to take ideas from solution to impact.

Our Programs



THE WATER LITERACY PROJECT

Our Water Literacy programming inspires lifelong freshwater stewardship, equipping young people with the knowledge to lead, opening pathways to careers in water, and mobilizing communities to take action.

Through interactive tools and hands-on experiences, it moves diverse audiences from passive concern to active participation, building the public movement needed to protect and restore our freshwater for generations to come.



AquaHacking Challenges are 7-month long innovation and entrepreneurship programs for young innovators to tackle North America's critical freshwater issues, with mentorship, seed funding and incubation to accelerate change impact.



AquaEntrepreneur supports the commercialization phase by helping early-stage water-tech companies to develop and deploy technological solutions for the municipal and private sectors.



AquaNation is the community of alumni from AquaAction's flagship programs—AquaHacking and AquaEntrepreneur. It is an exclusive growing community of water tech leaders, innovators, and industry experts dedicated to advancing water solutions across North America.

Our Impact by the Numbers

Scaling a High-Impact Water Tech Network



120+

active companies
in the portfolio



730+

736 pilots, contracts
and community
restoration projects
across all sectors



\$270M+

annual revenue
generated



900+

new jobs in the
blue economy



\$130M+

investments
secured by
AquaEntrepreneurs



Theory of Change

Canada and the United States face an accelerating freshwater crisis. The solutions exist; what's missing is the bridge between innovation and impact.

AquaAction believes lasting freshwater security is achieved when water-tech innovators receive the right support at the right moment, and when communities are equipped to demand and sustain change. We work across three reinforcing levers:

Innovation → Impact: We help early-stage companies survive the valley of death, turning promising ideas into proven, scalable solutions through early revenue, pilots, including community restoration projects, and investment readiness.

Ecosystem → Scale: By connecting entrepreneurs, municipalities, industry, and investors across North America, we remove the structural barriers that keep good technology on the shelf.

Stewardship → Movement: Through water literacy and a self-reinforcing AquaNation community that mentors and opens doors for the next generation, we build the public will needed for lasting change.

When these three levers work together, innovation reaches communities faster, investment follows traction, and each generation of water leaders lifts the next.

Strategic Partnerships

Building an Ecosystem



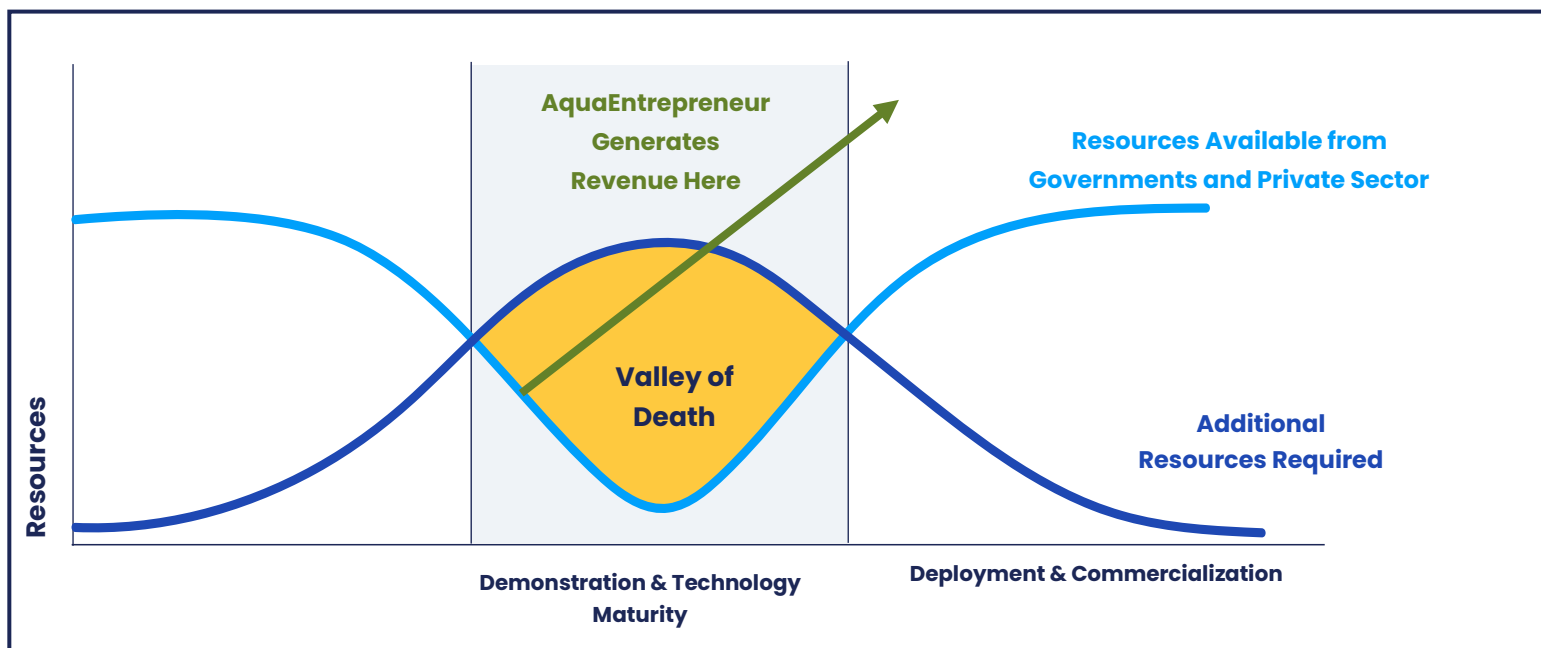
The **largest obstacle** often facing water tech entrepreneurs is the **“valley of death”**, where they go from the **R&D stage** to **proven commercialization**.

The reality is that there is often a **gap of funding** in this critical early stage of a company, that can last to **over ten years**, when their technology needs to field test, refine and prove their technologies.

We believe that the path through the “valley of death” runs through revenue. Venture capital seeks quick returns, and utilities and municipalities are often too risk-averse to adopt unproven solutions, leaving water-tech companies stranded in the critical Demonstration stage shown below.

AquaEntrepreneur targets exactly this gap. By helping companies secure pilots, generate early contracts, and prove real-world impact, we build the commercial traction that attracts investment on its own terms – **turning the valley of death into a bridge to full deployment and scale.**

Evolution of Capital Needs as a Function of Clean Technology Maturity



We are strengthening our ecosystem of strategic partners to support the deployment of technologies, particularly during early stages. Through these partnerships, AquaEntrepreneur companies gain structured access to pilots and co-investment that would otherwise take years to secure independently.

New Partnerships with:



GROUPE HELIOS

Aquatech, Services des Eaux du Québec Inc. (Groupe Helios)

will give AquaEntrepreneur participants access to concrete pilot projects within a network of 200 water treatment facilities across Québec



C3E Centre d'excellence en efficacité énergétique

Centre d'excellence en efficacité énergétique (C3E)

will help bring to international markets those water technologies with energy-related impact.



Newlab

Newlab

an innovation hub located in Detroit's Michigan Central district that brings together startups, corporates, and public partners, will provide access to real-world pilot opportunities and pathways to secure long-term commercial contracts.

These new partnerships further strengthen our network of pilot-access partners:



Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

Provides access to more than 400 municipalities and regional water summits.



IVÉO

IVÉO

Connects Québec municipalities with innovative solutions as a neutral intermediary, facilitates pilot deployment and ensures joint follow-up between cities and companies.



Réseau Environnement

Showcases companies ready for pilot projects via their network of 200 municipalities, 400 companies and 20 governmental and NGO organizations as well through high-visibility North American events such as Americana.



Centre des Technologies de l'eau (CTEAU)

Supports pilot-project structuring and provides independent scientific validation to facilitate municipal adoption.



Announcement of the launch of our U.S. headquarters, May 2025.

From left to right: Luke Polcyn, Senior Executive for Development & Economic Transformation, City of Detroit; Pete Hoekstra, U.S. Ambassador to Canada; Gretchen Whitmer, Governor of Michigan; Soula Chronopoulos, President of AquaAction; Benjamin Bélair, Quebec Delegate to Washington; Kevin Mull, Co-founder of Urban Tech Xchange; Alan M. Weber, Managing Vice President of Business Development, Detroit Regional Partnership

Becoming a Binational Freshwater Innovation Platform

A **defining milestone** of 2025 was the launch of **AquaAction’s U.S. headquarters** in **Detroit**, Michigan, hosted at Bedrock’s Urban Tech Xchange (UTX).

Announced at the SelectUSA Investment Summit in **Washington, D.C.**, this step positions AquaAction at the heart of the **Great Lakes–St. Lawrence region**—the world’s largest freshwater basin and a **USD\$9-trillion regional economy** in which **40 million people** depend on clean water.

AquaAction estimates the Detroit hub will attract more than \$1 million in capital investments annually, and support the creation of hundreds of new jobs across the Great Lakes region, reinforcing its role as a leading binational platform for freshwater innovation.

Supporting Key UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Clean Water & Sanitation

Expanding access to safe, clean water and promoting sustainable water use.



Affordable & Clean Energy

Supporting cleantech innovations that reduce energy consumption in water systems.



Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure

Accelerating water startups and building resilient, smart infrastructure



Climate Action

Tackling water-related climate risks through innovation, education and policy.



Life Below Water

Reducing freshwater pollution and protecting ecosystems that feed oceans and lakes.



Environmental Impact

Enterprises within the AquaAction community are united by a strong commitment to improving freshwater health and conserving ecosystems through the development and deployment of innovative solutions. This commitment is reflected by the high proportion of startups and scaleups actively aligning their impact with global sustainability priorities.



140,000

of Olympic Pools in Water Saved



OVER 5 MILLION

Plastic Bottles Saved

thanks to AquaEntrepreneur O'Land's water refill stations



+90,500

Trees Saved in CO²*

*Tree-equivalent estimate over four years, calculated using a 10-year tree-growth carbon

Water Impact Reports

Last year, AquaAction alongside partner group Oxia, announced Water Positive Impact Reports, a pioneering reporting framework that quantifies water savings. These reports are based on International Organization for Standardization (ISO) methodology, like those that underpin the multi-billion carbon market.

Where before, AquaAction relied on self-reported environmental impacts, AquaAction now relies on a standardized and credible method to assess the positive environmental performance of water technologies.

These methodologies align with the ISO 14046 (water footprinting), which measures the water savings from applying a technology against a baseline scenario of water use.



The result:

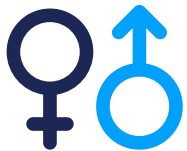
a marketplace that moves faster, attracts more private investment, and gets water-saving technologies to the people who need them.

To date, **16 companies** have completed the Water Positive Impact evaluation — and the results speak for themselves.

Together, they project saving **349 billion litres of water** — the equivalent of 140,000 Olympic pools, or enough to supply **3.3 million North American homes for an entire year.**

Social Impact

AquaAction is committed to building an inclusive ecosystem where talent and opportunity thrive. We recognize that diversity fuels innovation and delivers stronger outcomes for water resilience and long-term value creation.



40%

Female co-founders



31%

Companies with at least one founder born outside Canada



18%

Companies with at least one founder aged 29 or under



1.64M

People reached through education & awareness



Program Impact





Québec

212

Participants

45

Teams
registered

10

Startups
launched

43

Participants
accredited in
entrepreneurship
and innovation








The AquaHacking Quebec Challenge 2025 dove into the complex environmental issues related to restoring watersheds affected by **industrial activity**, with a particular focus on Osisko Lake.



Few places embody the tension between industrial history and community identity more than **Osisko Lake**. Located in the heart of **Rouyn-Noranda**, this cherished natural heritage site has borne the environmental cost of over a century of mining activity and is now at the center of a major revitalization effort involving the City, residents, researchers, and industry.

The **AquaHacking Québec Challenge 2025** called on young innovators to tackle its toughest challenges: **sediment and water contamination, eutrophication, urban runoff, and aquatic invasive species**. Innovation has a role to play in healing the waters that communities call home.

The issues addressed:

 Eutrophication	 Water and sediment contamination	 Urban runoff
 Aquatic invasive species and contaminant accumulators	 Citizen science for aquatic conservation	

Organized with:



The Winners:

1st Prize: \$20,000

Sulys developed a service that detects invasive aquatic species through DNA analysis of water, combined with an AI-powered decision support platform.

2nd Prize: \$10,000

Lacus Cras created FloteX, a floating island made from Quebec materials with vegetation that naturally filters water and helps slow lake eutrophication.

3rd Prize: \$5,000

AquaPure Analytics built a platform connected to IoT sensors that monitors water quality in real time and uses AI to predict pollution levels.

4th Prize: \$4,000

CADeau developed ÉduAction, an educational app featuring an interactive map and virtual terrarium game to raise awareness about lake protection.

People's Choice Award \$1,000

AQUORA created BioFintel, an intelligent biofilter that uses natural processes and sensors to optimize runoff water purification.



Prairies

85

Participants

20

Teams
registered

5

Startups
launched

35%

Of BIPOC
Participation



The AquaHacking Prairies Challenge that culminated into a Finale in Calgary was a powerful union of **Indigenous knowledge** and **Western science**, as five finalist teams took the stage to show how their **water tech enterprises** could **tackle** some of the Prairies' toughest **water issues**.



The issues addressed:



Small-scale
agricultural water
management



Invasive species
management



Small-scale & community decision-
making tools for extreme water events

The AquaHacking Prairies Challenge brought together the best of two knowledge systems. The challenge asked teams to apply the **Two-Eyed Seeing** approach - weaving Indigenous traditional knowledge alongside Western science to address the Prairies' most pressing water challenges: **drought, agricultural water stress, and the health of watersheds that communities depend on.**

Five finalist teams took the stage in Calgary, each presenting water-tech enterprises shaped by both data and deep ecological relationship. For many of the engineers and scientists involved, it was a transformative experience - one that taught them to **slow down, listen first, and see water not merely as a resource, but as something we are responsible to.**

Organized with:



With the support of:
Prairies Economic
Development Canada



In the end, five
judges decided upon
the winners:

1st Prize: \$20,000

Consilience developed Drift-Eye Swarm, a compact system for continuous aquatic monitoring that helps detect invasive species early and prevent damage.

2nd Prize: \$10,000

**+ Two-Eye
Seeing Award \$1,000**

Purus Aqua created a passive filtration system that captures contaminants from runoff, improving water quality in agricultural areas.

3rd Prize: \$5,000

ReverBio uses underwater microphones and AI to detect invasive species early and provide real-time alerts.

**People's
Choice Award \$1,000**

NAID Solutions built a web platform that turns community reports into verified, mapped environmental data for faster action.



Great Lakes & St. Lawrence

300+

Participants

60+

Teams Registered

25+

Recruitment Events

To mark **AquaAction's 10th anniversary**, in February of 2026, we launched our most ambitious AquaHacking challenge ever, the **Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Binational Challenge** - bringing together innovators from both sides of the border to tackle the basin's most urgent threats: water quality degradation, ecosystem collapse, the spread of invasive species, and the strain of a changing climate on communities that depend on these waters every day.

The **Great Lakes–St. Lawrence basin** is the largest surface freshwater system on Earth, holding **21% of the world's fresh surface water** and sustaining **40 million people** across Canada and the United States. If it were a country, it would be the **third largest economy in the world**; a \$9 trillion region where water is not just an environmental asset, but the foundation of economic life, public health, and national security.

It deserves a challenge equal to its scale! We will report on the outcome in 2027.

The issues we are addressing:



Water Access & Community Resilience



Efficient Industry & Energy



Great Lakes Circular Blue Economy



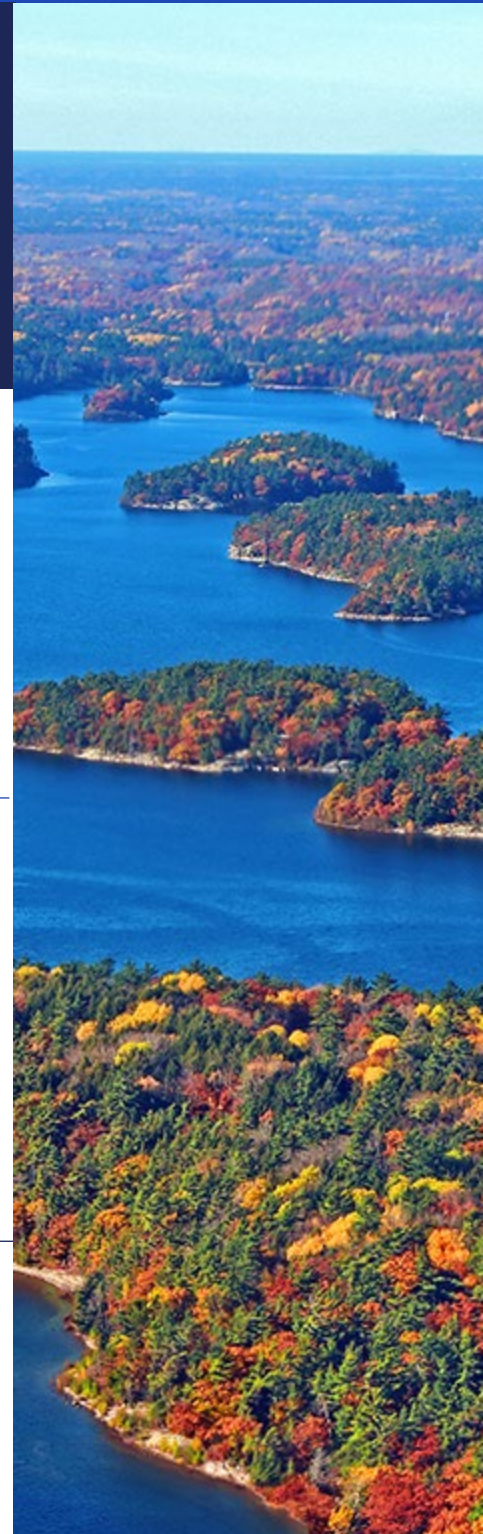
Water Quality & Ecosystem

Organized with:

GREAT LAKES
ST. LAWRENCE
GOVERNORS
& PREMIERS



GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE
CITIES INITIATIVE
L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES
DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT





From 2021 to 2025, AquaAction grew from a lean organization into a national freshwater innovation platform, with organizational revenues increasing from \$1M to over \$4M. The 2022 start of the **AquaEntrepreneur program marked a turning point in that growth**, shifting AquaAction from convening to commercialization, adoption, and economic development.

To date:

61	554	663	32	\$79M+	\$49M+	1225
Companies	Pilots/ Contracts	Jobs Created	Patents	New Investments Received	New Contracts Secured	C-suite Coaching Hours

3 Companies were launched from the AquaHacking Challenge



2025

Edition
Highlights

15	72	350
Companies	New Pilots/Contracts	Hours of 1:1 Coaching
22	\$8.5M	\$6.7M
New Jobs Created	Investments Received	New Contracts Secured

Key Activities:

- Municipal Pilot Workshop
- AquaCamp
- RSDE Webinar
- IP Bootcamp
- Networking Events
- Conference delegations

The returns speak for themselves. Since 2022, a **\$2.6M investment** from the **Quebec Ministry of Economy, Innovation & Energy** into the AquaEntrepreneur program has helped portfolio companies generate **\$49M+ in new contracts** and over **\$212M in annual revenue** for the province.

That is a **19x return on public investment** — and a compelling proof point that backing water-tech entrepreneurs is not just environmental policy. It is smart economic policy.

Pilot Success Stories

X-TELIA

Founder: Eric Bourbeau

Location: Quebec (national reach)

Sector: Digital Water / Smart Infrastructure

AquaEntrepreneur Program – 2023 Cohort

Overview

X-Telia is a Quebec-based technology company deploying connected sensor networks that enable real-time monitoring of drinking water systems. Their solution transforms water infrastructure into data-driven digital assets, helping communities detect risks earlier, improve system performance, and strengthen local water governance.

Pilot Context

X-Telia's technology has been piloted through a collaboration with SaskTel, enabling reliable connectivity for remote water monitoring. Deployments have focused on Indigenous communities, where the platform supports community-led water management, local autonomy, and improved system oversight.



Impact to Date

- Continuous, real-time monitoring of water quality and infrastructure performance
- Early detection of contamination risks, reducing system failures and emergencies
- Improved decision-making for operators, leading to more proactive maintenance
- Increased transparency and access to operational data at the community level
- Lowers long-term operational costs through preventative maintenance and system optimization

Geographic Focus and Growth :

- Current Project: **Saskatchewan**, with deployments prioritizing **remote, rural, and Indigenous communities**
- Expansion: Proven model for replication across **Western and Northern Canada** through partnerships with regional or public telecom providers
- Strategic alignment: Positions X-Telia for integration into provincial and federal water-infrastructure modernization, reconciliation, and climate-adaptation initiatives



Founders: Robert Hecht and Bryce Nagels

Location: Montreal North, Quebec

Sector: Agri-Tech / Water-Efficient Food Systems

AquaEntrepreneur Program: 3rd Edition

Overview

Planteva Farms is a Quebec-based agri-tech company redefining plant propagation through controlled-environment growing systems. By treating propagation as critical infrastructure, Planteva helps growers produce high-quality seedlings with less water, improved consistency, and greater resilience against climate and supply-chain disruptions.

Pilot Context

From its headquarters in Montreal North, Planteva is demonstrating how vertical, water-efficient propagation systems can support food production closer to urban centers. Their approach dramatically reduces water use compared to conventional farming while producing uniform, high-performing seedlings for growers. They are in the process of expanding their technology to **California's** farming communities.

As urban populations grow and farmland faces increasing pressure, Planteva's model shows how fresh, reliable food production can scale sustainably using less water and land.



Impact to Date

- Reduced water use in the early stages of crop production
- More consistent, high-quality seedlings for growers, improving yields downstream
- Increased resilience in food supply chains through local production
- Supports sustainable agriculture practices aligned with climate adaptation goals

Geographic Focus and Growth :

- Current focus: **Montreal (Quebec)**
- Expansion: **California**, through a recent partnership
- Near-term milestone: planned opening of a **Montreal-area farm**, with potential for site visits and demonstrations



Connecting the Water Innovation Ecosystem

The most valuable thing AquaAction has built over ten years is not a program – it is a network.

AquaNation is our answer to a simple but powerful insight: water entrepreneurs are stronger together than they are alone.

Formally launched in 2025, AquaNation is the community of alumni from AquaAction’s flagship programs, AquaHacking and AquaEntrepreneur, together with an expanding circle of water innovators, industry leaders, municipal champions, and sector experts who want to be part of the movement. It is an exclusive, growing community dedicated to advancing water solutions across North America. And it is designed to be self-reinforcing: **every new member makes the network more valuable for every existing one.**



The AquaNation supports water technology companies with:



Market access & expansion



Visibility & reach



Networking & community

The AquaNation in Action: Tacking the PFAS Problem from All Angles

When the problem is everywhere, the solutions have to be too



PFAS, the "forever chemicals" found in everything from food packaging to firefighting foam, have become one of the most urgent and complex water challenges facing communities across North America. Municipalities are scrambling. Regulators are catching up. And families relying on well water are discovering contamination that has been building for decades beneath their feet.

AquaNation is responding. Across detection, filtration, and nature-based remediation, AquaAction entrepreneurs are attacking the PFAS crisis from every angle, proof that when you build the right ecosystem, innovation shows up at scale.

Myconaut, biology over bulldozers

Founder: Ryan Iacovacci

Location: Michigan



Ryan Iacovacci didn't set out to solve one of the world's most intractable chemical problems. He grew up farming. But when his company Myconaut emerged from the 2024 AquaHacking Great Lakes Challenge, he brought that agrarian instinct with him: work with nature, not against it. Myconaut uses fungal cultures to bioremediate PFAS-contaminated soil, harnessing the natural properties of mushrooms to break down chemicals that most technologies can't touch. The approach caught the attention of some of the world's leading innovation programs, earning Myconaut a place in the NVIDIA Inception Accelerator and a National Science Foundation SBIR grant.

For Ryan, the stakes are personal and practical. If contaminated farmland is written off rather than restored, he warns, the consequences ripple through local tax rolls and rural economies. His solution keeps land productive, and communities intact.

Wave Lumina & Ecofilter Tek, detecting and destroying what others can't



Founders: Vernon Lalone, Farhad Farnia

Location: Michigan, Quebec (respectively)



Two more AquaNation companies are tackling PFAS from different points in the chain. Wave Lumina, also born from the 2024 AquaHacking Great Lakes Challenge, has built a portable field-testing platform that brings rapid, on-site PFAS screening directly to the source, giving engineers and site operators the fast, actionable data they need before contamination spreads further. Founder Vernon LaLone was selected as an Activate Fellow and received an NSF SBIR award in 2025, with multiple field pilots planned for 2026.

Ecofilter Tek, an AquaEntrepreneur alumnus, has taken a different approach: a regenerable ion exchange resin called AmphoRes that acts like a magnet for PFAS molecules. Unlike conventional filtration, their system can be reused without harsh chemicals, and concentrates PFAS to the point where they can be destroyed altogether, not just captured and transferred elsewhere.



Together, these three companies represent exactly what AquaNation is built for: a community of innovators who don't just see the same problem, they see it from every angle, and build toward a complete solution.



THE WATER LITERACY PROJECT



Leveraging a grant from Environment and Climate Change Canada, matched with funds from the de Gaspé Beaubien Foundation, we are creating a first-of-its-kind national education and awareness project, designed to catalyze lasting behavior change around freshwater stewardship. In doing so, we draw inspiration from the legacy of **ParticipACTION**, one of the most successful public behavior-change campaigns in Canadian history, co-founded by Philippe de Gaspé Beaubien II, which demonstrated the power of sustained, accessible public engagement to shift national attitudes and habits.

The national launch event marked a significant early milestone, generating over **10 million impressions nationwide**, with particularly strong engagement among educators, students, and environmental professionals, establishing freshwater stewardship as a visible and shared national priority and laying a strong foundation for ongoing public engagement.



Only 50% of people

know where their tap water comes from

Only 20%

feel well informed about freshwater



Public opinion research underscores the urgency of this work. Today, only half of the public knows where their tap water comes from, and just one in five feel well-informed about freshwater.

This lack of connection to the water that runs everything in our day to day lives – from food, business, recreation, city services, and more – allows freshwater to be taken for granted and perpetuate the illusion that Canada’s water abundance is limitless.

The Water Literacy Project is brought to life by AquaAction in partnership with the Royal Canadian Geographical Society and the Canadian Museum of Nature, with additional content support from experts and organizations across the water, education, and research sectors.

Together, we aim to help the public reconnect with water and lay the foundation for the kind of collective action required to safeguard this vital resource for generations to come.

National Leadership and Advocacy



Government Engagement and Policy Leadership

In 2025, AquaAction elevated water as a strategic asset and national security priority, positioning investments in freshwater to decision-makers as an opportunity to balance environmental protection and economic strength. Through a series of national opinion pieces in leading publications, we highlighted the urgent need to address vulnerabilities in water systems—recognizing that these vulnerabilities extend directly to supply chains, energy systems, and critical infrastructure.

Across Ottawa, Washington D.C., Detroit and Quebec City, we engaged legislators and federal ministers around the importance of generational investments in water innovation. We emphasized the significant growth potential of the global water sector – set to double to over \$600B by 2030 – that position water as a local economic growth engine opportunity that can simultaneously solve the quality and quantity issues within our water systems.

Through our partner network, we deepened engagement with municipal leaders, strengthening our understanding of local water challenges and improving the impact of the solutions we support. AquaAction contributed to national governance reports such as *Ensuring the Flow: Water Security in Canada and the World* and has been a consistent voice for a well-funded and empowered Canada Water Agency. We also played a key role in advancing the federal government's commitment to a National Water Security Strategy and a \$100 million water security technology fund. Building on this momentum, we convened a roundtable of leading experts to help define priority actions for the strategy and are continuing to work with partners to support its implementation.

We also worked with national trade groups to highlight the impacts of trade disruptions on small- and medium-sized businesses within AquaAction's network.

Impact of Trade Disruption on Water Tech Companies

Last year was marked by significant challenges for cross-border Canada-U.S. trade, particularly due to the imposition of new tariffs that affected our ecosystem of water-tech entrepreneurs.

In line with findings reported by national organizations representing small businesses, we similarly observed that tariffs became one of the top pressures facing our portfolio of over 100 small businesses.

Many companies both source inputs from and sell products into the U.S. market. The introduction of tariffs has increased costs for businesses already operating under tight margins, while disrupted trade dynamics have dampened overall commercial activity and confidence, leading Canadian-based firms to more aggressively seek new markets for their products overseas.

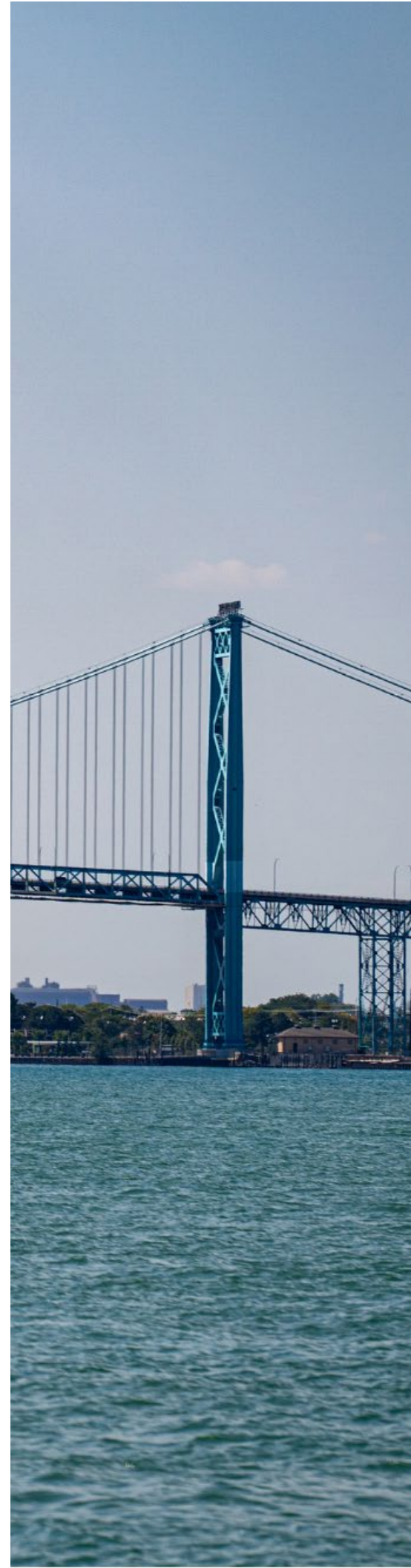
AquaAction experienced its highest year-over-year rate of portfolio company closures, with many founders citing trade disruptions as a significant contributing factor.

Despite these headwinds, AquaAction maintained strong cross-border trade activity, including hosting the largest delegation of Canadian entrepreneurs at the Chicago-based WEFTEC conference.

One good example is that of Rachel Labbé-Bellas, and her company O'Land Stations (AquaEntrepreneur cohort 3), which faced significant tariff-related pressures alongside a cash flow crunch last year. O'Land provides water refill stations for large events and venues that means people aren't forced to buy single-use plastic water bottles.

To overcome a challenging year, the company pivoted by developing a new product—a compact refill station—and enhancing its existing units with features such as umbrellas and sinks. At the same time, the need to stabilize revenues drove the company to aggressively pursue new opportunities, resulting in major contracts for events including a FIFA World Cup Fan Festival and the Montréal Grand Prix.

As a result, O'Land emerged from a difficult year in a stronger position, delivering services at 14 consecutive events and helping prevent more than 4 million plastic water bottles from potentially entering rivers and lakes.

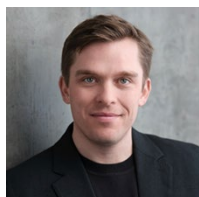


Governance, Team and Operations

Our Team



Soula Chronopoulos
President



Oliver Anderson
Vice-President of
Communications &
Growth



Danny Veilleux
Vice-President of
Programs & Impact



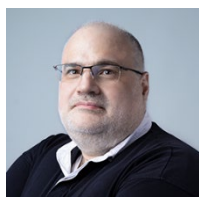
Marie-Cécile Poitevin
Executive Coordinator
of HR & Operations



Anne Pascale Richardson
Director of AquaHacking &
AquaEntrepreneur



Brittany VanderBeek
Director of Business
Development



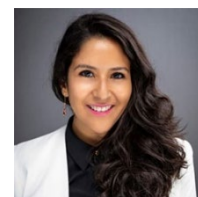
Jean-Sebastien Gasse
Director of Digital
Platforms and IT Strategy



Patricia Dorne
Director of Coaching,
AquaEntrepreneur



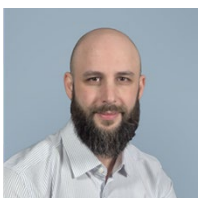
Melanie Fontaine
Senior Communications
and Media Manager



Gabriella Munro
Event & Sponsorship
Manager



Daniel Corber
Senior Instructional
Designer



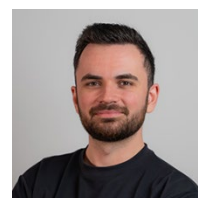
Félix Sintès
Senior Producer



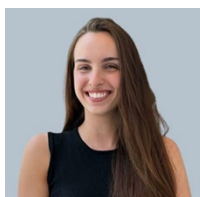
Juliette Dufresne
Program Coordinator



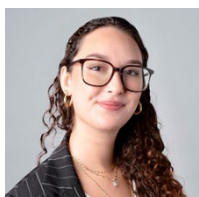
Marilou Filiol
Entrepreneur Community
Lead - AquaNation



Nick Trusiak
Lead Storyteller &
Videographer



Margaux Provencher-Marie
Digital Strategy and
Communications Lead



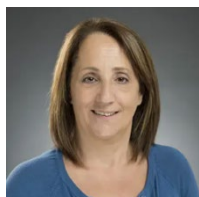
Sophie-Catherine Huneault
Marketing Campaign
Coordinator



Kenza Vandembroeck
AquaHacking Program
Lead



Will Kitchen
Special Advisor



Vittoria De Palma
Controller



Our Ambassadors & Youth Advisory Board



**Sophie-Catherine
Huneault**



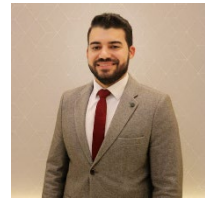
**Margaux
Provencher-Marie**



Merrick Marshall



Starla Richardson



Mohammad Zeinati

Our Board of Directors



Nan-B De Gaspé Beaubien
Founding Chair, AquaAction



François de Gaspé Beaubien
Founding Chair, AquaAction



Pierre-Marc Sarrazin
Vice-President, Corporate
Finance, Development &
Treasurer, Ovivo



Barrie Laver
Managing Director, Head
Venture Capital & Private
Equity, RBC



Helen Sheridan
Chief Human Resources
Officer, 123Dentist



Kevin Chan
Global Policy Campaign
Strategies Director, Meta
Platforms

Statement of Transparency

At AquaAction, we hold ourselves accountable to the communities we serve, our partners, and the planet. As we present our 2025 Impact Report, we do so with a deep commitment to transparency, integrity, and responsible stewardship of the resources entrusted to us. This report reflects not only our achievements, but also our challenges, learnings, and the ongoing work required to advance freshwater sustainability across Canada.

Every figure, story, and outcome shared here is grounded in data, collaborative effort, and the belief that environmental innovation can, and must, be accelerated. We are committed to open communication about how decisions are made, how resources are allocated, and how effectively our programs deliver results.

All data presented in this report has been assessed and validated through multiple sources, including annual surveys, Pitchbook, Crunchbase, and ZoomInfo, to ensure accuracy and reliability.

Our impact extends beyond numbers. It is reflected in the tangible progress made toward cleaner water, empowered youth, and resilient communities.

As stewards of both funding and public trust, we ensure that every dollar is directed toward meaningful, measurable outcomes. Through continuous evaluation, inclusive engagement, and adaptation informed by new insights, we work to maximize our impact. We thank our supporters, partners, and changemakers who share our vision. Together, we are building a future where Canada's freshwater ecosystems thrive for generations to come.

— **The AquaAction Team**

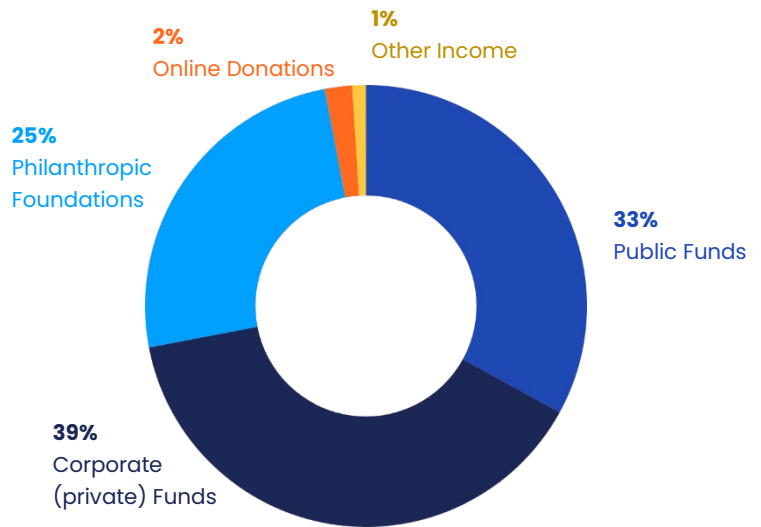
A Deliberate Path to Sustainability

AquaAction's financial growth over the past five years is not accidental; it is the result of a deliberate strategy to diversify revenue, reduce dependence on any single funding source, and build the long-term financial foundation that a mission of this scale demands.

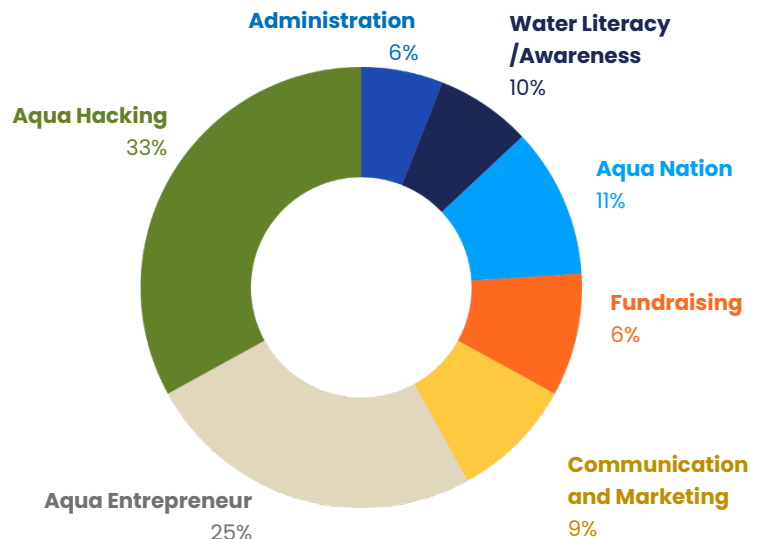
Since 2020, AquaAction has grown from **\$1.29M to \$4.23M in annual revenue**, more than tripling in five years. That growth reflects a fundamental evolution: from a convening-oriented organization stabilizing through the pandemic, to a national platform for water-tech commercialization, ecosystem coordination, and large-scale deployment. Our current revenue mix - **39% corporate, 33% public, and 25% philanthropic** - is intentional. We have actively worked to reduce reliance on any single sector, cultivating long-term, multi-year partnerships with corporate and government funders who share our commitment to freshwater security. This diversification is not just financial prudence; it is a reflection of the breadth of the coalition we are building.

Looking ahead, we are focused on deepening multi-year funding relationships that allow us to plan boldly, retain exceptional talent, and deliver programs at the scale the freshwater crisis demands. Every dollar entrusted to AquaAction is a vote of confidence in a model that is working, and one that is built to last.

AquaAction Revenue Sources



AquaAction Program Costs





NSF Engines: Southwest Sustainability Innovation Engine



Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique



Groupe de recherche Interuniversitaire en limnologie La science pour l'avenir des écosystèmes d'eau douce



To Our Supporters, with Deepest Gratitude

On behalf of the entire AquaAction team, we extend our heartfelt thanks to our major funders, donors, sponsors, and partners whose generosity make our mission possible.

Your continued support empowers youth, accelerates innovation, and turns ideas into tangible progress for our freshwater ecosystems. Every initiative we launch and every milestone we reach is grounded in your shared belief in a more sustainable future.

To our ambassadors, advisors, and volunteers; the changemakers who animate our mission. Your time, talent, and insight have shaped the direction of our work and inspired a growing, national community of emerging water leaders.

Your commitment continues to drive meaningful action from coast to coast.

Thank you!



L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT



Environment and Climate Change Canada Environnement et Changement climatique Canada

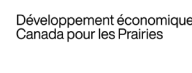


THE ROYAL CANADIAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

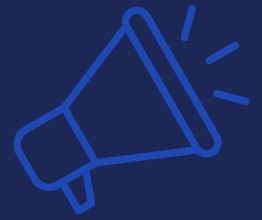


The St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation

Corporation de Gestion de la Voie Maritime du Saint-Laurent



Notable Highlights



Bringing water to life



8 years

of Shared Impact

AquaAction and Ovivo share an ambitious mission: building a water-secure future by transforming promising ideas into scalable, real-world solutions.

Impact at a Glance

8 years of strategic partnership

120+ water tech companies launched and scaled

Canada, U.S., and global markets reached

Solutions spanning **water treatment, reuse, protection, and resource efficiency**

Translating Innovation into Measurable Results

Early findings from the AquaAction ecosystem demonstrate the tangible outcomes of sustained collaboration:

~100 billion litres of water saved

by the first 16 companies surveyed - equivalent to supplying

~3,000,000 North American homes



Together, we continue to invest in the people and ideas needed to scale solutions that safeguard freshwater for generations to come.



This partnership reflects Ovivo's commitment to scaling innovation that delivers real-world impact. By empowering emerging entrepreneurs alongside AquaAction, we are advancing solutions that strengthen water systems, communities, and ecosystems for the long term."

Pierre-Marc Sarrazin,
Chief Investment and Development Officer

GLENCORE

Landmark partnership to advance sustainable water solutions

AquaAction is proud to partner with Glencore Canada, bringing together entrepreneurial innovation and industry leadership to help scale sustainable water solutions.

This partnership strengthens AquaAction's work by combining targeted investment with real-world expertise, advancing technologies that address critical water challenges facing communities, ecosystems, and industry alike.



For Glencore Canada, this partnership is an opportunity to contribute to an important social and environmental issue for communities and society more broadly," said Sheila Risbud, Senior Vice President, Corporate Affairs Canada, Glencore. "There would be no mining industry without water. It is important for us to contribute to its preservation through technological innovation, in addition to supporting the entrepreneurs of tomorrow."



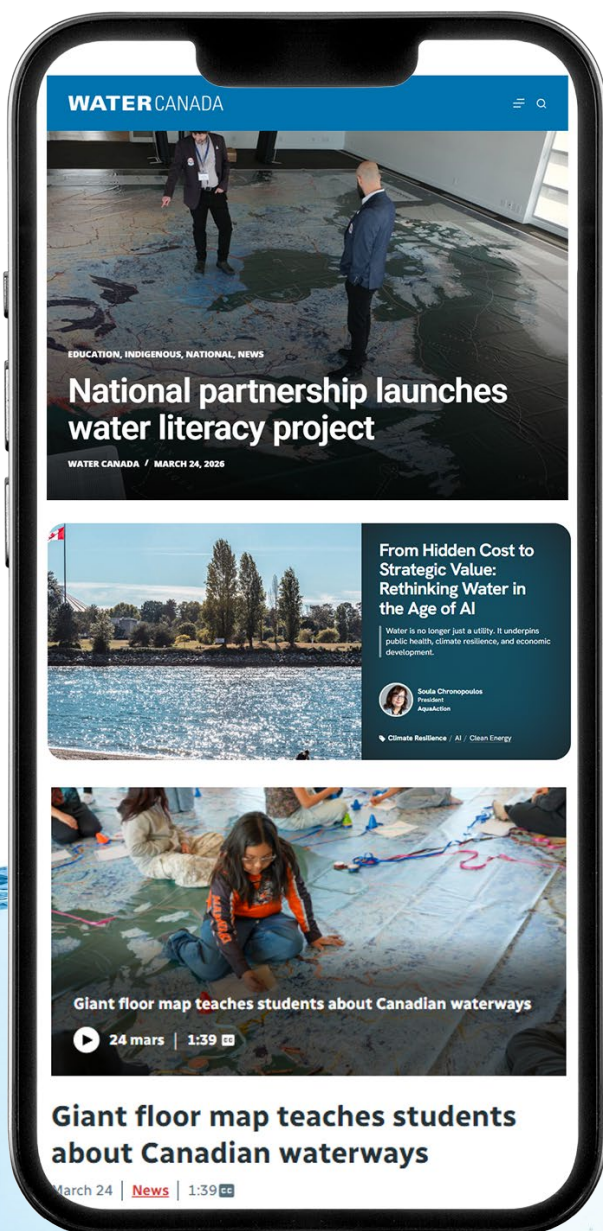
Sheila Risbud
**Senior Vice President Corporate
Affairs Canada, Glencore**



In the Media



In 2025, AquaAction **continued to shape the national conversation on freshwater security across Canada and the United States.**

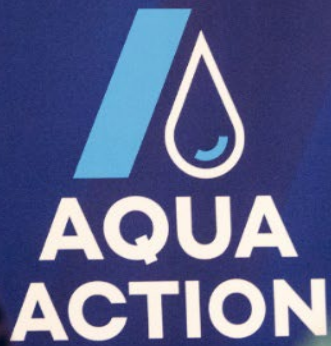


Through high-profile media features and opinion pieces, AquaAction's leadership amplified the urgency of the freshwater crisis and advanced the role of

Looking Ahead

Priorities for 2026

- Host our **largest AquaHacking finale to date** for the *Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Binational Challenge*, in Detroit – **November 5**
- Open **AquaNation** to a broader cohort of water-tech entrepreneurs beyond AquaAction programming
- Launch **Blue Days**, mobilizing AquaAction community and partners to give back through hands-on community water projects
- Fully launch the **Water Literacy Project** for schools and the general public, while expanding its content and reach
- Expand the proven **AquaEntrepreneur model** into **1-2 new provinces and the U.S.**
- Collaborate with the **federal government** on the development of a **National Water Security Strategy**
- Deliver the **5th AquaEntrepreneur cohort** successfully, building on its record-setting return on investment and venture success
- Deploy **AquaEntrepreneur USA in Michigan** to accelerate solutions for water-related maritime challenges in support of the Maritime Strategy.



Thank you

Our impact is driven by a passionate community of entrepreneurs, partners, donors, and allies who believe in building a water-secure future for all. Our supporters play a vital role in advancing our mission to protect and restore freshwater.

There are many ways to get involved:

- ✓ **Donate to fuel early-stage innovation and support real-world solutions**
- ✓ **Partner with us to scale impact through collaborative programs**
- ✓ **Volunteer your time and expertise as a mentor, judge, or program supporter.**

Learn more:

www.aquaaction.org

Contact us:

info@aquaaction.org

Support our mission:

[Donate](#)

Subscribe to our newsletter:

[Subscribe](#)

Follow us on social media:



#TakeAquaAction

Every form of support helps build cleaner, more resilient freshwater ecosystems, for today and for future generations.

Thank you for being a part of this journey.

Let's keep building it, together.

Land Acknowledgement Montreal

Located on the traditional territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk), a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst many diverse First Nations including the Algonquin-Anishinaabe, Atikamekw, and Huron-Wendat.

Land Acknowledgement Detroit

The land acknowledgement for Detroit, also known as Waawiyatanong, is a statement that recognizes the Indigenous presence and history of the region. It acknowledges the Anishinaabe, Odawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi peoples as the original stewards of this land, honoring Indigenous history and their ongoing connection to it, while fostering awareness and respect for Indigenous peoples of the region.

