Co-funded by
the European Union

Who Gets the Water?

C1 | AGES 16+ | 90 MINUTES | YOUR TOWN. YOUR SUMMER. YOUR CALL. S01

During a severe dry spell, Riverton must allocate a shrinking water budget. Agricultural livelihoods, bottling jobs and a youth summer programme compete for a limited share. Your team must negotiate a defensible allocation under uncertainty.

RIVERTON FEED / 08:12

“Our water activities might close, but bottled water could still leave town. Is that fair?”

RIVERTON FEED / 08:19

“Cut the farm supply and our next harvest suffers. Food matters too.”

RIVERTON FEED / 08:26

“Rain is forecast tomorrow. Why make any cuts?”

Your task
Read the real-world source window, then use only the fictional Riverton data for the negotiation. Protect the fixed allocations, share the remaining water, respond to new information and prepare a public statement.

THE RULES OF THIS SIMULATION

Four roles. One initial agreement. One surprise update.
Use the figures provided; do not invent new water, jobs or legal rules.
Riverton, its company, posts, figures and consequences are fictional. They do not describe Nestlé, Vittel or any real community.

A real debate, different sources

1 / EUROPEAN CONTEXT [1]

The EEA's 2025 assessment identifies increasing climate-related drought and scarcity risks. Competing demands complicate allocation. Continental findings do not establish the contribution of an individual abstraction site to a local shortage.

2 / PUBLIC OBJECTIONS [2]

The Vosges prefecture's consultation page, updated on 9 March 2023, hosts objections to proposed Nestlé Waters abstractions around Vittel. Contributors invoke residents' needs, drought and ecological concerns. Publication by an authority must not be confused with endorsement of a contributor's argument.

3 / THE COMPANY'S ACCOUNT [3]

Vittel reports a 23% reduction in its Vosges withdrawals between 2010 and 2024. This self-reported comparison is relevant but does not independently establish aquifer recovery or sustainable allocation.

Source audit
Distinguish speaker from publisher, baseline from current condition, and a reduction claim from proof of sustainability. The sources differ in time and scope. Identify one missing local dataset and explain how it could test a claim.

Do not transfer the fictional allocation figures on S03 to this real-world case.

Co-funded by the European Union

The Riverton water dashboard

FICTIONAL DATA | ONE SHARED PLANNING PERIOD S03

Use whole planning units. They have no real-world litre equivalent. The budget covers both water used by people and water left for nature. All figures refer to the same planning period. Do not add or count an allocation twice.

AVAILABLE

100 units

TOTAL REQUEST + RESERVE

125 units

The gap is _____ units. After protecting 75 units, we can negotiate _____ units.

Protected allocation	Units	What it covers
Essential household needs	40	Drinking, cooking, sanitation and basic hygiene
Medical services	10	Clinical needs; separate from the household 40
Ecological reserve	25	Water left for river and wetland functioning

Negotiable request	Maximum requested
Farms	25 units
Bottling plant	15 units
Youth summer programme	10 units

Non-negotiable simulation rules

Keep the protected 75 unchanged. Each negotiable group may receive 0 up to its requested maximum. Use whole units. Allocations may total less than the available budget; any remainder stays unallocated. No emergency imports are available.

The youth allocation is for leisure activities; safe drinking water and basic health protection are already protected above. These priorities are teaching rules, not a statement of local law.

Co-funded by
the European Union

Take a seat at the table

CUT-OUT ROLE CARDS | FOUR PEOPLE OR FOUR DELEGATIONS S04

Every role must make an opening proposal, ask another role a question and offer one concession. Requests and thresholds are scenario assumptions, not facts about real farms or employers.

FARM REPRESENTATIVE

Request: 25. A threshold of 15 protects priority crops; below it, losses are expected to increase but remain unquantified. Defend agricultural resilience while acknowledging competing claims.

Ask: Which cost is your proposal asking us to carry?

BOTTLING WORKER DELEGATE

Request: 15. Eight sustains reduced production; below that, production pauses and any allocation covers maintenance only. Employment implications are uncertain. Distinguish workers' interests from corporate assurances.

Ask: How will the plan support people affected by the cut?

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

Request: 10. Five enables reduced water-based activities; below this, a dry programme remains possible. Essential hydration is separately protected. Negotiate meaningful youth access without treating every leisure use as essential.

Ask: Can young people help design the alternative?

COUNCIL CHAIR

Enforce the allocation constraints and a transparent process. Test proportionality, uncertainty and who bears the burdens. Record dissent and agree a review trigger rather than presenting a compromise as objectively optimal.

Ask: What evidence would make us change this decision?

Co-funded by the European Union

Negotiate, then adapt

COUNCIL RECORD | DO NOT ERASE YOUR FIRST DECISION S05

Negotiate an initial 100-unit allocation and record its distributive consequences. On receiving the update, revise your decision and explain which assumptions changed.

Allocation	Round 1	Round 2
Essential households	40	40
Medical services	10	10
Ecological reserve	25	25
Farms		
Bottling plant		
Youth programme		
TOTAL ALLOCATED		
Available budget	100	
UNALLOCATED REMAINDER		

Who carries the greatest burden, and why is your choice defensible?

A concession or practical support measure

Explain what will change for one affected group. Do not invent compensation funding or extra supply.

Co-funded by
the European Union

The feed is moving fast

FICTIONAL POSTS | CHECK THE CLAIM, NOT THE NUMBER OF LIKES S06

POST 1

"The bottling plant takes all our water."

Challenge both the numerical claim and the conflation of demand with realised allocation.

POST 2

"Every group should lose the same number of units. That is fair."

Distinguish numerical equality from a defensible distribution of burdens using the operational thresholds.

POST 3

"Tomorrow's rain forecast means we can promise more water now."

Distinguish forecast rainfall from verified usable supply and propose an evidence-based review trigger.

POST YOUR DECISION / maximum 35 words
State your revised plan, acknowledge a difficult consequence and say when it will be reviewed. Be persuasive without promising that everyone wins.

Co-funded by
the European Union

Face the town

FINAL PRODUCT | TWO-MINUTE COUNCIL BRIEFING S07

Write 180–220 words. State the revised water budget and allocations. Explain who is affected, one uncertainty and a review trigger. Include one practical response now and one longer-term idea. Use S03–S06 as evidence.

Precision: distinguish an allocation decision from a factual claim. Acknowledge a reasoned objection and specify measurable conditions for reconsideration.

Peer check: Do the totals work? Are protected needs intact? Is uncertainty clear? Does the review trigger depend on evidence?

Co-funded by the European Union

Run the emergency meeting

C1 | TEACHER GUIDE | 90 MINUTES T01

Learning outcomes: distinguish climate risk from local attribution; evaluate source ownership; negotiate a constrained resource budget; revise a decision when evidence changes.
Preparation: S01–S07 per team, S04 cut into role cards. Keep the update below hidden until round 2. All core work is offline; source links are for checking or extension.

Time	Activity
0–8	Read the fictional feed on S01. Collect initial reactions.
8–23	Compare the three real-world source summaries on S02.
23–33	Calculate the dashboard gap and negotiable budget on S03.
33–48	Assign S04 roles. Negotiate round 1 and record it on S05.
48–58	Release the update below; negotiate round 2.
58–68	Check the fictional posts and draft a response on S06.
68–82	Write and peer-check the briefing on S07.
82–90	Hear selected briefings; discuss trade-offs and review triggers.

UPDATE CARD / RELEASE AFTER ROUND 1

A verified supply review reduces Riverton's available budget from **100 to 90 units**. The protected 75 stays unchanged. No emergency imports are available. Tomorrow's rain is uncertain and has not increased the verified supply. Revise your allocation now.

Facilitation
Use groups of four or four larger delegations. Allow a scribe or paired roles. No learner should have to disclose household finances or personal access to water. Keep disagreement focused on reasons and evidence.

Answers and possible agreements

Dashboard: protected 40 + 10 + 25 = 75. Flexible requests 25 + 15 + 10 = 50. Total request plus reserve = 125. Initial shortfall = 25; negotiable amount = 25. After the update, the budget is 90 and the negotiable amount is 15. The shortfall against the original requests is now 35.

Illustrative plan	Farms	Plant	Youth	Total incl. 75
Round 1 / mixed	12	8	5	100
Round 2 / food priority	15	0	0	90
Round 2 / shared losses	10	0	5	90

Consequences to discuss
In round 1, the farm is below its priority-crop threshold; reduced plant shifts and reduced youth activities can run. The food-priority revision protects priority crops but pauses bottling and replaces water-based youth activities with a dry programme. The shared-losses plan retains reduced youth activities but leaves farms below threshold. Other feasible plans are acceptable.

Meeting all three operational thresholds needs 15 + 8 + 5 = 28 units. This exceeds even the initial 25-unit flexible budget. The conflict cannot be removed simply by finding a clever sum.

Feed checks
1: The plant requests 15, not all 125 units; its actual allocation may be lower. 2: Equal numerical cuts do not necessarily have equal consequences. Fairness is a judgement requiring reasons. 3: A forecast is not verified usable supply; revise only after an updated supply assessment.

Real-world source check: public objections are not the prefecture's conclusions. The brand's 23% claim compares 2010 with 2024, not withdrawals with local recharge. Independent aquifer levels, recharge, withdrawals by all users and ecological needs would help assess sustainability.

Assessment / 0–2 each, total 10
Accurate budget; source attribution; justified trade-off; response to new evidence; clear C1 communication. 0 = absent/inaccurate, 1 = partial, 2 = clear. Do not reward a political position or a preferred allocation.

Sources and teaching notes

DATED CONTEXT | THE SIMULATION IS NOT A REAL CASE STUDY T03

The source window contains original English summaries, not quotations. It separates an EEA assessment, public submissions and a company statement. The dated sources do not establish the current legal position or prove who caused a particular local shortage.

1 / EEA: Water and climate impacts, Europe's environment 2025

European environmental assessment, 2025. Background on climate-related drought and water scarcity.

OPEN SOURCE

2 / Vosges prefecture: public water-abstraction consultation

Consultation page updated 9 March 2023. Public objections concerning Nestlé Waters abstractions are attributed to contributors, not adopted as official findings. Source in French.

OPEN SOURCE

3 / Vittel: Protection de la source et de sa nature

Company source, checked 14 October 2026. Reports a 23% reduction in Vosges withdrawals between 2010 and 2024. This is not independent verification of sustainability. Source in French.

OPEN SOURCE

Level-specific support
C1: distinguish causal attribution from correlation and challenge incomparable baselines. Require a counterargument and a review condition that could genuinely change the decision.

Original EU4Blue simulation, cards and diagrams. Free educational use and adaptation; not for resale. Supplied logos and linked sources retain their own rights. No endorsement by the named organisations or company is implied.

Last visited: 14 October 2026.