Mediterranean Regional Process
Ordinary Session
Managing and restoring Mediterranean ecosystems for water services and biodiversity

Monday 19 March 16h30-18h00

Agenda and outcomes

Room 8

Title	Managing and restoring Mediterranean ecosystems for water services and biodiversity
Session description	Most wetlands in the Mediterranean basin are at low altitudes and are predominantly coastal with a number of large river deltas (Camargue at Rhone delta in France, the Po delta in Italy, the Ebro delta in Spain, the Nestos delta in Greece, the Evros delta on the border between Greece and Turkey, the Menderes delta in Western Turkey, the Medjerda delta in Tunisia and, the Nile delta in Egypt). These ecosystems provides a wide range of services (fresh water, food, recreactional, flood protection, biodiversity) but are in great danger due to human activities as well as climate change. This session will present different cases of ecosystems restoration or artificial developments as Nature Based Solutions for water resources management in Mediterrenean countries, as well as an innovative moniroting tool (that can support SDG6.6 reporitng) and will feature a round-table on the governance structures to ensure the success of ecosystem management at river basin level.
Media friendly summary	Based on Mediterranean experiences, the session will formulate recommendations for better integration of ecosystem services in river basins management plans associated with inonovative monitoring tools.
Key-questions to be asked to panelists	How can we enforce an allocation of water for the ecosystems? Are Natural Based Solutions an alternative to traditional, grey infrastructure solutions? How to assess the value of ecosystems restoration measures?
Session coordinator information	
Session coordinators	Eric MINO - SEMIDE / EMWIS (“Euro-Mediterranean information system on know-how in the water sector”) Jaime L. Fraile - Hydrological Planning Office, Confederación Hidrográfica del Segura Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Food and Environment
Session outline	
Session outline and time allocation	INTRODUCTION (5 mins) – **Eric MINO, Director of EMWIS** Technical Unit OPENING SHORT VIDEO provided by the Citizen Forum (5 mins) CASE STUDIES presentations (4 x 10 mins): • Lake Manzala Engineered Wetland a Successful Model for the Mediterranean Sea Protection, **Prof. Ashraf Elsayed, NWRC** Egypt • Gafsa oasis: a resilient ecosystem for irrigation management, Mrs. **Latifa Dhaouadi, Regional Research Center for Oasis Agriculture**, Tunisia • Ecological flows in Sebou river basin, **Mrs Samira El Houat, Director of Sebou**

Mediterranean Regional Process
Ordinary Session
Managing and restoring Mediterranean ecosystems for water services and biodiversity

	River Basin Agency (ABHS), Morocco • **Albufera de Valencia**: semi-urban wetland under ecological recovering process, Mr. **Teodoro Estrela, Director, Jucar River Basin Authority** (Spain) QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (15 mins) PANEL and PUBLIC DISCUSSION (20 mins) around the 3 key questions: 1. Mrs. Latifa Dhaouadi, Regional Research Center for Oasis Agriculture 2. Prof. Ashraf Elsayed, NWRC 3. Mr. Teodoro Estrela, Director, Jucar River Basin Authority (Spain) 4. Dr. Amir Givati, Head of Surface Water Department, Hydrologic Service of Israel CONCLUSIONS (5 mins)
Other contributions received and taken into account	All contributions can be found at: http://www.semide.net/documents/meetings/events/wwf8/medecosystem • Aquatic crops for coastal protection in Egypt • Wastewater reuse project in the municipality of Granollers: urban sanitation supported by wetlands (Spain) • Water treatment as a basis for environmental recovery, Segura river (Spain)

Feedback from Forum Participants	• How to mitigate the water needs of farmers and of ecosystems and avoid conflicts:
	  • conflicts can be avoided thanks to a participatory process and user engagement
	  • minimum water flows can also benefits farmers downstream
	• Ground water ecosystems should also be considered
	• Artificial wetlands support the restoration of ecosystems and can provide products to co-finance the installation and maintenance (e.g. fish and crop production in Egypt)
	• Ecosystems are not only in danger due to human activities but also du to the impact of climate change, that make necessary allocatipn of additional water resources for ecological flows:
	  • Allocation of minimum flows should be enforced by regulation (as introduced by the new water law of Morocco)
	  • non conventional water resources can also be used to maintain minimum ecological flows or avoid intermitent streams. But costs recovery should ensured either by water users (acceptance has be ensure throught awareness campains) or state budget

Key Messages (updated)	• Ecosystems know no boundaries: they require cooperation and solidarity. The particular nature of water ecosystems and its linkage with the water cycle makes them a very relevant example of how the effects of actions of any sign taken at any place can be found across borders and both at local, regional and even continental scales. • Integrate ecosystem deterioration into pricing of water services

	In accordance with the "polluter pays" principle, the cost of deterioration of water ecosystems and its services should be integrated into the pricing policies for every water use sector, in order to collect funding for restoration projects and to discourage unsustainable use policies. • Ecosystems are of great value for the fight against climate change The ecosystem services of climate regulation, flood protection and carbon sequestration are only a few of the examples that illustrate how healthy water ecosystems can be a cornerstone in the fight against climate change. • Maintaining essential productions requires maintaining ecosystem services Multiple links have been found between sectors that sustain society in a strict survival sense, such as food production or water supply, and ecosystem services provided by wetlands. Maintaining these ecosystems in good working order is essential to ensure the sustainability of our very means of subsistance. • There will be no achieving the SDGs if we turn our back on the water ecosystems Water-related SDGs will be achieved while protecting and enhancing wetland ecosystems and the services they provide, or otherwise they will not be achieved at all.
Recommendations	**Water ecosystems (surface and ground water) are of great value for sustaining the water cycle, providing goods, and the fight against climate change, their management and restoration is essential to achieve SDG6 but also for the wellbeing of local communities. They require adequate financing ("polluter pays" principle) and shared management by all stakeholders to ensure sufficient water is allocated to natural ecosystems.**