

Progress and priorities for 2008-2011

Since the beginning of its mandate in 1999, EMWIS has continued to provide a tool to promote and support the exchange of know-how in the Euro-Mediterranean water sector. It has made a number of significant achievements for the regional cooperation and within each country, not least the posting of a newly designed and extremely comprehensive website portal at the end of 2006.

During 2006, Pascal Berteaud, French water director who holds the post of EMWIS Steering Committee President, set out five main priorities for 2008-2011 for transfer of know-how activities in the coming years. The list emerged as the result of dialogue with the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs), and takes into consideration national priorities, as well as the National Action Plans of the European Neighbourhood Policy, and the priorities defined at regional level, such as the Millennium Development Goals, Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and Pollution Control in the Mediterranean.



Prevention & risk management for extreme phenomena

One of the major consequences of the global climate change is the increasing number of extreme phenomena events which in the Mediterranean region are **floods** and **water scarcity or drought**. In Mediterranean Partner Countries, floods result not only structural damage but are also costly in human lives. The recent adoption of a flood directive by the EU shows that this interest is shared across the 2 sides of the Mediterranean. Water scarcity and drought are major concerns of Med Partner countries since a long time, now it is also becoming an issue for EU countries. A working group of the Joint Process has already produced an interim report in 2006, now works focus on the quantitative assessment of the situation, the definition of relevant indicators and the review of measures to be set-up to minimize the effect of drought and water scarcity.

Non-conventional water resources

Due to the increasing water demand in the region and the lack of natural resources, the development of alternative resources has been set as a priority at the Euromed Ministerial conference of Turin in 1999. The two major resources to be exploited are the **desalination** of sea or brackish water and the **reuse of waste water**. A working group has been set up within the Med Joint Process on waste water reuse, a theme of high interest for both EU and non EU countries. This group has already produced its final report (available on EMWIS portal)

Water monitoring

This group has been launched in the context of the Med Joint Process. The overall objective is to promote exchange between EU and non EU partners of the Mediterranean region and to identify good practices for the improvement of monitoring networks based on the existing situation and experiences collected within the Water Framework Directive-implementation process and in the Mediterranean Partner Countries. The inception meeting of this working group took place in Madrid in July 2007 where its draft mandate was defined. It will also be complementary to the activities on **National Water Information Systems** and will improve the availability of data related to water quantity necessary for water scarcity and drought assessment.

Two other priority issues have been identified, but the working groups have not started yet: **local sanitation management** and **participative approaches** in Integrated Water Resources Management.

EMWIS believes that the exchange of know-how taking place in these working groups as well as the production of reports and recommendations should be **followed by pilot implementations** demonstrating and validating the effective transfer between experts and countries.

EMWIS has defined and encouraged the development of a number of devices to help ensure the success of these priorities and more generally cooperation in the water sector. Some of them are described, hereafter.

Web portals

2006 saw the posting of the newly designed and greatly improved EMWIS portal, available in English, French and Arabic. Most of NFPs have created or revised their own portal based on the same approach, or are in the process of doing so. With its vast system of databases and files, the portal is documenting the water management issues in the Mediterranean area and providing a cooperation area for experts. A toolkit (open source) and guidelines are available for NFPs (or other organisations) to set-up their own website. The website is set to evolve over time, with the integration of interactive maps for example.

National Water Information Systems

Another initiative that came to being in 2006 is the focus on National Water Information System, or NWIS. The systems record water-related quantitative information using a variety of information technologies, with a particular emphasis on data sharing between various institutions. Depending on the needs of the country assembling the data, an NWIS can be organised in different ways. There might be emphasis, for example, on accessing certain types of documents, on facilitating exchanges, or on common indicators. EMWIS helped countries thanks to feasibility studies providing a road map for future developments. Part of EMWIS's role over the coming years will be to assist countries in creating and maintaining their NWIS, including the organisational issues, fund rising and standardisation of data and exchange protocols.



Mediterranean Water Observation Mechanism

This regional monitoring mechanism is in line with work carried out by the UN Commission for Sustainable Development promoting a global mechanism based on regional ones. It is based on National Water Information Systems with the aim of improving the collection, processing and comparison of reliable information in the water sector. The Med mechanism should be implemented in liaison of international initiatives managing water related data in the region. The feasibility study of this mechanism is presented in a separate document.

Euro-med Water Directors' Forum

This Forum has existed since 1997 (Naples), it has been regularly convened by EMWIS till 2005 and since 2005 it is jointly organised by Med-EUWI and EMWIS. It provides an appropriate structure for meeting the needs of the various international initiatives in the field of water, such as the EU and the UN Mediterranean Action Plan. Its role will have to be defined by the Euro-Med Ministers in charge of water at their meeting at the end of 2008. But it could have a consultative role for the definition of priorities, the validation of proposals, follow-up on implementation and the evaluation of results.

Synergies

To ensure complementarities with other initiatives working in the area, co-operations have been initiated and some agreements prepared:

Med-EUWI	Euromed water directors forum & dissemination
World Water Council	Promoting Med experience abroad & contribution to the water monitoring alliance
INBO/MENBO	Promotion of basin management approach
SMAP RMSU	Knowledge management : Environment and water
EEA	Water information systems (action plan)
IME	Monitoring of trans-national projects
UNEP/MAP/Plan Bleu	Linking Med water information system with the Med system on environment & sustainable development (under preparation)
BALWOIS	EMWIS extension to Balkan countries

A few figures on online information

16 multilingual national websites	Yellow pages with 2600 organisations, 1600 contacts and 300 information sources
40 000 monthly visitors on www.emwis.net	Water thesaurus in 5 languages : Arabic, English, French, Italian and Spanish Greek et Turkish under development
15 000 subscribers to monthly e-news flash	
More than 2800 articles published by year	Details on 250 projects
Portal references in more than 100 external websites	



**EMWIS National Focal Points
Nominated by the respective water directors**

Algeria	Agence de bassin Constantinois-Seybousse-Mellegue
Austria	Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management
Belgium	Aminal - Afdeling Europa en Milieu
Cyprus	Water Development Department - Ministry for Agriculture
Egypt	Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (Main Information Center)
France	Service National d'Information et de Documentation sur l'Eau (SNIDE)
Greece	Central Water Agency - Ministry of Environment
Israel	Hydrological Service of Israel
Italy	SOGESID
Jordan	Ministry of Water and Irrigation
Lebanon	Ministère de l'Eau et de l'Energie
Luxembourg	Ministère de l'Environnement
Malta	Malta Resources Authority
Morocco	Secrétariat d'Etat Chargé de l'Eau - Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire, de l'Eau et de l'environnement
Palestine	Palestinian Water Authority
Portugal	Instituto de Agua (INAG)
Spain	Centro de Estudios y Experimentacion de Obras Publicas (CEDEX)
Syria	Ministry of Irrigation
Tunisia	Ministère de l'Agriculture – BIRH - Direction Générale des Ressources en Eau
Turkey	General Directorate of State Hydraulic (DSI)

