

Coordination Committee Seminar Istanbul – 10-11 September 2007

CONCLUSIONS

(2007-09-19)

The 7th meeting of EMWIS Coordination Committee took place in Istanbul (Turkey) on 09-10 September 2007 under the presidency of Algeria. The meeting was attended by 12 National Focal Points –NFP- (Algeria, Egypt, France, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, Malta, Cyprus, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey). The Italian, and Palestinian NFPs were unable to attend the meeting (justified absence). This seminar was organised by EMWIS NFP in Turkey, the General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works (DSI), in collaboration with its regional office of Istanbul.

After the welcome speech addressed to the participants by M. A.C. GEREK DSI regional general director, Tahar AICHAOUI, Algerian Water Director, President of EMWIS Coordination Committee, introduced the seminar by reminding the conclusions of the last EMWIS Steering Committee meeting as well as the priorities adopted for EMWIS and discussed at the [last coordination seminar](#) (Algiers, June 2006):

- Thematic activities:
 - National Water Information Systems (NWISs) and water monitoring networks (launched in July 2007)
 - Participative approaches in Integrated Water Resources Management (postponed to further funding)
 - Prevention and risk management related to the extreme phenomena (in particular the water scarcity and floods). For “water scarcity” a unique group is operated with the EU Joint Process of between EUWI and the Water Framework Directive.
 - Non conventional water resources with two sub-topics: the desalination and the re-use of waste water. For “Waste water reuse” a unique group is operated with the EU Joint Process of between EUWI and the Water Framework Directive.
 - The local management of sanitation services and the prevention of domestic pollution (postponed to further funding)
- Horizontal activities:
 - maintaining EMWIS national and international websites,
 - preparing a regional water observation mechanism as an extension of EMWIS with a strong focus on the national dimension(i.e. the NWIS)
 - organising and supporting the Euro-Med Water Directors Forum

The President of the Coordination Committee highlighted also the proposal of the Steering Committee to institutionalise EMWIS and therefore the necessary actions required at the Ministerial level in each country.

Eric MINO, EMWIS Technical Unit coordinator gave a review of EMWIS progress and work programme, focusing on the activities carried out or to be completed within each country. This review included also the status of the recent activities on the 3 common working groups of EMWIS and the [Med Joint Process](#) between the Water Framework Directive and EUWI (i.e. drought/water scarcity, reuse of wastewater, and water monitoring networks).

The NFPs presented also their progress and the activities remaining in their work programmes to be carried out before the end of the year. This session gave place to a very positive exchange of experiences on content issues, human and financial resources necessary, personal data protection (e.g. for directory of contacts). For information, an evaluation of the human resources allocated to each

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NFP will be circulated to the coordinators. The details of activities planned by NFP are provided in annex.

The approach used for the development of a NWIS in Spain was presented and prototypes version demonstrated by Spanish NFP and the Spanish expert in charge of developing the system. The system will be officially launched on 21 November 2007. The development of water information systems in Turkey and Algeria were also presented.

These technical presentations were completed by organisational issues related to the collaboration between data managers. The French NFP presented the Memorandum of Understanding governing the data sharing for the French NWIS since 2003. The decree adopted in Algeria for the NWIS was also provided to the participants who appreciated these examples in order to prepare similar rules in their country.

Following the Steering Committee request of *“Defining, on the basis of existing experiences, a generic and operational model of a national water information system (NWIS), with an implementation strategy that could be tested in several pilot countries”*, a generic model for setting up or improving NWIS in med Partner Countries was proposed by the Spanish expert Eduardo GARCIA. This 1st proposal is based on a common metadata model (ISO and EU Water Framework Directive principles), spatial data infrastructure (Inspire directive) and service oriented architecture (SOA). An implementation plan was also proposed using open source software and including training and support. The cost for its development, deployment in 7 countries and support was estimated to about 2 MEUR. This 1st proposal will have to be detailed in order to take into account existing components developed by the European Environment Agency in the framework of the Water Information System for Europe (WISE), local contexts and the necessary organisational issues related to data sharing.

An overview of potential and possible funding for developing and deploying such model NWIS has been presented and discussed. At this stage there is no programme suitable to cover the overall activity. It was suggested that:

- Development of NWIS for the Maghreb countries could be supported by the African Water Facility
- NWIS can be supported by bi-lateral agreements, e.g. included in national programmes of European Commission delegations. The experience of Algeria could be very useful for this matter.
- EU call for proposals in 2008 should be checked carefully, as several might be relevant (ENPI: Information Society and Environment; FP7: ICT for Environment and Environment: observing systems for water resource management)

Taking the benefit of the review of potential funding, the discussion was extended to other opportunities to develop relevant content for EMWIS NFP. The opportunity to support the launching of an ERA.Net Plus project was debated. Although not involving directly most of the NFP, such project could provide useful content for R&D section of NFP sites and foster collaboration with the National Research Communities. In addition, such project could include a component on NWIS. The NFP will be contacted in order to identify the relevant organisation(s) in their country (Ministries or agencies responsible for defining, financing or managing research programmes at national or local level).

The revised logical framework Matrix of EMWIS has been presented and the participants discussed the sources and means of verification of the bench mark indicators, and agreed on the necessity to complete the remaining actions, and focus on users' needs surveys. The NFP will also need to provide:

- Yearly visits to their website (from 2003)
- Identification of the most visited web pages



- Results of users' surveys when carried out
- List of institutions providing information to the NFP

The approach used by the Jordanian NFP (official letters with the questionnaire and interviews) was presented as well as the qualitative assessment carried out by the French NFP. The use of online questionnaires was also discussed based on the experiences from France and Spain (new approach used by Spain at <http://www.emwis-es.org>). It was concluded that:

- online questionnaires do not provide relevant feed-back (very low level of replies even with very simple questionnaires)
- Survey should focus on needs rather than satisfaction (except if the survey is done after a presentation of the NFP web site)
- Survey should be carried out by interviews (visits or phone) as done in Jordan. The quality of replies is better and it allows also presenting the EMWIS NFP activities/web site.

The activities related to the preparation of the Euromed conferences of water directors (December 2007) and Ministers (End 2008) was given. The participants discussed the possibility to submit the proposal of EMWIS institutionalisation to the Ministers.

The indicative national and regional programs of the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) was presented, and showed to the participants the budget allocated for the water sector in each country for the period 2008-2010. The water sector is usually included in the Environment programme but without much priority and therefore a low budget. It was reminded that these programmes reflect the negotiation between the European Commission and each country. It is therefore necessary that each Ministry in charge of water make sure that the water priorities (incl. NWIS) are included for the next period (2011-2013).

The final session was dedicated to a brainstorming to exchange views on the strengths and the weaknesses of EMWIS, and to formulate some recommendations for the future. This process is documented separately, but the main outputs are:

- Covering additional priority themes, including brief synthesis on state of the art
- Reinforcing EMWIS financing taking into account donors priorities
- Improving EMWIS image: target users, objectives, activities, visibility
- Showing good practices (successful stories on know-how transfer),
- Increasing national support

Eric MINO, EMWIS coordinator, ended the seminar by thanking the participants and DSI for their warm welcome. The next meeting will take place in 2008.

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