

## REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON NATIONAL WATER INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND EMWIS

Hotel Sofitel Algiers - 26-27 June 2006

### Introduction Note

#### *Regarding the importance of access to water-related information*

« **Improving knowledge about water resources, the environments and uses is necessary for decision-making and sustainable management** »

However the persons in charge of water resources management in the Mediterranean countries are regularly facing problems of accessing the information necessary for their actions and decision-making. As examples, hereafter are 2 extracts resulting from 2 recent documents:

- ◆ *“The current situation in the Mediterranean regarding not only the availability of information but also the dissemination of existing data on ground water resource is not satisfactory” [Ground Water Working Group of the Joint Process MED-EUWI / EU Water Framework Directive - meeting 24/04/06]*
- ◆ *«It is very difficult to obtain reliable and comparable data on water demands on time and between the countries. » Blue Plan: “The Mediterranean: Blue Plan prospects on the environment and development]*

#### *Why does EMWIS intervene on the National Water Information Systems?*

The SEMIDE/EMWIS project started in 1999 with the main objective to "Facilitate access to the existing know-how in the water sector and develop the sharing of information along with the preparation of common outputs and cooperation programs between the participating countries".

During the 6th EMWIS Steering Committee meeting (Rome - September 2002), the Water Directors unanimously approved a « Widening of responsibilities for EMWIS so that the Technical Unit provides a “tailor-made” support to the development of national water information systems ».

The main objective in pursuing the enhancement and improvement of the National Water Information Systems –NWIS- in the participating countries is to remove all obstacles at the national level that impede the advancement of the NWIS and, as a consequence, improve and harmonize data/information exchange and sharing between the participating countries and the EMWIS international system via the National Focal Points. Improvement of the National Water Information Systems will improve the overall EMWIS system.



Working languages: English and French in plenary sessions - English only during workshops

Organised with the support of the European Commission, Italy, France and Spain

In April 2005, EMWIS awarded the EasyInfo Consulting Company to conduct a **feasibility study to assess the current situation and recommend actions to improve the National Water Information Systems (NWIS) in Mediterranean countries.**

In parallel, in November 2005, the Euromed water directors proposed that EMWIS studies with interested countries, the objectives and the feasibility of building up within EMWIS a **regional water observation mechanism to monitor the indicators towards the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals** related to water and sanitation in the Mediterranean, as well as the implementation of the water related section of the Mediterranean Strategy of Sustainable Development, based on the information provided by the National Water Information Systems, whenever they exist.

On the basis of these elements, and considering the IOWater expertise<sup>1</sup>, EMWIS requested IOWater support for the **“Organization of a workshop on the exchange of experiences in the field of National Water Information Systems in the Mediterranean Countries”.**

### ***Presentation of the regional workshop on NWIS***

The 2-day workshop planned by EMWIS in Algeria on 26 and 27 June mainly aims to **promote the exchange of experiences between the countries on the implementation of NWISs.**

The program of this workshop plans for :

- One day plenary sessions, open to the public with presentation of experiences from various countries
- half a day with 3 working group sessions and a plenary session for conclusions

It is proposed that the 3 working group sessions deal with 3 essential issues related to the implementation of water information systems:

1. **Enhancement/added value of final products:** what are the enhancement products of the basic information, who enhances and how and why?
2. **Access to data:** Who provides the basic information and how?
3. **Organizational/legislative aspects:** which are the procedures used for ensuring cooperation between institutions regarding the gathering and enhancement of data?

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<sup>1</sup> Note that as a recent reference, IOWater organized a specific session on shared Water information during the 4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in Mexico

Three major topics were selected to illustrate the discussion on concrete examples:

- 1- **Aquifer status and or level of exploitation** (or overexploitation);
- 2- **Dams and their status**;
- 3- **Current** (or foreseen) **water demand** for irrigation and drinking water supply.

As a support to the preparation of this workshop, a short questionnaire will be sent to the participants to draw their attention on the topics which will be discussed during this workshop.