



Proposals for a Second Phase 2007-2009

1. INTRODUCTION

The **Joint Water Framework Directive / EU Water Initiative process** aims at developing synergies between the two mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of sound water policies. That means facilitate the development of good water management practices, which is a prerequisite for sustainable drinking water and sanitation projects, and therefore, a contribution to the achievement of the water-related Millennium Development Goals; in EU countries, this contributes to facilitate the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) where challenges are shared between EU and non-EU countries,.

Sharing experiences between countries or basin authorities belonging to the same ecoregions and thus facing similar challenges could facilitate the implementation of water management policies.

The global strategy of the Joint Process was endorsed by EU Water Directors in December 2004 as well as orientations for implementing the Mediterranean Joint Process.

The first phase of the **Mediterranean Joint Process** was initiated in September 2004, thanks to a Mediterranean Workshop gathering Mediterranean Pilot River Basins from EU Member States and representatives of partner countries¹. Three topics were selected as a first basis of common interest. Three Mediterranean thematic Working groups were set up to address these issues. Their mandates cover 2005/06 and foresee the production of specific Mediterranean recommendations and examples to be integrated in EU reports. Two working groups were directly linked to activities carried out under the umbrella of the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) of the WFD: Groundwater (led by GR and COM) and Water Scarcity (led by FR and COM); the third one, focused on linkages between rural development and agriculture and water resource management is indirectly connected to the Steering group on Agriculture through the participation of the leader of the WG, the JRC. Annex 1 includes the state of play of each Med WG.

Progress of the Mediterranean JP was presented to the Euro-Mediterranean Water directors in November 2005².

Synergies with the MEDA Water Regional Programme, launched in Turin in 1999 and initiated in 2003, were developed in 2005 through the support of its Regional Monitoring Support Unit and EMWIS.

¹ Workshop – “The PRB Mediterranean dimension”, Back-to-back with the Workshop – “Linking rural development and land degradation mitigation into river basin management plans”., 22-24 September 2004 Brindisi, Italy organised by DG JRC and DG Environment of the European Commission and the Italian Ministry of Environment, APAT and the Regione Puglia

² Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, Conference of the Water directors, 24-25 November 2005 Rome, Italy

The development of these activities has contributed to the establishment of a network of Mediterranean experts, from various organisations (governmental, civil society, research, professional representatives) sharing a common understanding of challenges of water issues in the region and a shared knowledge of the principles of the WFD. Participation of Mediterranean experts in both EU and Mediterranean meetings has raised awareness on major issues related to groundwater management, water scarcity and agriculture in the context of the WFD. In addition, the drafting exercise has led to the production of Mediterranean recommendations on these issues with an emphasis on the WFD implementation and its major difficulties in the Mediterranean context.

This first phase of the JP illustrates the feasibility of working at regional level for preparing national and local activities for the implementation of sound water policies. And more generally, thematic activities at regional level, through the development of Med Working Groups can facilitate the integration of the WFD principles in partner countries' water related policies.

Indeed, the European Neighbourhood Policy, through the implementation of Actions Plans, agreed between the EU and partner countries³, aim in particular at gradual approximation of policy, legislation and practise. Sustainable development and Environment are included in each of these Action Plans. Environmental sub-committees in charge of implementing the National Action Plans have already identified specific issues for short term cooperation with EU in some countries. For example, for water-related issues, in Morocco, groundwater management was highlighted as a major problem; in Tunisia, saline intrusion in groundwater was also identified as an issue of interest. In this framework, the Med JP can play a role in analysing the Mediterranean specificities vis-à-vis the implementation of the WFD and in identifying the potential difficulties of its application in neighbouring countries.

In addition, development of regional activities based on the implementation of WFD principles could prepare the ground for working on sub-regional challenges such as shared water resources management.

2. OBJECTIVES OF PHASE II

The second phase of the JP will draw on the achievements of the first results gained during the two first years of development.

The second phase is a contribution towards the general objective of the JP which is to facilitate the implementation of improved water management practices in the Mediterranean, and thereby ensuring that coherent environmental objectives are shared and consistent instruments are being utilised. The basic principles for freshwater resources management in the Mediterranean are derived from the WFD.

For EU countries, the JP should focus on facilitating the implementation of the WFD thanks to exchange of experiences with other Mediterranean experts and water managers and for non-EU countries, the JP should explore which elements of the WFD process could be beneficial for them and promote sharing of experience and good practice.

³ Five Action Plans were agreed with Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and the Palestinian Authority and work is starting for Egypt and Lebanon.

As regards concrete outcomes of the second phase, it is suggested to work on two dimensions:

- Production of specific documents useful for water resources management in the region, based on the requirements of the EU Water legislation and particularly of the WFD;

Mediterranean recommendations could be used for the EU countries as guidance (complementary to the general ones produced by EU WGs) and as technical elements for convergence of legislation for non-EU countries.

- Promote the development of a Mediterranean expert network:

Building a community of Mediterranean –EU and non-EU-experts knowledgeable in the specificities of the implementation of the WFD in their region and aware of potential solutions to face existing problems would facilitate the achievements of common environmental objectives and work together towards sustainable development.

These specific objectives can be achieved thanks to the development of 3 types of activities:

- Med Thematic Working Groups (Med WGs), set up at regional level, mixing EU and non-EU experts, in charge of analysing specific Mediterranean issues in the light of the EU water –related legislation;
- Mediterranean Pilot Basins (MPB), in charge of testing the applicability of the WFD principles and requirements in non-EU Med countries. The experience gained by Mediterranean EU pilot Basin could be beneficial for non-EU ones.
- Regional workshops on the thematic issues identified by the Med WGs in charge of facilitating the exchange of best practices, experiences and lessons learnt through the pilot exercise..

3. KEY ELEMENTS FOR PHASE II: 2007-2009

3.1. Mediterranean Thematic Working Groups

Progress and experience achieved during phase I raised several issues that would need particular attention. It is therefore proposed to continue and deepen the topics selected in the first phase. In addition, 2 other issues were identified as essential in the region.

Five thematic activities are proposed for 2007-09:

1. Groundwater management: leaders: Greece and the European Commission;
2. Water Scarcity and Drought: leaders: Morocco, France (TBC), MENBO, the European Commission, supported by EMWIS
3. Linking rural development with water management: leader The European Commission;
4. Waste water reuse: leaders: Malta, the European Commission;
5. Shared water resources management: GWP-Med.

The main tasks of these groups are, for each issue, a study of the current practices in the region, an analysis of the implications of the WFD or other EU relevant legislations and finally the establishment of recommendations.

Detailed mandates of the 5 Med Thematic WGs are included in Annex 2.

Possibilities of developing further activities will be explored according to the needs and the resources available. In particular linkages between the EU Marine Strategy and freshwater resources management in the Mediterranean could be of interest in the coming years.

3.2. Mediterranean Pilot Basins

Complementary to the EU Pilot River Basins exercise, pilot activities can be developed in the southern rim of the Mediterranean. The objective of this pilot activity is to test the applicability of the WFD principles and requirements in non-EU countries and identified bottlenecks and solutions. The exercise will consist in testing the existing EU guidance as well as recommendations produced by the Med Thematic WGs covering different aspects of the WFD. Concrete testing would allow identification of activities / measures to be implemented for achieving the objectives of the WFD.

Participation is within a voluntary basis.

The testing exercise will be carried out by experts of the basin organisation supported by external experts specifically hired for this task.

Regarding the non-EU side, two basins have already indicated their interest to play the role of front runner for the implementation of the WFD principles:

- The Litani river in Lebanon;
- The Sebou basin in Morocco.

Other areas for which already some work has been undertaken in the WG Agriculture that might be potentially interested are:

- Seyhan River Basin, Turkey;
- Medjerda, Tunisia.

A report will be produced by each MPBs, and a general analysis will be conducted at the end of the testing exercise (by the end of 2009).

Lessons learnt through the MPBs will be utilised both at regional and national level for encouraging the development of the WFD principles. The bottlenecks identified and the solutions suggested will be shared thanks to the regional JP workshops and at national level, by communicating the results of the testing to the relevant authorities in charge of water resources management.

In addition, the pilot exercise must be considered as part of the national processes facilitating the convergence of legislation and the implementation of the Water part of the Action Plans as well as the achievement of the MED-EUWI objectives (and in particular its national dimension through the 'Country dialogues'⁴).

⁴ MED-EUWI Country dialogues are initiated to facilitate the identification of priorities in the water sector and the development of a financing strategy

3.3. Mediterranean WFD exchange of information

Exchange of information is a crucial challenge between EU and non-EU water experts. The first two activities will contribute to the objectives of sharing knowledge and experiences, learning practices and approaches.

Participation of non-EU experts in EU meetings and workshops as well as participation of EU experts in Mediterranean workshops and conferences strengthen this objective.

In addition, two cross-cutting facilities will be set up:

- electronic platforms;
- annual workshops of Med WFD experts including a research interface.

An electronic forum is already set up for the Med Groundwater WG and the Water Scarcity WG, hosted by EMWIS.

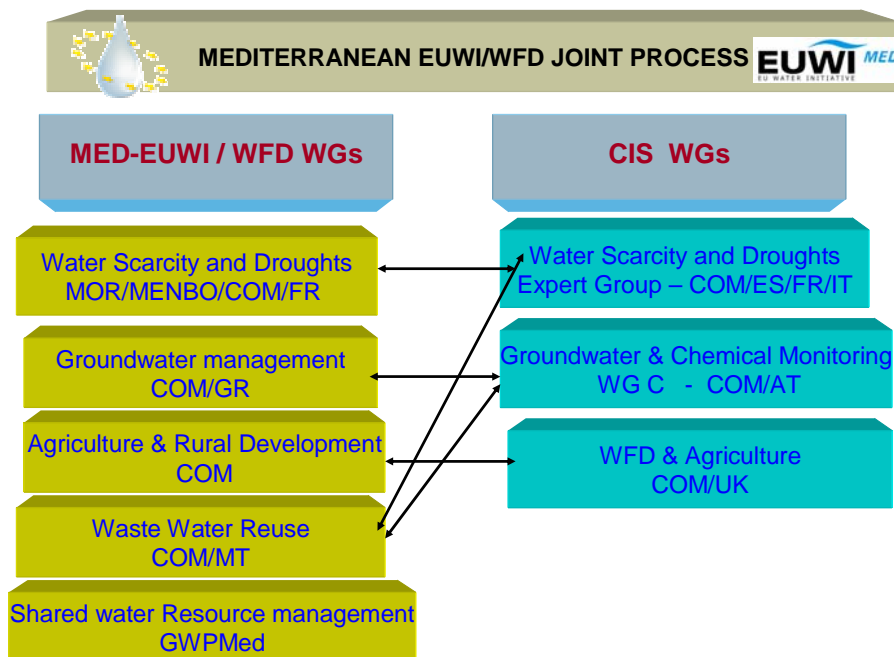
4. ORGANISATION

Thematic WGs will be led and coordinated by Member States, partner countries, Mediterranean organisations (in particular, EMWIS, MENBO, GWP-Med) and the Commission (JRC, DGENV).

Membership is open to experts and water managers, EU and non-EU, Med Pilot basins representatives who are ready to actively contribute in the process (notably contribution in drafting).

Linkages with EU WGs of the CIS are ensured thanks to EU experts involved in EU WGs dealing with similar issues.

The following graph illustrates these linkages:



The JRC and MENBO will assist the Med Pilot Basin activity in facilitating the exchange of experiences with already established EU Med Pilot River basins, analysing the results of the testing exercises and drafting lessons learnt on selected working issues.

Outside the EU, synergies will be sought with existing processes in order to (i) mobilise the best experts (ii) benefit from the existing past experiences (iii) disseminate as much as possible the results of the JP in the region.

Indeed, the JP Phase II will be built on the results of the MEDA water regional programme focused on issues such as water in irrigation, waste water reuse, droughts, in particular thanks to the Regional Monitoring Support Unit of MEDA water based in Amman. The JP Phase II is also creating synergies with the thematic activities of EMWIS and in particular for the Thematic WG on Water scarcity & Drought.

It will also mobilise the Research potentialities by bringing experts together and promoting exchange of information on current research project and interfacing the research and policy-making spheres.

Finally, connexions will be made with the GEF strategic Partnership phase II and the IWRM UNEP-UCC work programme.

As regards financial resources available for the second Phase, for 2007 and 2008 funding is secured for supporting the development of two MPBs through MEDA water regional programme and the Research Programme of the European Commission⁵.

Mobilisation of regional and thematic funds from the European Commission's side is being explored for 2007-09 and complementary supports are being discussed with several partners.

In addition, at national level, two instruments are now available for preparing convergence of legislation and can constitute a support to the thematic and Pilot activities of the JP:

- TIAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument): provides short term technical assistance in the field of approximation, application and enforcement of legislation⁶
- Twinning Programme: aims to help beneficiary countries in the development of modern and efficient administrations, with the structures, human resources and management skills needed to implement the *acquis communautaire*. This programme is now available for MEDA countries⁷.

Finally, the JP Phase II will be steered by the Euro-Mediterranean Water Directors Conference and the progress will be reviewed regularly during their yearly meetings.

The European Commission, the co-leaders and the MPB representatives are responsible for the implementation of the second phase of the Med JP.

⁵ SPI-Water, including the participation of MENBO, WWF, Litani Authority and the Sebou water Agency for a support to the Med JP.

⁶ <http://taiaex.cec.eu.int/>

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/financial_assistance/institution_building/twinning_en.htm

Acronyms

Blue Plan	Regional Activity Centre, Environment and Development in the Mediterranean
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CIS	Common Implementation Strategy
DG ENV	Directorate-General Environment
EMWIS	Euro-Mediterranean Water Information System
EUWI	European Union Water Initiative
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GWP-Med	Global Water Partnership Mediterranean
IME	Mediterranean Water Institute
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
JP	Joint Process
JRC	Joint Research Centre
MEDA	Financial Instrument of the European Union for the Implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
MENBO	Mediterranean Network of Basin Organisations
PRB	Pilot River Basin
UNEP-UCC	United Nations Environmental Plan-
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WG	Working Group

ANNEX 1 : Med-EUWI / WFD Joint Process Phase I - Main outcomes

Activities	WATER SCARCITY	GROUNDWATER	RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Electronic Forum for networking	Set up in October 2006 http://www.semide.net/topics/WaterScarcity	Launched in October 2005 http://www.semide.net/initiatives/medeuwi/JP/GroundWater	Prepared by JRC, under reconstruction as powerful exchange forum (early 2007) http://agrienv.jrc.it/activities/rdi/
Drafting of recommendations, Report	- EU report: Water scarcity management in the context of the WFD Final version endorsed by EU WDs, June 2006 - Med report: Technical report on water scarcity and drought management in the Mediterranean and the Water Framework Directive Draft version submitted to the Euro-Med WDs, Nov. 06	- Med report: "Technical report on groundwater management in the Mediterranean and the WFD" Draft version presented in November 2005 to the Euro-Med WDs Final version submitted to the Euro-Med WDs, Nov. 2006	Reports of three case studies, as well as specific case study reports from two EU Mediterranean PRBs are due by the end of 2006; preliminary results and recommendations have been formulated in the 05-06 Report of the WG Agriculture
Exchanges of knowledge, WG meetings	- Med focal points (Tunisia , Egypt) were invited in two workshop/conference organised in the framework of a research project: Palermo, Italy Oct.2004 and Cyprus, May 2005 - Med focal points were invited to EU meetings: Rome, January 2005, Paris, September 2005, Rome October 2005 and Madrid February 2006 - Med WG plenary meeting: September 2006, Brussels	- 2 annual Plenary meetings took place, in the framework of international conferences: Marrakech May 2005 and Malaga, April 2006; - Chapters coordinators of the report were invited to the EU WG meetings in Brussels in October 2005 and February 2006.	A WG Meeting was organized in November 2005. A workshop on the Balkans was organized (technical preparation by DG JRC RWER Unit – WG Agriculture Coordinator, in June 2006 and was focused on synergies of water and agriculture management and policies.
Set up cases for applied research			- Italy (Basilicata region) started early 2006, due in February 2007 - Turkey (Seyhan River Basin) started early 2006 due by end 2006 - Poland (Bialystok Vovoidship) started early 2006, due in February 2007 - Spain (Andalusia region) to start late 2006, due at end of 2007 - Tunisia (to be decided) to start late 2006, due at end of 2007 The WG Coordinator is also Coordinator of the EU PRB-Agriculture group and case studies are undertaken in two Mediterranean basins: Guadalquivir, Spain and Pinios, Greece

ANNEX 2 : Mandates of the Thematic Working Groups

1. Groundwater management
2. Water Scarcity and Drought
3. Agriculture & rural development
4. Waste water reuse
5. Shared water resources management