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EMWIS
Euro-Mediterranean
Information System on the
know-how in the Water Sector
<http://www.emwis.org>

Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

EMWIS Strategic Plan

2002-2005

(Version of 2001-11-02)

TABLE of CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	3
2	NECESSARY EVOLUTIONS.....	3
2.1	EMWIS ASSIGNMENT IN THE TURIN ACTION PLAN	3
2.1.1	<i>Political issues</i>	3
2.1.2	<i>Operational issues</i>	3
2.2	TOPICAL COVERAGE AND SERVICES PROVIDED.....	4
2.3	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE.....	4
2.4	DIRECT SUPPORT TO THE NFPS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN PARTNER COUNTRIES	4
2.5	FINANCING BY PUBLIC AUTHORITIES	4
2.6	TECHNICAL UNIT'S ASSIGNMENT AND FINANCING	5
3	OBJECTIVES OF THE SECOND STAGE.....	5
4	PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME.....	5
4.1	CO-ORDINATION WITH POLITICAL STRUCTURES	5
4.2	REINFORCEMENT OF THE NFPS	6
4.3	DIRECTING AND OPERATING INFORMATION SERVICES.....	7
4.4	EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES	7
4.5	FOSTERING THE PROMOTION OF THE SYSTEM.....	8
4.6	DEVELOPMENT OF TOPICAL ACTIVITIES (ANALYSES, SUMMARIES AND EVENTS).....	8
4.7	DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDA-WATER ACTIVITIES	8
4.8	LIAISON WITH INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES	9
5	ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	9
6	BUDGET FORECAST.....	10
6.1	BUDGET FORECAST FOR 2003-2005	10
6.2	BUDGET (2002) FOR MEDA-WATER ACTIVITIES	11
7	BILINGUAL GLOSSARY.....	11

1 Introduction

Two years after launching its operations, EMWIS had already achieved very stimulating results in terms of political, organisational and technical aspects (the need for co-operation among the partner countries was confirmed, political commitment had increased, appropriation of the system at the national levels, gradual implementation of focal points in the countries, expanding operational services). EMWIS is a unique reference tool in the Mediterranean water information sector. It is however an initiative that should be envisaged in a longer term.

2 Necessary evolutions

In order to prepare next EMWIS stage (after 2002), the main lines for evolution have now to be validated by the 27 Water Directors of the Partnership countries.

2.1 EMWIS assignment in the Turin Action Plan

EMWIS is the first and unique tangible co-operation tool implemented under the Barcelona process in the water sector. During the Ministerial Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Local Water Management, held in Turin in October 1999, the Ministers entrusted EMWIS with an additional assignment to support the implementation of the Action Plan. This activity supplements the initial EMWIS assignment to the five priority topics.

2.1.1 Political issues

EMWIS is a privileged platform for:

- ⇒ Dissemination information to the political structures of the water sector in the Partnership countries
- ⇒ Ensuring a top-level follow-up of the Action Plan developments, and
- ⇒ Giving feedback and comments to EU institutions on the future orientations of the programme.

2.1.2 Operational issues

EMWIS offers a good-quality and operational infrastructure to support the implementation of the MEDA-Water programme. It may be the main vector for disseminating information and dialoguing with all the stakeholders concerned. The fact that 20 countries have a NFP is an asset for providing services to communities, such as the organisation of information days, or for directing queries.

It is possible to create a 'specialised window' on MEDA-Water, relying on existing EMWIS resources. This window could include the following services:

- A MEDA-Water section in EMWIS electronic newsletter
- Diary of MEDA-Water events (Commission, projects)
- Electronic mailing list
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- Hotline for administrative problems
- Publishing of calls to tender and the relevant official texts
- Publishing public project results
- Tool for looking for partners
- Web support for events organised by the project teams
- Who's Who and project presentation sheets (linked to the topical directory)

2.2 Topical coverage and services provided

In its first stage (1999-2002), EMWIS aims at providing access to the information existing in each country and related to the following five priority topics: institutions, documentation, training, research and development and data management.

While processing these five topics (by refining their content in particular) and providing a specific support the MEDA-Water programme, new needs have arisen and must be taken into account, for example: topics such as Water culture and raising people's awareness, services of topical analyses, synthesis and case studies, etc.

2.3 Geographic coverage

The 27 partner countries approved EMWIS and its NFP-based structure during the Naples Conference of 1997. Two year only after the operational launch of EMWIS, 20 NFPs have been designated and 17 are already active.

Regarding the second stage of EMWIS (after 2002), the commitment of each Euro-Mediterranean partner country must be reasserted especially concerning the implementation and operation of a NFP, as being a national water-related information system integrated into a Euro-Mediterranean information network.

It is proposed to continue the actions on the active NFPs, especially on those whose political commitment is strong enough (i.e. availability of the required resources at the national level) and to foster the assistance to the others.

2.4 Direct support to the NFPs of the Mediterranean Partner Countries

Some NFPs of the Mediterranean Partner Countries have faced great difficulties (lack of financial and human resources) for building their national information system, as part of the commitments taken during the Naples Conference (1997). Today, EMWIS has no resource to help them. In addition, EMWIS has outlined the lack or obsolescence of some resources in certain countries (e.g. water-related documentation systems).

Three types of direct assistance to the NFPs might be considered:

- Covering investment costs related to the purchase of the hardware and software necessary to the good operation of the NFPs.
- Searching for bilateral or multilateral financing, on the basis of specifications approved by EMWIS, in order to set up or improve the information systems linked to EMWIS
- Financing the NFP operating costs which concern Euro-Med co-operation activities and the promotion of the system at the national level (estimated at 30% of the NFP operating costs with a top value of 10 000 Euros a year)

2.5 Financing by public authorities

As shown by the EMWIS sustainability study, **funding by public authorities is absolutely necessary** for its future activities. Indeed EMWIS is an important political and technical tool for the

Euro-Med Partnership in the Water sector and merchant services or private sponsoring cannot provide substantial contribution at this stage.

2.6 Technical Unit's assignment and financing

During the first stage (1999-2002), the main assignment of the technical unit is to define and develop the foundations of the system, to provide technical recommendations to the NFPs and to train them to guarantee EMWIS development. The TU financing (i.e. 440 000 Euro a year) was borne by three countries of the European Union (Spain, France and Italy). The financial resources are managed by a European Economic Interest Group -EEIG-EMWIS TU.

As the tools are becoming now operational, its assignment must move towards the exploitation of the system, and more particularly towards:

- ⇒ The updating of the content and the processing of the users' demands,
- ⇒ A significant editing and leading work to enhance the available information bases.
- ⇒ The required promotion on an international scale and in each country,

In addition to the operating system, it is however necessary to continue technical assistance to the countries to include new functionalities and to enable the development of new NFPs.

The commitment of the three member countries of the technical unit must be reaffirmed for this new EMWIS stage (to support the human resources, investment and operating costs, excluding development costs and technical assistance to the Mediterranean Partner Countries). It is proposed to widen its membership to new countries of the European Union.

3 Objectives of the second stage

In its second stage, EMWIS proposes to consolidate the results already obtained and to develop new services, especially in terms of dissemination of information and operational support to the MEDA-Water programme of the European Commission. The main objectives of this stage are as follows:

1. Co-ordination with political structures
2. Reinforcement of the NFPs
3. Driving and operating information services
4. Expansion and development of services
5. Fostering the promotion of the system
6. Development of topical activities (analyses, summaries and events)
7. Development of the MEDA-Water activities
8. Liaison with international initiatives

4 Provisional programme

4.1 Co-ordination with political structures

The goal of co-ordination with the political national and international structures is mainly to maintain a high degree of co-operation between the Euro-Med countries in the water sector, to encourage EU countries to take part in EMWIS activities, to follow up the evolution of the MEDA-Water programme (as stated in the conclusions of the Turin Conference), and to establish strategic alliances (e.g. with international initiatives working on similar issues).

Within this framework, it is planned to:

- organise a meeting of the Steering Committee every year (which includes the water directors of the 10 countries of the Partnership, the organisations supporting the Technical Unit and a representative of the European Commission);
- organise a meeting of the 27 Water Directors during the 3-year period
- regularly inform the Water Directors of the Partnership;
- regularly maintain contacts with the European Commission, the partner countries and the main international initiatives (specific meetings, participation in events);
- negotiate practical co-operation agreements with international initiatives working on similar issues;
- co-ordinate with political and technical levels, through quarterly meetings (Presidency and Technical Unit's organisations);

The Technical Unit will assume the secretariat of this activity under the supervision of the Steering Committee's President.

4.2 Reinforcement of the NFPs

The main activities planned are:

- Co-ordinating development and ensuring the interoperability of national services through organising two seminars a year. One of these seminars will deal with overall co-ordination, (defining services and prioritising) and the other with technical aspects (detailed contents, tools to be applied and exchange formats).
- Technical support to MPCs in order that their NFP becomes operational. This will be achieved through field monitoring and organisational support assignments.
- Email accessible hotline and Internet video-conferencing.
- Technical visits between NFPs to foster the sharing of experiences.
- Developing examples of "good practice" that will be presented during seminars.
- Seeking financing for MPCs. The 1st stage of EMWIS has shown that several MPCs have had financial difficulties in making their NFP operational. The TU must play a role of 'facilitator' in order to allow these countries to find additional financing in the context of bilateral or multilateral assistance. This service could be extended to "non EMWIS" projects. Five stages can be considered:
 - Preparing the file for financing application by the NFP
 - Validating application by the Technical Unit
 - Validating application by the Steering Committee
 - Application sent by the Steering Committee to potential donors
 - Monitoring the application up to the donor agreement
- Managing the allocation of direct aid to the NFPs of MPCs, on the basis of procedures vetted by the European Commission:
 - For the MPCs, coverage of part of the investment costs related to the purchase of the hardware and software recommended by EMWIS (10 000 Euros maximum for each NFP over a 3-year period)
 - Coverage of expenses for translating the access interface and part of the national website content in one of the two EMWIS working languages (English or French) - cost estimated at 8 000 Euros for each NFP)
 - Support for the operating costs of each NFP regarding its Euro-Med co-operation activities and the promotion of the system at the national level (estimated at 30% of the NFP's operating costs with a maximum of 10 000 Euros per year)

4.3 Directing and operating information services

It mainly concerns the maintaining and improvement of the services offered by EMWIS according to water related new and technological progress. Several sections, now available, require continuous updating: event diary, references on legislation in the Euro-Med area, useful links, Euro-Med information on water, electronic forums.

The website design will be revised according to the main technological progress and lessons learned in surveys carried out with the users to facilitate access to the services.

The exploitation of a topical directory on water will include:

- A campaign to annually update with the collection of complementary information
- Implementation of a protocol for quality control of available information
- Defining sub-topics to enable better-detailed searches
- Adding new fields, especially to integrate the MEDA-Water component

Topical electronic forums will be opened and led by specialists according to the users' field of interest and to the availability of experts. They will be based on a common operation charter.

As regards multilingual multiple database document searching, we will try to obtain new agreements for the dissemination of EMWIS content and to develop the necessary interfaces and enrich the multilingual dictionaries.

4.4 Expansion and development of services

The choice of new services to be deployed will be based on a study of the users' expectations and on an a-priori analysis of their value as compared to implementation costs (and to available resources). The analysis and developments will have to provide an opportunity of including merchant services.

A non-exhaustive list of services is given below:

- Supplier directory and catalogue of products and services
- Tendering
- Mapping
- Topical studies
- Intelligent Frequently Asked Questions (with automatic transfer to competent specialists depending on the request topic)
- Electronic training
- Forum on software with option to download programmes
- Job offers
- Advertising
- Bibliographical research
- Press review
- Sworn translation service (for legal texts for instance)
- Webcasting and multimedia event archiving service
- Warning system

At the same time, we will start defining and implementing tools considered as relevant during the first stage of EMWIS:

- Metacrawler specialised on water issues enabling the semi-automatic classification of the information sources available on the web, a simultaneous search on several websites selected by the user and assistance with the monitoring of new events,
- Electronic forums with message archiving, indicator of the users' satisfaction (e.g. response delays, relevancy of the reply) and enhancement of the specialists/moderators' work,
- Internet video-conferencing to ensure periodic technical support and follow-up of the NFPs. The use of this kind of tool is now interesting as Internet connections greatly improved at the end of the first stage of EMWIS,
- Synchronising of the national diaries on events.

4.5 Fostering the promotion of the system

A promotional plan, distinguishing the TU activities from those of the NFPs, will be defined. It will identify the main interesting media (events, press, search engines, news-groups). The following activities, based on this promotional plan, will be carried out:

- Electronic marketing (referencing, bilingual newsletter, surveys, etc.)
- Developing promotional media (newsletter, multimedia presentation, etc.)
- Taking part in national and international events
- Introducing through audio-visual media
- Preparation of press reviews and articles for the specialist press

4.6 Development of topical activities (analyses, summaries and events)

This involves the development of activities related to specific topics. This will lead to:

- the opening of a specialised electronic forum
- the undertaking of a specialised study which will be available to the forum members
- the organisation of a two-purpose event: dissemination and capacity building of the water stakeholders

As a working basis, two topics might be dealt with each year, for example (non exhaustive list): training on water in the Mediterranean countries, 'Water Culture' for the grand public, integrated water resource management, etc.

4.7 Development of the MEDA-Water activities

EMWIS offers a good-quality operational infrastructure to support the implementation of the MEDA-Water programme. It may be the main vector for disseminating information and dialoguing with all the stakeholders concerned.

EMWIS will develop a specialised window about MEDA-Water, relying on existing resources. This window will include the following:

- A MEDA-Water section in EMWIS electronic newsletter
- Consultation statistics
- Diary of MEDA-Water events (Commission, projects)
- Electronic mailing list
- Forum on administrative issues (with the participation of a representative from the Commission)
- Publishing of invitations to tender and the relevant official texts
- Publishing of public outputs of financed projects

- Questions/answers forum
- Tool for looking for partners: responsibilities, ideas for projects (entered in the on-line database by the users)
- *Who's Who* and project presentation sheets (linked to the topical directory)

The main documents related to MEDA-Water will be available to the NFPs for local dissemination and a presentation of the programme will be included in the events organised by EMWIS.

4.8 Liaison with international initiatives

The contacts already made with international initiatives will go on to co-ordinate activities and prepare agreement protocols whenever possible. The main initiatives already identified are: the Mediterranean Water Institute, the Global Water Partnership, the Blue Plan, WaterNet project, INBO, the World Water Council, the European Environment Agency, MEDSTAT and Med-Hycos project.

5 Organisation and responsibilities

In order to fulfil these functions, it is proposed to reinforce the Technical Unit staff with at least one more person, specialised in communications. Therefore, the following profiles are a minimum for the technical unit:

- Co-ordination
- Content and documentation
- Communication regarding promotional activities and publishing aspects (website and newsletter)
- Information technologies for the evolution and overall maintenance of the system and the development of new tools
- Administrative assistance and multilingual logistics

As concerns the focal points, the profiles are similar but the work load may be broken down differently according to the country and depending on the partnerships established:

- Co-ordination
- Information technologies for the evolution and overall maintenance of the system and the development of new tools (part-time person)
- Publishing design, documentation and content

6 Budget forecast

6.1 Budget forecast for 2003-2005

EMWIS budget BUDGET FORECAST in Euros (2002-2005) (Version dated 2001-10-25)	Total budget	EC part	Country part
TECHNICAL UNIT			
Investments	80 000	25 000	55 000
Operating costs			
Human resources (staff, experts fees, internship, training)	1 301 000	240 000	1 061 000
Travels and perdiem TU organizations and members	101 000	0	101 000
Office, consumable, telecom, accounting	171 200	0	171 200
Promotion (products and services)	196 700	196 700	0
Steering Committees and Directors meeting	89 000	89 000	0
NFP seminars (logistic, perdiem and travel for NFPs from MPCs)	234 000	234 000	0
Miscellaneous (e.g. translations of technical documents)	5 000	5 000	0
Technical assistance / training			
Trainers and experts for the seminars (NFP, promotion thematic events)	88 332	88 332	0
Technical visits	134 352	134 352	0
Studies (good practices, synthesis, etc.)	271 650	271 650	0
MEDA-Water activities	138 000	138 000	0
			0
Total budget for the Technical Unit	2 810 234	1 422 034	1 388 200
%		51%	49%
National Focal Points			
(Estimates based on a equal average cost for 17 NFPs and direct support for MPC only)			
Investments			
Equipments	340 000	120 000	220 000
Operating costs			
National activities	1 190 000	0	1 190 000
Translation costs of web sites in the 2 nd working language	136 000	96 000	40 000
Activities related to international cooperation	510 000	360 000	150 000
Total budget for the NFPs	2 176 000	576 000	1 600 000
%		26%	74%

6.2 Budget (2002) for MEDA-Water activities

This budget covers the activities during the year 2002

MEDA-Water activities	Total budget in Euros	EC part	Country part
BUDGET FORECAST in Euros (2002) (version of 2001-10-31)			
TECHNICAL UNIT			
Investment	5 000	5 000	0
Operation			
Human resources	80 000	80 000	0
Travels and perdiems	15 000	15 000	0
Information days in the 6 MPCs	60 000	60 000	0
Development of specific tools on the web	20 000	20 000	
Miscellaneous expenses (translations)	10 000	10 000	
			0
Total budget	190 000	190 000	0

7 Bilingual Glossary

French		English	
CD	Comité Directeur	SC	Steering Committee
CE	Commission Européenne	EC	European Commission
FAQ	Foire Aux Questions	FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
GWP	Global Water Partnership	GWP	Global Water Partnership
PFN	Point Focal National	NFP	National Focal Point
PPM	Pays Partenaires Méditerranéens	MPC	Mediterranean Partner Countries
UE	Union Européenne	EU	European Union
UT	Unité Technique	TU	Technical Unit
IME	Institut Méditerranéen de l'Eau	MWI	Mediterranean Water Institute
RIOB	Réseau International des Organismes de Bassin	INBO	International Network Basin Organizations
GEIE	Groupement Européen d'Intérêt Economique	EEIG	European Economic Interest Group