

Assessment and prospects for cooperation in the Mediterranean water sector

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE STUDY

*Water is a priority issue for all the Mediterranean partners and will gain in importance as water scarcity becomes more pressing.*¹

A- Introduction

Water is a vital component of the economic and financial section of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership that was launched in Barcelona in 1995. Cooperation in this sector was defined during two ministerial conferences on local water management:

- in December 1996, in Marseilles. This conference initiated the Euro-Mediterranean Information System on know-how in the Water Sector, known as EMWIS;
- in October 1999, in Turin. This conference saw the birth of the Turin Action Plan that formed the basis of the MEDA programme on local water management launched by the European Commission.

Since 1995, the European Union has developed a number of other initiatives for regional cooperation in the water sector, particularly in the fields of environment and research, including: the SMAP programme, MedStat-Environment, the Horizon 2020 programme for combating sea pollution, and the Mediterranean component of the European Union Water Initiative.

In parallel, within the scope of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) has defined the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, which was ratified by the Contracting Parties in November 2005. The “water” section of this strategy was greatly influenced by the prospective studies carried out by the MAP’s regional activity centre, the Bleu Plan. These studies highlighted the necessity for better water demand management (balancing supply/demand).

Other initiatives also exist beyond the two above-mentioned contexts, for example, those developed by Global Water Partnership Med, the Mediterranean Water Institute, the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organisations, the Strategic Partnership for Global Environment Fund, etc.

Since 2007, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has come within the scope of the European Neighbourhood Policy –ENP-. The ENP Instrument foresees a regional cooperation programme whose main lines of action have yet to be fully defined. On the initiative of its French presidency, the EMWIS Steering Committee launched the study of a Mediterranean water observation mechanism, and would like to make propositions for defining a regional programme in the sector of in land water management. The European Commission has decided to use these propositions for

¹ *Mediterranean Water Charter, Rome 1992*

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE STUDY

undertaking further investigations, as well as a debate with the stakeholders, with a view to establishing a large consensus and defining regional action lines in this sector.

These propositions could contribute, on the one hand, to the organisation of a conference for Euro-Mediterranean and South-East European water ministers, set for end 2008 during the French presidency of the European Union; and, on the other hand, to the project put forward by France of creating a Mediterranean Union.

B- Goals

This mission has two goals:

- To make an inventory of all existing regional and national initiatives based on meetings with their managers, partners and beneficiaries. A distinction will be made between those initiatives whose processes are more political or institutional in character, and those more technical. It will also include an account of the resources at their disposal for further actions. The actors' roles in relation to each of these different processes will be defined. Attention will be given to identifying any possible overlapping skills and complementarities, with a view to proposing a better framework for coordination between actors and initiatives. Potential ways of coordinating with the European Environment Agency will also be analysed.
- To make propositions for strategic recommendations over a ten-year period, and for the most workable action plan for cooperation between Europe and third-countries in the Mediterranean basin. The propositions will take into consideration the water domain in a more general context linked to the environment and to sustainable development. They will deal with essential² questions relating to policies for management and protection of water resources and for water services, and will take into account those efforts already made, progress achieved and coordination needs.

For additional information, where possible an inventory will be made of other partners identified in the same domain, comprising multilateral, bilateral and decentralised initiatives.

C- Calendar

The suggested calendar for achieving this mission is as follows:

- 12 November 2007: preliminary note
- 26 November 2007: intermediate report presenting the initial results, to be disseminated to water directors of Euro-Mediterranean countries, the Balkans and Libya in preparation for the Euromed Water Directors' Conference to be held in Slovenia on 10 and 11 December 2007.
- 10–11 December 2007, during the same conference: presentation of the intermediate results to the water directors.
- May 2008: final report and summary with a view to preparing the declaration at the Euromed Water Ministers' Conference in November 2008

² see appendix for list of themes proposed for information by the EMWIS Steering Committee in July 2007

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE STUDY

The setting-up of this study will be financed by the Water Directorate of the French Ministry for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Spatial Planning, which will be the coordinator. The study will be led by a high-ranking engineer, Mr H. Lainé. The EMWIS technical unit will provide support to the consultant with references, documentation, contacts and completed works.

The work will be under the aegis of an international pilot committee, which was defined at the EMWIS Steering Committee meeting held in July 2007. This committee comprises representatives from Morocco, Egypt and France (voluntary member countries of the EMWIS Steering Committee), from Greece (leader of Med-EUWI) and from the European Commission. Communication with the Committee is to be made electronically.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE STUDY

Appendix

List of themes proposed by the EMWIS Steering Committee in July 2007

- Impact of climate change on water resources (prospective studies)
- Evaluation of water resources that can be mobilised, conventional and non-conventional
- Management of extreme phenomena (floods, drought / water scarcity)
- Integrated water resources management by catchments area, taking into account the necessary reinforcement of water demand management,
- Taking water into account in sectorial policies - in priority for the agricultural, industrial and tourism sectors,
- Governance and efficiency of water and sanitation services,
- Optimisation of financing instruments and development of innovative financing mechanisms,
- National and regional information systems (including regional water observation mechanism) and tools for exchange of know-how and good practices,
- Introduction of technology clusters and technological development,
- City networks and decentralised “water and sanitation” co-operation,
- Training and capacity building
- Pollution of water bodies, specially groundwater
- Water and biodiversity, wet lands protection
- Energy print of the infrastructures related on water and the sanitation.