

Coordination Committee Seminar Algiers – 27-28 June 2006

CONCLUSIONS

(2006-07-04)

The 6th meeting of EMWIS Coordination Committee took place in Algiers on 27 afternoon and 28 June 2006 under the presidency of Algeria. The meeting was attended by 11 National Focal Points –NFP- (Algeria, Egypt, France, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey). The Cypriot, Israeli and Maltese NFP were unable to attend the meeting (justified absence). This seminar was organised back to back with the Regional workshop on National Water Information Systems (26-27 morning June, 2006).

After the welcome address by Tahar AICHAOUI, Algerian Water Director, the most important recommendations from the last Euro-Med Water Directors meeting held in Rome last November were presented to the participants.

During the review of EMWIS progress, the NFP were reminded that updating their website is a priority. In some cases (e.g. Jordan and Palestine), the NFPs are preparing a new version and therefore did not maintain the online information but it is suggested to inform the users that a new website is under development with a banner on the home page. Otherwise end-users will never visit it again. In other cases, new information has been uploaded, but the date on the home page was not updated, webmasters must take care about this process.

The monthly EMWIS electronic news Flash is a real success with some 6 000 subscribers to the English version, 2 500 to French version but less than 100 for the Arabic version. It is expected that with the new EMWIS international portal more people will subscribe to the Arabic version, but NFP from Arabic countries were also invited to promote the subscription to the Arabic EMWIS e-Flash into the national water community.

Due to technical problems, the new EMWIS international portal was not presented in details but the prototype is accessible from www.emwis.org and some features were discussed such as:

- the NFP private area providing good practices support, template and guidelines (user names and password can be requested from the Technical Unit)
- the multilingual thesaurus and glossary
- the water projects database
- the web portal tool kit allowing the NFP to set-up a national website with minimum resources

The progress of the 2 last topical studies was presented. It was reminded that 4 topics were introduced at the Malta Steering Committee meeting in 2004 to focus on more specific themes of interest for the Med region beyond the 5 general EMWIS topics (institutions, Documentation, Training, Research and development, Data administration):

- Use of non-conventional water resources (theme of the Turin Action Plan)



- Value of some concepts of the EU Water Framework Directive and the Mediterranean Partner Countries for the MPC – completed and presented at the Euromed water directors in November 2005-
- Irrigation water management (theme of the Turin Action Plan)
- Integrated management of local drinking water supply, sanitation and sewage (theme of the Turin Action Plan) – completed and presented at the Euromed water directors in November 2005-

The objectives of these studies, which have limited resources, are to prepare bibliographical synthesis as well as review of experiences for Euromed water institutions and identification of major specialized initiatives that can provide in-depth specific knowledge (e.g. MEDRC for desalination). NFP have been invited to publish web pages dedicated to the relevant topics with available information and national reports.

The study on “non-conventional water resources” was based on a questionnaire sent to the NFP to collect the information (pre-filled information for the desalination section). The presentation highlighted that some figures on desalination or waste water reuse have to be updated even for countries who did reply to the questionnaire. NFP are invited to contact directly [Juan-Antonio VERA](#) (CEDEX) to provide him with the complementary information.

Juan Canovas CUENCA (IMIDA) outlined the findings of the study on “Irrigation water management”, which was based on a bibliographical research. He gave more details on the Algerian case. The country reports on “Irrigation Water Management” will be sent to the NFP for validation before online publication.

The EMWIS orientations for the period 2007-2010, validated at the last Steering Committee meeting were presented:

- 3 horizontal priorities to maintain EMWIS national and international websites, to prepare a regional water observation mechanism and to organise and support the Euro-Med Water Directors Forum
- 5 vertical priorities to undertake activities for the transfer of know-how **leading to tangible results** in the Mediterranean Partners Countries (MPCs):
 - **National Water Information Systems** (NWISs)
 - **Participative approaches** in Integrated Water Resources Management
 - Prevention and risk management related to the extreme phenomena (in particular the **water scarcity and floods**)
 - Non conventional water resources with two sub-topics: the **desalination** and the **re-use of waste water**
 - The local management of sanitation services and the prevention of **domestic pollution**

Working groups will be set-up for the 4 last priorities. A brainstorming session allowed outlining the operative rules, objectives and activities of the working groups. The potential membership and leadership of countries in the different working groups were also discussed. The EMWIS Technical Unit will ask the Water Directors to validate the leadership, the membership and mandate (see document in annex).

The first analysis of water projects database was presented. It was an opportunity to introduce the main EU programmes funding projects in the water sector (MEDA-Water, MEDA bilateral agreements, SMAP –i.e MEDA Environment-, LIFE Third Countries,



INCO-Med –Research-). Today, this database includes some 125 EU funded projects; The NFPs have the opportunity to publish the relevant projects on their website (using content syndication). Projects funded by other institutions will be added in collaboration with the NFPs. Two additional EU initiatives were identified: [IWRM-Net](#) and [INTERREG – MEDDOC](#), the relevant projects will also be added to the database. These sources of information will also be useful for the above mentioned working groups.

Each NFP presented their activities and progress. These presentations were also the opportunity to exchange information on:

- The MEDA monitoring missions held in 5 countries (Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, Lebanon, and Israel) as well as at the Technical Unit. It was noticed that a mission was planned in Palestine to visit the NFP but it was cancelled without further details.
- The EMWIS impact in the countries, the following benefits were mentioned: sharing of experiences with water institutions from other countries, catalyst for National Water Information System development, better knowledge of MEDA-Water projects
- The potential indicators to follow NFP activities, the main ones identified were: web statistics, references to the NFP website (links), number of organisations providing information to the NFP for publication, content published, user satisfaction (using surveys). It was agreed that the Technical Unit will publish and update “benchmarking” indicators, including NFP web statistics on the NFP private area.
- Potential new content for NFP websites, such as: progress on NWIS, projects taking place in the country (possible syndication from the Technical Unit website), web pages dedicated to the EMWIS topical studies

It was noticed that the national planning for implementing the work-programme activities defined by the NFP have to be updated in a realistic way. Indeed, some delays for the national activities might not be compatible with the current EC contract ending in November 2006. A time extension will be analysed.

With regard to the **financing of 2007-2010 programme** proposed at the conference of the Euro-Mediterranean Water Directors in Rome in November 2005, it was reminded that the procedure proposed by the European Commission requires a strong mobilization of the Euro-Med Water Directors in order to inform the Commission on their will to continue the current activities and to work on a limited number of priority topics that will lead to tangible results in their country. In Lebanon, the Minister of Water and Energy contacted the EC delegation to express its satisfaction and priorities for future activities. The EC delegation welcomed this letter and is analysing potential support to the development of the NWIS. This case could be used as a good example for other countries.

Following the round-table on **financing NWIS** organised during the regional workshop the day before the EMWIS coordination seminar (26 June), several options have been identified:

- Requesting support from the EU delegation or other donors in the framework of a global bi-lateral agreement to support the water sector in the country. This was the case of Tunisia for the development studies (funded by the World Bank), Algeria (NWIS is integrated in a global water support project) and more recently in Lebanon
- Using the African Water Facility to support the definition of common water information standards and further development in North African Countries. A proposal will be prepared by the Technical Unit with Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia (the involvement of Libya will also be analysed).



The next EMWIS **events planned in 2006** are:

- Training seminar for IT manager for NFP willing to implement the new EMWIS web portal tool kit (September 2006, Sophia Antipolis)
- Euromed Water Directors meeting, 6-7 November, Athens. A Steering Committee meeting should be organised back to back to this event
- Training seminar for data managers, in Madrid in November 2006 (probably 14/16 November)

Finally, the organisation of the next World Water Forum in Turkey was also pointed out as good opportunity to promote EMWIS.

The Algerian Authorities and its NFP, the Basin Agency of Constantinois-Seybousse-Mellegue, were thanked for their welcome, as well as all the National Focal Points for their work and active participation.

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