

Buenos dias,

Dear EC representatives,  
Dear EEA representatives  
Dear project partners,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before starting my speech, I would like to thank our project partners: EVREN & CHJ for the hard work done together in this project, thanks to the CEDEX for hosting this workshop, thanks to the EC for its support and thanks to our Moroccan and Tunisian colleagues for accepting to join us here.

EMWIS is a strategic tool for exchanging water sector information among Euro-Mediterranean Partnership countries, began operating in 1999. Countries involved in EMWIS include the 43 members of the Union for the Mediterranean. It provides members with a means to collect, exchange and disseminate information on water in the region, particularly in light of the high level of water stress in the Mediterranean region. EMWIS focuses on assisting the Mediterranean Partner Countries to develop their own water intranets and to allow more coherent water planning. EMWIS aims at collecting and facilitating the sharing of information and experiences, as well as the development of common tools and cooperation programmes, in the water sector.

EMWIS focal point in Spain is the CEDEX, and we have been working with several Spanish water public and private actors (Ministry of agriculture, food and environment; REMOC, ADASA Sistemas, CHJ, CHS, Agbar, University of Valencia, CSIC, etc). Moreover, EMWIS & EVREN have been collaborating in the past in the preparation of the Euro-Mediterranean conference of water ministers held in Barcelona in April 2010.

EMWIS has conducted several projects funded by the European Commission, including in the framework of the ENRTP to support the Med Joint Process working groups and activities related to data harmonization based on SEEA-W.

EMWIS is the leader of the UfM Regional project: "Creating Shared National Water Data Management Systems towards a Mediterranean Water Knowledge Hub", which aims at implementing "data, information and statistics on water, based on internationally agreed definitions and methods, structured within information systems, for analysis and decision making" as requested by the UfM Ministerial conference on Water held in Jordan, in December 2008. Information has been identified as a weak point for many Mediterranean countries regarding their national strategy, especially insufficient knowledge about water abstractions or economic data, or regarding transboundary water resources management. In order to address these issues and to be sure that the deliveries of the project will be used in a sustainable manner, the scope of the project includes all data required for Integrated Water Resources Management Planning and Water Regulation at a river basin or aquifer level or at national and regional level. The project will adapt and transfer knowledge gained in Europe, at the UN level and in some advanced countries on water data management. In this context, several initiatives are of particular relevance: the EU Shared Environmental Information System –SEIS- initiative with guiding principles on inter-institutional cooperation, content driven developments, infrastructure enabling seamless data interconnectivity; the INSPIRE Directive for spatial data infrastructure; the Water Information System for Europe (WISE) for data structure; the UN System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water (SEEA-W) for aggregating physical and economic data.

EMWIS is also involved in the framework contract with the EEA for the extension of SEIS to ENPI South countries. Hence, EMWIS joined EVREN in the current project to offer its platform to share the

pilot exercise results with EU and non-EU countries which share basins with Member States or are involved in the EU Neighbourhood Policy actions.

EMWIS has been working under the project: “Towards a Mediterranean water information mechanism compatible with the water information system for Europe (WISE)” on the establishment and implementation of policies compatible with the principles of sustainable development promoted by the EU and the transition towards a Shared Environmental System in the Mediterranean. The project resulted among others in:

- Testing data collection in pilot areas (Sebou and Litani river basins), using the water quantity reporting tool set up for EU expert group on water scarcity and drought
- Preparation of National Water Information Systems based on Water data harmonization in 2 pilot countries (Tunisia and Jordan) using the water accounts approach defined the UNSD and promoted by MedStat Environment programme.
- Guidance documents on data harmonisation and compatibility with WISE and INSPIRE
- Implementation of a metadata catalogue of water data sources with a map server compliant with INSPIRE implementation rules (discovery, search and view services for spatial data)
- Reporting to the Water Expert Group to the Union for the Mediterranean

Together with the EEA, the Commission has developed **water accounts** at river basin and sub-catchment level. These accounts will need to be further refined with Member States and stakeholders in the context of the WFD CIS, but they provide the ‘missing link’ in many river basins for water management. They tell water managers how much water flows in and out of a river basin and how much water can realistically be expected to be available before allocation takes place. Water accounts fill a gap by bringing together knowledge that so far was only available in a scattered and piecemeal manner. If widely implemented, they could go a long way towards helping to solve water scarcity problems, e.g. by better analyzing structural and episodic categories of water stress and providing better insights for water resource indicators. Water accounts are closely linked to the identification of ecological flow as they should ensure that the needs of nature are respected and that water balances within a river basin stay within sustainable limits. But water accounts alone are not enough as the information they provide is only the basis for action.

Hence, the development the European Catchment and Rivers Network System (ECRINS) and its application for processing physical water accounts at elementary catchment level is a first step towards combining it with economic accounts to further support drought & water scarcity management plans and mainly the choice and the monitoring of the programmes of the measures to be adopted.

In this current project, we have worked on obtaining and assessing socio-economic, environmental and climatic data, develop updated water accounts according to water availability and existing demands in the Júcar River Basin district, all which allowed assessing existing desertification risks. It is intended, through management and water savings recommendations, to contribute to halting water scarcity, drought and desertification in the basin and optimize the drought management plan. Hopefully, we can transfer the lessons learnt in this project to other river basins around the Mediterranean and exchange with their authorities, and why not work for “Blueprint to safeguard Mediterranean’s Waters”.

Finally, I hope that we take advantage of today to discuss all the work done in our project and discuss the ways to improve it and transfer it and make its outputs concrete in the drought management plans and the water policies in general.

Thank you for your attention. \*\*\*\* Jauad El Kharraz / EMWIS \*\*\*\*