

# TOWARDS A REGIONAL WATER OBSERVATORY MECHANISM FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

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## CHALLENGES & BACKGROUND

The principle of a global observation mechanism on water and sanitation has been brought up many times in international bodies. The European Union presented its vision at the 13th Commission for Sustainable Development, held in New-York in April 2005. The final document published by this Commission incorporates the key measures proposed by the EU to continue the progress made towards the objectives set by the international community: a global mechanism based on national and regional mechanisms, the improvement of data collection and the comparison of information.

On the basis of the mandate assigned to EMWIS by the Euro-Mediterranean Ministers at the Turin Conference on Local Water Management, the Euro-Mediterranean Water Directors agreed, during their conference in Rome in November 2005, upon the *“Study, with the voluntary countries, of the objectives and feasibility of building up, within EMWIS, a Mediterranean water observation mechanism to monitor the indicators tracking the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals related to water and sanitation in the Mediterranean, as well as the implementation of the “water” component of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, based on the information provided by the National Water Information Systems, when they do exist.”*

## ABOUT THE FEASIBILITY STUDY

The feasibility study has been launched mid-2006, it includes the following components:

- An analysis of expectations regarding such a mechanism at regional and national level
- National diagnostic studies with first voluntary Mediterranean Countries: Cyprus, France, Jordan, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia
- A synthesis of the various existing national and regional observatory mechanisms
- Evaluation of potential activities on some key water related topics: access to drinking water and sanitation (MDG7); water & sanitation component of the Med Strategy for Sustainable Development; Water for agriculture; water and sanitation services; Drought/water scarcity; Impact of climate change
- A set of prototype tools: catalogue of data sources, web portal, web mapping, ...
- Outline vision: mission, targeted users, geographical and thematic scopes
- Proposal for an implementation scenario (organisational structure, technical architecture, common standards to be used for data exchanges, outputs production dissemination procedures, provisional planning, detailed budget, ..)

## GLOBAL VISION

The 1st phase of the study (2006) has resulted in a global vision of the situation with identification of 2 main priority levels of action for the establishment of a regional mechanism:

1. **The need of reinforcing the capacities of the Mediterranean countries** in supporting the organisation of their national water information system (NWIS). As most of the data used at regional level come from the national level, the production of reliable and comparable national data is of prior importance. So, further to possible support to the « NWIS » development (or equivalent), the mechanism has to respond **to the countries needs, such as contributing to reinforce the production processes related to data of common interest** both for national and regional organisation.
2. **The need for building a framework for co-operation and dialogue between the regional and national organisations.** Considering the multiplicity of water related policies in the Mediterranean region and the lack of regional coordination of the various actors, it is firstly recommended to develop a **“Mediterranean Water Information Partnership” (MEDWIP). On a voluntary basis, this partnership should aim to meet the expectations of information users for an effective water resources management in the Mediterranean working in particular on the rationalisation and co-ordination of the production of reliable and comparable data, and on the enhancement of this data with the expected information on its quality**

## WHO IS CONCERNED

The observatory mechanism will support decision taking related to water management at regional level and could directly benefit to national and regional organisations:

- **National organisations** would benefit of more efficient technical and financial support to develop their own national water information system and to produce reliable data and indicators useful for national and regional IWRM, public information. etc. All voluntary **local organisations** could also benefit of

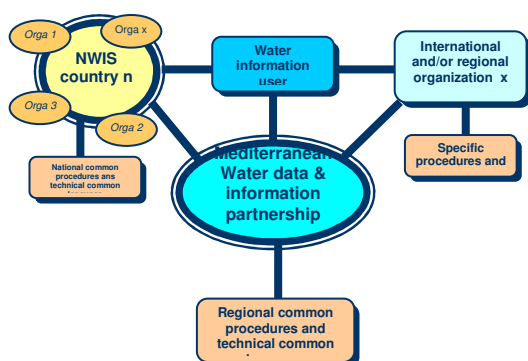


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(or contribute to) the potentialities that will be offered by the Mediterranean water information partnership in terms of access to specific data methodologies and tools (like catalogue of data sources) to promote their knowledge and activities

- **International organisations** (e.g. UN-Water, EU, MAP, WWC), could benefit of an easier access to reliable national or local data, and could promote their activities, building synergies and avoiding duplication of efforts for data collection, sharing tools and technology related to interoperability... Organisation supporting development projects shall also benefit from the availability of reliable data to prepare new projects and monitor the impact of the actions.

Finally, the **public in general** interested by environment and water management will also benefit of access to synthetic information based on reliable data with possibilities of looking at the status of a specific topic at local, national or regional level.



### MEDWIP BASIC PRINCIPLES

The partnership could be based on a charter defining some basic principles such as:

- voluntary participation of the members (international and national):
- openness to any organisation producing, administrating and/or using water data and information in the Mediterranean;
- Added value for members,
- Quality insurance

### POTENTIAL OUTPUTS

The findings and potential roads for development will be reviewed during an expert's workshop 3-4 July 2007 in Madrid, and some draft recommendations will be presented to the next conference of the Euromed water directors (October/November 2007)

However, various potential outputs and specific services can already be foreseen and could be developed in reinforcing synergies between existing actions in a number of topical or transversal projects that could be lead by voluntary organisations, e.g.:

- A shared regional catalogue of data sources can be developed to facilitate, metadata declaration, data source identification, and data uploading when authorisation is given by the author (a first prototype is under development within the feasibility study)
- The use of spatial technologies can be promoted at regional level to support data production at national level
- Better coordination of data production and enhancement on the main priority water related topic such as:
  - *Monitoring the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals related to water and sanitation;*
  - *Monitoring "water" component of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development*
  - The management of water demand following its various uses (agriculture, tourism, ...)
  - The improvement of water supply and sanitation efficiency
  - The necessary adaptation of water management to climate changes
  - .....
- Support to the development of national water information system or data production processes can be organised through exchange of experience between the countries, experts' mission supports, financing support ....
- .....