



**MEDITERRANEAN COMPONENT
of the EU Water Initiative
(MED EUWI)**

**Strategic Partnership on
Water for Sustainable Development**

Lead Country: Greece

**BRIEFING
on key activities in 2009
and activities planned for 2010-2011**

**Presented at the
EUWI Coordination Group
4 December 2009, Brussels**

MED EUWI Lead Country



Hellenic Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change
Department of International Relations and EU Affairs
15, Amaliados str., 115 23 Athens
T: +30 210 64 65 762, 64 59 213
F: +30 210 64 34 470
E-mail: m.peppa@tmeok.minenv.gr, m.papaioannou@tmeok.minenv.gr
Web: www.minenv.gr/medeuwi/

MED EUWI Secretariat



Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med)
12, Kyrristou str., 10556 Athens, Greece
T: +30210-3247490, -3247267, F: +30210-3317127
E-mail: secretariat@gwpmed.org
Web: www.euwi.net

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1. Background

In the Mediterranean, it is considered that significant progress on water and sanitation issues as well as on promotion of more sustainable water resources management has been achieved in the last two decades in most countries of the region. Despite this, water challenges remain enormous, exacerbated further by population growth, increasing urbanisation trends and climate change implications. Furthermore, political tensions have often set back development, as well as social and environmental agendas, also in relation to transboundary water resources management.

The Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI) constitutes an integral part and one of the geographic Components of the overall EUWI. It represents a strategic partnership among all related stakeholders (national, regional and international) in the Mediterranean region, aiming to contribute to the implementation of the water-related MDGs and WSSD targets. It, thus, seeks to make significant progress in poverty eradication and health, in the enhancement of livelihoods, and in sustainable economic development in the Mediterranean and Southeastern Europe, providing a catalyst for peace and security in the region which is a vulnerable and sensitive one from both an environmental and political view point.

MED EUWI is led by the government of Greece (Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change and Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The MED EUWI Secretariat within the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean Secretariat provides technical support and day-by-day running; this function is financially supported by the Greek Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change. The Euro-Mediterranean Water Directors Forum has served as institutional support for the implementation of MED EUWI, providing advice and guidance on MED EUWI's further development and implementation. Based on Ministerial Decision (22 December 2008, Dead Sea, Jordan), the latter has evolved into the Water Expert Group that currently has as its main task the elaboration of the new Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean.

MED EUWI develops its activities based on a demand-driven approach and through annual work programmes, supported also through the participation of a variety of institutions and stakeholders.

According to MED EUWI prioritization, the Component's activities until 2015 will focus on prioritization of national needs for the water sector to meet national targets; implementation of national planning activities including assistance to countries for the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of IWRM plans including national climate change adaptation strategies; development of sustainable financing strategies for the water sector; and improved donor coordination, harmonization and alignment on the ground. In addition, MED EUWI contributes actively to the follow up and implementation of the decisions taken at the 2008 Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water, including the elaboration of the SWM as a first important step.

2. Highlights of 2009 and key planned activities in 2010-2011

2008-2009 was an intensive and fruitful period for MED EUWI. Among key results of MED EUWI activities in 2009 and planned steps in 2010-2011 based on demand explicitly raised by partner countries, the following can be highlighted. At different levels, all activities involve donor coordination approaches and actions.

2.1. National Policy Dialogue on Water in Egypt

Phase I of the National Policy Dialogue on Water in Egypt was completed in April 2009 through an active multi-stakeholder approach. Outputs included two components: i) a household affordability assessment regarding water tariffs and ii) a sustainable financing strategy for WSS including analysis of alternative development scenarios. The geographic focus of the analysis for both components was the Greater Cairo area.

Activities were led by the Egyptian Holding Company for Water and Wastewater, while OECD and GWP-Med provided technical support and co-ordination. About 60 targeted Egyptian stakeholder organisations (Ministries, government bodies, utilities, civil society, donors) have been systematically informed and involved in the Dialogue. Activities were financially supported by the European Commission (MEDA Water Programme), the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA – Hellenic Aid) and the GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystems (GEF SPM).

Activities in 2010-2011 will aim at providing further strategic support for achieving financial sustainability in the water sector of Egypt. The envisaged key outputs include (i) a sustainable financing strategy for the irrigation sector and (ii) policy document on the potential for private sector involvement in the Egyptian water sector and the policy reforms needed in that respect. The envisaged key outcome will be the advanced integrated water resources management in Egypt incorporating financial sustainability considerations and measures. Consultations with key Egyptian authorities and preparatory activities have taken place in 2009 in close cooperation with OECD. Funding for part of the activities has been secured by the Greek MFA (Hellenic Aid) and the GEF SPM, while additional resources have been requested by the EC (EUWI Thematic Budget) through a related comprehensive project proposal.

2.2. National Policy Dialogue on National IWRM Planning in Lebanon

The two-year Phase I of the National Policy Dialogue on National IWRM Planning in Lebanon was completed in April 2009 through a multi-stakeholders approach. Outputs included the review of the Lebanese 10-Year National Strategic Plan (2000-2009). The review tackled the issues of water balance, water management, supply and sanitation, irrigation and capacity building and produced related recommendations.

Activities were led by the Lebanese Ministry of Energy and Water, while GWP-Med with a team of international consultants provided technical support and co-ordination. About 50 targeted Lebanese stakeholder organisations (Ministries, government bodies, utilities, civil society, donors) have been systematically informed and involved in the Dialogue activities. Activities were financially supported by the EC (MEDA Water Programme) and the GEF SPM.

Activities in 2010-2011 will aim at providing further strategic support to the water governance reform and IWRM process that is underway in Lebanon. The envisaged key outputs include (i) detailed ToR of a National IWRM and Water Efficiency Plan, analysis and recommendations on links between National Development Strategies and the National IWRM Plan and (iii) a National IWRM Plan, to the extent feasible by available data. The envisaged key outcome is that the national authorities are equipped with necessary tools to enhance the IWRM process in Lebanon. Consultations with key Lebanese authorities and preparatory activities for these have taken place in 2009. Funding for part of the activities has been secured by the GEF SPM while additional resources have been requested by the EC (EUWI Thematic Budget) through a related comprehensive project proposal.

2.3. Water governance reform activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

The Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) has elaborated a comprehensive plan for water governance reform at the Occupied Palestinian Territories (West Bank and Gaza Strip). MED

EUWI Secretariat assisted PWA in elaborating in more detail particular activities aiming at promoting institutional reform and strengthening the role of PWA to deliver its objectives.

Activities in 2010-2011 will aim at providing strategic support to the water sector reform process that is currently underway in Palestine. The envisaged key outputs are (i) an Emergency Response in Gaza, (ii) a Crisis Management Strategy in Drought Years and (iii) a Comprehensive Legal Review for the Water Sector. The envisaged key outcome is a more effective provision of WSS services to the Palestinian people through better operation of the relevant institutional and legislative frameworks. Funding has been requested by the EC (EUWI Thematic Budget) and the Greek MFA (Hellenic Aid) through related comprehensive project proposals.

2.4. IWRM planning activities in Tunisia

Following invitation by the Tunisian Ministry of Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources, a Training Course on IWRM for middle level managers of the Ministry was organized on 12-15 October 2009, in Tunis. The Course was co-organized by GWP-Med, UNEP-UCC / DHI and the Tunisian Ministry.

Responding to interest expressed by the Ministry for follow up activities on IWRM, *activities in 2010* will aim at providing strategic support to further promoting IWRM principles and methods in Tunisia. The envisaged key outputs are (i) an IWRM status assessment for Tunisia that will also complement national efforts to upgrade the Water Strategy 2030 and (ii) related capacity building activities. The envisaged key outcome is that the national authorities are further equipped with the necessary tools to enhance the IWRM process in Tunisia.

Financial contributions will be provided by GEF SPM and UNEP-UCC/DHI while interest of the African Water Facility is currently being explored.

2.5. Dialogue and capacity building for transboundary water resources management in Southeastern Europe

A rich set of inter-country and multi-stakeholder dialogue and capacity building activities on transboundary water resources management in Southeastern Europe was implemented in the framework of the *Petersberg Phase II/ Athens Declaration Process*. Issues addressed included institutional settings, public participation, sustainable financing and climate change adaptation.

Six sub-regional multi-stakeholder events were organized in different locations in the Mediterranean Balkans with the active contribution of national authorities and/or institutions per event. Furthermore, the Drin River Basin Dialogue was launched with the key participation of Albania, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo as well as the Joint Commissions of the three transboundary lakes in the area (Prespa, Ohrid, Skadar). Activities were supported by UNECE, Sweden, UNESCO Venice Office, UNDP, Germany and Greece.

Activities in 2010-2011 will aim at further promoting synergies and building stakeholders' capacity for integrated management of transboundary water resources. The envisaged key outputs are (i) capacity building workshops and field visits supported by technical material and (ii) full development of river-specific dialogues like in the Drin and possibly in Sava. Financial support is expected from UNECE, Sweden, UNESCO Venice Office, UNDP, Germany and Greece.

2.6. Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean

The *Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water* (22 December 2008, Jordan) decided the elaboration of a new long term Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean (SWM) through a Water Expert Group (WEG). The four main themes of the SWM are: water governance, water and climate change adaptation, water demand management and water financing.

MED EUWI assisted with the organization of the Ministerial Conference and has an instrumental role in the elaboration of the SWM by: assisting with the preparation of the SWM ToR (presented by Greece and Spain to the WEG and agreed); providing secretariat and technical assistance to the WEG; providing support for the organization of WEG 1 Meeting (Athens, 7-8 September 2009) and WEG 2 Meeting (Cairo, 4 November 2009) and assistance to the UfM Co-Chairs on related tasks; assisting Spain in its role as coordinator of the Technical Drafting Group within the WEG; co-organising the major multi-stakeholder Egyptian / Dutch Regional Conference on providing input to the SWM (Cairo, 2-3 November 2009 – more than 270 participants attended); etc. Activities were supported primarily by the EC with contributions from Greece and the Netherlands on specific activities.

Activities in 2010 will aim at assisting with effectively delivering the SWM that is planned to be agreed upon during the Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water, 12-14 April 2010, Barcelona. This includes securing timely preparation of texts, organization of WEG and TDG meetings, secretariat support to the WEG, etc. Furthermore, in assistance to the process, MED EUWI will elaborate an Assessment of No-Regret Measures for SWM Implementation at country level based on the agreed SWM recommendations. Financial support is expected by the EC and Greece.

2.7. Additional activities

- Following demand raised, scoping of MED EUWI interventions is planned in Syria, Jordan and Morocco and possibilities of funding of such activities will be explored.
- Exploration of ways to further expand cooperation with the OECD / Horizontal Programme of Water in relation to the Country Policy Dialogues and the SWM as well as for assisting to enhance replicability of OECD's innovative work on water financing.
- Possibilities for launching activities on transboundary water resources management in the Middle East are explored with competent national authorities and in collaboration with bilateral and multi-lateral donors.
- Assistance to the activities of the Working Groups of the Joint Process between the EU WFD and MED EUWI will be provided as appropriate and according to MED EUWI financial and human capacities.
- Educational activities will be implemented as appropriate in close cooperation with the Mediterranean Education Initiative for Environment and Sustainability.

3. Some lessons learned

Highlighting MED EUWI experiences gained through the implementation of activities at regional (since late 2004) and national (since late 2006) levels, the following points can be raised:

- Due to the strong political nature of the MED EUWI activities, a key prerequisite is that these must **respond to demand** expressed by key national and regional authorities and be integrally embedded in national and regional political processes. Consequently, constraints and risks are heavily influenced by such political processes and have to be frequently assessed and adjusted. **Anchoring activities at high political level** is an absolute asset, bringing-in recognition, support, synergies, outreach, etc.
- MED EUWI is not a donor agency, but a process, driven by national authorities where activities take place and are supported by existing donors working at national and regional levels. It is likely that other related processes are on-going in the countries of scope and thus, synergies need to be secured. MED EUWI as such, does not intend to have a constant presence in the countries (e.g. establish country offices, etc) but, at the same time, it expresses a collective long-term commitment from the EU side. Hence, **MED EUWI should aim for a catalytic effect** on

addressing specific water challenges, providing targeted assistance as an 'external' and 'neutral' agent to critical decisions that countries wish to examine and eventually make.

- The **design phase of Country Policy Dialogues is time consuming**, particularly when the aim is on highly strategic (e.g. review of on-going National Strategy, launching a process for a national IWRM plan, elaboration of priorities for water reforms) or controversial (e.g. water financing) issues where careful steps have to be taken.

- The **stakeholder consultation is a key tool** for setting the agenda for technical activities and policy interventions, for improving governance and transparency and for trying to reach a common understanding and consensus on the themes tackled. In some partner countries, the culture of stakeholder involvement or of partnerships is not advanced substantially. Therefore, MED EUWI's contribution on enhancing that culture by advocating for and implementing partnership approaches is among its added value.

- **Capacity** of national (and sometimes even regional) partners to follow activities in a significant way, particularly when it requires a multi-disciplinary technical and political background, is not always adequate and often **has to be built** or critically supported by MED EUWI while the intervention is on-going.

- **MED EUWI can catalyze aid effectiveness through better donor harmonization and alignment** at the national level as well as **induce increased ownership by partner countries** themselves. Practice has shown that such donors' coordination exists in a limited number of countries in the region while in some cases, and although a coordination mechanism is in place, scope or modalities for actual cooperation may not be at the level needed. Attention has to be paid to engage interested donors and related on-going programmes and projects from the beginning of the MED EUWI process aiming to enhance coordination and synergies as well as to secure assistance for implementation of the outcomes of the MED EUWI intervention aiming at practical and measurable results.

- **Expectations from MED EUWI activities must be realistic** and their impact can be mostly demonstrated in the medium and long-term, particularly since the set objectives respond to related far-reaching targets. This may present obstacles in defining quantifiable indicators for monitoring the Project activities, however considerable related experience exists in the Consortium through the management of previous MED EUWI activities. The political and strategic character of the MED EUWI and its objectives continue to require strong and regular political support by appropriate high-level structures within the Partner Countries, the EC and the Member States. On the EU side, this calls for greater commitment from the EU Member States and the EC and allocation of appropriate financial and human resources for administration, management and follow-up of the MED EUWI.

- **Closer operational links are needed** between the MED EUWI and ongoing bilateral and regional programmes supported by the EC, the Member States and other development partners in the region including the UN organizations and overseas ODA. Effective and operational links have been already achieved with several UN initiatives and programmes in the region as well as International Financing Institutions (IFIs). Of key importance is the developing operational link between MED EUWI and the Horizon 2020 Initiative to De-Pollute the Mediterranean as well as other ENPI policies and framework activities. Furthermore, the new Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean will further guide MED EUWI priorities in the coming years.

Practice and application have demonstrated that MED EUWI is a useful process with a distinctive added value at the national and regional levels. As documented in the Conclusions of the Conferences of the Water Directors of the Euro- Mediterranean and Southeastern European Countries, in the MED EUWI Reports and, recently, in the ToR for the Elaboration of the SWM agreed by the WEG, the demand for action as well as the wide recognition that MED EUWI is receiving have been growing rapidly, signaling the effectiveness and appropriateness of its activities.