

**BARCELONA PROCESS: UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN:  
EURO-MEDITERRANEAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON WATER**

**Working towards strengthening the coordination of existing Euro-Mediterranean initiatives and networks on information and expertise, policy planning and monitoring as well as capacity building**

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*This document is part of the proposals that are being made for the preparation of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Water.*

One of the recommendations that Ministers in charge of water should put forward in their ministerial declaration concerns in general ‘*the strengthening of cooperation in particular in the fields of Integrated Water Resources Management and Water Supply and Sanitation*’ and because of the importance of data and information, they call for ‘*strengthening the coordination of existing Euro-Mediterranean initiatives and networks on information and expertise, policy planning and monitoring as well as capacity building*’.

*The document was discussed in a first step by the French, Italian, Spanish, German and European Commission water experts.*

**1. A country’s success in terms of water policies depends in particular on the use of efficient governance tools**

Given that water resources are becoming more and more scarce while demand continues to grow, Mediterranean countries must become involved in important investment projects in order to strengthen the efficiency of their different water uses, mainly aiming to modernize irrigation techniques and water management systems, by developing non conventional resources, mobilizing existing resources, carrying out water transfers, fighting against pollution and rehabilitating networks. All the above actions have to take in due account social and environmental considerations.

The success of water policies and investments is linked to the use of good governance practices in each country, through political decisions to change or adapt water legislation and to strengthen water institutions, to introduce stakeholder participation processes, transparency and accountability in the sector. Therefore, developing activities such as developing capacity building in the field of governance, legislation, institutional arrangements, national and local planning, etc. , fostering research and development, strengthening national documentation centres and training and education courses and developing national information management and monitoring are instrumental for the Mediterranean countries.

The description of such activities and tools is presented in Annex A.

Up to now, the development of these various national tools – capacity building, data systems, information centres, training sessions, research and development programmes –in countries located within the southern and eastern Mediterranean regions is considered as a good initiative due to the expected benefits resulting in terms of: higher efficiency and operational management quality, efficient support regarding planning tasks, improved water distribution, encouraged participative management and allowing the proper follow-up / assessment of international initiatives...

However, these countries must yet continue to deploy their efforts in this direction by accomplishing the following tasks: defining a capacity building and training strategy, standardizing their data and indicators, modernizing water collection networks and organising data management tasks, structuring national information and documentation organizations,...

Therefore, cooperation in this field is of primary importance. **Contributions from both sides –donors and beneficiary countries- should facilitate the setting up, development and management of these activities and tools.**

## **2. The Mediterranean water strategy and its information and expertise, policy planning, monitoring and capacity building –related dimension**

The Mediterranean water strategy as decided by the Heads of States and governments on 13 July 2008 in Paris will benefit from the development of national tools for good governance as well as the development of efficient regional action based upon these same tools.

As stated in the Paris Summit, the Strategy is based on ‘promoting conservation of water resources, diversifying water provisions resources and efficient and sustainable use of water.’

The strategy shall follow a number of principles: taking different types of action, mainly in terms of adapting to climate changes and to environmental needs, exceeds the scope of one sole country or one organization, therefore requiring a collective approach that calls for increased coordination and cooperation.

This strategy must be in conformity with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000), the targets set at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD, 2002) as well as the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, which was decided by all concerned Parties who participated in the Barcelona Convention, agreeing on the following objectives: (i) stabilizing the existing demand for water, (ii) promoting integrated management at watershed level, (iii) achieving the MDGs, (iv) promoting participation, partnership, active cooperation and solidarity management of water at a local, regional and national levels.

This strategy shall build upon and strengthen the previous actions carried out in the Mediterranean by a variety of international and national partners and it should link on-going, future and past-plans (including the Ministerial Conferences on Water held in Marseille in 1996 and in Turin in 1999).

As proposed in the ministerial declaration, and in addition to the general coordination of organisations, institutions and initiatives, ‘strengthening the coordination and synergies between the existing Mediterranean initiatives and networks on information and expertise should contribute further to the elaboration, implementation and follow-up of the Strategy by:

- a. facilitating the development of national information systems, national documentation centres and related training activities ;
- b. Developing, at regional and national level, within the context of existing initiatives and governance mechanisms, exchange systems inter alia on : (i) water related information and monitoring, (ii) documentary data, (iii) professional training (iv) prospective analysis, (v) research, know-how and technology’.

The development of exchanges systems should be based on existing works in the different fields mentioned in Annex B.

It is necessary to recall that Mediterranean countries belonging to the European Union have already created a common base that includes such functions. It is therefore necessary to analyse whether this existing base is completely compatible with the initiatives that will be developed for the whole Mediterranean region.

### 3. Proposals and timeframe

A number of projects, initiatives, mechanisms, “networks” are already in place in the Mediterranean. Therefore jointly aiming towards strengthening the coordination of existing Euro-Mediterranean initiatives and networks on information and expertise, policy planning and monitoring as well as capacity building appears as a common objective for partners in the region.

#### When?

The related recommendation included in the Ministerial declaration is accompanied by timeframe mentioned in the Annex 1 of the Declaration:

*‘Developing strengthened coordination of the existing Mediterranean networks of information and expertise on water, including **first discussions in early 2009** covering inter alia water information, policy planning and monitoring, capacity development and sharing of expertise and the development of partnerships as from 2009.’*

#### Who?

The first discussions should bring together a set of participants from the northern and southern Mediterranean regions who have created other initiatives.

These participants should include at least: *the **Euro-Mediterranean Information System on Know-how in the Water sector (SEMIDE)**, the Mediterranean department for the European Initiative on water issues (Med – EUWI), the Blue Plan as well as other regional Centres deriving from the Barcelona convention, the European Environmental Agency, all relevant organisations belonging to the United Nations (FAO, WHO, UNESCO), the OECD, The Arab League, the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations (REMOB), the Mediterranean component of the Global Water Partnership (GWP – Med), the Med-Wet Programme, the World Council for Water, the Information and Observation System on Water in the Balkans (BALWOIS), the international Network of training centres for water related professions that is under development and last but not least, other representatives of the civil society (Mediterranean Water Institute, local and international NGOs) as well as aid organizations.*

Other structuring programmes may also constitute meaningful contributions, such as the “follow up” procedure within the “Meda-Water” (RMSU) transnational programme for local water management and the SPI-Water project for the transferability of European countries’ know-how towards other Mediterranean countries. The comprehensive list of skill-based centres throughout the Mediterranean region shall in any case be performed within the framework of a joint and collaborative approach.

In a first stage, the interested parties should be convened for these first discussion in early 2009.

#### What?

The aim of this approach shall be to identify the different stages needed and the most suitable framework in order to strengthen the coordination of existing Mediterranean networks of information and expertise which shall be independent and neutral, as well as capable to provide support to countries that are developing their national tools for good governance.

Another objective shall be that of implementing the practices described above at a regional level, trying to establish the highest possible synergy.

Mediterranean countries display a high potential in terms of organisations that have developed skills and projects that correspond to the functions being suggested in this document. Collaboration between these countries may be improved by developing common programmes and objectives as well as by enhancing each country’s means aiming to benefit a cooperative approach. A coordination effort must be developed in order to implement these functions at regional level.

## **How?**

Among the different possibilities that could be envisaged to develop the coordination of these existing networks, several operational modes are foreseeable, such as:

1. entrusting the responsibility to a sole participant, taking care to ensure that there is consistency between functions,
2. for each of the regional functions, entrusting the responsibility to a clearly identified binomial participants, one from the north and one from the south of the Mediterranean, who are considered to be the best entitled to carry out each task in conjunction with the other concerned parties,
3. promoting and strengthening the interlinkages between participants who hold a different status and nationality but work in areas that complement each other, based on partnerships, and e.g. organised on the principle of a " Knowledge Hub ". Participants working in binomial couples, where one is from the north and the other from the south of the Mediterranean, shall be considered as leaders in their area of expertise.

In each of these options, analysis should be carried out in order to identify the possible links.

The subsidiarity principle must be taken into account in the issues being analysed, whether it is used to define which issues shall be studied within a regional or a national framework or whether it is used to identify which participant is the most suitable for each type of responsibility.

The Water Expert Group, to be decided by Ministers, is tasked *'to elaborate further the Strategy as well as to assist its implementation and follow-up'*.

This Expert group will therefore play a technical role as regards the development of *strengthened coordination of the existing Mediterranean networks of information and expertise on water*.

## ANNEX A:

### ***National water data collection and monitoring system***

Supporting national information management and monitoring efforts based on internationally agreed definitions and methods should be a first priority when addressing the issue of water-related information. A ***national water data collection and monitoring system*** is an essential element for each country and is needed in order to provide reliable background for defining, implementing and evaluating each country's water policies.

Such data collection and monitoring systems requires:

- collecting, validating and storing necessary data (both physical and socioeconomic data) in terms of water resources, water use and water quality,
- sharing this data among concerned parties,
- elaborating and applying a system of useful indicators which must be approved internationally and shall help ensure proper follow-up regardless of the different geographical levels,
- creating awareness within targeted partner groups of the water sector, including the civil society (ex: user associations) and allowing its members to have access to material on water use and management issues and, therefore, facilitate their full involvement.

***Strengthening structured national documentation centres***, which is already being carried out in most Mediterranean countries, is also needed in order to make existing information more easily accessible and in order to allow the exchange of know-how in each country.

***Developing capacity building in the different fields of water is a crucial task in the success of each country's water policies as well as basic and up-graded training and education courses pertaining to water-linked professions.*** These activities must address governance aspects related to institutional settings, legislation development and enforcement, meaningful public participation and capacity building for planning – on the national level – , application of IWRM tools, modelling, etc.

Training sessions and more generally capacity building sessions, must address all of the institutional and technical aspects, particularly related to IWRM, drinking water production and water treatment or irrigation, both in terms of conceiving works for water infrastructure and in terms of water system use, maintenance and management. Training must be suitable for all types of public and private professional categories within the public and private sectors.

It is essential to ***launch or support stronger national programmes for research and development*** in relation to strategic issues regarding water-saving techniques, non conventional resources or suitable agricultural varieties and governance aspects. Increasing the dissemination of these results on site is equally important.

## ANNEX B:

### Development of exchanges systems

#### **(i). *Water related information and monitoring:***

Feasibility studies have been performed for this issue within the framework of the terms of reference issued by the conference held for Euro-Mediterranean water managers in Rome in 2005. The conclusions of the studies demonstrate the need for a project that would give participants access to reliable and relevant data, which is currently lacking in the region. It would help support all integrated resource management policies and would also help prevent risks. The project would be based upon each country's voluntary contribution and would provide information on water resources (renewable, renewable, non conventional), their use (domestic: water and treatment services, production: agriculture and industry, environmental) in terms of demand, loss, efficiency, environmental pressure (water withdrawal, overdraft, deterioration) and risks (droughts, floods, sedimentation of reservoirs, water shortages). This data may be compared to information regarding sustainable development in the Mediterranean region, as well as by using the "WISE" European water data system,

#### **(ii). *Documentary data***

The exchanges in this fields were initiated approximately ten years ago within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Information System on Know-how in the Water sector (SEMIDE) and are currently based on 20 national operational focal points located within each of the respective countries. Its development would count upon each nation's voluntary contribution and would improve access to information concerning policies, institutions, techniques, best practices, facilities, infrastructures and the economy within the sector... that have been set up by each country in different areas, falling under the priorities of the Mediterranean water strategy (conventional and non conventional mobilization of resources, efficiency of water use, drinking water production services and water treatment services, Private and Public Partnerships, securing long term investments ...).

#### **(iii). *Professional training:***

The exchanges in this sector would aim at promoting standard educational activities in all national training centres. It would help elaborate training schedules that are adapted to the specific needs of a targeted audience. It would also have the following objectives: promoting the exchange of training staff, making existing training offers more visible, providing common multilingual educational tools, opening regional training sessions within the Mediterranean, developing distance training, jointly answering relevant calls to tender which are issued by double or multilateral financial backers, and promoting quality procedures within national centres.

#### **(iv). *Prospective analysis:***

Water prospective studies that have been carried out in the Mediterranean region are an important tool used to raise awareness among decision-makers and participants, both at a national and at a regional level. They provide information regarding the stakes of water resource management and they also help outline future trends, therefore enlightening the decision-making process. These studies are based upon the works of experts and must be based upon a framework that includes information and data on the networks mentioned above in order to develop new regional practices. The development of exchanges on this type of studies would strengthen what has already been carried out by the Blue Plan and should be linked with those concerning sustainable development in the Mediterranean region.

#### **(v). *Research, know-how and technology***

Coordination and exchanges in this field would aim to strengthen the interface existing between research and policies by giving emphasis to research results that have been useful in creating water policies for the Mediterranean. It would help improve technology transfer procedures (modern irrigation techniques, water treatment and wastewater reuse, rainwater collection, desalination, socioeconomic studies, tools used in encouraging user participation...).