



UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

Working towards strengthening the coordination of existing Regional initiatives and networks on information and monitoring

Draft concept note (V2.02)

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This note focuses on the information and monitoring dimension of the final declaration of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial conference on water held in December 2008 at the Dead Sea, Jordan.

Its objective is to initiate the preparation of a concrete proposal responding to the needs expressed by the Ministers, while taking into account country priorities and the existing initiative in the region.

The declaration of the UfM Ministerial Conference on Water recommends the preparation of a **“strategy for water in the mediterranean focused on the needs of populations and future challenges”**. In this document, the Ministers are addressing issues related to information:

10/ **“Ministers reaffirm the importance of data, information and statistics on water, based on internationally agreed definitions and methods, structured within information systems, for analysis and decision making and insist on the need to dispose of national and regional systems that contribute to the definition, implementation and follow-up of the Strategy;”**

11/ **“Ministers hence 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 so as to increase synergies between ongoing activities; in particular, exchange of information will be implemented through voluntary approaches, keeping in mind the objective of seeking comparability, consistency and avoiding duplication of work ;”**

12/ **“Ministers underline the importance of exchange of good practices, including through EU, Mediterranean, and other relevant programmes.”**

1. A country’s success in terms of water policies depends in particular on the use of efficient governance tools, particularly in the field of national water data collection and monitoring system

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 improve the efficiency of their different water uses, mainly aiming to minimize water demand, modernize irrigation techniques and water management systems, by instil water-saving behaviour among the users, 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 clear and shared objectives, 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, 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.

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 in order to provide reliable background for defining, implementing and evaluating each country's water policies.

Such data collection and monitoring systems require:

- collecting, validating and storing necessary data (both physical and socioeconomic data) in terms of water resources, water use and water quality, based on homogeneous procedures between national actors
- facilitating the sharing of necessary data among concerned parties, respecting confidentiality rules;
- 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,
- Developing the data management tools and organising the production and dissemination of the expected information, taking benefits of the latest applications of information and communications technologies
- sharing experience and good practices between all water users
- creating awareness within targeted partner groups of the water sector, including the civil society (eg: water user associations) and allowing its members to have access to information on water use and management issues and, therefore, facilitate their full involvement.

Therefore, cooperation in this field is of primary importance in order to develop water policies based on coherent and comparable information. **Contributions from every country should facilitate the setting up, development and management of these activities and tools.**

2. The Mediterranean water strategy and its information and expertise 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 water chapter, 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. The guidelines for the development of the Strategy have defined the framework for a horizontal activity:

- a. facilitating the development of national information systems,
- b. developing, at regional and national level, within the context of existing initiatives and governance mechanisms, exchange systems inter alia on water related information and monitoring,

3. Proposals and timeframe

A number of projects, initiatives, mechanisms, “networks” are already in place in the Mediterranean (see annex). Some Mediterranean countries have already created a common base that includes such functions thanks to various international frameworks: the European Union (e.g. WISE¹), UNEP-MAP (e.g. SIMEDD²), Sahara & Sahel Observatory, Pan African water monitoring & assessment launched by AMCOW, UN-Water, MedStat, etc. It is therefore necessary to analyse whether the existing bases could be used as good practices and are completely compatible with the initiatives that will be developed for the whole Mediterranean region.

What?

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 directors in Rome in 2005. The conclusions of the studies demonstrate the need for strengthening national water information systems and for a mechanism 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. This mechanism would be based upon each country’s voluntary contribution and would provide information on water resources (renewable, non renewable, non conventional), their use (domestic: drinking 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, water pollution).

The aim of this approach shall be:

- Defining a common minimal set of relevant data required for the follow-up of the Mediterranean water strategy and related projects
- Agreeing on the “interoperability” between the indicators used in the framework of the different initiatives in order to streamline the various collection processes related water data in the Mediterranean countries
- Providing support to countries that are developing their national tools for good water governance, by implementing, when relevant, the good practices resulting of regional and national initiatives and thus establishing the highest possible synergy
- Providing a framework in order to strengthen the coordination of existing Mediterranean networks of information and monitoring which shall be independent and neutral,

How?

The first step should be the creation of a small working group to define quantified objectives, a concerted operational work programme as well as governance and management options. That could result in a concrete project proposal for an horizontal activity of the UfM for the water sector.

¹ Water Information System for Europe

² Mediterranean Information System on Environment and Sustainable Development – Blue Plan – UNEP/MAP

The Water Expert Group, decided by Ministers at the Dead Sea conference in December 2008, 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 in the governance of the development of *strengthened coordination of the existing Mediterranean networks of information and expertise on water*.

Who?

The first discussions should bring together a small working group of participants representing:

- Some Mediterranean “networks” working in this field, e.g. the Euro-Mediterranean Information System on Know-how in the Water sector (SEMIDE), the UNEP-MAP Blue Plan, GWP-Med, ACWUA, CEDARE and the Water Center of the League of Arab States.
- Mediterranean countries with some experience in this field (e.g. Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Cyprus, Syria, Turkey, France, Spain) to be defined by the members of the Water Expert Group of the UfM

A larger list of relevant participants that should be involved in the implementation of such activity is provided in annex 2.

When?

The related recommendation included in the Ministerial declaration is accompanied by timeframe mentioned in the Annex 1 of the Declaration (item 15.c):

*‘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.’*

A tentative timeframe is provided in the table below:

Dates	Events	Objectives
February 2009	2 nd water week of Beirut (Lebanon) Meeting of the water directors from South and Eastern Mediterranean Countries	First discussion of the concept paper Identification of interested bodies
March 2009	World Water Forum in Istanbul	Launch of a working group to define a concrete valuable horizontal activity/project
April/may	1 st meeting of the water experts group of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)	Validation of the approach
May-June 2009	Dedicated workshop to be organised back to back with an existing relevant event (to be identified)	Definition of objectives and operational work-programme for this activity
End 2009	2 nd meeting of the water experts group of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)	Presentation and discussion of the horizontal activity as part of the action plan related to the Med water strategy
1 st semester 2010	UfM Ministerial conference on water, Spain	Validation of the horizontal activity as part of the action plan related to the Med water strategy

**Annex 1 – List of some regional water related information system initiatives in the Mediterranean region
(non exhaustive)**

Euromed context				
Abbreviations	Name	Coverage	Type	Topics
SEMIDE/ EMWIS	Euro Mediterranean Water Information System (EMWIS Technical Unit / national water authorities)	Euromed	Portal	Water
MEDSTAT Database	Database of the Euro-Mediterranean Programme for co-operation on statistics (MEDSTAT/Eurostat)	Euromed	Statistics	Environment
SMAP	SMAP Clearing house (-)	Euromed	Portal	Environment
EU System				
Abbreviations	Name	Coverage	Type	Topics
SEIS	European Shared Environmental info System (EEA) with its project of Mediterranean Component (DG Env)	European (EEA Countries)	-	Environment
WISE	Water Information System for Europe (EC)	European (EEA Countries)	Portal, geographic and Data	Water
Eurowaternet/ EIONET	European water monitoring network (EEA) European Information and Observation Network on the Environment (EEA)	European (EEA Countries)	Portal	Water
CCM	Pan european river and catchment database (JRC)	Pan-Europe	Geographic and Data?	Water
-	European Drought Observatory and early warning system (planned for 2012)	-	-	?
MAP				
Abbreviations	Name	Coverage	Type	Topics
InfoMAP	UNEP-MAP Web portal being developed by RAC/INFO MAP	Mediterranean	Portal	BC protocols
SIMEDD	Mediterranean Information System on Environment and Sustainable Development (UNEP-MAP Blue Plan),	Mediterranean	Geographic and Data	Sustainable Development
ICAM	Clearing house coastal management center (UNEP-MAP PAP/RAC)	Mediterranean	Portal	ICAM
MEDPOL IS	MEDPOL Information System (UNEP-MAP MEDPOL)	Mediterranean	Portal / Monitoring	LBS Protocol

UN System

Abbreviations	Name	Coverage	Type	Topics
AQUASTAT	FAO Global information system on water and agriculture	World	Data	Water
GEMS WATER	Global Environment and Water Monitoring System (UNEP)	World		Water
JMP Database	JMP database for the evaluation of the water supply and sanitation utilities (JMP UNCEF/WHO)	World	Data	water supply and sanitation
GGIS	Global Groundwater Information System (UNESCO/WHO)	World		Water
WWAP portal	Web portal of the World Water Assessment Programme (UNESCO)	World	Portal	Water
GEO-GRID	Geo data Portal GRID (UNEP)	World	Geographic and Data	Environment
GIEWS	Global Information and Early Warning System (FAO)	World	Geographic and Data	Agriculture

Other context

Abbreviations	Name	Coverage	Type	Topics
IBNET Database	International database on the Benchmarking of water supply and sanitation utilities (World bank)	World	portal / data	water supply and sanitation
Tiger initiative	Use of space technology for water resource management in Africa (ESA)	Africa	Satellite images	Water
GEOSASS	Map server of the North Western Sahara Aquifer System (OSS- Sahara and Sahel Observatory)	Algeria, Tunisia, Lybia	Geographic and Data	water
TWIEN-SEE	Transboundary Waters Information Exchange Network for the Southeastern Europe region	Southeastern Europe	-	Water
IUCN	Inventory of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) of the Mediterranean Sea	Mediterranean	Inventory	Protected areas
-	Pan African Water Sector Monitoring and Evaluation Assessment (AMCOW)	Africa	-	Water

Annex 2
List of potential participants for the implementation

Categories	Organisations	Geo levels
Companies (e.g. water utilities)	ACWUA	Arab countries
IFI	African Water Facility	Africa
IFI	USAID	MENA
IFI	World Bank	Global
Int. Body	EC - ISPRA Joint Research Center	EU
Int. Body	EC DG Env	EU
Int. Body	EC Eurostat / MedStat	EU
Int. Body	European Environment Agency	Europe
Int. Body	ESCWA	ME - Gulf countries
Int. Body	UNEP-MAP Blue Plan	Med countries
Int. Body	UNEP-MAP Info RAC	Med countries
Int. Body	UNEP-MAP MED POL	Med countries
Int. Body	FAO - Aquastat	Global
Int. Body	JMP - World Health Organization / UNICEF	Global
Int. Body	UN WMO	Global
Int. Body	UNESCO Water	Global
Int. Body	World Water Assessment Programme	Global
Int. Body	ESA-ESRIN	Global
Int. Body	OCDE	Global
Local Authorities		
Media		
Nat. Gov.		Voluntary UfM countries
Network	CEDARE	Arab countries
Network	EMWIS	Euromed
Network	GWP Med	Med countries
Network	IME	Med countries
Network	Med EUWI	Med countries
Network	OSS	
Network	REMOC	Med countries
Network	World Water Council - Water Monitoring Alliance	Global
NGO	PSEau Med	
Research		
water user	Euro-Mediterranean Irrigators Community	
water user	MedWet	
water user	WWF	