

**Feasibility study on the
development of a
regional water
observation mechanism
in the Mediterranean
Region**

*Report on Phase 1 of the
Study*

Final version

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Name
AWF/FAE	African Water Facility
EC	European Commission
EC - DG Env	European Commission - DG Environment
EEA	European Environment Agency
ESCWA	Economic Commission for Western Asia
Eurostat	Statistical Office of the European Commission
EUWI	European Union Water Initiative
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GWP	Global Water Partnership
GWP - Med	Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean
Horizon 2020	EC 'Horizon 2020' initiative
IME	Mediterranean Water Institute
INFO-RAC	INFO - Regional activity center of the MAP
JMP	Joint Monitoring Programme
MAP	Mediterranean Action Plan
MED-EUWI	Mediterranean Component of the European Union Water Initiative
MEDPOL	Mediterranean Pollution Monitoring Programme
MEDSTAT	Euro-Mediterranean Statistical Co-operation Programme
MEDWIP	Mediterranean Water Information Partnership
MSSD/SMDD	Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development
OECD/OCDE	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSS	Sahel and sahara observatory
Plan Bleu/Blue Plan	Blue Plan- Regional activity center of the MAP
SEMIDE/EMWIS	The Euro-Mediterranean Information System on the know-how in the Water Sector
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WB	The World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization of the United Nations
WWAP	World Water Assessment Programme
WWC	World Water Council



I. INTRODUCTION

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 last 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 last 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.”***

The terms of reference of this study include:

- A 1st analysis phase, with the objective of defining the key orientations proposed for this mechanism;
- A second phase, which shall define detailed proposals for the implementation of this mechanism.

This report presents the outcomes of the 1st phase of the study, with in particular:

- A overview of the **current situation and needs**, expressed in the surveys conducted at the international level, which involved a large sample of initiatives and regional organisations¹, and at the national level regarding four pilot Mediterranean countries: Spain, France, Jordan and Tunisia.
- **The first conclusions and recommendations** aiming at organising, according to a pragmatic approach, phase 2 of the feasibility study of this “observation mechanism”.

¹ Among the international organisations involved there were: the European Environment Agency, the World Bank, the DG-Env. of the European Commission, the World Water Council, Eurostat/ MEDSTAT, FAO, GWP-Med, IME, Med-EUWI, Observatoire Sahara et du Sahel (Sahara and Sahel Observatory), WHO/UNICEF-JMP ..., MAP-INFO-RAC, MAP-Medpol, MAP-Blue Plan, UNEP-MAP, UNESCO WWAP, etc.



II. STUDY PURPOSE AND ORGANISATION

A. Study purpose

The principle of a global observation mechanism on water and sanitation is regularly mentioned by the international bodies.

The final document published by the Commission for Sustainable Development, held in New York in April 2005, incorporates the key measures intended to the follow-up of progress made towards the objectives set by the international community. This document especially underlines that:

- “The objectives stated in the Implementation Plan of Johannesburg and in the development objectives, agreed upon at the international level, in particular those stated in the Millennium Declaration, are complementary and **an integrated approach is needed;**”
- “The role - such as defined in the Implementation Plan of Johannesburg - that regional commissions and other regional and sub-regional institutions and bodies have to play in the implementation of Action 21², of the Implementation Plan of Johannesburg and of the development objectives agreed upon at the international level, including those stated in the Millennium Declaration, should be recognised;”

and recommends, among other things:

- **“To support, reinforce and ensure the voluntary follow-up, drafting of reports and evaluation in the fields related to water, sanitation and human settlements at the national and regional levels and by the mechanisms existing world-wide, in order to follow the progress made with regard to sustainable development, taking into account the specific needs of the developing countries, by, in particular:**
 - o **Improving data collection at all levels;**
 - o **Increasing data comparability at the regional and global levels;**”

In such a context, the principle of creating a Mediterranean regional observation mechanism was firstly mentioned in the EMWIS Steering Committee held in Athens on 23 June 2005.

Thereafter, the Euro-Mediterranean Water Directors agreed, in the resolutions of their conference in Rome in November 2005, upon the “Study, with the voluntary countries, the objectives and the feasibility of building up, within EMWIS, a Mediterranean water observation mechanism **to monitor the indicators tracking the achievement of the Millennium 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.**”



B. Organisation of the study

The feasibility study of this observation mechanism, whose terms of reference are appended in Annex A, was planned in 2 phases.

The **1st phase** is the subject-matter of this report. It was carried out from July to November 2006 and aimed at **drafting a first vision as well as key orientations**, which could be applied to this observation mechanism. It was based in particular on:

- A study of the expectations of the regional organisations and national partners concerned.
- An in-depth analysis of the information collection and production systems existing either at the regional or national level in the 4 pilot countries, selected for this 1st phase: France, Jordan, Spain, Tunisia.

The **second phase**, planned for 2007, should allow the **definition of detailed proposals**, by studying how a regional partnership could be organised and by developing complementary national studies on new voluntary countries.

• Organisation and follow-up during phase 1

As planned in the terms of reference, several consultants contributed to the implementation of phase 1: one for co-ordinating the study, for developing the overall vision and drafting this report, one for the regional study and one for each of the 4 national studies.

• Organisation of the study at regional level

A survey was launched at the regional level, involving various international organisations intervening in the area, with the purpose of:

- Analysing the operation and the difficulties encountered by the managers of the main collection processes, intervening in the area;
- Outlining possible synergies between the stakeholders;
- Identifying their expectations with respect to a potential regional water observation mechanism for the Mediterranean region.

The report, presented in Annex B1, summarises the results obtained from a large sample of stakeholders intervening at the regional level in various political contexts, including: JMP, Med Euwi, UNEP, MAP, DG-Env of the EU, EEA, Eurostat/Medstat, Blue Plan, UNESCO, the World Water Council, GWP, IME, the World Bank, etc.

• Organisation of the “country studies”

At the national level, the analysis of the situation and expectations was initiated in a similar way by 4 consultants in the 4 pilot countries, through surveys intended to:

1. Provide a synthetic vision of the organisation of water data management at the national level, and of the progress made in the implementation of a possible NWIS;
2. Collect the opinions and expectations of a sample of potential users with respect to a future regional water observation mechanism for the Mediterranean;
3. Analyse the information production and dissemination processes, implemented to meet the national and international needs.

The reports presented in Annex B2 summarise the results obtained in these 4 countries.



III. PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES OF PHASE 1

The analysis of the results of surveys conducted at regional level and in the 4 pilot countries (see report in annex B), combined with a bibliographical analysis, allowed to emphasize the following synthetic elements.

A. General issues and overview of the current situation

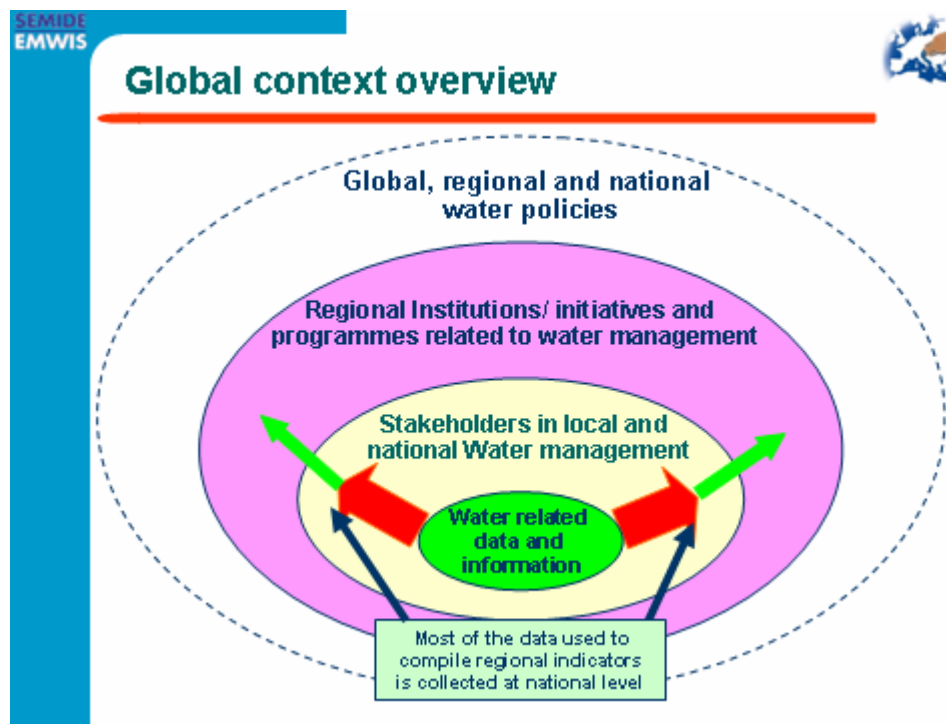


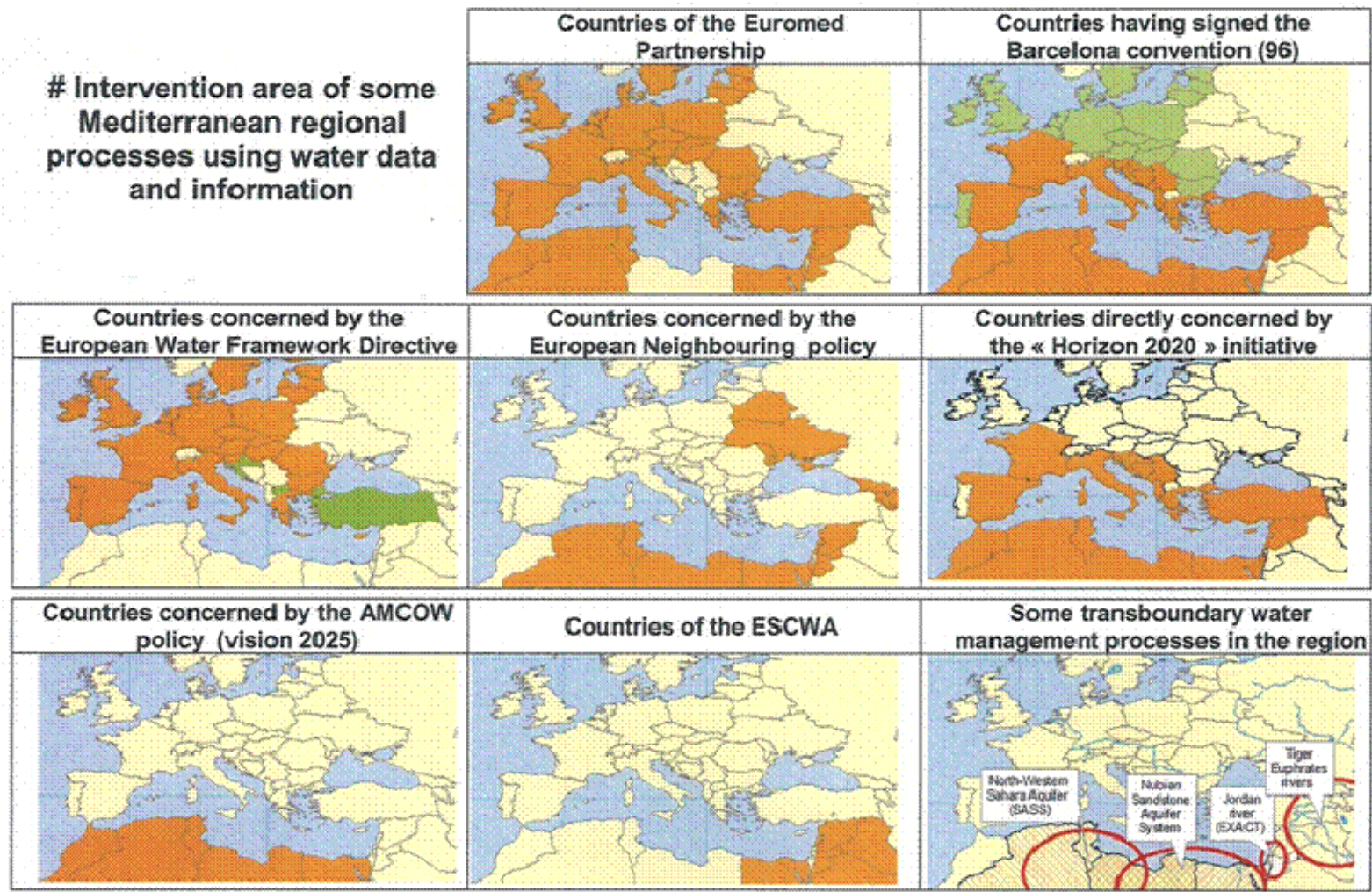
Figure 1: Overall background

Multiple policy processes involved

Knowledge of the status of the aquatic environments and of their uses is essential for defining, implementing, controlling and evaluating water policies.

However, one of the characteristics of the Mediterranean region is to include many national and regional policy processes, with a significant water component.²

² It should be noted that, at present, the Mediterranean region has no single framework for co-ordinating water policies, contrarily to Europe for instance, which can rely on the Water Framework Directive, or to Africa, which has a vision up to 2025, used as a framework for the various actions in the water field.



Indeed, water resources management in the area appears in:

- **The overall policies**, defined within the United Nations, which include a water component and whose follow-up is carried out using multiple indicators established at world level with regional approaches:
 - ◆ **Millennium Development Goals** (2000);
 - ◆ **Implementation Plan adopted at the World Summit for Sustainable Development** (Johannesburg -2002) ;
 - ◆ **Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development** (2005)
 - ◆ **Etc.**

- **Various regional policies**, covering all, or part of, the Mediterranean countries³, such as:
 - ◆ **The water policy of the European Community**, with the Water Framework Directive, which concerns all the EU countries;
 - ◆ **The EC policies for co-operation with the Mediterranean countries**: European Neighbourhood Policy, Initiative “Horizon 2020” dealing with pollution in the Mediterranean, etc.;
 - ◆ **The Barcelona Convention of 1976** for the protection of the Mediterranean sea and coastal areas, ratified by 21 Mediterranean countries and the EEC;
 - ◆ **The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership**; created by the Barcelona declaration of 1995⁴, and signed by the EC and a number of Mediterranean countries
 - ◆ **The African water policy co-ordinated by AMCOW**, which concerns the North African countries, among others;
 - ◆ **Etc.**

- **The national water policies of the Mediterranean countries**;

Multiple stakeholders at the regional and national levels

To implement these policies, **many stakeholders intervene at the national and regional levels, through multiple initiatives, programmes and/or projects**, some of them being based on very complete work programmes.

In the Mediterranean area, the regional organisations usually intervene in a dispersed manner, according to their own objectives and action logics. This led to redundancies in data collection.

Thus, **many monitoring processes and information systems** covering the region, already exist. Some of the most significant are listed hereafter⁵.

³ As the maps, presented in the preceding page, show it, these regional processes are often associated with different action areas.

⁴ Initially signed by the 15 EU Member States and 12 Mediterranean third countries, this partnership has now extended to 35 countries, due to the enlargement of the Union, and includes the environment as one of the priorities of economic co-operation.

⁵ A first inventory of the monitoring processes is available on the Monitoring Water Alliance website www.watermonitoringalliance.net



List of some information systems used for water resources management at the regional level

Acronym	Name of the information system
SEMIDE/ EMWIS	Euro-Mediterranean Information System on Know-how in the Water Sector
WISE	Water Information System for Europe (EC)
Eurowaternet	European water monitoring network (EEA)
EIONET	European Information and Observation Network on the Environment (EEA)
InfoMAP	Web portal being developed by RAC/INFO MAP
IBNET Database	International database on the Benchmarking of water supply and sanitation utilities (World bank / IBNET)
MEDSTAT Database	Database of the Euro-Mediterranean Programme for co-operation on statistics (MEDSTAT)
JMP Database	JMP database for the evaluation of the water supply and sanitation utilities (JMP)
Aquastat	FAO Global information system on water and agriculture
Millennium Indicator Database	Database developed by the United Nations Statistics Department for measuring the progress made towards the achievement of the Millennium Goals (UNSTATS)
GGIS	Global Groundwater Information System (UNESCO/WHO)
GIEWS	Global Information and Early Warning System (FAO)
GEO-GRID	Geo data Portal GRID (UNEP)
GEMS WATER	Global Environment and Water Monitoring System (UNEP)
MED-HYCOS	System for the observation of the hydrological cycle in the Mediterranean (WMO)
WWAP portal	Web portal of the World Water Assessment Programme (UNESCO)
.....	Etc

In addition, since the regional organisations are regularly encountering problems of dispersion and heterogeneity regarding received information, multiple bilateral/multilateral partnerships between regional organisations were created and various think tanks are now working on the homogenisation of the collection processes and on data standardisation (UN-WATER, EEA/JRC/DG Env. on WISE, EEA/UNEP/MAP, etc.).

Significance of the national data

The water-related data and information produced at the national and local levels are at the core and often the basis of the various stakeholders' actions: regarding regulatory, planning, risk management actions or public information, the managers of water resources need to have, in a lasting way, reliable, updated and relevant information available.

With regard to this matter, it is important to underline that most of the indicators used at the regional and/or global level, are based on data produced at the national and/or



local level (see fig. 1), therefore good operation at the national level and exchanges with the regional level are of utmost importance.

As regards exchanges of and access to data and information

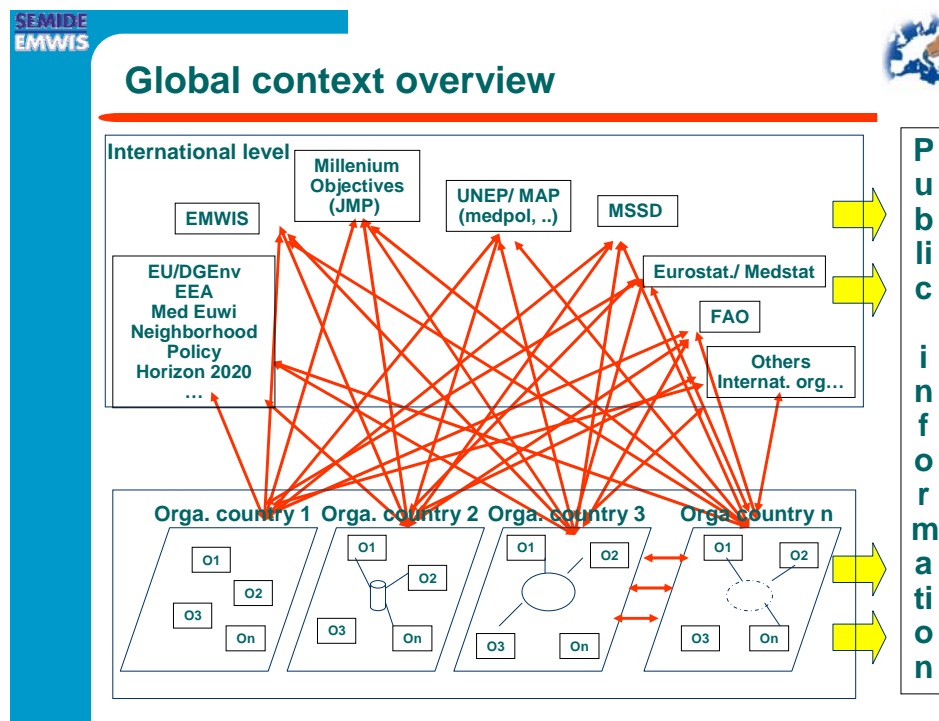


Figure 2: interface between the regional and national processes

The diagram above displays a summarised vision of the main issues encountered in the sharing of data and information necessary for following up the water and sanitation policy initiatives.

The first findings concern the fact that **exchanges between regional and national organisations are most often bilateral**. The result is:

- On the one hand, that **each country endeavours to provide consistent information in reply to the multiple requests of the regional organisations;**
- **On the other, that each regional organisation tries, at its own level, to standardise its exchange procedures with the countries, in order to receive from them data that are the most comparable possible,** consequently there are dispersed actions at the level of the countries, and duplications of activities between the various regional processes.

Secondly, the surveys reveal that **each international organisation usually relies on its own network of national focal points** and that these focal points are not always the producers of the disseminated information. However, the fact that most of the countries have not developed their internal procedures of access, exchange and enhancement of data and information (non-existent and non-operational national information system), means that **the national focal point itself is often encountering**

difficulties when accessing to the national information required by the regional level. The table hereafter shows the diversity of the National Focal Points for some initiatives, these focal points often having to call upon other institutions to have access to the relevant information.

Table highlighting the diversity of the focal points and information sources

Initiatives	Focal Points or main national contacts as information sources (or relays)	Among the topics covered by the initiative (non comprehensive list)
MEDSTAT-ENV	National Statistics Institutes	Freshwater resources, use and abstraction, water quality and treatment, environmental indicators for sustainable development
MedPOL	National specialised laboratories supervised by various Ministries: Environment (MAP Contracting Parties), Health, etc.	Pollution of coastal areas, including indicators on the pollution caused by rivers, urban and industrial wastewaters.
MSSD – Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development	Ministries of the Environment (MAP Contracting Parties)	Freshwater resources, use and abstraction, access to water and sanitation, index on the exploitation of renewable resources
EMWIS	Ministries in charge of water	General information on the water sector in each country and within regional co-operation. National water information systems
JMP -Joint Monitoring Programme-	Ministries of Health with the support of WHO and UNICEF national agencies (surveys carried out by specialised organisations)	Population having access to water and sanitation. Distribution between urban and rural populations Households connection rate
WISE –Water Information System for Europe-	Water Directorate or departments in charge of implementing the framework directive in the EU Members States	Core set of Indicators: Quality, freshwater use – urban wastewater treatment
IBNET	Service providers, regulators, universities, consultants	Performance indicators on water supply and sanitation utilities
.....		

Finally, since the various regional and national stakeholders disseminate the information independently and without co-ordination, the users are faced with a lot of sources of information specific to a topic and/or a sub-region, without a single access point available or a tool allowing them to identify and easily reach such or such information.



B. Analysis of the needs and expectations at the national and regional level

At the national level

Since most of the regional information is based on national data, one of the main challenges of the study is to propose orientations, which ensure an effective and lasting participation of the countries in the mechanism.

However, the countries' participation in this Mediterranean water observation mechanism will only be effective and lasting if the countries really benefit from it.

Taking into account the national needs is thus one of the key points for solving this problem. Accordingly, surveys were conducted within the scope of this study in each of the 4 selected pilot countries⁶. The preliminary outcomes can be summarised as follows:

1. The answers received highlight **the broad interest of the consulted organisations in a mechanism of the type “water information system in the Mediterranean”** or equivalent (see box below);

Extracts from national reports relative to the countries' interest in a regional observation mechanism (see annexe B1)

Extract from the “Tunisia” report

Practically all the contacted institutions highlighted: 1/ the usefulness of a Mediterranean water observation mechanism, which would be used to facilitate water information flows in the Mediterranean area and to promote the exchange of experience between the countries bordering the Mediterranean as well as the financing of projects on water resources development and protection against pollution in order to ensure a satisfactory well-being of the population.

Extract from the “Spain” report

According to the surveys received so far, most of the people interviewed consider that an Observation Mechanism for the Mediterranean is very important and could help Spain, and the rest of the Mediterranean countries, to organise and homogenise their information systems. It also provides an umbrella for a wider perspective of inland water issues and a forum where stakeholders could participate and share their particular views.

Extract from the “France” report

The contacted people agreed to say that the observation mechanism would be useful for international organisations. The Mediterranean and European organisations are mainly concerned: General Directorates of the Environment and Eurostat of the European Commission, the European Environment Agency, UNEP (for following up the Mediterranean Action Plan), the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development, etc.

Extract from the “Jordan” report

All interviewed stakeholders agreed on the importance of the Water Observation Mechanism (WOM) for the following target groups: international organisations, stakeholders in water resource

⁶ Note : these surveys will continue with new voluntary countries in the 2nd phase (2007).



2. Expressed **expectations** concern, above all, **the development of NWISs, with requests for exchanges of experience on:**

- **Organisation of inter-institutional co-operation to ensure effective data exchange**

Examples:

- *Spain: "our biggest problem is the big number of organisations and institutions with competence over water management and thus, in its information systems. This situation causes organisation problems and makes it difficult to know who should provide which information and how it should be displayed. Added to this, each institution chooses the topics of its interest, but there is no consensus on which are the most important."* (SP)

- *Jordan: "Most stakeholders agreed that the mechanism would support the organisation and development of national water information systems in the interested countries."* (JO)

- **Organisation of the monitoring of water resources, uses, services and management policies**

Example: According to the surveys received so far, most of the people interviewed consider that an Observation Mechanism for the Mediterranean is very important and could help Spain, and the rest of the Mediterranean countries, to organise and homogenise their information systems.

- **Development of a common language** for data to ensure semantic homogeneity during exchanges (e.g. data dictionaries, common coding lists, central standard format)

Example (FR): For most interviewed organisations, the mechanism should also be a relay between the collection processes at the international level and the national and local sources, in order to facilitate the collection and the production of comparable information at the regional level, especially for:

- *Supporting the definition of common reference frames between the international organisations and the countries*
- *Supporting the production of lacking information at the regional level*

- **Organisation of the dissemination and access to the data** made available by the producers

Examples (Tunisia): Importance of entrusting the future mechanism with potential assignments, dealing with:

- *... The methods for collecting and producing information and for its dissemination at regional level.*

- **Data enhancement**

*Example (JO): "There is a need for development of a **set of indicators** that cover the important elements in the water sector (such as sanitation, delivery of water, networking, etc.) to be linked with **MDG7 and poverty alleviation**"*

3. Other more specific expectations also concern:

- **The support to the production of lacking information (identification/ financing/homogenisation of processes), etc.;**
- **The promotion of common methodologies for analyses** at the regional level (especially a method for evaluating the resources, uses, socio-economic impact, water accounting, etc.);
- **The strengthening of international co-operation between Mediterranean countries.**



At the regional level

At the regional level, the surveys show a great interest of the organisations and consulted experts:

Extract from the analysis report at the international/regional level (see annex B1)

“This pre-feasibility study identified and investigated a large number of processes and institutions involved with collecting and monitoring water-related data and information at the regional Mediterranean level.”” While a lot of work is already been done, the difficulties identified by the experts in their work shows that there still is considerable room for improvement regarding water-related information and data provision.”

“... the large majority of experts welcomes the plan to set up a Mediterranean water observation mechanism that could fill a number of relay / interface functions.”

The major problems raised by the international and regional organisations in relation to their data administration activities can be summarised as follows

- **Difficulties in identifying and accessing data, due to:**
 - ◆ A great number of fragmented and uncoordinated collection processes, including validation aspects; ”
 - ◆ The lack of catalogues of information sources;
 - ◆ The general absence of metadata on the available national data;
 - ◆ The dispersion and little accessibility of the existing data at the level of the various national and/or local stakeholders (ex: data seldom available on the Internet)

- **Collection problems**, even within the framework of established processes (Blue Plan, Medstat, Aquastat, IME, etc.) for the following reasons, in particular:
 - ◆ The national focal point is not always the data producer and is seldom connected to a smoothly running system of exchanges with the other national producers (lack of NWIS), therefore, there are:
 - Significant times for obtaining data updates;
 - Irregular data updating;
 - An uncontrolled and uncontrollable information quality as there is no indication on the production process;
 - ◆ Difficulties in obtaining data from some European countries, “overbooked” by their obligations of producing data for the European directives ;
 - ◆

- **Major problems of heterogeneity, completeness and quality of the received data** (JMP, Aquastat, Medstat, IME, OSS.), with, in particular:
 - ◆ Problems linked to the lack of clear production processes and of a common technical language for exchange, leading to:
 - Heterogeneities between countries, for lack of common definitions or consistent definitions of the variables and indicators;
 - Non comparable information for lack of standardisation of the production processes or calculation methods (heterogeneities in



- the calculation methods between various organisations of the same country, and/or between various international organisations);
- ◆ Problems linked to the lack of metadata:
 - No information on the production processes (who, when, where, how, on what...), leading to the difficulty of identifying the adequate data;
 - No easy quality control for lack of knowledge of the production processes;
 - ◆ A strong monitoring discontinuity over time or geographically;
 - ◆ Provided data which are incomplete or not adapted.
- **Lack of data suited to the needs**, especially on the various major topics, such as:
- ◆ Water resources:
 - Description of the aquifers;
 - Groundwater quality;
 - Availability of groundwater resources;
 - ◆ Uses:
 - Water demand for the various uses, especially for agriculture;
 - "Self supply";
 - ◆ Socio-economic aspects:
 - On-going investments;
 - Investments needed for achieving the MDGs;
 - Impact of water shortages and droughts;
 - Socio-economy of uses;
 - ◆ Drinking water supply and sanitation utilities:
 - Drinking water supply and sanitation coverage rate in rural areas;
 - Results of the benchmarking of urban utilities.
- **Needs for key data allowing for consolidations** or specific multicriteria studies:
- ◆ At basin (or sub-national) level for all topics;
 - ◆ According to the type;
 - ◆ For each ecological area (marine waters for instance).
- **Needs for co-ordination of data production for the regional level:** The proliferation of the collection processes at regional level means that the countries are not readily willing to provide information.
- **Problems of sustainable financing of monitoring:**
- ◆ Many systems for monitoring the resource status are stopped for lack of sustainable financing;
 - ◆ Many surveys are never conducted for lack of financing.
- **A structuring of the (national and international) information systems usually not adapted to the exchanges.**



C. Conclusions and recommendations

1. First conclusions

This first phase of the feasibility study emphasizes, above all, that there is a **strong general demand for a mechanism of the type “regional water observation mechanism”** (or equivalent).

This demand is unanimously expressed by the international organisations and the majority of the national organisations.

When these various stakeholders are asked about the assignments to be entrusted to such a mechanism, the answers show that each of them has its own vision, according to its expectations, and many recommendations and proposals (for example on the name to be given to the mechanism) were presented in the survey outcomes.

On the contrary, although the opinions vary on the scope of the assignments to be given to the mechanism, all agree to say: **“be careful not to duplicate the existing institutions or information systems”**.

Thus, after analysing the answers to the surveys, **2 priority axes** seem to win unanimous support:

1. **Necessity of building the capacities of the Mediterranean countries** in order to better meet the information needs of the regional level, while each country would keep its autonomy when organising its national water information system (NWIS).

Further to possible support to the development of their « NWIS » (or equivalent), the mechanism will be of **real interest to the countries**, if it can, above all, **contribute to reinforce the data production processes**, that meet the regional and national expectations, by rationalising and by creating synergies in the information requests from the international organisations on the one hand, and, on the other, **by studying with the countries the possibilities of sustainable financing of these processes**.

2. **The need for building a framework for co-operation and dialogue between the regional and national organisations** in order to meet, as well as possible, the expectations of users of the information necessary for effective water resources management in the Mediterranean, with, on the one hand, the rationalisation and co-ordination of the production of comparable data, and, on the other, the organisation of the production of and access to reliable, comparable and quality information.

2. First recommendations

Taking into account the conclusions of the first phase of the study, the general interest raised by the mechanism in particular, the continuation of the study should allow:



- To specify the synergies, which could be developed between the various international, national and/or local stakeholders;
- To study the reinforcement and dialogue possibilities of the existing networks and organisations, while avoiding any redundancy with on-going or planned actions;
- To analyse the potential and tangible added-values, that the mechanism could bring to the various stakeholders.

Accordingly, two (2) main recommendations are presented at this stage of the study.

Recommendation No.1: Organisation of a “Mediterranean Water Information Partnership” (PMIE/MEDWIP)

The organisation of a “**Mediterranean Water Information Partnership**⁷ - (PMIE/MEDWIP)” aims at mitigating the lack of a regional collaboration and participation framework, in which the various regional, national and/or local stakeholders could coordinate their actions relative to the administration of water data and information.

This partnership would be opened to all the producer organisations, administrators and/or users of data and information on water and sustainable development in the Mediterranean, and could be sponsored by the Mediterranean forum of the water directors, to whom an annual report of activities would be presented.

In a first stage, the priority objectives of this partnership could be as follows:

- **To strengthen the processes of gathering “quality data and information”** and meeting the national and regional needs;
- **To promote the identification, access and enhancement of the data** made available by the national and regional partners;
- **To support the countries in the development of their information systems** according to their requests;
- **To facilitate the exchange** of comparable and quality data **between national and regional organisations**, especially by promoting a common technical language and common procedures;
- **To promote the exchange of experience between Mediterranean countries** and with regional organisations;
- **To strengthen synergies and collaboration between regional organisations and think-tanks** concerning data administration and enhancement.

According to the needs and priorities, **all the topics, related to water, sanitation and to uses and socio-economic aspects**, necessary for following up sustainable

⁷ Name selected by the Euro-Med Water Directors during their conference held in Athens on 6 and 7 November 2006.



development actions, could be gradually taken into account (priority topics to be identified in phase 2 of the study).

This partnership could be established and based on a charter, which would especially specify the basic principles of its organisation and operation, such as:

- **The principle of voluntary participation of the members:**
 - ◆ No obligation of participation, they are free to leave the partnership at any time,
 - ◆ Each member defines the data and/or human resources and equipment (information system), which it wishes to develop within this partnership;

- **The principle of opening it to all the organisations, which are producers, administrators and/or users of water data and information in the Mediterranean;**

- **Main advantages to the members**, such as:
 - ◆ Ability to facilitate or participate in the work of the working groups with privileged access to the results of the various groups (shared documents, etc.);
 - ◆ Enhancement of the produced data or indicators;
 - ◆ Privileged access to the tools and methods available for developing its own activities (catalogues, reference frames, tools for promoting actions by syndication of the information on events, diaries, documentary references, etc.);
 - ◆ Participation in workshops for the exchange of experience, and privileged access to training/information capacities and regular information on work progresses (info flash, etc.);
 - ◆

- **The principle of searching for quality:**
 - ◆ The producers contribute to the search for quality by producing metadata and information on the completeness of the available data;
 - ◆ The partner will benefit from possibilities of internal “peer review” by the members to improve the quality of its data;

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After establishing the organisational and technical framework necessary for its operation, one of the priority projects of this partnership could be to initiate collaboration between the national and regional partners, through the development of a **“Joint programme for the production and enhancement of water data and information for the Mediterranean area”**.

Established through dialogue between regional and national organisations, this programme would be an instrument for work co-ordination, enabling, on the one hand, the presentation of the current situation (who produces what...) and of the regional/national needs for data and information, and, on the other, the identification of actions to be performed and of the resources to be implemented to meet the common needs for data production and enhancement at the regional and the national levels (development of project profiles).

As a result from collective work, it could be based on **“national and topical programmes for production and enhancement of water data and information”**.



Finally, the partnership should facilitate exchanges, at the regional level, between regional organisations and national information systems, while each country and each international organisation would remain free to develop its own exchange processes and language, but while facilitating convergences between national and regional levels.

Thus, the network could operate in the medium term according to the following organisational diagram:

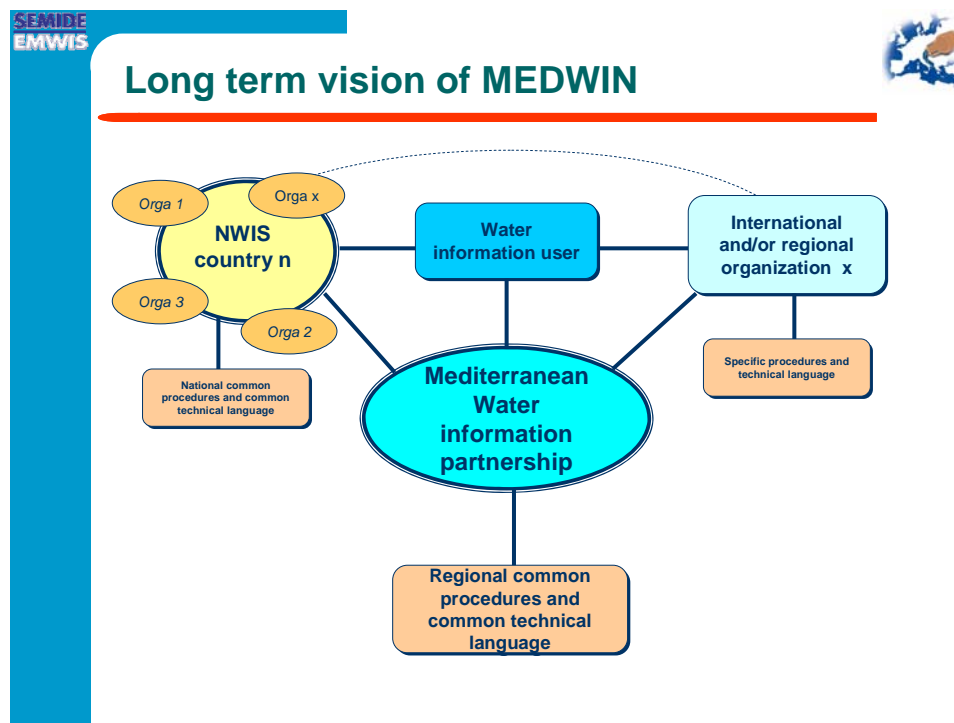


Figure 3 : Medium-term vision of the positioning of the Mediterranean Water Information Partnership

Recommendation n°2: Finalisation of the feasibility study (phase 2) with the study of the conditions required for implementing the partnership

With a concern of pragmatism and efficiency, it is recommended to take into account, in the 2nd phase of the feasibility study of the mechanism, the principle of creating the Mediterranean Water Information Partnership (MEDWIP).

This 2nd phase could thus be structured around the four following main components:

1. **Consolidation of the studies at national level with extension to new voluntary countries**, including:
 - ◆ The identification of new interested countries;
 - ◆ The development of studies for analysis of the current situation and needs in the new countries;
 - ◆ A first inventory of the information sources with a possible implementation of the first catalogues of metadata;



- ◆ A seminar for the exchange of experience between countries on national data administration activities.
2. **The study of the conditions required for creating a sustainable framework for dialogue between regional and national organisations regarding water data administration**, with in particular:
- ◆ The study of a charter draft for the Partnership (MEDWIP);
 - ◆ The analysis of potential synergies between the Partnership and the main working groups and regional organisations (UN-Water, EU, MAP, WWC, etc.) in the field of water data administration;
 - ◆ The identification of priority topics to deal with (for example: Indicators on drinking water supply and sanitation (MDG), MSSD indicators, data on water and agriculture, data on water supply and sanitation utilities, etc.) on which could be tested a first inventory and benchmarking of data sources;
 - ◆ The analysis of possibilities and priorities for the organisation of regional working groups according to the needs (for example: groups on reference frames, groups on topics, group on monitoring, etc.);
 - ◆ The development of prototypes for demonstration of collaborative tools (Web portal, catalogues of data sources, Web mapping)
 - ◆ A seminar, gathering representatives and experts from regional and national organisations, to present the study progress and to exchange on the conditions required for the organisation of the MEDWIP.
3. **Identification and specification of the products and services which could result from the partnership**, in particular for:
- ◆ **Support to the countries:**
 - Initiation of the national catalogues of data sources (National or sub-national Information System, sources of data on water and sanitation);
 - Development of national and local indicators relative to drinking water supply and sanitation;
 - Etc.
 - ◆ **Support to regional programmes and initiatives:**
 - For following up the millennium indicators on drinking water supply and sanitation (MDG 7 indicators);
 - For following up the implementation of the national integrated management plans (WSSD - 2002);
 - For following up demand management (MSSD);
 - For developing the actions of WISE/ the Joint-Process/ a working group on monitoring;
 - For developing the actions of the programme "Horizon 2020";
 - Etc.
 - ◆ **Facilitation of exchanges between the national and regional levels for better enhancement of the information of common interest**, through support to the development of:
 - A regional catalogue of data sources;



- A regional common language for the exchange of information (data model, reference frames, exchange formats);
- Processes for the production, exchange and enhancement of data and information;
- Etc.

4. **The definition of the conditions required for an effective operation of the partnership, through:**

- ◆ The identification of an organisational scheme for operation (organisation, structure, relations with the various regional initiatives and national organisations, etc.);
- ◆ The analysis of the necessary human resources and equipment;
- ◆ The proposal of a first detailed work programme over 2 years;
- ◆ The presentation of a yearly investment and operational budget allowing the implementation of the proposed work programme;
- ◆ The analysis of the possibilities of financing the partnership's actions.

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