

**Union for the Mediterranean
Water Expert Group
First Meeting
Athens, Greece, 7- 8 September 2009**

CONCLUSIONS

The First Meeting of the Water Experts Group of the Union for the Mediterranean was held on 7-8 September 2009, in Athens, Greece. It included representatives from Albania, Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, Palestine, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, the European Commission and the League of Arab States and was also attended by representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

Preamble

The Water Experts Group implements the provisions included in the Declaration of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water held at the Dead Sea, Jordan, December 2008, and particularly regarding the "Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean" (SWM).

The Water Experts Group was informed on:

1. Key strategies, processes and initiatives on water that already exist in the Mediterranean:
 - The Mediterranean Strategy on Sustainable Development (MSSD), and in particular the recent entry into force of the Land-Based Sources (LBS) Protocol, addressing *inter alia* water quality issues.
 - Strategic actions on water and related issues in the European Union, namely through the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), within which the River Basin Management Plans should be adopted by 2009, after public consultation. Likewise the Horizon 2020, which covers one of the six priority topics of the UfM and is action oriented, has achieved its third year. A progress report has been released by the European Commission.
 - Strategic actions on water and related issues in the context of the League of Arab States.
 - Strategic plans and actions on water and related issues undertaken at national level.
 - Regional activity centers of the UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP MAP /Blue Plan and MEDPOL) are implementing works that may contribute to the SWM:
 - Water demand management is already included in the national water strategies as related to the recommendations of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD). Potential water savings at national and regional levels should be achieved by the end of 2009.
 - Inter-sectoral water efficiency.
 - The Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI), led by Greece, has a long standing experience in facilitating political dialogue for water resources management and sector performance.
2. Draft Terms of Reference of the SWM has been presented by Greece and Spain based on the following proposals:
 - A Technical Drafting Group will elaborate the draft SWM text under the WEG political guidance,
 - Validation of the text would be through WEG meetings,

- MED EUWI mechanism will provide administrative assistance to the process in coordination with the UfM Co-Chairs,
 - Work will be delivered according to a tight schedule up to the Spain Ministerial Conference in April 2010.
3. The projects process and financing alternatives is going on through:
 - the UfM process,
 - the results of the Alexandria Meeting on Finance, 30 April 2009,
 - the results of the Paris Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Development Projects, 25 June 2009.
 4. The list of projects is open (www.ufm-water.net).
 5. The request expressed by the Ministers at the Jordan Conference to strengthen the coordination of existing Euro-Mediterranean and regional initiatives and networks on information and expertise, recalling the importance of data, information and statistics on water, based on internationally agreed definitions and methods, structured within information systems.
 6. The organization of a joint Egyptian-Dutch Conference "Towards the new Long Term Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean" which will be held in Cairo, Egypt, on the 2nd and 3rd November 2009.
 7. The organization of the Conference on the Role of the Local Authorities in the Water UfM Process organized by the Mediterranean Commission of United Cities and Local Governments (CGLU) which be held in Lyon, France, on the 23rd and 24th November 2009.
 8. The organization in Beirut, Lebanon, on the 6th to 9th October 2009 of a regional seminar on river basin management and WFD implementation in the Euro-Mediterranean region, organized by the International and Mediterranean Networks of Basin Organisations and the Lebanese Ministry of Energy and Water.

The Water Expert Group agrees to:

1. Elaborate the draft SWM according to the mandate given to the Water Experts Group by the Jordan Ministerial Declaration, in line with the Terms of Reference in annex. This Strategy should be developed as a strategy for action, with an implementation mechanism at regional and national level.
2. Set up a Technical Drafting Group composed of Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Spain, Syria, Croatia, the European Commission and the League of Arab States.
3. Spain to chair the Technical Drafting Group as hosting country of the next Ministerial Conference. Coordination tasks will be reported to the UfM Co-Chairs.
4. Ask the Technical Drafting Group to work on the following basis:
 - 4.1. start immediately the work. The Technical Drafting Group will work in a transparent way and material in electronic form will be provided for comment to the members of the Water Experts Group.
 - 4.2. contributions from Water Expert Group's members and observers will be transmitted by e-mail to the Technical Drafting Group until its first meeting.
5. Organize the work of the Technical Drafting Group so as the Strategy/Action Plan will build on existing activities and take into account as far as possible:
 - 5.1. a timetable that will be reviewed in regular intervals, for example 2015 / 2020 / 2025 / 2030,

- 5.2. objectives with indicators (when available),
 - 5.3. flexibility,
 - 5.4. local specificities and priorities, as well as the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.
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6. Welcome the proposal to include in the SWM the results of a group of countries working on strengthening the coordination of existing Euro-Mediterranean and regional initiatives and networks on information and expertise.
 7. Hold its next meeting in Cairo on the 4th November 2009.

Annex

Terms of Reference for the elaboration of the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean

Presented by
Greece / MED EUWI and Spain

Purpose of the document

The preparation of a Long Term Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean (SWM) is the key decision of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water (22 December 2008, Dead Sea, Jordan) as reflected in its Declaration. The decision followed related references made at the Conclusions of the Summit for the Mediterranean (13 July 2008, Paris) where the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) was launched by Head of States and Governments.

The current document presents a roadmap for the elaboration of the SWM and related key documents through an inclusive process until the next Ministerial Conference on Water scheduled for 12-14 April 2010 in Spain. It was presented by Greece and Spain to the Water Expert Group (WEG) that is assigned with the elaboration of the SWM. The Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI) mechanism, led by Greece since 2003, in close cooperation with competent governmental and stakeholder partners offered to provide technical and administrative assistance to the WEG in that process.

1. Content and modalities of the SWM

At the Dead Sea Conference, Ministers decided that the SWM will:

i. tackle problems that go beyond the means of any one country, organisation or initiative, in particular those related to the impact of climate change and environmental needs, that call for a coordinated approach and increased cooperation;

ii. build on integrated approaches, taking into consideration every kind of water, the needs of different users, by means of integrated management at basin level, as a tool to allow countries in the Mediterranean to respond to these challenges collectively and individually;

iii. include two main goals: conservation of water quality including the prevention of further deterioration of water resources and the balance between the quantity of water used and the quantity of water available including mitigating and preventing the consequences of droughts and water scarcity;

iv. include both measurable qualitative and quantitative objectives, as part of a voluntary commitment to achieve these goals;

v. consider the most appropriate instruments to reach the objectives of the SWM, with a view to achieve economic growth, social prosperity, equitable access and adequate supplies of water, and environmental protection, notably through improved efficiency of all water uses, appropriate governance arrangements, legislation and institutional arrangements, effective national and local planning, innovative financial mechanisms, tariff policies, standards, labels, alternative solutions, keeping in mind the differences in national situations and the need to increase the citizen's awareness by promoting the wide participation of civil society aiming at building the culture of water;

vi. develop and exploit for the benefit of all, scientific, technical and technological tools in these fields;

The Jordan Ministerial Declaration provided guidelines for the development of the SWM. Among other references, it was decided that the SWM will cover the following areas:

a. Advancing on effective water governance for integrated water resources management and water supply and sanitation; awareness, technical and capacity building and coordination within administrative units and among stakeholders;

b. Addressing water and climate change, through adaptation measures together with mitigation with emphasis, *inter alia*, on management of droughts and floods, mitigation of water scarcity effects and combat desertification;

c. Optimizing water financing, water valuation and appropriate instruments, with emphasis on innovative mechanisms

d. Water demand management and efficiency and non-conventional water resources.

It is recognized that despite the significant progress that has been made in the last two decades in most countries of the region, water challenges remain enormous, exacerbated by population growth and climate change. Achieving a sound institutional, social, economic and ecological environment, supported by appropriate planning and implementation capacities, are among key governance-related prerequisites for sustainable management of water resources. Water demand management policies and practices should be widely applied. Taking into consideration the necessary balance between supply and demand policy management. It is also recognized that the sector's self-financing capacities have to be increased, including through recovery of operational costs, while supported by sustainable projects and adequate funding.

The SWM should facilitate and formalize a political dialogue on water resources management and sector performance in the Mediterranean, leading to shared standards for water policy. The SWM should be oriented to specific and measurable objectives and commitments eg. on water saving regional potential, de-pollution targets, etc, providing indicators and a time-frame for implementation. Such indicators may include *inter alia*: water efficiency index; water demand (total and by sector); exploitation index of renewable natural resources; water saving; population with access to an improved water source (total, urban, rural); population with access to an improved sanitation system (total, urban, rural); infrastructure efficiency; environmental impacts; contamination levels etc.

Based concretely on the IWRM approach, the SWM should prioritize demand management and move towards water efficient societies and economies. Among issues to be tackled in the SWM reference should be made to water allocation, water scarcity, efficiency, extreme phenomena (droughts and floods), IWRM at river basin level, transboundary water resources, groundwater, sanitation, health, need for information sharing and development of national water accountancy system, etc.

Reference to and alignment with existing strategic documents should be made (eg. the MDGs, WSSD Targets, Roadmap of the Horizon 2020 Initiative to De-pollute the Mediterranean, UNEP MAP (Barcelona Convention and Protocols), Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development) as well as taking into account relevant developments at the regional and sub regional levels (including EU + Arab League). In general, the SWM should promote synergies and transfer of experiences.

The SWM should include general criteria for the identification of sustainable water projects that can illustrate the priorities of the Strategy. These should present operational links with the UfM Projects under development as well as other processes. Such general criteria for projects should reflect already existing and partially or fully harmonized sector strategies, action plans and milestone concepts, financial conditions and requirements, etc. The general criteria should elaborate on minimum requirements and other weighted prioritization criteria which may even differ between countries according to their present development and sector performance levels.

The SWM and especially new UfM projects should not replace or crowd out ongoing engagements or planned commitments (technical assistance and investments). They should neither damage sensitive sector dialogue processes, nor interfere with or undermine existing due diligence processes and existing financing conditions applied by donors, IFIs and partner institutions. Activities should be closely coordinated among all development partners institutions. Activities

should be closely coordinated among all development partners taking into consideration the national priorities and the need for ownership of project by recipient countries.

Further to the main themes, the SWM should include an 'introduction' providing briefly an account on status of water resources and management in the Mediterranean and a 'conclusion / summing up'. The SWM should be a brief document and include clear priorities and commitments (in the order of 15 pages).

2. Methodology and Activities

The preparation of the SWM has been entrusted to a Euro-Mediterranean Water Expert Group. Modalities of the WEG follow UfM provisions where possible and are also described at the Jordan Ministerial Declaration.

Aiming to effectively deliver objectives related to the SWM as these are described in the Jordan Ministerial Declaration, the following are considered:

i) Technical Drafting Group

The draft text of the SWM will be elaborated by a Technical Drafting Group (TDG) aiming for a structured and inclusive process under the political and technical guidance of the WEG. The SWM will address inter alia the above-mentioned key Themes, in addition to the above-mentioned objective of conservation of water quality including the prevention of further deterioration of water resources.

The TDG will be restricted in size in order to achieve effectiveness of delivery. Additionally, the members of the TDG may seek support from regional organizations and financing partners with experience on the relevant subjects in order to provide their technical expertise. Participation to the TDG was decided at the 1st Meeting of the WEG, 7-8 September 2009, in Athens.

The present Terms of Reference (ToR) of the SWM and the priorities of substance were discussed and agreed at the 1st Meeting of the WEG. Draft documents will be presented to the WEG for review and improvement by all partners. The SWM is to be agreed at the UfM Ministerial Conference on Water scheduled for mid April 2010, in Barcelona, Spain.

ii) WEG Meetings and other events

In principle, three meetings of the WEG (WEG 1, WEG 2 and WEG 3) are suggested to take place until the completion of the process. Modalities of the WEG will follow the guidelines at the Jordan Ministerial Declaration.

In addition, other events in assistance to the preparation of the SWM will also be organized. More specifically these include:

- the Joint Egypt / Dutch Conference 'Towards the new Long Term Strategy on Water in the Mediterranean', 2-3 November 2009, Cairo. The Conference will be an open, non-formal, multi-stakeholder event where the four key Themes of the SWM will be discussed. Drafts of the SWM developed by that time may serve as background material for information of the participants. Participation at the Conference will include policy makers, political leaders, members of the Water Experts Group, international / regional organisations, parliamentarians, civil society, scientists and media. The expected number of participants is about 220. Outputs of the Conference include (i) elements and strategic focus for the SWM for consideration and (ii) input for the December 2009 UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen. The Conference will be organised in conjunction with a Workshop of the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD) and the related Circle of Media (COMJEST). The 2nd Meeting of the WEG will be organized in conjunction with this Conference.

- a Conference on the contribution of Local Authorities to the water activities of the Union for the Mediterranean, 23-24 November 2009, Lyon. The Conference, to be organized by representative bodies of local authorities, among others the Mediterranean Commission of United Cities and Local Governments, should contribute to the elaboration of the SWM.

- a Civil Society Conference, in February 2010 (host to be decided) could be considered. The Conference will discuss the final drafts of the SWM and the Outline of the Action Plan among a multi-stakeholders audience and will prepare the 'Civil Society Statement for the Ministerial Conference on Water'. The Civil Society Conference will be organized in conjunction with the 3rd Meeting of the WEG. Furthermore, a Water Financing Session of the WEG may be organised. Having available advanced drafts of the SWM, the Session will discuss the draft Action Plan with the water financing community to support the SWM implementation.

iii) Action Plan

The Action Plan may not need to be agreed at the Ministerial Conference. Instead, its outline may be presented as a background document at the Ministerial 2010 and it will then serve as a technical document to be further elaborated at the level of the WEG. The Action Plan will serve as a 'roadmap' to match policy choices made at the SWM with major on-going and future operational plans and framework programmes designed and/or implemented through projects by governments, international financing institutions and stakeholder organisations as well as with new financial commitments by competent partners. Drafting of the outline of the Action Plan will be made in parallel with the elaboration of the SWM. It will be conducted by the TDG. The format of the Roadmap of the Horizon 2020 Initiative to De-Pollute the Mediterranean may be used as a reference.

iv) Need for synergies and coordination

It is recalled that the Jordan Ministerial Declaration acknowledges the need for synergies and coordination with the wider water sector and partners beyond that. In order to secure an integrated approach, the importance of participation in the process of a wider range of key authorities and partners with competence on water issues is recognized. In addition to the Ministry with the prime responsibility on water in each country, such authorities may include ministries responsible for environment, sanitation, agriculture, finance, development, energy and international cooperation.

v) Administrative assistance

The application of resources will be made available through a range of sources for the organizational costs of meetings (including of the WEG), the participation costs for south and east Mediterranean partners in meetings (when and if required) and overall administration.

The MED EUWI mechanism in close cooperation with competent governmental and stakeholder partners will provide technical and administrative assistance to the WEG and the process for the preparation of the SWM and the Action Plan.

vi) Overall suggested time-frame

Table 1 provides in a schematic way the time-line for the implementation of suggested activities.

Table 1. Overall frame for the elaboration of the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean (SWM)

	Year / Month	2009				2010			
No	Activity	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
1	- 1 st Meeting of Water Expert Group (WEG 1), Athens	7-8/9							
2	Preparation of the Draft of the SWM by TDG and WEG	X	X	X	X	X	X		
3	Preparation of Draft outline of the Action Plan by TDG and WEG			X	X	X	X		
4	- Joint Egypt / Dutch Conference, Cairo - 2nd Meeting of the Water Expert Group (WEG 2)			2-3/11 4/11					
5	- Conference of Mediterranean Local Authorities, Lyon			23-24/11					
6	- Civil Society Conference (tbc) and Water Financing Event in conjunction with - 3 rd Meeting of the Water Expert Group (WEG 3)						X X		
7	- UfM Ministerial Conference on Water, Spain								12-14/04