



Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean

Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med), is a regional partnership of the Global Water Partnership established in 2002. GWP-Med is a platform that brings together competent organisations working on water issues in the Mediterranean Region. The goal is to promote action and exchange knowledge on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and the sustainable use of water resources. In order to achieve this, GWP-Med's role is to act as a broker, a catalyst, a facilitator and an advocacy organisation.

Water situation in the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean is among the most arid regions in the world. The natural water supply is unevenly distributed in space and time, both at national and at regional levels, with 73% of the overall precipitation directed to the North of the Mediterranean, 23% in the Middle East and a mere 5% to the North Africa. At the same time demographic growth and economic development vary considerably in the sub-regions, shaping respectively the water demand and placing pressure over scarce resources and water ecosystems that are both rich and vulnerable. Agriculture accounts for 80% of water use in the Region, and important rivers, lakes and aquifers are shared among two or more countries.

With climate change just 'around the corner', the Mediterranean region is even more prone to issues such as water scarcity and extreme weather events, including droughts, floods and irregular precipitation, that will heavily impact on freshwater availability in terms of quantity and quality. Climate change is therefore an additional factor to be taken into account in IWRM and water-related adaptation strategies should be developed in order to address or prevent future crises and reduce the vulnerability of the region.

Therefore, there is a need to:

- meet the WSSD target for IWRM in all countries and strengthen and concretize the regional framework on IWRM;
- raise water concerns into national development plans and integrate water concerns into policies of related sectors;
- meet the MDG / WSSD target to halve the proportion of people who do not have access to safe drinking water and sanitation;
- mainstream climate change adaptation and risk management into IWRM planning in order to enhance the region's resilience in the near future;
- further develop tools, build capacity, raise public awareness and educate the youth on water issues;
- build synergies and boost commitment to action by setting up active water partnerships at the regional and national levels.

Responding to the needs of a water scarce Region

In order to tackle the water-related issues, GWP-Med:

- Facilitates a multi-stakeholder regional water partnership, bringing together ten major Mediterranean networks of different water disciplines (government, river basins, local authorities, professionals, NGOs, research institutes, irrigators, etc) and over sixty other organisations, institutions and companies.
- Seeks and facilitates multi-stakeholder engagement and donors' support for dialogue and action to promote IWRM at national and regional levels.
- Makes the principles of sustainable water use and IWRM widely recognised and applied, through sharing of information and experience.

Since its establishment, the partnership has been instrumental in developing the Vision for Water in the Mediterranean and the Framework for Action for Water in the Mediterranean (2000). Since 2001, GWP-Med has facilitated regional and sub-regional dialogues on national IWRM planning, effective water governance, water and climate, water demand management and river basin management in order to promote IWRM practices. Activities are also carried out on the role and engagement of the private sector in water resources management.

Through collaboration with its partners, GWP-Med activities extend to water, food and environmental interaction; integrated groundwater management; and education, through the Mediterranean Education Initiative for Environment and Sustainability (MEDIES – www.medies.net). Moreover, it facilitates the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD) and the Circle of Mediterranean Journalists for Sustainable Development (COMJSD). In addition, GWP-Med is promoting the set up of Country Water Partnerships in the Mediterranean in order to facilitate the intra-country dialogue on water and ensure the involvement of all related stakeholders.

Moreover, GWP-Med acts as the:

- Secretariat of the **Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative** (MED EUWI, 2003 - ongoing), led by the government of Greece and supported also by the European Commission. MED EUWI aims to assist achieve the water-related MDGs and WSSD targets in the non-EU member states of the Mediterranean (www.minenv.gr/medeuwi)

More specifically, Country Policy Dialogues are on-going in Egypt (with emphasis on financing strategies to assist the new Egyptian Master Plan on Water and Wastewater) and Lebanon (with emphasis on updating the National Water Plan and elaborating the National IWRM Plan). Following formal requests, activities on targeted issues of IWRM planning are currently (2008) explored in Syria (IWRM planning), Palestine (financing) and Morocco (non-conventional water resources).

Regional activities include elaborating assessments and guidelines on water issues linked with the MDGs and WSSD targets as well as the organization of regional events.

- Technical facilitator of the **Rabat Declaration on National IWRM Planning in North Africa** (2006 – ongoing), in cooperation with the African Development Bank, African Water Facility and UNEP Collaborating Centre on Water and Environment. The Declaration was adopted at the Rabat Seminar, in 2006, that was hosted by the government of Morocco. The Seminar

discussed progress, gaps and solutions for IWRM planning in North African countries and Mauritania.

Follow up activities are being carried out in Libya with emphasis on advancing institutional settings for IWRM.

- Technical facilitator of the joint **Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process** (2005-ongoing) on promoting transboundary water resources management in Southeastern Europe, led by the governments of Germany, Greece and the World Bank and assisted by GEF IW:LEARN (www.watersee.net). Emphasis is on building capacity of decision makers and stakeholders on targeted related issues while new emerging activities focus on IWRM planning at the local (transboundary) level.

- Leader of the **Working Group on Shared Water Resources Management of the Joint Process between the EU Water Framework Directive and the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative** (www.emwis.net).

- Lead of the **IWRM Component of the GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystems** (2008-2011) with emphasis on catalytic actions for IWRM planning in Mediterranean Countries (<http://www.medsp.org/>).

Through its activities, GWP-Med has an established network of active collaborations and synergies with a wide spectrum of institutions and organizations at the regional, sub-regional and national levels.

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