

1. Advancing the MED EUWI activities in Lebanon

Continuing the MED EUWI Lebanon Dialogue on Water, the technical documents of the review of the Lebanese 10-year National Strategy on Water were put forward into consultation with key stakeholders, including competent Ministries, Water Establishments, local authorities, civil society organizations, academia and media. The Strategy review addresses: (i) water development and water resources management, (ii) domestic and industrial water, (iii) sanitation, (iv) irrigation and (v) institutional settings and capacity building. Each document includes an evaluation of the current status, identification of constraints and problems as well as recommendations for action.

In that context, the 2nd Consultation Event was organized by the Lebanese Ministry of Energy and Water and GWP-Med on 24 April 2009, in Beirut, with the participation of around 50 targeted participants representing related stakeholders. Further to the Strategy review, the meeting discussed in particular the draft recommendations for capacity building needs in support of the water sector in the country.

Activities of the current phase of work in Lebanon are supported by the MEDA Water Programme of the European Commission.

2. Rainwater harvesting

Works for the project 'Stakeholder Collaboration for Pilot Application of Rainwater Harvesting Techniques in Greek Islands' continued. Two more public buildings (a high school and a city hall) in two Cyclades islands (Naxos and Tinos) in Greece were equipped with rainwater harvesting systems as pilot applications of this simple and environmentally friendly water management technique. Activities are implemented in close cooperation with the local municipal authorities in the islands and, further to their actual value for the people using the buildings they serve, are expected to trigger more applications by local partners.

Furthermore, the Education Package 'The Gift of Rain' was produced by the MEDIES team. It is a clipper hard-back publication that contains 10 educational activities for secondary schools. At this stage and due to the current funding, the Package was produced only in Greek but plans include translation in more languages.

The first Teachers' Seminar for the Educational Package was organized on 28 April 2009, in Naxos Island, Cyclades, with the participation of around 20 teachers. Furthermore, presentations and exemplary use of the package were made with the pupils of two schools.

In addition, the first Training Course for local technicians on rainwater harvesting techniques was organized on 29 April 2009, in Naxos island, with the participation of around 25 technicians. Similar activities will be implemented in Syros and Tinos islands in May.

The project is implemented by GWP-Med in coordination and with the financial support of the "Mission Water" corporate responsibility program of Coca-Cola HBC Greece & Coca-Cola.

3. 'Hydria' project on water, culture and education

The overall objective of this new project implemented by MIO-ECSDE as GWP-Med Activity Leader on issues of education, is to unfold and present the diverse yet common, tangible and intangible Mediterranean Cultural Heritage using as vehicle selected cases of the most representative ancient water management works, concepts and techniques. The project aims to demonstrate the wisdom of our ancestors, through their wise and respectful water management techniques and to educate youth on the valuable water-related Mediterranean cultural heritage and further present ways to protect it.

In addition, the project aims also to highlight youth's role today, as water consumers and help them adjust their behaviour concerning the use of water to more sustainable patterns, in view of the pressure generated on water resources by climate change and the water scarcity of the region. The project is especially aiming to support the educational community of the developing countries of the Mediterranean region, transferring experience and promoting a South-North synergy and cooperation in the field of culture.

Production, dissemination and use of educational and awareness material on the subject is envisaged among the outputs of the Hydria project. Partner organisations from Egypt, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Jordan and Morocco contribute through local case studies and with background material ie. on ancient cisterns, aqueducts, water supply systems for a city etc, providing information on the technology used, the management system, the evolution of uses through time, the current situation, the lessons drawn, etc.

The first meeting of the partners was organised on 9-10 April 2009, in Athens. It reviewed the case studies elaborated and planned next steps. Based on the case studies, follow up activities include the production of related educational material for secondary schools.

The Hydria project is supported by UNESCO and MIO-ECSDE.

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