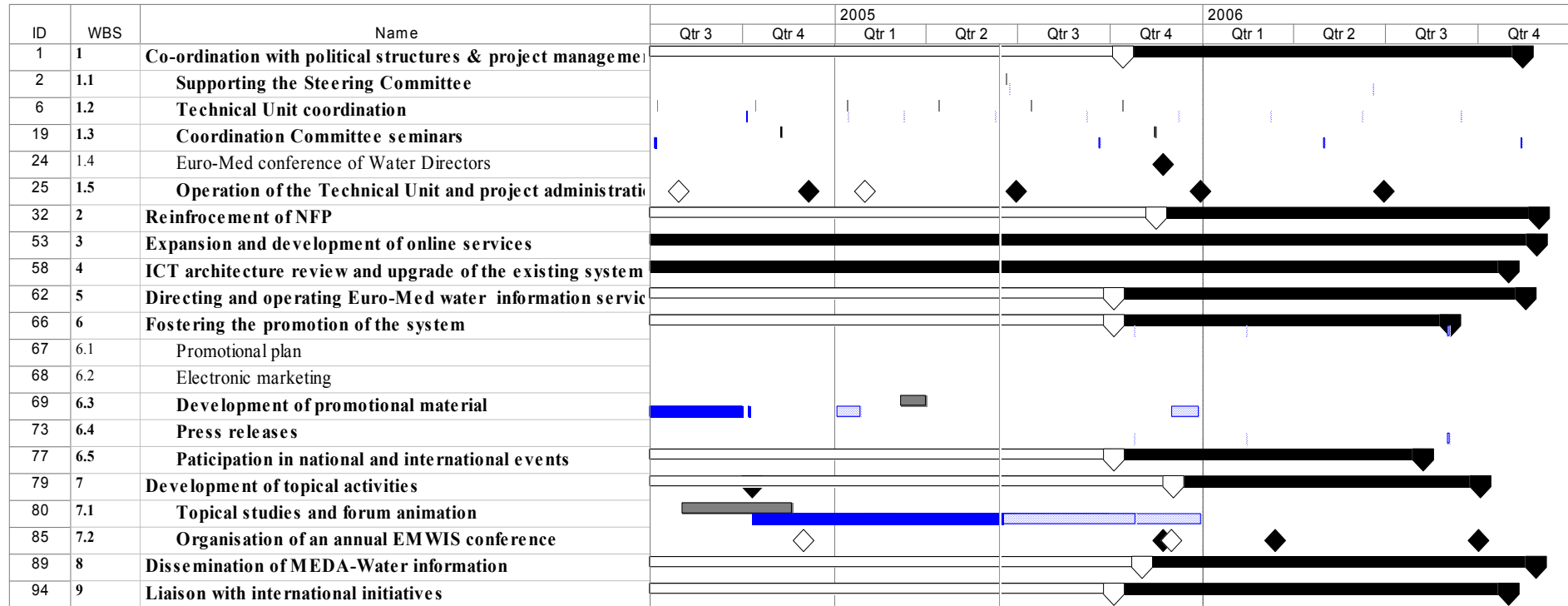


**PHASE II - PROGRESS REPORT ON  
EMWIS TECHNICAL UNIT ACITIVITIES  
December 2003 – May 2005**

The followed work programme corresponds to the contractual bases defined with the European Commission, under the second contract signed by the Commission and the three Technical Unit partners: IOWater (France), CEDEX (Spain) and SOGESID (Italy), with its 9 main lines of action being a continuation of activities previously undertaken. The Gantt diagram on the following page summarizes progress made in the activities, which are detailed hereafter in this document.

It is reminded that the legal body created to lead and facilitate the project is a European Economic Interest Group (EEIG): the EEIG of EMWIS Technical Unit.



**Gantt diagram - progress report (May 2005)**

### **Overall co-ordination and management of the project**

The permanent team of the Technical Unit was completed to carry out the planned tasks. It is now made up of 5 persons directly employed by the EMWIS-TU EEIG, including 3 full-time people.

The following meetings were organised:

- EMWIS Steering Committee on 5th May 2004 in Malta: in addition to the approval of EMWIS action plan and budget, this meeting allowed the definition of membership renewal rules in order to enable all the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) to participate and thus to strengthen their commitment at top level. The Committee also decided to hold a meeting of the General Directors of the 35 countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in 2005, and selected four topics for summarizing experience gained (Use of non-conventional water resources, Impact and advantage of the EU Water Framework Directive for the Mediterranean Partner Countries, Management of irrigation water, Integrated management of drinking water supply, sanitation and wastewater at local level).
- Supervising Board of the Technical Unit: five Board meetings were organised:
  - in January 2004, to adapt management methods and internal rules;
  - in June 2004, on the occasion of the annual General Assembly of EMWIS - TU EEIG for the passing of accounts;
  - in October 2004, for the launching of topical studies and assignments for technical assistance;
  - in January 2005, for the technical follow-up of the work programme;
  - in May 2005, on the occasion of the annual General Assembly of EMWIS - TU EEIG for the passing of accounts.
- Seminar of the Co-ordination Committee on 6th and 7th July in Rabat (Morocco): This coordination seminar allowed a detailed report on the progress made by EMWIS and its focal points, and discussions on the implementation of the activities planned from 2004 to 2006 in the various countries, in accordance with the contractual commitments following the intermediate phase (2003).

### **Strengthening of the NFPs**

- A training seminar was organised in Madrid, from 22nd to 25th November 2004, for the NFPs' data managers. This seminar provided further information and training intended, on the one hand, to help managers of operational web sites to enhance and better operate them (existing tools, topical analyses), and, on the other hand, to deal with the topics selected in Rabat. This seminar especially aimed at:
  - Introducing and explaining the use of the new version of the on-line application for the consultation and updating of the thematic directory , then at discussing its use by each NFP;
  - Introducing and discussing progress made in the topical studies, in particular on the impact and advantage of the EU Water Framework Directive – WFD - for the Mediterranean Partners Countries (MPC);
  - Defining common metadata;
  - Introducing methods for contents classification and organisation and assessing the advantage resulting from the use of a common thesaurus;
  - Introducing the methods used for developing quality contents;
  - Defining a common approach for the decentralized management of water-related news in the Euro-Med area (i.e. pooling and automatic re-use of the news produced by the various focal points);

- The 11th seminar of EMWIS's National Focal Points (NFPs), intended for IT managers, took place in Sophia Antipolis from 14th to 18th March 2005. This seminar focused on introducing various standards, techniques and technologies, thus enabling the NFPs to assess the appropriateness of their implementation. The following topics were dealt with:
  - Web content exchange and syndication;
  - Web services and distributed architectures;
  - Mechanisms for integrating applications (EAI: Enterprise Applications Integration);
  - Free software and open source: concepts, definition and benefits;
  - XML and data bases;
  - Management of the common metadata: practical application relating to the sharing of a diary of events and to water news between the NFPs and the Technical Unit;
  - Presentation of the new version of the on-line application for consultation and updating of the topical directory;
  - Assessment of the potential provided by the Open Archive Initiative protocol (OAI) for exchanging metadata within EMWIS;
  - Discussion on technical progress and possible difficulties with the implementation at the level of each country
- Analysis of national expectations and needs: A first survey was carried out involving the NFPs. The results were presented and validated by the co-ordinators during the seminar in Rabat. This survey especially allowed the definition of training priorities for the NFPs, the topics related to the good practices, the needs for equipment and local services (promotion, specific training, access to the Internet, etc.).
- An assignment was carried out in October 2004 for providing technical assistance to the Cypriot NFP with the training of its team in the publication of its EMWIS web site.
- The study on the feasibility of implementing or improving the National Water Information Systems was validated -by the NFPs- and launched in May 2005 after selection of experts, using the process of negotiated call for tenders. The selected company is EasyInfo (Jordan) with Mrs. Hala ZAWATI and Mr. Jean-Marie BARRAT.
- Preparation of examples of good practices: It is planned to carry out four examples of "good practices", related to the NFP's activities, in order to improve its operation. The topics, chosen by the co-ordinators during the Rabat meeting, are listed hereafter, these four studies are currently being developed:
  - Practical methods used to create a National Water Information System and to organise the information network involving the various partners,
  - Promotion of a National Water Information System,
  - Multilateral information systems in the water sector, especially thanks to experiments coming from initiatives such as WaterNet and EXACT,
  - Methods for following up the development, the results and the problems encountered in the management of a NFP.
- Management of the financial assistance to the NFPs:
  - An international call for tenders was launched according to the rules of the European Commission for the supply of equipment to the NFPs of the Mediterranean partner countries. The AGMIN Company (Italy) was selected. The equipment is being delivered to the 11 countries concerned by this call for tender.

- Almost all the NFPs have prepared their work programme, which details the provision of local services covering staff training, connections with the Internet, and support to the development of their web site, translation and national promotion of EMWIS.

### **Extension and development of on-line services**

New functionalities were validated on a prototype in July 2004. Technical specifications of the new technical platform for content management were defined. This new platform will especially allow an improved content localisation (multilingual management, including Arabic). Within this framework, all the interfaces for access to the information were translated into Arabic. The implementation of a new platform will be carried out using a call for tender procedure, whose terms of reference include the development and set up of a meta-search engine and the indexing with a multilingual thesaurus specialized in the water sector.

In addition, the mechanism for synchronising the diaries of events was defined (syndication of metadata under XML format and introduction of Web services). A first prototype is being finalised with three NFPs (Algeria, France and Spain).

Finally, as regards the implementation of new services, it was decided to focus the work on a water-specialised multilingual thesaurus and on the aggregation of the existing glossaries to provide contextual definitions.

### **Revision of the ICT architecture and improvement of the existing system**

A more ambitious technical architecture is necessary to improve co-operation within and between the various national water information systems and to ensure an effective exchange of information of any kind. Consequently, the development of an improved distributed architecture is planned, based on standardised but flexible information formats (using XML (eXtensible Markup Language) for their definition) and Web-services for communicating. Within this framework, the following actions were undertaken:

- Defining common metadata for all the NFPs and selecting basic tools for the use of a common multilingual thesaurus (within the Madrid seminar, November 2004);
- Tender documents were prepared and conveyed on mid-April 2005 to the European Commission for validation.

### **Facilitation and operation of the Euro-Med information services**

The international EMWIS sites are continuously updated (trilingual electronic Flash disseminated to about 6,000 subscribers, topical directory, Web pages). In addition, new sections were developed on the EMWIS site:

- ☞ The Mediterranean component of the EU Water Initiative to allow access by a larger audience to the initiative and its developments in the Mediterranean region;
- ☞ The MEDA-Water Programme to disseminate information on the 9 projects financed by the EU;
- ☞ The EU Water Framework Directive to allow the Mediterranean third countries to familiarise themselves with these concepts (including the translation into Arabic of the Commission's documents presenting the Directive, of the leaflets to be published by the Environment DG)

### Promotion of the system

A promotional plan was prepared and approved by the Steering Committee. The leaflets of EMWIS were updated (because of the EU's enlargement in particular) and were translated into Arabic. EMWIS was presented during the following meetings:

<i>Date &amp; place</i>	<i>Type and Title/Scope</i>
2004-01-09/11 Tunis (TN)	Regional MedWet workshop on agriculture, water and wetlands
2004-01-24/28 Martinique (FR)	Annual General Assembly of the International Network of Basin Organisations
2004-03-16/17	EU Water Initiative and its Med component
2004-04-18/22 Damascus (SY)	International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies
2004-05-24/25 Montpellier (FR)	International workshop for the definition of a Mediterranean Observatory of Irrigation
2004-06-15/16 Brussels (BE)	MEDA-Water Programme concertation meeting
2004-06-28 Montpellier (FR)	Steering Committee of MEDA-Water ISIIMM project
2004-09-24 Brindisi (IT)	International Workshops on Mediterranean Dimension of Pilot River Basins
2004-10-15 Foggia (IT)	Innovation as a tool for a sustainable development within the Mediterranean
2004-10-11/13 Istanbul (TR)	Annual General Meeting of the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organisations
2004-10-29/30 Nicosia (CY)	<a href="#">EMWIS National Promotion Seminar</a>
2005-03-15 Marseille (FR)	Hydrotop 2005
2005-04-27-28 Rabat (MA)	<a href="#">EMWIS National Promotion Seminar</a>
2005-05-23/25 Marrakech (MA)	INBO, MENBO and ANBO meeting

In addition, two national promotion seminars were organised:

- Cyprus on 29th October 2004, in the presence of the Minister in charge of Water and with the participation of approximately 80 representatives of national institutions.
- Rabat on the 27th and 28th April 2005, in the presence of the Secretary-General of the State Secretariat in charge of Water with more than 100 participants from national institutions, research centres and universities.

### Implementation of topical activities (analyses, summaries and events)

The studies on the four topics, defined during the meeting of the Management Committee in Malta in May 2004, were launched:

- Use of non-conventional water resources (topic of Turin Action Plan): a bibliographical study was undertaken and the results of a world-wide survey were acquired. These data will be used as a basis for defining profiles that the countries can validate and complete.
- Identification of centres of interest for the EU Water Framework Directive for the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC): the survey was carried out in the Mediterranean Partner Countries at the level of the water directorates and also of basin organisations (thanks to the Mediterranean Network of Basin

- Organisations). A first summary report will be presented to the members of the Management Committee and finalised in July 2005.
- Management of irrigation water (topic of Turin Action Plan): this study was launched later (first quarter of 2005).
  - Integrated Management of drinking water supply, sanitation and wastewater at local level (topic of Turin Action Plan): the MPC profiles are being finalised to be validated by the NFPs during summer. A first summary report will be available in October 2005.

A new topic for study will be proposed to the Management Committee in June 2005 by the representatives of Cyprus, Malta and Italy: specificities of the Mediterranean islands in the field of water resource management.

### **Dissemination of the information on MEDA-Water**

The regional monitoring and Support Unit for this programme (RMSU) was not launched as planned by the Commission. It was initially planned that this unit would play the role of interface with the projects, the Commission and the countries. Awaiting for its creation, EMWIS established contacts directly with the 9 projects launched within this programme to disseminate, in the widest possible way, the information on their activities. A specialised MEDA-Water section was opened on EMWIS web site, based on the existing resources. Regular contacts are maintained with the co-ordinators of these projects to support the dissemination of information between the projects (for the purpose of activity co-ordination) and a broader dissemination of their activities (promotion in the Flash or during EMWIS seminars).

### **Liaison with international initiatives**

In addition to the agreements already signed with INBO and MWI, contacts are maintained with international initiatives to co-ordinate activities. The following actions were carried out in particular:

- Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP): participating in the workshop on the definition of sustainable development indicators in the Mediterranean and organisation of the EMWIS Management Committee meeting after the annual meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development in Athens in June 2005;
- Preparing an agreement with the co-ordinator of the project for monitoring the MEDA environment programme (SMAP-RMSU), the APAT, to provide information on the water sector in the Mediterranean for the SMAP-RMSU web site;
- UNESCO and the European Environment Agency: partial use of their thesaurus and dictionaries;
- Mediterranean Group of the Global Water Partnership (GWP), contributing to the development of the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative;
- Global Water Partnership (GWP): discussion on the implementation of a multilingual dictionary on water to cover languages not used by EMWIS;
- FAO-Ipstrid: collaborating on the technical definition of new technical EMWIS platform (implementation of web services);
- WaterNet: joint organisation of a seminar to validate co-operation lines at the political level.

The structure of a data base on international projects was defined, especially to reference the projects financed by the EU (DGs for Research, Environment, Development and International Co-operation, bilateral agreements).