



**Draft Mandate for the continuation of the activity on
“Groundwater management”:
Second phase (2007-2009) of the MED-EUWI Working Group
on Groundwater (Mediterranean Groundwater WG)**

i. Introduction

The MED-EUWI Working Group on Groundwater (or Mediterranean Groundwater WG) was set up in September 2004, as a thematic group of the Mediterranean EUWI/WFD Joint Process. In parallel, it was directly linked to the EU Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), as a Drafting Group (GW5) of the WG C (WG on Groundwater).

The WG was composed of water managers, EU and non-EU experts, basin authorities, institutions and stakeholders of the Mediterranean region (*total number of WG members: 29*). Its objective was the development of synergies and partnership between the EU and non EU countries of the region, aiming at the adoption of a common vision on groundwater resources management, based on the Water Framework Directive (WFD) approaches and principles and the regional specific conditions.

In this context, a report (*Mediterranean Groundwater Report*) was prepared by the members of the WG. Among other issues, this report includes:

- a description and analysis of the role and importance of the groundwater resources for the Mediterranean region,
- an identification of the most significant problems, pressing needs and challenges for the region regarding groundwater resources management,
- specific recommendations, based on the WFD approach and the experiences of the EU and non-EU countries of the region,
- approaches and aspects of the WFD which need specific attention and proper adaptation in the Mediterranean context.

In addition, an exchange of experiences and knowledge was achieved by:

- the development of a web page, hosted by EMWIS, providing a platform for information sharing:
(<http://www.semide.net/initiatives/medeuwi/JP/GroundWater>),
- the organisation of meetings between the members of WG and/or with EU experts, promoting a further exchange of knowledge and experiences,
- the demonstration of the activities and the results in International events, informing and discussing about the Mediterranean specificities.

Despite the achievements, there are a number of issues related to groundwater resources management in the Mediterranean, which need to be further addressed and elaborated. The widespread scarcity, gradual destruction and aggravated deterioration and pollution of groundwater resources in the region, along with the progressive encroachment of incompatible activities, demand the promotion of specific and dynamic approaches/methodologies for the sustainable and rational utilization, protection, conservation and management of groundwater, within the framework of national economic development policies.

A discussion on the priority issues which need to be further addressed was initiated on the second meeting of the MED-EUWI Working Group on Groundwater (Malaga, 24 April 2006). According to the discussions and taking into account the results from the work of the WG (Mediterranean Groundwater Report), it can be concluded that:

- Strategic groundwater management approaches in the Mediterranean have to be supported by effective methods, techniques and practices for controlling intensive exploitation and preventing/reducing pollution, taking into account the natural and socio-economic conditions.
- Disseminating best practices or lessons learnt could serve as a catalyst for the development of effective approaches for groundwater resources management. The continuation of the information, knowledge and experience exchange, in the framework of an enhanced cooperation mainly at technical level, in order to identify best practices or “success stories”, is very important.
- Therefore, the work and activities of the MED-EUWI Working Group on Groundwater could continue, with a priority to the development and/or promotion of common approach methodologies and techniques for controlling intensive exploitation and preventing/reducing pollution of groundwater resources in the Mediterranean region.

In parallel, groundwater management is still a priority for the European Commission. The WG on Groundwater (WG C) will continue to be one of the key activities during the next Work Programme (2007-2009) of the EU Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) of the WFD, aiming both to clarify groundwater issues that are covered by the WFD and prepare the development of technical guidance documents in the frame of the orientations given by the future Groundwater Directive, upon its adoption.

In light of the above, it was proposed to continue the “Groundwater Management” activity during the second phase of the Mediterranean EUWI/WFD Joint Process. The MED-EUWI Working Group on Groundwater, during the second phase (2007-2009), could be engaged mainly in the development and/or promotion of common approach methodologies and techniques for optimal groundwater exploitation and pollution control in the Mediterranean region, based on the experiences of the EU and non-EU countries of the region, existing best practices and the regional conditions.

ii. Objectives and key subjects

The overall objective of the MED-EUWI Working Group on Groundwater, during the second phase of the Mediterranean EUWI/WFD Joint Process, is to promote the development of synergies and partnership between EU and non EU countries of the Mediterranean region and the adoption of a common vision on groundwater resources management. In particular, it aims to:

- analyse the most significant challenges for the Mediterranean region, related to groundwater resources management, with an emphasis on groundwater over-exploitation and saline water intrusion,
- transfer, exchange and demonstration of know-how on criteria, methodologies and tools used in the Mediterranean region on various groundwater protection and conservation issues and evaluate best practices and “success stories” existing at international and EU level,
- develop common approach methodologies and techniques for optimal groundwater exploitation and pollution control in the Mediterranean region and formulate adequate recommendations and technical specifications,
- improve the awareness raising on issues related to the groundwater protection, conservation and sustainable management and create the basis for additional relative actions in the region.

Based on the above, the following general actions must be undertaken during the second phase of the MED-EUWI Working Group on Groundwater:

- Step 1: list of on-going regional and national processes, initiatives and projects developed to respond to groundwater issues in the Mediterranean region.
- Step 2: description and analysis of significant problems, pressing needs and challenges for the Mediterranean region, related to groundwater resources management, taking into account the information included in the Mediterranean Groundwater Report. Emphasis can be given to over-exploitation and saline water intrusion into the coastal aquifers of the region.
- Step 3: collection of information on existing methodologies, practices and tools used in the Mediterranean region on various groundwater protection and conservation issues, such as remedial actions practised to recover salinized resources, aquifer recharge enhancement, other complementary supply-side measures, models of groundwater behaviour, scenario analysis, vulnerability mapping, protection zoning, remediation methods, groundwater treatment technologies, etc.
- Step 4: identification and analysis of best practices and “success stories” at international and EU level (e.g. provisions and methodologies from the WFD) for controlling intensive exploitation and preventing/reducing pollution.
- Step 5: formulation of recommendations and technical specifications, taking into account the experiences of the EU and non-EU countries of the region, existing best practices and the regional conditions.
- Step 6: demonstration and dissemination of results through the web page of the MED-EUWI Working Group on Groundwater, meetings/workshops, etc.

This activity is targeted to the Member States, partner countries covered by the MED-EUWI, the Commission and interest groups.

iii. Organisation

The activity will be lead by Greece and the European Commission.

The MED-EUWI Working Group on Groundwater will include members from the first phase of the WG as well as new members from EU Member States, MEDA and Balkans countries, experts from International Organisations and stakeholders.

Participation in this Working Group is based on active contribution (drafting).

The WG will be linked to the WG C (Groundwater) of the EU Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) of the WFD. In parallel, specific aspects of the WG will be linked with all the other activities to be developed under the second phase of the Mediterranean EUWI/WFD Joint Process.

iv. Expected outcomes and deliverables

The expected output will be a report which will include technical specifications and specific recommendations on various groundwater protection, conservation and management issues in the Mediterranean region.

v. Contact person/s

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vi. Timeframe

Inception meeting:	February-March 2007
Second meeting	June 2007
Final meeting	Winter 2007
Presentation to Euro-Med Water Directors	June 2008

Workshop: exchange of information: to be confirmed