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MELIA: MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE FOR INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT

R. Rodriguez Clemente*

* Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC), Seville, Spain

Email: raro@orgc.csic.es

Research on water management is and has been a priority in national and Euro-Mediterranean projects, especially in the INCO-Med programme. It has been observed that the outcomes of these research programmes and projects rarely succeeds in improving the efficiency of water use and its management due to the lack of dialog between the different protagonists. Research in this topic is of common interest of the EU and its Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) in view of the economic integration of both sides of the Mediterranean area, the risks associated to the climatic change and the increase in frequency of water risks events, such as droughts or floods, in the area.

WHY MELIA?

There exists a general perception that water management models are still constructed from points of view that ignore contributions by all the key stake-holders (especially users and citizens). The local cultural, social and economic peculiarities are critical to generate the necessary efficiency of water planning and management, and the collective concern on its issues.

There is a need to further analyse and consider the social, economic, environmental and institutional dimensions in water management.

Another general perception in the Mediterranean area is the lack of visibility of the important role that Science and Technology play in the sustainable development of the region. Part of these problems is due to communication gaps between political bodies, administrative institutions, scientists, sociologists, lawyers, economists, end-users and citizens.

MELIA aims at structuring an open dialogue between experts from both sides of the Mediterranean and among the key stakeholders concerned and affected by water use and management (scientists, professionals, decision makers, policy makers, water providers, media professionals, educators, citizens...) whose awareness on the issues should be raised by using appropriate dissemination instruments, language and content.

In this view, there is a need for horizontal and vertical integration and dialogue. The achievement of this dialogue and the dissemination and exploitation of the recommendations obtained will create real added value at European and Mediterranean scale.

This dialogue intends to create a Forum where water players can share knowledge, find consensus and propose new perspectives on the emerging needs of the different stakeholders (agriculture, industry, trade and tourism and urban development). This involves also looking beyond the physical aspects of water supply and sanitation.

In this way, MELIA is in the condition to build a consensus, to propose widely agreed solutions, and to promote the convergence of the water policies in the Euro-Mediterranean region on the basis of the Water Framework Directive recommendations.

THE PARTNERS

The partnership of MELIA has been structured in a way to include, on the one hand, players with experience in the scientific, technical and socio-economic sectors, experienced in past or on-going European, national or regional projects and committed to a dialogue without prejudices. Other actors,

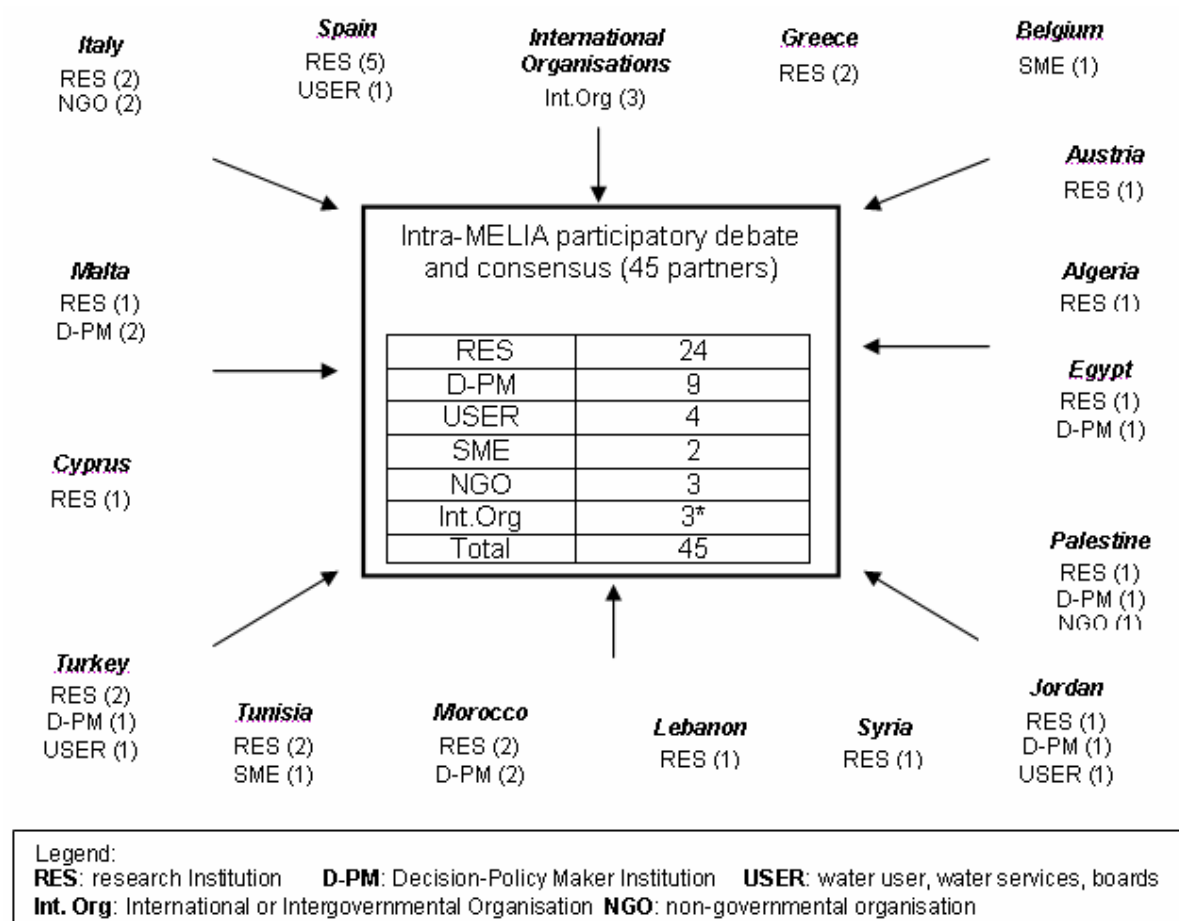
such as basin management organisations, water suppliers to cities, industrial groups, agriculture water users, NGOs with well known experience in daily management of water related issues, bring their deep knowledge about the current management systems, the expected demand and the possible baseline of the future conflicts.

The presence of groups and administrations from different sectors and countries will allow MELIA to create a wide dialogue to prevent and avoid conflicts related to water availability.

THE CONSORTIUM

The MELIA Consortium is composed by 45 partners representing 17 countries from both the EU (Italy, Spain, France, Cyprus, Greece, Belgium, Malta, Austria) and the Mediterranean (Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine) and of different categories: Research Institutions, Decision-Policy Makers, Users, International or Intergovernmental Organizations, NGOs.

The wide range of categories involved in MELIA and the governmental and intergovernmental status of some partners will help to reach and apply concrete results and will be effective on the problems related to water management in the territory. The structure of MELIA includes most of the relevant water stakeholders in the discussion of the issues related to the integrated and sustainable water management in the Mediterranean area (Fig. 1).



* **Int. Org.** International or Intergovernmental Organisations (3): P2 CIHEAM-IAMB, P7 OIE, P44 REMOC

Fig. 1. Structure of participation by different countries and categories

MAIN TARGETS

- Build a knowledge base for integrated water resources management (IWRM) planning, based on integrating contributions from different perspectives, involving the wide spectrum of stakeholders and based on the general frame defined by EU Water Framework Directive.
- Develop a Mediterranean-wide awareness of the social (cultural and participatory), economic and technological issues related to water management.
- Propose participatory mechanisms and prevention tools to avoid competition in resources allocation between regions states and different waters users.
- Provide legislative and administrative bodies with criteria and arguments agreed in a consensual way by a wide representation of social, economic, scientific and political actors from different countries, to support sustainable water policies and economy.
- Provide the intellectual basis and the indicators to perform a benchmarking exercise of Integrated Water Resources Management in the Mediterranean area through the debate and conceptual frame made with the aim of defining indicators that need standards for the measurements of selected parameters common to Mediterranean countries within homogeneous context. These standards will help the implementation of future benchmarking in selected areas.
- Contribute to the construction of a common frame and knowledge, and to the development of a common terminology and semantic and help water negotiations through Thematic Workshops.

To achieve the abovementioned targets, the activities were grouped in inter-linked work packages, as follows (Fig. 2).

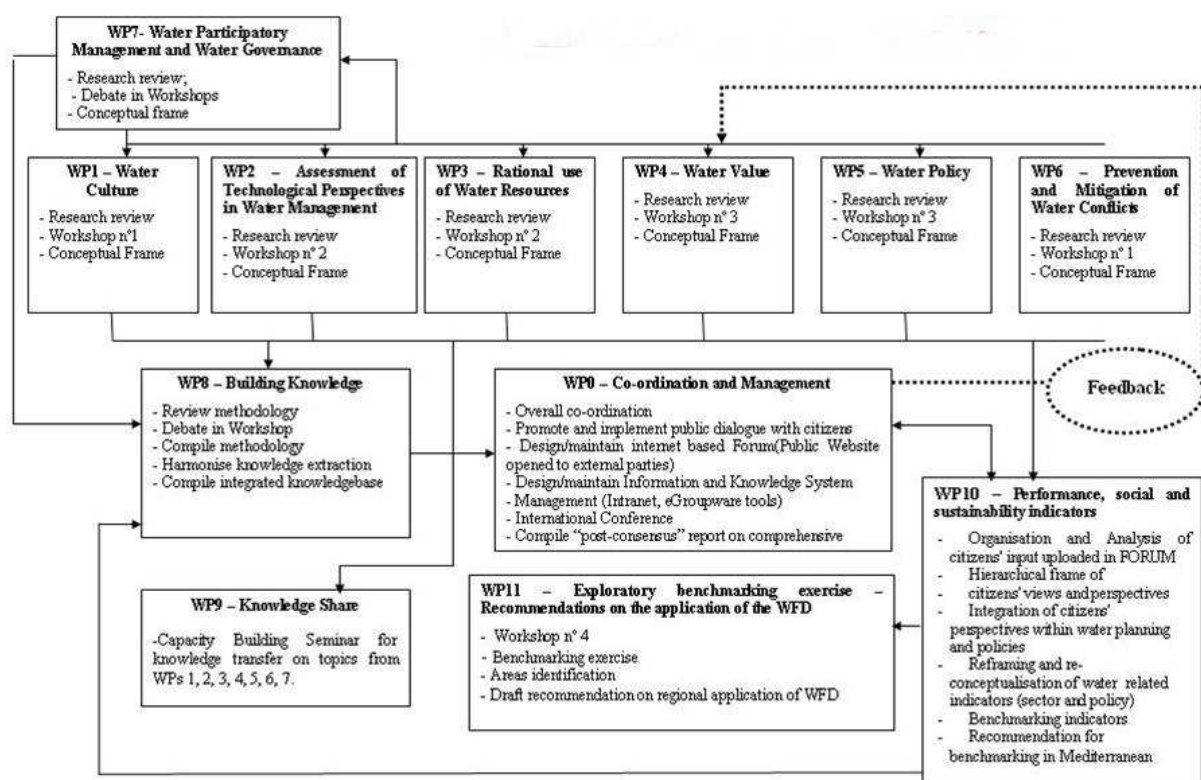


Fig. 2. Main structural links among work packages (PERT diagram)

MELIA COMMUNITY OR PRACTICE

The dissemination of the results of MELIA will be the most relevant and appreciable output, carried out by means of a wide communication strategy, addressed to all those involved actors in water use who set up the MELIA Community or Practice (CoP), in rising awareness at educational level, in research, administration and policy making.

The activities' results will be made available and disseminated in the form of dedicated brochures, leaflets, pamphlets, videos and educational material, CD-ROMs, newsletters in both English and Arabic, in order to promote and establish continuous interactive dialogue with citizens and private-public Institutions.

Another focus of MELIA will be the establishment of contacts in each of the participating countries and with regular media interaction and educational structures in order to increase public and political awareness on water management and use. In this way, MELIA Community or Practice is a strategic response to the demands for increased skills and capacities in the water sector leading towards the implementation of IWRM in the Mediterranean Area.

The information management cycle and knowledge generation foreseen in MELIA CoP will assist specific knowledge functions and link them with institutions or individuals outside the network. The cycle of information management and knowledge creation will be organised in a way that the following cycle of functions is ensured:

- Establishment of the information base;
- Adaptation of information and sharing within the network;
- Transfer of the information to target groups (discussion among stakeholders, water users, managers, IWRM implementers, citizens...);
- Generation – or better – consolidation of common knowledge (national and regional levels).

Table 1. Goals of MELIA CoP and indicators of performance

	Main goals to be reached by MELIA CoP	Indicators of performance
Information base (1) WPO	<p>MELIA CoP has access to international and local knowledge.</p> <p>Documentation of current thinking and practices on sustainable management of water resources is available within the MELIA CoP.</p> <p>MELIA CoP has a broad range of knowledge on elements of integrated water resources management in the skills and capacities of its members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in local and international meetings. • Membership distribution and functions at local and international levels. • Communication systems. • Resource libraries identified and accessible to members. • Web based information access. • Range of skills and disciplines of members. • Knowledge mapping of members.
Information adaptation & sharing (2) WPO	<p>Knowledge products are adapted to the regional and local context.</p> <p>MELIA CoP members and all citizens are fully informed and contribute to communication on MELIA CoP activities, work opportunities and exchange of information and experience.</p> <p>Network members are competent in aspects of IWRM and able to deliver quality capacity building services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training materials and other materials in appropriate languages, with local examples and relevance. • Effective communication system in place between members. • Members participating in activities, sharing experience and information. • Trainers have been trained. • Quality of capacity building assessed.
Access to information (3) WPO	<p>Information about the network and about integrated water resources management is made available and disseminated to water sector professionals and accessible to all the citizens.</p> <p>MELIA CoP and its members carry out training and include water resources management in education curricula (Special mention to PhD Students).</p> <p>MELIA CoP is seen as a focal point for accessing advice, from members, on integrated water resources management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information materials type and availability for dissemination towards water professionals and accessible to all the citizens. • Number of training activities. • Revised curricula. • Contribution of members. • Requests for network assistance. • Numbers of workshops, papers, consultancies.

	Main goals to be reached by MELIA CoP	Indicators of performance
Knowledge generation (4) (WP8 and WP9)	<p>Research is being conducted contributing to understanding on how to achieve sustainable management and development of water resources.</p> <p>Case studies have been prepared and disseminated.</p> <p>MELIA CoP is attracting experienced members and members are gaining new experience by participating in the network.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of research programmes. • Incorporation of research into capacity building. • Number of case studies. • Dissemination of results. • Number of new members. • Range of skills and knowledge. • Number and type of network activities generating experience.

At this point, a proper communication system based on the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) within the MELIA CoP is central for its efficiency and to facilitate information mapping sharing. MELIA Community of Practice is about people and their interactions, and thus information and communication are critical.

MELIA Work Packages (WPs) aim at a symbiosis of physical and virtual work environments. The availability of MELIA CoP members and their work environment becomes uncoupled from their physical locations.

MELIA Work Packages Workspaces need to offer team members intuitive and ubiquitous access to each other, and to information and resources of their Work Packages, secure and transparent to their physical workplaces and their own tools.

Therefore, MELIA CoP Platform will facilitate the collaboration of people in teams into each Work Package, providing a ubiquitous and secure access to selected Web services required for the teamwork within the respective context.

A context-oriented platform will be first created to support spatially distributed Work Packages teams. This is the main reason to design the user interface to be based on Web technology as a commonly well-understood and accepted user interface paradigm.

Information management and knowledge generation enhances MELIA Community of Practice performance as it:

- Makes things visible: for a network, the most active way of gaining visibility is through operational information management and knowledge generation. As much as it is important for networks to have a formal structure, they acquire reality once their active operations begin, and this as we have seen is through information management, knowledge generation and delivery of capacity building.
- Promotes policy acceptance: in the case of networks, this is promoting and raising awareness about the need for IWRM. The core of the content is IWRM and as information (and then knowledge) circulate, policy is impacted within the water sector and related target groups, including decision makers and governments in the Mediterranean Area.
- Facilitates platform processes: the information management and knowledge generation cycle requires effective networking. Without effective participation of MELIA Community of Practice members (MELIA partners, independent experts, anonymous contributors ...) and recipient groups there will be no real information management. Network development and information management are simultaneous processes contributing to each other.