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WATER RESOURCES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION, PS-EAU AND GEWAMED PROJECT

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BACKGROUND

The region is bioclimatically characterised by strong summer drought. Over the past 20 years, most of its countries have experienced memorable droughts lasting several years. Precipitation is irregular and often violent. Mediterranean high water can cause disastrous flooding and rain is a major cause of soil erosion. Faced with these constraints, local societies and governments have always endeavoured to plan and manage water and soils as it witnessed by the ancestral know-how of the farming communities as well as the major urban water works of antiquity. In the 19th and 20th centuries, major drainage and irrigation works made it possible to transform numerous marshy plains into high-yield land.

But, there is still a territorial imbalance: 300 km³ of water are being withdrawn today in the entire region. This water demand (consumption + losses from conveyance and distribution) has doubled in a century and increased by 60 % over the past 25 years. It remains unevenly distributed (from 100 to over 1000 m³/capita/year) depending on the country.

The main cause of the increased total demand is irrigation, which represents 82 % of the total demand in the south part of the Mediterranean region. Demographic growth and urbanisation are the 2nd factor in this evolution: coastal towns of more than 10 000 inhabitants will represent 80 millions inhabitants at 2025 horizon (instead of 43 on 1995). Water supply and sanitation needs for this population will require more and more water and considerable supply investments in water supply and treatment. Several experiments show that service provision improvement (leakage control, customers monitoring, adapted water pricing, ... etc.) allow to mobilize water losses volumes to be oriented towards new water demands. Very rapidly developing tourism (the Mediterranean is the most visited destination in the world) greatly increases summer potable water demand in the coastal areas.

Withdrawal already surpasses 50 per cent of the renewable natural water resources, all of which are far from being "exploitable" in numerous countries such as Jordan, Malta, Tunisia, and the Mediterranean watershed of Spain and 90 % of Egypt and Israel. The exploitation index goes beyond 400 per cent in Libya, a country that disposes only of non-renewable fossil resources. The pessimistic "crisis" scenario based on conventional uses trends does not seem realistic. The predominant supply-side approach will lead to an increase in the demand by more than 55 % by 2025. In this trend scenario, water demand in 2025 will surpass renewable natural resources (index > 100 %) in 8 countries and 50 % of these resources in 3 others.

In addition, the low efficiency of the water uses, especially in irrigation, contribute to future competitions and unsustainable future, including problems of food security and shortage of water for about 254-290 millions of people under stress and scarcity limits in 2025.

The alternative sustainable scenario based on water demand management (WDM) based on technical tools, policy making, financial incentives and public participation – including the gender dimension – would allow a reduction by half of the quantities of water extracted and lost and would represent about 70.4 km³, or 4/5 of the resources to mobilize to cover the projected additional water demands up to 2010 (Blue Plan, 2002). This scenario needs major strategic choices and in depth changes; the gender dimension is one of them.

The water demand management is based on the assumption that it is not possible to continue the business like usual in the field of water management. Also, the solution is more integrated than

exclusively technical or political, or financial. On the other hand, it needs to implement in practice the 30 years old permanent incantation of participation which requires:

- A shared responsibility at all levels.
- To inform: who would fight a problem he ignores?
- To build capacity and train: learn how to solve the problems.
- To build awareness: for involving people by the interactive dimension.

THE “PROGRAMME SOLIDARITE EAU – PS-EAU”

The Water Solidarity Network (pS-Eau) is a non profit organisation established in 1994 by wish of the European Ministries of Environment. The pS-Eau promotes dialogue between international aid stakeholders (non-governmental organisations, public authorities, local governments, the private sector, research, ... etc.) in the field of water and contributes to the elaboration of shared methodology references. It coordinates working groups and research-action programmes.

pS-EAU, a Tool for Dialogue Among Water Sector Stakeholders

In order to further the improved quality of interventions in this field and facilitate the elaboration of a shared set of references among the different stakeholders, the Water Solidarity Network (pS-Eau) facilitates local international aid initiatives and coordinates dialogue among stakeholders. The pS-Eau is now steered by a board of directors made up of researchers and representatives of public authorities, territorial authorities, international solidarity associations, and professional water organisations.

Four main activities are carried out:

- Spreading information, capitalisation and publications.
- Coordination and technical advices.
- Contribution to debates on water policies, at French, European and international levels.
- Animation of specific programmes.

Implementation of Specific Programmes

pS-Eau's activities are organised around the following geographic and thematic programmes.

Water and Sanitation in the Mediterranean

pS-Eau encourages the networking of stakeholders in the Maghreb and Machrek countries. It also facilitates the international aid actions of French partners with the organisations of the south shore of the Mediterranean basin. In the framework of the international support programme for water resource centres (Streams), pS-Eau is accompanying the regional process for the Maghreb.

The pS-Eau participates in the census of NGOs active in sustainable development in the Mediterranean. With various partners in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean and in Europe, pS-Eau participates in the elaboration of proposals in favour of sustainable and environmentally friendly development in the Mediterranean, involving the concerned partners.

Senegal River Basin (Mali, Mauritania, Senegal)

The goal of this geographic programme is to favour contacts between stakeholders and skills so as to improve the coherency of interventions in the Senegal River Basin. It ensures four functions:

- offering a methodology and technological support-advice service to project implementers;
- organising the monitoring of studies and encouraging capitalisation works;
- developing activities and information tools; and
- offering a space for exchange and dialogue.

In the framework of the elaboration of a repertory of development actions in Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal, pS-Eau supports the creation of Internet portals providing access to information in developing countries.

Drinking Water and Sanitation

This programme focuses on the sustainable management of solid waste and the evacuation of wastewater and excreta. It is co-run by pS-Eau and the Municipal Development Programme (MDP, Benin). The core of the programme has been structured around four key points of entry which are common to all aspects of solid waste management and sanitation (wastewater and excreta) :

- Technico-economical, environmental and health.
- Sociological, anthropological, cultural, spatial and territorial.
- Micro and macro-economic and financial.
- Institutional and legal.

Twenty pilot actions (to test new avenues and hypotheses full-scale) and research actions (to improve knowledge) were selected.

Gender and Water

The aim of this programme is to raise awareness and mobilize water stakeholders on issues related to mainstreaming gender in drinking water programmes. pS-Eau recently facilitated an electronic conference with about 300 participants from number of countries (around 30 countries). Currently, pS-Eau is studying the gender component of 12 bilaterally funded rural water programmes in Africa (Sénégal, Mali, Ivory coast) and from other regions (Columbia, Pakistan, ..., etc).

53 articles have been published in newsletters with a gender/water dimension since 1995 and also 10 publications have been made. The data base of pS-Eau also has registered 60 persons in this field. In addition, one bibliography on "gender, women and development" has been made.

Publications and Dissemination

pS-Eau publishes a newsletter (in French), studies and others publications. All these information are available on the pS-Eau website (www.pseau.org). On the website, pS-Eau publishes water actors databases. More than 14 000 contacts are record in these databases. There are two levels for the consultation: one public and one private with more contacts. The website is being visited by 600 persons per day and 220 000 sessions are being opened per year. Concerning the Mediterranean area, the database records more 700 organisations working in the field of water covering 25 countries.

pS-Eau and Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming is a very critical task and pS-Eau is very involved in this field. Mainstreaming also has several different aspects. For example, pS-Eau is organizing the participation of the French stakeholders and their southern partners in the international fora about water (e.g. The Hague, Kyoto and recently Mexico).

Also the lobbying on parliamentarians is very important such as the work done in France for the adoption of the loi Oudin which gives the opportunity for local authorities to spend 1% of the water bill for international cooperation activities.

Sometimes, meetings for public information on the results of international fora, local case studies, training sessions, participation in scientific or stakeholders workshops, ... etc, give the opportunity for mainstreaming.

Also pS-Eau is linked with number of networks like "gender and water alliance", "Streams of knowledge", "Global Water Partnership" GWP, "the Euro-Mediterranean Water Information System"

EMWIS, the Blue Plan; all of them manage a part of the strategic information in the field of water in the Mediterranean area and should be informed.

ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED DURING THE EXECUTION OF THE GEWAMED PROJECT

GEWAMED should try to avoid falling in the trap of doing business as usual. The project should explore all possibilities to be innovative and promote new approaches to give a more prominent role to gender in water management.

The establishment of websites and national networks are substantial contributions in terms of communication and coordination but to create a new “gender culture of water” some other inputs may be needed. The project should make efforts to identify what else may be needed.

The project should analyse critically what is the added value of the gender dimensions in water management.

The project is promoting the establishment of regional and national networks as a mean to coordinate the action of the partners and stakeholders. Will this be sufficient to achieve together goals that otherwise individually would not have achieved?. The project should explore other possibilities. One of them could be the establishment of small groups of partners working together in some issues and this can lead to achieve results of common interest.

No process of increased participation comes without costs. If women are going to have a greater participation in water management, what are the costs involved and who will pay for them? Furthermore how the process can be structured in terms of an specific plan where the actors, the time, the place and the costs are clearly defined.

ROLE OF PS-EAU

As pS-Eau is involved in 6 of the 7 work packages with little amount of money, its contribution should be very well organised. For example, in the field of advise and expertise for the websites, in facilitation of meetings, workshops and inter-linkages of networks; in conducting baseline studies on existing documents, or survey, or study case on indicators, ... etc.

The work plan for the next 18 months shall include:

1. establishing in the website of pS-Eau a GEWAMED window including contacts of GEWAMED partners, existing GEWAMED documents, documents related to gender issues in the Mediterranean region, links with the regional GEWAMED site and others.
2. making a baseline study on ongoing documents and efforts and activities conducted by pS-Eau and its French and foreign partners on gender issues in Mediterranean region.
3. Participate in the Regional events, in particular undertake the necessary preparatory work for the Regional Workshop on Mainstreaming Gender Dimensions in Water Management for Food Security and Food Safety.
4. Contribute to the conceptual framework to improve private and public awareness and education on gender and water management issues.