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EU-FUNDED PROJECT EMPOWERS SOUTH MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES IN ASSESSING THE COST OF WATER RESOURCES DEGRADATION AND REMEDIATION AT THE BASIN LEVEL

PRESS NOTE

Based on the latest news Mann River and Lake Mar have been polluted by excessive fertilization, and livestock and industrial waste. With each day of inaction, the potential for ecological degradation worsens and pollution threatens the drinking water supply for the residents of the towns and villages in the region, has led to the ban of fishing due to contamination, it is threatening tourism and mainly the restaurant industry as this region is famous for its mild weather and food variety.

Does the above sound familiar to you? It might, since it refers to a set of conditions and problems often experienced by South Mediterranean Basins.

How to evaluate the damages and prioritize specific actions for improving the management of the basins is at the heart of a document recently released by the EU-funded project Sustainable Water Integrated Management – Support Mechanism (SWIM-SM) to assist decision-makers at the national and local levels.

The hypothetical case study on Mann River and Lake Mar provides both the theoretical instruments and methods and practical exercises to build the capacity of South Mediterranean stakeholders in this process. The material has been successfully tested during two courses recently organized by SWIM-SM for [Mashrek](#) and [Maghreb](#) countries.

The practical section, in particular, provides the necessary tools to valuate water-related diseases, degradation of water quality and quantity, fossil aquifer replenishment, deterioration due to solid waste and selective remedial costs.

Drawbacks of the process, due to methodological limitations and lack of accessibility to reliable information, are also highlighted in the document.

In the past two years SWIM-SM has focused on assessing the cost of water resources degradation and remediation measures in four South Mediterranean River Basins (Litani in Lebanon, Medjerda in Tunisia, Oum Er-Rbia in Morocco and Seybouse in Algeria) in order to demonstrate the usefulness of quantifying economic gains and losses from a range of water management decisions and particularly in view of promoting:

- better allocations from the current budget to support management of environment and water resource sectors;
- better guidance to business about most efficient investments;
- better infrastructure investment decisions that reflect all the potential gains from sustainable management of environment or water sectors.

To download the assessments and policy notes prepared for the above-mentioned River Basins, please click [here](#).

[For more information:](#)

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[Note to editors:](#)

The SWIM Programme

Sustainable Water Integrated Management (SWIM) is a Regional Programme launched by the European Commission to contribute to the extensive dissemination and effective implementation of sustainable water management policies and practices in the Southern Mediterranean Region. This is in the context of increasing water scarcity, combined pressures on water resources from a wide range of users, desertification processes and in connection with climate change.

The Programme, with a total budget of approximately € 22 million, is implemented under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), following the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conferences on Environment (Cairo, 2006) and Water (Dead Sea, 2008).

SWIM Partner Countries are: **Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the occupied Palestinian territory, Syria*¹ and Tunisia.**

SWIM consists of two major Components, which are inter-related and complement each other:

- A Support Mechanism, funded with a budget of € 6.7 million and
- Demonstration Projects funded with a budget of € 15 million

SWIM – Support Mechanism (SWIM-SM)

SWIM-SM is the Component of the Programme that provides Regional Technical Assistance to the Partner Countries. This Component, of the duration of 4 years (2010-2014), aims at:

- Providing strategic assistance to the Partner Countries in designing and implementing sustainable water management policies and plans, involving inter-sector dialogue as well as stakeholder consultation and participation;
- Contributing to institutional reinforcement, to the development of the necessary planning and management skills and to know-how transfer;
- Raising awareness on the threats on water resources, the necessity to switch to more sustainable consumption models and possible solutions to face challenges.

Furthermore, SWIM-SM also:

- assists technically the Demonstration Projects implemented under the second Component of the SWIM Programme and;
- undertakes Capacity Building activities related to water resources management identified under the Horizon 2020 Capacity Building – Mediterranean Environment Programme (H2020 CB/MEP).

SWIM-Support Mechanism is implemented by a Consortium formed by a combination of nine international and regional companies and institutions:

- LDK Consultants Engineers & Planners SA: Leader of the Consortium
- Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean (GWP-Med): SWIM-SM Technical Direction
- Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA)
- Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED)
- DHV B.V.
- Greek Ministry of Environment, Energy & Climate Change, Department of International Relations & EU Affairs
- Lebanese Ministry of Energy and Water, General Directorate of Hydraulic and Electrical Resources

* In May 2011, the European Union decided to suspend all cooperation with Syrian authorities

- Tunisian Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, Bureau de l'Inventaire et des Recherches Hydrauliques / Direction Générale des Ressources en Eau
- Umweltbundesamt GmbH - Environment Agency, Austria

SWIM Demonstration Projects

- 1- **Adaptation to Climate Change of the Mediterranean Agricultural Systems (SWIM-ACLIMAS)**
Leader of the Project's Consortium: International Center for Advanced Studies on Mediterranean Agriculture – Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (CIHEAM-MAIB), Italy
- 2- **All Across the Jordan: the NGO Trans-boundary Master Planning of the Lower Jordan River Basin**
Leader of the Project's Consortium: Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME)
- 3- **Innovative Means to Protect Water Resources in the Mediterranean Coastal Areas through Re-injection of Treated Wastewater (SWIM-IMPROWARE)**
Leader of the Project's Consortium: Italian Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea
- 4- **Network of demonstration activities for sustainable integrated wastewater treatment and reuse in the Mediterranean (SWIM-Sustain Water MED)**
Leader of the Project's Consortium: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German International Cooperation - GIZ) GmbH
- 5- **Water harvesting and Agricultural techniques in Dry lands: an Integrated and Sustainable model in MAghreb Regions (SWIM-WADIS MAR)**
Leader of the Project's Consortium: Desertification Research Group (Centro Interdipartimentale di Ateneo) University of Sassari, Italy