



**PROMOTING BEST PRACTICES IN SUPPORT OF PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE
SUCCESSFUL ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF WUAS IN THE
PCS**

**UNDER THE PILLAR WATER GOVERNANCE AT LOCAL LEVEL
CONCEPT NOTE FOR SWM-SM 2ND SC
16 & 17 OCTOBER 2012, BRUSSELS
ACTIVITIES PROPOSED FOR 2013 & 2014 PLAN OF ACTIONS**



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I. INTRODUCTION

Water Governance at the local level is one of the four Pillars of Intervention that is currently being implemented within the framework of the Regional Project “Sustainable Water Integrated Management – Support Mechanism (SWIM-SM)” funded by the European Commission (EC). **The pillar, titled “Water Governance at the Local Level: Sharing Experiences from Water Users’ Associations (WUAs)”** was launched for implementation as part of the project with the aim to (a) Identify concrete actions for improving local water management and reinforcing users’ participation; (b) Assess the adequacy of water legislations for the establishment and effective operation of WUAs and identify opportunities for updating and/or amending water legislation; (c) Provide WUAs with tools that would enable them to be actively involved in decision-making in the water sector on selected areas and at the local level, and (d) create partnerships among policy makers, civil society and local communities in ways that enhance mutual trust and collaboration.

In this context, SWIM-SM planned and undertook a set of activities to support more effective water governance at the local level with emphasis for the first year (2012) on sharing of experiences in Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) and irrigation Management Transfer (IMT) for Water Users Associations in the region. These activities comprised:

1. A regional assessment on the status of water users’ participation in the project countries (PCs), complemented with specific case studies from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia. The assessment has illustrated the range of experiences in irrigation water users’ participation in the partner countries, compiled information on the status of WUAs in the region, including progress achieved and lessons learnt, and identified measures to improve the efficiency of WUAs.
2. Organised and conducted a regional WUA experts’ group workshop held in Athens in April 2012; involving international, regional and local experts from seven project countries including representatives of the partner institutions and WUAs in countries with which SWIM works. **The workshop aimed to** (a) present, discuss and validate the findings of the regional assessment, (b) identify the gaps and priority actions including capacity building (CB) and training that could be undertaken in the framework of SWIM-SM during its life with the aim to improve local water management and enhance users’ participation, and (c) promote the exchange of experiences and best practices among the countries of the region.
3. Conducted, in coordination with H2020 CB/MEP, a 3-day regional training on “Basic Operational Concepts and Practices for WUAs’ Establishment and Institutional Support” including a field visit to one of the Capitanata irrigation schemes in Italy, representing a success story for WUAs.

The regional assessment; confirmed by the results of the experts’ workshop group, has shown that the project countries experience three major constraints during the implementation of PIM/IMT:

- A lack of political support in most countries which resulted in an inadequate support to and slowing down of the PIM/IMT process.
- Legal constraints as the PCs did not supplement the PIM/IMT process with the necessary adjustments in the existing laws due to the difficulties related to changing legislations; involving parliamentary processes. The result has been that often the legal responsibilities and nature of WUAs are not clear or do not cover well the real responsibilities.
- Lack of technical and managerial skills within the WUAs, which has resulted in poor provision of water services.

II. RATIONALE FOR 2013 AND 2014 PLAN OF ACTIONS

Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) and irrigation Management Transfer (IMT) is a widely accepted approach for irrigation sector reform involving respectively the participation of users – the farmers - in all aspects and levels of irrigation management, and full or partial transfer of responsibility and authority for the governance, management and financing of irrigation systems from the government to water users associations (WUAs). The underlying rationale for participation in irrigation is that users have a direct interest in the water



delivery function because of its influence on the profitability of their agricultural operations. WUAs have proven, in the best cases, to be efficient, accountable and responsive. Maintenance activities by the associations have helped stop the deterioration of infrastructure. In some cases there is a risk that influential members of the community capture the WUA development process, which can reduce opportunities for the vulnerable. It is therefore important to monitor the level of involvement and degree of democracy exhibited by the WUA in the management of its affairs.

Although the devolution of management responsibility over irrigation systems, offers strong potential to improve the sustainability of irrigation systems, the process requires among many other things the following:

- A firm policy decision to transfer a meaningful level of responsibility over the management of irrigation systems to water users;
- A legal framework for establishment of independent WUAs, and for empowering them;
- A capability within WUAs to manage the irrigation system or sub-system serving them;
- A capability within public irrigation agencies to (i) provide technical and institutional support to WUAs and (ii) oversee the performance of WUAs;
- Economically viable irrigated agriculture: To be independent and self-managed, WUAs have to be financially autonomous and viable.

Based on the results of the regional assessment on water users participation and status of PIM/IMT in the region implemented by SWIM-SM in 2012, and the list of priority actions that were recommended during the regional experts' group workshop that was held in Athens in April 2012; the future plan of action for the years 2013 and 2014 was redesigned to address the specific needs of the countries while keeping in mind the requirements for a successful implementation of PIM/IMT; mentioned in the bullets above. In this context, it should be mentioned that the need for a comprehensive M&E system emerged as a priority action that was identified unanimously by all experts in a/m regional WUA experts' group workshop.

SWIM project countries are at different levels and breadth of experience with respect to water users' participation in irrigation management. Regardless of the stage of development, an M&E system is needed to monitor the process and associated activities throughout the different phases; immediately following the initial declaration of PIM/IMT policy statement for empowering stakeholders in the management of their water resources. This comprehensive system should help (a) enable monitoring the degree of political commitment towards the process, (b) provide the basis for evaluating government interventions to establish and support WUAs including the adequacy of the upgraded or newly enacted legislations in support of PIM/IMT and WUA establishment, the suitability of the publicity and awareness campaigns among water users of the WUAs roles and responsibilities, and the appropriateness of the capacity building and training programs undertaken to develop the WUAs management, technical and financial capabilities, etc., (c) assess the level of progress of WUAs and their institutional, financial and technical performance in order to identify the ones which are not performing well and where additional support is needed, and investigate reasons for good and bad performance and transfer lessons learnt to other WUAs, and (d) periodically assess the results/impacts of the government interventions.

Another main challenge facing the implementation of PIM/IMT in the SWIM project countries is strengthening the political commitment to the reform process. Sharing information through study tours to countries representing success stories in PIM and IMT; where the process was backed up by strong enabling environment including supportive legislations; hence resulting in positive impacts, can strengthen such commitment and encourage project countries to provide support for such a reform.

Long-term capacity building is yet another basic element that needs strengthening in the project countries which should include enabling the irrigation agencies, extension services and local NGOs to train WUAs staff and develop their management, financial and technical capabilities and ensure that WUAs are managed effectively.

Despite the range of problems that are particular to each PC, there are key activities and best practices (BPs) associated with the WUA formation and support which are universal. As indicated above, a basic element to be



included in any IMT programme is the establishment of an M&E system for the continuous monitoring and evaluation of the program. To this effect, developing a regional comprehensive system that suits the needs of the PCs while using best practices adopted by international organisations should, inter-alia, help increase awareness of the relevant staff in the PCs on the important role that M&E can play in adjusting the PIM/IMT process, and improve knowledge of best M&E practices throughout the process. This, together with actions required to strengthen both the political commitment for irrigation management reform and the long-term capacity of stakeholders involved in WUAs implementation, will form the three axis of intervention for SWIM-SM during 2013 and 2014; under the “Water Governance at local level” Pillar.

III. OBJECTIVES

The overall Objective of the suggested activities is to promote best practices in support of priority areas needed for the successful establishment and operationalization of WUAs in the PCs; and thereby contributing to ensure the effective implementation and sustainability of the WUAs.

The **specific objectives** of the proposed activities are:

1. Develop a comprehensive M&E system that best suits the needs of the participating countries **to monitor the PIM/IMT process throughout its different phases**. The system will enable:
 - Monitoring the degree of political commitment towards the process
 - Monitoring the various government interventions to establish and support WUAs
 - Monitoring the status and the institutional, financial and technical performance of the WUAs
 - Periodical assessment of the results/impacts of the government interventions
2. Contribute to the mobilization of support to PIM/IMT by promoting PIM/IMT at the political level and increasing awareness on the role of the political commitment and enabling environment in the successful implementation of PIM and IMT.
3. Build the capacity of national authorities responsible for WUAs, extension services and local NGOs to enable them carry out training for WUAs in areas needed to ensure WUAs sustainability.
4. Promote North-South and South-South exchange and contribute to the extension of regional networking.

IV. SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

The following activities are envisaged during 2013 and 2014, involving all PCs with some activities restricted to selected PCs:

Activity 1: Develop a comprehensive M&E system for Participatory Irrigation Management and Irrigation Management Transfer Process that is best suited for the Project Countries (2013).

The objective of this activity is to review and evaluate the existing M&E systems that are used to monitor and evaluate the PIM/IMT process in the project countries, and develop – through a regional workshop - jointly with the national, regional and international experts a comprehensive M&E system to enable the monitoring and evaluation of the PIM/IMT process throughout its different phases and which is best suited to the PCs, with a view to existing Best Practices (BPs) in M&E systems adopted by international organisations for the monitoring of Water Users Association Formation and Support.

This activity will entail the following:

- a) Provide a regional view on the status of M&E system that are used to monitor and evaluate the PIM/IMT process in the PCs. Develop a questionnaire to solicit country inputs on the availability of M&E systems, and the indicators used. Consolidate the responses into a regional perspective to be presented as background information for the envisaged M&E regional experts’ group workshop, proposed under sub-activity b (below);



- b) Review the International M&E systems adopted by international organisations such as Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), Irrigation Water Management Institute (IWMI), and the World Bank (WB) to monitor Water Users Association Formation and support; to be presented as exemplary best practices in the related field and serve as a guiding document for the development of regional M&E system during a proposed M&E regional workshop. Conduct a 4-days regional expert group workshop involving representatives from national authorities, water users associations, donors, regional and international organisations and experts to discuss existing related M&E experiences emanating from the SWIM-SM regional and international reviews and adopt one system that suits best the needs of the participating countries.

Year of Implementation: Year 2013

Potential partners: WUAs and Local Authorities that are concerned with the implementation of WUAs within the pilot area including extension services and NGOs.

Work Package (WP) No.: This activity falls under WP 1

Activity 2: Test the applicability of the M&E system in 1 pilot area.

This activity will enable local authorities and WUAs in the pilot area to examine and explore the applicability of selected BPs in the M&E system developed under activity 1 and apply them locally with due consideration to their local specificities, with the aim to document the approach and the lessons learnt during implementation for potential replication within the same and/or in other countries.

This will involve:

- a) Refinement of selected Best Practices in the M&E system to suit local conditions, and actual selection of indicators for the pilot area in a reflective and participative way involving the key stakeholders. Identification and mapping of the local beneficiaries will be carried out through field visits; jointly with the national and local authorities.
- b) Applying the selected BPs in 1 pilot area. Document the implementation approach, the results, problems in implementation and lessons learnt to extract those elements that can be replicated within the same and/or in other countries. Disseminate the findings and lessons learnt to other PCs. Conduct self-evaluation workshop in the pilot area, using social research methodologies that assist with capturing tacit as well as explicit knowledge from the involved stakeholders.

Output: Documentation of the M&E implemented

Year of Implementation: Year 2014

Potential partners: WUAs and Local Authorities that are concerned with the implementation of WUAs within the pilot area including extension services and NGOs.

Work Package (WP) No.: This activity falls under WP 1

Activity 3: Conduct a high profile Study tour involving officials from the authorities concerned with the implementation of WUAs in the project countries, to raise their awareness on the role of the political commitment and enabling environment in the successful implementation of the PIM and IMT.

Convene a 3 days high level study tour preceded by 2 days training on subjects related to the visit to strengthen political commitment to IMT and irrigation management reform process through a study tour to Turkey, to visit the General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works (DSI) responsible for planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of irrigation and drainage systems in the country. The study tour will show case how the government commitment for promoting privatization and IMT culminated in the transfer of 1,694,736 hectares in 2002 to water users associations (compared to 62,620 in 1992) and the subsequent positive results of transferred scheme which should encourage project countries to provide support for such a reform. The tour will introduce the participants from the project countries to the Turkish experience of success in PIM and IMT, providing them relevant information related to the process including factors affecting decision



to adopt PIM/IMT in Turkey.

Year of Implementation: Year2013

Potential partners: The State Hydraulics Works (DSI) in Turkey

Work Package (WP) No.: This activity falls under WP 2

Activity4: Develop the capacity of relevant authorities/NGOs that are well established in the irrigation field,to carry out training in the formulation of the legal statutes for WUAs through the planning and execution of a regional workshop for training of trainers (ToT) and the subsequent organisation and implementation of supervised training in selected PCs; assisted by SWIM-SM.

Activity 4 will involve the following:

- a) Organise and conduct a one 5-days regional workshop to train trainers on the formulation of the legal statutes for WUAs including the elements related to the WUAs budgets, water fees, business plans and models of income generation. The training shall be open to both the public sector including irrigation advisory/extension services and NGOs that are well established in the irrigation field in the respective countries.
- b) Organize and conduct one “**supervised**” training by trainers on the formulation of legal statutes for WUAs. The training will be mostly conducted by the trainers trained under activity (a)above, and assisted by the SWIM-SM. Training will take place in selected project countries where WUAs have a certain degree of autonomy, or in countries that are willing to undertake the training and establish a firm commitment to its implementation (Modality: one 3-day local training in 2-4 countries)

Year of Implementation: Year2014

Proposed Partners:National authorities concerned with the implementation of WUAs in the respective countries including extension services and one to two local NGOs.

Work Package (WP) No.: This activity falls under WP 2

V. OUTPUTS

1. Activity 1:

A regional M&E system and associated indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of PIM/IMT process is developed to suit the PCs needs with a view to the existing M&E systems in the PCs and related Best Practices currently in use by selected international organisations.

2. Activity 2:

- ThreeBest practices in M&E system for PIM/IMT process are examined and explored by local beneficiaries within a selected pilot area and lessons learnt are documented and disseminated for potential replication.
- 25-30 water users are with improved capacity in monitoring and evaluating the performance of WUAs

3. Activity 3:

High Level officials from the authorities concerned with the implementation of WUAs in the project countries, are aware of the role of the political commitment and enabling environment in the successful implementation of PIM/IMT process.

4. Activity 4

25-30 officials are capable to deliver training on the formulation of WUAs legal statutes; including the elements related to the WUAs budgets, water fees, business plans and models of income generation



VI. TEAM COMPOSITION

- Mr. Hosny Khordagui, SWIM-SM Team Leader
- Ms. Suzan Taha, SWIM-SM Water Expert
- Ms. Barbara Tomassini, SWIM-SM Communication Expert
- Non key Expert; Rural engineering
- Non key Expert; Sociologist
- Non key Experts; Trainers, Training preparation and facilitation