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## EU-FUNDED PROJECT ASSISTS ALGERIAN DECISION MAKERS IN PRIORITIZING INVESTMENTS TO REDUCE THE DEGRADATION OF THE SEYBOUSE RIVER BASIN

### PRESS NOTE

An assessment recently released by the **EU funded project SWIM-Support Mechanism (SWIM-SM)** identifies the conditions under which specific investments aimed to reduce the degradation of the **Seybouse River Basin in Algeria** become effective and profitable in the long-term.

Based on 2012 data, the costs of environmental degradation of the Seybouse River Basin is estimated to be equivalent on average to **0.2% of Algeria's (non-oil and gas) National GDP**, and is particularly attributable to **water resources degradation (73.1% of total costs in the Seybouse River Basin)** including, in order of importance, water quantity, water-borne diseases and water quality sub-categories.

Other major causes of degradation are the following:

- Poor waste collection and
- Health impacts due to air pollution in the Annaba region.

Based on the cost-benefit analysis of different scenarios related to the three identified priorities for action, namely **irrigation efficiency, the provision of water and sanitation in rural areas, and landfill management systems**, the following is anticipated:

- Concerning **irrigation efficiency**, the **profitability of large-scale interventions to reduce technical water losses is certain** and could have a positive return on investment after only 4 years, where the investment costs were compared to benefits accruing from increased productivity in terms of vegetable and tree crop yields.
- **Investments in the provision of sanitation in rural areas – with or without the supply of drinking water - are profitable over a 20 year time span** and would reduce both water-borne diseases and the pollution of water resources.
- For **solid waste management** and after considering different scenarios (including a combination of: ensuring a transfer station, segregation, recycling, composting and landfilling), **only the landfilling alternative** coupled with electricity generation in cells is by itself profitable. Although segregation and recycling alternatives are too costly, it is suggested to support decision making through a more in depth analysis focusing not only on cost-benefit criteria but also on economies of scale (regrouping other Wilayas) criteria, social criteria, such as employment creation, poverty reduction, etc., which might justify such interventions.

The assessment also proposes **four intervention areas** to achieve an integrated management of water resources in the Seybouse Basin, based on economic performance and degradation's costs considerations:

- The prioritization of interventions aiming at reducing the technical and financial losses of drinking water supply and irrigation services, further also likely to improve water management.** These include for example the rehabilitation of drinking water, sewage and irrigation networks, structural changes (incentives, tariffs, users' awareness, conservation, governance, etc.) and the choice of technology for greater efficiency (in economic, financial and environmental terms).
- Focusing primarily on efficient investment for domestic pollution control in rural, peri-urban and industrial areas which have been neglected in the past.**
- Set up an information network for decentralized observation, follow-up, monitoring of the environment and natural resources of the basin in partnership with water and environment institutions.**
- A horizontal action for integrated water management in the Seybouse catchment areas** that would take into account the economic, environmental and social issues, as well as an improvement of the knowledge base, of information systems and good analysis tools.

The assessment's outcome was discussed with Algerian relevant institutions and stakeholders during a **National consultation in Algiers, on 26 November 2013**. The feedback received in that occasion has been integrated in the final version of the assessment that is available in the SWIM website in its integral form in [French](#), while an executive summary is also available in [English](#). Moreover, a policy note is also available in [English](#) and [French](#).

### For more information:

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SWIM website: [www.swim-sm.eu](http://www.swim-sm.eu)

### 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\*<sup>1</sup> 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
- 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

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

## 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 (SWIM-All Across the Jordan)**

Leader of the Project's Consortium: Friends of the Earth Middle East

3- **Innovative Means to Protect Water Resources in the Mediterranean Coastal Areas through Re-injection of Treated Wastewater (SWIM-IMPWARE)**

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: University of Sassari, Italy