

...The shared century-old experiences and diverse cultures have resulted to uneven levels of economic development and socio-political systems. The region is encountering a rapid, unbalanced demographic growth and increased urbanization trends. At the same time, the Mediterranean region is rich in unique and fragile ecosystems.

Water supply in the region is unequally distributed in space and time, both at regional level and within each country. The Southern Mediterranean and Middle East sub-regions have among the lowest per capita amount of water supply in the world. It is estimated that 7% of the entire Mediterranean population (28 million persons) lie below the poverty line of 500 m³/year per capita and another 29% (115 million persons) are below the threshold of 1000 m³/year per capita. In certain countries, exploitation indexes of renewable natural fresh water resources have reached 100%. The intensive extraction and use of water for domestic, agricultural and industrial purposes, without proper provisions for the protection of the resource, has led to serious water pollution of surface and ground water bodies. Agriculture consumes 70-80% of water in the Mediterranean countries. Many countries in the region are currently in a stage of institutional reform, orienting priorities and practices towards an integrated water resources management (IWRM) approach.

The Mediterranean has a tradition in cooperation and networking schemes, many of which address issues of sustainable development, environmental protection and management of natural resources. Water is a defined priority in the majority of related regional processes eg. Euro-Mediterranean Partnership,

Barcelona Convention, and its Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSDD), etc.

The Euro-Mediterranean Turin Plan of Action, the recommendations of the MCSDD, the GWP-Med Vision, Framework For Action (FFA) and Core for Action Plan, are, among others, major processes shaping the common Mediterranean water policies and practices. The EU Water Framework Directive offers a concrete example of IWRM application in the EU Member States, worthy to explore its adaptation in the entire Mediterranean.

There is a need

- ▶ to strengthen and make more concrete the regional framework on IWRM and to meet the WSSD target to develop IWRM and water efficiency plans in all countries,
- ▶ to encourage the transformation of national water policies towards sustainability and to integrate water concerns into sectoral policies,
- ▶ to meet the WSSD target to halve the proportion of people who do not have access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation,
- ▶ to build synergies by setting up active water partnerships at the regional and the national level,
- ▶ to build capacity, to raise public awareness and to educate the youth on water issues.

It is widely recognised that the development of effective multi-stakeholder partnerships is of major importance for responding to the present water challenges. The Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean was created to respond to this demand.



Global Water Partnership Mediterranean

What is GWP-Med

The Global Water Partnership–Mediterranean (GWP-Med) is a Regional Water Partnership of the Global Water Partnership (GWP). GWP-Med, in its present form, was created in 2002 and it is the successor partnership to the Mediterranean Technical Advisory Committee of GWP (MEDTAC).

GWP-Med is a platform bringing together competent organisations working regularly on water issues in the Mediterranean region. Its members may come from all over the Mediterranean and beyond.

GWP-Med represents the Global Water Partnership in the Mediterranean, and as such has the responsibility of implementing its principles and initiatives in the region. GWP-Med's goal is to promote and exchange knowledge on IWRM for the sustainable use of the region's water resources.

To achieve its goal, GWP-Med:

- promotes and sustains a strong partnership in the Mediterranean among competent organisations that have an impact on water management;
- makes the principles of sustainable use and integrated management of water resources (IWRM) widely known, recognised and applied by countries and all other stakeholders in the Mediterranean, through appropriate mechanisms for sharing information and experience;
- supports exemplary actions at local, national and regional level that demonstrate the value applicability and positive impact of the above principles;
- seeks and facilitates the appropriate international funding and involvement of international institutions for activities promoting IWRM;
- introduces, helps to implement and adapts to the specificities of the Mediterranean region, global initiatives launched or adopted by the GWP.

Structure

To deliver its work in the region, GWP-Med has a governance structure with four bodies:

- The Membership Platform
- The Partnership Council
- The Advisory Board
- The Secretariat

Any organisation involved with water issues or having an impact on them, and having its base in a Mediterranean country, can become a member of the **Membership Platform**. In addition, members could be accepted among organizations working actively and regularly on water issues in the Mediterranean even if their seats are outside the region. Currently (2003), the GWP-Med Membership Platform brings together 11 major Mediterranean networks of major stakeholders and, furthermore, 35 competent organisations, institutes and companies.

The organisations participating in the Membership Platform agree to abide by the Dublin-Rio principles, as follows:

- freshwater is a finite and vulnerable resource, essential to sustain life, development and the environment;
- water development and management should be based on a participatory approach involving all users, planners and policy-makers at all levels;
- women play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water;
- water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognised as an economic good.

In addition, they should pledge a willingness to actively participate in the GWP network—a global network of institutions representing all stakeholders in the water sector—that is committed to:

- the concept and implementation of integrated water resources management (IWRM) towards achieving global water security;
- raising awareness on water and the need for IWRM among the political and decision making levels;
- sharing experience and knowledge on IWRM among GWP Partners;
- providing advice and services to help GWP Partners where and when appropriate;
- proactively working together with GWP Partners to identify water related problems at regional, national and local levels; and
- formulating priorities, and devising and implementing programs to resolve these priorities through IWRM approaches.

The **Partnership Council**, headed by its Chair, is the deliberative and decision-making body of GWP-Med. The present members of the **Partnership Council**, are representatives of the following regional networks:

- Blue Plan (MAP/UNEP)
- CEDARE – Centre for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe
- CIHEAM – International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies
- EIC – EuroMediterranean Irrigators Community
- IME – Mediterranean Institute for Water
- MedCities – The Mediterranean Cities Network
- MedWet – The Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative
- MENBO/REMOC- Mediterranean Network of Basin Organisations
- MIO-ECSDE - Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development
- MWN – Mediterranean Water Network

The **Advisory Board**, headed by its Chair, acts as a think tank / committee of experts assisting the Partnership Council on GWP-Med development and programme of activities.

A small **Secretariat** is responsible for the coordination and execution of the GWP-Med work plans and projects in collaboration with members and competent institutes and organisations. The Secretariat is based in Athens, hosted by MIO-ECSDE.

At present

At present, GWP-Med, while solidifying and expanding the regional partnership, is working to achieve its main goals through its elaborate annual Work Programme of activities which focuses on the following areas:

1. Establishing on the ground partnerships
2. Developing awareness and changing attitudes towards water management
3. Supporting established alliances
4. Forming alliances with key international and regional organisations
5. Generating and disseminating knowledge about IWRM good practices
6. Supporting dialogue on key IWRM issues
7. Completing regional Frameworks for Action and prioritising actions
8. Identifying and supporting special studies

Some of the specific topics which GWP-Med's work focuses on are:

- Effective Water Governance
- Raising of Awareness and Political Will for IWRM
- Educating the Youth about Water
- Integrated Groundwater Management
- Drought Management
- Water, Food and Environmental Interaction
- Water and Poverty
- Water and Climate Change
- Water Demand Management

In addition, GWP-Med has undertaken the Secretariat of the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative, facilitating its Multi-Stakeholder Forum and providing relevant technical assistance to the government of Greece (Lead Country of the Component).

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The Mediterranean, a water scarce area,

lies on the crossroad of three continents and it has been the cradle of major civilizations...

The Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean
GWP-Med