

PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES INFORMATION SHEET

Name of the Partnership/Initiative

Systemic integration of networks for sustainable freshwater management at West/Central Asia and North Africa (WESCANA) national and regional levels

This partnership reflects the spirit and supports the endeavours of the EU Water Initiative.

Expected date of initiation: 2003

Expected date of completion: 2005

Partners Involved:

Governments:

Italy (DGCS) and Jordan as the focal point of the 24 countries of the IUCN- West Asia, Central Asia and North Africa (WESCANA) Water Programme

Intergovernmental organizations:

IUCN

Major groups:

National and international networks (including WESCANA Water Programme Centre) of governmental institutions (Ministries of Environment, Water, Agriculture, Public Health etc), local administrations, conservation and development NGOs, private groups (including those related to water supplies for drinking and other uses and/or treatment), academic institutions and research centres (including The University of Venice), training and development programmes (including Hydroaid), etc.

Leading Partner: Italy - DGCS

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Main objectives of the partnership initiative

Introduction

This partnership initiative aims at contributing to sustainable, ecosystem-based freshwater management on the basis of an integrated, systemic approach linking two of the core development components related to water. The first component, *water resource*, refers to aspects such as water supply and storage, and their related technologies, institutional and policy frameworks and networks (e.g. on the development of dams, embankments, irrigation, schemes, etc.). The second component, *water quality*, pertaining to the maintenance of the freshwater ecological balance, biodiversity, and environmental and human health, etc, and related institutions, policies and networks (e.g. on land use planning, pollution control, biological requalification including biological and chemical monitoring and treatment, etc). The project will contribute to facilitating effective and informed policy and decision-making on integrated freshwater management by supporting the above interlinking through the creation of a strong regional systemic network of networks of national excellence and expertise. Further, this initiative will support the implementation of partnership pilot planning and management action at transboundary/regional level.

Background

Water stands out in a pivotal position as a central nodal point of ecosystem fluxes, food webs and biotic and abiotic interactions both between and within air and soil media. Yet, water resources use planning and management tends to be constrained within the bounds of sectoral perspectives and approaches. This is of particular concern in countries such as of the WESCANA region which are characterised by arid and semi-arid climate-environmental conditions. For political, scientific and/or administrative reasons, the water related core components of development -water resource and water quality- tend to be dealt with by different specialised institutions and technical experts' fora. Besides, relevant institutional frameworks are generally too rigid with limited interaction and coordination. For example, indiscriminate use of pesticides and other chemicals in agriculture which may modify the biological set up of entire water systems, also impacting on crop productivity and quality, is addressed by other fora (e.g. in environmental and conservation circles) than those debating and

managing water supply, or those relevant to sanitation issues. Or, water resource allocation schemes are hardly developed and/or assessed and monitored in recognition of the importance of the maintenance of environmental flows. As a consequence, causes and effects of changed water supply and biochemical composition, pollution, alteration and reduction of biological diversity, etc. are not fully understood hindering the identification and design of effective measures to regenerate and restore the original freshwater and related ecosystems, their functions and services.

Inadequate knowledge on integrated approaches to water management limits the potential for an effective cross-sectoral application of existing data in water policy and management both at national and regional levels. Available data sets often constitute 'stand-alone' information, not linked to other relevant data and data sources.

Lack of capacity and know-how to effectively inter-exchange between various stakeholders' individual water interests further constrain systemic planning and coherent management approaches. Existing networks of water expertise often function in isolation without benefiting from the collective intelligence of connected networks. Limited access to technology, information and networks -a common feature in the countries of WESCANA- additionally hamper the development of integrated institutional mechanisms.

In turn, incoherent and un-coordinated decision-making leads to cost-inefficiency and further conflicts between planning and management practices both at national and regional levels as well as between the different water interest groups (public and private sector, scientific, and/or conservation communities etc).

This harmful process is exacerbated by a general lack of awareness on the consequences of indiscriminate water use. In the absence of any economic incentives, water pricing mechanisms and unambiguous water allocation rules, demand for water is steadily increasing.

Given the above development scenario, processes of sustainable freshwater use can be effectively assured only through integrated, systemic, eco-system-based management approaches cutting across social, economic and ecological aspects at administrative and policy levels. Such a pursuit emerges among the most pressing development priorities in WESCANA countries where planning and management is characterised by the incidence of water scarcity and is associated to strategic socio-economic emergencies and tensions. Additionally, cost-ineffective resources mobilisation further underscores the need for identifying, promoting and/or building upon all possible perspectives of synergistic and complementary contributions pertaining to freshwater issues. In turn, to be effective, such contributions must be given by all sectors and segments of life, and facilitate the replacement of a 'managing in isolation' model with one of joint rationalisation of water management policies and action through a coherent regional perspective corroborated by the valorisation of the wealth of both constraints and potential for profits which are shared by WESCANA countries.

Justification

This partnership initiative builds upon the potential strength of existing networks in WESCANA which -albeit thematically focussed in mandate and/or technical/scientific capacities- can rely on a unique natural and cultural background for expanding their application scope and contributing to intersectoral pursuits. On the one hand the countries of WESCANA are diverse in terms of an exceptionally rich natural heritage with many globally significant hotspots of a highly specialised and drought adapted dryland ecosystem flora and fauna. On the other hand, they share many common traits with respect to culture, religion and tradition, contributing to the region's particularity and uniqueness. In turn, these countries' prevailing water scarcity and drought, while impacting on the socio-economic features of the region, also associates with a tremendous asset of traditional knowledge and customary traits relevant to sustainable water use.

The IUCN-WESCANA programme's thematic network in the region engages in priority areas of natural resources management such as water, biodiversity, desertification, marine and coastal ecosystems, protected areas, environmental law, environmental education and communication, equity and sustainability. Its potential to act as a catalyst to the integration of thematic networks, established in individual member countries form an ideal mechanism of linkage for the development of an effective "network of networks" duly emphasizing the integrated, systemic freshwater management approach. Such a reciprocally supportive mechanism can be coherently and systemically coordinated with the Regional Thematic Centre for Water in Jordan acting as a platform for contributions from the members' respective networks.

This partnership initiative between the Italian development cooperation (DGCS), the Government of Jordan and IUCN – The World Conservation Union through its WESCANA programme, is an expression of the long-standing cooperation in the field of the conservation of the environment and sustainable development (Framework Agreement between DGCS and IUCN 1995).

The present initiative builds upon processes in which Italy has and is being actively involved playing a leading role in the framework of both international bilateral and multilateral development cooperation, such as peace processes, regional management coordination fora, technical assistance, capacity building pertaining to sustainable and systemic water planning and management (e.g. initiatives related to the Euro Mediterranean Plan of Action for Water Resources, support to debt swaps in irrigation and water supply schemes as well as to National Environmental Action Plans, active involvement and support to the UNCCD processes, etc). Italy's cooperation priorities are consistent with and actively sustain international efforts in their fight against poverty, relevant economic reforms and environmental improvements. DGCS partnership with the Government of Jordan and IUCN-WESCANA is also in line with its geographical priorities which include the countries from the eastern and southern Mediterranean and Middle East. Further, the partnership will better connect Italian expertise to the urgent demand of sustainable water management in the

region by promoting and facilitating know-how exchanges and joint research/management work with national and local institutions. It will contribute to stability by supporting regional/transboundary coherent management decisions toward lowering the impact of conflict on water as well as the risk of their incidence. The partnership initiative will contribute to support lasting ecologic benefits also through participatory development activities by local communities, facilitating conservation and sustainable use of their considerable natural heritage with particular regard to biological diversity. Besides, WESCANA countries encompass dryland ecosystem types of utmost importance to securing global biological diversity, and hence, furthering new integrative partnerships represents a value added also with respect to existing natural resource conservation efforts in the region.

The comparative advantage of the partnership with IUCN lies in its vast knowledge network of natural resources expertise, together with the its capacity of convening a large and diverse constituency from governmental as well as non-governmental organisations. Conservation and sustainable use of freshwater through an ecosystem-based approach constitutes a specific and integral component programme of IUCN's portfolio. Recognizing the urgency of sustainable water management in the countries of West/Central Asia and North Africa, IUCN through its WESCANA Programme has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Jordan -Ministry of Municipalities, Rural Affairs and Environment- and IUCN Members of Jordan in 2000 to establish a regional water programme coordinated by Jordan (WESCANA Regional Water Programme Centre). The long-term goal of this partnership programme is outlined in the WESCANA Strategy and Programme Framework (2001): 'Water is managed in target catchments and aquifers to cope with social, economic and ecological processes'. The Water Programme Centre in Jordan is hence ideally placed to act as the focal point for the above partnership initiative. This partnership initiative will assist the members of the Union to engage with the water sector to foster sustainable water management and position IUCN as a facilitator and mediator in one of the most urgent natural resource management issues in WESCANA.

Objectives

This partnership initiative pursues the following objectives:

- 1) Promote a systemic approach to water management both within policy/decision-making processes and their field implementation, with particular emphasis to the integration of water resource and water quality;
- 2) Facilitate the dissemination and exchange of accurate and relevant information on ecosystem-based, integrated water management through strengthening the Regional Water Centre in Jordan and creating a network of networks of centres of excellence;
- 3) Document best and bad practice in freshwater management;

- 4) Support partners' institutional capacity in water planning and management while boosting their sustainability and effectiveness in terms of know-how acquisition -with the support of Regional Water Centre in Jordan- as well as in terms of consolidation of their intersectoral networking capacities as service providers at the country and regional levels;
- 5) Consolidate existing and promote new regional networks and partnerships on sustainable water management expertise and initiatives including exploring linkages with World Water Initiative, Water for Life – Water for Peace and Security, Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), Water and Nature Initiative, World Water Forum, Dialogue on Water, Food and Environment, Dialogue on Climate Change, World Bank/UNDP WSP Programme, GWP-SATAC, GWP-WATAC, GWP-MEDTAC, Cent per M3);
- 6) Establish and assist the implementation of support mechanisms towards strengthening decision making capacity to ensure system planning and management at national and regional levels, and building upon shared development potentials and constraints in the context of regional user areas and service areas and their relevant water catchments/watersheds and groundwater basins;
- 7) Develop and support implementation of economic incentives mechanisms to reduce indiscriminate water consumption and sustainably manage water demand.

Please also provide a brief description of the relationship of the Partnership/Initiative with the objectives of Agenda 21 as well as relevant goals and objectives of the United Nation Millennium Declaration:

Agenda 21 specifically highlights the importance of international cooperation, including to widen the scientific base on environment and development especially in developing countries, integration of environment and development in decision making, conservation of resources and the role of local actors in sustainable development. Bridging of the data gap through capacity building in such sectors is also indicated as key pursuit. The above is consistently undertaken in the present Partnership initiative through national and regional networking, supported by advanced technologies for objective, coordinated, systematic and harmonized collection and assessment of data on environmental conditions and trend, toward planning, monitoring and managing sustainably ecosystem resources.

Through its contribution to improved observations and predictive modelling capacities of local stakeholders, regionally coordinated training and institutional capacity building, this partnership initiative will contribute to the UN Millennium Development Goals as it will effectively focus on its most significant components, including eradication of poverty, promotion of equity and ensuring environmental sustainability, through the integration of principles of sustainable development and protection of biodiversity into country policies and regionally coherent and cost effective systemic planning and management.

Expected results

- Regional Water Programme Centre Jordan consolidated as focal point for the regional network of networks of sustainable water management expertise;
- Capacity of network partners built with the support of the Regional Water Programme Centre (including access to on-line information as well as regional training and monitoring), in propping up national systemic planning and management processes and, in turn, providing services to the partner countries of WESCANA;
- Institutional set-ups and legislative foundations analysed and synthesised as a basis for the development of sustainable water management policy in the WESCANA;
- Water conservation and sustainable use techniques inventorised, classified and analysed against sustainable, integrative water management;
- A number of pilot planning and management action implemented, jointly and/or in coordination, by two or more partner countries on transboundary/regionally shared management problems and/or development potentials, such as in water catchments/watersheds, groundwater basins, etc.

Specific targets of the Partnership/Initiative and timeframe for their achievement

The pursued targets are to be seen as a basement and trigger for the development of a long-term process; the initiation of this process is supposed to be achieved through a phased approach in a three-years time frame:

First phase

Consolidation of the Regional Water Centre in Jordan as the network of networks of centres of excellence in the region by facilitating and strengthening the regional experts' network, initiating new networks and partnerships, establishing policy guidelines, and developing and implementing capacity building initiatives towards integrated, systemic water management.

A situational analysis of water management best and bad practice will be conducted, by inventorying and classifying past and present water conservation and use practices and techniques, and institutional, policy and legislative frameworks in the region. A gap analysis on the basis of the above will identify the priorities for action towards an integrated, systemic water management approach by strengthening existing and initiating new partnerships with initiatives such as Water and Nature Initiative (WANI), World Water Initiative, Water for Life – Water for Peace and Security, Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), World Water Forum, Dialogue on Water, Food and Environment, Dialogue on Climate Change, World Bank/UNDP WSP Programme, GWP-SATAC, GWP-WATAC, GWP-MEDTAC, Cent per M3. This process will be supported by the development and implementation of

interdisciplinary capacity building modules towards integrated water management.

The project partners and partnerships will link documented experience, policy guidelines and technical know-how to practice by identifying and preparing integrated, systemic water management demonstration pilot projects on the basis of a strong network of networks of centres of excellence on issues of national, trans-boundary and/or regional interest and significance in specific catchment areas/watersheds and/or groundwater basins.

Second phase

- Two or more partner countries in coordination with the Water Programme Centre in Jordan will implement a number of pilot planning and management action jointly and/or in coordination on transboundary/regionally shared management problems and/or by valorising shared development potentials.

Co-ordination and Implementation mechanism

IUCN through its WESCANA programme will provide for a general coordination mechanism based on its field capacity and experiences. Through its expertise, it will also provide policy advice for facilitating operational execution of certain project components such as training, institutional capacity building, and database creation, and will facilitate access and interlinkages between databases of various institutions. IUCN will also monitor progress of the initiatives as related to specific indicators (in particular Agenda 21 principles and the Millennium Development Goals) and support the development of the decision support system hardware-software complex modelling.

IUCN will be a resource for technical and scientific expertise, as well as for databases (on its thematic areas) and will provide a network through which to access further environmental and socio-economic data. IUCN will also play a key role in advising on conservation strategies, policy advocacy and sustainability.

The partnership will be based on a regional systemic network (RSN) of national thematic networks, which will establish the latter as centres of excellence with respect to the acquisition and distribution of given sectoral information. The above set up will pursue optimal mobilisation of individual institutional capacity and cost effective use of resources, and will promote sustainable water related development processes. It will be mediated by individual countries' acquisitions of advanced know-how, tailor made to their respective institutional capacities and environmental and cultural assets. Such acquisitions will be focussed on one or more thematic sectors, while the access to information relevant to all other sectors will be assured through the RSN. In other words, while consolidating individual network capacities, it will also enable them -through the RSN- to expand their scope and serve intersectoral demands and applications. Besides, the establishment of national partner institutions as providers of updated and competitive information services to the region will contribute to strengthening the RSN while ensuring their sustainability.

Arrangements for funding

DGCS expected contribution of EUR 2.200.000 will be complemented with contributions in kind of relevant governmental Partners and IUCN

Arrangements for capacity building and technology transfer

Please include information if the Partnership/Initiative provides for training, informational support, institutional strengthening and/or other capacity building measures:

As above indicated, among the Partnership Initiative contributions, the provision emerges for training, know-how and technological transfer, institutional strengthening and capacity building of networking partners.

Please also provide here a brief description of expected arrangements for technology transfer.

Expected arrangements for technology transfer include the acquisition of the

DSS software-hardware complex and the joint development of its predictive models for systemic planning monitoring and management; the establishment of a methodological and procedural framework toward the development of regulations and methodology, on-the-job training on partnership pilot projects, and inter-institutional cooperation.

Links of Partnership/Initiative with on-going sustainable development activities at the international and/or regional level

Synergies will be identified with activities already promoted by the partner organisations, linking with their respective networking mechanisms as well as current regional and global processes not only for sustainable development and data management and exchange of experiences, but for their use in environmental and development pursuits.

In particular, linkages will be sought with governments, local stakeholders, institutions and water-related conventions such as the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification. Also, with the involvement of IUCN's voluntary networks of scientists and water and wetland managers, other important partnerships will be explored such as with the 'Water and Nature Initiative (WANI) including 80 organisations from governments, NGOs and technical institutes, the 'Dialogue on Water, Food and Environment' (a consortium of international organisations such as FAO, IWMI, WWC, ICID, GWP, WHO UNEP, IFAP, WWF and IUCN), and the 'NEW Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Water for Life-Water for Peace and Security, Waters Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council - WSSCC, World Water Forum, Dialogue on Climatic Change, World Bank/UNDP WSP program, GWP-SATAC, GWP-WATAC, GWP-MEDTAC, and Cent per M3.

Monitoring Arrangements

The involvement of an international reference institution such as IUCN (and other to be identified) as core partner will ensure adequate monitoring standards and effectiveness of modalities which will be further developed over the course of project implementation. A logical framework with indicators and targets will be developed at project outset. Progress reports, partner updates via email and distribution of information to the public via existing on-line networks (e.g. websites) of the partner institution will be foreseen and scheduled according to accepted international project criteria.

A joint Partnership Initiative website will be developed.

Other relevant information

Web-sites:

DGCS: www.esteri.it

IUCN: www.iucn.org

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