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GUIDELINES TO SET UP AN EMWIS NATIONAL FOCAL POINT

SUMMARY DOCUMENT FOR DECISION-MAKERS

Draft version of 2002-09-24 T 09:00



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SUMMARY DOCUMENT FOR DECISION-MAKERS

1 Introduction

The Technical Unit of EMWIS (Euro-Mediterranean Information System on Know-how in the Water Sector) wrote this summary document to help the countries to 1) Make the political decision for creating their own National Focal Point (NFP) and 2) Make the decision for introducing on the Internet a national information system on water that can be integrated into EMWIS.

1.1 Historical background

Barcelona, 1995-11-27/28. (First) Euro-Mediterranean Conference of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs. Creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

There were three components called partnerships:

1. Political and security
2. Economic and financial
3. Social, cultural and human

Component 2 (Economic and Financial Partnership) included 13 sections. The one devoted to water mentioned the following:

Water is a priority issue for all Mediterranean partners and its importance will be growing while water resources will become scarcer. Cooperation in this field will aim to:

- *assess the situation while taking account of current and future needs;*
- *define the means to strengthen regional cooperation ;*
- *make proposals with a view to jointly (whenever possible) rationalise water resource planning and management;*
- *contribute to the creation of new water sources.*

Marseilles, 1996-11-25/26. Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Water Management.

Conclusions included a "Note relative to the Euro-Mediterranean Information System on Know-how in the Water Sector".



Naples, 1997-12-09/10. Euro-Mediterranean Conference of the 27 General Managers for Water.

Paris, 1998-3-19/21. International Conference on Water and Sustainable Development.

We, the Ministers and Heads of delegation, gathered in Paris for the International Conference on Water and Sustainable Development, (19-21 March 1998).

*...**Commit ourselves** to support the implementation (should the case arises and within national and local strategies, taking account of the specificity of each country), of the following guidelines :*

*...**Improve knowledge, training and information**, while promoting a greater transfer of technologies and know-how, the implementation of information and monitoring systems for water resources and their various uses, and the organisation of programmes for supporting basic and continuing vocational training.*

Turin, 1999-10-18/19. Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Local Water Management.

1.2 What is EMWIS?

EMWIS is the acronym of the **Euro-Mediterranean Water Information System** on know-how. It is an initiative for long-term cooperation between the countries of the European Union and the Mediterranean Partner Countries.

1.3 Objectives of EMWIS

The overall objective is to improve local management of water resources through exchanges of information on know-how. Thus, three main working topics were defined:

1. Facilitate access to existing information in the **Euro-Mediterranean** countries
2. Develop the sharing of information
3. Develop joint products and cooperation programmes on available information to avoid information gaps that can arise in this area



1.3.1 Priority themes

In this area of know-how in the water sector, the 27 General Managers for Water decided, during the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Naples in 1997, to prioritise the five following topics:

1. Institutions
2. Documentation (legislation included)
3. Training
4. Research and development
5. Data management

1.4 EMWIS countries

The countries concerned with EMWIS are the members of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

Table 1 EMWIS countries

European Union	Mediterranean Partner Countries
Austria	Algeria
Belgium	Cyprus
Denmark	Egypt
Finland	Israel
France	Jordan
Germany	Lebanon
Greece	Malta
Ireland	Morocco
Italy	Palestine
Luxembourg	Syria
Netherlands	Tunisia
Portugal	Turkey
Spain	
Sweden	
United Kingdom	



1.5 EMWIS organisation

EMWIS organisation is based on two levels: an executive level and an operating level.

The executive level includes:

- The Steering Committee
- The Coordination Committee

The operating level includes:

- The National Focal Points (NFPs). For efficiency and flexibility purposes, it had been suggested that the NFP should be an organisation specialised in the management and dissemination of information and documentation, but always under the supervision of the Minister in charge of water.
- The Technical Unit, organised in the form of a European Economic Interest Group (EEIG) open to all countries of the Partnership. In September 2002, three countries are involved : Spain, France and Italy.



1.6 First EMWIS progress report

When EMWIS became operational in 1999, 20 countries of the Partnership had designated their NFP.

Table 2 EMWIS progress on 2002-09-20

NFP created	Internet servers
Algeria	YES
Austria	NO
Belgium	NO
Cyprus	YES
Egypt	NO
France	YES
Greece	YES
Israel	YES
Italy	YES
Jordan	YES
Lebanon	NO
Luxembourg	NO
Malta	YES
Morocco	YES
Palestine	YES
Portugal	YES
SPAIN	YES
Syria	NO
Tunisia	NO
Turkey	YES

1.7 EMWIS rules

1.7.1 Contents

Each NFP is free to choose the information it publishes on the Internet. Thus, the five priority topics are not restrictive, some countries have also included notifications of government contracts, quantitative hydrological information, etc.

1.7.2 Language (s)

Taking into account the variety of languages in EMWIS countries, the working languages (English, French and Arabic in the near future) should be distinguished from the national languages used for information in the countries.



1.7.3 Participation at the international scale

The international nature of EMWIS leads its members to get involved in collaborative activities: training/information seminars, technical meetings, exchange of information, etc.

1.7.4 Costs

According to the political agreements outlined in the historical background, each country commits itself to finance its NFP. The importance of a budget assigned to the NFP to cover the installation and daily operating expenses should be underlined. The most significant items are the personnel and expenditures related to the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

2 Valorization of a National Focal Point

The NFP has an important part to play in the rationalization and dissemination of the information at the national level. The overall vision thus achieved and the possibility of detecting lacking information are in themselves sufficient reasons to make the decision of creating a NFP. The NFP also promotes itself with its secondary effects: exchange of know-how, technological watch as regards water information systems, international cooperation opportunities, etc.

2.1 The NFP, a showcase (for water in the country) open to the world

Creating a NFP and developing a related web server allow the promotion of know-how and development level of the country in this area.

2.2 The NFP, core of the National Water Information System

In many countries, EMWIS also offers the opportunity of developing an integrated approach to the implementation of a National Water Information System, needed to implement a sound policy in this field, to inform and dialogue with all the stakeholders concerned.

3 Two political decisions are needed to create a NFP

The first decision (in chronological order) was a collective decision made in Naples by the Water Managers of the Partnership countries. Then, each country must inform of its final commitment with the system and objectives by creating and operating its NFP.



4 Mains steps in the creation of a NFP

This checking list is only a memorandum of the main points to take into account when creating a NFP.

1. Selection of the organisation which will host the NFP
2. Definition of the human and financial resources. The recommended minimal human team includes three people : the NFP head, the person in charge of the contents and the person in charge of the ICT.
3. Analysis of what already exists in the country, creation of working groups.
4. Identification of the information to be included in the system and of exchange flows
5. Operating specifications of the system
6. Definition of an ICT architecture for the national system
7. Implementation of the system, test and validation
8. Introduction of the information into the system
9. Selection of a name and registration of the Internet domain name in the country
10. Official presentation to the national stakeholders of the water sector
11. Updating, directing and continuous evaluation of the system as compared to the expectations of the users and partners

5 Conclusions

The creation of a NFP and its subsequent integration into the Internet require: 1) strong political will, 2) sufficient financial resources allocated by the State government, 3) competent human resources, 4) equipment with relevant information and communication technologies and 5) **last but not least muchas ganas de trabajar.**

For more information, please visit

<http://www.semide.org> (in French)

<http://www.emwis.org> (in English)