MEDWATER POLICY
POLICY INITIATIVE TO OVERCOME WATER COMPETITION BETWEEN THE VITAL ECONOMIC SECTORS OF AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

EC Contract No. ICA3 – CT2000 - 30002

DELIVERABLE FOR WP4

Report on Available Water Policy Options and Existing Experience

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Terms of Reference for the MedWater Policy Project included several work packages on which all partners worked to accomplish the objectives of the project. One of these work packages is WP4 for which Consolidated Consultants were assigned as the Team Leader. An outline of the work under this package and the experience of Jordan in this field were presented during the 3rd project meeting in Fethiye, Turkey. Later, based on this presentation and the feedback from all partners during that meeting, a questionnaire was distributed to all partners. This report incorporates the results of that questionnaire and the partners' expert knowledge and experience. In this report, the water policy options in the five countries under consideration in the MEDWATER project are described.

1.1 Objectives of WP4

The objectives of WP4 are:

- To evaluate the available experience of the project consortium partners with the application of different water policies in their respective countries; and
- To evaluate new policy options with regard to their potential to overcome inter-sectoral water competition.

1.2 Description of Work

WP4 analyses available water policy options and existing experience. These policy options will allow a better use of existing resources and facilities, thus permitting:

- A better match between the available water resources and water demand; and
- The exploitation of new sources of water by making use of additional supply options

WP4.1	Evaluation of existing experience with various water policy options
WP4.2	Evaluation of new water policy options and their potential to overcome inter-sector water competition

In order to implement water resources policies, there should be a certain strategy to follow. The World Bank has defined the water resources strategy as "A set of medium to long-term action programmes to support the achievement of development goals to implement water related policies". This definition will be adopted in this study.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The water development options in the partners' countries were identified. These options comprised the development of the conventional water resources which are mainly within the country and the non-conventional development which can be carried on the country or regional level.

It was concluded from each partner that development of water resources on its own is not sufficient if not accompanied by the appropriate regulatory and political framework conditions.

Since the region is facing a severe supply shortage, priority should be given to the domestic sector, above all drinking water. The supply to irrigation should be controlled by enforcing laws to switch to lower water consuming and/or more profitable crops. This also should be accompanied by rehabilitation of irrigation networks and encouragement of the use of new technologies in irrigation. This of course is already implemented in the region but still some areas are using conventional irrigation methods.

Another important issue to be considered is the import of crops from areas with cheaper water resources than in the region. This means that freer trade in agricultural products should be encouraged. This will allow the trade of water-intensive crops from areas with abundant water supply to arid regions. This practice will eventually help in enhancing the availability of water for other uses in areas facing water deficit and reduce pressure on precious groundwater resources which are currently over-exploited with no return profit.

Policies and action programmes to implement the strategies are developed. Measures to increase tariffs, which are thought to be the best way to limit the unwise use of water, are taken. Public awareness programmes which proved to be a powerful tool are also introduced. It is important in this respect to make sure that regulations are understood and accepted by water consumers, otherwise all efforts towards saving water will be lost.

Introducing new technologies is essential in developing new water resources and water use whether for domestic or agricultural uses. Certain programmes should be prepared to introduce such technologies to stakeholders and gain experience in their using, as this will help in the adoption of these techniques.

Regional cooperation is needed especially when discussing huge projects such as the case of the Red-Dead Canal Project in Jordan. This project is considered important not just to Jordan but also to the world as it will save the Dead Sea from drying which would eventually cause an environmental disaster to the region. It is also important to cover the tremendous shortage in water as well as to help in the reduction of over-exploitation of the groundwater resources.

For large regional infrastructure projects it is essential to mobilise significant financial resources. Middle Eastern countries are known to be dependent on loans and grants offered by major international and multilateral financing institutions. To be able to acquire such finance, it is essential to ensure the economic feasibility and environmental integrity of the project. It is also important to try involving the private sector who will bare part of the cost in such projects and this can be done on Build-Operate-Own (BOO), Build-Operate-Own-Transfer (BOOT) or Design-Build-Operate (DBO) basis.

Regional cooperation will enhance the exchange of experience between the different parties which eventually will build up the capabilities of the operators. Such cooperation will also encourage indigenous water research in liaison with international institutions and the mobilisation of the financial resources required to implement regional projects.