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MOROCCO: Setting-up of the Oum Er Rbia river basin agency 1996 - 1999

- International Office for Water - Cooperation - International actions - Integrated water resources management (IWRM) -

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The law 10/95 of 16 August 1995 is the legal basis of water policy in Morocco . It aims to establish the legal instruments necessary for controlling the use of water resources and for their conservation.

It plans for the creation of basin agencies, for which the missions are extensive. These bodies, which have financial autonomy and a legal status, are in charge of:

State missions concerned with water policing

which are currently taken care of by State directorates (Directorate General for Water):

- " the inventory of water rights and concessions,
- " the monitoring of quality and quantity, both for ground and surface water,
- " the issue of new permits and concessions for water abstraction,
- " the control of the use of resources,

New missions in the river basin :

- " the formulation and implementation of the water development plan which is to be integrated into the national water plan,
- " the levying of pollution and withdrawal fees which will be reinvested in pollution control,
- " providing contracting authorities with financial assistance and services for pollution control, improvement in water resources and flood management.

To help the structures and human resources of the Ministry of Public Works adapt to this new policy, the Director for Water at the French Ministry for the Environment and the Moroccan General Director for Water signed a special co-operation agreement, on 19 April 1996. This agreement mainly dealt with the creation of **a first pilot basin agency for the Oum Er Rbia basin** .

IOWater was the main operator for the French Authorities. This programme, carried out between 1996 and 1998, with the assistance of specialists from the Adour-Garonne Water Agency, included:

- awareness campaigns for users and communication actions among the population,
- assistance with fee and aid systems (institutional and financial aspects),
- training on floods (flood prevention, forecasting and warning),
- the restructuring of regional water analysis laboratories,
- the drawing-up of the documents necessary for the effective implementation of the Oum Er Rbia pilot Basin Agency's financial services (procedures, control of tax bases, legal department, preparation of multiannual programmes),
- technical training courses for Moroccan executives leading to a "Higher Education Certificate in Engineering and Water Resource Management" with the assistance of the National School of State Public Works.

This assistance to the Oum Er Rbia Basin Agency continued in 1999-2000 with the formulation and drawing-up of administrative and financial procedures linked to its effective start-up and a training programme on the River Basin Agency/Local Authorities partnership (subcontracting).

The implementation and co-ordination of all these co-operation actions were carried out, on the French side, by a steering committee led by the Water Directorate of the Ministry for the Environment, including the Adour-Garonne Water Agency and IOWater which provided the secretariat.