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Egypt : European twinning on water quality, application to Lake Nasser

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(The News 2 N° 21 - January 2011)

For 2 years, the Egyptian Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation has been the beneficiary of this European twinning with Austria, France and Italy.

On behalf of France, IOWater was entrusted by the Ministry of Ecology with coordinating support to the implementation of an IWRM (Integrated Water Resources Management) policy through testing the drafting of a pilot Management Plan for Lake Nasser, using a methodology taking advantage of the fresh experience of the European countries in the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive.

1 - The first stage was the collection of information on the different studies undertaken on the lake, such as the Lake Nasser Development Plan that has been used for the calculation of the potential pollution of activities and for building a baseline scenario of the pressures on the quality of the Lake in the future.

The project created a web-based catalogue of water data that will be further fed by the Egyptian partners and will be used as a basis for the development of the Water Information System with support from EMWIS (Euro-Mediterranean Water Information System).

2 - The second step was to undertake an analysis of the different water uses. This sectoral review allowed collecting and modeling the data needed for the development of the different parts of the plan.

This analysis was undertaken by IOWater for domestic and agricultural water uses, by the Rhine Navigation Commission and Strasbourg Navigation Service for shipping and by INRA for fishing and aquaculture activities.

An assessment of the Lake Nasser monitoring program and environmental characteristics has been undertaken by the Austrian Environmental Agency and Italian experts.

This study showed that the maintenance of good quality of Lake Nasser waters is possible with carefully controlled urban development. Nevertheless, agriculture and aquaculture development will have to be limited to avoid eutrophication of the lake. When using an approach of calculation of potential polluting flows, attention also could be drawn to the share of the nutrients brought by the upstream activities from Sudan.

3 - A program of priority actions for the next five years was proposed to control the impact of each sector on water quality. It includes implementation indicators. The study evidenced the importance of identifying the Organizations responsible for the application of the recommended measures and their control.

After this successful test of the adaptation of EU planning methodology to the Egyptian context, the next objective is the application of these guidelines to other water bodies of the Nile.

Twinning on water quality : Management Plan for Lake Nasser

(The News N° 17 - February 2010)

The European twinning on water quality management in Egypt, led by Italy and developed with the Egyptian Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, started in 2009. France is responsible for the IWRM component of this 2-year project.

This action includes the implementation by IOWater of a test for the formulation of a management plan for Lake Nasser and an institutional assistance for the control of accidental pollution carried out by CEDRE.

Lake Nasser, created by the construction of Aswan Dam between 1958 and 1970, is a fragile environment and an increasingly strategic water resource for Egypt due to its fast population growth that now exceeds 81 million inhabitants.

From a qualitative view point, the lake water remains today of good quality because the development of activities was strictly limited on its banks. However, a question is increasingly arising, that of development and regional planning in the surroundings of the lake with tourism as a promising line of activity.

The stakes of integrated management are thus focused on the future with an underlying question : what activities can be compatible with lake quality conservation and with which supporting and control measures ?

The twinning thus helps the Egyptian Authorities in their efforts and thinking related to knowledge of water quality in the lake (monitoring), the organization of the planning process and its corollaries related to data management and the organization of a dialogue between the public services.

Twinning project on the management of water quality

(The News N° 16 - December 2008)

The twinning project on the management of water quality in Egypt, presented by the consortium made up of Italy, France and Austria, was selected by the evaluation committee and the Egyptian Ministry of Water Resources. This 2-year project (Euros 1,300,000 of budget) will be coordinated by Giorgio Pineschi, project's permanent resident adviser. France, whose action is coordinated by the International Office for Water, is entrusted with testing the development of a management plan in support to the Aswan Dam Authority and with institutional assistance for the control of accidental pollution, which will be carried out by CEDRE.