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# SPI-Water : How to improve the science/policy interface ?

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# Proposals for facilitating the transfer of the IWRM principles towards non-European countries

(The News N° 16 - December 2008)

In the past, many Research and Development projects tried to establish links between science and policy. However, experience shows that these relations are not as effective as they should. Usually, the research outcomes are not easily available to the decision-makers and water managers and, on the contrary, researchers lack visibility of the users' needs.

**The "Science-Policy Interfacing in support of the Water Framework Directive implementation - SPI-Water" project (2006-2008) financed by the 6th EU Framework Program for Research and Development gathers 16 European and non-European partners.** It proposes practical actions to fill the gaps by developing a "science/policy" interface, focusing on a mechanism for improving the use of the research outputs resulting from the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

For 2 years, the SPI-Water project has been :

- Evaluating the projects and initiatives developed for managing river basins, targets for WFD implementation. The scientific knowledge, research outputs and demonstration projects thus collected were entered into the WISE-RTD knowledge base ;
- Analyzing water policies in non-European countries for facilitating the implementation of the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management ;
- Assessing the needs in the two Mediterranean pilot basins of Sebou (Morocco) and Litani (Lebanon), while complying with the WFD methodological framework ;
- Studying the applicability of WFD practices in non-European countries and identifying activities for facilitating their implementations in these countries ;
- Producing recommendations to improve the appropriation and dissemination of the obtained research outputs in non- European countries.

## **IOWater coordinated the drafting of the recommendations.**

Recommendations :

They are regrouped in 5 families :

1. **Building a continuous dialogue** : Creating a Scientific-Political Interfacing (SPI) platform gathering non-European decision-makers and scientists ;
2. **Promoting technological and social innovations** : Developing an operational body for supporting the Mediterranean countries not members of the European Union ;
3. **Transferring efficiently RTD results** : Identifying the needs of river basins and using the WISE-RTD portal to give them adapted answers ;
4. **Organizing scientific dialogue and promoting a proactive approach to research users** : Informing researchers of the users' needs by developing participatory processes between the managers of water and research programs ;
5. **Disseminating knowledge** : Promoting twinning and knowledge transfer via the international networking of water management organizations.

## **SPI-Water : How to improve the science/policy interface ?**

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These recommendations were discussed at a final conference organized in Brussels in October 2008 for water managers, researchers, political decision-makers, representatives from European and non-European countries.