



IWRM in the Greater Zab River Basin

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After decades of conflict, the autonomous region of Kurdistan in Northern Iraq has recovered the stability essential to its economic development.

Water resources shared with the upstream Turkish and Iranian neighbors and the Iraqi government downstream is a key to this development : good quality arable lands could be irrigated, hydropower has definite potential, the industrial base should be strengthened and natural areas and the rich archaeological heritage herald a major tourism development.

Integrated Water Resources Management at river basin level is a response to challenges currently facing the region where access to safe water and sanitation are far from guaranteed.

Faced with this growth, it is crucial to assess the water resource status to ensure a harmonious development respectful of the environment.

The French Ministry of Finance supports the Kurdish Government by funding a project in the pilot Greater Zab River Basin to provide the Kurdish institutions with local decision-making supporting tools which are still lacking.

A consortium of French companies, involving the Canal de Provence Company, BRGM, IOWater and G2C IT, is leading the project for the benefit of the Kurdish Ministry of Water Resources.

The first phase of the project, which started in November 2010, is planning :

- * A data collection and analysis for a shared knowledge base on water, its uses, natural environments, etc. ;
- * The analysis of the legislative and regulatory basis with proposals for adaptation ;
- * The implementation of a water information system in order to facilitate decision-making support, sharing and retrieval of data by the Ministries ;
- * The drafting of a Basin Management Plan including prioritized measures ;
- * A skills transfer and training plan.

The project allows initiating collective thinking on coordinated management of water resources at river basin level.

IOWater is responsible for the part relating to the institutional context. Proposals are made for the creation of a River Basin Commission (regional Water Parliament) in Kurdistan, as well as a Directorate for Basin Management, which would be its executive unit.