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Malta : Twinning on the Water Framework Directive

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Twinning on the Water Framework Directive

(The News N° 17 - February 2010)

Malta has to provide, like the other Member States of the European Union, its first Management Plan under the Water Framework Directive at the beginning of 2010.

Under the aegis of the French Ministry of Ecology, the International Office for Water and the French Rhone-Mediterranean Corsica, Rhine-Meuse, Loire-Brittany and Adour-Garonne Water Agencies and also the French Water Agencies Bureau in Brussels, have conducted, with European financing, a 6-month Twinning to prepare the documents necessary for the Management Plan of Malta.

This twinning benefited to the two competent Maltese Authorities : the Malta Resources Authority (MRA) for groundwater and the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) for surface water.

Close work with these two institutions has been carried out to produce a common Management Plan which is dealing with all issues of the Directive, the drafting of a strategy for the participation of the public and partners, and the creation of a website.

Two study visits of Maltese experts in France were organized with the French Rhone- Mediterranean&Corsica Water Agency to illustrate the proposed solutions in the management of groundwater and coastal waters. All the Maltese personnel have been trained in using the tools and instruments produced during the twinning. The implementation of the Directive seems thus well started in Malta.

WFD implementation in a Mediterranean island, a Program of Measures for Maltese groundwater

(The News N° 15 - December 2007)

The overall objective of the project was to provide support to Malta and in particular to the Malta Resources Authority for an effective implementation and management of the obligations arising from Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (or the so-called EU Water Framework Directive / WFD). The specific project purpose was the development of a cost effective programme of measures required to meet the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive for the Maltese Water Catchment District, based on existing data and previous characterisation works achieved.

In order to define a programme of measures to tackle the main problems and constraints of water management and

reach the environmental objectives of the WFD, a logical framework was developed and applied in the context of the Twinning Light project. This framework put strong emphasis on the requirement of the WFD in terms of logical steps :

- (i) Review of the risk-assessment carried out in the context of the preparation of the Article 5 report of the WFD, with particular efforts in building balances (quantity, quality) to capture the relative contribution of different sectors and water uses to current groundwater problems.
- (ii) Identification of significant water management issues for groundwater – combining the results of the analysis of pressures & impacts with experts' input on general water management problems…
- (iii) Identification of potential measures aimed at solving/tackling the significant water management issues identified. Potential measures dealing with quantity aspects, quality issues and pollution, regulation, awareness raising and knowledge were investigated.
- (iv) Building a database for measures including information on the implementation of the measure, its costs, expected effectiveness/impact on groundwater resources, etc
- (v) Undertaking the cost-effectiveness analysis and selecting measures for restoring good water status. This step is mainly relevant to quantity issues. It includes a sensitivity analysis that helps identifying the robustness of the proposed programme of measures because of uncertainties in different factors and parameters mobilised for the analysis.
- (vi) Assessing the financial implications of the proposed programme of measures – related to the recovery of the costs of water services/measures by different users/uses in the context of the cost-recovery obligations of the WFD.

The project also provided room for effective interaction and discussions with stakeholders relevant to groundwater resources and management in Malta

IOWater experts' inputs in the project were devoted to :

- • Basin management plans,
- • Economical analysis and related tools,
- • Stakeholders involvement,
- • Measures of water management on quality and quantity,
- • Institutions and capacity building.