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## MEMORANDUM

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A/To :

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Objet/Subject : **Euro-Mediterranean Programme for the Environment – Regional Management and Support (RMS) Project**  
**Water Community Programme to Promote Community-Based Awareness – Case Study of Good Practice Examples - Overview**

### Abstract

*What does the present case study want to achieve and why?*

The present case study intends to convey knowledge to the target groups concerned by community water supply that there are innovative ways of making more water available to communities. The project called: "Water Community Programme to Promote Community-Based Awareness" has showed ways and demonstrated the benefits of sparing water resources for achieving the objective of distributing water in a more just and equitable way to bordering communities. Although cooperation between bordering communities of Israel, Jordan and Palestine is a challenge, a dialogue and cooperation between communities has taken place in a sustainable way. Case of Alexander River, case of Wadi Fukin stream and case of Jordan River

The present case study is presented as a best practice example. Its intention is twofold: (1) to give a quick overview of what the best practice example is about, show what one has achieved in environmental work in terms of new and innovative measures of solving water shortage problems and (2) to raise awareness as to how this best practice example can function as a policy instrument and what one can achieve by using this tool. Readers interested to find more detailed information can do so either through contact persons or links to additional material.

Promoting best practice examples is seen as a way of enhancing visibility, showing the policy dimension of good practice measures, inspiring sector integration strategies and promoting thereby sustainable development initiatives. In the work for sustainability, it is important to show that solutions do exist and work. Finally, this best practice example will enrich initiatives on water preservation objectives.

## Background Information

In Israel, Palestine and Jordan, fresh water and environmental resources are scarce, fragile and suffer from a lack of sustainable management policies. Depletion of the region main water sources is caused by:

- Deterioration of the water quality
- Limitations due to the region climate, geography and hydrology
- Influence of the climate change

Because water does not recognise political borders and the water resources are shared, sustainable management of water resources must include a region-wide perspective and consider all people and communities in a fairly manner. **Surveying and better understanding the water resources in the area and striving to achieve sustainable use and a just regional water allocation, are essential conditions for the establishment of a good neighbourly relationship, beneficial to all people in the region.**

Good Water Neighbours (GWN) is the name of a regional project initiated by Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME) in early 2002 to foster cross-boundary cooperation in sustainable water management and environmental issues between Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority.

## Project Objectives

Overall, the project aims at promoting just and sustainable use of cross-boundary water resources by fostering people-to-people information exchange, common understanding, dialog and cooperation on the protection and equitable use of water resources in Jordan, Palestine and Israel making thereby people of the region aware on water resource issues.

### Project Specific Objectives

#### 1<sup>st</sup> objective:

Raise awareness at community level as to their water reality

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> objective:

Promote trans-boundary cooperation between the neighbouring Israeli/Palestinian/Jordanian pilot communities to seek to advance common water problem solving issues.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> objective:

Encourage public participation in water use efficiency, waste-water re-use and water equity issues by launching a region wide public awareness and dissemination program based on the results/experience gathered from the Partnering Community Programs.

## Project Results

### Results related to the 1<sup>st</sup> Objective

- ◆ Neighbouring Pilot Communities in Israel (5), Palestine (5) and Jordan (1) identified and enrolled
- ◆ In each pilot community, a group of "Water Trustees" lead by a Field Researcher established as the local advocates/activists for change
- ◆ Awareness of each Community in water management promoted
- ◆ In each pilot community, public buildings transformed into model water wise buildings using low cost water saving technologies
- ◆ Three workshops on wise water use and water equity issues targeted at community stakeholders organised in each community



### Results related to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Objective

- ◆ Petitions concerning common cross-border water problems between each pair of neighbouring communities raised
- ◆ Potential cooperative water projects between two sets of neighbouring pilot communities identified by way of conducting opportunity studies

### Results related to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Objective

- ◆ A 12-member Regional Community Water Forum (RCWF) established
- ◆ Public awareness and participation in water management and environmental issues increased at regional level
- ◆ Information/Communication material produced and disseminated
- ◆ Three study tours completed one in the USA, one in Canada and one in the EU
- ◆ Visits of EU and US experts to Pilot Communities and meetings with local authorities performed
- ◆ Presentations of the project at major international fora made
- ◆ Empowerment workshops targeted to local environmentalist activists in each country to address local and regional water problems conducted

### Project Activities

Project activities fall in three groups:

- ◆ Activities at the Community Level respectively in Israel, Palestine and Jordan
- ◆ Activities at the National and Trans-boundary Level
- ◆ Activities at the Institutional Level and Cooperation with International Organisations

### Project Status

As of the end of July 2004, the Project has completed 31 months since its outset with 5 months remaining until it ends, hence 86% work progress overall. A possibility for obtaining a time extension exists.

### Partners

- ◆ Friends of the Middle East Amman (Jordan) office
- ◆ Friends of the Middle East Tel-Aviv (Israel) office
- ◆ Friends of the Middle East Bethlehem (Palestine) office
- ◆ The European Environment Bureau (EEB) – Brussels - Belgium

### Financing and Resources Used

Sources of Funds	Amount in EURO	Percentage of Total
EU Contribution	561.063	79,73%
US Embassy Public Affairs Office	142.666	20,27%
<b>TOTAL CONTRIBUTION</b>	<b>703.729</b>	<b>100,00%</b>



## Stakeholders

### *Definition:*

Any individuals, groups of people, institutions or firms that may have a relationship with the project are defined as stakeholders<sup>1</sup>.

- **In Jordan:**
  - the General Corporation for the Environment Protection
  - the Ministry of Water and Irrigation
  - the Ministry of Education
  - the Jordan Valley Authority
  - Sheikh Hussein Community
  
- **In Israel:**
  - the Ministry of Environment
  - the Ministry of National Infrastructures
  - the Ministry of Education
  - the Ministry of Agriculture
  - the Ministry of Health
  - the Ministry of Interior
  - the Israeli Water Commission
  - Mekorot Water Co. Ltd., the Israel's national water supply company
  - The Ministerial Economic and Social Commission
  - NGOs like the Israeli Union for Environmental Defence (IUED)
  - The respective Regional Councils of Baka El-Garbia, Emek Hefer, Tzur Hadassa, Beit Shean and Eshel Hanasee
  
- **In the Palestinian Territories:**
  - the Ministry of Environmental Affairs
  - the Ministry of Local Government
  - the Ministry of Education
  - the Palestinian Water Authority
  - the Palestinian Israeli Environmental Secretariat
  - The respective Regional Councils of Wadi Fukin, Tulkarem, Abasan, Baka Al-Sharkia and Bardala

## Implementation

### Strategy

The strategy has been to work at the community level as an effective arena to advance better water management and in particular raise awareness on water issues at the cross border area. Since the water justice issue involves primarily the water allocation issues between Israelis and Palestinians, there is therefore a strong focus on pairing Israeli and Palestinian communities. Due to the near collapse in the peace process and inability to move cooperation forward at national level, the initiation of the project has proven to be even more strategically timely than originally expected.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Project Cycle Management – Manual – March 2001



## Methodology

In each community, the methodology has been to create one or several groups of “Water Trustees” lead by a Field Researcher. The “Water Trustees” are volunteers (mostly youth) that meet once or twice a week after or during school hours to undertake water awareness and environmental preservation activities guided by their respective Field Researchers.

In the first year of the project, the Field Researchers focused much of their attention on educating the groups of “Water Trustees” on their local community water and environment issues.

Then they have served as messengers on the issues to their community as a whole. This they have done through the collection of signatures on the common water petitions, the planning and survey of water saving features and the presentation of ideas on how to convert their schools into model water saving buildings.

Additionally, the Field Researchers have identified key community institutions such as schools, youth centres, community centres and/or other public or municipal buildings where project activities were based and support received. In this manner, the possibility to work with already existing facilities (office, meeting rooms, etc...) and community groups (like classes in schools, community centres) was gained.

Contacts at municipality level seek to encourage the establishment of better relationships between the paired communities at the municipal as well as at the people to people level. Another benefit is the financial participation in public events by the municipality or partner group and finally the ability of lobbying the local municipalities for better management of water and sewage.

Another method used to encourage local stakeholder participation and commitment to the project is the launching of missions to the USA and the EU in order to learn from experience of others on shared water management. Sending people from the communities to missions overseas brings prestige to the respective community and helps educate and enthuse decision makers as to the objectives of the project. A no less important goal in sending the delegates as pairs from the cross border communities to the different missions was to establish a personal contact between the decision makers to support cooperation between the communities on their return. The meeting between the Mayors of Tulkarem and Emek Hefer that took place during last reporting period has resulted in work being conducted for the rehabilitation of the Tulkarem sewage treatment facility.

We chose field researchers who for the most part live in the communities we are working with. This has proven beneficial not only for the local contacts that the individuals have but on the Palestinian side helped decrease the impact of travel restrictions as far as undertaking the activities within their communities. This is a significant operational benefit at this time.

## Results and Impacts

Water saving good practice measures promoted in community schools proved to be effective in saving water: Water bills reduced – Still remains to be quantified.

Willingness to cooperate, exchange experience and solve common water and environment problems is real, only limited by curfews, restrictions to movements imposed by Israeli authorities.

Awareness of need for a just and equitable allocation of water between Israeli and Palestinian communities has built up.

In the long run, groups of school children have become involved and are activists that will become environment conscious citizens when adults and will make their own children inherit of a new culture.



## Transferability

Fitting selected school buildings with water saving devices and systems to turn them into water saving model buildings is a replicable model that can be generalised to existing school buildings and also to new projected ones.

Good practice measures to save water that were adopted by households in pilot communities can be disseminated for replication in other communities.

## Sustainability

Sustainability is an attribute that was integrated right from project design. The main ingredients of sustainability for this particular project are outlined thereunder:

- ◆ **Consistency with national policies:** The GWN project fits into the national policies and is consistent with national programmes lead by the national authorities. All national policies have in common the control and protection of water resources through legislation. The GWN project supplements and reinforces policies and programmes initiated by the national authorities in as much as it has produced results of the following types: (1) Technical innovations, i.e. low-cost simple solutions to save water taking school premises as pilot grounds (2) Contribution to education through the creation of environmental activist youngsters and promotion of population awareness (3) Participation of community authorities and residents to specific project activities (4) Cross-boundary cooperation to emphasise the interdependent character of water supply, quantity and quality wise, to neighbouring communities on each side of common borders.
- ◆ **Use of effective low-cost no-maintenance technology:** Fitting existing public buildings, mainly schools, with water saving devices and collection systems to turn them into water saving model buildings will continue to produce benefits after the project will end.
- ◆ **Project has a capacity building dimension:** Youth that have been educated and participated in the project as “Water Trustees” will become water saving conscious adults that will, in turn, educate their children in the new culture they have acquired in childhood. This culture will survive long after the SMAP project will end. The replicable character of this educational experience is a strong element of sustainability.
- ◆ **Participation and ownership by public authorities:** The petitions that have been signed by numerous people belonging to all participating communities have triggered attention and action on the part of government authorities for better water infrastructure. Public pressure as a determinant of policy initiatives has played its part in this instance.
- ◆ **Evidence of economic effectiveness:** Good Practice Measures promoted in community schools proved to be effective in saving water: Water bills reduced – Still remains to be ascertained and quantified.
- ◆ **Socio-cultural aspects in project implementation:** Nice and simple technology implemented does not require a high degree of skill or qualification to install, operate and maintain.



## Policy Dimension

Based on the results and experience of the project model water-efficient school buildings that have been equipped and fitted with water saving and conservation systems, evidence has been provided that there is room for improving the technical design specifications of school buildings. The authorities concerned should enact directives to the effect that all school new construction projects and refurbishment projects of existing ones should integrate in their design the low-cost water saving features that have been implemented in the pilot schools.

Based on the experience of cooperation with the EXACT programme of the Water Working Group of the Peace Process that prepared a regional water exercise book for school children and teachers, the educational authorities concerned should take advantage of the GWN experience to introduce this topic in the school curricula.

## Integrated Approach to Environmental Management

Illustration of the need and importance of an integrated approach to environmental management has been provided by the GWN project in what can be termed the Wadi Fukin paradox. Whereas the pilot community of Wadi Fukin (Palestinian Territories) is endowed with fertile agricultural land and numerous fresh water springs that would be more than sufficient to cater for both household consumption and agriculture, the same water is unfit for both household consumption and agriculture. The reason is high rate of pollution caused by infiltrations of effluents from overflowing cesspits (there is no sewage system) and leachate originating from piling solid waste that is not properly collected and disposed of. The case of Wadi Fukin is clearcut demonstration that a sole water management policy, although necessary, is not sufficient unless sewage and solid waste management are addressed simultaneously as part of an integrated municipal management approach.

## Lessons Learned

The project has demonstrated that:

- ◆ There exist low-cost technical solutions and easy-to-implement good practice measures to save and re-use water reducing thereby water consumption so that more fresh water can be available for the communities and their neighbours.
- ◆ These solutions and measures have economic benefits reflected by reduced water bills
- ◆ A significant contribution to improving a difficult environmental situation can be made if the national and the local authorities are willing to combine their efforts to improve existing policies by upgrading public buildings technical specifications, issuing new directives, improving legislation or decrees applicable to water consumption in new and existing buildings.
- ◆ Despite an unfavourable political situation, cooperation between neighbouring communities of different countries is possible as the project has demonstrated namely in the field of jointly initiated new infrastructure projects to prevent water pollution or treat water.
- ◆ Water scarcity and deterioration of water quality dictate the need for greater water efficiency and conservation. Conversely, trying to increase water supply to populations requires an integrated approach to environmental management. In the course of implementing the GWN project, we visited communities that are endowed with ample water resources originating from plentiful fresh water springs but water could not be used neither for domestic nor for agriculture purposes for being polluted by lack of sewage systems (overflowing cesspits) or solid waste piling up along water streams and land without being reclaimed. Following pressure and threats exerted by communities some improvement could be achieved but the fact remains that no action developing



in one sector can be effective and successful unless it is integrated into a more global management process.

- ◆ Whenever political conflicts between neighbouring states prevent national authorities to cooperate in particular fields, work at community level is the best strategy for fostering dialogue, promoting cooperation and conducting common projects.

## Barriers and Conflicts – Assumptions, Constraints and Risks

- 1) Barriers to better co-operation and to involvement of national authorities are political. As long as political issues will not be given solutions or tensions will not ease, suspicion and mistrust between trans-boundary communities may defeat the goodwill that has been built up by the project. Horizontal co-operation at regional level will remain a major challenge that FoEME have so far managed successfully thanks to the implementation of a successful “bottom-up” type of strategy.
- 2) Movement restrictions in the Palestinian Territories sometimes prevented Field Researchers to reach the communities assigned to them. Solutions have been found by recruiting Field Researchers from within the communities without too much damage to the project performance.
- 3) Sustainability: Owing to a right choice of strategy and methodology based on work at community level, very much appropriate given the political context in the region, the project has all the ingredients of sustainability at community level. Water conservation and water saving measures implemented at community level are replicable. However, despite excellent relationships with municipalities of the partnering communities and good working relations with Ministries as they result out of intense and well targeted public relations activities, the impact of this project at regional as well as at national level still has to be strengthened. When the project will end, will the respective national and municipal authorities of the three partnering states be willing to capitalise on the positive results and lessons derived from this project and see its policy dimension in terms of improved national/municipal directives, institutional reforms, integrated approach to water management issues?
- 4) The major risk for the presently established cross-bordering community cooperation lies with an aggravation of the already serious political situation.

## Further Information

### Contacts

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## References

### Websites:

[www.foeme.org](http://www.foeme.org)

[www.ganim.org/water-project-FOEME/contents.htm](http://www.ganim.org/water-project-FOEME/contents.htm)

[www.emwis.org](http://www.emwis.org)

### Studies:

### Reports:

### Books:

### Publications:

- ◆ FoEME's Good Water Neighbours Bulletins N°1 to 20
- ◆ FoEME's Water Saving Guide
- ◆ Good Water Makes Good Neighbours – Project brochure published by FoEME
- ◆ Better Water Demand Management for Overcoming Water Crisis in the Mediterranean – The Blue Plan's notes, N°2 – February 2003 prepared for the Third World Water Forum – Kyoto special

## Conclusion

The purpose of the case study is to disseminate information to stakeholders and target groups of the Mediterranean region about a best practice example in the field of water management. The demonstration that new and innovative low-cost good practice measures to conserve and re-use water have been implemented so that water was available to cross-bordering communities to achieve a more just and equitable water supply made the GWN project eligible to enter into the list of best practice example anthologies.

