

Annex VI
Action Fiche for West Bank and Gaza Strip/ Jordan/ Israel

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title/Number	Fostering co-operation on water management between the Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian water authorities		
Total cost	€1,500,000		
Aid method / Method of implementation	Project approach - centralised (direct) management		
DAC-code	14010, 14081	Sector	Water resource policy and administrative management; Education and Training in water supply and sanitation

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Sector context

The scarcity of water resources is a common problem for West Bank and Gaza Strip, Israel and Jordan which is further augmented by the impact of the climate change. The conflicting water demands are difficult to meet with the available water resources and lead to societal tensions (competition between different water uses) and trans-boundary conflicts.

The quantity and quality of water resources, upon which the peaceful economic and social development of the region depends, have been altered by the intensive development of these resources over the past decades. Currently water resources are used in unsustainable way both in Jordan and Israel while the Palestinian water use is in addition constrained by the physical limitations as well as important political constraints.

Bilateral as well as multilateral peace talks among the three core parties (Israel, West Bank and Gaza Strip and Jordan) refer to water resource management as one of the key issues. Following peace talks the Multilateral Working Group on Water Resources (WGWR) was formed in 1992 to advance the peace process, with four broad agenda items: Enhancement of water data availability; Water management practices, including conservation; Enhancement of water supply; Concepts of regional water management and cooperation.

This Group endorsed in November 1994 the Water Data Banks Programme, which since 1995 received the EU support. The recommendation of the WGWR was to establish regional water data banks to improve the data availability and information exchange among water managers of the three Core Parties. These recommendations were reaffirmed during the fifth WGWR meeting in Muscat, Oman in April 1994, further elaborated into an implementation plan, and it has been agreed to establish EXACT – Executive Action Team to assist in the co-ordination of this plan.

The Implementation Plan aims to enable proper assessment of the state of the region's water resources through development of accurate and up-to-date data banks for hydro-meteorological, hydrological, hydro-geological and water quality data, which are mutually comparable and exchangeable. The Plan proposes approaches to develop a new Palestinian hydrometric data base facility, and to upgrade and strengthen the Israeli and Jordanian existing water data programmes, as well as introducing internationally recognized minimum quality standards for all. The Implementation Plan focuses furthermore on issues as: training for water managers and field technicians; communication and information; network review and evaluation; field data collection; laboratory analysis; data bank enhancement; quality assurance and control.

The Working Group on Water Resources accepted also in April 1994 a joint United States/ European Union proposal for a Regional Training Programme in the water sector. The European Union undertook the coordination of this Programme, which included donors from the United States, European Union, Canada, Japan, The Netherlands, France, Israel, Spain, UNEP, and Sweden.

The Executive Action Team (EXACT) meets twice a year and coordinates the implementation of recommendations of the Multilateral Working Group on Water Resources. Originally five Donor Parties supported the WGWR: the European Union, the United States, Canada, France and the Netherlands. Currently the group works under the US leadership with a multi-donor financial support including a number of the EU Member States.

The core parties continue committing their human and financial resources working together towards establishment of compatible water data systems, development of agreed-upon common water management standards and improved qualifications of water sector professionals demanding high technology solutions.

The EC funded Regional Water Data Banks project has been implemented so far through four phases. Phase 4 of the Water Data Banks Project was executed from March 2005 until December 2008. The objectives of phase 4 were to enhance the ability of the Core Parties to quantify their problems related to waste-water re-use, to strengthen their ability to identify measures to be taken to address their problems, to ensure there would be no technical impediment to the transfer of relevant data among the three Core Parties. The following outputs have been delivered during the Phase IV: 1. Common operational Decision Support System for waste water issues; 2. Water Quality Baseline Survey reports, identifying the overall impact of waste water pollution in the project area and if needed, operational monitoring networks; 3. Enhanced database for each individual Core Party; 4. Trained local staff in issues related to the fields mentioned above; 5. Organizational support to the Core Parties to sustain the project achievements, including a proposal for a Regional Centre of Excellence .

2.2. Lessons learnt

The new project focuses on furthering the recommendations of the Water Data Banks Project, Phase 4 and intends to build on its major findings and outputs. The main recommendation that came out of the final workshop attended by the 3 core parties was to establish a Regional Centre of Excellence in the field of wastewater treatment.

Emphasis was given to further develop the Decision Support System to better serve as an optimization tool for the reuse of treated effluent. This would require some enhancements, research and training for the relevant stakeholders in the three core parties. The need for pilot projects testing the practical application of the DSS was also stated as well as the value added of possible sharing of experience in this regard among the 3 Core Parties.

The three core parties confirmed their interest in establishment of a regional centre of excellence for wastewater treatment and reuse as well as in optimizing the use of the developed Decision Support System for the optimization of wastewater treatment and reuse schemes, and improving the capacities of water professionals and knowledge sharing. The optimization of reusing the treated wastewater will help improve the crop productivity, hence will improve the livelihoods of the farmers in the region and the food security. Moreover, it will help protect the fragile environment and the scarce water resources from pollution and have positive impact on public health. This should lead to more stability in the region as well.

The Water Data Banks project underlined that wastewater (apart from desalinated water), can be a valuable alternative source of water for various applications, and specifically for agriculture. It also demonstrated that building a "common professional language" and sustainable co-operation platform among the core parties is important due to the cross-border dimension of the waste water treatment and reuse. In this context it further stressed the critical importance of work on optimizing the use of the Decision Support System (DSS) – common management tool of the three core parties, developed under the regional data banks project to help optimize the use of treated effluent with various qualities in accordance with the soil and crop type.

2.3. Donor coordination

The objectives of this project have been defined in coordination with the representatives of the three core parties: Palestinian Water Authority, Ministry of water and Irrigation in Jordan and the EXACT counterpart from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Israel.

Complementarity and coordination of efforts will be ensured through the Executive Action Team which meets twice a year and provides for consultation on the programme among all donors and the key three parties, Palestinian, Israeli and Jordanian water authorities.

Coherence and alignment of the project activities with the Mediterranean Water Strategy (under preparation) and the related actions as well as with the wider regional EU-Mediterranean co-operation programme framework will be sought throughout the project with assistance of the European Commission.

3. DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives

The overall objective is:

Creating an EU- Mediterranean regional cooperation platform that will support wastewater management (treatment and reuse), that will maintain and further develop the regional Decision Support System for the optimization of wastewater reuse, and that will allow for exchange and sharing of knowledge in this field. As such this regional cooperation platform shall contribute to sustainable development and stability in the region.

Specific objectives include:

- (1) Establishment of a Regional Centre of Excellence/Cooperation Network on Wastewater treatment and reuse under the leadership of the three core parties, Palestinian, Israeli and Jordanian water authorities supported by the EU.
- (2) Joint training and capacity building for the three core parties.
- (3) Further development of the Decision Support System delivered in the Phase IV of the Water Data Banks Project.
- (4) Testing application of the DSS through pilot projects.
- (5) Providing technical assistance to the “core parties” of EXACT (Jordanian, Israeli and Palestinian water authorities) in further joint detailed formulation of this project and planning of activities based on mutual agreement, as well as in identification of possible complementary activities.

3.2. Expected results and main activities

Expected results

- (1) The strengthened co-operation among the tree core parties of the project developing together a common management tool and management efficiency standards.
- (2) Enhanced knowledge base and knowledge sharing among the concerned water professionals.3. Improved sustainability of the achievements of the EC funded Water Data Banks project, Phase IV.
 - (a) enhancement of the common Decision Support System developed for the three core parties;
 - (b) supported adoption of DSS as a common strategic tool by the three core parties
 - (c) pilot-tested application of the DSS and exchange of experience in this regard among the Core Parties
 - (d) enhanced confidence of the 3 Core Parties in using the common management tool (DSS)
- (3) Enhanced socio-economic and socio cultural perspectives of the waste water reuse and contribution to development and adoption of the related policies.

- (4) Supported programme approach under EXACT in line with the Aid Efficiency and division of labour principles among the EU Member States.

Activities

The specific detailed plan of activities should be elaborated based on the agreement among the three core parties which is critical for successful achievement of the project objectives.

As for the Centre of Excellence, according to the recommendation of the Phase 4 of the Water Data Banks Project, subject to the core parties agreement, its role could be as follows:

- (a) Advice and Support – Validate knowledge dissemination of measurable benefits from tools and techniques supported by the center.
- (b) Promotion of Technology and Tools –to train, advocate and support the use of proven tools and technologies for the treatment and reuse of wastewater across the region.
- (c) Promoting / organizing international scholarships.
- (d) Regional Knowledge Management and Sharing – A regional interactive website (possibly connected to the EXACT website) to facilitate communication to internal and external stakeholders, and also to organize /support regional events such as seminars and congresses
- (e) Applicable Research – Coordinate research and development activities that highlight regional portfolio of activities in the reuse of wastewater.
- (f) Promotional tasks, like for instance the need to deal with the socio-cultural resistance to reuse of treated wastewater, organizing cross visits for practitioners and farmers to learn from each other’s experiences will help bridge this socio-cultural gap and will facilitate the acceptability of the issue.

3.3. Risks and assumptions

The commitment to the joint project under EXACT of Jordan, Israel and West Bank and Gaza Strip will be maintained and agreement will be reached among the core parties on detailed activities.

The water authorities of Israel, West Bank and Gaza Strip and Jordan remain committed to adopt the DSS as a common “strategic tool” for decision making by general management on mid and long term strategies.

The risk of overlapping donor support is mitigated by the coordination mechanisms which exist under the Executive Action Team, which meet on biannually basis and groups together representatives of the EXACT core parties (from Jordan, Israel and West Bank and Gaza Strip) and all supporting donors.

3.4. Crosscutting Issues

Given the important existing co-operation between the water authorities of Jordan, Israel and West Bank and Gaza Strip under EXACT developed with support of the EU since 1995 and with assistance of other donors, it is envisaged that the project will further foster this co-operation and good water governance at regional level contributing to stability and peaceful co-existence in the region.

The me will have a clear positive effect on sustainable management of water resources at regional level contributing to sustainable development.

The programme is expected to be neutral on gender issues.

3.5. Stakeholders

The main stakeholders of the EC support are Palestinian Water Authority, Israeli Water Commission and the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation, the EXACT multi-donor action group, and the communities of the three parties which should benefit from the project.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Method of implementation

A Financing Agreement will be signed and the programme will be implemented through service contracts launched and managed by the EC.

Capacity building activities will be designed as joint programmes for the three core parties and they will be harmonized with related activities sponsored by other donors.

4.2. Procurement and grant award procedures

All contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the Commission for the implementation of external operations, in force at the time of the launch of the procedure in question.

4.3. Budget and calendar

The total amount of EC support is **€1.5 million**.

The indicative budget breakdown is:

€1.4 million will be devoted to the Service components described in section 3.2, managed through service contracts by the EC. This Service component will include associated Technical Assistance, also under centralised management, dedicated to the detailed planning of this project activities, as well as complementary activities as may be required by the three core parties.

The remaining € 100,000, under centralised management by the EC, will be earmarked for monitoring, evaluation and audit of the programme.

The indicative operational period is 48 months from the signature of the Financing Agreement.

4.4. Performance monitoring

Internal monitoring will be based on periodic assessment of project progress against expected results using a logical framework matrix and key performance indicators.

Half-yearly Progress Reports will be submitted to the EC, providing detailed information on individual activity progress. Deviations from the budget and/or schedule will be noted, their implications assessed and corrective measures will be proposed. A final report will be submitted at the end of the project activities.

The programme will be also subject to external Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM), to be contracted by the EC.

Project monitoring will be harmonised with other donors as may be required in order to align reporting/monitoring frameworks, to prevent duplication of efforts, and to ensure effective use of available funds as well as to ensure consistency with the programme framework of the Multilateral Working Group on Water Resources.

4.5. Evaluation and audit

The implementation of the programme will be subject to regular follow-up by the Commission services.

The programme will be the subject of external evaluations managed by the Commission services at mid-term period and a final evaluation following the completion of the project.

The programme will be the subject of an external audit managed by the Commission services on a yearly basis. A final audit will also be performed before the end of the closure phase.

4.6. Communication and visibility

Communication and visibility activities will be carried out in accordance with provision of the Visibility Guidelines. The contracted partner will be responsible for enforcing the guidelines, namely by providing information on the EC funding of the programme in all the activities and communication related to the programme.

A visibility plan should be prepared at the beginning of the project and provide for effective promotion of the leading role of the EU in the region as related to the support to the Middle East peace process as well as to the overall EU regional cooperation and specifically in the water sector.