

International Workshops

*organized by
the Puglia Regional Environmental Agency (ARPA Puglia)
DG Environment and DG Joint Research Centre
of the European Commission,*

*in collaboration with and support of
the Puglia Region, the Italian Ministry of Environment and
the Italian Agency for Environmental Protection and Technical Services (APAT)*

Pilot River Basins – The Mediterranean Dimension

and

Linking Rural Development and Land Degradation Mitigation with River Basin Management Plans



*Ministero dell' Ambiente
e della Tutela del Territorio*



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
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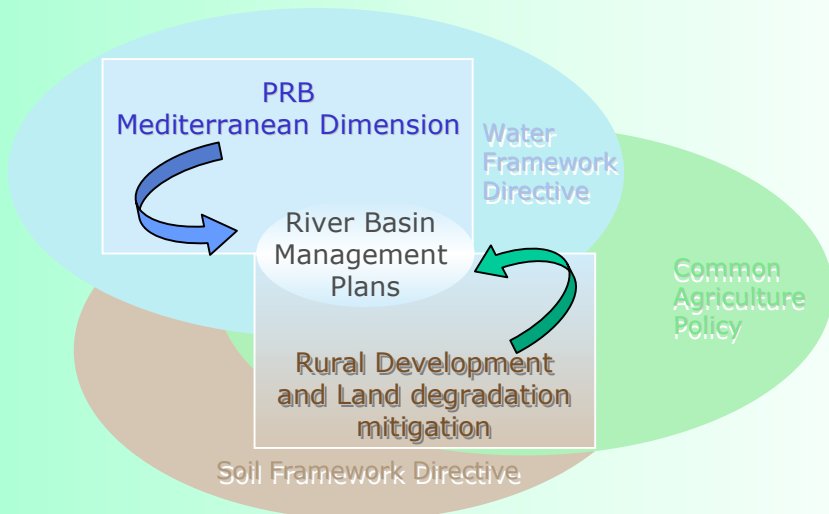


Brindisi, Italy, 22-24 September 2004

The watershed is recognised as the territorial unit where problems are environmentally linked and integrated actions can be taken.

The Pilot River Basin Network (PRB) evaluates implementation of the WFD within Member States and indicates directions for compiling river basin management plans. Mediterranean catchments have their characteristic problems heavily related to water supply and consumption.

Within Mediterranean watersheds distinctive management issues clearly touch other thematic fields, disciplines and policies. Soil erosion and desertification are severe threats and relate to agricultural practices, water and land use. The fragile Mediterranean area requires specific farming practices to keep land degradation under control and to minimise contamination. Hence, linking rural development and basin management plans will strengthen the coordination of water and soil management.



To ensure overall sustainability, combined solutions will need to be constructed which reach far beyond a single policy context.

**Sharing Mediterranean PRB experiences
and
discussion on concepts of river basin management plans as
drivers for integrated resource management.**

**Open to managers with natural resources responsibilities from
all over the Mediterranean area**

PRB Mediterranean Dimension

The major objective of this Workshop is to evaluate the progress made so far in terms of Article 5 requirements, and address several key issues specific to the Mediterranean PRBs. Contributions are encouraged from other river basins in the Mediterranean area in order to compare experiences acquired so far in the starting phase of WFD implementation. This will be also debated in relation to the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative, which intends to reinforce existing partnerships, bilateral and regional programmes through networking of "building blocks".

Other topics suggested by Mediterranean PRBs:

- Minimum ecological flow.
- Pressure analysis and establishment of reference conditions on lower reaches of Mediterranean watercourses.
- Establishment of chemical GW status and risk assessment of failing to achieve good status.

Rural Development and land degradation with RBMP

Presentation and discussion of case studies showing approaches for implementation of cross-cutting policies integrated with watershed management and aiming at sustainable use of resources

Further on, learning on these case studies, discussions will be held in Working Groups along specific topics and finally conclusions will be drawn on how to deal with integration of cross-cutting issues in the development of river basin management plans. The workshop is to be a forum to exchange and build on experiences.

Working Groups will provide recommendations on topics as:

Needs and information

- Multi-stakeholder needs
- Information and knowledge pooling

Processes and hurdles

- Participatory processes
- Factors limiting policy integration on the ground and how to overcome them

Instruments and harmonisation

- River Basin Management Plans as drivers for policy collaboration and organisational issues
- Mediterranean wide harmonisation of environmental policies at watershed scale
- Watershed based observational networks in the Mediterranean

MED EUWI - Extra Session

Integrated Resources Water Management (IWRM) issue is one of the 4 focus themes of the Med component of the EU Water initiative. The PRB Mediterranean network organised under the Common Implementation strategy of the Water Framework Directive constitutes the opportunity to liaise with one of the priorities of the EUWI Med component. A process will be established for sharing practices and experiences between EU and non-EU partners in the framework of the Mediterranean PRB network.



source: FAO
<http://www.fao.org/english/newsroom/photofile/index.html>

The event will be held in Brindisi, Italy.

For information on practical arrangements and Registration, pls. address to:

http://viso.ei.jrc.it/prb_im/index.html

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Pilot River Basins – Mediterranean Dimension

and

Linking Rural Development and Land Degradation Mitigation with River Basin Management Plans

Workshop Main Objectives

- Review Mediterranean PRB experiences and identify key issues for further action and coordination
- Open the discussion on optimizing integrated resources management using River Basin Management concepts as drivers
- Co-ordination of the on-going or future activities related to the water management undertaken or planned by WI Mediterranean partners

Brindisi, Italy, 22-24 September 2004

International Workshops
Workshop – “The PRB Mediterranean dimension”

Back-to-back with the

**Workshop – “Linking rural development and land degradation mitigation with
river basin management plans”.**

Brindisi, 22-24 September 2004

Introduction

The watershed is more and more recognised as the territorial unit where problems are environmentally linked and integrated actions have to be taken. The Pilot River Basin Network (PRB) has been established to evaluate implementation of the WFD within Member States and for indicating directions for compiling river basin management plans in the future. Mediterranean catchments have characteristic problems heavily related to water supply and consumption. Experiences of Mediterranean PRBs are worth discussion and evaluation within their own perspective, both in terms of Art. 5 requirements and as pilot for possible follow up activities in the context of the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative.

However, many of the topics within Mediterranean watersheds where distinctive management issues emerge clearly touch other thematic fields, disciplines and policies. Soil erosion and desertification are severe threats in Mediterranean catchments and significantly relate to agricultural practices, water and land use. The more fragile Mediterranean area requires specific land management and farming practices in order to prevent further land degradation and contamination.

To ensure overall sustainability, combined solutions will need to be constructed which reach far beyond a single policy context. Due to the inherent interactions between water, soil and sediment, the watershed entity is best adapted to address integrated management questions.

Therefore, two combined Workshops are proposed, first to review Mediterranean PRB experiences and introduce the concept of river basin management plans to be extended with a discussion on river basin management concepts as drivers for integrated resource management.

The combined Workshops are open to managers with natural resources, agricultural and rural development responsibilities from all over the Mediterranean area for an interchange of experiences, practices and information. The common objective is to discuss possible co-operation by establishing linkages at operational level among different environmental strategies in the Mediterranean region.

An extra session is organised back-to-back with these workshops to provide the possibility to Med EUWI partners to get familiar with the WFD and more particularly with the Med PRB activities. This extra session is devoted to the organisation of the transfer of know-how activities in the field of integrated water management. The linkages between the Med PRB activities and the Med EUWI component are an essential step of the WFD/EUWI joint process aimed to use the WFD as support for IWRM activities of the EUWI.

WORKSHOP1:

The PRB Mediterranean Dimension

Rationale

In order to achieve a successful implementation of the WFD by Member States, the EU Water directors agreed on the necessity of a common strategy for the implementation. Within this framework, Guidance Documents were developed and are being tested on a network of Pilot River Basins (PRBs) to help Member States in their task of successful implementation. It emerged during the initial phase of the testing of the guidance documents that, due to the wide range of environmental, political and socio-economic conditions it was necessary to organise a series of workshops where specific problems or a set of problems common to one region would be addressed. The aims of such workshops are to encourage information and experience exchange among PRBs, to promote and disseminate results to other river basins in Europe, and bring together a broad range of experts from managerial, scientific, and technical background to answer all potential problems emerging during the testing and the implementation of the WFD in general.

In such a context it was decided to organise a Workshop under the umbrella of the Mediterranean PRBs. The PRB Network includes several Mediterranean catchments such as the Cecina and Tevere (Italy), Pinios (Greece), Guadiana (Portugal), Jucar (Spain). These PRBs have environmental problems characteristic of Mediterranean basins linked to the construction of water retention structures, water over-exploitation, intensive agriculture, increased tourist pressure during the summer period, etc. All these pressures and their impacts will have to be reviewed and evaluated in terms of cost analysis in the near future. However, it is important to stress that these pressures and impacts cannot simply be relegated to economic terms, but rather linked to other value systems, social and environmental. This will have to be taken in consideration during the development of the river basin management plans.

The major objective of this Workshop is to evaluate the progress made so far in terms of Article 5 requirements, and address several key issues specific to the Mediterranean PRBs. Contributions are encouraged from other river basins in the Mediterranean area in order to compare experiences acquired so far in the starting phase of WFD implementation. More experiences will be brought in also by other Mediterranean river basins, in order to reinforce existing partnerships, bilateral and regional programmes.

At the end, an open discussion will be held with all partners so as to outline and establish a process for sharing practices and experiences and discuss next steps of the Mediterranean PRB network.

WORKSHOP 2:

Linking rural development and land degradation mitigation with river basin management plans

Rationale

Sustainable use of natural resources requires adequate management of impacting key elements, such as soil management practices, water use, agriculture, tourism and urbanisation. While various existing or planned EU legislation have identified links through common environmental issues, in their formulation and assessment strategies they still focus substantially on single thematic topics. As a result, their implementation is rather stand-alone and local policy or management measures are mostly taken in 'isolation'.

Land degradation, soil erosion and salinisation, water quality and quantity, nutrient and pesticide concentrations, groundwater as well as conservation of natural habitats, preservation of landscape and of farmed semi-natural areas, etc. are single problems addressed in separate EC legislation. However, they are environmentally interlinked and impact as such on the sustainability of the rural areas. Their political links become clear when observing the overlapping appearance within various Directives. Mitigating measures for each of these threats, whether they are strategies defined from within either the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the Water Framework Directive (WFD) or the Soil Thematic Strategy, are converging but are still being defined and implemented separately. A starting point for integration could be identification of specific soil data, soil functions and measures needed to support the achievements of WFD or CAP objectives. For instance, some agricultural measures encouraged under the CAP deal with some of the above mentioned threats, but their planned effect on the sustainability of the ecosystem will only be reached when they are adapted to take into consideration the ecosystem as a whole, which goes far beyond agriculture only.

The watershed is increasingly being conceived as the territorial unit where actions can be taken most effectively. It is the basis for monitoring and information system initiatives, and it is also embedded in the concept of the River Basin Management Plans introduced by the EU WFD. Many National Action Programmes developed by Mediterranean countries in the context of international Conventions (e.g. Annex IV of UNCCD, the UN-Convention to Combat Desertification) mention among their priorities the protection of watersheds as core measures for achieving their objectives. The Pilot River Basin experience is showing that achievement of WFD objectives requires specific coordination with already in-place mechanisms of the CAP, which point into the direction of linking rural development plans and river basin management plans. The same applies to certain soil protection measures (to counteract e.g. erosion, salinisation, decline in organic matter), which could be integrated with the watershed management. Within this context, stakeholders need to propose measures for a given problem in view of satisfying objectives that are related to different legislation and influenced by their environmental complexity.

WORKSHOP 2 Ctnnd:

Linking rural development and land degradation mitigation with river basin management plans

The proposed Workshop aims at gaining insight from exchange of experiences and will build on the concept of river basin management plans introduced in the first Workshop. Some practical case studies from the Mediterranean area where crosscutting approaches are tested will be demonstrated and emerging initial concepts for integrating approaches will be evaluated.

Fundamental issues to be addressed in support of integrated watershed resource management plans are:

- Defining of user and management specific needs for collaborative planning
- Better pooling of information and knowledge to address the indicated lack of adequate data hampering systematic application of models or decision-making processes
- Setting up participatory processes and identification of hurdles and ways to overcome them in view of improved policy integration
- Policy instruments and tools, can River Basin Management Plans drive the action?
- Mediterranean wide, North-South, harmonization for implementing of environmental policies

Watershed based observational networks in the Mediterranean can be the very first step to initiate this complex work of appraisal of impact of measures. Working group discussions will be organised to in order to identify ways for integration and follow-up actions.

EXTRA SESSION:

Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative: Integrated Water Resources Management Focus Theme

Rationale

Integrated Resources Water Management (IWRM) issue is one of the 4 focus themes of the Med component of the EU Water initiative. The PRB Mediterranean network organised under the Common Implementation strategy of the Water Framework Directive constitutes the opportunity to liase with one of the priorities of the EUWI Med component. A process will be established for sharing practices and experiences between EU and non-EU partners in the framework of the Mediterranean PRB network.

As several building blocks proposed for the implementation of the MEDEUWI are directly linked with IWRM (e.g. capacity building, transfer of know-how) the question is now to streamline all theses activities and to ensure that no major gaps or overlaps will exist. Therefore, this session is dedicated to the co-ordination of the on-going or future activities related to the water management undertaken or planned by the Mediterranean partners.