



# NEWSLETTER 1



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## General information on EU WATER Project

*During recent years Europe and mostly its South-Eastern regions faced the issue of pollution of waters with nitrates. This has emerged due to complex causes which include poor efficiency of water utilization, ever increasing sources of pollution and lack of a real integrated management of water uses in agriculture, industry and domestic sectors.*

*Last years climate changes and modification of the precipitations' regime only added to the worsening of water resources' quality through an enhanced migration of nitrates.*

*In the SEE area, as mentioned within the "Program's Strategic Environment Assessment", some of the most important challenges are water related, especially those connected to the influence of agricultural activities on the pollution of waters.*

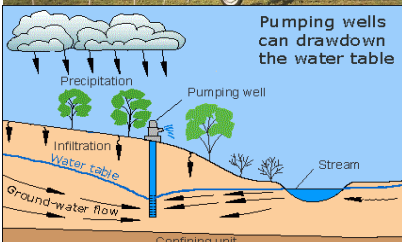
*On one hand, agriculture represents an important sector of the SEE countries' economies and on the other hand, agriculture related activities represent a potential risk to surface water bodies and to underground waters in EU countries; reasons for this are among others, a significant loss of water through the tillage system and pollutants in the surface/underground waters.*

*The third report on implementation of Council Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources confirmed the agriculture as prime contributor to the pollution of surface and underground waters with nitrates and to their eutrophication, also highlighting the fact that SEE countries are late in their endeavour to enforce provisions of the above mentioned Nitrates Directive.*

*EU WATER project concept is based on recognizing the fact that only through a large scale common approach to the rational management of available water resources to prevent nitrates pollution, one could ensure a long term protection of these resources.*

*EU WATER is an on-going initiative implemented by 12 partners from 8 member and non-member states and co-financed by the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme; the project is coordinated by the Province of Ferrara from Italy.*

*The project is part of the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme, Priority Axis 2. Protection and Improvement of the Environment; Area of Intervention: A.O.L 1.2 Improvement of integrated water management and flood risk preven-*





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## General information on EU WATER Project

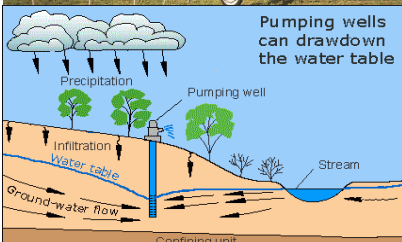
*The project aims to extrapolate at transnational level, an integrated water resources management system in agriculture, based on water consumption optimization and on reduction of nitrates water pollution.*

*Within the frame of the project, one targets the achievement of a common strategy and the creation of governance mechanisms for each individual EU WATER partner, needed for enforcement of the Water-frame and Nitrates Directives provisions in SEE countries and for the development of innovative and ecological agricultural practices.*

*For the "Transnational integrated management of water resources in agriculture for the EU WATER emergency control" project, there are 12 partners (PPs) which undertook to cooperate, situated in 8 SEE countries that will effectively contribute to the reduction of water consumption and of nitrates pollution from agricultural sources, in a number of 8 areas located in the SEE countries.*

*The partners involved in the project activities are:*

1. Province of Ferrara, Italy which is the project coordinator;
2. Province of Rovigo, Italy;
3. Trans-Tiszanian Inspectorate for Environment, Nature and Water – Hungary;
4. University of Debrecen, Hungary;
5. Region of Western Macedonia, Greece;
6. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece;
7. National Research and Development Institute for Land Reclamation, Romania;
8. National Research and Development Institute for Soil Science, Agricultural Chemistry and Environment, Romania;
9. Agency for Rural Development of Istria-Pazin, Croatia;
10. Institute of Agricultural Economics, Serbia;
11. Odessa National Polytechnic University, Ukraine
12. Ialoveni County Council, Republic of Moldova.





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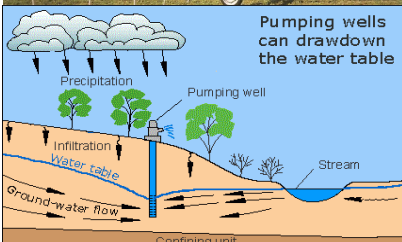
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## General information on EU WATER Project



*The following are the areas where outcome of this project will be tried in practice (project target areas):*

1. Interregional Po river basin, Italy;
2. Tisza river basin – Hajdu-Bihar County, Hungary;
3. Region of Western Macedonia, Greece;
4. Argeş-Vedea basin, Romania;
5. Istria Region, Croatia;
6. Pancevo Municipality, Serbia;
7. Odessa Region, Ukraine;
- Botna river basin, Republic of Moldova.

*The aim of pilot actions is to test the TSIWMA (Transnational Strategy for Integrated Water Management in Agriculture) approach (filtered through the regional intervention plans) by applying management procedures which will allow determination of the best agronomic practices that are able to generate the best outcomes, which in turn should achieve environmental goals while maintaining profitability and economic competitiveness.*



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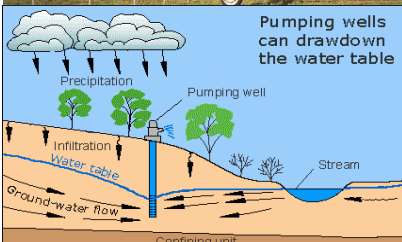
## Project objectives:

*The general objective of the project is the development of shared methodologies and the application of demonstrative and innovative interventions towards the integrated management of water resources in rural areas, to move toward sustainable development models framed by EU legislation. The main goals are to give concrete answers to the problem of water consumption and water contamination caused by intensive agriculture in selected rural communities across SEE space, where agriculture represents the major user of natural resources and supplier of environmental services.*

*The project will implement a pragmatic process based firstly on the improvement of the traditional “top-down–bottom-up” planning approach and secondly on adaptive learning practices to contribute to the transition of local agriculture towards innovation technology and environment-friendly measures.*

*The project specific objectives are:*

- capitalization and reorganization of the existing knowledge in the project areas with reference to the water-sensitive agricultural zones;
  - definition of a joint transnational (horizontal) strategy for the integrated management of water in agriculture, coherent to EU Water Framework and to the Nitrates Directive, to be subsequently applied (vertically) in each participating region through local adaptive plans;
  - development of practical actions and grants mechanisms for introducing new technologies and new productive systems in agriculture (e.g. sustainable fertilising practices, low water consumption technologies for irrigation, etc.), with a direct impact on a wide number of farmers;
  - support to public bodies in territorial planning, land-use management in rural areas and promotion of low environmental-impact agriculture, supporting the implementation of EU regulations on integrated water management;
- encouragement of an active role of local stakeholders towards tackling the problems, implementing the solutions, and getting the corresponding benefits.*





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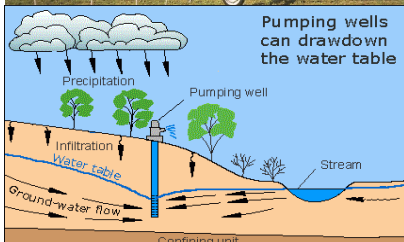


## Project's working plan

*EU.WATER adopted a strategy to in-field apply, test and give solutions for the long lasting application of the integrated water management principles, in areas representative of the different environmental and social contexts of the SEE space: ranging from alluvial highly intensive agriculture (Italy), continental agriculture (Hungary), extensive agriculture (Romania) and up to a Mediterranean type of agriculture (Greece). In other words, a common strategy for an integrated water management, built on a strong scientific knowledge, will be tailored to specific areas' needs, tested through pilot actions and refined and capitalized into policy instruments for the local development processes.*

*Project setting up and implementation follows an approach able to fit the top-down planning and programming actions of partners with the bottom-up perceived needs, constraints and weakness points of the selected areas and stakeholders. Activities are carried out accordingly and in tight synergy with stakeholders, in order to promote participation and ownership. Focus will therefore be put to directly involve both local and regional institutions of the concerned areas (and of the neighbouring ones) in the project implementation. For this purpose, a basic contribution will be played by the setting up of the Local Implementation Networks (described in Act. 4.3) that, on one side, will allow to fit approaches and actions to the perceived needs and, on the other side, will allow to prevent the evidenced external constraints (chap. 3.9). A participatory approach is seen as essential to promote empowerment and ensure project relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. Project implementation is based onto an internal quality and management system able to:*

- deliver efficiently project outputs, achieve the expected results and contribute effectively to the overall objectives of the project and the Programme;
- manage the available resources regularly and efficiently;
- continuously monitor, evaluate and report project progress.





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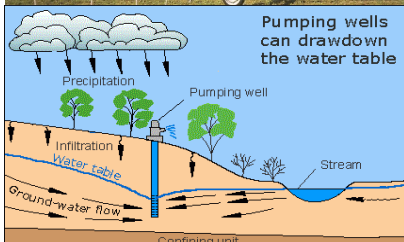
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## Expected outcome of the project



*The main project result will be the establishment of transnational coordinated and harmonized water management in agriculture, in accordance with the EU legal framework and based on the direct involvement of the main government actors of the concerned rural areas. In particular, after project completion, the following results are expected:*

- *to have acquired a comprehensive picture of main European relevant experiences and scientific results in the application of integrated water management, available to a wide range of stakeholders;*
- *to have improved regional planning and managing strategies for integrated water management, based on a wide scientific horizon, developed according to a transnational approach and applied/tested in different relevant SEE areas;*
- *to have achieved an increased capacity of both institutional and economic actors to perform sustainable rural development without jeopardizing competitiveness*



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## I.N.C.D.I.F-ISPIF/I.C.P.A role

*Within the frame of Pilot Action Romania, ISPIF (PP6) and ICPA (PP7), as project partners, undertook the following activities:*

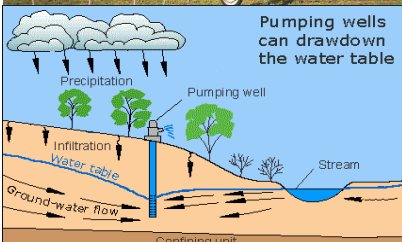
- 1. PP6 – I.N.C.D.I.F-ISPIF conducts social-enquiry type field activities of the work group (also involving LIN members), for the purpose of capturing opinions of local stakeholders/end users, opinions which should subsequently allow ranking/prioritization of measures that need to be applied within each Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ).*
- 2. PP7 – I.C.P.A elaborates the list with measures and the indices that measure their efficiency, for these to be added to the multi-sectorial integrated decision support system (DSS).*

*Common efforts of both PP6 and PP7 will converge towards the elaboration of a final list of measures and corresponding monitoring indicators.*

*After evaluating the current situation of the reform process of water legislation and the institutional arrangements prevailing in SEE area, the project partners are focusing on the use of economic instruments in the project's regions and highlight the incentive/fiscal tools and funding water-investments to support the use of efficient water management's practices by the farmers (according to the regional intervention plans).*

*These instruments, based on a strong practical orientation and supported by a bottom-up approach to meet the local stakeholders' needs, will result in a number of 8 financial and normative packages (one per project target area) that can be used within the national and local governance / incentives mechanisms.*

*The widest transferability and understanding of the eco-environmental benefits from applying EU-WATER integrated approach will be ensured by training cycles addressed to technicians and farmers in each project area.*





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## Progress of project activities

*The following project tasks are either completed or still on-going at present:*

### **WP 2 - Project communication and information dissemination (C&D):**

*Effective communication and knowledge management within and outside the partnership are carried out through several dissemination channels and apposite tools developed within the project's communication package addressed to both international and local stakeholders and relevant target groups.*

### **WP 4 - Common Integrated Strategy for Water Management in Agriculture:**

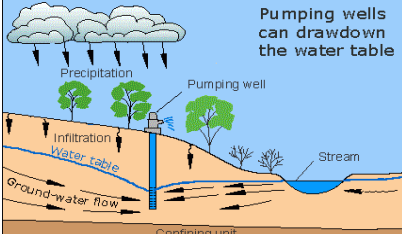
*Development of one common Transnational Strategy for the Integrated Water Management in Agriculture (TSIWMA) in the frame of EU "Water" and "Nitrates" Directives (CE/2000/60 and CEE/91/676) and based on the critical factors/trends stressed by WP3 and follow 2 main priorities: water resources saving and prevention of water pollution.*

### **WP 5 - Pilot Action Romania**

*As mentioned before, the purpose of pilot actions is to test the TSIWMA (Transnational Strategy for Integrated Water Management in Agriculture) approach (filtered through the regional intervention plans) by applying management procedures which will allow determination of the best agronomic practices that are able to generate the best outcomes, which in turn should ensure environmental goals while maintaining profitability and economic competitiveness.*

### **WP 6 - Governance and normative / fiscal incentives**

*After reviewing the current situation of the reform process of water legislation and the institutional arrangements prevailing in the SEE area, the project partners are focusing on the use of economic instruments in the project's regions and highlight the incentive/fiscal tools and funding water-investments to support the use of efficient water manage-*





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## The pilot action Romania

*This pilot action also aims to put in practice a multi-sectorial integrated decision support system designed to reflect opinions of stakeholders and of end-users, through local LIN networks, these opinions being required in order to be able to plan adequate measures of protecting surface and underground waters against pollution with nitrates from agricultural activities.*

### Target area

*For Romania, this target area is represented by Argeş-Vedea basin situated in the south of Romania, which includes a number of 20 localities that have been designated as Nitrates Vulnerable Areas.*

*Therefore, for Romania, the pilot area is the Argeş-Vedea river basin, in the southern part of Romania.*

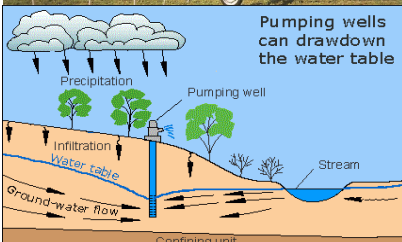
*This river basin encompasses main cultivated land areas such as: orchards and vineyards in the hilly region, field crops in the plain area and pastures much needed for livestock breeding in the mountain area.*

*Within this river basin there is also an extensive network of rural and urban localities which constitute potential sources of pollution of surface and underground water bodies.*

*The entire river basin territory has been designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zone, in accordance with Directive EEC/91/676 which is mentioned under the 'Code of Good Agricultural Practices' (2005 revised edition).*

*In these localities the Action Programme for Nitrates Vulnerable Zones from Agricultural Sources is under implementation at commune level – this programme is based upon Order no.425/105951/2001 of the Minister of Waters and Environment Protection and of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, which in turn acted as basis for the issuing of Decision no.21130/DC/14.10.2010 that approves the aforementioned programme as means to implement provisions of EEC 91/676 Nitrates Directive.*

*Within the framework of EU WATER project, proposals will be devised in order to achieve reduction of water pollution with nitrates from agricultural sources.*





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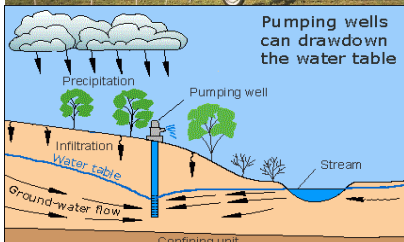
## The pilot action Romania

Such project measures refer to:

1. Improvement of irrigation water conveyance efficiency through the lining of canals and modernization of on-farm irrigation infrastructure;
  2. Enforcing irrigation planning and scheduling for field crops, by soil moisture monitoring, thus avoiding to distribute larger than necessary water applications and also minimizing the in-depth leaching of nitrates due to excess water in the soil;
  3. Achieving high values of irrigation distribution uniformity by carefully controlled water applications which take into account final percolation velocity, depth of specific root system, critical plant growth stages, momentary moisture content within the soil profile and soil's hydro-physical indices;
  4. Fractioned application of nitrogen based fertilisers together with the irrigation water, in accordance with plants' requirement, momentary soil water reserve and depth of root system;
  5. Establish criteria for the selection of adequate irrigation installations depending on the infrastructure layout, available pressure, terrain topography, type(-s) of soil(-s) in the area, main soil's hydro-physical indices, existing water source and commonly practiced agricultural techniques;
- Increased efficiency of irrigation application through a reduction in water and fertilisers consumption and by employing low pressure water distribution systems.

Such measures will be subject to scrutiny during future meetings and their role is to support farmers in enforcing provisions of the Code of Good Agricultural Practices. Subsequently, lists will be devised, with measures adopted and indices for monitoring their implementation.

Based on final adopted measures, irrigation field management plans will be devised. Such plans will be based upon farm level specific conditions (access to the water source, type of predominant soil, irrigated area, available in-field irrigation installations and items of equipment, planning and scheduling of irrigation application, uniformity of water distribution).





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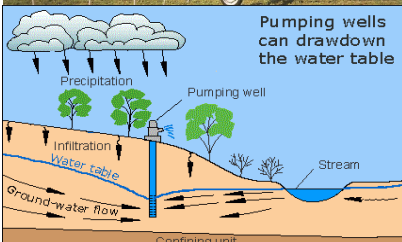
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## Expected results:

- a superior management of available irrigation water resources;
- enhanced uniformity of in-field irrigation water distribution;
- smaller amounts of irrigation water and implicitly of nitrates infiltrated into the underground waters;
- smaller amounts of water getting into the fresh water bodies surrounding the cultivated land areas, by surface run-off.





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## WP 6 work package activities - Governance and normative/fiscal incentives

Within the frame of this work package, project partners will undertake the following tasks:

1. I.N.C.D.I.F-ISPIF hosts and organizes the technical and scientific meeting;
2. Elaborates a **Green book** composed of:
  - **Guidelines** – to define standardized approaches towards incentive mechanisms to be applied locally;
  - **Best practices** – containing practical and technical information on each project's measure / grantee.
3. Prepares **1 financial and normative package (for the Romanian target area)**, tailored on addresses given by regional intervention plan (act 4.4), to be proposed to policy makers as law design to enhance the use of efficient water management capabilities;
4. Organizes the 3<sup>rd</sup> LIN round table (members of the Local Implementation Network);
5. Organizes **local training sessions** for agricultural technicians, with the purpose of transferring EU WATER specific know-how and management practices;
6. Organizes **training seminars for local farmers**, for a higher degree of awareness regarding the need to practice a rational management of available water resources.

Involved partners are the following:

1. ISPIF+ICPA+IAE Serbia
2. ISPIF+IAE Serbia+ICPA
3. IAE Serbia+ISPIF+all PPs
4. ISPIF+ICPA
5. ICPA+ISPIF+all PPs
6. ICPA+ISPIF+all PPs.

