

NEWSLETTER 2

1. Introduction

The general goal of the EU WATER project is the development of common methodologies and the implementation of demonstrative/innovative interventions that target the integrated management of water resources in rural areas, all for the purpose of achieving sustainable development models as defined within EU legislation.

The main purpose of the project is to formulate concrete answers to issues such as the need to decrease water consumption and to alleviate water pollution caused by intensive agricultural practices in a few rural communities that have been selected in the SEE area, where agriculture represents a major user of natural resources, as well as a supplier of environment services.

Nitrates are generally useful to the crop plants but their increased concentration is harmful to humans and to the environment. Underground waters in the southern part of Romania have an alarming rate of nitrates loads. These excess amounts of nitrates contaminate aquifers and pose a serious threat to human health.

Induced pollution occurs when the flow extracted from a certain aquifer exceeds the designed flow, so that the underground water from the surrounding area contaminated with nitrates tends to migrate to the location from which it is being pumped.

The development of a common Transnational Strategy on the Integrated Water Management in Agriculture (TSIWMA) that should work within the frame constituted by provisions of both CEE /2000/6 Water-framework Directive and of CEE /91/676 Nitrates Directive, based on critical factors/trends made clear within WP 3 project activities, should follow two major priority concerns of the day: saving of water resources and prevention of water pollution by nitrates coming from agricultural sources.

Such a strategy must support governance bodies involved in the project, to:



1. *harmonize the policy tools to the relevant EU legislation and to adapt these to local water management applicable laws;*
2. *downscale TSIWMA to the territorial level, in order to be able to facilitate application of the pilot initiatives in each of the selected target areas, by means of the 9 regional intervention plans;*
3. *assess the impact of implemented policies, in terms of cost/benefit ratio, maintaining and aggregating agricultural productivity and implementing environment measures.*

The leader of the WP 4 package of project activities is PP4 – Region of Western Macedonia, from Greece.



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2. Glossary

SEE = South-East Europe (programme);
CAP = Capitalization Action Plan (or Common Agriculture Policy);
WFD = Water Framework Directive;
CTM = Common Transnational Management;
SC = project's Steering Committee;
TSF = Scientific and Technical partnership forums;
LP = Lead Partner of the EU WATER project;
PP = Project Partner;
WP = Work Package;
LIN = Local Implementation Networks;
MAP = Mainstreaming Action Plan;
QAS = Quality Assessment System;
TSIWMA = Transnational Strategy for the Integrated Water Management in Agriculture;
AUTH = Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece);
RWM = Region of Western Macedonia (Greece);
ONPU = Odessa National Polytechnic University;
AZRRI = Agency for Rural Development of Istria Ltd Pazin;
IPA = Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance;
NVZs = Nitrate Vulnerable Zones;
N = Nitrogen;
DSS = Decision Support System ;
R&D = Research and Development ;
GIS = Geographic Information System;



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IT = Italy;
HU = Hungary;
GR = Greece;
HR = Croatia;
RO = Romania;
UA = Ukraine;
RS = Serbia;
MD = Republic of Moldova;

Stakeholders = persons and employees that have direct or indirect stake in the successful completion/implementation of a certain project, because it can affect their subsequent actions and policies.

Local Intervention Plan = a plan prepared based on provisions of Government Decision HG no.964/2000, for the purpose of reducing the pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources within NVZs.

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3. Description of WP4 activities

Common integrated strategy and its local adaptations

Name of WP4 package: common integrated strategy and its local adaptations.

Activity (task) 4.1: joint preparation of the strategy pertaining to the integrated management of water resources in agriculture.

Work package leader: Region of Western Macedonia - RWM.

Partners involved: all PPs.

Within the framework constituted by the CEE/2000/60 and CEE/91/676 Directives (on water and nitrates respectively) and based upon critical factors and trends that were highlighted during project's package WP3, all partners will have to cooperate so that by following the two major targets (water resources saving and prevention of water pollution), a common transnational strategy of integrated water management in agriculture is devised.

Leader of this work package is PP4 – Region of Western Macedonia in Greece.

Within the frame of this part of the project, involved partners will have to carry out the following:

4.1 preparation of common TSIWMA;

4.2 organization of the 3rd technical and scientific forum in Budapest;

4.3 setting up of the Local Implementation Network (LIN);

4.4 adaptation of TSIWMA to concrete local conditions – through the local Action Plan;

4.5 organization of the 6th technical and scientific forum in Odessa.

Common Transnational Strategy for the Integrated Water Resources Management in Agriculture:

There are two key issues related to this task:

1. Water pollution – the Province of Ferrara partner can propose the best fertilisation management techniques, which combine certain traditional agricultural concepts and new innovative/experimental approaches;
2. Water scarcity - the Region of Western Macedonia is able to forward proposals concerning the most adequate practices that are able to ensure both the saving of water and its rational use for irrigation purposes, all within the boundaries of the “water should be used in correlation to its availability” principle.

I.N.C.D.I.F – ISPIF will prepare a Green Book on the financial/normative mechanisms that are supposed to encourage farmers to efficiently manage their water resources (in compliance with the regional intervention plans).

As part of the EU WATER project, the Rovigo leader initiated a series of 4 pilot demonstration actions in the countries of the following project partners:

Hungary, Romania, Italy and Greece.



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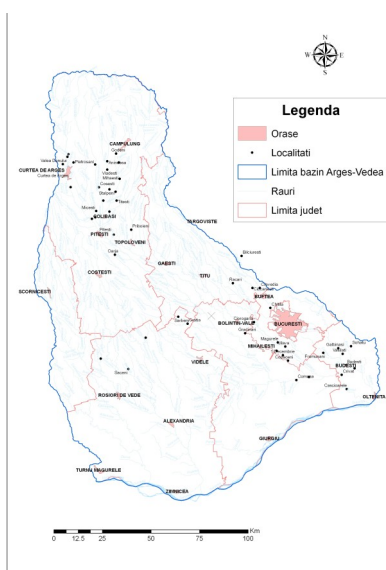
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4. Description of WP 4.1 task

As part of the 4.1 task, partners involved carried out the following activities:

Part A (Technical orientation):

4.1.1 Review of the critical factors and trends presented during project WP3 package, for each partner country, following the 2 main priorities:

- water resources conservation and prevention of water pollution with nitrates from agricultural activities;
- assessment of agriculture's contribution to the overall water consumption and to the extent of the water pollution phenomenon.

This was carried out by reviewing and analysing regional reports and regional vulnerability maps and by checking the way in which the two relevant EEC Directives have been implemented.

Two deliverables correspond to these tasks:

- a strategy on reduction of water consumption in agriculture;
- a strategy on reduction of water pollution from agricultural activities.

Any strategy must define aspects which should be improved and to what extent.

4.1.2 Identification/assessment of agriculture's contribution to the water consumption and to the water pollution, by comparison with other economy sectors' contribution

For this task:

- one gathered and synthesized information from specialized literature;
- one presented provisions included in the codes of good practices which are applicable in the relevant countries;
- one devised ideas and concepts related to the consumption of water, which the partners think adequate to the goals of the

EU WATER project;

- one also presented traditional agricultural practices already implemented in the area;

- the strategy could not comprise radical changes due to the fact that the local adaptation plan could no longer be applied. One identified the feasible methods which can achieve water savings.

The Region of Western Macedonia (RWM) has drafted a questionnaire accompanied by a set of open questions which was already sent to all project partners.

Each partner is supposed to answer these questions after prior consultations with the local stakeholders through their LINs (Local Implementation Network).

After collecting answers to this questionnaire and drafting a report on the good practices (which also included references to the specialized literature), RWM has reviewed and identified the best practices that will be part of the final strategy.

This report has been submitted to all project partners who were asked to critically comment on its contents with members of their LINs and to forward back which are the practices they deem feasible to be applied.

After collecting all the answers, RWM elaborated the Final Report on the best practices aimed at achieving water savings.



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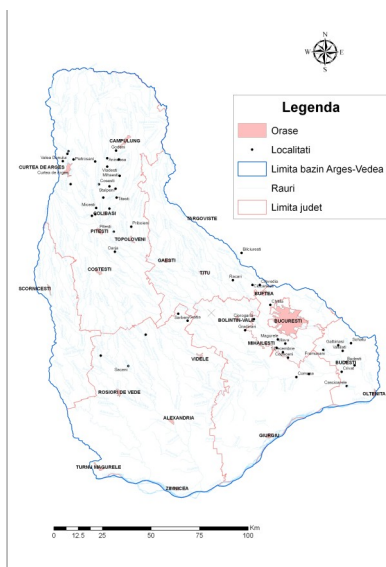
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4. Description of WP 4.1 task

4.1.3 Identification of alternative irrigating methods that can save water
Aside of principles already validated and acknowledged worldwide in the specialized literature, one reviewed also techniques that are part of the codes of good practices in the relevant project areas and issues related to the water consumption and to the management of wastes deriving from agricultural sources.

The WP leader devised a questionnaire accompanied by a set of open questions which was sent to partners which were supposed to review their code of good practices and to issue their own suggestions on the best fertilisation practices.

Each partner is supposed to answer these questions after prior consultations with the local stakeholders through their LINs.

After collecting answers to this questionnaire and drafting a report on the good practices the WP leader has reviewed and identified the best practices that will be part of the final strategy and will be included in a specialized report to be distributed to all project partners.

4.1.4 Identification of alternative methods that can achieve alleviation of the pollution with nitrates

Activities were based upon collection of useful specialized literature references and were developed by using provisions of the codes of good practices corresponding to each project target area.

Outputs to be obtained will be presented in the form of a guideline of good practices in the field of water utilization and fertilisers management, offering advice to farmers and constituting models for other project partners, for the purpose of adapting provisions of TSIWMA to the local intervention plans.

4.1.5 Prioritization of methods/practices

The final strategy and the guidelines of good practice will be downscaled to the level of each region/country through the pilot action activities (in WP5).

Part B (policy orientation)

As I.N.C.D.I.F-ISPIF and ICPA are supposed to cooperate for the preparation of a

Green Book on the current state of the water

legislation reform and predominant institutional arrangements within SEE area, with major focus on the use of economic tools in the project regions and of incentive/financial instruments that together with financing of water investments are meant to support farmers to efficiently utilize water, these two partners will devise that policy part of the common strategy, by:

4.1.6 performing a brief review of the current policies that aim to support saving of water and alleviation of nitrates water pollution in the geographical area of the SEE, and also by: 4.1.7 preparing a set of instructions for factors deciding policies in this field, to help them to identify and to regulate application of economic and financial incentives within agricultural activities, so that the two priority goals (saving water and preventing water pollution with nitrates) are attained.

Part C (Transnational strategy for a more sustainable agriculture in the SEE area)

This part entails the following activities:

1. *Technical instructions and code of good practices on the use of water and fertilizers, including practical advice offered to farmers;*
2. *Policy guidelines designed to support reduction of water consumption and nitrates pollution in the SEE area, to include specific suggestions to policy makers.*



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5. Role of ISPIF - ICPA within WP4 project activities

This role consists in fulfilling the following tasks:

4.1 Devising the common strategy – ISPIF effectively supports the WP4 leader in the elaboration of this common strategy, whereas ICPA contributes to its definition;

4.2 3rd ST forum in Budapest – ISPIF takes part to this meeting and contributes by supplying the requested inputs, the same as ICPA's task;

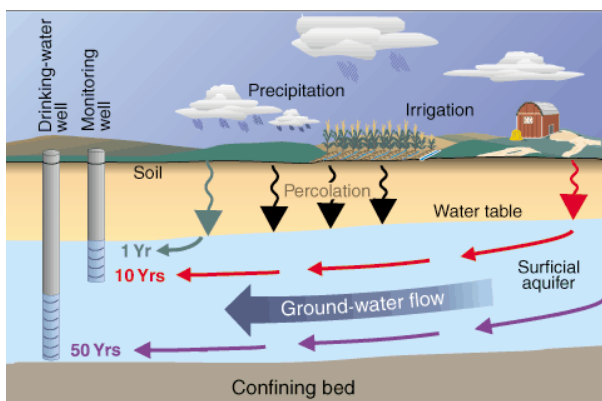
4.3 setting up the Local Implementation Network (LIN) – ISPIF will set up the structure of this network and will organize its first round table, while ICPA is supposed to support ISPIF in this undertaking;

4.4 Downscaling of TSIWMA to the local level – the regional intervention plan – ISPIF will devise the Romanian local intervention plan, designed to achieve adaptation of TSIWMA to the local reference level, in close cooperation with ICPA; ISPIF is also supposed to organize the second LIN round table;

4.5 the 6th ST forum in Odessa – ISPIF will take part to this meeting together with its agronomist, contributing with the requested input, similar to ICPA's task.



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6. Rezultate asteptate

The main project result is the establishment of transnational coordinated and harmonized water management in agriculture, in accordance to the EU legal framework and based on the direct involvement of the main government actors of the concerned rural areas.

In particular, after project termination, 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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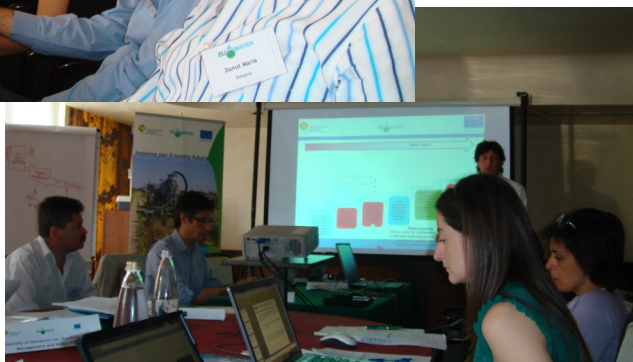
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7. ST meeting at ROVIGO (ITALY)

During 19 to 20 of May, the 4th Scientific and Technical Partnership Forum (STF) & the 4th Steering Committee Meeting took place in Rovigo (Italy).

The following topics have been on the meeting's agenda:

1. Towards the Transnational Strategy for Integrated Water Management in Agriculture (TSIWMA WP4) - rationale, structure and tasks: a preliminary comparative analysis of the vulnerability and risks based on the results of the vulnerability maps; role of agriculture in water consumption and water pollution in the SEE area; review of good practices in reducing water consumption and nitrates pollution; common agricultural practices codes;
2. Concrete case studies towards a lower environmental impacts agriculture: presentation of the pilot actions' intermediate results (WP5): presentation of the state of pilot actions developed in the Interregional Po-River Basin (Ferrara and Rovigo, IT) and study visit, in the Tisza River Basin (HU), in the Sarigiol Basin (EL) and in the Arges-Vedea Basin (RO);



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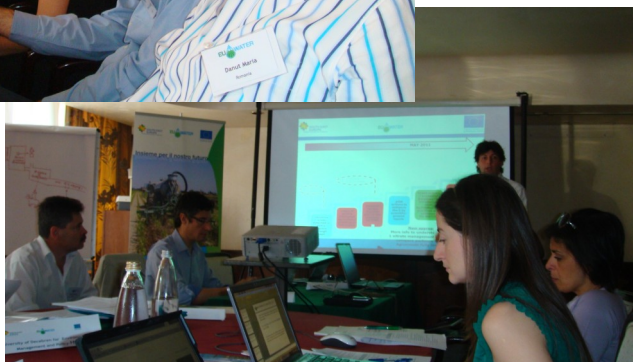
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3. Towards the Governance and fiscal incentives for a more sustainable agriculture: work programme and guidelines to implement the WP6 presented by PP8 ISPIF; brief overview on current policies to help reduce water consumption and nitrates pollution in the SEE area; presentation of the first cycle of trainings in Pancevo City by the IPA PP2 IAE; presentation of the capacity building training for IPA and 10% of the partners;

4. Communication and dissemination (work package 2): state of the project communication activities and presentation of the work programme until the end of the project (including final conference and final publications);

5. Project management (work package 1): state of the project financial/spending performances, progress report and budget modifications; scheduling of the next STF & SC meeting in Odessa in place of planned Bucharest forum, in October 2011;

6. Decision of the SC regarding the PP7 ICPA's missing commitments: its lack of attitude to cooperate (no outputs delivered) and missing communication put at risk the whole project implementation, in terms of technical and financial performance.



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