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Sida Decentralised Evaluation

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Evaluation of three projects on transboundary water management in the Middle East and North Africa region

Final Report

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**Final Report
October 2017**

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CE	Central Eastern
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (United Nations)
GWP-Med	Global Water Partnership Mediterranean Regional Water Partnership
IUCN-ROWA	International Union for Conservation of Nature Regional Office for West Asia
IWRM	Integrated water resources management
LWSAP	Local Water Security Action Plan
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PME	Project monitoring and evaluation
PSC	Project Steering Committee
REC	Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe
REKK	Regional Centre Energy Policy Research
ROM	Results Oriented Monitoring
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SFG	Strategic Foresight Group
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIWI	Stockholm International Water Institute
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
WaSe	Water and Security (component of REC project)
WATER-PorT	Water Resources Management Good Practices and Knowledge Transfer (component of REC project)
WDA	Water Demand Management

Preface

This evaluation was contracted by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) through the Framework Agreement for Evaluation Services, and conducted by the consortium partners FCG Sweden and Sthlm Policy Group AB.

The evaluation team consisted of the Team Leader, Nicklas Svensson (Sthlm Policy Group) and key experts, Ludo Prins and Aly Kerdany. Zeina Attaher supported the field study of the Regional Environmental Center project in Jordan and Tunisia. Kim Forss provided quality support and the Project Manager was Christian Carlbaum of the Evaluation Unit at FCG Sweden. The report was copy-edited by professional editor.

The findings of the report are entirely the responsibility of the team and cannot be taken as expression of official Sida policies or viewpoints.

Acknowledgements

In the course of this evaluation, the Evaluation Team had the privilege of interacting with a number of persons who generously gave their time and interest. The Evaluation Team wishes to express its heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to this evaluation.

Executive Summary

This report outlines the results of an evaluation of three projects on transboundary water management in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, covering the period 2013–2016. The evaluation was commissioned by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and conducted by consortium partners FCG Sweden AB and Sthlm Policy Group AB from March 2017 to August 2017.

This evaluation is an independent assessment of the effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of the three Sida-funded projects, and highlights lessons learnt from the interventions. While assessing the relevance of the projects, the evaluation also includes an assessment of how gender is incorporated into the programming and illustrated in project results.

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to provide an assessment of the project approaches for building cooperation on transboundary natural resources management and improving water management. It will serve to support the design of potential future Sida support.

More specifically, the terms of reference (see Annex 1) asked the evaluation team to answer evaluation questions for the three projects, and present findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learnt.

Sida's three partner organisations for the evaluation were:

- Global Water Partnership Mediterranean Regional Water Partnership (GWP-Med) – ‘Overcoming Governance Challenges to the Mobilization of Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector’
- The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) – ‘Sustainable Use of Transboundary Water Resources and Water Security Management’
- Strategic Foresight Group (SFG) – ‘Experience Exchange for Regional Water Cooperation in the Middle East’.

The GWP-Med project aims at diagnosing key bottlenecks and governance gaps to improve the mobilisation of financing for the Mediterranean water sector. The strategy is to provide realistic and implementable solutions, in the form of a set of operational guidelines and a compendium of good practices from within and outside the region. The project works at regional and national levels jointly promoted and implemented by GWP-Med and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The REC project comprises two components: ‘Water Resources Management Good Practices and Knowledge Transfer’ (WATER-POrT) and ‘Water and Security’ (WaSe). The objective of WATER-POrT is to accelerate more sustainable use of the region’s water resources and to develop a strategic approach to climate change adaptation by identifying best water management practices, demonstrating successful replication strategies, and disseminating and promoting best practices and replication strategies to practitioners, decision makers and interested public. The objective of WaSe is to promote a comprehensive and integrated approach to water security and ecosystem services for sustainable development of eight municipalities and their local communities in selected countries of the MENA region, as a part of efforts to combat water scarcity, reduce the threat of conflicts, reverse the downward spiral of poverty, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation, and to increase overall human well-being within the wider context of ensuring regional peace and stability.

The SFG project aims to create social infrastructure, based on networks and learning groups, for shared water resources management in the Middle East. SFG works on the assumption that transboundary water cooperation enhances the chances for regional peace. This work is conducted through shared learning events and conferences, in which participants are exposed to both practices and knowledge around peaceful water cooperation. This is meant to lead to a shared understanding and increased trust between stakeholders in the region. The project includes stakeholders from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey (though there is currently no engagement with Syrian officials due to the ongoing conflict).

The evaluation covers the period from 2013 to May 2017.

This report is divided into three chapters. The first chapter describes the background, purpose and scope of the evaluation. It also outlines the approach and methodology of the evaluation. It highlights limitations experienced during the evaluation which either had an obvious or potential influences on the Evaluation Team’s conclusions from having interviewed stakeholders in the field and carried out desk review. The second chapter covers the Evaluation Team’s findings, conclusions and recommendations for each project. Each section on findings is divided into *effectiveness*, *relevance* and *sustainability*. This section aims to answer the evaluation questions listed in the terms of reference. Following the findings, the chapter includes conclusions and recommendations for each of Sida’s three project partners and for Sida. The third chapter outlines the lessons learnt from the evaluation.

Background

The development cooperation in the MENA region, as per the Regional Strategy for Sweden’s Development Cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa 2016–2020, is expected to contribute to strengthened democracy, increased respect for human rights and sustainable development – thereby improving the prospects for peace, stability and freedom in the region. The three Sida-funded projects were

chosen under the previous regional cooperation strategy for Swedish support to the Middle East and North Africa (2010–2015) and assessed to be relevant for the objective of Sector 2, ‘Sustainable use of regional water resources’.

Global Water Partnership Mediterranean Regional Water Partnership

The evaluation finds that the project has partly achieved the results set out in the project document. The project was successful in producing high-quality technical reports for targeted countries (Lebanon still in prep.). The reports provide a fair analysis and diagnosis of water governance at country level, as well as a detailed action plan to address water governance gaps to attract funds for the sector. Stakeholder consultations provided validation and acceptance of the national reports. Reform processes at country level have taken place each at its own pace and direction based on the national context and degree of external donor support to those processes. Outcomes leading to an improved environment enabling and attracting private sector participation and increasing opportunities for financing the sector are still not visible. There are some cases of project financing and several changes in legislation and administrative decrees for reforming the water sector and for private sector participation; however, direct correlation and attribution to the project activities is not evident.

GWP-Med has been able to coordinate and develop synergies with several national and regional processes related to the sector, and has been able to create a process for stakeholders to participate at national and regional levels. It has not been easy to engage informed knowledgeable stakeholders to address corporate social responsibility and gender issues in order to influence action plans and policy makers to address the ‘unusual suspects’ of stakeholders representing gender and poorer or marginalised communities. This is more evidence in the national reports for the countries targeted at the beginning of the project. For Palestine, the report makes a better effort to address cross-cutting issues. There are indications that central bodies in Lebanon may have been gender sensitised based on the Central Bank’s interest in including gender and corporate social responsibility checklists in an upcoming tender for a private sector participation financing project.

The evaluation concludes that the efforts from GWP-Med and OECD in launching the national country reports are commendable. Project influence on positive change that leads to improved environments that encourage private sector participation is still not evident. The major stakeholders, closer to the project activities, highly appreciate the project support and processes at both national and regional levels. However, inclusion of the smaller and ‘softer’ stakeholders was constrained by the structure and design of consultations, which was traditional. More time and funds should have been assigned to enable stakeholders that represented underprivileged groups of communities to better participate and influence recommendations. Enabling these stakeholders may have required capacity building and less-strict design of consultation workshops (e.g.

break-out groups and focus group discussions) and processes, especially at national level.

Section 2.1.5 of the report outlines a number of recommendations.

Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe

The evaluation finds that REC's two components were considered highly relevant and addressing the participants' capacity development needs, though some doubts were observed regarding local level water mandates in the WaSe component. In both components and in both countries, expectations were met to a large extent (though in the Water-POrT component more so in Jordan than in Tunisia), but further deepening and widening are considered necessary by all. The synergies between the two components have been limited due to highly centralized government systems, and water management is primarily dealt with at national level. While having the two components in one project may have reduced transaction costs and project management costs, but the functional relations and synergies between the two components have been rather limited.

The evaluation finds that the participation and learning curves during the training and other capacity building events were considered very positive in both countries and in both components. Moreover, a number of participants feel comfortable and willing to become trainers for further capacity development (though more so in Jordan than in Tunisia). Many members of the WaSe planning teams indicated that knowledge and skills learned were indeed applied in their organizations.

The evaluation finds that, while in Jordan reservations at national level remained throughout the project, the WaSe activities became increasingly supported by national level in Tunisia. In fact, the Tunisian Ministry was inspired and became to champion the component, even to the extent that the Ministry disseminated the WaSe concept and implementation strategy to all the governorates of the country by means of a specially requested and additional REC training activity. The WaSe component has contributed to a number of unintended results in both countries. In Jordan, a number of planning team members has managed to introduce the participatory planning approach in other sectors (general, health, energy, tourism), and most municipalities have indicated their willingness to adopt the approach for all their planning activities.

The evaluation finds that under the Water-POrT component, no evidence was found of any specific plans and budgets that were aimed at mitigating poverty, being the result of the project. The evaluation finds no evidence of efforts to involve marginalized groups in the planning and implementation of the project activities. It also seems that no analysis was made to break down and identify marginalized groups like e.g. rural landless poor, urban unemployed, destitute women, school drop-outs or refugees, the latter group being quite clearly present and seriously aggravating the water scarcity situation in Jordan. It is clear that the issue of involving marginalized

groups' perspectives was less relevant in the Water-POrT component (esp. the technical/professional training activities). In both components and in both countries, the inclusion of the civil society in the project's activities has generally been considered as a novelty and eye-opener both by government and civil society representatives.

The evaluation concludes that the REC project focused its project monitoring and evaluation activities on capacity development and awareness raising interventions (activities, events) rather than on the application of new knowledge and skills learned by the participants at their host organizations, thereby not allowing to measure the level of change in institutional/individual behaviour. The project organization with its two separate components and its financial and administrative systems and procedures used seem too complex, which has caused implementation delays. This complexity could have been mitigated by a good functioning communication and PME system, which unfortunately was not available. Problems occurred in the WaSe support structure in Tunisia due to the delays that occurred as a result of the replacement of IUCN by SONEDE International as National Coordinator.

The evaluation concludes that the implementation time has proven too short to fully complete the two components. Both still need to finalize their procurement and contract management activities. Furthermore, the WaSe component still needs to complete the entire program of 20 modules, which has already resulted in condensing of activities and insufficient digestion and application of the knowledge and skills learned. These reasons, along with the perceived needs for further deepening and widening, justify the need for a contract extension.

The evaluation concludes that marginalized groups were left out of the project's design and implementation activities altogether. While REC, in particular in its WaSe component, applied a bottom-up and participatory approach, which was widely seen and experienced by the participants as very successful, it did not pay attention to marginalized groups. Women and gender issues were addressed, though it seems that REC team assumed that by engaging a significant number of female experts (N.B. no designated gender expert), female local staff (CWA, LC) and female participants of project activities, that this would result in the integration of gender mainstreaming in project activities and results.

The evaluation concludes that key ministries in both countries showed a strong ownership in terms of design and implementation of the POrT-component, as well as in owning and sustaining the project results (the latter being slightly stronger in Jordan than in Tunisia). The involvement of civil society and women in both countries was poor in project planning, though much better during project implementation. Action 2 (Cooperation and Dialogue) was considered by government and civil society alike to be very innovative and useful. While the relevance and need for continued collaboration were clearly and jointly agreed, the sustainability risk of

this activity is potentially high as a permanent platform and a clear vision (document) for public-private collaboration are still lacking.

The evaluation concludes that the ownership in the design of WaSe-component was poor, partly through the limited water related institutional mandates at municipal level, and partly through the supply orientation of the LWSAP concept.

Notwithstanding this, local ownership in both countries during project implementation increasingly grew to full ownership, and in Tunisia strong support at national level was observed to the project implementation.

The evaluation concludes that proof of the current sustainability can be found e.g. in Jordan through the spread of the participatory planning approach to other sectors and (general) municipal level. Similarly, both in Jordan and in Tunisia, sub-national ambitions have emerged to replicate this to other municipalities (replication) and at governorate level (upscaling). Training of trainers of Local Coordinators could help reduce the sustainability risks. These changes can be attributed to the REC activities. However, while these developments are supported by central level in Tunisia, they are not in Jordan.

The evaluation finally concludes with regards to the WaSe component, note has to be made of the fact that national exchange of ideas and experiences between the local coordinators and the planning teams in the four municipalities in Jordan and between the four delegations in Tunisia are considered to be more practically useful and cost effective as compared to doing the same in the context of regional activities.

Section 2.2.5 of the report outlines a number of recommendations.

Strategic Foresight Group

The evaluation finds that the SFG project has managed to engage champions of water cooperation from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey who have continued to communicate and collaborate with each other. They comprise a broad representation of stakeholders, including former ministers, members of parliament, secretaries general of ministries, technical advisors and experts, academics, and journalists – who have established relations with each other.

The SFG project has helped raise awareness on water among the general public through the involvement of the media. The participation of media personnel, of whom many were women, raised awareness of the issue of women and water in rural areas, and also of the vulnerability of refugees in the region. It contributed to knowledge sharing and learning among participants about linkages between water and socio-economic factors, fostering a commitment among participants to strengthen their involvement and engagement in water management and cooperation. It provided perspectives on the relationship between marginalised groups, women and water. The vertical integration of water cooperation from policy to grassroots level was largely

established through the capacity of media persons who helped to voice the concerns of women and marginalised groups, inform them about their rights, and disseminate information.

The SFG project has helped prepare a readiness in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq (including the Kurdistan Regional Government territory) for further dialogue, and possible negotiations on transboundary water cooperation. There is a desire among participants to engage high-level decision makers to commit to an agreement for cooperation and a regional water commission for monitoring water flows, and active collaboration on flood control, dams and reservoirs. There is a desire among participants that the positive spirit of collaboration among them be showcased to the political leaders, and translated into institutionalised regional cooperation. The political leaders need to form a strategy for regional cooperation. The achieved results are not likely to be sustained over time without a regional mechanism or institution, and a clear strategy for cooperation on transboundary water management and continuous support for confidence-building measures and deepening of relations between ministries in the region.

The SFG project demonstrates that ongoing technical assistance projects – such as standardisation, verification and regular exchange of data and information on a range of water issues – is considered important and useful for building confidence, trust and collaboration.

The SFG project helped encourage groups to meet regularly at the country level in Jordan and occasionally in Lebanon. The SFG umbrella has fostered new relations and partnerships, and presented opportunities for collaboration on other water management activities beyond the SFG project.

The evaluation concludes that SFG's approach to create a soft infrastructure for water cooperation in the Middle East has worked. A success factor has been SFG's own contacts and network with key individuals at the highest level in the region who have been a strong attraction for participants to be involved in SFG activities. The SFG project has contributed to strengthening the channels for dialogue and nurtured a spirit of readiness to move current dialogue forward towards institutionalisation of transboundary water cooperation. SFG's approach – including publishing reports, arranging conferences and meetings, and organising international study trips ('Learning Journeys') – has served to foster and nurture dialogue among participants on water cooperation. It has helped to create a publically available source of documents on water cooperation and water issues, and inspired and motivated media persons to write news articles and broadcast news about SFG activities and water issues, which evoked public interest.

SFG's approach to create vertical integration in the water discourse in the Middle East from high-end policy concerns to grassroots-level concerns was appreciated by participants. The inclusion of media persons has contributed to two-way

communication that both voices concerns of the public, women and marginalised people, and also informs them about water issues and their rights.

SFG's approach to strengthen and expand the Blue Peace community has worked. However, civil society organisations were not included in this project.

Section 2.3.5 of the report outlines a number of recommendations.

1 Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has supported three projects within the water resources sector in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, which will come to an end in 2017. Sida requested that an external evaluation assess whether these projects have reached their objectives (effectiveness). The three projects were chosen under the previous regional cooperation strategy for Swedish support to the Middle East and North Africa (2010–2015) and assessed to be relevant for the objective of Sector 2, “Sustainable use of regional water resources”.

Sida’s three partner organisations for the projects evaluated were:

- Global Water Partnership Mediterranean Regional Water Partnership (GWP-Med) – ‘Overcoming Governance Challenges to the Mobilization of Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector’,
- The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) – ‘Sustainable Use of Transboundary Water Resources and Water Security Management’, and
- Strategic Foresight Group (SFG) – ‘Experience Exchange for Regional Water Cooperation in the Middle East’.

Each project was assessed in relation to its relevance for gender, as well as its sustainability related to ownership by stakeholders in the region. In all three cases, Sida decided to include questions on women and gender in relation to the Development Assistance Committee criteria on *relevance*. Both REC and SFG also include the perspectives of marginalised groups, while GWP-Med includes perspectives of corporate social responsibility.

1.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The primary purpose of the evaluation was to provide the project implementation partners, local stakeholders and Sida with relevant knowledge on the effectiveness, and aspects of the relevance and sustainability, of the project approaches for building cooperation on transboundary natural resources management and improving water management. The term ‘transboundary’ can be somewhat misleading since GWP-Med does not focus on transboundary issues.

Documentation and analysis of results, as well as strengths and weaknesses in the project methodology, will be used by the implementing partners in developing their future work. The evaluation aims to provide useful documentation for Sida in the

design of potential future support and to provide an opportunity for local stakeholders to feed back on the work methods and results of the projects.

A secondary purpose of the evaluation was to provide cross-learning between the three projects by comparing lessons learnt and highlighting critical factors for successful change processes for the benefit of the implementing partners and Sida.

1.3 APPROACH

The Evaluation Team adopted an outcome-oriented approach to this evaluation, seeking verifiable evidence for changes contributed or attributed to the Sida-supported projects. ‘Outcomes’ refer to significant changes (intended or not intended results) in individual and organisational behaviour emerging between the project launch and the project evaluation.

The outcome-oriented approach sought information to verify reported, expected or perceived changes and their relation to project activities and outputs. The information should help in understanding how de facto changes can be attributed to the Sida-supported projects and/or in analysing whether the projects contributed to others’ efforts in realising those changes.

A ‘*significant change*’ is in many ways subjective and is often defined by whoever has used the term. The Evaluation Team approach first sought the views of the project organisations, as expressed in their documentation and/or in their initial consultations with the consultants. The participatory and collaborative approach involving Sida’s partners, sought to go beyond the results matrices and planning instruments, and aimed to help in understanding what the project organisations themselves considered as ‘significant changes’, whether or not they were intended and unintended results of their projects.

The documentation review of both applications and reporting helped identify what the organisations themselves had stated as expected, desired and actual changes, but the consultations with GWP-Med, REC and SFG enabled the evaluation to go beyond validating and verifying the results matrices of the project proposals, and instead assess and verify linkages between the projects and outcomes.

Each project has a regional dimension and the Evaluation Team is therefore interested in seeking any potential linkages between the regional dimensions and the outcomes at the national level. To recognise potential linkages required an approach to specifically identify the process of change and the paths to achieve objectives in complex and unpredictable environments (e.g. the MENA region), where predefined objectives and theories of change must be modified over time to respond to changes in the context.

The approach adopted sought efforts that had been directed at building capacity, introducing tools, nurturing cooperation, building consensus and strengthening

governance to contribute to creating a state of readiness for reacting to new opportunities for regional cooperation and integration. Thus, the approach aimed to assess whether the Sida-supported projects contributed to improved capacity, goodwill and a readiness to respond to more favourable political circumstances; or whether the capacity-building and dialogue efforts have served as a basis for informed and knowledge-based political and technical dialogue for lasting and trustworthy partnerships and possible agreements.

Thus, in short, the approach aimed to:

1. Seek and verify the factual information regarding the changes (policies, draft laws, procedures, roles of regulatory bodies) documented in reports and secondary documents from the interviewees
2. Seek opinions on behavioural and regulatory environmental changes as well as seeking linkages to the Sida-supported projects
3. Understand the degree of involvement in the project and participation in the process – for those stakeholders who participated
4. Gather additional information for use in lessons learnt and success stories.

The evaluation process

This evaluation was commissioned by Sida at the end of February 2017 and conducted by an independent team of senior evaluators with long-term experience in the MENA region and water sector.

The working process started with gleaning information from reports, interviews and other sources to document how the projects had contributed to outcomes (significant changes). This was followed up by initial interviews and communication with the management of Sida's three partner organisations, whom the Evaluation Team asked to comment on what they considered had been 'significant changes' during the project period. Their views were integrated with the evaluation matrix and specifically reflected in the evaluation indicators for the evaluation questions for the relevant project.

The consultancy team produced a draft inception report that developed the approach and methodology. This was internally quality assured by a Quality Assurance Manager at FCG Sweden, and revised in accordance with their suggestions and comments.

The Evaluation Team carried out field visits for each project, including two countries per project, which was central to the data collection for the evaluation. The countries visited for the evaluation are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Countries visited by the Evaluation Team by partner organisation/project

Partner organisation	Country A	Country B
GWP-Med	Jordan	Tunisia
REC	Jordan	Tunisia
SFG	Jordan	Lebanon

After completion of the field studies, an internal workshop was held to identify, assess, validate and verify synergies and complementarity between and lessons learnt by the projects. The output from this workshop was cross-learning between the projects, and concrete recommendations for future programmes. Key findings for good practice and dilemmas were summarised, and emerging lessons learnt and recommendations in relation to the evaluation questions were formulated. A presentation of the outputs from the workshop was held at Sida with partners prior to the submission of the draft report. The presentation was an opportunity to validate findings and preliminary conclusions with Sida and the project organisations.

The consultancy team produced a draft report for 14 July 2017, which was reviewed by Sida and project organisations. The report was revised in accordance with their suggestions and comments. The revised draft report was further reviewed by the FCG Sweden evaluation Quality Assurance team. The consultancy team addressed the final comments from the QA expert and the final report was then be copy-edited by a professional editor. The final report will be presented to Sida in September 2017.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for this evaluation was framed around the evaluation questions listed in the terms of reference for each project (Annex 1). The Evaluation Team developed evaluation matrices including indicators in relation to the evaluation questions and the specific project at the national and regional levels. The indicators in the evaluation matrices helped the Evaluation Team assess, validate and verify whether there was sufficient and reasonable information to answer the evaluation questions. The indicators also helped the team understand whether and to what extent it could draw conclusions on the specific findings about the evaluation questions. The indicators were developed and formulated on the basis of the initial documentation review and consultation with Sida's three partners.

The indicators did not substitute or replace the specific outcome indicators of the results matrices for the projects.

Several evaluation questions requested an understanding of the context at the outset of the projects. As there were no specific baseline studies for the projects, the Evaluation Team sought general information in both background documents and other publications on each project's context, as well as opinions during interviews about the situation of the specific issue in reference to the evaluation questions.

Thus, the data collection methodology included the following main sources.

1. Document review – including applications to Sida; Sida assessments of applications; progress and annual reports; publications and other relevant documentation.

The documentation (secondary data) was scarce in terms of data on project results. There were no specific baseline studies for the indicators, or specific needs analyses of the target groups. There were scarce qualitative data about intended or unintended changes, outcomes and results. Annex 2 lists the documents reviewed.

2. In-depth interviews were conducted with management and staff at each of the three Sida partners (GWP-Med, REC and SFG) in the field and/or via Skype, and stakeholders and beneficiaries in the field, as well as relevant Sida officers. The Evaluation Team conducted field visits to Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia. With the support of Sida's partners, the Evaluation Team met key informants for each project. Annex 3 lists the people interviewed for this evaluation.
3. Survey-questionnaires were handed out to beneficiaries during the final REC conference in Amman. The survey aimed to supplement, validate and verify findings and preliminary conclusions emerging from the desk review and in-depth interviews with the REC stakeholders.

The Evaluation Team conducted semi-structured interviews as a research method to discuss the evaluation questions for the evaluation criteria. The semi-structured interviews were most suited for the purpose of allowing for more reflective conversations with Sida's project partners and their stakeholders about key issues related to the evaluation questions and evaluation indicators.

The interviews including probing to get more details on the evaluation indicators. The Evaluation Team used prompts and/or sub-questions to ensure coverage of the evaluation questions in follow-up questions if certain aspects did not come to the fore automatically. These sub-questions were guided by seeking verifiable evidence for the following.

1. *Outcomes*: Who have the project and its stakeholders (change agents) influenced to change what, and when and where was it changed? What is the verifiable change that can be seen in the individual, group, community, organisation or institution? What is done differently that is significant?
2. *Contribution*: How did the change agents contribute to this change? What did the change agent do that influenced the change?

Different sets of organisations and stakeholders were interviewed for each project. For example, the approach included officials close to reform and policy change processes, participants in consultations and workshops, participants of technical

reports, regional partners seeking the same change, civil society and gender experts tracking impact on women's roles in the sector, potential financiers, private sector contractors or service providers, and donor representatives.

The duration of interviews ranged from a minimum of one hour to more than two hours, depending on the role and experience of the interviewee in relation to the project. Meetings were in Arabic and/or English. The Evaluation Team engaged an Arab-speaking water expert to accompany it for meetings with local REC project key informants from the municipalities of Aljoun, Karak, Jerash and Salt in Jordan, and the municipalities of Bir Mcherga, Nefza, Sidi Ali Ben Aoun and Tunis in Tunisia.

Meetings and interviews included a gender perspective by asking if and how women and marginalised groups were considered and/or affected by the projects. Note that the perspective of marginalised groups was not included in the questions on relevance for GWP-Med; instead, questions were asked about any (potential) effects of corporate social responsibility activities or mainstreaming.

The data collection sought evidence of what had been achieved, and worked backward to determine whether and how the project contributed to the change. Information was collected from the partner organisations whose actions intended to influence specific outcomes. Information was validated by triangulation through stakeholder and beneficiary interviews. The substantiated information was analysed and interpreted at the outcome level that contributed to goals or strategies.

The methodology also included an analytical framework, used during the internal workshop, to map and classify all outcomes (significant changes) in the operational context for each project. The process of achieving the outcomes was described and analysed. The analysis involved the identification of patterns and processes among clusters of outcomes, and focused on the theories of change underlying the change objectives.

Outcomes were analysed to answer the evaluation questions at the overarching project level to which multiple change agents relate. For instance, did the outcomes of the projects combine synergies to create broader and deeper changes? The analysis enabled the construction of stories of change, which enabled comparing and contrasting of the processes in the three projects.

In this way, answers about what was achieved and how it was achieved were established. In addition, critical factors for successful change processes were

highlighted by analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the theories of change of the project organisations.

1.5 LIMITATIONS

None of the three projects being evaluated have the implementing organisation on the ground in the region. The Evaluation Team has therefore not visited the head offices.¹ The Evaluation Team instead used Skype and emails to communicate with senior management and project staff at the head offices.

The Evaluation Team believed it was important to assess and understand the organisational capacity and processes for design, planning, monitoring and learning, and in what way learning from project implementation is institutionalised. The Evaluation Team has not gone into any depth of organisational assessment, but it is, however, confident that the findings reflect well the strengths and weaknesses of the organisations' capacities to achieve intended results.

For the evaluators, the review of project reports did not result in significant insights to provide answers to the evaluation questions. The lack of information in the reports can be explained by the fact that the questions in the evaluation matrix form part of a framework that is quite different from the projects' results matrices. However, and in particular, the evaluators' use of the concept of significant change, i.e. the change in individual and organisational behaviour, was not reported upon by the organisations beyond the level of evaluations of the interventions.

The interviews held during the field visits and Skype calls have partly helped to remedy this. A complete list of persons interviewed is presented in Annex 3.

¹ GWP-Med head office is in Athens, and for the MENA region there is satellite office in Tunis as well as a satellite officer in Lebanon.

2 Three transboundary water management projects in the MENA region

In this chapter, findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented for each of the three projects included in the evaluation.

2.1 GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP MEDITERRANEAN REGIONAL WATER PARTNERSHIP

Global Water Partnership Mediterranean Regional Water Partnership (GWP-Med) was established in 2002 as one of 13 regional partnerships under the flagship of the GWP network, which is serviced by Global Water Partnership Organization (GWPO). It is hosted by the environmental NGO MIO-ECSDE in Athens. Its focus area is the Mediterranean region. The secretariat in Athens is composed of around 20 staff members who are mostly programme staff. Recently GWP-Med has established six satellite offices at country level: two in MENA region and four in the Balkans. The Executive Secretary is responsible for the operations with support from the Chair and there are designated staffs for core functions of finance, communication and administration.

GWP-Med is a partnership of regional networks. In addition, it has over 100 Mediterranean partner organisations that subscribe to GWP-Med and are part of the GWP global network. A partnership council governs the partnership. Together with its Chair, the partnership council members are elected from the core and general partner organisations. GWP-Med is accredited by GWPO.

The partnership provides a neutral and inclusive multi-stakeholder platform at regional level and to some extent at country level. GWP-Med advocates integrated water resources management (IWRM) and sustainable water use, and acts – together with its partners – as a repository of knowledge on water.

GWP-Med supports actions that demonstrate value of integrated water resources management as well as programmes that promote and address issues of water governance, sustainable financing, transboundary water, climate change adaptation, water–energy–food nexus, non-conventional water management, and water–employment–migration.

Previous collaboration with Sida has been through the following processes.

- Sweden support to Global Water Partnership Organization (GWPO) and GWP network – core funding support to GWPO, part of which is designated for the GWP regions, including GWP-Med.
- Capacity-building programme: ‘Water Integrity for the MENA’ in collaboration with SIWI as the lead implementing partner, in which GWP-Med is the key regional partner.
- Overcoming governance challenges to the mobilisation of financing for the Mediterranean water sector.
- Future: Making Cooperation Work in the Med. – North-Western Sahara Aquifer System (NWSAS) Algeria, Libya and Tunisia.

The project

The budget for the project is SEK7.835 million. The project was implemented during 2013–2016, and further extended to the end of 2017.

GWP-Med submitted the project proposal in collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for technical work on financing. The consultations and stakeholder involvement at both national and regional levels have been organised and facilitated by GWP-Med.

The project is labelled under the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) framework. Official requests started the process from the ministries responsible for water from Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia. In addition, Albania, Egypt and Morocco have submitted requests; however, they are not included in this project.

In addition to its own funding, GWP-Med has leveraged a significant amount of co-financing in cash and in-kind from the European Investment Bank and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Med Partnership for national and time-bound work, OECD for technical work, and UfM Secretariat for targeted financial support (on communication material and also for sponsorship of non-MENA participants during the regional conferences). The project has also made synergies with several other regional programmes and processes. An example of this is the coordination with the European Commission funded project ‘Sustainable Water Integrated Management – Support Mechanism’ and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in organising and partly funding the first and second regional workshops, thereby widening the stakeholder platforms, aligning/complementing regional agendas and optimising projects budgets.

The project aims at diagnosing key bottlenecks and governance gaps to improve the mobilisation of financing for the Mediterranean water sector.

The strategy is to provide realistic and implementable solutions, in the form of a set of operational guidelines and a compendium of good practices from within and outside the region.

The project works at regional and national levels jointly promoted and implemented by GWP-Med and OECD, GWP-Med being Sida's agreement partner.

The project's intervention logic is as follows.

- (a) Three country-level workshops for consultation on diagnosing and unpacking the regulatory framework for the water sector at country level, identifying the water governance challenges, and seeking stakeholders' agreement on a country action plan to address the bottlenecks and encourage private sector participation.
- (b) The output of the consultations is a country report for each country presenting the following: governance challenges to private sector participation; recommendations on improving financial sustainability, the regulatory framework and stakeholder engagement; a compendium of good practices and lessons learnt from within and outside the region; and a time-bound, partner identified action plan for the country's water sector.
- (c) Four regional meetings to share lessons and experiences and provide regional political support and encourage intra-country coordination.

2.1.1 Effectiveness

GWPO, with its 13 regions, adopts a combination of results-based and outcome mapping as its monitoring and evaluation system. This enables it to better capture outcomes and long-term desired change, as well as attributing some results to its networks' and partners' work. GWP-Med is highly successful in leveraging funding from global and regional doors with interest in supporting the promotion of IWRM and sustainable management of the resource in the Mediterranean region. While GWP-Med reports in outcome mapping mode to track longer-term change as seen in the annual GWP-Med and GWP reports, it also relies on result-based management to report on programmes funded by its many donors within a framework of time-bound projects.

The project 'Overcoming Governance Challenges to the Mobilization of Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector' is one such time-bound project, governed by a results matrix approved by Sida. The results matrix identifies several outputs as results expected to be achieved by the project.

However, the results matrix does not identify indicators against which reporting can track progress in achieving the outputs and outcome.

Table 2 presents GWP-Med's results–output matrix.

Table 2. The GWP-Med results–output matrix

Results	Activity-Output	Indicator
Increase awareness and knowledge of decision-makers and stakeholders on the conditions for PSP in the water sector at national and regional levels	National assessments on PSP water infrastructure Regional Report compiling the national cases	- Number of partners involved in the national assessments (interviews, consultations) - Number of partners participating in the regional events
Enhance intra-country coordination among actors involved in PSP	Elaboration of the national assessments through – among other tools – the use of consultation meetings/workshops	Number of different institutions/organizations involved in assessment and the meetings
Promote actively the extensive dissemination of sustainable policies that address the water governance-financing nexus	- Dialogue processes at national and regional levels - Identification and compilation of good cases - Technical/analytical work at large	- Outreach of technical work (number of partners reach, number of partners involved in the work, etc.)
Improved enabling environment for PSP – Policy change at national level	- Conduct of technical work	Aligning with national plans and strategies - Reference to or direct input of the work in related national plans/strategies
Identification and dissemination of good practices and sharing of experiences	- Documents/Reports from Regional Workshops - Compilation of the Regional Report	- Number of good cases documented from within and beyond the region - Outreach of national and regional activities (in terms of partners participating)
Aid effectiveness	- Financing modalities of the work	- Number of donors/funders contributing to the Project - Complementarity of funds among donors active in the same field/country

Case studies and lessons learnt from countries in the region and beyond are integrated within the action plan for each country. The action plans have been prepared in collaboration with national stakeholders. The action plans include selected case studies as examples for each action as agreed with stakeholders.

The country reports offer a fair description and diagnoses of the water sector, and historical and ongoing reform processes. The reports also fairly identify gaps in governance. The action plans are a robust set of recommendations that offer a sound approach for reform. At the time these reports were written, they seemed realistic and received approval and formal validation from stakeholders. In a national report, each of the actions was attributed to a particular actor within the country priorities – immediate, mid-term or long term. The actions were linked to ongoing efforts of the actors they were assigned to. These recommendations took account of the type of support this actor was receiving or had plans to receive from state budget and/or donor. The action plans seemed practical and realistic. The case studies and lessons provided are all relevant, providing guidelines from lessons from around the globe. The case studies and lessons may not be the most fitting in terms of context, but seem the most fitting in terms of examples for best or, in some cases, worst practice. They are useful in relaying the message of what should be done.

On the other hand, whether the actions plans were implementable or not depended completely on the voluntary actions and initiative of each actor (mostly government bodies). At the time the reports and action plans were accepted and verified, the activities at country level were winding up. There was no coordinating body or project influence on how the implementation of the plan took place. Had there been a designated coordinating body that fully adopted the actions plans, then these would have been implementable. In the absence of coordination, and with the scope and magnitude of the recommendations, it seems difficult to assume they would be implementable.

Stakeholders interviewed could not remember the recommendations they or their organisation had validated three years before. The action plans themselves and the country report were not physically available or used as a practical guideline. The actors have moved on in their reform process, which several donors as well as country priorities have influenced. Several of the stakeholders referred to the project or actions plans as a ‘study’ portraying their perception of the project as a standalone report or a block in the building, but not as the guideline to the reform process.

The action plans recommend actions that are considered part of the framework for existing and ongoing reform processes in the water sector. In the countries visited, it was noted that since 2013 several policies and strategies have been adopted by governments that resonate well with some of the recommended actions. It was also noted that several bilateral donors have had programmes targeting the same reforms and changes as the actions plans. Some of these programmes are of a significantly large magnitude. It is thus difficult to find a direct link of causality between the recommended actions and the actual changes.

Due to the magnitude of the GWP-Med network of partner organisations, the project had good access to significant change agents. Individuals with professional motivation and will acting as change agents from within their organisations were

identified and motivated through the project period. In almost all cases in Jordan and Tunisia these individuals, however, have moved positions either horizontally or vertically within the system. In several cases, they are no longer responsible for the area of focus (water governance, financing or private sector participation). The project's ability to access and influence change processes was limited, therefore, to the duration of that these change agents held office. Beyond that duration, they lost momentum and institutional memory faded away, offering no continuity for the project activities or utilising its outputs. Results achieved by the project were the outputs outlined in the results matrix. Successful methods that led to the finalisation of the action plans was the engagement of relevant stakeholders in a successful consultation process. The use of neighbouring countries' experiences, especially in presenting what did not work well (e.g. the case of Morocco presented by Moroccan nationals in Tunisia) and what to avoid. The use of regional financing experts in the consultations was also very helpful. One conclusion may be that for gender, women and corporate social responsibility, the same approach would have been helpful in tackling this area.

Within the current political framework in the region, with constant change in policies in the sector as well as increased expectations of consumers (beneficiaries) for water and sanitation services, it is difficult to predict in which form change will take place, if at all realised. One example is that key government counterparts and agents of change (at both minister and director levels) have quite a high turn-over rate.

2.1.2 Relevance

The regional component added value to the national work at several levels. Firstly, the project was labelled as a UfM project at the outset. Ministers for water from countries interested to tackle this area provided official supporting letters for the project's focus and indicated willingness to participate in the project. This not only guaranteed country-level ownership, but also provided a solid formal entry point for the project to work with stakeholders and engage them officially in the preparation and consultations. Several of the change agents in high-level government positions (notably Ministry of Water and Irrigation in Jordan and Ministry of Finance and Planning in Tunisia) find great value in solidifying their regional network and exchanging experience in the project area, and beyond, with their counterparts in other countries as well as with the regional resource base (OECD, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank and other regional bodies). The regional platform serviced by GWP-Med also provides opportunities for seeking financing, which is always an area of interest to countries in the region.

At the time of its inception, the project was very relevant to national and sectoral processes of reform. The action plans' recommendations were aligned to the then-existing efforts of other donors and government strategy processes. The recommendations were provided to address gaps identified in the governance of the sector. Where government organisations, actors or donors were making progress or

had plans for improvements, those recommendations were assigned to be undertaken within those ongoing or planned efforts. Where no efforts were being made, the action plans recommended that a particular actor address the gap. Validation with stakeholders and in donor coordination meetings provided a higher comfort level that the recommendation was realistic. During the 3- to 4-year period from report launch to date, however, implementation could not be guaranteed nor be regularly reviewed, and reforms have had their own momentum each within their national context.

The official letters of interest submitted by ministers to the project supporting the UfM labelling signify the level of interest to join the project and its high relevance. It is, however, important to note that the directions of reforms and national processes are influenced by external drivers, such as shifts in local political environment, changes in donor support and weakening of national economies – drivers that are forceful enough to shift goalposts and be game changers. Within a limited time-frame approach, projects are not able to be flexible to address such changes.

The action plans have a main area of recommendations that addresses conditions for greater transparency and effective engagement of stakeholders. Some recommendations are provided on how to address vulnerable groups and involve NGOs and local community organisations. As in other recommendations, these are linked to lessons learnt from other countries in this area. The action plans also linked then-current activities and programmes of other players (government or donors) with the specific recommendations.

It is worth noting that, in the countries visited, civil society may not seem experienced or well-versed with cross-cutting issues in the water sector. However, it was noted that several donors work closely with local women's organisations and government agents to build their capacity and knowledge on how to address gender and women's rights in the sector.

Interviews with staff and stakeholders indicated that, at country level, there is a belief that there are poor capacities and expertise in gender. It is recommended that GWP-Med searches for strong partners in the region to build capacity and join the partnership to tackle this seemingly difficult issue.

Within the scope of the project, it is not clear to GWP-Med staff what the best approach would be to effectively address those cross-cutting issues within the scope of recommended action for improved financing through private sector participation. An experienced organisation with a history within the region may be able to provide added value to the partnership in this area.

Interviews with stakeholders represented by women did not identify any obstacles. It is, however, worth noting that very few of the women interviewed had a clear vision as to how to engage women effectively in the project activities. The project sought national women's organisations to actively engage in consultations. However, little

technical expertise and solid arguments to ensure gender mainstreaming and addressing women's rights in the water sector were provided during the consultations. The platform provided by GWP-Med for the consultations was thus not adequately used to address these issues. This also strengthens the recommendation that, in the future, longer-term partnership arrangements need to be established by GWP-Med with a skilled organisation in this field.

In regard of capacity building of stakeholders (men and women) it could perhaps have had a positive impact. This, however, was not part of the project's activities. As for end beneficiaries, there was no attempt to measure change or effect of project activities on them.

Similar to the synergy and use of OECD as a technically strong champion in the field of finance, GWP-Med may well be able to make agreements and capacity/knowledge partnerships with strong regional partners with technical skills in gender and other cross-cutting issues. Such a partnership may well have complemented the work of the experts appointed by Sida to assist GWP-Med in tackling that matter. A training workshop was organised for GWP-Med staff and partners. GWP-Med has appointed a gender officer. One outcome is that GWP-Med is much more aware of the shortcomings of technical abilities in this area among its current partner organisations.

Interviews with the corporate social responsibility and gender consultants revealed that their involvement during the national work in Jordan and Tunisia was limited. However, in Lebanon and Palestine they were involved at an earlier stage, thus influencing the process more effectively. In Lebanon, for example, there is an indication that the Central Bank is interested in addressing gender and corporate social responsibility while tendering a private sector participation project for agriculture and renewable energy. The consultants have been able to 'convince' the Central Bank that including gender and corporate social responsibility checklists to evaluate tender dossiers would guarantee a more mainstreamed approach of consultants/contractors, which would improve billing and collection functions of the project, resulting in a better internal rate of return for the project thus better financial sustainability. It remains to be seen whether this breakthrough will materialise.

The consultants observed that the dynamics during consultations could be improved if the consultation workshops were moderated differently. Some stakeholders would not engage fully to present their views within formal protocols, especially within hierarchal societies and consultations dominated by strong line and central ministries. The consultants suggested that adopting less formal techniques of small group discussions, group work and side events during consultations would yield better results in more dynamic engagement of stakeholders, especially those who represent rural communities, women, small (and large) private sector and civil society, who, in a natural formal setting with a high-ranking official on the podium, would not engage out of courtesy or tradition.

The action plans include a set of recommendations that relate to stakeholder buy-in, transparency, and effective engagement. In earlier reports (Jordan and Tunisia), the consultants' involvement was late and limited for several reasons. The recommended actions for engagement of special groups of stakeholders (namely women and youth) in dialogue are minimal and do not mention the need for engagement, or how to engage, with poorer groups of the community. There are, however, recommendations for strengthening grassroots organisations and water boards in rural areas. Do the organisations assigned by government to implement those recommendations have the capacities available? Do they understand the subject matter? Are they able to implement the recommendations? These are questions that remain unanswered. The recommendations are few and will probably make few changes in the conditions of the poor and special stakeholder groups.

The report for Palestine (Lebanon report is currently being finalised) has a different perspective and has a checklist (provided by Sida's external consultants) that address issues of gender, corporate social responsibility, the poor and stakeholders more extensively. Interest from the Central Bank of Lebanon on including a similar checklist for tendering out private sector participation projects seems like a positive lead to follow to determine what changes take place. The involvement of the external consultants is more evident in the work done in Lebanon and Palestine because their engagement was at a later stage.

2.1.3 Sustainability

The project was in line with the priorities of most key stakeholders in the ministries responsible for the water sector, planning, international cooperation and finance. Some key stakeholders (e.g. current operators) had reservations on private sector participation as a concept – and may have seen private sector participation as a potential threat to their organisational power, clout and budgetary strength within the water sector (e.g. SONAD, responsible for sanitation services in Tunisia). The first demonstration of ownership of the design was the letters from the ministries requesting inclusion of private sector participation in the project. However, in terms of implementing the actual recommendations of the action plans, ownership may seem diffused mainly from the change of direction of reform or from the political pressure rejecting private sector participation. Although some private sector participation laws and related legislation and administrative decrees have been approved, implementation of details remains difficult. Very little time has passed between issuing private sector participation law in Tunisia (8 months) and in Jordan the ministry responsible for the water sector has sought temporary exemption from adhering to the private sector participation law (which governs all sectors) for the water sector. Interviewees from both countries indicated that details and clarifications are still missing that would assist in rolling out the new framework for private sector participation. Some stakeholders suggested that the project would have had a better chance of implementation if some components had been added to assist in rolling out the recommendations.

Where recommendations from the action plans have been covered in the new private sector participation law, there is some sustainability of the results. However, in most recommendations, results have still not been realised or not fully realised. However, the action plans specifically assign recommendations to specific actors (government and/or donor with a programme seeking sector reform) and suggest a time frame. Some of the recommendations on financial sustainability and feasibility of the sector, for example, seem to be the current interest of the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in Tunisia together with the Ministry of Finance. It is, however, not clear if this interest is sector specific for water or for all sectors in the government budgetary process of the ministry.

In Jordan, the water strategy has been adopted by the government and has direct reference to private sector participation – however, the strategy does not outline detailed actions for approaches within private sector participation. Again, several donors with clout have been supporting the ministry in developing the strategy. It is not clear to what extent the project has contributed to this process. Currently, several donors are seeking to take credit for change.

There are several examples of self-sustaining relations, such as OECD, the European Investment Bank, EBRD with Ministry of Finance. It is, however, not clear if these are the result of the project activities/results.

2.1.4 Conclusions

These are set out under the relevant expected results of the project.

Increase the awareness and knowledge of decision makers and stakeholders on the conditions for private sector participation in the water sector at national and regional levels

This has been realised to some extent. However, not all stakeholders have significantly increased their awareness on the conditions. The conditions for private sector participation in improving water governance are significantly, especially as reviewed in the recommendations for improving the financial viability of the sector. Effective action in this regard has not been noted as significant yet, especially with the current political and economic context.

Enhance intra- and inter-country coordination among actors involved in private sector participation

Intra-country coordination: Actors involved in private sector participation and financing seem to be effective in Jordan, for example. The ministry responsible for water has a forward-looking approach to addressing the issues of financing. They are champions leading the reform process, working closely with Ministry of Finance. An example is that the ministry sought and received approval to work outside the private

sector participation law that governs private sector participation in all sectors, because of their belief that they have in-house drive and political will to address financing themselves. That example provides lessons that would benefit other countries. In Tunisia, on the other hand, the ministry responsible for water is more traditionally engaged in requesting budgets from the Ministry of Finance and planning and is more reliant on the central ministries in raising funds to enable the ministry to roll out its investment plan. In the latter case, the Ministry of Planning was the champion, where the authorities responsible for service provision were lagging in their desire for reform to attract finance.

There is some indication of *inter-country coordination*, though this is in a narrow context where countries share a similar context where the coordination would be effective (Jordan and Palestine, Tunisia and Morocco are two examples where stakeholders indicated they better valued examples and lessons presented from nearby countries with more similarities in context).

Aid effectiveness

The project has been very effective in leveraging substantial amounts of additional funding from several sources. GWP-Med has managed very good leverage from within its network. However, basket funding of this sort sometimes takes control over activities in terms of sequencing activities. For example, the projects had only one year to finalise the action plans at country level. Further intervention for follow-up was not in the design and it is difficult for GWP-Med to track the take-up and implementation of the action plans beyond the time frame of the project. This is especially important due to the constant changes of key individual stakeholders and changes in policy direction.

The project is of relevance to the Strategy for the Development Cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa 2010–2015. Though it is not a transboundary water cooperation project, this Strategy does have elements of inter-country coordination in terms of exchange of experiences and lessons learnt around private sector participation in the water sector.

The project was of high relevance to the countries that have formally subscribed to join the project activities. The area of work in terms of exploring opportunities of additional financing through private sector participation in the sector was of high relevance to the regional cooperating partners in the region. UfM provided a project label for this project which resonates well with its own priorities.

It is hoped that the challenges facing private sector participation and financing the sector in the region, specifically the countries in the southern part of the Mediterranean basin, have been brought to the forefront for the decision makers of the region – though it is not clear to what extent projects have been designated to support this area further.

Actively promote extensive dissemination of sustainable policies that address the water governance–financing nexus

GWP-Med has summarised case studies and lessons learnt and shared them in regional platforms even beyond the scope of the project. However, ‘the devil is in the detail’ and national contexts vary significantly from country to country, making the uptake of disseminated policies slow and variable in terms of effectiveness. At national level, there is a need to work closely with the big players, whether they are government or donors, since these are the real moving force for change. The project period in each country was for one year, making it difficult to be physically present to realign the recommended actions with contextual change.

Improved enabling environment for private sector participation – Policy change at national level

Law, policies and strategies have changed. But it is not clear to what extent these changes were influenced by the project. The key individual partners and project counterparts were the closest to the project and may possibly have influenced change from within their organisations. There is no clear link between the activities of the project and an improved enabling environment for private sector participation. In both countries visited, the ‘dust had not yet settled’ and the change in enabling environment had still not led to an ‘influx’ of private sector participation, for example. Challenges to good governance of the water sector still exist even after new laws and strategies have been adopted. Structural reform, especially with financial viability of the sector, is still a challenging area for governments in the region. Several donors are supporting reforms in the sector and the link between project activities and change, if any, is very difficult to document.

Identification and dissemination of good practices and sharing of experiences

As discussed, GWP-Med has shared and summarised several lessons learnt from this project in several regional and global forums. The uptake of these experiences is not yet documented and may be difficult to track. The country reports are being shared by OECD through its resources website and may be downloaded for a fee. So, in some ways there is ownership by OECD of the documents as seen in their repository of knowledge.

The country reports are not working documents at country level. There was no evidence that the report as an output in its own right was in use or referred to as a guideline in the current reform activities, some three years after the country reports were launched, in either Jordan or Tunisia. This puts the action plan and recommendations at risk of being outdated and/or forgotten with institutional and individual changes.

The project would have benefited from a short inception period with the main objective of improving the project results matrix and project monitoring and evaluation (PME) system.

That period would have helped the project identify a suitable system for tracking progress and for reporting results. The indicators identified in the results matrix are mostly suitable for input verification and managing implemented activities.

Moreover, some indicators that could be used to identify and report change of partners' and stakeholders' approaches and attitudes towards project design would serve better if the project activities could address and reduce risks of changes in staff and reform direction.

One solution to minimise the risk of high turn-over of key staff and of champions may be the inclusion of several champions at an earlier stage, to sustain involvement and ownership.

Some partners at country level have a strong sense that there were missing ingredients in the design of the project. Some suggested additional activities may not be in the direct line of work of GWP-Med as a partnership and stakeholder platform; however, a partner organisation could be quite effective in delivering those extra activities in a collaborative project partnership.

2.1.5 Recommendations

GWP-Med is recommended to consider the following.

- Consider a narrower scope either geographically or technically. For example, the recommendations from the action plan on financial viability and fiscal sustainability are key to improving the governance of water.
- Develop a strong partnership with a partner with regional knowledge to enable faster implementation of recommendations, through strengthening capacity building and guidance (technical assistance) for counterparts.
- Consider a partnership with an experienced organisation working on effective communication and stakeholder engagement for improved water services, including supporting capacity building of the counterparts to start and strengthen gender mainstreaming as a part of the country report recommendations.
- Consider how to bring the voice of the underprivileged into reform processes at national level, and use messages and lessons to highlight the benefits of this approach in regional and global forums and processes.
- Consider a demonstration intervention, or mini-project, that assists the service provider in implementing the recommendations while, in parallel, improving the services. This could be a strong alliance or partnership with an ongoing donor project or programme in a rural area, for example.

- The evaluation strongly recommends support of projects that support policy change and complicated change processes spend more effort, time and funds on preparing theories of change and work programmes that take into consideration national and cultural contexts in addition to policy reform contexts.

2.2 REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) is an international organisation that aims to assist in addressing environmental issues by promoting cooperation among different stakeholders, and by supporting the free exchange of information and public participation. The REC, established in 1990 by the United States, the European Commission and Hungary, has its head office in Hungary and has a network of 12 offices in central-eastern Europe and Turkey. Since 2009, it has implemented and is currently implementing, several projects in partnership with SIDA: in Serbia (CSOnnect, SECTOR), Kosovo (LEAPS-K, SpECIES), Albania (SENIOR-A, SENIOR-ii) and the WATER SUM project, its first project in the MENA region.

WATER SUM, with a project value of SEK55 million (6,88 million USD), aims to promote and enhance the sustainable use of water resources in the MENA region, taking into consideration the impacts of climate change, by mutually reinforcing efficient national water resources management and regional cooperation on water issues. The project was implemented by 12 experts between April 2014 and June 2017, focused its activities on Jordan and Tunisia, and comprised two components, Water Resources Management Good Practices and Knowledge Transfer (WATER-PORt) and Water and Security (WaSe).²

Table 3. The REC results matrix

WATER-PORt component objective	WATER-PORt component outcomes
To accelerate more sustainable use of the region's water resources and strategic approach on adaptation to	Improved skills and capacities of respective national authorities for applying integrated water resources management approach

² Egypt has increasingly become involved in the regional activities organised under the WATER-PORt component, and is expected to have its own national activities during the project extension period.

climate change by identifying best water management practices, demonstrate successful replication strategies, and to disseminate and promote best practices and replication strategies to practitioners, decision makers and interested public	Common understanding of the needs of water practitioners and stakeholders in regards to cooperation and regional approach in managing water problems
	Enhanced knowledge regarding adaptation to impacts of climate change on the region's water resources
WaSe component objective	WaSe component outcomes
To promote comprehensive and integrated approach to water security and ecosystem services for sustainable development of eight municipalities and their local communities in selected countries of MENA region, as a part of efforts to combat water scarcity, reduce threat of conflicts, downward spiral of poverty, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation, and increase overall human well-being within the wider context of ensuring regional peace and stability	Process of introduction and drafting Local Water Security Action Plan (LWSAP) initiated and supported in 80% of target municipalities Partner communities work jointly towards sustainable development Local environmental governance in partner countries benefiting from LWSAP concept

According to the REC proposal, the project is built on the assumption that improved and sustainable water resources management in the MENA region can be achieved through targeted capacity building for institutional and behavioural change, as well as through the development of national action plans and local water security action plans that include inputs from actors from ministries, municipalities and civil society.

The evaluators' assessment of the project's results framework, as well as of the reports studied and the interviews held, has led to the understanding that the expected outcomes were improved institutional and individual performance and improved public awareness and changed behaviour on water issues. In addition, the main thrust of activities was geared towards the establishment and strengthening of platforms for professionals and practitioners, for civil society and mixed platforms for both practitioners and civil society. Table 4 presents the evaluators' understanding of the project's theory of change.

Table 4. The REC theory of change (as understood by the Evaluation Team)

Actors / target groups	Inputs/activities	Theory of change	Outcome / significant change
Professionals and practitioners	Training, workshops, study tours, conferences, demonstration sites,	Develop platforms for professionals	Improved institutional and individual water performance
Civil society and	action planning and	Develop mixed platforms for professionals and	Improved public

general public	implementation	civil society	awareness and changed behaviour on water issues
		Develop platforms for civil society	

2.2.1 Effectiveness

The main expected impact was defined in the *project proposal* as institutional and behavioural change in water governance and utilisation patterns. The project contained two components, i.e. Water Resources Management Good Practices and Knowledge Transfer (WATER-PorT) and Water and Security (WaSe), each along with its own set of component objectives, anticipated results, activities and proposed implementation approach. The project's result matrix (Table 3) can be considered to be in line with Sida's MENA Strategy 2010–2015, in particular its area of cooperation on sustainable use of transboundary water resources (Section 6.4.2).

Monitoring and evaluation would take place through a series of indicators as presented in the two separate logical frameworks, while a results-oriented monitoring framework would be developed during the inception phase to include output indicators, outcome indicators and intermediate performance indicators. Studies were to be carried out to establish baselines for core indicators, while monitoring would be undertaken at regional, national and community levels, and outcomes monitored and evaluated through self-evaluations and peer assessments. An internal evaluation was foreseen towards the end of the project, targeting donor, client and beneficiaries. Finally, annual progress reports would be produced to provide assessments of the project's performance against performance indicators at programme, country and regional levels.

During the *one-year inception phase*, the number of countries was reduced from eight to three, i.e. Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, shifting the project focus to countries with minimum expected political and security obstacles, and trying to achieve more results with fewer stakeholders. The project organisation was further elaborated and, in addition to its Project Director, Project Component Managers and Project Management Team Members, a Project Steering Committee was established, and a number of roles and positions were created and gradually filled.

Table 5. Key stakeholders in REC

WATER-PorT	WaSe
External experts	External experts
National Focal Points	Regional Coordinator
Country Water Assistants	National Coordinators
	Local Focal Points
	Local Coordinators
	Local Water Security Action Plan (LWSAP) team members

Challenges were identified and a risk register was established; special sections were included on gender, regional aspects, cross-cutting issues and environmental impact assessment; the two logical frameworks were slightly adjusted from the project proposal; two detailed work plans (for the first year of implementation) and an overall plan of operations until project end were prepared. No follow-up or details were provided regarding the project's monitoring and evaluation system (with the exception of WATER-PORt water quality monitoring and WaSe monitoring system for local sustainability) or the different types of indicators introduced in the project proposal.

During the *second year* of the project, Morocco decided to leave the project and Egypt set aside its earlier reservations and re-entered the Water-PORt component, while the project focused its activities on Jordan and Tunisia. The Jarmuk River Basin was selected as a demonstration site in Jordan and the Upper Medjerda River Basin in Tunisia under the Water-PORt component, and four municipalities in Jordan and four delegations in Tunisia were selected under the WaSe component.

In general, reporting on planning and progress on result areas, activities and sub-activities was done in a narrative way. Under the Water-PORt component, reporting on progress was done using “ongoing” and “completed” as status indicators, other more specific monitoring indicators (output, outcome, intermediate performance) were not used. For planned Water-PORt activities, the expected deliverables and deadlines were mentioned. For the WaSe component, progress in missions and events was reported in terms of event, purpose and result, while result areas were only reported in terms of activities undertaken. Planning was reported in terms of activities to be undertaken under each result area. As with the Inception Report, separate narrative sections were included for gender, regional aspects, cross-cutting issues, environmental impact assessment, and an update of the risk register. A detailed overview of the planned activities until project-end was presented using Microsoft Project Management.

During the *third year* of the project, Kafr Elsheikh governorate was selected as a demonstration site in Egypt under the Water-PORt component. A summary of the progress and planning for each result area and its detailed activities and sub-activities was reported in tabular format for both components in terms of status (ongoing, completed) and deadline. Detailed progress descriptions were provided in a narrative way, and an updated risk register was provided. A detailed overview of the planned activities until project-end was presented using MS Project Management.

Interviews and analysis

The project organisation was designed in line with the two project components. The Project Director, the two Project Component Managers and the WaSe Deputy Component Manager were based in Hungary, the latter three travelling frequently to

the beneficiary countries. Throughout the project implementation period, REC agreed various contracts and sub-contracts for the provision of technical assistance with the following parties:

- REC technical experts;
- External technical experts (e.g. Regional Centre for Energy Policy Research, Cimera, DHI Group);
- WATER-PORt Country Water Assistants in Jordan, Tunisia and Egypt (6);
- International Union for Conservation of Nature Regional Office for West Asia (IUCN-ROWA) as WaSe Regional Coordinator based in Jordan (with sub-contracting Suhaib Khamaiseh for National Coordinator in Jordan, and for eight Local Coordinators in Jordan and Tunisia); and
- SONEDE International as WaSe National Coordinator in Tunisia.

REC worked with IUCN-ROWA (after year 1) and with SONEDE International (during the last year) through a system of framework contracts, along with task- and period-specific terms of reference and administrative orders. In general, this system was considered to have functioned well. The PME activities related to these framework contracts, and related corrective actions, were managed by the various REC project managers, although the exact (technical and financial) mandates of each individual manager were not always clear. Financial and administrative matters were governed by REC systems and procedures, and where relevant also by specific national laws and regulations. Decision taking related to procurement, contracting and contract management by IUCN and SONEDE International were subject to delays as these could involve several layers of stakeholders and project managers. Within this project environment of two components, three countries, several sub-contracted parties (comprising a large number of managers, experts, organisers, facilitators, focal points, coordinators and project participants), several respondents (in particular under the WaSe component) indicated that information was not always systematically organised, shared or shared in a timely manner.

As stated above, the main expected impact was defined as institutional and behavioural change in water governance and utilisation patterns. However, the project's PME system was designed and implemented mainly to focus on the project's interventions (activities and events). Similarly, its evaluations focused on the interventions. There was no effort to measure individual and organisational behaviour (or change in behaviour) in the participants' host organisations as part of a baseline study, before and after the interventions, or at the end of the project. It seems that Sida did not raise this issue with REC as a point of concern.

The needs assessment in the Water-PORt component to identify capacity-development interventions can be considered to reflect the needs, but was undertaken through sessions between managers from the key ministries and REC. The identification of capacity-development interventions under the WaSe component had its foundation in the proposed methodology and approach, and was therefore

essentially supply driven. In particular, participatory planning was already practised in some form in Tunisia, while it was new in Jordan. Still, the related training events were considered as very useful and were instrumental in the achievement of the component's results in both countries.

The terminology used in the various planning and progress reports included 'results', 'outcomes' and 'outputs', although these were not always used in a systematic and consistent manner (in line with Overseas Development Assistance terminology) and in practice referred more to the activities (to be) undertaken and the outputs (to be) produced, rather than to any outcomes. Therefore, the two logical frameworks annexed to the reports did not always have a clear relation or link to the narrative of the main body of the reports.

The complex organisational structure of the project, but in particular of the WaSe component, has caused implementation problems that could have been mitigated by a well-designed and well-managed PME system. Staffing changes throughout the project organisation (Project Director, WaSe Project Component Manager, IUCN-ROWA, Country Water Assistants and Local Coordinators), though to some extent inevitable in any project, as well as the late joining of SONEDE International in Tunisia, resulted in additional challenges to maintain a stable PME system.

It seems that the one-year inception phase, leaving only two years for project implementation, and the delays at the start of the implementation, significantly influenced the way that project management and PME were carried out. The focus increasingly moved towards the implementation of all the planned activities and the organisation of events on time. The recently approved project extension could provide an opportunity to improve the PME system.

This has left the project beneficiaries short of fully digesting and benefiting from the project interventions, and the project managers paying less attention to monitoring and achieving the higher levels of the project's results framework. Therefore, one can conclude that the original expectations regarding the elaboration of indicators and PME systems were not met.

Have participants in training activities applied what they have learnt in their respective roles and work places?

In the Water-PORt component, the capacity development needs assessment carried out at the start of the project was done jointly and in close collaboration between REC and the relevant water ministries, and the results and subsequent list of interventions can be considered to be demand driven and in line with existing needs and priorities. In the WaSe component, the capacity development needs assessment carried out at the start of the project was based on the specific participatory planning approach and methodology for water security action planning, and can be considered to be more

supply driven and not necessarily in line with existing mandates at municipal level in Jordan and at delegation level in Tunisia.

In collaboration with REC, the key water ministries in the three countries selected demonstration sites within the WATER-PORt component based on predefined selection criteria, while for the WaSe component the four municipalities in Jordan and the four delegations in Tunisia were selected exclusively by the water ministries, using selection criteria of water scarcity and different models for water management (e.g. surface water, dams, groundwater).

Trainee selection in the WaSe component was based on involving all planning team members in all capacity-development activities, a comprehensive and sequential set of 20 modules. In the Water-PORt component in Jordan, trainee selection was specifically targeting young technical-operational staff, though also subject to bureaucratic procedures which resulted in (1) a number of trainees being identified for which the training was less relevant, and (2) subsequent training courses not always being attended by the same trainees. In Tunisia on the other hand, trainee selection was deliberately targeting young graduates and, where applicable, continued to target the same persons to achieve maximum benefit for a selected group of staff.

In general, in both components, the participation and learning curves during the training events were considered very positive as observed by the trainers and as reported during training evaluations.

Under the WaSe component, one can state that, in Jordan, the basis for planning at municipal level in the pre-project situation was very narrow in terms of the number and quality of persons involved, whereas in Tunisia, planning at local level was already more broadly practised involving different committees. In both countries, civil society was not involved in planning and the planning methods used did not include the systematic and analytical tools introduced by the project (e.g. problem tree analysis, public opinion assessment, prioritisation of proposed actions).

REC did not report on the application of the newly learnt skills at individual or organisational level within the organisations where the trainees are employed. Interviews with project managers, facilitators and experts, and stakeholder organisations' managers did not always provide a clear picture. However, the many members of the WaSe planning teams interviewed by the evaluators did indicate that knowledge and skills learnt were indeed applied in their organisations.

A survey was conducted by the evaluators, targeting the participants and beneficiaries of the project interventions. The results of the 58 received evaluation forms are listed below, representing a response rate of only 20%, and should therefore be considered with some caution.

1. In general, the overall scores were slightly higher in Jordan than in Tunisia, though mainly as a result of the lower application levels of the Water-PORt component in Tunisia.
2. In both components and in both countries, the interventions were considered highly relevant and addressing the participants' capacity-development needs.
3. In both components and in both countries, expectations were met to a large extent (though in the Water-PORt component more so in Jordan than in Tunisia), but further deepening is considered necessary by all.
4. In both components and in both countries, the participants' supervisors encouraged the application of the newly learnt knowledge, skills and tools (though in the Water-PORt component more so in Jordan than in Tunisia). Participants across the board indicated that they are now actively applying their new capacities.
5. In terms of supervisors encouraging the participants (of both components) to share these new capacities with their colleagues, Jordan scored significantly higher than Tunisia. In terms of the actual application of these newly acquired capacities in the participants' units, the routine application in Tunisia of Water-PORt-related capacities has been slightly less successful.
6. In both components, participants from Jordan (more so than those from Tunisia) considered that the application of new capacities did not only improve the performance of their own units, but also positively affected the work of other units in their organisations.
7. In both components and in both countries, participants felt comfortable with becoming trainers for further capacity development, though slightly more so in Jordan than in Tunisia.
8. Professional contacts have increased as a result of the project's interventions. These are also being maintained, though in particular among the participants of Jordan's WaSe component.

To what extent have downward spirals of poverty been addressed or mitigated?

Under the Water-PORt component, no evidence was found of any specific plans and budgets that were aimed at mitigating poverty, being the result of the project. Possible reasons for this include (1) the scope and focus of the interventions and (2) the limited implementation period of the project. In indirect terms, the component's interventions and capacity development related to flood prevention, droughts and related early warning systems may well have a positive influence on the protection and improvement of livelihoods in flood-prone areas.

The WaSe component on the other hand was specifically designed to address water security and vulnerability at local levels through water security action planning and related capacity development and awareness raising. The formal approval of the action plans at both local and national levels is promising and the initial implementation of the action plans, e.g. on rainwater harvesting, directly addresses the priority needs that were identified by the local-level stakeholders. In Jordan, it has

been estimated that investments in rainwater harvesting may result in a reduction of non-revenue water (through water theft) and of the regular domestic water bills by up to 50%. In Tunisia, one delegation (Sidi Ali Bin Aun) included an activity to connect some 1,160 households to an existing piped network, which is expected to result in a cost reduction of 10 m³ from 25 Euro to just 5 Euro. In addition, a number of awareness-raising activities under the majority of action plans, once implemented, are expected to have positive results on the general socio-economic situation of the local population (improved health, environmental and water situation). In Jordan, increased awareness raising on the reuse of grey water may result in an increase of irrigated home gardening. All these expected results can be directly attributed to the WaSe efforts. Finally, the project's final conference saw the showcasing of action plans by representatives of the municipalities and delegations.

The WaSe component has also caused a number of unintended results in both countries. In Jordan, a number of planning team members have managed to introduce the participatory planning approach in other sectors (general, health, energy, tourism), and most municipalities have indicated their willingness to adopt the approach for all their planning activities. Though a direct WaSe attribution could not be established, legislation in Jordan did start to get more strictly enforced in early 2017, requiring house owners to include a reservoir to harvest rainwater in their applications for building licences. In Tunisia, an introductory WaSe training event was held by REC for all 20 remaining governorates in 2016. This activity was not originally foreseen but requested by the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry continued to work with these governorates to produce a national 2017 summer water supply action plan and budget, which will be implemented at governorate level in cooperation with the Ministry. Ideas are also further being fostered to produce governorate-level water-supply and irrigation plans, the next step possibly being integrated water resources management plans.

To what extent did the project have access to and was able to influence change processes important for the fulfilment of the stated objectives?

The Water-POrT component was actively supported by the key decision makers at the key ministries in Jordan and Tunisia responsible for water. In both ministries, water resources management was well known and practised, while integrated water resources management (IWRM) was known and understood but less practised. The close collaboration between the key ministries and the REC in the early project stages resulted in the establishment of mutual trust and confidence. The positive attitudes of the Project Steering Committee members and National Focal Points towards the Water-POrT component, its objectives and its interventions remained strong throughout the project.

The WaSe component suffered from initial acceptance problems from key stakeholders in Jordan and Tunisia. Unfortunately, senior REC managers (Project Director and WaSe Component Manager) had left the organisation and were no

longer available to the evaluators to tell their story. It seems that, first of all, REC was not fully aware of existing protocols requiring central government approvals before starting to work at local levels and to continue to closely liaise with central government. Secondly, it appears that REC did not (properly) carry out a legal and institutional baseline survey from which it would have emerged that local mandates in water management are very limited. As a result, REC plans to give a central role to municipal level (in Jordan) or delegation level (in Tunisia) were misunderstood and misconceived. Furthermore, local water security action planning was neither known nor practised at municipal level, though some forms of participatory planning did already take place in Tunisia before the project. Thirdly, it seems that REC established contact with the key ministries rather late to discuss and agree on intervention plan, and the proposed interventions, being rather supply driven, caused additional acceptance problems. IUCN-ROWA, based in Amman, played a crucial and positive role in resolving these problems in Jordan, while this took significantly more time in Tunisia.

Once these initial problems were overcome, the intervention plan was implemented and a strong interest and commitment emerged among the Local Focal Points (representing the mayors and delegators), the Local Coordinators and the Planning Teams, whose awareness was raised and whose capacities rapidly developed. While in Jordan reservations at national level remained throughout the project, the WaSe activities were actively supported from national level in Tunisia. In fact, the Ministry were inspired and came to champion the component, even to the extent that the Ministry disseminated the WaSe concept and implementation strategy to all the governorates of the country by means of a specially requested and additional REC training activity.

What are the lessons learnt (positive and negative) about which actors and approaches that have been more successful in achieving results?
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Water resources management in Tunisia and Jordan was already well established in terms of legal framework, policies, strategies, plans and activities. The early and joint execution of the Water-POrT needs analysis at the start of the project by the key water ministries and REC was demand driven, reflecting the capacity-development priorities of beneficiary organisations and thereby established a basis of trust. Further and ongoing liaison through National Focal Points and Country Water Assistants in both countries secured an effective and efficient communication between REC and its experts on one side and the project beneficiaries on the other side.

Capacity-development interventions focused mainly on national-level organisations, providing a mix of new perspectives (e.g. economic aspects of water demand management, water resources monitoring and adaptation to climate change, including flood and drought management and related early warning), platforms for people that would normally not meet (different departments within ministries, different organisations, civil society), and theoretical knowledge and practical skills

application, with activities at different levels (local, national, regional and international). During the interviews, the participants indicated that this mix had succeeded in broadening horizons, had provided new practical knowledge and skills, and had allowed for the establishment of contacts with other water stakeholders to exchange ideas and experiences.

Participatory water security action planning at local level, thus also including civil society, was not known nor practised in Jordan or Tunisia at the start of the project. The existing legal, institutional, policy and strategy frameworks in the two countries do not provide many options to introduce this. Although the centralised government system may be subject to new insights and/or suggestions towards further de-concentration or decentralisation, both countries are clearly in the early stages of doing so, and may also face opposition. Therefore, any attempt aimed to strengthen capacities and develop plans at sub-national level should first be unambiguously agreed and implemented in close liaison and monitored together with the key water ministries. It is also clear that supply-driven approaches, even if properly explained, may face resistance in their acceptance.

Once accepted at national level, the introduction of the participatory approach towards water security planning was received well by the local stakeholders after awareness raising of the wider stakeholder community (stakeholder assessment and public opinion assessment) and putting communication and monitoring systems in place with local leaders. Strong interest and ownership were created by the establishment of Local Focal Points and Local Coordinators, each having clearly defined and separated responsibilities, and provided with a professional support structure in Jordan through a locally based National Coordinator. Tunisia did not have a locally based formal National Coordinator until last year, after the completion of the action plans, though active support was and continues to be provided through the Ministry.

Change processes take time, and the more ambitious the objectives are, the more time is normally needed. Although the REC contract was agreed for a three-year period, it also allowed for a one-year inception period as it was new to the MENA region. The result of this decision was an effective implementation period of two years. And, as a result of the acceptance problems of the WaSe component, the remaining implementation time has proven too short to complete the entire programme of 20 modules, resulting in condensing of activities and insufficient digestion and application of the knowledge and skills learnt, and hence the need for a contract extension to implement the first priority actions.

Although, in the project design, clear relations were established between the project's activities, outputs and outcomes, in practice this was never elaborated or implemented in the REC PME system. The fact that neither of the components had a well-elaborated PME system indicates that this was the result of management arrangements (rather than implementation delays). Another observation is that only

the project's events were monitored and evaluated and not the expected outcomes in terms of institutional and behavioural change. In fact, no baseline was established for individual and organisational performance of the key organisations and no outcomes were measured for the same organisations during or at the end of the project. This means that the achievement of the project objectives cannot be determined to any significant level or with any degree of certainty.

Are there synergies between the two components and, if so, are they being utilised?

Conceptually, water security (action) planning and (integrated) water resources management have inherent synergies, as both try to deal in a comprehensive and integrated manner at sub-national level with issues related to water quantity, water quality, water supply, water demand and water allocation among different water users. In practical terms, however, both Jordan and Tunisia have highly centralised government systems and water resources management is primarily dealt with at national level, which has limited the potential for synergies between the two components.

While having the two components in one project may have reduced transaction costs and project management costs, the functional relations between the two components have been rather limited. An example of synergies being utilised relate to the use of water resources management data management systems worked on under the national activities of the WATER-PORt component as an input to the local analysis and planning activities under the WaSe component. Another example of synergies is the number of regional activities that were designed to address, present and jointly discuss the activities and achievements of both components to representatives from both components from the participating countries.

Potential synergies that were not utilised relate to the fact that none of the eight selected municipalities under the WaSe component coincided geographically with the two demonstration sites under the Water-PORt component. However, once integrated water resources management starts to be practised at sub-national level, more synergies could be achieved with water security planning activities.

Though not strictly being synergy related, the presence of REC experts working on the WATER-PORt component at national level may well have contributed to help solve problems related to the acceptance for the local-level activities under the WaSe component.

Have civil society actors been involved in the planning and implementation of activities and had the opportunity to provide inputs to local water security action plans?

At the outset of the project, the selection of the participating municipalities and delegations was made by the key water ministries (see above). The planning of the project activities was significantly supply driven and carried out by REC, based on its water security concept and methodology (see above). So, in both these initial project activities there was no involvement of civil society.

Although this particular evaluation question was specifically formulated with respect to the WaSe component, the evaluators have also tried to assess to what extent and how civil society has been involved in the WATER-PORt component. In both components and in both countries, the inclusion of civil society in the project's activities has generally been considered as a novelty and eye-opener by both government and civil society representatives. Typical practice in water governance and planning was that only (central) government and its relevant agencies were involved in these activities.

The WATER-PORt component contained a number of activities (Result Area 2) that were specifically designed to promote a framework for understanding among water practitioners and stakeholders. An effective interface with the public was established to include an online water forum, a photo competition and a civil society forum, and a series of integrated water resources management workshops were organised, bringing together both government and civil society representatives. Both activities can be considered to have been implemented successfully and saw the active participation from both groups of participants. Also, a call for proposals for small grants was launched for civil society organisations and NGOs in Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia to support the development of civil society (and gender) in the water sector; the implementation of these proposals is about to start. Further activities that were aimed to involve civil society included a website, social media, leaflets and newsletters.

Under the WaSe component, civil society was represented in all of the planning teams in both countries, including the private sector, universities, water users' associations, farmers' unions, environmental societies and charity organisations. In general, their participation in the teams was very active and considered by the 'government' members as very positive. In Jordan, by far the highest civil society involvement was observed in Al Karak with 6 out of 12 planning members, the other teams having only 1 or 2 civil society representatives. In Tunisia, all planning teams had between 3 and 5 civil society representatives.

Civil society is also targeted in a number of the activities under the local water security action plans, such as awareness raising related to rainwater harvesting and water efficiency and conservation (both countries), disinfection, health and environmental issues (Tunisia only), and the reuse of grey water (Jordan significantly more than in Tunisia), as well as the provision of rainwater harvesting and storage reservoirs for schools and poor rural families (Tunisia only). As the implementation of the action plans was still in the process of preparation, it is too early to provide a clear and unambiguous opinion on its final results.

2.2.2 Relevance

To what extent has the intervention taken the perspectives of women, gender and marginalised groups into account?

The REC expert team included a significant female component – the two Project Component Managers and a number of female experts. However, neither of the components had an expert designated to deal with gender issues or marginalised groups, with the exception of a Tunisian voluntary adviser who was a specialist in youth and women empowerment issues.

No evidence was found regarding efforts to involve marginalised groups in the planning and implementation of the project activities. It seems that no serious analysis was made to break down and identify marginalised groups such as rural landless poor, urban unemployed, destitute women, school drop-outs or refugees – the latter group being quite clearly present and seriously aggravating the water scarcity situation in Jordan. While the absence of attention to marginalised groups can be more easily explained in the WATER-PORt component, this is more difficult to understand for the WaSe component, even though central governments may not always and freely admit the existence of marginalised groups. For Jordan, note could have been taken of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) initiatives in Jordan of ‘Cash for Work’ in the water sector or other well-tested international examples of obliging contractors to recruit labour from marginalised groups.

In the WATER-PORt component, REC recruited and actively engaged women in its professional support structure to prepare, facilitate and organise capacity-building events and activities, in particular through the Country Water Assistants, where it came close to achieving a 50–50 equal participation between men and women. In terms of implementation and project beneficiaries, the WATER-PORt component included a call for proposals from civil society organisations and NGOs in Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia to support the development of civil society in the water sector, through specially inviting organisations engaged in gender-related issues and gender mainstreaming, active in water and/or environmental themes. However, no results can yet be reported as the implementation of these proposals was still to start at the time of the evaluation.

In the WaSe component, REC succeeded in actively engaging female Local Focal Points, two out of four in Jordan and one out of four in Tunisia. Five out of eight Local Coordinators were female and were recruited and actively engaged, three in Jordan and two in Tunisia. With regards to the representation of women in the local action planning teams (not calculating mayors/delegators, Local Focal Points and Local Coordinators), a wide variety was observed both between and within the two countries. Overall, women constituted an average 29% in Jordan against only 8% in

Tunisia. In terms of engaging women and marginalised groups in the implementation and/or these groups benefiting from the implementation of actions under the water security plans, one must bear in mind that, at the time of the evaluation, bids were still being evaluated and awarded. In Tunisia, some planning teams included actions targeting women and rural poor families as beneficiaries, making use of records of poor and marginalised areas maintained at the delegation.

Are there obstacles to the active participation of women and marginalised groups in project activities?

As stated above, women were well represented in the REC expert teams and in the various project support (Country Water Assistants, Local Focal Persons) and implementation structures (Local Coordinators, planning teams). In the inception phase (first year) of the project, Sida made early recommendations to REC to increase its attention to gender and gender-mainstreaming issues. One can conclude that the resulting project implementation activities did consider the perspectives of women and a significant number of activities were specifically targeted towards women, not only as participants, but also as beneficiaries (e.g. women forum, Local Water Security Action Plan). However, other than through proactive trainee selection by REC, specifically under the WATER-POrT component, little evidence was found of gender-mainstreaming efforts or results.

Although it would be relatively easy to assert that (integrated) water resources management and water security planning are very likely to improve the general socio-economic situation of the population at large, little to no evidence was found that the perspectives of marginalised groups were taken into account. It is clear that the issue of involving marginalised groups' perspectives was less relevant in the WATER-POrT component (especially the technical/professional training activities) as compared with the WaSe component; however, marginalised groups did not emerge in the stakeholder analysis under the WaSe component, while REC experts indicated that they were reluctant to influence the groups' internal assessment processes. Finally, it seems that, in Jordan more so than in Tunisia, there is some reluctance to acknowledge the existence of marginalised groups.

In general, no serious problems were reported that would have inhibited the participation of women. On a number of occasions, REC has organised project activities to finish early enough for women to arrive back at their homes before dark. Only a few times, requests have come in (and were approved) for male family members to accompany female participants to and from the location of the project event. Overall, REC has been more proactive in including female participants in capacity-development activities, an activity unopposed by the key water ministries.

How are women and marginalised groups affected by the results of the intervention (as stakeholders and as end beneficiaries)?

One can conclude that women have been affected as stakeholders and as end beneficiaries by the project through their participation in the project's activities. For women targeted from the perspective of their professional, work-related situation, and although no pre-project and post-project analysis has been made regarding their behaviour or performance in their host organisations, what can be assessed is the behaviour of these women during the project activities and events, and what they have reported in the event evaluations. It seems safe to conclude that new knowledge and skills have been acquired in theoretical terms and in terms of their practical application, and that these activities have met capacity-building needs. However, there is no evidence that this has led to an improvement of these women's situations within their host organisations.

Water security action planning activities have targeted women from the perspective of their professional, work-related situation as well as from their home- and family-based situation. As the action plans were not yet being implemented at the time of the evaluation, no conclusions can yet be drawn on the potential results of these interventions.

As marginalised groups were not defined, identified, targeted or observed as a separate group of stakeholders or beneficiaries, one cannot provide any confident answer to this evaluation question for this group.

In the most optimistic scenario, assuming that the limited number of specific short-term activities for which funding is available under the Local Water Security Action Plan (LWSAP) will be implemented successfully, a number of poor families or women may well end up being affected positively. Information regarding the project's efforts to strengthen local planning capabilities may increase the confidence of the general public, including the poor and disadvantaged, in local government's performance in understanding and addressing the needs of their population. The action plan interventions are expected to increase awareness regarding water and environmental issues, which may lead to more cost-efficient behaviour in relation to existing water resources (water efficiency, conservation), the utilisation of new water resources (rainwater harvesting, reuse), and related increased livelihood opportunities. The actual development of rainwater-harvesting infrastructure and government regulatory interventions (regulations, enforcement) are to provide good prospects of immediate improvements to the precarious water scarcity situation.

Is there a regional added value of the project, for example through transfer of knowledge between participating countries?
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A series of regional activities has been organised jointly and separately under the two project components in the countries of Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt, Spain, Sweden, Hungary, Croatia and Slovenia. These activities included different capacity-development activities (including training courses, workshops, study tours, conferences and summits), and were principally aimed towards professional

exposure, and the generation and exchange of knowledge, experiences and best practices. A second group of activities that can be considered as regional activities are related to, for example, the international photo competition, the Distance Learning Platform, the WATER-PORt small grants component, and the different online platforms and forums.

The first group of regional activities, in general, were highly valued and considered to be very useful during the interviews. Being able to meet with peers, homologues or ‘blood-brothers’ from other countries to exchange ideas and experiences, to discuss practices, problems and solutions, to showcase results, and to hear and/or see best practices were very positively rated. Notwithstanding this, these regional activities can also be considered to contain a certain level of reward for shown loyalty, effort and/or performance. Still, horizons were broadened, even where problems and solutions in one country would not be (directly) relevant or applicable to another country, as even hearing and seeing that some problems can be solved has inspired and changed mind sets. Examples and specific points taken away from these international events include the following.

Between participating countries

- WaSe component: Tunisians learning from Jordanian experiences and successes in the reuse of treated wastewater and of grey water. Jordanians learning from Tunisian experiences and successes in reducing illegal water use.
- WATER-PORt component: Jordanians learning from Tunisian experiences and successes in flood management, drought and related early warning systems. Egypt learning from Tunisia and Jordan experiences in data exchange.

From other countries

- WaSe component: Tunisia learning from Swedish experiences in the use of drip irrigation for trees. Both Jordan and Tunisia countries seeing in Sweden that solid waste can be managed successfully.
- PORt component: Tunisia and Jordan learning from Central European experiences in transboundary water resources agreements and management. Egypt learning from Spanish experiences in local level water use planning and management.

With regards to the WaSe component, note has to be made of the fact that national exchange of ideas, experiences, problems and solutions between the Local Coordinators and the planning teams in the four municipalities in Jordan and between the four delegations in Tunisia are considered to be more practically useful and cost effective as compared to the regional activities. Moreover, the relatively low level of

(some of) the planning team members may also favour national activities over regional activities.

The second group included activities with clear knowledge-exchange objectives between the participating countries, e.g. the various online platforms and water forums, and those that did not (e.g. photo competition, WATER-PORt small grants, Distance Learning Platform). One can conclude that the online platforms and water forums offered an international platform and provided opportunities and results that cannot be achieved to the same extent through national activities only. However, the measure of success of these activities can be determined in terms of the number of hits, likes and actual contributions to the different topics and discussions. Although there is clear evidence that these platforms are being visited and used, it is considered too early to come to final conclusions. For the other activities, like the photo competition, small grants and Distance Learning Platform, the main aim was not to exchange knowledge between the participating countries.

2.2.3 Sustainability

Do stakeholders from the targeted region (both national and local, including civil society) demonstrate ownership of the design and implementation of the project? Is the project in line with their priorities?

For the WATER-PORt component, there is clear evidence that the key ministries have demonstrated strong ownership, from the early stages and subsequent implementation, of component's objectives, activities and outputs; the component being designed, and agreed and implemented in line with their needs and priorities. Representatives from civil society and women, on the other hand, mostly from national level, whose relevant activities related to Action 2 (Cooperation and dialogue) only, were not involved in the design of the project, but both groups have increasingly shown an interest and active participation in their implementation. Moreover, bringing together representatives from the public sector and civil society was rated by both groups as very useful, highly interesting and eye-opening.

In the WaSe component, the design was rather supply driven, and it took some time and effort to convince the national stakeholders to accept the component with its central role for the municipalities and delegations. During its implementation, the key Tunisian water ministry is increasingly embracing and adopting the project and being inspired to embark on replicating it in other governorates. At national level in Jordan, reservations on the proposed approach continued during the implementation, not only by suggesting only municipal mandate activities to be included in the action plans, but also up to the extent that suggestions for further replication or upscaling would not be considered favourably under the current circumstances.

Local WaSe stakeholders in both countries, on the other hand, although not involved in the design of the component, did show an increasing interest, involvement and

ownership in its implementation. Local Focal Points, Local Coordinators and planning teams worked together diligently, efficiently and effectively to produce the action plans. However, due to a lack of time, the groups barely completed the plans and were not able to fully digest the programme. Still, the teams are eagerly anticipating the implementation of a number of prioritised short-term activities during the project extension period. The strong appreciation and ownership of the newly introduced approach and methodology regarding participatory planning is underscored by a number of developments reported above for both countries that go clearly beyond the anticipated project results.

To what extent do stakeholders own and sustain the results of the project?

Under the WATER-POrT component, and especially with respect to the technical training courses on the Integrated Water Resources Management Approach and Adaptation to Climate Change, no significant sustainability risks exist. Potential measures to reduce these limited risks could include, for example, training of trainers courses, some repeater courses for staff not yet trained, and some refresher courses. For the training on economic aspects of water demand management, water demand management best practice handbook, and the training on flood and drought management and related guidelines, good practice handbook and software, some doubts exist whether the foundation laid will be enough for the host organisations to effectively apply and continue to use the newly obtained tools and the newly acquired knowledge and skills.

The cooperation and dialogue activities under the WATER-POrT component were considered to be innovative and very useful by most stakeholders, government and civil society alike. While the relevance and the need for continued collaboration were clearly and jointly established, the sustainability risk of this activity is potentially high as a permanent platform and a clear vision (document) for public–private collaboration are still lacking in both countries.

Under the WaSe component, the participatory approach seems to be fully embraced by sub-national stakeholders. Unfortunately, the project implementation period proved to be too short to fully digest the different capacity-development activities and to complete one full project cycle. In particular, further capacities will need to be developed to undertake feasibility studies, write project proposals, and to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the plans.

Proof of the current sustainability can be found, for example, in Jordan through the spread of the participatory planning approach to other sectors and (general) municipal level. Similarly, in both Jordan and Tunisia, sub-national ambitions have emerged to replicate this to other municipalities (replication) and at governorate level (upscaling). Training of trainers of Local Coordinators could help reduce the sustainability risks. These changes can be attributed to the REC activities. However, while these developments are supported by central level in Tunisia, they are not in Jordan.

The possible, or likely, lack of funding for the implementation of the water security action plans has to be considered a sustainability risk, and possibly even more than that. If the raised expectations of the municipalities and delegations and their planning teams cannot be met, and become frustrated, future similar events regarding participatory planning and implementation may no longer be responded to.

In general, typical sustainability risks exist in relation to staff turnover, a process the host organisations have little control over, and in relation to software packages (subscription, update and renewal fees) and equipment (maintenance, break, theft). With regards to the first, the sustainability risk in Jordan's WaSe component is considered low as the Local Coordinators were selected from within the municipal organisation. Although this was not the case in Tunisia, the Local Coordinators could continue to be utilised as future consultants. With regards to the latter two, i.e. software and equipment, REC has made serious efforts to reduce these risks by inserting special conditions and criteria in the tender specifications.

The participants of the regional activities are fully aware that the regional activities, including international travel, may be cost prohibitive, although still possible through other donor-funded projects. Moreover, project activities have allowed first physical contact and trust to be established between different countries, and continued exchange of information is already being practised through email and social media, which may well be continued outside of the project context and beyond the project implementation period. Although these contacts may well strengthen inter-institutional relations, and strengthen organisational performance, it seems that these contacts are person specific rather than institutional.

Finally, REC decided to establish and maintain a number of e-platforms and forums (WATER-PorT) and a distance learning platform (WaSe), which are expected to continue to be operated by REC, based on the interviews with REC managers and experts. REC apparently took this as a business decision rather than trying to find a 'safe' national or regional host in the MENA region. The apparent sustainability risk is that any future decision to continue or discontinue will be based on (commercial and other) REC considerations and not necessarily on prevailing needs in the beneficiary countries.

2.2.4 Conclusions

Although evaluation criteria for efficiency were not included in the evaluators' terms of reference, some specific efficiency conclusions can be drawn, which can help to explain the results and conclusions under the criteria of effectiveness, relevance and sustainability.

REC, being new to the MENA region, was granted a one-year inception period, during which eight countries were analysed. Once it was decided to focus the implementation activities on Jordan and Tunisia, the collected information on these

two countries proved to be insufficient for a proper understanding of the specific legal and institutional frameworks. REC established contacts relatively late with the key ministries in Jordan and Tunisia to explain and obtain appreciation for the project and to be made to understand specific protocols. This has caused design problems and acceptance-related delays, specifically in the WaSe component.

Notwithstanding the useful meetings that were held between the relevant ministries in Jordan and Tunisia and REC, no detailed baselined analysis was carried out regarding the relevant organisations' individual and organisational capacity-building needs. However, note has to be made of the public opinion assessment that was successfully carried out under the WaSe component, clearly identifying public opinions and behaviour on water issues in the selected municipalities. The REC project focused its project monitoring and evaluation activities on the capacity-development and awareness-raising interventions (activities, events) rather than on the application of new knowledge and skills learnt by the participants at their host organisations, thus it was not possible to measure any change in institutional or individual behaviour.

As a result of the one-year inception period, only two years remained to implement the project. The period proved to be too short to achieve all the expected outcomes and outputs under the two components. As the objectives and expected outcomes and outputs were not adjusted, national-level partners and support structures proved critical to facilitate project implementation and bridge language gaps. IUCN, based in Jordan, performed better in Jordan than in Tunisia, which led to support gaps in Tunisia, which were, however, to an important degree mitigated by the key ministry.

The project organisation with its two separate components and the overall financial and administrative systems and procedures it used was complex, which caused implementation delays. This complexity could have been mitigated by a well-functioning communication and PME system, which unfortunately was not available. Specific problems occurred in the WaSe support structure in Tunisia due to the delays that occurred as a result of the replacement of IUCN and the time needed for procurement and contracting of SONEDE International as National Coordinator.

Effectiveness

In general, the project seems to be well on track to achieve its objectives, though it is still too early to confirm significant changes with a high level of confidence.

WATER-POrT

The close collaboration at the start of the project has established trust and confidence in the REC experts to successfully plan and implement a variety of capacity-development activities. These positive attitudes of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) members and National Focal Points towards achieving the objectives and interventions remained strong throughout the implementation of the project.

WaSe

The introduction of participatory planning approaches to develop water security action plans has proven to be successful in terms of capacity development, awareness raising and including civil society, and has been appreciated by local managers and planning teams.

Action plans have been produced and have subsequently been approved at local and national levels. In Jordan, all proposed actions fall within the mandate of the municipalities. In Tunisia, all types of actions have been included whether or not they fall within the mandate of the delegation. Some first-priority actions are about to be implemented that fit within the relatively limited budgets provided by Sida (45,000 Euro) and the counterparts.

The Local Focal Points and Local Coordinators have been instrumental in the achievement of the project results. In Jordan, Local Coordinators were selected from within the municipal planning organisations, which will help sustainability. In Tunisia, all coordinators were selected from outside the delegation organisations, but could be used in the future as consultants in the government's duplication and upscaling efforts.

The project has succeeded to a large extent in retaining the members of the planning teams throughout the capacity-development activities. Capacity-development efforts have not yet covered all aspects of the project cycle management. Knowledge and skills in terms of feasibility studies, proposal writing and monitoring and evaluation still need to be (further) improved.

Relevance

The project is clearly in line with the MENA Strategy 2010–2015. Whereas the WATER-POrT component obtained decision makers' support through its high level of relevance, the WaSe component faced institutional (design) problems, which were resolved in Tunisia, but not in Jordan.

The evaluation questions formulated under the relevance criteria were biased towards women, gender and marginalised groups.

Marginalised groups were left out of the project's design and implementation activities altogether. While REC, in particular in its WaSe component, applied a bottom-up and participatory approach, which was widely seen and experienced by the participants as very successful, it did not pay attention to marginalised groups.

Women and gender issues were addressed, though it seems that the REC team assumed that by engaging a significant number of female experts (but no designated gender expert), female local staff (Country Water Assistants, Local Coordinators) and

female participants of project activities, that this would result in the integration of gender mainstreaming in project activities and results. REC did not set any gender-related targets other than the WaSe Result 3 output indicator (Local environmental governance in partner countries benefiting from LWSAP concept). Still, a number of activities did specifically target gender and gender-mainstreaming issues, though rather late in the project, notably the women's forum under the Water, Growth and Stability initiative, and the Dialogue and Understanding activities under the WATER-POrT component.

There is ample international evidence of the relevance of gender and gender mainstreaming in water projects in general, and of including marginalised groups, especially in water security projects. While this was not (fully) recognised during project design, implementation and monitoring, it did receive more than proportional attention in the evaluation questions.

Although the project's regional activities were rated highly for broadening horizons, exchanging experiences and providing exposed to best practices, it is not clear to what extent these activities have actually resulted in changed policies, strategies, plans or practices.

WATER-POrT

In Jordan, Tunisia and Egypt, water resources management was well known and practised, while integrated water resources management (IWRM) was known and understood but less practised.

Egypt's participation (limited to the WATER-POrT component) was not throughout the full project implementation period, and so far has comprised only its participation in regional activities.

In Tunisia and Jordan, the needs assessment carried out at the start of the project was done jointly and in close collaboration between REC and the key water ministries, and the results and interventions can be considered to be demand driven and in line with needs and priorities.

WaSe

Whereas local-level water planning was completely new in Jordan, in Tunisia local-level government-led participatory planning was already practised, though not with the methodological and analytical tools introduced by the project.

Sustainability

In general, the short duration of the project implementation period, and the decision regarding the timing of the evaluation to take place before project completion, make it

difficult for the evaluators to fully assess the sustainability of the project and the related sustainability risks.

WATER-POrT

Key ministries in both countries showed strong ownership in terms of design and implementation of the project, as well as in owning and sustaining the project results – the latter being slightly stronger in Jordan than in Tunisia.

The involvement of civil society and women in both countries was poor in the project planning phase, though much better during project implementation.

Under Actions 1 (IWRM Approach) and 3 (Adaptation to Climate Change), sustainability risks could be reduced through training of trainers courses, and repeater and refresher courses (over time). Some doubts exist whether the foundation laid is enough for participants to effectively apply and continue to use the newly obtained tools and acquired knowledge and skills.

Action 2 (Cooperation and Dialogue) was considered by government and civil society alike to be very innovative and useful. While the relevance and need for continued collaboration were clearly and jointly agreed, the sustainability risk of this activity is potentially high, as a permanent platform and a clear vision (document) for public–private collaboration are still lacking.

It is not clear if and how the risks can be reduced in sustaining the e-platforms, e-forums and distance learning, exclusively managed by REC.

Political realities at sub-national level may start to change later this year in Tunisia (municipal elections) and Jordan (governorate elections), which may result in some form of further de-concentration or decentralisation.

WaSe

In general, the ownership in the project design was poor, partly because of the limited water-related institutional mandates at municipal level, and partly because of the relatively high supply orientation of the Local Water Security Action Plan concept. Notwithstanding this, local ownership in both countries in the project implementation grew to full ownership and, in Tunisia, national-level support to the project implementation was observed.

Local momentum has been created in terms of capacities, awareness and ambitions. In Jordan, the four municipalities intend to use what they have learnt in the water experience in overall overall municipal planning, Local Coordinators have the ambition to help replicate their achievements in other municipalities and at governorate level, and a number of planning team members have been instrumental in

the adoption of participatory planning approaches at local level in other sectors such as health, energy and tourism. In Tunisia, there is support to improve existing participatory planning practices at local level with the new analytical tools provided under the project.

There is strong national-level support in Tunisia to continue the implementation of the action plans, and REC has been requested to provide introductory training for representatives from the country's other governorates, and has worked closely with all governorates to prepare a 2017 summer action plan and budget for water supply. At national level in Jordan, there currently seems to be no support to duplicate or upscale the project's efforts in giving municipalities a central role in water security action planning.

It is not clear if and how the risks can be reduced in sustaining the e-platforms, e-forums and distance learning, exclusively managed by REC.

Political realities at sub-national level may start to change later this year in Tunisia (municipal elections) and Jordan (governorate elections), which may result in some form of further de-concentration or decentralisation. In Tunisia, this may mean that municipalities rather than delegations will become the natural platform for water security action planning.

2.2.5 Recommendations

General recommendations

1. An early legal and institutional analysis or appreciation of the water and environmental sectors is crucial to establish a foundation for successful project implementation.
2. Early contacts should be established with key national-level stakeholders to establish mutual trust, to create national ownership and to understand protocols.
3. The use of national partners should be considered for project start-up and implementation, especially if the contract holder (REC) does not have a (semi) permanent local presence.
4. A project results framework should be developed and be specific and realistic (and where relevant adjusted) with regards to its expected achievement of objectives, outcomes and outputs including measurable indicators and targets.
5. Use training of (selected) trainers as a tool to enhance sustainability for continued capacity development.
6. The envisaged project extension is supported to maintain project momentum, to reduce sustainability risks, to be based on a clear needs assessment, and to consider including an evaluation in the host organisations of the project's beneficiaries to determine changes in opinions and behaviour since the start of the project.

WATER-PORt

The project extension period should consider including the following activities.

1. Further training and guidance in water monitoring: data processing, analysis, reporting and exchange.
2. For Tunisia: Training to produce a vision document on civil society involvement.
3. Guidance to implement gender-mainstreaming and human rights recommendations and action plan.
4. In Jordan: Training in flood risk management and related early warning.
5. In Egypt: Aiming for the implementation of a full programme, similar in content and effort to those in Jordan and Tunisia.
6. Depending of the results of sub-national elections in Jordan and Tunisia, consider additional support under a second phase project targeting sub-national levels.
With regards to Egypt: Aim to design a similar programme in content and volume to those in Tunisia and Jordan.

WaSe

The project extension period should consider including the following activities.

1. Translation of all action plans from English into Arabic, and dissemination campaign.
2. Additional budget³ and counterpart contribution to implement other short-term activities of the action plans.
3. Extension of Local Coordinators' contracts with a small operating budget for planning team meetings and activities, and for coordination between Local Coordinators.
4. Evaluation of the planning process, and revisit of the stakeholder analysis and planning team composition to include refugees (in Jordan) and teachers.
5. Training of planning team members in feasibility studies, project proposal writing, and monitoring and evaluation.
6. Extension of contracts with National Coordinators.
7. Repeat the public opinion assessment to determine the changes in opinions and behaviour in the participating municipalities on water quantity and quality issues since the project started.

³ For the implementation of all short-term activities in Jordan, an additional donor budget of approximately 50,000 Euro would be required. As the Tunisian action plans also include infrastructure development, an additional total budget would be required of around 300,000 Euro.

8. For Tunisia: Training of trainers for Local Coordinators to enhance knowledge and skills for duplication and upscaling of water security action planning.
9. Depending of the results of sub-national elections in Jordan and Tunisia, consider additional support under a second phase project targeting new municipalities or governorates.

REC

1. Continue to provide a mix of different national, regional and international interventions with a mix of (inter)national experts and local support structures.
2. Improve PME system elaboration and implementation.
3. Carry out institutional and legal baseline surveys in new countries.
4. Improve communication, simplify procedures.
5. Engage one or more designated experts in gender, gender mainstreaming, rights, poverty and marginalised groups in project design and implementation.
6. Secure regional and/or national hosts for newly introduced tools to support sustainability.

Sida

1. With respect to gender, gender mainstreaming, rights, poverty and marginalised groups: (1) issue calls for proposals that highlight related Sida policies; (2) approve proposals that demonstrate a clear understanding and demonstrated expertise and experience; and (3) actively monitor and steer project implementation.
2. Monitor partner PME system.
3. Prolong contract periods to allow for achievement of results framework and minimise sustainability risks.
4. Undertake a project evaluation after the completion of the project when results have become apparent and clear lessons can be learnt, while using a special expert mission (e.g. results-oriented monitoring) to support decisions on approach and scope for project extension.

Key ministries

1. (Continue to) Claim driving seat in project design, planning, implementation and in monitoring and evaluation.

2.3 STRATEGIC FORESIGHT GROUP

Strategic Foresight Group (SFG), founded in 2002, is a think tank based in Mumbai, India, engaged in crafting new policy concepts that enable decision makers to prepare for a future in uncertain times. SFG's work spans across 50 countries, on four continents.

SFG has published over 30 in-depth research reports in English with some translations in Arabic and Spanish. The focus of SFG is: water diplomacy; peace, conflict and terrorism; and global foresight.

The organisational capacity consists of a senior management team, two senior programme managers, a research team of 12 qualified researchers, as well as a small administration. The researchers are trained at internationally recognised universities in law, international relations, public policy and social sciences.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Switzerland has, since 2009, supported SFG's work on the Blue Peace Initiative.

The current project was preceded by two previous ones supported by Sida: A water security study (SEK 2,150,000) conducted in 2009–2011, culminating in the report *The Blue Peace: Rethinking Middle East Water*, and 'Experience Exchange for Regional Water Cooperation in the Middle East Phase 1' from January 2013 to March 2014 (SEK 2,900,000).

The project for this evaluation – 'Experience Exchange for Regional Water Cooperation in the Middle East Phase 2' – was implemented from July 2014 to March 2017 and had a total budget of SEK 9,500,000, all of which was financed by Sida. The overall project objective was to create a social infrastructure, based on networks and learning groups, for shared water resources management in the Middle East. The objective aligned with previous work for which SFG had received Sida funding. The project included stakeholders from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Syria (though there is currently no engagement with Syrian officials due to the ongoing conflict).

SFG's work for the second phase (2014–2017) was both expanded and deepened. The project aimed to strengthen networks and to increase learning exchanges for transboundary water collaboration among opinion makers in the region in order to further strengthen and expand the Blue Peace community of media leaders, parliamentarians, former ministers, government officials, water experts and others. New for this phase was that it also aimed to create vertical integration in the water discourse in the Middle East from high-end policy concerns to grassroots-level concerns in order to include marginalised groups. SFG attempted to also address gender issues in water management in the current phase.

Table 6 presents SFG's results matrix, and Table 7 their monitoring and evaluation matrix.

Table 6. The SFG results matrix

Results areas	Output/activities	Responsibility/follow up
• Linkages between Middle East experts and experts from basins with working regional cooperation • Synergy with High Level Forum • Consolidation and expansion of champions of regional cooperation, creating 'soft infrastructure' for water and peace	Annual meeting of media leaders with back-to-back workshop on experience exchange in collaborative management of transboundary waters, learning journeys, small meetings	SFG project coordination team
• 6 reports of about 20-page each during the project period	Research, including participatory research with input from the region	SFG project coordination team
• Awareness and appreciation of merits of regional cooperation in water	Engagement with the media for publishing articles, TV programmes, and other media products	SFG project coordination team

Table 7. The SFG monitoring and evaluation matrix

Impact (overall goals)	Impact indicators	Means of verification
• Creation of soft infrastructure and networks in the region, underpinned by relevant knowledge • Greater appreciation of the merit of regional cooperation, benefits accrued in other regions and the prospects for the Middle East	• Emergence of champions for regional water cooperation in the Middle East • Emergence of networks and dialogue platforms • Increase in the level of knowledge and awareness of the benefits of water cooperation	• Quotations about the merits of regional water cooperation and other goals in public spaces such as the media, speeches of leaders, discussions between relevant stakeholders and other forums
Output/outcome	Outcome indicators	Means of verification
• Annual meeting of media leaders with back-to-back workshop on experience exchange in collaborative	• Number and level of participants in annual meetings, learning journeys, small	• List of participants in various meetings and exercises • Agendas of meetings

management of transboundary waters, learning journeys, small meetings •	meetings, and expansion and diversity in 2014–2017 as compared to the previous period • Discussion on the themes developed under Experience Exchange project at the meetings of High Level Forum and other meetings • Cooperation from river basin organisations outside the Middle East to participate in the annual meeting in the region and to facilitate learning journeys of Middle East participants • Reports of conferences, learning journeys and other outcomes	covering the desired themes • Speeches of leaders and experts at the meetings
• 6 reports of about 20 pages each during the project period	• Advice and input from key stakeholders in the Middle East into agenda setting and research processes • Number and quality of actual reports published, either in print or online, during the project period	• Number and level of individuals and institutions from the Middle East who provide input into agenda-setting and research processes, as well as comments on the final product
• Engagement with the media for publishing articles, TV programmes and other media products	• Coverage of the aforementioned ideas in the Middle East media • Coverage of the aforementioned ideas in discussion with senior policy makers in the region	• Media content supporting regional water cooperation • Content of conversation and communication with policy makers • Speeches and statements made by

		policy makers in various forums, within or outside the scope of the activities of SFG, supporting key analysis and ideas
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2.3.1 Effectiveness

‘Soft infrastructure’

SFG has successfully contributed to the establishment of a ‘*soft infrastructure*’ for dialogue on water cooperation in the MENA region. The network of participants from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey⁴ are water experts, government officials, parliamentarians, academia and media persons, and they comprise the ‘*Blue Peace*’ community in the MENA region.

Several of the individuals were also critically engaged in the first phase (2008–2010) leading up to the ‘*Blue Peace*’ initiative. The Director General of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Switzerland wrote in 2011, in the foreword to the publication *The Blue Peace – Rethinking Middle East Water*, that the initiative served to “foster trust between stakeholders which can go beyond water issues and be the sound basis of a good relationship, preventing future or potential conflicts related to water management.”⁵ Since then, SFG has successfully continued to nurture both existing and new ‘champions of water cooperation’ by supporting them to keep learning from best practices and exchange experiences in water management with other key stakeholders. This falls squarely within the objective of creating ‘soft infrastructure’ for dialogue on water cooperation in the MENA region. Interviews during the field visits to Jordan and Lebanon by the consultants confirm that both older and newer participants have established informal networks of communication by phone and email both within and between countries, and they appreciate the open access to each other. Participants from the same country meet occasionally for roundtable discussions in Amman and Beirut. The project has, however, not yet resulted in any regional or national mechanism to sustain the relationships and the achievements.

⁴ Syria was included in the proposal as a focus country, but the project never included any participants from Syria.

⁵ Strategic Foresight Group. 2011. *The Blue Peace Rethinking Middle East Water*, page iv.

Most interviewees said that there is a readiness among the participants, which may indicate enhanced empowerment in terms individual awareness about water management issues and ways to address them, but there is so far no established institutional capacity or processes for regional water management and cooperation. Almost all interviewees said that there is a need for a regional secretariat to continue SFG's work. A group of Blue Peace participants from Jordan supported by the HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal's office on Water and Sanitation is currently in the process of drafting a concept note for a new architecture of water cooperation in the Middle East.

The empowerment of individual participants has boosted the confidence and the willingness to seek channels to influence public discussions at local, national and regional levels on water management and cooperation. Participants from the media feel particularly empowered, and also members of parliament. In our interviews during the field visits it was a unanimous opinion that SFG's project empowered journalists. A sign of strong personal commitment to participate in the SFG activities was the decision by some journalists to take unpaid leave of absence in order to participate.

Although some of the participants are associated with state institutions, the conferences and meetings are not an official forum for governments. They participated in regional conferences and meetings, and international study trips in their own capacity. Many of the participants have positions in their respective countries and communities that allow them to share important insights and information about water management with other influential stakeholders. They are dedicated individuals who have actively participated and shared their knowledge and experiences about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to water management in their countries and the region. The participants who were interviewed are aspirational and committed to continue to contribute to closer cooperation among the MENA countries. A few interviewees said that there was a language barrier, especially for parliamentarians who did not speak English well, and could have needed translation to better follow and engage in the presentations during the conferences. A few interviewees noted that some parliamentarians were not so experienced and knowledgeable about water management in order to participate in the discussions. Overall, the selection of participants was very good. Some interviewees felt that some participants were not well prepared. On the other hand, some of the members of parliament with weak knowledge of water management have now gained knowledge and can better understand and engage in water management.

The 'Blue Peace' initiative contributed to establish and deepen contacts among the participants from the same country and with other countries. Although the project had a certain rotation among the participants, the activities allowed for developing personal bonds to establish mutual respect, understanding and trust for future collaboration. This type of project is very desirable among the participants.

Convening power

A success factor contributing to establishing ‘soft infrastructure’ has been SFG’s access to influential policy makers in the region, and in particular to Prince Hassan bin Talal of Jordan. The good relationship with Prince Hassan bin Talal gave legitimacy to the ‘Blue Peace’ initiative and facilitated SFG’s role in convening senior policy makers and opinion makers.

Although SFG has no office, or staff, deployed in the MENA region, it has been described as a highly responsive and flexible organisation with an exceptional convening power and facilitation skills. This organisational capacity should not be taken for granted, and it is not easy to build and sustain since it tends to depend on personal relationships and trust, which take time to institutionalise and transfer to others within the organisation. The President of SFG is well connected with senior policy makers in the MENA region, who had the respect for what SFG set out to achieve, and shared SFG’s vision for a comprehensive, long-term, regional framework for sustainable water management in the Middle East to help and support national policy and decision making.

SFG is a nimble organisation that had to manage personal setbacks such as the assassination in December 2013 of Dr Mohamad Chatah, former Minister of Finance of Lebanon, and one of five members of the *Blue Peace Core Group*. It was described as a political assassination and likely to be linked with the political power struggle in the region over the war in Syria. Dr Chatah was important to the ‘Blue Peace’ initiative, and had worked as a key advisor of former Prime Minister Saad Hariri. He was described as a moderate and was a former ambassador to the United States. His replacement in the Blue Peace Core Group was Dr Bassem Shabb, a Member of Parliament in Lebanon. This tragic incident caused worry and anxiety among the Blue Peace members when SFG considered Beirut as a venue in response to the Lebanese Prime Minister’s invitation to SFG to hold a meeting in the city. However, the Lebanese Parliament could not agree on an official invitation, and thus Beirut never became a venue for Blue Peace events.

During an Istanbul meeting in March 2016, the city was the scene of another terror attack killing five people. It was just another terrifying reminder of the violence in the region. SFG had to make decisions about safety and security for the well-being of the participants who all stayed throughout the conference.

The Government of Iraq offered its services to assist SFG to arrange an event in Iraq, by offering free visa entry, covering local costs in partnership with universities, and attendance of ministers, but SFG felt it had to cancel plans due to safety and security concerns. Instead, the meeting venues were shifted to Amman and Istanbul, which were efficiently supported by the governments of Jordan and Turkey, which gave participants entry visas. The meetings were held as scheduled, and still offered Iraqi officials and politicians to be part of the hosting of the venue. The Government of

Turkey and the Royal Palace of Jordan also assisted with covering some of the costs of the events.

When SFG hosted Learning Journeys to Senegal and Uganda, special visa-on-arrival arrangements were made by the local governments. Similarly, host governments or river basin organisations hosted lunches, venues and contributed to expenses in kind.

SFG has organised the activities in a way that has allowed and enabled as many participants as possible to attend and fully participate in the conferences and meetings.

Not only did SFG have the convening power and experience to facilitate difficult discussions during meetings and conferences, but it also had, according to interviews, a strong sense and ability to seek and guide participants towards commitments to continue nurturing the process of consultation and dialogue. Dialogue activities are often unpredictable and highly sensitive to the nature and personalities of the participants. Similarly, the dynamic and outcomes of meetings are sensitive to the agenda and its preparation. Given the different variables influencing the result of meetings and conferences, it is important to recognise the efforts and time it takes to nurture and sustain dialogue in times of violent and armed conflicts, and the subsequent calls for senior decision, policy and opinion makers to be committed to engage on the water management issues. SFG has successfully anchored the project within a core group of key policy makers and experts from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, who gave further legitimacy to SFG's activities and contributed to broadening the circle of participants.

Two paths of dialogue

SFG worked along two paths. One was a broader Sida-funded path aiming to facilitate experience exchange among 50–70 policy makers, members of parliament, serving and former ministers, media leaders, academics and water experts from across the Middle East to conferences. Since 2013, SFG has arranged three conferences:

- ‘Water Cooperation for a Secure World – Focus on the Middle East’ (2013 in Amman)
- ‘Exploring the Water-Peace Nexus Blue Peace in West Asia’ (2015 in Amman)
- ‘Women, Water and Peace’ (2016 in Istanbul).

Part of the preparation of the conference agendas was the publication of reports, which fed into the panel discussions and aimed to stimulate discussions and challenge current thinking about regional cooperation and joint management of transboundary water resources. Since 2013, SFG has published four reports:

- *Water Cooperation for a Secure World* (2013)

- *The Hydro-Insecure Crisis of Survival in the Middle East* (2014)
- *Water and Violence – Crisis of Survival in the Middle East* (2014)
- *Women, Water and Peace* (2015).

Furthermore, as part of this path was also international study trips (*Learning Journeys*) for 20–30 participants (who also participated in the conferences) to exchange experiences in the management of shared water resources, since 2013 SFG has arranged four Learning Journeys:

- Switzerland and Germany, Rhine Learning Journey in September 2013
- Cambodia and Lao PDR, Mekong Learning Journey in November 2013
- Senegal, Senegal River basin in August 2015
- Uganda, Nile River basin in August 2016.

The second path was supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the Human Security Division of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Switzerland, focused on concrete actions resulting from annual High-Level Forums on Blue Peace in the Middle-East. Since 2013, SFG has arranged two High-Level Forums:

- High Level Forum in Istanbul 2014
- High Level Forum in Geneva 2015.

These meetings, convening 70–90 participants, aimed at forming concrete initiatives at bilateral as well as the regional level. The 2014 High-Level Forum set forward seven principles of cooperation to underpin the work of the Blue Peace Community and processes to establish a Cooperation Council for the sustainable management of water resources in the Middle East. The second High-Level Forum emphasised that the Blue Peace Community is the only platform engaging multiple stakeholders in the Middle East, whilst an official regional institution for water cooperation is missing.

Although SFG developed two parallel paths with some differences between them in terms of their intended results, the distinction between them is not clear, but the paths seem to reinforce each other by involving many of the same participants from both High-Level Forum meetings and conferences, which helped create momentum and commitment among the key stakeholders from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.

The two paths of experience exchange and seeking concrete actions allowed participants to come together and openly discuss problems, solutions, similarities and differences among countries. The Learning Journeys were considered helpful to learn about environmental issues, water allocation and management, as well as to foster mutual trust among participants. The Learning Journeys emphasised not only the technical aspect of water cooperation, but also why it was and is important to develop a structured water cooperation between countries by setting up a mechanism for facilitating cooperation. The format of Learning Journeys promoted important

discussions among the participants, which continued through conferences and meetings.

The third-party role of SFG, supported by Sida and SDC, managed to convene and engage participants by creating a momentum of meetings and study trips, which helped to build trust and personal bonds. As several interviewees noted, it does not take one or two meetings to establish trust and confidence, but rather – when the political environment is highly complex – meetings and confidence-building measures have to be well designed and continuous. The broad spectrum of stakeholders from the MENA region who have participated in the conferences, meetings and international study visits have developed new relationships, and it evolved into a platform for learning and dialogue. People who were interviewed for this evaluation voiced appreciation for how the project had contributed to foster trust between the participants and build bridges between different social actors such as media persons and government officials in different countries during times of war and conflict in the MENA region.

Several interviewees noted that a third-party facilitator or mediator was needed to convene stakeholders and build common ground between technicians, policy and decision makers to sustain working relations. Although the Learning Journeys are appreciated for technical experience exchange, the political context in the MENA region after the ‘Arab Spring’ in 2011 has a limiting effect on participants to apply their newly gained knowledge on transboundary water management.

Political realities

When the ‘Blue Peace’ report was published in 2011, it stated:

*this report is being presented at a promising time despite appearance of stagnation or even failure in reconciliation initiatives in the region. The relationship between Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon has dramatically improved in 2–3 years prior to the publication of this report.*⁶

As we know, later that same year the ‘Arab Spring’ unfolded through protests, governmental changes, and culminated with conflicts and war in the region. The turmoil in the MENA region and in particular Syria has worsened over the years, and SFG found it unfeasible to continue to include representatives from Syria due to the political development between the Syrian Government and the international

⁶ Strategic Foresight Group. 2011. *The Blue Peace Rethinking Middle East Water*, page i.

community. The European Union imposed sanctions on Syria soon after the atrocities in Syria became known in 2011. The European Union still maintains restrictive measures against the Syrian regime. The international sanctions on Syria forbid SFG from using public funds from Sweden and Switzerland to cover expenses for Syrian nationals to participate in the project. The ambiguities around if, who and how anyone could participate had the effect of SFG avoiding taking any chances to include someone, although SFG all along considered Syria to be an important stakeholder which should have participated.

Participants who were interviewed noted that Syria was missed in the discussions, as it is an important actor for the discussions on the transboundary water cooperation with the other neighbouring countries. Syria plays an important role for the discussions with Turkey and Iraq on managing collaborative solutions for sustainable regional water management of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, as well as with Turkey and Lebanon about the Orontes River, with Lebanon on El Kebir River, and with Jordan on the Yarmouk River. Given the importance of Syria for regional transboundary water management this was highlighted in several conversations. In response to the question about how to involve people from Syria during the current political situation, interviewees suggested that non-political experts in or from Syria should have been brought into the conversations. For reasons stated above this was not possible.

Similarly, the international sanctions on Iran had the same effect. Again, participants felt that it would have been useful to include representatives from Iran since some critical discussions concern the transboundary water management of the Tigris River which is fed by several tributaries, of which Lesser Zab and Diyala are two major rivers which originate in Iran and supply Iraq with freshwater. The Diyala River plays an important role in agricultural production, and there are concerns that water projects in Iran, for example dams, reservoirs and canals, risk raising tensions with Iraq. A few people feel that there is a need for Iranian participants to be invited to the meetings to learn about the water situation and ensuing challenges in terms of water scarcity affecting the agricultural sector in Diyala Province, Iraq.

Given the war and violence in Syria and the political instability in the region, the political context is considered among some participants not conducive to a multilateral approach but rather a bilateral one. This is further underpinned by a concern among a few participants about the weak linkage between the positive discussions under the auspices of the 'Blue Peace' initiative and the decision makers at the ministerial level (politicians). On the other hand, there are voices raising the opposite view that there is a need to widen the circle of countries by inviting Syria and Iran to activities under the 'Blue Peace' initiative.

As the section on the 'Consensus on the Tigris River' below indicates, the two paths described above successfully enabled Blue Peace participants to sit together and discuss and reach consensus on water cooperation between Iraq and Turkey.

However, the design of a regional platform for consensus building on water cooperation is complex, and it includes many factors that are hypothesised to affect its outcomes. The nature and effectiveness of efforts to reach consensus or an agreement depend as much on who the parties are and the character of their interests, positions and interaction, as on the capacity and style of the convener. These efforts are a contingent form of political influence; its performance and results are contingent upon context. The fact that many interviewees feel it is necessary to include senior decision makers at the ministerial level of governments to institutionalise the results achieved indicates a readiness to advance the current achievement of building trust among Blue Peace participants to start building a regional mechanism that is institutionalised and supported by the high-level decision makers in the MENA region. It resonates with the concept note for a new architecture of water cooperation in the Middle East, described briefly above in the section ‘Soft infrastructure’. Several ‘Blue Peace’ participants think that the next step is now to develop an initiative for a regional commission on water cooperation. However, given the dynamics of the political landscape in the Middle East where the turnover of political leaders at the ministerial level are rather high, it is important to find ways to anchor processes within the political system.

In contrast to involving people at a ‘very high level’ of the ministries, all interviewees agreed that the inclusion of media persons in the initiative was ‘the right thing’. Their case studies and reporting on women and refugees in communities, as well as their impact analysis of water scarcity on vulnerable groups by actually visiting and interviewing local people added significant value to the conversations in the meetings. The stories told by the media persons contributed to a strong ownership of promoting responsibility to address water management issues.

Vertical integration in the water discourse

Both the forums and conferences brought attention to new aspects in relation to water management. For instance, the important linkage between humanitarian and development efforts in relation to water was emphasised for better understanding. As was the linkage between women, water and peace. In 2011, SFG started to invite media persons to different activities. This was greatly appreciated by policy makers and water experts. They reckoned that the participation of media persons changed the dynamic during the meetings. The media persons brought perspectives of women and marginalised groups to the fore, and were able to convey stories about how the water situation at the local level affected these groups. The media was also recognised as an important actor to package and channel information from policy makers and water experts to people in the communities. The SFG platform helped to develop a dialogue and collaboration between media persons, policy makers and water experts. The media persons contributed significantly to highlighting and sharing insights about the role of women, gender and marginalised groups in the publications, conferences and forums. Many of the media persons were female journalists from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.

Not only did the media persons capture the vulnerabilities and challenges that women face as water users, but their contribution also shed light on how women are systematically prevented from participating in decision-making processes that affect them. The local traditional systems and culture often keep women away from discussions which would otherwise be highly relevant to them, such as their access to water and how to best manage water resources. SFG through the involvement of media persons truly helped spread information about the impact of water scarcity on people and communities.

Policy makers and water experts stated their appreciation for the media's contribution to raise more awareness on drivers and effects of water management in relation to women, internally displaced people and refugees. It was also mentioned that this broader approach also helped participants to better understand conflict risks at a community level, which are driven partly by lack of control and ability to manage access to and use of water. It was also mentioned that many of the participants need to hear the voice of women and vulnerable groups to understand the suffering and difficulties they experience while farming their land or managing health issues such as cholera.

Consensus on the Tigris River

In June 2014 under the auspices of the Blue Peace initiative, 15 senior representatives⁷ of Iraq and Turkey reached a consensus on a Plan of Action for promoting exchange and calibration of data and standards pertaining to Tigris River flows. SFG, with support from the Swiss Government, facilitated five meetings from September 2013 leading up to the consensus meeting in Geneva in June 2014. The Tigris Consensus Process was considered a major breakthrough for the Blue Peace initiative, which also gained support from the High-Level Forum on Blue Peace in the Middle East during its meeting in September 2014. The agreement proposed the identification of two stream-gauging stations in Turkey, one in the upstream part of the river and one near the border; and, similarly, in Iraq (one in the border region, and one in the downstream part of the river). The stations were meant to be used for the measurement of both quantity and quality of water. The technical cooperation between Iraq and Turkey was intended to be managed by their relevant ministries. The consensus was welcomed by government officials, and it is still recognised as a breakthrough. The Swiss Government currently provides technical support to the Iraqi Government to rehabilitate a water monitoring station by preparing the tender

⁷ Including senior advisors of the prime ministers, former cabinet ministers, members of parliament, officials of water ministries and water authorities, and experts from Iraq and Turkey.

process for procuring adequate technical equipment. The Kurdish Regional Government was also consulted in this process, which incorporated their views and positions.

2.3.2 Relevance

By involving the media, SFG gave a voice to the perspectives of women and marginalised groups. The media persons were conduits to incorporate these perspectives, and without them these perspectives would likely have been rather weak. As mentioned above, the stories and case studies presented in SFG's publication *Women, Water and Peace: Crisis of Survival in the Middle East* (2015) illustrate the suffering and struggle of women and vulnerable groups, as well as the horrendous consequences of despair and human indignity by being denied protection of human rights and access to basic services such as water and sanitation. It highlights the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls. It looks into the underlying sources of water-related risks for refugees and internally displaced women in camps. The report helps to understand the underlying causes of women's vulnerability to violence in relation to water and sanitation in the refugee and internally displaced persons camps, and therefore outlines a number of assumptions to improve safety for women. The report also illustrates examples of addressing water shortages in villages by drilling wells to store rainfall, or protesting against authorities' inaction in renovating water supply systems. The report was particularly appreciated for its close-up reporting from within communities in the villages and refugee camps depicting women's vulnerability to water scarcity and insecurity. Most media persons who were interviewed said that their participation in the SFG project helped them to report better on water issues, and they felt there was a strong response from the public who wanted to know more about their rights, government plans at the local and national levels, and how they can engage to secure access or improve access to clean water.

The field research indirectly empowered women in the communities, who felt listened to and respected, and felt encouraged to make their voices heard to influence water management and water cooperation at the community level. They learnt about their rights to claim representation in local committees on water management, and hold authorities accountable to deliver basic services such as water and sanitation. Not only are women often not represented in policy and decision making at the national and local levels in the MENA region, but also the political, economic and social structures discriminate against the needs, concerns and interests of women.

The two additional reports within the series of 'Crisis of Survival in the Middle East', *The Hydroinsecure: Crisis of Survival in the Middle East* (2014) and *Water and Violence: Crisis of Survival in the Middle East* (2014), are two desk-researched reports providing a detailed picture of the conditions of water access for vulnerable people in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey. The reports help to understand to what extent the populations in these countries face serious challenges to access water,

and what risks come along with coping with poverty, drought and displacement. The reports were used during the panel discussions in the conferences and high-level meetings.

The perspectives of women and marginalised groups is also about reviewing and addressing problems to promote a just and fair system that takes into account the equal rights between women and men. There is great need for more reporting and discussions on women, water and peace. In addition, according to the media persons, training of women at the community level on water management has been noted to be highly desirable. The underlying structural causes of the current bad water management in the region can probably partly be found in the exclusion of women from the discussions and processes for policy and decision making at the community and national levels. The more and better understanding of how water crises impact women and marginalised groups differently from men, the more likely the water management system will be able to mitigate potential and actual risks to water crisis. In this context, a few interviewees stressed the importance of not missing to incorporate case studies and stories depicting the struggles and concerns facing women and marginalised groups at the community level, and their desired or actual ways of solving water-related problems. There is a concern that quantitative data fail to tell the stories of the people in the communities. SFG has in that way contributed to both qualitative and quantitative reporting, and also contributed to the creation of vertical integration in the water discourse from high-end policy making to grassroots-level concerns. To actually pick up on the risk driven by the competition for limited water resources by people from different groups – Yazidi, Arab, Turkman and Kurd – as it was reported by Maria Saldarriaga from a refugee camp in Iraq (see *Women, Water and Peace: Crisis of Survival in the Middle East*), provides very important perspectives to understand conflict drivers and conflict impacts, and how to try to mitigate these conflict risks as they relate to water.

In terms of other institutions and sources of information, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) and universities in the region offer relevant sources and information on water management and water cooperation.

2.3.3 Sustainability

As mentioned throughout this section on SFG, Blue Peace participants have to a large degree contributed to the design and implementation of the project by engaging in the meetings and conferences, which were often a platform for the next set of activities. This has shaped a strong sense of ownership of the process and commitment to contribute to positive results. The level of trust and collaboration among the participants is largely the result of the dialogue, mutual respect and understanding among the participants that have been promoted and facilitated by SFG. All interviewees agreed that they want to continue SFG's work and establish some kind of regional mechanism that also involves decision makers at the national level and

coordinates with the subnational (municipal) level. Many of the interviewees feel that there is a need to keep up the momentum of meetings and dialogue, and also to create tools for continued exchange, such as a website for participants. The project has likely contributed to developing and fostering new long-term relations between participants, but this does not mean that the current network of participants will be sustained over time without a regional mechanism.

As mentioned above (section ‘Political realities’), Blue Peace participants are currently discussing building a regional mechanism for water cooperation in the Middle East region.

The role of the media, which has been mentioned throughout this section, was given significant space to influence the project and strengthen the voice of women and marginalised groups.

2.3.4 Conclusions

SFG’s approach to create a soft infrastructure for water cooperation in the Middle East has worked. A success factor has been SFG’s own contacts and network with key individuals at the highest policy level in the region – people who have had a strong influence on the design and implementation of the project. Also, SFG’s approach kept the momentum of activities and stayed in continuous contact with key stakeholders.

Blue Peace participants felt that SFG listened to their concerns and interests, and were flexible and willing to adapt the project implementation to their feedback along with adaptation to events and changes in the region. Despite not having a presence in the region, SFG fostered a feeling of being accessible and available to respond swiftly and support ownership and commitment that enabled readiness for a regional mechanism for water cooperation in the Middle East.

SFG published reports on the Blue Peace initiative, which covered the political, social and economic context in the Middle East, and how it impacts different dimensions of water management. These products almost replace the traditional context analyses, baselines, risk mitigation strategies and plans that usually go with a project proposal. SFG’s project proposal is rather simple and straightforward, and does not include any of these additional supporting documents.

The design, planning and monitoring of SFG by the senior management is rather intuitive, and done in consultation with the key stakeholders. The theory of change is in many ways underpinned by multiple implicit assumptions. For both SFG and its partners, including Sida, the project implementation would most likely have gained from having made the assumptions explicit and documented in order to trace and monitor them. In this way, SFG and partners would have continuously learnt what worked and what did not work, and why it was successful or not. It is generally

important, not only for SFG, but overall in development cooperation, to be aware of the assumptions underpinning change as well as the risks of impacting negatively the series of assumptions for positive change. A robust monitoring and evaluation framework helps an organisation to validate whether or not the indicators provide information about progress, and whether there is reliable and accurate data to measure progress. It would have been useful if SFG had elaborated in more detail what “real institutional change” would have included from having established ‘soft infrastructure’.

Monitoring the progress of interventions promoting dialogue, trust and collaboration needs to consider indicators carefully. SFG’s results and monitoring matrices are generally weak for validating change contributed by or attributed to SFG. This intervention would have gained from process indicators trying to capture readiness at a group level within and among the participating countries in the Blue Peace initiative. The indicators could also have been more calibrated towards the changes contributed by the media persons. It would have been very interesting to understand in what way media persons contributed to changes. From this evaluation report, the Evaluation Team understands that they managed to contribute to bring in and give a voice to the perspectives of women and marginalised groups, while at the same time they also contributed to raise public awareness and generate public reaction on water issues.

Setting specific indicators on the objective of creating a vertical integration in the water discourse in the Middle East from high-end policy concerns to grassroots-level concerns would help both SFG and its partners to better understand what works or what does not. In the SFG case, the approach of vertical integration linking the highest policy level in the region with the grassroots level by involving media persons yielded what was intended. Being able to do so can presumably be attributed to the selection of media persons who had the skills to link with both high policy and grassroots levels.

Although it was not an explicit assumption that the project would lead to a regional mechanism for water management, the project stakeholders were presumably hoping for a level of institutionalisation of the project progress. To achieve this there needs to be a specifically designed process for institutionalisation that is carefully coached and supported by external partners. The Tigris Consensus Process is a relevant and good example illustrating technical cooperation between two countries following a political agreement, which is still in need of coaching and support to be institutionalised like the Rhine River Basin.

Thus, for the future, the Evaluation Team concludes that the inclusion of media persons contributes to a two-way communication that both voices concerns of women and marginalised people, and also informs them about water issues and their rights. Their involvement has been a win-win to the media persons, the water experts and

members of parliament. News articles and TV and social media broadcasts by media persons have overall had a very positive, if unintended effect.

This raises questions about whether vertical integration has the potential to be even stronger by the inclusion of civil society. If not, it is also important to know why a certain social actor is not included given the role of civil society to voice the interests and concerns of marginalised and vulnerable groups. We know that water management requires coordination and governance at different levels of society from regional and national to local. Thus, it seems important that the social and political dimensions along the vertical axis of public services and power be well integrated with the overall discussions to understand challenges, problems and risks to better design solutions and be held accountable to the people.

SFG shall of course not be accountable for the water management system, but the way SFG included media persons in the Blue Peace initiative indicates the value of ‘thinking out of the box’ and enhances the understanding beyond solely technical issues. The consultancy team finds the aspect of human security and human dignity closely intertwined with water and peace. By understanding the community level, where complex dynamics over rights to scarce water are likely to exist, as well as the potential for conflict at the inter- and intra-community levels, the regional and national stakeholders are more likely to view the water issue not only as a technical or diplomatic issue, but also from a socio-economic perspective that drives stability, development and peace. For example, specific elements relevant for women and marginalised groups, but also in general at the sub-national and community levels are: understanding informal sources of power, which include religious leadership; recognising traditional systems of governance; the role of civil society; and improving cooperation between traditional and formal institutions.

The Evaluation Team concludes that SFG managed to contribute to the initiation and strengthening of the channels for dialogue and nurtured a spirit of readiness to move the current dialogue forward towards institutionalisation of transboundary water cooperation. We know that the elements underpinning the change process – such as publishing reports, arranging conferences and meetings, and organising international study trips (learning journeys) – have served well to foster and nurture dialogue among participants on water cooperation.

As pointed out above, SFG has contributed to creating a publicly available source of documents on water cooperation and water issues. This is a resource that needs to be further capitalised on, both within and outside the region. SIWI, ESCWA and ministries in the region can learn from the SFG experience as they continue to work on water diplomacy and water management in the region.

The lack of participation of individuals from Iran and Syria is considered critical because of their influence on the Euphrates and Tigris river systems, and their participation would potentially have contributed to widening the readiness for

sustainable regional transboundary water cooperation. However, the consultants fully recognise the difficulties of including participants from these countries due to the international sanctions and the decisions that SFG had to make to respect and comply with stipulations in the agreement with Sida and the Swiss Government.

In summary, SFG has contributed to an enabling environment through facilitating contacts and networking for non-official negotiations among actors who are not affiliated with the governments (track 2). It currently has the potential to be leveraged to formal track 1 (official negotiations between parties directly representing the governments) or track 1,5 negotiations (official actors who act on behalf of government and cooperate with non-official actors, e.g. scholars or practitioners). This window of opportunity for formal mediation or facilitation can be relevant for international donors to support.

2.3.5 Recommendations

For SFG

- Improve the PME system to strengthen the results framework with clear objectives, indicators and means of verification.
- Elaborate a more explicit theory of change/intervention logic that clearly links the series of assumptions leading to a desired change or outcome.
- Consider its partnership approach with other local organisations to support research activities.

For Sida

- Identify synergies between projects that complement each other in terms of strengthening technical water management capacity and promoting a rights based approach at local, national and regional levels.
- Support a local or regional initiative that has the capacity and legitimacy to bring together key stakeholders to bridge track 2 and track 1 processes.
- It is considered preferable if a regional initiative is located in Amman, Jordan, due to its moderate political position in the MENA region.

Concerning a local or regional think tank

- The regional initiative needs to consider widening the group of participating countries to include Iran and Syria (given it is *not* in conflict with international sanctions).
- Develop a regional vision and strategy for water cooperation.
- Build on existing water management structures and results, and ensure that there is vertical integration of high-level policy makers with voices of women and marginalised groups to create sustainable and equitable use of water resources and delivery of clean water supply and sanitation services to all.
- Ensure that the design, monitoring and evaluation processes integrate a rights based approach as well as a perspective of the poor, in order involve women and marginalised groups.

- Set a regional agenda for integrating water issues with public institutions such as:
 - The education system and curriculum
 - Civil society to engage in the consumption of water
 - Religious institutions (mosques)
 - Strengthen the cooperation between universities and parliaments.

3 Lessons Learnt

This evaluation covered three distinct separate projects but all relevant for the objective of Sector 2 of the previous regional cooperation strategy for Swedish support to the Middle East and North Africa (2010-2015). The distinction and differences in purpose, approach and methodology offer some inspiration and insights for cross-learning between the three projects. Although, there are no salient references for how certain aspects from one project can be well suited for another project, we believe that each project can learn from the key drivers for success that have been described and demonstrated in the previous chapter, but also learn from what has not worked as well.

Below outlines some of the lessons learnt emerging from the key findings and conclusions from the evaluation of the three projects that we believe are critical for sustainable results.

First, the GWP-Med offers a lesson in understanding the importance of balancing different interests and priorities in the working process. The projects input comprises a mix of highly specialist technical work of diagnoses and analysis of the water sector. Identified gaps for improving water governance are used to define a set of detailed technical recommendations that are set in an action plan for each country. The other input element is the stakeholder engagement and consultation. Stakeholders assist the technical work of diagnostics with their information and input, and validate the country reports including the action plans. Focused discussions amongst certain groups of stakeholders were also organised around particular subjects, such as the regular consultations with donors.

While balancing those two groups of different inputs, there are trade-offs to be considered. Due to the highly specialised nature of the subject (water governance and financing water services), the technical process needs to be focused and follow a technical methodology to ensure a sound technical report. The stakeholder consultations around these technical subjects need to be highly adaptive and staged around the degree of knowledge and perceptions of the stakeholders in relation to the technical subject matter. This is particularly important in country contexts where open discussions and stakeholder engagement are not historically or culturally practised to the degree one aspires to in some other countries.

In order to improve stakeholder engagement in such contexts around a technical matter, it is necessary to plan and structure the engagement of stakeholders carefully. Consultation forums would yield better results if they were structured to deal directly with constraints of engagement. Different approaches to ensure the beneficial

engagement of water users from rural areas and from different sectors, as well as women and youth/children, in addition to the small private sector and grassroots community organisations, are necessary. A detailed and comfortable budget, appropriate time frame and experts would be necessary for these engagements to reach the desired outcome of robust stakeholder input.

GWP-Med's approach of prioritising synergies with national and regional important political and reform processes also has its impact on how to structure and plan stakeholder engagement. This is another trade-off that implementing partners need to be aware of. The more one seeks synergies and alignment with mainstream processes, the more likely one is to lose control over the approach of full engagement of stakeholders, especially at national level, with particular impact on special groups such as the poor, marginalised and women, for example.

Had the priority been on planning, organising and structuring stakeholder engagement, the synergies may have been less than what was achieved in this project; however, one can argue that the results and outcomes of the discussions may have been more 'special-group friendly'. One can imagine a country report that focused more on identifying gaps in engaging certain groups of stakeholders making the recommendations veer more towards balancing the mainstream existing efforts for reform.

If such was the desired change sought by a project like this, the budget and work plans would have been significantly different, arguably with larger budgets and a slower pace of implementation.

While a lesson learnt drawn from the GWP-Med project is the importance of considering a highly adaptive and staged stakeholder consultation process with an inclusion of water users from rural areas and different sectors, such as women, grass root community organizations, and small private sector businesses, the REC project (the WaSe component) demonstrates that a participatory approach bringing together sub-national level (government and non-governmental) organizations resulted in many cross learning effects.

Specifically from the REC project, although the project has not yet been completed and has not yet been able to demonstrate the full extent of its results, some tentative lessons can be drawn.

The participatory approach under the WaSe component focused on bringing together subnational-level (government and non-governmental) organisations. Having representatives from government organisations and NGOs working together is something that these groups were not used to, while NGOs were normally not even invited to participate. However, having these groups meet and work together on an equal footing under REC facilitation created an interest and mutual respect, which resulted in many cross-learning effects.

A good basis was laid providing confidence that with a proper continuation (through a project extension), positive results for water users and women are likely to be achieved. On the other hand, if no proper continuation would follow, this might very negatively and for a significant time affect the momentum built, shattering expectations and trust.

Results regarding the poor were disappointing, as poor families were only involved as recipients, not being involved in the design and planning of project interventions. In addition, only a minor part of interventions were targeted at the poor, i.e. some families being selected from government administered lists of poor families to receive rainwater harvesting installations.

However, due to the fact that the project management cycle of local water security action planning (and implementation) was not yet finalised at the time of the project evaluation, it was not possible to confirm that the position of local-level water users, women and marginalised groups had actually improved.

The implementation agency's focus and actual engagement of a significant number of female experts, female local staff and targeting female participants in the project's activities laid a useful foundation to address gender and gender mainstreaming. However, without also having designated gender experts and without having gender and gender mainstreaming integrated into the project planning, design, implementation and monitoring decisions and actions, similar water projects were bound to fall short of achieving maximum results.

The project focused on capacity development of water professionals and practitioners, much more so than on awareness raising for civil society and the general public (as water users involved in and/or affected by water resource and water-use decisions). Politicians were not targeted by the project. In general, relatively young, mid-level professionals and practitioners were targeted in the project's capacity-development activities. This group proved to be eager to participate, being willing to fill the voids in their capacities, and gratefully accepting these professional development opportunities. Moreover, where professionals and civil society participated in joint activities, these encounters were generally, and by both parties alike, perceived as an eye-opener and rated as highly useful. Whereas these two groups were largely used to operating in separate spheres, these activities resulted in a strong desire to continue to deepen these interactions.

As a general rule, any implementing agency's understanding of the legal and institutional framework and the early involvement and support of the countries' key water ministries are crucial for the successful programming and implementation of a project. The lack of the former, specifically in the early implementation stages of the WaSe component, caused delays as a result of a lack of acceptance on the part of the key ministries. The early involvement of the key ministries in the capacity-

development needs assessment under the WATER-POrT component proved essential in establishing mutual trust and confidence from the key ministries regarding the approach and capabilities of the implementing agency.

The engagement of a mix of international, regional and national experts has greatly benefited the project. Activity evaluations and evaluators' interviews demonstrated that the capacity-development activities provided by the different experts were well received, providing international best practices, a wide experience in the MENA water sector and a profound understanding of the specific local conditions in the participating countries. Such a setup, comprising different organisations with different backgrounds, also proved to pose management challenges. This affected the way the implementing agency's project management systems and procedures were organised, which caused complications in communication, procurement and audit, and which in turn resulted in disappointments, frustrations and project implementation delays.

A series of activities for the same target group(s), and using a mix of delivery methods, have proven to increase the participants' commitment and support to the project. Activity evaluations and evaluators' interviews with participants and participants' supervisors and managers showed that serial and incremental interventions for the same target group(s) and interventions using different capacity-development methods were highly preferred over one-off and/or typical classroom training activities. This new generation of future top professionals and leaders were very keen to be exposed to new technical and technological developments and to use modern means of communication (e.g. e-platforms, e-learning).

For regional activities that included international travel, some activities yielded better value for money (e.g. transboundary and national water resources management) than others for which cheaper in-country alternatives were more useful (e.g. local water security action planning). Regional activities are also more difficult to sustain, although it was indicated that ongoing contacts were and can continue to be maintained through email and social media and other bilateral or regional water projects.

Three key lessons can be drawn from the SFG project. First, the involvement of media persons demonstrating how a third party can strategically facilitate information, learning and understanding to make efforts to influence priorities for policy and decision making at the local and national level.

Second, partly as a consequence of involving the media persons the discourse on water management was broadened to also include social aspects articulated by women and marginalized groups. It has allowed at a minimum to better understand there is a critical linkage between water scarcity and the protection and health of women. This has been particularly useful to demonstrate the linkage between water, women and security.

Thirdly, the Learning Journeys concept is a good example for fostering new relationships between individuals who represent different spheres in the society. Although Learning Journeys focused on bringing individuals together for learning about how other international river basins have moved from division to cooperation, a new version of a similar concept could be focusing on bringing together similar stakeholders but to learn about the social context due to water scarcity from within the MENA-region.

The SFG case demonstrates the impact of what the rights perspective can bring when it is integrated into programming, although the project did not initially or fully integrate the rights perspective in a traditional meaning throughout the project implementation. By involving media in the project it contributed to channel the voices and views of women and marginalised groups on water management. SFG started the project by targeting high-level policy makers to discuss regional water management, but the project design successfully broadened the focus through media persons to include the perspectives of poor women and marginalised groups. There was appreciation among these groups to be able to voice and share their stories about how difficult water scarcity made their lives in terms health, safety and security, and livelihood. What made the inclusion of media persons successful was that they were also given the platform not only to share their reports and articles, but also to participate in the conferences, learning journeys and other events, to engage in the discussions and thereby inform, advocate and influence the mind set and attitudes of the high-level policy makers.

For many practitioners working at the margins of politics and development, it can be a lonely and powerless feeling to lack access to or be excluded from policy-making processes and national public implementation of projects. Vertical integration through different forms of dialogue and network forums offers opportunities to bridge voices at the grassroots level with national policy making. Vertical integration can take many forms and shapes. The support and facilitation by SFG was one approach that was greatly appreciated. It also encouraged other ideas to be considered for the future, such as building a platform that brings members of parliament closer to the grassroots level. The evaluation team has learnt through this assignment, but also through other evaluations, that members of parliament are not always as well informed about and connected to the grassroots level as expected and necessary. Strengthening the linkages between parliamentarians and grassroots level can have many benefits for democratic governance and social cohesion. It gives opportunities for learning about political and socio-economic factors that obstruct development at the local level, while also contributing to nurturing accountability and transparency in the public sector. In the same way that media persons played a role as a conduit between the grassroots level and the high-level policy makers, the local civil society actors can be involved in the dialogue process. The evaluation team has learnt from this evaluation that the personalities of the media persons played a significant role, and similarly the individuals representing the civil society actors have to be carefully selected in order

to have the trust and legitimacy to facilitate vertical integration. This can be particularly relevant given that the institutional capacity at the national level on water management is limited and weak, and there is a lack of local coordination of water management at the national and community levels.

An assumption that representatives of a government, parliament or national public agencies are well informed and have a robust understanding of critical needs that drive and influence people's reality of survival and human dignity is a great risk. Organisations like SFG have to carefully sensitise the target groups and their level of holistic understanding of all the vertical and horizontal linkages between women, water, and peace in a society. Having a multi-dimensional approach to peace and development requires organisational capacity to identify and assess a multitude of conflict drivers and conflict risks, and prioritise critical issues that demand more attention in the short and long term. Thus, making high-level policy makers aware about how water is intrinsically linked with human dignity, peace and development can help to ensure that efforts to improve water management is designed and planned through involving target groups and key stakeholders to understand their interests, concerns and priorities. Whether it is internally displaced persons or refugee camps, villages in rural areas, towns and cities in marginalised parts of a country, or large urban centres, there is going to be a need for water supply. This raises important questions about how to ensure sustainable and equitable use of water resources and delivery of clean water supply and sanitation services to all.

As described in this report, particularly under section 2.3.2 it is essential to broaden the discourse on water management beyond strict technical discussions in order to understand the impact of the water scarcity on human dignity and survival of women and vulnerable groups. The media persons managed to visualize some of the important linkages between water management, women and security.

As useful and appreciated as the Learning Journeys to different river basins were for the participants, a similar concept for learning would be very important and useful through field excursions to countries within the MENA region, especially for high-level policy makers to learn more about challenges, problems and solutions in water management from the perspectives of women and marginalised groups within the region.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for the evaluation of 3 projects on transboundary water management in the MENA region

Date: 2017-01-23

PLANIt ID-number: 10777

Introduction

The ambition of Swedish development cooperation is to support policy coherence, with the explicit objective of helping to create improved living conditions for people living in poverty and oppression. The work is guided by poor people's perspectives on development and their human rights. These aims are linked to the Sustainable Development Goals in terms of social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The development cooperation in the MENA region, as per the Regional Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa, 2016-2020, shall contribute to strengthened democracy, increased respect for human rights and sustainable development that improve the prospects of peace, stability and freedom in the region.

The three projects within the water resources sector in the Middle East and North Africa region "Sustainable Use of Transboundary Water Resources and Water Security Management", "Overcoming governance challenges to the mobilisation of financing for the Mediterranean water sector" and "Experience Exchange for Regional Water Cooperation in the Middle East" are currently supported by Sida. All three projects were decided under the previous regional Cooperation strategy for Swedish support to the Middle East and North Africa (2010-2015) and assessed to be relevant for the objective of Sector 2: Sustainable use of regional water resources. As they are being finalized during 2017, an external evaluation is requested to assess whether they have reached their objectives and Sida is therefore procuring a team of evaluators to conduct the evaluation. Within each project, the evaluators are also asked to assess the relevance for gender, as well as sustainability related to ownership by stakeholders from the region. Each project is described further in sections 3-5.

Evaluation purpose

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to provide the project implementation partners, local stakeholders and Sida with relevant knowledge on the effectiveness, as well as aspects of the relevance and sustainability, of the project approaches for building cooperation on transboundary natural resource management and improving water management. Documentation and analysis of results, as well as strengths and weaknesses in the project

methodology, will be used by the implementing partners in developing their future work. The evaluation will also provide useful documentation for Sida in the design of potential future support and be an opportunity for local stakeholders to provide feedback on the work methods and results of the respective projects.

A secondary purpose of the evaluation is to provide cross-learning between the three projects by comparing lessons learned and highlighting critical factors for successful change processes for the benefit of the implementing partners and Sida.

Strategic Foresight Group: Experience Exchange for Regional Water Cooperation in the Middle East

Background

Through “Experience Exchange for Regional Water Cooperation in the Middle East Phase 2”, Strategic Foresight Group (SFG) aims to create social infrastructure to create preconditions for water cooperation in the Middle East. The project is implemented from July 2014 to March 2017 and has a total budget of SEK 9 500 000, all of which is financed by Sida. The current project was preceded by two previous ones supported by Sida: A water security study conducted 2009-2011, culminating in the report “The Blue Peace: Rethinking Middle East Water” (SEK 2 150 000) and “Experience Exchange for Regional Water Cooperation in the Middle East Phase 1” from January 2013 to March 2014 (SEK 2 900 000). The project includes stakeholders from Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria (though there is currently no engagement with Syrian officials due to the on-going conflict).

SFG is a think tank based in Mumbai, India. Over the years, it has gained respect in the MENA region at high political levels for its role as an independent think tank on water cooperation and water security. Its role is to facilitate and convene the networking. Stakeholders see SFG as an honest and reliable broker, with no hidden agenda.

The region covered by the project has been going through and continues to go through a period of significant political upheaval, including internal conflicts, transboundary conflicts, terrorist attacks, attempts of coup d'état, dissolution of national parliaments, among others.

Intervention objective

The overall objective is to create a social infrastructure, based on networks and learning groups, for shared water resources management in the MENA region. The objective aligns to previous works that SFG has received both Sida funds for and gained international recognition for, such as the experience exchange work 2012-2014 and the work of The Blue Peace, where pathways and links between water resources collaboration between riparian states and peace, were explored and demonstrated.

In the current phase (2014-2017), the work has been both expanded and deepened following explicit demands from stakeholders in the region. The project continues to strengthen networks and to increase learning exchanges for transboundary water collaboration among opinion makers in the region in order to further strengthen and expand the Blue Peace community of media leaders, parliamentarians, former ministers, government officials, water

experts and others. New for this phase was that it also aims to create vertical integration in the water discourse in the Middle East from high end policy concerns to grassroots level concerns in order to include marginalised groups. SFG has also attempted to more explicitly address gender issues in water management in the current phase.

Summary of intervention logic

SFG works on the assumption and evidence that transboundary water cooperation enhances chances for regional peace. This work is conducted through shared learning events and conferences, where participants are exposed to both practices and knowledge around peaceful water cooperation. This is meant to lead to a shared understanding and increased trust between stakeholders in the region. SFG produces its own analysis (collated research reports) to further support these messages to the stakeholders and wider international readers. A novelty in the current phase is to link water cooperation at ground levels to those of high level policy making, which will be guided by the assumption that this knowledge will further support the value of stakeholders' shared analysis and produce policy and disseminate knowledge which is relevant to all stakeholders of transboundary water cooperation (water inclusion).

Evaluation questions

Effectiveness

- To what extent has the project been effective in realising the main objective of creating soft infrastructure for dialogue on water cooperation in the MENA region? For example,
 - Has the project facilitated the emergence of champions of water cooperation, networks and dialogue forums? If so why, if not, why not?
 - How have participants in the Learning Journeys applied what they have learned in their work?
 - How have participants communicated and/or cooperated with each other following participation in project activities?
 - Has the project resulted in an enhanced empowerment and agency to act among participants?
- To what extent did the project have access to and was able to influence change processes important for the fulfilment of the stated objectives? Is it possible to draw any conclusions about which actors and approaches that have been more successful in achieving results? What are the lessons learned (positive and negative)? What has worked and what has not worked?
- Has the project demonstrated effective resilience to the volatile environment in which it operates? For example,
 - Has the project been able to overcome practical problems arising from such political crisis, such as restrictions on movement, visa blockades, safety of travellers, constraints on media, reluctance of governments for permission to host meetings in the region? Provide recommendations for improvements, if relevant.

- What lessons can be learnt from the experience of this project for engagement in the Middle East in terms of navigating the political crisis and relating to cross sections of society, ranging from senior decision makers to young media persons?

Relevance

- To what extent has the intervention taken the perspectives of women, gender and marginalised groups into account? For example,
 - o Are women and marginalised groups able to have an input on the agenda of project activities?
 - o Are there obstacles to the active participation of women and marginalised groups in project activities? If so, how are these addressed by SFG? Provide recommendations for improvements, if relevant.
 - o How are women and marginalised groups affected by the results of the intervention (as stakeholders and as end beneficiaries)?
- Has the project addressed its objective of vertical integration in water discourse by connecting high end policy concerns to grass-root level policy concerns?
 - o Specifically, has the project been able to engage Ministers and Parliamentarians to understand high end concerns, and journalists and civil society actors to understand grassroots level concerns?

Sustainability

- Do stakeholders from the targeted region demonstrate ownership of the design and implementation of the project? Is the project in line with their priorities?
- Has the project created self-sustaining relations between participants?

Evaluation scope and delimitations

The evaluation shall focus on the current project phase, i.e. from July 2014. Geographically, it should focus on stakeholders from Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon.

Regional Environmental Center: Sustainable Use of Transboundary Water Resources and Water Security Management

Background

The overall objective of the “Sustainable Use of Transboundary Water Resources and Water Security Management (WATER SUM)” is to promote and enhance sustainability of managing water resources in partner countries and the MENA region to reduce the downward spiral of poverty, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation. The project is implemented by Regional Environmental Center (REC) from April 2014 to June 2017 and has a total budget of SEK 55 000 000, all of which is financed by Sida.

REC is an international organisation based in Hungary. WATER SUM constitutes the first contribution by Sida to REC for work in the MENA region (though Sida has supported REC's work in other regions). Before WATER SUM, REC had limited experience from working in the region and the project therefore started with a 12 month inception period. The project has mainly been implemented in Tunisia and Jordan, though stakeholders from other countries in the MENA region have participated in conferences. Egypt initially decided not to join the project, but later expressed interest and is now included in the WATER POrT component. Initial communication was held with stakeholders in Morocco, but they later decided to formally step out of the project.

Intervention objectives

The Water SUM project is divided into two components: Water Resources Management Good Practices and Knowledge Transfer (WATER POrT) and Water and Security (WaSe). The objective of WATER POrT, which targets national authorities responsible for water management, is to accelerate more sustainable use of the region's water resources and strategic approach on adaptation to climate change. This is done by identifying best water management practices, demonstrating successful replication strategies, and disseminating and promoting good practices and replication strategies to practitioners, decision makers and interested public.

The WaSe component works with eight local communities in Tunisia and Jordan, which were selected during the inception period, to support the development of local water security action plans. It has the objective of promoting a comprehensive and integrated approach to water security and ecosystem services for sustainable development in selected municipalities and their local communities, as a part of efforts to combat water scarcity, reduce threat of conflicts, downward spiral of poverty, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation and increase overall human wellbeing within the wider context of ensuring regional peace and stability.

Summary of intervention logic

The project is built on the assumption that an improved and more sustainable management of water resources in the MENA region can be achieved through targeted capacity building for institutional and behavioural change, as well as through development of national action plans and local water security action plans that include inputs from actors from ministries, municipalities and the civil society.

Evaluation questions

Effectiveness

- To what extent has the project been effective in realising the main objective of each component? For example,
 - o Have participants in trainings applied what they have learned in their respective roles and work places?
 - o To what extent have downward spirals of poverty been addressed or mitigated?

- To what extent did the project have access to and was able to influence change processes important for the fulfilment of the stated objectives? Is it possible to draw any conclusions about which actors and approaches that have been more successful in achieving results? What are the lessons learned (positive and negative)? What has worked and what has not worked? Are there synergies between the two components and if so, are they being utilized? Have civil society actors been involved in the planning and implementation of activities and had the opportunity to provide inputs to local water security action plans?

Relevance

- To what extent has the intervention taken the perspectives of women, gender and marginalised groups into account? For example,
 - Are women and marginalised groups able to have an input on the agenda of project activities?
 - Are there obstacles to the active participation of women and marginalised groups in project activities? If so, how are these addressed by REC? Provide recommendations for improvements, if relevant.
 - How are women and marginalised groups affected by the results of the intervention (as stakeholders and as end beneficiaries)?
- Is there a regional added value of the project, for example through transfer of knowledge between participating countries?

Sustainability

- Do stakeholders from the targeted region (both national and local, including civil society) demonstrate ownership of the design and implementation of the project? Is the project in line with their priorities?
- To what extent do stakeholders own and sustain the results of the project?

Evaluation scope and delimitations

The evaluation should cover the entire project period. Geographically, it should focus on Tunisia and Jordan. At least one of the municipalities included in the WaSe component shall be visited.

Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean: Overcoming governance challenges to the mobilisation of financing for the Mediterranean water sector

Background

The overall objective of the project is to diagnose key bottlenecks and governance gaps in the mobilisation of financing for the Mediterranean water sector and provide realistic and implementable solutions, in the form of a set of operational guidelines and a compendium of good practices from within and outside the region. The project works at both regional and

national levels and is jointly promoted and implemented by Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with GWP-Med being Sida's agreement partner. The financial support from Sida, amounting to SEK 7 835 000, covers the project's regional component as well as financial support for national workshops within the country-focused component (in Palestine, Tunisia, Jordan and Lebanon).

Within the framework of the national component, country reviews are developed aiming to identify main governance challenges to financing water services (i.e. water supply and sanitation), including through Private Sector Participation (PSP), via in-depth technical and analytical work, based on tested and recognised OECD methodology, and multi-stakeholder policy dialogues aligning with GWP-Med consultation methodology. The policy dialogues complement the technical work and pave the way for recommendations and country-focused action plans based on international good practices.

The regional component concerns predominantly the facilitation of a regional multi-stakeholder dialogue for sharing policy experiences and promoting best practices across the Mediterranean and beyond and enabling the interface between policy-makers and private sector actors on governance reforms enhancing the water sector's financial sustainability. The regional and national work are closely interlinked, with the multi-stakeholder regional dialogue feeding the national work, while outcomes of the national work, including policy messages, success stories and lessons learnt feed the regional one.

The project's centrepiece and added-value lie, on the one hand, with the production of solid technical work based on accepted and tested OECD and GWP-Med methodologies, and on the other hand, with the facilitation of structured, multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral policy dialogues at national and regional levels. It represents the expansion and deepening of the work on water governance and financing that GWP-Med and OECD have been jointly implementing since 2008 in countries of the Mediterranean region (Egypt, Lebanon and some preliminary work in Tunisia). Moreover, the project has been formally labelled under the Union for the Mediterranean,⁸ which is the main political body of reference for the Europe-Mediterranean region. Project managers report that it is also included as tangible work contributing to the implementation of the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Water Strategy and Action Plan (2015, 2016) and has contributed to the on-going process towards the UfM Ministerial Conference on Water (2017).

Evaluation questions

Effectiveness

⁸ UfM labelling signifies that all 43 members recognise the value of the project for the regional peace and stability and support its implementation

- To what extent has the project been effective in realising the main objective of identifying and providing realistic and implementable solutions to the governance challenges for the mobilisation of financing for the Mediterranean water sector? For example,
 - Have the good practices, identified and disseminated in the project, been supported or adopted by stakeholders?
 - Has the project led to changes in policies or national plans/strategies?
- To what extent did the project have access to and was able to influence change processes important for the fulfilment of the stated objectives? Is it possible to draw any conclusions about which actors and methods have been more helpful and successful, respectively, in achieving results? What are the lessons learned (positive and negative)? What has worked and what has not worked?

Relevance

- Is there a regional added-value of the project? Does the regional component add value to the national work?
- Is the project relevant to national processes and national and sectoral strategies and plans on Water Supply and Sanitation in the targeted region?
- To what extent has the intervention taken the perspectives of women and gender into account? For example,
 - Have gender needs and rights been addressed in the national and regional consultations on water services?
 - To what extent have gender aspects in relation to water resources governance, financing and water supplies been explored within the project?
 - Are there obstacles to the active participation of women in project activities? If so, how are these addressed by GWP-MED? Provide recommendations for improvements, if relevant.
 - How are women affected by the results of the intervention (as stakeholders and as end beneficiaries)?
 - To what extent did the targeted and additional grant given by Sida in order to enhance understanding of gender and corporate social responsibility, leave traceable effects?

Sustainability

- Do stakeholders from the targeted region demonstrate ownership of the design and implementation of the project? Is the project in line with their priorities?
- To what extent do stakeholders own and sustain the results of the project?
- Has the project created self-sustaining relations between participants?

Evaluation scope and delimitations

The evaluation shall focus on the current project phase, i.e. from 2013. Regarding the national component of the project, the evaluation should focus on Palestine, Tunisia, Jordan

and/or Lebanon (at least two countries shall be included) and the results of the national workshops (i.e. the part of the project financed by Sida).

Synergies, complementarities and overlap between the projects

The main evaluation questions for the three projects have been kept similar in order to facilitate analysis of possible common findings, conclusions and lessons learned.

In addition to the questions related to each project above, the evaluation shall also assess whether there are areas where the projects complement or overlap each other. Are there synergies between the projects which could be used? Are there common lessons learned between the projects?

Approach and method

The work shall include a desk study of project documents, such as the ones listed in Annex 1, as well as interviews with relevant people, including stakeholders who have participated in activities.

In the tender, the consultant shall elaborate on the approach it plans to take. For example, what will the organisational set-up be, considering that three separate projects are to be evaluated? Will the same evaluators review all three projects or will there be three separate evaluation teams working in parallel? The tender shall also include an overall work plan, budget and suggested methods to be used. Security aspects relevant for conducting the evaluation should be taken into consideration.

The assignment will start with an inception phase. In the inception report, the full evaluation design shall be presented. This shall include a detailed work and time plan, and – amongst other relevant matters – an overview of questions (taking into account the questions listed above in Sections 3.2, 4.2, 5.2 and 6), a presentation of the method and basic considerations.

Organisation of the assignment and stakeholder involvement

The main stakeholders of the evaluation are: Sida, SFG, REC, GWP-Med and their participating partners.

The evaluation team shall report to the Sida programme manager responsible for the evaluation.

Stakeholders shall be involved during the evaluation process. In the tender, the consultants shall elaborate on how different stakeholder groups are to participate in and contribute to the evaluation process, reporting and dissemination phases of the evaluation. For example, how will relevant stakeholders be given the opportunity to participate in ongoing feedback, comment on the draft reports and so on? This shall include how the consultants plan on presenting and discussing the inception report with Sida, SFG, REC and GWP-Med, and, if needed, revise it.

The consultants shall be responsible for arranging meetings, travel, etc. related to the evaluation. Sida shall provide the consultants with key documents on the projects, such as project proposals, results frameworks and annual reports.

Evaluation Quality

All Sida's evaluations shall conform to OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation⁹. The evaluators shall use the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation¹⁰. The evaluators shall specify in the tender how quality assurance will be handled by them during the evaluation process.

Time Schedule, Reporting and Communication

The evaluation is expected to be carried out between March and May 2017. After contracting, the consultant shall hold a first meeting with Sida to discuss possible outstanding questions regarding the ToR. An inception report is to be submitted to Sida, SFG, REC and GWP-Med within 15 working days of the signature of the contract. The inception report shall have Sida's approval.

The exact period of field work shall be settled in dialogue with the main stakeholders.

A draft report shall be submitted by the consultant to Sida, SFG, REC and GWP-Med no later than April 17. The subsequent presentation and discussion of the review team's findings shall be scheduled as soon after this date as is possible.

A final report shall be submitted to Sida no later than May 5. The report shall be written in English and shall be professionally proof read. The evaluator shall, upon approval of the final report, insert the report into the Sida template for decentralised evaluations and submit it for publication to sida@sitrus.com, with a copy to the Sida Programme Manager as well as Sida's evaluation unit (evaluation@sida.se). The final report should have a clear structure and follow the report format in Sida's template for decentralised evaluations. The methodology used shall be described and explained, and all limitations shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed. The report should be no more than 40 pages excluding annexes.

⁹ DAC Quality Standards for development Evaluation, OECD 2010

¹⁰ Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2014

Evaluation Team Qualification

All team members shall have academic degrees in relevant fields such as: Environmental and/or Natural Resources Management, Rural Sociology/Anthropology, Peace and Conflict, Political Science, Development Studies, Gender Studies or similar.

The assignment shall be carried out by a team with expertise in:

- Previous experience of evaluations of complex and composite regional development cooperation
- Professional experience on transboundary water and/or natural resource management and cross-cutting aspects to the sector (such as gender, poverty, rights, participation)
- Previous experience on conflict/post-conflict environments
- In-depth knowledge of the Middle East and North Africa region
- Knowledge of and experience in working with gender and making gender analysis.
- Language skills: English and Arabic

The competences of the individual team members should be complimentary, and can include both level 1 and level 2 consultants, as defined in the framework agreement. The Evaluation Team should have a team leader who is a core team member. It shall be stated in the tender who will be the team leader. For team members that are not core members, a Curriculum Vitae shall be included and contain a full description of the team member's theoretical qualifications and professional work experience.

The evaluators must be independent of the evaluated activities and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

Resources

The budget ceiling for the evaluation amounts to 1 500 000 SEK. The consultant is fully responsible for issues relating to visa and accommodation during field visits.

Annexes

Annex A: List of key resources

Annex B: Data sheet on the evaluation object

Annex A: List of key resources

Evaluation of the Swedish development cooperation in-the MENA region 2010-2015

Decentralised Evaluation Report Template

Cooperation strategy for Swedish support to the Middle East and North Africa, 2010-2015

Key project documents for each project (project proposal, results framework and narrative reports).

Annex B: Data sheet on the evaluation object

Strategic Foresight Group

Information on the evaluation object (i.e. intervention, strategy, policy etc.)	
Title of the evaluation object	Experience Exchange for Regional Water Cooperation in the Middle East
ID no. in PLANIt	52030257
Archive case no.	14/000930
Activity period (if applicable)	July 2014 – March 2017
Agreed budget (if applicable)	9 500 000 SEK
Main sector	Environment
Name and type of implementing organisation	Strategic Foresight Group, International NGO
Aid type	Project type
Swedish strategy	Cooperation strategy for Swedish support to the Middle East and North Africa, 2010-2015

Regional Environmental Center

Information on the evaluation object (i.e. intervention, strategy, policy etc.)	
Title of the evaluation object	Sustainable Use of Transboundary Water Resources and Water Security Management
ID no. in PLANIt	52030234
Archive case no.	14/000139
Activity period (if applicable)	April 2014 – June 2017
Agreed budget (if applicable)	55 000 000 SEK
Main sector	Environment
Name and type of implementing organisation	Regional Environmental Center, International NGO
Aid type	Project type
Swedish strategy	Cooperation strategy for Swedish support to the Middle East and North Africa, 2010-2015

Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean

Information on the evaluation object (i.e. intervention, strategy, policy etc.)	
Title of the evaluation object	Overcoming governance challenges to the mobilisation of financing for the Mediterranean water sector
ID no. in PLANIt	52030028
Archive case no.	2012-000947

Activity period (if applicable)	December 2012 – December 2017
Agreed budget (if applicable)	7 835 000 SEK
Main sector	Environment
Name and type of implementing organisation	Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean, International NGO
Aid type	Project type
Swedish strategy	Cooperation strategy for Swedish support to the Middle East and North Africa, 2010-2015

Information on the evaluation assignment	
Commissioning unit/Embassy	HUMASIEN/MENA
Contact person at unit/Embassy	Ida Wilhelmson, Programme Manager
Timing of evaluation (mid term review, end-of-programme, ex-post or other)	End-of-program
ID no. in PLANIt (if other than above).	10777

Annex 2: Documentation review

GWP-Med

Strategy for development cooperation with The Middle East and North Africa, September 2010 – December 2015
Overcoming governance challenges to the mobilisation of financing for the Mediterranean water sector: A GWP-Med/OECD Project proposal, labelled under the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), November 2012
Beredning GWP-Med, Sida 2012
First Annual Project Progress Report 2012–2013
Second Annual Project Progress Report 2013–2014
Third Annual Project Progress Report 2014–2015
Fourth Annual Project Progress Report 2015–2016
Minutes of the First Annual Review Meeting
Minutes of the Second Annual Review Meeting
Minutes of the Third Annual Review Meeting
Minutes of the Fourth Annual Review Meeting
Water Governance in Jordan: Overcoming the Challenges to Private Sector Participation, OECD Studies on Water, OECD Library, 2014
Water Governance in Tunisia: Overcoming the Challenges to Private Sector Participation, OECD Studies on Water, OECD Library, 2014
Water Governance in Palestine: SECTOR REFORM TO INCLUDE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION, National Report 2015
Several documents related to water sector reform process and PSP laws, policies and strategies in both Jordan and Tunisia
Several documents related to the work of GWPO and GWP-Med and stakeholders

REC

Looking Back, Moving Forward: Sida Evaluation Manual, SIDA, 2nd revised edition, 2007
Strategy for development cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa (September 2010 – December 2015), SIDA Department for Middle East and North Africa (MENA), 2010
Evaluation of the Swedish development cooperation in the MENA region 2010–2015, Final Report, SIDA, 2015
Project Intervention Appraisal document Sustainable Use of Transboundary Water Resources and Water Security Management (Water SUM), SIDA Department for Middle East and North Africa (MENA), 2013
Sustainable Use of Transboundary Water Resources and Water Security Management (Water SUM), Project Proposal, REC, 2013

Sustainable Use of Transboundary Water Resources and Water Security Management (Water SUM), Project Inception Report, REC, 2015

Sustainable Use of Transboundary Water Resources and Water Security Management (Water SUM), Project Inception Report Appendix 1: WATER POrT, Background Document, REC, 2015

Sustainable Use of Transboundary Water Resources and Water Security Management (Water SUM), Project Inception Report, Appendix 2: WaSE, Background Document, REC, 2015

Sustainable Use of Transboundary Water Resources and Water Security Management (Water SUM), Project Inception Report: Appendix 3: Local Water Security Assessment for Improved Water Management in Selected Countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region, REC, 2015

Sustainable Use of Transboundary Water Resources and Water Security Management (Water SUM) – Project Annual Report 2016, REC, 2016

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WATER POrT, Water Resources Management Good Practices and Knowledge Transfer, Action 1.2 – Capacity Building on Water Resources Protection in Jordan and Tunisia, Sub-task 1.2 – Feasibility study in Jordan, Water Resources Monitoring System at the Northern Parts of Jordan (Yarmouk Basin & North Side Wadis Basin) – Current Status & Upgrading Possibilities

WATER POrT, Water Resources Management Good Practices and Knowledge Transfer, Action 1.2 – Capacity Building on Water Resources Protection in Jordan and Tunisia, Sub-task 1.2 – Feasibility study in Jordan, Water Resources Monitoring System at the Northern Parts of Tunisia (Medjerda River Basin) – Current Status & Upgrading Possibilities

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SFG

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Sida SFG AR minutes 2017

Annex 3: List of persons consulted

GWP-Med

Name	Position	Organisation Name	Organisati on Address	Date of Contact	Type of Inquiry
Emg. Ghazi Khalil	CEO	Jordan Water Company (Mayahuna)	Amman	8 May 2017	Interview/service provider
Mr. Tarek Zureikat	Managing Director	EngiCon	Amman	8 May 2017	Interview/private sector
Dr. Khalil Alabsi	Head of Business	Jordan Valley Authority	Amman	9 May 2017	Interview/water resources regulator
Eng. Iyad Dahiyat	Secretary General	Ministry of Water and Irrigation	Amman	10 May 2017	Interview/policy maker
Eng. Khaldoon Khashman	Secretary General	Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA)	Amman	10 May 2017	Interview/regional-training
Mr. Ali Hayajneh	Project Coordinator	International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)	Amman	10 May 2017	Interview/regional-environment-civil society
Mr. Fadi Al-Shraideh	Regional Director	IUCN	Amman	10 May 2017	Interview/regional-environment-civil society
Eng. Heba Ababneh	Project Coordinator	IUCN	Amman	10 May 2017	Interview/regional-environment-civil society
Mr. Sameeh Nueimat	Project Manager	IUCN	Amman	10 May 2017	Interview/regional-environment-civil society
Mr. Kussai Quteishat	Managing Director	Jordanian Desalination and Reuse Association	Dabouq	10 May 2017	Interview/consultant
Eng. Ali Subah	Assistant Secretary General	Ministry of Water and Irrigation	Amman	11 May 2017	Interview/policy maker
Mr.	General	Suez/Samra	Amman	11 May	Interview/private sector

ANNEX 3: LIST OF PERSONS CONSULTED

Bernard Bon	Manager	Company Project		2017	
Mr. Kosti Ziadeh	Financial Manager	Suez/Samra Company Project	Amman	11 May 2017	Interview/private sector
Mr Hazem Abdalla	Operations Manager	Suez/Samra Company Project	Amman	11 May 2017	Interview/private sector
Atika Ben Maid	Project Officer	Agence Francaise de Development (AFD) – Amman Regional Office	Amman	11 May 2017	Interview/donor
Mr. Mohamed Tahrani	Director	Ministry of Development Investment and International Cooperation	Tunis	22 May 2017	Interview/Central Government
Mr. Atef Masmoudi	General Director	Public Private Partnership (PPP)/ Ministry of Finance	Tunis	23 May 2017	Interview/regulator
Eng. Abderrazak Souissi	General Director	Water Balance and Planning/ Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources	Tunis	23 May 2017	Interview/policy maker
Ms. Jawaher ben Amor	Deputy Director	Ministry of Finance	Tunis	24 May 2017	Interview/central government
Mr. Hosni Sadok	Deputy Director	Ministry of Finance	Tunis	24 May 2017	Interview/central government
Mr. Redha Gabbouj	Directeur General	Genie Rural et Exploitation des Eux-Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources	Tunis	24 May 2017	Interview/policy maker-operator
Ms. Awatef Messai	Chef de Service	General Directorate of Environment and Quality of Life-Ministry of Environment and Local affairs	Tunis	25 May 2017	Interview/environment/policy maker
Mr. Alexandre Misnil	Programme Manager	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale	Tunis	26 May 2017	Interview/donor

		Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)			
Mr. Adel Boughanmi	Director	Office National de l'Assainissement (Sanitation Utility)	Tunis	26 May 2017	Interview/operator
Ms. Anthi Brouma	Senior Programme Officer	Head for MENA, GWP-Med	Athens	Several phone calls and Skype interview	
Ms. Sara Touzi	Senior Programme Officer	Tunisia Office, GWP-Med	Tunis	Several phone calls and meetings in Tunis	
Ms. Meriam Ben Zakour	Assistant Programme Officer	Tunisia Office, GWP-Med	Tunis	Several phone calls and meeting	

REC

Jordan:

Jovanka Ignjatovic, PO/T Project Component Manager, REC

Adel Alobeiaat, PSC member, Country Water Assistant, National Focal Point, Ministry of Water and Irrigation

Ali Subah Secretary General Assistant, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (Jordan)

Anwar Zayed Al-Subeh, Country Water Assistant, REC

Fadi Shraideh/Sameeh Nuimat, Regional Coordinator, IUCN ROWA

Suhaib Hamad, National Coordinator, Arab Women Organization

Nicklas Svensson, Evaluation Teamleader, SIPU

Mohamed Alqudah, Local Focal Point, Ajloun Municipality

Lama Oweis, Local Coordinator, Ajloun Municipality

Nabeel Al Qudah, Mayor of Ajloun, Head of Ajloun Planning Team

Ziad Al Smadi, Head of Financial Affairs, Water Directorate, Ajloun Planning Team member

Azzam Katatbeh, Head of Technical Affairs, Water Directorate, Ajloun Planning Team member

Ritta Aldawoud, Manager of Proncess Basma Centre, Jordanian Hashemite fund for Development JOHUD, Ajloun Planning Team member

Abd Alkareem Almoumani, Head of Water Laboratory Section, Health Directorate, Ajloun Planning Team member

Mutaz Ayes Hamed Allah AlAwaisheh, Local Coordinator, Salt Municipality

Wafaa Hussein Faleh Hawamdeh, Local Coordinator, Jerash Municipality

Sajeda Aqel Hattab Alrahaife, Local Coordinator, Karak Municipality
 Ali Hayajneh, former PSC member, former Ministry of Water & Irrigation, IUCN ROWA
 Nayef K. Hammad, Representative, GIZ

Tunisia:

Danko Aleksic, Deputy Project Component Manager, Local Governance, REC
 Houda Ammar: Local Focal Point, Bir Mcherga Delegacion,
 Aida Ajili, Hygiene Service, Mcherga Delegacion Planning Team
 Tahia Abdeljaoued, Local Coordinator, Bir Mcherga Delegacion
 Asma Amri, Delegator, Head of Bir Mcherga Delegacion Planning Team
 Lasaad Agaál, Regional Commission for Agricultural Development, Bir Mcherga Planning Team member
 Kamel Yahyaoui, Environmental Conservation Society, Bir Mcherga Planning Team member
 Lotfi Weslati, Regional Commission for Agricultural Development, Bir Mcherga Planning Team member
 Tarek Ayoub, Regional Commission for Agricultural Development, Bir Mcherga Planning Team member
 Kristina Laarman, Directice, KFW
 Slim Tounsi, Charge de Mission, KFW
 Sofian Meddeb, National Focal Point, Ministry of Agriculture & Hydraulic Resources
 Doha Zamel, Country Water Assistant, REC
 Raouf Ben Elhaj Khalifa, Country Water Assistant, REC
 Mongi Karrit/Fethi Chaieb, National Coordinator (PM/Expert), SONEDE
 Rahmani Jamel, Local Coordinator, Sidi Ali Ben Aoun Delegacion
 Mohamed Ali Dellai, Local Coordinator, Nefza Delegacion
 Ridha Gabouj, PSC member (WaSe), Ministry of Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources
 Abdelhamid Mnajja, WASE Operational Coordinator, Ministry of Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources
 Asma Cherifi, Gender, NGOs, CSOs, REC/TACID
 Hanan El Ghali, Association president, Tunisian Association of Development and Training

Egypt:

Tahani Moustafa Sileet, National Focal Point, PSC Member, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (through Messenger)
 Ahmed Yassin Towfik Abed, Country Water Assistant, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (In Jordan)

REC experts through Skype:

Mihallaq Qirjo, Project Director, REC
 Ana Popovic, WaSe Project Component Manager, REC
 Valerio Ponzó, International Relations, REC
 Ventzislav Vassilev, Biodiversity and Water Management, REC
 Celine Monnier, Law Development, Enforcement and Compliance, REC
 Andras Kis, Water Demand Management, REC/REKK
 Romina Alvarez Troncoso, Water Resources Protection, REC/CIMERA

Imola Koszta, Water Management, REC

Sara Shabani, Local Governance, REC

Scheduled interviews, not materialised

Belkasssem Dhimi, National Focal Point, Ministry of Energy, Mines, Water & Environment (Morocco)

Lotfi Frigui, Director, GD Water Resources (DGRE), MAHRF (Tunisia)

Sayari, World Bank (Tunisia)

SFG

Name	Position	Organisation Name	Organisation Address	Date of Contact	Type of Inquiry
Ms. Ilmas Futehally	Executive Director	SFG	Mumbai	March 21, 2017	Skype interview
Ms. Ilmas Futehally	Executive Director	SFG	Mumbai	April 27, 2017	Skype interview
Ms. Ilmas Futehally	Executive Director	SFG	Mumbai	May 10, 2017	Skype interview
Dr. Bakhtiar Amin	Former Minister of Human Rights, Iraq	Government of Iraq	Amman	April 19, 2017	Interview
Dr. Hakam M. Al Alami	Advisor to HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal on Water and Sanitation	Majlis El Hassan Royal Palace of Jordan	Amman	April 19, 2017	Interview
Ms. Hana Namrouqa	Journalist	The Jordan Times	Amman	April 20, 2017	Interview
Ms. Maysoon Zoubi	Secretary General	Higher Population Council	Amman	April 20, 2017	Interview
Ms Reem al Saraf,	Journalist	Al Rai	Amman	April 19, 2017	Interview
Ms. Zeina Majdalani	Advisor	Prime Minister's office of Lebanon	Beirut	April 21, 2017	Interview
Ms Mey Sayegh	Journalist		Beirut	April 21, 2017	Interview
Ms Marwa Osman	Political analyst		Beirut	April 23, 2017	Interview
Esse Nilsson	Senior Programme Manager	Sida	Stockholm	May 3, 2017	Interview
Ida Wilhelmson	Programme Manager	Sida	Stockholm		Consultation

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Dr Basem Shabb	Senior Member of Parliament	Parliament of Lebanon	Beirut	May 9, 2017	Skype interview
Dr Ibrahim Gurer	Professor, Member of the Executive Board of Gazi University	Gazi University	Turkey	May 18, 2017	Skype interview
Prof. Dr. Aysegül Kibaroglu	Dept. of Political Science and International Relations	MEF University	Istanbul	June 19, 2017	Skype interview
Eileen Hofstetter	Water Policy Advisor	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	Bern	June 20, 2017	Skype interview



Evaluation of three projects on transboundary water management in the Middle East and North Africa region

This report outlines the results of an evaluation of three projects on transboundary water management in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, covering the period 2013–2016. This evaluation was an independent assessment of the effectiveness, relevance, sustainability and highlights lessons learnt from the interventions of the three Sida-funded partner project:

- Global Water Partnership Mediterranean Regional Water Partnership (GWP-Med) – ‘Overcoming Governance Challenges to the Mobilization of Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector’
- The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) – ‘Sustainable Use of Transboundary Water Resources and Water Security Management’
- Strategic Foresight Group (SFG) – ‘Experience Exchange for Regional Water Cooperation in the Middle East’.

The primary purpose of the evaluation was to assess the project approaches for building cooperation on transboundary natural resources management and improving water management and to serve as support the design of potential future Sida support. The secondary purpose of the evaluation was to provide cross-learning between the three projects by comparing lessons learned and highlighting critical factors for successful change processes for the benefit of the implementing partners and Sida.