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MIO-ECSDE WORKING PAPER FOR THE PROJECT GEWAMED

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1. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MIO-ECSDE

The Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development is a Federation of Mediterranean Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for Environment and Development, acting as a technical and political platform for the intervention of NGOs in the Mediterranean scene. In co-operation with Governments, Intergovernmental and other International Organizations and socio-economic partners, MIO-ECSDE plays an active role in the development of policies, the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development of the Mediterranean countries and of the region as a whole.

The Mediterranean Information Office (MIO) was established in 1990 as a network of NGOs, under a joint project of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and Elliniki Etairia and in close collaboration with the Arab Network of Environment and Development (RAED) and achieved in 1996 the current international NGO Federation status, registered under the Greek Law.

MIO-ECSDE Main Objective

The main objective of MIO-ECSDE is to protect the natural environment (flora and fauna, biodiversity, biotopes, forests, coasts, natural resources, climate) and the tangible and intangible cultural heritage (archaeological monuments, traditional settlements, cultural diversity, cities etc) as well as the areas of interaction between both. The ultimate goal of MIO-ECSDE is to promote sustainable development in a peaceful Mediterranean.

Major Tools Used by MIO-ECSDE

In order to achieve its objectives, the major tools used are the following:

- Promotion of understanding and collaboration among the people of the Mediterranean, especially through their NGOs, between NGOs and Governments, Parliaments, Local Authorities, International Organizations and socio-economic actors of the Mediterranean region at all levels.
- Assistance for the establishment, strengthening, co-operation and co-ordination of Mediterranean NGOs and facilitation of their efforts by ensuring the flow of appropriate information among relevant bodies.
- Promotion of education, research and studies on Mediterranean issues, by stimulating collaboration between NGOs and scientific and/or academic institutions.
- Raising public awareness on crucial Mediterranean environmental and social issues through campaigns, publications, exhibitions, presentations, etc.

MIO-ECSDE Main Activities

- Networking,
- NGO capacity building,
- Drafting, Promoting and Presenting common NGO policies and positions,
- Promoting partnerships,
- Raising public awareness, participation and consensus building,
- Research,

- Education for Sustainable Development (ESD),
- Promoting the cultural dimension of sustainable development,
- Facilitation of Mediterranean stakeholder networks,
- Publications.

Networking

The MIO-ECSDE Secretariat keeps regular contact with the members, as well as with the wider network of Mediterranean actors and stakeholders it cooperates with. It produces and disseminates an Internal Information Bulletin (8 issues per year), a quarterly newsletter Sustainable Mediterranean (co-published with RAED and EEB), various publications and also regularly up-dates the MIO-ECSDE website (www.mio-ecsde.org). By these means it provides information on on-going and future activities and policies related to the Mediterranean and also promotes co-operation on common projects among relevant bodies.

NGOs Capacity Building

MIO-ECSDE has contributed substantially to the capacity building of Mediterranean NGOs through its publications and the several residential training workshops on environmental issues for its NGO members. Currently, such workshops take place on an *ad-hoc* basis, focusing progressively on more specific issues. Furthermore, by involving its member organizations in joint projects, MIO-ECSDE enhances their abilities in drafting, implementing, monitoring and evaluating environmental and sustainable development projects in the region. Progressively, its capacity building schemes involve also other stakeholders (i.e. educators, journalists etc.).

Drafting, Promoting and Presenting Common NGOs Policies and Positions

As the major and most representative Federation of Mediterranean NGOs, MIO-ECSDE manages to reach consensus among its members, draft common positions in collaboration with the leading organization on each key issue and systematically promotes common NGO policies reinforcing the collective voice of the environment and development citizens' organizations at international fora and conventions. In several cases, MIO-ECSDE has drafted, proposed and lobbied common NGO policies, position papers and memoranda adopted by the widest possible environmental NGO membership. MIO-ECSDE is frequently entrusted and mandated to represent all Mediterranean NGOs in major international conferences (Ministerial, Intergovernmental, etc.) and processes, presenting the NGO Declarations and collective views.

MIO-ECSDE's skills and key role as umbrella organization have been recognized by many stakeholders and it has been repeatedly requested to organize successful multi-stakeholder events of great political weight.

MIO-ECSDE has organized, alone or with other partners, a large number of particularly successful and influential conferences and meetings aiming either to consolidate the NGO views or to bring together all relevant stakeholders and address a variety of critical issues (sustainable development, water, tourism and water, Agenda Med 21, waste, heavy metals, Euro-Mediterranean partnership, sustainability of archaeological sites, environmental education, public participation etc.).

The gender issue has faithfully been included in the Mediterranean NGO and multi-stakeholder statements that MIO-ECSDE has drafted and which have subsequently been presented to the various regional and international Ministerial and other fora. It has also circulated important articles and statements on how female empowerment is a necessary prerequisite for sustainable development. The same applies for all of the MIO-ECSDE publications.

Furthermore, MIO-ECSDE in its IWRM efforts is a proponent of mainstreaming gender aspects into water advocacy and policy making relating to the different roles of men and women in the water sector and the impacts of proposed policies.

A gender-balanced representation of regional and local actors in the meetings (co)organised by MIO-ECSDE had also been taken into account.

Promoting Partnerships

MIO-ECSDE collaborates closely with the Commission of the European Union, UNEP/MAP and its RACs, UNEP, UNDP, UNESCO, UNECE and other International, Intergovernmental and Regional Governmental Organizations (IFAD, METAP, World Bank, EIB), with scientific and other networks, Federations, Conventions (EEB, RAED, FoE, WWF, Eco Forum, Greenpeace, RAMSAR Convention, MEDWET, CIESM, MedCities, IUCN, GWP etc).

MIO-ECSDE is a UNEP/MAP Partner organization and a member of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) which was established in the framework of the Barcelona Convention.

Since 2002, MIO-ECSDE is the Host Institution of the Secretariat of the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med). GWP-Med aims at promoting Integrated Water Resources Management and sustainable use of water in the Mediterranean. The members of its Partnership Council are: Blue Plan (UNEP/MAP), CEDARE, CIHEAM, EIC, IME, MedCities, MedWet, MENBO/REMOC, MIO-ECSDE and MWN.

MIO-ECSDE has participated in the setting-up and development of various cooperation schemes. One of these, known as the Comité de Suivi, focuses on the environmental component of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and comprises of 7 NGO networks active at European and Mediterranean level.

The Comité de Suivi is also on the Board of the Directors of the EuroMed NGO Platform.

Raising Public Awareness, Participation and Consensus Building

One of the main objectives of the Federation is to raise public awareness on sustainable development, environmental and cultural issues in the Mediterranean through campaigns, publications, exhibitions, presentations, etc. MIO-ECSDE has launched and coordinated awareness campaigns with the collaboration of its member organizations on critical issues like the Mediterranean Water Year and the creation of a Mediterranean Environment Fund (Euro/\$ per air ticket fund). In the framework of its annual activities, MIO-ECSDE coordinates the **Mediterranean Action Day** in order, for member organizations, to take action in the field and be more visible to their target audiences, while tackling a "hot" environmental issue of their region, such as water, waste, desertification, etc.

The participatory processes that MIO-ECSDE has initiated among NGOs since 1991 have contributed considerably to consensus building, mutual trust and solidarity in the Mediterranean and to the improvement of North-South, South-South and East-West cooperation.

Recognizing the crucial importance of awareness and participation in the achievement of goals for both social and economic well-being of the Mediterranean people, MIO-ECSDE has invested considerable time in research, development and improvement of participatory techniques leading to consensus among social partners and eventually to joint action.

Environmental Education (EE) & Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

MIO-ECSDE is in the forefront of developments in Environmental Education (EE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) already since its establishment. It coordinates various educational programmes, regularly organizes educational conferences and seminars at national and regional level and also publishes materials necessary for students and educators working in the field of formal and non formal education. MIO-ECSDE also coordinates the Mediterranean Educational Initiative for Environment and Sustainability (see Annex).

MIO-ECSDE contribution to gender mainstreaming includes actions within Education for Environment and Sustainability (particularly in terms of Education for all) such as the e-campaign "New Era 21" where the gender issue is underlined and MEdIES, which is an Education for All initiative centered on water and household waste, supporting a wide network of Mediterranean educators engaged in ESD activities.

Promoting the Cultural Dimension of Sustainable Development

Among the main objectives of MIO-ECSDE is the protection of the cultural heritage and diversity of the Mediterranean region. Since March 2003, MIO-ECSDE has been intensively working on the issue of Cultural Diversity and Biodiversity, a relatively new priority on agendas at global level after Johannesburg. MIO-ECSDE is in the process of setting-up a critical group of interested organizations, institutions etc. as well as individual scientists in order to register and study the various forms of interaction between culture and biodiversity in the Mediterranean countries and propose ways in which these interactions can best contribute to the simultaneous protection of cultural diversity, the conservation of biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable development in the region.

Facilitation of Stakeholders Networks

MIO-ECSDE facilitates 3 stakeholders Networks in the framework of the following initiatives:

- MEDIES – Mediterranean Education Initiative for Environment and Sustainability.
- COMPSUD – Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development.
- COMJESD – Circle of Mediterranean Journalists for Environment and Sustainable Development.

A brief description of these 3 Initiatives is contained in the Annex.

2. MIO-ECSDE VIEWS ABOUT HOW IT COULD PROMOTE THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE FIELD OF WATER RESOURCES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE GEWAMED PROJECT

1. An introduction and up-dates about the developments of the GEWAMED project could be included in forthcoming issues of the quarterly newsletter Sustainable Mediterranean (which is sent to approximately 1000 recipients in European and Mediterranean countries) as well as in the Internal Information Bulletin's issues. In this way the project and its achievements will have a wide diffusion among European and Mediterranean stakeholders including NGOs, local authorities, institutions, research centres etc. that are among the receivers of the newsletter. Some of these stakeholders involved in the issues at the heart of GEWAMED might eventually decide to contribute to it on the basis of their expertise and knowledge of the issues dealt within its framework.
2. One or two issues of the Sustainable Mediterranean newsletter could be dedicated to the project GEWAMED and, more generally to the topic of Gender in an IWRM context.
3. One section of the MIO-ECSDE web site (www.mio-ecsde.org) could be elaborated in order to make available to visitors all information concerning the project, informative materials, links with the various partners and other relevant stakeholders etc and would be regularly up-dated.
4. In order to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of its Members in dealing with gender issues in the framework of an integrated management of water resources, MIO-ECSDE would facilitate the participation of some of its NGOs members in the regional and national workshops organised in the framework of GEWAMED. The aim is to contribute spreading information and sensitization on GEWAMED issues the widest as possible in the Mediterranean region.
5. In cooperation with GWP-Med (MED EUWI Secretariat), MIO-ECSDE could highlight the issue of Gender and IWRM, in connection with the work done in the project GEWAMED, during the kick-off meetings of the National Dialogues that are organised in the framework of the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI), so that GEWAMED issues could have a chance to be integrated in the national discussions to follow. Country dialogues for the prioritization of national needs related to water ODA (Official Development Aids) and identification of existing gaps (for each country dialogue) towards the successful implementation of IWRM is among the main activities to be realized in the framework of the MED EUWI (see Annex). Participants in National Dialogues are all relevant stakeholders involved, directly or indirectly, in the management of water resources, including: Ministries and governmental agencies, research centres, local authorities, Parliamentarians, NGOs and Civil Society Organisation, journalists etc. After the kick-off meetings National stakeholders will be kept informed about the evolutions in the project GEWAMED mainly by email. The next kick-off meeting will be the one related to the Egyptian National Dialogue and will most probably take place in the second half of 2006 (the dates have not been defined yet). Further kick-off meetings organised in the framework of National Dialogues of other South Mediterranean countries are going to take place in the years to follow.

6. MIO-ECSDE could raise seed money to support its NGO members in organising, ideally in each of the countries in the framework of the Mediterranean Action Day or in connection with the National Dialogues (see point 5 above) and other major events (International and National) related to Water, a workshop or an activity focused on the role of NGOs and other relevant stakeholders in the promotion of IWRM with major focus on gender issues.
7. MIO-ECSDE could organise 1 workshop dedicated to "Gender, Culture and Water" (a topic which is not sufficiently present in the International Agenda yet) in the framework of the forthcoming Euro-Mediterranean Civil Forum (November 2006) and in cooperation with the Euro-Mediterranean Civil Platform, which has the responsibility of organising the Forum.
The Civil Forum is an opportunity for EuroMed civil society to meet and agree on recommendations to address to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) governments. GEWAMED partners could be invited to participate and intervene in the Forum while the project GEWAMED could have a wide dissemination also through the Web-site and the Newsletter of the Forum which reach numerous stakeholders in the entire Euro-Mediterranean region.
8. One section of the MEdIES web site (www.medies.net) could be elaborated in order to diffuse to visitors (mainly educators in the formal, informal, non-formal sectors) all information concerning the project, informative materials, links with the various partners and other relevant stakeholders etc and would be regularly up-dated.
9. A discussion group could be formed in the inner Circle of Educators of MEdIES in order to get a feed-back on the present situation relating to Gender and Water from the perspective of the various countries and cultures of the Region.
10. An educational material on Gender, Water and Culture (in English, French and Arabic) could be prepared and published in the cooperation with MEdIES. The content of this material could be defined and prepared in collaboration with MEdIES members and in close cooperation with GEWAMED partners in order to be best adapted to their educational needs. The so-produced material could be inserted in or accompany one of the already existing educational packages of MEdIES, with title, "Water in the Mediterranean", which is applied in many schools of various Mediterranean countries or could also be used independently. The new material would also be also posted in the web site of MEdIES and would be therefore available to many other interested stakeholders. The GEWAMED project will get visibility in the new educational material.
11. In the framework of COMPSUD and COMJESD activities (where Gender is already present as an issue of interest in connection with Sustainable Development issues), it could be given additional focus to the role of women in relation to water resources management. In practice this could include:
 - a) presentation of the project GEWAMED during the next General Assembly of the COMPSUD (planned for November 2006) so that this can take decisions on a set of actions it might wish to undertake in order to become more active on the issues at the heart of the project at regional and national levels.
 - b) Information of Mediterranean journalists members of the COMJESD about the project GEWAMED and its developments so that they might give some visibility to it through their articles, broadcasts etc.
 - c) The organisation of a training seminar for Mediterranean Journalists on the issue of Gender, Culture and Water in the Mediterranean, in order to improve their capacity building in communicating information on this topic and sensitizing further the general public.
 - d) The production of a introductory manual addressed to professionals and NGOs communicators in support to the training above and, more generally, to improve their knowledge on these issues.
12. MIO-ECSDE would also like to contribute to the development of gender sensitive indicators in the framework of the GEWAMED project since it has some expertise in this sense.
13. Relevant National stakeholders (including Gender Research Centres, Parliamentarians, Journalists, NGOs etc) interested in the kind of issues at the centre of the project will be contacted and informed about GEWAMED and asked to support the project and its objectives.

3. ACTIVITIES THAT MIO-ECSDE COULD CARRY OUT DURING THE NEXT 18 MONTHS

3. ACTIVITIES THAT MIO-ECSDE COULD CARRY OUT DURING THE NEXT 18 MONTHS (continuation)

Activity	Semester 3	13	14	15	16	17	18	Cost of the Action: Human resources (person/month) for the entire duration of the project
1								
2	1 st issue of SD newsletter							
3								
4								
5								
6						Jul		
7								
8								
9								
10	after the first 18 months							
11 (a)								
11 (b)								
11 (c)								
11 (d)								
12								
13								
Total							5.5	

ANNEX

MEdIES – Mediterranean Education Initiative for Environment and Sustainability

MEdIES is a WSSD Type II Initiative on Education for Sustainable Development, which is supported by the Hellenic Ministry for Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works, the Italian Ministry for Environment and Territory and GWP-Med. Leading partners are also UNEP/MAP together with UNESCO and MIO-ECSDE, which has undertaken the Secretariat. Its confirmed partners include several Ministries of Environment, Universities, IGOs and NGOs as well as schools.

MEdIES aims to facilitate the educational community (educators and students) to contribute in a systematic and concrete way in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals, through the successful application of innovative Educational Programmes. The core of this initiative is an e-network of Educators (www.medics.net) that implement common integrated educational programmes in countries around the Mediterranean basin on cross-cutting themes (i.e. water, waste) as a vehicle to sustainable development.

In order to achieve the common implementation of innovative Educational Programmes, MEdIES facilitates the Mediterranean educational community through (i) appropriate educational materials, (ii) proper training and (iii) Information & Communication Technologies (ICTs, internet).

On the basis that freshwater and wastes are considered broad cross-cutting themes in the existing school curricula in all Mediterranean countries, MEdIES has facilitated the production and dissemination of two educational materials for secondary education: "Water in the Mediterranean" (English, French, Italian, Greek, Turkish and Arabic) and "Wastes in our life" (Greek, English). The training of educators is achieved through regular seminars at national or regional level and publications such as the "Handbook on methods used in EE and ESD". Furthermore, through the MEdIES webpage, educators may download all publications, be informed on recent developments in the field of ESD, read and post articles on their activities and exchange views with their colleagues from other Mediterranean countries.

The Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD)

The Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD) was created with the encouragement of the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE) and the Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean (GWP-Med) in December 2002 in the wake of the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which reaffirmed sustainable development as a central element of the international agenda and emphasized the important role of partnerships and dialogue among the various stakeholders and decision makers, including Parliamentarians and politicians at large.

The Circle is an open, flexible and light structure, aiming to promote suitable mechanisms to support the dialogue among Members of Parliaments (from EU and non-EU Mediterranean countries), politicians and other Stakeholders on the protection of the Mediterranean environment and the necessary socio-economic conditions for the sustainable development of the region.

The Circle stresses on the necessity to strengthen effective governance of natural resources and the environment, with particular emphasis on good Water Governance, through the encouragement of systematic and constructive dialogues among Parliamentarians themselves and with all relevant stakeholders, civil society organizations and the public at large, as a fundamental premise for the promotion of sustainable development in conditions of peace and cooperation among all countries and peoples of the Mediterranean region.

In particular, the objectives of COMPSUD are the following:

1. The promotion of sustainable development in the Mediterranean region through an integrated resources management approach, securing a healthy and peaceful environment, where the biodiversity and cultural diversity of the region are protected.

2. The strengthening of effective environmental governance with particular emphasis on water governance.
3. The promotion of public dialogue among all relevant stakeholders, civil society organizations and the public at large with Parliamentarians and among themselves.
4. The encouragement of production, dissemination and use of reliable, timely, accurate, complete, relevant and accessible data and information for use by decision makers and as a basis for public information and awareness raising on issues of sustainable development and of IWRM in particular.
5. The promotion of capacity building, training and appropriate education with emphasis on Education for Sustainable Development for all those involved directly or indirectly in making critical choices, particularly those affecting integrated water resources management.

The basic philosophy and scope for action of the Circle are clearly expressed in the that Parliamentarians are invited to sign and agree upon if they wish to join in.

The COMPSUD is governed by a Board composed by 6 Parliamentarians whose mandate lasts for 2 years. Chairman and a Cochairman are selected among the Members of the Board keeping a North-South balance.

The work of COMPSUD is jointly facilitated by GWP-Med and MIO-ECSDE, which also hosts the Circle's Secretariat.

The General Assembly of the Circle takes place once every year and it sets the priorities for the Action Plan of the Circle for the year to come, also in relation with on-going or forthcoming key events related to the general framework of interest and activities of COMPSUD. These include, among others, the support of Transboundary Cooperation on Water issues, the promotion of IWRM principles in national laws through relevant legislation, the active involvement in important initiatives related to water, such as the Mediterranean component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI), the Euro-Mediterranean Water and Poverty Facility (WPF), the World Water Forum (WWF) and the Mediterranean Education Initiative for Environment and Sustainability (MEdIES) as well as the endorsement of strategies, policies etc. contributing to the promotion of Sustainable Development in the Region (i.e. the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development – MSSD, prepared in the framework of UNEP/MAP and recently adopted by the Contracted Parties of the Barcelona Convention).

The Mediterranean Regional Dialogue of Parliamentarians, NGOs and other Stakeholders on the Protection of the Mediterranean Environment and Prospects for the Sustainable Development of the Region (also called for simplicity 'Dialogue of COMPSUD') is an integral part of the Circle's annual meetings and is inscribed in its philosophy of exchange, cross-fertilization and cooperation with civil society and other important actors towards the promotion of the sustainable development in the Mediterranean.

In line with this, COMPSUD collaborates also closely with the Circle of Mediterranean Journalists for Environment and Sustainable Development (COMJESD) and the Educators for Environment and Sustainable Development (under the Mediterranean Education Initiative for Environment and Sustainability, MEdIES) , facilitated by MIO-ECSDE and GWP-Med having in this way a more direct feedback and effective access to the important flow of information and awareness raising activities initiated by scientists, NGOs, etc. on relevant issues.

The Circle of Mediterranean Journalists for Environment and Sustainable Development (COMJESD)

The Circle of Mediterranean Journalists for Environment and Sustainable Development (COMJESD) was established during the "Mediterranean Regional Dialogue of Parliamentarians, NGOs and other stakeholders on the protection of the Mediterranean environment and prospects for the sustainable development of the region" (12-13 of December 2002), an event jointly organized by the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE) and the Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med).

The Circle aims to be an active forum through which the regular exchange of information and views about crucial Mediterranean environmental and sustainable development issues, the promotion of capacity building of media professionals and the organization of joint and concerted actions can be promoted so that information and communication experts will be strengthened in their capacity of sensitizing and informing Mediterranean societies, of improving democratic and participatory processes and in directing more effectively the flow of information produced by scientists, NGOs etc. to the decision-makers.

The Circle of Mediterranean Journalists is open to any information professional and journalist (expert or beginner) sharing the objectives highlighted above.

The Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI)

The Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI) aims to serve as a platform for promoting strategic partnerships between the EU and the Mediterranean and Southeastern European countries as well as between government, civil society and the private sector. Non-EU donors and international organizations (including the UN family and the IFIs) are also contributing to the component through the promotion of synergies and development of activities at sub-regional level. MED EUWI is led by Greece that chairs a multi-stakeholder Working Group. MED EUWI Secretariat is facilitated by GWP-Med.

MED EUWI is an integral part of the EU WI and shares its overall objectives, aiming to:

- assist design of better, demand driven and result oriented programmes,
- facilitate better coordination of water programmes and projects, aiming at a more effective use of existing funds, and the mobilization of new financial resources, where this is required, based on an analysis of gaps, and
- enhance cooperation for the proper implementation of these programmes and projects, based on peer review and strategic assessment.

MED EUWI, is giving particular emphasis to Mediterranean and Southeastern Europe priorities and focuses on the following themes:

- Water supply and sanitation, with emphasis on the poorest part of the societies.
- Integrated water resources management, with emphasis on management of transboundary water bodies.
- Water, food and environment interaction, with emphasis on fragile ecosystems.
- Non-conventional water resources.
- Cross cutting issues such as transfer of technology, transfer of know how, capacity building and training and education.

The following partner countries are involved:

- In the South East Europe – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Romania, Serbia and Montenegro.
- In the South and East Mediterranean – Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Turkey, Tunisia.

Therefore, the Component encompasses overall 18 countries.