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# PROMOTING GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT THROUGH INFORMATION COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION. THE GEWAMED<sup>1</sup> PROJECT

**J. A. Sagardoy Alonso**  
GEWAMED Project Manager  
CIHEAM-IAM-Bari

**SUMMARY** - The knowledge gap is often the source of inequalities and marginalisation of women in many activities. Knowledge is the base for empowerment. The transfer of knowledge in gender issues has been the bases for formulating a regional project called: "Mainstreaming Gender Dimensions Into Water Resources Development And Management In the Mediterranean Region" (GEWAMED) where information collection and dissemination play an important role. In the project 18 Mediterranean institutions participate with the purpose of contributing to the mainstreaming of gender dimensions in the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in the Mediterranean Region. The project will promote a dialogue among the countries of the Region and establishing regional and national information networks and promote coordination structures at national level to encourage the adoption of gender sensitive policies and build a common knowledge base. The main features of the GEWAMED project, such as its strategic objectives, expected outputs, composition of the Consortium of participating institutions, the plan for disseminating knowledge, project management structure and expected impact are briefly described in the remaining part of the paper. The project started in February 2006. and although the operational time has been short some of the achievements are noticeable.

## BACKGROUND

The European Research Area (ERA) includes an important Programme for International Cooperation with the developing and transition countries which is called INCO (International Scientific Cooperation). This programme intends to open the European research to the rest of the world and in particular to integrate it with the developing countries. The INCO Programme works within of the Research Framework and in particular within the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme (FP6, 2002-2006). Within each framework programme the research priorities are defined (seven in the case of the FP6) for the period and within each priority the financial resources are assigned. At present the priorities for the 7<sup>th</sup> Programme have already been defined and the call for research proposals will start in the last part of 2006.

Within the research programme several types of project are financed by the European Commission (EC). The main types of project financed are:

- Networks of Excellence (NoE)
- Integrated projects (IP)
- Research projects address to specific Project objectives (STREP)
- Coordinated Actions (CA)
- Specific Support Actions (SSA)

Besides these types of project other actions exist addressed to improve the international mobility of researchers as well as their training (Marie Curie Action).

Depending on the type of project different arrangements exist regarding the minimum number of institutions required as well as the distribution between developing and European countries. In any

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<sup>1</sup> "Mainstreaming Gender Dimensions into Water Resources Development and Management In the Mediterranean Region"

case the participating institutions are integrated into an organizational structure where all the partners have the same level coordinated by one of the participating institutions. Project execution implies a joint responsibility, this means that if one of the partners fails to deliver the remaining ones must take up the missing outputs.

The Coordinated Actions are a type of research project intends to generate new knowledge through the exchange of information among partners and other stakeholders in selected areas. To some extent a CA is a forum for discussion from which new ideas and concepts should emerge. New ideas and concepts are of scarce value if they are not disseminated to the people that should make use of them. Hence the dissemination process is as important as the one of knowledge generation

## **THE GEWAMED PROJECT**

The WEGAMED project is Coordinated Action and it stands for “Mainstreaming Gender Dimensions into Water Resources Development and Management In the Mediterranean Region”.

The GEWAMED is the follow up of a SSA Project called INGEDI (108 000 €) undertaken in 2004. The recommendations of the participants promoted the formulation of the GEWAMED project. The GEWAMED project has started on 15 February 2006 with a duration of 4 years

The project plans to build an extensive knowledge base for mainstreaming gender dimensions into IWRM. To achieve this objective the project will build networks at regional and national level using Internet technology and undertake 10 national seminars in countries of the South East Mediterranean Region, three regional workshops and an inter-regional conference. The regional network will be essentially a mean for exchanging experiences, disseminate results and allow for enhanced coordination among national projects' activities and participants. The national networks will be a powerful tool to store and disseminate relevant information and contribute to the coordination of existing relevant activities.

### **Project objectives**

The project strategic objectives are :

1. Building a national and regional shared knowledge base on gender issues, policies, actions and measures to support gender mainstreaming in all processes related to IWRM.
2. Enhance the cooperation and dialogue among Mediterranean countries but also within each country promoting the exchange of information and its dissemination among national governmental agencies, NGO's research institutions, international organizations, private sector and communication media involved in gender related issues and the water sector.
3. Contribute to the adoption of national policies and other related instruments (strategies, approaches, guidelines, incentives and legislation) by involving decision makers and politicians in the processes of mainstreaming gender dimensions in IWRM

### **Relevance to the objectives of the specific EC programme**

One of the priorities for supporting cooperation between EC and national institutions in the Mediterranean countries is the appropriate management and protection of natural resources. Such management cannot take place without the active participation of women who represents at least the fifty percent of the recipients of the project's initiatives.

There are clear gender disparities in the South Mediterranean that need to be reduced or eliminated. The project intends to promote attitude changes in all the different stakeholders leading to a more equalitarian distribution of the benefits of Integrated Water Resources Management. This is in full accordance with EU Mediterranean Policies where the social dimension of the management of water resources is considered of utmost importance.

It is remarkable that within the South Mediterranean countries there are considerable differences in the integration of gender issues in water resources with some very positive experiences and lessons learned. Therefore the dialogue among all interested stakeholders should provide new opportunities for a sustainable and equitable development.

The project is also in accordance with the recommendations of several major international conferences held recently and with the directives of the United Nations. Information technology constitutes nowadays an important development tool for women and the United Nations place information technologies together with the fight against poverty and violence at the centre of the development actions that can improve women's conditions worldwide.

### **The expected results and some of the achievements**

The strategic objectives will be achieved through the project activities that will be undertaken. The activities should lead to the achievement of the outputs described below.

#### Related to Strategic Objective 1: Building a national and regional shared knowledge base

- Output 1. Establishment of a national web site in at least 6 countries of the South East Mediterranean Region. (SEMR<sup>2</sup>). In principle, the following countries are of priority: Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and Turkey. *Already the national websites are under construction in more than 6 countries*
- Output 2. Development of a structured national information system on gender issues related to water resources development and management in each of the MP countries participating in the Project and made available to all potential users of the web site. This includes the development of gender sensitive indicators.
- Output 3. Development of a regional information system dedicated to gender issues in the domain of IWRM where information a regional interest will be stored and disseminated. The regional website has been implemented and is operational

#### Related to Strategic Objective 2: Enhance the cooperation and dialogue at regional and national level

- Output 4. Improved cooperation among partners and external organizations interested in this subject through the participation in regional workshops and national seminars. *One Regional Workshop was organized and the next one will be held in Cyprus in March 2007*
- Output 5. Improved coordination and dissemination of information at national level by establishing a National Central Focal Point in the SEMR countries *Already 5 countries have made considerable progress in the organization of the national Focal points*
- Output 6. Greater awareness of the society in general and in the agricultural sector in particular of the importance of gender issues in the water sector.
- Output 7. Dissemination of the results of the project to larger audiences

#### Related to Strategic Objective 3: Contribute to the adoption of gender national policies and other related instruments

- Output 8. Contributing to the adoption by SEMR countries of policies and/or other instruments (strategies, approaches, guidelines, incentives, legislation) promoting a gender mainstreaming in the planning, development and management of water resources

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<sup>2</sup> In the context of this document the denomination of South East Mediterranean Region (SEMR) covers the following 9 countries :Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.

## **The problems addressed and the possible solutions**

At the INGEDI workshop held in June 2004 on "Integration of Gender Dimension in Water Management in the Mediterranean Region" organized by the CIHEAM-MAIB in Bari (Italy), 44 participants identified, among others, the following problems:

- lack of coordination mechanisms among relevant institutions and related bodies.
- lack of institutional support for information/dissemination.
- lack of coordination among women programmes.
- insufficient knowledge among men and women about their own rights.
- lack of access to information and technology (particularly in the sanitation area).
- limited political commitment in integrating gender dimensions in water-related policies, legislations and programmes.
- few initiatives undertaken to ensure women's participation in water-related decision-making.
- lack of skills and knowledge in promoting gender mainstreaming in integrated water resources management.

Many of these problems coincide with those mentioned in the section of Gender problems in the Contest of IWRM of this paper and suggested the following solutions :

- establishment of a Mediterranean network to be interlinked with national and, where applicable, to existing local networks.
- develop information and communication strategies.
- develop a national agenda for mainstreaming of gender issues in water resources.
- undertake national seminars and workshops with women associations and government agencies.
- provide information at all levels addressing issues on water and sanitation, and risk assessment.
- promote capacity building on gender analysis and participatory tools in water resources management.
- sensitise policy-makers on the importance of integrating a gender perspective in integrated water resources management.

The GEWAMED project has selected those solutions which are closely related to the creation of a gender knowledge base and its dissemination as it corresponds to the Coordinate Action projects. In this sense the establishment of national and regional networks can contribute substantially to resolve some of the problems earlier mentioned within the context of IWRM.

A coordinated action will not only generate benefits in terms of exchanging information and adding value to the national initiatives, but will also benefit from the experience gained by UE participating institutions have undergone through similar processes and can provide useful orientations to other Mediterranean countries.

## **Participating institutions**

For the establishment of the proposed Consortium of partners, several criteria were used, based on the recommendations made at the INGEDI workshop and other previous meetings for assessing the interest, relevance and capacity to implement the work programme. The participating national institutions from North and South East Mediterranean countries, international organizations and NGOs are detailed in *Table 2*.

Table 2. List of project partners

Partic. No.	Participant name	Participant short name	Type of institution	Country
1	Mediterranean Agronomic Institute- Bari	CIHEAM- MAIB	Int. Org.	Italy
2	Centre de Recherche en Economie Appliquée pour le Développement	CREAD	Gov.	Algeria
3	National Water Research Center- Strategic Research Unit	NWRC- MWRI/SRU	Gov	Egypt
4	Faculty of Agriculture University of Jordan-	UJ-FA	Gov	Jordan
5	Association Marocaine de Solidarité et de Développement	AMSED	NGO	Morocco
6	Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee	PARC	NGO	Palestine
7	Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency	EEAA	Gov	Egypt
8	The Center of Arab Women for Training and Research	CAWTAR	NGO	Tunisia
9	Cukurova University- Faculty of Agriculture	CUKUR	Gov.	Turkey
10	Agriculture Research Institute	ARI	Gov.	Cyprus
11	Mediterranean Office for Environment, Cultural and Sustainable Development	MIO-ECSDE	NGO	Greece
12	Osservatorio Nazionale per l'Imprenditoria ed il Lavoro Femminile in Agricoltura	ONILFA	Gov.	Italy
13	General Commission for Scientific Agricultural Research Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform	GCSAR	Gov.	Syria
14	International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage. Italian Committee	ITAL-ICID	NGO	Italy
15	Instituto Andaluz de la Mujer- Junta de Andalucía	IAM -JA	Gov.	Spain
16	African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development	CAFRAD	Int. Org.	Morocco
17	René Moawad Foundation	RMF	NGO	Lebanon
18	Programme Solidarité Eau	pS- Eau	NGO	France

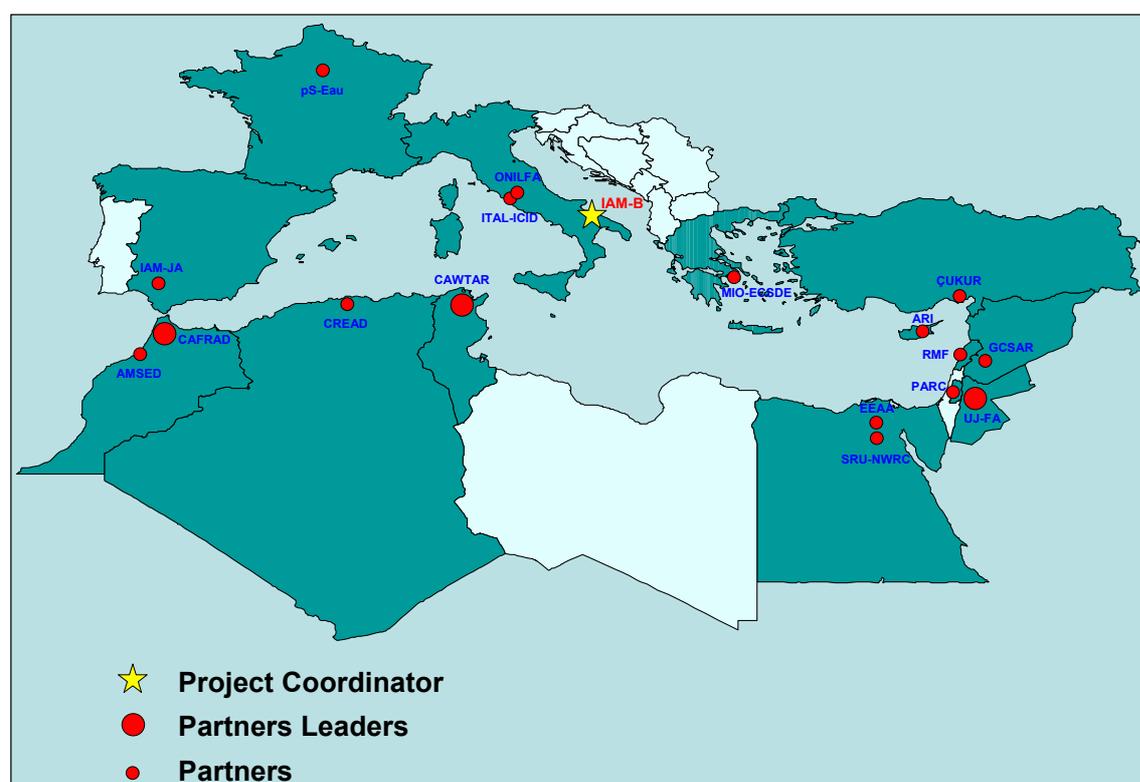


Figure 2. Location of Project partners

The project will involve other institutions and interested parties of the region to amplify its objectives and impact but they are not formal part of the Consortium.

### **Plan for using and disseminating knowledge**

The GEWAMED Project is dealing essentially with the compilation and dissemination of knowledge in order to promote the adoption of policies or other actions that will mainstream the role of women in integrated water resources management and reduce inequity between females and males. Therefore the processes whereby the knowledge bases are established and disseminated are of great relevance in the project activities.

Separating the processes of compiling knowledge from its dissemination is not always advisable since both processes are very much interwoven, however for reasons of clarity in the exposition they are treated separately here.

The processes presented here are an outline of the actions to be taken. In any case the Plan for using and disseminating knowledge is an evolving instrument that will be progressively adjusted throughout the life of the project in each SEMR country depending of local conditions. In this sense the Plan will start from the project beginning but a more concrete vision will be only available when the project may have already gained more experience in its implementation. By the third year of the project life the plan should be concretised in report.

### **Building knowledge process**

The process of compiling information and transform into knowledge in the SEMR can be synthesize in the following steps:

1. Generation of relevant information by the national Gender-Water Teams through a number of activities that include, field surveys, review of existing records, review of statistical information, problem identification and others. This information will be transformed into knowledge by processing it so as to come with relevant new knowledge and practical information. In doing this task the team will have to *define criteria* with regard to a number of related issues which include:
  - Process of information collection (qualitative and quantitative, existing local structures for collection of information, use of local people to collect information, collection tools techniques, etc.)
  - Sources of information (available statistics, results of other projects, identify key stakeholders, previous training activities, the legal, institutional, policy frameworks,)
  - Type of information to be collected. The project should in no way store information that is available somewhere else but register the source of information, the type of data available, period of time covered and some general consideration about the quality and relevance of data.
  - Gender disaggregated data (women's, roles as collectors, users and manager of water, division of labour, linkages between women's labour and the control of resources, land tenure and use by gender, women's participation in local authorities and decision making at community level, analysis of women access to inputs, female-headed households, unpaid labour, control of information and knowledge, etc.)
2. Another important source of information will be the National Central Focal point and Local focal points. Each participant will have considerable information and knowledge about the on-going or planned activities and issues in the field of gender-water in the respective field of activity of his/her institution. Such information should be channelled to the National Coordinator for storing it and disseminating it.
3. Another source of valuable information will be the EU partners and International and Regional organizations participating in the project. There is considerable experiences, and accumulated knowledge in some of these organizations that will be extremely useful to the MPCs. It will be useful if some sort of "twining" is established among the EU partners and the corresponding

MPCs partners. In any case, this information should be channelled through to the National Coordinator and where relevant copied to GEWAMED Regional Network.

4. The National Coordinator together with his collaborating staff should be the focus for processing national information and convert it into relevant knowledge. This is a complex and difficult task when a lot of information is available but the amount of factual information on these issues is limited and therefore the amount of information to be managed will not be initially large. Nevertheless the organization of information within the National Web site will be a task requiring considerable attention. The Project Manager in collaboration with the Communication and Technical Team will prepare some guidelines for storing and disseminating the information and knowledge at national and regional level.
5. The National Web Site should be structured in a simple way so as to people connecting to it may find path to find the information or knowledge synthesis that may be of interest to them. On the other hand, the site must also have the capacity to manipulate a large database where all the information will be stored.
6. The Regional Web site will be basically the place where information and knowledge of more general and regional character will be stored and disseminated. It will link with other international and regional web sites concerned or interested in gender and/or water issues and will be a sort of external window for the project to show the achievements and main activities. The Regional web site will be serviced by a specialist in this field and the information to be entered will be the responsibility of the communications team under the supervision of the Project Manager.
7. The EU partners and International and Regional Organizations have a wealth of technical information and knowledge that should be of great assistance to the SEMR partners. It is true to some extent that some of that information is available through the official web sites of such organizations but very often the language limitations and the complexity of accessing to the relevant information make its dissemination and use limited. The project will try to facilitate and simplify this process by compiling some of such information in the GEWAMED Regional Web Site or providing orientations on how to access to it at the original site. In addition to this important role the Regional web site will have an important role also in alerting participants of any important news arising in the field of gender will detected by the Goggle, or other similar, search engine and disseminated to the participants for their information and use.
8. The Regional Workshops will be a place where new knowledge and concepts will be generated resulting from the presentations of the participants. The presentations are expected to be a place where not only general issues will be discussed but where countries should report on what their respective countries are doing in these areas of work. The discussions should result in specific plan of action to be undertaken by the participant to solve or reduced the identified problems.
9. Another important event where knowledge will be generated will be the "policy seminars" that will be carried out in each of the SEMR partners. These seminars will not only try to sensitise policy makers and senior administrators to the gender problems but will also bring to the surface some of the important issues that need urgent attention to solve some of the existing inequities.

Adequate classification of information in the web sites is very important in this process of compiling and disseminating information not only for a question of easy retrieval but more important because a proper classification system can be very helpful to identify patterns of behaviour that will be useful to identify and characterize at regional level.

This process of compiling disseminating it and using knowledge is schematically reflected in Figure 3. The process of dissemination would be essentially the reserve of the one shown.

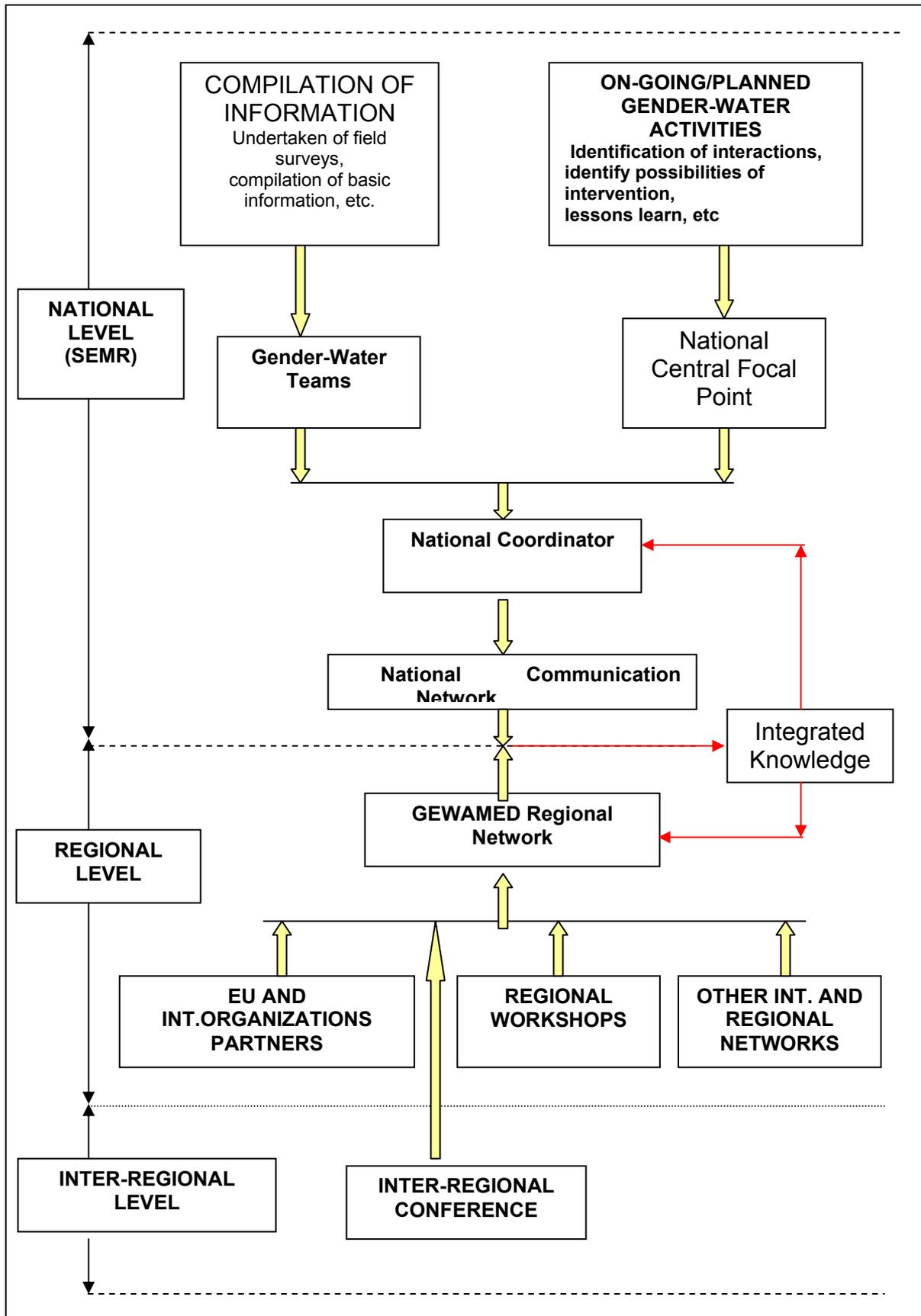


Fig. 3. Flow of information for knowledge acquisition

### ***The knowledge dissemination process***

In general terms the process of dissemination works in the opposite direction than that of compilation process and therefore it does not need the same detail of description as for the compilation since the main features are the same. However some comments and observations are relevant.

1. The Gender-Water Team should play also an essential role in the dissemination of information and knowledge. They should identify the institutions, NGOs and other organizations interested in the project activities and keep them involved and periodically informed. The Gender-Water Teams should develop and use information dissemination and communication strategies that will permit approaching the local groups in an effective manner and more responsive to women needs. Attention should be paid to language and cultural barriers. They should also encourage the exchange of information and experiences among gender officers and other development officers. Although dissemination of information to public and formal institutions will be relevant, efforts should be made to promote and emphasize the local knowledge level.
2. The National Central Focal Point can play an important role not only in disseminating knowledge but also in generating actions that may solve some of the most important problems. However, the commitment to such dissemination and use of the knowledge acquired will depend considerably on the capacity of the Committee to operate in an effective manner and this may vary from country to country.
3. The national web sites will be also an important mechanism for disseminating knowledge and providing useful contacts. A list of network of Internet mail addresses of interested institutions should be compiled. They will receive periodically the project information and a periodic newsletter. There will be still a number of rural institutions that have no access to Internet but still interested in project activities and for them the regular distribution by mail services will be a way of establishing a communication link. As said earlier each Gender-Water Team should prepare regularly (quarterly) newsletters that should be sent to interested parties but also included in the web site for easy access and consultation. The upkeep of the national web sites is an institutional responsibility of the SEMR partners.
4. The GEWAMED regional network will be the one of the main mechanism for disseminating project information to external data users of any kind (policy, institutional, private).
5. Several of the EU partners and international organizations (MIO-ECSDE, pS-EAU, CAFRAD, and others) have considerable experience in the processes of compiling and disseminating information and their knowledge and experience should be capitalized by all participants but specially by the SEMR countries.
6. All the EU partners have already web sites that they manage. They will be requested to insert a special section in their sites referring to the project activities and establishing appropriate links.
7. The Project will generated a considerable number of reports, newsletters and publications. All these documents will also contribute to disseminate the project activities and results. *Table 1* presents the foreseen Plan for the publications and reports. It should be noted that the total number of publications and reports is quite considerable with relation to the person/months of the Project.

### **Project management**

CIHEAM-MAIB will be the organization responsible for the overall management of the project and each individual participant will be responsible for management of the activities assigned in this document in the Plan of Work.

The proposed management structure is made of the following persons and bodies. It is schematically represented in Figure 3:

1. **Consultation and Advisory Gender Committee (GC).** Gender expertise is not easily available and it is felt that a Consultation and Advisory Gender Committee will be of great assistance to the project management. The Committee will examine the project achievements and the Annual Plan of Work and provide their views and orientations to the Coordinator and Project Manager. The members of the Gender Committee will be outstanding persons known for their recognized capacity in the implementation of gender mainstreaming programmes. They will be independent from the project partnership so as to provide an independent advice.
2. **Project Coordinator.** Responsible for the institutional contacts within the project and in its relation with external bodies (EC, International organizations, National Coordinators).
3. **Project Manager and working teams.** Responsible for the implementation of the project's day-to-day activities. The project Manager reports directly to the Coordinator. The Project Manager will be sought among the senior collaborators of CIHEAM-MAIB. The Project Manager will coordinate and lead the actions of the following teams:
  - **Organization and technical team.** This will be integrated by a group of consultants that will support the project manager in organizing the workshops, Regional Conference and provide technical inputs related to other work packages
  - **Communication team.** Group of consultants that will assist the Project Manager in all the activities related to Communication
  - **Administration Team.** Responsible for the control of expenditures and supervision of accounts, provision of costs statements and all administrative matters.

The National Coordinator in each of the SEMR countries will be the main responsible for the implementation of the project activities in each of the SEMR countries. For each SEMR country only a National Coordinator will be nominated even if more than one institution from the same country participate in the project. The National Coordinator will be supported in his/her work with the following teams.

- **The Gender-Water Team** will be integrated by those persons belonging to the same organizations as the Coordinator that will collaborate very closely with him/her to implement the project activities. In most cases this will be integrated by the staff of the corresponding partner but in others will be made of consultants specially hired for the intended activities. In either case the consultants or staff will be under the technical coordination of the National Coordinator.
  - **The National Central Focal Point.** Among the national collaborating institutions one will be designated to act as the focal point to link with the National Coordinator and other public or private institutions interested in the project activities. This institution will designate one person to act as National Central Focal Point. The role of the Focal Point will be to establish links with other institutions interested or involved in gender and water issues and promote the exchange of information and coordination of activities in the mentioned field. With this purpose the National Central Focal Point will look for the collaboration of interested organization and establish focal points for groups of similar organizations or other suitable arrangements. The essential ideal is to establish a network of institutions that work in the area of gender and water and that are willing to exchange and disseminate related information.
4. **Project Institutional Partners.** They are each of the 18 institutional partners of the present CA. For the European Partners the institutional set up recommended for the SEMR countries will not be necessary as they already have adequate mechanism for coordinating and exchanging information. Their main role is to assist and orient the SEMR countries with their experience in the implementations of similar activities.

### Potential project impact

The project strategic objectives and outputs were described formerly in this paper. At the end of the project life (4 years) an evaluation of the project achievements will be made and reported in the final report. Such evaluation will be addressed mainly to the specific outputs earlier mentioned. The project is addressed to improve the knowledge of the participating countries of some of the gender

problems earlier mentioned but even much more important is to improve the information that may contribute to solve some of the problems. In this sense the generation of information and its dissemination will be the key factor determining its success.

Furthermore the project is also expected to contribute to improve the condition of women in the water sector in general and as such the project should contribute to achieve the following goals

1. Improved access of women to job opportunities in the governance of water related institutions
2. Better access to technical information and training facilities enhanced
3. Agricultural extension services will be more prepared to provide services to women
4. Increased number of policy/administrative instruments will be adopted by SEMR countries to mainstream gender in IWRM.
5. Greater social recognition of the women's work in the many activities of the water sector.
6. the inequities limiting the access of women of work opportunities reduced.
7. Women will be better prepared to undertake new roles in the rural environment.

Like many other goals, their achievement depend of many factors but efforts will be made to assess to what extend the GEWAMED project may have contributed to their achievement. The use of gender sensitive indicators in the context of IWRM will be of great assistance in this assessment. A number of such indicators already exist but the project has proposed a consolidated set to be used by the participating institutions.