



Second Water, Growth and Stability Conference

Outcome Document

July 11–14, 2016, Hammamet, Tunisia

Background

In April 2016, multiple stakeholders from the MENA region and beyond met for the [First Water, Growth and Sustainability \(WGS\) Conference](#) at the Regional Environmental Center's head office in Szentendre, Hungary, to discuss how to improve water management and security at both the national and local level, and also to discuss terms for regional cooperation and engagement in order to achieve the more sustainable use of water resources. The [outcome document of the First WGS Conference](#) introduced the [Water, Growth and Stability Initiative](#) (WGSIni), a milestone output of the REC project "[Sustainable Use of Transboundary Water Resources and Water Security Management in the MENA Region \(WATER SUM\)](#)", which is supported by the Swedish Government through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Main outcomes of the Second Water, Growth and Stability Conference

Launch of the Water, Growth and Stability Network

In order to further support and enhance networking and cooperation in the MENA region, and following up on the conclusions of the First WGS Conference, participants at the Second WGS Conference welcomed the launch of the Water, Growth and Stability Network (WGSN). The network will support the WGSIni framework by enabling interaction between WGSIni members — especially water experts and practitioners.

The WGSN is supported by an interactive cloud-based software platform that keeps all WGSIni members engaged in live communication and assists in accomplishing the agreed goals. The WGSN platform will make possible to set up working groups; to develop, share and store working documents; to evaluate and monitor activities in real time; and to streamline the transfer of knowledge among appointed mentors and WGSIni members.

Public campaigns for awareness raising on water, growth and stability

The WGSIni and the WGSN will liaise and cooperate with public-awareness networks across the MENA region in order to develop similar actions and share experiences regarding effective approaches to public awareness campaigns for the safe and efficient use of water. A perspective in which human rights and democracy are regarded as fundamental to development will underpin all planned actions. Following a photo competition organised on the occasion of World Water Day 2016 (March 22) on the theme of water and jobs, an drawing competition targeting school pupils will be officially launched during World Water Week in Stockholm in August 2016. The theme will be the relationship between water and people, with an emphasis on local actions undertaken to preserve vital water resources.



Introducing the Water, Growth and Stability Forums

The WGSIni enjoys support for its work from a high-level panel and five forums (Academic Forum, Business Forum, Civil Society Forum, Municipality Forum and Women's Forum), the last three of which were launched at the Second WGS Conference. Their main points are summarised below:

- **Municipality Forum** – Participants focused on the exchange of knowledge among municipalities with respect to local water security action planning (LWSAP) and welcomed the setting up of the knowledge platform — the e-learning courses in particular. Participants also confirmed LWSAPs as an important deliverable that enables the involvement of local communities in water management and governance and in the implementation of water-related Sustainable Development Goals and related targets.
- **Civil Society Forum** – Representatives of civil society discussed their roles in water governance and water security and focused on how the synchronising of their advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives, both among themselves and with national and local water authorities and actors, can contribute to addressing needs and priorities through a harmonised approach. Participants welcomed the WGSIni as a means of providing the knowledge and tools necessary for strengthening the capacities of civil society organisations in the region; fostering accountability; and cooperating through a participatory approach and multi-stakeholder dialogue.
- **Women's Forum** – Forum representatives initiated dialogue about the role of women in water resources management and water governance, water security, sanitation, agriculture and adaptation to climate change. Emphasis was given to several identified needs and priorities — to be built upon during forthcoming WGSIni events — such as raising awareness of women's rights in the water sector; promoting capacity building for adaptation and resilience to climate change; and facilitating women's empowerment and engagement in decision making and strategic planning for sustainable and efficient water management.

Milestones

During the closing session of the conference, the WGSIni team introduced [upcoming milestones](#) and described how participants can contribute. These include:

- World Water Week, Stockholm (WWW2016, August 28 – September 2, 2016)
- Budapest Water Summit 2016 (BWS2016, November 28–30, 2016)
- MENA Dialogue during REC General Assembly (December 2016)
- Third Water, Growth and Stability Conference (April 2017)

Participants thanked the REC and the Government of Sweden for organising and supporting the Second WGS Conference, as well as the Tunisian Ministry of Agriculture, Hydraulic Resources and Fisheries and the Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation for their assistance in co-organising the event.

Please visit wgsini.rec.org and follow #WGSIni on social media for further information and updates about the Water, Growth and Stability Initiative!

Hammamet, Tunisia
July 14, 2016