Message from the project director

The WATER SUM project supports the MENA region and its water stakeholders by advancing water management at national and local levels, by promoting the more sustainable use of water resources, and by shoring up regional cooperation and engagement. The project was developed in accordance with the Swedish Government’s international development policy, and we hope that these efforts will assist stakeholders in crafting a strategic approach leading to viable solutions.

We have always stressed the importance of bridging efforts and the mutual transfer of knowledge and good practices between countries in the MENA region and other states and regions. WATER SUM has the potential to catalyse an already visible change of perspective on water issues. Sharing responsibility is the key to managing the region’s water resources more efficiently and harmoniously at all levels.

Radoje Lausevic is WATER SUM Project Director and REC Deputy Executive Director.

Making a difference

Jovanka Ignjatovic draws from deep experience

Jovanka Ignjatovic, project manager for the WATER POt component of WATER SUM, has been involved in the water sector for over 25 years, but she is still amazed by the many ways that water influences humanity.

“Water professionals are very committed people who frequently work behind the scenes,” says Ignjatovic, “but their impact on daily lives is enormous.”

WATER POt aims to build skills and transfer knowledge related to integrated water resources management (IWRM) and climate change adaptation.

“Achieving common understanding of the needs of water practitioners and stakeholders is pivotal to WATER POt’s objectives,” stresses Ignjatovic. “The MENA region should make use of its comparative advantages in natural, human, technological and financial resources to achieve water sustainability. WATER POt aims to capitalise on these underlying strengths and pairing them with processes and methodologies that are also helping to address pressing situations across the region.”

Getting connected

WATER POt’s national and regional activities actively seek links and interactions with selected projects across the MENA region.

“Our current focal countries are Jordan and Tunisia, where we have identified demonstration sites for carrying out activities,” the project manager explains. “Other countries, such as Egypt, Morocco and Algeria, are invited to take part in our cross-cutting regional events and workshops. Cooperative dialogue on water issues can help bring peaceful development to the region and a sustainable future with water for all.”

Jovanka Ignjatovic is a water management engineer specialising in hydrology, water quality modelling and environmental management, and is leader of the REC’s Water Management topic area.
Setting the learning scene

Demonstration sites provide concrete knowledge and practical experience related to the IWRM approach, water sustainability, climate change adaptation and other actions linked to WATER PORT objectives.

**TUNISIA**

**Medjerda River Basin**

The Medjerda River is the most important watercourse in Tunisia. It originates in the semi-arid Atlas Mountains of eastern Algeria at an elevation of 1,408 m and flows north-eastwards for 460 km before emptying into the Mediterranean Sea (Gulf of Tunis). The Medjerda’s catchment area covers around 24,000 km², of which 16,300 km² (69 percent) lie in Tunisia. The Medjerda River Basin covers approximately 10 percent of Tunisia’s territory.

The river and its tributaries provide valuable irrigation water for surrounding plains through a complex system of greater dams, hill dams and channels. The channels also support the transport and supply of water to higher-density areas such as Tunis and its surroundings.

**DEMONSTRATION SITE FACTS**

- **Site area:** Watershed of the Medjerda River section between the Sidi Salem dam (148.5 km) and the Ghardimaou hydrological station (313.5 km) close to the Algerian border
- **Main tributaries within the site:** (left tributaries) Raghai, Bou Heurtma, Kasseb, Beja, Zerga; (right tributaries) Tessa, Mellegue, Mliz
- **Length of river section:** 167 km
- **Governorates:** Kef, Jendouba, Beja
- **Main water usage:** Agriculture, domestic water supply
- **Hydraulic infrastructure:** (five dams) Sidi Salem, Kasseb, Bou Heurtma, Beni M’Tir, Mellegue
- **Hydrological stations:** Ghardimaou, Jendouba, Bou Salem, Sidi Salem
- **Main wastewater treatment plants:** Ghardimaou, Bou Salem, Jendouba

**JORDAN**

**Yarmouk River Basin**

The Yarmouk River is the biggest tributary of the Jordan River. From its source in Lake Mzareeb, Syria, where it draws from the Hauran Plateau and Mt. Hermon (Jabal Al Shaikh), it joins the Jordan River near Adassiya in Jordan at an elevation of 200 m below sea level, forming the boundary between Israel and Jordan. It then flows with the Jordan downstream to Lake Tiberias (the Sea of Galilee), which forms the boundary between Syria to the north and Jordan in the south. The Yarmouk River Basin covers approximately 1.5 percent of Jordan’s territory.

The total length of the Yarmouk River is 57 km, of which 47 km forms the border between Jordan and Syria, while the remainder flows in Syria only. The total catchment area of the river is 6,780 km², of which 1,426 km² (20 percent) are in Jordan.

Targeted WATER PORT activities will be carried out within the delimited demonstration site area lying within the Jordanian Yarmouk River Basin between the upstream point in Ajloun area (1,200 m above sea level) and the downstream point near the Adassiya diversion weir (200 m below sea level).
Comprehensive training boosts skills of water professionals

The WATER PORT team conducted the training “Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Links to the WATER PORT Project Component” at the head office of the Regional Environmental Center (REC) in Szentendre, Hungary. The training, which took place on January 19–28, 2016, targeted young water management experts and representatives of national water authorities, institutions and NGOs from the MENA region, particularly from Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia.

The training event covered a wide range of subjects, such as IWRM practices, shared water resources, climate change, water-related diplomacy, and stakeholder dialogue.

Participants held dynamic discussions and shared experiences with the REC’s own experts, which, combined with case studies and study visits, made it possible to identify links between MENA-related water issues, WATER PORT actions, and the application of management and governance tools to concrete situations in the project’s target countries.

One of the highlights of the training was an exercise in which the participants developed a regional concept of water diplomacy.

The complete training agenda, photos, presentations and other materials can be found on the WATER PORT website training page.

Around the bend: World Water Week 2016

World Water Week is the global focal point for the planet’s most pressing water-related challenges, drawing 3,000-plus participants to Stockholm each year.

In 2016, a diverse set of actors will explore new perspectives and ideas related to “Water for Sustainable Growth”. There will also be a general discussion on the new climate agreement and water-related SDGs. Starting from this year, the MENA region will be highlighted through the dedicated “MENA Regional Focus Day”.

As part of this focus day, the WATER SUM project is organising the MENA Water World Café 2016, to bring together leaders representing central and local governments, regional bodies, NGOs, academia and businesses from the region. We anticipate lively discussions in a pleasant atmosphere on a range of topics that are also linked to the key themes of the WATER PORT project component.

The event will be a follow-up to last year’s event, the MENA Water World Café 2015. Among the conclusions reached last year were that the water sector in the MENA region needs better governance, a deeper consideration of climate change issues, and better cooperation between water authorities.

For a detailed summary of key conclusions, please visit the project website. We look forward to seeing you at Water World Café 2016!
The WATER SUM project is benefiting daily from an increasingly credible and impactful online presence. A recent facelift and revamp now makes it easier to follow WATER SUM’s progress, including bespoke actions falling under each of the two project components (WATER PorT and WaSe). The WATER SUM website now functions as a dynamic, attractive instrument that ensures clarity and integration with the project’s social media tools, such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

The website area dedicated to the WATER PorT project component has been meaningfully reshaped to conform to its original twofold goal of disseminating information on the component’s progress, while at the same time facilitating discussion, interaction, cooperation and the sharing of knowledge among those practitioners and citizens active in the water sector across the MENA region.

The WATER PorT team has introduced sub-areas to which training summaries and materials — as well as resources and publications — will be uploaded regularly, both for consultation and for reaching a broader audience.

With the creation of the WATER PorT Forum — a space for dialogue, reflection and discussion — we hope to encourage institutions, NGOs, policy makers, those working in the water sector, and the general public, to come together on complex water issues affecting the MENA region and beyond.

We are keen to hear your impressions of the website’s new look and feel. Please write to us at waterport_watersum@rec.org, or send a message through one of our social media channels.

The newly re-crafted WATER SUM website makes it easier to stay abreast of project activities and achievements.

The WATER PorT facilitates discussion, interaction, cooperation and knowledge sharing across the MENA region.

Photo competition
People & Water:
Jordan and Tunisia
Accepting entries now!
Deadline: April 15, 2016 (Jordan)
April 30, 2016 (Tunisia)
To get the latest WATER PorT news
subscribe on our website