

**DOC n° 1 – WP 6.2.1**

**First draft on: 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

# Participation of Lazio Region to the European Innovation Partnership on water and the road to Horizon 2020



### **An activity envisaged in the project plan and scheduled in the Gantt.**

While drafting the SWMED project in 2009 it was discussed and approved by all the network's partners the decision to introduce in the WP 6 (The dissemination of best practice to beneficiaries and the definition of promotional policies) the participation of some representatives of SWMED to a water conference of international level. This activity was considered potentially important in order to disseminate the results and the best practices of SWMED, to confront them with other projects and capitalize the action through the valorization of its inputs in view of the new EU programming funds.

In other words, this means that the experience made of using SWM tools in the project at the Mediterranean basin level with ENPI CBC Med could be exploited to obtain additional financing in key areas in the countries where the activities were carried out: applied research for water saving and water re-use; innovative water policy and sustainable water management.

Initially, the choice was made for the 2012 international water conference that was to be held in the city of Seville but while the deadline approached, the partners realized that, since the project SWMED was at the start-up few results could be shown in an international forum rather than mere intentions. Therefore, all the project partners opted to participate to a conference near the end of the project. They could propose the conference to which to participate with a relative freedom, but a lowest common denominator was established for the approval by the network which is the international prestige that the initiative would give the project SWMED. This means that the Conference should relate to the water resources, with an audience of international speakers, possibly focused upon the sustainability of water management in the Mediterranean countries. In such a context the presentation of our project could earn visibility, enhance the potential impacts of replicability in other parts of the Mediterranean areas, contributing to the dissemination of the preliminary results achieved.

### **The participation of Lazio region to the Open-days 2013 in Brussels.**

The SWMED project beneficiary, Lazio region, decided to participate to the 2013 Open-days workshop "The European Innovation Partnership on Water and the road to Horizon 2020" held on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2013 in the premises of the Brussels office of Puglia region. In this initiative **Mr. Alessandro Scoppettuolo**, an officer of Lazio region involved in the project made a presentation of SWMED, introducing the synergies between the ENPI CBC Med Programme objectives and the growth strategy of EUROPE 2020, within the water management sector.

The environmental challenge has been well described in the ENPI CBC Med Programme especially for important context of shared sea basins like the Mediterranean, whereas water pollution, whether from industrial or urban discharges, represents a critical problem, exacerbated by risks of marine pollution and by a growing water-shortage.

While many of these issues can only be effectively addressed at a national or indeed multilateral level, there is still an important role which local actors can play in this respect, and thus contribute i.e. to achieving the goals of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership's Horizon 2020 initiative.

On the other hand, the ENPI CBC Med Programme stressed that water is a case point where cross-border cooperation will facilitate the shared development and protection of water resources (page 16 Strategy Paper 2007-2013 – Indicative Programme 2007-2010).

In HORIZON 2020 the water-related research will continue to benefit by the Programme since water is a commodity with the potential for driving economic growth, employment and market opportunities, both at EU and global level. Furthermore, the Euro-Mediterranean governments aim to tackle the top sources of Mediterranean pollution by the year 2020 through the Horizon 2020 initiative that is built around 4 elements:

1. Projects to reduce the most significant pollution sources focusing on industrial emissions, municipal waste and urban waste water, responsible for up to 80% of pollution in the Mediterranean Sea
2. Capacity-building measures to help neighboring countries create national environmental administrations that are able to develop and police environmental laws.
3. Using the Commission's Research budget to develop and share knowledge of environmental issues relevant to the Mediterranean.
4. Developing indicators to monitor the success of Horizon 2020.

The SWMED project objectives perfectly match the Horizon goals above reported. In order to measure to the new principles expressed in the 2014 – 2020 EU programming in the field of water resources, the Lazio Region wanted to take part in a workshop focused on the new tools to participate in the decision-making process on the financing, such as the EIP water and Horizon 2020, by presenting the objectives, strategies, methodology of work, the results and main activities of the SWMED project.

Mr. A. Scoppettuolo had the chance to introduce the participants to the project's objectives and strategies, the level of application of the action and the results envisaged. He has emphasized the sustainability of SWMED and the integrated approach aimed at setting a new water policy capable to introduce sustainable water management solutions in regional/national water plans and programming in the Mediterranean regions.

He then had the opportunity to reiterate the points in common between SWMED and the new tools launched by the European Commission for the environmental challenge (EIP-water and Horizon2020) that focus, among the others, on the need to improve the water governance and its administration. Finally, Mr. A. Scoppettuolo has explained the participants how the project has approached the green economy principles insisting on the innovation & sustainable technology applied to the water saving and water and wastewater reuse and the participatory approach used to share a new water policy with local and regional stakeholders in all countries and regions involved in the project.

### **Brief description of the event.**

Under the Innovation Union flagship initiative, DG Environment launched the European Innovation Partnership on Water. Its aim is to stimulate, through the creation of Action Groups, creative and innovative solutions that contribute significantly to tackling water challenges, while stimulating sustainable economic growth and job creation. The workshop has shown concrete examples of EU regions, provinces and cities involved in the activities of the Partnership. DG Environment has also provided information about the state of the art of the EIP and its future development. The DG Research has commented on the future funding for the water sector under Horizon 2020.

### **Speakers**

- **Robert Schroeder**, European Commission, DG Environment (moderator)
- **Panagiotis Balabanis**, European Commission, DG Research and Innovation
- **Jean De Bethune**, Vice-governor of the Province of West Flanders
- **Pieter De Jong**, Wetsus Nederland Liaison Office in Brussels
- **Umberto Fratino**, Politechnic University of Bari
- **Isaac Navarro**, President of ZINNAE Water Cluster
- **Alessandro Scopettuolo**, Lazio Region

The meeting, which has been held in the Liaison Office of Puglia Region has started at 14:30 and ended at 17:00 on the 9th October with the participation of about 100 people. During the workshop the representatives of the European Commission showed the functioning of the EU funding on water for the period 2014 - 2020 , with a particular emphasis on the European Initiative Partnership on water and the Horizon 2020.

### **Output for SWMED project.**

The main output for the SWMED project in participating to the conference “The EIP on Water and the road to Horizon 2020” has been the presentation of the action to the EC representatives of the DG Environment and the DG Research and Innovation, in a context where new EC tools to significantly contribute to orient the new EU programming on the climate change measures, even in the Euro-Mediterranean area and with a focus on water governance were discussed.

As preliminary result, the Lazio Region was requested by the Action group coordinator, to be involved in Finnowater (an AG approved by the EIP-water) just because of its experience in SWMED project. The Finnowater's main goal is to boost innovative financial instruments and mechanisms to support public and private sector in the water innovation.

The FINNOWATER Action Group intends to explore, develop and implement new approaches to increase financial flows in the water (and water-related) sector, particularly by incentivizing public innovation (Pre-Commercial Procurement PCP, and Public Procurement of Innovative Solutions PPI) of new technologies and services as well as other innovative financial tools and mechanisms.

Among the four actions around which the action group is organized, the leader, the Errin network, has offered to the Lazio Region the coordination of the Action n.1 “A common framework at EU level to build interfaces among the financiers, industry, businesses, SMEs and research organizations to foster relationships that promote innovation and improve the knowledge about access to finance”.

Participating in this action group, would allow the Lazio region to valorize the feasibility studies carried out in the partner countries of the SWMED project, especially with regard to the economic and financial sustainability. In addition, with this experience, the Lazio region as coordinator of Action 1 could propose the extension of accession to the Action group to the subjects from the Mediterranean Basin Area.

Another result emerged from the workshop was to draw the attention of the representatives from the EC on the necessity to deal with the water governance at the Mediterranean basin level in EIP-water. This suggestion came out of the presentation of the first results of the SWMED project, especially regarding the involvement of the stakeholders in the planning of water resources, which have shown how the administrative fragmentation and the lack of sound management are the main bottlenecks common to the Mediterranean countries to affirm the innovation and the market in the water sector.

### **Media coverage of the event**

The workshop has been publicized by local media in the participating regions, by EU newsletters and by the Open-days organization.

[The website of Puglia Region](#)

[The website of Lazio Region](#)

[The ERRIN website](#)

[The website of the Antwerp port](#)

A video of the event may be seen at:

<http://www.regione.puglia.it/index.php?page=bruxelles&opz=showns&id=951>

### PICS



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- 1 **Alessandro Scopettuolo**, Lazio Region
- 2-3 **Panagiotis Balabanis**, European Commission, DG Research and Innovation
- 4 Round table among speakers
- 5 **Robert Schroeder**, European Commission, DG Environment (moderator)
- 6 **Pieter De Jong**, Wetsus Nederland Liaison Office in Brussels