

Switzerland' support to transboundary water cooperation in the Middle East and Central Asia

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Water, a top priority for the Swiss assistance programmes

- The Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency (SDC) invests annually around 100 million Swiss francs world over in water projects through bilateral and multilateral actions
- The Parliament has recently decided to increase the volume of public aid in order to reach 0,5% of GDP. The extra resources will be allocated to two sectors: water and climate change
- The Swiss Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) has also a strong focus on water in Central Asia, mostly the provision of safe water and sanitation in urban centres

Water security in the Middle East

- *Working hypothesis:* even in the most strained political context, top level water experts and leaders can acknowledge that water is a precious common good that has to be managed in a concerted way.
- In conjunction with influential actors in the region, Swiss and Swedish governments co-financed the project « Water Security in the Middle East »
- Study encompassing 7 countries/territories: Israel, Palestinian Territories, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Turkey.

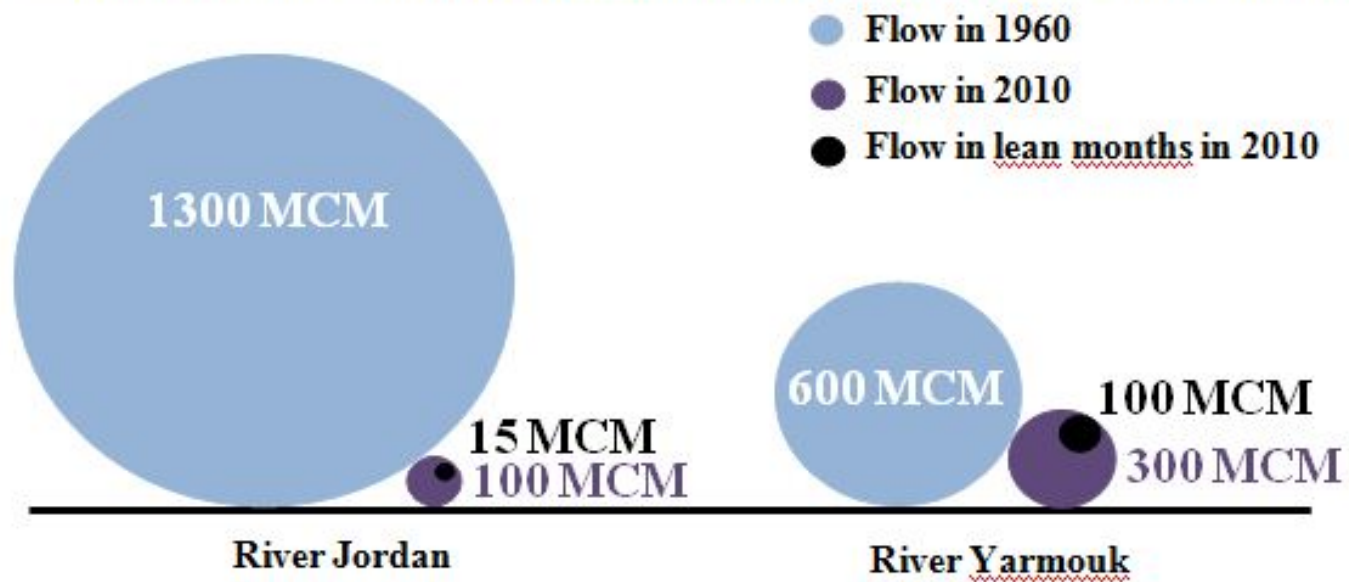
The Blue Peace

- First output of the study: book written by the « Strategic Foresight Group » (Mumbai) titled: « The Blue Peace: Rethinking Middle East Water »
- Released in Geneva in February 2011 by the President of the Swiss Confederation
- Innovative approach to engage leaders from all branches of the society in harnessing collaborative solutions for sustainable regional water management

Depleting River Flows in the ME

Depleting River Flows *(From SFG, The Blue Peace, 2011)*

The river flows in Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan have depleted by a range of 50 to 90 per cent from 1960 to 2010. See below the example of the rivers Yarmouk and Jordan. The impact is most strongly felt in the lean month.



Dead Sea

Fig 1-e: Dead Sea Status with Time, if No Action is Taken



Source: Eng. Zafer Alem



The Blue Peace: an action plan

- Finding: relations at political level extremely difficult, but mutual recognition and good professional relations among water experts and managers in the region
- Made it possible to identify a set of concrete recommendations constituting a consensual and realistic roadmap for the management of shared water resources

Summary of recommendations

The BLUE PEACE : Summary of Recommendations			
Short Term Intra Circle	Medium Term Intra Circle	Long Term Intra Circle	Long Term Inter Circle
<p>Cooperation Council for Water Resources in the Middle East</p> <p><u>Decentralised Water Management in the Palestine Territories</u></p> <p>Confidence Building Initiatives between Israel and the PA</p> <p>Demand Management</p>	<p>Integrated River Basin Management in selected rivers</p> <p>Cooperation in <u>Euphrates-Tigris Basin</u></p>	<p>Joint <u>Desalination Plants</u></p> <p>Red-<u>Dead Sea Canal</u></p>	<p>Turkish National Water for Jordan Valley</p> <p>Lake <u>Kinneret (Tiberias) as Regional Commons</u></p>

The Blue Peace: next steps

- Comprehensive assessment of the conditions under which a « *Cooperation Council for Water Resources in the Middle East* » could be established
- SDC will finance concrete activities (equipments + TA) in the fields of water productivity, water demand management, groundwater mgt, etc.
- Partnership with State agencies, academic institutions, agricultural cooperatives
- Strengthening networking within the region.

Swiss support for Water Management in Central Asia

- Switzerland active in water management in CA since 2000 with cumulative commitments in the order of 50 million USD
- Focus on regional approaches:
 - Testing similar approaches in three countries and promoting exchanges of experiences
 - Creating a regional information system & data base for water management
 - Working in close partnership with regional water coordination institutions: SIC-ICWC and IFAS



Three axes of intervention

- Data collection and exchange for improved water management
 - Support to National Hydro-meteorological Services
 - Central Asia Regional Water Information Base (CAREWIB)
- Integrated Water Resources Management
 - IWRM Ferghana Valley: improving effectiveness, reliability and equity of water delivery to the farm gate y introducing demand oriented and transparent water allocation mechanisms
 - Canal Automation: equitable and transparent water allocation thorough stabilizing and monitoring water flows in canals

Three axes of intervention (2)

- IWRM (cont.)
 - Water Productivity Improvement at plot level: on-plot water management to minimize water consumption
 - Rural Enterprises Support Project II: up-scaling IWRM approach with the World Bank
 - Water Resources Management Support Project: up-scaling IWRM approach with the Asian Development Bank (to be signed shortly)
 - In the case of the last two projects, SDC supports « software » components (training, capacity building) whereas the multilateral development banks fund the « hardware » components (canal rehabilitation, roads, etc.)

Three axes of intervention (3)

- Central Asia Energy Water Programme: providing seed funds to the World Bank to launch one of the components: « Energy Water Modelling »
 - Aim: « establish a common platform for analysis, accepted by and useful to all countries to support both collective and national dialogue on regionally significant initiatives »



Tentative conclusions

- Potential for significant water saving (at least 20%); the combined CA, WPI and IWRM approach makes economic sense !
- Water governance dimension is crucial: for effective water management, bottom up consultation mechanisms must complement top down planning.
- Time to scale-up: IWRM approach has demonstrated its benefits on a significant scale. It is time now for the governments of the region to define a strategy to implement these principles nation-wide.
- IWRM and WUAs sustainability will depend to a large extent on the broader agricultural policy framework (state order and procurement system).

Tentative conclusions (2)

- The data bases on which decisions are made still need improvement, both in terms of data gathering (completing Hydromet projects) and accessibility for authorized users.
- There is room for improvement in the institutional framework for regional water management cooperation. In particular, the system of rotating seat of interstate commissions and executive committees leads to inefficiencies.
- Promoting regional approaches and programmes is not getting any easier in Central Asia , but we have to try harder ! The good collaboration among the six main donors in the sector and region is an asset.