

INTERNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE

**TRANSBOUNDARY WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN**

Within the framework of

**UNECE Water Convention, Union for the Mediterranean, GEF IW:LEARN, Activity D2**

# NGO involvement in transboundary water resources management

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**FOR ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

THE MEDITERRANEAN NGO FEDERATION

# Outline



Overview of potential benefits and challenges related to NGO involvement in transboundary water resources management in the Mediterranean

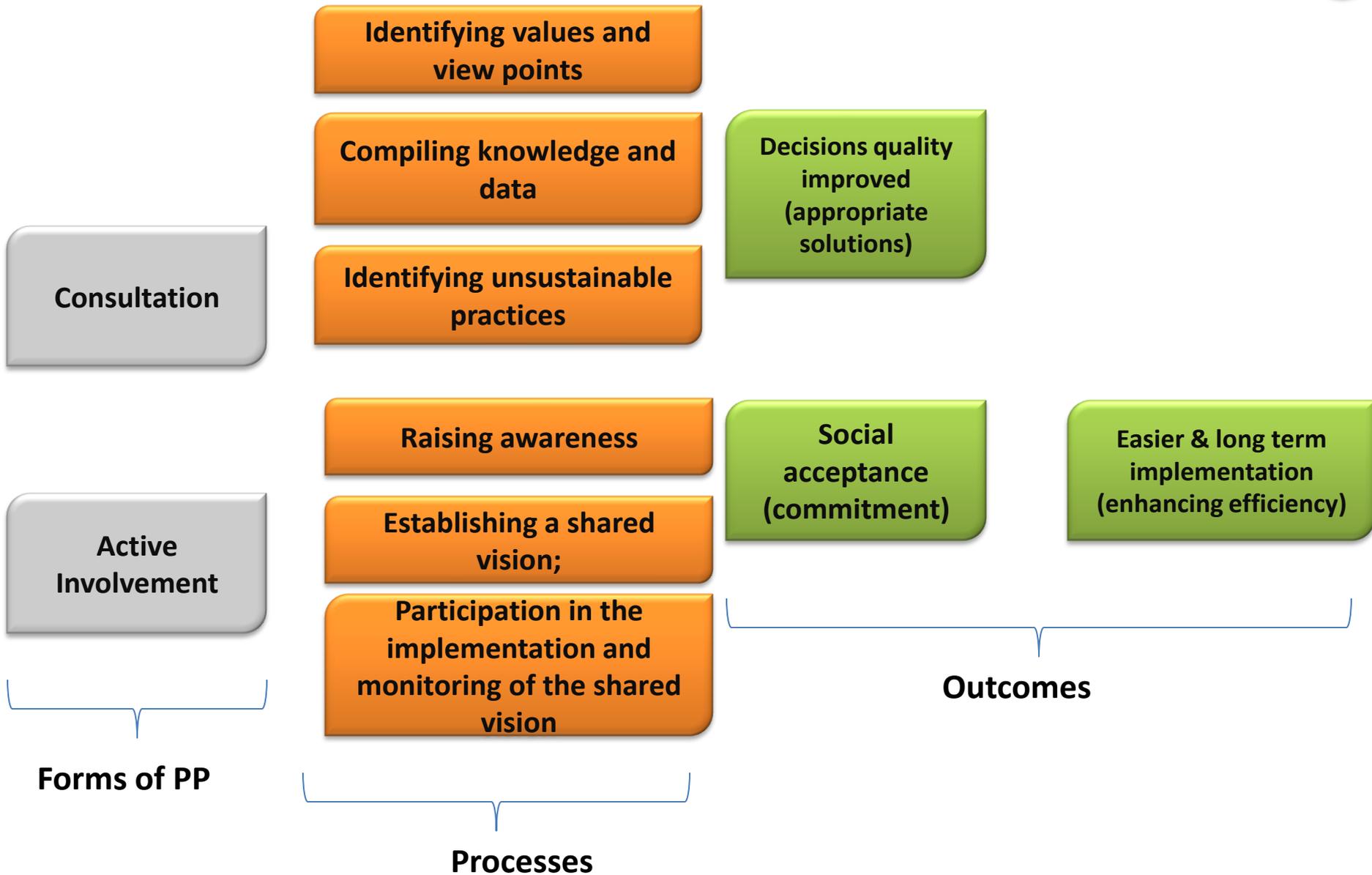
Practices applied & experiences gained from MIO-ECSDE's role in the involvement of NGOs in the GEF MedPartnership project

A coordinated Civil Society contribution for an effective Drin Dialogue: practices applied and lessons learned

NGOs within the wider civil society sector play an important role in promoting sustainable water resources management.

This includes their active participation at local, national and transboundary level in all phases of watershed management planning and implementation (design, implementation in the field, operationalization, monitoring and evaluation).

# Public Participation: forms, processes and possible outcomes



# Potential benefits from public participation & NGO involvement

- Increasing public awareness of environmental issues;
- Making use of knowledge, experience, initiatives of different stakeholders and thus, improving the quality of plans, measures, policies, etc.;
- Public acceptance, commitment and support / consensus building;
- More transparent and creative decision-making;
- Less misunderstandings, litigation, delays, and more effective implementation and in the long term, safeguarding and reinforcing of democracy.

# Main challenges and obstacles for effective NGO involvement in the region

- Lack of recognition of legitimacy of the role of NGOs;
- Constraints on the capacities and culture of local/national administration bodies to properly organise and implement participatory processes;
- Lack of capacity and expertise of NGOs at local/national level and lack of human resources;
- Lack of funds and/or knowledge on how to access funds;
- Lack of donors;
- Lack of, or weak coordination/collaboration between national/local NGOs;
- No access to information or limited access to unreliable data regarding environmental issues;
- Frequent cases of opportunistic NGOs, that adapt their scope according to funding prospects that arise;
- Lack of continuation/sustainability of activities that have been initiated within the framework of a project.

# MedPartnership

## MIO-ECSDE's experience in involving NGOs in the MedPartnership activities



# NGO Involvement in the MedPartnership activities

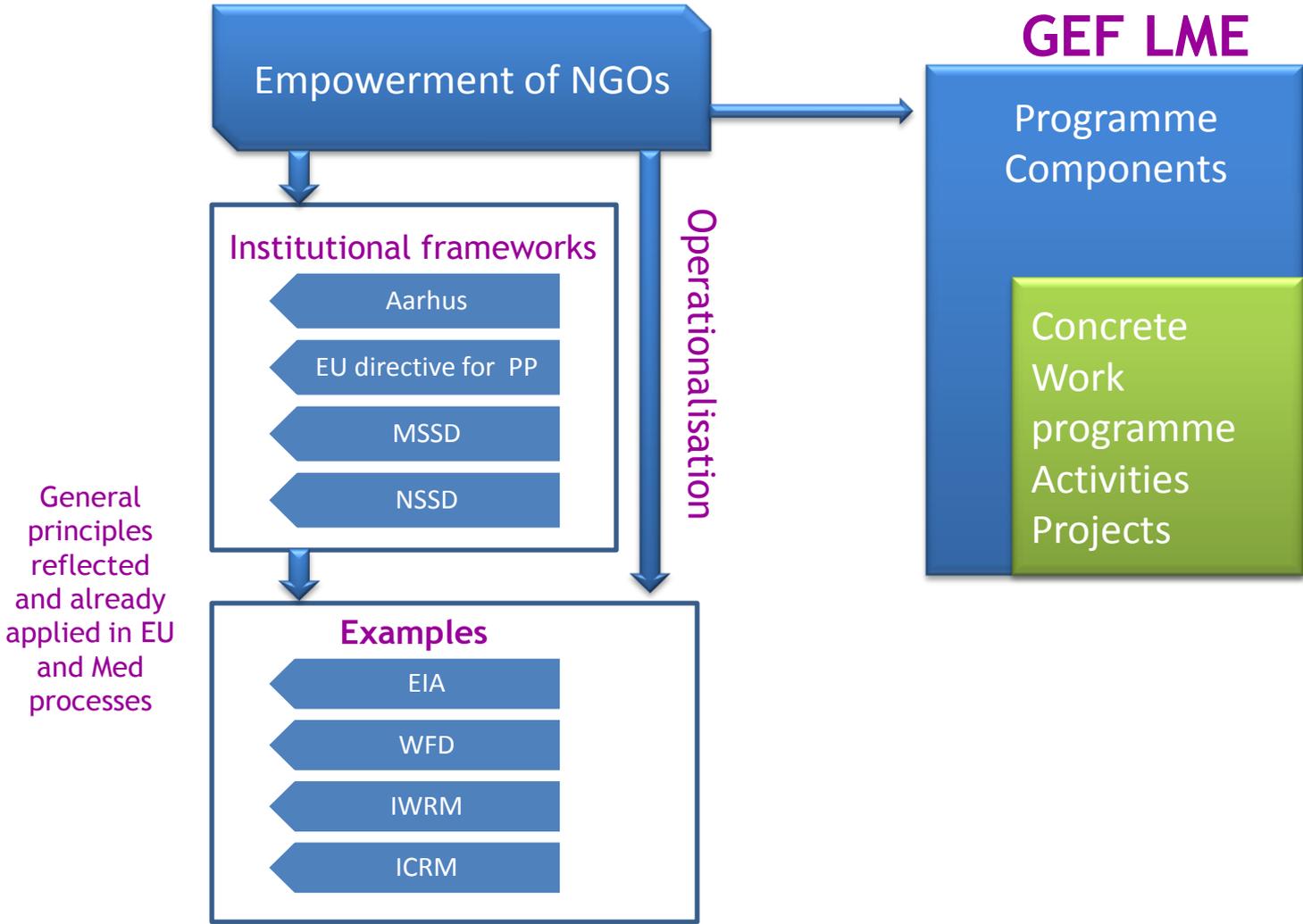
The involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) is an integral part of the MedPartnership, critical for the effective implementation of its objectives.

Facilitating NGO and CBO participation in the project activities

Enhancing the role of NGOs and CBOs in the MedPartnership activities

Building synergies with other projects

# General Framework of NGO involvement



# Practices and tools applied to facilitate & enhance NGO participation in the MedPartnership

- Development and implementation of the NGO Involvement Plan (table of roles, questionnaire, check list, database, etc.)
- Information dissemination & Visibility related activities
- Networking meetings & capacity building workshops
- Efforts to link the MedPartnership with the GEF Small Grants Programme

# Proposed NGO roles in the MedPartnership activities

## Component 1 Overall Work-plan

Activities	Main Outcomes/Outputs at year end			
	2010	2011	2012	2013
1. Integrated approaches for the implementation of the SAPs and NAPs: ICZM, IWRM and management of coastal aquifer				
1.1 Management of Coastal Aquifer and Groundwater				
1.1.1 Assessment of coastal aquifer risk and uncertainty and mapping of their vulnerability				
1.1.1.1 Assessment of risk and uncertainty related to the Mediterranean coastal aquifer	- Draft report on risk and uncertainty for the MED coastal aquifers prepared - Coastal aquifer - related risks & uncertainties identified - Case study Nador Lagoon, Morocco, completed – consolidated report	- Final report on risk and uncertainty for the MED coastal aquifers prepared		
1.1.1.2 Coastal aquifer vulnerability mapping: Pilot Project in one selected country	- Aquifer vulnerability mapping started: field assessment of Land Based Source (LBS) pollution & sea water intrusion - Training & technology transfer - Preparation of GIS-based vulnerability maps in selected areas prepared started	Technology and information system for management of coastal aquifers introduced for regional MED dissemination and replications	Meeting with the SP Investment Fund (Sustainable MED) to plan follow up for possible investment <b>Add to the agenda the role of NGOs</b>	
1.1.1.3 Coastal aquifer supplement to TDA-MED: Development of a coastal TDA supplement		- Aquifer TDA committee for coastal aquifer supplement to TDA-MED established - National TDA reports developed and available	- Coastal aquifer supplement to TDA-MED drafted based on risk assessment/ vulnerability mapping. - Coastal aquifer supplement to TDA-MED reviewed, finalized and adopted	
1.1.2 Regional actions for Coastal Aquifer Management				
1.1.2.1 Development of a regional Action Plan on Coastal Aquifers		- 3 sub-regional action plans (Adriatic; Southern/ Central; Levantine/ Aegean) developed subsequent to the workshops	Sub-basin action plans reconciled in draft regional coastal aquifer action plan and adopted <b>With NGO support this task could be easier/smoothen</b>	
1.1.2.2 Integration of groundwater management in ICZM and IWRM planning systems	Draft methodology for development of ICZM plans prepared	ICZM plans developed	Regional dissemination	

Advisory/consultative role  
 Participant

Stakeholder  
 Advisory/consultative role & Participant

Participant & Stakeholder  
 Appropriately communicated to NGOs

## Challenges & lessons learned

The involvement of a regional NGO such as MIO-ECSDE from the design phase of the MedPartnership has been acknowledged across the board as a major success.

*However:*

Not enough financial resources were earmarked for the proper implementation of the NGO Involvement Plan.

NGOs have not been involved from the first phases of transboundary water resources management processes → low engagement, weak commitment. Late inclusion → difficulties in the process (delays, misunderstandings).

Continued momentum must be maintained even though some processes take a lot of time to evolve/progress (funds for communication, interim activities).

Small scale pilot/demo projects/activities undertaken by NGOs considerably strengthen their ownership of the processes and objectives as well as the success of the overall project.



# Case study: The Drin Dialogue Process

A coordinated Civil Society contribution for an effective Drin Dialogue



# MIO-ECSDE

## Member of the Drin Core Group

To contribute to the aims and objectives of the Drin Dialogue process by:

- Supporting the dialogue at regional level (politically, technically, through communication/awareness raising actions...);
- Contributing in establishing a common understanding and shared vision via the coordinated involvement of civil society, and particularly NGOs, in the Drin Dialogue;
- Enhancing the ability and capacity of its member and collaborating NGOs in order to act in an effective and constructive way.

## Main activities to coordinate and empower NGOs to effectively contribute in the Drin Dialogue

- Organization of capacity building workshops;
- Organization of networking meetings back-to-back with the national/regional consultations and Core Group meetings;
- Dissemination of information/communication activities;
- Joint fund raising efforts for implementing a project in support of the shared vision;
- Engagement efforts to foster commitment and solidarity among environmental NGOs of the region to protect the Drin River Basin through the development of tangible/concrete outputs.

## Enhancing synergies and impact

To enhance impact, MIO-ECSDE's actions in support of NGOs and the Drin Dialogue were included under the umbrellas of the 2 biggest regional initiatives in the Mediterranean it participates in:

The MedPartnership

Horizon 2020 Capacity  
Building/Mediterranean  
Environment Programme

## Lessons learned...

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- Need to **engage** NGOs throughout the process from the planning to the implementation phase.
- In order to ensure a meaningful, coordinated and effective participation of NGOs in the transboundary water resources management cycle, there is a need to **enhance their abilities and capacities** to act throughout these processes.
- Considerable amount of time and resources are needed in order to create an atmosphere of **cooperation and trust** but the investment definitely pays back!
- In order to keep NGOs motivated and engaged in the process opportunities should be sought to **jointly develop concrete outputs**.
- **Collaboration and exchange of experiences** among NGOs at national and sub-regional level can help to effectively replicate successful approaches.

# Questions & discussion

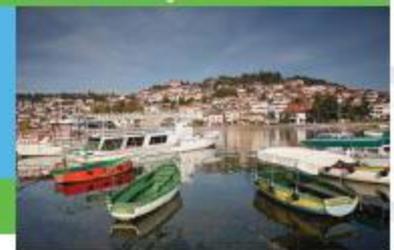
- Why is it that early NGO involvement in transboundary water resources management is sometimes intimidating?
- Funds for NGO involvement: how do we go from theory to practice?



*Fisherman, Lake Shkoder/Skadar*  
Photo credit: Thomas Vlachogianni

*Lake Ohrid*

Photo credit: Milan Vognin



*Drin River*

Photo credit: Thomas Vlachogianni



*Pelecanus crispus, Lake Prespa*  
Photo credit: Vassilis Psalidas

Thank you for your attention!

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