PROJECT SHEET

ENPI 2008/150-505 REMEE
Rediscovering together the water heritage in the Mediterranean region

Timeframe
01/01/2009 To 30/06/2011

Total budget
€ 1.070.560 EU Contribution € 850.667

Coordinator
Association pour la Participation et l’Action Régionale (A.P.A.RE.) - France
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Partners
Algeria AREA-ED - Association de Réflexion d’Echanges et d’Action pour l’Environnement et le Développement
France OEC - Office de l’Environnement de la Corse (http://www.oec.fr)
Greece MKP - Mediterranean Centre for Environment (http://www.medcenv.org)
Morocco CMEM - Centre Méditerranéen de l’Environnement de Marrakech
Turkey Gas-Der - The Association of Friends of Gököva-Akyaka
Tunisia AERE - Association pour l’Education Relative à l’Environnement d’Hammamet

Associated themes
Conservation & Rehabilitation; Cultural Tourism; Intangible Heritage; Landscape, Planning & Infrastructures; Research / Education & Training

Summary
Water heritage in the Mediterranean region reflects the way rural and urban populations coped with the scarcity of water and how they organised local structures around water management.

Today, most of this vernacular heritage is unprotected and recent developments, both societal and economic, including the mechanisation of agriculture, migrations from rural areas, and unruly urban expansion, threaten its survival. Legal protection runs short of meeting current needs and an awareness campaign targeting decision makers as well as the general public is necessary.

This project aims to promote the preservation of vernacular heritage linked to water management in the Euro-Mediterranean region; intensify public awareness, particularly among the youth, of the value of this heritage and the need to protect it; promote water management techniques linked to this heritage; and promote, together with local populations, local development projects based on the principle of valorising this heritage.

This project is based on the development of a common methodology for the protection and management of water heritage resources. It involves seven partners who are active in the field of mobilising civil society towards heritage preservation. It includes eight interrelated activities where the participation of local populations, particularly youth, is elemental.
Detailed description

Background, diagnosis and needs analysis

Water heritage in the Mediterranean is a testimonial to the uses and practices around water management throughout the ages. Very early on, the hydrological profile of the Mediterranean has led local groups to develop a value system, and a body of regulations and techniques that would ensure the protection and sharing of water resources.

In the rural areas, water heritage reflects attempts to develop agriculture in a context of water penury: foggaras, canals, aqueducts, wells, terraces, etc. The emerging landscape is, in itself, symbolic of these past attempts (agricultural terracing, Valencian huertas, etc.); it is also a testimony of the adaptive uses of water resources, such as mills for industrial uses, or moats for security.

A whole body of poetry and literature inspired from water management has also emerged, and it tells of the daily life of peasants who are constantly confronted with water scarcity or have to deal with natural disasters caused by water.

In urban centres, fountains, hammams, public baths, etc. witness individual and collective uses associated with the domestication of water. Its sacred dimension was at the source of much urban architecture such as gardens, temples, etc.

Today, some major sites are protected – antique or sacred heritage, gardens-, but most of the vernacular heritage related to water is endangered and its survival threatened by recent social developments.

These threats are more remarkable in rural areas where agricultural practices, emigration, tourism imperatives, etc. are as hostile as other factors related to relinquishing traditional heritage. In urban areas, degradation is linked to unruly development, the absence of protection laws, lack of awareness among local populations and a diminution of collective uses.

The preservation of this heritage is therefore essential, because it constitutes a living memory of Mediterranean societies and their relationship with their environment. In a context of increasing water penury, it illustrates good management practices.

This heritage has survived in some local hydraulic systems, where it still satisfies a multiplicity of uses, such as traditional irrigation techniques that help preserve the phreatic table demonstrate. Also, in areas undergoing transformations, a valorisation of this heritage could contribute to the development of new projects at the local level, e.g. for tourism concerns or to support a particular form of agriculture that has added value. Finally, it could meet essential needs for the populations, as could be the case with wells or public baths.

The preservation of this heritage would go by way of mobilising social groups around the Mediterranean through awareness actions and participation in local pilot activities involving local actors.

Objectives

- Promote the preservation of vernacular tangible heritage (architecture and the landscape) linked to water management among decision-makers and citizens of the Mediterranean
- Heighten awareness among citizens, particularly youth, to the preservation of this heritage
- Highlight uses and practices in traditional water management and its heritage
- Integrate water heritage in local development projects involving the populations and civil society of the areas concerned
Detailed description (follow-up)

Activities

The project is structured around 8 interrelated activities four of which are local pilots involving rehabilitation and public participation, particularly youth.

- **Activity 1**: Elaboration of a common methodology for an inventory and a valorisation plan for this heritage

- **Activity 2**: Valorisation of heritage related to collective use in Marrakech (Moroc)
  It involves the mobilisation of the inhabitants of Marrakech towards the preservation of the hammams and fountains: creation of an inventory, participatory workshops, rehabilitation activities, exhibition on water uses in the Medina.

- **Activity 3**: Valorisation of heritage related to agricultural uses in remote rural areas of Al Haouz region (Morocco)
  Valorisation of the traditional hydraulic system of Tamsholt and Zat through an awareness programme and development of eco-tourism activities: inventory of cultural heritage, participative workshops, establishment of an eco-museum and an eco-tourism trail, publications.

- **Activity 4**: Preservation of hydraulic agricultural heritage and landscape in a traditional orange grove threatened by demographic and tourism imperatives – Hammamet (Tunisia)
  The elaboration of a cultural heritage rehabilitation plan in partnership with authorities and the public– establishment of a ‘token’ garden with the participation of local youth, establishment of an itinerary to discover the orange orchard, and a cultural programme.

- **Activity 5**: Integration of tangible and nontangible water heritage in the tourism development for Tipaza/Cherchel/Mont Chenoua (Algeria)
  The elaboration of a valorization plan in partnership with local authorities – collection of stories and legends of Chenoua related to water – creation of a tourism itinerary and guide for water heritage across the ages.

- **Activity 6**: A transnational educational programme: « young actors for water heritage »
  Youth groups will be identified in the four areas where the pilot activities are planned in addition to groups from Provence, Corsica, Greece (Cyclades), and Turkey. They will create local exhibitions on water heritage and these will be integrated into an itinerant exhibition.

- **Activity 7**: Establishment of awareness tools for the larger public – dissemination of these tools
  An itinerant multi-lingual exhibition highlighting vernacular tangible and intangible heritage related to water in the Mediterranean region; a heritage discovery guide: it will be realised around the exhibition in five languages (10.000 copies); a DVD Rom in 3 languages explaining the implementation of the project, particularly the four pilot activities and educational programme.

- **Activity 8**: Creation of a resource centre on heritage and water uses within the Mediterranean
  This centre will be affiliated to the maison de l’eau in Corte (Corsica) and will be accessible through the project website.

Expected results and outputs

- A methodology for data-collection and inventory of water heritage
- 4 preservation and heritage valorisation activities at local levels
- 7 educational workshops on water heritage targeting youth
- 7 local exhibitions created by youth
- One collective exhibition and a guide in five languages
- A DVD Rom in 3 languages
- A virtual resource centre on water heritage