Mainstreaming Gender Dimensions into Water Resources Development and Management in the Mediterranean Region

GEWAMED Project

Report of the Second Meeting of the Consultation and Advisory Gender Committee

4 April 2007
FAO, Rome, Italy
The Second Session of the Consultative and Advisory Gender Committee (CGAC) was held at FAO on the 4th of April 2007.

The meeting was attended by the following members:

- Ms. Joke Muylwijk, Executive Director of GWA (Gender and Water Alliance);
- Ms. Ilaria Sisto, Training Officer, Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).
- Mr. Atef Hamdy, Professor Emeritus, Consultant, MAI-B

and staff of GEWAMED:

- Mr. Juan Antonio Sagardoy, Project Manager
- Mr. Raouf Guelloubi, Technical Support Officer
- Ms. Vittoria Pinca, Technical Support Officer

The meeting was chaired by Prof. Atef Hamdy and the rapporteurs were Ms Ilaria Sisto and Ms Vittoria Pinca. Ms Sisto, in the name of FAO, welcomed the participants and expressed her appreciation for the work carried out by GEWAMED and the successful collaboration with the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari in promoting gender mainstreaming in water management in the Mediterranean countries. The Director of the Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division, Ms. Marcela Villareal, came to greet the participants and exchange views about the project’s activities and the collaboration with FAO.

During the meeting the following documents were distributed to all participants:

1. GEWAMED, Report of the First Meeting of the Consultation and Advisory Gender Committee.
2. GEWAMED, Annual Activity Report for the first year of operation.
3. GEWAMED, Monitoring & Evaluation System for Project Implementation.

Copy of these materials has already been sent to participants by email prior to the meeting. Ms. Joke Muylwijk and Ms. Sisto also distributed some relevant materials recently produced by their organizations, to be circulated among GEWAMED partners by the project management team.

A summary of the Annual Activity Report was presented by Mr. J. A. Sagardoy, describing under each Work Package, the main activities undertaken. The meeting was highly interactive and all participants made many comments, suggestions and recommendations. The one-day meeting was considered very useful by all participants, as it provided an opportunity to present the work performed by the Project and exchange views on how to improve the future work. Throughout the meeting the external advisers expressed their appreciation and congratulated the project management team and the 16 GEWAMED partners for the successful work carried out in the first year of the project.

The present report of the CAGC is organized in Work Packages and related activities. For each Work Package there is a short description of the activities for which specific recommendations were made. Although all activities undertaken for the Work Packages 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 were presented to the CAGC by Mr. Sagardoy only the activities for which specific recommendations were made are listed in this report.
Activity 1.6 Collection, processing and dissemination of gender-water related information

GEWAMED has disseminated information about the project in more than 15 conferences, workshops and other meetings attended by some 1600 persons. A full list of the events is presented at the end of the Annual Activity Report.

This activity was discussed in length. In general, the CAGC members considered extremely positive that GEWAMED partners have taken such keen interest in disseminating the project’s activities in 16 international and national events. The fact that on several occasions GEWAMED partners have been invited by other institutions to participate in international events is a reflection of the interest that the project is generating beyond the framework of the project partners. The audience reached of about 1600 people was also considered quite impressive for the first year of operation of the project, covering a wide range of institutions. The complete list of attended meetings is included in Appendix 1 of the Annual Activity Report.

1. More contents/information should be provided on the list of the events reported where GEWAMED partners have participated or organized themselves. In particular, it would be desirable to indicate who was the convener of the conferences, what type of information was presented by the partners, which institutions attended, etc. Some of this information is already included in Appendix 1 of the report, but CAGC members recommended to mention in details what kind of information on GEWAMED was disseminated (i.e. general presentation or some specific lessons learned – positive and negative - at country/regional level) and what was the expected impact of the attendance, specifying the content and topics addressed at each event.

2. Ask GEWAMED partners and external collaborating institutions (i.e. IFAD; GWA and FAO) to recommend events where GEWAMED dissemination and participation should be envisaged. The events should be as practical as possible in order to have more impact on participants. In the future, GEWAMED partners should be more selective with Conference’s attendance looking at the expected outcomes, especially in view of possible financial limitations in the travel budget.

3. When participating in international and national events, GEWAMED partners should always take into consideration two target groups (policy makers and technical experts in water management) sharing information and examples relevant for each audience – i.e. how GEWAMED members have reviewed and amended legislation and policies, or have implemented international commitments or concrete examples of the impact of gender mainstreaming in water management for irrigation experts.

4. It was recommended to prepare some policy briefs or any other report to raise awareness of decision-makers at macro level, with a focus on lessons learned and good practices and less on complicated concepts like gender mainstreaming for a wide audience.

5. The Committee recognized an urgent need for capacity building and knowledge sharing on gender issues in water management, as also requested by several GEWAMED partners at the meetings of Cairo and Cyprus. Therefore it was recommended that the Project Management team looks for opportunities, combining international or national events with a two-day training session, in collaboration with GWA and FAO, sharing resource persons and available training and information materials. Wherever possible, the
collaboration with other projects at country and regional levels (i.e. field visit to project site and on-going activities) should be encouraged. Possible countries to be considered for such learning workshops include Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia; Egypt and Algeria, depending on the resources availability and interest of the respective partners.

**Activity 1.7 Preparation of a report containing a set of gender-water indicators**

A draft document has been prepared with a suggested list of indicators at National and Project/Local level. The document was presented at the Second Regional Workshop in Cyprus and Partners are analyzing it for implementation at national level.

1. The Committee recommended to strengthen the collaboration with FAO for the Workshop planned in Tunisia in 2008 on Gender-sensitive indicators in water management, where the document could be presented and discussed.

**WORK PACKAGE 2. BUILDING OF A REGIONAL KNOWLEDGE BASE FOR COORDINATION, COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION (VIA INTERNET)**

**Activity 2.1 Establishment of a dedicated Regional Internet web site**

The Regional Website was published in early January 2007, with some delay due to the process of consultation with the partners regarding the type of portal to be used and some contractual difficulties with the consultant responsible for the development work of the website. The Project Manager made a short presentation of the regional website and CAGC members recognized the relevance of the sections of the Documentation (in particular the way in which the documents were organized) and News.

The CAGC recommended to add the following two specific sections:

1. Include in GEWAMED Regional web site a specific session on lessons learned (positive and negative) and good practices from the Region. The same information can also be disseminated through the periodical newsletter.
2. Include in the regional web site a section with policy briefs and information on international commitments to assist mainstreaming gender issues at policy level.

The Project Manager expressed his agreement with these proposals, but expressed also some concern for the financial implications in modifying the web site. It was agreed that the project management team would check the available personnel budget, that is mostly committed for the year 2007.

**Activity 2.2 Preparation of quarterly Newsletters**

It was reported that 3 Newsletters have been prepared and the 4th is under preparation. The newsletters are also available in the Regional website and distributed by e-mail to more than 400 institutions and experts. The Newsletter has received good acceptance and several partners disseminate it at national level.
The following recommendations were made:

1. The Newsletter should focus more on national initiatives and could include an interview to farmers’ or women’s groups or an international expert to share his/her experience and lessons learned (i.e. impact of woman membership in Water User Association). GEWAMED partners were encouraged to send more material for the preparation of the Newsletter.
2. Include in the regional website and newsletter some information on special awards established for International and rural women’s day or water’s day.
3. It was reported that at the next “Fiera del Levante” (Eastern Fair) in Bari (Italy) the organization of a “gender day” is being considered and the possible active participation of GEWAMED should be assessed.

WORK PACKAGE 3. MAINSTREAMING GENDER DIMENSIONS IN WATER MANAGEMENT FOR FOOD SECURITY AND FOOD SAFETY

Activity 3.1 Organization and undertaking of a Regional workshop on Mainstreaming Gender Dimensions in Water Management for Food Security and Food Safety

Ms. Sisto reported on the main outcomes of the Second Regional Workshop held from 12 to 14 of March 2007 in Larnaca (Cyprus) with the strong support of the national partner from Cyprus, the Agriculture Research Institute (ARI). She mentioned that the event was very well organized from a logistical and technical point of view. The workshop was attended by some 40 participants from 12 countries. The technical sessions of the last two days were particularly useful with a high degree of participation in the discussion among GEWAMED partners. The technical emphasis was on food security aspects which were well covered by a considerable number of presentations, while food safety received less attention. The evaluation of the meeting by the participants was rated “excellent” or “good” for most of the criteria used in the final assessment carried out at the end of the workshop.

1. The Committee suggested to give a concrete follow-up to the Cyprus meeting and several options were discussed. It was agreed that the most practical way would be to involve the National Committees or Networks established by the partners of the SEMR in the subject. For this purpose, it was recommended to prepare a document with a summary of the lessons learnt and main recommendations made by several presenters to guide the national committees/partners with the follow-up at national and regional levels. Most of the content for this guide is already available in the papers presented in Cyprus.
2. It was recommended to continue the discussion on Food Security during the next workshop on Rural Development planned in 2008, and ask participants to report on the progress made, as both subjects are closely related.
3. In the next Regional Workshop try to invite and involve not only technical experts in water management and agriculture but also top-level politicians, decision-makers and legal experts. As the next workshop will be held in Tunisia, where many legal reforms have recently been made, the possibility of inviting a legal expert to report on the main lessons learned in the country was considered relevant.
4. The GEWAMED project was encouraged to make special efforts in collecting relevant legislation to promote the role of women and mainstream gender issues in food security and rural development. In this regard it could be useful to establish a collaboration with
FAO Legal office to get advice for GEWAMED partners with the revision of their legislation and policies.

**Activity 3.3 Preparation of the proceedings of the Second Regional Workshop**

The preparation of the Workshop’s proceeding is planned for the next 4 months and it will require good quality control of the papers presented before publication.

1. A technical review committee of 4 members (Ms. Joke Muylwijk, Ms. Ilaria Sisto, Mr. Atef Handy and Mr. Juan Antonio Sagardoy) was established to guarantee the quality control of articles and papers to be published in the proceedings.

**WORK PACKAGE 5. POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL GENDER DIMENSIONS IN WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

**Activity 5.1 Establishment of a National Central Focal Point in each of the SEMR countries**

Mr Sagardoy informed the audience that the GEWAMED partners from Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Syria and Jordan have established the National Central Focal Points and the corresponding national networks. Palestine and Lebanon have faced serious difficulties with the establishment of the networks, due to their current political situation; while Morocco is in the process of initiating it. Turkey has not reported any action for its implementation. In general the partners that were able to establish the national focal point considered that it was a positive experience, but stressed that the national networks need careful maintenance of the interest and active involvement of relevant stakeholders and national partners.

The Committee expressed high appreciation for the work done in the implementation of these national voluntary networks and encouraged partners to continue their efforts to maintain active such important mean of communication and dissemination of information. Those that have not started yet were requested to take the necessary actions to implement them as soon as possible. The following specific recommendations were made:

1. Make special efforts to involve the media in the National networks and plan activities to join efforts with information dissemination
2. Try to involve as much as possible experts from different levels (i.e. public and private institutions, members of Water User Associations, local NGOs, etc) to ensure the active participation of all relevant stakeholders at different levels;
3. Plan field visits to farmers’ organizations and WUA for the members of the National networks.
4. Encourage also other partners of GEWAMED to establish their national networks even if they are not in the SEMR.
Activity 5.2 Reports of the National Central Focal Points

The National Central Focal Points should submit their annual reports to be sent to the Project Management for consolidation.

1. Establish the deadline for the submission of the national reports as the end of the year (December) in order to avoid receiving the information late and guarantee sufficient time to incorporate it in the next annual report due in February (2008) to the European Commission.

2. Provide the National Central Focal Point/partners with detailed guidance/guidelines to help them preparing their annual reports.

WORK PACKAGE 7. MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

Activity 7.2 Management, coordination and monitoring of project activities

Most partners have shown a keen interest in the project activities and some have gone beyond their contractual obligation. Communication with some partners remain somewhat a problem, as e-mail correspondence often does not always receive the necessary attention. The Project Manager has made a special effort to maintain personal contacts with most of the partners.

1. Stimulate the communication not only between the partners and the Regional coordinator but also among the partners themselves.

2. Information concerning the activities planned at national level should be supplied on time so that all GEWAMED partners can be involved in the different planning steps.

Activity 7.4 Establishment of M&E system for project implementation

A project implementation monitoring system has been prepared and applied for the first year of operation. The system was presented to the CAGC for revision and also distributed during the Second Session of the CAGC. A summary of the system was presented by the Project Manager, showing that all planned activities for the first year of operation were implemented adequately, with some delays in a few activities with regard to the initial planning.

The CAGC made the following observations and recommendations:

1. With reference to the monitoring systems proposed by GEWAMED Management team the CAGC recommended to wait for the appraisal by the EC and contact them to see if there is a standard format for the monitoring and evaluation of this type of projects.

2. The Committee recommended for the future to identify some additional indicators to assess the progress made in the achievement of the planned outputs to monitor the progress made and the impact of the implemented activities towards the achievement of the main aim and specific objectives of GEWAMED project. GWA provided an example of the system they used to assess the implementation of their main objectives and purposes. CAGC suggested to take into account the following elements during the formulation of the set of indicators: progress made towards the achievement of outputs, timing, level of participation, sustainability – growth of national networks-, sense of ownership of GEWAMED partners and beneficiaries.