

FORTEEN COUNTRIES ALREADY ON-LINE

The Marseilles Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Local Water Management (November 1996)

initiated EMWIS. Today, it is the only operational tool for co-operation between the 27 Euro-Mediterranean countries in the water sector. It aims to:

- Facilitate access to the information existing on know-how in the water sector, while prioritising the five following topics:
 - the institutions involved in the water sector and their representatives;
 - the documentation on water;
 - the training opportunities;
 - the research and development programmes;
 - the data administration.
- Develop the sharing of useful information;
- Prepare common outputs and promote the necessary co-operation programmes.

The information is made available by "a **National Focal Point**" (NFP) in each country and by a central "**Technical Unit**". The **National Focal Points** (NFPs) are small teams working in a public organisation responsible for water related-documentation and information. Their tasks consist in creating and developing a national information server, organising communication processes and access to vetted information, ensuring information availability in the working languages,

developing access to the information and maintaining relations with the users in their country.

The **Technical Unit** is a permanent body which runs the system with the National Focal Points. Its assignments consist in co-ordinating and providing technical assistance to the National Focal Points, being the International Focal Point, developing and managing EMWIS information portal. The Technical Unit is managed by a group of water operators: CEDEX (Spain), Office International de l'Eau (France) and SOGESID (Italy).

Owing to its original approach to the "know-how" in the water sector, EMWIS is complementary to many international activities

While remaining accessible to any person interested in water management-related issues, **EMWIS is above all addressing the public and private operators of the Mediterranean water circle.**

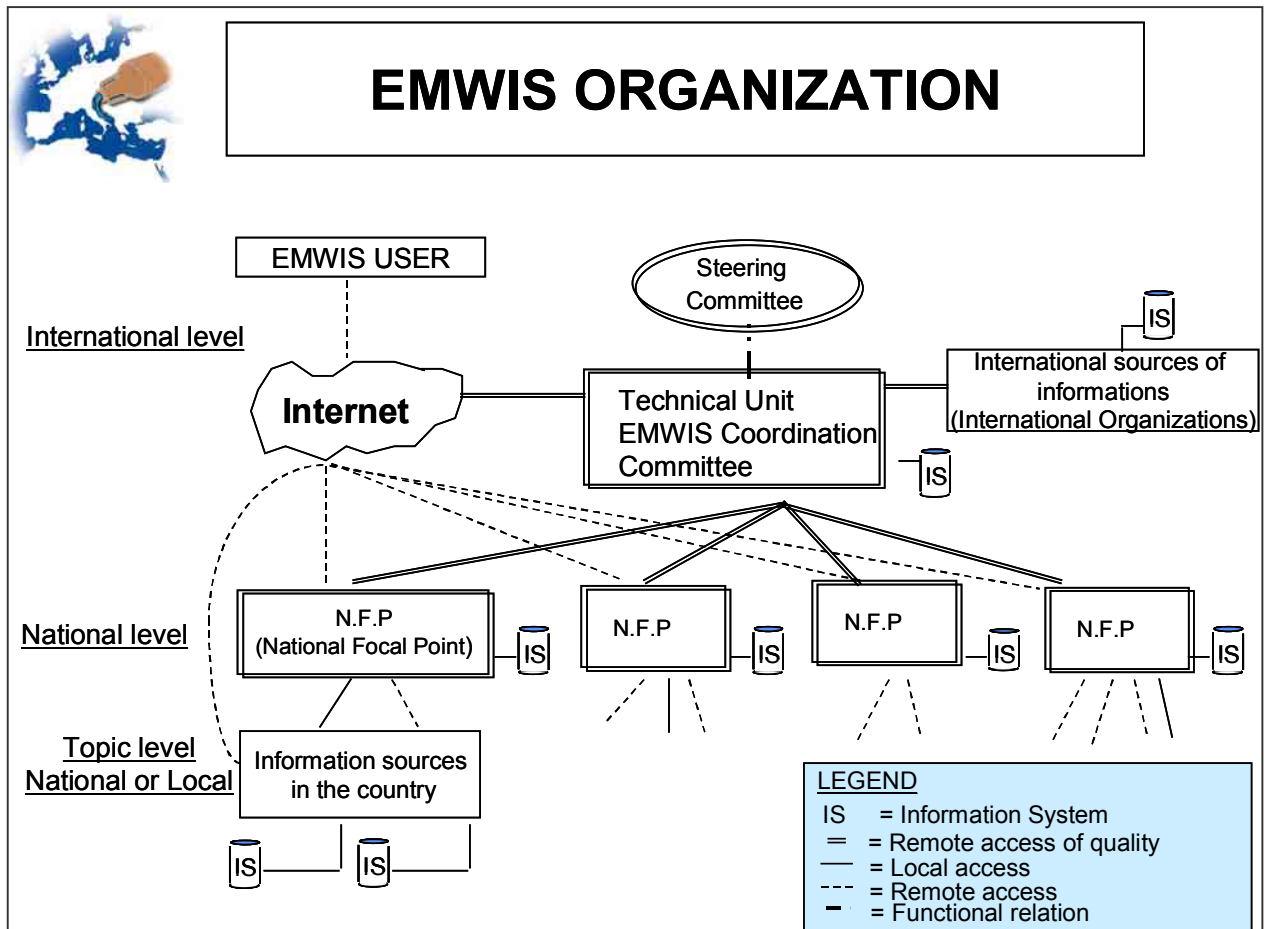
From a technical viewpoint, EMWIS has set up a system of shared and vetted information which uses the Internet already available in the 27 countries.

At the strategic level, EMWIS is directed by a restricted "**Steering Committee**" of 9 countries, designated for a 3-year period. It formulates the main strategic orientations and validates the yearly budgets and progress reports. Under a Spanish

Presidency and a Cypriot Vice-Presidency, it is made up of the Technical Unit's donors (Spain, France

and Italy), of the European Commission and of Algeria, Cyprus, Jordan, Malta, Morocco and the Palestinian Authority.

The figure below shows the organisational and technical structure of EMWIS



Three years after the operational launch, at the end of 1999, EMWIS has become exemplary. Twenty countries created a National Focal Point and fourteen countries have already launched their own Web site to present available water information in their country: Algeria, Cyprus, Spain, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Palestine, Portugal and Turkey.

EMWIS is to become the Reference system on the Water in the Euro-Mediterranean area:

- The thematic directory on the water ("Who does what") is on-line and counts already more than 2500 organizations.
- It is considered by the European Commission as the cooperation tool for the Mediterranean Component of EU Water Initiative and for the MEDA Program on the local Water management