

World Water Forum, Marseille 2012

**Session organized by SCP and Provence's WUAs,
with the partnership of AFEID**

MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL WATER RESOURCES IN PROVENCE, A MODEL THAT HAS STOOD THE TEST OF TIME

Promoter

The Société du Canal de Provence et d'Aménagement de la Région Provençale (SCP), 13100 Le Tholonet, France.

Partners

The traditional water users associations in Provence (WUAs) coordinated by the Regional Agriculture Board have joined with SCP to co-organise this World Water Forum side event.

The event has also received the backing of the Rhone-Mediterranean-Corsica Basins Agency and the PACA Regional Authority.

Date and place

It is proposed that a morning session be held on **Wednesday, 14 March 2012** at SCP's HQ in Le Tholonet followed by field visits in the afternoon.

Purpose

The purpose of this side event organised by SCP and the main Water User's Associations in Provence during the next World Water Forum to be held in March 2012 is to demonstrate and promote the model used in Provence to manage the region's irrigation systems. This model relies on two types of complementary management organisations: a regional development company (*société d'aménagement régional-SAR*) and conventional irrigation structures (Water Users' Associations-WUAs). The fact that the World Water Forum will be held in Provence offers to the Forum's participants a rare opportunity to examine the originality, complementarity and efficiency in both time and space of two coexisting socio-technical systems of agricultural water management. This joint existence has led to the development of technical, legal and institutional solutions that could find exemplary applications in other parts of the world, in particular the Mediterranean basin. These solutions have involved many players whose efforts will help to promote these applications.

The solutions described and debated during this side event constitute responses to the priority actions adopted for the 6th Forum, in particular:

- balance multiple uses of water,
- ensure food security,
- harmonize energy and water uses.

Content

Our “regional model of management of agricultural water resources” can only be understood if it is viewed in the overall history of Provence. This is a region that over many generations has learnt how to organise and implement a system for managing the distribution of water that is adapted to the geographical and climatic characteristics of the region. This management system is based on the sharing of resources between uses, solidarity between regions (that goes beyond the management per catchment principle), and complementary and coordinated management of the different resources. This model has proved its capacity to answer the challenges faced over the years up to the present day. It is founded on complementary socio-technological organisations with comparable cultures (Water User's Associations and a regional development company) that may be compared from the standpoint of the technical choices involved, perception of the general interest and system of values. Although local tensions may have arisen in the past, these two types of organisations are today facing common challenges: new demands, statutory changes, social expectations in terms of the environment, uncertainties as to the future of the resource itself, and so on. The side event will demonstrate how these tools are able to provide complementary responses to these challenges at each level and how they fit into a programme of sustainable development.

The question of governance will receive special attention. Indeed, the public administration of water and the networks by its users (WUA) or by a regional development company (SCP) is highly relevant in the modern world due to the different demands on water, particular geographical characteristics, and regional issues. This event will concentrate on showing how the Provence's model offers information that may be applied in other regions by comparing it with other forms of organisation found on the Mediterranean basin.

Format

This side event will take place over one full day and form an initial part of the 6th World Water Forum program. In principle, Wednesday, 14 March 2012 will be the chosen date unless it is already occupied by a major event on the issue of water governance. If this is the case, Thursday, 15th March could be a fallback date.

The participants (400 to 500 persons) will be picked up at the start of the morning in Marseille and brought back to Marseille at the end of the day. A system of prior registration will be set up. Bus transport will be used, leaving Marseille at 8 a.m. and returning to Marseille at around 7:30 p.m. (those who wish to do so may return at around 2 p.m.).

The morning will be given over to a conference/debate organised at SCP headquarters in le Tholonet under a marquee erected to accommodate 500 participants. A quick lunch will be served on site. The afternoon will be devoted to field visits organised in five or six optional tours (for organisational purposes prior inscription will be required). For those not wishing to take part in the visits, a return to Marseille after the conference/debate will be organised.

Several marquees will be erected on the site at le Tholonet. The main marquee, heated and equipped with simultaneous translation equipment, will constitute the conference/debating centre. One or two additional marquees will also be erected on the site in order to present the solutions, and provide a buffet.

Public

The targeted public consists of both French and foreign participants at the 6th World Water Forum with interest in the social management of water and governance issues. It is expected that many players involved in the water sector in both the Provence region and the Mediterranean basin will be present.

Program

Morning (9.00 to 12.30): conference/debate in le Tholonet

Conference/debate concentrating more on the social management of water (organisation, governance, status, etc.) than on hydraulic or irrigation technological issues. The morning session will progress as follows:

1. Opening of the conference.
2. Introductory film (yet to be created).
3. Introduction by a major player specialist in the social management of water (we have in mind Bernard Baraque): placing the management of water in Provence in its historical and socio-economic context (from canal-driven water mills to the major hydraulic infrastructures developed on the rivers Durance and Verdon, etc.).
4. The Provence model, presentation of the 2 main types: Water User's Associations (OGC Craonne and Canal Saint-Julien, for example) and a Regional Development Company (SCP). Joint interventions by the WUAs and SCP: "*A history of water sharing*"
5. Presentation of other Mediterranean organisation models:
 - The JVA in Jordan,
 - Farmers' committees in Spain,
 - Farmers' associations in the Maghreb,
 - ...
6. Debate
7. Summary presentation by the major player.
8. Conclusion by a professional manager from the AIRMF [French Association of Irrigation Users in Mediterranean Regions] (André Bernard or Michel Pontier) and Michel Vauzelle, president of the PACA Region and president of SCP, or his representative.

Lunch - buffet (12.30 to 14.00) in Le Tholonet.

During lunch, the participants will be invited to visit a display of solutions to water-related issues.

Afternoon (14.00 to 18.00): selection of visits

Tour 1

- On-demand and pressurized distribution (SCP)

Tour 2

- Roster-based gravity distribution (Crau: OGC Craponne, Merle estate, etc.)

Tour 3

- Mixed system (gravity and pressurized: Canal St Julien)

Other tours: to be defined

Comments

- The program of visits is still at the provisional stage. It will be added to and finalised shortly with the players concerned, after checking the practical feasibility of the technical tours (access, reception, safety, etc.).

- Each participant will receive a folder when entering the conference/debating marquee in the morning. In addition to the different conference presentations, this folder will contain documents describing all the tours arranged for the afternoon.

Contacts

For SCP-AFEID: François PREVOST, tel. 33 (0)4 42 66 71 18; mob. 33 (0)6 75 65 37 71
francois.prevost@canal-de-provence.com

For the Provence WUA: Noël PITON, tel. 33 (0)4 92 79 40 45; mob. 33 (0)6 81 11 35 06
n.piton@ahp.chambagri.fr