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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Improved Water Security in Arab States
Project Inception Meeting
Beirut, 20 December 2022

INFORMATION NOTE

I. BACKGROUND

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has secured funding from the United Nations Development Account for the “Improved Water Security in Arab States” project. The “Improved Water Security in Arab States” project aims to improve water security by strengthening the capacities of ESCWA member States for the sustainable management of groundwater resources. The project will draw upon innovations in water technologies that can be used for monitoring, managing and reporting on scarce water resources, geospatial analysis and remote sensing tools, and the development of interactive and accessible Arab Groundwater Knowledge Platform that can facilitate dialogue on groundwater and improve availability and access to water related data in Arab States.

The project aims to implement the following: (1) improvement of availability and accessibility to groundwater data and information through the development of the Arab Groundwater Knowledge Platform (2) the assessment of climate change impacts on groundwater resources in at least 2 pilot case studies; (3) the use of disruptive technology for the management of groundwater resources in up to 3 pilot case studies.

- (1) The Arab Groundwater Knowledge Platform responds to the need for establishing a knowledge platform focused on groundwater resources. It has the potential to serve water and natural resources managers, terrestrial ecosystem experts, climate change studies, remote sensing data users, and particular users with limited resources and time who wish not to invest in resources for data preparation and preprocessing. It will be available and accessible to a range of users, especially to researchers, analysts, policymakers, and ministries responsible for groundwater management in the Arab Region to facilitate inclusive review and dialogue to improve water security in the Arab States. The Arab Groundwater Knowledge Platform will bring all the available remote sensing, geospatial, and climate data related to water resources from different sources into a centralized, user-friendly, and highly interactive platform system.
- (2) At least two cases studies on the assessment of climate change impacts on groundwater resources in pilot ESCWA Member States will be conducted in cooperation with national teams including development of a training manual and conducting national technical workshops for selected countries. The selection of case studies will be done based on a demand-driven basis.
- (3) Three case studies on the use of disruptive technologies/groundwater analysis tools for the management of groundwater resources will be conducted in cooperation with national teams including development of a training manual and conducting national technical workshop for selected countries.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

The meeting aims at introducing the project and more specifically the Arab Groundwater Knowledge Platform, to the nominated project focal points. The technical structure of the platform : datasets, capabilities, features, will be presented. National focal points are then invited to share their experiences, views, and feedback which will contribute to enhancing the user's experience. In conjunction, the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Drylands (ACSAD) will present a plan to update the existing hydrogeological map of the Arab region to be hosted on the Arab Groundwater Knowledge Platform.

The meeting will also seek to solicit interest from member states to implement pilot case studies on the impact of climate change on groundwater resources and the use of disruptive technology for the management of groundwater resources while relying on spatial data from the Arab Groundwater Knowledge platform.

III. PARTICIPANTS

The meeting will gather nominated project focal points from ESCWA member States for the “Improved Water Security in Arab States” project.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

The meeting is organized by ESCWA in coordination with ACSAD and will be held virtually on 20 December 2022. The meeting will begin at 11 am and conclude at 1 pm, Beirut time.

All meeting documentation and presentations will be provided after the meeting. The meeting link and further guidance on how to virtually join the meeting will be shared with confirmed participants a few days ahead of the meeting.

V. DOCUMENTATION

- ESCWA (2022). ESCWA Water Development Report 9: Groundwater in the Arab Region. E/ESCWA/CL1.CCS/2021/2. Available at: <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/water-development-report-9>
- ESCWA (2021). Impact of Climate Change on Groundwater Resources in the Eocene Aquifer System. E/ESCWA/CL1.CCS/2021/RICCAR/TECHNICAL REPORT.8 Available at: <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/impact-climate-change-groundwater-resources-eocene-aquifer-system>
- ESCWA (2021). Assessment of Climate Change Impacts on Groundwater Resources using RICCAR Data in the Beni-Amir Aquifer (Tadla Complex, Morocco). E/ESCWA/CL1.CCS/2021/RICCAR/TECHNICAL REPORT.12. Available at: <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/climate-change-groundwater-riccar-data-beni-amir-aquifer>
- ESCWA and BGR (2013). Inventory of Shared Water Resources in Western Asia. Available at: <http://waterinventory.org/>

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

Inquiries and confirmation of participation should be submitted to the following meeting focal points:

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