

Protecting river basins in the Mediterranean

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We as European citizens may not be directly exposed to all of its consequences yet, but global warming is progressively driving lifestyles across the world into a corner. Some of its most devastating - and probably most documented - effects are related to water. Taking a look at broadcast news reveals how Europe has not been spared: some of our most delicate and precious ecosystems, river basins, are regularly threatened by climate-related extreme events. Droughts and floods affect hundred thousands of people every year. And in spite of its continuous efforts, science is still lagging behind.

The EU BEWATER project is the latest pan-European initiative looking into the issue of droughts in [river basins](#). The project consortium, which includes 12 partners from research centres, businesses, NGOs and European institutions, aims to identify sustainable and adaptive [water management](#) options in the most vulnerable regions of the Mediterranean. It will perform case studies in Catalonia, Cyprus, Slovenia and Tunisia, with the aim of building societal resilience to the impacts of global change.

'We are now about to start the first stage of the participatory processes in each one of the Case Study River Basins, where we aim at engaging society in the discussion on current water uses and their related problems, especially focusing on the expected [climate change impacts](#) at River Basin scale,' says project coordinator Anabel Sanchez from the Centre for Ecological Research and Forestry Applications (CREAF) in Spain.

Current projections for the Euro-Mediterranean region forecast an increase in [water scarcity](#) and droughts, causing substantial socioeconomic losses and environmental damage. The consortium stresses that the combination of improved awareness, mutual learning processes and shared responsibility of both civil society and stakeholders are essential to ensure successful adaptation strategies and their implementation.

This bottom-up approach, relying on the active participation of society in water adaptation strategies to [global change](#), is what really sets BEWATER apart. Project participants are hopeful that their work will result into effective adaptation policies while raising awareness about the challenges of water management and water use among local populations. The BEWATER methodology also integrates physical, ecological, social and management processes, which is expected to allow for an out-scaling of results of national and international relevance.

More information: cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/111232_en.html

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