



Photo: Sihem Jebbari, INRGREF



From planning to implementation Recommendations for implementation in the Rmel River Basin

Key messages

- A participatory process has led to the creation of the Rmel River Basin Adaptation Plan, including 19 water management measures - several of which are priorities in the basin.
- The involvement of stakeholders, experts and decision-makers has been crucial to increase the political acceptance of the plan and likelihood of funding for its implementation.
- Bundling multiple measures to be implemented together can maximize synergies and the delivery of one or more shared objectives.
- It is crucial to develop a framework for supporting ongoing interactions between the key actors in the basin in order to exchange and reach supported decisions regarding the developed measures
- Needs relating to funding must be well defined, and efforts to secure appropriate resources taken early in the planning process

Introduction

To ensure that adaptation strategies for water management are credible, informed and achievable, they need to be developed in an open and transparent process with the active participation of a diversity of stakeholders, sectors and policy areas in the river basin. In this context, INRGREF has led a collaborative process of developing the Rmel River Basin Adaptation Plan together with the basin's stakeholders. The plan includes an overview of the main challenges faced in the basin, 19 measures for adaptation, a suggested timeline for implementation, and an indication of which measures should be prioritised given stakeholder preferences and the local context. The information provided throughout the plan is intended to serve as a tool to help to guide policy and decision makers in selecting appropriate options or sets of options to implement within the basin to address the basin's specific needs.

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Presentation of priority measures

A particular focus should be given to the 19 water management measures that have been identified based on the wishes and needs of the stakeholders engaged in the process, and taking into account implementation-oriented factors such as the multi-criteria analysis, performance with regards to the challenges, feasibility, acceptability and policy synergies. As such, these measures are strongly aligned with community interests and are foreseen to offer large potential in addressing the targeted challenges identified within the basin. The key groups of measures and the challenges to which they respond are as follows:

- The application of taxes will respond to the water quality challenge faced in Rmel by providing the protection and improvement of water quality in the watershed via a stricter implementation of laws, penalties and regulations.
- The introduction of new agroforestry species and enrichment of existing forest relate to forestry and biodiversity management challenges and are consistent with the objectives of the Forestry Code, which aims at ensuring the protection, conservation and rational exploitation of forest resources and also to guarantee users the lawful exercise of their rights.
- To address the lacking awareness of civil society, the measures awareness campaign and learning and improved decision making aim to sensitize civil society and can facilitate the successful implementation of all other water management measures identified in the plan.
- Developing skills for young people relates to the challenge human and resources employment and has a high priority according to stakeholders; its implementation would facilitate the employment of young people and create a generation of skilled workers in the use of sustainable and innovative techniques. The measure would thus also allow improved implementation of other measures, such as encouraging investments, reducing pressures on forests, etc.

Implementation of multiple measures together in a 'bundle' ensures that there is a high occurrence of synergies between the measures and enables the pursuit of one or more shared objectives in parallel. Two water management options that are strongly aligned may decrease the associated implementation or maintenance costs if they are implemented together. Implementing measures in bundles may also lead to an increased impact in terms of addressing the outlined challenges. For example, if both the conservation of water and soil as well as improvements in and the development of water supply infrastructure were prioritised as a key objective and limited financing was a main consideration, the water quantity focused bundle introduced above would be well suited.

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Concluding recommendations for future action in the river basin

The presentation of priority measures in this policy brief is an excerpt of the Rmel River Basin Adaptation Plan, which also includes a wealth of information on the interaction of the water management measures, their potential to support decision-making processes in the basin, the potential costs involved, and the ideal phasing of the measures in time.

In addition to taking these considerations into account when deciding on which measure or bundles of measures to implement, it is crucial to develop a framework for supporting ongoing interactions between the key actors in the basin in order to exchange and reach supported decisions on the main measures to be implemented in the short and mid-term. Needs relating to the funding of the measures must also be well defined, and efforts to secure appropriate resources taken early in the planning process.

The local policy forums in the Rmel river basin consist of a series of four workshops with regional actors and a national workshop. This procedure consists on developing with regional actors, concrete, costed proposals, suggesting geographical locations to set measures and displaying a detailed timetable of the funding requirement for each WMO. While the national workshop aims to raise awareness of the final River basin adaptation plan as concrete actions to national actors. This would increase the chance of political/policy/financial support by key ministries. In addition, during the national event, it is proposed to invite key international funding organisations, such as development agencies that have representatives in Tunisia, so as to advertise the plan to these actors too.

Finally, the indicators for monitoring the implementation of measures must be identified prior to implementation in order to be able to assess their contribution toward outlined objectives and adapt their design or management accordingly.

The Monitoring indicators for the Rmel river basin can be deduced from the results of the planned meetings and the funding needs determined on the basis of an interactive discussion between all the experts and stakeholders.

The short and mid-term funding timeline will provide details on the total costs of the implementation of options either by option or by area of intervention.