

1. Country/Organization:

ITALY

2. Title of the action committed to in 2011 (see the annex)

Please indicate the title of the action on the implementation of which you are reporting. Those countries that committed to more than one action please kindly note that a template for reporting should be filled in for each action.

Improve utilization of water resources in the agricultural sector in the Po river basin district

3. Overview of progress made

(a) *Has the action been implemented?*

Yes / In progress / No

“Territorial Water Balance Plans (PiBIT)” (at first named as “Water Resources conservation plans”), as a measure of the Po Water Balance Plan, are proposed as the main measures to improve water use in agriculture in the Po River District.

They are local level tools to allocate water in compliance with the WFD environmental objectives and to manage water crisis during drought periods.

A specific technical Focus Group has been working on PiBIT: it evaluated the applicability of damage assessment during drought events at irrigation district level. Focus Group also examined possible actions, in the short and medium term, regarding water saving and improved use of water resources in each irrigation district.

The outputs of the Focus Group have been used by the Po River Authority to design “Guidelines for the preparation of PiBIT” (drafting is still ongoing) to support local irrigation Boards/Consortia and to ensure a uniform approach in PiBIT at river basin level. Guidelines set common objectives such as saving water resources, minimizing impact of drought on traditional agriculture and promoting the development of a “third generation agriculture”, based on the integration of agricultural production and ecosystem services supply.

(b) *What challenges were encountered during the implementation of the action? What lessons were learned?*

Challenges in homogenizing and/or developing shared and comparable methodologies in order to:

- calculate territorial water balances;
- review irrigation water needs and review abstraction permits;
- assess the impacts and the local vulnerability of climate projections;
- identify, during drought periods, water use priorities among the different sectors and within the same sector among the different areas.

(c) *What future steps, if any, are planned in relation to the action implementation/follow up?*

Sharing Guidelines for the preparation of PiBIT with stakeholders and Institutions.

Completing the assessment of impacts and local vulnerability using tools such as economic analysis, public questionnaires, stakeholders interviews.

Adoption of “Water Balance Plans” by Water Irrigation Consortia.

4. Usefulness of the Astana Water Action

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements and provide an explanation, as appropriate.

(a) *The Astana Water Action was useful to strengthen political support related to sustainable water management issues:*

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree

Joining Astana Water Action fosters the exchange of experiences among non-EU Regions and River basins improving water resources management, including during drought periods.

(b) *The Astana Water Action has helped my country to comply with its international obligations:*

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree

The AWA is also linked to obligations coming from European Union legislation. It is, however helpful in addressing management of international river basins shared by Italy and might facilitate the exchange of experiences with other international basins not shared by Italy.

(c) *Would your country be interested in continuing to submit and monitor new actions within the AWA framework in the future?*

Yes / No

In the next future, Italy will monitor progresses in implementing the current AWA. A possible renewal of the Italian commitment in AWA framework will be evaluated in due time.