

# **Cooperation on transboundary waters**

## **Israel**

### **Introduction**

As in other small countries, many of Israel's water resources are connected with trans-boundary or trans-area basins and aquifers. With respect to some of these trans-boundary or trans-area basins and aquifers, cooperative arrangements have been concluded with riparian parties thereto. In other cases, arrangements were not made, either because they were not of interest to either riparian party or because the current political conditions are not conducive to cooperative arrangements at this time. The listing of the latter group of trans-boundary or trans-area basins and aquifers in response to the questionnaire is therefore of little or no use as the absence of cooperative arrangements in those cases is not related to trans-boundary management principles.

Furthermore, the parameters of the questionnaire cannot portray a complete picture of Israel's endeavors in cooperation with other countries in improving water utilization in arid climates. Israel as a world leader in the wa-tec field is a strong proponent of cooperative efforts in addressing water shortages through advanced technological solutions in all segments of the hydrological cycle, ranging from desalination techniques through irrigation devices, prevention of water losses in water supply, water treatment methods and the treatment wastewater and its use agriculture, to name just a few. Moreover, these efforts also entail advise on water resource management principles.

Israel's cooperation with other countries is therefore not just based on the parameters listed in the questionnaire but extends far and beyond those, both with our riparian neighbors as well as through regional and global cooperative efforts.

In response to the questions posed raised in the questionnaire, and without engaging in the self-grading exercise required thereby, we wish to describe, in a few sentences, the extent and areas of cooperation with our direct neighbors on water management related issues.

## **Israel-Jordan**

Jordan and Israel concluded a Peace Treaty in 1994 and included therein arrangements on water use. The arrangements apply to those segments of the Yarmouk and Jordan rivers, downstream of El-Hamma, where they form the boundary between the countries<sup>i</sup>.

Article 6 of the Treaty and Annex II regulate the water use arrangements between the countries. It provides for the allocation of waters in the form of priority withdrawals and residual uses from each of the Yarmouk and Jordan Rivers along their common border and also provides for abstraction rights for Israel from wells situated on the Jordanian side of the border between them in the Wadi Araba / Arava Valley area. In addition, environmental rules were established to improve water quality in the Jordan River. Pursuant to Annex II a Joint Water Committee (JWC) was formed to oversee the implementation of the water arrangements. The JWC meets regularly, usually at least twice per year, and water officials at sub-ministerial level from both sides engage in an ongoing dialogue between meetings. There are regular exchanges of data on the water uses that are pertinent to the implementation of Annex II as well as exchanges on flood occurrences in the Wadi Araba / Arava Valley area that affect the urban areas of Eilat and Aqaba.

In addition, Jordan and Israel cooperate on water related projects along their common such as projects along the Lower Jordan River that include flood prevention, bank reinforcements, desalination endeavors, water quality improvement and tourism development. A plan to swap between natural water to be supplied by Israel to Jordan in the northern part of the countries against the output of a desalination plant in Jordan adjacent to the Aqaba with the brine being disposed of in the Dead Sea, as part of the contemplated Red Sea Dead Sea Water Conveyance Project, is also under discussion.

## **Israel – Palestinian Authority**

Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) stipulated in the 1995 Interim Agreement that the Palestinian water rights in the West Bank area will be negotiated in the permanent status agreement, an agreement which has not yet been concluded. The Interim Agreement provides for practical arrangements on water utilization from some of the trans-area aquifers during the interim period as well as for the supply of water to the Palestinian Authority from Israel. The supply was recently augmented in connection with the Red Sea Dead Sea Water Conveyance Project.

Both sides cooperate in preventing the flow of raw sewage flows from the Judea and Samaria mountainous areas to the coastal regions by the construction of water treatment plants that treat urban sewage with the added benefit that the treated wastewater can be used for agricultural purposes.

The Gaza Strip, under full Palestinian control after the Israeli withdrawal in 2005, is situated above the southern part of the Coastal Aquifer which is shared with Israel. Pursuant to the 1994 Agreement between Israel and PLO on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area the Palestinian Authority manages the uses of the groundwater in the Gaza Strip. Water is augmented by Israel from time to time.

A Joint Water Committee was established to monitor and oversee the implementation of the agreements. The JWC meets regularly and discusses, inter alia, the construction of additional water projects to improve water supply.

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<sup>i</sup> Upstream of El-Hamma, the Yarmouk River forms the boundary between Jordan and Syria and in the absence of diplomatic or other relations between Israel and Syria the upper reaches of the Yarmouk River is not regulated in the 1994 Treaty of Peace.