

The management of the water resources has always been an important problem for the South East and Mediterranean Europe because of the characteristics of the Mediterranean climate which often provokes problems related with water scarcity, problems which are expected to intensify in the near future because of the climate change, population growth, rise in living criteria, and accelerated urbanization.

The EU countries that participate in this consortium (Cyprus, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Romania) while they consider Water and Waste-water treatment a very important aspect of their environmental policies, have neither specific curricula and practical oriented materials in their education systems regarding this field nor a specific map of competencies (for full documentation see the WET project initial study report attached in the application as well as Aggelakis 2002 and Salgot 2008).

On the contrary, the subject is studied in a very unsystematic way. It makes part of a great variety of educational fields and contexts and, therefore, there is no curriculum that could teach a future waste-water treatment operator all the knowledge and skills that he/she should have. The result of this situation is that generally the people working in the sector (especially in the small Water Treatment Plants) are not specialized (unspecialized workforce or hydraulics and electricians), fact which provokes dangers in the quality of the work done. Furthermore, the non-formal and informal training activities in this particular field are very few, not well organized and not accredited. As a result, the employees are having difficulties to acquire all the skills needed to find a job position or to update their knowledge and the companies cannot find easily properly trained staff. Many of the employees that are currently working in the sector have to acquire knowledge and skills exclusively on the job without any certification and possibility for further learning and improving career prospects.

The proposal corresponds to a number of European priorities such as "Education and Training 2020" (objective 2: improving the quality and efficiency of education and training), the European Environment Agency (EEA) 2004 report "Impacts of Europe's Changing Climate, an Indicator-Based Assessment", the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC) report on "Climate Change and the European Water Dimension" in 2005 and The European Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC).