

# Water Security in the Middle East

## Blue Peace Middle East Initiative



**Country / Region**  
Middle East

### Main Partners

Strategic Foresight Group (SFG), UNESCO Iraq, Cewas, Media in Conflict and Transformation (MiCT), University of East Anglia (UEA)

### Background information

The Middle East is the most water scarce region in the world. Water plays a central role in the region's conflicts and in defining priorities with regard to the sustainable development agenda. As water problems in the region and their impacts are often transboundary, regional solutions are required, which can encourage regional cooperation.

### Project objective

To enhance regional water management, empowering the broader underpinning for peace in the region.

### Beneficiaries

Populations threatened by conflict or water scarcity, and the dire need for access to water and sanitation.

### Costs

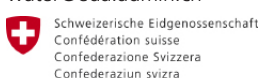
CHF 4,290,000

### Duration

04.2016 – 12.2018

### Contact

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Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

In the Middle East, the increasingly precarious situation of water resources demands stronger regional cooperation than ever before. Set against this background, the Blue Peace approach aims at contributing to peace building through combined political and technical dialogues, which are substantiated in concrete regional projects and direct impact activities on the ground. Together with the Strategic Foresight Group (SFG) and local partners from academia, international organisations, civil society and the private sector, SDC is able to promote policy and concrete solutions for sustainable development serving those threatened by water scarcity and conflict.

The Middle East is the most water scarce region in the world. Water plays a central role in the region's conflicts and in defining priorities with regard to the sustainable development agenda. Aggravating this situation, the majority of water resources in the region are shared between two or more countries. Other important challenges include the need for more sustainable water use, access to more reliable water services, and improved water governance for national and transboundary surface water and groundwater resources. As water problems in the region and their impacts are often transboundary, regional solutions are required, which can encourage regional cooperation.

The Blue Peace approach aims at contributing to peace building through combined political and technical dialogues, which are substantiated in concrete regional projects, data collection and capacity building programs. It combines politics with hands-on technical expertise.

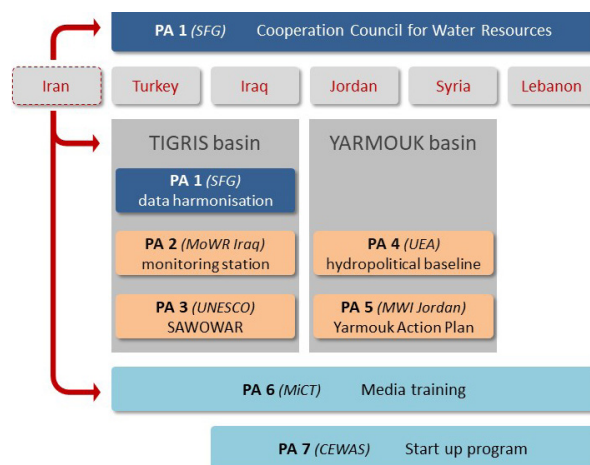
The Blue Peace Middle East programme consists of three political tracks altogether aiming at improved water governance for the region. This in turn enables an improved management at operational level. In some cases, an improved technical approach can precede and facilitate advances at political level. The different operational projects and concrete actions are interlinked and respond to three main challenges for sustainable water management in the region: closing the knowledge gap with regard to reliable data about surface and groundwater resources, effective capacities building and ensuring efficient water management.

### Planned outcomes of the programme

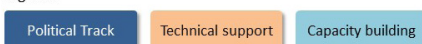
- Establishment of a Cooperation Council for Water Resources in the Middle East for Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey.
- Activities on the ground in the two shared basins (Tigris, Yarmouk) support the political tracks (under PA1) and lead to closing the knowledge gap with regard to reliable data about surface and groundwater resources and ensuring efficient water management.
- Regional capacity building measures will create start-up opportunities for the regional water sector.
- A training programme for the media network and a new generation of journalists will draw attention to the water security issues in the region and result in improved communication around water.

Following factsheet of partial actions are available:

- Cooperation Council (SFG)
- Safeguarding applied management of water resources (SAMOWaR) in the autonomous region of Kurdistan Iraq (UNESCO Iraq)
- Hydropolitical baseline study of the Yarmouk basin (UAE)
- Media training (MiCT)
- Start-up opportunities and innovative training for water sector (cewas)



Legend:



Overview of the Blue Peace Middle East Programme

\* Partial Action (PA); Strategic Foresight Group (SFG); Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR); University East Anglia (UEA); Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MWI); Media in Conflict and Transition (MiCT)