

## Blue Peace in the Middle East

# Cooperation and Confidence Building



**Region**  
Middle East

**Partners**  
Strategic Foresight Group  
(India)

**Background information**  
Countries in the Middle East lack desire for co-operation for sustainable management of water resources despite depletion of rivers and aquifers, drought and refugee crisis extending beyond the region.

**Project objective**  
To facilitate emergence of institutional solutions and concrete actions on the ground to promote collaborative and sustainable management of water resources and to create political will among opinion makers and the public at large for such cooperation.

**Beneficiaries**  
Public organisations, state water management bodies, industries, agricultural units, environmental bodies, water users, particularly including women

**Costs**  
CHF 970,000

**Duration**  
03.2015 – 12.2018

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 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC

The Blue Peace Community, a network created in 2011 with today over 200 policy makers and opinion makers in the Middle East, appears to be the only sustained mechanism of regional dialogue on water during a five year period when the Middle East has seen violent conflicts and crisis of governance. It is now moving towards implementing concrete confidence building measures in water management that will improve living conditions for common people and also help establish a Cooperation Council in the post conflict era.

Blue Peace in the Middle East is a unique process to use water for building peace and cooperation in the strife torn region. It has sustained in the context of serious crisis of governance, internal political unrest, civil conflict, and conflicts between countries. Despite such turmoil, resulting in massive death, displacement and refugees to Europe it has created a community of champions of water cooperation from governments, parliaments, academia, media, and public in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, and also separately in Israel and Palestine. It will be extended gradually to include stakeholders from Iran and Syria in due course.

The Blue Peace Process has led to adoption of principles of cooperation by the policy makers and opinion makers in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. These principles include common responsibility, efficient management of water resources, benefit sharing and cooperation.

The process has resulted in publication of over 500 articles, comments and news analysis and broadcasting of prime time television programmes advocating the benefits of water cooperation in the Middle East and sensitising around 40-50 million people.



These media expressions appeared in Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish, Hebrew, Persian, English and French.

It has led to an informal agreement between Iraqi and Turkish decision makers on twinning of monitoring stations in order to harmonise standards for measurement of water flows and thereby remove misunderstanding and build confidence. This agreement will be implemented once the border areas of Iraq and Turkey are free from extremist violence. It will directly benefit 30 million people living in the Tigris basin.

It has led to an initial dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian experts on confidence building measures that can improve living conditions of ordinary Palestinian people needing access to water. When this dialogue progresses, it will directly benefit a few thousand villagers, but the indirect and long term benefits will be immense in terms of contribution to regional peace and cooperation.

The Blue Peace Process eventually aims to establish Cooperation Council for the sustainable management of water resources in the Middle East. It is primarily expected to include Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey and can be realistically implemented once the political situation in Syria makes such an institutional structure feasible. In the meanwhile, while the "hardware" of the Cooperation Council has to wait for the post conflict era, the "software" is being created by the Blue Peace Community through its confidence building measures between policy makers and awareness building of the general public.

Additional information  
[www.strategicforesight.com](http://www.strategicforesight.com)