

Blue Peace Middle East: Improving Shared Water Management in the Tigris Basin (Iraq, Turkey)

Blue Peace



Country / Region
Iraq / Middle East

Partners

Ministry of Water Resources (Government of Iraq)
Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (Kurdish Regional Government)
OTT Hydromet

Project objective

- Strengthen Iraq's hydrological monitoring capacities in the triple-border region.
- Contribute to trans-boundary data harmonization and sharing between Iraq and Turkey.

Beneficiaries

Iraqi government experts tasked with network operation, hydrological analysis and reporting; Iraqi and Turkish representatives in the joint monitoring initiative. In the long term, the project will benefit the general population in the Tigris region.

Costs

CHF 510,000

Duration

06.2019-6.2020

Contact

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 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

The Tigris River is an important lifeline for the Western Asia region. However, worsening water scarcity in the region have resulted in growing tensions over the river. In 2014, the 'Geneva Consensus' marked a breakthrough between Iraqi and Turkish representatives on the harmonization and sharing of hydrological information. This project will strengthen Iraq's hydrological monitoring capacities in the triple-border region and facilitate information exchange with Turkey.

The Tigris River is the second-largest river in Western Asia and an important lifeline for its riparian countries Iraq, Syria and Turkey. Along its course, it is fed by numerous tributaries that rise in Zagros Mountains, making Iran part of its basin as well. The once-abundant waters of the Tigris and Euphrates – the two great rivers of Mesopotamia – have been impacted by the mounting pressure on the resource, especially since Turkey launched large dam projects for irrigation and hydropower generation as part of its Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP).

Lack of data and mutually acceptable baseline information have proven an obstacle to dialogue. In 2014, an important breakthrough in building consensus between Iraqi and Turkish representatives on the harmonization and sharing of hydrological information was achieved in the form of the so-called 'Geneva Consensus'. Building on this consensus. This initiative aims at strengthening Iraq's hydrological monitoring capacities. The process was facilitated by the Blue Peace Middle East Initiative, which promotes consensual collaborative solutions to foster sustainable water cooperation and strengthen the basis for peace in the region.

Iraq is currently suffering from the lack of properly functioning monitoring station at the triple border point (Turkey, Syria, Iraq) creating large gaps in the data records. It creates difficulties for the country to produce reliable inflow estimates on the Tigris River when entering Iraq, flowing from Turkey upstream, affecting its national water resources management and the transboundary dialogue.



The project will strengthen Iraq's capacity to collect, store, analyze and share hydrological data on the Tigris River and the wider basin. The specific focus lies on assessing cross-border flows in the triple-border region. Working jointly on these aspects will help to identify trends and impacts of ongoing and planned water management interventions, and to separate manmade impacts from broader climate-change effects. Reliable baseline information is also needed to prepare – and for Iraq to monitor – any future basin agreement between the riparian countries.

Planned outcome

- **Establish a reliable water discharge and quality monitoring of the Tigris River and its tributaries.**
- **Enhance data management infrastructure.**
- **Build capacities of Iraqi experts in related thematic areas**
- **Preparing the ground for future data exchange between Iraq and Turkey**

Additional information:

Geneva Consensus on the Tigris River:
https://www.strategicforesight.com/conference_pdf/47694Consensus%20On%20Tigris%20River_Revised%20Sep14.pdf