



A European initiative to define research needs and foster the adoption of Managed Aquifer Recharge into river basin management

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The European Technology Platform for Water (WssTP) was initiated by the European Commission to federate a highly fragmented sector with the aim to foster competitive innovations and promote sustainable solutions.

To achieve this, pilot programmes endorsing a bottom-up approach were launched in 2007 with a variety of stakeholders having representative water issues to solve.

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) was adopted as a balancing process for the safe and sustainable development, allocation and monitoring of water resource use in the context of current and future social, economic and environmental objectives.

As a result key drivers were selected and a methodology was followed to identify and validate the needs with stakeholders and experts, and demonstrate solutions as an integrated part of the river basin management plans.

Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) was identified as a key component of integrated water resources management, especially in water scarce regions and an area relevant for further research.

The paper shall summarize the process followed by the WssTP, initiating a Task Force with 36 representatives from European research institutes and industry partners with participation of a few international experts. During a workshop conducted in Graz in June 2009 these experts developed the basis for a report that has now been submitted to the European Commission for consideration in future research calls.

Implementing IWRM and MAR is made difficult by the number of different water bodies, but also by the large number of stakeholders, policies, legislations and conflicting interests.

The results of the MAR Task Force initiative set the basis for further discussions with the international MAR community on the relevance of the identified research needs but also on the importance and process to associate the institutional and managerial entities for capacity building and the adoption of MAR into the overall management strategies.