



Iraqi Kurdistan : Can we guarantee the water resource ?

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The Autonomous Region of Kurdistan includes three provinces : Erbil (1.75 million inhabitants), Sulaymaniyah (1.56 million) and Dohuk (0.78 million).

For the KRG, Kurdistan Regional Government, a concerted water policy is a major component of development in the autonomous region as in Iraq as a whole.

Water is a major challenge at national and regional level, which must be jointly addressed with the neighboring countries (Turkey and Iran), as well as with other Iraqi provinces.

Different priorities must be combined, dams and electricity generation, irrigation and agricultural development, drinking water production and management, industrial development and environmental protection.

The exploitation of surface and groundwater resources for different uses is increasingly important, as the region is facing high population growth and is rich with unique and fragile ecosystems.

Irrigated agriculture alone, based on traditional and high water consuming practices, accounts for 70-80% of abstractions.

The Kurdistan Autonomous Region has currently no specific laws concerning water uses. In 2010, the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of Iraqi Kurdistan started, with French assistance, a study on the methods for implementing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM).

Carried out by the "Canal de Provence" Company and IOWater, in partnership with BRGM and SCE, this study is primarily focusing on the Greater Zab River Basin, which covers the provinces of Erbil and Sulaymaniyah.

The governance, planning and monitoring topics will be central.

The implementation of the general principles of IWRM will require from Iraqi Kurdistan an adaptation of its legislation to use these new concepts, and the acquisition of new practices by institutions and services in charge of water management.