

# **Environmental Programme for the Mediterranean (EPM) and Municipal Environmental Audits**

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The World Bank and the European Investment Bank undertook the Environmental Programme for the Mediterranean (EPM) as a contribution to environmental planning and management for the region and as a complement to the Mediterranean Action Plan. The program includes a series of studies designed to assist both banks to better understand the nature, extent, and cause of environmental degradation in the countries bordering the Mediterranean. The broad objective was to allow both banks to launch an enlightened program of assistance.

As part of the EPM, JDA developed a GIS data base and conducted a strategic regional assessment of the Mediterranean Basin. The assessment synthesized relevant information on living resources, habitats, and human uses throughout the region and identified "hot spots" or areas of heavy, and usually conflicting use of resources. Such comprehensive and holistic assessments are aimed at providing project and policy managers with the necessary information to develop broad-scale and long-term management strategies and programs such as those defined under the EPM and METAP programs. This assessment complements site- or resource-specific analyses by focusing on larger regions and synthesizing a wide array of data on environmental, biological, and socioeconomic themes. It identifies common issues and priorities that nations share within the region.

Five cities in the Mediterranean were identified as "Regional Hot Spots" as part of the Municipal Environmental Audit Project -- the next major stage of the METAP program. This stage identified municipal-level "hot spots" requiring immediate action to ensure that the investment programs will be targeted toward resolving the more urgent, cross-sectoral issues in the most critical areas of each of the five cities.