

## What is Nostrum-DSS?

It is a Co-ordination Action, funded by the EC FP6, aimed at improving governance and planning in the field of sustainable water management in the Mediterranean area:

- by establishing a network between the science, policy, and civil society spheres,
- by fostering active involvement of the relevant stakeholders,
- through the development and dissemination of Best Practices Guidelines for the design and implementation of DSS tools for IWRM.

## What is the Nostrum-DSS Leaflet Series?

These brief documents summarise the main output of the project and represent an **entry door** to the wide range of products and resources available on the project's web site. The series includes three kinds of leaflets:

- Case studies leaflets
- Policy leaflets
- Technical leaflets

## To whom is this leaflet addressed?

As part of the Policy leaflet series, this document is mainly addressed to **policy and decision makers** interested in gaining insights on how *DSS tools and approaches* can support them in their everyday job, but may be useful to researchers and practitioners too.

For further information see the NOSTRUM-DSS website:

→ <http://www.nostrum-dss.eu>

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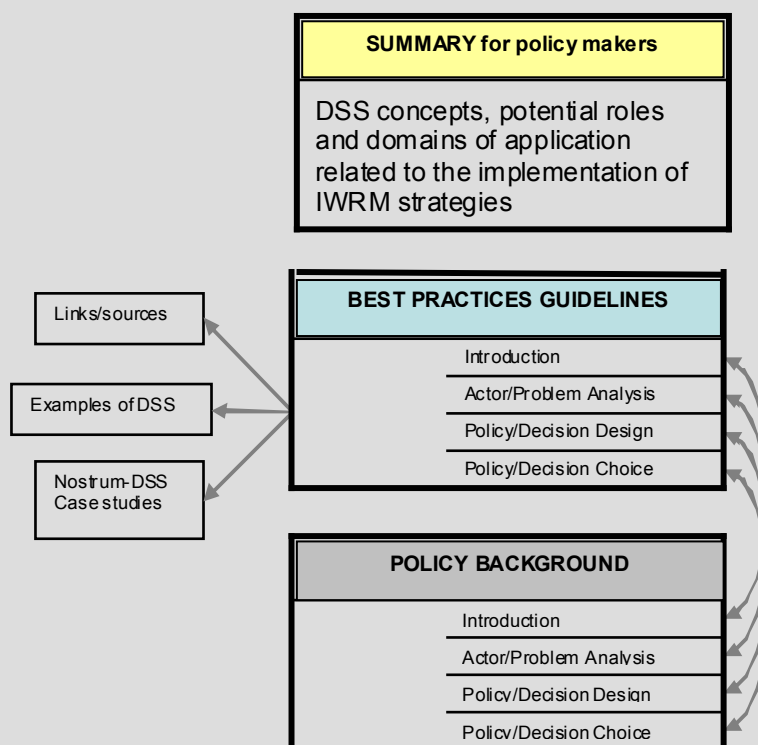
## Overview

The main purpose of the NOSTRUM-DSS Guidelines is to contribute to the improvement of water governance in the Mediterranean area, by assisting researchers, practitioners, but also policy and decision makers in the development of water policies and integrated management plans through enhanced support tools.

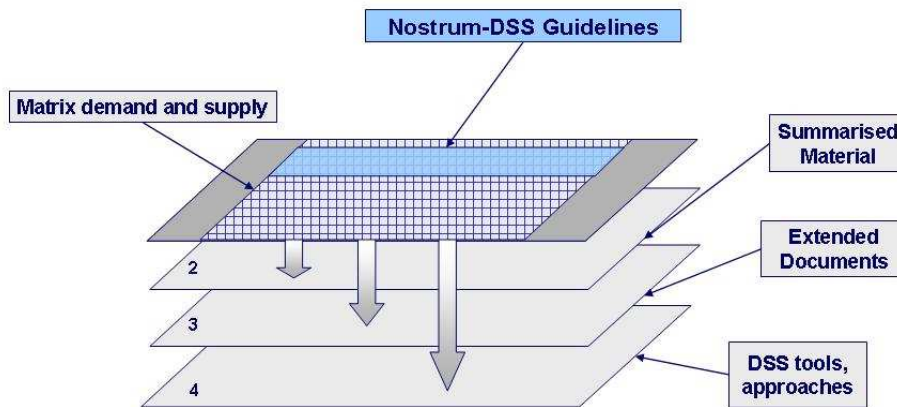
Furthermore, they will contribute to bridging the gaps between the needs of the stakeholders and the methods and tools developed by the scientific community for the management of water resources.

## The Guidelines structure

The Guidelines are designed as an interactive tool to summarise and facilitate the consultation of the project's outcomes and other related products. They are structured in three sections, as shown in the figure below.



The 1<sup>st</sup> section is a short document targeted to policy makers and the lay public which briefly introduces the main concepts and potential roles of the Guidelines. The 2<sup>nd</sup> section contains "Best Practices Guidelines (BPGs) for DSS design and implementation" and it includes set of practical checklists, providing good practice recommendations on the issues related to the improvement of decision support tools' development and use in the field of water management. It responds in detail to perceived inadequacies concerning the development and the support offered by DSS for the accomplishment of a particular management task. The 3<sup>rd</sup> section, "Policy Background", identifies policy targets and problem areas for the development and implementation of water policies or decision processes. Stakeholders' needs are listed here in terms of tasks to be accomplished or goals to be attained towards the implementation of the Integrated Water Resources Management process.



## Description

As depicted in the figure above, the Guidelines are designed as a stand-alone component, but they are embedded within a more complex structure called the NOSTRUM-DSS Meta-Guidelines, which is one of the main products available on the Nostrum-DSS web site.

The “meta” prefix identifies the emphasis placed on avoiding duplications of previous efforts (i.e. previously published guidelines, toolboxes, manuals, etc.), preferring instead to build upon already existing materials and facilitating a guided access to available resources with increasing levels of details, starting with very concise documents, such as technical briefs, summaries for policymakers down to project deliverables and extended materials (tools, methods, approaches, ...).

The Nostrum-DSS Meta-Guidelines is thus a collection of project outcomes and other materials developed to assist practitioners and policy makers in the development of enhanced IWRM strategies. This tool specifically focuses on making available information and references on DSS tools and methods developed for carrying out the different phases of the planning process.

The Meta-Guidelines are conceived as a 3D web-based tool developed upon a series of layers in which products are displayed according to an increasing degree of detail and technical content.

## More details on the structure of the Guidelines

The Nostrum-DSS Guidelines aimed at supporting the development and application of improved DSS for Integrated Water Resources Management in the Mediterranean area have been structured according to the main phases of a decision-making process.

The initial phase deals with the identification of the relevant stakeholders to be involved and the assessment of the state (i.e. quality and quantity) of the water resource in a river basin through the collection and organisation of data.

This forms the background information on which to build the subsequent phases of analysis of the system, DSS design and implementation, structuring the process leading to the ultimate evaluation and identification of preferred water management strategies.

For instance, participatory approaches managed through the use of ad-hoc DSS tools in water management help create a common understanding amongst the different actors (i.e. governmental organisation, representatives of specific interest groups, local or national NGOs, trade unions and associations, representatives of the civil society and experts) at all levels (i.e. local, regional, national) and improve the acceptance of the decision to be taken.

Methodological frameworks are developed to structure and manage all phases of tool development associated with the particular decision making process, and allow for the integration of different approaches.

See the **NOSTRUM-DSS Meta-Guidelines**

→ | <http://www.nostrum-dss.eu>

*Home » Final products » Policy support » Meta-guidelines*

- Keywords: IWRM
- Keywords: Actor Analysis
- Keywords: Problem Analysis
- Keywords: Creative system modelling
- Keywords: DSS Design
- Keywords: Analysis of Options
- Keywords: Actions and Monitoring

