

Monitoring network to be automated

AMMAN - The Ministry of Water and Irrigation has launched a project to monitor its surface and groundwater resources using remote sensing systems, according to government officials.

The National Water Resources Observation Programme, which will be implemented in cooperation with the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, is designed to automate the water sector's monitoring network and provide accurate and up-to-date information on the country's water resources, Adnan Zu'bi, the ministry's assistant secretary general and spokesperson, said on Saturday.

"Implementing the project is vital because of the distance between water monitoring stations across the country, in addition to the fact that some of them are located in deep valleys and remote areas," he told The Jordan Times yesterday.

The project also includes establishing stations for wells in Azraq, Lajoun and Disi to monitor the "behaviour of the country's aquifers" and the quantity of water pumped from them, according to Zu'bi.

The official noted that under the second phase of the project, monitoring stations will measure evaporation percentage, water flow from springs and streams and precipitation.

He noted that the first phase of the project will be implemented within three years at a cost of JD400,000.

"The ministry has floated a tender for automating 16 stations under the first phase of the project, with plans to automate the remaining stations across the country by 2018," he noted.

The official underscored the importance of providing decision makers in the water sector with up-to-date information on the water situation in the country's surface and ground aquifers, particularly when formulating the annual water budget and balancing quantities with demand.

Officials recently said that available water resources are falling short of the growing demand fuelled by population growth and development needs, highlighting that reducing the gap between water supply and demand and monitoring water resources are the ministry's main priorities.