Agora MedSpring is an important component of MedSpring project. Its aim, in line with the project's objectives, is to foster the open dialogue on research and innovation on some of the societal challenges of the Mediterranean region: water, food, and energy. It acts like a social hub supporting social dialogue for knowledge-sharing initiatives at the regional Mediterranean level.

Building the web community was AgoraMedSpring’s first activity in 2013. During an initial “listening phase”, AgoraMedSpring staff identified and mapped the major existing players (individuals, web communities, organizations) already active in the virtual and non-virtual debate on the three challenges addressed by the MedSpring project.

The mapping activity showed that there is an ongoing debate on these topics addressed by different stakeholders with different approach. Through a day-by-day content curation AgoraMedSpring started engaging with these experiences and gaining visibility.
The Open Consultation
what is it?

An open consultation is a participative instrument to open the decision-making process to all those willing to get involved. Its main objective is to listen to often unheard voices and make good use of them: it is a first step towards a participative democracy.

The consultation was open from April to June 2013 to all citizens from the Mediterranean region and beyond. Respondents came mainly from Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan and Italy. The majority of the respondents defined themselves as researchers (46%). Researchers were followed by respondents defying themselves as belonging to civil society (28%), policy-makers (11%) and entrepreneurs (8%).

In the open consultation it was asked which are the thematic topics that needs more attention from the policy and research community within the three societal challenges. It was also asked which are the major barriers and positive factors respectively limiting and enhancing research results uptake and dissemination.
The Euro-Mediterranean Expert Group (EMEG) is a group of high level professionals from EU Member States and Mediterranean Partner Countries.

EMEG brings together professionals with different background and experience, coming from different countries and representing – other than traditional thematic/scientific interests – also horizontal stakes like (innovation, policy and governance, private enterprise, socio-economics, gender, and cultural heritage).

EMEG aims at developing recommendations and suggestions to the European Commission for the development of the future agenda for the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in research and innovation, with emphasis on enhancing research impact, effective policies and adequate holistic and sustainable approach to the three main societal challenges (resource efficiency, high quality affordable food and energy).

On the basis of the results obtained through the open consultation, EMEG developed a framework for actions in the three societal challenges.
3 PARADIGMS FOR ACTION
and the Next Step

The next step of the MedSpring project is a brokerage event to be held in Cairo on 12, 13 February 2014.

A brokerage event is an important matching opportunity between the supply and demand for research and innovation expressed by private enterprises, SMEs, universities and research institutions in order to develop technology and business partnerships as well as joint participation in Euro-Mediterranean research projects having strong connotation in innovation.

MedSpring, has decided to launch a call for new innovative ideas with the primary aim of capturing a wider audience to create new knowledge, and to help transform ideas into new thinking for actions for the benefit of the region. MedSpring is also interested in hearing ideas which could eventually open up new fields of research.

E-mail
brokerage@medspring.eu

Platform
http://www.b2match.eu/euromed/pages/med-spring-event

On the ground of the Open Consultation, EMEG identified the following three paradigms for action:

Resources efficiency - Water
Managing water resources under scarcity, pollution and uncertain conditions while improving agricultural water use efficiency as well as treatment and re-use of non-conventional water.

High quality affordable food
Integrated development and rehabilitation of rural arid and semi-arid areas capitalizing on sustainable agriculture including traditional and organic farming, empowering rural communities and valorizing agricultural resources while taking into account local cultural heritage.

Energy
Capitalizing on local large availability of solar energy, by developing adapted packages of solutions for sustainable remote communities, both in terms of supply and demand, in addition to promoting the well integrated penetration of renewable energy solutions in the inhabited areas, while taking into account local cultural heritage.