

Informal UfM Water Expert Group Meeting

The UfM Water Agenda and Financial Strategy in view of SDG6 and the Green Deal: Policy Actions, Economic Responses, and Ways Forward in the post-COVID 19 context

on-line meeting, 9-10 June 2020



The response of the Water and Environment Support Regional Programme in the post-COVID-19 era

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The relevance of WES

As it is well summarized in the Concept Note of the on-line Consultation:

“The COVID-19 crisis proves, as clear as ever, the **inextricable link of health with access to safe water and hygiene**, with the WASH agenda being among the centrepiece for responses. The crisis also proves the **risks of water-related inequalities**, particularly for the more vulnerable populations. Implementing **water efficiency options**, as well as intensifying efforts to **improve the good chemical, quantitative and ecological health of all waters**, can increase water availability for all uses and contribute in **enhancing environmental health**, promoting development options and strengthening the resilience of societies. **Improved water governance and sustainable financing instruments** to create an enabling environment, contribute to the same direction and should not be undermined in post COVID-19 recovery plans.

All the above are key issues addressed by WES.





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WES in a Snapshot

WES capitalises on previous successful EU funded regional projects (Horizon 2020 CB/MEP; SWIM SM; SWIM-Horizon 2020 SM) and strives for creating the enabling environment and increasing the capacities of stakeholders in the Partner Countries (PCs) through three Inter-related Dimensions:

- **Capacity Building, by using a blended approach of National (32*) and Regional Trainings (20), Study tours (4 - 8), Peer-to Peer experience sharing (10) , Webinars (4 ++)** virtually addressing all the aforementioned issues.
- **Technical Assistance (32*) at National and/or Regional Context (*combined)**
- **Enhancement of Enabling Conditions**

Facts & Figures	
Partner Countries:	Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Libya, Palestine and Tunisia
Project value:	7.917.200 Euros
Duration:	May 2019 – May 2023 (48 months)
Project team:	Team Leader: Professor Michael Scullos, scullos@wes-med.eu Water Expert: Ms Suzan Taha, taha@wes-med.eu Environment Expert: Mr Anis Ismail, a.ismail@wes-med.eu Communication & Networking Expert: Ms Pam van de Bunt, vandebunt@wes-med.eu Stakeholder Engagement Expert: Dr. Emad Adly, wes.gc@raednetwork.org

COVID-19: a wake-up call at the launching of WES

The WES Team, apart from elaborating measures for the, as much as possible, smooth application of the Work Programme under these extraordinary conditions, though online consultations and webinars, wishes to stress that we should consider the current situation as a **strong wake-up call** for preparedness and reflection on a series of issues, several of which are tackled by the WES project.

Starting with water, the simple most basic measure to avoid the spread of the virus, the frequent hand washing with clean drinking water is a condition that has **increased water consumption** by 30% to 50% in the region with significant **shift of resources from agriculture** to households. It is an alarming fact that still several millions of Mediterraneans **do not have access to safe water** and even more people have no access to sanitation.

COVID-19: a wake-up call at the launching of WES

No COVID-19 was found in natural water bodies although it was present in untreated waste-waters which are still used for informal irrigation in some Mediterranean countries.

- Conventional treatment for drinking water and waste waters is also effective against COVID-19. That means that **all the activities related to securing proper integrated management of water resources**, water economy, reduction of losses, reduction of non-revenue water, promotion of safe use of non-conventional water resources, water retention systems with recharge of aquifers, methodologies considering the nexus of water-energy-food-ecosystems, economy of water resources by industry (food industry in particular) and abatement of pollution of water bodies, water accounting, etc., are all relevant and **in the heart of policies to address COVID-19** and proactively protect or prepare to address similar future crises.

COVID-19: a wake-up call at the launching of WES

- Furthermore, the fact that many new diseases are linked to zoonosis and closer animal-human contact in mass production linked to new lifestyles with meat as only one of the indicators of the over-consumption of our days, further justifies **all the WES activities related directly or indirectly to the environment** with emphasis on various types of recycling, avoidance of single use plastics, etc., aiming at reconsidering unsustainable consumption and production patterns and promotion of awareness/education and particularly on appropriate processes, where women and youth are also targeted.
- We do believe also that WES contributes in tangible ways to strengthening institutional frameworks and capacities and the ability of partner countries to obtain and properly manage the urgently needed additional investment on water, environment and awareness raising which we hope that will be of high priority within the funds connected to the recovery plans for the post COVID-19 era.



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Component 1: Pollution prevention

Four topics were formed in order to facilitate well-structured national and regional activities for Technical Assistance and Capacity Building. Three of them directly respond to COVID-19 by enhancing integrated environmental management and reducing pollution of the water bodies (fresh, brackish and marine waters).

- **Topic 1:** Curbing Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter
- **Topic 2:** Promotion of Mechanisms, Tools and Conditions for shifting to a Circular Economy
- **Topic 3:** Prevention and Reduction of Pollution reaching the Mediterranean from specific Industrial sector
- **Topic 4:** Support in mainstreaming and implementing Integrated Environmental Management





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Component 2: Efficient & safe use of water

Five topics were formed addressing quality and quantity issues of fresh water, in order to facilitate a guided, harmonised and well-structured design of national and regional activities for TA and CB, all of which address COVID-19.

- **Topic 1:** Assessment and Estimation of Water Use (Per Sector)
- **Topic 2:** Investigation and Introduction of Water Efficiency Gains at the Decentralized Level
- **Topic 3:** Water Resources Valuation, Cost-recovery and Affordability of Water Services
- **Topic 4:** Legal And Regulatory Aspects of Mainstreaming Water Use Efficiency in the National and Regional Frameworks
- **Topic 5:** Enhancing Water Efficiency and Productivity in Agriculture





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Enhancement of Enabling Conditions: included in all Components and Horizontal actions

✓ Creating the right enabling conditions for comprehension, social acceptance, appreciation and utilization of the products/results.

✓ Creating synergies among relevant actors and stakeholders brought together, by strengthening the existing partnerships or creating new ones.



Through:

- Formal, non-formal, informal ESD on key topics of the project.
- Exchanging successful practices, sharing experiences, identifying new and innovative methodologies and developing regional and sub-regional networks;
- Effective communication and dialogue on issues of mutual interest,
- Exchange best practices, explore opportunities to potentially replicate/up-scale specific projects;
- Real capacity development of beneficiaries where the know-how transfer is based on a real working environment.
- Promote environmental governance
- Networking, women's empowerment, Youth
- Consultation meetings of Civil Society, MPs and Local Authorities



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION !

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