



**Water and  
Environment Support**  
in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood region

## WES PRESS RELEASE

### WES to support Israel in Storm Water Management and Natural Water Retention Measures (NWRM)

Athens, 30 September 2020

Israel is characterised by a small and narrow territory with extremely densely populated areas. This is especially the case along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea where an accelerated process of increasing urbanization is taking place. This process is accompanied by a reduction of recharge to the groundwater aquifers and an increase in storm water flows.

The loss of water yields to groundwater as a result of lack of natural infiltration areas is estimated in tens of millions of cubic meters per year. Good management of surface runoff in urban and agricultural areas will help to prevent the loss of water.

Proper storm water management will also help preventing erosion and pollution. The main focus of applying Natural Water Retention Management is to enhance the retention capacity of aquifers, soil, and aquatic and water dependent ecosystems with a view to improve their status. The application of Natural Water Retention Measures supports green and blue infrastructure, improves the quantitative status of water bodies as such, and reduces the vulnerability to floods and droughts.

The EU funded Water and Environment Support (WES) Project, which aims to protect the natural resources in the Mediterranean and to improve the management of scarce water resources, will start implementing an activity with the Israel Water Authority (IWA) aiming at designing NWRM in two areas in the in order to support and amplify storm water management and Natural Water Retention Measures.

During the kick off meeting of this project, which took place on-line due to the Covid-19 crisis, Mr Guy Reshef, Deputy Director General of the Israel Water Authority (IWA) expressed his interest to increase the knowledge of the IWA in order to protect the scarce water resources in the country. "Using the retention capacity of soils to retain water is quite a new approach for us and from this project we would like to find out what kind of measures fit best the semi-arid conditions of our country" Reshef told.

Mr Lucca Polizzi from the Research and Innovation Section of the European Union Delegation to Israel added that also in the EU there is a growing interest in climate related technology and a long history of the EU supporting water related projects in the region and emphasized the need to link well with such projects. This WES activity in Israel will be implemented over a period of one year by Water Expert Dr Demetris Zarris, joined by Ms Tali Wexler (Landscape Architect) and Ms Eleni Avramidi (GIS Expert) in close cooperation with Ms Suzan Taha, WES Key Water expert.





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### WES

The Water and Environment Support project in the Southern Mediterranean Neighbourhood aims to protecting the environment and improving the management of scarce water resources in the Mediterranean region. It will tackle problems related to pollution prevention and water use efficiency. WES is a regional project with emphasis on the countries of North Africa and the Middle East (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia).

### Disclaimer

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