



## WES PRESS RELEASE

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### Improving water efficiency in Tunisian agriculture

Athens, 17 November 2020

Despite considerable efforts of Tunisia to mobilize its scarce water resources, the country is experiencing a situation of recurring and severe water shortage. Demographic and economic factors, combined with climate change issues are exacerbating the situation of water stress in the country. The available water allocation was 450 m<sup>3</sup> per capita in 2010, is now down to 400 m<sup>3</sup> per capita and is foreseen to be only 370 m<sup>3</sup> in the year 2030.

Irrigation for agricultural purposes, is currently consuming more than 80% of the total withdrawals. A more efficient water management and optimal allocation of this resource is therefore imperative. The EU funded Water and Environment Support project (WES) will support Tunisia in improving agricultural water use efficiency. According to Professor Hamadi Habaieb, Director General of the Office of the Planning and Hydraulic Balances (Bureau de Planification et des Equilibres Hydrauliques), of the Ministry of Agriculture, Hydraulic Resources and Fisheries, this project comes in a very good time as integrated water resources management and raising awareness on the efficient use of water are essential to achieve a better management of the available scarce water resources. “We are currently focusing on three issues, first to improve water use efficiency on the ground, then dealing with dam sedimentation problems and thirdly the accessibility of water resources for agricultural use and especially water governance”

WES expert Nicola Lamaddalena, also added during the kick off meeting of the project, that water availability is a serious problem for Tunisia. An important goal of this project is to explore new ways of irrigation that will help farmers and managers to face water stress in Tunisia. “It is very relevant to look at the whole chain of the water distribution, starting from the source up to the crops. In this perspective, optimal irrigation scheduling will be assessed, along with on-farm and off-farm irrigation performance and efficiency. The main objective is to reduce water losses as much as possible. Appropriate capacity development programs are mandatory to achieve such objectives. Therefore advanced tools will be used during the planned training sessions. Smart irrigation techniques will be also examined as they are extremely helpful to achieve a better management of the scarce water resources in Tunisia.



## Water and Environment Support

in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood region

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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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