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WES newsletter

Water and Environment Support (WES) project

The “Water and Environment Support (WES) in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood Region” is a regional project funded by the European Union. It aims at protecting the environment and improving the management of scarce water resources in the Mediterranean region. Among the key objectives of WES is to tackle problems related to pollution prevention and water use efficiency. WES capitalises on the experience of previous successful EU funded projects (Horizon 2020 CB/MEP 2010-2014, SWIM SM, SWIM and Horizon 2020, 2015-2019) strives for creating the enabling environment and increasing the relevant capacities of all stakeholders in the partner countries.

WES supports the shift to a more sustainable consumption and production model, promotes an integrated and efficient management of water, combats plastic pollution and marine litter and fosters dialogue on key environmental and sustainable development issues. It operates as a support mechanism to the Partner Countries, creating synergies and opportunities for collaboration and dissemination of information and good practices. WES also provides support to its institutional partners, namely the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) by facilitating specific regional strategies and dialogues and the UN Environment/Mediterranean Action Plan of the Barcelona Convention.

The WES Partner Countries are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Libya, Palestine¹ and Tunisia.

¹ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of Member States on this issue.

Regional event on Water Accounting to take place on-line

The first WES regional training on Water Accounting that was scheduled to take place in June in Athens, will now take place on-line from 12 – 26 October 2020. Due to Covid-19 crisis the event will now be via an on-line platform. Through an on-line platform, participants will have the possibility to take the floor, share their screens and simultaneous interpretation will be running in parallel within the same platform. The training will have various sessions that will be organised on 12, 14, 19, 22 and 26 October.

This regional training event will introduce water accounting as a tool to achieve integrated water governance and a sustainable water balance. It will also capture the important role of water monitoring. The training is open for water experts within relevant ministries and the statistical offices of all the WES Partner Countries. Registration for the event is currently ongoing. Through the sessions, participants will get a comprehensive introduction to the overall concept of water accounts (environmental and economic components), to learn about the benefits of water accounting and the use of water accounting outputs (e.g. UN SDG process). They will also get introduced to the Physical Flow accounts and Physical Assets accounts, using the UN System of Environmental Economic Accounting for Water.



Water demand management in Morocco

The economic and social development of Morocco implies an increasing demand on the already scarce water resources in the country, whether for the supply of drinking water to urban and rural populations, to industries or touristic establishments. At the same time, there is also a growing demand for irrigation. Due to the high and growing water demands in the country, the efficient use of water has become of paramount importance and is among the country's national priorities.

“ Furthermore, we are trying to implement the European Green Deal, which tries to find responses to fight climate change, in our partner countries as well. ”

Jacques Legros,
the EU Delegation in Morocco

In view of this, WES will support the Moroccan Ministry of Equipment, Transport, Logistics and Water to advance the management of water demand in the country and to reduce water needs for domestic, public, tourism and industrial use. During the kick off meeting of this activity, Jacques Legros from the EU Delegation in Morocco emphasised that the EU is supporting Morocco in the field of water management since many years. “Furthermore, we are trying to implement the European Green Deal, which tries to find responses to fight climate change, in our partner countries as well” Legros added. The activity will focus on advising on typical water saving measures which can be easily applied in the country.

First activity in Egypt taking off

Currently many parts of the Egyptian water network are suffering from water leakages and water that is unaccounted for. This is estimated to amount to more than 30% of the produced amount of water in the country. This is partially due to pipe leakage and partially due to subtracting water. Together with the Water Authority of Asyut, WES has started an activity to strengthen water utilities capacities and to manage and reduce non-revenue water and detect leakages in a pilot area in Asyut city.

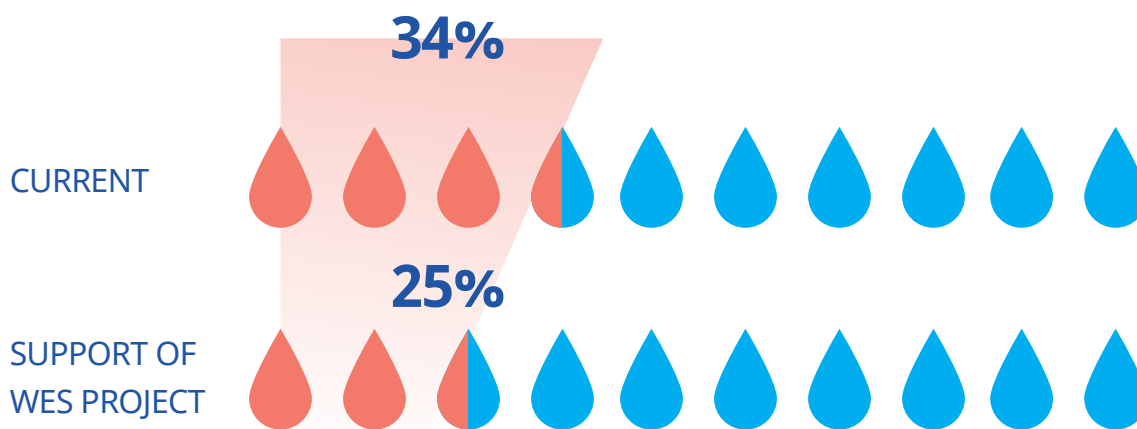
Egypt has seen a rapid population growth over the past few decades, resulting in the expansion of urban areas and a spread of villages in the rural areas. The population is forecasted to continue to increase, while the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation estimates that the threshold of absolute water scarcity (500 m³/capita/year) will be reached by 2025. Egypt's reliance on the Nile as a water resource, combined with the forecast growth in water demand, highlights the importance of conserving water. This new WES activity will assist the Asyut Water and Wastewater Company to target the reduction of Non-Revenue Water (NRW) and to continue its efforts to improve Non-Revenue Water management.

Dr. Ayman Ayad, Water and Utilities Sector Manager of the Delegation of the European Union to Egypt, acknowledges the fact that this task is challenging, especially in the light of Covid-19 crisis, but that the topic of leak detection is more important than ever, considering the unilateral action taken in the upper Nile River basin. According to the WES focal point for Egypt, Dr. Walid Hakiki, the planned activity is in line with the objectives of the National Water Resources Plan 2017-2037, that includes enhancing the use of available resources through rational use of water and increased water use efficiency. Eng. Mohamed Salah Eldin, Chairman of the Asyut Water and Wastewater Company, stated that "non-revenue water in Asyut is currently 34% and in the short term, with the support of this project we hope to bring this down to 25%."

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Chairman of the Asyut Water and Wastewater Company

Non-revenue water in Asyut





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

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 sources 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.

WES is supporting Israel by implementing together with the Israel Water Authority (IWA) a project that will assess the potential of Storm water management and Natural Water Retention Measures.

Using the retention capacity of soils to retain water is quite a new approach according to Guy Reshef, Deputy Director General of the Israel Water Authority (IWA). "From this activity we are keen to find out what kind of measures fit best the semi-arid conditions of our country."

Women and youth to promote sustainable consumption

Women and youth play an important role in the management of water and other natural resources as well as in promoting sustainable consumption patterns and responsible consumer behaviour. However, policies in these fields rarely address women or youth and their voice is hardly heard or consulted, despite their significant role as citizens, mothers and (future) professionals. This is why reaching out to women and youth is among the priorities of the WES project.

With two online surveys that have been distributed among relevant women associations, WES is currently gathering information on women's and youth priority issues, needs and expectations in environmental and water-related matters. The surveys also seeks information on possible synergies with women's and youth organisations working on environmental and water issues, as well as ways to strengthen and shape the environment and water agendas of those organisations through the WES project.



Through the results of the surveys, which are expected in the beginning of October, WES will ensure that priority issues for women and youth in the field of environmental and water-related matters will duly be addressed by the various WES activities.

Field visit to tomato processing industry Tunisia

WES experts made a recent field visit, between 14 - 16 July 2020, to seven tomato processing companies in the Korba region in Tunisia and also met with local authorities and associations in Korba, Haouaria, Hamam El Ghzaz and Dar Allouch.

The field visits focused on the analysis of practices related to the entire tomato processing cycle, from cultivation and transport to industrial processing and treatment technologies used by the tomato processing companies. The experts assessed the impact of the different components of the tomato production and processing cycle on the environment and water resources at the Korba lagoon and the wadis of the region.

WES will provide advise on how environmental impacts linked to the important agro-food processing industry of tomatoes in the coastal region of Korba can be reduced. Furthermore, an environmental monitoring system for the tomato processing industries will be set up and a process for a sectoral framework agreement for the sustainable management of resources for the tomato processing industry will be made.



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