



Enhanced WES activities addressing plastic pollution

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.

Combatting marine litter in Morocco

Marine litter is globally acknowledged as a major societal challenge of our time because of its significant environmental, economic, social, political and cultural implications. All Mediterranean countries are severely affected by marine litter, with negative impacts on coastal and marine ecosystems and on people's livelihoods and well-being. Marine litter quantities have increased tenfold in the last decades and have become a critical issue to address.

The root causes of marine litter in the Mediterranean are a combination of unsustainable modes of production and consumption, irresponsible behaviour by individuals and economic sectors, as well as a fragmented understanding of the problem due to lack of data adapted to needs, lack of adequate political and legislative frameworks and poor application of existing frameworks, weak solid waste management practices and misconceptions about possible solutions. In order to address these issues, WES has a series of activities at regional and national level among which support to Morocco for the implementation of the relevant national and regional policies and measures.

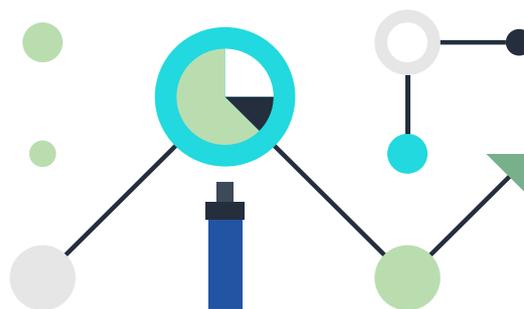


Quantities and sources of marine litter will be assessed and a monitoring programme will be set up. Through comprehensive monitoring appropriate decision making will be facilitated. This activity, will ultimately support Morocco to achieve the commitments laid down in the Regional Plan for Marine Litter Management and the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Barcelona Conven-

tion. It will generate fit-for-purpose data on the amounts, types, composition and sources of marine litter on the sea surface and sea floor. These data will then be used to identify and prioritise marine litter mitigation measures to be included in the Moroccan management plan for reducing marine litter.



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More than 50 participants in training on phasing out Single-Use Plastics

In the Mediterranean region, plastic pollution is one of the major threats to the environment. In order to address the development of policy measures linked to phasing out Single-Use Plastics (SUPs), WES has implemented a regional training which was attended by participants working for Ministries of Environment, Ministries of Industry, the private sector (plastic and beverage producers) and NGOs from the Southern Mediterranean countries, the Western Balkans and Turkey. The training helped the participants to strengthen their skills and capacities to identify, prioritise and operationalise targeted measures in order to proceed in phasing out Single-Use Plastics (SUPs) in their countries.

Various problems of Single-Use Plastics, their quantities as well as responses and alternatives to SUPs were tackled. Participants looked also into the feasibility and impact of measures, the rating

of policy objectives and selecting priorities. The exchanges during the training brought valuable contributions to informing the Regional Guidelines on measures to phase out Single-Use Plastic items which are currently under development by the UNEP/MAP system. It also contributed to a strengthened implementation of the Barcelona Convention Regional Plan for Marine Litter Management and the UfM's Environment Agenda (including the soon to be approved 2030GreenerMed Agenda). The regional training was concluded by Professor Michael Scoullou, WES Team Leader, stating that WES, thanks to a new Addendum specific for plastics, will continue and enhance its relevant actions in presenting the entire spectrum of solutions and approaches that are helpful for the Southern Mediterranean countries to speed up the process of phasing out SUPs.

Gap analysis to reduce plastic pollution: a prerequisite for further systematic action on SUPs

To further the WES activities addressing the growing and pervasive plastic pollution problem, in a coordinated way, DG NEAR approved a specific Addendum of WES on plastics. In the coming months a “Gap Analysis on country needs with regard to the reduction of plastic pollution” will be implemented. At the moment, countries are at different stages when it comes to actual progress in the field of plastic pollution reduction. This also counts for their policy and regulatory landscapes in terms of circular economy and their management of plastics.

The Gap analysis results will include information on the development of institutional-legislative frameworks, challenges as well as information and knowledge gaps to facilitate the implementation of regulation frameworks. The WES Gap Analysis is the initial

activity that will lead to the development of a new set of WES activities that will focus on plastic pollution reduction, based on the EU Plastics Strategy, aiming at the reduction of plastic pollution in order to protect the Mediterranean environment.

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Improved and updated Emission Limit Values for Lebanon

Together with the Ministry of Environment of Lebanon, WES will work on the improvement and updating of the Emission Limit Values (ELVs) for industrial emissions. Existing guidelines for a number of industrial sectors and sub-sectors will be revised. The Lebanese Ministry of Environment has already issued a set of decisions related to environmental conditions for the establishment and operation of industrial sectors. A set of guidelines for the food and beverages sector as well as for the construction sector were drafted. Currently the Ministry of Environment is working towards developing updated ELVs. A WES team of international and national experts will provide comments and revise the drafted environmental guidelines for the establishment and operation of several industrial sectors.

New guidelines will be developed for the food sector, which includes the subsectors of dairy production, slaughterhouses, cow farms, meat processing, and beverages production. For the construction sector the guidelines for the sectors of construction and demolition waste, the stone cutting industry, the asphalt and concrete industry as well as paint production will also be evaluated and updated. Specific Lebanese circumstances like the size of the concerned industries, technologies used and types of processes will be taken into account. The same counts for current practices applied, regarding air, solid waste and wastewater emissions allowed. The aim for the Ministry of Environment is to publish the ten new guidelines during the course of this year.

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WES has started the monitoring of seven EU-funded Demonstration (DEMO) projects. The DEMO projects, which were awarded through an EU Call for proposals, focus on the promotion of efficient use of water in urban and rural areas. Under the predecessors of WES, the SWIM - Horizon 2020 and SWIM projects, a number of DEMO projects were also guided and monitored. To exchange experiences in the field of project implementation, transferability and replication, a first meeting between the managers of the new WES DEMO projects and older ones relevant EU Delegations, WES Focal Points of the Partner Countries and WES staff that will be involved in the monitoring of the DEMO projects was organised.

The DEMO projects provide a unique opportunity to demonstrate practical methods, new approaches, and tools that are effective, useful, applicable and replicable, while at the same time playing a pivotal role in providing good practices and disseminating knowledge. The purpose of the WES support to the DEMO projects is to make them more open, facilitate the dissemination of results, find synergies with other projects in the region and to facilitate links and synergies among the different DEMO projects. During their implementation, each DEMO project will be monitored and supported by WES, not only from a technical point of view but also from a communication capacity building perspective to also maximise their visibility and knowledge dissemination.

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WES Youth and Gender Action plan

The ecological and climate crisis is becoming a major concern for women, as well as young people worldwide, as it has direct implications on their well-being now and in the future. At the same time, sustainable development is increasingly becoming a key element in the programmes of women's and youth organizations throughout the world, including in the Mediterranean. Women and young people have special roles and interest in maintaining a healthy environment. The EU has recognized the importance of gender and youth at many levels and has introduced the Gender Equality and Women's and Girls Empowerment (GEWE) Policy as a core value. In 2020, an EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 was also introduced.

WES, as a key project of EU external/Neighbourhood support, is committed to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and youth in its structure and management, as well as in its activities. The WES Gender and Youth Action Plan was elaborated for this purpose. It reviewed the gender and youth legal and institutional frameworks, at global and regional levels, as well as the national policies and their implementation in the partner countries; identified appropriate stakeholders and projects to explore engagement in and synergies with WES activities and conducted brief surveys; defined the gender and youth specific interventions to be included in the WES activities (Roadmap for gendering and youth mainstreaming the WES activities) and developed indicators to monitor the progress and impact of the WES Gender and Youth Action Plan.



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