



## WES PRESS RELEASE

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### 87 WES Candidate “Champions in addressing pollution by plastics” advancing with Cooperation Agreements

Athens, 7 December 2023

In addressing the challenge of pollution from plastics, it is crucial to recognise, support and motivate those who contribute with innovative solutions to combat it. It is in this spirit that the EU-funded WES project, with the support of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Mediterranean Action Plan of UNEP (UNEP/MAP), launched in the spring of 2023, the call for “*Champions of Plastic Pollution Prevention in the Mediterranean*”. After an extensive evaluation process, 87 out of 109 applicants were selected to be considered Candidate Champions.

The variety of commitments made by the Candidate Champions reflects the great array of innovative solutions Mediterranean actors are mobilising within their local contexts. To describe just a few:

**Governance related:** participatory development of specifications for the plastics recycling sector and for plastic packaging products; local governance schemes for the integrated management of solid waste in natural parks and protected areas.

**Product/method/technology:** revival of traditional non-plastic alternatives for packaging; reduction of the use of plastics in fisheries, in beekeeping, for food storage; use of plastic waste in the construction sector including for radiation shields in hospitals, street light poles, etc.

**Improved waste collection:** use of digitalisation for transparent plastic waste collection connecting producers, collectors and recycling industries (also clustered under Governance); increased efficiency of recyclers (modernisation/expansion of infrastructure, increased collection/recycling rates, etc.).

Many **education and public awareness initiatives** have also been proposed. Interestingly, the Call has among other things, also mobilised North/South partnerships and the transfer of successful campaigns and methods to new countries and communities.

The signing of Cooperation Agreements between the WES project and the Candidate Champions (currently on-going) formalizes the intention of these candidates to deliver on their commitments by the summer of 2024. Those who successfully deliver on their commitments will receive the honorary title of “Champion in addressing pollution by plastics” by the EU, UfM and UNEP/MAP, in recognition of their dedication and contribution to one of the most pressing challenges the Mediterranean region faces.

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in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood region

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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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