



## WES PRESS RELEASE

### The 2024 Workplan of WES project endorsed by its Steering Committee

Athens, 7 February 2024

The Workplan of 2024, the final year of the EU-funded Water and Environment Support (WES) project, was unanimously endorsed on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2023, during its online 5<sup>th</sup> annual Steering Committee Meeting (SCM).

As in previous years, this SCM brought together the WES Water and Environment Focal Points (FP) from the relevant ministries of the WES Partner Countries (PCs), the European Commission (DGNEAR, DGENV), the EU Delegations to the PCs, the institutional partners of the project - the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) - as well as the WES Consortium Members, representatives of the Water Demonstration projects, and water organisations.

**Mr Patrick Wegerdt - Bilateral & Regional Environmental Cooperation, EU DGENV**, in his opening remarks, updated participants on the latest environment and water policy developments of the EU (including on the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus approach) and expressed his confidence that the WES project will continue to efficiently address the water and environment challenges and opportunities in the 8 PCs.

**Ms Alessandra Sensi - Head of Sector, Environment, Green and Blue Economy, Union for the Mediterranean**, expressed her deep appreciation of the multifaceted support that WES has provided and that will continue in 2024. She also reminded the participants of the forthcoming 2<sup>nd</sup> UfM Stakeholder Conference on Sustainable Blue Economy (Athens, 19-20 February 2024) where WES will contribute to the session dedicated to tackling the marine litter challenge.

**Ms Samira Shaban i Pina - Project Analyst, Water Division, Union for the Mediterranean**, re-confirmed the excellent collaboration of the UfM with the WES project and looks forward to finalising together the draft Strategy for the WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea continuum along with the other key regional partners: the EU, UNEP/MAP, GWP-Med and PRIMA.

**Ms Tatjana Hema - Coordinator, MAP/UNEP**, emphasised the serious threats that the region is facing and how WES is working hand in hand with UNEP/MAP on various fronts, ranging from WES support to the first steps in the revision of the National Action Plans (NAPs), promoting the Aarhus Convention to the whole of the Mediterranean, applying the WEFE Nexus as a new tool to address environmental crises, to Education for Sustainable Development.

The WES FPs and EU Delegations shared their experiences in implementing WES activities at national level and on capitalising on their participation in the many regional activities. A genuinely needs-driven regional project, WES has been consistently supporting the PCs at many levels, from policy formulation, technical assistance and capacity building, to stakeholder engagement and consensus building, education and awareness, in an integrated manner, building on previous work and on synergies with other on-going efforts. Appreciation for the extension of the WES programme was frequently reiterated.

Following the presentation of the WES workplan for 2024 by the WES team, it was unanimously adopted by the Steering Committee members. **Mr Stavros Damianidis - WES Project Director**, reconfirmed the commitment of the WES team to accelerate its efforts in order to conclude the WES workplan in full over the next 10 months, while **Professor Michael Scoullas - WES Team Leader**, thanked the WES FPs, EUDs, DGNEAR and DGENV, the institutional partners and consortium members for their commitment and hard work that has collectively led to a very high level of satisfaction by the majority of the beneficiaries as shown by the project's sophisticated and rigorous impact



## Water and Environment Support

in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood region

assessment methodology, proven impact and momentum in the countries and new arising opportunities for progressing further.

The final session of the SCM, was dedicated to the Water Demo Projects monitored by WES, that are gradually concluding, the results and challenges of which were briefly presented and discussed.

**Mr Frédéric Fourtune - Programme Manager, EU DGNEAR**, who co-chaired the SCM with Professor Michael Scoullos, WES Team Leader, in his closing remarks, expressed his satisfaction with the WES project's progress thus far. There is much anticipation for the results within the final stretch till November, including the Mediterranean-wide activity that will award the "Mediterranean Champions of plastic pollution prevention". He formally announced the decision for the next 3-year phase of WES which is under design and will be launched immediately after WES closes for a seamless continuation of EU support to the sustainable development of the region.

The EU funded Water and Environment Support (WES) in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood region project aims at protecting the environment and improving the management of scarce water resources in the Mediterranean. It tackles problems related to pollution prevention and water use efficiency. The project's activities began in May 2019 and will end in November 2024, with a total budget of 9.508.054 euros.

**For more information, please contact:**

Lisa Papadogeorgaki, WES Key Expert Communication and networking

[lpa@ldk.gr](mailto:lpa@ldk.gr)

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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.

Disclaimer

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