

WES-BCA PRESS RELEASE

The WES-BCA project's work plan of 27 Activities and Outreach campaigns towards Climate Action and Environmental Protection was endorsed during the 1st Steering Committee Meeting

Athens, 27 May 2025

The “Water and Environment Support-Biodiversity and Climate Action (WES-BCA) in the Neighbourhood South region” project presented the 27 national and regional activities, trainings, study tours, workshops, consultations, as well as the large scale outreach campaigns to be delivered in the Mediterranean East and South, many of which related to Plastic Pollution, Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus, Biodiversity and Water Scarcity.

The WES-BCA work plan was discussed among the WES-BCA experts, the 16 Focal Points of the related Environment and Water Ministries of the 8 Partner Countries (PCs) (including Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia), European Delegations, the institutional partners (Union for the Mediterranean and the Barcelona Convention), and various other stakeholders. It was endorsed during the project's first Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) on the 26th of May 2025, in Brussels, Belgium.

Based on the valuable feedback of the SCM's participants on the issues to be tackled over the next 2,5 years, the plan of action is to be implemented through two complementary Components:

Under Component I, the issues covered focus on 5 topics: Prevention & Reduction of Pollution; Curbing Plastic Pollution & Marine Litter; Promoting the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus approach; Promotion of water efficiency at all steps and levels of water management and use; Climate Change mitigation and adaptation actions, including Water Scarcity and Biodiversity protection.

Under Component II, the project aims to raise awareness and improve understanding by the general public (and specific segments of the population), including youth and women, stimulating adoption of appropriate behaviours and attitudes towards improved Climate Action and effective Environmental Protection.

During their opening remarks, **Mr Patrick Wegerdt, Directorate-General for Environment (DG-ENV)**, reaffirmed the European Union's commitment to support the Southern Neighbourhood countries through the WES-BCA project activities, that follow the principles of the European Green Deal (EU policy initiatives) on the path to low-carbon, resource-efficient economies, with the ultimate goal of reaching climate neutrality by 2050.

Ms Olfat Hamdan, Programme Management Officer, UNEP/MAP- MedPol, confirmed the importance attached to the WES-BCA project and its contribution towards a healthy, clean, sustainable and climate resilient Mediterranean Sea and Coast with productive and biologically diverse ecosystems, a vision also reflected in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

As for **Ms Cristina Cardenete, Environment Expert, Water, Environment, & Blue Economy Division, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)**, expressed the commitment of the Union for the Mediterranean in promoting and pushing forward a close collaboration with WES-BCA, along the lines of the previous years, in support of the UfM GreenerMed Agenda, Sustainable Blue Economy Roadmap and a renewed Water Ministerial Declaration, currently in the making.

Mr Stavros Damianidis, General Manager of LDK Consultants and WES-BCA Project Director, made clear that the WES-BCA team will deliver activities based on their valuable expertise gained during the previous WES project and in close cooperation with the WES-BCA Focal Points from the Water and Environment ministries of PCs and the EU Delegations in the PCs.

Professor Michael Scoullas, WES-BCA Team Leader, who has led also the predecessor phases, reminded old and new partners on the vision, principles, priorities and overall approaches and related strategy of the project/program and gave emphasis to the activities related to the pioneer Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus approach. New policies and best practices to follow, advanced techniques to adopt and apply, along with initiatives and synergies to be promoted, will certainly promote development efforts of the PCs, while protecting the environment and supporting the sustainable development in the region.

Mr Frédéric Fourtune, Programme Manager, WES-BCA, European Commission-DG MENA, added: “Thanks to the productive collaboration among the SCM's participants, the endorsed workplan and the 27 WES-BCA activities and outreach campaigns would prove to be beneficial to the PCs and pave the way to a greener and more sustainable

Mediterranean. The achievements and impact of the previous WES project, will certainly serve as guidelines for a successful WES-BCA project.”

Ms Cristina CASELLA, Programme Manager for Climate Action, European Commission-DG-MENA, stressed the need for an extensive dissemination of information regarding the WES-BCA project activities to stakeholders and the general public, to ensure that the results and key proposed policies and solutions would be adopted and implemented by the PCs.

WES-BCA project in a snapshot:

The “Water and Environment Support-Biodiversity and Climate Action (WES-BCA) in the Neighbourhood South region” project is the continuation of the WES project and aims to improve the protection of the environment, the restoration of biodiversity and the management of scarce water resources, while enhancing the resilience to climate change in the Mediterranean region, strengthening the formulation and enforcement of the relevant policies of the Partner Countries and the two regional political frameworks, namely the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Barcelona Convention.

Partner Countries: countries of the Middle East and North Africa

Duration: November 2024-November 2027

Budget: 7.000.000 Euros

Implementing Consortium of leading European and regional entities with complementary skills and experience, namely:

LDK CONSULTANTS S.A. (Leader), Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED), Association of Cities and Regions for Sustainable Resource Management (ACR+), Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (CIHEAM Bari), Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE), MedWaves, the Regional Activity Centre of UNEP/MAP for Sustainable Consumption and Production.

Contracting Authority: European Commission, Directorate-General Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR)

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