

Online Regional Workshop
Advancing WEFE Nexus integration in the Mediterranean
with emphasis on governance, policy and institutional arrangements:
Towards an Action Framework

Activity Code: C1_HOR-1
Monday 19 January 2026
09:00 – 14:00 CET

CONCEPT NOTE

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

The "**Water and Environment Support - Biodiversity and Climate Action (WES-BCA-BCA) in the ENI Neighbourhood South Region**" project is a regional project funded by the European Union. Implemented in eight Countries in North Africa and the Middle East, WES-BCA 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.

The project builds on the experience and achievements of its predecessor projects (WES, SWIM-H2020 SM, SWIM SM, and Horizon 2020 CB/MEP) and provide continuity, further integrating new elements and institutional, scientific and technical developments. The “integration” concept will be coupled with regional exchanges of good practices and lessons learned (regional activities) and the adapted, more focused, continuation of the WES work at the national level (country-specific activities).

1.2. CONTEXT

The WES-BCA project is implementing a horizontal activity titled “Demonstrating the WEFE Nexus Policy Advancements at National Level” (C1_HOR-1), which is implemented in synergy with the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med) through the GEF UNEP/MAP MedProgramme Child Project 2.2. on “Mediterranean Coastal Zones: Managing the WEFE Nexus,” that aims to promote WEFE Nexus and Source-to-Sea approaches, and the PRIMA WEFE4Med Project, which aims to establish and facilitate a Mediterranean WEFE Nexus Community of Practice.

The activity aims to assist in the advancement of policy, institutional, and governance settings for the WEFE Nexus at country level and to contribute to the implementation of the WEFE Nexus Strategy in the Mediterranean Source to Sea

Continuum. An Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy would be elaborated in 2026. A multi-stakeholder 'Regional Conference on WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea Continuum: from Strategy to Action', 24-26 February 2026, Cyprus, would contribute in shaping technical contents of the Strategy's Action Plan. It will be organized in the framework of the Barcelona Convention and UfM, and under the auspices of the EU Cyprus Presidency, by GWP-Med and the Cyprus Institute in synergy with WES-BCA.

The activity started with a pilot study focusing on Jordan, Lebanon, and Morocco, where significant steps on WEFE Nexus integration were recorded, by assessing their institutional frameworks, identifying governance and cross-sectoral challenges related to WEFE integration, and compiling lessons learned and good practices.

These findings were included in a Background Document, which also assesses the degree to which national WEFE Nexus policy advancements align with the priorities and principles of the Mediterranean WEFE Strategy, identifying areas where these could inform the future Action Plan of the draft Strategy, particularly in terms of policy alignment, institutional coordination, and cross-sector collaboration.

The Background Document also identifies knowledge gaps and preliminary capacity-building needs to be further addressed through broader regional dialogue and cooperation. In this context, the Background Document will serve as the main reference for the upcoming regional online workshop planned for 19 January 2026, which will bring together representatives of the WEFE sectors from all partner countries, as well as a wide range of stakeholders from across the Mediterranean.

A **first online consultation meeting was held on 3 September 2025** and **was attended** by the WES-BCA Focal Points for Water and Environment from Jordan, Lebanon, and Morocco. The online meeting served as an initial working session to review the draft Background Document, gather country-specific feedback, and identify common policy and governance challenges related to WEFE integration.

Building on the draft Background Document and the outcomes of the first consultation, the one-day online regional workshop will focus on validating common findings, refining priority actions, and identifying concrete follow-up steps to advance WEFE integration at national and regional levels.

2. OBJECTIVES

The Regional Workshop's Objective is to collaboratively review key findings and recommendations from the WEFE Nexus background document, fostering dialogue and identifying priority-oriented inputs generating actionable insights for advancing WEFE Nexus implementation and supporting the preparation of the Strategy's Action Plan, particularly in fields related to governance, institutional and policy arrangements.

Specific Objectives:

The online meeting will provide a regional platform to:

- **WEFE Institutional and Policy Challenges:** Validate and expand on the identified institutional and policy challenges (cross sectoral coordination, governance mechanisms, policy coherence, and inter-ministerial cooperation)

hindering effective WEFE integration in the three focus countries while extending the dialogue to all WES-BCA Partner Countries to reflect their national realities;

- **WEFE institutional Innovation:** Facilitate knowledge exchange and cross-learning showcasing WEFE policy advances and lessons from the three focus countries, and discussing best practices and institutional innovations and policy enablers that support WEFE mainstreaming across sectors, applicable across the region;
- **Mediterranean WEFE Strategy alignment:** Discuss the alignment of national WEFE policy advancements with the Mediterranean WEFE Strategy and inform its forthcoming Action Plan in supporting national implementation, policy alignment, institutional coordination, and inter-sectorial governance;
- **Capacity Building:** Moving beyond the findings of the assessment from Jordan, Lebanon, and Morocco, refine and expand key capacity-building needs for WEFE Nexus implementation by gathering stakeholder input on policy integration, and institutional and intersectoral gaps that must be addressed to strengthen WEFE implementation across the Mediterranean. This will help map out broader regional gaps and determine priority capacity building needs for different institutional and governance settings;
- **Insights and recommendations:** Review and comment on key findings and recommendations for strengthening WEFE governance and implementation across the region, feeding into the future Action Plan of the Mediterranean WEFE Nexus Strategy.

The key inputs from the online event will be used to finalize the Background Document and provide input into the preparations of the Action Plan of the Mediterranean WEFE Nexus Strategy.

3. APPROACH TO MEET THE EVENT'S OBJECTIVES

The online event will be implemented as a **structured, facilitated regional consultation**, combining targeted presentations with moderated plenary discussions to ensure focused, inclusive, and outcome-oriented exchanges. The approach builds on existing analytical work and validated inputs, with the aim of informing the **Action Plan of the Mediterranean WEFE Strategy** without duplicating prior assessments or reopening agreed strategic orientations.

The event will draw on the **Background Document**, which assesses WEFE policy and institutional integration in Jordan, Lebanon, and Morocco and has been validated through a dedicated consultation with the three pilot countries. This document will serve as the common reference point for all discussions. Initial sessions will present the key cross-country findings, including common strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, followed by short, time-bound highlights from the pilot countries.

A facilitated plenary discussion will then enable Partner Countries to validate whether the findings accurately reflect their national contexts, provide clarifications or country-specific perspectives, and flag any missing or misrepresented institutional or policy issues. The discussion will be structured by country, with strict time control, to ensure balanced participation and comparability of inputs.

A dedicated moderated session will focus on identifying **priority areas for the forthcoming Action Plan related to governance, policy and institutional arrangements**. To support efficiency, a structured prioritisation table will be prepared based on the WEFE Med Strategy dimensions and evidence from the Background Document and validated pilot-

country inputs. Participants will use this table to indicate priority emphasis and help identify shared priorities across countries and flag key capacity-building needs relevant to the priority areas.

The review of proposed WEFE Nexus recommendations will then be guided by the priority areas identified during the Strategy-focused session, including the associated capacity-building needs, ensuring a clear link between strategic orientation and the content of the recommendations. All inputs will be captured in a structured manner and used to finalise the Background Document and inform the preparation of the Framework for Action in the related thematic fields.

4. RESOURCE PERSONS & MODERATION

Michael SCULLOS: Team Leader (WES BCA)

Vangelis CONSTANTIANOS: Regional Coordinator (GWP-Med)

Ger BERGKAMP: WEFE Nexus and Policy Integration Expert (WES BCA)

Stelios VAVOULOGIANNIS: Junior Non-Key Expert (WES-BCA)

Suzan TAHA: Water Key Expert (WES BCA)

Frédéric DE DINECHIN: Senior Policy Advisor (UfM)

Tatjana HEMA: MAP Coordinator (UNEP/MAP)

Patrizia BUSOLINI, UNEP/MAP, Programme Management Officer

Atila URAS, UNEP/MAP

Antonella AUTINO, PRIMA, Coordinator

RESOURCES FOR PARTICIPANTS

Background Document, agenda, and relevant reference materials will be shared with participants in advance of the meeting to support informed discussions.

5. TARGET AUDIENCE

This activity primarily targets **policy makers, decision-makers and public administrators** from **Jordan, Lebanon, and Morocco**, as well as relevant representatives from other **WES-BCA Partner Countries**, involved in WEFE Nexus policy development and implementation. It will also engage **regional and national stakeholders as well as technical experts and planners** responsible for integrated natural resource management, to ensure that both institutional and operational perspectives are reflected.

Participants are expected to include:

- Officials from ministries responsible for water, energy, agriculture, environment/ecosystems, and planning as well as other related ministries like international cooperation, finance, etc.
- Representatives of existing inter-ministerial coordination bodies and cross-sectoral governance mechanisms

- Regulatory agencies relevant to water, energy, environment, and land use
- National institutions actively involved in WEFE Nexus policy development and implementation
- Regional institutions, including the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), representatives of the UfM Water Expert Group (WEG) and the Barcelona Convention, other UN Organisations, donor agencies, etc.
- Regional stakeholders, including Mediterranean networks of different WEFE Nexus disciplines
- The GEF MedProgramme Child Project 2.2 on WEFE Nexus
- WEFE Nexus practitioners and experts, including those contributing to science–policy interfaces through PRIMA, Horizon 2020 / Horizon Europe, and related pilot initiatives
- Civil society organisations engaged in WEFE Nexus–related policy dialogue and implementation

6. REQUIREMENTS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

Participants are expected to:

- review the Background Document in advance of the meeting;
- actively participate in the online discussions and share perspectives from their institutional or national context;
- contribute to the identification of priority areas and related capacity-building needs for Action Plan of the Mediterranean WEFE Nexus Strategy.

No preparatory presentations or written inputs are required from participants.

7. LANGUAGE

The meeting will be conducted in English, with simultaneous interpretation provided - EN/FR/EN.

8. DATE AND VENUE

The workshop will take place online on **19 January 2026** between **09:00 and 14:00 CET**.