



WES-BCA
Water and Environment Support -
Biodiversity and Climate Action
in the Neighbourhood South region

Regional Dialogue on Advancing Private Sector Engagement for Climate Resilience through WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean Source-to-Sea Continuum

**15 September 2026
11:00 (CET), online**

**EU WES-BCA Activity Code : C1_HOR-2
Concept Note**

1. BACKGROUND

The Mediterranean is a climate and water stress hotspot where water scarcity, food security, energy transition and ecosystem degradation are increasingly linked: water allocation decisions affect food production and energy demand; energy choices affect the cost and carbon footprint of desalination, pumping and treatment; agricultural practices affect aquifers, rivers and ecosystems; and ecosystem degradation increases exposure to floods, drought and coastal risks. Therefore, a Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus in a Source-to-Sea Continuum approach, particularly in the vulnerable Mediterranean region, is no longer an optional technical lens, but a governance necessity and can act as investments' enabler for meeting climate resilience objectives through adaptation and mitigation co-benefits.

WES and WES-BCA, in close cooperation with the EC and its institutional partners UfM and the Barcelona Convention, as well as with GWP-Med and PRIMA, have been instrumental in preparing and promoting the [Strategy for WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean Source-to-Sea Continuum and its Action Framework](#), still under preparation. The latter has an important financial component including the involvement of the private sector.

The role of the private sector in meeting climate resilience objectives is key by: mobilising investments as well as capabilities at the required volume and speed for a series of issues related to technology, operations and maintenance, digital services, construction and engineering, off-take markets, risk analytics, insurance, innovation and entrepreneurship, etc. While public authorities remain responsible for regulation, safeguards, affordability and public-interest outcomes, private engagement is most effective when it is transparent, well-regulated and linked to measurable water, climate, social and ecosystem results.



In WEFE projects, private actors may undertake different roles, like: investors and co-investors; operators of utilities, concessions or performance-based contracts; technology suppliers for irrigation, reuse, desalination, and leakage/water-loss reduction, sensors and AI; industrial and agri-food off-takers that reduce water and energy intensity; local banks and funds that lend to SMEs and farmers; project companies and PPP vehicles; insurers and risk-capital providers; and impact investors or corporates that monetise ecosystem services, carbon sinks, payment-for-ecosystem-services schemes and circular-economy revenues; etc. Overall, the private sector should be invited in tackling specific WEFE bottlenecks, and not to replace public roles. Each transaction should specify the public objective, the private role, the risk-sharing mechanism, the affordability arrangement, the environmental safeguards and the data that will prove impact.

The European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+) is a principal financing instrument of Global Gateway for mobilising sustainable investment in EU partner countries. It combines EU budgetary guarantees with investment by eligible financial institutions and can be complemented by blending, grants and technical assistance. EU policy explicitly identifies blending and guarantees, including EFSD+, as tools for mobilising private finance for water and sanitation. EFSD+ provides up to EUR 40 billion in risk-sharing capacity, with the objective of mobilising up to approximately EUR 135 billion in public and private financing. It includes dedicated EIB guarantees as well as Open Architecture guarantees implemented through eligible development and financial institutions. EFSD+ can help address several barriers that constrain private engagement in water, including: political and sovereign risk; credit risk; insufficient collateral; foreign-exchange risk; long investment horizons; weak project bankability; limited SME access to credit; high perceived risks of new technologies; insufficient project preparation; and, limited capacity of domestic financial institutions to finance green and climate-resilient investments.

Regional policy processes linked to the subject include:

- the [Pact for the Mediterranean \(aka Pact\)](#), including its [Action Plan \(April 2026\)](#)
- the [Strategy for WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean Source-to-Sea Continuum \(aka Strategy\)](#), approved by UfM and Barcelona Convention at the end of 2025), and ongoing work towards preparing an Action Framework (see [Nicosia Accord](#)) including on WEFE Nexus Financing.

2. ADVANCING A REGIONAL DIALOGUE ON THE SUBJECT

A regional dialogue on advancing private sector engagement for climate resilience through WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea Continuum will foster action planning, promote synergies and facilitate the exchange of experience.

The regional dialogue is being advanced by the EU funded WES-BCA Project through its activity number HOR-2, in cooperation with GWP-Med and in synergy with other regional partners and processes, including those of the UfM and UNEP/MAP.



The regional dialogue is based on the findings and 24 recommendations of the WES Regional Assessment on Private Sector Engagement for Climate Change Adaptation in the Mediterranean (second half 2024) that were validated during the Regional Roundtable on Catalysing Financing for Climate Change Adaptation in the Mediterranean Coastal Area: The Role of the Private Sector (December 2024, Athens).

Under HOR-2, the 24 recommendations were subsequently screened and prioritised against the criteria established in the activity TOR, including regional relevance, climate adaptation and resilience, WEFE Nexus alignment, feasibility, financing mobilisation potential, demonstration value and synergies with regional initiatives. Based on the screening and prioritisation, two initial Action Plan areas were proposed: (i) larger infrastructure for small- to medium-sized urban areas, incorporating wastewater treatment and reuse, water efficiency and water-loss reduction, and desalination; and (ii) green finance for SMEs, with food processing initially proposed as a specific SME subsector given its multiple WEFE linkages.

Building on this work, the approach was further developed towards the preparation of Country Action Plans/Frameworks for Accelerating Private Sector Engagement in the Water Sector through a WEFE Nexus approach for Climate Resilience in Egypt and Jordan, complemented by a brief Regional Action Framework drawing lessons and recommendations for potential replication and scaling across other WES-BCA Partner Countries.

The regional dialogue would contribute to:

- operationalising the Pact for the Mediterranean, by providing a regional platform for dialogue on private-sector engagement and financing for climate-resilient WEFE Nexus investments.
- the elaboration of the WEFE Nexus Financing thematic area of the WEFE Strategy's Action Framework by facilitating dialogue among relevant public, private and financing actors on private-sector engagement and financing for WEFE Nexus investments.
- advancing the UfM agenda on strengthening capacities for finance mobilisation through the Rome Initiative on Water, expected to be launched at the 2026 Euro-Mediterranean Water Forum, as a practical expression of UfM Member States' collective commitment to work together towards achieving their shared water goals.
- advancing the Barcelona Convention Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035.
- ongoing action in Egypt and Jordan, as pilot countries in the Mediterranean for advancing the application of integrated WEFE Nexus concepts/approaches and facilitate experience sharing, with a view to their potential replication and upscaling for impact in the Mediterranean.

Target audience for the consultation includes representatives from:

- private sector partners including water and wastewater companies/utilities, desalination and reuse operators, renewable-energy developers, agri-food companies, major industrial water users, digital technology and agritech companies, insurers, etc.



WES-BCA

Water and Environment Support -
Biodiversity and Climate Action
in the Neighbourhood South region

- SMEs, including those active in-service provision, technology and innovation, youth entrepreneurs and women-led companies
- national chambers of commerce and their regional networks
- government representatives from WEFE sectors, as well as Finance and Development Cooperation authorities
- finance partners, including the EU, IFIs, DFIs, national banks, investment funds, bilateral and multilateral donors, and philanthropic foundations, etc.
- regional institutions and stakeholder organisations.

Activities that will be technically delivered by EU WES-BCA in synergy with GWP-Med, include until the end of 2026:

- development of Action Plans/Frameworks for Accelerating Private Sector Engagement in the Water Sector through a WEFE Nexus approach for Climate Resilience in two EU Partner Countries (Egypt and Jordan) as well as a brief Regional Action Framework based on the latter findings drawing on the country-level work to identify lessons and recommendations for potential replication and scaling across other WES-BCA Partner Countries;
- formation of a Thematic Community of Practice (CoP) on Private Sector Engagement in WEFE Nexus Financing for Climate Adaptation and Resilience, bringing together private and public partners for knowledge exchange, peer learning and networking, in synergy with the PRIMA WEFE4Med project and other partners.

Reflecting the recommendations of the 2024 Assessment as well as the HOR-2 TOR, and following the related screening and prioritisation, emphasis of the current work is suggested to be on:

- engaging (i) SMEs active in-service provision, technology and innovation and (ii) partners for large scale infrastructure (e.g. wastewater treatment and reuse, desalination, irrigation, agritech, etc).
- on the side of financing instruments, emphasis is suggested to be on mobilising EFSD+/NDICI financing and investment instruments, while considering other potential sources (e.g. GCF, private funding, etc), including as co-financing options.;
- applying a WEFE Nexus approach to such investments towards multiple benefits for climate resilience, including as outlined in the WEFE Nexus screening tool in the EU Assessment on WEFE Nexus Financing.

In service of these activities, the following steps have been taken:

- introduction was made at the 'Segment on Sustainable Finance & Private Sector Engagement' of the Annual Stocktaking Meeting of the GEF UNEP/MAP MedProgramme, 25 June 2026, Tunis.
- introduction was made at the 16th Meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Water, 2 July 2026, online.

3. NEXT STEPS

Next steps include:



WES-BCA

Water and Environment Support -
Biodiversity and Climate Action
in the Neighbourhood South region

- an online consultation event, scheduled for **15 September 2026, 11:00 (CET)**, aimed to introduce the process and activities, and consult on these with WES-BCA Focal Points and key partners
- a major **Regional Conference on the subject** at the Cairo Water Week, 26 October 2026, co-organised with the EU Delegation in Egypt and UfM
- a **concluding online consultation event**, at the beginning of December 2026, to define the roadmap of follow up activities in 2027.

The agenda of the online consultation event of the 15th of September 2026 will be sent in due time.

4. LANGUAGE

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

5. INVITATION LINK FOR THE FIRST EVENT

The upcoming **consultation meeting** will be held on the **15th of September 2026, online**. The link for the meeting is provided below:

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/DdNJs9dQR9KpQ-Ta6N6otq>

Meeting ID: 891 9218 0119

Passcode: 12345