

Key results of the 1st MED-RISE Conference

Mediterranean Resilience through Investment and Sustainable Ecosystems

Cairo Water Week, 26 October 2026

UfM Working Group on Water Finance and Investment (WATFIN), Cairo, 27 October 2026

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The day at a glance

- Ministers, finance ministries and PPP units, development and commercial banks, investors, SMEs and researchers from across the Mediterranean
- Convened by the EU with the UfM, GWP-Med (GEF UNEP/MAP MedProgramme) and WES-BCA; open conference, live-streamed in Arabic, English and French
- Six sessions: regional policy picture and blended finance; what moves private capital; high-level opening and launch of MED-RISE as a regional platform; investable WEFE cases; national frameworks; draft Cairo Messages

Under 2%

The share of water spending in developing countries that comes from private capital (World Bank, 2024)

6 to 14%

of GDP by 2050: what climate-related water scarcity could cost the Middle East and North Africa (World Bank and FAO, 2018)

What made the cases bankable

Five cases from source to sea, from public water and wastewater infrastructure to an agri-food business that links water, energy and food

THREE SHARED INGREDIENTS

1

A clear cash flow and a credible payer: tariff, offtake, savings or availability payment, with by-products such as reuse water, energy or compost adding revenue

2

Preparation done before the lender is asked: feasibility, environmental and social studies, permits, and a counterparty with a track record

3

Public money used where it moves private finance: preparation support, guarantees and blending, with results measured against a baseline

One warning: currency and tenor. Long-dated, local-currency finance is still the hardest piece to find.

What could change within a year

Measures within reach of governments in the next 12 months, to check on at Cairo Water Week next year

Regulators: a clear path to cost-reflective tariffs, with protection for vulnerable households

PPP units: standard contracts and a published pipeline of prepared projects

Finance ministries and national development banks: guarantees and blended grants that reach the private operator and don't stop at the bank

Utilities: metering and digital data that lenders can verify

The common thread: make risk visible early, and share it with those best placed to carry it

Emerging Cairo Messages

Draft, for the rapporteur and co-conveners to refine

01

Fully funded water plans need private capital alongside public budgets. Public money works best where it moves private finance: preparation and risk-sharing.

02

Bankability is built before the pitch: prepared pipelines, clear cash flows and credible counterparties, from source to sea.

03

Share the binding risks (currency, tenor, counterparty) through instruments that reach the operator, and learn together through a regional community of practice.

Why it matters for this Working Group

Rome Initiative on Water: turning national goals into project pipelines that attract finance. The Cairo Messages are an early input, with the Action Framework of the WEF Nexus Strategy

UfM Recommendations on Water Finance: the measures heard in Cairo support their implementation at country level

UN 2026 Water Conference, Abu Dhabi, 8 to 10 December 2026: the Cairo Messages travel there

This afternoon: the MED-RISE investment clinic reviews up to four projects against seven questions; the pipeline register records the next steps

Two asks of the Working Group

1

Consider the Cairo Messages in the Working Group's work programme and in the follow-up to the Rome Initiative on Water

2

Point your countries' project promoters to the MED-RISE pipeline register, so a second edition builds on real projects

Thank you