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

1st MED-RISE - Mediterranean Resilience through Investment and Sustainable Ecosystems

Key Messages

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Opening

- Today's discussion focused on how private investment can contribute to a more resilient Water–Energy–Food–Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus across the Mediterranean.
- Water scarcity, food security, energy transition and ecosystem health are interconnected. Decisions in one area affect the others.
- A WEFE approach can support better planning and investment by identifying synergies, managing trade-offs and strengthening climate resilience from source to sea.
- The region has strategies, national priorities, pilots and capable public and private actors. The challenge is to move more initiatives from concept to prepared, financeable projects and implementation at scale.
- The draft messages below are proposed as an input to the Rome Initiative on Water, the Mediterranean WEFE Nexus Strategy's Action Framework and the UN 2026 Water Conference.

Key Messages 1 & 2

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1. Treat integrated WEFE investment as a practical route to sustainable development and climate resilience

- Apply a WEFE lens to investment decisions across the source-to-sea continuum, building that on a set of criteria for assessing Nexus application for multi-sectorial benefits .
- Assess projects for their contribution to climate resilience, adaptation and mitigation co-benefits as well as social and economic co-benefits.

2. Mobilise private capabilities and finance in support of public objectives

- Engage private actors for their potential contributions in capital, technology, innovation, - construction, operations, maintenance- and risk management
- Ensure private participation complements—not replaces—public responsibilities for planning, regulation, safeguards, affordability and public-interest outcomes.
- Include affected communities and relevant local stakeholders in partnership processes.

Key Messages 3

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3. Make projects investable by supporting preparation and bankability

- Recognise that a strategy or investment idea is not yet a bankable project.
- Support project promoters to complete feasibility studies, establish a credible borrower and repayment pathway, demonstrate cash flows and assess risks.
- Define safeguards and clear, measurable WEFE results as part of project preparation; consider applying a related methodology based on available standards and/or their evolution based on needs.
- Strengthen project-preparation and transaction-advisory support, including targeted technical assistance and practical bankability clinics.
- Provide preparation support for public-interest projects and early-stage initiatives that cannot meet the full cost of preparation themselves.
- Set clear, time-bound next steps and assign responsibility to identifiable project owners.

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Key Messages 4

4. Use blended finance and guarantees to address specific risks

- Use public and concessional finance to help projects with strong development and resilience benefits attract private participation
- Match instruments to the project's actual constraints:
  - E.g Consider grants and technical assistance for preparation and early-stage work.
  - E.g Consider blended finance, guarantees, local-bank credit lines and other risk-sharing tools to address currency, payment, tenor, demand or technology risks.
- Demonstrate additionality: public support should enable investment or outcomes that would not otherwise occur on suitable terms.
- Make relevant EU, IFI and other development-finance instruments easier to understand and navigate, subject to their eligibility, programming and approval requirements.

Key Messages 5 & 6

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5. Build a stronger and more accessible pipeline, including for SMEs

- Develop a rolling pipeline of identified WEFE opportunities, with consistent project information and clear preparation stages.
- Explore project aggregation, standardised documentation, appropriate credit products, guarantees and local-currency financing to improve access to finance.
- Focus on both SME-led solutions and large infrastructure investments as complementary parts of the pipeline.
- Consider opportunities such as wastewater treatment and reuse, renewable-energy-linked desalination with responsible brine management, irrigation modernisation, water-efficiency measures, agri-tech and ecosystem restoration.

6. Strengthen enabling conditions and coordination at country level

- Improve inter-ministerial coordination and strengthen institutional capacity for project preparation and procurement.
- Clarify institutional roles and responsibilities and address regulatory or institutional bottlenecks.
- Align projects with national plans and investment priorities.
- Capacitate public officials, including middle level managers, on e.g. private sector engagement and finance to become enablers of related action.

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Key Messages 7 & 8

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7. Make results measurable, transparent and inclusive

- Set **baselines and monitor project outcomes**, while using transparent reporting to support public accountability and help financiers assess performance.
- **Track relevant results**, such as: water saved, reused or treated; energy and resource efficiency; agriculture production boosted sustainably, and ecosystem protected and restored
- Include youth, women, workers, entrepreneurs and local communities in project design, implementation and monitoring.

8. Regional cooperation as support for project promoters & financiers

- Use **regional platforms to share experience**, improve access to financing information, standardise project information where useful and connect projects with potential partners.
- Establish and maintain a thematic **Community of Practice** on private-sector engagement in WEFE finance.
- Use the Community of Practice to support e.g bankability clinics, pipeline development, SME aggregation, market intelligence and matchmaking.

Key Messages 9

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9. Move from dialogue to delivery, with follow-through beyond Cairo

- Identify **priority investment opportunities** and specify what each needs to advance by assigning project owners and realistic next milestones.
- Connect project **promoters** with appropriate preparation and **financing pathways** and obtain promoters' consent before sharing project information beyond the relevant process
- Use the **MED-RISE process** to link regional dialogue with project follow-up, including through the investment clinic, project pipeline register and future convenings, contributing to the WEFE Nexus Strategy's Action Framework, Rome Initiative, etc.

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10. Proposed follow-up

For the Rome Initiative on Water

- Help countries move from water and resilience policy priorities to well-prepared, financeable project pipelines.
- Strengthen cooperation on project design, financing, and management.

For the WEFE Nexus Strategy's Action Framework

- Foster projects pipeline development
- Strengthen project-preparation capacity.
- Improve connections between projects and suitable financing instruments.
- Support engagement of private sector partners, including SMEs.

For the UN 2026 Water Conference

- Share a Mediterranean regional perspective on mobilising investment for water resilience in a WEFE Nexus approach.
- Highlight combined roles and interdependencies of public leadership, development finance and private-sector capabilities.
- Emphasise safeguards, affordability and accountability as essential conditions.

Closing

- Private capital alone cannot solve the region's water and resilience challenges alone, and should not replace public responsibility.
- The opportunity is to **make public priorities investable**, use public and concessional resources **strategically**, and **engage private partners** where they can deliver clear public value.
- The shift is
  - from isolated pilots to a structured pipeline,
  - from fragmented efforts to coordinated partnerships, and
  - from commitments to measurable implementation.
- The 1st MED-RISE events in Cairo and their follow ups can add value to this work, carried forward through the Rome Initiative on Water and the WEFE Nexus Strategy's Action Framework, and into Abu Dhabi and beyond.

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Thank you for your attention!

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