Euro-Mediterranean Water Forum 2026
29 September – 2 October 2026, Rome, Italy

WORKSHOP
‘Towards implementation of the Strategy on Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea Continuum’

Date: 1 October 2026
Time: 16.30-18.00 CET
Room: Atlante, La Nuvola Convention Center, Rome

CONCEPT NOTE & AGENDA

In the framework of

UN environment programme | Mediterranean Action Plan Barcelona Convention

Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط

Organised by

Global Water Partnership Mediterranean

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

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PRIMA PARTNERSHIP FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

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WEFE Nexus Child Project 2.2. of the GEF UNEP MAP MedProgramme and PRIMA WEFE4Med

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[TENTATIVE – Some speakers to be confirmed]

Background

Mounting challenges demand integrated solutions

Our Mediterranean and the ancient sea around which we all live, is an exquisite mosaic of people, cultures and a global hotspot of significant bio-, geo- and cultural diversity. The region is challenged by multiple interrelated pressures that are expected to become more severe by the triple planetary crisis (climate change, pollution and biodiversity degradation). These challenges have direct implications on efforts towards water, energy and food security as well as environmental sustainability within and across the Mediterranean countries.

Integrated approaches, including Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), Ecosystems-Based Approach (EBA) and their Integrative Methodological Framework (IMF), Integrated Energy Planning (IEP), etc. are applied in the region making impact towards sustainable development.

Identifying inter-dependencies and recognising possible trade-offs, the system-thinking applied through a Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus in a Source to Sea Continuum approach adds value by enabling sectoral and spatial integration in policy development and management of natural resources, aiming to facilitate -often missing- operational channels towards commonly defined objectives and to mobilise funding and investments for multi-disciplinary benefits, delivering beyond the 'do no harm principle'. Moving from strategy to action requires structured preparation, realistic risk allocation, institutional discipline, and coordinated partnership among governments,

The Strategy for WEFE Nexus in the Med Source to Sea Continuum

The 'Strategy for WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea Continuum' presents a comprehensive strategic framework to support countries in strengthening policy and action integration across WEFE sectors and to promote leveraging of financial resources towards sustainability and climate-resilience objectives across borders.

The Strategy was built on a dual and inter-connected (formal amongst governments and informal amongst stakeholders) regional participatory consultation process. The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the Barcelona Convention/UNEP MAP and the European Union provided the institutional framework, with the technical support of the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med) within the GEF UNEP/MAP MedProgramme, the EU Water & Environment Support (WES) and Water, Environment Support Biodiversity Climate Action (WES BCA) Projects, and the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA). Technical contributions were provided

by a range of partners, including through the WEFE Nexus Community of Practice facilitated by the PRIMA WEFE4Med project.

The Strategy received formal endorsement by the 15th Meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Water (5-6 Nov 2025, Barcelona) in view of the 2nd UfM Ministerial Conference on Water (28 Sep 2026, Rome) and was adopted in the framework of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD, 2026-2035) flagship initiative by the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24) of the Barcelona Convention (2-5 Dec 2025, Cairo).

Towards an Action Framework for the Strategy implementation

Aiming to catalyze the shift from 'Nexus thinking' to 'Nexus doing' in the Mediterranean, and in full alignment with the Strategy's 3 Goals, 8 Objectives and 40 Directions for Action, a regional framework for actions (aka Action Framework) would assist the Strategy's implementation by strengthening institutional capacities to improve project preparation and accelerate access to climate financing, by promoting synergies and identifying ways of leveraging necessary funding and by supporting meaningful participation in regional WEFE and sustainable development initiatives, including the emerging UfM 'Rome Initiative' (suggested for approval at the 2nd UfM Ministerial Conference).

Launched at the Nicosia Regional Conference on WEFE Nexus[1] that concluded with the Nicosia Accord (Feb 2026), and reflecting countries' priorities for integrated natural resources management, the Action Framework should be aligned with and support the implementation of the relevant Barcelona Convention Protocols and their legally binding Regional Plans and the MSSD Strategy 2026-2035; the UfM strategic documents, including the UfM Vision Statement 2025, and initiatives; the Pact for the Mediterranean; the EU Water Resilience Strategy; etc. Securing further engagement of the Energy and Agriculture communities and agendas, including by utilising appropriate regional fora, is recommended, so as to create opportunities for the mobilisation of resources and enhance resilience across the Mediterranean.

The Action Framework is expected to be informed by WEFE Nexus technical regional processes led by regional institutions, stakeholder organisations and relevant projects and initiatives that focus and address key thematic areas, like on *Governance, Financing, Non-Conventional Technical Solutions (desalination, water reuse, etc.) and Digital Transformation, and Climate Resilience*, while remain open to additional and emerging fields and attentive to interlinkages with other sectors and industries and potential impacts on overall quality of life and public health. Priority to be given to knowledge exchange, awareness raising and education, and enhancing capacity building across the region. Focus on diversity/gender+ and gender responsive strategies, with priority on youth and women's needs and contributions to be ensured. Among means of elaborating and implementing an Action Framework for the Strategy, the WEFE Nexus Community of Practice should play a major role in providing a collaborative platform to connect stakeholders and support dissemination of WEFE solutions in the region.

In advancing from strategic direction to effective implementation, particular attention should be given to the quality of project preparation and structuring. Ensuring that WEFE-related initiatives are technically robust, financially viable, and institutionally ready will be essential to mobilise public and private investment at scale. The Action Framework should, therefore, promote well-structured project pipeline development, transparent risk allocation principles and mechanisms, and

[1] Regional Conference on WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea Continuum: From Strategy to Action | 24-26 Feb 2026, Cyprus Institute, Nicosia, Cyprus | The Conference took place under the auspices of the Cyprus Presidency of the EU and in the framework of the Barcelona Convention/UNEP MAP, UfM and PRIMA. It was organised by GWP-Med and the Cyprus Institute in synergy with EU WES-BCA Project. It was supported by GEF MAP UNEP MedProgramme, PRIMA WEFE4Med and GEF IW:LEARN.

affordability considerations that safeguard public interest while enabling private sector participation where appropriate. Strengthening institutional capacities for project implementation and contract management will be equally important to translate effective financing commitments into tangible and sustainable impact on the ground.

Fully reflecting the Strategy contents and based on a Why-What-How-Who approach, the Action Framework is suggested to elaborate on key components and fields like: context, including anchor with regional processes; purpose; description of contents; key partners and roles; timeframe; means of implementation; indicators; monitoring; learning and improvements.

Following technical drafting led by the six partner institutions that have worked for the Strategy's development, the Action Framework is expected to be considered by the UfM Regional Platform on Water as well as the UNEP/MAP Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development, with the consultations hopefully leading to the Framework's adoption in 2027.

Upcoming key events include the UfM 2nd Ministerial Meeting on Water (28 Sep 2026, Rome), the WEFE Nexus events at the Euro-Med Water Forum (29 Sep-2 Oct 2026), the 1st Mediterranean Resilience through Investment and Sustainable Ecosystems (MED-RISE) High-Level Conference on Mobilising Private Sector Investment through the WEFE Nexus from Source to Sea within the Cairo Water Week 2026 (26 Oct 2026, Cairo), UN Water Conference (8-10 Dec 2026, UAE).

Objectives & expected outcome of the Workshop at the Euro-Med Water Forum

The purpose of the Workshop 'Towards implementation of the Strategy on WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea Continuum', at the Euro-Med Water Forum (16.30-18.00, 1 Oct, Atlante Room, La Nuvola, Rome), is to attract partners' commitment for scalability, innovation and investments for the Strategy's implementation through its emerging Action Framework.

More specifically, the Workshop will:

- present key elements of the approved Strategy, demonstrating practical benefits of the inter-disciplinary approach
- elaborate on advancements with the Strategy's Action Framework as a pioneering and transformative process for sustainable development in the Mediterranean
- promote partners' engagement and commitment to action.

Targeted audience

The Workshop is intended for policymakers, government officials, funding institutions, private investors, regional and international institutions and stakeholder organisations, practitioners, demonstrator leaders, civil society organisations, researchers, and other stakeholders working on or interested in the implementation of the WEFE Nexus in the Source to Sea Continuum.

Organisers

The Workshop at the Euro-Med Water Forum is organised in the framework of the Barcelona Convention/UNEP MAP and UfM. It is organised by GWP-Med in synergy with PRIMA and EU WES-BCA Project. It is supported by GEF MAP UNEP MedProgramme and PRIMA WEFE4Med Project.

Agenda

The Workshop will begin with opening remarks by representatives of the regional institutions engaged in the process of the Strategy and its Action Framework, followed by a brief presentation, providing for setting the stage for discussions.

A first discussion panel of distinguished representatives of countries and stakeholders will elaborate on key contents that should be considered, and new synergies that should be promoted, in the Strategy's Action Framework, followed by brief questions/answers.

A second discussion panel of distinguished representative of multilateral and bilateral funding partners will elaborate on ways to advance blended financing in a WEFE Nexus context for climate resilience and sustainable development.

The Workshop will conclude by summing up key messages and outlining next foreseen steps.

Agenda
[TENTATIVE - Some speakers to be confirmed]

16:30-16:55	**Opening Remarks & Setting the Stage** Moderator: Michael Scoullos, Team Leader, EU WES-BCA Project **Opening Panel** • Tatjana Hema, Coordinator, UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan • Frédéric de Dinechin, Senior Policy Advisor, Water Stability and Resilience Division, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) • Youssef Tadros, Programme Manager, DG MENA, European Commission • Antonella Autino, Programme Coordinator, PRIMA Foundation **Brief Presentation:** The Strategy on WEFE Nexus in the Source to Sea Continuum and progress towards its Action Framework (8 min) • Vangelis Constantianos, Regional Coordinator, Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med)
16:55-17:25	**Panel Discussion 1: What key contents, and what new synergies, should the Strategy's Action Framework advance on the benefit of Mediterranean countries?** Moderator: Atila Uras, Senior Programme Officer & Scientific and Technical, UNEP MAP • Ahmad M. Al Hawyan, Assistant Secretary General, Ministry of Planning & International Cooperation, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan • High level representative from Egypt • High level representative from Morocco • Stavros Malas, President, Cyprus Institute, Cyprus • Hussein El Atfy, Secretary General, Arab Water Council Q/A
17:25-17:55	**Panel Discussion 2: How will we increase blended financing in a WEFE Nexus content for climate resilience and sustainable development in the Mediterranean?** Moderator: Frédéric de Dinechin, Senior Policy Advisor, Water Stability & Resilience Division, UfM **Panellists:** • Edouard Perard, Head of the Water Division, European Investment Bank (EIB) • Daouda Ben Oumar Ndiaye, Lead Climate Change Specialist, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)

	• Yosra Albakkar, Regional Climate Finance and Programming Advisor, Middle East Region, Green Climate Fund (GCF) • Lionel Goujon, Head of Water & Sanitation Division, Agence Française de Développement (AFD) • Emilio Ciarlo, Director General, One Water Committee Italy • Ali Rhouma, Project Officer, PRIMA Foundation Q/A
17:55-18:00	**Key take away Messages & Next Steps** • Michael Scoullos, Team Leader, EU WES-BCA Project • Vangelis Constantianos, Regional Coordinator, GWP-Med