The Rome Water Investment Flagship: From Vision to Investment

CIHEAM Bari / Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

KEY INFORMATION

Date	30 September 2026
Time	11:30 – 12:45
Room	Giordano Room, La Nuvola Convention Centre
Format	Institutional presentation and moderated dialogue
Language(s)	English

SUMMARY

Presentation of the vision and proposed architecture of the Rome Water Investment Flagship (RWIF), jointly developed by CIHEAM Bari and the Union for the Mediterranean, connecting the regional priorities emerging from the ONE WATER process with project preparation and future investment opportunities.

AGENDA & SPEAKERS

Time	Speaker Name & Title	Organization / Country	Role
11:30–11:35	**Mr Frédéric de Dinechin**	**Union for the Mediterranean**	**Moderator – Senior Policy Advisor, Stability and Resilience Division – Welcome & Introduction**
11:35–11:42	Mr Marco Rago	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAECI)	Special Envoy for International Water Affairs – Political and strategic perspective
11:42–11:47	Ms Ludovica Tancredi Martinelli	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI)	Unit for Finance for Development, Environment and Digital – Institutional remarks
11:47–11:55	Mr Biagio Di Terlizzi	CIHEAM Bari	Director – Vision and architecture of the RWIF
11:55–12:00	Mr Joan Borrell	Union for the Mediterranean	Deputy Secretary General for Stability and Resilience – Regional dimension of the RWIF
12:00–12:15	Mr Jauad El Kharraz Ms Amal Azab Mr Idriz Haxhiaj	Maghreb Mashreq Western Balkans	ONE WATER II Regional Focal Points – From regional priorities to investment needs
12:15–12:20	Mr Filippo Soccodato	One Water Committee Italy	Secretary General – Intervention: linking the EMWF B2G meetings with the RWIF
12:20–12:40	All speakers	—	Moderated dialogue: connecting priorities with investment
12:40–12:45	**Mr Frédéric de Dinechin**	**Union for the Mediterranean**	**Moderator – Conclusions**

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

The Mediterranean is one of the world's regions most exposed to climate-related water risks, facing increasing water scarcity, droughts, floods and ecosystem degradation. At the same time, substantial financing opportunities exist through international financial institutions, climate funds, development finance and national and regional investment programmes. A persistent challenge, however, is translating identified water priorities into projects that are technically sound, environmentally and socially robust, financially viable and institutionally implementable.

The Rome Water Investment Flagship (RWIF) has been conceived to address this project-preparation and investment-facilitation gap. Jointly developed by CIHEAM Bari and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), RWIF is designed to support project promoters in progressively developing priority water and climate-resilience projects towards investment readiness, while strengthening dialogue and connections with potential financing partners.

RWIF is envisaged as a first operational pillar of the Rome Initiative on Water, a UfM regional cooperation framework contributing to the broader objective of strengthening cooperation and investment for water security across the Mediterranean.

The Euro-Mediterranean Water Forum 2026 provides an opportunity to present the vision and proposed architecture of RWIF, discuss the project-preparation and investment challenges it is intended to address, and engage the regional water and investment community in shaping its future implementation.

The session will particularly benefit from the perspectives of the ONE WATER II Regional Focal Points for the Maghreb, Mashreq and Western Balkans, connecting the regional priorities emerging from the ONE WATER process with the question of how these priorities can be translated into future investment opportunities.

OBJECTIVES

- Present the vision and strategic rationale of the Rome Water Investment Flagship, including its envisaged role within the Rome Initiative on Water.
- Introduce the proposed architecture of RWIF.
- Discuss the gap between identified water priorities and investment-ready projects, including the technical, institutional, environmental and financial barriers faced by project promoters.
- Bring regional perspectives into the investment discussion, through the participation of the ONE WATER II Regional Focal Points for the Maghreb, Mashreq and Western Balkans.
- Explore how regional water priorities can be translated into future investment opportunities, including in water resilience, non-conventional water resources, climate adaptation and sustainable water infrastructure.

FORMAT & METHODOLOGY

The session will present the Rome Water Investment Flagship as an emerging regional mechanism for project preparation and investment facilitation in the water and climate-resilience sectors, linking Mediterranean water priorities with the conditions required to develop future investment opportunities. Moderated by Mr Frédéric de Dinechin, Senior Policy Advisor, Stability and Resilience Division, Union for the Mediterranean, the session will bring together four complementary perspectives.

1. Political and strategic perspective. Mr Marco Rago, Special Envoy for International Water Affairs, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), will frame the broader Italian perspective on international water cooperation and investment, highlighting the strategic relevance of water security for the Mediterranean and the role envisaged for the Rome Initiative on Water in strengthening regional cooperation and investment. His intervention will be complemented by institutional remarks from Mr Stefano Lo Savio, Head of Unit for Finance for Development, Environment and Digital, MAECI.

2. The RWIF architecture. Mr Biagio Di Terlizzi, Director, CIHEAM Bari, will present the vision, objectives and proposed architecture of the Rome Water Investment Flagship, including its project-preparation dimension and its intended contribution to strengthening the pathway from priority identification to investment readiness. Mr Joan Borrell, Deputy Secretary General for Stability and Resilience, Union for the Mediterranean, will outline the regional dimension of the Flagship, including the role envisaged for regional dialogue, investment facilitation and connections with relevant financing and investment partners.

3. From regional priorities to investment needs. The three ONE WATER II Regional Focal Points will bring the perspectives of the Maghreb, Mashreq and Western Balkans into the discussion. Building on the priorities

consolidated through the ONE WATER process, each Focal Point will briefly highlight the principal water priorities and associated investment needs emerging from their region, with particular attention to the types of interventions that require stronger project preparation and access to finance.

Linking with the EMWF B2G meetings. Mr Filippo Soccodato, Secretary General, One Water Committee Italy, will deliver a short intervention connecting the B2G (Business-to-Government) meetings organised at the Forum by the One Water Committee Italy, with the support of CIHEAM Bari, with the Rome Water Investment Flagship. He will illustrate how the dialogue between Italian companies and government representatives on the bankable projects identified through the ONE WATER Focal Points network can feed into the project-preparation and investment pathway that RWIF is designed to support.

4. Moderated dialogue: connecting priorities with investment. The moderator will then bring the institutional and regional perspectives together in a moderated discussion focused on the practical pathway from regional priority to project preparation to investment. The dialogue will address: what the main gaps are between identified water priorities and projects that are ready to attract investment; which forms of technical, institutional and financial support are most important in closing these gaps; and how RWIF can contribute to connecting regional priorities and project promoters with appropriate financing and investment opportunities; and why and how this flagship serves as the first pillar of the Rome Initiative on Water.

The session will conclude with reflections on the key conditions and partnerships required to support the future implementation and operationalisation of RWIF.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Public project promoters (ministries, public agencies, utilities, research centres) from across the enlarged Mediterranean; international financing institutions, climate funds and private investors (GCF, EIB, EBRD, World Bank, AfDB, Cassa Depositi e Prestiti and others); MAECI/DGCS, AICS, MASE and the wider Italian system; the Union for the Mediterranean and its 43 member states; CIHEAM Bari and Mediterranean water experts; and media representatives.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- A shared understanding of the vision, objectives and proposed architecture of RWIF.
- Regional priorities emerging from the ONE WATER process connected with the investment agenda.
- Maghreb, Mashreq and Western Balkans perspectives brought into the discussion on project preparation and investment.
- Key barriers and enabling conditions identified for translating water priorities into investment-ready projects.
- A strengthened connection between regional water priorities, project preparation and future financing opportunities.