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# WES newsletter

## Water and Environment Support (WES) project

The “Water and Environment Support (WES) in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood Region” is a regional project funded by the European Union. It aims at protecting the environment and improving the management of scarce water resources in the Mediterranean region. Among the key objectives of WES is to tackle problems related to pollution prevention and water use efficiency. WES capitalises on the experience of previous successful EU funded projects (Horizon 2020 CB/MEP 2010-2014, SWIM SM, SWIM and Horizon 2020, 2015-2019) strives for creating the enabling environment and increasing the relevant capacities of all stakeholders in the partner countries.

WES supports the shift to a more sustainable consumption and production model, promotes an integrated and efficient management of water, combats plastic pollution and marine litter and fosters dialogue on key environmental and sustainable development issues. It operates as a support mechanism to the Partner Countries, creating synergies and opportunities for collaboration and dissemination of information and good practices. WES also provides support to its institutional partners, namely the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan of the Barcelona Convention by facilitating specific regional strategies and dialogues as well as by undertaking joint activities.

The WES Partner Countries are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Libya, Palestine<sup>1</sup> and Tunisia.

<sup>1</sup> This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of Member States on this issue.

## Great satisfaction for the WES project and unanimous endorsement of its Workplan for 2023 during the 4<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting

In my capacity as WES Team Leader, I am grateful for the satisfaction expressed by all participants of the 4<sup>th</sup> WES Steering Committee Meeting (SCM), held online on January 24, 2023, for the work carried out during 2022 and the unanimous endorsement of our ambitious Workplan for the year 2023.

This SCM brought together the WES Water and Environment Focal Points (FPs) from the Partner Countries (PCs) (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia), the European Commission and EU Delegations in the PCs, the institutional partners - the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) - as well as the WES Consortium Members and representatives of the WES Demonstration projects.

The positive spirit of the meeting was initiated by the opening remarks of the EC representatives. Mr. Frédéric Fourtune, Programme Manager, EU DG NEAR who welcomed the participants, stressed the progress of the WES project despite the challenges of COVID-19 and the various global and regional crises known to all. Mr. Patrick Wegerdt (DG ENVIRONMENT), in his intervention, underlined the key significance of the WES project in promoting key environmental priorities and initiatives in the region and policies elaborated during the UN Conferences (e.g. COP 27 on Climate Change, COP 15 on Biodiversity, the forthcoming UN Conference on Water) and a series of Mediterranean and EU policies and programmes.

In the same spirit, the UfM representatives Ms. Alessandra Sensi and Ms. Doha Zamel, stressed the importance of the WES project and emphasized the close collaboration between WES and UfM, on issues of circular economy, plastic pollution, marine litter and various aspects of water.

The Coordinator of UNEP/MAP, Dr. Tatjana Hema, underlined the fundamental role of WES in addressing a series of key environmental issues of the region. She stressed the contribution of MEDWAVES/UNEP RAC of SCP, which is a WES Consortium member and she also referred to the very successful joint missions on marine litter monitoring in the PCs, which will continue. She proposed the extension of the WES project for several more years as a necessary component for the collective efforts in protecting the environment of the Mediterranean.

As it was presented by our team, there were many successful results of the WES regional and national activities during 2022 including trainings, consultations, meetings, P-2-P exchanges, etc., organised either online or with physical presence in the PCs), overcoming a number of serious challenges emerging from the known to everybody global and regional crises. The outcomes of the monitoring of the WES impact were also presented as well as the communication activities, including two attractive videos.

The ambitious 2023 workplan presented includes a large number of significant new initiatives, among which the ones specially designed to stimulate wide public participation in addressing

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the “hot” for the Mediterranean issue of marine litter and plastic pollution, including the Single Use Plastics (SUPs).

The WES FPs, as well as the EU Delegations in the WES PCs, who took the floor, described the activities undertaken in their countries and praised the work of WES in supporting their initiatives at policy and operational level. Many of them requested the extension of the WES programme for the years to come.

In the final session of the SCM, the WES Demo Projects on water were also presented by their managers, indicating their achievements so far as well as the expected results in the remaining period.

In his concluding remarks, the co-chair of SCM, Mr. Frédéric Fourtune, WES Programme Manager, expressed his full satisfaction for the work carried out by the WES Team, and for the meeting. He wished everybody the successful continuation of the WES programme and confirmed the commitment of the EC to secure the best follow up of the WES activities.

**Professor Michael Scoullos**

*WES Team Leader*

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## WES Regional Study Visit and Workshop on the Sustainable Management of Construction and Demolition Waste in the Mediterranean

WES project organised a Regional Study Visit (combined with an interactive Workshop) in the Région Sud, Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur, in France, from 20 to 22 September 2022, to showcase the recent developments and innovative approaches on sustainable management of Construction and Demolition Waste in the MENA region.

24 trainees from the WES Partner Countries (Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia) visited five different CDW sites, in Marseille, ranging from material sorting to recycling and crushing, all of them closely interacting with the host CDW processors on key technological solutions, already tested on the ground in the South of France.

During the Workshop they were updated on the legal and economic EU context and state of the art in connection to the facilities visited the days before and exchanged on CDW management practices in the Southern Mediterranean.

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## WES Regional Activity on Non-Revenue Water was organised in Greece



WES project has successfully organised an important Regional Activity on Non-Revenue Water (NRW), which included a Regional Training and a one-day Study Tour at the Athens Water and Sewerage Utility S.A. (EYDAP). Both events were held between 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023 in Athens, Greece. This activity is complemented by a Peer-to-Peer online process which has already begun in October 2022 and will end in September 2023.

The purpose of this Regional Activity was to build the capacity of 40 representatives of related Ministries and Government Agencies of the 8 Partner Countries (PCs) on NRW, which is a very serious problem for the majority of the PCs. The activity covered a series of methodological and technical issues, tools and measures used to reduce physical and commercial losses, including the role of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in facilitating NRW management.

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# WES activity on marine litter monitoring and management in Algeria



*“Algeria wanted to be part of this project because of its great importance towards protecting the environment and ensuring sustainable development in the country”.*

**Dr. Samia Moualfi**  
Minister of Environment and Renewable Energy of Algeria

Some 70 participants came together in Algiers to officially launch the WES activity on marine litter monitoring and assessment in Algeria.

The 3-day events, organised from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2022 in cooperation with the Algerian Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energy and the National Conservatory of Environmental Training, were two-fold: the first day was focused on institutional and operational aspects of the planned WES marine litter activities; the second and third day addressed marine litter professionals and practitioners with the aim to train them on how to carry out marine litter monitoring on the sea surface and the seafloor and generate fit-for-purpose data.

One of the highlights, was the presence of Dr. Samia Moualfi, Minister of Environment and Renewable Energy of Algeria in the closing session and the certificates' awarding ceremony, where she said that “Algeria wanted to be part of this project because of its great importance towards protecting the environment and ensuring sustainable development in the country”.

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# WES and Marine Litter MED II Projects cooperate with the Ministry of Environment in Lebanon on food and beverage single-use plastic packaging products

The WES project has been providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Environment of Lebanon with the common goal of reducing the impact and leakage of SUPs into the environment and specifically from selected on-the-go food and beverage SUPs. It is noteworthy that in Lebanon another EU Funded Project, the "Marine Litter MED II", is also carried out, focusing as well on single-use plastic bags activities.

The two projects joined forces and co-organised with the Ministry of Environment the Consultation Meeting, during which their respective baseline reports were presented.

The Consultation took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 2022, in Beirut, at the premises of the MoE.



The fruitful discussions between key stakeholders provided valuable insights and feedback that will be used in order to finalise the reports and define policy measures to be implemented in Lebanon for reducing the targeted SUPs.

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# WES supports the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Israel to develop a policy on recycling plastic polymers

The online kick off meeting of WES activity regarding the plastic strategy in Israel, was organised on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2022. WES is to work hand-in-hand with the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MoEP), which aspires to align as much as possible with the EU Plastics Strategy and develop policy guidelines aiming to regulate and manage the use of various plastic polymers and products including mixtures, colors and additives that are disruptive to the sorting, recycling and upcycling of plastics (packaging and non-packaging) in the country.



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Meanwhile, stay updated via: [www.wes-med.eu](http://www.wes-med.eu)

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## WES

The Water and Environment Support project in the Southern Mediterranean Neighbourhood aims at protecting the environment and improving the management of scarce water resources in the Mediterranean region. It will tackle problems related to pollution prevention and water use efficiency. WES is a regional project with emphasis on the countries of North Africa and the Middle East (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia).

## Disclaimer

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