

Regional Launching Conference Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector¹

Project labelled under the Union for the Mediterranean

28-29 May 2013
Palau de Pedralbes
Barcelona, Spain

Concept Note

The occasion

The 28-29 May 2013 will mark the official launching of the project “Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector”. The event will take place in Barcelona, Spain, under the auspices of the Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean.

The project is promoted and implemented by the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and was labelled under the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) framework in July 2012.

Important for launching the implementation of this regional project has been the strategic partnership with the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and the European Investment Bank (EIB). The steady support, already since 2009, of the GEF/ MAP UNEP MedPartnership programme and the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI) has been instrumental for concretising the project’s line of work.

The Conference will take place over one and a half days and will bring together around 100 targeted participants from both shores of the Mediterranean and the international community, thus engaging a wide range of stakeholders (governments, utilities, civil society, private sector, donor community, etc.) into a constructive policy dialogue on issues directly related to the inter-linkages between governance and financing (the governance-financing nexus) within the Mediterranean water sector.

The Agenda for the Conference is provided at the end of the document.

Background to the project

Rationale

In the Mediterranean region, despite the significant allocation of public funds and the flow of aid, countries struggle and usually fail to meet the financial requirements that water-related strategies and plans entail. Governance deficits, mismanagement, and under-financing undermine the quality and sustainability of the water and sanitation sector. In particular, the lack of basic elements of a sound governance framework, including absorption capacity at both national and local levels, impedes the efficient use of available funding and the mobilisation of much needed additional sources of financial and managerial resources, particularly from the private sector.

¹ The full title of the Project, as submitted to the UfM Senior Officials, is *Overcoming governance challenges to the mobilisation of financing for the Mediterranean water sector*

At the same time, the governance deficit has been put under the spotlight by the recent unrest calling for in-depth reforms in socio-political settings that have set the Mediterranean region into an unprecedented and most challenging trajectory. Although the full implications of these changes are yet to be seen, there is a clear call for more effective and responsive water service provision, wider participation of stakeholders, more bottom-up and decentralised planning and implementation processes and more transparent and accountable policy and decision making. The recent regional unrest has also strongly highlighted the urgent need to re-establish public trust in government institutions and reinforce ownership through consultative and inclusive processes.

The regional political relevance

With the above in mind, and with due consideration to the recommendations of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water Declaration (Dead Sea, Dec. 2008), the cooperative objectives of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and its Secretariat's mandate to advance projects for progress, the Project aspires to address and promote action on the *governance-finance nexus* in the water sector with emphasis on the potential role of the private sector.

The roots of the Project

The proposed line of work builds on previous and ongoing activities that have been implemented since 2008 jointly by GWP-Med and OECD in Egypt (completed in 2010), Lebanon (completed in 2011) and Tunisia (on-going). This work has involved national assessments of the enabling environment for successful private sector participation in the water sector highlighting three areas for consideration by the respective governments: the institutional framework, the administrative capacity and the sustainability of projects. The assessments have been based on well-grounded and tested OECD methodology and their completion involved wide stakeholder consultations among government bodies, utilities, civil society and private sector representatives.

Where we are today

Given the very good reception of this work, GWP-Med and OECD were encouraged to put together a project proposal of wider regional scope and more country coverage to be submitted for political endorsement under the UfM framework. In July 2012, and following the review process carried out by the Secretariat, the Senior Officials representing the 43 members of the UfM, unanimously endorsed the project providing it with the UfM label. Country interest has been manifested through the provision of official support letters signed at the Minister's or at Secretary General's level. Thus far, six countries have provided their support, namely from Albania, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Morocco and Tunisia, while the opportunity for technical work is available for an additional three countries. The regional component will engage all the countries of the Mediterranean basin and beyond (through the UfM framework and also OECD).

Objectives of the Conference

The Regional Launching Conference on the *Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector* project aims to:

- Present the overall Project, including its context, objectives, components/activities, methodology, expected outputs and outcomes, etc.
- Facilitate a discussion platform among the participants on key issues/challenges and needed actions relating to governance and financing of the Mediterranean water sector.
- Identify new opportunities for cooperation and synergy.

The Conference will provide the opportunity to explain the Project's regional component and specifically:

- to facilitate **the interface between policy makers and the range of private sector actors** that are active on water issues in the Mediterranean, including conventional (IFIs, donor agencies, service providers) as well as non-conventional (public and private banks, foundations, small scale and local private sector, insurance companies, etc) stakeholders
- to enhance interaction on existing and potential synergies, also through a reflection on selected themes (e.g. gender, integrity, employment, etc) with which beneficial inter-linkages can be detected

Additional outcomes of the Conference are expected to include:

- The exploration of interest from additional countries in getting actively involved in the project's technical work; and
- The identification of ways to enhance the outreach of the project's findings, awareness raising, stakeholders' involvement and potential pilot applications, including through corporate social responsibility programmes.

Organisation

The Regional Launching Conference is organised by the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development with the support of the Swedish International Development Agency and the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean. The Conference is also supported and contributes to the objectives of the GEF /MAP UNEP MedPartnership and the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative.

Further details on the Conference will become available at: www.gwpmed.org

Launching Regional Conference of the Project *Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector*

28-29 May 2013
Palau de Pedrables
Barcelona, Spain

Agenda

DAY 1 - 28 May 2013

15:00-16:00	Registration
16:00-18:30	Opening Session – Launching the Regional Project - H.E. Fathallah Sijilmassi, <i>Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean</i> - Address from H.E. Hazim El-Naser, <i>Minister of Water and Irrigation, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Co-President of the Union for the Mediterranean</i> - Statement by H.E. Shaddad Attili, <i>Minister and Head of Palestinian Water Authority, Palestine</i> - Statement by H.E. Abdel Kawi Khalifa, <i>Minister of Water and Wastewater Utilities, The Arab Republic of Egypt</i> - Statement by H.E. Ermina Salkicevic- Dizdarević, <i>Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina</i> Reflections from the Project's partners - Mr. Anders Carlsson, <i>Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Sweden in Spain</i> - Mrs. Maria Luisa Silva Mejias, <i>Executive Secretary and Coordinator of UNEP/MAP</i> - Mrs. Maria Peppas, <i>Head, Department of International Relations and EU Affairs, Hellenic Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Greece as Lead Country of MED EUWI</i> - Mr. Nick Malyshev, <i>Head, Regulatory Policy, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</i> - Mr. Julien Serre, <i>FEMIP Trust Fund Manager, European Investment Bank</i> - Presentation of the objectives of the Conference by Prof. Michael Scoullas, <i>Chairman, Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean</i>
18:30 – 19:15	Press Statement
19:30 - 21:30	Welcoming Reception

DAY 2 - 29 May 2013

09:00 – 10:30	Session I: Unfolding the Project Chairperson: Dr. Rafiq Husseini, <i>Deputy Secretary General, Environment and Water, Union for the Mediterranean</i>
	Presentation of overall project, objectives, activities, expected results (15') - Ms. Anthi Brouma, <i>Senior Programme Officer, GWP-Med</i>
	Discussion & clarifications (20')
	Methodological considerations and experiences from relevant work within and outside the Mediterranean (25') Ms. Celine Kaufmann, <i>Senior Economist, Regulatory Policy Division, OECD</i> & Ms. Aziza Akhmouch, <i>Administrator, Water Governance Programme, OECD</i>
	Discussion (30')
10:30 – 11:30	Networking Coffee Break
11:30 – 13:00	Session II: The Project's regional perspective & potential synergies Chairperson: H.E. Shaddad Attili, <i>Minister and Head of Palestinian Water Authority, Palestine</i>
	Introduction to the session (5') - Mr. Vangelis Constantianos, <i>Executive Secretary, GWP-Med</i>
	Multi-stakeholder interventions on issues of existing and potential complementarity to the project (40') Facilitated by Mr. Vangelis Constantianos, GWP-Med & Ms. Aziza Akhmouch, OECD
	Discussion and reflection on existing and potential synergies with the Project (45')
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:00	Session III: Exploring the set up of a regional platform on governance & financing for the Mediterranean water sector Chairperson: H.E. Abdel Kawi Khalifa, <i>Minister of Water and Wastewater Utilities, The Arab Republic of Egypt</i>
	Reflections on the existing interface between policy makers and private actors & presentation of the Platform's Issue Paper regarding the set up of a platform (15') - Mr. Roberto Martin Hurtado, <i>Project Consultant</i>
	Multi-stakeholder interventions (45') Facilitated by Mr. Roberto Martin Hurtado & Ms. Anthi Brouma, GWP-Med
	Discussion and interventions from the floor (30')
16:00 – 16:30	Coffee Break

16:30 – 17:30	Conclusions & Next Steps
	Summary of key points raised in the three sessions & next steps (20') Prof. Michael Scoullou, <i>Chairman, GWP-Med</i> & Mr. Nick Malyshev, <i>Head, Regulatory Policy, OECD</i>
	Closing remarks (40') - Ms. Esse Nilsson, Senior Programme Manager, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency - Mrs. Maro Evangelidou, <i>Secretary General, Hellenic Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Greece as Lead Country of MED EUWI</i> - H.E. Hazim El-Naser, <i>Minister of Water and Irrigation, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan</i> - H.E. Ermina Salkicevic- Dizdarević, <i>Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina</i> - Dr. Rafiq Hussein, <i>Deputy Secretary General, Environment and Water, Union for the Mediterranean</i>
End of the Conference	

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Wednesday, 29 May 2013

Session II: The Project's regional perspective & potential synergies

This Session intends to take stock of the wealth of projects/processes/initiatives functioning in the Mediterranean and which contain elements closely related to the Project's context and intended line of work. The aim is to explore these linkages, some of which are already operational, and identify areas of synergy to be sought during the Project's implementation. A conscious and targeted effort will be made to avoid duplication of work and to make good use of existing findings of relevance to the Project.

Therefore, this 90-minutes Session is intended to be an interactive dialogue with the participants on work that their respective organisations carry out and which could be of relevance to the Project. Emphasis will be placed on the way linkages can be drawn specifically in the work to be conducted at the national level. In order to stimulate the discussion, the Session will commence with brief interventions by selected stakeholders and will be followed by a discussion with the rest of the participants.

The initial interventions would welcome representatives from:

- Mr. Hani Abdalmasih, ARLEM SUDEV Commission and Mayor of Beit Sahour, Palestine
- Mr. Ramiro Martinez Costa, Mediterranean Network of Basin Organisations (MENBO)
- Ms. Marie-Laure Vercambre, Green Cross International
- Prof. Atef Hamdy, Arab Water Council (AWC)
- Ms. Milagros Couchoud, Mediterranean Water Institute (IME)
- Mr. Chris Severin, Global Environment Facility (GEF)
- Ms. Chantal Demilecamps, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
- Mr. Francois Brikké, Global Water Partnership (GWP)
- Mr. Anders Jägerskog, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)

These will be complemented by interventions from the rest of the participants, while the overall discussion is expected to address and provide insight to the following questions:

- What projects/processes/initiatives in the Mediterranean region show close linkages with the context and objectives of the Project?
- What would be the best way (practically) to synergise with them? Is there scope and potential for the combination of resources with regard to specific activities, especially at country level?
- How replicability of the Project's activities could be enhanced, including through synergies?
- How elements like gender, poverty, rights and employment would be best addressed?

The conclusions of the discussion are expected to guide the further development of the Project's regional component and support the national line of work, by setting the stage for targeted operational linkages.

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Session III: Exploring the set up of a regional platform on governance & financing for the Mediterranean water sector

The session focuses on the regional component of the project and aims to explore the need to create a regional platform as a space for reflection among policy-makers and private sector actors on how to progress towards governance reforms that will help achieve financial sustainability of the Mediterranean water sector. A brief Issues Paper, shared in advance with the participants, provides some background and context to this endeavour.

This 90-minutes session will commence with brief interventions by selected stakeholders and will be followed by a discussion with the rest of the participants (including officials and representatives of governments, utilities, private sector, IFIs, donors, banks, others).

The initial targeted interventions would welcome representatives from:

- Mr. Samir Mohamed Tazi, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Morocco
- Mr. Mohamed Taleb Ould Mohamed, Ministry of Hydraulics and Sanitation, Mauritania
- Mr. Al Mahdi Megrbi, General Water Authority, Libya
- Mr. Khaldon Khashman, Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA)
- Mr. Nejib Abid, ONAS, Tunisia
- Mr. Essam Nada, Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED)
- Mr. Robert Djellal, Veolia Eau
- Mr. Ferran Simon, Aguas de Barcelona (AGBAR)
- Mr. Belgacem Bensassi, African Development Bank

Given the need for governance reforms in the region, with the potential contribution of the private sector to the sustainable financing of water, the overall discussion is expected to address and provide insight to the following questions:

- What is the existing interface between public and private actors, at regional and national level, aiming at a common understanding and successful collaboration opportunities?
- Could a regional platform add value and contribute to the needed governance reforms and contribute to the sustainable financing of water and sanitation services?
- What type of actors (public, private, other, and traditional, non-traditional) need to be engaged in the regional platform?
- What specific topics need to be addressed by the regional platform in order to best contribute to support the needed governance reforms?
- How could such a regional platform become operational?

The conclusions of the discussion will be incorporated into the Issues Paper and guide the further development of the platform and within the overall regional component of the *Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector* project.