

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

Announcement - 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.

A provisional 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.

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

28-29 May 2013
Palau de Pedrables
Barcelona, Spain

Provisional Agenda
(some speakers to be confirmed)

DAY 1 - 28 May 2013

15:00-16:00	Registration
16:00-18:00	<p>Opening Session – Launching the Regional Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Fathallah Sijilmassi, <i>Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean</i> - H.E. Fouad Douiri, <i>Minister of Energy, Mines, Water and Environment, Kingdom of Morocco</i> - H.E. Mohamed Ben Salem, <i>Minister of Agriculture, Republic of Tunisia</i> - H. E. Hazem Nasser, <i>Minister of Water and Irrigation, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan</i> <p>Reflections from the project's partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Anders Carlsson, <i>Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Sweden in Madrid</i> - Mr. Ioannis Kaltsas, <i>Head of Policy and Trust Fund Division, European Investment Bank</i> - Mrs. Maria Louisa Silva, <i>Coordinator, MAP UNEP, GEF MedPartnership</i> - Mrs. Maro Evangelidou, <i>Secretary General, 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> <p>- Presentation of the objectives of the Conference and a brief introduction to the project (15') by Prof. Michael Scoullou, <i>Chairman, Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean</i></p>
18:00-19:00	Press Conference
19:00-20:00	Welcoming Cocktail

DAY 2 - 29 May 2013

08:30 – 10:00	Networking Coffee
10:00 – 11:30	Session I: Unfolding the Project
	Presentation of overall project, objectives, activities, expected results (15') - GWP-Med
	Discussion & clarifications (20')
	Methodological considerations and experiences from relevant work within and outside the Mediterranean (25') - OECD & GWP-Med
	Discussion (30')
11:30 – 12:00	Coffee Break
12:00 – 13:00	Session II: The Project's regional perspective & potential synergies
	Introduction to the session (5') - GWP-Med
	Multi-stakeholder panel interventions on issues of existing and potential complementarity to the project (30') Facilitated by GWP-Med & OECD
	Discussion and reflection on existing and potential synergies with the Project (25')
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	Session III: Exploring the set up of a regional platform on governance & financing for the Mediterranean water sector
	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') - GWP-Med & Roberto Martin Hurtado
	Panel interventions (35') - Government Representative (Jordan or Tunisia or Morocco) - Business (including those that are water users and SMEs) - Service providers - Banks and investors - Insurance companies - More, i.e. Foundations, Charities, etc
	Discussion and interventions from the floor (40')
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 – 16:30	Conclusions & Next Steps
	Summary of key points raised in the three sessions & next steps (15') - GWP-Med & OECD
	Closing remarks (15') - Sida - EIB - GEF MedPartnership - MED EUWI - UfM