

Union for the Mediterranean launches project to promote better governance and mobilizing of financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector

- The project addresses the obstacles to the mobilization of financing in the Mediterranean Water Sector and aims to improve public governance and attract important investments. It involves work at national and regional level over three years (2013-2015) in six Mediterranean countries, with the potential of more countries joining at later stages.
- *“The UfM-labelled project that we are launching today, aims to effectively address a clear demand for more efficient water service provision, wider participation of stakeholders, more decentralized planning and implementation processes and more transparent and accountable decision making”, Secretary General Sijilmassi said.*

Barcelona, 29 May, 2013. The Union for the Mediterranean’s labelled project *Governance and Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector* was launched today during a regional conference held at the Palace of Pedralbes, in Barcelona on 28 and 29 May. Endorsed by the 43 countries of the Union for the Mediterranean, the *Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector* project is a joint undertaking of the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The Conference was opened by the UfM Secretary General, Fathallah Sijilmassi, and attended by the Minister of Water and Irrigation of Jordan, H.E. Hazim El-Naser; the Minister and Head of Palestine Water Authority, H.E. Shaddad Attili; the Minister of Water and Wastewater Utilities of Egypt, H.E. Abdelkawi Khalifa; as well as High-Level Officials from other UfM Member states and representatives from financial institutions, private sector, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions.

The Mediterranean region is currently lagging behind by 38% to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of bringing safe water to all, and the impacts of population growth, climate change and urbanization are expected to add substantially to an already challenging situation. While countries aim for wider provision of water services, significant investments are needed as well as sound policies, capable institutions and good water management.

The core objective of the project is to diagnose key governance obstacles to mobilizing financing through public private partnerships (PPP) for the Mediterranean water sector and to support the development of consensual action plans based on international good practices. The project will deliver a set of country analysis, national recommendations and a regional action plan. **Albania, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia** will be actively engaged in the studies, while the opportunity for technical work will be available for additional countries.

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.

Statement by H.E. Abdelkawi Khalifa, Minister of Water and Wastewater Utilities of Egypt:

H.E. Professor Abdelkawi Khalifa, **announced during the proceedings of the Conference the accession of Egypt to the “Regional Governance and Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector Project”**, highlighting that the key factors behind Egypt’s decision are the promotion and attraction of private sector, both local and international, to invest in the sector of water and wastewater services; the discussion of plans and programmes for improving the investment environment in the region; as well as the exchange of expertise, problem solving and best practices in the sector. He also expressed Egypt’s willingness to host the third conference of this project scheduled to be held in the first quarter of 2015.

Statement by H.E. Hazim El-Naser, Minister of Water and Irrigation of Jordan:

“Nations and civil societies need to work on enhancing prevailing water governance with all its elements: foremost transparency, accountability, coherence and participation. This UfM-labelled project aims to effectively address these issues and identify and promote solutions that are realistic and implementable. With this in mind, let me restate Jordan’s support to this UfM project and our commitment to work together with GWP-Med and OECD for its success”.

Statement by H.E. Shaddad Attili, Minister and Head of Palestine Water Authority:

“We have been engaging efforts in the reform of the water sector and we are conscious that we need to further these efforts to improve the governance framework and encourage the private sector to invest in the water sector in Palestine despite the political situation. That is why we strongly support this project and praise UfM and our partners, GWP-Med and OECD, who are providing their expertise and assistance for the development of Palestine and allowing dialogue and exchanges with our neighboring countries”.

Background information on the project:

[Concept Note of the project Governance and Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector](#)

About the UfM

The **Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)** is a unique Mediterranean institution bringing together 43 countries (27 EU member states and 16 Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries). It constitutes a platform for political dialogue, coordination and consensus building.

The **Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean**, established in Barcelona in 2010, focuses on implementing regional cooperation projects and initiatives in areas such as energy, environment, education, transport, business development and social affairs. The Secretariat works in close collaboration with governments and with an active network of Euro-Mediterranean partners to assist project promoters throughout the entire project cycle: from technical assistance to project implementation, including financial planning and fundraising.

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