



From urban development to SMEs support: four new projects labelled by the Union for the Mediterranean

The 43 countries comprising the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) have approved four new projects promoting mobile financial services, urban sustainable development, private sector development and cooperation among civil society organisations in the field of water and environment, respectively.

Barcelona, 3 June, 2014. The Senior Officials of the 43 UfM member countries approved the adoption of four important projects during their Senior Officials Meeting that took place in Brussels on 2 and 3 June:

Mobile Finance - Promoting Financial Inclusion via Mobile Financial Services in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Countries. Promoted by the central banks of Morocco and Jordan, and to be implemented by the European Investment Bank, the project aims to expand access to financial services across the population in the Mediterranean region through the development of innovative retail payment solutions such as mobile financial services. Currently, financial regulators in the region are looking into how these solutions can be used to increase access to financial services while maintaining the stability of the financial system. In this regard, the project will provide a comprehensive package of technical support and capacity building actions, adapted to the needs of each country.

Imbaba Urban Upgrading Project. This project builds upon the ongoing Giza Governorate efforts to convert a former airport in Imbaba into a vibrant urban centre encompassing a major public park, a residential complex, commercial facilities and new roads to improve the area's accessibility. The project aims to strengthen the integration of Imbaba, one of Egypt's most populated and unplanned areas, with the whole city of Cairo and provide 700,000 inhabitants with the basic infrastructure and services needed (medical centres, schools, recreational parks, sports areas, etc.). The project is among those flagship projects selected by the [Urban Project Finance Initiative \(UPFI\)](#). UPFI aims to promote and develop sustainable and innovative urban projects that serve as best practice examples and are potentially replicable. The initiative is managed by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) in liaison with the European Commission (EC) and under the umbrella of the UfM Secretariat. The German bank KfW, the French Caisse des Dépôts (CDC) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) are closely associated and other IFI's and investors such as the African Development Bank (AfDB) and La Caixa have expressed their interest.

Establishment of a Regional platform for the Development of Culture and Creative Industries and Clusters in the Southern Mediterranean. Promoted by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the project aims to foster entrepreneurial cooperation, leverage the potential of the cultural and creative industries as well as promote new employment opportunities and inclusive growth in the Southern Mediterranean region. The project will deliver a platform for policy dialogue and the exchange of good practices within the cultural and creative business field. The beneficiaries of this project are those micro, small and



medium-sized enterprises that form part of the pilot clusters supported through the EU-UNIDO's initiative *Cultural and Creative Industries Clusters in the Southern Mediterranean Region*, in addition to national and regional government institutions, which will benefit from the project's learning experience and will gain knowledge of the clusters' development methodologies. The project falls within the second axis of the [Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs \(Med4Jobs\)](#): the development of the private sector and the promotion of inclusive growth.

BlueGreen Med-CS. A joint effort by the Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN-Med), the Mediterranean Water Institute (IME), the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE), the Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED) and the WWF Mediterranean Programme Office (WWF MedPO), this project aims to seize existing — and promote new — cooperation and financial opportunities among Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the field of water and environment.

The project will launch a capacity building programme and a small grants scheme for NGOs to acquire skills in various areas of sustainable development, including wetlands, water demand management/water-use efficiency/transboundary water resources management, environmental education and awareness as well as marine litter. The activities will contribute towards strengthening the dialogue between selected Mediterranean CSOs and national authorities.

The Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean will continue overseeing the development, implementation and follow-up of regional projects aiming to strengthen regional cooperation in the Mediterranean.

About the UfM

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is an intergovernmental institution bringing together 43 countries: 28 EU member states and 15 Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries. It constitutes a platform for political dialogue, coordination, cooperation 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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