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High-Level Conference on Water Finance and Investment

Strengthening Water Finance and Investment Policies to Address the Climate Emergency in the Mediterranean Region – A Pre-COP 27 Event

Jointly organised by UfM and EU
in partnership with the Egyptian Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation,
Sida, INWRDAM, GWP-Med/AIP WACDEP-G and AWEN
in the framework of Cairo Water Week

Alf Lila We Lila A Ballroom, Hotel Ritz-Carlton, Cairo (Egypt)
17th-18th October 2022

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The UfM Water Agenda

The [UfM Ministerial Declaration on Water](#) (Malta, 27 April 2017), called for “a Union for the Mediterranean Water Agenda to enhance regional cooperation towards sustainable and integrated water management in the UfM region” and mandated the UfM Water Expert Group (WEG), under the guidance of the UfM Senior Officials’ Meeting (SOM), and in consultation with regional institutions, donors and non-governmental actors of the UfM region, to “elaborate and implement the UfM Water Agenda”.

The UfM Senior Officials’ Meeting endorsed the UfM Water Agenda on 17 December 2018. The UfM Water Agenda includes:

- The [UfM Water Policy Framework for Actions 2030](#). A strategic framework to guide the work of the WEG up to 2030, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) horizon. It is structured around four thematic priorities: (1) water-energy-food-ecosystem nexus; (2) water, employment and migration, (3) water, sanitation and hygiene; and (4) water and climate change. For each thematic area, the document details aims and objectives; aimed outputs and main types of interventions; aimed outcomes; and partnerships. Its 2020 update includes the UfM WEG Work Plan 2020-2022 and highlights an number of UfM projects and initiatives, as well as actions implemented by UfM member states.

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- The [UfM Financial Strategy for Water](#). A strategic document that aims to facilitate increased financing of investments that contribute to water security in the Mediterranean region (access to water and sanitation services; protection against risk of droughts, floods or polluted water; and availability of water resources to underpin sustainable growth) while enhancing the financial sustainability of the water sector. The UfM Financial Strategy for Water identifies common challenges and a shared goal, 10 strategic objectives and a menu of 47 actions. Each UfM member state is expected to implement different actions according to their individual circumstances, priorities and capacities.

The UfM Programme on Water Investment and Financing

Since the 2017 Ministerial Meeting, and under the guidance of the WEG, UfM member states and the UfM Secretariat have implemented a substantial programme of activities.

- In 2018, the ad-hoc Water Financing Task Force (co-chaired by Jordan and the EU) developed the [UfM Financial Strategy for Water](#).
- In 2019, the UfM Secretariat supported the organization of National Workshops on Water Financing in Albania and Jordan and organized the [first UfM Conference on Water Investment and Financing](#). The conclusions of the Conference were summarized in the publication [Public Private Partnerships and the Financial Sustainability of the Mediterranean Water Sector](#).
- In 2021, the EU and the UfM agreed to re-focus the EU-UfM Governance and Business Forum (organized since 2019 in the framework of Cairo Water Week) which was renamed the EU-UfM Water Investment Policy Forum. The [2021 EU-UfM Water Investment Policy Forum](#) included a special session on desalinization investments, and its conclusions were summarized in the publication [Improving water investment policies in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean](#).
- In May 2022, at its 12th meeting, the WEG supported continued collaboration with the EU, starting with the organisation of a new regional conference, that would pay special attention to climate finance and investments, in the framework of Cairo Water Week (October 2022).

The First UfM Conference on Water Investment and Financing

The [First UfM Conference on Water Investment and Financing took place in Rome \(Italy\) on 5th December 2019](#). It was organised by the UfM Secretariat in partnership with ISPI and GWP-Med and with financial support from Sweden. The discussions at that Conference provided guidance for the design of a follow up Conference:

- Further dialogue is necessary to promote the financial sustainability of water management, as many people do not understand water financing. Further work needs to look for failure and successes, and engage private financiers.

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- The three pillars of the UfM Financial Strategy for water are equally relevant. For pillar 1 (strategic approach) most countries identified water sector reforms as the top priority. For pillar 2 (making the best use of existing resources) most countries identified reducing inefficiencies as the top priority. For pillar 3 (mobilising additional resources) the two top priorities were increasing internally generated revenues, and accessing climate finance.
- The UfM process can enhance the contribution of private financiers to the financial sustainability of the water sector by (i) creating networking opportunities (bringing more financiers to water meetings, setting up a permanent platform) and (ii) collecting and sharing good experiences and lessons learned.

Emergence and consolidation of an annual regional event in the framework of Cairo Water Week

The EU and the UfM jointly organised in 2019 and 2020, in the framework of Cairo Water Week and in partnership with the Egyptian Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, two events that addressed a number of governance, cross-sectoral, and financing issues. In 2021, the EU and the UfM identified the opportunity to bring a clearer focus to their annual collaboration and agreed to create an annual regional event focused on improving water investment and finance policy issues in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean. The third edition took place on 25th October 2021 under the name EU-UfM Water Investment Policy Forum and served to identify common priorities for improving water investment policies.

The EU and the UfM are committed to continue supporting UfM countries to improve their water investment and finance policies through future editions of this new regional event. The conclusions of the 2021 EU-UfM Water Investment Policy Forum noted that future editions should aim to keep a line-up of high quality speakers, offer more options for interacting in small groups, increase the number of presentations by UfM member states, and strengthen the coordination with the Team Europe's event on financing water investment projects. While the third edition had a special session on desalination, the fourth edition could focus on wastewater reuse.

The 2022 High Level Conference on Water Finance and Investment: Contributing to COP-27

Egypt will host the 2022 Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP-27) in Sharm-El-Sheikh from 7-18 November 2022. This provides an opportunity to showcase the need for improved water investment policies to achieve water security in the face of climate change, and the role of climate finance in contributing to ensure the financial sustainability of the water sector.

To take advantage of this opportunity the UfM and EU have agreed to further develop their annual collaboration and organise the High Level Conference on Water Finance and Investment, building on the achievements of the 2019 UfM Conference on Water Investment and Financing and the 2021 EU-UfM Water Investment Policy Forum while at the same time elevating its high-level segment to Ministerial Level.

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Objectives

The overall objective of the Conference is to support progress towards achieving water security in the Mediterranean by providing a high-visibility platform for policymakers and stakeholders to discuss how to further improve climate resilient water finance and investment policies in Mediterranean countries, with due attention to addressing gender inequalities, engaging youth and promoting job creation.

The specific objectives of the Conference are:

1. To raise the profile of water investment and finance issues on the regional political agenda and within the finance community, including towards enhanced gender-transformative planning, decision making and institutional development for mobilising climate adaptation investments.
2. To promote peer learning among UfM member states on the role of climate finance in the water sector and how to attract climate finance.
3. To identify ways to enhance the engagement of public and private financiers in the water and climate agenda.
4. To discuss how water investment policies are evolving to address the impacts of climate change on different segments of the society, including women and girls, the economy, and the environment.
5. To promote peer learning among UfM member states on the development and implementation of large water investment plans in the context of climate change, with a focus on wastewater reuse.
6. To present to a regional audience the current Team Europe Initiatives on Water and discuss how they can support the financial sustainability of the water sector.
7. To continue developing a regional roadmap for improving water investment policies by sharing experiences on how the recommendations from the 2021 Water Investment Policy Forum are being implemented.
8. To seek Ministerial guidance for the development of a high-level action agenda for improving climate resilient water finance and investment policies, including with a poverty alleviation and gender transformative vision, that could be submitted to COP-27.

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Target audience

The Joint UfM High-Level Conference EU-UfM Water Investment Policy Forum is targeted towards high level officials from Mediterranean countries in charge of water-related investment and finance policies, as well as representatives from national, regional and international stakeholders including: public agencies responsible for water-related investments; public and private operators of water infrastructure; domestic and international financiers; water users; research centres; regional bodies with an interest in water security issues; and other development partners.

Participation at the Conference will be by invitation only. Ministers responsible of the Water dossier of all 42 UfM member countries will be invited to participate.

Conference Structure

The Conference will be organised around nine sessions:

Day 1

- *Setting the stage* – in this session Egypt, the UfM Co-Presidencies (European Union and Jordan) will welcome participants, key partners will set the stage for the Conference, and the UfM Secretariat will introduce the objectives and agenda of the Conference [9h00-9h30]
- *Climate and Water* – this session will discuss the links between climate and water as well as the consequences of climate change for water investment planning and water finance strategies [9:30-11:00]
- *Attracting Climate Finance for Water* – this session will discuss the role of climate finance in water finance strategies and lessons learned in attracting climate finance for water investments, including for job creation and gender equality [11h30-13h00]
- *Regional Dialogue on Water and Finance* – building on the work carried out at the Rome Conference, this session will provide an opportunity for the water and finance communities to discuss how to attract financing for water investments [14:00-15:30]
- *Team Europe Initiatives on Water* – this session will present the concept of Team Europe Initiatives on Water, discuss the lessons learned in launching Team Europe Initiatives on Water across the Mediterranean region, and discuss how they can support policy reforms to enhance the financial sustainability of the water sector [16:00-17:30]

Day 2

- *Improving Water Investment Policies under Climate Change* – building on the conclusions of the 2021 EU-UfM Water Investment Policy Forum, this session will share experiences in improving the quality of water investment policies around the Mediterranean in the context of climate change [9:00-10:30]

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- *Investing in Water to Adapt to Climate Change: Focus on Water Reuse* – this session will offer opportunities for peer learning regarding the development and implementation of water reuse programmes [10:30-12:00]
- *Ministerial Segment: Elements of a High-Level Action Agenda on Water and Climate* – in this session, a Ministerial Panel will identify key priorities of the water finance and investment agenda under the climate emergency, some of the key governance and policy reforms that are required to successfully address those priorities, and how regional cooperation could help to implement those reforms [12:30-14:15]
- *Closing session* – in this session the UfM Secretariat will report the conclusions and next steps, and Egypt and the UfM Co-Presidencies (European Union and Jordan) will provide the closing remarks [14:15-14:30]

Date and place

The Conference will take place at the Hotel Nile Ritz-Carlton in Cairo (Egypt) on Monday 17th and Tuesday 18th October 2022, Alf Lila We Lila A Ballroom. This is a face-to-face meeting only (no possibility of online participation).

Organising Committee

The organising committee is composed of:

- *Almotaz Abadi*, Deputy Secretary General for Water, Environment and Blue Economy, UfM
- *Ayman Ayad*, Sector Manager for Water and Utilities, EU Delegation to Egypt
- *Tahani Sileet*, Head of Central Department for External Cooperation, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Arab Republic of Egypt
- *Roberto Martín Hurtado*, Senior Advisor on Water Economics, UfM
- *Samira Shaban Pina*, Project Analyst, Water Team, UfM

The event is financially supported by the European Union, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Inter-Islamic Network for Water Resources Development and Management (INWRDAM), and the Africa Water Investment Support Programme to Water, Climate, Development and Gender (AIP WACDEP-G) of Global Water Partnership (GWP).

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How to contribute and participate?

Speaking roles. Representatives of national authorities and other stakeholders interested in having a speaking role at the Conference should contact the Conference's Technical Lead Roberto Martin Hurtado (roberto_martin@hotmail.com) and cc: Almotaz Abadi (almotaz.abadi@ufmsecretariat.org) and Ayman Ayad (ayman.ayad@eeas.europa.eu) in order to explore the different possibilities.

Participants. The number of participants will be limited to a maximum of 80 participants.

Conference outcome

The UfM Secretariat, in consultation with the co-organisers, will prepare and publish a Policy Brief reflecting the conclusions of the substantive sessions as well as the strategic guidance provided by the ministerial segment.

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