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LATEST NEWS

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.

The Senior Officials of the 43 UfM member countries approved the adoption of four important projects during their Senior Officials Meeting held in Brussels on 2-3 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.

Clusters in Cultural and Creative Industries are called to participate in EU-UNIDO-UfM project to increase their competitiveness and entrepreneurial cooperation

Clusters in Cultural and Creative industries from Southern Mediterranean countries were invited to submit applications to participate in a cooperation project developed by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) with the support of the UfM Secretariat to promote business development, entrepreneurial cooperation and increased competitiveness in the cultural field.



Interested clusters and cluster initiatives were invited to participate in the Call for Proposals that the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) recently launched within the framework of its Southern Mediterranean project “Support for the Development of Cultural and Creative Industries and Clusters in the Southern Mediterranean”. The project is funded by the European Union, with a financial contribution from the Italian Cooperation.

Each selected cluster will receive technical assistance over a period of three years — worth an estimated EUR 250,000 per cluster — to improve its competitiveness and products, to modernise and innovate as well as to access new markets. This includes

financial support for the acquisition and maintenance of new or improved equipment and services.

The project offers a unique approach: on the one hand, it will assist selected clusters in strengthening their cooperation for increased competitiveness; on the other hand, it will help clusters improve their product range based on their cultural heritage. Subsequently, strong measures will be put in place to accompany the clusters towards new markets, especially by creating connections with buyers and distributors from both sides of the Mediterranean.

The UfM Secretariat will complement the EU-UNIDO programme with a

project aiming to **establish a regional platform** for dialogue, exchange of experiences and dissemination of best practices.

The cluster selection will be announced during the next National Steering Committee, which is scheduled for the end of October, and will be validated by the regional Project Approval Committee in November.

Interested clusters and public or private support institutions that would like to apply on behalf of cluster initiatives can obtain support to complete the application form from the national UNIDO team. The form can be downloaded from the project website: www.cci-clusters.org

Young Women as Job Creators project to begin its second implementation phase

“Young Women as Job Creators” provides talented young women finishing university with training and assistance in order to make them become successful businesswomen. The project’s second phase is to be implemented in additional countries and universities with enriched content.



After the successful implementation of the project’s first phase in Morocco, Jordan, Palestine and Spain last May to November 2013, the project’s second phase was officially launched at the UfM Conference on “Women’s Socio-Economic Empowerment: Projects for Progress” (Barcelona, March 2014). Following the positive results of 2013 and after a decision taken by the UfM Secretariat and the Association of Organisations of Mediterranean Businesswomen (AFAEMME), the project’s promoter, there

will be a second phase taking place in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Albania and Spain.

The project’s second phase will provide young female university students with the necessary skills and tools for the creation of their own businesses. In addition to the series of seminars entitled **Women Entrepreneurship Days (WEDs)**, this phase will offer management, marketing and financing access training sessions, all crucial in the process of setting up a company.

Based on the “Women Entrepreneurship Days (WEDs)”, the project is structured around motivational seminars organised by businesswomen organisations from the participating countries and hosted by local universities, faculties and higher education centres. It promotes self-employment and entrepreneurship among young female university students with a strong interest in starting their own businesses. In 2013, the project boosted the motivation and provided dedicated training on business creation to some 800 women from 32 participating universities from Morocco, Jordan, Palestine and Spain.

The UfM Secretariat and AFAEMME are currently finalising the early implementation of the project’s second phase, which is scheduled for late 2014, early 2015.

“Skills for Success – Employability skills for women” implementation begins in Jordan and Morocco

The selection of young female participants to the training courses concluded in August. The programmes began in September and will run until the end of December.



The UfM-labelled project **Skills for Success – Employability Skills for Women**, promoted by AMIDEAST, started its implementation phase in Jordan and Morocco with the recruitment of young women who will participate in the programme. The selection of the top 90 candidates from each country commenced in July and finalised in August, in collaboration with various ministries

and local organisations working with young people and women. The training programme began in September and will run until the end of December.

Skills for Success is a four-month programme, comprising 320 hours of training with four core components: English for the Workplace, Computer/IT Skills, Professional Skills and Job Search Strategies. The project’s content provides young, economically underprivileged women who have completed secondary education with the communication and job-related skills needed to access local labour markets. In addition, the programme

increases participants’ knowledge of issues that affect women in the workplace and offers internship and job opportunities in local businesses, as well as resources to help them continue pursuing their goals beyond the programme.

The project was launched during the UfM “Women’s Socio-Economic Empowerment: Projects for Progress” conference, held in Barcelona on 26–27 March 2014. The Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs and the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs are co-funding its first phase. Lebanon, Egypt and Tunisia will follow Morocco and Jordan shortly.

Water Governance & Financing in the Mediterranean Region:

successful completion of UfM project in Jordan and Tunisia

- The first phase of the UfM-labelled project “Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector” has been completed following successful policy dialogues in Jordan and Tunisia. The project aims to improve the public governance and attract investments to the water sector of the Mediterranean region.
- The promoters GWP-Med and OECD organised workshops to launch national reports in Amman and Tunis, respectively. Stakeholders from the water and wastewater sector – authorities, utilities, donors, civil society, private sector, etc. – convened to discuss the report’s findings and recommendations based on the analytical work and series of consultation meetings held during the preceding ten months.



Discussions refined the proposed recommendations and set the foundation for defining a roadmap to reduce regulatory risks in the water sector and enhance stakeholders’ engagement. There was a broad consensus on the need to reinforce the current reforms of the regulatory framework for water and sanitation services. The strengthening of an existing Performance Management Unit (PMU) in the Ministry to transform

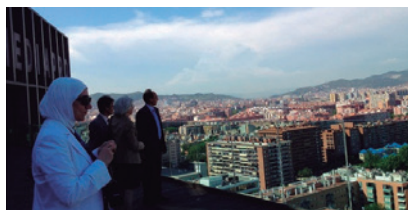
it into the utility regulator was recommended as a step in the right direction in Jordan, whereas in Tunisia the implementation of public-private partnerships (PPP) still requires a change not only to administrative culture, but also to water supply and sanitation services modalities.

The project’s First Regional Conference will be held on 28-30 October in Athens to share the

experiences collected in the first phase with participants from around the Mediterranean. Building on successful collaborations, the Conference shall be held back-to-back with a Risk and Insurance Workshop (30-31 October) focusing on private sector participation, which is organised under the European Commission’s Sustainable Water Integrated Management (SWIM) programme.

The **Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector** project is a joint undertaking of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med). It aims to diagnose key governance bottlenecks to financing through public private partnerships (PPP) for the Mediterranean water sector and to support the development of consensual action plans based on international best practices.

UfM holds the first Urban Projects Finance Initiative (UPFI) Project Committee meeting



The Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) hosted the **first UPFI Project Committee meeting** on 15 June at its headquarters, in Barcelona. This meeting took place right before the official endorsement by the UfM member states of the first project promoted within the framework of the Initiative, the **Imbaba Urban Upgrading Project**, which took place at the UfM Senior Officials Meeting, on 2-3 June.

In consultation with the financial institutions and the European Commission, this project committee prepared an overview of the projects' progress in order to create the Preparatory Technical Assistance schedule, which will allow a project to acquire the maturity necessary to meet the financing standards of the international financial institutions and receive the UfM label.

The meeting gathered all the UPFI partners, namely, the UfM Secretariat, the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Commission, the German bank, KfW, and the French

Caisse des Dépôts, as well as various international financial institutions under a new observer status such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

The holding of this meeting, in coordination with the Euro-Mediterranean institutions and stakeholders operating in the field of sustainable urban development, confirms the role of the UfM Secretariat as an operational platform to foster coordination efforts, by drawing on the synergies with and between institutions, stakeholders, cooperation schemes and donors.

Trans-Maghreb Motorway Axis project: UfM organises working days to define management action plan

An action plan concerning the key aspects of the Trans-Maghreb Motorway Axis' management was discussed in a participatory manner during a "Working days: Horizontal Actions for the Integration and Coordination of the Trans-Maghreb Motorway Axis management" seminar.



A high-level seminar entitled "*Working days: Horizontal Actions for the Integration and Coordination of the Trans-Maghreb Motorway Axis management*" was held on 6-7 May 2014 at the headquarters of the Union for the Mediterranean, in Barcelona. The Working Days seminar was jointly organised by the Centre for Transportation Studies for the Western Mediterranean (CETMO), as Technical Secretariat of the Group of Transport Ministers of the Western Mediterranean (GTMO 5+5), and the UfM Secretariat, in

partnership with the International Road Transport Union (IRU).

The objective of the meeting was to define an action plan concerning the key aspects of the motorway's management, namely trade facilitation, infrastructure financing and pricing, road safety, and integration of the axis into the global transport system of the region. The implementation of this action plan will have a positive regional impact and the axis will act as a backbone for the mobility of people and goods in the Maghreb.

The **Completion of the Central Section of the Trans-Maghreb Motorway Axis** project was labelled by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in February 2012 in view of its regional importance

and relevance. The project includes the completion of the Trans-Maghreb Motorway Axis Central Section missing links, and the coordination of the motorway axis' management. The project will provide a continuous motorway corridor from Agadir (Morocco) to Ras Jedir (Tunisian-Libyan border).

The definition of the plan was carried out in a participatory manner with the contributions of the main parties involved in the development of the Mediterranean transport sector. The Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean will organise a meeting to discuss the progress of the Action Plan on 23 September, 2014 at its Barcelona headquarters.

FEATURED INTERVIEW

UfM interviews

Ms. Luma Sukarieh

Ms. Luma Sukarieh, from Jordan, is a young beneficiary of the UfM-labelled project “Young Women as Job Creators” and winner of the UfM – AFAEMME Young Women as Job Creators Award for the best business idea.



UfM: What motivated you to participate in the Women Entrepreneurship Days (a series of seminars on entrepreneurship held under the framework of the “Young Women as Job Creators” project)?

Luma Sukarieh (LS): What drove me to participate was the need to fill a gap. As young entrepreneurs, I feel we are capable of generating creative ideas. However, we do not possess the experience, expertise or tools to make our ideas become a reality. I felt that the Women Entrepreneurship Days provided us with a platform to close the gap.

UfM: How did the project “Young Women as Job Creators” help you develop your business idea?

LS: This project gave us the chance to think as a professional business developer, not as a university student, and to put our first step on the right track. It also taught us how to work as a team in an effective way. The most important thing is that it gave us the opportunity to meet professional women who have their own companies now. They shared with us their own experiences, which was very useful to help us obtain the skills

that we need when we graduate from the university and decide to have our own company.

UfM: In your opinion, what is the added value of businesses created and run by women?

LS: I feel that women provide a perspective that is much needed in the market. Historically men have dominated in the business arena; resulting in a market that was developed by men and thus catered to men. Businesses should be built to cover the needs of both men and women.

UfM: What kind of projects would complement Jordan’s further socio-economic development?

LS: There are many projects which can be done to develop our country, especially projects which can save energy through solar power since the cost of electricity is high, and the whole world is moving toward sustainability in materials to save our environment.

FEATURED PROJECT

Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector

“Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector” aims to deliver a set of country analysis and a regional action plan to improve the public governance and attract investments to the water sector of the Mediterranean region.



Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water sector is a joint undertaking of the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The core objective of the project is to diagnose key governance and capacity building bottlenecks 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. In particular, the project will focus on assessing the opportunities and institutional and

regulatory challenges arising from public-private partnerships (PPPs) as a tool in the hands of policy makers to managing water resources and financing services in an effective, sustainable and affordable manner.

The project involves work at national and regional level over three years (2013-2015), and draws on established OECD methodology and previous work undertaken by GWP-Med and the OECD in Egypt and Lebanon.

Seven countries are participating in the first phase of this project: Albania, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Palestine.

ABOUT THE PROMOTERS

The **Global Water Partnership** –

Mediterranean (GWP-Med) is a regional partnership of the Global Water Partnership (GWP). It is a platform bringing together organisations working regularly on water issues in the Mediterranean region. It aims at promoting knowledge on Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) through the exchange of experiences, dialogue, and capacity-building.

The **Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** is an intergovernmental organization promoting policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world. The OECD provides a forum in which governments can work together to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems.

A set of country reviews, developed through national consultations

At country level, a questionnaire will be developed and used to identify the institutional and regulatory factors inhibiting the flows of financial resources and PPPs. The in-depth research based on the questionnaire will be complemented by multi-stakeholder policy dialogues and will pave the way for recommendations and an action plan for reforms, based on international best practices.

Regional dialogues to share experiences and promote the diffusion and replication of successful practices

At regional level, the Project will support the exchange of policy experiences through regular meetings among Mediterranean and OECD countries and facilitate the interface between policy-makers and private sector actors on governance reforms that will help achieve financial sustainability in the water sector. The potential for setting up a regional platform for such interface will be explored.