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CONCEPT NOTE

6th Annual Conference on Water Finance and Investment

Water finance: regional priorities and the role of banks

Triumph Luxury Hotel, Cairo (Egypt)

13th –14th October 2025

BACKGROUND

Achieving the water-related Sustainable Development Goals is a common goal and challenge of the countries around the Mediterranean (as well as in the rest of the European Union, Africa and the Middle East) that requires a financially sustainable water sector. In the Mediterranean region, the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Water approved in Malta in 2017 mandated the development of a Water Agenda and a Financial Strategy for Water, which were elaborated and endorsed in 2018. In order to help countries achieve the objectives of the Financial Strategy for Water, the UfM decided to launch an annual series of conferences focused on water finance and investment.

The first Annual Conference on Water Finance and Investment was organized in Rome (Italy) in December 2019, with a focus on public-private partnerships and the financial sustainability of the water sector. Following a pause in 2020 due to Covid-19, the series re-launched in 2021 in partnership with the EU Delegation in Egypt. Since then the conferences have taken place in Cairo (Egypt) in the framework of Cairo Water Week. The second Conference focused on strengthening water investment policies. The third Conference focused on water, climate and finance. The fourth Conference focused on water finance and the water-energy-food-ecosystem (WEFE) nexus. The fifth Conference focused on making finance work for drinking water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services.

On 8th July 2025, the UfM Working Group of Finance and Investment (WG-WATFIN) approved the UfM Recommendations on Water Finance, to be included as part of the Ministerial Package for the 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water (24-25 March 2026). The working group also approved the focus of the 6th Annual Conference. The Conference will present the UfM Recommendations on Water Finance and will discuss how to support their implementation, with a particular emphasis on the role of domestic commercial banks, national public development banks, and international development banks in financing WASH and WEFE Nexus projects. This focus is aligned with *Theme 1: Cooperation for Sustainable Management, Topic 4: Financing Water Projects* of Cairo Water Week 2025.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the annual conferences is to support progress towards achieving water security in the Euro-Mediterranean region by providing a high-visibility platform for policymakers and stakeholders to discuss how to further improve water finance and investment policies.

The specific objectives of the 2025 Conference are:

1. To present and discuss the UfM Recommendations on Water Finance.
2. To discuss the role of banking institutions (including domestic commercial banks, national public development banks, and international development banks) in financing WASH and WEFE

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Nexus projects, and in supporting the implementation of the UfM Recommendations on Water Finance.

3. To discuss how actions to achieve water resilience are financed in EU member states, and how EU institutions and EU member states can support the implementation of the UfM Recommendations on Water Finance in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean.
4. To discuss how water finance is being integrated in upcoming international water processes, and how the UfM Recommendations on Water Finance can contribute to those processes.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The 6th Annual Conference on Water Finance and Investment is targeted towards high level officials from Euro-Mediterranean countries in charge of water-related investment and finance policies (including in a WEFE Nexus context), as well as representatives from national, regional and international stakeholders including: public agencies responsible for water-related investments; regulators of water supply and sanitation services; public and private providers of water and sanitation services; domestic and international financiers; water users; research centres; international agencies with an interest in water issues; and other development partners.

The number of participants will be limited to a maximum of 100 participants on-site and a maximum of 120 participants on-line.

CONFERENCE OUTCOME

As in previous years, the UfM Secretariat will prepare and publish a Policy Brief reflecting the conclusions and recommendations of the conference.

The conclusions and recommendations from the conference will contribute to the preparations and follow-up of the Second UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water that will take place in Rome (Italy) in 24th-25th March 2026, including the implementation of the Strategy on WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea Continuum.

DATE AND PLACE

The Conference will take place at the Triumph Luxury Hotel in Cairo (Egypt) on Monday 13th and Tuesday 14st of October under a hybrid format. The exact meeting room and on-line platform details will be communicated to registered participants in due course.

The Conference is organised back-to-back with 4th Meeting of the UfM Working Group on Water Finance and Investment, and the 3rd Regional Consultation Workshop on Digital Transformation for Advancing WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea Continuum, 14-15 October, supported by PRIMA and UfM.

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