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DRAFT 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 (XIX World Water Congress, Euro-Mediterranean Water Forum, 2026 UN Water Conference, 11th World Water Forum) 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 14th 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.

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Monday, 13 th October 2024	
8:30-9:00	Registration
9:00-9:30	Session 1. Opening <i>Master of Ceremonies: Frederic de Dinechin, Senior Policy Advisor, UfM</i> <i>Speakers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H.E. Hani Sewilam, Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation, Egypt H.E. Angelina Heichorst, EU Ambassador to Egypt H.E. Dag Juhlin-Dannfelt, Swedish Ambassador to Egypt H.E. Grammenos Mastrojeni, Senior Deputy Secretary General, UfM
9:30-11:00	Session 2: High Level Panel: The UfM Recommendations on Water Finance <i>Facilitator: Roberto Martin Hurtado, Senior Water Economics Advisor (TA), UfM</i> <i>Speakers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H.E. Afire Sever, General Director for Water Management, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Türkiye H.E. Minister Ziad A. Mimi, Chairman of the Water Authority, Palestine (online) Jacob Waslander, Envoy to the Middle East and North Africa for Water, Energy and Food, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands Antti Rautavaara, Special Envoy for Water, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland Mahmoud Abu-Zeid, President, Arab Water Council Abdourahmane Diaw, Country Manager, African Development Bank Enas Ahmed, Director General of Regional Organizations Department, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Egypt <i>Questions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which of the UfM Recommendations on Water Finance resonate more with the priorities of your institution? How can water sector leaders facilitate the implementation of the UfM Recommendations on Water Finance?
11:00-11:30	Break
11:30-13:00	Session 3. Engaging domestic commercial banks in financing WASH and WEFE Nexus projects <i>Chair: Rasha Fattouh, Senior Economic Development Consultant, UAB</i> <i>Speakers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anthi Brouma, Deputy Regional Coordinator, GWP-Med Ahmed Darwish, Assistant Managing Director, Attijariwafa Bank Egypt Dalia Abdel Kader, Chief Sustainability Office, Commercial International Bank Zoheir Hamed, Executive Director, RCREEE Dalia Akmal, Senior Sustainable Finance Specialist, Central Bank of Egypt Salam Ababneh, Head of Projects Follow Up Division, Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Jordan (online) <i>Questions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What role can commercial banks play in financing WASH and WEFE Nexus projects? What key actions are needed to untap that potential?

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can domestic commercial banks contribute to the implementation of the UfM Recommendations on Water Finance?
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13:00-14:00	Lunch Break
14:00-15:30	<p>Session 4. Engaging national public development banks in financing WASH and WEFE Nexus projects</p> <p><i>Chair: Sophie Trémolet, Water Team Lead, Environment Directorate, OECD</i></p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amir Nashed, Head of Sustainability, National Bank of Egypt Sevket Altug Tasdemir, Group Director of International Relations, İlbank, Türkiye Nejia Gharbi, General Director, CDC, Tunisia Lucrétia Letourneur, Project Manager, Water Community within Banque des Territoires, CDG Group, France (online) Hicham Bouziane, Director of Regional Planning and Development, Conseil Régional Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima, Morocco <p><i>Questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are national public development banks (PDBs) currently investing in water resilience? What challenges are they facing in supporting water resilience investments? How can national public development banks contribute to the implementation of the UfM Recommendations on Water Finance? How could greater collaboration and peer learning via the Public Development Banks for Water initiative help them do so?
15:30-16:00	Break
16:00-17:30	<p>Session 5. Engaging international development banks in financing WASH and WEFE Nexus projects</p> <p><i>Chair: Frederic de Dinechin, Senior Policy Advisor, UfM</i></p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alba Serna, Water and Sanitation Engineer responsible of water portfolio in Egypt, Mauritania and Libya, African Development Bank Christian Walder, Senior Water Sector Engineer, EIB (online) Mostafa Asaad, Lead Infrastructure Banker in Egypt, EBRD Amgad Elmadhi, Regional Manager, Middle East and North Africa, Green Climate Fund Naglaa Salah, Head of Central Department for Planning and Follow-up, Nile Water Sector Marwan Bardwil, General Director, Institutional Support Programme, Palestinian Water Authority Magnus Andre, Regional Programme Manager, Sida, Sweden <p><i>Questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What role can international development banks play in financing WASH and WEFE Nexus projects? What key actions are needed to untap that potential? How can international development banks contribute to the implementation of the UfM Recommendations on Water Finance?

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Tuesday, 14 th October 2025	
9:00-10:30	Session 6. Finance for water resilience: EU policies and instruments <i>Chair: Ayman Ayyad, EU Delegation in Cairo</i> <i>Speakers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henriette Faergemann, International Relations Office, DG ENV, European Commission • Paolo Enrico Sertoli, Maputo Head of Office, Italian Agency for Development Cooperation • Octavi Quintana Trias, Director PRIMA Foundation • Esmat Karadsheh, Regional Office Coordinator, Interreg-Med • Erjona Bela, Head of Budget and Finance Sector, Water Resources Management Agency (AMBU), Albania <i>Questions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are actions to achieve water resilience financed in EU member states? • How can EU institutions and EU member states support the implementation of the UfM Recommendations on Water Finance in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean?
10:30-11:00	Break
11:00-12:30	Session 7. Water finance in international processes for water <i>Chair: Vangelis Constantianos, Executive Secretary, GWP-Med</i> <i>Speakers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alain Meyssonier, President, Mediterranean Water Institute (IME) • Ikram Benchani, Head of Service Economic Studies and Impacts, Directorate for Water Research and Planning, Ministry of Equipment and Water, Morocco (online) • Marco Rago, Vice-President of One Water Committee Italy and Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation • Arif Ibrahim Al-Kalali, Co-Chair of the Thematic Process of the 11th World Water Forum, Saudi Arabia • Huriye Incecik Ceylan, Section Manager, Policy Development and International Relations, General Directorate of Water Management, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Türkiye <i>Questions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is water finance being integrated in upcoming international water events? • How can the UfM Recommendations on Water Finance contribute to those processes?
12:30-13:00	Session 8. Closing <i>Facilitator: Roberto Martin Hurtado, UfM</i> <i>Speakers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grammenos Mastrojeni, Senior Deputy Secretary General, UfM • Lorenzo Vingut Harrington, Team Leader, Green Transition, EU Delegation in Egypt

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mohamed Khaled Badr, focal point for UfM Regional Platform on Water, MWRI, Egypt
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