

Regional Conference on Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea Continuum: From Strategy to Action

24-26 February 2026
Cyprus Institute, Nicosia, Cyprus

Concept Note

Draft

Organised by



In synergy with



In the framework of:



**GEF UNEP MAP Mediterranean Coastal Zones:
Managing the Water-Energy-Food and
Ecosystems Nexus Child Project 2.2., managed
by GWP-Med**

PRIMA WEFE4MED Project, managed by Cyl

GEF IWLEARN

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Concept Note & Agenda

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1. Background

Water, energy, food and ecosystems are essential resources for human livelihoods and socio-economic development. The use of the **Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus approach** enables integrated action for assessing cross-sectoral trade-offs and synergies, optimizing overall security of resources, and facilitating solutions that benefit all sectors, or at least avoid harming the other three sectors when developing activities in each one of them (“no harm principle”). Overall, this enables sustainable management of these resources and facilitates the adaptation to the effects of climate change. In addition, management of water and related natural resources in the **Mediterranean** region, need to take into consideration the **Source to Sea (S2S) continuum** encompassing land, watersheds, aquifers, wetlands, coast and the sea, linked through water, sediment, biota etc., flows, recognizing the interconnectedness of ecosystems, environmental, social, and economic factors along this continuum.

Aiming enhancing system-thinking and inter-disciplinary approaches towards multiple cross-sectorial benefits the '**Strategy for WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea continuum**' has been prepared in the frameworks of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)¹, the Barcelona Convention/UNEP MAP² and the European Union, and with the technical support of the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med)³, EU Water & Environment Support – Biodiversity * Climate Action (WES-BCA) Project⁴ and Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA)⁵. The Strategy proposes a comprehensive strategic framework to assist countries in enhancing policy and action integration across WEFE sectors and to promote leveraging of necessary funding towards sustainability and climate-resilience objectives.

The Strategy has undergone **formal consultations by national governments** in the frameworks of the UfM through the Regional Platform on Water, and of UNEP MAP through the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development. In addition, supported by the GEF UNEP/MAP MedProgramme Child Project 2.2. on WEFE Nexus⁶ in synergy with the EU WES Project, PRIMA WEFE4Med and other partners, a **structured regional consultation process** further engaged governments, civil society, financing institutions, academia, etc. This process was launched at the 1st Regional WEFE Nexus Roundtable in the Mediterranean on “Promoting innovation, investments and upscaling solutions” (6-7 June 2023, Rabat)⁷, and continued at the 2nd Regional WEFE Nexus

1 <https://ufmsecretariat.org/water-agenda/>

2 www.unep.org/uneppmap/

3 www.gwpmed.org

4 [https://www.wes-bca.eu/](http://www.wes-bca.eu/)

5 www.prima-med.org

6 <https://www.gwp.org/en/GWP-Mediterranean/WE-ACT/Programmes-per-theme/Water-Food-Energy-Nexus/the-medprogramme/mediterranean-coastal-zones-managing-the-water-energy-food-ecosystems-nexus/>

7 <https://www.gwp.org/en/GWP-Mediterranean/WE-ACT/News-List-Page/20232/nexus-roundtable/>

Roundtable 'Towards a Strategy for WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea continuum' (5 February 2024, Tunis, in the margins of the 5th Mediterranean Water Forum)⁸.

The Strategy was adopted at the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24) of the Barcelona Convention (2-5 Dec 2025, Cairo) and by the 15th Meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Water (5-6 Nov 2025, Barcelona) in view of the 2nd UfM Ministerial Conference on Water (24-25 Mar 2026, Rome).

Among possible results of the UfM 2nd Ministerial Meeting on Water, the '**Rome Initiative**' would aim to support the UfM Member States in their renewed ambition and collective commitment to advance towards common climate resilient water goals. Based on that, the Rome Initiative objectives could include facilitating the design, investment planning as well as the accessible and affordable financing of sustainable climate resilience water projects, and fostering the development of the technical capacities and partnerships needed, to address the priorities identified in the Rome UfM Ministerial Declaration.

The Strategy is expected to bring new momentum to efforts for sustainable development in the region. Elaborating a **regional framework for actions (aka Action Framework)** would assist its implementation, including by promoting synergies and identifying ways of leveraging necessary funding. The Action Framework will be aligned with, and support the implementation of, relevant protocols under the Barcelona Convention as well as regional strategic documents, including those of the UfM. Elaborating on possible contents of such an Action Framework would be fostered by collecting inputs of stakeholders as well as by becoming informed of and aligned with related regional thematic WEFE Nexus consultations and action lines.

Among means of elaborating and implementing an Action Framework for the Strategy, the **WEFE Nexus Community of Practice (NCoP)**⁹ can assist providing a collaborative platform to connect stakeholders, facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity building, and support dissemination of WEFE solutions in the Mediterranean. The WEFE Nexus NCoP has its origins in the recommendations of the 2021 'WEFE Nexus Science Advances Conference'¹⁰, organized in Nicosia and online by the EU Joint Research Centre (JRC), UfM, PRIMA, and The Cyprus Institute (Cyl)¹¹, that highlighted science's pivotal role as a driver of innovation and the importance of the science-policy interface to advance sustainable resource management. Since then, the Mediterranean region has witnessed a significant number of WEFE Nexus projects, processes and initiatives, including those supported by the European Commission Directorate General for Research & Innovation¹² and PRIMA. The PRIMA-funded WEFE4MED Project supports the WEFE Nexus NCoP, that was launched in 2024, facilitating the identification, testing, and dissemination of Nexus solutions while showcasing their benefits to policymakers and stakeholders through specific case studies.

Rooted in these recent and upcoming key developments within regional policy institutions and their processes, and building on the foundations of previous regional multi-stakeholder events, the 3rd Mediterranean WEFE Nexus Roundtable (Conference), would contribute to charting a course forward from Strategy-to-Action for the sustainable management of the WEFE resources through the Nexus approach in the Mediterranean Source to Sea Continuum. This would also directly address challenges of the climate crisis, linking to regional efforts like the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle

8 <https://www.gwp.org/en/GWP-Mediterranean/WE-ACT/News-List-Page/2024/2nd-regional-roundtable-on-wefe-nexus/>

9 <https://wefe4med.eu/wefe/home>

10 https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/events/conference-water-energy-food-ecosystems-wefe-nexus-scientific-advances-mediterranean-region-2021-09-27_en

11 <https://www.cyi.ac.cy/>

12 https://commission.europa.eu/about/departments-and-executive-agencies/research-and-innovation_en

East Climate Change Initiative (EMME-CCI)¹³. Furthermore, its recommendations will contribute to related thematic areas of the 6th Euro-Mediterranean Water Forum (29 Sept-2 Oct 2026, Rome) and other regional and international fora.

2. Objectives and expected Outcomes

The Conference will promote multi-stakeholder efforts towards action for the integrated management of natural resources as well as water, food and energy security and environmental sustainability by enabling the implementation of the WEFE Nexus Strategy in the Mediterranean Source to Sea Continuum. In that context, the Conference will:

- Elaborate on technical contents of an Action Framework to foster the WEFE Nexus Strategy implementation, ensuring it is operationally aligned with the upcoming Rome Initiative.
- Demonstrate application of the WEFE Nexus and the Source to Sea approaches in the region by highlighting relevant policy and governance developments, measurable outcomes of pilot activities, innovation driven by digital transformation, and scalability achieved through investment/financing mobilization, among other aspects.
- Elaborate on advancing design of WEFE Nexus investments and access to financing.
- Elaborate on aligning the WEFE Nexus framework with the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East Climate Change Initiative, aiming for the integration of climate resilience-related action in the region, and other regional initiatives.

Expected outcomes include:

- A Nexus multi-stakeholder consultation process established, initiating work for shaping the Strategy's Action Framework, including linked with the upcoming Rome Initiative.
- Collaboration through the Mediterranean WEFE Nexus CoP fostered, including towards reinforcing the link between science, policy, and finance for actionable outcomes.
- The regional WEFE Nexus agenda and climate resilience objectives enhanced and aligned with the EMME-CCI and other related regional processes.

4. Target Participants

Aimed participants include: Governments; Local authorities; Civil society, youth, and community-based organizations; Scientists and researchers; Practitioners; International institutions, regional organizations and networks; International financing institutions and national development banks; Multilateral and bilateral development partners; Private sector; Media

5. Organization and Support

The Conference will take place on 24-26 February 2026, at the Cyprus Institute, in Nicosia, Cyprus, and online (Hybrid). It is held under the auspices of the 2026 Cyprus Presidency of the EU, within the frameworks of UNEP MAP, UfM, and PRIMA, and in the context and with the support of the GEF UNEP MAP MedProgramme and the PRIMA WEFE4MED Project (Nexus Community of Practice - NCoP) and contribution from GEF IWLEARN. It is organised by the Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean and the Cyprus Institute, in synergy with the EU WES BCA Project.

Please REGISTER here: [WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea Continuum: From Strategy to Action – Registration.](#)

13 <https://emme-cci.org/about/>

6. Agenda (tentative – some speakers to be confirmed)

The Regional Conference will start in the **afternoon of Tuesday, 24 February 2026**, with **technical interactives sessions** aiming to bring together members of the WEFE Nexus Community of Practice and other interested partners to elaborate on and suggest actionable recommendations for financing replication and upscaling of successful demo applications of WEFE Nexus in a Source to Sea Continuum, to inform the Strategy's Action Framework.

The **formal opening of the Regional Conference will be held in the morning of Wednesday, 25 February 2026**. Sessions will include: presentations assisting to set the stage; discussion panels of stakeholders to elaborate on how to move the Strategy to Action; interactive sessions over which on-going thematic consultations on WEFE Nexus aspects will inform on progress achieved, possible suggested recommendations already shaped and next steps foreseen; dedicated sessions discussing linkages of the WEFE Nexus with other key sustainable development agendas in the region;

A **poster exhibition** presenting objectives, setting and results of Mediterranean WEFE Nexus projects will provide the opportunity for interaction between participants.

Ramadan arrangements will be observed for practicing participants. Light lunches and coffee breaks will be provided accordingly for the remaining participants.

Time indicated in the agenda is in Athens/Eastern Europe Time
For Central European Time: -1 hour

Tuesday, 24 February 2026

13.00-13.30	Registration and Get Together
13.30-13.45	Welcome to the WEFE Nexus Technical Interactive Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intros, objectives, structure and expected outcomes - PRIMA WEFE4Med Project - PRIMA Foundation
13.45-14.00	Setting the Stage: Financing WEFE Nexus replication and upscaling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PRIMA Foundation Q/A
14.00-15.00	Panel A: How we will finance replication and upscaling of successful demo applications (1) <p><i>Facilitator:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 Panel members from regional projects <p>Interactive Discussion</p>
15.00-15.30	Break
15.30-16.30	Panel B: How we will finance replication and upscaling of successful demo applications (2) <p><i>Facilitator: UfM</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 Panel members from regional projects <p>Interactive Discussion</p>
16.30-17.30	Poster Session: participants receive information from regional projects on WEFE Nexus at the poster exhibition. The poster exhibition will be open for visits and info provision during breaks throughout the Conference.
<u>17.40</u>	<u>Dinner / Iftar</u>

Wednesday, 25 February 2026

10.00-10.30	<p>Formal Opening & Purpose of the Conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction and moderation: <i>Cyprus Institute</i> Welcome Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cyprus - European Commission - UNEP MAP - UfM - PRIMA Foundation Purpose of the Conference: <i>GWP-Med</i>
10.30-12.00	<p>Setting the Stage <i>Facilitator: Med Country</i></p> <p>Why action cannot wait</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the added value of WEFE Nexus in Source to Sea Continuum in a changing Mediterranean: <i>EU WES-BCA Project</i> WEFE Nexus Brief Country Assessments: <i>GWP-Med – MedProgramme CP2.2</i> The Strategy for WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea Continuum <p>Q/A</p> <p>Perspectives from the field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WEFE Nexus project (Child 2.2) of the GEF UNEP MAP MedProgramme: <i>GWP-Med</i> The WEFE Nexus Community of Practice facilitated by the PRIMA WEFE4Med Project: <i>Cyprus Institute</i> <p>Q/A</p>
12.00-12.15	Break
12.15-13.00	<p>Setting the Stage: How to screen and finance WEFE Nexus <i>Facilitator: European Commission</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The landscape of WEFE Nexus financing in the Mediterranean WEFE Screening tool for WEFE Nexus projects <p>Q/A</p>
13.00-14.00	<p>Panel 1: How we will move the Strategy to Action Focus on Strategy's Goal 1: Appropriate institutional arrangements, policies, and cooperation frameworks are established at country and regional levels <i>Facilitator: UNEP MAP</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representatives of Government from the WEFE Nexus sectors, RBOs and Cities networks <p>Interactive Discussion</p>
14.00-15.00	Break
15.00-16.00	<p>Panel 2: How we will move the Strategy to Action Focus on Strategy's Goal 2: Efficient and effective planning, financing and implementation of management and technical solutions <i>Facilitator: European Commission</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representatives of Financing Partners <p>Interactive Discussion</p>
16.00-17.00	<p>Panel 3: How we will move the Strategy to Action Focus on Strategy's Goal 3: Informed decision making based on enhanced science-based knowledge, engagement of capacitated stakeholders, and increased public awareness <i>Facilitator: PRIMA</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representatives of regional organisations, science partners, civil society, gender and youth <p>Interactive Discussion</p>
<u>17.40</u>	<u>Dinner / Iftar</u>

Thursday, 26 February 2026

10.00-11.30	<p>Informing the Action Framework: results of recent consultations on WEFE Nexus aspects</p> <p><i>Facilitator: UfM</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WEFE Nexus Financing • WEFE Nexus Governance • WEFE Nexus & Desalination • WEFE Nexus Digital Transformation <p>Q/A</p>
11.30-11.45	Break
11.45-13.00	<p>Informing the Action Framework: exploring further linkages</p> <p><i>Facilitator: European Commission</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WEFE Nexus for Climate Resilience • WEFE Nexus across the Source to Sea Continuum - systemic thinking in practice • WEFE Nexus in Wastewater Treatment & Reuse • WEFE Nexus in Nature based Solutions <p>Q/A</p>
13.00-14.00	<p>Aligning the Action Framework: linking with regional initiatives and processes</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Cyprus Presidency of the EU</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East Climate Change Initiative • Rome Initiative • 6th Euro-Med Water Forum • Arab Region Initiatives and regional processes <p>Q/A</p>
14.00-15.00	Break
15.00-16.30	<p>Structuring the Strategy's Action Framework</p> <p><i>Facilitator: TBD</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of a suggested ToR for the Action Framework, and facilitated discussion
16.30-17.00	<p>Conclusions & Next steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Declaration on WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean -presentation for adoption • UNEP MAP, UfM, EU, PRIMA, GWP-Med, CyI
<u>17.40</u>	Dinner / Iftar