

1st Regional Conference

Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector

Project labelled under the Union for the Mediterranean

Conference organised in cooperation with the EU-funded SWIM-SM project

28-30 October 2014

Athens, Greece

Venue: Acropolis Museum & Hotel Divani Acropolis

Background Note & Provisional Agenda

Purpose & Setting of the Conference

The 1st Regional Conference of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) labelled project *Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector* is organised in close collaboration with the EU funded *Sustainable Water Integrated Management - Support Mechanism (SWIM-SM)* project, in Athens, Greece, on 28-30 October 2014.

The Conference aims to continue and reinforce the Regional Policy Dialogue, set off during the Launching of the UfM project in May 2013, and the sharing of experiences and best practices on the water governance and sustainable financing nexus by bringing together targeted Mediterranean stakeholders from within and outside the water sector, including public authorities, civil society and the private sector.

More specifically, the purpose of the Regional Conference is to:

- present and disseminate widely the outcomes from the Water Policy Dialogues conducted in Jordan and Tunisia during the first year of the UfM project's implementation (2013-2014) and will discuss the way forward for the second year;
- present the completed and ongoing work on water financing conducted by SWIM-SM, especially in view of the programme's completion (Dec 2014) and the potential next phase of work;
- share experiences and views on sustainable financing mechanisms for water infrastructure and identify ways for promoting action at both policy and implementation levels, including through a regional platform among public, private and civil society actors;
- contemplate synergies (existing and upcoming) with related initiatives and projects, as well as the role of cross-cutting themes (e.g. gender, integrity, rights, etc) in the water governance and financing line of work.

The Regional Conference is relevant to:

- Representative of government authorities dealing with water services and public-private partnerships
- Representatives of water and wastewater utilities
- Private sector representatives with an interest in water PPPs
- Representatives of Regional and National Stakeholder Organisations including Civil Society Organisations
- International and Regional Institutions and Organisations
- Representatives of donor and financing institutions active in water issues in the Mediterranean Region

The Conference represents an integral part of the activities of the *Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector* regional project that has been officially labelled under the UfM and is jointly implemented by the Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The Conference is organised in close cooperation with the ‘*Sustainable Water Integrated Management-Support Mechanism (SWIM-SM)*’ project that is funded by the EU and is implemented by a Partners’ Consortium led by LDK Consultants SA.

The Conference is supported by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and the European Commission and will be conducted in strategic partnership with the European Investment Bank (EIB), the GEF/ MAP UNEP MedPartnership programme and the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI).

The Sessions of the Conference will be held at the Acropolis Museum and at the Divani Acropolis Hotel. GWP-Med is the key organisers of the event. The working languages of the Conference will be English and French.

Information and current status of the UfM and the SWIM-SM projects

Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector

The three year (mid-2013 – mid 2016) regional project aims to diagnose key governance bottlenecks to mobilising financing through public private partnerships (PPPs) for the Mediterranean water sector and to support the development of consensual action plans based on international good practices.

The official labelling of the Project by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in 2012 through its endorsement by its 43 members, demonstrates wide political support and a clear acknowledgment of the Project’s potential to deliver concrete benefits for the citizens and the environment of the Mediterranean and contribute to the regional stability. It is implemented by the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Important for launching the implementation of this regional project has been the strategic partnership with the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and the European Investment Bank (EIB). The steady support, already since 2009, of the GEF/ MAP UNEP MedPartnership programme and the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI) has been instrumental for concretising the project’s line of work.

With the presence of more than a hundred stakeholders, among them three Ministers and one Deputy Minister indicating a strong political support, the *Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector* Project was officially launched on 28-29 May 2013, at the seat of the UfM Secretariat, in Barcelona, Spain.

At national level, in Jordan and Tunisia, Water Policy Dialogues were conducted during 2013-2014 and completed in June 2014. Tangible outcome of these multi-stakeholder Policy Dialogues is the elaboration of two country-tailored National Reports on Governance Challenges to Private Sector Participation in Water. These Reports include a diagnostic analysis of the key governance bottlenecks to private sector participation (PSP) in water supply and sanitation services as well as concrete policy

recommendations and an action plan for overcoming them. Respective work has been routed thus far in Palestine (to be completed by June 2015), with two additional countries currently under exploration for the period 2014-2015. Further to Jordan, Tunisia and Palestine, Albania, Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco have provided official support letters for being involved in the conduct of similar national work.

At regional level, the 28-30 October Conference is will be the first regional event of the Project and will constitute a platform for experience and knowledge sharing while showcasing the results of the analytical work conducted at national level.

Sustainable Water Integrated Management - Support Mechanism (SWIM-SM) project

The EU funded Programme 'Sustainable Water Integrated Management' (SWIM, 2010-2014, www.swim-sm.eu) aims to contribute to the extensive dissemination and effective implementation of sustainable water management policies and practices in the Southern Mediterranean Region.

SWIM – Support Mechanism (SWIM-SM) is the Component of the Programme that provides Regional Technical Assistance to Partner Countries. SWIM-SM includes Governance among its four focus areas and is implemented by a Partner's Consortium led by LDK Consultants SA and is technically directed by GWP-Med.

Wastewater treatment and reuse has been a priority action requested by the SWIM-SM Partner Countries (PCs) during the inception phase and firmly included in the project's work under one of its Thematic Pillars (i.e. on Non-Conventional Water Resources). Consequently, several activities (reports, policy assessments, trainings, study tours, best practices compilation...) have been organised/completed during the years of implementation and are planned for the remaining life of the project.

Lack of resources, as a hindrance for the development of wastewater treatment and reuse in SWIM PCs, has come out prominently in the recommendations/conclusions of activities of SWIM-SM. This aligns fully with the Draft Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean, elaborated under the UfM framework, where financing in the water sector emerged as a priority topic for capacity development in the region. To support resource mobilisation, the need was obvious for transfer of knowledge and experience and for facilitating the engagement between the public sector, private sector, civil society and IFIs for a constructive, forward looking dialogue around resource mobilisation.

In order to serve best the priorities of the PCs under the theme of wastewater treatment and reuse and in order to strengthen the synergies with on-going initiatives and projects with the overarching objective of developing the capacity of PCs in resource mobilisation for depollution investments and engaging stakeholders in dialogue, the organisation of a regional conference has been included in the SWIM-SM workplan (activity 2.2.8). Given the thematic convergence between this conference and that of the UfM-labelled project, a synergy was put in place between the two projects aiming to strengthen the engagement between water and financing stakeholders, to identify capacity needs for future interventions and finally and most importantly to contribute to the creation of a regional platform for financing the water sector in the Mediterranean. This Regional Conference is scheduled to take place on 28-30 October 2014 in Athens, Greece, as per the information described above.

Provisional Agenda

DAY 1 - 28 October 2014 Venue: Acropolis Museum	
14:00 - 15:00	Registration and light lunch
15:00 - 17:30	Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming remarks by the Conference's co-organisers • Remarks and reflections on financing water infrastructure in the Mediterranean by high level representatives from the countries • Keynote speech on the status of water PPPs in the region • Brief introduction to the scope and structure of the meeting and short presentations of the UfM project and SWIM-SM project
18:00 - 19:00	Guided tour at the Acropolis Museum
	Dinner
DAY 2 - 29 October 2014 Venue: Hotel Divani Acropolis	
09:00 - 17:30	Session I: Addressing the bottlenecks in the governance-financing nexus for the water sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodological considerations and approaches • Findings from the national policy dialogues in Jordan and Tunisia • Experiences from relevant work within and outside the Mediterranean <p><i>Brainstorming & Discussion</i></p>
	Coffee Break
	Session II: Some not-so-usual suspects in the governance-financing nexus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on CSR, innovative financing, insurance sector • Interventions on targeted issues like gender, integrity, rights <p><i>Brainstorming & Discussion</i></p>
	Lunch
	Session III: In search of sustainable financing mechanisms for water services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on water financing under SWIM-SM • Lessons learned from the MeHSIP project • Innovative financing: local mechanisms for financing water – cases from the South Med Region <p>Coffee Break</p> <p><i>Brainstorming & Discussion</i></p>
	Dinner

DAY 3 - 30 October 2014 Venue: Hotel Divani Acropolis	
09:00 – 14:00	<p>Session IV: Regional platform – Together for a more financially sustainable Mediterranean Water Sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key presentation on the regional platform • Targeted interventions on ongoing efforts and their complementarity to the project <p>Coffee Break</p> <p><i>Brainstorming & sharing of experience</i></p> <p>Conclusions & Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of key points raised & next steps • Closing remarks <p>Lunch</p>
End of the Conference	