



## PRESS RELEASE

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### TOWARDS A WATER-ENERGY-FOOD-ECOSYSTEMS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

At the end of September, scientists, practitioners and policy-makers from all around the Mediterranean agreed on the creation of a Community of Practice focused on building the capacity of Mediterranean stakeholders to operationalize adaptation, conservation and mitigation measures over Water, Food, Energy and Ecosystems (WEFE) resources.

With the spectre of Climate Change stretching the Mediterranean ecosystems and societies to a breaking point, this existential crisis can only be resolved by working together, across national boundaries, but also across boundaries of scientific specialisation and sectorial management. Water, Energy, Food and Ecosystems are not separate challenges, they are part of the same life support system which humanity needs to survive.

The conference last week was unprecedented in scale and scope: it brought together Ministers from both shores of the Mediterranean, as well as 45 experts (scientists, innovators, practitioners, civil society representatives, policy makers) from countries all over the region, to discuss how to work together in an integrated approach (the Nexus) to the accelerating challenges we face. The delegates agreed to create a Mediterranean WEFE Nexus **Community of Practice**, which will:

- Promote the collection and documentation of WEF Nexus best practices and innovative, science-based policy and technical solutions to manage WEF resources better, while improving socio-economic conditions in the Mediterranean region.
- Survey new approaches and modes of practices to inform decisions, choose priorities and incentivise the cross-sectoral management of water, energy, food and ecosystem resources.
- Account for impacts, costs and benefits these responses may have across sectors, on the society and the environment, now and in the future, providing hands-on recommendations for the development of sustainable operational targets, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals
- Promote/support the deployment of regional demonstrators, which substantially contribute to developing and replicating WEF concepts and solutions in the Mediterranean region.
- Provide an outlook and foresight scenarios on the impacts of a regional-wide application of possible solutions tested at WEF Nexus demonstration cases.
- Disseminate the outcomes emanating from WEF Nexus interventions.

Such a Community of Practice is urgently needed, because climate change, demographic development and geopolitical tensions will continue to affect the Mediterranean region, and the impacts will continuously be more severe. The interdependence and competition between the water, energy, food production sectors and their impact and dependency on ecosystems and ecosystem services render the WEF Nexus approach the only viable solution. All WEF components are vulnerable in light of a swiftly changing climate and unsustainable exploitation. For example, the combined effects of extensive area desertification, freshwater scarcity and the rise of extreme weather conditions will affect food systems in the Mediterranean and globally. This imminent threat calls for an enhanced regional collaboration for the deployment of WEF Nexus solutions able to face needs and challenges specific to the Mediterranean region.

The conference was co-organised by the European Commission (DG Research and Innovation and the Joint Research Centre), the Union for the Mediterranean, PRIMA and the Cyprus Institute. This organising team, which has worked together for the last two years towards the creation of the Community of Practice, is committed to realising the pledges made at the WEF Nexus Conference and invite all relevant stakeholders to join them in this ambitious initiative.

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***For more information, please consult the website: <https://wefe-nexus-medconf-2021.eu/> or contact [international.relations@cyi.ac.cy](mailto:international.relations@cyi.ac.cy)***

## Quotes

**Cristina Messa**, Minister of University and Research of Italy: *A “Community of Practice” would be ideal for bridging science on one side and policy-makers and practitioners on the other with the final aim to create knowledge that is solution-oriented, socially robust, and transferable to both the scientific and societal practice.*

**Costas Kadis**, Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment of Cyprus: *“The Nexus concept has the potential to provide a holistic approach in addressing the energy, water and food security in an integrated manner which recognises that healthy ecosystems are important for ensuring the sustainability of development solutions”*

The Algerian Minister of Environment, **Dr. Samia Moualfi**, stressed the need to exchange experiences and scientific results among the participating countries, as they suffer from the same problems with regard to the Nexus, and in the same context, the need to transfer technology and finance projects in this field for the benefit of developing countries.

**Nasser Kamel**, UfM Secretary General: *“The UfM is working on a holistic approach to link the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus with economic development, regional integration and engaging women & youth”*

**Jean-Eric Paquet**, Director General of the European Commission’s Directorate General on Research and Innovation: *“To achieve the objectives of European Green Deal and turn climate and environmental challenges into opportunities, the Nexus between water, climate, energy and food needs to be addressed as a priority.”*

**Stephen Quest**, Director General of the European Commission’s Directorate General Joint Research Centre: *“I am convinced that learning from best practices and providing evidence-based assessments on the benefits and trade-offs of a Nexus approach can help convince policy makers and social actors to adapt their thinking and behaviour”.*

**Jihad Al Mahamid**, Secretary General of Ministry of Water and Irrigation of Jordan: *“Ensuring the financial sustainability of the water sector in Jordan and in the Mediterranean as a whole is of paramount importance to support economic growth and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the Mediterranean region. This cannot be achieved if we don’t follow the WEFE nexus approach! This conference’s recommendation can be the starting point.”*

**Angelo Riccaboni**, Chair of the PRIMA Foundation: *“Institutions and Initiatives like PRIMA shall help as a science-policy interface to bridge the gap and advance in breaking the silos approach. The Community of Practice will engage policymakers to ensure that nexus solutions coming out from R&I efforts go to the ground with tangible impacts”*

**Mohamed El Shinawi**, Co-Chair of the PRIMA Foundation: *“To translate an integrated WEFE nexus program from concept to action, we need a means to engage all stakeholders and better*

*manage WEF resources by understanding the issues and consequences of decisions. A community of practice could offer the opportunity to maximise the exchange of experiences and best practices and to identify solutions that may be broadly applied across the Mediterranean region”*