

PRESSE RELEASE

NATIONAL MEETING OF THE PROJECT WATER AND ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT (WES)

Rabat, 25 June 2024

The EU funded “Water and Environment Support (WES) in the ENI Neighbourhood South Region” project, in cooperation with the Ministry of Equipment and Water, the Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development of Morocco and the European Delegation to Morocco, organised a WES National Meeting on the 25th of June 2024 in Rabat, to present an overview of WES environment and water activities in Morocco, the results obtained so far and the steps of monitoring stakeholder engagement.

More than 40 representatives of Ministries, Institutions and Agencies involved in water and environment issues, as well as representatives of Local Authorities, the private sector, NGOs, experts, associations, and media participated in this National Meeting and recognized the project's achievements and lessons learned.

The “Water and Environment Support (WES) in the ENI Neighbourhood South Region” project aims to protecting the environment and improving the management of scarce water resources in the Mediterranean region. It tackles problems related to pollution prevention and water use efficiency in the countries of North Africa and the Middle East.

Since June 2020, more than 200 key Moroccan stakeholders have gained valuable knowledge and experience from which their colleagues now also benefit, thanks to 5 national activities (2 of which focused on the environment sector and 3 on the water sector), 11 regional activities and 3 multidisciplinary activities.

In his opening speech Mr. Abdelaziz Zerouali, Director of Water Research and Planning (DRPE), Ministry of Equipment and Water, WES Focal Point for water, expressed their appreciation of the quality approach followed in the activities of the WES project in Morocco, on the water demand management, the assistance in monitoring and management of marine waste, the joint initiative for the establishment of the PET bottle management chain. He highlighted the fact that, by the end of the WES trainings, the workshop, the consultations, the study trip, the survey, the key Moroccan stakeholders will indeed benefit from the recommendations and lessons learned to design and implement national strategies and plans.

Mr. Jean-Christophe Filori, Head of Cooperation of the EU Delegation to Morocco, underlined the fact that “The WES has contributed to creating common regional intelligence in terms of environmental protection. The Morocco-European Union Green Partnership is the ideal framework to extend and sustain WES activities in Morocco, thanks to the strong political and technical commitment of the Moroccan and European parties, and also thanks to the wide range of bilateral cooperation tools available.”

Professor Michael Scoullos, WES Team Leader, expressed the deep satisfaction of the WES Project with the close cooperation with the Moroccan Authorities and the EU Delegation to Morocco, which resulted in tailored assistance to the country to advance its water and environment agendas.

Professor Michael Scoullos emphasized the fact that Morocco is trying hard to introduce in a systematic way cutting-edge tools in addressing the difficult water and environmental issues of our days that have been exacerbated because of climate change. In this respect WES was asked by Morocco and contributed on all types of tools, including institutional/regulatory, technical, capacity building and awareness raising, collaborating in an exemplary way with all relevant Ministries and Departments. He thanked both Mr. Abdelaziz Zarouali, WES Water Focal Point, Director of Water Research and Planning Department of the Ministry of Equipment and Water, and Mr. Rachid Firadi, WES Environment Focal Point, Director of Partnership, Cooperation and Communication Department of the Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development, and their teams, for their valuable contributions in achieving very useful results in the WES Water and Environment National Activities, that will hopefully be further built upon in the new phase of WES (WES-BCA) till 2028.

WES Water Activity “Support Water Demand Management in relation to water scarcity”

This activity supported the improvement of the of water demand management (WDM) in a context of water scarcity for specific uses. The activity included an analytical assessment documenting the technical, regulatory, institutional and financial aspects related to the application of water demand management in Morocco, accompanied by a set of recommendations on measures and practices to improve the level of WDM in Morocco in household, public and tourist uses.

This activity supported the improvement of water demand management in the context of water shortage for specific uses. The WES expert team prepared and presented [a guide](#) to establish benchmark indicators, as well as a link to existing local standards and audits for future use. In addition, the experts recommended an action plan that provides for the next steps in terms of legal and institutional reforms, technical adaptations and financial analysis to determine the real cost.

WES Water Activity “Field visit to Jordan”

The activity is supporting Morocco in its continued efforts to improve water demand management (WDM) in the country by organizing a high-level field visit to Jordan, focused on WDM, and water resources conservation by bringing together key stakeholders of the Moroccan Directorate of Water Research with their counterparts in Jordan.

The participants thus had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the practices applied in Jordan and compare the technologies used, particularly in the management of non-billed water (the use of SCADA, automatic meter reading, financial model, ERP, etc.). Successful practices could be then used also in Morocco. Projects were presented demonstrating the Jordanian experience and efforts in the use of alternative water resources focusing on the reuse of treated wastewater, biogas generation and rainwater harvesting including on roofs of industrial installations.

WES Water Activity “Water-efficient buildings”

The activity, which is currently being implemented, aims to help the Ministry of Equipment and Water to convert three buildings belonging to it into water-efficient buildings. This activity also includes an awareness component for the dissemination of the best practices on the efficient use of water and the management of water demand among public users. The initial results for one of the buildings audited show the achievement of an approximately 35% reduction of consumption thanks to the intervention.

WES Environment Activity “Joint initiative for the establishment of the management chain for PET bottle packaging within the framework of Extended Producer Responsibility in Morocco”

The WES team of environmental experts has developed a diagnosis of the production, distribution and consumption of PET packaging (one of the major, in volume, waste streams), identified previous experiences on this subject and proposed a roadmap on the promotion of the so- called “Extended Producer Responsibility” (EPR) for the management of PET beverage bottle waste in Morocco. This WES activity was implemented with the support and services of the WES Consortium members MedWaves/Regional Activity Center of the Mediterranean Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Program and the Association of Cities and Regions for Sustainable Management of resources (ACR+).

WES Environment Activity “Assistance on Assistance on marine litter monitoring and management in Morocco”

The activity strengthened the skills and knowledge of the responsible staff at, among others, the Regional Environmental Directorate of the Tangier-Tétouan-Hoceima Region/Department of Sustainable Development, the National Institute of Fisheries Research-Nador/Department of Maritime Fisheries, the National Laboratory for Pollution Studies and Monitoring (LNEP), NGOs and divers’ associations, in using cutting-edge techniques and international protocols aimed at monitoring macro-waste and micro-waste on the sea surface and seabed. Marine litter monitoring activities were carried out on the seafloor and sea surface, providing essential data that will lead to mitigation measures. Appropriate monitoring (and relevant research) are necessary for elaboration of effective measures and policies. The activity also enabled participants to acquire the know-how to link monitoring results with effective management tools for properly addressing marine litter.

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