



4th Mediterranean Water Forum Malta 2021



CONCEPT NOTE

Draft 8

Background

Initiated in Marrakech in 2011, then held in Murcia in 2014 and Cairo in 2018, the Mediterranean Water Forum is intended to be a regional event that brings together the main stakeholders in the Mediterranean water community.

Given its specificity as an inter-continental crossroads, a target region for water scarcity and a hot spot of the effects of climate change, the Mediterranean region is as well is a dynamic platform to a large number of solutions and experiences on water issues that can to be highlighted during World Water Forum.

The World Water Council is supporting the organisation of the 4th Mediterranean Forum through a mission entrusted to the IME to facilitate the mobilisation of the Mediterranean water community and to launch a feasibility study for the setting up of an International Observatory of Non-Conventional Water Resources and Associated Renewable Energies, in a first pilot area located within the Mediterranean-Sahel Region, before its extension to the world level. This Observatory will be designed to monitor the use of non-conventional water resources and the renewable energies dedicated to them.

Main objective

The Forum aims to present the Mediterranean as a hub of innovative water management solutions which have been locally developed or adapted to address the prevailing challenges of the region including those related to climate change impacts. It will also outline how the Mediterranean region is developing an integrated implementation framework through the Union for the Mediterranean's Water Agenda, while also servicing other important political and technical regional and sub-regional frameworks, which ensures that different water management actions reinforce each other thereby providing a comprehensive solution for evolving needs. In so doing, the forum will present the value of the Mediterranean region in the development, adaptation and implementation of effective and integrated water resources management (IWRM) solutions. It will also showcase the replication potential of these solutions to address emerging problems at a global scale, including as a contributor to jobs, prosperity, stability and peace.

The Forum will be a great opportunity to present the results in relation to the 20 "Water" targets of the United Nations SDGs for the 2030 horizon, including the 8 linked to SDG 6 (access to drinking water and sanitation).

The 4th Mediterranean Water Forum will be held in Malta from December 6 to 8, 2021

Malta, host country

Located in the centre of the Mediterranean region, Malta has always been a meeting point which facilitated the integration of different cultures and hence contributed to the development of the Mediterranean's distinctive characteristics. Within this context, Malta is also synonymous with the Mediterranean's water culture. Malta's water history dates back to the Neolithic Period, with rainwater harvesting cisterns located next to the Megalithic Temples. Water management techniques continued to be enriched throughout the centuries, fusing new practices and technologies into a distinctive Mediterranean heritage. Rainwater cisterns, rubble walls, aqueducts, sea-water desalination, water reuse are all practices and technologies which define water management in our Mediterranean region.

Furthermore, from a political perspective, Malta has always actively worked for facilitating regional integration. In the water sector, Malta believes in the importance of the development of a Mediterranean Water Agenda, and together with the Union for the Mediterranean, the European Union and all Mediterranean Countries is fully involved in the regional process which was launched by the UfM following the endorsement of the Valletta Ministerial declaration in 2017.

Mediterranean process for the World Water Forum.

Held every three years and in alignment with the themes defined for the World Water Forum, the Mediterranean Water Forum will target specific themes for the Mediterranean region coordinated by the main regional stakeholders.

The main theme of the 9th World Water Forum (Dakar, Senegal, March 2022,) is "Water Security for Peace and Development", and discussions are expected to be centred on the identification of effective responses which can guarantee water security. This theme is of interest for the Mediterranean where changing demographics, socio-economic challenges and the onset of climate change are increasingly threatening the water security of the region. However, the Mediterranean has throughout its history managed to transform the challenges of water scarcity into opportunities for its sustainable development. The Mediterranean process will therefore seek to identify best practices and technologies developed in the region, and present these as responses for addressing water security in the region and beyond.

During the activities of the 4th Mediterranean Water Forum, other major subjects and initiatives will be discussed and debated. The outputs of the working groups' activities, the panels and other events will serve to significantly enhance the Mediterranean participation to the 9th World Water Forum.

Furthermore, this 4th Mediterranean Water Forum should contribute to making water on the highest political agenda at Global, regional and a national level.

Mediterranean Water Forum Sessions

✚ Session 1 – The Mediterranean as a hub of water management solutions and responses

The session will discuss the Mediterranean region's strengths in the application of innovative water technologies to address the impact of water scarcity and drought, and the increasing demands of the populations and related economic activities. In particular, it will also focus on how technological improvement can support the region's economies to increase employment and address migration related challenges.

✚ Session 2 – Non-Conventional Water Resources

The session will focus on current innovation in the sea-water desalination and water reuse sectors with particular reference to the use of these technologies within an integrated water management framework to ensure that growing water demands are met whilst respecting the water needs of the environment, within the broad synergies established under the WEFE nexus. Specific reference will be made to issues related to energy efficiency optimisation in this sector, and also the opportunities which water reuse presents to the agricultural sector.

✚ Session 3 – Integrated Management of Natural Water Resources

This session will outline the potential for the development of sustainable management solutions for natural water resources in the Mediterranean region, within integrated water resources management frameworks. Although limited and increasingly threatened by the impacts of Climate Change, natural water resources, if properly managed, can continue to play an important role in the provision of water supplies in the region. Hence the need to ensure the development of comprehensive management plans at basin level which ensure sufficient protection to these natural water resources.

✚ Session 4 – Financing the Water Sector in the Mediterranean

The session will focus on the existing opportunities for the use of private (and/or alternative) financing to support the implementation of projects in the Mediterranean water sector. The discussion will look at different financing tools ranging from private-public partnerships to CSR initiatives and how these can be utilised in the Mediterranean region to facilitate the optimisation of the water sector and the achievement of important objectives such as security of supply and sustainability.

✚ Session 5 – International Collaboration

This session will assess the potential of the Mediterranean Region in the exchange of water management practices and technologies with other regions facing similar challenges. Such exchanges of experiences can provide both an opportunity for the development of the Mediterranean's blue economy and hence contribute to address employment and migration issues, as well as an opportunity for ensuring access to new water management practices and technologies hence enabling the optimisation of the region's existing water management frameworks.

4th MWF website : www.medwater2021.mt

