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FLOW4MED CELEBRATES PROJECT LAUNCH WITH CONSORTIUM KICK-OFF MEETING

FLOW4Med (Fostering Landscape-scale Adoption of NbS for Water Security: Strengthening Mediterranean Ecosystem Resilience against Climate Extremes), a new EU-funded project under Horizon Europe and PRIMA, has officially launched with a consortium kick-off meeting. Bringing together eight partners from five countries, the three-year project will scale and evaluate Nature-based Solutions to strengthen water security and ecosystem resilience across three Mediterranean sites in Egypt, Greece, and Lebanon.

Berlin, Germany, 9 July 2026 - The FLOW4Med project is up and running. At the end of June, the consortium celebrated the start of the project, supported by the EU's Horizon Europe and PRIMA programs, with a total funding of €2.7 million. Eight partners from five countries (Ain Shams University in Egypt, CIHEAM-Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania in Greece, Hudara in Germany, Integrated Development Group in Egypt, Technical University Berlin in Germany, Terrartives in Greece, University of Balamand in Lebanon, Wadi for Sustainable Ecosystem Development in Jordan) joined forces to address the socio-ecological challenges of the Mediterranean region.

The Mediterranean is warming significantly faster than the global average, intensifying water scarcity and heat stress and turning the region into a climate hotspot. Increasing droughts, declining water availability, deteriorating water quality, and biodiversity loss are putting growing pressure on the water–energy–food–ecosystems (WEFE) nexus. These issues are being progressively intensified by climate change, urbanisation, and socio-economic disparities, weakening resilience across both rural and urban communities.

The three-year project responds by scaling, integrating, and evaluating Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to strengthen water security and ecosystem resilience across three diverse Mediterranean settings, including one rural, one semi-rural, and one urban site. In Akkar, Lebanon, a constructed wetland will be tested for water treatment and agricultural use. At the same time, ecosystem regeneration for water retention will be implemented in Crete, Greece, while hybrid green-grey urban infrastructure for cooling and water reuse will be established in Cairo, Egypt.

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The NbS help to promote or mimic natural processes, preserve and restore ecosystems, integrate ecological functions into modified or artificial environments, and address societal challenges. Therefore, they provide multifunctional solutions; in particular, they increase resilience to drought, improve water quality and reuse, and support biodiversity and ecosystem services while delivering essential socio-economic benefits. Although NbS have demonstrated feasibility, their wider adoption remains constrained by fragmented governance, limited monitoring and evaluation, weak business models, and insufficient policy integration.

"What makes FLOW4Med unique is that we do not treat NbS simply as infrastructure. We understand them as social-ecological innovations that need to be co-developed, tested, and adapted together with local communities, users, public authorities, researchers, and practitioners," said Prof. Dr. Boris Heinz, coordinator of FLOW4Med. That is why the NbS are implemented through Living Labs, using co-design, participatory monitoring, and capacity building. "Solutions are not simply transferred from one place to another but are adapted to the social, ecological, and institutional realities of each context," explained Prof. Heinz. Through the Living Labs approach, combined with impact modelling, policy recommendations, and replication strategies, FLOW4Med aims to enable broader and more sustainable uptake of NbS in the region.

Special thanks go to the principal investigators, whose hard work and collaboration made this project possible: Prof. Dr. Mohamed A. Salheen (Ain Shams University), Dr. Chariton Kalaitzidis (CIHEAM-Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania), Dr. Lena A. Schmid (Hudara), Dr. Norhan Eldallal (Integrated Development Group), Prof. Dr. Boris Heinz (Technical University Berlin), Dr. Nikolaos Gryspolakis (Terrartives), Prof. Dr. George Mitri (University of Balamand), and Tariq Abu Taleb (Wadi for Sustainable Ecosystem Development).

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