Funded by the European Union

Safeguarding the livelihood of rural communities and the environment in the Mediterranean through Nature-based Solutions

# Agenda Final Project Event, Cairo, 10 June 2025

**Register your online participation via this link**

| 10/06/2025 | Time (CET) | Final Conference Programme | Partner organization |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mara-Mediterra Project Achievements | 09:00 - 09:30 | Registration | All |
| | 09:30 - 09:40 | Welcome Session | ECU |
| | 09:40 - 10:00 | General Project Intro | SWRI |
| | 10:00 - 10:15 | Local communities in action | IRMCo |
| | 10:15 - 10:30 | *Coffee break* | |
| | 10:30 - 11:45 | Key outcomes and Living Lab achievements | AMENHYD, ECU, DEU, UL, SWRI |
| | 11:45 - 12:00 | Financing opportunities and tools | TENSOR |
| | 12:00 - 12:15 | Transferring knowledge and good practices: Mara-Mediterra training material and testimonial videos | UNIFI |
| | 12:15 -12:30 | The Journey of Mara-Mediterra (video clip) | IRMCo |
| | 12:30 - 14:00 | *Lunch* | |
| Vision statements | 14:00 - 14:45 | Sharing a common vision for the Mediterranean | VENUS (PRIMA) \| SEACURE (HE) \|RAINS (HE) \| GOV4ALL (HE) |
| | 14:45 - 15:30 | Mapping the 5 Mara-Mediterra Living Labs: Connecting Challenges, Nature-based Solution & Impacts | ECU, SWRI, IRMCo |
| | 15:30 - 15:45 | *Coffee break* | |
| Policy forum | 15:45 - 16:30 | Policy Panel discussion | ECU |
| | 16:30 - 16:45 | Interactive session/public forum | SWRI |
| | 16:45 - 17:00 | Conference closure | SWRI, ECU |

# Brief project overview

The PRIMA funded Mara-Mediterra project is aimed at addressing the hitherto low uptake of **Nature-based Solutions** to combat **water** and **land degradation** in agro-ecosystems around the **Mediterranean**.

At the core of the project are **9 agro-ecological** practices and **4 eco-engineering** solutions. The approach adopts the concept of Living Labs, made up of farmers, local community representatives, **agricultural experts**, **researchers**, **local water managers and policy/decision makers**. These actors tested and validated an array of Nature-based Solutions in the real-life settings of 5 hotspots of land and water degradation (Table 1).

**Table 1: Mara-Mediterra's Case Studies at a glance**

| Case study | Algeria | Egypt | Greece | Lebanon | Turkey |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Degradation hotspot | Djelfa gateway to Sahara | Coastal area of Nile Delta | Agri-ecosystems on Lesvos Island | Mountainous Akkar al-Atika | Marmara lake habitats |
| Main problematic | Desertification | Water and soil salinization | Rural landscape desertification | Water and soil quality degradation | Natural ecosystem degradation |
| Nature-based Solutions* | Micro-eco-system based afforestation, smart irrigation, land application of sludge, agroforestry | Wetland aquaponics, natural systems of water quality improvement, composting, hydraulic barrier to halt seawater intrusion | Terracing, smart irrigation, green manure, composting, natural systems of water quality improvement | Terracing, composting, afforestation, natural systems of water quality improvement, decentralized wetland aquaponics | Minimum ecological flow for lake/wetland restoration, smart irrigation, composting, natural systems of water quality improvement |
| Investment Potential | Commitment to reduce carbon emissions | Sustaining Egypt's food security | High value olive oil producing area | High agritourism potential | Major eco-touristic destination |
| 'Mirror' hotspot | Akkar plain | Mitidja plain, east of Algiers | Manisa-Akselendi Plain | El-Hamoul, Kafr El-Sheikh Governorate | Lake Koroneia |

**Nature-based Solutions*:** Green manure & cover crops, organic fertilization, mulching, and conservation tillage were trialled in each of the Case Studies

Following the validation of the respective **agro-ecological** practices in **small-scale** field trials, as well as of pilot wetland **aquaponics** facilities, the actors in the **Living Labs** drew up action plans through the use of Participatory **GIS**.

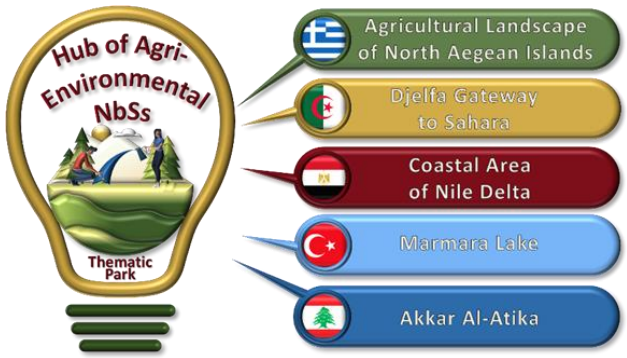
This **decision-support tool** which by its nature brings best practices in good governance, complemented the development of a **dynamic water allocation tool**. A third decision support, in the form of a diagnostic tool, guides the quantified assessment of the environmental, social, and economic benefits of the proposed action plans.

Being fully harmonized with the **new ISO standard** for land and water degradation, the **diagnostic tool** is inextricably linked to the achievement of the ***Sustainable Development Goals*** pertaining to ***food security***, improving ***water quality*** and reducing ***water stress***, improving society's resilience to ***extreme weather***- and ***climate-related*** events, preserving ***habitats*** and ***reducing biodiversity*** loss.

The **project's policy solutions** for the respective hotspots comprise both the **action plans** and a set of **accompanying policy recommendations.** These were then presented to stakeholders in the identified cross-border **mirror-hotspots** (see Table 1), with the purpose of gaining insight in the cross-border transferability of Mara-Mediterra's policy solutions.

The latter approach once again provided bottom-up inputs towards the drawing up of policy briefs addressed to 4 overarching themes: **Agriculture** and **rural development**; **Environment** and **Bioeconomy**; Good governance, social innovation and mobilization; Innovation, Research and Entrepreneurship.

**Investment opportunities**; for the implementation of the action plans beyond the project's duration were explored at the local, national and international levels. A Thematic Park in Greece showcases the Nature-based Solutions to key actors and the public, while acting as a knowledge transfer hub and ensuring a lasting project legacy.




The PRIMA funded Mara-Mediterra project ran over 39 months, starting in April 2022, and ending with a Final Conference in Cairo, Egypt in June 2025.

# Project Partners

Partnership

- Hellenic Agricultural Organization "DIMITRA" – Soil and Water Resources Institute *(SWRI)*
- University of Firenze – Department of Agriculture, Food, Environment and Forestry *(UNIFI)*
- Integrated Resources Management Company Ltd. *(IRMCo)*
- Dokuz Eylul University, Industrial Application and Research Center *(DEU DESUM)*
- AMengagement ENvironement HYDraulique *(AMENHYD)*
- Egyptian Chinese University, Research & Innovation Center *(ECU)*
- Lebanese University - Faculty of Engineering (FoE) & Azm Center for Research in Biotechnology and its Applications *(UL)*
- Tensor Consulting *(TENSOR)*