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NEXT MED



MAENA

MAENA: Replenishing the small water cycle towards a more resilient Agriculture

MAENA (Replenishing the small water cycle towards a more resilient Agriculture) is a cooperation project funded by the European Union through the Interreg NEXT MED programme. The programme is managed by the Autonomous Region of Sardinia (Italy) and aims to promote transnational cooperation in the Mediterranean region.

- **Start date:** 16/09/2025
- **Duration:** three years
- **Total project Budget:** 2.8 M€
- **EU Contribution:** 2.49 M€ (89%)

ABOUT THE PROJECT

MAENA project directly tackles critical water scarcity and climate vulnerability in the Mediterranean, a region where current water management policies overlook the vital role of Small Water Cycles (SWC). Recognising that agricultural overuse severely disrupts SWCs—which contribute up to 2/3 of land precipitation—MAENA introduces a new water management paradigm. Targeting up to 40% water savings, The project aims to enhance farm resilience through practical SWC restoration techniques. A participatory approach implemented across 20+ pilot farms, coupled with transnational training, will provide proof-of-concept of the proposed solutions. The ultimate goal is to form a strategic MED Hub to foster regional cooperation and enable decision-makers to replicate and scale up these practices for a more resilient and sustainable agricultural sector in the region.

***SWC:** Unlike the global water cycle that spreads water across a great range, the small water cycle keeps everything centralized. This localized loop helps retain water in the soil and contributes to the growth and reproduction of crops.

OBJECTIVES

To showcase the effectiveness of restoring the small water cycle (SWC) that has been disrupted by disproportionate and inefficient use of water, as one of the most impactful and far-reaching methods of conserving agricultural water and adapting to the ongoing effects of global warming in the Mediterranean region.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Improved water-use efficiency and agricultural productivity.
- Increased knowledge and skills, of agricultural actors involved, on small water cycle restoration.

OUTPUTS

- Agricultural practices implemented in more than 20 pilot sites for small water cycle restoration.
- Training & capacity building delivered and planned, for 60 agricultural actors, supporting the adoption of the proposed practices (provide knowledge and skills on small water cycle restoration at farm scale).
- Strategic Mediterranean Hub setup, gathering around 400 members, to coordinate knowledge sharing and stakeholder collaboration on SWCR.

TARGET GROUPS & FINAL BENEFICIARIES

- 60 Authorities (national, regional & local) and development organisations (national & regional agencies, research cooperation & dissemination entities) dealing with agriculture and water management
- 30 socio-economic operators, including solutions and services providers and private farm advisors
- 12 funding agencies & donors
- 300 Farmers/associations of farmers
- Surrounding local communities
- 12 Decision-makers interested in the SWC restoration

PARTNERS

Mediterranean Renewable Energy Centre (MEDREC)	Tunisia
Institut National Agronomique de Tunisie (INAT)	Tunisia
Agricultural Extension and Training Agency (AVFA)	Tunisia
Food quality	Tunisia
Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (CIHEAM BARI)	Italy

Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute (LARI)	Lebanon
Energy and Water Agency (EWA)	Malta
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Animal Rights	Malta
Atriga Research and Innovation	Malta
Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN)	Jordan
isardSAT	Spain