

NBS360 Officially Launches:

A 360° Innovation Ecosystem for Climate-Resilient Water Management in the Mediterranean

Kick-off Meeting: Thessaloniki (Greece), 25–26 June 2026

NBS360: “A Transformative Innovation Ecosystem for Resilient Water Management through Scalable Nature-Based Solutions in the Mediterranean”, today announces its official launch, with the inaugural Kick-off Meeting scheduled in Thessaloniki, Greece on 25–26 June 2026, bringing together all 13 consortium partners from 8 Mediterranean and European countries. Funded by the **PRIMA programme (Section 1, 2025 Call)**, NBS360 will run for 36 months with a total budget of €2.93 million and deliver an ambitious integration of Nature-Based Solutions (NbS), Digital Twins, Explainable AI, participatory governance, and novel financing instruments to tackle the growing water crisis across the Mediterranean basin.

About NBS360

The Mediterranean is one of the world's most climate-vulnerable regions: prolonged droughts, intensifying flash floods, soil erosion, and water contamination increasingly threaten the livelihoods of millions of people and the integrity of fragile ecosystems. Yet existing responses remain fragmented, data-poor, and difficult to scale.

NBS360 responds with a clear and ambitious vision: a **360-degree innovation ecosystem** that unites cutting-edge digital technologies, inclusive participatory governance, and novel financing instruments into a single, coherent framework for co-designing, validating, and scaling NbS solutions that genuinely work from the local to the Mediterranean scale. Seven demonstration sites across six countries provide the real-world proving ground for this vision.

Seven Mediterranean Demonstration Sites

NBS360 will implement and validate its NbS solutions at seven carefully selected demonstration sites spanning six countries — covering the full spectrum of Mediterranean water challenges from transboundary river basins and irrigated agricultural plains to peri-urban catchments and reservoir floodplains.

DS1 — Mesta/Nestos River Basin (Greece–Bulgaria): A transboundary river system shared between Greece and Bulgaria, where NBS360 will demonstrate integrated NbS for hydrological restoration, biodiversity enhancement, and cross-border water governance under climate stress.

DS2 — Lacani (Italy): A Mediterranean watershed addressing seasonal water scarcity, land degradation, and hydrological variability through integrated NbS for water retention, soil conservation, and ecosystem function.

DS3 — Rio San Gerolamo Watershed (Italy): A small catchment under pressure from diffuse agricultural and urban runoff, serving as a test bed for NbS integration in water quality improvement, flow regulation, and riparian habitat restoration.

DS4 — Júcar River Basin (Spain): One of the most hydrologically complex and water-stressed river systems in the western Mediterranean, demonstrating NbS at basin scale for drought resilience, sustainable water allocation, and ecosystem services valuation.

DS5 — Gharb Plain (Morocco): A major irrigated agricultural region on the Atlantic coast of Morocco facing groundwater depletion, soil salinisation, and prolonged drought cycles, piloting NbS for irrigation water efficiency and soil water retention.

DS6 — Downstream Sidi Salem (Tunisia): A lowland floodplain downstream of the Sidi Salem reservoir subject to seasonal flooding, sedimentation, and agricultural water stress, integrating NbS for flood attenuation, riparian restoration, and water quality management.

DS7 — Alibeyköy Basin (Türkiye): A peri-urban catchment on the northwestern fringe of Istanbul under intense hydrological, land-use, and climate pressure, demonstrating NbS for urban water resilience, stormwater management, and ecological connectivity.

Key Innovations

Physics-Informed Digital Twins (PIML): Site-specific virtual replicas of NbS systems integrating real-time sensor streams, Earth Observation data, and hydrological models to simulate "what-if" scenarios under current and future climate conditions.

Explainable AI Decision Support System (IDSS): An AI-powered planning tool using SHAP-based XAI methods to deliver transparent, human-interpretable recommendations to local planners, communities, and water authorities.

Decision Theater Approach (DTA): An interactive science–policy methodology combining scenario modelling, data visualisation, and structured participatory dialogue to foster inclusive, evidence-based decision-making.

Nexus Credits: An innovative, transferable incentive mechanism that quantifies and rewards the multiple co-benefits of integrated NbS across the water–energy–food–ecosystem nexus, designed to attract public and private investment beyond the project's lifetime.

Harmonised NbS Typology: A standardised classification and performance assessment framework ensuring that evidence from all seven demonstration sites is comparable, transferable, and scalable across the Mediterranean.

The Thessaloniki Kick-off Meeting

The two-day inaugural meeting (25–26 June 2026) marks the formal start of the consortium's joint work. Partners will align on operational procedures, launch the planning of field activities across all demonstration sites, and consolidate the shared methodological framework that will guide the project throughout its 36-month duration.

The event also inaugurates the collaborative culture that NBS360 places at the heart of its approach: scientists, engineers, local authorities, communities, SMEs, and civil society representatives working as equal partners in a common pursuit of climate-resilient water futures for the Mediterranean.

"NBS360 is more than a research project. It is a catalyst for systemic change. By combining the ecological intelligence of Nature-Based Solutions with cutting-edge digital tools and genuine participatory governance, we aim to demonstrate that NbS can become the structural answer to the Mediterranean's water crises. Thessaloniki is where that journey begins together."

— Dr. Evangelos Tziritis, NBS360 Project Coordinator | ELGO-Dimitra, Greece

The Consortium

NBS360 is coordinated by **ELGO-Dimitra (Hellenic Agricultural Organisation – Dimitra, Greece)** and brings together 13 partners of excellence from 8 countries:

	Organisation (Acronym)	Country	Website
	ELGO-Dimitra (ELGO) — Coordinator	Greece	agres.elgo.gr
	NEURALIO A.I. (NEU)	Greece	neuralio.ai
	Helmholtz-Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ)	Germany	www.ufz.de
	Institute of Biodiversity & Ecosystem Research – BAS (IBER)	Bulgaria	www.iber.bas.bg
	Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV)	Spain	www.upv.es
	Ecoadapta (ECO)	Spain	ecoadapta.com
	University of Sassari – NRD (UNISS)	Italy	nrd.uniss.it
	University of Cagliari – DICAAR (UNICA)	Italy	www.unica.it
	IRIDRA SRL (IRD)	Italy	www.irdra.eu
	INRA Morocco (INRA)	Morocco	www.inra.org.ma
	École Sup. Ingénieurs Medjez El Bab (ESIM)	Tunisia	esim.iresa.tn
	Bogazici University (BU)	Türkiye	www.boun.edu.tr
	DOKTAR Teknoloji A.Ş. (DOK)	Türkiye	www.doktar.com

Expected Impact

Over 36 months, NBS360 will advance its digital technology stack from TRL 4 to TRL 6–7; deploy integrated and hybrid NbS at seven Mediterranean demonstration sites; engage 200+ stakeholders across co-design and training sessions; pilot innovative governance models including co-operatives, Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES), and Nexus Credits; and deliver at least three policy briefs targeting decision-makers at local, national, and transboundary levels.

Project results will sustain a permanent cross-Mediterranean NbS Community of Practice and feed into the EU Missions on Adaptation to Climate Change and Water4All, contributing to durable, system-wide transformation beyond the project's lifetime.

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