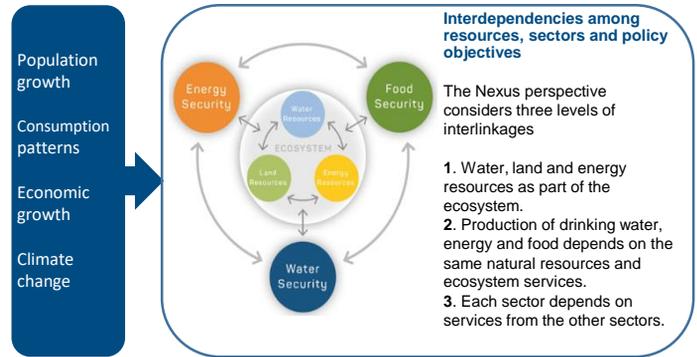


FACTSHEET

# The Nexus Regional Dialogue in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region

Public Policies to Manage the Interdependence of Water, Energy and Food

Project name	Nexus Regional Dialogue (NRD) in the Middle East and North Africa
Joint co-financing	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) European Commission
Region	Middle East and North Africa (MENA)
Partner	League of Arab States (LAS)
Implementing Agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Duration	2016 – 2018



## Context

The Middle East and North Africa Region (MENA) is water scarce, food deficient, energy intensive and highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Although the MENA region contains 43% of the world’s oil reserves and holds immense potential for renewable energy, 35 million of its people lack electricity. Furthermore, the region accounts for just 1.4% of the world’s freshwater resources. The MENA region is also the world’s largest importer of wheat, and recent economic instability has increased food insecurity. Ongoing conflicts and poor security plague the region and undermine the sustainable management of natural resources.

Fulfilling MENA’s high demands requires understanding the synergies, conflicts and compensations that connect water, energy and food with ecosystems, as well as introducing holistic approaches to secure them, protect the environment and ensure social equality. MENA’s supplies of water, energy and food are strongly linked and interdependent – a situation that is likely to be intensified by many internal and external forces.



High level validation workshop with members of the League of Arab States in Cairo, Egypt, March 2016, © Nisreen Lahham/GIZ

## The Nexus Approach in the MENA

The Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus is an integrated approach that attempts to reconcile the social and economic interests that compete for scarce resources and address trade-offs and build inter-sectoral synergies while protecting ecosystems and the services they provide for the sectors, using coherent, integrated cross-sectoral perspectives.

The WEF Nexus approach assists MENA in achieving the SDGs and mandates of the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change. The approach enables systems thinking and organisational learning among the sectors. It can substantially improve the sustainable use of scarce resources and reduce risks to the supply of the essential human needs for water, food and energy.

Priority interests for the MENA region include

- solar desalination, using solar energy to treat and reuse wastewater
- solar water pumping, and
- investments in biofuels and offshore agriculture to ensure food security and preserve scarce water resources.

Willingness to adopt the Nexus approach in MENA was reflected already in the LAS-initiated Nexus Regional Dialogue (NRD), which was launched at the Arab States Regional South-South Development Expo in Doha in February 2014.

## Objectives of the Nexus Regional Dialogue

The MENA Nexus Regional Dialogue seeks to generate discussion about water, energy and food security. By engaging members of the Arab Ministerial Water Council (AMWC), the Arab Ministerial Council on Electricity (AMCE) and the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE), the NRD aims to obtain support from these councils and the various national governments.

## Activities and Outcomes of the Nexus Regional Dialogue

### 1) Nexus Policy Briefs

A cooperation between the NRD, LAS and the GIZ/ACCWaM (Adaptation to Climate Change in the Water Sector in the MENA Region) Programme resulted in six Nexus MENA policy briefs, which were discussed and approved in a high-level workshop, by LAS Member States, as well as by regional organisations. They may be accessed at the Nexus Resource Platform

(<https://www.water-energy-food.org/regions/mena/1/>).

These policy briefs **thoroughly analyse WEF Nexus challenges, trade-offs as well as opportunities** that arise from informed decision making. Some measures for mainstreaming MENA's WEF Nexus approach were defined in the briefs:

- **Build the institutional capacities** on the WEF Nexus on technical and policy levels. Capacity development should focus on Nexus governance, data management and analysis, and decision-making tools, in addition to conflict resolution and communication skills.
- **Increase policy coherence** by integrating policies, avoiding silo thinking, and linking sectors and ministries.
- **Apply outcomes** from the holistic Nexus tools and comprehensive data sets to manage water, energy and food resources.
- **Determine the right tools** and data sets for specific conditions (local, national and regional levels) and goals.
- **Encourage collaborative and focused applied R&D** on the Nexus to promote innovation and technology transfer.



## 2) Human Capacity Development

The MENA NRD has contributed to

- **building the institutional capacities** in Arab countries on WEF Nexus through developing a training module on European/German Nexus case studies, and
- **conducting a training for national experts** on this module, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (UN-ESCWA) in Lebanon from 11-12 December 2017
- **building the capacities** of audiences from municipalities, public offices, and local communities, through a **training on Urban Nexus** in collaboration with the "MENA Region Initiative as a Model of NEXUS Approach and Renewable Energy Technologies" (MINARET) in Tunisia from 14-15 February 2018
- an additional **training is planned in Sudan** in April 2018.

## 3) Nexus Country Assessments and Nexus Applications

In order to assist the regional stakeholders to develop concrete Nexus policies and Action Plans for future multi-sector investments, with correspondent capacity development, the **NRD is carrying out two Nexus country assessments for Tunisia and Sudan**. Besides, it initiated two small scale Nexus demonstration projects; one on an assessment of solar energy farming in Jordan from the Nexus perspective and another one on the impacts of solar pumping in Tunisia regarding water security.

Moreover, the NRD has developed specific MENA content in Arabic for the **Nexus Resource Platform**, <https://www.water-energy-food.org/regions/mena/>.

*The NRD has helped in establishing a change in the mindset of policy makers and executives towards Nexus thinking, as a key pre-requisite for managing the WEF resources in a sustainable manner. This was evident through the feedback of participants in the training workshops, and the interest of some countries to conduct Nexus training workshops on the national level, in collaboration with the NRD.*

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Global Nexus Secretariat  
c/o Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH  
Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1 – 5  
65760 Eschborn, Germany  
T +49 61 96 79-1878  
E Nisreen.Lahham@giz.de  
www.water-energy-food.org  
www.nexus-dialogue-programme.eu  
Nisreen Lahham  
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Author(s)  
As at

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Addresses of  
the BMZ offices

Federal Ministry for Economic  
Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

BMZ Bonn  
Dahlmannstraße 4  
53113 Bonn, Germany  
T +49 (0)228 99 535-0  
F +49 (0)228 99 535-3500

BMZ Berlin  
Stresemannstraße 94  
10963 Berlin, Germany  
T +49 (0)30 18 535-0  
F +49 (0)30 18 535-2501

poststelle@bmz.bund.de  
www.bmz.de