



WES PRESS RELEASE

WES supporting Medical Waste Management in Palestine

Athens, 14 December 2020

Medical waste is one of the most difficult substances to handle. It is considered hazardous because it may possess infection dangers and can cause unsafe effects on the environment and human health. The collection, transportation, treatment and disposal of medical waste therefore constitutes an environmental problem that poses an important health risk and calls for an integrated and sustainable management.

The Master Plan for the treatment of medical waste in Palestine was developed in 2006 by the Environment Quality Authority (EQA) and the national law on medical waste management was passed in 2013. Since then, several remediation measures have been proposed to tackle the problematic areas of medical waste management. It is clear though, that more efforts need to be made to improve the medical waste management in an effective and integrated manner. Cooperation among key actors of the medical waste chain is pivotal, including the Ministry of Health, the Environmental Quality Authority, the Ministry of Local Government and also Non-Governmental Organisations working in this field as well as the private sector.

The Water and Environment Support project (WES) has just started an activity to support the different actors to promote sustainable medical waste management solutions in Palestine. WES will support the country in the update of the Master Plan for Healthcare waste management. The aim is to reinforce capacities of different actors to improve medical waste management practices. Furthermore, a contingency plan will be executed in crisis situations like the current Covid-19 pandemic. The project started this week with bringing the most important stakeholders together for an online kick off meeting.

João Anselmo, of the EU Delegation for Palestine told the meeting that the update of the plan fits well into the European Joint Strategy for Palestine in which environment and health are important issues. “There is a lack of resources and therefore a great need to invest further in this field. We hope that the update of the Master Plan for medical waste will provide us with a systematic set of initiatives in which also donors and EU Member States can play a role and where possible make further investments in the sector.”

Ahmed Abu Thaher, Director General for Projects and International Relations Environment Quality Authority (EQA) emphasized that at the national level the management of medical waste is a high priority. “The Covid-19 pandemic stresses even more the need for a responsible handling of medical waste and the need for a national vision for the road we need to take. We hope that WES will support us in learning from experiences in other parts of the world.”

Paolo Marengo, the expert leading this WES activity concluded the meeting with ensuring that the updated Master Plan will “not be just a report but a practical tool with actions that are realistic to implement in order to enhance the medical waste management in Palestine”





Water and Environment Support

in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood region

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The Water and Environment Support project in the Southern Mediterranean Neighbourhood aims to protecting the environment and improving the management of scarce water resources in the Mediterranean region. It will tackle problems related to pollution prevention and water use efficiency. WES is a regional project with emphasis on the countries of North Africa and the Middle East (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia).

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