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MAENA

# The First Drop: Introducing MAENA Project

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## ABOUT MAENA

MAENA (Replenishing the small water cycle towards a more resilient Agriculture) 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.

## Newsletter Purpose



Understanding the Small Water Cycle and its vital role in recharging local Mediterranean landscapes.



Outlining the integrated framework of MAENA, from participatory on-farm demonstration to regional collaboration and knowledge exchange



Sharing the progress, latest implementation results and collaborative achievements

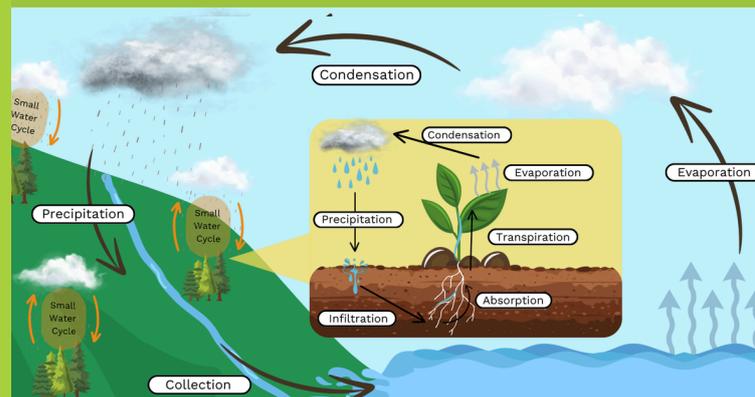
## Understanding the Small Water Cycle

The Small Water Cycle (SWC) is the localised movement of water between the land and the atmosphere, where water evaporates, falls back as rain, and evaporates again within the same region without reaching the oceans. Currently, approximately 65% of global rainfall originates from the small water cycle, while 35% comes from the large water cycle (the ocean-land-ocean cycle).

The small water cycle, or the precipitation cycle, is intimately linked to the land's capacity for rainwater infiltration. Therefore, when we degrade our land and reduce its ability to absorb rain, there is less water available for evapotranspiration and the subsequent formation of new precipitation, which disrupts the small water cycle.

[Learn more](#)

## The Water Cycles: Large and Small





## MAENA's Mission and Impact

MAENA (which means our water in arabic) is dedicated to securing a more resilient future for Mediterranean agriculture by restoring the SWC at the farm level. The project focus is on enhancing water-use efficiency and boosting agricultural productivity across the region. Through a transnational consortium spanning Tunisia, Italy, Lebanon, Jordan, Malta, and Spain, MAENA is taking concrete actions by deploying restoration solutions across 26 farms, training 60 agricultural actors, and engaging 400 water management professionals in a Strategic HUB

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## Launch of the project

On November 26, 2025, the Mediterranean Renewable Energy Centre (MEDREC) officially launched MAENA project at the National Agronomic Institute of Tunisia (INAT). The event, which featured high-level representatives from the Ministry of Economy and Planning, the Italian Embassy, and the Interreg NEXT MED Programme, highlighted the strategic importance of improving water-use efficiency through restorative farming practices. Following the launch ceremony, participants visited a demonstration farm to see these techniques in action, underscoring MAENA's commitment to providing farmers with the scientific and economic evidence needed to make sustainable soil and water conservation a profitable reality.

[Learn more](#)



## MAENA's Demonstration Hubs - Tunisia

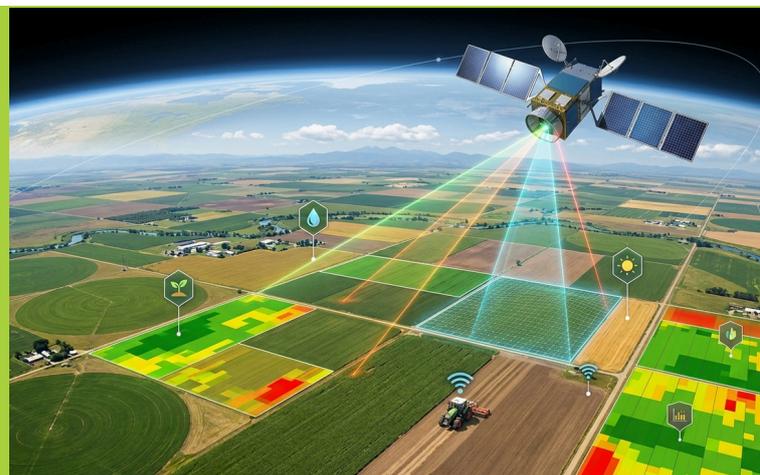
The MAENA project is driving the restoration of the SWC by establishing specialised demonstration farms across Tunisia, Lebanon, and Italy. These sites will serve as a "proof of concept" for sustainable practices that will be scaled up and deployed across around twenty private farms in partner countries (Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon, Italy and Spain). The field actions focus on four critical pillars: water conservation, soil remediation, water-energy nexus solutions, and advanced monitoring. In Tunisia, these interventions are being implemented at INAT (Institut National Agronomique de Tunisie), INRAT (Institut National de Recherche Agronomique de Tunisie), AVFA (Agence de la vulgarisation et de la formation agricoles), featuring soil health conservation, smart drip irrigation, greenhouse rehabilitation, and high-tech decision support via on-field sensors and remote sensing.

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## Support mechanism in Catalonia to adopt efficient water management practices

To restore the SWC and boost on-farm water efficiency, MAENA relies on a participatory model that puts farmers and local communities at the heart of the solution. In line with this mission, isardSAT, Spanish partner of MAENA, has officially opened a call for participation to select motivated farmers for specialized training and support. This initiative offers the technical tools and capacity-building necessary to effectively adopt SWC restoration solutions, turning sustainable water management into a tangible reality for local producers.

[Learn more](#)





INAT demonstration farm - Mornag, Tunisia

## Direct Seeding as a flagship practice of MAENA's Water Restoration Strategy

INAT, Tunisian partner of MAENA, has successfully implemented direct seeding of durum wheat at its demonstration farm in Mornag, Tunis, as a flagship practice of its SWC restoration strategy. By sowing seeds directly into undisturbed soil and maintaining a natural crop residue cover, this "no-till" technique transforms the field into a moisture-trapping sponge, significantly reducing evaporation. Beyond water efficiency, direct seeding protects soil structure, enhances biodiversity, and lowers operational costs like fuel and labor. This successful implementation provides a practical "proof of concept" for Mediterranean farmers, proving that sustainable practices can lead to more resilient ecosystems and higher, more uniform yields.

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## Media



Can we restore the Small Water Cycle? See how MAENA project is making it happen



Project kicks off in Tunisia: Video recap

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## PROJECT FIGURES

MAENA 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.



Budget  
**2.8 M€**



EU Contribution  
**2.5 M€**



Duration  
**3 years**

## PARTNERS



## STAY CONNECTED



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