

## Blue Peace in the Middle East

# Water Start-Up Programme & Innovation Trainings for Humanitarian WASH in the Middle East



### Country / Region

Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq,  
Palestinian Authority

### Partners

GIZ, German Toilet Organization, BORDA, Awarenet, local organisations

### Background information

The Middle East is facing ongoing humanitarian crisis with millions of displaced persons, diminishing natural resources and the mismanagement of water and waste as well as high unemployment across the region.

### Project objective

- increase the resilience of vulnerable populations through building capacities and new businesses in the WASH sector
- Contribute to improving sustainable water sanitation and resources management

### Beneficiaries

- Direct: Local water and sanitation entrepreneurs, WASH practitioners
- Indirect: Refugees and host communities in the MENA region

### Costs

CHF 730,000

### Duration

04.2016 – 12.2018

### Contact

Global Programme Water  
water@eda.admin.ch

Worldwide, the Middle East is the most water-scarce region and youth unemployment also ranks the highest in the world. In addition, the on-going Syrian and Iraqi conflict has created a devastating humanitarian crisis with millions of people displaced both within the countries and to neighbouring countries. To address the pressing situation, this multi-faceted project trains and supports local entrepreneurs and humanitarian WASH actors in the region to develop innovative, locally adapted water and sanitation solutions for refugees and host communities.

Since 2011, the entire region of the Middle East has been facing instability as a result of political uprising, violence and warfare. The Middle East is a water scarce region struggling to meet the basic water and sanitation demands of its rapidly growing population. With millions of displaced persons, the situation is even more critical. Refugees and displaced populations are acutely vulnerable, and increasing pressure is put on host communities resources. Adding to that, youth unemployment in the Middle East ranks the highest in the world, which further contributes to instability and increases vulnerability.

The water actors in the region lack the capacities and access to innovations that can sustainably ameliorate the water, sanitation and waste crisis that the Middle East is currently facing. New, innovative, sustainable, and creative "out-of-the-box" solutions with a working business model are needed that can tackle those water challenges, create employment and improve overall living conditions in the effort to support longer-term solutions in a context marked by forced displacement.

Cewas, the international center for water management, has been making these links between expertise in water and sanitation, innovation and business development since 2011. Cewas is the world's first and only dedicated water and sanitation start-up incubator and business innovation training program. Since its inception, cewas created more than 40 international water and sanitation start-ups and executed over 20 water entrepreneurship training programs on 4 continents.

The cewas Middle East Programme will strengthen the local capacity of water and sanitation actors particularly with regards to humanitarian response in



Water start-ups discussing business ideas in Ramallah. © Lillian Volat, cewas

Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. The programme has two main target groups: Firstly, these are the local and international humanitarian actors, local universities, local governmental authorities and NGOs already operating in the fields of water and sanitation. In a series of trainings and innovation workshops, new, sustainable WASH solutions for this protracted humanitarian crisis will be developed. In addition, to further support all Arabic speaking WASH actors, all capacity development materials as well as a main online platform will be translated into Arabic.

The second target group are those involved in the business community; entrepreneurs, existing businesses, investors and mentors. Here, dedicated Water Start-Up Training Programmes will link the different players and support water and sanitation entrepreneurs to bring their innovative solution to the local market. Thereby the program aims to increase employment opportunities and strengthen the role of the private sector in sustainable water, sanitation and resource management in the Middle East.

Synergies with other Swiss Federal Administration actors and relevant partners in the region are being sought during the implementation of this project.

### Additional information

[www.cewasmiddleeast.org](http://www.cewasmiddleeast.org)

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