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11 MILLION EUROS PROJECT CONTRIBUTES TO TACKLE THE SEVERE DROUGHT IN THE ALGARVE REGION

Portimão, Portugal – 14th November 2024 - The CisWEFE-NEX project, an 11 million euros project financed by the European Commission, will apply the principles of the circular economy from its demonstrator in Portimão to close the loops in the main value chains of food, water and nutrients in regions with severe water stress, a problem faced by the Algarve region. **The CisWEFE-NEX launch event will take place on 20 November at 3pm at the Corta Ventos site in the municipality of Mexilhoeira Grande, Portimão (coordinates 37°09'53.1'N 8°36'59.7'W).**

Coordinated by Bioazul, S.L., the five-year project brings together a prominent consortium that includes national partners such as INOVA+, MORE CoLAB, In Loco, Dariacordar, Coopérnico, IDAD and REQUIMTE, as well as other leading European organisations.

The project aims to develop a fully integrated and circular system between Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem Nexus (WEFE Nexus), with a focus on sustainability and resilience in areas affected by water scarcity.

The pilot region selected to test this system is the border of the Alentejo-Algarve-Andalusia Euroregion, which faces common environmental challenges. The demonstration unit, made up of several subsystems, will occupy around six hectares in Mexilhoeira Grande, Portimão. The area will include an agro-voltaic zone, irrigation pond, salt pans and water treatment and desalination units.

The CisWEFE-NEX launch event will mark the start of work on implementing the demonstration unit, with the presence of the Portimão Municipality, which recognises the importance of this ambitious project for the region *"as it represents a valuable contribution to solving one of the biggest problems affecting us and the local economy, which is largely dependent on tourism. Anything that improves the water efficiency and sustainability of this area is very welcome and should be supported, and the association or promotion of innovative projects in these areas is a priority for Portimão and certainly*

Funded by the European Union

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for the municipalities of the Algarve", says Álvaro Bila, Mayor of Portimão. CisWEFE-NEX also includes the CCDR Algarve, the Municipality of Tavira and the Municipality of Olhão as local partners.

Funded by Cluster 6 of Horizon Europe and part of the Circular Cities and Regions initiative, CisWEFE-NEX is aligned with the European Union's objectives of climate change adaptation, bioeconomy and sustainable innovation. "*By fostering collaboration between sectors, the project aims to establish a framework for environmental resilience and community empowerment through innovative, nature-based solutions",* emphasises Pilar Zapata, from Bioazul, S.L.

The innovative practices to be applied in the demonstrator include:

Positive Water Balance: Use of desalination technologies powered by renewable energy to provide drinking and irrigation water, with by-products such as brine being reused in solar salt pans.

Renewable Energy Innovations: Implementation of agrivoltaics, which combine agricultural production with solar panels, and generation of biogas from olive oil mill waste through advanced anaerobic digestion techniques.

Sustainable Food Production: Demonstration of regenerative agricultural practices and sustainable aquaculture, free of growth hormones and antibiotics, promoting environmental and human health.

Advanced Ecosystem Monitoring: Integrating cutting-edge analyses to monitor pollutants, enabling predictive alerts and proactive environmental protection measures.

For more information on the CisWEFE-NEX project and its transformative impact, follow the project on Linkedin.

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