WATER RESILIENCE LAB
Arno Basin • Italy

PRESS RELEASE

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THE WATER RESILIENCE LAB – ARNO BASIN LAUNCHED TODAY: A COLLABORATIVE PLATFORM TO ADVANCE WATER RESILIENCE IN TUSCANY

Presented in Florence today as part of the commemorations marking the 60th anniversary of the 1966 Florence flood, the Water Resilience Lab – Arno Basin aims to foster a collaborative, strategic and innovative approach to strengthening the water resilience of the Arno Basin, building on the significant achievements by public authorities

To build water resilience, the Lab brings together public and private institutions, businesses, academia, the scientific community and financial stakeholders to address the basin's vulnerabilities related to water scarcity, droughts, floods and pollution, drawing on a shared, science-based understanding of the challenges and opportunities

Floods affecting Tuscany in 2023 caused an estimated €1.89 billion in damages; by 2030, the Tuscany region is expected to experience more than 50 days of heat stress per year, while all stakeholders across the basin will be exposed to water-related risks

The Water Resilience Lab – Arno Basin promotes a shared platform to address water-related risks, with a defined roadmap and periodically measured outcomes to regenerate and replenish the basin

The launch event of the Water Resilience Lab – Arno Basin took place today at Palazzo Medici Riccardi in Florence. Initiated by Kering, Conservation International and Etifor, the platform seeks to address the main water-related challenges affecting the Arno Basin. Over the last 12 months, the Lab has brought together public institutions, businesses, academia, the scientific community and financial actors with the objective of fostering coordinated, long-term action against water scarcity, drought, flooding and pollution. Ultimately, the Lab's aim is to regenerate and replenish the basin to achieve long-lasting resilience.

Building on the significant achievements by public authorities, the Lab is anchored in the understanding that the health of the Arno Basin is closely connected to the wellbeing of local communities, the vitality of ecosystems and the economic activities that depend on its resources. Concretely, the Water Resilience Lab – Arno Basin acts as a platform, backed by public-private co-financing mechanisms and innovative financial instruments, testing and funding the models of tomorrow. A first of its kind, it galvanizes all actors and sectors in the region to go beyond the conventional model of fragmented initiatives to proactively create a shared, long-term approach for leading-edge water stewardship and resilience that is required to meet the level of urgency and action in the basin. To reach the initiative's ambition, the Lab will leverage synergies and amplify positive outcomes through coordinated nature-based and industrial projects. Through increased impact and investment,

the Lab aims to become a “best-in-class” model for the investment community, businesses and government agencies to be replicated and scaled in water-stressed basins in other international territories.

The launch event today brought together public and private stakeholders from across the region as part of the programme commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Florence flood, coordinated by the Comune di Firenze, the Regione Toscana, the University of Florence, and the Città Metropolitana di Firenze, under the patronage of the latter, all of whom attended the launch event alongside business representatives. The event was also attended by the Northern Apennines River Basin Authority, ANBI Toscana, the land reclamation consortia, and ANCI Toscana.

Among the initial organizations already actively contributing to and funding the Lab are initiators Kering and Etifor, with LVMH as the first company to join the Lab at the highest level, alongside Burberry, Giardini di Toscana, and Italpreziosi, with additional on the ground co-funding by KONE, Mosaiq Group, Assicurazioni Generali, Messaggerie Libri, Generali Agenzia di Firenze Rifredi, Butterfield & Robinson, Caurum, Neavita, Kallas Viaggi, Planet Viaggi Responsabili, Natua S.r.l. and Molino Pordenone. In addition, organisations including Global Fashion Agenda are supporting with knowledge sharing and industry collaboration on the Lab.

“*No individual company or actor, regardless of its size or influence, can address the challenges posed by climate change, nature loss, and water risk alone. Through the Water Resilience Lab – Arno Basin, we seek to demonstrate that meaningful value creation stems from systemic collaboration and collective action across diverse stakeholders,*” commented Marie-Claire Daveu, Chief Sustainability and Institutional Affairs Officer at Kering. “*Joining forces with public institutions, the scientific community and industry partners throughout the Arno Basin is not only a responsibility towards the region and its communities, but also a strategic investment to help ensure the continuity and resilience of our value chain. Our ambition is to make the Arno a leading example that can be replicated globally*.”

“Joining the Water Resilience Lab – Arno Basin illustrates our conviction that preserving ecosystems and building resilience against extreme events requires an anchored, collaborative territorial approach. This initiative directly echoes the ambitions of our LIFE 360 environmental strategy by uniting collective action, scientific innovation, and ecosystem regeneration,” said Helène Valade, LVMH Group Environment Development Director.

“Water stewardship should not be regarded as a constraint on the productive system, but rather as a strategic infrastructure for economic development. Through the Water Resilience Lab – Arno Basin, we aim to leverage district-level planning tools to establish a stable, transparent and measurable framework in which public and private stakeholders do not fulfil the same role, but embrace distinct and complementary responsibilities. Only through a renewed territorial alliance, with private sector value chains acting as active partners and drivers of change, will we be able to ensure water security, environmental quality and sustainable development,” said Gaia Checcucci, Secretary General of the Northern Apennines District Basin Authority.

During today’s event, the Lab shared a consensus-led roadmap aligned with the initiative’s multi-sectorial advisory board and built on a Nexus approach, recognizing the interconnections between water, nature, climate and society. The roadmap was developed using a science-based analysis conducted by Etifor, together with the DAGRI and DICEA departments of the University of Florence in 2025, which established a hydrological, ecosystem and socio-economic assessment of the basin. In parallel, stakeholder engagement was undertaken to account for the private and public sector’s most pressing concerns. The roadmap prioritizes the key areas where interventions can generate the greatest impact, with six hotspots selected as the Lab’s first cohort of nature-based restoration projects, which have already started on the ground: Villa Petriolo, Ombrone/Bisenzio, Altopascio/Lake Sibolla, Pisa/Era Basin, Usciana/Pescia River and Arezzo/Chiana Valley areas. All of these areas are home to some of Italy’s most prominent manufacturing districts, culture, craftsmanship and tourism, representing centres of excellence in the country.

“As a university spin-off, we start with the data: we know that 94.5% of Italian municipalities are exposed to landslides, floods, or coastal erosion, and that over 640,000 production facilities are located in flood-risk areas. Now, we need to connect the dots by fostering a dialogue between those who invest and those who know and manage the territory. The Water Resilience Lab – Arno Basin was created for this very purpose, using a replicable financial model that combines blended finance and innovative financial instruments to demonstrate that investing in nature generates economic value while reducing risks for both territories and businesses,” commented Alessandro Leonardi, CEO of Etifor | Valuing Nature.

"Our family's story in perfumery began in 1942 in Bibbiena, in the Casentino valley, where the Arno rises. That is why we are proud to be an 'Ally' partner of the Water Resilience Lab – Arno Basin, part of a coalition supporting environmental projects in our Tuscany. Within the Lab, we have supported the Montanino Forest project, for reforestation and better forest management in the Pisa area. We believe aesthetics are inseparable from social and environmental responsibility: the beauty of a fragrance must live in harmony with the land where it is born," commented Umberto Doni Giannini, CEO of Giardini di Toscana.

"Italy has one of the world's most renowned textile, leather and craftsmanship supply chains, and the Arno Basin hosts several of its key districts. The resilience of our industry is inseparable from the resilience of the river and the communities that depend on it. The Water Resilience Lab – Arno Basin shows what's possible when businesses, public authorities, scientists and investors act together on a shared, science-based roadmap. At Global Fashion Agenda, we believe this is exactly the collaboration our industry needs. As an Italian, I am proud to see Tuscany lead the way with a model other water-stressed basins can follow," said Federica Marchionni, CEO, Global Fashion Agenda.

The urgency of collective action is underscored by the data. Flood events that affected Tuscany in 2023 resulted in an estimated €1.89 billion in damages[1]. By 2030, the region is expected to experience more than 50 days of heat stress annually, while stakeholders across the basin are expected to face increasing water-related risks. Analysis undertaken for the Lab estimates that retaining approximately 48 million cubic metres of water in the Arno Basin could help reduce the impact of flooding events[2]. The analysis further estimates that each cubic metre of water retained could avoid approximately €157 in flood damage in the Arno Basin[3], supporting community and economic resilience. The Water Resilience Lab - Arno Basin aims to help address these risks and support the mitigation of water scarcity, flooding and pollution through nature-based and industrial projects, with the objective of strengthening the basin's resilience over the long term.

Discover more information on the Water Resilience Lab – Arno Basin here.

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[1] €1.89 billion in estimated damage to households, businesses, public buildings and agriculture (IRPET, December 2023)
[2] Analysis conducted by Etifor, together with the DAGRI and DICEA departments of the University of Florence in 2025
[3] Every 1m3 of water captured by NBS avoids €157 in flood damage in the Arno (Arrighi, C., Rossi, L., Transforini, E., Rudari, R., Ferraris, L., Brugioni, M., Franceschini, S., and Castelli, F. (2018). Quantification of flood risk mitigation benefits: A building-scale damage assessment through the RASOR platform. Journal of Environmental Management, 207, 92-104)