



The Agadir Commitments: Promoting synergy and best practice

The *International Symposium on Water and Wetlands in the Mediterranean - From Grado to Agadir: The next 20 years*, was held in Agadir, Morocco, on 6-8 February 2012, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the wetland symposium held in Grado, Italy, in 1991, which launched the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative. MedWet was the first regional initiative associated to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) and consequently, the Agadir International Symposium is also a fitting occasion to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Convention.

The Symposium participants fully endorse the [Changwon Declaration](#) as a statement and call to action from the last meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP 10), which was held in Changwon, Republic of Korea, from 28 October to 4 November 2008. It calls on governments in the Mediterranean region, regional and international organisations, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector to adopt and apply, as appropriate, the Changwon Declaration, as well as the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015), and subsequent versions of the Plan adopted by the COP (see http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/key_strat_plan_2009_e.pdf).

The programmes and projects inscribed in *The Agadir Commitments* are a concrete contribution to that end with the key objective of creating synergy. They are all in favour of Mediterranean wetlands and represent activities that are on-going, just starting or being planned, promoted by national governments, regional and international organisations, civil societies, the private sector and donors aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of water-related ecosystems in the Mediterranean. They concern policies, strategies, administrative measures, legal instruments and frameworks, initiatives or measures at the local, national or regional level. Promoting synergy and best practice can be achieved through networking, common actions, sharing of lessons, capacity building, strategies, policies and transboundary coordination.

The MedWet Initiative will monitor the activities on the roster and encourage exchange of information among those responsible for their application. It will report on progress made through the Agadir Symposium website, as well as to the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee.

The broad range of activities listed below, with the approval of the main actors concerned, will be included in The Agadir Commitments roster.

In addition, smaller projects at the national level, led by government authorities, NGOs or the private sector, shall be encouraged and included in the list as long as they contribute to the conservation and wise use of water-related ecosystems in the Mediterranean in an exemplary manner.

The Agadir Commitments are thus directly connected to the four axes of the MedWet Strategic Vision also approved in Changwon in 2008:

1. Improving the knowledge on Mediterranean wetland functions, services and values, as well as on their status and trends.
2. Promoting, developing and implementing national wetland policies and inter-sectoral action plans.
3. Ensuring the sustainable integrated management of wetlands.
4. Moderating the impact of climate change.

Axis 1. Improving the knowledge on Mediterranean wetland functions, services and values, as well as on their status and trends.

1.1 Cultural values in wetland restoration (in progress):

- *Lead organisation:* Med-INA (Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos).
- *Other partners:* MAVA Foundation, MedWet.
- *Brief description:* The project aims at demonstrating how cultural aspects can contribute to the restoration of degraded wetlands. It uses as case studies Karla Lake in Greece, Larnaca Lagoon in Cyprus and the Lake of Tunis in Tunisia. Lessons learned from this project will be proposed for similar situations around the Basin.
- *Time schedule:* 2011-2013.
- *Current status:* Background research on the three sites completed, preliminary proposals being formulated.

1.2 GlobWetlandII (in progress):

- *Lead organisation:* European Space Agency.
- *Other partners:* JENOPTIK, KEYOBS, DLR DFD, EKBY, MWO, MedWet, Terrasphere, I-MAGE CONSULT.
- *Brief description:* The GWII project aims at using Earth Observation and GIS technologies to better monitor the status and trends of wetlands and as a consequence improve our knowledge base and management capacities. The pilot work of the GWII information system is taking place in the South and East Mediterranean in 200 sites in order to produce a number of wetland related geo-information maps and indicators. Overall, it aims to contribute to the setup of a Global Wetlands Observing System (G-WOS), as decided in the Ramsar COP10.
- *Time schedule:* 2010-2012.
- *Current status:* Production of the maps is now in place and there will be training seminars for the users of the system in the near future.

1.3 Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (in progress):

- *Lead organisation:* Tour du Valat.
- *Other partners:* Ramsar Convention, MedWet, Plan Bleu, Wetlands International, Greek Biotope-Wetland Centre/EKBY, European Thematic Centre on Land Use and Spatial Information. MAVA Direct funding until 2011, MAVA funding through the TDV program since 2011.
- *Brief description:* this Mediterranean programme launched in 2008 under the Med-Wet initiative is a management tools to monitor and assess the status and trends of wetlands in the region, as well as to analyse and explain the causes of changes. The aim of the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory is to help decision-making towards improved wetland conservation and management.
- *Time schedule:* 2009 onwards.
- *Current status:* First “Mediterranean Wetland Outlook” report prepared.

1.3.1 RhoMeo Project (in progress):

- *Lead organisation:* Agence de l'Eau Rhone-Méditerranée (France).
- *Other partners:* Tour du Valat, regional Conservancy Trusts of PACA, LR, RA, Bourgogne and Franche-Comté (regional NGOs), Universities.
- *Brief description:* the main objective is to test & develop methods and tools that could form the backbone of a future Observatory of wetlands of the Rhone-Méditerranée catchment, to be created in 2013 or beyond. One key component where Tour du Valat is involved is the use of satellite imagery to calculate some of the indicators that are common to those developed by the MWO.
- *Time schedule:* 2011-2012 (1st phase); 2nd phase likely from 2013 onwards.
- *Current status:* First year of test on field and space data completed; methods being adjusted for 2nd round of tests in 2012.

1.3.2 Valuation of wetlands cultural services in the Mediterranean (Launched)

- *Lead organisation:* Tour du Valat (Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory).
- *Other Partners:* SPANA NGO, University of Casablanca, Med-INA.
- *Brief description:* The study aims at assessing the status and trends of leisure and educational roles of wetlands. Starting with Sidi Boughaba area, Morocco, this project will prepare the ground for a larger project among different wetlands related visitor centres in the Mediterranean region.
- *Time schedule:* 2012-2013.
- *Current status:* Preparation and fund raising for implementation.

1.4 Pan-European High Resolution Layers (HRL) for Water, Wetlands and Grasslands. (in progress):

- *Lead Organization.* Indra Espacio (space division of Indra, a major technology global company based in Spain)
- *Other partners:* EUROSENSE, RapicEye, UAB GEOMATRIX, EKBY, DLR
- *Funding:* The project is funded by the GMES Initial Operations program 2011-13 under a public contract awarded by The European Environment Agency.
- *Brief Description:* The project falls in the Land Monitoring Service of the pan-European Land Cover component. It is part of a framework service contract which has as overall objective the production of 5 seamless European coverages (all of the

EEA39 countries) of high resolution land cover characteristics of 5 main land cover types (i.e. artificial surfaces, forest areas, agricultural areas, wetlands, and water bodies) for the reference year 2012. In particular, this project regards the mapping of Wetlands, as areas covered permanently or temporarily of surface water considering seasonal changes too, Permanent Water Bodies and Permanent Grasslands, at a spatial resolution of 1 ha.

- *Time schedule:* 2012 - 2014 (36 months)
- *Current status:* Kick off meeting is going to be organized by EEA at the end of January 2012.

Axis 2. Promoting, developing and implementing wetland policies and inter-sectoral action plans.

2.1 National Wetland Strategies

2.1.1 Algeria Wetland Strategy (in formulation):

- *Lead organisation:* General Direction of Forestry.
- *Other partners:* MAVA, WWF.
- *Brief description:* The project aims at preparing in a participatory manner a national Wetlands Strategy.
- *Time schedule:* 2012 - 2013.
- *Current status:* Research of consultants and starting preparation.

2.1.2 Moroccan Wetland Strategy (in progress):

- *Lead organisation:* High Commissariat for Water, Forests and Desertification Control of Morocco.
- *Other partners:* Dutch Government (DLG), Tour du Valat, Conservatoire du Littoral France in the early stages, MAVA in the 3rd phase
- *Brief description:* The project aims at finalising a national Wetlands Strategy and at preparing an action plan to implement the strategy.
- *Time schedule:* 2011 - 2012.
- *Current status:* Phase I and Phase II of the strategy preparation.

2.2 PEGASO project (People for Ecosystem Based Governance in Assessing Sustainable Development of Ocean and Coast) (in progress):

- *Lead organisation:* Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.
- *Other partners:* 25 partners and 16 countries?
- *Funding instrument:* European Commission (FP7-ENV.2009.2.2.1.4 Collaborative Project-Large scale integrating projects).
- *Brief description:* The main objective of PEGASO is to build on existing capacities and develop common new approaches to support integrated policies for the coastal and marine aspects of the Mediterranean and Black Sea Basins. It is also assisting the implementation of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Protocol for the Mediterranean, signed in 2008 under the auspices of the Barcelona Convention. Main achievements are the ICZM-ecosystem based Governance platform and the building of tools (SDI, indicators, LEAC, scenarios, socio economic valuations, etc). Most of studies areas (CASES) are wetlands. Proposal for opening the ICZM network to the

water and wetlands networks, sharing data and building the SDI together and testing PEGASO tools on all interested wetlands.

- *Time schedule:* 2010-2014.
- *Current status:* Implementation phase.

2.3 Prespa Park Transboundary Initiative (in progress):

- *Lead organisation:* Albania, FYR of Macedonia, Greece, European Union.
- *Other partners:* MedWet, local Municipalities, Society for the Protection of Prespa.
- *Brief description:* Concerns the transboundary collaboration of three Balkan states for the conservation of the Prespa Lakes region and the sustainable use of its resources, for the benefit of both inhabitants and nature.
- *Time schedule:* Initiated on 2 February 2000 and on-going.
- *Current status:* Formal agreement ratified by EU Council, and ratification pending by the three national parliaments.

2.4 WIMED - Wetlands as natural infrastructure (in formulation):

- *Lead organisation:* Wetlands International.
- *Other partners:* GWP-Med, WWF MedPO, MedWet, Tour du Valat, MAVA.
- *Brief description:* The programme aims to influence water governance in the region to invest in wetlands as natural infrastructure, through two approaches; (a) a campaigning approach that builds on establishing a partnership between the different networks existing in the region; (b) a partnership approach that will seek to unite some of the key players in the field of water and ecosystems to join forces. Their collaboration will both underpin the civil society campaign and seek to strengthen the connection between technical resources and water resource management actors in the region.
- *Time schedule:* To be determined.
- *Current status:* Has been submitted to MAVA who has encouraged its presentation.

Axis 3. Ensuring the sustainable integrated management of wetlands.

3.1 Dinaric Arc Sustainable Hydropower Initiative - DASHI (in progress)

- *Lead organisation:* WWF MedPO.
- *Other partners:* Green Home (Montenegro), Youth Center Livno (Bosnia and Herzegovina), REC (Livno (Bosnia and Herzegovina). MAVA Foundation is the main donor of the project.
- *Brief description:* DASHI intends to address the threat of unsustainable hydropower boom in the western Balkans where inadequate environmental assessment processes allow destructive projects to be implemented. It intends to mobilise the civil society around the issue basing actions on scientific basis and fostering a dialogue with all the sectors, in particular the energy one.
- *Time schedule:* 2010-2012.
- *Current status:* Construction of four destructive dams in Montenegro put on hold, positive dialogue with the energy sector in BiH and on-going efforts to secure environmental flow in Hutovo Blato wetland, and partnerships with other international organisations under shape.

- 3.2 **LIFE+ Project “MC-SALT”** (Environmental Management and Conservation in Mediterranean Salt Works and Coastal Lagoons) (in progress):
- *Lead organisation:* Consorzio del Parco Regionale del Delta del Po dell’Emilia-Romagna.
 - *Other partners:* Consorzio del Parco Naturale Regionale Molentargius-Saline, Parc naturel régional de Camargue, Tour du Valat, Green Balkans NGO, Compagnie des Salins du Midi et des Salines de l’Est.
 - *Brief description:* The overall objective is the restoration and conservation of coastal wetlands inside 5 sites (10 Natura 2000 perimeters) located in Italy, France and Bulgaria. The project will target 7 habitats (including coastal lagoons) and 16 bird species (including Greater Flamingo and a range of colonial waterbirds). Other objectives include the elaboration of a management model for saltworks.
 - *Time schedule:* October 2011 to March 2016.
 - *Current status:* Project accepted by the European Commission, kick-off workshop in December 2011.
- 3.3 **Wetland management and ecosystem services' delivery** (in progress):
- *Lead organisation:* University of Tel-Aviv, La Tour du Valat.
 - *Other partners:* The University of Jerusalem.
 - *Brief description:* the main objective of this research is to understand the relationship between ecosystem management, focusing on water management, and the provision of ecosystem services in wetlands, by comparing two Mediterranean wetlands: the Camargue, France, a large coastal wetland with delta flowing into the Mediterranean Sea and the Hula, an inland wetland in Israel.
 - *Time schedule:* 2011-2012.
 - *Current status:* First year of data collection and analysis, scientific paper in redaction.
- 3.4 **NEREUS project** (Towards a Representative Network of Mediterranean Marine Managed Areas) (in progress):
- *Lead organisation:* IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation.
 - *Other partners:* UNEP-MAP, RAC/SPA, WWF MedPO, MedWet, ACCOBAMS. MAVA Foundation is the main donor of the project.
 - *Brief description:* The primary aim of this project to gather, produce, synthesize and communicate information on the marine environment (species, features, resources and threats) and to identify conservation priority sites in the Mediterranean Sea. Integrated management of marine resources and coastal wetlands will be an important component of the project. Ultimately, it will provide focused scientific information to help policy makers, managers and practitioners when planning and prioritising their conservation and management actions. Funding to be provided by the MAVA and TOTAL Foundations.
 - *Time schedule:* 2011-2015.
 - *Current status:* currently being implemented.

- 3.5 Sustainable management of Mediterranean coastal wetlands and lagoons (in formulation)**
- *Lead organisation:* RAC-SPA (UNEP-MAP).
 - *Other partners:* FAO, GFCM, IUCN Med, Tour du Valat, MedWet.
 - *Brief description:* The project aims to provide Mediterranean countries with an integrated strategy to conserve and manage their unique coastal biodiversity, promoting the use of aquaculture and capture fishery as a base for habitat restoration, climate change mitigation, and the improvement of local communities' welfare. The project also promotes the sharing of development experiences on coastal areas, providing high opportunities for countries partnerships in order to exchange information, maintaining a common database on the status of their coastal wetlands and lagoons, and facilitate decision making processes.
 - *Time schedule:*
 - *Current status:* Planning meeting held in Malaga on 18-19 October 2011.
- 3.6. Hotspot and Key Biodiversity Areas in The Mediterranean (Critical Ecosystems Partnership Funds (in formulation)**
- *Lead organization:* CEPF.
 - *Other Partners:* Several (waiting results of call for proposals).
 - *Brief description:* Regional and site projects towards safeguarding globally threatened species and critical sites in the Mediterranean, including Wetlands. Some priority corridors and key birds areas (KBA) includes wetlands such as Ichkeul (Tunisia) and El Kala (Algeria).
 - *Time schedule:* 2012-2014
 - *Current status:* Call for proposals for regional projects
- 3.7 The MedWet Civil Society Network (in formulation):**
- *Lead organisation:* WWF MedPO.
 - *Other partners:* MAVA, Wetlands International, IUCN Med, Tour du Valat, MedWet.
 - *Brief description:* The Ramsar Convention encourages the participation of civil society in the conservation and wise use of wetlands. To this end, the project will establish the MedWet Civil Society Network in six Mediterranean countries of the Western Balkans and North Africa and strengthen the capacity of its members to promote the conservation and wise use of ecologically valuable wetlands currently under threat. The members of the Network will play the role of MedWet resource people in their river basins by gaining knowledge and skills on a broad range of technical/managerial/networking subjects.
 - *Time schedule:* 2012-2014.
 - *Current status:* Planning meeting organised on 8-9 October 2011 in Rabat in the framework of the MAVA North African Partners Meeting. Project concept has been accepted by the MAVA Foundation and must now be refined by the project partners. A preparation and information workshop for Tunisian NGOs has been organised by WWF Tunis with the participation of the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO). Project concept has been presented in the Agadir Symposium.

Axis 4. Moderating the impact of climate change.

4.1 Effects of climate change on wetland ecosystems of Attica Region of Greece: (in formulation)

- *Lead Organisation:* Attica Region.
- *Other Partners:* EKBY, Center for Technological Research of Crete (CTRC), Ministry of Environment Energy & Climate Change (YPEKA).

- *Brief Description:* The project constitutes one of the 6 pilot vulnerability studies of the SEE strategic project “ORIENTGATE: a structured network for integration of climate knowledge into policy and territorial planning” which has been submitted under the coordination of the Euro Mediterranean Center on Climate Change (CMCC). ORIENTGATE has been designed to foster concerted and coordinated climate adaptation actions across the SEE region. The Greek pilot vulnerability study will support the territorial planning and policy formation in the Region of Attica in regard to the effects of climate change on wetland ecosystems.
- *Time schedule:* 2012 - 2014 (30 months)
- *Current status:* Results of the second step evaluation of the SEE 3rd call strategic projects will be announced soon (first trimester of 2012).

Annex: Projects and programmes
(by alphabetic order, updated in January 2012)

Project	Status	Where	What	MedWet Vision
Algerian Wetland Strategy	Planning phase	Algeria	Wetlands policy	Wetland policies
Cultural values in wetland restoration	Ongoing	All Mediterranean countries	Cultural values, Wetlands restoration	Improving knowledge
Dinaric Arc Sustainable Hydro-power Initiative	Ongoing	Western Balkans	Sustainable use of water (hydropower)	Integrated management
Effects of climate change on wetland ecosystems of Attica Region of Greece	Planning stage	Greece	coordinated climate adaptation actions	Climate change
GlobWetlandII	Ongoing	Non EU Med. countries	Monitoring wetlands	Improving knowledge
Hotspot and Key Biodiversity Areas in The Mediterranean (Critical Ecosystems Partnership Funds)	Ongoing	All non EU Med. countries	Safeguarding globally threatened species and critical sites in the Mediterranean	Integrated management
LIFE+ Project “MC-SALT”	Ongoing	Italy, France, Bulgaria	Restoration of coastal wetlands	Integrated management
Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory	Ongoing	All Mediterranean countries	Monitoring wetlands	Improving knowledge
Moroccan Wetland Strategy	Ongoing	Morocco	Wetlands policy	Wetland policies
NEREUS project	In progress	All non EU Med countries	Marine Protected Areas and coastal wetlands	Integrated management
Pan-European High Resolution Layers (HRL) for Water, Wetlands and Grassland	Ready to be launched	Pan European	Land Monitoring Service	Improving knowledge

PEGASO project	Ongoing	Italy, France Bulgaria	Restoration of coastal wetlands	Wetland policies
Prespa Park Transboundary Initiative	Ongoing	Albania, FYR of Macedonia, Greece)	Transboundary management	Wetland policies
RhoMeo	Ongoing	Rhone-Méditerranée catchment, France	Wetlands monitoring	Improving knowledge
Sustainable management of Mediterranean coastal wetlands and lagoons	Planning stage	All Mediterranean countries	Conservation of coastal biodiversity	Integrated management
The MedWet Civil Society Network	Planning stage	Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia	Capacity building of CS on wetlands monitoring and preservation	Integrated management
Valuation of wetlands cultural services in the Mediterranean	Planning stage	All Mediterranean countries	Assessing the status and trends of recreational and educational roles of wetlands	Improving knowledge
Wetland management and ecosystem services' delivery	Ongoing	France, Israel	Ecosystem services and management	Integrated management
WIMED - Wetlands as natural infrastructure	Planning stage	All Mediterranean countries	Water governance, partnership building, capacity building of CS	Wetland policies