



**MedWet**

L'initiative pour les zones humides méditerranéennes  
The Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative  
مبادرة المناطق الرطبة المتوسطية

**Doc. SG16/AG4 - I**

**16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MedWet Steering Group  
and  
4<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the MedWet Secretariat Association**

**14:30 – 18:00, 3 November, 2017 at City Hotel Ljubljana, Slovenia,**

**Report on developments since March 2017**

**I - Operation of the MedWet Secretariat**

1. The Steering Group held a teleconference meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2017, with the outgoing coordinator Mr. Delmar Blasco. All documents can be found here: <http://medwet.org/documents/steering-group-meeting/>
2. As it proved difficult to gather all Steering Group members, it has been decided to establish an informal group made of the members of the Steering Group willing and able to contribute on a regular basis to MedWet management and governance: the “Friends of the Chair” group. The Friends of the Chair have been fully active during this period (March-November 2017) and have taken in charge the strategic coordination of MedWet to compensate for the absence of a nominated coordinator. They had regular meetings (formal and informal) and exchanges among them, as well as with the team of the MedWet Secretariat, to make the planned MedWet activities running smoothly.
3. One of the main tasks of the “Friends of the Chair” has been the preparation of the MedWet strategic planning meeting taking place on 2-3 November 2017 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. All MedWet members have been invited. This meeting is aiming at MedWet’s Strategy considering the achievements and limits of the past three years and the added-value expected from members. It will enable preparation of the next work plan which will subsequently be submitted to MedWet/Com13 for adoption. The MedWet/Com13 meeting will take place in the side-lines of Ramsar COPI3 in Dubai, during the period of 21-29 October 2018.

4. Currently the MedWet team is composed of:  
Two employees: a Communications officer and an Administrative/ financial officer  
Four part time consultants: a communications assistant, a communications expert, a project developer, a network manager.

a/ The employees

The MedWet Secretariat has operated effectively and efficiently, adjusting the staff capacities as required, despite the absence of a coordinator since March 2017, when it was proposed by the Steering Group and approved by the MedWet members not to replace him for the time being, since none of the candidates applying for the position were considered appropriate and the financial limitations proved to be a major pitfall.

The communications officer, Mailis Renaudin, has mobilized a large part of her working time on project development to ensure the financial sustainability of the organization. We can mention the five MAVA funded projects in which the MedWet Secretariat has committed for three years in the activities as mentioned later on in the report (see below).

A new administrative and financial officer, Isabelle Perroud, was recruited on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. It was necessary to consolidate this function with the setting up of MAVA projects funding for the next three years, especially with the financial follow-up and coordination of the MAVA Communication Campaign with the many partners.

b/ The consultants

Part time external consultants have applied their skills for the benefit of MedWet:

- Alessio Satta, whose contract was signed in April 2017 (ending December 2017), has the task of developing project proposals to be submitted to funders, in close cooperation with employees and the MedWet Steering Group. He is currently working on developing two EU funded projects: H2020 Cost and European Neighbourhood Instrument / Cross Border Cooperation Med. (see 17 below)
- Flavio Monti, whose contract was renewed in September 2017 for one year, is responsible for managing the Scientific and Technical Network for MedWet. (See 17 below)
- Abder Smari, whose contract was renewed in July 2017 for one year, is responsible for updating the website in the three languages of MedWet, writing articles, animating the social media platform and the World Wetlands Day in the Mediterranean, with specific attention to Arabic speaking countries. He will be actively participating in the development of communications activities within the MAVA projects during 2017-2019 period.
- Corinne Brunois, whose contract was signed in August 2017 (ending December 2019), is responsible for strategic support regarding MedWet's communication work, especially in supporting the MAVA communication campaign project.

## II – Activities 2017

This activity report is based on the adopted Work Plan for the “interim period” of 2017.

- a) Further raise the profile of MedWet (communications, training, networking);
- b) Raise additional funds through project development in order to strengthen the future of MedWet;
- c) Further develop the ownership and involvement of the Member countries’ Focal Points in MedWet governance and activities;
- d) Prepare the MedWet presence at Ramsar COPI3 in 2018;
- e) Strengthen the Specialist Groups of the MedWet/Scientific & Technical Network;
- f) Ensure synergies with the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO);
- g) Ensure a MedWet presence at relevant events/meetings in the Mediterranean;
- h) Search for a new MedWet Coordinator through exchange of views and personal contacts.
- i) Ensure a project administration capacity for approved projects.

### II.1 Communications, training and networking

The MedWet communication strategy has been implemented and MedWet is active in social media and through its website. It is worth noting the launching of the Arabic version of the website. Although MedWet is expected to renew its communication tools (e.g., its communication brochure), the Communication Officer has focused her efforts on the development of MAVA projects for fundraising purposes. The design and production of these new tools will be undertaken at the end of 2017 and early 2018.

5. Raise the MedWet profile as a trusty and valuable source of information and support on wetland conservation and sustainable use)
  - a. MedWet website: Update frequently the content on the website for MedWet and the MWO with an article per week
  - b. upload the website and official launch of the website in Arabic in summer 2017;
  - c. no update on the MedWet country profiles;
  - d. constantly update the different social media accounts : Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram;
  - e. launch social media campaigns during important international days, with sharing of the content of the MWO;
  - f. share and provide news for the MedWet culture network;
  - g. postpone a new MedWet brochure for 2018;
  - h. proposal to work on a “MedWet’s projects factsheets” portfolio for 2018.
6. Ensure the right mix of information being delivered to further raise awareness about: a) wetland values and functions; and b) existing policies and tools for the conservation, restoration and effective management of these ecosystems:
  - i. Publications are shared on the website and social media: guidelines, factsheets, policy brief and synthesis from the Ramsar Convention, the MWO and the STN;
  - j. Projects are updated with lessons learnt from partners (WWF North Africa, MWO, MedINA, etc.);

7. Highlight the positive actions by the Med community of governments and non-governmental actors in favour of wetlands:
  - k. CEPA network in the Med is reinforced and is sharing news from governments and NGOs;
  - l. International NGOs' wetlands network is reinforced with a new project on "Communication campaign on coastal wetlands" funded by the MAVA Foundation;
  - m. Local and national NGOs wetlands network is reinforced and is promoting the WWD activities; and
  - n. Synergies are developed with the Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance's partners, gathering a number of NGOs and research organisations.
  
8. Provide communications support to help raise communication capacity:
  - o. Support and training on communications and policy to international and national NGOs via the new MAVA project "Communication campaign on coastal wetlands" and the "Maghreb wetlands sentinels project";
  - p. Support to government and national NGOs for WWD: printing Ramsar materials, support on the web/social media to local/national events, sharing the MedWet materials like cartoons, production of a Mediterranean report on WWD activities.

All activities of the MedWet Secretariat were intended to reinforce the role of MedWet in promoting facilitation and regional coordination in the field of wetland conservation and wise use. To this end, the visibility and communication of MedWet have been raised to reach out and influence different networks in the Mediterranean region through raising awareness and promoting efforts in favour of Mediterranean wetlands to a variety of audiences.

## 9. Training

- Training course for the project "Wetland Sentinels in the Maghreb: the MedWet Network of Civil Society in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia", funded by the MAVA Foundation and led by WWF North Africa. Two training sessions of trainers were organized in Tunisia, from 19 to 25 February 2017 and 25 participants were present. These sessions addressed a training of trainers on the analysis of wetland monitoring results, and a training of trainers in Communication and Wetland Conservation.

For more info see here: <http://medwet.org/2017/03/training-of-trainers-in-the-project-wetland-sentinels-in-the-maghreb/>

- Training Course in Spain "Visitors Management in Protected Wetlands: Making them the allies of conservation"

MedWet co-organisation of the training course on "Visitors Management in Protected Wetlands: Making them the allies of conservation" between 24 and 29 July 2017, with the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Environment and the Polytechnic University of Valencia with 27 participants from 16 Mediterranean countries. Thanks to all the organizers and the participants it was a very successful workshop and the report was published on the MedWet website.

For more info see here: <http://medwet.org/training-visitors-management/>

## 10. Networking

Strengthening the MedWet Scientific & Technical Network (STN)

The objective of this is the Scientific & Technical Network to help MedWet and the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO, led by Tour du Valat) with the transfer of scientific knowledge to national decision makers. The five key areas of work are Biodiversity, Inventories, Climate Change, Water, and Ecosystem Services (the five Thematic Working Groups).

The first kick-off meeting gathering together the Chairs of the STN thematic groups, the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory and the MedWet team took place on 27 July 2017 and focused on the development and launching of the MedWet Scientific and Technical Network: involving 54 scientists from 22 countries in five Thematic Working Groups with committed Chairs. Overall, more than 90% of the pre-selected members have accepted to join the network.

More information here: <http://medwet.org/the-scientific-and-technical-network/>

## **II.2 Raise additional funds through project development**

The priority has been put on securing funds through projects focused on the core functions of the MedWet Secretariat: Networking and Communication.

### **11. Coordination / participation in MAVA strategies (2017-2019)**

The MedWet Secretariat has been involved in the development and submission of five MAVA projects for the 2017-2020 period. The MedWet Secretariat has participated in two strategic meetings of the MAVA strategy in the Mediterranean: the M3 strategy "Coastal Wetland Degradation due to Coastal Development and Water Abstraction" (October 2016); and the M1-M2 strategy "the impacts of water abstraction and unsustainable water infrastructure on river basins' biodiversity and functioning" (February 2017). The MedWet Secretariat is now leader of one project "a Communication Campaign on wetlands", and is a partner in four projects.

### **12. Communication Campaign on the value of coastal wetlands (M3)**

This project is a comprehensive communication campaign for raising the value of Coastal Wetlands. The campaign will aim to improve knowledge about the functions and values of these important Mediterranean wetland types as well as the benefits of integrated land/sea interface management. By scaling up the visibility of the results and using scientifically grounded arguments, the campaign should convince decision-makers, and key stakeholders around demonstration sites and beyond, of the need to protect and manage these habitats in a sustainable way. The campaign coordinated by the MedWet Initiative is really at the core of its mission and aims to provide for the Mediterranean wetland community a real opportunity to experience and learn how to jointly demonstrate the catalyst role of bringing together several governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in the region.

In this initiative, MW is joined by an impressive list of 11 partners: BirdLife, DiversEarth, GWP-Med, IUCN Med, MedINA, MEDPAN, PAP-RAC, Plan Bleu, Tour du Valat, Wetlands International, WWF, which are expected to work closely and effectively together in promoting the Mediterranean Coastal Wetlands. Each partner will also play a pivotal role in delivering on specific activities that will build on each partner's strength, network and experience while ensuring coherence with the overall campaign.

In December 2016, MedWet with WWF MedPO proposed a first draft proposal to MAVA on this innovative communication campaign concept as an overarching initiative related to the M3 Coastal wetlands strategy. In June 2017, the MedWet Secretariat submitted a full detailed proposal to MAVA. On September 2017, the MAVA Foundation approved the Communication Campaign

Project, and the contracting document has been signed. The MedWet Secretariat has now started to ensure the technical and financial coordination of this project.

MedWet with its eleven international partners have officially launched this new project during its kick-off meeting in Bizerte, Tunisia, from 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

More information here: <http://medwet.org/2017/10/kick-off-meeting-of-communication-campaign-on-coastal-wetlands/>

### 13. Governance and Stakeholder participation in coastal wetlands management (M3)

This project is coordinated by IUCN and PAP/RAC (regional activity center for Barcelona Convention UNEP/MAP) and is tailored around identifying the main critical governance components within demonstration sites, preparing guidance for the sites on how to improve targeted governance issues, and supporting implementation of specific recommendations. The main output of the initiative is a Handbook on Coastal Wetlands Governance (taking into account ICZM and IWRM and the two targeted Conventions: Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and Barcelona Convention (UNEP/MAP)).

### 14. Maristanis – Integrated management of Coastal and Marine Habitats of the Oristano Gulf (Sardinia) (M3)

This project is coordinated by Mediterranean Sea and Coast Foundation (MEDSEA). It is focused on the definition of innovative models of integrated management for the six Ramsar Sites of Oristano area and the MPA of Sinis with a long-term vision for the preservation, enhancement and restoration of the wetlands, coastal and marine habitats.

### 15. Conservation of the island wetlands of the Mediterranean Basin: MedIsWet (M3)

This project is coordinated by WWF Greece. This joint Mediterranean project will enable the replication of the Greek project “Conservation of the island wetlands of Greece” to all the islands of the Mediterranean basin (covering Cyprus, Croatia, France, Italy, Malta, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey) by establishing a network of NGOs, institutes, universities and public authorities across the Mediterranean. The project aims at the implementation of Ramsar Resolution XII.14 and to achieve this, actions will be developed for the completion of wetland inventories in all Mediterranean islands, dissemination of knowledge, and promotion of certain conservation measures at a local, national and Mediterranean scale.

For more info see here: <http://medwet.org/2016/11/conservation-of-mediterranean-basin-island-wetlands/>

### 16. Platform on water management and abstraction (M 1-2)

This project, coordinated by Wetlands International, is aiming at reducing the impact of water abstraction and unsustainable water infrastructures on river basins’ biodiversity and functioning. It is currently being submitted to MAVA.

The project will promote sustainable water use by bringing wetland needs and their contributions to society into dialogues around water allocation and management. This will ensure that the trade-offs involved are better understood and recognized and, in turn, will help promote lower-risk approaches to development and related infrastructure construction and management. The result will be a better future for wetlands and water-related ecosystems in the Mediterranean and a sustainable basis for development for wider Mediterranean society. The project will achieve this by supporting and developing civil society organisations’ capacity to influence the policy, planning and implementation of water-related development and management across the Mediterranean.

#### 17. Project development with EU funds

In order to secure the networking activities within MedWet: the Scientific and Technical network, and the Ramsar Sites managers' network, a Project Development Consultant (Alessio Satta) has been hired and two projects have been designed in which MedWet is a partner:

- EU H2020 COST program, supporting the Scientific & Technical Network activities (meetings, conferences, training workshops, etc.)

COST is an EU-funded program that enables researchers to set up their interdisciplinary research networks in Europe and beyond. The funds are available for organizing conferences, meetings, training schools, short scientific exchanges or other networking activities in a wide range of scientific topics. The project has been submitted in September 2017.

- EU ENI CBC Med project led by AVITEM, the Mediterranean network of sustainable cities, which is focused on the development of a network of Ramsar Sites managers in the Mediterranean with a focus on coastal wetlands' resilience toward climate change. A project named "CONNECT MED - Conserving wetlands to enhance coastal resilience to climate change in the Mediterranean" should be submitted by the 15<sup>th</sup> of December. This project is a collaboration with Plan Bleu, MedSEA Foundation, partners in Lebanon and Tunisia and AVITEM.

#### 18. The Mediterranean Youth Parliament for Wetlands

This project aims to target Mediterranean students to be educated on wetland values, functions and threats and to participate in debates on these issues. It is a partnership of organisations involving MedWet; IUCN-Med; a consortium of partners in the Corsican government; the SPANA, Morocco; WWF-North Africa; the AAO, Tunisia; the RSCN, Jordan; and the SPNL Lebanon. The budget for the first phase of three years involving work in five countries is 900.000 Euros.

The project documents and budget are now finalized and formal letters to the partners are being sent. The project has been informally submitted by IUCN Med to the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and to the Global Water Partnership (GWP-Med), both of which have shown interest in supporting and labelling the project. It is intending to submit a proposal to EU's CBC-Med program in the coming phase.

More information (2016) here: <http://medwet.org/2016/10/the-mediterranean-youth-parliament-for-wetlands/>

#### 19. MedWet Country Profiles Project

This project aimed to strengthen the visibility of the MedWet countries in the MedWet website. The overall objective is to enable visitors (researchers, students and the general public) to the MedWet website and MedWet Focal Points to have an overview of wetlands in all the member countries of the Mediterranean in relation to their economies and their respective institutions, water-related issues and ecosystem services provided by their wetlands.

So far the website dedicated to this project is operational. The standard template for the country profile of Tunisia has been fully finalized, validated by country focal point and uploaded. The country profiles of Albania, Algeria, Croatia and Lebanon have also been finalized and remain pending validation. The introductions (summaries) of all country profiles have also been finalized (in English and French). A decision should be taken on the future of this activity, taking into account its cost and time required for its development, as well as its expected added value.

20. Further develop the ownership and involvement of the Member countries' focal points in MedWet governance and activities

The Friends of Chair decided to organise a MedWet strategic planning meeting taking place on 2-3 November 2017 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. All MedWet members have been invited in order to better improve the governance and ownership of the Mediterranean countries' focal points vis à vis MedWet and its Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory. A questionnaire has been sent and the evaluation will be discussed during the meeting.

21. Synergies with the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO)

During the last Steering Group meeting the MWO's place in the MedWet initiative and its strategy were discussed within the Steering Group and with the MWO/Tour du Valat team, and greater visibility requested, while reaffirming its fundamentally scientific character. It has been agreed that the MWO should communicate more on its activities (and not only on its results) to increase its visibility to the countries. Accordingly the MWO has organized communications meeting and activities internally to jointly develop processes that ensure better communication and interaction between the MWO and MedWet members. The creation of the MedWet Scientific and Technical Network, Initiated by the MedWet Coordinator before his departure, and chaired by the MWO coordinator, was another event that involved the MWO team all year. This Network is expected to be a complement and aid for the Observatory's work through the expertise that it provides and its links with the various countries. The development of the Alliance for Mediterranean Wetlands was another major work area for the MWO. Concerning the internal organisation, Ilse Geijzendorffer took over the coordination of the MWO in early September. Scientific activities were very largely devoted to the production of data and summaries in the perspective of the next Ramsar COP in October 2018. To that end, the indicator-files are being updated. A first mapping of the flooded zones, surface areas of open water and potential wetlands in coastal catchments was carried out throughout the Mediterranean Basin for the hydrological cycles 2013-2017. This remote-sensing approach, homogeneous throughout the Basin, should facilitate the implementation of wetland inventories. A list of socioeconomic and governance indicators ("macro-indicators") is being finalised to be used as explicative variables concerning the trends observed for the MWO's other indicators.

The MWO team increased its scientific production with 17 articles in high-impact journals. Our technological and transfer efforts concentrated mainly on our participation in the meeting of the Society of Wetland Scientists, the IPBES regional assessment for Europe and Central Asia, the Ramsar Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP), the IUCN World Conservation Congress, and the French Ministry for Ecological for the Ecological and Supportive Transition (MTES)'s National Wetlands Observatory and National Wetlands Committee.

22. Prepare the MedWet presence at Ramsar COP13 in 2018

The MedWet Secretariat has started preparing for the attendance at the Ramsar COP13 in Dubai mainly to organise the fundraising opportunities with different MAVA projects: the Communications Officer will organise several side events during the COP. So far there has been little information about how to prepare and organise a booth from the Ramsar Secretariat. The MedWet work is focusing on preparing the communications tools and messages from the important work of the MWO together with the Communications team of Tour du Valat. During the COP, the MWO and MedWet will be officially launching the Mediterranean Wetlands Outlook report. Some additional funds should be secured in order to help the Secretariat to participate to this event.

The Steering Group should work with the members to organize a MedWet/Com meeting in Dubai. Therefore, negotiations have started with the Ramsar Secretariat and the Host



Government for having a half a day-long meeting the day before the opening of the COP. This will also imply that Tunisia, the only MedWet country in the Ramsar Standing Committee, should participate with at least two delegates in order to participate in the MedWet/Com meeting.

The Steering Group should also consider whether MedWet would have an interest in promoting Resolutions by the COP, knowing that the deadline for Parties to submit draft Resolutions is 31 December 2017. Sweden proposed to submit a draft Resolution to COP13 on Regional Initiatives, including aspects of their legal status (cf. Ramsar Standing Committee 53 document). Most likely this matter will be dealt with by the Working Group on Regional Initiatives established by the Standing Committee. MedWet countries should be urged to participate actively in this Working Group.

23. Ensure a MedWet presence at relevant events/meetings in the Mediterranean  
The MedWet Secretariat (Mailis Renaudin) has been participating in project-related events such as Interreg Fish MPA Blue II in Croatia, and several meetings related to MAVA Mediterranean strategies for fundraising purposes. She also attended the Ramsar France seminar and will also be involved in different MAVA pilot sites kick-off meetings. She is also invited to attend a Mediterranean Natura 2000 seminar in order to explore further possibilities for collaborations within the EU process.

24. Search for a new MedWet Coordinator through exchange of views and personal contacts.  
The Strategic Planning Meeting in Slovenia should conclude on the need (or not) to proceed on hiring a new Coordinator.

25. Ensure appropriate staffing for project implementation.  
No further work has been done at this stage, waiting for approval of projects submitted for funding.