

11th Meeting of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee

5 July 2012, Bucharest, Romania

Doc MWC11.03

Updated Terms of Reference of MedWet

The ToRs have been adopted on the 28 of July 2007 during MedWet/Com8 held in Frascati, Italy. They have been updated¹ by MedWet/Com10 on the 3rd of June 2010 in Bastia, France and revised in late January 2011 according to the decisions of the 9th meeting of the MedWet Steering Group².

1. Introduction

This document sets out the Terms of Reference and organization of the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet) in order to define and facilitate collaboration between its members and the operations of the Initiative.

The MedWet Initiative was established to support the Mediterranean region in its implementation of conservation and wise use of wetlands within the framework the Ramsar Convention and decisions of the Convention's Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) and its Standing Committee.

The MedWet Initiative is a long-term collaborative effort between Mediterranean countries and entities, the Ramsar Convention, the European Commission, international organisations, the Ramsar International Organisation Partners (IOPs), other international NGOs and wetland centres.

The MedWet Initiative is an endogenous mechanism based on voluntary participation, mutual trust and mutual benefit.

The legitimacy and legal authority of the MedWet Initiative are provided by the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971), on the basis of Resolutions VII.22 and VIII.30 and Decisions SC19-19 and SC25-31 of the Ramsar Standing Committee.

The MedWet Initiative has to foster synergies with all institutions dealing with conservation and wise use of wetlands in the Mediterranean basin.

2. Mission and Objectives of the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative

Mission

To ensure and support the effective conservation of wetlands and the wise use of their resources, values and services, through local, national, regional and international collaboration and implementation of activities in the Mediterranean region, within the framework of the Ramsar Convention.

¹ Ref. Doc MWC10.10 Report of the Meeting and Doc MWC10.04 'the future of MedWet' annex 1 and annex 3.

² Ref Doc SG 9.04 (guidelines for MWST-Net) and Doc MWSG9.05 (SG Operation Conclusions)

Objectives

- a. To promote and participate in the implementation of the Ramsar objectives and initiatives in the Mediterranean region.
- b. To develop and reinforce capacities in areas where these are lacking, and especially to develop and ensure adaptive management of Ramsar sites and cooperation between their management bodies.
- c. To transfer and exchange knowledge and expertise to key conservation actors in order to reinforce Mediterranean wetland management.
- d. To coordinate with other international initiatives in the region, and globally.

3. The partners and implementing bodies of the MedWet Initiative, and their responsibilities

The MedWet Initiative is a partnership of:

- i. Governments of countries and entities bordering on the Mediterranean Sea and other countries in its immediate proximity, including Bulgaria, Jordan, Portugal, Serbia, and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
- ii. Mediterranean wetland centres approved by the MedWet/Com as forming the MedWet Scientific and Technical Network;
- iii. Other entities with an interest in the conservation and wise use of Mediterranean wetlands;
- iv. Intergovernmental organisations with activities related to or concerned about Mediterranean wetlands;
- v. Other international organisations with activities related to Mediterranean wetlands and
- vi. Federations or networks of national NGOs, or individual NGOs, from countries mentioned above (maximum of one per country), with a proven record of activities related to wetland conservation and wise use.

The implementing bodies of the MedWet Initiative are:

- i. the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com);
- ii. the MedWet Steering Group;
- iii. the MedWet Secretariat;
- iv. the MedWet Scientific and Technical Network and
- v. *ad hoc* working groups, including networks.

International Organizations, NGOs and some Mediterranean Wetland Centres are independent institutions.

The Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention and the Chair of the MedWet Steering Group co-chair the meetings of MedWet/Com. The MedWet Secretariat reports on MedWet Initiative implementation to the MedWet Steering Group and then to the MedWet/Com and Ramsar Standing Committee.

The Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com)

The MedWet/Com is a forum for collaboration on wetland issues in the Mediterranean and acts as an advisor to the Convention in this region (Ramsar COP7 Resolution VII.22, paragraph 3). It is the decision-making body within the framework of the MedWet Initiative, and operates within the framework of the Ramsar Convention.

The current membership of the MedWet/Com is listed in Annex 1.

Other organisations and individuals may participate in MedWet/Com meetings and other activities as observers by invitation and admission by decision of the MedWet/Com.

Responsibilities of the MedWet/Com

The MedWet/Com has been entrusted by the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention to implement the Ramsar strategy and activities with relevance to the Mediterranean Region and its specificities.

The MedWet/Com Rules of Procedure were approved, with amendments, by the 5th meeting of the MedWet/Com. The Rules of Procedure, as further amended to harmonise the modified terminology of these Terms of Reference, are attached as Annex 2 of this document.

The responsibilities of the MedWet/Com in overseeing the implementation of the MedWet Initiative and its other bodies are, *inter alia*, to:

- i. approve new members in the MedWet Initiative;
- ii. appoint the membership of the MedWet Steering Group;
- iii. approve the Initiative's Strategic Priorities and Multi-Year Work Plan;
- iv. monitor the implementation and results of the MedWet Multi-Year Work Plan, including through analysis of the six-monthly reports provided by the MedWet Secretariat;
- v. consider reports and recommendations from the MedWet Steering Group, and adopt decisions on any action needed, as appropriate;
- vi. consider and approve the financial budget and annual audited financial accounts of the MedWet Secretariat and
- vii. approve the establishment of temporary *ad hoc* working groups and their dissolution.

The MedWet Steering Group

The MedWet Steering Group is the body that operates between MedWet/Com meetings with the responsibility (on behalf of the MedWet/Com) to make operational decisions and resolve problems identified during the implementation of the MedWet/Com decisions. The Steering Group is appointed by, and reports to, the MedWet/Com.

The MedWet Steering Group is composed of:

- i. three country representatives (one MedWet/Com country from each Ramsar region - Africa, Asia, Europe);
- ii. one representative from the country hosting the MedWet Secretariat (Greece);
- iii. one Ramsar International Organisation Partner (IOP) representative;
- iv. one Mediterranean Wetland Centres representative;
- iii. one Ramsar Secretariat representative;
- iv. MedWet Honorary member Thymio Papayannis and
- v. the MedWet Secretariat Coordinator (*ex officio* non-voting).

In the case of the three countries an alternate country from each region is designated, for the event of the regular country representative's non-availability to attend a Steering Group meeting.

The MedWet Steering Group is chaired for the three-year period by one of the country representatives in rotation. The Mediterranean Wetland Centres representative and the IOP representative will also serve on a rotational basis, by agreement between the Centres and the IOPs

respectively. Countries willing to serve on the Steering Group should be proposed by their regional group of MedWet/Com members. The membership of the MedWet Steering Group for each three-year period will be approved by the MedWet/Com.

The Steering Group may invite the participation of other MedWet members as observers, as necessary.

The MedWet Secretariat provides the secretariat to the Steering Group.

The Steering Group meets periodically face-to-face, but will operate largely through email and teleconference processes. The necessary budget provisions to cover travel and subsistence costs of those members of the Steering Group eligible for such support are included in the MedWet Secretariat budget.

All members of the Steering Group- including the alternate countries- should be notified two months in advance about the dates of the next Steering Group meeting. If one month before the meeting, the regular country cannot attend or is unresponsive, the alternate country will be asked to attend. The Steering Group meeting working documents are to be sent to all members of the Steering Group including the alternate countries.

A quorum is reached with the presence of 5 members, of which at least 2 must be country representatives. Absent members can be contacted and consensus can be obtained through Skype.

The conclusions and agenda of each Steering Group meeting are to be posted on the MedWet website.

Responsibilities of the MedWet Steering Group

The responsibilities of the MedWet Steering Group are to:

- i. take operational decisions between two MedWet/Com meetings;
- ii. prepare, with the assistance of the MedWet Secretariat and MedWet Scientific and Technical Network, the draft MedWet Multi-Year Work Plan in line with the MedWet Strategic Priorities and other documents to be submitted to the MedWet/Com for adoption;
- iii. monitor and approve the annual reports and audited accounts provided by the MedWet Secretariat;
- iv. approve the yearly work plans and budget of the MedWet Secretariat, based on the Multi-Year Work Plan adopted by MedWet/Com;
- v. advise the MedWet/Com and MedWet Coordinator on ways and means of ensuring the capacity for the delivery of the responsibilities and work required of the MedWet Secretariat;
- vi. guide and supervise arrangements for the next meeting of MedWet/Com, as well as the technical session associated with it;
- vii. participate in the selection process for the MedWet Coordinator;
- viii. present to MedWet/Com at its regular meetings a summary report on the progress of the work carried out during the past period;
- ix. keep the members of the MedWet/Com informed intersessionally, through the MedWet Secretariat, of progress, activities and any issues arising in the implementation of the Initiative and
- x. undertake additional responsibilities as requested and approved by the MedWet/Com.

The MedWet Steering Group undertakes responsibilities that include those of the former MedWet “Advisory Board”, and has superseded that body.

The MedWet Secretariat

The MedWet Secretariat has been established by decision of the Standing Committee of the Ramsar Convention to serve the public interest and in particular to coordinate and facilitate the work of the MedWet Initiative in carrying out its mission. It operates under the authority and supervision of the MedWet/Com, MedWet Steering Group, and the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention.

The MedWet Secretariat was legally established in Kifissia (Athens, Greece) in 2002, as an “Association of a non-trading, non profit-making partnership” with an international remit. This is considered to be a temporary solution, until a fully international structure can be established in line with the legal structure needed for the Ramsar Secretariat. To assure that the MedWet Secretariat operates according to the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedures adopted by MedWet/Com, a **governing board** for this Association was established in 2007. Two representatives of the MedWet Steering Group and a key official of the Ramsar Secretariat, appointed by the Ramsar Secretary General, constitute the members of this governing board. The governing board of the MedWet Association employs the MedWet Coordinator, based on the Terms of Reference listed below.

The MedWet Secretariat consists of the MedWet Coordinator and other Secretariat staff, according to the programme needs and available resources.

The MedWet Coordinator is appointed by decision of the Ramsar Secretary General with the participation of the MedWet Steering Group and in full consultation with the MedWet/Com. Other MedWet Secretariat staff is appointed by the MedWet Secretariat Coordinator in consultation with the Secretary General and the Chair of the MedWet Steering Group

The MedWet Coordinator has the overall responsibility for the effective functioning of the MedWet Secretariat.

Responsibilities of the MedWet Secretariat

The responsibilities of the MedWet Secretariat are to:

- i. facilitate collaboration among MedWet members and projects and proactively seek to use the Centres’ expertise and resources in order to catalyse the development of projects and programmes;
- ii. act as the secretariat for the MedWet/Com, MedWet Steering Group and the MedWet Scientific and Technical Network;
- iii. assist MedWet States and national entities in the implementation of the Multi-Year Work Plan, including *inter alia* drafting projects, facilitating services and operational contacts and relations with funding institutions in order to mobilise resources for the implementation of the MedWet Strategic Priorities and Work Plan;
- iv. propose to the MedWet/Com for approval and manage an indicator system for monitoring the implementation of the MedWet Multi-Year Work Plan and the results achieved;
- v. identify and actively promote the involvement of Mediterranean stakeholders in the implementation of the MedWet Multi-Year Work Plan;
- vi. organise meetings of the MedWet/Com, Steering Group and Scientific and Technical Network;
- vii. administer the budget of MedWet/Com and the MedWet Secretariat, and prepare audited annual financial reports for Steering Group approval and Multi-Year budget and financial reports for MedWet/Com approval at each MedWet/Com meeting;
- viii. prepare and submit six-monthly implementation reports, through the MedWet Secretariat governing board, to the Steering Group;
- ix. assure dissemination of information related to projects (activities, results, plans and programmes, funding opportunities etc.);
- x. synergise the efforts of the Centres and the IOPs in their promotion of the Initiative;
- xi. identify opportunities to foster cooperation among and between MedWet/Com members, Ramsar site managers, NGOs, and other regional initiatives and institutions, and disseminate them at the appropriate level in a timely manner and
- xii. undertake other actions as allocated by the MedWet/Com and the MedWet Steering Group.

Responsibilities for the MedWet Coordinator

The main responsibilities of the MedWet Coordinator are the following:

- i. to serve the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee and the Steering Group as its executive secretary and to make sure that its decisions are promptly and faithfully carried out;
- ii. to catalyse activities in favour of the conservation and wise use of Mediterranean wetlands, within the framework of approved work plans, involving in their execution, in an equitable manner, the members of MedWet/Com;
- iii. to guide the MedWet Secretariat and to ensure that it operates efficiently. In particular, to select, train and supervise the Secretariat staff and guide their work, including individual annual performance appraisal reports to be submitted to the governing board of the Association;
- iv. to manage prudently the finances of the MedWet Secretariat, limiting expenses to the income possibilities, and guaranteeing a balanced budget, with proper accounting and allowance for contingencies;
- v. to draft the MedWet Secretariat annual work plans and submit them for approval to the Steering Group;
- vi. to report fully and accurately on progress of work and the financial situation on a six-monthly basis through the governing board to the Steering Group and
- vii. to represent the MedWet Initiative in national, regional or international fora in consultation with the Chair of the Steering Group.

The performance of the MedWet coordinator is evaluated on an annual basis by a three-member panel, consisting of the Chair of the Steering Group, one representative of the Ramsar Secretariat (appointed by the Secretary General) and a member of the governing board of the MedWet Secretariat Association. Her/ his tenure is for a three-year period, which can be renewed, at the proposal of the Steering Group, by decision of the Ramsar Secretary General in consultation with MedWet/Com.

The MedWet Scientific and Technical Network

1. Background

The MedWet Scientific and Technical Team (MWSTT) was established since the very beginning of MedWet in order to provide technical and scientific input to the MedWet Initiative. Up to now, it was composed of five Wetland Centres:

- Agencia Regionale per la Proteziona Ambientale della Toscana (ARPAT) in Italy;
- Greek Biotope Wetland Centre (EKBY) in Greece;
- Instituto da Conservacao de Natureza e da Biodiversidade (ICNB) in Portugal;
- Tour du Valat in France;
- Centro Espanol de Humedales (CEHUM) in Spain, as the Sede para el Estudio de los Humedales Mediterraneo (SEHUMED) was renamed.

Even though the MWSTT had successfully collaborated on various MedWet projects, it gradually ceased to be functional in coordinating and implementing joint projects. The MedWet/Com recognized in its 10th Meeting in Bastia that a modification of the MWSTT was necessary and mandated its restructuring into an open network. The new Scientific and Technical Network (MW/ST-Net) will work on an expertise basis, thus encouraging the involvement of more organizations from the South, East and Balkans, fostering a more sub-regional spirit.

2. Establishment of the MedWet Scientific and Technical Network (MW/ST-Net)

2.1. Objectives

1. To benefit from suitable expertise that can assist on a program or project basis in an open manner
2. To appropriately address the geographical specificities of MedWet country members
3. To increase the flexibility of MedWet to use existing and newly developed partnerships in order to better implement its mission.

4. To become an operational and technical reference panel that will capitalize on more competencies and capacities on a Mediterranean level.
5. To build networks around projects rather than projects around networks.

2.2. Fields of action

Priority will be given to the fields mentioned in the MedWet Work Plan as mandated by the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee.

2.3. Members of the MW/ST-Net

The MW/ST- Net will have a **core group** which will consist of the previous members of the MedWet Scientific and Technical Team as well as the MedWet International Organization Partners which are Wetlands International, BirdLife International, WWF-MedPo and IUCN-Med. The IOP's, and the wetland centres will be merged because of the similar nature of their work, their capacities of implementing projects and their expertise in the field of conservation and wise use of wetlands in the Mediterranean region.

New members will be approached based on specific project proposals, as the expansion of the network will primarily be project centred. These members will be identified based on an extensive list of resource organizations, compiled by the MedWet Secretariat, from MedWet's own experience and research as well as those used by IOP's and the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory. Membership in the ST-Net will not mean membership in the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee which can only happen after approval by the MedWet/Com. In the case of such an approval the organization will enter the core group.

3. Criteria for entry in the MW/ST-Net

1. Entities and resource persons that can join the MW/ST-Net can be institutes, universities, wetland protected areas, non-profit organizations, intergovernmental organizations, or Non Governmental Organizations (NGO's), that are registered organizations with a legal entity of their own and are based in the Mediterranean or working on Mediterranean issues preferably on wetlands and water.
2. The organization needs to have an interest and technical competencies in the field of water and wetlands either directly or as part of their general strategy.
3. The organization needs to be able to work on a pan-Mediterranean, or at the minimum at sub-regional level.
4. The organization needs to be financially self sufficient and provide MedWet with its budget for the previous and forthcoming year.
5. The organization needs to be able to provide a list of previous projects especially those related to wetlands and water and have a proven track record of implementing and managing projects.
6. The organization needs to be willing to participate in the development of the MedWet Strategic Vision and Work plan and serve the objectives of MedWet and the Ramsar Convention.
7. The organization needs to be willing to promote the work of MedWet in their publications and website.

4. Guidelines of Operation

- In order to join the MW/ST-Net, an organization can either express interest to the MedWet Coordinator, be invited by the MedWet Secretariat, or be recommended to the MedWet Coordinator by another entity or MedWet/Com member. It is then up to the Chair of the MedWet Steering Group to accept the proposed collaboration and approve the organization's joining the MW/ST-Net as a member. From the moment of a written expression of interest for joining, a response should be given by the Steering Group within 2 weeks maximum.
- Upon receiving approval for joining by the MedWet Steering Group, a Memorandum of Collaboration (MoC) should then be signed with the MedWet Secretariat. The duration of its

participation to the Network will not be necessarily related to the timeframe of the specific project of collaboration.

- An organization can leave from the MW/ST-Net at any time. If an organization does not fulfil its obligations under the MoC in such a way that cause problems to the functioning of the MW/ST-Net or the specific project, the Steering Group reserves the right to ask for their departure from the Network.
- The new members of the MW/ST-Net will be invited to contribute to the implementation of the scientific and technical aspects of the MedWet Strategic Vision and Work plan.

5. Responsibilities of MW/ST-Net members

- Provide technical and scientific input to the MedWet Initiative and facilitate/cooperate with MedWet towards the development of projects in the Mediterranean region;
- Contribute to the application of policies and the implementation of project centred activities;
- Contribute to the building of technical capacity including inter alia the transfer of knowledge and expertise both project and CEPA centred;
- Contribute to the drafting of the MedWet Strategic Priorities and Multi-year Work Plan;
- Promote activities and projects based on the MedWet Multi-year Work Plan and
- Provide scientific and technical peer review and quality control of the Initiative's projects and programs.

MedWet *ad hoc* working groups, including networks

MedWet's *ad hoc* working groups are thematic working groups comprising individuals and organisations, established in order to address priority technical, scientific or organisational/institutional needs of the MedWet Initiative's Multi-Year Work Plan.

MedWet *ad hoc* working groups consist of experts from MedWet/Com members and may invite the participation of external experts as necessary. The participation of the members is to be provided *pro bono*.

The working groups are established by decision of the MedWet/Com, and have a temporary character. They are dissolved by decision of the MedWet/Com once their objectives have been delivered.

The work of the *ad hoc* working groups is facilitated by the MedWet Secretariat. They report to MedWet/Com through the MedWet Secretariat and MedWet Steering Group.

4. Use of the MedWet Initiative name and logo

The name and logo of the MedWet Initiative are legally protected.

The MedWet Initiative name and logo can, and should, be used by any MedWet/Com member for activities implemented within the framework of MedWet Initiative, complying with standards developed by the Scientific and Technical Network and approved by MedWet/Com.

Any other organisation or individual wishing to use the logo should obtain approval from the MedWet/Com, or under its delegated responsibility, the Chair of the MedWet Steering Group.

Annex 1

MedWet/Com members (as in April 2012)

Governments of countries and entities	Albania, Algeria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, The FYR of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Palestinian Authority
Intergovernmental Organizations	Ramsar Convention Barcelona Convention Bern Convention European Commission UNDP
International Organisation Partners (IOPs) of the Ramsar Convention	BirdLife International IUCN Wetlands International WWF IWMI
Wetland Centres	Agenzia Regionale per la Protezione Ambientale della Toscana (ARPAT) Greek Biotope Wetland Centre (EKBY) Portuguese Wetland Centre (CEZH/ICNB) Centro Espanol de Humedales (CEHUM) Station Biologique de la Tour du Valat (TdV)
Honorary members	Dr. Luc Hoffmann Mr. Thymio Papayannis