



## Note to the teacher.

### 1. Background information & Objectives

We decided to create a Role Playing Game (RPG) as a tool for environmental/wetland education. We believe that environmental education is vital in order to equip children with the attitudes, values, knowledge and skills necessary to rethink and change current patterns of action and to become well rounded and environmentally conscious adults.

The objectives of this RPG are to educate students on the value and functions of wetlands and the threats posed to wetlands by the activities of humans. At the same time to demonstrate to the students the complexity of environmental problems and the multitude of stakeholders and interests involved. Finally, to show them that the dialogue approaches and the use of science are the basic ways of resolving environmental problems. In addition, the RPG can have a positive effect on public speaking skills and team work and hence, can have other benefits on the students rather than simply environmental education.

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### 2. Role Playing Game process

In the MedWet Secretariat we would like to thank you for your willingness to participate in this activity and we hope it will be enjoyable and educational both for you and your students. The documents we have provided you can only be successful with your involvement and indeed much of the success of this game depends on your initiative, input and enthusiasm.

Before starting the game and after having read all the documents provided by us, you must decide how much time you will allocate to the RPG. We have created a set of six steps that must be completed for the proper application of the RPG. Each step- except the field visit- can be completed in 45' to 1:30 hours. The steps of the RPG can be extended, activities can be added and extra research can be made on issues of characteristics of wetlands, fishing, agriculture, tourism climate change and others. It is a matter of the time available for this module.

The first step introduces students to the concept of wetlands and aims to elicit the knowledge they already have on the issue through their own experiences or what they have heard. The second step involves a visit to the classroom by an expert, ideally a member of the NGO/ wetland association you are collaborating with or someone invited by them. The expert will present the functions and values of wetlands and will illustrate this with a local case study. He/she may also begin to introduce the concept of stakeholders. After this step the students must make their own quick research based



on the characteristics of a local wetland (Fauna/flora, human activities, pressures, geography) in order to be more able to understand and enquire during the field visit.

The third step involves a field visit where the students can experience a wetland and if possible speak with local stakeholders.

The fourth step is about a more in-depth research on issues that will be dealt with during the RPG and wants to allow students to use their own initiative and intrigue their curiosity in order to find information.

The fifth step is the actual Role Playing Game. It is based on a fictional wetland and involves 7 stakeholders with different interests and demands. The aim is to understand together the issues involved in the protection and the development of a wetland and to create solutions through dialogue between various stakeholders.

The sixth step gets students to consider the knowledge they have gained while playing the RPG and to apply them to a local wetland.

The process of the six steps is to listen to the existing knowledge the students have, to guide them with the help of the expert and the field visit, to enrich through the students own research, to show them how to take positions different to their own, to engage them in a dialogue and finally to allow them to make a synthesis of what they have learnt in order to be able to describe the issues and challenges in their own case study (local wetland).

## 2.1 Introductory activities (Step 1-4)

Students may or may not know about wetlands. The aim of the introductory activities is to evoke any knowledge they already have and their imagination, then to educate them on facts about wetlands and to provide them with a hands on, experiential field visit to a wetland. Each step can be completed in an hour- except the field visit. The activities can be enriched with your own ideas and style and can be extended to more sessions, if you so wish.

## 2.2 Role Playing Game (Step 5- Phase A & B)

***Story: A wetland is being shared between various stakeholders (see Map 1 and PowerPoint presentation of the scenario): in order to assure that all stakeholders are represented in the decision making process, the local authorities have decided to create a management committee involving all stakeholders- with the help of invited experts (see Role Cards). The aim of the management committee (and the game) is to find the best possible scenarios for the management of the wetland and its resources while assuring that all stakeholders have been heard and have agreed in a common strategy.***



### 2.2.1 Scenario

Before starting step 5, it is important to take 15 minutes and present to the students the scenario, which we have provided in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. This is important because without the information given in the scenario the students will not be able to answer their “role preparation worksheets”. Each group that has the same role will be given a printed copy of the PowerPoint presentation so that they can use it in Phase A.

### 2.2.2 Roles

There are 8 stakeholder roles and so the class needs to be divided into 8 groups (no student must take a role on their own). One of the most demanding roles is that of the “experts” who need to provide technical advice on the environmental impact of the stakeholders’ actions and demands. This role requires a minimum of three students. The local authorities are being represented by the teacher who makes the welcome note to the management committee.

1. *STOCKBREEDER*
2. *FARMER*
3. *FISHERMAN*
4. *INDUSTRIALIST*
5. *DEVELOPER*
6. *RESIDENTS*
7. *NGO*
8. *EXPERTS*

Stakeholders 1-6 are the ones that have specific demands and their role is to present their demands, argue with other stakeholders and in the end provide potential proposals to be voted for. Stakeholders 7 and 8 have a different rationale. The NGO is mainly interested in protecting the wetland and its ecological integrity at all costs. The experts have been invited by the local authorities for their scientific knowledge of the problems and issues and in order to present other approaches that could be applied. They intervene for or against projects but don’t have demands of their own. That is why they are responsible for counting the votes in Phase B. The experts are also given the “environmental impact table” which assists them in presenting these alternatives.

Because of this separation between the stakeholders, roles 1-6 have a common “role preparation worksheet” whereas roles 7 and 8 have a different “role preparation worksheet”. This worksheet is designed to help the students understand their role, the effects they have on other stakeholders, on the community and on the natural environment. We have provided an “example role preparation worksheet” in order to show what kinds of answers are expected. If you feel a question should be changed or added that is perfectly acceptable. To better understand the role of each stakeholder please refers to the “role cards”.

### 2.2.3 Phase A

In Phase A you must divide the students into groups and allocate them roles. In their group, the students must complete the “role preparation worksheet” and discuss on their role. Then the management committee meeting begins and you as a representative of the local authorities welcome the stakeholders and explain why the meeting is being held. After, a representative of the NGO briefly presents why the wetland is important, its values and why it should be protected. Then a representative from each role takes the floor for three minutes and presents their position, there are two minutes for questions, comments and exchange of ideas.

### 2.2.4 Phase B

In Phase B the students are divided into groups again but this time they create mini-management committees with one (or more) representatives of each role. The students dialogue between them and try to take some decision for the management of the wetland. The process concludes with propositions on which the students must vote for or against. The experts are in charge of counting the votes. Once decisions are made, each group must connect the into a management plan and must select a representative to present it in front of the whole class.

In the final phase of the game, the groups present their management plans and all together discuss in order to create a final, common management plan. They can simply choose the best one or they combine elements from all of them. They can even vote again in order to reach a final decision.

Keep in mind that:

- All groups in Phase A must have a printed copy of the scenario.
- The roles of the “experts” are more demanding and there should be a minimum of three students in this group. They should also be given the “environmental impact table”.
- The NGO and the experts have different “role preparation worksheets”

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Please don't forget.....

- To film and photograph as much as possible during all the steps: debate, stakeholder interventions, field visit etc.
- To film the debate so we can create a short film after the completion of the RPG.
- To use your imagination in order to add or change activities, roles etc.
- To encourage the students to use their imagination and animate their role by giving names and acting like the stakeholder.
- The roles of the “experts” are different and quite demanding, so provide your help where necessary.



In case you require any clarifications, your first point of contact is the NGO, wetland association etc. which will take the role of technical advisor and facilitator. You can also contact us directly in the MedWet Secretariat by sending an e-mail to [lily@medwet.org](mailto:lily@medwet.org) or phone 0030-2108089270.

Once again, thank you very much for your participation.

The MedWet Secretariat.