

20 Draft MedWet Project Concepts For comments and feedback and expressions of interest

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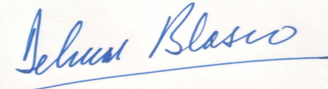
INTRODUCTION

To be faithful to its Mission and *raison d'être*, MedWet has to bring added value to the MedWet countries by promoting concrete actions on the ground to further the implementation of the Ramsar Convention to the maximum extent possible. Another significant aspect of the MedWet Mission is to encourage and facilitate cooperation in the Mediterranean in multiple directions among and inside ALL the sub-regions -- North and South, East and West -- and among ALL stakeholders: governments, regional and international organizations, non-governmental and civil society organizations, scientific and technical personnel, including wetland managers, and users of wetland services.

In order to do so, the MedWet Secretariat is working on a number of project concepts with a view to identify potential partners and sources of funding to then proceed to the preparation of full project proposals.

It should be clear that it is not the intention of the Secretariat neither to become a “mega project implementation mechanism”, nor to finance its core costs through project overheads. It is envisaged that most MedWet projects will be implemented by partners. Only in exceptional circumstances the MedWet Secretariat would hire additional personnel or consultants for the implementation of specific projects.

Your comments and/or expressions of interest will be most welcome.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Delmar Blasco".

Delmar Alberto Blasco Bellomaría
MedWet Coordinator

PROCESS

Step 1. These projects concepts will be elaborated in more detail in the next two months on the basis of the feedback received primarily from the MedWet countries but also from other stakeholders.

Step 2. MedWet countries will be invited to express their interest in participating in project implementation in their territories and/or possible funding contributions. The MedWet Secretariat will actively encourage the participation of MedWet countries from different sub-regions, developing and developed countries alike, in each project, so as to promote a sense of “common cause” and the exchange of experiences and lessons learnt.

Step 3. The MedWet Secretariat will actively seek to enlist one to four partners for each project.

Step 4. The project concepts will be introduced to potential funders.

Step 5. Full project proposals will be develop for those project concepts that have obtained an expression of interest from one or more potential funders.

Step 6. If funding is secured, agreements will be signed with the partner(s) for each project concerning project implementation.

PROJECT CONCEPTS

BASIC TOOLS SERIES

Project concept 1 – Assessing pressures on water and wetlands in the Mediterranean through the *water footprint (WF)* indicators

(A joint proposal MedWet/Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO))

The project would:

- a) complete the picture for *blue water scarcity* and the *grey WF*;
- b) calculate their values for the recent period (e.g. 2010-2014) to allow direct comparison with the existing ‘standard’ figures for the WF indicators, i.e. 1996-2005 → *Assess progress (or degradation) of the situation in MedWet countries*;
- c) assess the feasibility of enhancing the grey WF by:
 - i) including pollutants other than Nitrogen-based (Phosphorus pesticides? heavy metals?); and
 - ii) refining the picture at sub-national scale (provinces, river basins?); and
- d) prepare recommendations on how to use the findings of the project in water-related decision making.

Note: This project concept is in a more advanced design phase than the rest.

Project concept 2 – Wetland inventories

MedWet has developed tools for wetland inventory and has assisted countries in using them. Nevertheless, the analysis of a sample of 10 MedWet countries National Reports recently submitted to the Ramsar Convention in preparation for COP12 in 2015, shows that some of them still lack complete inventories of their wetlands resources. This is a high priority if countries would develop, as required by Ramsar, credible National Wetland Strategies or similar tools, including the appropriate legislation to support them.

Project concept 3 – Study and valuation of wetland ecosystem services

Pilot project for an in-depth study and valuation of wetlands ecosystem services in 15 important sites in five MedWet countries. In addition to the description of findings, the project should include the elaboration of:

- a) recommendations to ensure the long term conservation of those services;
- b) recommendations for their sustainable use for the benefit of biodiversity and human populations related to them; and
- c) elaboration of tools for the effective transmission of the results to decision-makers and wetlands stakeholders (e.g. local authorities, wetland managers, farmers, fishermen, hunters, NGOs, etc.).

Background. The Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory collated in 2010 all known Mediterranean case studies of ecological services provided by wetlands (see *Mediterranean Wetlands Outlook 2012*, p. 60-61). However these have only been compiled in terms of statistics showing which services have been the most or the least studied so far in the region. There is therefore a need for updating and completing this information and translating the technical studies into powerful tools which could enable MedWet countries to promote the cause of wetlands because of the services they provide to nature and to human populations.

On the basis of the lessons learnt, the project could be extended in a second phase to all MedWet countries.

WETLANDS WISE USE SERIES

Project concept 4 – Artisanal coastal & inland fisheries

A pilot project to assess artisanal coastal and inland fisheries and to elaborate plans for their ecological and economic sustainability in at least three developing MedWet countries, using a participatory approach involving all stakeholders.

Note: A similar pilot project is in progress concerning artisanal fisheries in Marine Protected Areas in six EU countries.

In a second phase and using the lessons learnt, the project could be extended to other interested countries.

Project concept 5 – Sustainable tourism

The project would develop sustainable tourism models (e.g. bird-watching, sport fishing, rural tourism, etc.) in at least five sites in at least three countries, including strategies to implement those models.

In a second phase and using the lessons learnt, the project could be extended to other interested countries.

Project concept 6 – Cultural values

Recuperation and/or revalorization of cultural values and plans for their long term conservation, including:

- a) outreach plans to make those values better known at national and regional level;
- b) possible promotion of those values through appropriate activities such as regular festivals; and
- c) plans for socio-economic development activities, such as production of handcrafts and/or creation of labels for food products, including the design of marketing strategies.

WETLAND MANAGEMENT SERIES

Project concept 7 – Integrated Coastal Zone Management

Development of Integrated Coastal Zone Management plans for specific regions in at least three countries, as pilot methodology for future application to the coastal zones as a whole. After assessment of the countries' priority needs for legal, policy & institutional reforms to strengthen the ecosystem based approach with ICZM, the project should develop models for integrating the environmental and socioeconomic aspects and the implementation of a participatory dialogue on coastal governance.

Project concept 8 – Adaptation to climate change

The project should elaborate climate change adaptation measures through a resilient network of wetland areas in six MedWet countries. The main objectives would be:

- a) to assess and document anticipated impacts of several climate changes scenarios on the essential services and functions of key wetland sites;
- b) to communicate the main environmental, cultural and socio-economic values which in turn can contribute to the adoption of climate change adaptation measures;
- c) the development and implementation of community-based adaptation strategies and monitoring frameworks in a number of pilot wetland sites;
- d) the development and refinement of carbon sequestration /carbon credit trading mechanisms in a number of pilot wetland sites to ensure their financial sustainability;
- e) the enhancement of key institutional capacities of relevant stakeholders with regard to wetlands resilience to climate change; and
- f) the dissemination of the main outputs and lessons learned among the project partners and beyond.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT SERIES

Project concept 9 – Community participation

Community participation in Ramsar Sites management, as a concrete implementation of the “Ramsar City Accreditation” envisaged in a draft Resolution sponsored by Tunisia to be submitted to Ramsar COP12. Even if the draft is not adopted at COP12, the project will seek to use key elements included in the “Framework for Ramsar City Accreditation” attached to the draft Resolution (see “COP12 Draft Resolutions” at <http://www.ramsar.org/event/48th-meeting-of-the-ramsar-standing-committee>).

Project concept 10 – *Hima* participative biodiversity monitoring and sustainable use

Birdlife International in the Middle East is reviving the *hima*, a traditional system under which communities manage natural areas such as woodlands, grasslands and wetlands, and protect them from over-exploitation. Dating back at least to the sixth century, the *hima* system began to decline with modern changes in land use and transport. A feature of the system is its flexibility, with regulations, management and responsibilities determined at a local level according to local needs and priorities. Therefore the *hima* system allows a mixture of strict protection and sustainable use, and in many places it has supported the preservation of biodiversity that has been lost from the wider landscape.

Based on the *hima* community participation concept, the project would promote similar approaches in different wetlands of the region and seek to create a network of research centres and NGOs/CSOs interested in and supporting these practices.

Project concept 11 – Private sector involvement

The project would envisage the development of wetland conservation initiatives with active involvement (including funding) of the private sector (one or more companies in each case) in at least three countries.

Based on the experience gained in more than 16 years of operation of the partnership between the Ramsar Secretariat and the Danone Group, the intention is to identify other companies operating in the Mediterranean for the development of similar partnerships. For further information on the Danone/Ramsar partnership see www.ramsar.org

RAMSAR IMPLEMENTATION SERIES

Project concept 12 – Ramsar Sites designation

The project would provide assistance in the identification of potential Ramsar Sites using the Ramsar Guidelines and in the preparation of the Ramsar Information Sheet(s) in countries with few Ramsar designations and a significant potential for more.

As of September 2014, the 26 MedWet countries have inscribed 396 sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance, encompassing more than 9 million hectares of highly diverse wetland types. Nevertheless, in practically all MedWet countries there is a potential for more Ramsar Site designations. This constitutes an important first step for the long term conservation of those wetlands.

Project concept 13 – Ramsar Sites management

The Ramsar Site designations, if they are not followed with the development and effective implementation of management plans for the sites, could become meaningless. Thus, this pilot project would assist countries to develop management plans for at least six Ramsar Sites in at least three MedWet countries, with sound and credible means and measures for their effective implementation on the ground in the short, medium and long term (e.g. it may be necessary to change the conservation status of the Sites if they are not legally protected areas). The project should have an important outreach component with lessons learned to be disseminated to all the other Mediterranean countries.

In a second phase and using the lessons learnt, the project could be extended to other interested countries.

Project concept 14 – Wetland restoration

Even if there are no confirmed figures, it is estimated that at least 50% of Mediterranean wetlands have been lost or seriously degraded in the last century. Thus, in addition to safeguarding still existing wetlands, wetland rehabilitation may represent a high priority in many countries. Through this project, wetland rehabilitation will be carried out in at least one site in five MedWet countries, developed and developing countries, if possible in wetlands of similar characteristics/functions (e.g. waterbird habitats, either permanent or wintering) or having similar ecosystem functions (e.g. aquifer recharge or flood control). The project could represent a model of sustainable wetlands restoration and also include pilot experiences of creation of new wetlands for specific functions.

In a second phase and using the lessons learnt, the project could be extended to other interested countries.

Project concept 15 – Conservation of Mediterranean Basin island wetlands

The Greek government has introduced a Draft Resolution for Ramsar COP12 (June 2015) entitled *Conservation of Mediterranean Basin island wetlands*. The draft, *inter alia*,

- a) “URGES Mediterranean Contracting Parties in the framework of the MedWet Initiative, to produce or update as a matter of high priority a complete, a scientifically-based inventory of their island wetlands, based on appropriate methodologies, such as the one developed for Greek island wetlands, and to share it through a MedWet database; ...[and]
- b) DIRECTS the Ramsar Secretariat to:
...
c) develop, share and disseminate case studies, with the help of the MedWet Initiative and other partners where Mediterranean island wetlands have been:
 - i) negatively affected by human interventions, including through the spread of invasive species; and
 - ii) effectively protected or restored, through particular measures and through their designation as Ramsar Sites and/or other forms of protection...”.

Regardless of the decision of the Ramsar Standing Committee and later the COP concerning this Draft Resolution, the MedWet Secretariat considers that the above-mentioned actions deserve to be implemented as soon as possible. Thus, this Project concept envisages to implement those activities.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AWARENESS SERIES

Project concept 16 – MedWet presence at Ramsar COP12

The 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention will be held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, on 1-9 June 2015. The MedWet Secretariat is planning to promote a significant MedWet, and, by implication, Mediterranean presence at the COP. To that end this project envisages:

- a) to mount a “Mediterranean Space” in an appropriate area of the COP facilities where all Mediterranean countries and regional intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions and the region’s private sector can have a presence;
- b) to produce a significant MedWet exhibition designed in such a way that it could be replicated later in all MedWet countries in the national languages with support from MedWet; and
- c) include in the “Mediterranean Space” at COP12 facilities for side events, films, round tables and other activities, including cultural events and promotion of regional products.

Project concept 17 – Wetland species of the year

Pilot project in at least five countries based on the designation of a “*wetland species of the year*”, with associated activities of protection of the species and public awareness campaigns related to wetlands and wetland species.

The project may be related to the same wetland species in the participating countries or to the different species, based on national priorities, but with a similar approach.

In a second phase and using the lessons learnt, the project could be extended to other interested countries and be replicated year after year or at regular intervals.

Project concept 18 – Ramsar site of the year

Pilot project in at least five countries based on the designation of a “*wetland of the year*” (preferably a Ramsar Site), with associated activities for the protection of the site and public awareness campaigns related to wetlands.

In a second phase and using the lessons learnt, the project could be extended to other interested countries and be replicated year after year or at regular intervals.

NETWORKING SERIES

Project concept 19 – Mediterranean Deltas and Main Estuaries Symposium

The project would envisage the organization of a Mediterranean Symposium involving decision-makers and other stakeholders involved in the management of Deltas and Main Estuaries in order to:

- a) analyse the current conservation status of the Mediterranean deltas and main estuaries;
- b) establish the basis for the elaboration of a Mediterranean strategy for the conservation and effective management of Mediterranean deltas and estuaries; and
- c) establishing a Network of Mediterranean Deltas and Main Estuaries with a view to generate exchanges, disseminate experiences and promote further pilot actions for the protection and effective management of the deltas and main estuaries of the region.

Project concept 20 – Mediterranean Oases Symposium

The project would envisage the organization of a Mediterranean Symposium on Oases to:

- a) analyse the current conservation status of the oases in MedWet countries;
- b) establish the basis for the elaboration of an strategy for the conservation and effective management of oases in MedWet countries; and
- c) establishing a Network of Oases in Mediterranean Countries with a view to generate exchanges, disseminate experiences and promote further pilot actions for oases protection against desertification, urbanisation and inadequate management.