

SPECIALIST GROUP ON THE INTEGRITY OF THE WATER CYCLE

MEDWET/STN/SG/WATER

Work plan 2018-2020



January 2018

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Background

This document presents the context in which the SG-Water operates and its first triennial work plan for 2018-2020. It is based on the Terms of Reference for the MedWet/STN as adopted by the 12th Meeting of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (Paris, 7-11 February 2016).

In February 2016, the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee adopted the establishment of the **MedWet/STN (Scientific and Technical Network)** to develop technical guidance to the Regional Initiative for Mediterranean Wetlands or MedWet.

Specialist groups

Five Specialist Groups (SG) have been established in the framework of this network: Inventories, Ecosystem services, Climate change, Biodiversity, and **Water**.

Each SG shall prepare a triennial work plan to be submitted to the Chair of the MedWet/STN, who in turn should submit it for the approval of the Ramsar's Mediterranean Wetlands Committee.

The Specialist Group on the integrity of the Water cycle

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Water Specialist Group is to provide knowledge on wetland-inclusive watershed planning as well as the status and the reporting challenges associated with water-related indicators such as withdrawals and pollutant inputs.

More specifically, the group is expected to:

- provide decision-makers, wetland practitioners and other stakeholders with the necessary watershed planning methods, guidelines and tools, including through capacity enhancement and at the appropriate nested level of coordination, to better fulfil their commitments and obligations towards the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and other international and sub-regional (EU) policy objectives; and
- help improve the capacity of relevant agencies in the Mediterranean to report on their “water indicators” in alignment and synergy with existing and new protocols for compiling wetland inventories under the different frameworks.

The Group can also help overcome current biases in the inclusion of ecosystem services in watershed planning and sustainable management by addressing methodological and knowledge gaps in collaboration with SG-Ecosystems.

MEMBERS OF THE SPECIALIST GROUP

The Water Specialist Group gathers 9 scientists from 7 countries with complementary expertise on different topics related to water resources management.

NAME	INSTITUTION	COUNTRY
1. Stefano Barchiesi <i>Chair</i>	IUCN Global Water Programme	Switzerland
2. Christian Perennou	MWO - Tour du Valat	France
3. Nienke Ansems	IGRAC	The Netherlands
4. Francesca Antonelli	WWF Freshwater Practice	Italy
5. Antonio Camacho	University of Valencia	Spain
6. Amr Abdel Elmegeed	CEDARE	Egypt
7. Dimitris Faloutsos	GWP-Med	Greece
8. Eva Hernandez	WWF-Spain	Spain
9. Eric Mino	EMWIS/SEMIDE	France

Thematic areas and work plan

According to the Terms of Reference for the SG-Water as commented on by its members, the group is expected to focus on the following themes:

- Environmental flows: how can ecosystem water requirements be quantified? How the hydrology of Mediterranean wetlands can shift with climate change?
- The possibilities of monitoring ecosystem health of wetlands (i.e. water quality) on a large scale in the Mediterranean beyond the monitoring of the Water Framework Directive water bodies in EU countries.
- The innovative management of watersheds to reduce pressure on water resources.
- Summaries of knowledge/case studies on ecosystem services linked to water provided by Mediterranean wetlands (a crosscutting task with the SG-Ecosystems).
- How can contacts with the socio-economic stakeholders responsible for pressure on water resources be strengthened?
- What means of communication are most likely to influence them?

AREAS OF WORK

In line with the themes above, the main areas of work agreed with the chairs of the other SGs are:

1. Environmental water requirements of Mediterranean wetlands

An analysis of a 2017 global review on environmental flows implementation has led to the development of a Ramsar STRP Policy Brief on the environmental water requirements of wetlands. The SG will identify and prepare case studies for the Mediterranean in conjunction with that work, as the basis for linking wetland inventories, ecosystem valuations, and watershed level planning.

These evidence-based summaries are in turn expected to contribute to reviewing and updating policies and guidelines for negotiation and implementation of wetland water requirements in the Mediterranean.

2. Mediterranean wetlands as natural infrastructure

The SG-Water will review available examples where project development or pressure from human activities affect ecosystem services supply from the affected Mediterranean wetlands, as well as examples where ecosystem services affect water infrastructure (in conjunction with SG-Ecosystems).

Ultimately, the methods and tools stemming from this work are expected to improve watershed planning including through quantification of pressures from different water uses more broadly.

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3. Mediterranean wetlands and water indicators

The SG-Water will review trends and reporting challenges for “water indicators” under the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the CBD and other biodiversity related conventions, e.g. available water resources, good ambient water quality, integrated water resources management, and change in the extent of freshwater ecosystems (in coordination with SG-Inventories, SG-Climate change and SG-Biodiversity).

This is in turn expected to increase knowledge and align processes for development and reporting on “water indicators”, including through shared databases of relevant metrics. Relevant agencies and civil society stakeholders will also benefit from this work and their capacity to manage wetlands for multiple values and wise use hopefully be enhanced.

MEDWET STN- Water Specialist group - Potential activities list for 2018-2020.

Area of work	Initiative name	Coordinators and participants	Foreseen time-period
Environmental water requirements of Mediterranean wetlands	1. (policy brief on the) environmental water requirements of wetlands and their importance for watershed management in the Mediterranean, including the effects of climate change on natural water flows	Antonio Camacho, Stefano Barchiesi & Christian Perennou	mid 2018
Mediterranean wetlands as natural infrastructure	2. (technical report or practical toolkit on the) process for incorporating previously unvalued benefits of wetlands into sectoral development planning at the watershed scale	Antonio Camacho & Nienke Ansems	mid 2019
Mediterranean wetlands and water indicators	3. (briefing note on the) trends and status of “water indicators” as well as the reporting practice associated with them	Antonio Camacho & Sherine El-Wattar On behalf of Amr Abdel-Meguid (CEDARE)	end 2018

TARGET AUDIENCE

Dissemination of results is a key aspect to influence implementation of measures by decision makers, and to promote higher awareness and concern in the general public.

The key target audience groups to whom the work will be addressed are:

- Policy-makers, including those from the environment and water sectors and other related sectors such as energy, health and sanitation, agriculture, infrastructure; and
- Practitioners and in particular wetland managers and stakeholders, but also others from related fields, such as protected area managers and staff of wetland education centres.
- Scientists, as we need to approach the research of other scientists to the water management problems and its effects, to offer sounder scientific solutions to these concerns. This can be done by, e.g. special sessions in scientific meetings, brief papers on the effects (for a scientific point of view) of management modes, etc. In brief, we need more members of the scientific community having a perspective that their research can help to solve environmental problems and thinking on how to do it.

In addition, the SG-Water will produce information for outreach and further mobilization at key scientific events.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

Based on the results of the work carried out by the SG under the different thematic areas, and depending on the availability of resources to achieve them, concrete outputs will be delivered targeting a particular audience. These products can be of different kinds in order to successfully reach the different audiences.

- a. Reports e.g. a technical report or practical toolkit on the process for incorporating previously unvalued benefits of wetlands into sectoral development planning at the watershed scale;
- b. Conferences, symposia, workshops: participation to relevant meetings by SG members where they can highlight the work, objectives, results, etc. of the group to increase visibility and raise awareness but also deliver lectures or network to upscale dissemination;
- c. Policy briefs: addressing key issues and targeting decision-makers e.g. a policy brief on the environmental water requirements of wetlands and their importance for watershed management in the Mediterranean;
- d. Guidelines, e.g. a briefing note on the trends and status of “water indicators” as well as the reporting practice associated with them
- e. Scientific papers: as a result of the SG members’ work; and
- f. Leaflets, clips: targeting general public.

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IMPORTANT EVENTS

The table below contains a list of important dates to bear in mind in order to produce some input.

EVENT NAME	DATE AND VENUE	IDEAS TO DEVELOP
World Wetlands Day 2018	2 February 2018 Worldwide celebration	The theme for 2018 is "Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future". It can be interesting to highlight in social media and on STN website something related to the water management of wetlands sites next to Mediterranean urban areas.
Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP13)	21-29 October 2018 Dubai, UAE	
Symposium of the European Federation of Freshwater Sciences	June 30th till July 5th 2019, Zagreb, Croatia	Promote a special session on "freshwater sciences and water management", as well as outreach activities.

ONGOING PROJECTS

The following are ongoing initiatives, projects, etc. which are considered relevant for the SG in terms of lessons learned and possible synergies.

-- Natura 2000 biogeographical seminars series

Contact Information

For information regarding the SG-Water, please contact:

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Chair of MedWet STN Water Specialist Group

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IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)
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Currently: Water and Marine Resources Unit – Directorate D
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For information regarding the STN, please visit this page:

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

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MedWet

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

MedWet is a Ramsar Regional Initiative.

Summary table

Goal 1: Environmental water requirements of Mediterranean wetlands.					
Key Activity	Timeline	Expected Outcome	Data Source and Methodology	Person Responsible	Comments/Constraints
1.1 Environmental water requirements of wetlands and their importance for watershed management in the Mediterranean, including the effects of climate change on natural water flows.	mid 2018	Policy brief	Identify and prepare case studies for the Mediterranean in conjunction with the Ramsar STRP Policy Brief on the environmental water requirements of wetlands	Antonio Camacho Stefano Barchiesi Christian Perennou	
Goal 2: Mediterranean wetlands as natural infrastructure.					
Key Activity	Timeline	Expected Outcome	Data Source and Methodology	Person/Area Responsible	Comments
2.1 Process for incorporating previously unvalued benefits of wetlands into sectoral development planning at the watershed scale.	mid 2019	Technical report or practical toolkit	Review available examples where project development or pressure from human activities affect ecosystem services supply	Antonio Camacho Nienke Ansems	
Goal 3: Mediterranean wetlands and water indicators.					
Key Activity	Timeline	Expected Outcome	Data Source and Methodology	Person/Area Responsible	Comments
3.1 Trends and status of “water indicators” as well as the reporting practice associated with them.	end 2018	Briefing note	Review trends and reporting challenges for “water indicators”	Antonio Camacho Sherine El-Wattar <i>On behalf of Amr Abdel-Meguid (CEDARE)</i>	