

SPECIALIST GROUP ON MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF WETLAND BIODIVERSITY

MEDWET/STN/SG/BIODIVERSITY

Work plan 2018-2020



January 2018

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Background

This document presents the context in which the Biodiversity SG 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 **Scientific and Technical Network (MedWet/STN)** to develop technical guidance to MedWet.

SPECIALIST GROUPS

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

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 Ramsar's Mediterranean Wetlands Committee.

The Specialist Group on monitoring and assessment of wetland biodiversity

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Biodiversity Specialist Group is to identify the knowledge gaps that prevent decisions being made to help preserve wetland biodiversity.

In addition, the group is expected to provide advice to the MWO and other key stakeholders on the development of indicators and their interpretation in the fields of biodiversity and climate change. It can also boost the development of research projects related to wetland biodiversity.

MEMBERS OF THE SPECIALIST GROUP

The Biodiversity Specialist Group gathers 14 scientists from 12 countries with expertise on different taxonomic groups and topics related to Mediterranean wetland biodiversity.

NAME	INSTITUTION	COUNTRY
1. Violeta Barrios <i>Chair</i>	IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation	Spain
2. Thomas Galewski	Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory - Tour du Valat	France
3. Flavio Monti	MedWet - University of Siena	Italy
4. Yamina Kadid	Ecole Nationale Supérieure Agronomique	Algeria
5. Geert De Knijf	Department of Biodiversity & Natural Environment, Research Institute for Nature and Forest	Belgium
6. Mathieu Thevenet	Initiative PIM	France
7. Eva Papastergiadou	University of Patras	Greece
8. Simonetta Bagella	University of Sassari	Italy
9. Myrna Semaan	American University of Technology	Lebanon
10. Khaled Etayeb	University of Tripoli	Libya
11. Branko Micevski	Ss. Cyril and Methodius University	Macedonia
12. Sidi Imad Cherkaoui	Université Moulay Ismail	Morocco
13. Manuel Lopes-Lima	University of Porto	Portugal
14. Jasmina Krpo-Četković	University of Belgrade	Serbia

Thematic areas and work plan

According to the Terms of Reference for the SG/Biodiversity, the group should focus on the following themes:

- Summarising knowledge on the values and services provided by the biodiversity in Mediterranean wetlands and its ability to influence decision-making;
- The summary of knowledge on the conflicts between biodiversity and human activities (economic and others) and the solutions provided to address them;
- The possibility of extending a system for mapping and identifying wetland habitats of global importance to Mediterranean countries outside of the European Union;
- The monitoring of the conservation status of areas of key importance for wetland biodiversity;
- The production of scientific position papers on the key subjects mentioned above; and
- The communication and dissemination of the results of the MedWet/SG/Biodiversity to a wide audience.

MAIN WORKING LINES

In line with the thematic areas, the main working lines agreed with members of the SG are:

1. (re)Assessment of the conservation status of key wetland species.

The following taxonomic groups have been highlighted as good starting points for reassessment of their conservation status as their Red List evaluations are outdated and new data to update their status is available.

- *Freshwater fishes*
- *Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies)*
- *Amphibians*
- *Freshwater molluscs*

The SG will also gather the available assessments at different spatial scale for other important groups (e.g. vascular plants), including national assessments, in order to undertake a meta-analysis of the assessments already available for target taxonomic groups.

2. Invasive species in wetlands

This is a key issue for freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity conservation in the region and worldwide. The group should address specific invasive species for Mediterranean wetlands to provide advice and guidelines on which should be eradicated in priority, including best elimination techniques based on previous successful operations.

The role of citizen science as an important data provider will also be highlighted, to involve citizens to collect data on invasive species distribution. At the local scale the SG will foster networking with ongoing initiatives on this issue, e.g. LIFE ASAP.

3. Assessment of wetland ecosystems

The assessment of freshwater ecosystems to highlight the menacing risks and vulnerabilities impacting them and their biodiversity is of urgent action in order to propose concrete measures for decision making.

This working line could be developed in collaboration with the other SG such the Inventories SG to assess, applying the Red List of Ecosystems standard, one type of Mediterranean wetland (for example temporary ponds) using satellite data analysis, and the Water and Climate Change groups, who can contribute with outputs on impacts on wetland ecosystem.

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 would be addressed are:

- Policy makers, including Ramsar focal points, national authorities (at different scales) in charge of environment, protected areas, water, agriculture...
- Wetland managers (in case there are), managing agency, NGOs (local, national), or local community.

In addition, the Biodiversity SG will produce information for a broader audience:

- Scientific community
- Citizens
- Private sector

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

Based on the results of the work carried out by the SG in the different thematic lines, and depending on the availability of resources to produce them, concrete outputs will be produced as targeting particular audience group. These products can be of different kind in order to successfully reach the different audiences.

- a. Reports: documents with updated conservation status of taxonomic groups assessed under thematic line 1.
- b. Conferences, symposia, talks: 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.
- c. Policy briefs: addressing key issues and targeting decision-makers.
- d. Guidelines
- e. Scientific papers: as results of members work.
- f. Leaflets, clips: targeting general public

IMPORTANT EVENTS

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

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 biodiversity of wetlands sites next to Mediterranean urban areas. For example: Merja Fouwarat in Morocco, L'Albufera near Valencia, Spain; Sebkhet Sejoumi and Lake Tunis next to Tunis, Tunisia, etc.
Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP13)	21-29 October 2018 Dubai, UAE	

ONGOING PROJECTS

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

- The **MedIsWet project**, coordinated by WWF and PIM Initiative, is aimed at inventorying wetlands on Mediterranean islands and improve their ecological status. The project is financed by MAVA Foundation.

Contact Information

For information regarding the Biodiversity SG, please contact

Violeta Barrios

Chair of MedWet STN Biodiversity Specialist Group

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For information regarding the STN, please visit this page:

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

You can also contact:

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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: The monitoring of the conservation status of areas of key importance for wetland biodiversity.					
Key Activity	Timeline	Expected Outcome	Data Source and Methodology	Person Responsible	Comments/Constraints
<p>1.1 (re)Assessment of the conservation status at the Mediterranean scale of:</p> <p><i>Freshwater fishes;</i></p> <p><i>Odonata (dragonflies & damselflies);</i></p> <p><i>Amphibians;</i></p> <p><i>Freshwater molluscs;</i></p> <p><i>Freshwater plants.</i></p>	2018-2020	Reassessment of conservation status of key species as their Red List evaluations are outdated	Data and census on: Freshwater fishes; Odonata; Amphibians; Freshwater molluscs; Vascular plants.	<p>Violeta Barrios Thomas Galewski Flavio Monti - Geert de Knijf <i>(Odonata)</i> Manuel Lopes-Lima <i>(Molluscs)</i> Branko Micevski <i>(Amphibians-Odonata-Waterbirds)</i> Jasmina Krpo-Ćetković <i>(freshwater fishes)</i> Imad Cherkaoui Eva Papastergiadou <i>(vascular macrophytes, charophyte species, bryophytes)</i> Myrna Semaan <i>(vascular plants)</i> Simonetta Bagella <i>(freshwater plants)</i></p>	<p>Requires updated data on populations, distribution and threats for the targeted groups: Freshwater fishes; Odonata; Amphibians; Freshwater molluscs; Vascular plants</p> <p>VB suggests that, for large group like fishes and molluscs, we start with Med endemics.</p> <p>- Meta-analysis of other taxonomic groups (e.g. vascular plants)</p> <p>-MWO has started (re)-assessment of wetland plant species.</p>
Goal 2: The summary of knowledge on the conflicts between biodiversity and human activities (economic and others) and the solutions provided to address them.					
Key Activity	Timeline	Expected Outcome	Data Source and Methodology	Person/Area Responsible	Comments

THE SPECIALIST GROUP ON MONITORING AND ASSESMENT OF WETLAND BIODIVERSITY

2.1 Invasive species in wetlands	2018-2020	Address specific invasive species for Mediterranean wetlands to provide advice and guidelines on which should be eradicated in priority	Citizen science as an important data provider	<p>Violeta Barrios Simonetta Bagella Flavio Monti Thomas Galewski Khaled Etayeb Mathieu Thevenet</p> <p>Jasmina Krpo-Ćetković <i>(freshwater fishes)</i></p>	-M.T. (PIM) will provide information through the MedIsWet project on invasive species assessment on wetlands of Mediterranean islands.
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Goal 3: Summarising knowledge on the values and services provided by the biodiversity in Mediterranean wetlands and its ability to influence decision- making.

Key Activity	Timeline	Expected Outcome	Data Source and Methodology	Person/Area Responsible	Comments
3.1 Assessment of wetland ecosystems.	2018-2020	To highlight the menacing risks and vulnerabilities impacting these ecosystems and their biodiversity	Developed in collaboration with the other SGs	<p>Imad Cherkaoui Eva Papastergiadou Mathieu Thevenet Myrna Semaan Khaled Etayeb Simonetta Bagella</p>	<p>-in collaboration with the Inventories SG</p> <p>-new approach of EU for the assessment of European Red list of Freshwater Habitat types</p> <p>-M.T. (PIM) has data on Smir wetland and the Nador Lagune in Northern Morocco</p>