

7th Meeting of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee MWC7. 4 - Strategic Priorities for the triennium 2006-2008



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES
CONVENCIÓN SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)



9th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)



The Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative

7th Meeting of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee

Kampala, Uganda, 8-15 November 2005

MedWet/Com7 DOC. 4

Strategic Priorities for the triennium 2006-2008

In trying to identify the priorities for the work of MedWet for the triennium 2006-2008, the main sources are:

- The analysis of the National Reports as presented in the *Report of the MedWet Coordination Unit 2003-2005* (MedWet/Com7.2 – Ramsar COP9 DOC 8), and the
- Conclusions of the '*Qualitative Assessment of the Status of Mediterranean Wetlands*' presented at MedWet/Com6 (Tipasa, Algeria, 2004).

By the combined analysis of these two sources some conclusions can be drawn as regards the priorities for focusing the work of MedWet over the triennium 2006-2008. The objective is to better address the needs of the Mediterranean Contracting Parties and face the basic drivers of change that have a negative impact on Mediterranean wetlands, while at the same time reinforcing the technical and institutional capacity of the MedWet Initiative.

Some of these priorities emerge as issues in which MedWet was not involved to date or was only involved to a small extent or partially. However, they appear as important priorities and attention will have to be paid to their development. These include:

- i. Water as regards both **water quantity** (allocation of appropriate water resources; river basin management) and **water quality**. The efforts made to launch new activities in relation to the Water Framework Directive of the EU should be maintained.
- ii. **Sectors** of human activities with a high impact on wetlands are a significant driver of change for Mediterranean wetlands. In this region the two sectors appearing to have a strong impact are **Agriculture** and **Tourism**.

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- For **Agriculture**, MedWet should pursue its efforts for establishing a regional or sub regional set of activities addressing issues directly related to this sector, namely water abstraction and use, pollution, and land use.
 - The issue of **Tourism** should be addressed in combination with Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and water use.
- iii. **Cultural values of wetlands** should be further pursued by enhancing work within MedWet through activities for the development, testing and implementation of the appropriate tools.

In addition to these, a number of issues on which MedWet has been working in the past need to be maintained among its strategic priorities. These include:

- iv. Wetland **inventories**, with an aim to complete a pan-Mediterranean wetland inventory by 2010. The MedWet methodology needs to incorporate the appropriate techniques for serving the purposes of assessment and monitoring. The methodology should be applied to all Mediterranean countries.
- v. **Management planning and implementation** including **Restoration and Rehabilitation**. Being one of the strong fields of most MedWet Team Partner Organisations it should continue to be applied, in collaboration with the CPs, towards addressing the drivers of negative change, especially regarding sites listed in the Montreux Record.
- vi. Developing and applying a MedWet methodology for the **assessment of the Socio-Economic values** of wetland systems and services. This is not an end in itself, but it will allow for a much better integration of wetlands conservation in development and sectoral planning processes
- vii. The work already underway for the identification and cooperative management of **Transboundary/shared wetland sites** should be further enhanced through the support of the CPs concerned and the mobilisation of financial support as appropriate.

Finally, some methods/tools for delivering the work of MedWet are a priority in terms of what the CPs have indicated as needs in their National Reports. These are

- viii. **Training**, which must remain a key priority of MedWet, by putting to use the expertise of the MedWet Team Partner Organisations and implementing as appropriate training activities through the MedWet networks and projects.
- ix. Effort on **CEPA** must be enhanced, by designing and implementing activities promoting all CEPA aspects (Communication, Education and Public Awareness). The role of the MedWet CEPA working group should be enhanced and collaboration between its members reinforced.

Note:

The issue of **Climate change and the Kyoto Protocol** in relation to wetland management and protection, although emerging from the analysis of the National Reports as an issue that needs increased attention is not proposed as a priority field for the coming triennium, due to the lack of capacity and expertise within MedWet to address this complicated issue properly.

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STRATEGIC PLAN AND WORKPLAN

The above mentioned Strategic Priorities need to be put in the form of a Strategic Plan, showing clear objectives, proposed actions, and measurable targets, so that MedWet can turn this Plan into a concrete Workplan for the triennium. In addition, such a Strategic Plan must include some ranking of the above mentioned priority fields, so that MedWet can channel its limited resources accordingly, and ideally differentiate between **approaches** (transboundary, management planning, inventories, etc), **sectors/thematic fields** (agriculture, tourism etc), and cross cutting tools (training, CEPA, etc).

Following discussion at MedWet/Com7 and COP9 and endorsement of some or all of these strategic priorities, the MedWet Team will develop in full the Strategic Plan and workplan and communicate it to the MedWet/Com.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

These MedWet Strategic Priorities should be applied according to the needs and capacity existing for each sub-region and/or CP in the Mediterranean taking into account the significant differences (in priorities, funding instruments, scientific and technical capacity) that exist. Also, appropriate differentiation should be made between Inland and Coastal areas.

It is generally felt that in the past years MedWet has done significant work in developing sound methodologies and tools. However, the application of these tools by the CPs still remains limited (with considerable variations as regards specific issues: inventories, restoration etc). It is therefore considered important that during the coming triennium an increased effort is made, in a close collaboration between the CPs and the MedWet Team and all other MedWet partners to put to as much use as possible these tools.

Consequently, implementation and application of tools should be the main focus of the MedWet programme development for the triennium, rather than further methodological and tool development work. The latter should be undertaken specifically in order to complement or correct existing methodologies.¹

Project development is not an end in itself, but a way to assist the CPs in developing good projects and activities for applying the MedWet tools (and in this way implementing the Convention), and mobilising the necessary human and financial resources for this purpose.

As a result, project development should not constitute a base for securing the operation of the MedWet Coordination Unit. It must be the result of the concerted effort (both as regards the development and implementation of activities) of the CPs, the MedWet Team Partner Organisations and all other MedWet partners, while the Coordination Unit must maintain its crucial role in consolidating priorities in a clear and target-oriented Strategic Plan and workplan, and facilitate all MedWet partners in developing its programme.

In conclusion, the continued effort for the establishment and reinforcement of the MedWet Initiative in the region is dependent on the active involvement of all MedWet partners in its work. This could be summarised in the following points:

- Continued support of the Mediterranean countries and the Ramsar Convention and active involvement in MedWet;
- Establishment of good working relations and activities with all Mediterranean CPs;

¹ This applies to a lesser extent to themes that are currently under development, including water management and cultural values.

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- Reinforcement and further integration of the different teams and networks within the MedWet initiative (MedWet Team, MedWet networks, MedWet Working Groups etc);
- Establishment of further collaborations with other key actors in the Mediterranean region, and globally.