Members and observers present:

The following MedWet/Com members were represented at the meeting:

Parties to the Ramsar Convention: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, The FYR of Macedonia, Tunisia and Turkey

Other MedWet/Com members: Palestine; International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN); World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF); Greek Biotope Wetlands Centre (EKBY), Greece; Tour du Valat Research Institute for the Conservation of Mediterranean Wetlands, France; Mediterranean Coastal Foundation; Plan Bleu, Environment and Development in the Mediterranean (UNEP/MAP); Ramsar Convention Secretariat; and Honorary Member Mr. Thymio Papayannis

The following observers were present:
MAVA Foundation for Nature (Switzerland); University of Malaga (Spain); ESili Consultants (The Netherlands); Jena-Optronik GmbH (Germany); Terra Cypria - The Cyprus Conservation Foundation; Water Agency Rhône Méditerranée Corse, France; and Council of Architecture, Urban Planning and the Environment of High Corsica (CAUE 2B), France.

General note: all the MedWet/Com 12 documents noted or adopted by the meeting, as well other documents related to the meeting, are available in the MedWet web site at [http://medwet.org/documents/medwetcom-meetings/](http://medwet.org/documents/medwetcom-meetings/)

Proceedings

1. The plenary sessions of the meeting were conducted with simultaneous interpretation in English and French.

   **Item 1 – Opening of the meeting and adoption of the Agenda**
   (Doc. MedWet/Com12 – 1)

2. The Chair, Ms Adèle Veerabadren, Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy (MEDDE), France\(^1\) opened the meeting on 8 February 2016 at 09.00 a.m. and welcomed the participants. She hoped that the meeting would be productive and that participants would have a pleasant stay in Paris.

3. The Chair introduced the video message sent to the meeting by French Minister of Ecology Ms Ségolène Royal addressed to all participants, with her apologies for not being able to be present. The transcription of her message appears in Annex 1.

4. The MedWet Coordinator welcomed the participants and said that this was a crucial meeting for the Initiative due to the significant issues that were in the agenda, in particular the adoption of the draft MedWet Framework for Action 2016-2030. The challenges in front of MedWet were many, in particular taking into account the situation prevailing in the region: economic crisis, wars, and long-term unresolved geopolitical problems. Nevertheless, he was confident that MedWet could make an

\(^1\) On 11 February 2016, the Ministry changed its name to Ministry of Environment, Energy and the Sea (MEEM).
important contribution to the sustainable development of the Mediterranean region.

5. The Provisional agenda was adopted.


6. The MedWet Coordinator introduced the working documents. The reports were noted.

**Item 3 – Review of the operations of the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO) since MedWet/Com 11 (Doc. MedWet/Com12 – 3)**

7. The Coordinator of the MWO introduced the report. The report was noted.


8. The MedWet Coordinator introduced the working document. The majority of the MedWet/Com members intervened in the ensuing discussion, and most of the interventions indicated that it could be very difficult to follow any of the alternatives presented in the working document to provide MedWet with an adequate legal status.

9. The Mediterranean region faces a difficult situation, with numerous crises and a difficult context in which it would be difficult to find a solution to the legal status of MedWet. Perhaps this is the root of its present difficulties because of the links with the financial contributions. This issue had to be resolved in as a matter of priority.

10. The MedWet Coordinator indicated that he would prepare a draft decision to be submitted to the consideration of the meeting under agenda item 12.

11. The MedWet Coordinator introduced the working document and responded to several questions for clarification.

12. The afternoon of the first day of the meeting was devoted to the discussion of items 4 (Legal status) and 5 (Framework for Action) in four sub-regional groups, as proposed by the MedWet Secretariat:

a) Europe 1: Albania, France, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain, with the assistance of the Coordinator;
b) Europe 2: Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Israel, Montenegro, Serbia, and The FYR of Macedonia, with the assistance of consultant Lily Mordechai;
c) Middle East: Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Turkey, with the assistance of the Communications Officer; and
d) North Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, with the assistance of the Senior Advisor.

Other participants were invited to join the sub-regional group of their preference.

13. The first day of the meeting concluded with a reception and dinner offered to all participants by MedWet at the Aquarium Tropical of the Palais de la Porte Dorée.

14. The second day of the meeting started with the presentation of a brief summary of the discussions in the sub-regional groups by the chair of each of them. It was noted that the staff members that have assisted each group have taken notes of the conclusions and proposals that have been agreed upon in order to amend, if required, the working documents.

Item 6 – Proposed update of the MedWet Terms of Reference (Doc. MedWet/Com12 – 6)

15. The MedWet Coordinator introduced the working document and responded to questions and comments from the floor. As foreseen in the agenda, the document would be discussed in detail in the sub-regional groups and adopted in plenary (Item 11).

Item 7 – Terms of Reference for the MedWet Scientific and Technical Network (MedWet STN)
16. The MedWet Coordinator introduced the working document and responded to questions and comments from the floor. As foreseen in the agenda, the document would be discussed in detail in the sub-regional groups and adopted in plenary (Item 11).


18. The Senior Advisor presented the MedWet web-based country profiles project and illustrated the initiative with the profile of Tunisia. He thanked the MedWet Tunisian Focal Point for all the support received in developing this pilot profile. The intention was to continue developing the profiles of the other 26 MedWet countries. The profiles should be available soon on the MedWet web site, au fur et à mesure that they are developed.

19. Reactions from the floor indicated that it was important to give more visibility to countries and to complete the country profiles project.

20. The Coordinator informed the meeting that Nejib Benessaiah will continue to work on this as a consultant and that an intern arranged by the MWO will assist him in this job. Assistance will also be needed from Focal Points in order to feed the application with information from their countries.

21. The delegate from Algeria indicated that that country was ready to cooperate with the development of its profile.

22. Three draft MedWet projects that were under preparation were introduced by the respective leaders of those projects, as follows:

22.1 Anis Guelmami, MWO, introduced the draft project *Development of a harmonized pan-Mediterranean wetlands database as a support to wetland national inventories*;

22.2 Patrick Grillas, MWO Coordinator, introduced the draft project *Assessing and managing pressures on water and wetlands in the*
MedWet, the MWO, the Water Footprint Network (WFN), Plan Bleu – Environment and Development in the Mediterranean (UNEP/MAP), and the Euro-Mediterranean Information System on know-how in the Water Sector (EMWIS); and

22.3 A team from the Council of Architecture, Urban Planning and the Environment of the High Corsica (CAUE 2B), France, introduced the draft MedWet project The creation of the Mediterranean Youth Parliament for Wetlands.

23. As foreseen in the agenda, the MedWet Work Plans 2016-2017 document would be discussed in the sub-regional groups.

24. Concerning the draft MedWet budgets for 2016 and 2017, it was decided that the discussion should be held in plenary.

25. The Chair invited a ‘tour de table’ for each county to express its views concerning the draft budgets submitted by the Secretariat, and in particular the proposed increase in the contributions from countries for the year 2017.

26. With very few exceptions, the delegates informed the plenary that they were not authorized to accept an increase in their countries’ contributions to the MedWet budget.

27. Some MedWet Focal Points said that they had problems in explaining what MedWet is and why it should include financial obligations for the members.

28. Some countries suggested that the MedWet Secretariat should send a formal letter explaining the reasons for increasing the contributions to the MedWet budget.

29. It was noted that this is a period of great economic problems for many countries. In the origin of MedWet, the funding came from the European Commission, and it was felt to be important to recover this support.
30. It was pointed out that during ten years MedWet benefited from the generosity of Greece, as the host country of the MedWet Secretariat, now hosted, as from 2014, by France (Tour du Valat). It was suggested that, in addition to the Parties to the Ramsar Convention, other MedWet/Com members should consider making contributions.

31. The other important element was to mobilise funds for the core functions of the MedWet Secretariat: networking and communications.

32. IUCN-Med offered to share with MedWet its experience in fundraising within the Mediterranean context.

33. The MAVA Foundation indicated that the ending of its core funding after July 2017 was not an indication of lack of interest. It would be prepared to continue providing project funding even though the Foundation as such will cease to exist in 2022. MAVA would need to have clear indications of support from the member countries. The MAVA representative pointed out that if one compares the millions of Euros contributed by wetlands to the amount devoted to the MedWet Initiative, these contributions are fully justified.

34. WWF International associated itself with the MAVA statement. WWF also agrees on the possibilities of project funding.

35. The Ramsar Secretariat requested assurances that the Coordinator would not be left alone to find a solution. The possibility of setting up a working group to work on the issue of MedWet funding should be considered.

36. It was decided that the Secretariat should prepare for consideration the following day a revised budget maintaining the level of the countries’ contributions at the level of 2015.

37. The presentation of the work plan and budget of the MWO was left for a later moment.

**Item 9 – The MedWet Communications Strategy 2016 – 2017**
(Doc. MedWet/Com12 – 9)

38. The MedWet Communications Officer introduced the working document and responded to questions and comments from the floor. As foreseen in
the agenda, the document would be discussed in detail in the sub-regional groups.

39. It was noted that the challenge that exists is to generate the maximum of synergies. The Communications Strategy is centered on the MedWet Secretariat itself. Means should be used to bring in as active contributors the Ramsar focal points for Communications, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA), establishing an active network.

40. The four sub-regional groups met to discuss items 6, 7, 8 and 9.

41. A joint side event was held in the evening on the following subjects:

Conservation of Mediterranean island wetlands: Ramsar Resolution XII.14 and steps ahead: the objective of the side event is to support the implementation of Ramsar Resolution XII.14 on Conservation of the Mediterranean island wetlands adopted at Ramsar COP12 last June. Leader: WWF Greece

Briefing on the Satellite-based Wetlands Observation Service (SWOS): begun in 2015, SWOS is developing a monitoring and information service for wetlands tailored to specific policy needs on different levels (local, national, regional and global). Leader: Jena-Optronik GmbH (Germany)

The creation of the Mediterranean Youth Parliament for Wetlands. Leader: Council of Architecture, City Planning and the Environment of the High Corsica (CAUE 2B)

42. The MedWet Steering Group held an evening meeting to review the progress with the MedWet/Com 12 meeting. The MedWet Secretariat distributed in the morning the amended documents on the basis of the discussions and proposals of the sub-regional groups.

43. In opening the plenary session in the morning of 10 February 2016, Mr José Ruiz, Deputy Director of Natural Areas, MEDDE, welcomed the following high level officials that had joined the meeting:
- Mr. Pellumn Abeshi, General Director of Environment Policy and Priority Delivery, Ministry of Environment, Albania
- Mr. Admir Softic, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Bosnia & Herzegovina
- Mr. Ghassan Sayah, Adviser to the Minister of the Environment, Lebanon
- Mr. Joseh Borg, Board Secretary, Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA)
- Ms Aleksandra Doslic, Head of the Department for Protected Areas and Ecological Network, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Serbia
- Mr. Miguel José Aymerich Huyhgues-Despointes, Sub-Director General of Natural Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment, Spain
- Mr. Hayrettin Yildirim, Deputy Director General, General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, Ministry of Forests and Water Affairs, Turkey
- Ms Ania Grobicki, Acting Secretary General, Ramsar Convention Secretariat

The Chairperson of the Environment Quality Authority of Palestine, Ms Adalah Atira, excused herself due to a last moment obligation.

The delegate of Algeria read a message from Mr. Abdelkader Yettou, Director General of Forests, who had been unable to attend.

44. The Ramsar Acting Secretary General welcomed the draft MedWet Framework for Action and the MedWet Communications Strategy and indicated that she would do all the necessary efforts to enhance the relationship between MedWet and the Convention. The issue of the legal status should be discussed in the next meeting of the Ramsar Regional Initiatives, planned for 12 June 2016.

45. The MWO Coordinator presented the MWO work plans and budget.

**Item 10 – Approval of the MedWet Framework for Action 2016-2030**

46. This item was postponed for consideration after item 13 of the agenda.
Item 11 – Adoption of the revised MedWet Terms of Reference and of the Terms of Reference for the MedWet Scientific and Technical Network (MedWet STN)

47. The revised MedWet Terms of Reference were adopted with the amendments introduced in the sub-regional groups.

48. The Terms of Reference for the MedWet Scientific and Technical Network (MedWet STN) were adopted with one amendment.

Item 12 – Decision on the way forward concerning the legal status of MedWet

49. The plenary adopted the following Decision proposed by the Coordinator on the basis of the discussions of the previous day:

The MedWet/Com,

a) HAVING ANALYSED the different options for developing and obtaining a legal status for the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative; and

b) HAVING CONCLUDED that the best option would reside in an appropriate type of arrangement within the framework of the Ramsar Convention,

1. INVITES the Ramsar Standing Committee:
   a) to study options for providing legal coverage to well-established Ramsar Regional Initiatives, such as MedWet, as part of the arrangements for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention;

   b) to consider possible arrangements for the operation of the secretariats of well-established Ramsar Regional Initiatives; and

   c) to submit a draft Resolution on this matter to the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention; and
2. REQUESTS the MedWet Steering Group and the MedWet Coordinator to make the necessary follow-up to this decision and report to the 13th MedWet/Com meeting.

50. The Director of Water and Biodiversity at MEDDE, France, Mr. François Mitteault, joined the last plenary session in the afternoon of 10 February 2016. He welcomed once more all participants and in particular the high level officials that have joined the meeting that day.

**Item 13 – Approval of the Work Plans and Budgets 2016-2017 for MedWet and the MWO**

51. The Coordinator submitted a revised budget for 2016 and 2017, maintaining the countries contributions at the level of 2015. After a number of changes in the allocations to different budget lines, the budgets for 2016 and 2017 were adopted.

52. The MedWet Work Plan for 2016 and 2017 was adopted as originally presented.

53. The Work Plan of the MWO was adopted as originally presented. The MWO budget was noted.

**Item 10 – Approval of the MedWet Framework for Action 2016-2030**

54. The Coordinator had circulated a revised draft of the MedWet Framework for Action incorporating the amendments proposed by the sub-regional groups. The MedWet Framework for Action 2016-2030 “Wetlands for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean” was approved.

**Item 14 – Adoption of the MedWet Communications Strategy 2016 – 2017**

55. The MedWet Communications Strategy 2016-2017 was adopted.
Item 15 – Election of the members of the MedWet Steering Group (Doc. MedWet/Com12 – 10)

56. As established in the MedWet Terms of Reference, and on the basis of the proposals received from the Ramsar regional groups, the meeting adopted the following composition of the MedWet Steering Group for the period from the closure of this meeting until the closure of the next MedWet/Com meeting:

Africa: Algeria
       Alternate: Morocco

Asia: Lebanon
      Alternate: Jordan

Europe: Slovenia
       Alternate: Turkey
       France, as host country of the MedWet Secretariat

Other members:
The Ramsar Convention Secretariat
International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (Alternate to IUCN: World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF))
Tour du Valat, Research Institute for the Conservation of Mediterranean Wetlands, as host of the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory
Honorary Member Mr Thymio Papayannis
The MedWet Coordinator (ex officio)

Dr. Gordana Beltram, representing Slovenia, accepted to Chair the MedWet Steering Group.

57. The meeting requested Steering Group members to consult with other MedWet/Com members in their respective regions or networks before meetings of the Steering Group and to report back to them after each meeting.
58. The 12th Meeting of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee was formally closed on 10 February 2016 at 17.30 hours.

59. A closing ceremony to formally launch the MedWet Framework for Action 2016-2030 was held in the Auditorium of the Palais de la Porte Dorée at 19.00 hours.

60. The MedWet countries’ ambassadors to France and to UNESCO, as well as a number of other important guests, were invited to the ceremony.

61. The video message sent for the opening of the MedWet/Com 12 meeting by the Minister of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy (MEDDE) of France, Ms Ségolène Royal, was shown again at the closing ceremony.

Interventions were made by:
- Dr. Ania Grobicki, Acting Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention
- Mr. Delmar Alberto Blasco Bellomaría, MedWet Coordinator
- Mr. François Mitteault, Director of Water and Biodiversity, MEDDE, France, outgoing Chair of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee
- Dr. Gordana Beltram, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Slovenia, incoming Chair of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee

62. The closing ceremony included a concert by professors from the Paris School of Mediterranean Music and was followed by a reception at the Tropical Aquarium of the Palais de la Porte Dorée.

63. A field visit was offered to participants on 11 February 2016 to the wetland Marais de Sacy, which was being considered by France for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.

64. The financial report concerning the costs of the MedWet/Com12 is attached for information as Annex 2.
Annex 1

Transcription of the video message kindly sent by the French Minister of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy, Ms Ségolène Royal, for the opening of the MedWet/Com12 meeting on 8 February 2016.

Hello everyone. You have all gathered together to discuss a subject that is particularly close to my heart: wetland conservation. I have always been very committed to the preservation of these environments. I was the president of the Marais Poitevin Natural Park, and stopped a motorway being built through it. So, I know how rich wetlands are, I know how complex they are, I know the beauty of this interface between land and water, and the crucial role wetlands play in protecting biodiversity.

Firstly, wetlands are the key suppliers of water and food to the numerous plant and animal species they contain. They are natural infrastructures that in particular guarantee the regulation of the water cycle, the maintenance and improvement of water quality, the prevention of floods and the protection of banks and shores, as well as supporting numerous activities such as agriculture, fish farming and tourism. And these areas play an essential role, long overlooked, but one that we are all fortunately aware of. Wetlands are also among the most endangered natural environments in the world.

This is why France has a long-standing commitment to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and it is why this year we want to celebrate the 30th anniversary of our country’s ratification of this Convention, the 30th anniversary of the designation of the first French Ramsar Site, which happens to be a Mediterranean site, namely “the Camargue”. And you may know that we have included the Ramsar sites in the bill on biodiversity restoration, which I recently had adopted by the French National Assembly and by the Senate.

Then, we must also mention that the Mediterranean region has a wonderful network of wetlands, 400 Ramsar sites covering a total of over 9 million hectares across all the countries within the Mediterranean region.

So, we should enlarge these areas and preserve them. We also know that half the wetlands in the Mediterranean region have disappeared since 1900. This is a disaster and it is why at the Paris Climate Conference, the COP21, I highlighted the important role wetlands play in adaptation and mitigation, and I
also underlined the fact that water resources constitute a major issue for this region, a subject that will be discussed at the COP22 in Morocco.

I think that an important part of the work that you should carry out over the next few days is the adoption of the future Framework for Action 2016-2030 initiative. Indeed, this Framework is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and international conventions aimed at protecting the environment and biodiversity, such as the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Barcelona Convention.

So, the objective of the various workshops that are planned will be to see to what extent this Framework will allow each of you to apply it, by calling on operational national action. With regard to France, my services are working on the implementation of a 3rd National Action Plan due to last 5 years. I shall now hand over the reins to the country that is to preside over the initiative’s Committee for the next three years. I wish you every success with your work at this magnificent Porte Dorée Aquarium, which is also dependent on the Ministry of Ecology that I am responsible for, and which highlights all the actions that we must carry out for the world’s oceans.

I’d also like to say that there are very close links between wetlands and the issue of global warming, since shorelines are the most affected, and then the connections between land and sea, between fresh water and salt water, and between water found on land and sea water. And at the COP21, as you know, I took an initiative regarding the oceans and I think that the issue of the ocean and wetlands is also an important topic.

Finally, regarding climate solutions, as you know, I am very committed to actions to recover mangroves, which are very closely linked to wetlands. I’m thinking about the entire African border, for example, and all the other seas where, by replanting mangroves, we can also mitigate the effects of global warming, flooding and wave height. I would therefore encourage you during your work to focus on how wetlands are both victims of climate change and can also provide part of the solution to a certain number of the problems posed by climate change.

I wish you all the best with your work. Rest assured that it will be taken into account. In any case, all you do will be very helpful and useful for all the work that we are carrying out to prepare for the COP22.
## Annex 2

### MEDWET/COM 12 EXPENSES

#### AIR TICKETS SPONSORED PARTICIPANTS
- 22 air tickets (2 cancelled)  
  - 8250.76
- Ground transportation Palestinian delegate  
  - 469.3
  - 8720.6

#### HOTEL ACCOMODATION SPONSORED PARTICIPANTS
- Directors General  
  - 1497.1
- MedWet Focal Points  
  - 5878.8
- Honorary Member  
  - 558.25
- Rooms not used  
  - 1322
  - 9256.15

#### Per diems (50 euros per hotel night - Maximum 5 nights)
- 83 per diems x 50  
  - 4150

#### DOCUMENTATION
- English editing  
  - 525
- Translations  
  - 5000.78
- Study on legal status of MedWet  
  - 3630
- Copies of documents for interpreters  
  - 78
  - 9233.78

#### COMMUNICATIONS
- Production of badges for printing  
  - 225
- Budge holders  
  - 75.36
- Photographer  
  - 440
- Graphic design MedWet/Com materials  
  - 991.7
- Present for participants (passport holder with MedWet logo)  
  - 1596.14
- Printing of signs for meeting venue and country names  
  - 655.76
  - 3983.76

#### INTERPRETATION ENGLISH/FRENCH
- 3 interpreters (2880 x 3)  
  - 8640
- Interpretation equipment and personnel  
  - 4313.76
  - 12953.76

#### CATERING SERVICES
- Diner Steering Group meeting  
  - 270
- Lunch for VIPs 10/02/16  
  - 520
- Coffee breaks (2 x 3 days)  
  - 1890
- Opening reception  
  - 1813
- Closing reception  
  - 1590
- Catering for side events (offered)  
  - 0
- 171 lunches on 8, 9 and 10 February  
  - 4275
  - 10358
## CLOSING CEREMONY

| Concert Paris School of Mediterranean Music | 3300 |
| Interpretation booth | 942,24 | 4242,24 |

## STAFF COSTS (4 staff members)

| Consultant Lily Mordechai (162 hours x 23) | 3726 |
| Travel (2 air tickets and 2 train tickets) | 834 |
| 31 nights hotel accommodation | 3359,4 |
| 31 per diems x 50 | 1550 | 9469,4 |

## FURNITURE AND SUPPLIES

| Cabling to connect computers to electricity | 173,9 |
| Flowers for plenary room | 120 |
| Hiring of furniture (tables, screen, projector table) | 557,82 |
| Cable for Power Point | 29,99 |
| Printing paper | 10,4 | 892,11 |

## FIELD VISIT

| Transport | 769,43 |
| Lunch x 30 | 705 |
| Audiphones for translation | 360 | 1834,43 |

## PERSONNEL PALAIS DE LA PORTE DOREE

| Additional staff time to serve MedWet meeting | 4411 | 4411 |

## MISCELLANEOUS

| Present for Director Aquarium de la Porte Dorée | 111 |
| Courier (invitations for visa processing) | 290 |
| Visa | 69,55 |

**TOTAL** | **79.975,88**