



# MedWet

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

## Report - MedWet Meeting 28-29 June 2018 - Malaga, Spain

MedWet members present at this meeting:

Country / Organisation	Name	Position
France	Ghislaine FERRERE	Chargée de mission Milieux humides - Convention de Ramsar Direction de l'eau et de la biodiversité Ministère de la transition écologique et solidaire
Israel	Simon NEMTZOV*	Wildlife Ecologist and Head of International Relations Israel Nature and Parks Authority
Libya	Almokhtar SAIED	Head of Marine and wildlife section Nature Conservation Dept Environment General Authority
Malta	Robert BAJADA	Environment Protection Officer/ Environment & Resources Authority
Morocco	Mesbah HAYAT	Chef de Service de la conservation de la flore et de la faune sauvages, Haut-Commissariat aux Eaux et Forêts et à la Lutte Contre la Désertification Maroc CEPA Government Focal Point / Point focal MedWet
Slovenia	Gordana BELTRAM (MedWet Chair)	Ramsar National Focal Point - Conservation Unit Directorate for the Environment, Nature Ministry of Environmental and Spatial Planning
Spain	Miguel AYMERICH HUYGHUES	Subdirector General de Biodiversidad Dirección General de Biodiversidad y Calidad Ambiental Ministerio para la Transición Ecológica
Spain	María Magdalena BERNUÉS SANZ	Servicio de Conservación e Inventariación de Humedales, Dirección General de Biodiversidad y Calidad Ambiental Ministerio para la Transición Ecológica National Focal Point
Tunisia	Salem TRIGUI	Directeur Général des Forêts, Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Ressources Hydrauliques et de la Pêche
IUCN-MED	Antonio TROYA	Director
IUCN-MED	Maher MAHJOUB	Project officer
MedWet	Alessio SATTA	Secretary
Ramsar	Tobias SALATHE	Senior Advisor Europe
Tour du Valat	Patrick GRILLAS	Programme Director

\*participated just at the first session by ZOOM

**MORNING SESSIONS (10H00 – 13H00)**

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**1-2. Welcome and Opening**

Miguel Aymerich (Spain) and Antonio Troya (IUCN) welcomed the participants. Gordana Beltram (MedWet Chair) opened the meeting and thanked Spain and IUCN for hosting this important preparatory meeting and the members present for their participation. The participants approved the agenda.

**3. Keynote address**

The keynote address was delivered by Miguel Aymerich. He identified two main structural weaknesses of MedWet in recent years: 1) The management structure is not very clear and 2) the overall financial crisis affected donors' capacity to contribute. Moreover, he identified a lack of continuity for the role of the MedWet Coordinator. This position must be attractive in terms of duration of the contract and salary. The ideal profile to cover the role of a coordinator is someone with technical capacities but at the same time abilities in fundraising with good networking skills. To attract new funding is a long-term process. A reinforced credibility and visibility of MedWet will facilitate fundraising and recognition from countries. The work plan 2018 prepared by the Secretary already shows a different vision and that many things are ongoing. He also added the importance of networking for MedWet and in particular the need of consolidating the wetland managers network to share experiences among different countries. Furthermore, the cultural approach to wetlands should be explored. Culture and biodiversity, as expressed in the Charter of Rome on Natural and Cultural Capital<sup>1</sup>, could be a very useful approach. Finally, he proposed three main "keys" that should guide the management of MedWet:

- 1) stable and attractive structure;
- 2) a good work plan; and
- 3) concrete results to be presented every year to members.

**4. MedWet today (10h45 – 11h00)**

In his presentation, the MedWet Secretary, Alessio Satta, presented a brief overview of the MedWet activities, focusing in particular on the achievements of the past three years and on the future challenges. Moreover, the current structure of MedWet and the Secretariat staff were introduced. The participants expressed their appreciation of the strong commitment demonstrated by the several ongoing activities and by the clear strategy for the future challenges of MedWet.

The participants requested the Secretariat to upload the PPT presentation (enclosed with this document) on the website in order to allow all the members and also the general public to be informed of MedWet activities and of the views of the current secretary. Libya and Spain stressed the fact that MedWet should focus on developing training activities for the benefit of wetlands managers. Morocco asked to have all the documents translated into French and possibly also into Arabic.

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<sup>1</sup> Italian Ministry of the Environment, 2014 (accessed 05/07/18)

[http://www.minambiente.it/sites/default/files/archivio/allegati/biodiversita/conference\\_ncc\\_charter\\_of\\_rome\\_final.pdf](http://www.minambiente.it/sites/default/files/archivio/allegati/biodiversita/conference_ncc_charter_of_rome_final.pdf)

## **SESSION I. Defining the key elements for MedWet work in 2019-2021 (11h30 – 13h00)**

Tobias Salathé recalled the legal status of MedWet, established in 1999 through Resolution VII.22, where the COP “EXPRESSES ITS SATISFACTION at the work carried out so far under the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative and ITS APPRECIATION to the governments and institutions, in particular the European Commission, that have provided financial support to the initiative, and RECOGNIZES it as a model of regional cooperation, based on endogenous efforts and a wide participation of all sectors” (paragraph 2) and “APPROVES the establishment of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com) within the framework of the Convention, as a forum for collaboration on wetland issues in the Mediterranean and as an advisor to the Convention in this region” (paragraph 3).

Afterwards, he introduced the main objective of Session I which was to develop consensual recommendations on the following questions: 1) How could MedWet contribute to better fulfil member countries’ commitments and obligations towards the Ramsar Convention and the present challenges? 2) How can MedWet provide services and what services to its state members individually and to the Mediterranean as a whole? 3) How can MedWet best engage its members, and be closer to the need of the countries and other members? While the aim of Session I was to have: 1) Defined status, position and positive pro-active role of MedWet within the Mediterranean and the Ramsar Convention, and 2) Agreed concrete proposals on the MedWet focus of work for the next triennium (2019-2021), recommending the Secretariat to prepare the Work Plan 2019-2021 to be approved in Dubai.

Main reflections of the discussion:

France anticipated its agreement on the priorities expressed by Spain in the keynote. The priorities for MedWet should be clear and well known in order to gain its recognition in the Mediterranean context. Results and outcomes of MedWet activities should be clearly presented. According to France, there is a strong need to show that MedWet is active. MedWet should focus on the exchange of information among countries and wetland managers (Network of site managers). The Network could even include not only Ramsar Site managers but also other wetland managers. MedWet should investigate what is needed at the local level to properly conserve and manage wetlands. France continued by underlining that MedWet should speak to local authorities and administrative regions of the Mediterranean, even directly without passing through the national Ministries, if they agree and organise these national networks. To show the results and outcomes, a stronger effort on communicating MedWet activities should be undertaken. Finally, France noticed that the Communication Officer of MedWet is very busy with the MAVA project and that the Secretariat needs more resources to animate its network and communicate its activities as well as the activities of the MWO and the STN. Spain agreed on this point, stating that to get more visibility MedWet needs professionals to do the communication work.

The priorities of Mediterranean countries and wetland managers in terms of conservation and wise use of wetlands need to be identified. The analysis is crucial to focus MedWet priorities on a limited number of activities having an added value at the international level.

The Secretary explained that the MedWet STN is preparing state of the art guidelines for each specialist group which should be ready for most groups at the end of the year. Morocco expressed its agreement on the need of having a MedWet initiative for safeguarding Mediterranean wetlands and that MedWet currently benefits from Ramsar recognition through several of its Resolutions.

The Chair asked the participants what could be done to make MedWet more visible and how countries could contribute to raising MedWet’s visibility. Malta explained that they have just two

Ramsar Sites and that they would like to ask MedWet for technical support to identify temporary waters in the island and for help to translate the existence of these waters into national policies. Malta asked for support in understanding the functioning and the value of these temporary waters. The MWO replied to Malta suggesting the use of the MedWet network to support Malta on the issue of temporary waters. MWO suggested preparing a wetlands projects database and to apply the “MedWet label” to the existing or future relevant projects concerning wetland conservation in the Mediterranean.

The Chair reminded participants that the questions on the needs have already been asked several times to the MW members, but with few answers, and wondered how to get better feedback from members. Libya thought that it is very important that every country states what the national needs are and how the country wants to organise itself regarding these items.

Morocco proposed that the MedWet Initiative should strengthen research and monitoring activities on wetlands and make the results available to countries. At the same time MedWet should enhance its networking capacities. France observed that the results of the MWO activities are not visible (or not easily visible) on the MedWet website but only on the website of Tour du Valat, and suggested that the visibility of the Observatory and of its results for MedWet should be improved.

France also suggested exploring the opportunity of involving the Mediterranean regions in MedWet activities. IUCN attracted the attention of the participants by asking them to reflect on what really makes MedWet special and above all what is the added value of having a regional approach. One example might be by providing common solutions to all Mediterranean countries by defining a list of priorities to implement the Ramsar Convention goals at the regional/national level. He suggested focusing on concrete activities, for example, networking wetland managers and capacity building.

### **Conclusions of Session 1**

- Defining the needs of the countries in terms of on-site training and capacity building
- Focusing on a limited number of concrete activities and in particular on the wetland managers network and capacity building
- Planning each year a capacity building session, in the different countries
- Addressing the need to make MedWet activities more visible (wetland projects database)
- Continuing the monthly newsletter to inform countries and others (each country should send to the MW secretariat the list of all the national organizations to which the newsletter should be sent directly by MW)
- Improving the link with the WWD
- Improving the translation of all documents in French and Arabic, and possibly other languages

Documents to be prepared for MedWet/Com13:

- Strategic Work Plan 2019-2021

### **SESSION 2. Enhancing the MedWet governing structure**

The Chair, Gordana Beltram, introduced the main objective of Session 2, which was to get consensual recommendations on the following questions: How could the participation of countries in MedWet governance be improved, in order to create a better balance between the different actors involved? How could the MedWet governance be simplified and streamlined? The aim of Session 2 was: 1) Arriving at concrete proposals on how to improve countries’ participation in MedWet operation; and 2) Confirming the current governance model of MedWet or proposing alternative model(s) to the current model to be agreed by the majority of members.

Main reflections of the discussion:

In addition to the involvement of countries, France reiterated its proposal also to involve Mediterranean regions within the countries. Morocco suggested considering this proposal and how it could be implemented. The MWO proposed that countries decide which regions should be involved in MedWet activities, with respect to the Ramsar framework. Spain (Miguel Aymerich) agreed that national governments have to define how to include their regions in MedWet as they are the Ramsar Contracting Parties.

The secretary underlined the opportunity of involving the regions which are a key level for cooperation and funding. Morocco recalled the experience of sub-regional networks (e.g., the North African sub-region), which was very interesting even though it didn't last – perhaps this should be renewed. Libya also thought that a sub-regional network inside the global MW network could be very productive, as the regions involved would really share some concerns and possibilities of acting together.

Morocco regretted that the MedWet Committee meetings were not organized for several days as they used to be, with presentations, discussions, etc. These MedWet Committee meetings helped a lot to reinforce the feeling of being a member of an operational network.

The Chair asked the participants what they think about the governance of MedWet and in particular about the following aspects: keeping the MedWet Secretariat at Tour du Valat; confirming the current governance bodies; keeping their terms of reference, or if improvements should be proposed? She reminded the participants that during the Strategic Planning Workshop in Ljubljana in November 2017, the possibilities of a MedWet member being willing to execute the secretarial functions, or to second staff to the MedWet Secretariat, were evoked, but have not led to a concrete offer since then. The Chair also suggested holding Steering Group meetings by using videoconferencing. The Secretary underlined that some members of the MedWet/Com have not been active for a few years. Tunisia proposed that the Secretariat, to be more efficient, could be helped by countries/members on different issues. France agreed with this proposal, thinking that, even though it is clear that the NFP have not much time for MedWet, each country (i.e., not only the NFP) could provide different expert(s) to help on the issues on which they have particular experience or competence. Spain (M. Aymerich) also agreed with the proposal but specified that it should be on a voluntary basis and have no negative consequence on the size of the Secretariat, which needs to be sufficient.

## **Conclusions of Session 2**

- Keeping the existing governing structure
- Exploring how members can contribute to the work of the Secretariat
- Asking all current non-state members of the MedWet/Com, including those that have never replied to emails, if they want to keep their membership
- Refining the ToRs and RoPs and better defining the responsibilities of each body, if needed, and the procedure for approval of documents
- Making better use of videoconferences for MedWet/Com meetings, but keeping at least one physical meeting of the MedWet/Com every three years
- Exploring how to involve Mediterranean regions and local communities.

Documents to be prepared:

- Updated Terms of References and Rules of Procedures

### **SESSION 3. Ensuring the financial stability of MedWet in the long term**

Mr Troya (IUCN) introduced the main objective of Session 3, which was to get consensual recommendations on the following questions: How could the administration of MedWet become more effective and financially sustainable in the long term? Is there an alternative to a stable and timely contribution from members? Are there any restrictions or obstacles preventing members from paying their annual contributions in a timely manner? And the aim of session 3 was to have: 1) Agreed consensus on the model of a physical secretariat as currently hosted by France and based in Tour du Valat, or proposing alternative model(s) to be agreed by the majority of members; 2) Agreed Secretariat structure in terms of human resources and budget; 3) Recommendations to prepare the 3-year budget to be approved at the MedWet/Com 13 in Dubai.

Main reflections of the discussion:

All the participants agreed on the need for a MedWet Secretariat, not only for transferring information, but mainly to help developing and implementing projects and performing as discussed in the two previous sessions. Consequently, for such a Secretariat, members have to ensure a baseline budget.

The participants agreed that this baseline budget, to be covered by countries' contributions, should be a minimum of € 160.000/year. It allows the basic costs for human resources to be covered, as well as the office management costs. All participants agreed that the Secretariat team should not be reduced, but rather reinforced. The baseline budget must secure a core team, composed of a coordinator (half time), financial and administrative officer, and a communication officer.

One of the priority responsibilities of the MedWet Coordinator will be to multiply the baseline budget through fundraising at all levels. The participants also agreed that the annual contributions by the countries must be updated on the basis of the new UN table, which is also used by the Ramsar Secretariat; Ramsar Resolution VIII.30 on the regional initiatives included specific annexes concerning MedWet and specified the country contributions but these need to be updated<sup>2</sup>. The minimum contribution of € 514 / year was kept. To this aim the participants asked the Secretariat to update the countries' contributions, according to the current UN scale, taking into account the baseline budget of € 160.000 / year. The MedWet Secretariat, with the support of the Ramsar Secretariat, will prepare a new table for countries' distribution, to be shared with all MedWet/Com members.

### **Conclusions of Session 3**

- The Secretariat remains a physical structure located at Tour du Valat (but independent of it).
- There is a need to update the current ToRs and RoPs, and to establish a baseline budget of € 160.000/year for 2019-2021 in order to secure a core team, composed of a coordinator (half time), a financial and administrative officer, and a communication officer.
- The schedule for the country contributions should be updated according to the Ramsar approach and the updated UN Scale, as follows: 1) a baseline budget to achieve € 160.000 / year; 2) minimum contributions of € 514, and countries should be encouraged to pay more on a voluntary basis.
- ToRs for the MedWet Coordinator should be reviewed, for a period of three years, to be approved in Dubai.

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<sup>2</sup> VIII.30 Resolution: [https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/res/key\\_res\\_viii\\_30\\_e.pdf](https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/res/key_res_viii_30_e.pdf)

Documents to be prepared:

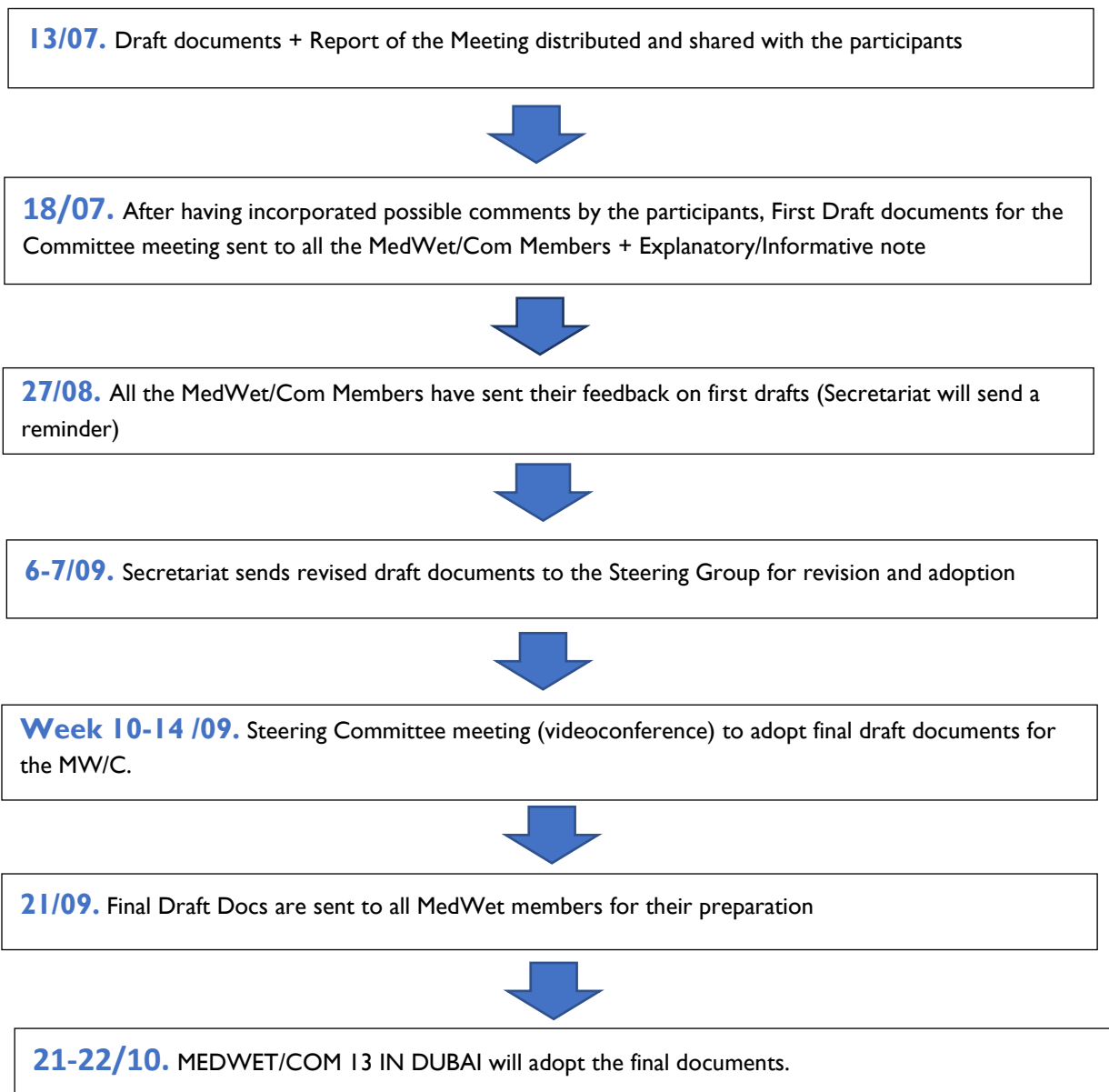
- Explanatory document describing the structure of the Secretariat, including the core team and the attached baseline budget of €160.000 / year for the period 2019-2021.
- A new scheme proposing the contributions between country members to cover the baseline budget.
- Updated ToRs for the MedWet Coordinator, to be recruited for the period of three years after COPI3.

#### **SESSION IV. MedWet/Com13 and the way forward**

In the last session of the meeting the main conclusions of each session were reiterated and accordingly, a roadmap from Malaga to Dubai was defined together with a list of documents to be prepared.

#### **Road Map**

Follow the Roadmap from Malaga to Dubai.



## List of documents

<b>Document</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Report Malaga meeting	Alessio S.	03/07/18
Work Plan 2019-2021	Secretariat	12/07/18
Budget 2019-2021	Secretariat	13/07/18
Annex to the Budget: New Schedule for Countries' Contributions	Secretariat	13/07/18
Updated ToR and RoP	Chair + FoC	
Explanatory document describing the structure of the Secretariat including the core team and the justification for the baseline budget of €160.000	Secretariat	12/07/18
ToRs for the MedWet Coordinator	Chair + FoC	

Miguel Aymerich, Antonio Troya and the MedWet Chair thanked all the participants for their contributions and for the successful and fruitful meeting. The IUCN staff and the Ministry staff were thanked for the excellent organisation. Special thanks were expressed to the interpreters.

MedWet Chair closed the meeting.