



MedWet

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

Doc. MedWet/Com13 - 8

MedWet/Com 13
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21 October 2018

The Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance

Actions requested: MedWet/Com13 is invited:

- to take note of the new Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance and its structure and governance, and
- to agree that the MedWet Secretariat becomes a permanent observer to the Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance and is invited to all meetings of its governing bodies.

I – Background

MedWet and Civil Society Organisations

1. MedWet, as the first regional initiative of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, has been instrumental in structuring and promoting operational collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations for the conservation and sustainable management of wetlands. One of the key assets of MedWet, as an implementation mechanism, which makes it original and well fitted for fulfilling its mission, is its membership, bringing together Mediterranean countries and entities, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, intergovernmental institutions, international non-governmental organisations and national institutions specialized in wetland issues.
2. This added-value has been recognised many times, especially in projects where the legitimacy of governments together with the flexibility and capacity to deliver of NGOs has proved to be a key condition of success.
3. Twenty years after the launch of MedWet, the International Symposium on Water and Wetlands, held in Agadir (Morocco) in February 2012, was aimed at celebrating the achievements of MedWet during this first period, and at agreeing on the key challenges for the next twenty years.
4. In the conclusions of the symposium¹, endorsed by MedWet in 2102, the participants stressed the urgent need “to consolidate actions by civil society and locally active non-governmental organisations, support their activities for environmental education and awareness and encourage their networking at regional, national and Mediterranean levels”.
5. The MedWet Framework for Action 2016-2030, adopted by the 12th MedWet/Com meeting, held in Paris (France) in February 2016, contains three actions targeted at the civil society:
 6. - Action 8.4: Promote and support the participation of civil society organizations and citizens in citizen-based science schemes to complete and update the information contained in wetlands inventories;
 7. - Action 15.2: Reinforce the network of non-governmental organizations at national and regional level to enable them to be part of the MedWet Framework for Action; the Ramsar International Organization Partners should play an important role for this to happen;
 8. - Action 19.2: Provide training programmes on organizational management and strategic planning for local and national non-governmental organizations that are willing to be involved.
9. Finally, between 2014 and 2017, the MAVA Foundation funded project “Wetlands Sentinels in the Maghreb: the MedWet Network of Civil Society” was implemented by the WWF Mediterranean Programme Office in partnership with Tour du Valat / Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory and Wetlands International. Its aim was to contribute to promoting the conservation and sustainable participatory management of selected priority wetlands in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia through the development and capacity building of an active and efficient community of civil society in the three countries. This project resulted in the improved capacities of 18 NGOs.

¹ See “Proceedings of the International Symposium on Water and Wetlands in the Mediterranean; from Grado to Agadir, the next 20 years”, p.145.

2 – Rationale

10. It appears today that the consequences of the 2008 economic crisis, and of the 2011 “Arab spring”, have had negative repercussions throughout the Mediterranean basin, leading to a lasting political and institutional instability, a weakening of a number of governmental institutions, and a decline of environmental concerns in political agendas.
11. At the same time, civil society has experienced a strong development in various countries, with in many cases a great need for capacity building in technical, communication and organizational fields to build their professionalism, prerequisite to becoming credible and recognized by the public institutions.
12. Considering this context, a number of national and international NGOs, as well as research organisations, donors and the MedWet Secretariat, met in October 2016 in order to discuss how to better engage the civil society, raise its voice and responsibility for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
13. In January 2017 they decided to establish the “Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance” (see Terms of References in Annex²), a partnership arrangement among NGOs and scientific organisations dedicated to mobilizing the civil society towards the sustainable use of wetlands, with the following objectives:
 14. - Exchange and share in a multidirectional manner between the members of the Alliance available knowledge, sources, experiences, best practices, information on model sites, etc.
 15. - Build the capacity of the wider civil society so that it can become more effective in actions related to wetland management and conservation.
 16. - Effectively link local, national, regional and international actors or initiatives through innovative concrete joint actions on prioritized policy and strategic topics.
 17. - Increase the public profile of wetlands through joint communication using scientific knowledge and concerted messages about the value of wetlands, their multiple advantages and benefits they provide to people, and the potential solutions they hold in the face of global change, including climate change.
18. The Alliance is set as an informal mechanism, without legal existence, meant to be as light, flexible and inclusive as possible.
19. To date the Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance is composed of 23 members from 14 countries: 6 international NGOs, 11 national NGOs, and 6 scientific organisations.

3 - Relations between MedWet and the Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance

20. The Alliance intends to contribute to the effective conservation of Mediterranean wetlands and the wise use of their resources, values and services, which is a clear contribution to MedWet’s mission.
21. Alliance members felt that, taking into account the nature of NGOs and their contribution to the Mediterranean society, the Alliance should have its own governance scheme and retain its autonomy from MedWet. However, it should develop its activities in close

² This updated version of the Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance Terms of References is still in draft form and will be discussed and endorsed during the Alliance meeting to be held on 12th October 2018 in Tunisia. Therefore a validated version these ToRs will be available for the MedWet/Com13 meeting.

collaboration with the MedWet Secretariat, the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory, and the MedWet Scientific and Technical Network, in order to optimise synergies and to ensure a good flow of information.

22. In this respect, it is proposed to consider the Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance in the framework of the “Agadir Commitments”. This mechanism endorsed by MedWet in 2012 is “an evolving roster of projects and actions contributing to the conservation and wise use of Mediterranean water-related ecosystems in an exemplary manner, developed by governments of the Mediterranean region, regional and international organisations, non-governmental organisations or the private sector. These “Agadir Commitments” are aimed at promoting synergy and best practices among all these actors. The MedWet Secretariat should act as a clearing house for projects listed therein and maintain updated information on their progress, facilitate exchange of information and cooperation between the actors.”
23. In this context, MedWet/Com is invited to :
24. - Acknowledge the existence of the Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance and its potential to effectively contribute to achieving MedWet’s mission,
25. - Authorize the MedWet Secretariat to act as a permanent observer in the Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance, being invited to all meetings of its governance bodies, and
26. - Request the MedWet Secretariat to monitor the activities of the Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance and report to the MedWet Steering Group.

ANNEX:

Terms of Reference of the MEDITERRANEAN WETLANDS ALLIANCE

[Working Document for validation]

Introduction

On a global scale, wetlands represent the ecosystem which contributes the most to human development and well-being, but is at the same time the most degraded and destroyed by the people who benefit from its services³. In the Mediterranean basin, the situation is even worse due to the considerable pressure on natural resources and in particular on water resources⁴, which has led to the loss of more than half of the wetlands over the past century. This pressure on Mediterranean wetlands and their ecosystem services⁵, which are still outstanding, has a negative impact on human well-being and national economies⁶.

In response to this worrying situation, the MedWet initiative was established in 1991, bringing together 27 countries around the Mediterranean basin, several NGOs, supranational organizations and research centres. As the first regional initiative of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of international importance, MedWet has been instrumental in structuring and promoting operational collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations for conservation and sustainable management of wetlands, although not being able yet to reverse this negative trend.

In 2008, to better influence public policies and development planning decision in favour of wetlands conservation and wise use, the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO) has been established within MedWet, as a Science/Policy partnership monitoring and evaluation platform designed to provide decision-makers regularly updated and scientifically validated information on the status of wetlands in the Mediterranean basin, threats affecting them, as well as actions for sustainable management. More recently, MedWet established the Scientific and Technical Network to provide scientific and technical support concerning national policies and actions related to wetlands conservation and sustainable use.

However, the 2008 economic crisis, the consequences of the 2011 « Arab spring » have had negative repercussions throughout the Mediterranean basin, leading to a lasting political and institutional instability, a weakening of a number of governmental institutions and a decline of environmental concern in political agendas.

³ Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005.

⁴ Mediterranean Ecological Footprint, 2012

⁵ Vaschalde D., 2014. Ecological services provided by wetlands to climate change adaptation. The state of knowledge and economic evaluation. Technical report, Plan Bleu and Tour du Valat, 74p.

⁶ OZHM 2012. Mediterranean wetlands outlook. First Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory report. Tour du Valat Ed., 128p.

At the same time, civil society⁷ has experienced a strong development in various countries, with in many cases a great need for capacity-building in technical, communication and organizational fields to build their professionalism, prerequisite to become credible and recognized by public institutions.

In this context, in January 2017, following a meeting gathering a number of Mediterranean NGOs and research organisations, together with donors and the MedWet Secretariat, it has been decided to establish the “**Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance**” as partnership arrangement among NGOs and research organisations dedicated to mobilizing the civil society towards the sustainable use of wetlands.

This Alliance intends to contribute to the effective conservation of Mediterranean wetlands and the wise use of their resources, values and services, which is also MedWet’s mission, but through modalities of actions that are complementing those of MedWet, and in close collaboration with the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory and the MedWet Scientific and Technical Network. Thus, the two entities –having the same goals– must collaborate closely, without losing their autonomy, which would greatly reduce their effectiveness. In order to ensure optimal flow of information and synergies, the MedWet Secretariat is a permanent observer and is invited to all Alliance meetings.

Mission

“The Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance aims to raise collectively the profile of wetlands in the Mediterranean society at large and in particular in national, regional and international policy through the promotion of their sustainable use, based on innovation and evidence-based best practices as catalyst for change.”

Objectives

To achieve its mission and ensure its overall impact and effectiveness, the Alliance aims to:

- **Exchange and share** in a multidirectional manner between the members of the Alliance available knowledge, sources, experiences, best practices, information on model sites, etc...
- **Build the capacity** of the wider civil society so that they can become more effective in actions related to wetland management and conservation.
- **Effectively link** local, national, regional and international actors or initiatives through innovative concrete joint actions on prioritized policy and strategic topics.
- **Increase the public profile of wetlands** through joint communication using scientific knowledge and concerted messages around the value of wetlands, their multiple advantages and benefits they provide to people and the potential solutions they hold in the face of global change, including climate change.

The synergy and joint action among members is organised around three main topics:

- Knowledge and Innovation
- Communications
- Policy

⁷ Organizations in a society which are independent of the government.

Members and partners

Members of the Alliance can be sub-national, national and international NGOs, CSOs, site management bodies and research organizations of various sizes and abilities, but having in common a commitment to conservation and sustainable use of Mediterranean wetlands.

The Alliance is meant to be inclusive, i.e. open to any organization that is willing to actively contribute to and benefit from one or more of its core functions. Each member commits to comply with these ToRs and to sign the “Chart of Collaboration” specifying the general governance of the Alliance, recalling the mission and the main functions to which each partner is expected to contribute.

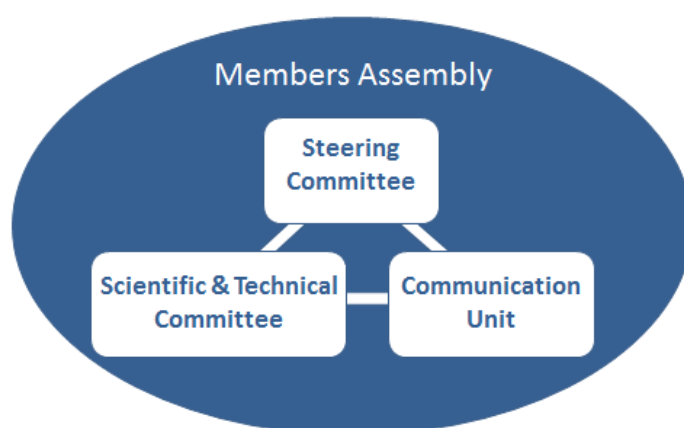
Organizations that cannot be members - i.e. governmental or intergovernmental organizations other than research organizations, donors - or that are not ready for full commitment to the Alliance, but that are willing to collaborate with the Alliance on one or more of its core functions, can be fully associated to the work of the Alliance as **partners**. However, they can't be part of the governance bodies, nor take positions on behalf of the Alliance.

Structure and organization

The Alliance is an informal structure, meant to be as light, flexible and inclusive as possible.

This structure is meant to be adaptive and responsive to serve the mission and the functions of the Alliance and seize opportunities. The priority of this structure is to create and maintain a good flow of communication, to build trust among partners and to deliver key messages in a concerted way.

The governance bodies are the following:



▪ **Members Assembly / Strategy**

Composition and operation:

All members. Meets physically once a year.

Main functions:

- Adoption of the Strategic Plan and the Annual Action Plan

- Assessment of the implementation of the Annual Action Plan
- Adoption of the “Chart of the Alliance”
- Appointment of the Alliance’s Ambassadors

- **Steering Committee / Policy**

Composition and operation:

Representatives of 5 members of the Alliance, on a rotating basis every 3 years. Two members are renewed each year (one on the third year), so as to ensure continuity. One of the SC members is acting as coordinator.

Criteria:

- Geographical representativeness.
- Gender representativeness.
- Policy expertise in the different national, international level.
- Balance between international, national and local members.

Main functions:

- Development of the strategy for validation by the Members Assembly,
- Coordination of the implementation of the strategy and the annual action plan.
- Coordinates its monitoring and implementation
- Ensures the flow of information among Alliance members and partners.
- Ensures the representation of the Alliance

- **Technical and Scientific Committee / Knowledge & Innovation**

Composition:

5 representatives of Alliance members, on a rotating basis every 3 years. Two members are renewed each year (one on the third year), so as to ensure continuity. One of the SC members is acting as coordinator of the TSC.

Criteria:

- Technical & scientific expertise in the key fields related to the work of the Alliance.
- Geographical representativeness.
- Gender representativeness
- Balance between international, national and local members.

Main functions:

- Propose scientific questions, topics and activities of the Alliance.
- Assess the information and capacity needs of local NGOs
- Promote technical and scientific collaboration among members.
- Synthesize key information and data for civil society and decision-makers.
- Ensures optimal collaboration with the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory and the MedWet Scientific & Technical Network.
- Ensure the production of concrete knowledge syntheses for the support of the activities and communication of the Alliance.

- **Communication Unit / Communication**

Composition:

The Communication Officers of the Alliance members willing to take part to it, one of them acting as leader. The MedWet Communication Officer should be closely associated, as appropriate.

Criteria:

- Expertise in communication (national, international level and key targeted audiences to be identified in the strategy)
- Geographical representativeness.
- Gender representativeness
- Balance between international, national and local members.

Main functions:

- Develop and implement a communication strategy and the annual Work Plan with an agenda including key events for advocating Alliance's positions.
- Activate and mobilize
- Identify key media to be targeted, as well as key « spokespersons » or wetlands ambassadors.

In order to optimise synergies and exchange of information between MedWet and the Alliance, the MedWet Secretariat is a permanent observer. In this respect it is invited to all meetings of the Alliance governance bodies.

Resources

The operating costs of the governance bodies will be covered by each of the organizations participating in the governance structure, in a fair and equitable manner.

Members can apply together in common projects, based on common ideas. This could help in fundraising for the needed expenses. An equitable distribution of tasks and resources should be sought.

Annex I

Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance Members and Partners

Founding members

The Alliance has been established in January 2017 with 20 members (14 international or national NGOs and 6 research organizations), from 12 countries.

International NGOs

- Euronatur
- Global Water Partnership Med
- MedINA
- Wetlands international
- WWF International

Other international associations

- IUCN Center for Mediterranean cooperation

National NGOs

- Association des Amis des Oiseaux (AAO) / Tunisia
- Doğa Derneği (DD) / Turkey
- Groupe de Recherche pour la Protection des Oiseaux au Maroc (GREPOM) / Morocco
- Petites Iles de Méditerranée (PIM) / France
- Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) / Jordan
- Society for the Protection of Prespa (SPP) / Greece
- Society for the Protection of Nature of Lebanon (SPNL) / Lebanon
- WWF Greece

Scientific organizations

- Centre d'Ecologie Fonctionnelle et Evolutive (CEFE-CNRS) / France
- Institut Méditerranéen de Biodiversité et d'Ecologie (IMBE) / France
- Ornithological Research Center / Ondokuz Mayıs University / Turkey
- Society of Wetlands Scientists
- Tour du Valat, Research Institute for the Conservation of Mediterranean Wetlands / France
- University of Annaba / Algeria

New members

In November 2017, further to an expression of interest from several NGOs, the Alliance Steering Committee submitted the applications of 3 NGOs to the Members Assembly, who endorsed them:

National NGOs

- Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania (INCA) / Albania
- Association Nationale Algérienne d'Ornithologie (ANAO) / Algeria
- Centar Za Zastiitu Ptica (CZIP) / Montenegro

Partners

The following organizations have expressed the willingness to be informed of the Alliance activities and, if relevant, associated to some of them:

- Agence Française de Développement / France
- Conservatoire du Littoral / France
- Estacion Biologica de Doñana – CSIC / Spain
- MAVA Foundation
- UNEP-MAP Plan Bleu
- UNEP-MAP CAR/ASP

Annex 2

Composition of the Steering Committee / Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance

January 2017-December 2019

Organisation	Representative
▪ Doğa Derneği	Levent Erkol
▪ IUCN Center for Mediterranean cooperation	Antonio Troya
▪ MedINA	Thymio Papayannis
▪ Tour du Valat (Coordinator)	Jean Jalbert
▪ WWF International / North Africa	Faouzi Maamouri