



MedWet

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

Terms of References of the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet)

Amended Terms of Reference of the MedWet Initiative as a Ramsar Regional Initiative

I. Purposes

1. Within the framework of the implementation of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971), these Terms of Reference, made public and shared with the Ramsar Secretariat, set out the organization and functioning of the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (hereafter referred to as MedWet), which was established to support countries in the Mediterranean region (hereafter referred to as Region) in their implementation of the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
2. MedWet is a long-term collaborative effort between Mediterranean countries and entities, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, intergovernmental institutions, international non-governmental organizations and national institutions specialized in wetland issues, which aims to ensure the effective conservation of wetlands and the wise use of their resources, values and services within the framework of the Ramsar Convention.
3. MedWet is an endogenous mechanism based on mutual trust and respect.
4. MedWet shall foster synergies with the relevant institutions dealing with the conservation and wise use of wetlands in the Mediterranean region.

II. Scope and Objectives of MedWet

5. MedWet is a Ramsar Regional Initiative (RRI) intended to provide operational means for international cooperation and support for an effective implementation of the Ramsar Convention and its Strategic Plan in the Mediterranean region, for improving the visibility of the Ramsar Convention and wetland-related issues of common concern through voluntary international cooperation at regional level and, in particular involving all relevant national and regional stakeholders.
6. The MedWet objectives are:



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- a) to promote the effective implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan, pertinent Ramsar Resolutions and relevant policies and initiatives in the Mediterranean region by supporting actions on the ground by governments, civil society organizations and the private sector;
- b) to reinforce capacities in areas where these are not sufficiently developed, and especially to develop and ensure adaptive and integrated management of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) and other wetlands;
- c) to transfer to and exchange knowledge and expertise among key conservation and sustainable use actors in order to reinforce Mediterranean wetland management; and
- d) to coordinate with other regional and international actions and programmes relevant for wetland conservation and sustainable use, thereby serving to build synergies to support the implementation of the Convention in the region.

III. Membership to MedWet

7. Members

The MedWet membership includes:

- Country-members: states as the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention of the European, African and Asian regions of the Mediterranean, pursuant to Para. 7. They have the right to vote.
- Non-country members: national non-governmental organisations; international non-governmental organisations; other non-governmental organisations; universities and research centres, local communities and the private sector. They have the right to vote.
- Honorary members are individuals who are broadly acknowledged as having contributed significantly to MedWet, which status is awarded by the MedWet/Com following a proposal of the MedWet/SG, with voice but without the right to vote.

Members with the right to vote, contribute to MedWet by paying membership dues and active involvement.

The current membership of the MedWet/Com is listed in Annex A.

8. Admission



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Countries shall become members of MedWet by notifying the MedWet/Com of their adhesion to the MedWet Statutes and these Terms of Reference, effective upon payment of the first year's membership dues.

Non-countries shall become members of MedWet when the MedWet/Com has determined that the applicant:

- a) shares the objectives of MedWet;
- b) is active in the conservation of nature and natural resources, including their scientific, educational, legal, economic, social and political dimensions, at global, regional, national and local levels;
- c) is committed to participate actively in the MedWet activities of the annually adopted work plan;
- d) does not pursue objectives or carry out activities that conflict with the objectives or activities of MedWet; and
- e) signs a formal letter of engagement, using the format adopted by the Ramsar Standing Committee for the Ramsar Regional Initiatives.

Membership will be effective upon payment of the first year's membership dues.

The maximum number of non-country members eligible is set at a maximum of one-third of the country members.

Before admitting an applicant, the MedWet/Com shall notify members of the application and consider any objection raised. The MedWet/Com shall admit the applicant by a two-thirds majority of votes cast.

Members shall:

- (i) support and facilitate the objectives, activities and governance of MedWet;
- (ii) provide to MedWet, upon request, readily available information regarding their activities in support of MedWet's objectives;
- (iii) avoid pursuing objectives or carry out activities that conflict with the objectives or activities of MedWet;
- (iv) disclose any potential conflict of interest on matters under consideration by the MedWet/Com and refrain from participating in the discussion and voting on these matters;
- (v) pay membership dues as prescribed in the para. X.

9. Suspension, Rescission and Withdrawal

The rights of a member in connection with elections and voting shall *ipso facto* be suspended when the dues of that member are **two** years in arrears. If a Member intends to reobtain the right to vote, it has to regularize the arrears of contributions due to MedWet.

If the dues of a Member are more than **two** years in arrears, the matter shall be



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referred to the Meeting of the MedWet/Com, which may rescind all the remaining rights of the Member concerned. Such rescission shall be on such terms as the Meeting of the MedWet/Com may determine.

Should a Member act in a manner seriously inconsistent with the requirements of article 9, the MedWet/Com may suspend that Member by a two-thirds majority of votes cast. While under suspension, a member shall not be entitled to exercise any membership rights except the right of withdrawal. To reinstate membership of the MedWet/Com after being suspended, the Admission procedure as stated in para. 8 has to be completed.

Any Member may withdraw at any time from membership of MedWet/Com by giving notice in writing to the Chair to that effect. The Member withdrawing shall not be entitled to any refund of membership dues paid.

IV. Governance and functioning

10. The MedWet structure is composed of five bodies:

- a) a governing and decision-making body, the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com), bringing together all members of the RRI;
- b) an intersessional governance body, the MedWet Steering Group (MedWet/SG);
- c) a coordinating body, the MedWet Secretariat;
- d) an advisory scientific and technical body, the MedWet Scientific and Technical Network (MedWet/STN); and
- e) a scientific monitoring body, the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO).

11. MedWet shall establish regular contacts and cooperation with the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and the Convention's programme on Communication, Capacity building, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) National Focal Points of the MedWet country members, as well as with other appropriate experts, in order to obtain the best scientific and technical advice, and to contribute with MedWet regional experience and knowledge into STRP's and CEPA's work at the global level.

V. The MedWet Committee (MedWet/Com)

12. The MedWet/Com is the governing and decision-making body for the MedWet Initiative.



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- The MedWet/Com includes representatives of all the members of the MedWet Initiative.
- It meets, regularly, at least once a year, guides and monitors the Initiative's work programme and its resources consistently with the Ramsar Strategic Plan.
13. In addition to members, non-governmental organizations and individuals may also be invited to participate in MedWet/Com meetings as observers, without the right to vote, and participate in the adoption of decisions and in the presentation of information or reports relevant to the objectives of the meeting.
Ramsar Secretariat and IUCN are permanent observers in MedWet.
 14. The MedWet/Com has been entrusted by the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention to assist in the effective implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plans and Resolutions relevant to the Mediterranean region.
 15. The responsibilities of the MedWet/Com in overseeing the implementation of the MedWet Initiative are:
 - a) to adopt the MedWet strategic documents, including the three-year strategic work plan and related provisional budget, and work plans;
 - b) to monitor the implementation and results of MedWet activities;
 - c) to consider the reports and recommendations from the MedWet/SG;
 - d) to comment on the proposed new programmes and activities by the Ramsar Convention, by invitation of the Ramsar Convention Secretariat;
 - e) to approve the selection and replacement of the MedWet Coordinator;
 - f) to approve the establishment of temporary *ad hoc* working groups and their dissolution;
 - g) to designate the members of the MedWet/SG;
 - h) to admit new members of MedWet;
 - i) to take any other decisions for the good and effective functioning of the Initiative; and
 - j) to provide guidance to the MedWet bodies, promote MedWet and its work, as well as the co-funding of its activities by its members and any additional donor.
 16. The members of MedWet/Com shall make every effort to reach agreement on all matters of substance by consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached, the report shall reflect the views of all members of MedWet/Com. If all efforts to reach consensus have been exhausted and no agreement has been reached, any decision shall, as a last resort, be taken by a simple majority vote of the members, present and voting.



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VI. The MedWet Steering Group (MedWet/SG)

17. The MedWet/SG is the governance body that operates intersessionally between MedWet/Com meetings with the responsibility to supervise the implementation of the decisions of the MedWet/Com and the effective functioning of the MedWet Secretariat.
18. The MedWet/SG is composed of:
 - a) three country representatives, one from each of the following Ramsar regions: Africa, Asia and Europe;
 - b) a representative of the country hosting the MedWet Secretariat;
 - c) a representative of the non-country members;
 - d) a representative of the institution hosting the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO);
 - e) a representative of the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, as a permanent observer (*ex officio*);
 - f) a representative of IUCN-MED, as a permanent observer (*ex officio*);
 - g) the MedWet Honorary Members; and
 - h) the MedWet Coordinator (*ex officio*).
19. In the case of the three countries, an alternate country from each region is designated by the MedWet/Com to serve in the event that the regular country representative of the three regions should be unable to attend a meeting.
20. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the MedWet/SG are designated, on a rotating basis, by the MedWet/Com at the time of election of the MedWet/SG members among the representatives of the three countries.

They shall serve the MedWet/Com in the intersessional period until the closure of the next MedWet/Com meeting and therefore serve in those capacities until their successors take office. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the MedWet/SG shall not serve for more than two consecutive terms.
21. Countries to serve on the MedWet/SG should be proposed by their regional group of MedWet/Com members.
22. The MedWet/SG meets periodically, at least two times a year, face-to-face but shall



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operate largely through email and online processes. The necessary budget provisions to cover travel and subsistence costs of the members of the Steering Group eligible for such support are included in the MedWet Secretariat budget.

23. The responsibilities of the MedWet/SG are:

- a) to take operational decisions between MedWet/Com meetings based on the decisions of the MedWet/Com;
- b) to approve the three-year strategic work plan and related provisional budget, prepared by the Secretariat, to be submitted for adoption by the MedWet/Com;
- c) to approve the annual work plans and annual budgets prepared by the Secretariat;
- d) to approve the annual contributions of MedWet members to the MedWet budget;
- e) to approve the annual reports and audited accounts prepared by the MedWet Secretariat;
- f) to guide and supervise arrangements for the meetings of MedWet/Com;
- g) to select and appoint the Coordinator to be submitted for approval by the MedWet/Com or provide arguments for his/her replacement to the MedWet/Com;
- h) to evaluate, on an annual basis, the performance of the MedWet Coordinator and report to the MedWet/Com;
- i) to propose to the MedWet/Com the renewal of the MedWet Coordinator contract or his/her replacement;
- j) to approve the recruitment of Secretariat staff members in consultation with the MedWet Coordinator.

VII. The MedWet Secretariat

24. MedWet is coordinated by the MedWet Secretariat, which carries out the operational management and the administrative functions, with the support of the Ramsar Secretariat, as appropriate.
25. The MedWet Secretariat operates under the authority and supervision of the MedWet/Com and, intersessionally, of the MedWet/SG.
26. The MedWet Secretariat is managed by the MedWet Coordinator, who is selected via a competitive procedure. The Coordinator is appointed through a public call with a



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selection procedure approved by the MedWet/Com. The Coordinator has a term of office of three years. At the end of each mandate the Coordinator's terms of offices can be renewed after a prior and positive evaluation carried out by the MedWet/SG and approved by the MedWet/Com.

27. The core MedWet Secretariat consists of the MedWet Coordinator, a Financial-Administrative Officer and a Communication Officer. Other Secretariat staff members may be recruited according to the needs of the work plan and available resources.
28. The Association MedWet Secretariat employs the MedWet Coordinator and other staff members of the MedWet Secretariat according to the laws of the host country.
29. Under the leadership of the Coordinator, the responsibilities of the MedWet Secretariat are:
 - a) to facilitate and promote collaboration among MedWet members;
 - b) to coordinate the implementation of the work plans adopted by the MedWet/Com;
 - c) to prepare annual work plans and budgets for the approval of MedWet/SG and adoption by the MedWet/Com;
 - d) to act as the secretariat for the MedWet/Com and the MedWet/SG;
 - e) to identify and actively promote the involvement of Mediterranean stakeholders in the implementation of the MedWet work plans;
 - f) to administer the budgets adopted by the MedWet/Com and to prepare the annual financial reports to be submitted to the MedWet/SG and to the MedWet/Com; and
 - g) to report periodically to the MedWet/SG the progress of the initiatives of the MedWet bodies and relevant outcomes.
 - h) to report to the MedWet/Com meeting the progress of the initiatives of the MedWet bodies and relevant outcomes
 - i) to represent the MedWet initiative in the international fora
30. The MedWet Secretariat may have a formal recognition by signing a hosting agreement with the host country, and with the host institution to recognize the specific status of the Initiative and its operational independence with regard to the host institution.

VIII. The MedWet Scientific and Technical Network (MedWet/STN)

31. The Terms of Reference for the MedWet/STN are included in Annex B.



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IX. The Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO)

32. The Mediterranean Wetland Observatory (MWO) was established in 2008 at the request of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com) as a multi-partner project coordinated and to be partially funded by Tour du Valat (TdV). All members of MedWet contribute to MWO.
33. The MWO four objectives are closely linked:
- a) to provide timely and quality information on Mediterranean wetlands status and trends;
 - b) to monitor threats to Mediterranean wetlands and identify actions to promote their protection and wise use and restoration;
 - c) to assess the contribution of Mediterranean wetlands in the Mediterranean context of sustainable development;
 - d) in collaboration with the MedWet/Secretariat, to contribute in raising awareness among policy and decision makers and to feed public policies towards wetlands conservation and sustainable use.
34. The geographical scope of the MWO is the Mediterranean region at large, and includes all the countries that are members of MedWet/Com.
35. Within the limitations of available funding, the specific responsibilities of the MWO are:
- a) to identify, test and propose suitable indicators, methods and techniques for the assessment of the conservation status and trends of wetlands in the Mediterranean region;
 - b) to make regular assessments using existing data of the state and trends of Mediterranean wetlands;
 - c) to identify and quantify the changes in surface area and in quality of Mediterranean wetlands based on selected indicators and using inventory, monitoring and assessment methods;
 - d) to develop an understanding of the causes and underlying mechanisms responsible for the ecological changes and test them by gathering and analyzing adequate data;
 - e) to publish regular reports on the status and trends on Mediterranean wetlands;
 - f) to increase awareness on the importance of wetlands, their conservation and sustainable use, among decision-makers and other stakeholders/users, by sharing research outcomes.



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36. The MWO promotes a shared understanding of the main root causes of Mediterranean wetlands loss, identifying key challenges to be addressed in the coming years, using this knowledge for regularly updating the MedWet Strategy and the multi-annual Work Plan, and monitoring the impact of the actions undertaken.
37. The MWO supports the Secretariat in the preparation of the annual work plans for the approval of MedWet/SG and adoption by the MedWet/Com.

X. Financing

38. The income of MedWet shall be derived from membership dues, contracts, grants, donations, investments and from other sources approved by the MedWet/Com.
39. The MedWet/Com adopts a baseline annual budget to cover the costs of the core staff and operations of the MedWet Secretariat.
40. In order to allow MedWet to provide lasting structural and operational support to facilitate and improve the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the Mediterranean region, all MedWet members should provide sufficient and adequate contributions to the baseline annual budget to support a minimal operational structure for effective work in the region and take the necessary steps to achieve and ensure financial sustainability of MedWet.
41. Dues for country members shall be established by the MedWet/Com according to the UN Scale of Assessment adopted by Ramsar and adjusted to the context of MedWet. The MedWet/Com may establish a minimum contribution and groups for the setting of dues.
Dues for non-country members shall be established by the MedWet/Com on the proposal of the MedWet/SG.
Membership dues shall become payable on the first day of each calendar year.
42. MedWet/Com members are encouraged to make voluntary contributions to the MedWet budget beyond the baseline annual budget, for MedWet's specific programmes and activities.
43. MedWet may receive donations and/or voluntary contributions from governmental, non-governmental and private sector.



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44. The MedWet Secretariat takes all the necessary measures to establish financial sustainability with resources from a variety of fairly distributed reliable sources, allowing for the development of its activities over the long term.

XI. Reporting

45. MedWet Secretariat reports annually to the Ramsar Secretariat on work progress, collaborations it has established, current financial status, including financial and work plans for the following year, using the format adopted by the Ramsar Convention Standing Committee.
A summary of Ramsar Convention and other funding sources is reported. Annual reports shall be submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat in time for the preparation of the documents for the annual meeting of to the Ramsar Convention Standing Committee.

XII. Use of the MedWet name and logo

46. The name and logo of MedWet are protected. They should be used by any MedWet/Com member in conjunction with the Ramsar Convention logo for activities implemented within the framework of MedWet Initiative.
47. Any other organization or individual wishing to use the logo should obtain approval from the MedWet Coordinator.



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Annex A – MedWet/Com members

The MedWet Initiative is currently composed of the following members:

Country members

- 27 States: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, North Macedonia, Tunisia and Turkey.
- One self-governing body: Palestinian Authority.

Non - country members

- Tour du Valat research institute for the conservation of Mediterranean Wetlands (TdV).
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

Honorary members

- Mr. Thymio Papayannis.
- Ms Gordana Beltram.

Permanent Observers

- Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.
- IUCN Center for Mediterranean Cooperation.

The MedWet Coordinator

Rules of procedure of the MedWet/Com and the MedWet/SG

Amended Rules of Procedures of the MedWet/Com and the MedWet/SG of the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative as a Ramsar Regional Initiative

Membership

- Rule. 1* New members of the MedWet/Com shall be admitted by a three-fourths majority of votes cast of members present at a MedWet/Com meeting.
- Rule. 2* The MedWet/Com may award honorary members on the proposal of the MedWet/SG to whom is broadly acknowledged as having contributed significantly to MedWet. Honorary members shall be admitted by a three-fourths majority of votes cast of members present at a MedWet/Com meeting.
- Rule. 3* Each member of the MedWet/Com shall be entitled to be represented at meetings of the Committee by a Representative and an Alternate Representative.
- Rule. 4* Voting. "Simple majority" means more than half of the total number of votes cast.
- Rule. 5* "Members present and voting" means ordinary members present and casting an affirmative or a negative vote. Members abstaining from voting shall be considered as not voting.
- Rule. 6* Conditions for the admission and participation of observers. The MedWet Coordinator, with the tacit consent of the MedWet/Com members, may invite them to send representatives to observe any MedWet public meetings or for particular agenda items, any other Ramsar Contracting Party or any country, or intergovernmental organization, or non-governmental organization, or persons, who are implementing the Ramsar Convention in the Mediterranean region or are interested in the conservation and wise use of wetlands. Observers may, upon the invitation of the Chairperson and with the tacit consent of the meeting, actively participate, present information or report relevant to the meeting and objectives of the Convention, without the right to vote.
- Rule. 7* MedWet/Com members are expected to cover their own travel and accommodation costs to attend MedWet/Com meetings, with the exception of one government representative (or more, if resources allow) from each country eligible for support according to the List of Development Assistance Recipients established by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). No representative will be sponsored from eligible countries that have not paid their membership dues to the MedWet baseline budget for more than two years in arrears.
- Rule. 8* The MedWet/SG, to approve the measures and documents, submits them to the MedWet/Com for adoption, through on-line consultation or at face-to-face meetings. A 'silent assent' procedure applies on the on-line consultation, where decision is 'deemed adopted', unless any member objects within the specified period under Rule 22".

Chair and meetings

- Rule. 9* The MedWet/Com is chaired by the Chair of the MedWet/Steering Group (MedWet/SG).
- Rule. 10* The Chair represents the MedWet/Com as required within the limits of the Committee's mandate and shall carry out such other functions as may be entrusted to him/her by the MedWet/Com.
- Rule. 11* MedWet/Com may appoint a Vice-Chair among the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention in the region, which shall assist the Chair in his/her functions and shall preside at meetings in the absence of the Chair.
- Rule. 12* The Chair of MedWet/Com may declare a session of the meeting open and permit the debate to proceed if at least half of the Country-members are present and voting. No decision shall be taken at a meeting in the absence of a quorum.
- Rule. 13* The MedWet/Com meets face-to-face at least once every three years prior to or during the Ramsar Convention COP. MedWet members are encouraged to host additional face-to-face MedWet/Com meetings. In case face-to face meetings may be impossible, impracticable or against health protocols, virtual MedWet/Com meetings should be considered.
- Rule. 14* The MedWet/Com shall also hold regular online meetings in between the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.
- Rule. 15* The MedWet/Com meetings shall be called by the MedWet/SG or at the request of at least one fifth of the country members.
- Rule. 16* The MedWet Secretariat shall be responsible to make necessary arrangements for the logistic and the organization of the meetings of the Committee.
- Rule. 17* Notice of a meeting shall be given to all members at least 45 days in advance.
- Rule. 18* The agenda and the time of the meetings shall be determined by the MedWet/SG.
- Rule. 19* The working documents shall be distributed for the approval of the MedWet/SG at least 15 days before their distribution to all MedWet/Com members at least 30 days before the opening of the meeting.
- Rule. 20* A quorum of the meeting shall consist of at least half of the country-members. No decision shall be taken at a meeting in the absence of a quorum.
- Rule. 21* The minutes of each meeting, with the approval of the Chair, shall be distributed to all members within 60 days after the closure of each meeting and shall be posted in the MedWet website.

Rule. 22 In absence of a regular face-to-face meeting of MedWet/Com, documents related to the functioning of MedWet, mainly strategic work plan and provisional budget, shall be adopted by online meetings.

Rule. 23 Other decisions, other than those provided for in Rule 21, may be adopted by electronic means. In this case, the Chair shall send the relevant documents approved by the MedWet/SG to the members for comment. Comments are to be sent to the Secretariat within 30 days of the dispatch of the communication, after which the Secretariat shall communicate all comments received to all members. If no objection is received by the Secretariat within these 30 days of communication, the documents shall be considered as adopted and a notice of the adoption shall be given to all members. If a member objects to a document within the applicable time limit, the document shall be put to voting or otherwise referred to the next meeting of the MedWet/Com. Any member may also make a proposal to the Chair for a decision by electronic means. The Chair shall send the proposal to the members for comment, following the same procedure as outlined above.

Working languages

Rule. 24 The working languages of the MedWet/Com shall be English and French. All documents shall be distributed in the two languages and simultaneous interpretation shall be provided at the face-to-face meetings of the MedWet/Com. The costs of using these two working languages shall be included in the budget of the face-to-face meetings of the MedWet/Com.
If resources are obtained, Arabic shall be used as the third working language at the face-to-face meeting of the MedWet/Com.

Final provisions

Rule. 25 In matters not covered by the present Rules, the Rules of Procedure as adopted by the latest regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands shall apply, mutatis mutandis.

Rule. 26 Any amendment to these Rules of Procedure is adopted according to the voting procedure of Rule 4.

Rule. 27 These Rules shall apply mutatis mutandis to the MedWet/SG.

Rule. 28 All members of the MedWet/SG, including the alternate members, should be notified about the dates of the next meeting and should receive all working documents.

Rule. 29 All members are invited to meetings. For participation at face-to-face meetings full members eligible for sponsoring have priority over alternate members.

Rule. 30 In the case of the MedWet/SG, a quorum is reached with the presence of five members, of which at least two shall be country members, which are the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention in the region.