



Wetland restoration as Nature-based Solutions in the Mediterranean

16 November 2021

10:00 – 13:00 CET

On-line Conference

#coastal #wetlands #restoration #Nature-basedSolutions
#Mediterranean #MedWet #UfM #wetlandbasedsolutions

Organized by the Union for the Mediterranean and MedWet in the framework of the UfM labelled project, “the Wetland-based Solutions Programme”



Background and Objectives of the Conference

The Mediterranean Basin is a global biodiversity hotspot but also one of the most vulnerable regions in the world to the impacts of global warming. Today **wetlands cover** some 18.5 million hectares, between **1.7-2.4% of the total area** of the 27 **Mediterranean countries**. Wetlands are ecosystems of paramount importance since they give us our drinking water, irrigate our crops, directly support biodiversity and ecosystem management and conservation, underpin cultures, and are increasingly vital in the fight to mitigate and adapt to climate change. In the Mediterranean, **about half of our wetlands have been destroyed in the last 50 years**, and there are intense pressures on remaining areas, most of which are damaged and badly degraded.

Coastal Wetlands in the region are particularly exposed to the effects and risks associated to climate change, excessive water abstraction and unsustainable urban and infrastructure development. Hosting now more than 2/3 of the human population, the resilience of coastal communities, local economies, and the political and economic stability in the Region are at stake. **It is more than ever urgent to shift to actions** to protect this vital natural capital, for the **essential ecosystem services** they provide to Mediterranean people and Nature such as ensuring carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, water resources management, disaster risk reduction, food security and human well-being.



Fortunately, at **international level, the sustainable management and restoration of natural ecosystems, and in particular wetlands, are now more and more recognized as effective nature-based solutions (NBS)**.

Several regulatory frameworks are in place or in development focusing on the restoration of ecosystems including wetlands, such as the EU Green Deal, the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Programme of the Barcelona Convention, the UN decade for the restoration of ecosystems and the dedicated Convention of Ramsar for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

Significant efforts are being made on the ground in the Mediterranean Basin to conserve and restore coastal wetlands. These initiatives must be supported by updated and sound scientific research and supported by appropriate and relevant decision-making at the national and regional level in a better coordinated way, including all the involved stakeholders.

The online conference aims to align with and contribute to these ongoing local, national and international efforts by:

- shedding light on the main concepts, last available knowledge, and most effective tools to restore coastal wetlands through a series of success stories experienced at both shores of the Mediterranean
- highlighting the role of restoring wetlands as the most cost-effective Nature-based solution to tackle burning environmental problems across the Mediterranean.
- Boost better informed decision-making processes at the national, regional and international level in a more coordinated way across the Region



Agenda of the Conference

10:00 10:15	Welcome remarks	<p>Union for the Mediterranean Co-Presidencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Patrick Wegerdt, UfM EU CoPresidency ○ Abdallah Alzyod, UfM Jordan CoPresidency <p>Dr. Miguel Aymerich Huyghues-Despointes, MedWet Dr. Tobias Salathé, Ramsar Secretariat</p>
<p>Welcome remarks, presentation of agenda and introduction of the speakers (Facilitator: Alessandra Sensi, Head of Sector - Environment and Blue Economy, UfM)</p>		
10:15 10:30	Keynote speech	
<p>Keynote – Climate change impacts on Mediterranean coastal zones Prof. Dr. Maria Snoussi, Department of Earth Sciences of Mohammed V University in Rabat, Ex-President of the French IRD Scientific Council, member of MedWet and MedECC</p>		
10:30 11:30	Presentation of Restoration of wetlands Success Stories from both shores of the Mediterranean	
<p>Coastal wetlands are particularly important in preventing biodiversity loss and for fighting climate change. Pilot restoration projects are already underway in some areas where the need is greatest. This session is an opportunity to learn from different success stories across the Mediterranean.</p> <p>Keynote – Wetlands restoration as Nature-based Solutions Mr. Jean Jalbert, Director General, Tour du Valat</p> <p>Introduction to the significant value of wetlands restoration as Nature-based Solutions for facing societal challenges, especially biodiversity protection, climate-change mitigation and adaptation, water and food security, risk reduction and health.</p> <p>Presentation of 5 Wetlands restoration success stories from the Mediterranean:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ms. Nahed Msayleb, Tyre (Lebanon) ○ Mr. Pablo Vera, Albufera (Spain) ○ Ms. Imen Rais, Ghar el Mehl (Tunisia) ○ Ms Vania Statzu (Italy) ○ Mr. Serif Hizli, Konya (Turkey) <p>Moderator: Dr. Alessio Satta (MedWet)</p>		
11:30 12:30	Discussion Panel	
<p>Opportunities for wetlands restoration in the Mediterranean A multi-actor and multilevel approach are key to address the challenges faced by wetlands. This discussion panel brings together actors from institutions providing opportunities for wetlands_restoration in the Mediterranean and financial instruments for wetlands restoration from public and private organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ms. Francesca Marcato, INTERREG-Med ○ Mr. Vincent Ernoux, ENI-CBC Med ○ Mr. Diego Intrigliolo, PRIMA ○ Mr. Luis Costa, MAVA Fondation <p>Moderator: Dr. Alessio Satta (MedWet)</p>		
12:30 12:45	Questions & Answers	
<p><i>Questions received from the audience will be answered live by the speakers</i></p>		
12:45 13:00	Conclusions & Final remarks	<p>Dr. Alessio Satta, MedWet Coordinator Alessandra Sensi, Head of Sector Environment and Blue Economy, UfM</p>
<p><i>Conclusions and way-forward, links to UfM 2030GreenerMed Agenda, presentation of next edition</i></p>		

