



MedWet

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

Doc. MedWet/Com15 – I

MedWet/Com 15
Geneva, Switzerland, 06 November 2022

**Report of the 15th Meeting of the Mediterranean
Wetlands Committee**

Introduction

The first part of the MedWet/Com 15 was held online.

Due to the exceptional circumstances related to the organization of COP14 and related documents to be discussed and approved, the MedWet/Com15 took place in two parts. The first during an online meeting held on the 10th of October 2022, and the second, in presence, in Geneva during the COP on the 6th of November.

Both meeting reached the quorum of 14 countries present to make the decisions eligible and valid.

For ease of reading, the discussions and related decisions have been integrated into the present report.

Members and observers present at MedWet/Com15_Part 1 (10/10/2022)

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

Members countries attending the Meeting (14): **Turkey, Albania, Algeria, Morocco, Andorra, Slovenia, Spain, Bulgaria, France, Bosnia, Cyprus, Serbia, Portugal and Egypt**

Non-country members attending the meeting: **Tour du Valat and WWF**

Observers: **IUCN MED and Ramsar Secretariat**

Honorary members: **Gordana Beltram**

MedWet Coordinator: **Alessio Satta**

Members and observers present at MedWet/Com15_Part 2 (06/11/2022)

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

Members countries attending the Meeting (17): **Spain, Turkey, Lebanon, Portugal, Andorra, Malta, Albania, Bulgaria, France, Slovenia, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Italy, Libya, Jordan, Bosnia & Herzegovina**

Non-country members attending the meeting: **Tour du Valat**

Observers: **Ramsar Secretariat**

MedWet Coordinator: **Alessio Satta**

Adopted Agenda

Part 1

1. Updating the core budget of MedWet to 160,000 euro and the related members' contribution according to the UN scale assessment
2. Defining the minimum contribution for country members (1000 or 750) and the minimum contribution for the non-country members (750 or 500)
3. Defining the remaining rights for those members in arrears from more than 3 years
4. New honorary members

Part 2

5. Finalization of the table with the contribution of the countries based on the online vote. The table should be included as an annex to DR
6. Updates on Resolution 18.20 and on how to work together to obtain the consensus of the COP
7. Presentation of the draft of the Strategic Work Plan 2023-2025 and the related Budget 2023-2025
8. Update on the Mediterranean Alliance for Wetlands

Report

1. Maria Magdalena Bernues Sanz (chair of MedWet) opened formally the session and welcomed the participants. She hoped that the meeting would be productive and said that this was a crucial meeting for the Initiative due to the significant issues that were in the agenda.
2. The Chair declared the meeting legal as a quorum of 14 countries was reached

Item 1 - Updating the core budget of MedWet to 160,000 euro and the related members' contribution according to the UN scale assessment

3. The Coordinator shared a presentation with the group (annex 1 MedWet/COM 15 ppt). He reminded the participants about the context of this meeting: The Coordinator reminded that in the strategic meeting in Malaga in June 2018 the participating members proposed to define the sum of 160,000 euros as the core budget of MedWet to be covered with the contribution of the countries; (<https://medwet.org/documents/medwetcom-meetings/>). During the MedWet / Com14 in Dubai in October 2018 the proposal was brought to the attention of the same countries. Following the negotiations that took place between a small group of countries and at the request of Italy, the total contribution of the countries fell to 129,378 euro, lower than that of 134,426 euro valid until 2017.
4. The Coordinator reminded that starting from 2018 Italy stopped paying its contribution as well as other countries that paid the minimum contribution. This has brought the contribution of the countries to a maximum of around 100k / year. Up to now the remaining 60k have been offset by the administrative costs of the projects financed by MAVA which have always dedicated a portion to the financing of the organizations' functioning. Starting from January 2023 the MAVA funding will no longer be available and in addition to an integration by the contribution of the countries it will be necessary to identify new constant incoming resources.
5. The Coordinator explained that the baseline budget of MedWet is based on the minimum functioning of the Secretariat and of the key activities (e.g. communication, STN and wetlands managers network). The baseline budget is covered by the contributions of MedWet members and is aimed at: covering the costs of the core activities for the functioning of MedWet (the Coordinator, the financial and administrative officer, the communication officer, the STN manager, the MERSIM-Net manager and the office costs).
6. The Coordinator reported the proposal of the MedWet/SG to the MedWet/Com concerning the adjustment of the members contributions according to the current scenario by defining a core budget of 160,000 euro. The Coordinator reminded that the formerly adopted key of distribution for the countries' contributions will continue to mirror exactly what the Ramsar Convention does at global level.
7. Some members asked for a draft of the activity plan for the next 3 years which will be provided by the Coordinator before November 4th.
8. The Coordinator committed to share the draft of the SWP 2023-2025 with the members in the next two weeks

Decisions 1

- The MedWet/Com approved the MedWet / SG proposal to bring MedWet's core budget to 160,000 euros / year.

Item 2 - Defining the minimum contribution for country members (1000 or 750) and the minimum contribution for the non-country members (750 or 500)

9. The Coordinator reported the current contribution of the countries members explaining that it allows to cover a little more than 60% of the baseline budget (< 100,000 euro). The lack of the contribution of Italy alone creates a gap of almost 25% of the baseline budget. The other non-regular countries (Syria,

Libya and Lebanon), facing unprecedented political, economic and social crises, generate a lack of contribution of 2,5% of the baseline budget.

10. The Coordinator reported the proposal of the MedWet/SG to introduce alternative scenarios for minimum contributions of members to partially fill the gap. The last MedWet/SG meeting discussed the following two alternative scenarios :

Minimum contribution for the country-members:

- 750 euro
- 1,000 euro (in line with the threshold applied by Ramsar which is 1,000 CHF).

Minimum contribution for the non country – members

- 500 euro
- 750 euro

11. The Coordinator continued explaining that introducing these new scenarios, in line with the new MedWet ToR, the contribution of the current regular members would allow to cover approximately 75% of the baseline budget (from 100k to around 120k).
12. Albania asked about the time frame to send a final confirmation.
13. The Coordinator exposed the need to have the contribution defined in a Resolution as it helps the financial departments, he added that this needs to be confirmed before the COP.
14. WWF expressed that needs to consult with its internal financial department.
15. Algeria suggested commenting on both scenario and to have an online questionnaire before the COP as some countries need to decide this internally and then vote for it formally.
16. Tour de Valat suggested that the contribution should be at the minimum 500 euros for not to close the door to other NGOS in the future to be part of MedWet that could be smaller than WWF and TDV.
17. Albania suggested to add in the questionnaire information about why the country contribution is increasing and what would be the impact of it.
18. The Coordinator explained that a document already exists and explains the logic behind the increase which is mainly to ensure the co-funding of other projects and to guarantee that MedWet can expand and consolidate the actual team.
19. Turkey accepted the proposal of the MedWet/SG for the budget and accepts the increase the contribution.
20. Andorra explained that they don't have yet an official response regarding the change of the minimum country contribution.
21. Morocco approved the contribution for the sustainability of MedWet and its relevance in the Mediterranean basin.
22. Portugal needed to get an internal agreement but expressed the willingness to support this contribution as it's not a big increase.
23. Slovenia had not an official approval but expressed that they will support the increase as it's not a big increase and could help support the consolidation and the continuity of the good work done by MedWet.
24. Bulgaria supported the increase of the contribution done by MedWet but has not yet the official approval and suggests voting before the COP.
25. The coordinator reminded that the decision should be taken before the COP14 in order to have the Table of contributions annexed to a Resolution.
26. Bulgaria approved the increase.
27. Serbia needed more internal consultation and will be approving the increase.
28. Cyprus is not able to give a final approval at the moment.
29. Egypt asked to receive the list of activities planned for 2023. Egypt added that she consulted with her ministry and is waiting for final decision.
30. France approved the proposal as she considers that the work of MedWet should be consolidated and continuous.
31. Spain expressed its preference for a minimal contribution at 1000 being open to adapt to the majority of the countries.
32. Slovenia appreciated the work done by MedWet and suggests sharing the 3-year strategy for the future with the members and also the key activities that contributed a lot to the region in the past.

33. The Coordinator proposed to launch an online survey to assess the opinion of countries about the increase of the countries' contribution to be completed by the 31st of October.

Decisions 2

- The Coordinator must prepare and share an online survey to choose the best option between 750 and 1000 for country-members and between 750 and 500 for non-countries members.
- Members pledged to reply by the 31st of October to allow the Secretariat to prepare all documentation prior the COPI4 in Geneva.
- Given the need expressed by member countries of having the “members contributions” table approved at the Ramsar COP, the MedWet / SG must contact the drafters of resolution I8.9 (relating to RRI) to negotiate the timing to include the Annex I “MedWet members' contributions”.

Item 3 - Defining the remaining rights for those members in arrears from more than 3 years

34. The Coordinator shared information about the membership rights and arrears according to the current ToR of MedWet as follows. 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 (in this case Italy, Lebanon Syria and Libya cannot vote). Moreover, if a member intends to reobtain the right to vote, it must 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 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.
35. The Coordinator explained that there is a need to define the remaining rights. By way of example, these could include no more right to participate to the MedWet/Com15 and other events organized by MedWet; excluding the member from current and future MedWet activities (e.g. WWD) and excluding the member from funding opportunities.
36. Algeria approved the decision to reduce rights of members that are not paying their contribution to participate to the MedWet/Com15 and to the vote.
37. Albania suggested to keep the same contribution for these countries and approves that no more voting for the countries that are not paying their contribution but not for the rest of the suggestions. Albania raised the question if countries are excluded how they can get back in the MedWet Initiative.
38. The Coordinator replied that the countries excluded and want to be part of the initiative again they have to reapply to the MedWet Com.
39. Tobias Salathe shared the link on the chat for the participants of the status for the annual contribution to the Ramsar Convention on website. He added that the countries that are not paying are creating a problem in the finance of the Ramsar Convention. The budget will be attached to a resolution which could be the one on regional initiatives or finance.
40. Turkey supports the decisions of taking the cited rights from the countries that are not paying.
41. The coordinator launched a ZOOM survey to assess the opinion taking the rights for those members in arrears from more than 3 years). The results were as follows:
- No more right to participate to the MedWet/Com15----- 64%
 - Excluding the member from current and future MedWet activities 64%
 - Excluding the member from funding opportunities-----80%

Decisions 3

- The MedWet/Com agreed, in principle, on the need to remove the remaining rights to countries with unjustified delays of more than 3 years but they decided to approve the final decision during the second part of the MW / COM15 in Geneva.
- The MedWet/Com agreed on defining a procedure that will allow members in a situation of objective political and economic difficulty (eg Syria and Libya) to prepare a request for postponement of the annual payment that however, it must be approved by MedWet /Com.

Item 4 - new honorary members

42. The Coordinator took the opportunity of the meeting to thank Antonio Troya for his huge support to the MedWet initiative and how he deserves to be an honorary member.
43. The coordinator and the participants thanked Tobias Salathe for his continuous support to the work of MedWet.
44. Tobias Salathe suggested to designate Joao Farinha as an honorary member and to invite him to the COP in Geneva.

Decisions 4

- The MedWet/Com nominated Tobias Salathe, Antonio Troya and Joao Farinha as new honorary members of MedWet:

45. The second part of MedWet/Com15 was held in the International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG) in Geneva during the Ramsar COP14 on the 06/11/2022 from 13 to 15 PM.
46. The Chair verified that the quorum was reached (17 country-members) and declared the meeting officially opened.

Item 5 - Finalization of the table with the contribution of the countries based on the online vote

47. The coordinator reminded that, as decided by the MedWet/Com (Decision 2), the members asked the Secretariat to prepare an online voting to establish the minimum contribution for country members and no-country members.
48. The coordinator highlighted that the voting process was opened for two weeks, and deadline was on the 1st of November. He explained that 16 members (France, Turkey, Portugal, Spain, Croatia, Tour du Valat, Bosnia and Herzegovina, WWF, Slovenia, Algeria, Cyprus, Albania, Bulgaria, Andorra, Greece, Malta) voted, achieving the quorum, with the following results:

Country members:

- Option 1 (1,000 euros) = **68.8%**
- Option 2 (750 euros) = 31.2%

Non-country members:

- Option 1 (750 euros) = 40%
- Option 2 (500 euros) = **60%**

The coordinator explained that the Table of contribution was updated accordingly (Doc. MedWet/Com15 – 02).

Decisions 5

- The MedWet/Com decided the following minimum contribution: 1,000 euro for country-members and 500 euro for non-country members. These will be applied starting from 2023.
- The table of contributions with the new figures should be included as an annex to DR 18.9

Item 6 - Updates on Resolution 18.20 and on how to work together to obtain the consensus of the COP

49. The Chair introduced the topic of Draft Resolution 18.20 giving the floor to the coordinator who explained the importance of supporting this DR proposing to set up a task force to advocate other contracting parties during the COP.
50. The Coordinator suggested that the Task Force should be coordinated by Slovenia with support from Spain and France.

51. The Coordinator invited Slovenia to share the updated version of the Draft Resolution Wetland as Nature-based solution resolution with the members.

Decisions 6

- The MedWet/Com decided to fully support DR 18.20 inviting all the parties to contribute to the negotiations

Item 7 - Presentation of the draft of the Strategic Work Plan 2023-2025

52. The Coordinator presented the Strategic Work Plan of MedWet for the triennium 2023-2025.
53. As the former SWP, the priorities of MedWet reflect those of the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan to be applied at the Mediterranean level.
54. Spain proposed to add a specific activity concerning the organization of a Mediterranean Scientific Congress on Wetland Climate Nexus to be organized in Spain. The Congress will likely take place in Valencia with the involvement of the municipality and the 2 universities. The Congress will also host the 1st face-to-face meeting of the Mediterranean universities producing wetland research

Decisions 6

- The MedWet/Com approved the SWP 2023-2025 and the related budget

Item 8 - Update on the Mediterranean Alliance for Wetlands

55. Jean Jalbert, as member of the Mediterranean Alliance for Wetlands (MAW), presented the last updated on the development of the Alliance. In particular, Jean Jalbert explained the relationship between MAW and MedWet which, as decided in MedWet/Com13 in Dubai in 2018, has the role of Observer. This choice was dictated by the fact that in the MAW, in addition to the Tour du Valat, IUCN Med, BirdLife International and Wetlands International, involves several local NGOs that could wish to keep full autonomy to bring the government of a country to justice if necessary.
56. Spain asked Jean Jalbert if he sees any possible conflicts and overlaps between the MedWet and MAW.
57. Jean Jalbert explained that these are very unlikely and rather presented the possible collaborations between MAW and MedWet on the subject of communication and policy.
58. Spain also asked about MAW's sources of funding.
59. Jean Jalbert replied that MAW had received substantial funding from MAVA in its final part.

Conclusions

60. Once all the points on the agenda were concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed and congratulates all the participants for the excellent results obtained for MedWet
61. The Chair also encouraged everyone to actively participate in the side events organized by MedWet during the COP