



MedWet

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

Minutes Steering Group Meeting 19/10/2021

Participants

Nadjiba Benjedda-Algeria
Marijana KAPA- Croatia
Noha Sami Said- Egypt
Ghislaine Ferrere- France
Dana Milstein- Israel
Gordana Beltran-Slovenia
Maria Magdalena Bernués-Spain
Marie José Vinals -Spain
Alessio Satta – MedWet
Isabelle Perroud - MedWet

The Agenda

- I. Update on MedWet activities: ongoing and future projects
- II. The post MAVA scenario: the Mediterranean Consortium for Biodiversity
- III. Discussions
- IV. Decisions

Discussion

Alessio Satta (MedWet coordinator) welcomed the participants and started with the presentation (*Annex 2-presentation Steering committee October 2021*).

The key elements of the presentation concerned:

I. Update on MedWet activities: ongoing and future projects (Annex I)

The Coordinator reminded that MedWet Secretariat is chaired by Thymio Papayannis since 2014. He added that recently Thymio decided to hand over and that the role of MedWet president is proposed to Jean Jalbert, currently Treasurer of the association.

All participants congratulated this decision.

The Coordinator presented the current activities of MedWet, in particular:

I. Communicating and advocating to reduce water abstraction and detrimental coastal development in Mediterranean coastal wetlands.

Main achievements:



MedWet

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

- **“Restore Nature” campaign** where MedWet successfully helped Birdlife pressure for the integration of coastal wetlands restoration in the Green Deal and coming EU policies.
- Presence at IUCN Congress** including in Med Solutions stand and conferences.
- Editorial published** in media for World Wetlands Day
- A list of 15 stories in collaboration** with the project partners.

2. MedWet strengthening its leadership in policy advocacy for Mediterranean wetlands

He exposed the main achievements:

- Development of a close working partnership with UfM** with the Wetland-Based Solution Programme.
- At the EU level:** an ongoing working dialogue to integrate Med wetlands into the EU Green Deal
- The Ramsar Convention - drafting and submission of a resolution** for the restoration of Mediterranean wetlands submitted on time for COPI4
- The Barcelona Convention - An ongoing partnership as Observer** to the Convention.

3. Improving and Sharing the Knowledge base to promote Scaling up at the regional level

The Coordinator explained that MedWet's most relevant result is the creation of a community of Ramsar site Managers which already benefiting of the following tailored activities:

- Training on Self-Assessment and Planning tool for the governance along with PAP/RAC** of Barcelona Convention with 10 Countries – 30 key actors targeted -13 Wetland managers.
- Webinars of Knowledge and Experience promoting wetlands conservation around the Mediterranean:** 17 wetlands managers, 11 countries.

4. Strengthening the restoration of Mediterranean Wetlands for Nature and people

The Coordinator explained that Medwet is participating to the activities of the Strategy 7 of the M3 MAVA Programme contributing both to the definition of technical contents (e.g. definition of criteria for restoration project, analysis of case studies} and communication and dissemination activities

5. EU Project: Tune Up Promoting multilevel governance for tuning up biodiversity protection in marine areas

The key results achieved so far can be summarized as follows:

- a. Stronger, coordinated and proactive involvement of key stakeholders in MPAs management.
- b. Improved effectiveness of MPAs management by integrating multilevel governance tools into national and regional policy instruments.



MedWet

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

c. More intensive transnational cooperation and networking between Med MPAs.

6. EU project: REST-COAST Large scale RESToration of COASTal ecosystems through rivers to sea connectivity

The project REST-COAST has just started and the specific role of MedWet can be summarized as follows:

- Striving to initiate innovative policies and management schemes in the Mediterranean region promoting wetland conservation and wise use.
- Advocating Mediterranean countries that are members of MedWet to influence national policies and improve the restoration agenda, and supporting policy and advocacy actions to transfer restoration outcomes in international frameworks e.g. Ramsar and CBD.
- Transferring the outcomes to the Mediterranean wetlands manager network and organizing online training.

7. World Wetlands Days in Mediterranean

The Coordinator presented the great results of this work fully coordinated by the internal team of MedWet that thanks to the financial support of OFB project and the coordination of MedWet team in 2021, 451 institutions organized World Wetland days with about 793 events and 80 000 people reached.

II. The post MAVA scenario: the Mediterranean Consortium for Biodiversity

The Coordinator introduced the Consortium, its scope and the current members (Tour du Valat, IUCN MED, Conservatoire du Littoral, PIM, MedPAN and AIFM) highlighting the great opportunity for MedWet to be involved in this initiative which was made possible thanks to Jean Jalbert.

One of the first joint activity of the MBC is the submission of the project proposal RESCOM to AFD and FFEEM.

The project consists of 4 components and a certain number of activities.

- COMPONENT 1 - Development and implementation of a regional capacity building programme based on nature-based adaptation and resilience building solutions, enabling their integration into public policies
- COMPONENT 2 - Creation of a Red Alert system for sensitive biodiversity areas and a Think and Do Tank leading to the implementation of small projects
- COMPONENT 3 - Design and implementation of nature-based demonstrative solutions (NBS) in pilot territories in cooperation with national and local actors
- COMPONENT 4 - Coordination, management and sustainability of the project

The project was initially conceived by external consultants who were paid through a quota (2000 euro) allocated by each partner and a grant from AFD. In this preparation phase, the specific roles of each partner within the project were not defined and for this reason the



MedWet

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

Coordinator asked the SG as MedWet's governance body for an indication on what MedWet's priorities could be for the next few years also in consideration of current challenges (e.g. climate change agenda, UN decade on restoration, etc.). The RESCOM project, and more generally the Consortium, which intends to address many of these issues, is an excellent test bed for what MedWet activities in the forthcoming years and in the post 2022 scenario. With this aim, the Coordinator presented the RESCOM project in more detail highlighting that the project is at a very preliminary stage and it's still an expression of interest to AFD and FFEEM. Beyond the "classic" MedWet activities (communication, policy, networking, capacity building) the Coordinator asked SG members if they envision, among those included in RESCOM, other activities in which MedWet could be involved.

Gordana Beltram expressed that MedWet has a lot and consolidated experience in training and capacity building so she asked to MedWet to further elaborate on that and expand its capacity. She added that MedWet has a lot of partners who can contribute in that field which is the strongest field of MedWet.

The Coordinator added that If the project is granted it will be for a couple of years. The SG is saying in 2021 that MedWet should continue the work on capacity building. He then added that this project requires energy and resources people that's why MedWet needs to take decisions concerning the people that will be kept or recruited for the project. The Coordinator also explained that the project will likely start in 2022 and will be funded but will not be million of euros behind because most of the funds will go to the pilot projects. He added that more of 60 per cent should go to the pilot projects but as MedWet we should be able to deliver some trainings with the core budget and maybe to take the opportunity of the project to build the trainings modules and being able with the limited resources to continue delivering training through webinars (less expensive). He then raised the point of how the Mediterranean Ramsar site managers Network and the need to continuously raise funds for the coordination and management.

Gordana Beltram added that MedWet should give the support and to the managers to apply on their sites among them. She then added when Managers are coordinating and developing projects, MedWet should assist them to do their work properly.

Marie José asked how is the project will be implemented? What's the role of countries? She then added that MedWet has the experience with policies and advocacy.

The Coordinator replied that the project will be funded by AFD and FFEEM and for this reason the beneficiaries will be Non-European countries. He also explained that a list with several pilot sites in different countries have been defined including different ecosystems as forests, wetlands, marine areas etc. He ended up by explaining that AFD and FEEM want to be sure that there is no overlapping between the countries and that funds are equally distributed. He added that the final decision will be made by the donors.

Marijana Kapa added that the results of the project should be replicated in the countries. She asked who are the target group for this project?

The Coordinator replied that MedWet will target the MedWet Ramsar site Managers but also include other beneficiaries mainly located non-EU countries. On the other side, the Consortium will try to disseminate best practices and exchanges also to EU-countries.



MedWet

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

Noha Said added that it's very important to work with the Ramsar site managers so they can adapt the work on the ground on the national level. She added that that social resilience is important and that there is a need to strengthen the countries and to involve local communities in the countries.

Ghislaine Ferrere asked how the different partners will work together depending on competencies. She reminded that MedWet has already its strategy and should follow its priorities and she asked how the project was defined in the beginning.

The Coordinator replied that it was designed by a group of consultants based on a initial brief of the members of the Consortium. The project has been adapted to the requests of the AFD and FFEEM.

Gordana Beltram explained that Medwet can be a mediator, an observer and be in charge for communication and policy work. She added MedWet is not only established by the countries but it has to serve the countries. She added that the Network of Ramsar site managers is a very good initiative because they are part of the system and a way to engage the countries, adding to the focal points, and the universities et.. She added that If you want to have the support from the countries you need to give something to the countries.

The Coordinator explained that national institutions can be involved in EU projects (e.g. Horizon 2020) as beneficiaries as well as local municipalities or Ramsar site managers if established as public entities or no-profit organizations. He added that MedWet is focusing its efforts on involving Ramsar site managers and that national focal points are informed of all the activities MedWet is carrying out with the managers. He also explained that the Israel Natures and Parks Authority (INPA) is involved in the project REST-Coast that could be a good opportunity to start collaborating with this country. He added that is a MedWet priority to involve the countries as much as possible in the Call for tenders. As for RESCOM, the Coordinator explained that the Component.

Marie Jose Vinals explained that the work of MedWet should focus on improving the benefits for all the members of the MedWet/Com. She added that there is a need to continue sharing and disseminate the results of MedWet's work as the Secretariat is doing through the website and the newsletter. She asked for more information on component 3 of the RESCOM project and how the pilot sites will be defined.

The Coordinator explained that this component concerns the local demonstrator activities and a preliminary ecosystems assessment. He added that basically, the initial idea was to identify those sites with multi-biomes characteristics and taking into account the vulnerability of the sites. He also added that in the meantime the MWO was carrying on an overall coastal risk assessment to climate change including the presence of wetlands and how these wetlands could work as Nature-based solution. This work carried out by the MWO in collaboration with the ETC of the University of Malaga aims to prioritize those wetlands that need to be restored and that could improve coastal resilience. He added that wetlands are a key for any climate adaptation strategy. He ended up by explaining that this work will help national adaptations plans and how this can be zoomed at the level of each country. He suggested that this work as well as other interesting work produced by the MWO could be made available to the countries by organizing specific webinars and offered to the members.



MedWet

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

Gordana Beltram expressed the need to know what is prepared and then decide who invite to the webinars. She added that at the Eu level talking about nature-based solutions are priority for Europe and specially about wetlands. She added that we need to think about how to involve the climate people in the discussions.

The Coordinator explained that there are parts of MedWet's work and advanced approaches that could help with the climate outcomes. Providing scientific robust information about Blue Carbon potential of wetlands and their role for adaptation could be one of the specific objective as a contribution to the national efforts for climate change.

Ghislaine Ferrere explained that it's quite hard to convince climate colleagues that NBS are important solutions to tackle climate change. She added that document prepared by MWO will be ready and maybe its not possible to send it to Glasgow for the Conference of Parties on climate change or to the Ramsar Convention.

Gordana Beltram explained that climate colleagues are preparing the UNFCCC conference and are very much focused on forests and agriculture. She added that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Slovenia will organize in the water and climate pavilion in the conference- the blue area a session that will be held on trans-boundary wetlands and adaptation and mitigation opportunities.

The Coordinator ended the meeting by reminding that on **the 16th of November 2021** a Virtual Conference will be held with UFM on wetland restoration and the role of Wetland-based solutions for climate change adaptation with high level panel and people from the environmental task force of the UFM.

IV. Decisions

- MedWet** needs **to expand** its capacity to involve the countries and use the newsletter as a tool to share all its outcomes and results for the benefit of its members
- the **SG** will meet **every two months, based on a calendar**. It will be a quick meeting for updates and analyze documents, results, opportunities that needs to be shared with the members of MedWet/Com.
- The **SG** asked to be regularly updated on the implementation of the Mediterranean biodiversity Consortium and on the project proposal RESCOM.