

# Terms of Reference of the MEDITERRANEAN WETLANDS ALLIANCE

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## 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 services<sup>1</sup>. In the Mediterranean basin, the situation is even worse due to the considerable pressure on natural resources and in particular on water resources<sup>2</sup>, 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 services<sup>3</sup>, which are still outstanding, has a negative impact on human well-being and national economies<sup>4</sup>.

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, over the last decade the Mediterranean basin went through turmoils, 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.

At the same time, civil society<sup>5</sup> 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 meetings of the Members Assembly and of the Steering Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Mediterranean Ecological Footprint, 2012

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> OZHM 2012. Mediterranean wetlands outlook. First Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory report. Tour du Valat Ed., 128p.

<sup>5</sup> Organizations in a society which are independent of the government.

## 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

## Members and partners

**Members** of the Alliance can be sub-national, national and international NGOs, CSOs 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 member is expected to contribute.

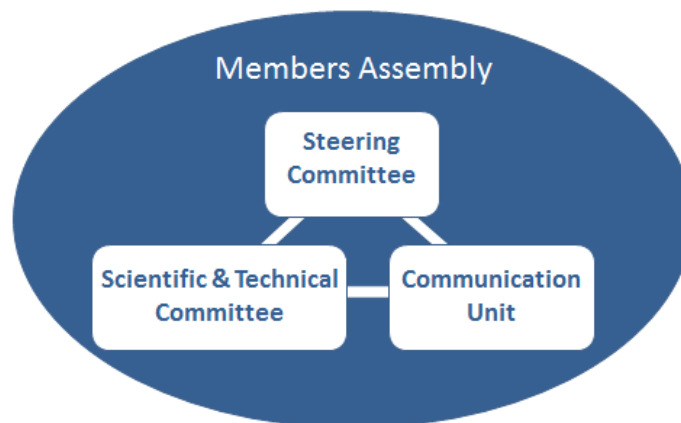
Organizations that cannot be members - i.e. governmental or intergovernmental organizations other than research organizations, donors, networks of NGOs - or that are not ready for full commitment to the Alliance, but that are willing to collaborate with the Alliance on one or more of its core functions, 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 mechanism, without legal existence, meant to be as light, flexible and inclusive as possible.

It is meant to be adaptive and responsive to serve the mission and the functions of the Alliance and seize opportunities. The priority of this mechanism is to create and maintain a good flow of communication, to build trust among members 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 collaboration”
- 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 and monitoring of the strategy and the annual action plan.
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- 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.

#### 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 the communication networks of each member.
- 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. Any company/legal entity interested in supporting the Alliance will be checked by the steering committee that they do not have any adverse impacts on the environment in any way.

## Annex 1

### 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 North Africa

#### 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 4 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
- SPANA / Morocco

## 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

## Observers

- MedWet Secretariat

## 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 North Africa	Faouzi Maamouri