

Estructura de colaboración para los Humedales Mediterraneos

Collaborative structure for Mediterranean Wetlands

The 7th Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention, held in Costa Rica on 10-18 May 1999, approved «the establishment of the **Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com)** within the framework of the Convention, as a forum for collaboration on wetland issues in the Mediterranean and as an advisor to the Convention in this region».

Resolution VII.22. Collaborative structure for Mediterranean wetlands.

1. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT eight years of collaborative efforts in favour of Mediterranean wetlands, within the framework of the Convention on Wetlands, and more specifically:

a) the launching in 1991 of a concerted effort for the conservation and wise use of Mediterranean wetlands under the name «Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative» (MedWet) as a joint effort of the Ramsar Bureau, the European Commission (EC), the Italian Government, the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau (now Wetlands International), the Station Biologique de la Tour du Valat (France), and the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF);

b) the implementation of the MedWet1 project (1993-1996), funded to a large extent by the EC and encompassing France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain, during which methods and tools for wetland inventory and monitoring, management, application of research results, and public awareness were developed and tested;

c) the implementation of the MedWet2 project (1996-1998), carried out in Albania, Algeria, Croatia, Morocco and Tunisia, funded also to a large extent by the EC and managed by the Ramsar Bureau, during which the MedWet approach was adapted to countries of the East and South of the region, and a new socio-economic approach to wetlands conservation and sustainable use was developed;

d) the adoption of Recommendations 5.14 at Ramsar COP5 (Kushiro, 1993) and 6.11 at Ramsar COP6 (Brisbane,



1996) on the MedWet Initiative;

e) the adoption of the Declaration of Venice and the endorsement of the Mediterranean Wetland Strategy by the Conference on Mediterranean Wetlands, organized by the Italian Government and the Ramsar Bureau in June 1996, within the framework of the MedWet project;

f) Decision 19.19 of the Standing Committee of the Convention in October 1996 to establish the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com) within the framework of the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative, consisting at present of 25 governments of the Mediterranean basin, the Palestinian Authority, the European Commission, the Barcelona and Bern Conventions, and six wetland centres and international NGOs;

g) the results of the first two meetings of the MedWet/Com held in Thessaloniki, Greece (March 1998) and Valencia, Spain (January 1999), hosted and financed by the Governments of these two countries;

h) the appointment in 1996 by the Secretary General of the Convention of a MedWet Coordinator and the establishment of a secretariat structure, with the financial support of the Governments of France and Greece (and since 1999, of the Government of Spain), as well as of the Station Biologique de la Tour du Valat (France) and WWF International; and

i) the launching of two further MedWet projects concerning ten Mediterranean countries, of which one is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF);

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

2. EXPRESSES ITS SATISFACTION at the work carried out so far under the Mediterranean Wetland Initiative and **ITS APPRECIATION** to the governments and institutions, in particular the European Commission, that have provided financial support to the Initiative; and **RECOGNISES** it as a model of regional collaboration, based on endogenous efforts and a wide participation of all sectors;

3. APPROVES the establishment of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com) within the framework of the Convention, as a forum for collaboration on wetland issues in the Mediterranean and as an advisor to the Convention in this region;

4. ENDORSES the Mediterranean Wetland Strategy and the Venice Declaration, which implement the Ramsar Strategic Plan in the region, as the guiding documents for efforts in the Mediterranean;

5. ENTRUSTS the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee with the task of monitoring the implementation of this Strategy and Declaration, and of adapting them to changing conditions;

6. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties around the Mediterranean to use and further develop the methodological tools elaborated under the MedWet1 and MedWet2 projects, with a view to encouraging integrated and sustainable management of wetlands in the region;

7. INVITES Contracting Parties in other

Secretary General of the Convention to establish and supervise a MedWet Team, consisting of a Co-ordinator and secretarial units, supported financially by voluntary contributions of governments and organisations in the region and elsewhere;

9. URGES Contracting Parties and institutions, in particular the European Commission, to continue providing financial support to the MedWet Initiative, in



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particular for its work in the developing countries and entities of the Mediterranean region; and

10. ENDORSES the initiative for the establishment of a North African Wetland Centre, and URGES Contracting Parties and institutions to contribute financial support for it.

The Committee shall provide advice and guidance to the Convention on Wetlands Bureau and to the MedWet Team on all matters pertaining to the Convention in the particular geographic region of the Mediterranean Basin, especially in relation to the implementation of the Mediterranean Wetland Strategy, and shall carry out such other functions entrusted to it by the Standing Committee of the Convention.

The Mediterranean Wetlands Committee will promote the co-ordination of wetland-related activities in the region, and will ensure communication and co-ordination with other relevant bodies. Its main aim is to build strong synergy in favour of wetland conservation and sustainable use, and to avoid duplication of other existing or projected initiatives.

On the basis of an invitation issued by the Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands, members of MedWet/Com can be the following:

1. Governments of countries bordering on the Mediterranean Sea and countries in its immediate proximity, such as Jordan, Portugal and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,

being them Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands or not.

2. Other entities with an interest in the conservation and wise use of Mediterranean wetlands.

3. Intergovernmental organisations with activities related to or a concern for Mediterranean wetlands.

4. Other international organisations with activities related to Mediterranean Wetlands.

5. Federations or networks of national NGOs, or individual NGOs from countries mentioned in 1 above.

The Bureau of the Convention on Wetlands is an ex officio member of MedWet/Com, and is represented by its Secretary General and the MedWet Co-ordinator.

A MedWet Team, consisting of a MedWet Coordinator currently based in Athens, Greece, and supported by three wetland centres -Tour du Valat, EKBY and SEHUMED-, was established under the guidance of the Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands. The oldest of the three bodies is the *Station biologique de la Tour du Valat*, established in 1954 in the Camargue (the French Rhone delta) on a former agricultural estate with natural wetlands and cultivated areas (2,500 ha, of which 1,000 ha are a Nature Reserve). A team of almost 80 people carries out scientific activities to increase understanding of the functioning of Mediterranean wetland ecosystems. In addition to managing the Tour du Valat estate, the Station disseminates knowledge and know-how on wetlands through training sessions and consultancy work. Tour du Valat has developed and managed projects for the MedWet Initiative since its very beginning, and is a focal point for wetland training and the transfer of research results to wetland management practices.

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EKBY (Greek Biotope/Wetland Centre), was established in 1991 by the Goulandris Natural History Museum, with the support of the European Commission and WWF International. Its objectives are to advance scientific knowledge, to contribute to the sustainable development of activities that may have an impact on nature, to provide scientific and technical as well as policy advice to the Greek government and the EC institutions, to raise public awareness and to promote education in the sustainable management of natural resources. EKBY provides secretarial services to the MedWet Initiative, serving and strengthening the MedWet network by maintaining a Web site with address databases, publishing newsletters and technical reports, and disseminating MedWet tools and methods. It acts as a focal point for wetland mapping, restoration, and rehabilitation.

Sede para el estudio de los humedales mediterráneos, SEHUMED, is based at Valencia University in Spain and was established as a multidisciplinary research group specialising in the study of wetlands, focusing specifically on environmental analysis, territorial assessment, environmental conservation, and sustainable management of resources. SEHUMED joined the MedWet Team in 1998 with the encouragement and support of the Spanish Ministry of the Environment. For the MedWet Initiative, SEHUMED develops and manages specific projects on the wise use of wetlands and tourism, and it acts as a focal point on water pollution, water quality, and the sustainable use of wetland resources.

Together, these three wetland centres are helping the MedWet Coordinator to carry out the Action Plan 1999-2000 and to assure good communication and collaboration among the different members and partners of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee.

The team's major task is to develop new projects and activities for implementation of the Mediterranean Wetlands Strategy, within the priorities and guidelines established by MedWet/Com. At present, an action plan for 1999-2000 has been approved.

In implementing the Mediterranean Wetlands Strategy, it was decided that for each area of activities one of the members of the MedWet Team or of MedWet/Com would be the leading organisation, the focal point, in developing the work and promoting wide collaboration. The current dis-