



Online Workshop

By the Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community

*HEALTHY MEDITERRANEAN WETLANDS AS REQUISITES
FOR SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE*

*#EUGreenWeek #ecosystemapproach #MBPC #Wetlands
#MADEinMED*

22 October 2020

Capitalization Webinar - EU Green Week



BACKGROUND

Wetland ecosystems cover a wide range of habitats that fall under the scope of different regional and national environmental legislations. The most comprehensive approach is that of the Convention on Wetlands, known as the Ramsar Convention, an intergovernmental treaty ratified by 171 parties (but not the EU) that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

In the EU, the main environmental legislations are the Habitats Directive, the Water Framework Directive and the Marine Strategy Directive. At Mediterranean level, the most relevant agreements linked to wetland ecosystems are the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) protocol that entered into force in 2011, followed by the "Conceptual Framework for Marine Spatial Planning" adopted in 2017, recognized as the best tool to implement the ICZM Protocol in the marine part of the coastal zone, and the "Common Regional Framework for Integrated Coastal Zone Management" adopted in 2019 and considered the strategic instrument to facilitate the implementation of the ICZM Protocol from 2020 up to 2027. The ICZM nevertheless targets only coastal wetland ecosystems while inland wetlands are not considered.

Wetlands are key ecosystems rich in biodiversity and carbon, which play an important role in preventing and reducing the impact of natural disasters as well as providing a broad range of additional ecosystem services including food provision, water purification, recreation and tourism, among others. Their degraded condition in Europe in terms of both extension and quality is a big concern (cf. IPBES, 2018) as it is influenced by several factors linked mainly to the lack of implementation of regional criteria to classify and delimitate wetland ecosystems using their hydro-ecological boundaries together with the absence of a comprehensive regional policy framework targeting all types of wetland habitats. The status of wetlands in the Mediterranean region is not an exception, as highlighted in the Mediterranean Wetlands Outlook report 2018, with clear negative long-term pressuring trends affecting their condition and threatening their future.

Authoritative science suggests that forward-looking policies need to find a more comprehensive approach to ensure wetland conservation and restoration and their wise use, as promoted by the Ramsar Convention. This involves acknowledging their hydro-ecological characteristics and ensuring their integrity in management through sectoral policies and their conservation and protection through environmental policies in addition to responding to the urgent need for a reliable knowledge base as a solid foundation for informed decision-making and as a basis for action.

Several EU-funded initiatives have set the basis for understanding tangible approaches that, if implemented correctly, would support a future regional agenda for bending the curve of degradation for wetland ecosystem condition. This agenda needs to prioritize wetland restoration plans to safeguard and restore their sensitive habitat function, guarantee their multi-functionality and co-benefits, and increase the overall socio-ecological resilience to global changes.

The European Green Deal highlights the need to restore the natural functions of ground and surface water, to preserve and restore wetlands biodiversity and to ensure the provision of their services. In this context, the new Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 is highlighting the need to map, monitor and restore ecosystems with clear objectives for 2030 and for 2050. Furthermore, the "Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for

the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region" (Post-2020 SAP BIO) is preparing their priority actions focusing on a similar line of work.

Building on the above, this regional workshop aims at highlighting the need for urgent agreements and actions to protect and more sustainably use wetland habitats based on a better understanding and knowledge on wetland ecosystems. It also targets showcasing the regional efforts of European projects in paving the way towards raising awareness and providing tools and solutions to consider in the post-2020 plans in the Mediterranean region to ensure better protection and management of these sensitive key ecosystems and calls for the need (or ways) to reserve financing instruments for their future long-term sustainable restoration and conservation.

The workshop is structured in four parts to raise awareness on the following:

1. The European and Mediterranean policy efforts to manage and conserve wetland ecosystems more effectively;
2. The role, status of and knowledge on wetlands at European and Mediterranean levels;
3. Solutions in place to fill knowledge gaps and transferable tools and models for a full understanding and participatory management of wetlands; and
4. Ways ahead to ensure support for healthy Mediterranean wetland ecosystems: funding priorities to bridge science, management, policy and wetland users.

DRAFT AGENDA

HEALTHY MEDITERRANEAN WETLANDS AS REQUISITES FOR SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

22 October 2020	
09:00 - 09:30	Registration
09.30 – 09.45	Introduction
	Welcome speech and introduction by UNEP MAP Plan Bleu
09:45 – 11:00	SESSION I: The policy frameworks to conserve and sustainably use wetland ecosystems
	<p>Overview on the policy frameworks and governance models that are in place at global, European and Mediterranean scales and debate on what should be changed to reduce pressures so more sustainable use of these ecosystems is ensured</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, Tobias Salathé ❖ EU DG ENVIRONMENT, Anne Teller, B2 unit - Biodiversity ❖ EU DG CLIMA, Simon Kay, C3 unit – mitigation (<i>tbc</i>) ❖ UNEP MAP PAP RAC, Marco Prem <p>Short interventions followed by Q/A with the public</p>
11.00 – 12.15	SESSION II: The role, condition and knowledge of European and Mediterranean wetland ecosystems
	<p>The available evidence and still existing gaps on the location of wetland ecosystems, the most impacting pressures affecting their condition as well as the services they provide in Europe and the Mediterranean region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ ETC-UMA, Dania Abdul Malak ❖ Tour du Valat, Jean Jalbert ❖ EKBY, Eleni Fytoka ❖ MedWet, Alessio Satta <p>Short interventions followed by Q/A with the public</p>
12:15 - 13:15	Lunch
13:15 - 15:00	SESSION III: Exchanges on hands-on knowledge, and tools:

	<p>understanding pitfalls and success stories in the region</p>
	<p>Practical/Interactive session on solutions found and how they are replying to territorial needs / problems.</p> <p>Showcasing solutions reached though Interreg funded projects and the way they are being implemented on the ground / in the territories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ WETNET / POSBEMED2 / TUNE UP / ECOSUSTAIN / WetMainAreas / AMBER / AgroWetlands
15:00 - 16:00	<p>SESSION IV: Forward-looking uptake priorities to bend the curve for wetlands</p>
	<p>Funding and programming priorities towards a more effective system of healthy wetlands: towards sustainable mechanisms across global, EU and Mediterranean policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ EU and Mediterranean programme representatives ❖ EU DG Regio ❖ EU DG RTD <p>Recommendations from linking science, policy, management and society needs to acknowledge the value, preserve and restore our Mediterranean water resources against global changes.</p>
16:00 - 16.15	<p>Conclusions and Outlook by ETC-UMA representative</p>

