



# Identity of the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory

**Tour du Valat, May 2015**



MedWet



*The Mediterranean Wetland Committee (MedWet/Com) has mandated Tour du Valat in 2008 for catalysing the emergence and developing the Observatory of Mediterranean Wetlands (MWO), in order to monitor and evaluate the state and trends of wetlands in the Mediterranean and to develop the knowledge on their multiple values. Its eventual goal is to improve the conservation and management of wetlands by disseminating information on their status towards a broad audience, especially political decision-makers and the public at large, in line with the axis 1 of the MedWet strategic vision.*

*The MWO has been conceived since 2009 as a regional tool for managing wetlands. It has been operational since 2010 and in February 2012, a first report on status, trends and outlook of wetlands was published. Since 2011, the MWO functions thanks to a group of 34 technical and institutional partners committed to this process. The MWO is central to the Medwet strategy and its governance is tight to the one of MedWet. Its direct linkage with the Ramsar Convention and the political endorsement of this initiative by the member countries of MedWet ensure its institutional recognition. This initiative is also in line with the sustainable development mandate of the Barcelona Convention.*

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# Historical background of the Observatory

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## *2004: original idea of building an observatory*

The idea of building a Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO) was suggested by **Tour du Valat** in the course of the sixth meeting of MedWet Committee (MedWet/Com, Tipaza, Algeria). **The objectives were to ensure and harmonize monitoring of status and trends of Mediterranean wetlands in the members countries of MedWet**, share knowledge and help decision-making for an improved protection and management of wetlands in the Mediterranean basin<sup>1</sup>.

## *2007: preparatory phase of the Observatory: the first international workshop*

In March 2007, a **first international workshop** was held at Tour du Valat to discuss the objectives, monitoring themes and indicators as well as the Observatory structure. Several representatives of international organizations, of Mediterranean countries and NGOs participated in the workshop.

## *2008: launching of preparatory studies and political validation of the Observatory*

Tour du Valat starts preparatory studies, in particular on the list of existing wetland's related indicators and on the technical feasibility of adapting the Living Planet Index to the Mediterranean. In the course of the Ramsar COP10 (Korea, October), the Observatory project obtained the support of the MedWet/Com. This gave a political dimension to the Observatory and call for a large participation. **Tour du Valat was mandated by MedWet/Com to launch the building and implementation of the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory**. The major expected result is the first Mediterranean wetlands status and outlook, to be prepared for the 20th anniversary of Medwet "Grado + 20) foreseen in 2011. A small permanent team financed by MAVA foundation<sup>2</sup> and Tour du Valat acts as the coordination unit of this Observatory.

## *2009: planning of strategic steps of the Observatory, of its monitoring and evaluation framework and its governance*

The MWO coordination unit started, following the arrival of the new coordinator, the participatory building of this regional observatory as well as the activities needed to produce the first status and outlook of Mediterranean wetlands in 2011. Logical steps were discussed between February and September 2009 (see box 1). A **second international workshop** was organized by Tour du Valat in March with representatives of Mediterranean countries and international conservation organizations. This workshops allowed the elaboration of the monitoring logical framework, the draft MWO governance and partnership structure and the launching of the priority activities. A work calendar 2009-2010 was approved by the participants with detailed steps. The feedback of implementation of planned activities is done every two months through an **electronic letter** sent to MWO partners and users. Out of these activities, communication and visibility action took place immediately and a

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<sup>1</sup> Albania, Algeria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, FYR Macedonia, France, Greece, Israel, Italia, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Palestine Territory

<sup>2</sup> With also financial support of Total and AlbertII of Monaco Foundations, MEDDE (French Government) and CEPF (Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund).

communication strategy and plan were prepared. A study on "Wetland monitoring situation an need assessment" was launched in 2009 among 16 Mediterranean countries to get a reference baseline. Finally, a third international workshop was organized for 2010 to finalize the MWO governance, the partnership structure and to discuss priority indicators to measure.

*2010: validation of MWO governance and priority indicators and starting of the monitoring and communication strategy implementation,*

In February, about 60 participants from 19 different countries participated in the **third MWO workshop**. They included representatives from the Secretariats of the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity, MedWet initiative, technical partners as well as funding agencies supporting MWO. The main outcomes of this workshop were the approval of the MWO structure, organization and partnership, the development of indicators, the kick-off of the monitoring phase and the communication plan. The 2010-2011 work calendar was prepared by the participants. During the **tenth MedWet/Com meeting** (Bastia, France, June 2010), participants approved the MWO 2010-11 work calendar as well as its governance structure. Starting from March 2010, the Coordination unit (CU) **started, with MWO partners, the monitoring of indicators** as well as the preparation of the first report on status and trends of Mediterranean wetlands. Implementation of 2010-11 work calendar was pursued, including for the "wetlands monitoring situation and need assessment" study. The **website of MWO was operational** in three languages (English, French and Arabic). Effort was made in developing MWO partnership and networking with connectivity between local, national and international levels.

*2011: Preparation of the first report on Mediterranean Wetlands*

MWO spent most of its effort to produce the **first report on Mediterranean wetlands**, including a technical report and strategic report targeted to decision-makers. These reports were declined in several communication products such as movie, posters, PPT presentation. The study on "Wetlands monitoring situation and need assessment" was completed and disseminated to partners in English and French version with summary in Arabic language. The different activities planned in 2011 were implemented, including several studies, partnership and network development. The preparation of the first thematic report on Biodiversity in Mediterranean wetlands started. New projects were identified and formulated for monitoring biodiversity, spatial indicators and cultural services of wetlands.

*2012-2013: Visibility and valuation of MWO results as well as strategic review of MWO*

In 2012 and 2013, the coordination unit of the MWO focused its efforts on **visibility and valuation of monitoring results** published in its reports through national and international events, website update and diversity of communication products. The report on "**Mediterranean wetlands outlook**" and associated communication products realized in January 2012 and launched in the course of the **Agadir Symposium** in February 2012, then in the **World Water Forum** (Marseille) in March 2012. The reports were disseminated during these events and sent to the main partners and MedWet/Com members. The first thematic report on "**Biodiversity, status and trends of species in the Mediterranean wetlands**" was published in June 2012. The results of these two reports were presented in the course of the **Ramsar COP 11** (July 2012, Bucharest, Romania), during the **World Congress for Nature** (September 2012, Jeju, South Korea), the **2012 Forum on Marine Protected areas in the**

**Mediterranean** (November, Antalya, Turkey) and in the **Conference of Parks of the Dinaric Arc** (November, Banja Luka, Bosnia & Herzegovina). The MWO vision and strategic planning 2012-2015 was validated by the Mediterranean wetlands committee (MedWet/Com11) in July in Bucharest.

*2014-2015: Enhancing geo-information satellite indicators and contribution of monitoring results at supranational level.*

Following the last phase of GWII, the work for the **second thematic report on spatial indicators on "land use and wetlands"** was published in 2014. A similar monitoring exercise on land-use trend started in 2014 to cover all Ramsar sites of metropolitan France. MWO also engaged itself as **partner of two consortiums in H2020 project (SWOS) and Globwetland Africa to further develop geo-information toolbox and products to monitor land use and water in wetlands**. MWO also pursued the development of its activity in wetlands services, through a partnership study with the Plan Bleu on wetlands and climate changes, participating to an H2020 project (Ecopotential) and in completing site studies on cultural services provided by wetlands. MWO dedicated also great efforts in developing an improved Living Planet Index/Living Wetland Index by type of habitat. In collaboration with Ramsar and MedWet secretariat and countries, MWO is becoming a contributor of wetlands monitoring results at regional and international levels: articles, presentations, participation in the Ramsar COP12, observatory member of the Scientific and Technical Committee of Ramsar (STRP). From 2014, the continuity between technical monitoring and the transfer of results to decision-makers is facilitated by the geographic proximity of the MedWet secretariat and the MWO, both situated in South of France.

# MWO building steps and development and valuation mechanisms

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## **The 12 steps of the MWO building and operation**

1. *Definition of challenges, principles objectives of the Observatory;*
2. *Targeting (users of MWO results);*
3. *Monitoring & evaluation logical framework: objective, themes, indicators, data & methods;*
4. *Governance and partnership structure;*
5. *Implementation of monitoring activities as well as communication & visibility strategy (multi-products) of the Observatory*
5. *Rolling working calendar: 2009-2010, then 2010-2011, 2012-2015;*
6. *Baseline reference of wetlands monitoring & evaluation situation and needs (based on a survey conducted in 16 countries);*
7. *MWO preliminary Chart: objectives, strategies, principles, mandate, etc;*
8. *Formal approval of MWO governance and MWO building process;*
9. *Implementation of monitoring & evaluation and communication strategy;*
10. *Production of the reports*
11. *Dissemination of results and analysis*
12. *Outcome and impact assessment of MWO and strategic adaptation.*

## **Dissemination activities and valuation of results**

1. *Dissemination & feedback of results towards targeted users, partners and data providers;*
2. *Valuation of results (scientific, vulgarization)*
3. *Support national strategic and policy initiatives in favor of wetlands*

## **MWO development activities**

1. *Harmonization of national M&E systems at the regional level*
2. *Follow-up assessment studies on evolving wetlands monitoring and evaluation compared to baseline reference*
3. *Identification, study and test of monitoring indicators*
4. *Elaboration of database*
5. *Fund raising*

## **Efficiency and adaptative management tools of MWO**

1. *Evolving questioning on methods, strategic leverage means and indicator adjustment*
2. *Regular assessment of usefulness and efficiency of MWO, outcomes and impacts;*
3. *Incorporation of lessons learned, emerging needs and expectations in the evolving regional environment to adjust the strategic actions and the development of the MWO;*
4. *Integration of national and local planning network in order to incorporate the results of monitoring and evaluation in land use planning;*
5. *Strengthening the capacity of actors and in particular the civil society for the management of wetlands and to communicate about them.*

# Observatory mandate

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The Observatory of Mediterranean Wetlands functions as a partnership monitoring mechanism among Medwet countries. It aims at strengthening and disseminating knowledge among users to influence decision for the benefit of wetlands. It facilitates linkages between scientists and decision-makers, whether by providing them with access to consolidated and harmonized data and analysis on Mediterranean wetlands status and trends or by providing the link with policymakers to make their work more policy-relevant. Similarly this interface mechanism provides policymakers, wetlands-related managers and other users with science, analysis and lessons learned to help decision-making in the field of wetland protection, use and management covering issues such as biodiversity, ecosystem, land management, adaptative management and sustainable development. In doing so, it is expected to harness networks of scientific experts and the policy communities on Mediterranean Wetlands issues. Progressively, it is also intended to provide a platform of exchange between environment and development actors active in sustainable development programme in Mediterranean Wetlands areas.

The main value that the Observatory intends to add to decision-makers, citizens, site managers, scientists and to other potential users is at three levels:

- *To catalyze, centralize, consolidate, assess and share knowledge on the conservation status and trends of Mediterranean wetlands;*
- *To assess the status and trends of ecological functions, values and services of Mediterranean wetlands in the context of sustainable development.*
- *To raise awareness among users and to help decision-making towards wetland conservation and sustainable management and use.*

When the Observatory will have more capacity and experience, the mandate may be extended to:

- *Early warning and early lessons learned timely reported to decision makers, in line with international conventions and global changes.*
- *Evaluation of impact of public policies and strategies on Mediterranean Wetlands.*

# Targeting

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Within the current context of a more decentralized and participatory governance in the Mediterranean basin, a large array of stakeholders do influence the decisions on conservation and development. With regards to the MWO mandate focused on the sharing of knowledge and assisting decision-making, it is important to maintain a permanent, efficient and proactive communication and feedback of results, so as to maintain the users' interest and their active involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process. With this in mind, the potential targets and users of the MWO are identified as:

- Governments, elected representatives and local authorities dealing with wetland conservation, protection, management and uses (environment, agriculture, water, forestry, tourism, infrastructures, fishing, hunting, mining, energy...);
- Organizations, international and regional conventions and protocols (Convention on Biological Diversity, Millennium Development Goals (MDG), Ramsar Convention, Barcelona Convention, European Union, Union for the Mediterranean, MedWet, UNESCO-Man and Biosphere, etc.) ;
- MWO partners and data providers ;
- NGOs, associations, community-based organizations (CBOs), projects and other organizations active in wetland protection and management ;
- Universities, institutes, research centers working for conservation and development ;
- The public at large and the media.

During the implementation and evaluation of the MWO activities, more precise targets for transfer are defined based on the level of interest of the various users : some of them will be more interested in such or such objective, theme, service or product of the Observatory.

Within this diversity of stakeholders, it is proposed to aim at « key targets »:

- Decision-makers (primary targets, i.e. those who are in charge of steering/ leading opinions, attitudes or behaviors in their country (national and local levels)
  - o The MedWet and Ramsar focal representatives in the considered countries, supposed to transfer MWO information to national and local appropriate levels;
  - o The national and local decision-makers involved in inter-sector committees dealing with land use and development planning and having the capacity to take into account wetlands monitoring results in their subsequent planning.
  - o One or two key decision-makers per country, who are capable of strongly influence the future of wetlands in their country.
- The opinion « relays » can on one hand help the primary targets when delivering their message to the public at large, and on the other hand influence them towards the ideal direction, by helping a bottom-up social demand emerge from a better-



informed public in favor of wetlands – a demand that decision-makers will not be able to ignore.

- the media, in order to relay the information towards the public at large - this is deemed as the most efficient leverage for influencing positively the policies towards wetlands ;
- international and local NGOs which can relay the monitoring results and analysis through their own communication actions.

Communication products and networks have been identified for each of these target groups. Other networks and products have to be identified and incorporated. For decision-makers, it is important to rely on sound scientific data and results, to analyze them in a sufficiently broad context that encompass their political agendas and responsibilities and to transfer them with appropriate communication products. It is equally important to regularly and timely transfer the information because decision-making process is taking place annually.

The communication strategy for the public at large started in 2011, in line with the following activities: the project preparation for the strengthening of civil society to better monitor and disseminate results related to wetlands, the elaboration of a few results on simple and easily understandable indicators and upon a few sites (“fast entry point”). However, it is obvious that impact of communication on general public will first take place with targets concerned and interested by wetlands and potentially ready to change their attitude and behavior. The interest for wetlands is often linked to the notion of benefits (economic, social or environmental), principles or quality of life that will have to be identified during the implementation of the communication strategy.

In order to maximize the efficiency of communication activities, a segmentation and refined definition of targets will be performed, from available data such as their professional situation, their state of knowledge, their responsibility, attitudes and practices towards wetland preservation and local development in their countries.

On the other hand, the strategy for decision-makers will require a deeper study in order to identify and update them in each country, define their needs and the messages that will enable them to act.

This task is performed with MedWet secretariat, in charge of updating institutional and political networks relevant to wetlands in the 27 Mediterranean countries.

Therefore, the targeting exercise will rely mainly on the expectations and needs of users, by identifying which types of products and services they expect from the MWO. With this perspective in mind, the coordination unit of MWO undertook, between November 2009 and June 2011, a first assessment of wetlands monitoring situation and needs among sixteen MedWet countries. Studies were conducted among decision-makers, financing agencies, NGOs, specialized institutes, experts, universities and site managers. The study is planned to be periodically updated (every 3-5 years) in order to take the new needs and expectations on board. It is also important for the MWO to be able to identify the key leverages in order to raise the interest of persons and institutions that will be identified as potentially playing a key role for wetland conservation, and to help their needs emerge and be formulated.

Finally, for MWO which is a key MedWet tool, it is important that results and messages that have been produced be disseminated and transferred through MedWet Secretariat and the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com) at appropriate political and strategic levels in order to influence on decision and planning. Potential relay structures do exist in each country such as inter-sector committees, cross-cutting ministries with authority on land use and land use planning, the national and regional thematic group, etc. At supranational level, relay in the Mediterranean are also available such as Barcelona Convention, Union for the Mediterranean, Millennium Development Goals offices, TEEB initiative, WCMC:UNEP, etc. Using these relay may allow to reach development sector networks, identified as key drivers impacting on wetlands

# MWO Objectives and monitoring and evaluation framework

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The M&E framework is linking the objectives, themes and indicators of MWO on a logical and complementarity way

MWO has three inter-related objectives:

1. *Provide timely and quality information on Mediterranean wetlands status and trends.*
2. *Track threats to Mediterranean wetlands and identify actions to promote their protection and wise use and restoration.*
3. *Assess Mediterranean wetlands dimension in the Mediterranean context of sustainable development.*

These three objectives are inter-related with the following logic: the first objective is linked to the knowledge on status and trends of Mediterranean Wetlands. This objective informs on a status that is a consequence of internal and external drivers and pressures on wetlands. The second objective tries to mobilize research and analyze the causes of these internal and external drivers and pressures impacting on the status and trends of wetlands. It aims also at facilitating to reverse the degradation trend and to initiate positive actions, i.e. to restore some of the recently degraded wetlands. The third objective seeks to inform on the analysis of the weight given to Mediterranean wetlands in the context of sustainable development, including with policy, strategic and scientific dimensions (responses).

The level of achievement of those objectives is assessed through the monitoring of four themes:

- ➔ Theme providing monitoring and evaluation results mostly towards objective 1 of MWO:
  1. Biodiversity and ecosystem integrity
- ➔ Themes providing monitoring and evaluation results mostly towards objective 2 of MWO:
  2. Drivers and pressure on wetlands
- ➔ Themes providing monitoring and evaluation results mostly towards objective 3 of MWO:
  3. Ecosystem services
  4. Wetlands consideration in development decision process

A list of indicators have been selected to measure these four themes. While their number and nature may evolve with time, the ones considered for the period 2012-2015 (either already monitored and used or in development) are the following:

### **Biodiversity and ecosystem integrity**

- Diversity and abundance of species
- Wetlands birds and climate change
- Wetlands birds and land use change
- River flow
- Water quality
- Wetland surface area
- Inundation extent in the wetland

### **Drivers and pressures**

- Renewable water resources
- Water demand per sector
- Overexploitation of underground water in oases/salinisation
- Land conversion: agriculture and urbanization in/around wetlands
- A set of macro-indicators (1) : Global/National GDP, GDP per capita, HDI, Poverty index, Demography/density, Ecological footprint, LPI International, Governance, Climate change, Policy decisions, Millennium Development Goals, etc.

### **Ecosystem services**

- Role of wetlands in water supply
- Role of wetlands in water purification
- Educational and touristic role of wetlands
- Role of wetlands in mitigating flood and drought

### **Integration of wetlands in development decision**

- Surface of protected wetlands
- Integration of environment in local development planning
- Level of implementation of integrated water resources management
- Effectiveness of the management in the Ramsar sites
- Level of implementation of integrated coastal zone management
- Strategic efforts in wetland protection
- Integration of wetlands in national strategy of sustainable development
- Integration of wetlands in water national management plans

(1). Among the 22 macro-indicator analyzed in 2010-2011 for the Mediterranean, 10 show relatively interesting possibility of correlation to analyze wetlands results and trends. For the first MWO publication (2012), they have been utilized for analyzing MWO indicator results. Starting from 2016, they will be further developed to improve the quality of correlations with MWO indicators for subsequent monitoring wetlands status and trends and improved understanding and the science-policy interface.

The monitoring analytical frame adopted by MWO is the DPSIR model (Drivers-Pressures-status-Impact-Responses, largely utilized in the context of conservation in the European Union and by international institutions. Following the adoption by Ramsar in 2012 of the linkage between the concepts of "ecosystem services" and "livelihood", widely used by the networks and institutions dealing with international development, especially in the non EU



countries of the Mediterranean Basin, this linkage has been also integrated in the MWO for communication purpose. This aims at translating the monitoring results in a more understandable way for these targets. Indeed, development sectors are the ones impacting most on wetlands and then to be particularly convinced.

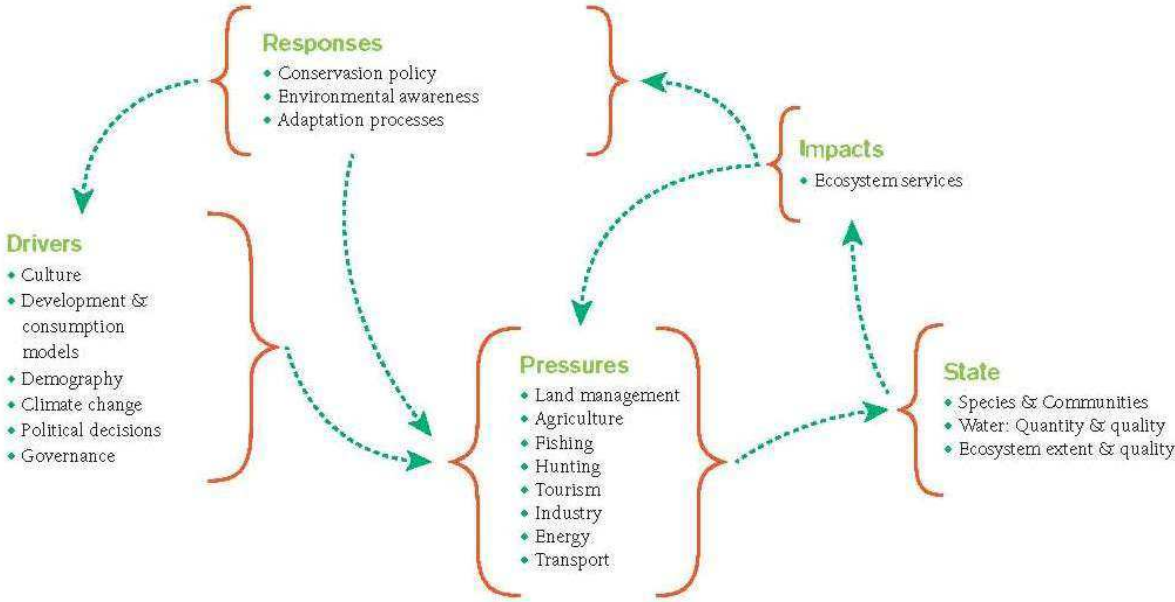
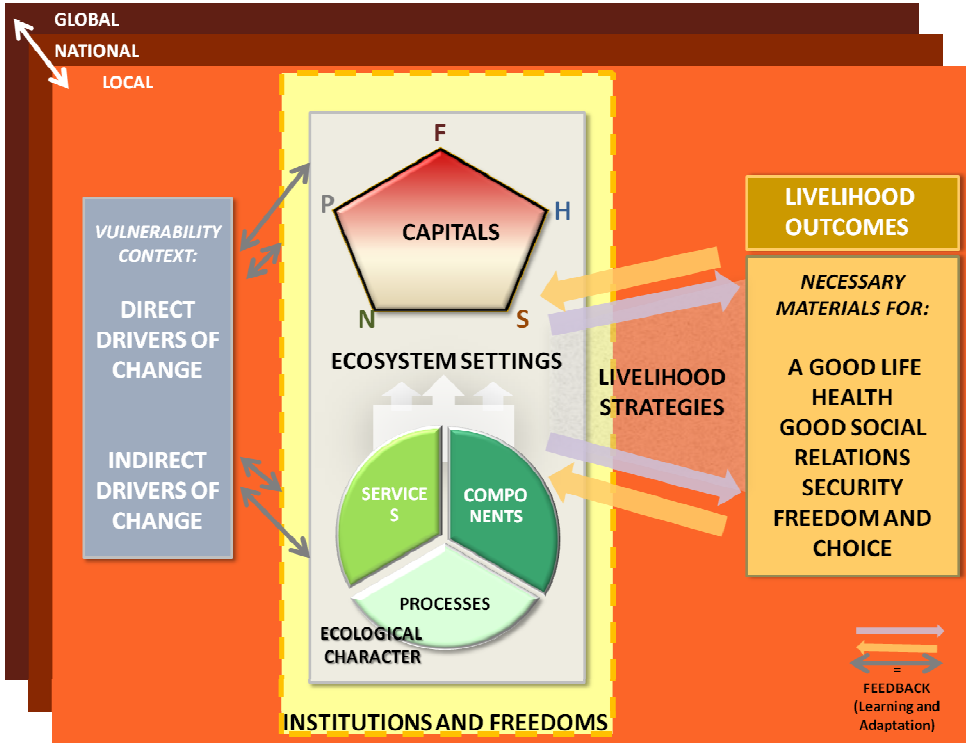


Fig 2. Simplified Driver-Pressure-State-Impact-Response (DPSIR) model for the MWO monitoring framework



Livelihood model adapted in the frame of the Ramsar Convention (STRP, 2011)

# Logical & analytical framework of MWO

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In the international context, the monitoring and evaluation framework is a useful management tool to measure the status, trends and changes, to assess the relevance and correlation between activities, results, outcomes, impacts and objectives. Nowadays, in the evolving concept of monitoring and evaluation, the frame is not considered anymore as an information control system but as a management tool to improve the subsequent planning and decision processes, as well as the integration and efficiency during implementation of programmes and projects.

In this context, MWO has not been simply conceived as a monitoring tool for wetlands, but as a prospective tool for analysis and assessment. Said differently, the intention of MWO is not only to observe wetlands trends - usually negative trends - but also to explain the causes and consequences of the changes and to communicate them to appropriate targets in order to influence the planning, decision and practices for the benefit of wetlands. The MWO has prepared a **broad and integrated impact oriented (ecological and human) analytical monitoring and evaluation framework** and an **overall Mediterranean Wetlands Monitoring and Evaluation Logical framework**. This framework allows useful diagnosis and analysis for wetlands as well as for territories encompassing larger land use management and sustainable development with several stakeholders (detailed logical framework, Annex 1).

This framework facilitates, beyond monitoring results, diverse levels of analysis adapted to each targeted MWO user. A first level of analysis is based on results of each indicator. The second level of analysis seeks to identify correlations between results of the different indicators and themes of MWO. Finally, the third level of analysis incorporates causes, either external forces, initial causes or cross-cutting issues, explaining results and changes. These causes may be governance, policy decision, security, law enforcement, etc. These causes can also be analyzed by the use of macro-indicators, key cross-cutting issues or through qualitative studies and researches.

This framework has been designed based on lessons learned of monitoring and evaluation of international development experiences:

- Lack of monitoring framework linking monitoring indicators with monitoring objectives may provide confusing and diverging lines and interests in evaluation, based on segmented sector results;
- Results-based monitoring is not sufficient to assess outcomes and impacts;
- Results based and sector monitoring may keep segmentation at work, selective listening, awareness and knowledge interest that does not help for knowledge integration and wise decision making;
- Insufficient vertical and horizontal integration in monitoring provide sector view that is not adequate in the context of sustainable development and conservation.
- No or insufficient correlation with cross-cutting issues may underestimate important external forces explaining cause-effect relationships;
- Sector monitoring itself does not allow mainstreaming this sector with overall development-conservation agenda.

## Simplified MWO analytical monitoring and evaluation framework

Targets: decision-makers, citizens	Monitoring and evaluation framework of MWO with vertical and horizontal integrations	
<b>Objectives</b>	1. Overarching objective	<b>Improved conservation and management of wetlands</b>
	2. Specific objectives of MWO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide timely and quality information on Mediterranean wetlands status and trends.</li> <li>• Track measures and threats towards Mediterranean wetlands and identify actions to promote their protection, wise use and restoration.</li> <li>• Assess Mediterranean wetlands dimension in the Mediterranean context of sustainable development.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring</b>	3. Monitoring themes	<p>Mostly under <u>Objective 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity and ecosystem integrity</li> </ul> <p>2. Mostly under <u>Objective 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drivers and pressure on wetlands</li> </ul> <p>Mostly under <u>objective 3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecosystem services</li> <li>• Integration of environment in development process</li> </ul>
	4. Indicators	List of indicators associated to themes and objectives
	5. Monitoring scales	Main levels: regional (Mediterranean), country and cluster of countries, Specific scales: sites, biomes, coastal zones, comparison with international references, conventions, protocols and commitments. Other scales: watershed, rural/urban, ecological zones.
<b>Analyze and evaluation</b>	6. Analyze and correlation with macro-indicators and cross-cutting issues.	<p><u>Main macro-indicators:</u> ecological footprint, LPI international, demography/density, GDP, Human development index, country status, poverty index, percentage of national budget for environment, implementation efficiency towards CBD Targets, Natura 2000 and wetlands.</p> <p><u>Main cross-cutting issues:</u> Governance, policy, Decentralization, Law enforcement, Participation, Demography, Poverty, Democracy, Climate change, Gender, Mobility/migration, Energy, Access to innovation, Security, Partnership, Cultural values, Human development index, GDP/capita, policy, development models.</p>
	7. Analyze in relation with main development sectors	Access to food, Urbanization including litoralization, Agriculture (crops and livestock), Fisheries, Irrigation, Domestic water supply, Public infrastructures, Tourism, Industry, Trade.
<b>Reporting</b>	8. Report of results and analysis	Production of results and analysis Diversified products for targeted communication.
<b>Dissemination</b>	9. Feedback, communication and transfert	Feedback to partners and data providers Communication and transfer to priority MWO targets and users Communication at large Messages and lessons learned

# Principles and leverage of the Observatory

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Since the second international workshop of MWO in March 2009, the MWO coordination Unit has elaborated and shared with its partners a series of principles and a multidimensional strategy aiming at efficiently reach the MWO objectives

The MWO has set a three initial principles: usefulness, efficiency and sustainability. These three principles have a mutual reinforcing effect aiming at developing and keeping the confidence, interest and participation of stakeholders in this initiative.

**Usefulness: respond to the need and interest of the different categories of potential users** (decision-makers, citizens, civil society (in particular NGOs and associations), data providers, scientists, researchers, etc.) and in particular those involved in, or influencing the protection and management of wetlands. The MWO have then a role in enhancing and guiding their interests:

- Identification of users for which the Observatory, its programme, projects and tools represent an added-value, and identification of their evolving common and respective needs and expectations.
- Respond to their needs, for example to help understanding and decision making in their professional context and activities, to value their actions, acquired knowledge and their expertise
- Respond to expectations such as bringing an additional service, a technological innovation or a method that may solve a problem or improve a situation.
- Depending of situation, foresee, inform or accompany dynamic of changes within a conservation and development compromise.

## **Efficiency**

- Coherence in the Observatory logical framework between objectives, strategy, results, choice of tools and activities of MWO for effective value addition.
- Regular review and adaptation of Observatory strategies to maintain performance (Operation, communication and feedback, participatory mechanisms with data providers and data users, etc.).
- Appropriate (timely and quality) feedback and communication capacities towards all categories of users.
- Efficient communication strategy at different levels: targets, products, social marketing and calendar of communication.
- Relevance, efficiency, efficacy in the choice and implementation of the process, management and tools of the Observatory.

## **Sustainability**

- Financial sustainability of the Observatory through an efficient managerial and operational structure with partners.



- Institutional sustainability using existing networks, competencies and experiences.
- Maintenance and development of quality services.
- Integrated programme by progressively switching from a rather segmented management of result and project oriented actions to a more integrated programme built on expected impacts on which will be conceived and proposed projects and results contributing to these expected impacts.
- Flexibility and adaptation of the Observatory to accommodate evolving trends linked to ecological, socio-economic, institutional, policy, legal, climatic and security changes impacting on Mediterranean wetlands.

The MWO has also elaborated since its start a partnership strategy relevant for the production of sound and recognized scientific production. The scientific information is then processed into communicable and awareness creation products and communicate to priority targets.

This strategy with multi-dimensional approach comprises :

- A multi-product communication dimension particularly targeted to decision-makers (local, national and international) and the public at large (through the media and NGOs), considered as the most efficient leverage to influence or take decisions;
- An horizontal (stakeholders active in conservation, sustainable development, either public and private) as well as vertical (local, national, supranational) partnership dimension;
- A network dimension that include relay to share and exchange information;
- A window beyond wetlands and protected areas, in order to reach people and areas where human development take place.

#### *Leverage, practices and management modalities to reach MWO objectives*

The main identified instrument that MedWet and the Observatory have decided to tackle is the lack of information and/or poor efficiency of current channels of information for decision makers and media on status and trends of wetlands in the Mediterranean basin, the core causes of change and possible responses.

The proposed response instrument is to establish a dynamic monitoring and evaluation system (MWO) which will also be a management tool to help decision (incorporation of lessons learned into subsequent planning). This instrument, supported by a network of partners, is also supposed to strengthen and to harmonize existing and future knowledge and data at the Mediterranean level and to analyze them to produce a shared message amongst partners.

At the start of the Observatory, there is a need to gather and harmonize existing data available in the Mediterranean basin. MWO has started its operational activities in 2009 with

a rather *ex-post*<sup>3</sup> monitoring-evaluation strategy. However, since 2012, MWO is developing a *ex-ante* analyze-assessment-recommendation strategy by formulating new projects and initiatives in order to implement its long-term programme. The concept of Impact Pathway Analysis adopted by the Tour du Valat since 2012 has been integrated in this approach. These new programmes will continue to be developed by incorporating lessons learned from Mediterranean and International experiences and by analyzing regional and global trends.

Since October 2008, MWO is politically attached to Ramsar/MedWet with already give a certain level of regional and international recognition and then a formalized contact with member countries signatories of Ramsar convention, facilitating communication linkages with other regional and international conventions. The political dimension and the development of partnership network would provide opportunities for MWO to inform and communicate through strategic regional and international events.

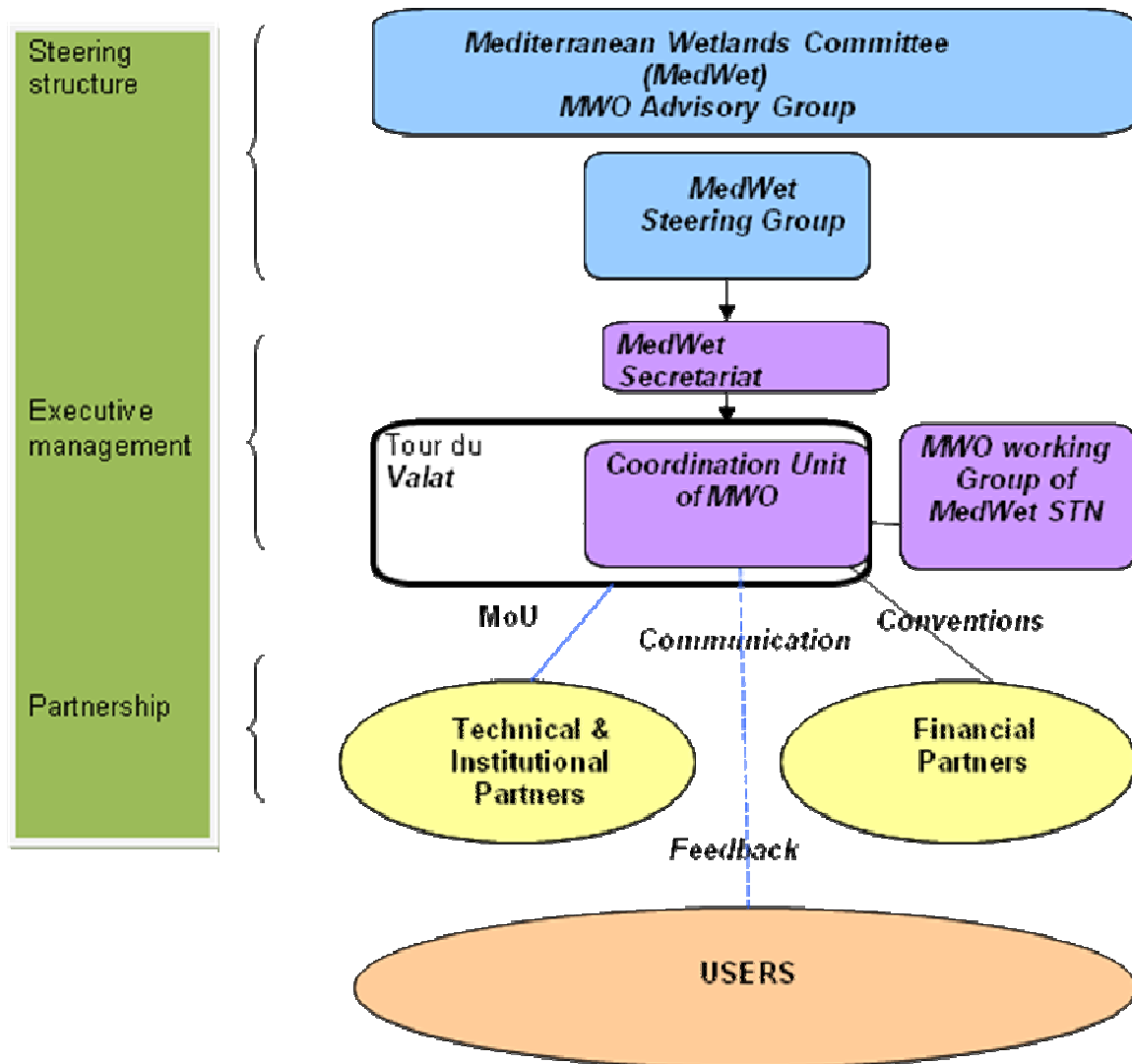
Since 2014, with the proximity of the MedWet secretariat (based in the Tour du Valat premises) and the new dynamic of the new team supported by MAVA Foundation and the French Water Agency, linkages between technical work, institutional networking, country and supranational exchanges and communication and transfer of results are being improved.

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<sup>3</sup> Reference to evaluation performed after implementation of project results, to the contrary of *ex-ante* evaluation which is done before results and allow evaluation during the project process with possible adjustment based on trends of indicators (preventive evaluation).

# Structure of the Observatory

## Governance structure of the Mediterranean wetlands Observatory (MWO)



The MWO governance, established since 2009, has been consolidated in 2012 and validated by the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee in July 2012 (MedWet/Com 11, Bucharest)

- Steering structures

- **The Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com) is the MWO Advisory Group.** Its main functions are:
  - providing strategic guidance to the Coordination Unit
  - facilitating all contacts between MedWet/Com member, their respective networks and the MWO coordination unit;
  - disseminating broadly the MWO results and analysis in their countries/networks and at relevant supranational level; .
  - approving the MWO strategic orientations and workplans;
  - Assisting the MWO/CU with fund-raising for the sustainable operation of MWO;
  - Inform the MWO CU about all relevant information such as policy, strategic, institutional and legal changes in Mediterranean countries and region, as well as the situation of Ramsar sites, wetlands inventory, etc..

In the course of each MedWet/Com meeting, every 1,5 years, the agenda comprise a section on MWO strategic and programme review and guidance. Each member of MedWet/Com is proposed de facto as focal point of MWO in its respective country. However, he can nominate another representative if considered appropriate.

A smaller MedWet Steering Committee is guiding the MWO CU between two MedWet/Com meetings, in particular for strategic and operational issues such as project development and adjustment, partnership development, etc.

- Executive structure

The MWO Coordination Unit is a technical team based at the Tour du Valat and depending from this institution in terms of administration and functioning.

The Unit is responsible, under the guidance of the MedWet Advisory Group and Steering Committee, for:

- facilitating the operation of the MWO structure
- coordinating the technical work done by all Partners
- Propose and implement workplans approved by MedWet/Com and partners;
- ensuring the overall delivery of project results as planned;
- Inform and report MedWet secretariat on its participation in key missions and events;
- preparing key technical elements for informed decisions/ choices to be made by the Steering Committee
- assist in fund raising to implement monitoring and evaluation activities (*by the CU or MWO partners*).
- Cooperating with the MedWet Secretariat.



The MedWet secretariat is responsible for:

- Facilitate the collaboration between the coordination unit of MWO and the members of MedWet/Com as well as with other relevant stakeholders of the Mediterranean Basin;
- Transfer the information coming from MWO CU to MedWet/Com and Steering group as well as to appropriate national and international platforms and networks;
- Inform and report to MWO CU on its participation in key missions and events that interest MWO;
- Facilitate synergies, coordination, communication and economy of scale between its projects.

Support structure: the MWO working group of the Scientific and Technical Network (STN) of MedWet.

This ad hoc working group aims at providing a technical and methodological support to the MWO Coordination unit. The group comprises members of MedWet/Com and of other organizations recognized for the expertise relevant to MWO. The current composition, validated by MedWet/Com 11 is as follows:

- MedWet Secretariat
- UNEP-Mediterranean Action Plan/Plan Bleu
- EKBY (Greece)
- Wetlands International
- ANPE Tunisia (Ichkeul Observatory)
- WWF Mediterranean

Other organizations may be invited based on needs and opportunities.

The main functions of this working group are:

- Help in the technical exchange on MWO wetlands monitoring method, themes and indicator development;
- Facilitate the development of the technical partnership network of MWO;
- Assist in developing the network of wetland and environmental monitoring systems in the Mediterranean;
- Promote, in the MWO network as well as in their own networks, synergies between projects, training programmes and events when impacting directly or indirectly wetlands, in particular their monitoring and evaluation;
- Participate in the elaboration of MWO work programme.

# Feedback, transfer and communication of information

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The main mandate of the Observatory is to develop and share knowledge aiming at helping decision making towards the improved protection, management and use of Mediterranean wetlands. Communication is a major and permanent cross-cutting axis of the Observatory and the driver of its capacity to deliver its services and to reach its objectives. The Observatory has prepared its communication strategy at an early stage, in September 2009, that mean 10 months after its political validation.

Recognizing the leakage of information between supra-national and local levels and between conservation and socio-economic/sustainable development networks, it was decided to give priority to vertical (local-national-regional-international) and intersector (intersector committees, Ramsar Committee, other regional platforms such as Barcelona convention/MAP, Plan Bleu, MedPan, etc.)

## Communication axis

1. improve the communication and feedback tools for a higher efficiency and impact towards the overarching objective of MWO, the protection of Mediterranean wetlands. To improve the efficiency of communicating and sharing information and to effectively help or influence decision making at the right moment, it is important to inform on timely manner, with appropriate quality and through means of communication and terminology adapted to the targeted users of the Observatory. In short, we should be able to bring information to key decision makers and to the media at the right moment, regularly and on attractive, communicable and synthesized manner.

2. to communicate with the different stakeholders involved in sustainable development issues in Mediterranean and to create the need, ten influence their agenda “wetlands » amongst development agents. This strategy aims at breaking the segmented logics and behavior of several stakeholders based on sector results orientation and at harmonizing terminologies and methods with a common and shared view, or at least with much more openness on integration. It is expected that this initiative help to influence attitude and behavior towards an improved care of wetlands in planning and in territorial, including local, development.

3. to better use tools, instruments and indicators associated to international and regional conventions, guidelines and programmes for an increased care and monitoring of wetlands in development policies and strategies, both at national and local levels. At national level, it is useful to transfer results, analysis and messages of MWO at both national and local planning levels, in particular through inter-sector committees, local planning institutions and thematic groups linked to the Paris Declaration (aid efficiency mechanisms, 2005)

4. to switch from a rather pessimistic « culture » of communication about wetlands to a more balanced culture of communication, recognizing cases and factors of success on which to build to influence decision makers. Indeed, a constant negative report on wetland status may be translated as a failure to perform by some stakeholders involved in sustainable development with the consequence that it may not motivate decision makers to change their behavior. On the contrary, informing of success obtained, even at small scale, may encourage a decision maker to extend this experience to other wetland areas. Since 2001, this approach is more and more in use in the development context, building on assets and solving problems in the process instead of starting from problems (i.e. building block or livelihood methods)

### Mission Statement

The communication strategy has to be used as a framework for the overall of the Observatory communication activities (present and futures).

The objective of the MWO communication is made of five points:

- Timely and quality communicate, inform and raise awareness among users on Mediterranean wetlands status and trends.
- Ensure the communication of the monitoring/evaluation system with a strategy of usefulness, efficiency, and sustainability.
- Share the Observatory knowledge and communicate its experience to present and future potential users
- Promote and accelerate actions in favour of Mediterranean wetlands
- Bring more credibility and impact to efforts undertaken for the conservation, preservation, management and sustainable use of Mediterranean wetlands with focus on the ones:
  - Of the Observatory and in particular, of the active partners of 27 countries and international organisations;
  - Of MedWet;
  - Of the Tour du Valat and in particular the Coordination Unit in charge of developing the MWO process.

The communication of the results obtained by the Observatory and its partners is international and may allow, through appropriate platforms, the transfer of good practises to the other regions of the world.

### Key messages

The key message, aligned with the strategic planning of the Observatory is of high visibility on most of our communication material:

**Together, sharing knowledge on Mediterranean Wetlands for their improved protection and management**

### The different levels and networks of communication

Communication by the MWO will serve several levels : exchange of information between MWO partners, the feedback of studies involving data collection, diagnosis and analysis, awareness-raising for potential users of the products and services of the Observatory, the improvement of coordination (scientific, geographic, institutional) and harmonization as well as building of partnership. Training and capacity-building which are also communication means are not directly the mandate of the Observatory. However, the Observatory may consider training and capacity building activities in its area of expertise based on a demand of institutions and available resources.

In order to serve these various levels of communication, the MWO will have to determine the most appropriate approaches for each target, among the following possibilities: participatory community approach, interpersonal communication, advice, training, information, social focus groups, etc.

The higher level of communication and transfer of MWO results and analysis towards strategic and decision making levels (which are the key MWO targets) will be made through MedWet and Ramsar platforms, assisted by MWO in case the Observatory has a recognized voice in these platforms. The transfer should reach these key MWO targets, with special focus on local and national decision-makers and planners. Other identified relay platforms and network: CBD, Barcelona Convention, , Union for the Mediterranean, European Union, Millennium Development Goals (including subsequent commitment after 2015), TEEB project, IPBES. In the short term, it is strongly recommended to institutionalize the transfer of results and analysis within these networks and platforms in order to formalize the transfer and to potentially increase the impact efficiency of MWO.

For the public at large, national and international NGO networks are involved in communication transfer through media. This requires building their capacity to relay international and regional information to national and local levels. On the other hand, it is important that national NGOs can make an efficient use of regional initiatives and platforms such as MWO to relay local and national information at higher levels.

It is considered key to develop excellence in communication towards the various users of the MWO. Therefore, it is mandatory to **adapt the forms, mechanisms and processes to the historical, geographical, cultural, socio-economic, linguistic and religious diversity of the various countries involved. It is equally important to adapt the communication to the status of countries (developed versus developing countries) and their respective socio-economic situation.**

## The timing of communication and feedback

The useful timing for restitution is the time that the stakeholders consider as acceptable and useful between data collection and restitution. In an international framework, it is usually considered that e.g. the feed-back on a short-term assistance mission should not exceed 2 months. The restitution of data collected for a monthly progress report should not exceed a few days. An annual progress report is, in principle, is completed within 3 months after receiving all data. The restitution of human population census data usually takes place within one year. However, in a multi-national exercise, the pace is usually dictated by the slowest of the data providers.

The notion of « useful timing for feedback” is often considered at 2 levels: 1) the time-span during which the production of information is still new, and therefore attractive for the users (motivation, interest); 2) the restitution timing that can assist decision-making for the following administrative, political, financial, programmatic steps of a cycle. For instance, the restitution of an exercise of wetland monitoring-evaluation must, for its lessons learnt and recommendations to be taken into account in the next cycle of planning decisions by the relevant Ministry of a developing country, arrive in February-March onto the desks of both the Ministry in charge of Planning, the sector planner and the person in charge of the wetland. Indeed, it is during this period of the year that technical ministries start to meet to evaluate the implementation efficiency of the last plan and to draw lessons. Starting from April-May, meetings for building subsequent planning usually take into account these lessons. The process end-up in December, with the vote of the next annual budget.

## Communication products

Communication / feedback products is diverse and target potential MWO users: web site, newsletter, theme publications, monitoring/evaluation reports, brochures, leaflets, press articles, workshops, seminars, film, posters, calendars, etc... As such products might be expensive and require specific expertises, we have to plan the production of these communication outputs as well as the required workshops and training sessions that we will have to attend before producing these communication products. This production planning allow us to list the tasks induced by the conception of communication products, the methodology of production, the laps of time authorized for the completion of each task, the resources (human, technical and financial) needed for the production of each product, and the distribution of responsibilities.

- The MWO communication particularly includes the restitution of the monitoring/evaluation results and of the informative products that will be developed, analyzed, or transmitted by the Observatory. It also includes, from may 2009, (i) the activation and development of a network of (potential) partners, (ii) the preparation of terms of references and the launching of activities that will bring a visual identity to the Observatory, (iii) the identification of the Observatory products (reports, articles, website, letters, classes, participation to seminars and workshops, open days, citizen science, fair etc...) and the progressive establishment of an exchange platform.

The possible communication tools are:

<b>Communication tools distributed in function of targets</b>	Observatory partners	Politic decision-maker	Site manager	Scientists, researchers	Conservation and development projects	Funding agencies	Citizens, general public	Mass media
1. Leaflet	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
2. Monitoring/Evaluation report	X	X	X	X		X		
3. Calendar	X	X	X			X	X	
4. Press article								X
5. Brochures and leaflets	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
6. Press kit								X
7. Manual	X		X	X	X			
8. Illustrated report	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
9. Scientific publications	X			X	X			
10. Oral Communication	X	X	X	X				
11. Interview		X	X		X	X		X
12. Audiovisual spot presenting the MWO	X	X	X	X				
13. Monitoring / Evaluation audiovisual spot	X	X	X		X	X	X	
14. website	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
15. monthly newsletter	X	X	X	X	X	X		
16. Workshop and seminar	X	(X)	X			X		(X)
17 Notice board / poster	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
18. USB device	X	X	X	X	X	X		

## Languages of communication

The main vehicular language of communication is English. However, French language is regularly used in France and in Maghreb countries and is also a permanent communication language of MWO. Summary and translation of some documents in Arab language has also be considered since 2010 due to the high proportion of Arab countries in the Mediterranean basin. Language is an important identity element of people and to be seriously taken into account in knowledge transfer and knowledge adoption strategy, as per mentioned during the regional meeting of Arab states for the implementation of Ramsar Convention (Cairo, 22-25 June 2009).

<b>Communication tools</b>	<b>Communication language</b>
1. Leaflet	English, French, Arab
2. Monitoring and evaluation report	English, French, summary in Arab
3. Calendar	A single calendar in three languages
4. Press article and Press files	English, French
5. Brochures	English, French, summary in Arab
6. Monitoring and evaluation manual	English, French, Arab
7. Illustrated report	English, French, Arab
8. Oral communication	English, French
9. Interview	English, French
10. MWO audiovisual presentation	English, sub-title in French and Arab
11. Audiovisual spot on monitoring and evaluation	English, subtitle in French and Arab
12. Web site	English, some themes in French, summary in Arab
13. Monthly newsletter	English, French, summary in Arab
14. workshop and seminar	English, French, translation and summary in Arab
15. Notice board	English, (French), translation and summary in Arab
16. USB keys	English, French

*Remark: this table was established in 2010 and shared with MedWet countries. Products may be under the responsibility of MedWet and/or Tour du Valat/MWO and subject to changes.*