

"Wetlands: water, life, and culture"
8th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
Valencia, Spain, 18-26 November 2002

Resolution VIII.30

Regional initiatives for the further implementation of the Convention

1. RECOGNIZING the importance of regional initiatives in promoting the objectives of the Convention in general and in implementing the Ramsar Strategic Plan in particular, as they can build upon bio-geographic commonalities, shared wetland systems and wetland-dependent species, and solidly established common social and cultural links;
2. CONSIDERING that the Convention, through its provisions under Article 5 as elaborated by the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention* (Resolution VII.19), provides the appropriate framework for promoting international collaboration among Parties and other partners;
3. ACKNOWLEDGING the positive, catalytic, and decisive role of international collaboration in planning and providing technical and financial support for projects and activities with that aim;
4. RECOGNIZING in this context that a framework guidance on the development of and support for regional initiatives to implement the Convention will be useful;
5. RECALLING Resolution VII.22 on "Collaborative structure for Mediterranean wetlands" and COP Recommendations 5.14 and 6.11 on the Mediterranean Wetland Initiative (MedWet), and ACKNOWLEDGING that MedWet can be a model example of such regional initiatives;
6. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that following Decision SC25-31 of the Standing Committee a Coordination Unit for MedWet has been established in Athens, Greece, in 2001 under the authority of the Secretary General of the Convention, with the financial support of the Greek Government; and
7. FURTHER TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the Government of Greece has offered to continue hosting and contributing financially to the operation of the MedWet Coordination Unit in Athens for the triennium 2003-2005;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

8. ENDORSES the *Guidance for the development of Regional Initiatives in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands* presented in Annex I to this Resolution;

9. CONSIDERS appropriate the inclusion of a budget line “Support to Regional Initiatives”, when one or more regional initiatives are evaluated by the COP, in accordance with the above *Guidance*, as worthy for financial support from the Convention core budget;
10. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to take into consideration the *Guidance* referred to in paragraph 8 when launching and developing a regional initiative;
11. APPROVES, within this context and for the years 2003-2005, the financial support from the Convention core budget to be provided to the MedWet Initiative as reflected in the MedWet Coordination Unit Budget 2003-2005, presented in Annex II of this Resolution;
12. RECOGNIZES the critical importance of financial and political support from Contracting Parties of the region to the MedWet Initiative, and especially from the host country of its Coordination Unit; EXPRESSES ITS SINCERE GRATITUDE to the Government of Greece for hosting the MedWet Unit in Athens, including the provision of adequate office space and financial resources to cover all other expenses during 2001 and 2002; and ACCEPTS the generous offer of the Government of Greece to continue providing office facilities and financial support during the triennium 2003-2005 for the same purpose;
13. APPROVES the budget of the MedWet Coordination Unit as contained in Annex II of this Resolution;
14. AUTHORIZES the Secretary General to conclude, taking due account of the *Guidance* and in consultation with the Chair of the Standing Committee, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Greek Government with regard to the specific financial and institutional arrangement of the MedWet Coordination Unit in Athens for the years 2003-2005, and DIRECTS the Secretary General to report to the Standing Committee on the conclusion and implementation of this MoU; and
15. REQUESTS the Secretary General to ensure that the experience of the MedWet Coordination Unit and its partners will be at the disposal of other regional initiatives as required and in the most appropriate form.

Annex I

Guidance for the development of regional initiatives in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands

AIM

1. The overall aim of regional initiatives should be to promote the objectives of the Convention in general and to implement the Ramsar Strategic Plan in particular, through regional and subregional cooperation on wetland-related issues of common concern.

SUBSTANTIVE ELEMENTS

2. Regional and subregional initiatives should be based on a bottom-up approach. As a matter of priority, the involvement of as many as possible Contracting Parties of the region or subregion(s) covered by the new initiative should be sought from the start.
3. Each initiative should entail the participation, from the start, not only of the Administrative Authorities responsible for the application of the Convention in the Contracting Parties involved, but also of all other relevant stakeholders with an interest in and directly or indirectly responsible for wetland issues, including the ministries responsible for the environment and water issues, intergovernmental bodies, NGOs, academia, and economic actors.
4. A regional initiative should base its operation on the development of networks of collaboration established upon clearly defined terms of reference, thus creating an enabling environment for the involvement of all stakeholders at all levels.
5. At an early stage, a regional initiative should seek collaboration with other intergovernmental or international partners operating in its region, by establishing complementary and non-duplicative activities.
6. The operation of a regional initiative should be based upon strong scientific and technical backing, provided by relevant institutions which should be recognized as partners in the initiative.
7. The strategic and operational targets of a regional initiative should be fully aligned with the Strategic Plan of the Convention by means of policy and site technical work and activities.

FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT

8. A regional initiative requires both political and financial support from Contracting Parties and other partners from the region. A substantial support from the host country is especially important if a regional office is to be established.
9. The launching of a regional or subregional initiative should rely upon secured start-up funding for planned activities and projects.

10. Financial support from the Convention's core budget, should the Conference of the Parties so decide, will be provided for a pre-determined period of time – in principle not more than three years. After such a period, the support should be phased out. A regional initiative should generate its own resources and should become financially self-sufficient in the long term. When deciding financial support from the Convention's core budget, geographically equitable distribution should be taken into account.

GOVERNANCE

11. Regional initiatives should establish their own advisory mechanisms, involving all the stakeholders, in order to provide guidance and insight. The Conference of the Parties and the Standing Committee shall receive, through the Ramsar Bureau, reports on their activities and shall oversee their general policies relating to the implementation of the Convention.
12. Specific arrangements as to the coordination between a regional initiative and the Convention should be worked out by the Ramsar Bureau under the guidance of the Standing Committee, and such arrangements should ultimately be approved by the Conference of the Parties.

Annex II

MedWet Coordination Unit Budget 2003-2005 (Swiss Francs)

	2003	2004	2005
1. Host country (Greece)	240,000	240,000	240,000
2. Ramsar core budget (budget line 3)	82,836	86,150	89,596
3. MedWet Countries	105,164	111,615	118,227
TOTAL INCOME	428,000	437,765	447,823
Budgeted expenditure	428,000	437,765	447,823

Notes on income

1. Contribution by the Host Country (Greece), as proposed in the letter of the Minister of Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works to the Secretary General of the Convention, dated 17 July 2002.
2. Contribution from the Ramsar core budget for the triennium 2003-2005 (budget line 3 – Support to regional initiatives)
3. Additional annual contributions from the Contracting Parties participating in MedWet earmarked to cover the costs of the MedWet Unit (see table 1 with the list of contributions for 2003).

MedWet Coordination Unit Budget 2003-2005 (Swiss francs)				
EXPENDITURES				
		2003	2004	2005
1	STAFF COSTS	325,500	335,265	345,323
	a) MedWet Coordinator	108,000	111,240	114,577
	b) Policy Officer (50%)	52,500	54,075	55,697
	c) Programme development officer	61,500	63,345	65,245
	d) Communications/Information officer	61,500	63,345	65,245
	e) Office administrative assistant	42,000	43,260	44,558
2	EXPERTS & CONSULTANTS	35,000	35,000	35,000
3	TRAVEL	30,000	30,000	30,000
4	OFFICE COSTS	37,500	37,500	37,500
	a) General expenses / utilities	12,000	12,000	12,000
	b) Communications	15,000	15,000	15,000
	c) Equipment purchase / maintenance	10,500	10,500	10,500
	TOTAL	428,000	437,765	447,823

Notes on expenditure

1. Positions 1a and 1b are currently covered by the financial contribution of the host country (Greece).
2. Positions 1c and 1d are currently covered by the host country (Greece) through a secondment by the Greek Biotope Wetland Centre (EKBY).
3. A ~~4~~ 3% annual increase in gross salaries is foreseen for cost of living and performance-related salary increases.

Table 1: Additional contributions earmarked for MedWet Unit costs

Name of Country	UN %	Ramsar %	2003	2004	2005
			corrected for min CHF450	corrected for min CHF450	corrected for min CHF450
			CHF	CHF	CHF
Albania	0,003	0,0182	450	450	450
Algeria	0,070	0,4237	450	455	483
Bosnia & Herzegovina	0,004	0,0242	450	450	450
Bulgaria	0,013	0,0787	450	450	450
Croatia	0,039	0,2361	450	450	450
Cyprus	0,038	0,2300	450	450	450
Egypt	0,081	0,4903	494	526	559
France	6,466	39,1381	39,408	41,990	44,621
Greece	0,539	3,2625	3,285	3,500	3,720
Israel	0,415	2,5120	2,529	2,695	2,864
Italy	5,065	30,6564	30,868	32,890	34,951
Jordan	0,008	0,0484	450	450	450
Lebanon	0,012	0,0726	450	450	450
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	0,067	0,4055	450	450	462
Malta	0,015	0,0908	450	450	450
Monaco	0,004	0,0242	450	450	450
Morocco	0,044	0,2663	450	450	450
Portugal	0,462	2,7964	2,816	3,000	3,188
Slovenia	0,081	0,4903	494	526	559
Spain	2,519	15,2457	15,351	16,357	17,382
Syrian Arab Republic	0,080	0,4842	488	520	552
FYR Macedonia	0,006	0,0363	450	450	450
Tunisia	0,030	0,1816	450	450	450
Turkey	0,440	2,6633	2,682	2,857	3,036
Yugoslavia	0,020	0,1211	450	450	450
TOTALS		100	105,164	111,615	118,227

Note: This table is calculated using the UN scale of contributions for 2003. The calculations for 2004 and 2005 are only indicative; the exact numbers will be calculated on the basis of the UN scale for each year, when it is known. Minimum contribution is set to 450 Swiss Francs.