

Coordinated management and networking of Mediterranean wetlands

Deliverable

2.2.4

Summary of project results

SUMMARY OF PROJECT RESULTS

(deliverable 2.2.4 – English summary)

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This deliverable provide a short portrait of the project – adapted to 3 main target groups - containing the project objectives, actions and main results as reported by the Partners.

Chapter	Contents
<p>I. Introduction</p>	<p>Many changes in the way of thinking and making territorial and spatial plans, as well as governance tools, have occurred during the last 20 years. Many of the concerns and issues that planners are facing nowadays are similar to those faced in the past, but some are quite different mainly as the result of two trends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a growing concern for sustainability and the conservation of natural ecosystems; • the increased recognition of the need for a bottom-up/grass-roots participatory approach to planning, managing and defining decision-making processes. <p>As in the past, we know that <i>wetland management</i> should focus on controlling and mitigating the adverse impacts of floods and droughts, water pollution, controlling erosion and sediment, regulating water exchange as well as rivers and channels functionality, protecting wild flora and fauna, sustaining economic activities and community dwellings, <i>but only if these and similar activities are fully compatible with healthy ecosystems</i>.</p> <p>Clearly, all these objectives complicate even more the conflicts and issues related to wetlands management than in the past.</p> <p><i>How can we better manage all these conflicts?</i> This has been the question that WETNET has attempted to through testing “wetland contracts”.</p> <p>The project aimed to address the issues of wetland governance through a <i>transnational</i> approach. Therefore, Wetnet has partners from many European countries and the selected pilot areas represent some of the most interesting wetlands in the Mediterranean. The selected sites have in some cases limited dimensions, but they are all representative of the European Mediterranean geographical area and of the different kinds of wetlands. The skills and experiences covered by the partnership are equally qualified and they were sought in order to be able to represent a wide range of authorities and subjects operating in the field of protection and enhancement of wetlands. Such a composition allowed us to consider the different aspects of the management of wetlands because each partner brought its own experiences: good practices, laws, but also possible failures.</p> <p>What is a “Wetland Contract”? It is a voluntary agreement for the inclusive governance of wetlands that derives from the long experience of river contracts. Similarly to the river contract, it is defined as (...) <i>an agreement that allows to adopt a set of regulations in which criteria of public utility, economic return, social value and environmental sustainability equally take part in the search for effective solutions for the river basin’s recovery</i>, using the definition adopted at the World Water Forum of L’Aja (The Hague) in 2000. The reference points are, therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the recognition of wetlands as strategic territorial resources • the systematization of the different interests at stake. <p>The scientific partners of the project set the approach proposed, which included a number of mandatory activities that can be broadly grouped in two phases - participation and negotiation.</p> <p>As we will see in the summary, these steps were followed, with various adaptations by all projects partners, ensuring the achievement of the objective of signing the contract (in different forms and under different names).</p> <p>Through the comparison of the experiences, it was possible to develop guidelines and some recommendations.</p> <p>In addition to the main goal of the project - the 9 wetland contracts - a Summer School was organized in Caorle and in Venice in June 2019. The main objectives of the School were:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to build capacity on sustainable governance of protected wetlands addressing target groups involved in wetland management • to facilitate the uptake of the Wetland Contract model by wetland Managing Authorities at Mediterranean scale • to foster the coordination and networking of Mediterranean protected wetlands • to set up and make available a training format replicable within the Mediterranean community <p>Here below the main results of the project are reported for each partner.</p>
<p>II. Project objectives, actions and main results</p>	<p>Veneto Region (LP):</p> <p>The great importance of testing the wetland contract of the Caorle Lagoon System as a voluntary, inclusive and integrated governance process emerged from the observations that many public bodies have competences in the management of wetlands, agricultural lands, fishing areas, navigation, hunting, environmental protection, etc. and there is a clear lack of coordination capable of defining the common interests of resources users. The participative process developed between September 2018 and October 2019 engaged around 50 stakeholders that were previously identified and mapped. According to the path established by the Project, it began with a detailed analysis of the context and with public conferences with experts, addressed to the various stakeholders in order to clarify the main issues emerged in the first general meetings and in the previous attempts to start a similar initiative. The regulatory framework, the state of conservation of wetlands, the composition and structure of the local community and of interest groups were analysed. These preparatory activities were relevant in order to identify the main potential critical points of the process, choose the objectives to focus on the participatory process, establish the relationships between the interested parties and know their interests.</p> <p>The regional government, the municipalities, the reclamation consortium, associations of the various professional categories, environmental associations, fishermen and hunters were the main actors in the process. The goal was to reach a negotiated agreement in compliance with the national and regional legal framework.</p> <p>The process has allowed the creation of synergies between the various territorial actors and has started a comparison between different regional planning tools, which in turn refer to their own governance processes. The overlap of the Wetland Contract in the respective processes is a positive result that allows to give importance and visibility and helps to prepare the ground to guarantee a governance approach after the end of WETNET.</p> <p>The participatory process developed through the definition of a Documents of Intent (MoU), an initial workshop (according to the method of EASW), 4 main territorial laboratories (focus groups) and a series of face-to-face meetings held throughout the whole process. A "long-term strategic scenario" obtained by consensus and negotiation between the main public entities with expertise in the various sectors was presented and discussed. The territorial laboratories were oriented to manage four main axes: governance, environment, socio-economic development, hydrology and water management. General assemblies focused on sharing the common objectives and settling disputes between stakeholders on critical issues, laying the foundations for an open discussion.</p> <p>Some difficulties identified during the participatory process were the low involvement of some relevant stakeholders at the management level, the difficulty of some subjects to submit proposals. Some other difficulties emerged in gaining confidence from the most sceptical subjects and convincing some institutions to participate because they were not accustomed to sharing information with other parties.</p> <p>Anyway, the comparison and conflicts between the interested parties have been less</p>

	<p>frequent than expected.</p> <p>At the end of the process, the most relevant results are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved governance - based on a more transparent and inclusive governance model that goes beyond the previous excessively separate governance schemes. • Empowerment of the local community - through the creation of new channels for the exchange of knowledge and the preparation of concrete actions. • A new common vision of the future scenario trend was shared. • Greater awareness of local stakeholders on the fragility of the wetland system and pressures on ecosystems; • Empowerment of local stakeholders to monitor and preserve the quality of the wetland; • Improvement of the dialogue between different interest groups; • Greater awareness of decision-makers on the importance and effectiveness of the governance process. • Wetland Contract of the Caorle Lagoon System - adapted to the Italian national legislation in the form of a negotiated agreement. Digital signing phase has started on October 30th, 2019. • Program of actions (Action Plan) - based on a shared vision and operational objectives to improve governance related to the management of water resources, outlining the responsibilities for the implementation of actions aimed at protecting the environment, economic development and governance. It includes 55 actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 25 relating to defining and recognizing a "representative institutional model" of single reference for the coordination of the various actors, by stimulating and activating actions for the management, protection, in the Caorle lagoon system; - 2 relating to ensuring the hydraulic protection of the area from the risk of flooding and sediment from the canals, as well as from the upstream inputs; - 2 relating to creating a network of meters to monitor all the data needed to define and know the current lagoon dynamics, in order to plan and plan the interventions on an extended and integrated knowledge base; - 11 related to establishing an operational programme that takes account of all components of the system, through an integrated approach capable of restoring lagoon dynamics, ensuring and consolidating the protection, promotion and development of the wetland area; - 15 related to consolidating and/or promoting instruments and actions for the protection and enhancement of the territory, as well as for the protection of habitats. <p>The main expectations and challenges after signing the Wetland contract are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A better definition of the structural and non-structural actions of the plan, of the priorities and of the financial resources available with no need to start time-consuming procedures. • Early implementation of actions that don't require financial resources. • Updating and monitoring the implementation of the program of actions. • Activating changes in the wetland governance framework, as well as enhancing the harmonization between local and regional regulatory framework; • Facilitating the implementation of the action plan through local incentives and regional funding requests. • Capitalizing the hard work done for the definition of the Contract and the program of action, through their implementation in the next years. <p>One of the main features (and bets) of the wetland contract of the Caorle Lagoon system is the postponement of the final choice of those responsible for the actions identified in the action plan and the identification of the sources of funding.</p> <p>The choice was dictated not only by the strict terms for signing the contract, but also by</p>
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	<p>the will to test a different way of defining and implementing individual actions. This is a way in which none of the actions identified in the participatory process can be set aside, shifting over time the very delicate and time-consuming phase of definitively identifying those responsible and the resources that may not actually be immediately available but may become available in the future. We believe that this different way of proceeding may have more chance of success.</p> <hr/> <p>Province of Vercelli (PP1): The Wetland Contract was built on the basis of the regional rules (Piedmont Region) for the "River and Lake Contracts" of which it is a variant (it is in fact the first application on an area other than the "River" or the "Lake"). The main Community, national and regional rules governing the River Contract in the Piedmont Region are described below. In 2000, the European Union adopted Directive 2000/60/EC, the so-called Water Framework Directive, which states that "Member States shall encourage the active involvement of all interested parties [...] in the production, review and updating of the river basin management plans". In the same year of adoption of the Directive, the Second World Water Forum identified the River Contracts as instruments that allow to adopt a system of rules in which the criteria of public utility, economic performance, social value, environmental sustainability are equally involved in the search for effective solutions for the rehabilitation of a river basin. The Legislative Decree 152/2006 implements the Directive 2000/60/EC and reaffirms the pursuit of the objectives of prevention and reduction of pollution. To this end, it divides the national territory into river basin districts and provides for a Management Plan for each district, assigning the competence to the authorities of the river basin district. The Law n. 662/1996 (Measures for the rationalization of public finance), in art. 2 - paragraph 203 letter a) defines the "Negotiated Planning Agreement" as the regulation agreed between public subjects or between the competent public subject and the public or private party or parties for the implementation of different interventions, referring to a single purpose of development, which require an overall assessment of the activities of competence. The Water Protection Plan (PTA) of the Piedmont Region, approved by DCR N. 117-10731 of 13 March 2007, makes explicit reference to the "River Contract or Lake Contract" for the achievement of the objectives of protection provided by the PTA itself. The Regional Territorial Plan (PTR) of the Piedmont Region recognizes the role of the Contract as a tool that allows the development of synergies with the provincial and local spatial planning tools, in order to promote the integration of different policies. Further legitimacy was given by the Po River District Basin Authority, which in its Management Plan for the Hydrographic District (PdG Po) recognised the Contract as a tool for achieving environmental quality objectives by 2015 and 2021, as provided for by the Water Framework Directive. In Piedmont, the process of forming a River Contract is outlined in the "Regional Guidelines for the Activation of River and Lake Contracts", which draw a methodology divided into four distinct phases: preparation, activation, implementation and consolidation. The Memorandum of Understanding of the Wetland Contract is currently signed. The procedure set out by the Piedmont Region for the signing of the Contract requires a long period of time, since it first provides for the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the members of the Direction Cabinet (Public Bodies), which commits the signatories to the signing of the Contract. In this phase, the Direction Cabinet approved the proposal of the Action Plan, which will be discussed by the Basin</p>
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	<p>Assembly.</p> <p>The Action Plan includes 10 concrete actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 relating to the strategic area "governance", aimed at concluding custody agreements; - 4 relating to the strategic area "environment" aimed at protecting and increasing biodiversity, improving the landscape and the quality of water resources; - 5 relating to the strategic area "economic and social development", relating to the development of environmentally sustainable rice farming, to the increase of soft tourism and to the increase of citizens' awareness of environmental issues. <p>Main problems and obstacles encountered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Contract concerns issues on which different interests coexist, not always and not easily converging (profitability and environmental reasons). These are therefore delicate issues to be managed at a political level and, consequently, require a long time. - Difficulties in involving local private actors. <p>Administrative elections concomitant with the period of the territorial laboratories, with consequent difficulty in involving the representatives of the Municipalities.</p>
	<p>Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (PP2)</p> <p>At Ljubljansko barje nature park pilot area a Memorandum on participation in wetlands conservation of Ljubljansko barje Nature park is being signed rather than a Wetland Contract, in view of the current situation where some entities have shown that they are not in a position to commit further resources (man-power and finances) to additional tasks. ZRC SAZU held a series of participatory events from September 2018 to April 2019 involving various stakeholders, including: representatives of ministries, landowners, farmers, representatives of non-governmental organizations and scientific institutions. At the first territorial lab the team presented the WETNET project and the idea of the wetland contract. Thereafter, experts from the sectors of water, biology and agriculture presented their expert opinions for the maintenance of biodiversity and the water regime of the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park. After the introductory presentations, the question "Which problem do you face in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park?" was done to the stakeholders. A discussion followed on the issues perceived by stakeholders in the pilot area. At the second territorial lab the method used was the so-called World Café. The stakeholders were divided in four groups discussing on different topics: agriculture, water management, nature and tourism. All the participants discussed all four themes. At each group, which was led by an expert in the subject, participants discussed the most pressing problems they faced in the pilot area on a particular topic, they were asked to find possible solutions to the problem and ultimately expose potential barriers that prevent the implementation of possible solutions. At the end, the experts who led the tables presented the findings in their working tables, and the starting points for the coexistence and functioning of different stakeholders in the pilot area. The third territorial lab was conducted as a round table. The stakeholders discussed potential goals, measures, initiatives and risks for three different areas: governance, environment and economic and social development. The fourth territorial lab was conducted as a round table. We invited the stakeholders of agricultural sectors, stakeholders and rightholders. The stakeholders discussed potential goals, measures, initiatives and risks for three different areas: governance, environment and economic and social development. In general we believe the methodology used was useful and appropriated to engage the stakeholders in the participatory process.</p> <p>The final document, the Memorandum, which was developed through the process, took the form of an Environmental Agreement for the implementation of the Action Plan shared by the stakeholders. The legal support of the agreement are the Water</p>

Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC of 23 October 2000) specifically the “negotiated environmental agreements” mentioned in Part B of Annex VI, the The Decree on the Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 112/08) and the Interim Management Guidelines for the Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park (<http://www.ljubljanskobarje.si/uploads/files/ZUS%20KPLB%202011.pdf>).

An integral part of the Memorandum is the Action Plan, which is the result of the joint conclusions of all participants in the process of its creation, and which defines goals, measures, initiatives and risks in Ljubljansko barje Nature park. The Memorandum is a voluntary document signed by project partners and various stakeholders from public authorities, education and research institutions, civil society, the economic sector and others related to the wetland, with a view to achieving the objectives of restoring the environmental, social and economic aspects of the wetland.

The actors in charge of the coordination of the Memorandum are Research Centre of Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (the partner of the project) and Ljubljansko barje nature park (the associated partner of the project). The bodies responsible for implementing the Memorandum are the Assembly and the Supervisory Board. The Memorandum Assembly is composed of all signatories to this Memorandum, and it is open to those who wish to join the Memorandum at a later stage. The Monitoring Committee of the Memorandum consists of representatives of three experts (in the field of nature: Center for Cartography of Flora and Fauna, agriculture: Biotechnical Faculty of the University of Ljubljana and water management: Faculty of Civil and Geodetic Engineering of the University of Ljubljana). The partners coordinate the work of The Monitoring Committee. The Monitoring Committee and the Assembly meet as needed to assess the state of implementation of the Action Plan, to take careful action and to identify improvements and upgrades. All signatories to the Memorandum undertake to include the appropriate resources available for active participation in the activities. Decision-making procedures follow the principles of information, consultation and active cooperation, in accordance with the applicable national law and the provisions of the European Union. The Action Plan of the Memorandum includes 16 measures that can be classified as concrete. Those are:

From the field of management:

- control of drainage of water from secondary arrester to main dams (river) with locks;
- control of drainage of water from tertiary arrester;
- coordinated maintenance of ditches;
- awareness of stakeholders on the importance of adequate maintenance of the arrester;
- Control of the use of fertilizers and preservatives on agricultural land.

from the field of environment:

- compliance with the ban on the permanent grass cut from the KPLB Regulation (also for organic farmers);
- mowing, adapted to the conservation of species and habitat types;
- adequate maintenance of borders and green belts (selective logging, preservation of trees, maintaining adequate width of green belts along ditches and watercourses);
- establishing a zone of individual subregions where priorities are defined in cooperation with land owners and managers of the protected area and NATURA2000 (KPLB and ZRSVN) - with the participation of the Agricultural Advisory Service;
- the establishment of monitoring of qualifying species and habitat types;
- an example of good practice of coherent policies on the land of the Agricultural Land and Forests Fund (SKZG);
- prepare an analysis of the development possibilities and the restructuring plan for individual agricultural holdings in cooperation with agricultural institutions and with the financial support of agricultural policy;
- payment for the implementation of the adjusted use on agricultural land.

	<p>In the field of economic and social development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - designing common tourism products; - joint marketing of products; -building of tourist infrastructure, which will provide a targeted visit; <p>Along the whole process we had some problems to actively involved agricultural sector and right holders. Finally we decided to arrange the special territorial lab for them, which was very successful. Similar problem was with public sector especially on the national level. The Action plan was prepared in a sufficient way with our external experts from all three strategical areas. The problem has arisen when the actions with specified responsible stakeholders, financial resources and workplan were presented to the potential responsible stakeholders. We decided to cut the actions and build up the modified action plan with goals, measures, initiatives and risks.</p> <p>The other problem occurred as the prepared document was named “Contract”. The potential stakeholders expressed the concern on too binding formulation of the document. Finally we agreed on changing it into the voluntary “Memorandum”.</p>
	<p>Andalusian Federation of Towns and Provinces (PP3)</p> <p>FAMP’s case study began in 2017 and aimed at establishing a participated governance for the Odiel Marshes Biosphere Reserve (Huelva, Andalusia, Spain). The Andalusian Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FAMP) held a series of participatory events in Nov-2017, Feb-2018, Mar-2018, Jun-2018 and Feb-2019 (Final Conference) involving various stakeholders. The “River Contract Methodology” was used, consisting in a broad participation process, involving all agents of the basin and public entities linked to water management, where public and private interlocutors commit themselves to a common river management project. The method was used to elicit stakeholder needs, expectations, motivations and conflicts. Participatory events also tap into subjective experiences and are an efficient way to collect large amounts of data that describes, compares, or explains a social phenomenon because they allow participants to interact with one another and build on one another’s comments, and they allow the facilitators to probe for details. This participatory process was successful as the number of events held was ideal, allowing the completion of the proposed objectives, such as the development, sharing and assessing of trend and alternative scenarios for the pilot area.</p> <p>In order to increase engagement, a series of bilateral visits/meetings of a technical nature were held, in which technicians and politicians of the different entities met FAMP to carry out a more concrete study and definition of the first draft operations included in the preferred scenario committed to be included in the Action Plan.. Finally, 11 main actions were included in the action plan to be implemented in the future.</p> <p>As a result of this participatory process, a number of existing positive aspects and problems capable of being improved over time through the Wetland Contract were revealed. With regard to Governance, the main issues identified were those related to Multi-level coordination and governance system; Extension of the procedures and bureaucracy; and Scientific and technical dissemination and dissemination strategy of the Biosphere Reserve. Related to the Environment, the problems encountered were mostly related to the lack of operations for the environment conservation; and of strategies including diffusion, education and citizen awareness. Lastly, regarding the Economic and Social Development, the issues that should be improved were related to the Promotion of new alternative sustainable development systems; strengthening public, private and citizen involvement; and the creation of Odiel Marshes Biosphere Reserve brand.</p> <p>Therefore, a new vision of the Odiel Marshes Biosphere Reserve as an area of connection with nature and as a tool for creating wealth and quality employment emerged, in the form of a list of possible actions and measures to be included in the Action Plan, derived from the preferred consensual scenario. The typology of these actions was related to</p>

	<p>communication, awareness raising and training, to management and governance or more concrete actions included in the Wetland Contract:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rehabilitation and valorisation of the Cojillas tidal mill 2. Recovery, conservation and valorisation of Cárdenas marshes 3. Connection project and use of livestock tracks and rural roads as green corridor 4. Enhancement of the connection marsh-city in front of 26 de Abril de 1963 square and estuary promenade 5. Project for the connection and use of livestock tracks and rural roads as green corridors (Odiel river border to the hanging bridge of a-49) 6. Enhancement of the marsh-city connection in front of the San Felice de Circeo promenade and the surroundings of the Tejar stream 7. Sustainable tourism in the Odiel marshes biosphere reserve 8. “Marismas del Odiel, Cero es Más” campaign 9. Environmental education campaigns on the Odiel marshes 10. Promotion of green infrastructures, connected to the "Biosphere Reserve Brand" 11. Eco-innovation (ECOMO) Odiel marshes (incubator and accelerator of eco-entrepreneurs and green employment). <p>As for the model of agreement, since the Spanish law doesn't allow the signing of a bidding Wetland Contract, the choice was to sign a Memorandum of Cooperation based of the agreed Action plan. The purpose of this Memorandum was to establish the basis for collaboration between the signatory Parties in relation to the development and implementation of the WetNet Action Plan for the Odiel Marshes Biosphere Reserve Pilot Area. Nonetheless, the signing of this instrument does not involve any conflict of competences of the signatory Administrations or any economic commitment. Furthermore, none of the Parties assumes any economic commitment by virtue of the MemoWetNet, and the WetNet Action Plan for the Odiel Marshes Biosphere Reserve will have no contractual character of any nature.</p> <p>The Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between FAMP (Andalusian Federation of Municipalities and Provinces) and the members of the Odiel Marshes Territorial Laboratory. The main challenge encountered was obtaining the signature of all parties involved.</p> <p>FAMP has found it easier to obtain the signatures of the public entities and administrations that had participated in the Odiel Marshes Territorial Lab: Odiel Marshes Board of Trustees and Odiel Marshes Natural Reserve and Biosphere Reserve (Agriculture, Livestock, Fishing and Sustainable Development Regional Ministry), Punta Umbria City Council, Aljaraque City Council, Gibraleón City Council and Huelva City Council.</p> <p>The WetNet Action Plan for the Odiel Marshes Biosphere Reserve foresees continuous consultations and dialogues between citizens, economic and social agents, civil organizations and the competent authorities and institutions affected by the Odiel Marshes Biosphere Reserve. That is the reason why a WetNet Odiel Marshes Committee was proposed through the Memorandum of Cooperation in order to provide a framework for consultation. As a mechanism for follow-up, monitoring and control of the implementation of the Action Plan, the Committee will act, resolving any problems of interpretation and compliance that may arise with respect to the Memorandum and the WetNet Action Plan for the Odiel Marshes Biosphere Reserve Pilot Area.</p>
	<p>Spanish Ornithological Society (PP4)</p> <p>The relevance of testing Wetland Contracts in Albufera de València as a voluntary, inclusive and integrative governance process relied in that many public bodies have competences in the wetland management (i.e. for water management: River Basin Authority, Environment Regional Council and Agriculture Regional Council, Irrigation</p>

communities, 13 towns and sewage treatment entities) but there is a clear lack of coordination mechanisms (i.e. the former Management Plan did not establish any competence to coordinate all the entities implicated in water management issues) as a weak interest in dealing with the definition of common interests of users as confrontations have been usual.

The participatory processes developed in l'Albufera for the testing of the implementation of a Wetland Contract began with a detailed context analysis. Regulatory framework, the conservation status of the wetland and the composition and structure of the local community were analysed. This previous work was relevant since it allowed identifying the main criticalities of the process (for example derived from a regulation concerning this type of processes, and the implementation of the new contract law in Spain). As Albufera de Valencia has a wide set of stakes and huge, complex interrelations between stakes, it was decided according to the context analysis to choose water management issue on which focus the participatory process and establish the relationships between stakeholders and know their interests.

The main previous work consisted in presenting the project to the two public administrations with competences in territorial planning and in the management of the wetland and protected area (River Basin Authority and Regional Government). This previous work had two main objectives. First, to prevent that the role of SEO/BirdLife (a conservation NGO with a wide experience in dealing with environmental conflicts in the wetland) as leader of the participatory process could generate distrust among some stakeholders. This work provided helped to reinforce the role of the external facilitator and to reduce tensions during the overall stakeholders' interaction and make clear the position of SEO/BirdLife as an another stakeholder at the same level as the others.

Secondly, these alliances with national or regional administration allowed the creation of synergies with Regional Planning Tools (River Basin Plan and Natura 2000 site Management Plan), which include their own governance processes. The overlapping of the Wetland Contract in their respective processes was studied by a legal assessor and this helped to find common positions with the national and regional administration. This was a very positive result that allowed raising relevance and visibility to the project, facilitate the participation in the project of two main stakeholders on water management, and also helped to set the floor for ensuring governance approach after WETNET.

The participatory process has involved 40 stakeholders from all economic, public and private sectors through 4 main territorial labs and a series of face-to-face and petit-committee meetings throughout the participatory process. The process presented as a oriented scenario the "Albufera's Special Plan" obtained from the consensus and negotiation between the main public entities with competences in wetland management, so that they felt comfortable in the participation and the rest of the actors could propose changes on this Special Plan under the Wetland Contract. The territorial labs were oriented to deal with three main axes: governance, environment and socioeconomic development. General assemblies were focused on sharing stakeholders' positions on critical issues of the pilot area, setting the floor for open discussion. Some difficulties identified during the governance process was the occurrence of multi-role stakeholders, expectations management (previous governance process not satisfactory as expected) and low engagement of some relevant stakeholders. Confrontation and conflicts amongst stakeholders were less frequent than expected.

The project main results are:

- Improvement of governance – based in a more transparent, inclusive model of governance overcoming previous governance schemes in the wetland (i.e. Albufera Special Plan, and Natural Park Advisory Board).
- Empowerment of local community – through the creation of new channels for knowledge interchange.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arise of new a common, shared vision – through the establishment of new spaces for collaboration and motivation. • Action Plan – based on a shared vision and operational goals to improve governance related with water management, allocating responsibilities for the implementation of actions aiming environmental protection, economic development and governance. • Albufera de València Wetland Contract – adapted to national regulation framework and referred in Spanish as the “Albufera de València Memorandum of Cooperation”. To be signed by near 30 stakeholders (public and private) on December 2019. <p>The project main expectative and challenges after the Wetland Contract signature are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imbrication of Wetland Contracts in new territorial planning tools (River Basin Plan, Natura 2000 site Management Plan) for improving governance and also incorporating the Wetland Contract Action Plan into the respective plans. • Triggering obligations for structural, territorial actions which responsibility is of public bodies and are not possible to be developed by small stakeholders. • Spread the word in Spain through technical meetings, collaborative work and technical assistance to River Basin Organisms’ officers in order to incorporate wetland contracts to the “Relevant Issues Scheme” in the River Basin Plans as a concrete tool for improving governance and preservation of wetlands. • Triggering changes in the wetland governance regulation framework, as well as the creation of a local or regional regulatory framework to ease the implementation of the Action Plan through incentives in local and regional calls for funding.
	<p>SARGA - GOVERNMENT OF ARAGON (PP8)</p> <p>In the case of the Aragon pilot, "Cañizar Lagoon", the wetland contract has not been signed due to lack of agreement. The lagoon of the Cañizar is a singular wetland according to LEGISLATIVE DECREE 1/2015, of July 29, of the Government of Aragon, by which the consolidated text of the Law of Protected Spaces of Aragon is tested, said figure was recognized by ORDER of November 21, 2012, of the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Environment, which includes the Laguna del Cañizar, in the municipal terms of Cella and Villarquemado (Teruel), in the Inventory of Singular Wetlands of Aragon.</p> <p>The singular wetland figure in Aragon, having no regulatory development, does not have by law any form of management defined. This pilot case has served to include the Wetland Contract as a figure of management of these kind of wetland in Aragón region. Only general measures are specified in the contract as it is agreed with the stakeholders to include the specific measures to be executed in the Action plan. One of the problems that the lagoon has had since its recovery is the absence of a governance and management model. With the union of the Wetland contract and the Management Action Plan it was intended to provide the lagoon with a management figure based on stakeholder participation. The lack of agreement and the existing conflict have prevented the start-up of these management figures, although it is still working once the Wetnet project is finalized in the implementation of both the wetland contract and the action plan –management</p> <p>For that reason, the following actions were included in the contract from a generalist point of view</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environmental integration measures and agricultural uses 2. Environmental integration measures and livestock uses 3. Environmental integration measures and tourism uses 4. Environmental integration measures and public uses (hunting, fishing ...) 5. Conservation measures and environmental improvement <p>These actions were defined in the management plan, annexed to the wetland contract. As explained previously, our pilot area did not reach an agreement for the signing of the</p>

	<p>wetland contract during the wetnet project. Despite the multiple meetings and workshops held, the conflict in the pilot zone has prevented a sane from being reached. However, the government of Aragón and Sarga continue working in the area, searching for a sane way to manage the wetland. At present, the Action Plan is the instrument with which the wetland is being worked, the application of some of the measures can facilitate reaching the desired agreement and finally be able to sign the wetland contract as a management figure.</p>
	<p>RCDI – Development and Innovation Network (PP9)</p> <p>The Melides Lagoon is coastal land-locked lagoon protected under the Nature 2000 Network. Its sustainability depends on reducing human pressures on the ecosystems and coping with unfavourable effects of climate and water dynamics.</p> <p>The collaborative process developed between February 2018 and June 2019 involved participants from 15 to 20 organisations from the public administration and the private sector. The process was based on five general meetings (general assemblies of stakeholders), complemented by sectoral and individual organization meetings.</p> <p>Territorial labs were oriented to the wetland critical issues organised into the following categories: sanitation, agriculture, tourism, fishing, lagoon and river environment, and governance issues. The most dominant private activities in the pilot area are rice farming and tourism accommodation. Thus, sectoral meetings were organised to discuss issues specific to each sector. In addition, 16 individual meetings with public entities were held, at various stages of the collaborative process.</p> <p>These complementary sectoral and individual meetings were determinant to prepare inputs for the general assemblies and to assess the position of key stakeholders, helping to reinforce the role of the facilitator and to reduce tensions during the overall stakeholders’ interaction. General assemblies were focused on sharing information on critical issues of the pilot area, discussing options and getting consensus about solutions. Confrontation and conflicts amongst stakeholders were moderate.</p> <p>Some factors were found to be critical for the success of the process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Adoption of a mixed approach based on general/sectoral/individual meetings; ii. Inputs for the meetings always previously sent to invited participants; iii. Keeping a frequent presence in the area; iv. The rhythm of the process; v. Showing results along the process; vi. Inviting “neutral” experts to present the technical vision on the most controversial issues. <p>A local Conference participated by 33 stakeholders concluded the process. The project main findings were presented and the importance of the governance process was acknowledged. The Melides Lagoon Environmental Agreement was signed at the end of the Conference.</p> <p>The project substantive results are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Plan – based on a shared vision and operational goals to improve and preserve the quality of the Melides Lagoon, the plan allocates responsibilities for the implementation of 18 measures covering environmental protection, economic development and governance. • Melides Lagoon Wetland Contract - inspired in the “negotiated environmental agreements” referred in Part B of Annex VI of the Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC), it is referred in Portuguese as the “Melides Lagoon Environmental Agreement”. It was subscribed by 17 stakeholders (public and private) on June 17, 2109, during the Local Conference. • Local governance structure – included in the Wetland Contract as the management structure to implement the Action Plan, it follows the model adopted during the

	<p>collaborative process. Some intangible but equally relevant results can be mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of local stakeholders about the fragility of the wetland system and the pressures on the ecosystems; • Empowerment of the local stakeholders to watch and preserve the quality of the wetland; • Improved dialogue between the different stakeholder groups; • Increased awareness of the decision makers about the importance and effectiveness of the governance process.
	<p>Gozo Development Agency - Gozo Regional Committee (PP10)</p> <p>A Memorandum of Collaboration is being signed rather than a Wetland Contract, in view of the current local situation where entities have shown that they are not in a position to commit further resources (man-power and finances) to additional tasks. This is mainly due to the fact that the relevant entities are already committed to execute actions that are currently taking up all their resources and running on very tight budget lines. In order to be able to assign budget, a formal request would need to be put forward by the relevant entities, and approved by central Government for upcoming financial years. Such requests need to be made well in advance. Despite this, stakeholders proved willing to commit to a lower level, via a different form document similar to a Memorandum of Understanding, whereby they express agreement on further collaboration on an agreed list of priorities/actions.</p> <p>The process led to the definition and prioritisation of a list of actions that relate to the pilot areas, directly or indirectly. This was done through a concerted approach where all actors contributed, and constructive discussions were held in relation to potential barriers that could be faced if the actions were to be implemented. Some of the actions overlapped with the Eco-Gozo vision. In such cases, progress of implementation was discussed with the relevant entity, and fine-tuned to avoid overlap. For instance, Eco-Gozo already included the establishment of the “Made in Gozo” label, which was very similar to an action to brand local agricultural produce, however the entity had faced several legal barriers when trying to establish the label, but agreed that it may be worthwhile to re-investigate what the possibilities are. Hence, the action was reworded to fit. A similar approach was taken with other overlaps, and in some cases actions were toned down or broadened for entities to be comfortable in committing to sign the agreement. This was due to concern expressed by some entities. While the signed document is positive, and is evidence that the relevant entities are willing to collaborate and take it forward, further follow-up will be necessary after the end of the project in order to actually activate or continue collaborations, since the agreement does not involve time-frames or the assignment of resources. The Memorandum of Collaboration is the first step, of many necessary, towards a Wetlands Contract for the island of Gozo.</p>
	<p>Tour du Valat Foundation (PP11)</p> <p>The wetland contract process was beneficial to the Verdier marshes. With over ten years of community based management, the site has faced some important questions concerning water management and participation. The collaborative effort to create a shared vision that was validated by the members allowed us to address these questions. The fact that the shared vision includes aspects of natural water management, now allows us to adapt the water pumping for the site which impacts various activities including hunting, pasture management and bird watching. The shared vision sets the framework for all of the activities proposed in the action plan and thus sets the basis for</p>

the management plan. Given that the members of the Association are volunteers, a formal contract could not be signed, but to resolve this problem, each of the members signed the membership card with the shared vision and the action plan was validated by the board of the Verdier marshes which includes members of the Association and the Tour du Valat.

The vision for the site was:

A mosaic of wetlands that is representative of the natural environments typical of the Camargue and respectful of the natural water cycles. The site supports community engaged events that stimulate social links and well-being. The site, managed by a village association in a collective spirit and is freely accessible to all.

The main activities included in the action plan were:

- Maintain infrastructures so that they remain functional and appealing to the public (shed, tables, dry toilets, etc.).
- Develop new artistic activities (drawing classes)
- Continue control of invasive species;
- Maintain the South dike
- Respect the natural hydrological functioning of the South basin (rain fed) to favor the installation of a vegetation characteristic of temporary low-salt marshes and vegetation of salt meadows;
- Edit a site and event program attached to a newsletter.
- Add signage and interpretation on birds in the observatory;
- Organize meetings with site users and children to discuss and promote local know-how;
- Find referents and perpetuate monitoring in places (water levels, breeding birds, hunting boards, botany);
- Ensure compliance with hunting regulations (ensure guarding)
- Schedule a quarterly activities that take place over a weekend to mobilize people in professional activity and allow them to participate in construction sites;
- Empower a referent for each task for the organization of workdays. He/she will have to inform all the members about the progress of the building sites;
- Maintain the monthly meetings of the association.


