



## SUMMARY

| **WHATS GOING ON**

| **FINAL CONFERENCE: OCTOBER 1-3th VENICE, ITALY**

| **GOVERNANCE PLANS / WETLAND CONTRACTS**

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## WHAT'S GOING ON?

Dear readers and friends of Wetnet,

The project has arrived at its final phase, but the activities are continuing. As we exchanged our experiences during the Venice Final Conference in October, the outcomes of our endeavors are positive. Each partner has been able to initiate participatory processes in its pilot area, involving many new people and institutions in the governance along the way. A process that successfully led - or will lead in the coming weeks - to the signing of nine agreements for wetland governance.

The agreements have had to adapt to the different legal frameworks of each country; despite the different names, they all have the contents of the "Wetland Contract" that the project aimed to fine-tune and test.



These contracts have produced a series of concrete actions and commitments shared by all the territorial actors involved in the protection and enhancement of wetlands.

It is certainly an important goal, especially because it fits into a transnational network in which the outcomes of Wetnet can provide important elements of knowledge to those who, in the Mediterranean Region and in Europe, want to start similar initiatives for their wetlands.

The training model developed by the Wetnet Summer School held in Caorle-Italy in June can be exported wherever it is necessary to increase and disseminate knowledge and best practices for the protection of wetlands.

We know that following Wetnet, Interreg Europe is giving more and more importance and attention

to wetlands by financing projects focusing on the ecological and legal state of wetlands and their worldwide importance for humans and biodiversity under the special consideration of global climate change scenarios.

The final perspective is to see all the wetlands of the Mediterranean and their ecosystems connected by an integrated and transnational network in which models of governance and safeguard measures will ensure the achievement of the objectives of supporting people and biodiversity outlined by the "Charter of Venice" announced at the end of the Final Conference. Wetnet is ending, but let's stay connected!

## FINAL CONFERENCE: SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE OF MEDITERRANEAN WETLANDS

### “Wetland Contracts as voluntary agreements for stakeholder engagement and empowerment “

### Venice (Italy), October 1st – 3rd, 2019



The WETNET Project organized its final conference on “Sustainable Governance of Mediterranean Wetlands” in Venice (Italy) the first week of October. The final conference aimed to capitalize the partnership experiences developing Wetland Contracts in their pilot areas as voluntary agreements for stakeholder engagement and empowerment.

The conference started with a technical seminar in which the project partners presented the key findings, experiences and lessons learned during the implementation of the wetland contract methodology in their pilot areas. Thanks to the variety of typologies of the partners and the different types of wetlands pilot sites, interesting reflections were drawn about implementation and adaptation of the tool.

The discussions highlighted the need to tailor fit the contracts and the methodology to each specific context.

The technical seminar allowed participants to visualize how Wetland Contracts fit into the current governance initiatives. This bottom-up process is a result of a more mature, democratic, engaged and integrative society, which can improve the capabilities and empower the local people for the integrated management of natural resources.

The presentation of the experiences and the debate between speakers and the public showed that the signature of the Wetland Contracts are not a final point in the process, but a small milestone in the long process of improving wetland governance and a starting point of implementing an action plan. After the technical seminar, an informal wetland governance marketplace was performed in which the participants and project partners went deeper in the Wetland Contract process and showcased strategies



for the participatory process, problems and solutions found, and consider different approaches for the implementation of the action plan.

The Conference held the final event October 3, with an overview of the project's main outputs and promoted a continuation of the Wetland contract implementation in the Mediterranean basin. A roundtable with all the project partners addressed the topics of the added value of the project to improve governance in the pilot areas and focused on the expectations and challenges for the implementation of the Wetland Contracts in the future.

## GOVERNANCE PLANS / WETLAND CONTRACTS

As the WetNet project reaches the final stage the project main output becomes visible. Project partners spent the last year preparing and discussing with stakeholders joint governance plans aiming at the integrated management and sustainable development of the project wetlands and connected systems. Taking different forms and designations, these governance plans represent wetland contracts and are the project legacy for each one of the pilot areas. The result of this process is 9 governance plans already signed or about to be subscribed by the most representative stakeholders.

Wetland Name (Project Partner)	Designation of the Plan/contract	Current Situation
<b>Caorle Lagoon System (VENETO REGION)</b>	Negotiated Planning Agreement "Wetland Contract of the Caorle lagoon system"	To be subscribed before project conclusion (expected 14 subscribers)
<b>Vercelli Lowplain (PROVINCE OF VERCELLI)</b>	Memorandum of understanding for the realization of the wetland contract for the Vercelli rice plain	To be subscribed before project conclusion
<b>Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park (ZRC SAZU)</b>	Memorandum on Participation in Wetland Conservation in Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park	To be subscribed before project conclusion
<b>Odiel Marshes (FAMP)</b>	Odiel Marshes Wetland Contract and Action Plan	Subscribed on February 13, 2019 by 4 stakeholders
<b>Albufera de Valencia (SEO/BIRDLIFE)</b>	Albufera de València Memorandum of Cooperation	To be subscribed before project conclusion (expected 20 subscribers)
<b>Cañizar Lagoon (SARGA)</b>	Management Plan for the Laguna Cañizar Wetland.	On discussion
<b>Verdier Marshes (TOUR DU VALAT)</b>	Membership card with the shared vision	Subscribed on June 20, 2019 by 45 stakeholders
<b>Melides Lagoon (RCDI)</b>	Melides Lagoon Environmental Agreement	Subscribed on June 17, 2019 by 17 stakeholders
<b>Gozo Island (GRC-GDA)</b>	Memorandum of Cooperation towards a Wetlands Contract for the island of Gozo	To be subscribed before project conclusion (expected 4 subscribers)