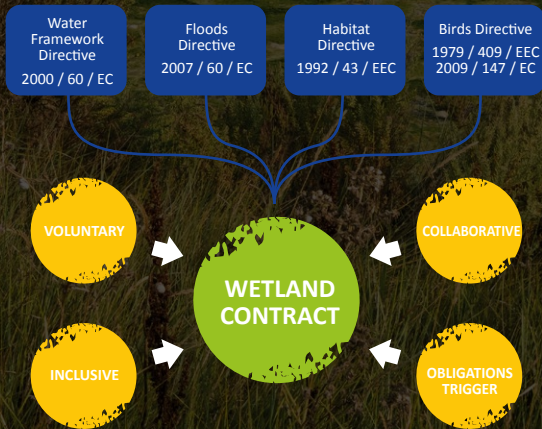




## Wetlands in Core of Global Economy



Wetlands Contract is a voluntary tool for inclusive governance of surface water bodies, based on the active participation of local actors and the integrated assessment of management options.

## Project partners

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<b>2,252 M €</b> Project budget	<b>1,914 M €</b> ERDF / IPA	<b>30 Months</b> Project duration
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# Wetland Contract

Coordinated management and networking of Mediterranean Wetlands

Project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

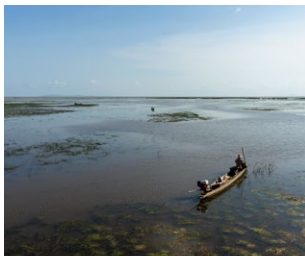
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**What is a Wetland Contract and where did it come from?** It is a voluntary tool for participative governance of wetlands. It originates from the long-time experience of river contracts.

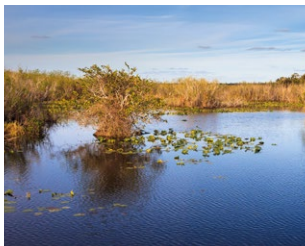


social value and environmental sustainability to search for effective solutions for the enhancement and protection of wetlands. It does not produce obligations but rather encourages commitments.



**What are the contents of a Wetland Contract?** It consists of a series of shared, specific and detailed commitments and actions. The objective of a Wetland Contract is to ensure proper governance to protect wetlands and their surroundings. The contracts take into account the problems and needs of the people, plants and animals that live or benefit from wetlands either permanently or temporarily.

**Are the contents the same for all the Wetland Contracts?** No, there is no standard recipe for the governance model because every territorial context poses different problems and solutions. A tailor-made approach is always needed.



**Is it a new kind of territorial plan?** Not really. Wetland Contracts do not want to by-pass, replace or overlap existing plans or tools. They gather different skills and knowledge from different stakeholders, community representatives, institutions and territo-

**Is it a mandatory tool?** No, it is a voluntary agreement that includes criteria in the areas of public utility, economic return,

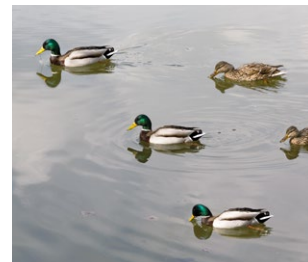
rial actors to produce ideas, commitments and actions.



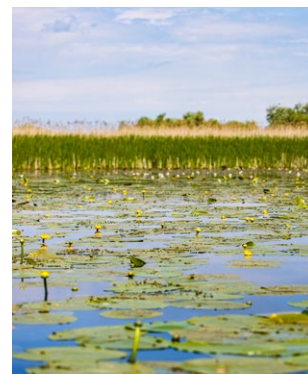
**Why do we need a tool like that?** Wetlands provide benefits that no other ecosystem can. Some of the benefits include natural water quality improvement, flood protection, shoreline erosion control, opportunities for recreation and aesthetic appreciation, community structure and wildlife support, and natural products at reduced costs compared with other alternatives. Protecting wetlands can increase human safety and well-being as well as enhance the productivity of aquatic ecosystems. Wetland Contracts bring together different interests and stakes into a coordinated system. The bottom-up approach makes it possible to find and implement win-win solutions.

**What is necessary for a Wetland Contract to succeed?** A set of conditions is required: the existence of an active, interested and reactive community, the presence of active and interested institutions, the adoption of an inclusive approach and the

willingness of the contractors to implement the commitments undertaken.



**How can a Wetland Contract take into account all the different and possibly conflicting needs and points of view?** The added value of the governance process proposed by Wetland Contracts is that they do not only propose mediation but also the evaluation of alternatives and the choice between different options putting together all the possible solutions. A Wetland Contract can be useful and effective as far as it brings out the conflicts and activates participatory processes leading to a common and shared vision of the future of a wetland.



The Ramsar Convention (Iran, 1972) states that “wetlands are areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters”. Hence, as defined by the Convention, wetlands include a wide array of inland ecosystems (such as marshes, peatlands, floodplains, rivers and lakes) and coastal areas (such as saltmarshes, mangroves, intertidal mudflats and seagrass beds), but also marine areas no deeper than six meters (at low tide), as well as human-made wetlands such as reservoirs, rice paddies and wastewater treatment ponds.



European Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and several Daughter Directives (Habitat Directive, Floods Directive, etc.) require Member States to foster an integrated approach for the management of all water bodies, through a collaborative governance able to combine multi-objective, multi-level and multi-stakeholder decision-making processes and to simultaneously pursue environmental enhancement, risk management and local development.

In the framework of the Interreg Med Programme 2014-2020, the WetNet project will test the Wetland Contract as a governance tool for the sustainable management of protected wetlands.

Nine pilot areas have been identified in Italy, France, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain and a comprehensive guideline will be produced at the end of the project.

