RED ALERT SYSTEM

APPLICATION FORM

Mediterranean Alliance for Wetlands

2020, Izmir Turkey

1. BACKGROUND

It has been more than four decades since The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat has been implemented. This Convention, signed by 171 parties to date stated:

> *'the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.'*

Despite numerous efforts, including the MedWet Initiative dedicated to conserving Mediterranean wetlands, these ecosystems continue to suffer from unsustainable human activities and the growing impacts of climate change. This pressing situation led to the creation of the Mediterranean Alliance for Wetlands (MAW), a network of associations and research organizations working to enhance the visibility of Mediterranean wetlands in society and influence policy at local, national, and regional levels. The Alliance promotes sustainable practices based on innovative, evidence-based solutions as catalysts for change.

The Mediterranean Alliance for Wetlands (MAW) works in the Mediterranean, which is home to the second largest biodiversity hotspot in the world (more than 2M km² for the land part and more than 9M km² if the marine part is included[1]). This hotspot is especially important due to the high number of endemic species (a third of the plants of the world). Out of the ca. 7.000 species recorded in the Mediterranean hotspot, more than a thousand species are classified as globally threatened by the IUCN Red List. The Mediterranean hosts a particularly high percentage of critically endangered particularly high levels of freshwater fishes and mollusks (ca. 26% and 32% respectively) making it a critical habitat for globally threatened freshwater species.

[1] CEPF,2017. Ecosystem profile: Mediterranean Basin biodiversity hotspot.

The Mediterranean Wetland Outlook 2: Solutions for Sustainable Mediterranean Wetlands report (2018) highlighted the ongoing loss and degradation of these habitats and their species over the last four decades—a trend that contradicts global and regional commitments, including the goals of the Ramsar Convention.

1.1 Justification

"Raising the profile of wetlands as a decisive means to ensure their conservation and wise use" is a priority mission for the Mediterranean Alliance for Wetlands.

The objective of Target 7 of the 4th Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 of the Ramsar Convention is that "Sites that are at risk of change of ecological character have threats addressed". Within this target, Action 7.1 of MedWet Framework for Action 2016–2030 aims to "Assess the main threats to wetlands and their magnitude by the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory, the MedWet Scientific and Technical Network, and national wetland observatories, and formulate and actively promote recommendations for improving conservation and management for addressing those threats."

Although there have been some attempts to identify the areas of biodiversity importance under threat, the situation of these areas is still getting worse as is explained in the background chapter of this document. International/governmental political climate and development strategies are making the situation even harder to engage with. For example, with the support of its partners, the NGO BirdLife International launched the Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas in Danger (IBAiD), which aims to compile and publish the list of the most threatened Important Bird Areas around the world, identified by BirdLife Partners based on monitoring data in 2013. These sites are areas in need of urgent conservation action to save them. As of 2019, there are 255 sites from 48 countries and territories in the IBAiD List globally. There are around 60 sites in the Mediterranean basin, from which 2/3 are mostly constituted by wetlands. Similarly, Montreux Record, "a record of Ramsar sites where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring or are likely to occur" is maintained by the Secretariat in consultation with the Contracting Party concerned of Ramsar Convention (Recommendation 4.8, 4th COP, Montreux, Switzerland). To date, out of the 400 Ramsar sites designated by the 28 MedWet

countries, 16 are listed in the Montreux Record (most of them for more than three decades).

The target 7 of the Ramsar Convention and the Action 7.1 of the MedWet indicate that there is a strong need for a tool to both identify and engage with relevant stakeholders for the sake of the wetlands.

2. 2. THE RED ALERT SYSTEM

The Red Alert System is a mechanism to identify and try to stop or reduce emerging threat(s) towards wetlands of importance within the Mediterranean Basin. Within the context of the Red Alert System, the term emerging threat is used to define, a direct threat such as (i) Residential & commercial development, (ii) Energy production & mining, (iii) Transportation & service corridors,(iv) Natural system modifications according to the Threats Classification Scheme of the IUCN. The term, wetlands of importance, is defined as wetlands that meet the criteria defined in the Criteria section of the document, which are global, regional, or national significance and cultural values.

2.1 Application

The application can be made by any civil society organization that wants to request the support of the international community to protect a wetland under threat. The applicant should fill the application form (Annex 1) in order to provide the reasons and justifications of the Red Alert. Evidence-based data with references to academic or citizen-science publications and datasets are desirable.

2.1.1 Evaluation and engagement process

The Steering Committee (SC) of the Alliance will evaluate the application and decide whether to start the Red Alert mechanism and define a strategy. It will reply to the

applicant within a maximum of 15 days. In the meantime, the Steering Committee may ask for more detailed data and/or an online meeting with the applicant.

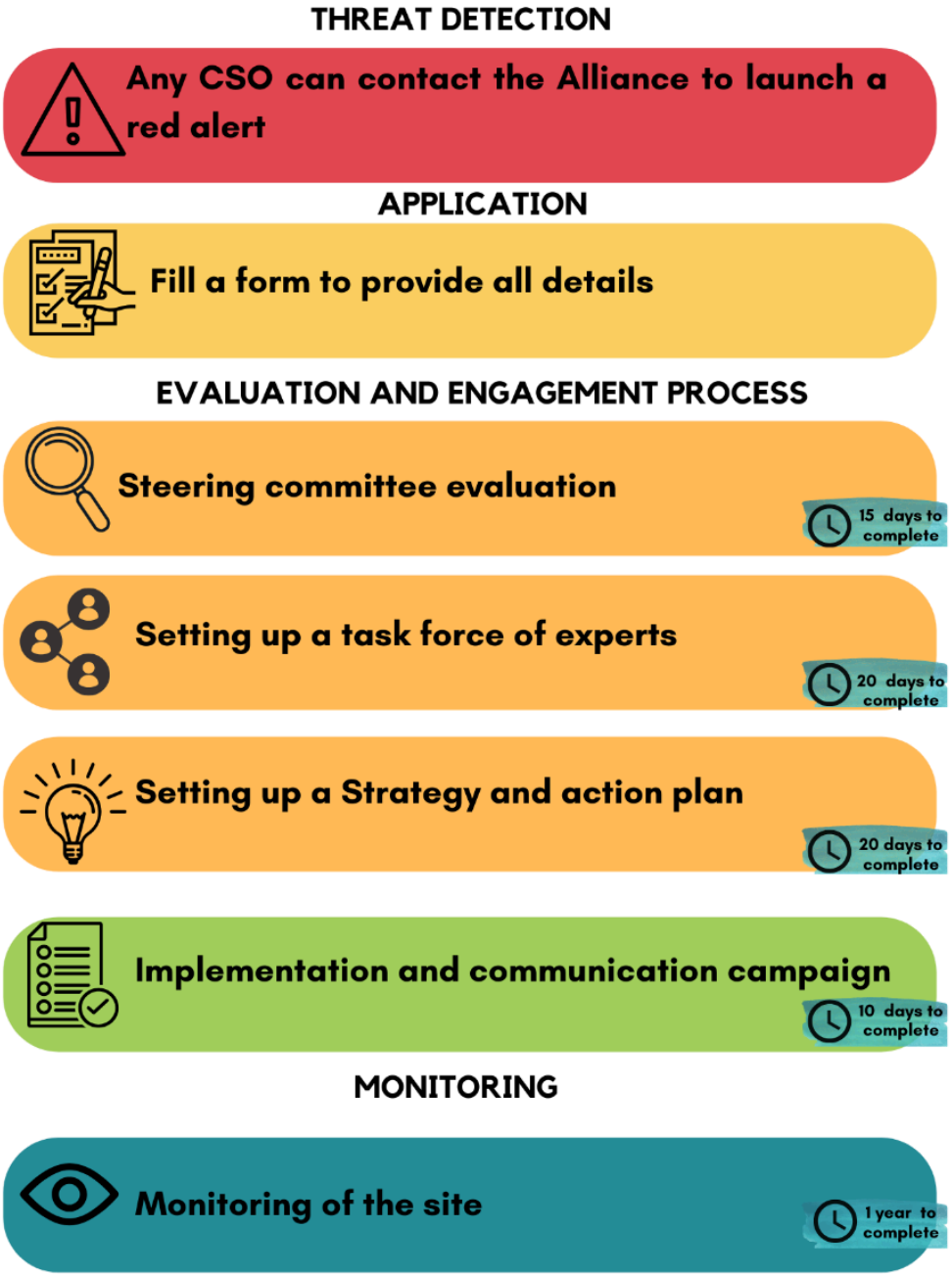
The Steering Committee will then ask MAW's members to form a task force of at least three people to work on the case and form the task force within 20 days max. The applicant will be part of the task force and the main responsible of developing the strategy.

Within 20 days, an online meeting will then be organized, where the threat(s) and the key stakeholders involved will be discussed in detail. The strategy will include different lobbying and advocacy tools, such as social media content, online petitions and dissemination of the issue to other relevant networks.

Once the strategy is finalized, the committee will circulate it among the members to ask for their approval and possible use of their signatures and logos.

The task force will monitor the influence of the strategy and update the Steering Committee on the situation during 1 year. The case will be brought to the public's attention through the appropriate media channels (press, social media, web, petitions, etc.).

How does the Red Alert System work?



3. APPLICATION FORM

3.1 Applicant information

1. Name of the applicant:

2. Organization:

3. Email:

3.2 Description of the site

4. Name of the wetland:

5. State(s):

6. Mark with an X the Wetland type:

☐ Inland wetland
☐ Marine coastal wetlands
☐ Human made wetlands

7. What is the exact location of the wetland?

Lat Long

8. What is the surface area of the wetland in ha?

9. What is the surface area of the zone under threat in ha?

10. Indicate if any previous actions have been undertaken at the site (contacting Ramsar or other institutions, draft legislation, civil mobilization, press releases, etc.)

3.3 Wetland of importance

There are five different criteria groups to identify an important wetland that will be subject to Red Alert. These criteria groups are Global, Regional, National, Connectivity and Cultural criteria. If a site meets at least one of the criteria represented in this section, then it will be considered as a wetland of Mediterranean Importance.

11. Select one or more Red Alert criteria from the list below and provide evidence for each of the criteria.

Check	Global criteria	
☐	G1	It contains a representative, rare, or unique example of a natural or near-natural wetland type found within the appropriate biogeographic region as defined in Olson et al., 20011.
☐	G2	It supports globally vulnerable, endangered, critically endangered, or restricted-range species or threatened ecosystem types.
☐	G3	It supports populations of plant and/or animal species which are important for maintaining the biological diversity of a biogeographic region
☐	G4	It supports plant and/or animal species at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge during adverse conditions
☐	G5	It regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds
☐	G6	It regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a global population of one species or subspecies of waterbird,
☐	G7	It supports a significant proportion of indigenous fish subspecies, species or families, life-history stages, species interactions, and/or populations that are representative of wetland benefits and/or values and thereby contributes to

		global biological diversity
☐	G8	It is an important source of food for fishes, spawning ground, nursery, and/or migration path, either within the wetland or elsewhere
☐	G9	It regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of wetland-dependent non-avian animal species
☐	G10	It holds 20% of the global extent of an ecosystem type

Check		Regional criteria[2]
☐	R1	There are evidence of the presence of individuals from a regionally vulnerable, endangered, critically endangered globally or regionally (Mediterranean IUCN RedList assessment or European RedList assessment), or globally near threatened species.
☐	R2	The wetland host Mediterranean endemic species.
Check		**National criteria**
☐	N1	There is evidence of the presence of a vulnerable, endangered, critically endangered species according to national assessments.
☐	N2	It is known or thought to hold, regularly, at least 1% of the national population of a congregatory waterbird.
Check		**Connectivity criteria**
☐	Cn1	It supports the habitat range of wetland species that meet one of the National criteria described above, in particular over transboundary areas.
Check		**Cultural criteria**
☐	Cu1	It supports a certain Intangible Cultural Heritage registered by UNESCO or rare indigenous land-use/livelihood practices.

12. Which ecosystem services the wetland provides (mark your options)?

Cultural	Recreation and tourism	☐
	Scientific and educational	☐
	Spiritual and inspirational	☐
Provision services	Food for humans	☐
	Wetland non-food products	☐

[2] Olson, D. M., *et al.*, . Terrestrial ecoregions of the world: a new map of life on Earth. Bioscience 51(11):933-938,2001.

	Fresh water	☐
	Genetic material	☐
Regulating services	Erosion protection	☐
	Flood hazard reduction	☐
	Maintenance of hydrological regimes	☐
	Pollution control and detoxification	☐
	Climate regulation	☐
	Biological control of pests and diseases	☐
Supporting services	Biodiversity	☐
	Nutrient cycling	☐

3.4 Wetland threats

13. What are the main threats to the wetland? (Put a 3 for a high threat, a 2 for a medium threat and a 1 for a low threat)

Threat	(1-3)
Agriculture and aquaculture	
Biological resource use	
Climate change & severe weather	
Pollution	
Energy production and mining	
Geological events	
Human intrusions & disturbance (ex. Massive tourism)	
Human settlements (non agricultural)	
Invasive and other problematic species and genes	

Transportation and service corridors	
Over abstraction of water	

14. Provide brief information about the threat (Not more than 300 words):

3.5 About the protection status of the wetland

15. Is the wetland within a protected area?

YES ☐ NO ☐

16. If yes, which kind of protection it benefits?

YES ☐ NO ☐

17. Is there a management plan available?

YES ☐ NO ☐ In preparation ☐

18. Is/are the State(s) party of the Bern Convention?

YES ☐ NO ☐

19. Is/are the State(s) party of AEWA Agreement?

YES ☐ NO ☐

20. Is/are the State(s) part of Convention of Migratory Species?

YES ☐ NO ☐

21. Is the wetland an Important Bird Area (IBA)?

YES ☐ NO ☐

22. Is the wetland a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA)?

YES ☐ NO ☐

23. Is there anything else that you want to highlight from the site?

Thank you for your application.

4. GLOSSARY

AEWA Agreement: The Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) is an intergovernmental treaty dedicated to the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats across Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, Greenland, and the Canadian Archipelago. Developed under the framework of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), AEWA brings together countries and the wider international conservation community in an effort to establish coordinated conservation and management of migratory waterbirds throughout their entire migratory range.

Bern Convention: Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats is a binding international legal instrument in the field of nature conservation, covering most of the natural heritage of the European continent and extending to some States of Africa. The Convention aims to ensure the conservation of wild flora and fauna species and their habitats. Special attention is given to endangered and vulnerable species, including endangered and vulnerable migratory species specified in appendices.

Biodiversity Hotspot: A biodiversity hotspot is a biogeographic region with significant levels of biodiversity that is threatened by human habitation. To qualify as a biodiversity hotspot on Myers 2000 edition of the hotspot-map, a region must meet two strict criteria: it must contain at least 0.5% or 1,500 species of vascular plants as endemics, and it has to have lost at least 75% of its primary vegetation.

BirdLife: BirdLife International is a global partnership of non-governmental organizations that strives to conserve birds and their habitats. BirdLife International's priorities include preventing the extinction of bird species, identifying and safeguarding important sites for birds, maintaining and restoring key bird habitats, and empowering conservationists worldwide. It has a membership of more than 2.5 million people across 116 country partner organizations, including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Wild Bird Society of Japan, the National Audubon Society, and the American Bird Conservancy.

BirdLife Datazone: It is a repository of information on globally important bird species and IBAs. It also contains country profiles and bird profiles globally.

Convention on Migratory Species: The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of

Wild Animals, also known as the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) or the Bonn Convention, is an international agreement that aims to conserve migratory species within their migratory ranges. The Agreement was signed under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme and is concerned with the conservation of wildlife and habitats on a global scale.

Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas in Danger: IBAs are under threat from damaging development – much of which is poorly planned and does not take environmental values into account. In early 2013, 95 BirdLife network countries and territories provided data on the pressures at their most threatened IBAs. This has identified a set of IBAs at great risk of losing their biodiversity value. This resulting list of over 300 'IBAs in Danger' will be used to target enhanced conservation efforts for these insufficiently protected or poorly managed sites, through advocacy, campaigning, and local action.

Important Bird and Biodiversity Area: An Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) is an area identified using an internationally agreed set of criteria as being globally important for the conservation of bird populations. IBA was developed and sites are identified by BirdLife International. Currently, there are over 12,000 IBAs worldwide. These sites are small enough to be entirely conserved and differ in their character, habitat, or ornithological importance from the surrounding habitat.

Key Biodiversity Area: The Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) approach helps to identify and designate areas of international importance in terms of biodiversity conservation using globally standardized criteria. KBAs extend the Important Bird Area (IBA) concept to other taxonomic groups and are now being identified in many parts of the world, by a range of organizations. Examples include Important Plant Areas (IPAs), Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) in the High Seas, Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) sites, Prime Butterfly Areas, Important Mammal Areas and Important Sites for Freshwater Biodiversity, with prototype criteria developed for freshwater mollusks and fish and marine systems. The determination of KBAs often brings sites onto the conservation agenda that hadn't previously been identified as needing protection due to the nature of the two non-exclusive criteria used to determine them; vulnerability; and irreplaceability.

Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot: The Mediterranean Basin stretches from Cabo Verde in the west to Jordan and Turkey in the east, and from Italy in the north to Tunisia in the south. It also includes parts of Spain, France, the Balkan States, Greece, Turkey, and the nations of North Africa and the Middle East, as well as some 5,000 islands scattered around the Mediterranean

Sea. West of the mainland, the hotspot includes several Atlantic islands: The Canaries, Madeira, the Selvages, the Azores, and Cabo Verde.

MedWet: An initiative of 27 the Mediterranean and peri-Mediterranean countries that are Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971). The MedWet mission is to ensure and support the effective conservation of the functions and values of Mediterranean wetlands and the sustainable use of their resources and services.

Montreux Record: The Montreux Record is a register of wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution, or other human interference. It is maintained as part of the Ramsar List.

Ramsar Convention: The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. It is also known as the Convention on Wetlands. It is named after the city of Ramsar in Iran, where the convention was signed in 1971.

Ramsar site: A Ramsar Site is a wetland site designated to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. A wetland can be considered internationally important if any of the nine criteria apply.

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