

**"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.25**

### **The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008**

1. RECALLING that Resolution VI.14 adopted the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 as the basis for the implementation of the Convention;
2. RECOGNIZING that the implementation by Contracting Parties and others of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 has permitted a more coherent and effective realization of the Convention, but AWARE that there remain many and increasing challenges to achieving globally consistent delivery of wetland conservation and wise use;
3. AWARE that to achieve wetland conservation and wise use, a broader approach to wetland conservation and sustainable development is needed, notably in relation to poverty eradication and food and water security, integrated approaches to water management, climate change and its predicted impacts, increasing globalization of trade and reducing of trade barriers, the increasing role of the private sector, and the increasing influence of development banks and international development agencies;
4. FURTHER AWARE of a number of challenges that still require urgent attention in order to achieve wetland wise use under the Convention, including *inter alia*: inventory; assessment and monitoring; institutional frameworks and laws; integration of wetland wise use into local, national and international planning and decision-making; the role of wetlands, their values and functions in supporting human well-being and alleviating poverty; restoration and rehabilitation of wetlands; invasive alien species; agricultural influence and impact; management by local communities and indigenous people; cultural issues; involvement of the private sector; incentive measures; communication, education and public awareness; strategic designation of Wetlands of International Importance; strengthening joint activities between multilateral environmental agreements; catalyzing funding for wetland work; collaboration with the Convention's partner organizations, scientific networks and other stakeholder groups; training and capacity-building; and universal membership of the Convention;
5. RECOGNIZING that each Contracting Party is free to choose the extent to which it will implement the Strategic Plan, the resources it will allocate to the implementation, and the timeframes to be used; and
6. AWARE ALSO that the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 has been prepared by the Standing Committee through a wide consultative process with Contracting Parties, the Convention's International Organization Partners and other partners, including intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

7. APPROVES the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 as annexed to this Resolution as the basis for the implementation of the Convention, and INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Bureau to finalize the text of the Plan to take into account the Resolutions adopted by the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties and to make available the finalized text of the Plan to Contracting Parties and all others concerned with its implementation;
8. URGES all Contracting Parties, the Standing Committee, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, the Ramsar Bureau, and the Convention's International Organization Partners to take on the renewed challenge of implementing the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 through the targets established by the Convention's Work Plan 2003-2005 (Resolution VIII.26); and
9. INVITES other multilateral environmental agreements, non-governmental organizations, scientific academies and research institutions, professional scientific and technical bodies, the donor community, and the private sector to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008.

## Annex

# The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008

## CONTENTS

	Page
SECTION I	
Progress, future challenges and General Objectives for wetland conservation and wise use	
Introduction	4
The Mission and achievements of the Ramsar Convention	4
The challenges for future wetland conservation and wise use	6
General Objectives of the Strategic Plan	9
Rationale for the General Objectives	10
SECTION II	
Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008	
Operational Objectives and Actions	16
Application of the Strategic Plan by Convention bodies and collaborating partners	48
REFERENCE	
Resolutions and Recommendations adopted by the Conference of the Contracting Parties relevant to the Strategic Plan	50

## SECTION I

### PROGRESS, FUTURE CHALLENGES AND GENERAL OBJECTIVES FOR WETLAND CONSERVATION AND WISE USE

#### Introduction

1. The 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands, held in Spain on 18-26 November 2002, adopted this Strategic Plan for the application of the Convention during the period 2003-2008. It builds upon the first Ramsar Strategic Plan, which covered the period 1997-2002.
2. This second Strategic Plan recognizes the adoption by the Convention of a broader approach to wetland conservation and sustainable use in achieving full application of the wise use principle<sup>1</sup> and safeguarding wetland resources. It takes into consideration the results of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, as well as those of recent major events concerning water resources management.
3. The Plan provides a renewed challenge for all those with responsibilities for, or commitments to, the delivery of the Convention – Contracting Parties; the Convention's bodies, including the Standing Committee, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, the Ramsar Bureau (the Convention's secretariat), and the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com); the International Organization Partners; and a range of other bodies and organizations with which the Convention works, including in particular the other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).
4. Full implementation of the Plan will need effective synergies with other MEAs and increased involvement of non-governmental, civil society, and community-based organizations, foundations and other conservation institutes, national science academies and research councils, research and educational institutions, and national professional scientific and technical societies, as well as significantly increased private sector involvement.

#### The Mission and Achievements of the Ramsar Convention

5. The Convention's mission is "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."
6. The Convention defines "wetland" in very broad terms<sup>2</sup> in recognition of the intrinsic importance of wetlands to the maintenance of healthy and productive inland and coastal ecosystems.

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<sup>1</sup> The Convention defines wise use of wetlands as "their sustainable utilization for the benefit of human kind in a way compatible with the maintenance of the natural properties of the ecosystem" and sustainable utilization as "human use of a wetland so that it may yield the greatest continuous benefit to present generations while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations".

<sup>2</sup> "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 metres" (Article 1.1 of the Convention).

7. The Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) is the oldest of the global MEAs. It owes its origins to the urgent need to combat widespread drainage and destruction of wetlands and the habitats they provide for migratory species, notably waterbirds.
8. Since its inception, the Convention has progressively developed its scope and approach to address the sustainable utilization of wetlands (considered to be synonymous with the Convention's concept of "wise use") in the context of integrated territorial and water resource planning and management. The Convention stresses that it is essential to integrate the conservation of wetlands and sustainable use as a contribution to the health and well-being of people through sustainable development everywhere.
9. Significant achievements of the Ramsar Convention during the period of implementation of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 include:
  - a) 134 States as Contracting Parties to the Convention (as of 26 November 2002);
  - b) a major contribution to increasing the recognition and understanding of the crucial role of wetland functions and services in the daily lives of people;
  - c) the production of an increasingly comprehensive range of policy and technical guidelines to assist Contracting Parties with implementing the Convention;
  - d) the adoption by over 55 Contracting Parties of National Wetland Policies or similar instruments and the establishment by 82 Contracting Parties of national Ramsar or wetland committees to ensure that cross-sectoral approaches are taken;
  - e) by the close of COP8, the designation by Contracting Parties of 1230 wetlands covering 105.9 million hectares for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar List), and the establishment of management plans for 35% of these sites;
  - f) the lead taken by the Convention in establishing synergies with the conventions that emerged from the Rio 92 process and with other conventions and institutions, so that experiences and achievements may be shared for the benefit of wetland wise use;
  - g) the help through the Convention to generate more financial resources and technical assistance for wetland projects in developing countries and countries in transition, and since 1990 the operation of the Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use. The Fund, although as yet modest in scale, has funded 156 projects in 86 countries;
  - h) the management by the Ramsar Bureau for the past eight years, with funding from the U.S. Government, of the Wetlands for the Future Initiative, providing support to training and education projects in Latin America and the Caribbean; and
  - i) the establishment of the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet), under the guidance of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee, as a firm regional expression of the Convention, involving all countries in the Mediterranean basin and the Palestinian Authority, relevant international institutions, and non-governmental organizations.

## The challenges for future wetland conservation and wise use

10. There is increasingly wide appreciation that wetlands, in all their forms, provide unique services to human societies and human well-being. Wetlands play a key role in the global hydrological cycle; supply water for the survival of biological diversity, human consumption, agricultural production and recreation; supply food (especially fish and rice and other natural products) and fibre (e.g. wood, peat and reeds); are centres of economic development focused around industry, transport, food production and tourism; and are places rich in unique plant and animal species as well.
11. However, in all regions of the world, human populations are suffering social, economic and environmental hardships resulting from the destruction and mismanagement of their natural resources, notably including their wetlands and water resources. The causes are multiple – from local actions and national policies to global issues.
12. Major global issues influencing the conservation and wise use of wetlands include:
  - a) increasing demands for water services to be allocated to agriculture, industry and human consumption in relation to the role of wetlands as both users and providers of water, and the need for water allocation and management to maintain their ecological functions;
  - b) climate change and its predicted impacts, including changing and more extreme patterns of drought, storms and flooding; rises in sea temperature and sea level; thawing of permafrost and glaciers; and changes in ecosystem distribution and quality; and the implications of these for species' survival;
  - c) increasing globalization of economic development, affecting agricultural, fisheries and other natural resource products;
  - d) the changing role of national governments through increasing privatization of services (including water supplies), devolution of decision-making responsibilities, and greater empowerment of local communities;
  - e) increasing land-use pressures leading to continuing loss and damage to the ecological character of wetlands and their values and functions;
  - f) increasing population pressure and economic challenges placing some local communities in the developing world on the edge of survival;
  - g) the increasing influence in the developing world of development banks and international development agencies and the need to ensure that such agencies are fully engaged in the major issues affecting wetlands; and
  - h) the need to ensure continuing political support and public interest in biodiversity issues and sustainable development ten years after the establishment of Agenda 21 through the Rio 92 process.
13. Many of the priority actions resulting from the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg 2002) coincide with the current objectives of the Ramsar

Convention. Proper strategic planning should provide considerable opportunities for Ramsar Parties to maximize the effectiveness of their programmes by participating in WSSD-inspired efforts. Five key WSSD areas were identified by the UN Secretary General for the future of the planet: Water and sanitation, Energy, Health, Agricultural productivity, and Biodiversity and ecosystem management. Water and sanitation and Biodiversity and ecosystem management are of direct significance to Ramsar.

14. Specific WSSD objectives on which Ramsar could contribute are:
  - i) Halving, by the year 2015, the proportion of people without drinking water;
  - ii) Developing integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans by 2005;
  - iii) Developing and implementing national/regional strategies, plans and programs with regard to integrated river basin, watershed, and groundwater management;
  - iv) Improving the efficient use of water resources and promotion of their allocation among competing uses, giving priority to basic human needs while attending to the preservation or restoration of ecosystems;
  - v) Supporting actions to monitor and assess the scientific understanding of the water cycle;
  - vi) Improving water resource management;
  - vii) Increasing the understanding of the sustainable use, protection and management of water resources to advance long-term sustainability of freshwater, coastal, and marine environments;
  - viii) Maintaining and restoring depleted fish stocks, where possible by 2015;
  - ix) Achieving by 2010 a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity;
  - x) Providing particular support to Africa's efforts to implement the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which includes a specific wetland component;
  - xi) Continuing support for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States; and
  - xii) Forming "Type 2 Outcomes" partnerships (multi-stakeholder partnerships) to accomplish sustainable use objectives.
  
15. The continuing challenge for Ramsar Contracting Parties is to ensure conservation and sustainable use of their wetlands and water resources within the context of these global pressures and changes. Despite the many tangible achievements on the ground, and with increasing awareness of the importance of wetland conservation and wise use for human well-being, the challenge remains strong.
  
16. To respond to this challenge, Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention seek to deliver their commitments to wetland conservation and wise use through three 'pillars' of action. These are:
  - a) working towards the wise use of their wetlands through a wide range of actions and processes contributing to human well-being (including poverty alleviation and water and food security) through sustainable wetlands, water allocation, and river basin management, including establishing national wetland policies and plans; reviewing and harmonizing the framework of laws and financial instruments affecting wetlands; undertaking inventory and assessment; integrating wetlands into the sustainable development process; ensuring public participation in wetland

management and the maintenance of cultural values by local communities and indigenous people; promoting communication, education and public awareness; increasing private sector involvement; and harmonizing implementation of the Ramsar Convention with other multilateral environmental agreements;

- b) devoting particular attention to the further identification, designation and management of a coherent and comprehensive suite of sites to complete the List of Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar List) as a contribution to the establishment of a global ecological network, and to ensure the effective monitoring and management of those sites included in the List; and
  - c) cooperating internationally in their delivery of wetland conservation and wise use, through the management of transboundary water resources and wetlands, and shared wetland species, collaboration with other conventions and international organizations, sharing of information and expertise, and increasing the flow of financial resources and relevant technologies to developing countries and countries in transition.
17. Each of these 'pillars' is addressed by a General Objective of this Strategic Plan (General Objectives 1 to 3). Two further General Objectives (General Objectives 4 and 5) provide the means to undertake effective implementation of the objectives related to the three pillars of the Convention. The General Objectives are given in Box 1.
18. Implementation of the General Objectives is delivered by the Operational Objectives and Actions in Section II of this Strategic Plan.



## Box 1 - General Objectives of the Strategic Plan

The General Objectives of this Strategic Plan, and the Articles of the Convention to which they refer, are:

**General Objective 1. The wise use of wetlands:** To stimulate and assist all Contracting Parties to develop, adopt and use the necessary and appropriate instruments and measures to ensure the wise use of all wetlands within their territories.

Delivers Articles 3.1, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 of the Convention.

**General Objective 2. Wetlands of International Importance:** To stimulate and support all Contracting Parties in the appropriate implementation of the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance*<sup>1</sup>, including the appropriate monitoring and management of listed sites as a contribution to sustainable development.

Delivers Articles 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 2.6, 3.1, 3.2 and 4.2 of the Convention.

**General Objective 3. International cooperation:** To promote international cooperation through the active application of the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention*<sup>2</sup> and in particular to mobilize additional financial and technical assistance for wetland conservation and wise use.

Delivers Article 5 of the Convention.

**General Objective 4. Implementation capacity:** To ensure that the Convention has the required implementation mechanisms, resources and capacity to achieve its mission.

Delivers Articles 6, 7, and 8 of the Convention.

**General Objective 5. Membership:** To progress towards the accession of all countries to the Convention.

Delivers Articles 2.4 and 9 of the Convention.

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<sup>1</sup> Ramsar COP7 Resolution VII.11.

<sup>2</sup> Ramsar COP7 Resolution VII.19.

## Rationale for the General Objectives

### 19. GENERAL OBJECTIVE 1: The wise use of wetlands

**To stimulate and assist all Contracting Parties to develop, adopt and use the necessary and appropriate instruments and measures to ensure the wise use of all wetlands within their territories.**

20. Under Article 3.1 of the Convention, Contracting Parties agree to “formulate and implement their planning so as to promote as far as possible the wise use of wetlands in their territory”. Through this concept of “wise use”, the Convention continues to emphasize that human use on a sustainable basis is entirely compatible with Ramsar principles and wetland conservation in general. The Ramsar wise use concept applies to all wetlands and water resources in a Contracting Party’s territory, not only to those sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance. Its application is crucial to ensuring that wetlands can continue fully to deliver their vital role in supporting maintenance of biological diversity and human well-being.
21. The Conference of the Contracting Parties has determined that the concept of wise use applies to broad planning affecting wetlands, and has therefore adopted *Guidelines for the implementation of the wise use concept* (Recommendation 4.10) and *Additional guidance for the implementation of the wise use concept* (Resolution 5.6). The “wise use” of wetlands has become one very important concept and *modus operandi* of the Convention, of particular relevance to developing countries where fighting poverty and social exclusion continues to be the highest priority. The Ramsar COP-approved guidance on the application of the wise concept has been published in the Ramsar Handbooks 1 to 6.
22. In the coming triennia, major emphasis in Ramsar implementation will be placed upon wetlands in the context of territorial spatial planning, water resource, river basin and coastal zone management, agricultural management, and sustainable management of economic activities and other decisions affecting wetlands. Where Contracting Parties are developing National Wetland Policies (or other policies encompassing conservation and wise use of wetlands), such policies should be cross-referenced to other national environmental and development planning measures. National Wetlands Policies should aim to integrate and adapt existing environmental and development planning measures to promote more effectively the wise use of wetlands.
23. This General Objective of the Strategic Plan also addresses the interaction between wise use and public awareness and education, public participation, legislation, institutions, training, policy development, planning, and general decision-making.
24. For the effective delivery of wise use, it is essential to recognize fully the values and functions of wetlands, including the wide range of social benefits and cultural significance embodied in them, particularly for people directly dependent upon wetlands. In recognition of this, the Conference of the Contracting Parties has adopted *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities’ and indigenous people’s participation in the management of wetlands* (Resolution VII.8), and has placed further emphasis upon this issue through the adoption of *Guiding principles for taking into account the cultural values of wetlands for the effective management of sites* (annexed to Resolution VIII.19).

25. Public support is essential to generate political and legislative action, to allocate the required financial resources, and to ensure the successful implementation of wetland legislation and management. In turn, public support can only be achieved through information about, and understanding of, the issues and their resolution, including the benefits that individuals and societies can derive from wetlands.
26. In order to achieve the Convention's mission, it is essential that wetland values and functions, the Convention itself, and its activities become better known, appreciated and supported, as the Contracting Parties have recognized in Recommendations 5.8 and 5.10 and Resolutions VII.8, VII.9 and VIII.31.
27. Through the Operational Objectives and Actions designed to deliver this General Objective, the Convention will also focus on:
  - a) undertaking wetland inventory, assessments and monitoring;
  - b) managing wetlands adaptively in response to the impacts of global climate change and sea-level rise;
  - c) developing more sustainable agricultural practices;
  - d) restoring and rehabilitating the many degraded or lost wetlands and their values and functions, whilst recognizing that it is ecologically, economically and culturally more appropriate to maintain existing wetlands than to permit their damage and then seek to restore them;
  - e) addressing the major threats posed by invasive alien species to the future of wetlands;
  - f) promoting and improving existing incentives for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and making every effort to eliminate those incentives which are incompatible with sustainable use; and
  - g) involving the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
28. In the coming triennia, special emphasis will be placed also on the conservation and wise use of peatlands, through the implementation of the *Guidelines for global action on peatlands* (Resolution VIII.17), in recognition of the severe pressures on this wetland type worldwide and their role in mitigating impacts of climate change and as depositories of cultural heritage, and as a demonstration of the ecosystem-based conservation approach under the Convention.
29. **GENERAL OBJECTIVE 2: Wetlands of International Importance**

**To stimulate and support all Contracting Parties in the appropriate implementation of the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance*, including the appropriate monitoring and management of listed sites as a contribution to sustainable development.**

30. The List of Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar List) constitutes the flagship of the Convention. As such, it deserves special attention by all those responsible for, or interested in, the implementation of the treaty.
31. The inclusion of wetlands in the List has proved to be an effective means of conserving wetlands, especially in cases where they have not otherwise been formally designated as protected areas. The number of sites on the List has grown at a steady pace over the years as new Contracting Parties have joined the Convention and existing Parties have designated additional sites, as indicated in paragraph 9 e) above.
32. While this is a welcome development, over 500 (40% of the total) of these sites are in only 24 Contracting Parties. Much greater effort is required to promote the listing of sites by many countries.
33. At COP7 the Parties made significant progress by adopting a *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Resolution VII.11). Its purpose is “to provide a clearer view, or vision, of the long-term targets or outcomes which the Convention is seeking to achieve through the Ramsar List.” This General Objective aims at fully implementing the Strategic Framework, as complemented by COP8 Resolutions VIII.10, 11, 13, 21, 22 and 33, and to achieve the vision for the List:

**“To develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the ecological and hydrological functions they perform.”**

34. The listing of wetland types recognized as under-represented in the List and transboundary sites also requires priority attention.
35. Criteria for identifying Wetlands of International Importance have been adopted by the Conference of the Parties and reviewed over the years, and will continue to be kept under review as circumstances evolve and the Convention is able to adopt further guidance on this matter.
36. Designation of a wetland for the Ramsar List is only the starting point, since Contracting Parties accept an undertaking to conserve listed sites. The Conference of the Parties has placed increasing emphasis upon defining and maintaining the ecological character of Ramsar sites as a key to their conservation. This does not preclude human use but is intended to avoid fundamental adverse changes to wetland functions, values or attributes. The aim is to maintain at least the ecological character recorded at the time of designation. In many cases, additional measures will be required to restore functions, values or attributes lost prior to designation.
37. Working definitions of “ecological character” and “change in ecological character” and *Guidelines for describing and maintaining the ecological character of listed sites* were adopted at COP6 in 1996 and further refined at COP7 in 1999. The COP has also adopted mechanisms to assist the Contracting Parties with listed site issues:
  - a) the Montreux Record (Recommendation 4.8, Resolutions 5.4, VI.1, VII.12 and VIII.8) identifies Ramsar sites in need of priority action;

- b) the San José Record contributes to the promotion of wetland management (Resolution VIII.15); and
  - c) the Ramsar Advisory Missions (Recommendation 4.7, Resolutions VI.14 and VII.12) enable the Ramsar Bureau to provide Parties with expert advice.
38. In the coming triennia, particular attention will be given to the requirements of Article 3.2 of the Convention for each Contracting Party to “arrange to be informed at the earliest possible time if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory and included in the List has changed, is changing or is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference”, and to report this without delay to the Ramsar Bureau.
39. To achieve the maintenance of the ecological character of Ramsar sites, particular emphasis will be placed on more systematic implementation of management planning, through the application of the *New Guidelines on management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands* (Resolution VIII.14) in order to identify, monitor and address changes in ecological character of sites.
40. The enhanced functionality of the Ramsar Sites Database will provide a key tool for assisting and reporting to Contracting Parties on their delivery of the designation and status of Ramsar sites; the management and monitoring processes that they require for the maintenance of their ecological character; and reporting and addressing change, and likely change, in ecological character under Article 3.2 of the Convention.
41. **GENERAL OBJECTIVE 3: International cooperation**
- To promote international cooperation through the active application of the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention* and in particular to mobilize additional financial and technical assistance for wetland conservation and wise use.**
42. Under Article 5 of the Convention, Contracting Parties have committed themselves to consult one another “about implementing obligations arising from the Convention especially in the case of wetlands extending over the territories of more than one Contracting Party or where a water system is shared by Contracting Parties”. This Article also refers to Parties coordinating their present and future policies and regulations concerning the conservation of wetlands and their flora and fauna.
43. At COP7 the Parties adopted the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention* (Resolution VII.19), upon which this General Objective (and Operational Objectives 12-15) of the Strategic Plan is largely based.
44. Through the Operational Objectives and Actions designed to deliver this General Objective, the Convention will focus on:
- a) intensifying its international cooperation activities, *inter alia* those related to transboundary freshwater and coastal wetlands and river basins, as well as transboundary water resources and shared wetland-dependent migratory species;

- b) developing further the coordination of activities with other relevant global and regional conventions and organizations;
  - c) promoting the further development of regional wetland sustainable use initiatives;
  - d) promoting the sharing of expertise and information, particularly through enhanced training opportunities, twinning and site networks, and Internet-based resource kits and knowledge and information sharing;
  - e) encouraging growth in the flow of international financial resources to eligible Parties;
  - f) promoting the application of sustainable agriculture and sustainable harvesting practices where wetland-dependent plants and animals are being traded both nationally and internationally; and
  - g) making efforts to ensure that wetland-related investment is consistent with the principles of conservation and wise use.
45. Actions delivering this General Objective provide mechanisms to allow Contracting Parties to assist each other in their development of capacity for, and consistent application of, the wise use of all wetlands, and the designation and management of Wetlands of International Importance, through General Objectives 1 and 2.
46. Actions under this General Objective also address the further harmonisation of working frameworks between multilateral environmental conventions (MEAs), national biodiversity status reporting, and incorporate the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).
47. **GENERAL OBJECTIVE 4: Implementation capacity**
- To ensure that the Convention has the required implementation mechanisms, resources, and capacity to achieve its mission.**
48. This General Objective relates to the operation of the Conference of the Contracting Parties and of Ramsar subsidiary bodies and mechanisms, including the Standing Committee, Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com), Ramsar Bureau and its MedWet Coordination Unit, Small Grants Fund and its Endowment Fund, Voluntary Fund for the Convention's Communication, Education, and Public Awareness Programme, Montreux Record, San José Record, Ramsar Advisory Missions, and partnerships with national, regional and international bodies. It also relates to the resources and capacity required for the effective functioning of the Convention.
49. The Operational Objectives and Actions designed to deliver this General Objective aim to:
- a) ensure that the Conference of the Contracting Parties, subsidiary bodies and other Convention mechanisms are able to support efficiently the implementation of this Strategic Plan;

- b) ensure that Contracting Parties establish effective and efficient institutional mechanisms for implementing the Convention;
  - c) provide the necessary financial resources to enable the Convention's mechanisms and programmes to achieve the expanding expectations of the Contracting Parties;
  - d) maximize the mutual benefits of working with the Convention's International Organization Partners and their membership and expert networks, and other collaborating organizations; and
  - e) provide effective mechanisms for training and capacity-building to equip Contracting Parties to implement the Convention.
50. The Wise Use Guidelines emphasize that the conservation and wise use of wetlands require appropriately structured institutions in each Contracting Party. There is an urgent need in all regions and at all levels, particularly in developing countries and countries in transition, to strengthen the capacity of the institutions responsible for achieving the Convention's mission and objectives.
51. In order to strengthen existing institutions, an extensive programme of training and exchange of experiences is required. A strategic approach to identifying the precise training needs and target audiences will take account of the differences among regions, countries and sites. Furthermore, existing training opportunities need to be developed and supported and new initiatives begun in regions and subjects where such opportunities are lacking. A high level of international cooperation, including the transfer of environmentally sound technology and the exchange of information, will be a significant feature of this approach.
52. **GENERAL OBJECTIVE 5: Membership**
- To progress towards the accession of all countries to the Convention.**
53. In order for the Convention to achieve its Mission, all States should become Contracting Parties. While membership has grown steadily to encompass all regions of the world, there remain notable gaps, namely in parts of Africa, the Middle East, and amongst the Small Island Developing States.
54. Decisive efforts will continue to encourage non-Contracting Parties to join the Convention to benefit from the available tools and resources, and to ensure that the future work of the Convention is based on a comprehensive global dialogue of priorities and needs.

## SECTION II

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2003-2008

#### Operational Objectives and Actions

55. This section lists the Operational Objectives that address 21 areas of activity, and the specific Actions to deliver them that together should achieve the General Objectives of this Strategic Plan presented in Section I.
56. The Operational Objectives cover the following areas of activity:
1. Inventory and assessment
  2. Policies and legislation, including impact assessment and valuation
  3. Integration of wetland wise use into sustainable development
  4. Restoration and rehabilitation
  5. Invasive alien species
  6. Local communities, indigenous people, and cultural values
  7. Private sector involvement
  8. Incentives
  9. Communication, education, and public awareness
  10. Designation of Ramsar sites
  11. Management planning and monitoring of Ramsar sites
  12. Management of shared water resources, wetlands and wetland species
  13. Collaboration with other institutions
  14. Sharing of expertise and information
  15. Financing the conservation and wise use of wetlands
  16. Financing of the Convention
  17. Institutional mechanisms of the Convention
  18. Institutional capacity of Contracting Parties
  19. International Organization Partners and others
  20. Training
  21. Membership of the Convention
57. Each Action under an Operational Objective contributes to the delivery of one or more of the General Objectives of this Strategic Plan. The General Objectives to be delivered by each action are indicated in bold at the end of each Action (e.g. **GO1, 3**).
58. The Actions in this Implementation section of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 are addressed to the following responsible bodies of the Convention:
- CPs: The Contracting Parties to the Convention, in particular the Administrative Authority in each country and the Ramsar/Wetlands National Committees (or equivalent bodies) that should be in place in each Party
- CEPA: The Convention's Communications, Education and Public Awareness National Focal Points
- SC: The Standing Committee of the Convention



STRP: The Scientific and Technical Review Panel and its network of National Focal Points  
 Bureau: The Ramsar Bureau (the Convention's secretariat)  
 MedWet: The Mediterranean Wetlands Committee and/or the Coordination Unit of the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative, and organizations working as part of this regional network

59. The Plan also identifies actions involving collaborating partners of the Convention:

IOPs: International Organization Partners: at present BirdLife International, IUCN – The World Conservation Union, Wetlands International, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)  
 MEAs: Multilateral Environmental Agreements, in particular CBD, CCD, UNFCCC, CMS, World Heritage, and regional conventions with which Ramsar has agreements in place  
 OCs: Other collaborators, including those with which Ramsar has agreements in place, in particular UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB); Eurosite (the network of European natural heritage management bodies); The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS), Center for International Earth Science Information Network, Columbia University, USA (CIESIN), The International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA), Ducks Unlimited (Canada, Mexico and USA), South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP), Institute for Inland Water Management and Waste Water Treatment (RIZA, The Netherlands), Niger Basin Authority, and Lake Chad Basin Commission.

60. Those responsible for implementing, or who are urged to assist in implementing, each Action in the Implementation Plan are indicated in brackets {...}; for example: {CPs, STRP, Bureau}.

## **OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1. INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT**

### **Operational Objective 1.1:**

**Describe the extent of wetland resources, especially at global and national (or, where appropriate, provincial) scales, in order to inform and underpin implementation of the Convention and in particular the application of the wise use principle.**

### **Actions**

1.1.1 Promote and encourage the use of standard wetland inventory methodologies following the Ramsar *Framework for Wetland Inventory* (Resolution VIII.6), to undertake, update and disseminate national (or, where appropriate, provincial) scientific inventories of wetlands.

**GO1, 2** {CPs, IOPs, Bureau, MedWet}

**2003-2005 global implementation target:** By COP9, all Parties without completed inventories to have initiated action in line with the Ramsar Framework for Wetland Inventory, and as far as possible to have completed and disseminated comprehensive national wetland inventories.

1.1.2 Include in national wetland inventories information which identifies: a) potential Ramsar sites; b) wetlands of national, provincial or local importance in the territory of each

Contracting Party; and c) wetlands that need restoration and rehabilitation, with a list of priorities, giving particular priority to inventories of karst and caves, intertidal wetlands, coral reefs, peatlands, sites supporting globally threatened species, and other wetland types and features under-represented in the Ramsar List. **GO1, 2** {CPs, IOPs} (Refer also to Action 4.1.3)

**2003-2005 global implementation target:** All national wetland inventories initiated after COP8 to include information on wetland importance; potential Ramsar sites; wetlands for restoration; location of under-represented wetland types; and values and functions, in particular in relation to poverty eradication strategies.

- 1.1.3 Ensure that national arrangements for the custodianship, storage and maintenance of wetland inventory data and information, including metadata, are in place and introduce the necessary measures to ensure that this resource is both as comprehensive as possible and readily accessible to the full range of stakeholders. **GO1** {CPs}

**2003-2005 global implementation target:** All wetland inventories to have full data management, custodianship, and metadata records in place.

- 1.1.4 Make available a Web-based wetland inventory meta-database and encourage the inclusion of a metadata record for all national (including provincial) wetland inventories. **GO1** {STRP, Wetlands International, CPs}

**2003-2005 global implementation target:** By COP9, a Web-based metadatabase in place and populated with information on all national wetland inventories.

- 1.1.5 Undertake an update of the *Global Review of Wetland Resources and Priorities for Wetland Inventory (GRoWI)* to include updated information on the distribution and size of the wetland resource and progress in national (including provincial) wetland inventory since COP7 (Resolution VII.20), and report on this to COP9. **GO1** {STRP, Wetlands International, Bureau}

**2003-2005 global implementation target:** An update to be completed of the *Global review of wetland resources and priorities for wetland inventory (GroWI)* with a report to COP9.

- 1.1.6 Encourage the use of relevant information from wetland inventories by decision-makers, wetland managers and wetland users in the development and implementation of national wetland policies and national and local wetland programmes. **GO1** {CPs}

**2003-2005 global implementation target:** By COP9, all Parties with wetland inventories to have made these available to all stakeholders.

- 1.1.7 Give high priority to developing projects for inventory activities for the Small Grants Fund. **GO1** {CPs, SC, Bureau, MedWet}

See also COP8 Resolution VIII.6 for additional action related to this Operational Objective.

### **Operational Objective 1.2:**

**Assess and monitor the condition of wetland resources, both globally and nationally (or, where appropriate, provincially), in order to inform and underpin implementation of the Convention and in particular the application of the wise use principle.**

### **Actions**

- 1.2.1 Actively contribute to the work of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) project (<http://www.millenniumassessment.org>) by serving on its Board and Executive Committee and on its various working groups; analyze the MA's methodologies, results and findings at Ramsar COP9, and review the necessary actions, if any, to update and make comprehensive the global assessment of wetland resources and their condition. **GO1** {CPs, Bureau, MedWet, STRP, IOPs} (Refer also to Action 1.1.5)
- 1.2.2 Establish a repository for the contribution by Contracting Parties of summarized national (or, where appropriate, provincial) assessments of changes in the status of wetland resources, as the basis for regular analysis and improved reporting on the status of wetland resources. **GO1** {STRP, Bureau, IOPs, CPs, OCs}
- 1.2.3 Develop guidelines for rapid assessment of wetland biodiversity and functions and for monitoring change in ecological character, including the use of indicators, for both inland and coastal and marine ecosystems, for consideration by COP9. **GO1, 2** {STRP, Bureau, CBD} (Refer also to Action 11.2.1)
- 1.2.4 Develop methodologies for the assessment of the vulnerability of wetlands to change in ecological character, including their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, sea-level rise, invasion by alien species, and agricultural practices. Apply for this purpose the Convention's *Risk Assessment Framework* (Resolution VII.10), and its guidance on impact assessment (Resolutions VII.16 and VIII.9). **GO1, 2** {Bureau, STRP, MedWet, IOPs, MEAs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** Wetland ecosystem vulnerability assessment methods available to COP9.
- 1.2.5 Undertake assessments of the vulnerability of wetlands to change in ecological character, including their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise. **GO1, 2** {CPs, MedWet, IOPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** SC/Bureau to identify at least 20 Parties willing to undertake vulnerability assessments and report to COP9.
- 1.2.6 Assess the contribution of Ramsar sites and other wetlands to the maintenance of fisheries, including utilizing information available from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and other assessment programmes, and recommend sustainable management practices which can contribute to the WSSD target of, where possible by 2015, maintaining or restoring depleted fish stocks to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield. **GO1, 2, 3** {CPs, STRP, IOPs, MEAs, OCs}
- 1.2.7 Undertake assessments of water quality and quantity available to, and required by, wetlands, to support the implementation of the *Guidelines for the allocation and management of water for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands* (Resolution VIII.1), as a contribution to the WSSD Plan of Implementation. **GO1, 2** {CPs, MedWet, IOPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** At least 50 CPs to have undertaken water quality and quantity assessments.

See also COP8 Resolutions VIII.2, 4, 7, 32 and 35 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

## OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2. POLICIES AND LEGISLATION, INCLUDING IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND VALUATION

### Operational Objective 2.1:

**Specify the most appropriate policy instrument(s) to be used in each country to ensure the wise use of wetlands.**

#### Actions

- 2.1.1 If not yet done, develop and implement a National Wetland Policy using the guidelines adopted by COP7 for this purpose (Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 2), and ensure that policy goals are explicit, comprehensive and accessible. **GO1** {CPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** National Wetland Policy or equivalent instrument initiated by all Parties not having it, incorporating WSSD targets and actions, as appropriate.
- 2.1.2 Ensure that wetland policies are fully integrated into and harmonized with other strategic or planning processes and documents, in particular those related to biodiversity, desertification, climate change, agriculture, trade in endangered species, water resource management, integrated coastal zone management and environmental planning in general, including national strategies for sustainable development called for by the WSSD. When these other documents include chapters or sections on different ecosystems, ensure that one of them is devoted to wetlands. **GO1** {CPs, MEAs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** National Wetland Policy or equivalent instrument fully integrated into other strategic and planning processes by all Parties, including poverty eradication strategies and water resources management and water efficiency plans and national strategies for sustainable development in line with WSSD targets.
- 2.1.3 Ensure that best practice examples of integration and harmonization of policies and legislation are made available to the Ramsar Bureau and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, so as to contribute to the development of good practice guidance to assist Contracting Parties. **GO1.** {CPs, Bureau, STRP}

See also COP8 Resolutions VIII.34 and 39 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

### Operational Objective 2.2:

**Develop, review, amend when necessary, and implement national or supra-national policies, legislation, institutions and practices, including impact assessment and valuation, in all Contracting Parties, to ensure that the Convention, and especially the wise use principle, is being fully applied.**

#### Actions

- 2.2.1 Apply the guidelines for *Reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands* (Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 3) to carry out a review of legislation and institutions and, as necessary, amend or modify legislation and institutional procedures to preclude unwise use of wetlands. **GO1** {CPs}

**2003-2005 global implementation target:** SC/Bureau to identify at least 100 Parties to initiate and if possible complete by COP9 comprehensive reviews of their laws and institutions.

- 2.2.2 Apply Strategic Environmental Assessment practices when reviewing national and provincial policies, programmes, and plans that may impact upon wetlands. **GO1** {CPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** SC/Bureau to identify at least 50 Parties to have in place Strategic Environmental Assessment for policies, programmes and plans impacting on wetlands.
- 2.2.3 If not yet in place, develop and implement Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) legislation so as to ensure that an EIA is carried out, as appropriate, in wetlands, including Ramsar sites, where adverse impacts may occur due to a proposed development, change in land/water use, invasive species, etc., in line with additional guidance adopted by Resolution VIII.9 and enlisting the collaboration, if required, of the International Association of Impact Assessment (IAIA). Ensure that these impact assessments include full and appropriate consideration of the environmental, social, economic, and cultural impacts. (Refer also to Action 1.2.6) **GO1, 2** {CPs, OCs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** All CPs to have required EIA, as appropriate, for proposed projects, developments or changes which may impact on wetlands.
- 2.2.4 Promote the continuing development, wide dissemination – primarily through the Internet-based resource kit (<http://www.biodiversityeconomics.org/assessment/ramsar-503-01.htm>) – and application of methodologies to undertake valuations of the economic, social and environmental benefits and functions of wetlands, in collaboration with the International Association of Impact Assessment (IAIA), Ramsar's International Organization Partners, and interested Parties and organizations. **GO1** {CPs, STRP, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs, OCs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** STRP to have made progress on methodologies for economic, social and environmental valuation, and all CPs with experience in this area to have engaged in the STRP work.

See also COP8 Resolutions VIII.9, 12, 19 and 34 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

### **OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3. INTEGRATION OF WETLAND WISE USE INTO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Operational objective 3.1:**

**Develop and disseminate methodologies to achieve the conservation and wise use of wetlands.**

#### **Actions**

- 3.1.1 Review the Wise Use concept, its applicability, and its consistency with the objectives of sustainable development. **GO1** {STRP, CPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** STRP to spearhead process of reviewing and updating guidance on the Wise Use concept, including the ecosystem approach, in particular in line with the outcomes of WSSD.

- 3.1.2 Compile advice, methods and best practice studies for the wise use of wetlands, including the application of the ecosystem approach, and disseminate these to wetland managers. **GO1** {STRP, CPs, Bureau}
- 3.1.3 Ensure that the principles embodied in the Convention's new management planning guidelines adopted by Resolution VIII.14 are applied to decision-making about, and the wise use of, all wetlands. **GO1** {CPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** All CPs to consider how to adapt and to incorporate, as necessary, into national practice the new management planning guidelines to the wise use of all wetlands.
- 3.1.4 Disseminate and encourage the use of the Convention's guidance on the wise use concept to governments, responsible agencies, and bilateral and multilateral donor organizations, in order to assist their development and implementation of sustainable development funding policies that fully address the conservation and wise use of wetlands. **GO1, 3** {Bureau, CPs, IOPs, OCs}

See also COP8 Resolutions VIII.12, 32 and 39 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

#### **Operational Objective 3.2:**

**Ensure the conservation and wise use of peatlands as a demonstration of the ecosystem-based approach under the Convention.**

##### **Actions**

- 3.2.1 Implement the *Guidelines for global action on peatlands* as adopted by Resolution VIII.17, noting the priority sought therein for inventories of peatlands, the protection and possible designation of peatlands as Ramsar sites, the transfer of peatland restoration technology, and the maintenance of the cultural significance of peatlands, and implement those actions identified as national priorities. **GO1, 2** {CPs} (Refer also to Operational Objectives 1.1, 4.1 and 10.1)
- 3.2.2 Report to COP9 on the progress in implementing the *Guidelines for global action on peatlands* (Resolution VIII.17). **GO1, 2** {CPs, Bureau, IOPs, OCs}

#### **Operational Objective 3.3:**

**Increase recognition of the significance of wetlands for reasons of water supply, coastal protection, flood defense, food security, poverty alleviation, cultural heritage, and scientific research.**

##### **Actions**

- 3.3.1 As part of national (or, as appropriate, provincial) wetland inventories, assess and document wetlands which are of special significance for reasons of water supply, coastal protection, flood defense, food security, poverty alleviation, cultural heritage, and/or scientific research, and, where appropriate, seek to have these sites protected in recognition of these values. **GO1** {CPs} (Refer also to Operational Objectives 1.1 and 10.1)

- 3.3.2 Prepare, based upon the available information contained in the Ramsar Sites Database, an analysis and promotional summary of the values and functions of Ramsar sites, giving particular attention to those that have importance for reasons of water supply, coastal protection, flood defense, food security, poverty alleviation, climate change mitigation, cultural heritage and/or scientific research. **GO1, 2** {Bureau, MedWet, Wetlands International} (Refer also to Operational Objective 10.2)  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** Analysis of values and functions of Ramsar sites prepared by Bureau/Wetlands International and circulated.
- 3.3.3 Consider using the guiding principles in Annex I of Resolution VIII.19 to promote full recognition of the social and cultural heritage of wetlands, and ensure that this is fully appreciated and taken into account in their wise use and management. **GO1, 2** {CPs}
- 3.3.4 Develop and implement wise use wetland programmes and projects that contribute to poverty alleviation objectives and food and water security plans at local, national and regional levels. **GO1** {CPs, IOPs, OCs, Bureau}
- 3.3.5 Promote research, including through the establishment of national and regional research and training centres, into the role of wetlands in water supply, coastal protection, flood defense, food security, poverty alleviation, and cultural heritage. **GO1, 2** {CPs, MedWet, IOPs, OCs}

See also COP8 Resolutions VIII.12, 19, 33, 34 and 40 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

#### **Operational Objective 3.4:**

**Integrate policies on the conservation and wise use of wetlands in the planning activities in all Contracting Parties, and in decision-making processes at national, regional, provincial and local levels, particularly concerning territorial management, groundwater management, catchment/river basin management, coastal and marine zone planning, and responses to climate change.**

#### **Actions**

- 3.4.1 Ensure the inclusion of wetland conservation, wise use, and restoration/rehabilitation in general sectoral planning at national, regional, provincial and local levels, including, as far as possible, the necessary budgetary provisions to enable their implementation. **GO1** {CPs}
- 3.4.2 Apply the guidelines in *Integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management* (Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 4) and, where appropriate and feasible, participate in the related CBD/Ramsar project entitled the “River Basin Initiative” so as to support the WSSD agreement to increase understanding of the sustainable use, protection and management of water resources. **GO1, 3** {CPs, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs, OCs}
- 3.4.3 Review, from case studies and other materials compiled through the CBD/Ramsar River Basin Initiative, lessons learnt and good practice experience, and report this to COP9, including the preparation of additional guidance, as appropriate, on integrating wetlands, biodiversity and river basin management. **GO1, 3** {Bureau, STRP, MEAs, OCs} (Refer also to Operation Objective 12.1)

- 3.4.4 Develop guidelines to assist Parties in considering the full environmental, social and economic impacts on wetland and river systems of constructing large dams, for consideration at COP9. **GO1, 3** {STRP, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** Guidance prepared on assessment of impact of large dams on wetlands and river systems.
- 3.4.5 Apply the *Guidelines for integrating wetlands into integrated coastal zone management* as adopted by Resolution VIII.4. **GO1** {CPs}
- 3.4.6 In decision-making processes related to freshwater resources, apply the *Guidelines for the allocation and management of water for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands*, as adopted by Resolution VIII.1. **GO1** {CPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** All CPs to have made available the guidance on water allocation and management for ecosystems to support decision-making on water resource management in all CPs, as a contribution to achieve the WDDS target on water resources management and water efficiency plans.
- 3.4.7 Develop, for consideration at COP9, guidelines on the sustainable use of groundwater resources to maintain wetland ecosystem functions and the maintenance of the groundwater component of the hydrological cycle. **GO1** {Bureau, MedWet, STRP, IOPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** Guidelines on groundwater resources prepared.
- 3.4.8 In collaboration with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (refer also to Action 13.1.1), promote the management of wetlands in relation to adaptive management and mitigation of the impacts of climate change, particularly in the context of land use, land use change and rising sea levels, forestry, peatlands and agriculture. **GO1, 2** {STRP, Bureau, MedWet, OCs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** COP8 information on wetlands and mitigation and adaptive management for climate change made available.
- 3.4.9 Ensure that national policy responses to the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, including revegetation and management, afforestation and reforestation do not lead to damage to the ecological character of wetlands. **GO1, 2** {CPs, OCs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** All relevant CPs to have assessed implications of Kyoto Protocol implementation on wetlands (including applying COP8 restoration guidelines).

(Refer also to Operational Objective 12.1 in relation to transboundary wetlands and river basins.)

See also COP8 Resolutions VIII.2, 3, 4, 12, 25, 32, 34, 39 and 40 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

#### **OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4. RESTORATION AND REHABILITATION**

##### **Operational Objective 4.1:**

**Identify priority wetlands where restoration or rehabilitation would be beneficial and yield long-term environmental, social or economic benefits, and implement the necessary measures to recover these sites.**



## Actions

- 4.1.1 Use national scientific inventories of wetlands to identify those where restoration or rehabilitation would be appropriate because of their present and/or former values and functions, using the guidelines on this matter adopted by Resolution VIII.16. **GO1** {CPs, IOPs} (Refer also to Action 1.1.1)
- 4.1.2 Establish wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes, where feasible, at destroyed or degraded wetlands, especially in those associated with major river systems or areas of high nature conservation value, in line with Recommendation 4.1 and Resolutions VII.17 and VII.20. **GO1** {CPs, MedWet, IOPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** All CPs with lost or degraded wetlands to have identified priority sites for restoration; restoration projects underway or completed in at least 100 CPs.
- 4.1.3 Compile information on new research and methodologies for the restoration and rehabilitation of lost or degraded wetlands and disseminate this information. **GO1** {CPs, STRP, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** Continue to add new case studies and methods to Ramsar wetland restoration Web site.
- 4.1.4 Apply the guidelines on wetland restoration adopted by Resolution VIII.16 to ensure that national policy responses to the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, including revegetation and management, afforestation and reforestation, do not lead to damage to the ecological character of wetlands. **GO1, 2** {CPs, OCs} (Refer also to Action 3.4.9)

See also COP8 Resolutions VIII.1, 18 and 19 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

## OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 5. INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

### Operational Objective 5.1:

**Develop guidance and promote protocols and actions to prevent, control or eradicate invasive alien species in wetland systems.**

## Actions

- 5.1.1 Implement available guidance relating to the prevention, control and eradication of invasive species. **GO1** {CPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** Address the problems posed by invasive species in wetland ecosystems in a decisive and holistic manner, making use, as appropriate, of the tools and guidance developed by various institutions and processes.
- 5.1.2 In collaboration with the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), the Convention on Biological Diversity, Ramsar's International Organization Partners, and interested Parties, continue to develop and disseminate practical guidance for the prevention, control and eradication of invasive species, based on case studies and documented experiences from around the world. **GO1** {CPs, STRP, Bureau, MedWet, GISP, IOPs, OCs}

**2003-2005 global implementation target:** Guidance for invasives' management prepared.

- 5.1.3 Ensure that national and, where necessary, international action plans for the prevention, control and eradication of invasive species fully incorporate wetland issues. **GO1** {CPs, Bureau, IOPs, OCs}

See also COP8 Resolution VIII.18 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

## **OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 6. LOCAL COMMUNITIES, INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, AND CULTURAL VALUES**

### **Operational Objective 6.1:**

**Encourage active and informed participation of local communities and indigenous people, in particular women and youth, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.**

#### **Actions**

- 6.1.1 Apply the *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands* (Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 5), giving particular attention to the importance of incentive measures (refer to Operational Objective 8.1), the building of trust, the need for flexible approaches, the exchange of knowledge, capacity building, and the continuity of resources and efforts. **GO1** {CPs, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs, OCs}
- 6.1.2 In consultation with and with the full support of indigenous people, document and encourage the application of appropriate traditional knowledge and management practices of indigenous people and local communities in the conservation and wise use of wetlands, particularly where wetlands are under the traditional ownership of local communities and indigenous people. **GO 1, 2** {CPs, MedWet, OCs}
- 6.1.3 Continue to support the Participatory Management Clearinghouse (PMC), a joint service of IUCN–The World Conservation Union, the Ramsar Bureau, and WWF International ([www.iucn.org/themes/pmns](http://www.iucn.org/themes/pmns)). **GO 1** {CPs, Bureau, MedWet, IUCN, WWF}
- 6.1.4 Promote public participation in decision-making processes with respect to wetlands and their conservation and ensure that there is full sharing with the stakeholders of technical and other information related to the selection of Ramsar sites and management of all wetlands. **GO 1, 2** {CPs, IOPs, OCs}
- 6.1.5 Elaborate for consideration by COP9 further guidance on the application of the *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands* (Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 5), based on experiences gained at the field level, and in particular the experience of Pacific Island States and other Small Island Developing States, **and** working with the CBD and others in line with the CBD-Ramsar 3<sup>rd</sup> Joint Work Plan. **GO1** {CPs, CEPA, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs, OCs}
- 2003-2005 global implementation target:** Elaborated guidelines, developed jointly with CBD, available to COP9.

- 6.1.6 Consider using the *Guiding principles for taking into account the cultural values of wetlands for the effective management of sites* (Resolution VIII.19), and continue to document case studies on social and cultural values of wetlands and how they can be incorporated into the effort to conserve and sustainably use wetland resources. **GO 1, 2** {CPs, CEPA, MedWet, Bureau, IOPs, OCs}
- 6.1.7. Apply the *New guidelines on management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands* (Resolution VIII.14) in such a way as to ensure the full incorporation of the cultural features of wetlands in their sustainable use. **GO1, 2** {CPs, MedWet, IOPs, OCs}

See also COP8 Resolutions VIII.16, 19 and 39 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

## **OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 7. PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT**

### **Operational Objective 7.1:**

**Promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.**

#### **Actions**

- 7.1.1 Encourage the private sector to apply the wise use principle (Ramsar Handbooks 1 to 6) in their activities and investments affecting wetlands. **GO1** {CPs, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs}
- 7.1.2 Seek opportunities to involve the private sector, national science academies, universities and other professional, scientific, and technical societies of recognized merit in wetland-related decision-making, through vehicles such as National Ramsar/Wetlands Committees, site or river basin management authorities/committees, and outreach activities. **GO1** {CPs, CEPA, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs}
- 7.1.3 Establish an international private-sector “Friends of Wetlands” forum where international and national companies can seek advice on applying wise use practices in their business activities, and can also identify opportunities for supporting the activities of the Convention, either at the national, regional or international levels. **GO1** {SC, Bureau, IOPs, OCs}
- 7.1.4 Establish, where appropriate, national and local private-sector “Friends of Wetlands” forums where companies can seek advice on applying wise use practices in their businesses, and can also identify opportunities for supporting the activities of the Convention. **GO1** {CPs, Bureau, IOPs, OCs}
- 7.1.5 Review, in cooperation with the private sector, domestic and international trade in wetland-derived plant and animal products, both exports and imports, and as appropriate implement the necessary legal, institutional and administrative measures to ensure that harvesting is sustainable and in accordance with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES). **GO1** {CPs, CITES} (Refer also to Operational Objective 2.1 and Actions 13.1.9 and 15.1.13)

## **OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 8. INCENTIVES**

**Operational Objective 8.1:**

**Promote incentive measures that encourage the application of the wise use principle and the removal of perverse incentives.**

**Actions**

- 8.1.1 Continue to review existing, or evolving, policy, legal and institutional frameworks to identify and promote those measures which encourage conservation and wise use of wetlands and to identify and remove measures which discourage conservation and wise use. **GO1** {CPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** SC/Bureau to have identified at least 50 CPs to have reviewed policy and legal and institutional frameworks and sought to remove measures adversely affecting wetland conservation and wise use.
- 8.1.2 Make use of and continue to develop and improve upon the Internet-based resource kit (<http://www.biodiversityeconomics.org/incentives/policies-07-00.htm>) on positive incentives prepared and maintained by IUCN—the World Conservation Union. **GO1** {CPs, STRP, IUCN, Bureau}
- 8.1.3 Report to COP9 on progress in the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of positive incentive measures and the identification and removal of perverse incentives, including those relating to agriculture. **GO1** {STRP, Bureau}

See also COP8 Resolutions VIII.23, 34 and 40 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

**OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 9. COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, AND PUBLIC AWARENESS (CEPA)**

**Operational Objective 9.1:**

**Support, and assist in implementing at all levels, the Convention's Communication, Education, and Public Awareness Programme (Resolution VIII.31) for promoting the conservation and wise use of wetlands through public participation and communication, education, and public awareness (CEPA).**

**Actions**

- 9.1.1 Ensure that a suitable national government and non-government focal point for wetland communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) has been designated and, as much as possible, given the required resources for action (Resolution VII.9). **GO 1** {CPs}
- 9.1.2 Ensure that, based on a review of relevant activities, target groups, and threats, a national action plan for wetlands CEPA has been formulated, has been made widely available, and is being implemented (Resolution VII.9). **GO 1** {CPs, CEPA}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** At least 50 CPs to have established national CEPA action plans.
- 9.1.3 Ensure that the *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands* (Resolution VII.8) are fully taken into

account in the development of implementation of the Convention's Communication, Education, and Public Awareness Programme. **GO 1** {CPs}

- 9.1.4 Ensure that national wetland CEPA action plans do not overlook communication within the government (i.e., between ministries and among the focal points of all environmental conventions) and among the government and the major private sector stakeholders and local communities. **GO 1** {CPs, CEPA}
- 9.1.5 Develop at the national level appropriate mechanisms for ongoing communication, exchange of ideas, and sharing of knowledge among the actors in wetland management, in particular of Ramsar sites, and between these actors and communication and education professionals, and endeavour to link this national network with similar networks in other countries and globally through electronic means. **GO 1, 3** {CPs, CEPA, MedWet, Bureau, OCs}
- 9.1.6 Undertake campaigns, ideally linked to World Wetlands Day (2 February), to raise awareness of wetland conservation and wise use issues, and seek further national and international recognition of World Wetlands Day, e.g. through the UN General Assembly. **GO 1** {CPs, CEPA, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs}
- 9.1.7 Provide the Bureau with advice on, and samples of, the effective wetlands CEPA materials available in each Party, so that the Bureau can enhance its clearinghouse function and facilitate the sharing of this information. **GO 1** {CPs, CEPA, Bureau}
- 9.1.8 Continue to produce CEPA materials of relevance to all CPs, including through private sector sponsorship, and make use of them in national wetlands CEPA activities. **GO 1** {Bureau, MedWet, CPs, CEPA,}
- 9.1.9 Review the extent to which formal education curricula include the Ramsar principles of wetland conservation and wise use and, where necessary, seek to have such information added. **GO 1** {CPs, CEPA, IOPs, OCs}
- 9.1.10 Seek to establish, or develop further, wetland education centres based at Ramsar sites and other wetlands, and where appropriate, also use these as centres for training in wetland research and management and wetland education and public awareness techniques. **GO 1** {CPs, CEPA, IOPs, OCs}
- 2003-2005 global implementation target:** At least 75 CPs to have established at least one wetland education centre at a Ramsar site.
- 9.1.11 Enlist a range of centres of learning (universities, museums, aquaria, botanic gardens, etc.) in promoting enhanced awareness and understanding of the importance of wetlands. **GO 1** {CPs, CEPA}
- 9.1.12 Encourage the facilities referred to in 9.1.10 and 9.1.11 to participate in the Wetland Link International network of centres as a way to increase the flow of information and the sharing of resource materials among such centres, and to encourage twinning and exchange of expertise between wetland education centres (Resolution VII.9). **GO 1, 3** {CPs, CEPA, Bureau, IOPs, OCs}

- 9.1.13 Undertake efforts to encourage resourcing of the Voluntary Fund for the Ramsar Communication, Education, and Public Awareness Programme, with the aim of generating a minimum of half million US dollars annually for this purpose. **GO 1, 4** {Bureau, CPs, CEPA, IOPs, OCs} (Refer also to Action 15.1.5)
- 9.1.14 Strengthen collaboration, through the CBD-Ramsar 3<sup>rd</sup> Joint Work Plan, for harmonizing the respective CEPA programmes of the two Conventions, and further investigate and pursue, as appropriate, opportunities to do likewise with other conventions and programmes. **GO1, 3** {Bureau, STRP, CBD, other MEAs}
- 9.1.15 Contribute, through the Ramsar CEPA programme, to the proposed decade for education for sustainable development, if and when established by the United Nations General Assembly in line with WSSD targets. **GO1, 3** {CPs, Bureau, CEPA, IOPs, OCs}

See also COP8 Resolution VIII.31 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

## **OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 10. DESIGNATION OF RAMSAR SITES**

### **Operational Objective 10.1:**

**Apply the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Ramsar Handbook 7).**

### **Actions**

- 10.1.1 Renew efforts to apply the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the Ramsar List* (Resolution VII.11), including, as a matter of priority the establishment of a strategy and priorities for the further designation of Ramsar sites so as to achieve, as soon as possible, the coherent national networks called for in the Vision for the List. (Resolution VIII.10) **GO2** {CPs, IOPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** Report on implementation progress to the Ramsar Bureau by 31 December 2003, with consolidated Bureau report circulated to all Parties by 31 March 2004. Each CP which has not designated a Ramsar site since accession to the Convention to have designated at least one new site. Designation of a further 55 million ha and 250 Ramsar sites, as progress towards global targets of 2500 sites and 250 million ha by 2010.
- 10.1.2 In undertaking Action 10.1.1, give priority attention to the designation of sites for each representative, rare or unique wetland type present in the territory of a Contracting Party, as well as to wetland types currently under-represented in the Ramsar List, including, *inter alia*, karst and other subterranean hydrological systems, coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass beds, salt marshes, tidal flats, peatlands, wet grasslands, temporary pools, arid-zone wetlands, and mountain wetlands (Resolution VIII.12), and in so doing apply the guidelines so far approved by the COP to assist in the designation of some of these wetland types (Resolutions VIII.11 and VIII.33), and report on progress to COP9. **GO2** {CPs, IOPs, OCs}

- 10.1.3 Give priority to the designation of coastal and marine Ramsar sites<sup>3</sup>, as a contribution to the WSSD target of establishing representative networks of marine protected areas by 2012. **GO2, 3** {CPs}
- 10.1.4 In addition to the priority established in 10.1.2, also assign priority to the designation as Ramsar sites of wetlands hosting globally threatened species and species that are unique or endemic to the territory of a Contracting Party or for which the territory supports a significant proportion of the global extent of the species. **GO2** {CPs, IOPs, OCs}
- 10.1.5 Designate, as a priority, those eligible sites that are not under any form of protective or sustainable use management regime, including those utilised for agriculture, as the basis for accelerating the establishment of such regimes, and ensure that this is done soon after designation. **GO2** {CPs}
- 10.1.6 Consistent with the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands* (Ramsar Handbook 9), designate the national area of transboundary wetlands as a Ramsar site and invite the concerned neighboring country(ies) to do likewise, with a view to establishing a harmonized management regime for the entire wetland. **GO2, 3** {CPs, IOPs} (Refer also to Operational Objective 12.1)
- 10.1.7 Continue to support the work of Wetlands International, other International Organization Partners, and others in providing analyses and information to help Parties to apply the Strategic Framework to identify and designate Ramsar sites, including further identification of under-represented wetland types. **GO2** {CPs, Bureau, IOPs}
- 10.1.8 Continue to support the work of Wetlands International and others in the updating for each COP of the 1% thresholds for waterbird populations for the application of Criterion 6 for Ramsar site designation, having first undertaken international scientific consultation on its contents; seek to provide such population information for other wetland-dependent taxa; and apply this information for the designation of Ramsar sites. **GO2** {CPs, Bureau, IOPs} (Refer also to Operational Objective 12.2.)

See also COP8 Resolutions VIII.2, 4, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 21, 22, 33, 38 and 39 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

#### **Operational Objective 10.2:**

**Maintain the Ramsar Sites Database and constantly update it with the best available information, and use the database as a tool for guiding the further designation of wetlands for the List of Wetlands of International Importance.**

#### **Actions**

- 10.2.1 Ensure that the maps and descriptions of Ramsar sites submitted by Contracting Parties at the time of designation are complete, in the approved standard format of the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands as amended by COP8 (Resolution VIII.13), and provide sufficient detail to be used for monitoring the ecological character of designated

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<sup>3</sup> In line with Articles 1.1 and 2.1 of the Convention, which include as Ramsar wetlands areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres, and indicates that Ramsar sites may “incorporate islands or bodies of marine water deeper than six metres at low tide lying within the wetlands.”

wetlands (refer to Operational Objective 11.1 below). **GO 2** {CPs, Bureau, Wetlands International}

- 10.2.2 Ensure that the social and cultural values and features of listed sites are fully recognized in the descriptions of Ramsar sites in the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands, as the basis for their incorporation in site management planning. **GO 2** {CPs}
- 10.2.3 Submit missing or incomplete data sheets and/or maps of listed sites as a matter of utmost urgency, and also ensure that all previously submitted site descriptions are in the format of the approved Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands. **GO 2** {CPs}
- 10.2.4 Fully update and submit revised Ramsar Information Sheets as frequently as necessary to record changes in the status of sites, and at least at intervals of not more than six years, so that they can be used for reviewing change in ecological character and progress in achieving the Vision and Objectives of the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Ramsar Handbook 7) at each COP. **GO 2** {CPs, STRP, Bureau, Wetlands International}
- 10.2.5 Enhance the interactive capacity of the Ramsar Sites Database and its accessibility to stakeholders, including through links between the Database, the Ramsar Sites Directory Web presentation, the Ramsar Web site, and other interactive systems such as the Ramsar Data Gateway, as well as the publication of special reports and other outputs. **GO 2** {Bureau, Wetlands International, OCs}
- 10.2.6 Maintain, and make available and easily accessible, the *Directory of Wetlands of International Importance* in electronic format, including the preparation of a fully up-to-date version for each meeting of the Conference of Parties, and the *Annotated Ramsar List* in the three official languages. **GO 2** {Wetlands International, Bureau}

See also COP8 Resolutions VIII.8 and 13 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

## **OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 11. MANAGEMENT PLANNING AND MONITORING OF RAMSAR SITES**

### **Operational Objective 11.1:**

**Maintain the ecological character of all Ramsar sites.**

#### **Actions**

- 11.1.1 Consistent with Article 3.1 of the Convention, define and apply the measures required to maintain the ecological character of each listed site, using as the basis for this the official definitions of “ecological character” and “change in ecological character” adopted by Resolution VII.10 and the integrated package of Convention tools for site management as presented in Ramsar Handbook 8 as well as the supplementary guidance adopted by COP8, and ensure that this information is included in the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (refer also to Actions 2.2.1. and 2.2.3). **GO 2** {CPs}



- 11.1.2 Apply the Convention's *New Guidelines for management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands* (Resolution VIII.14) to develop management plans or strategies for all Ramsar sites. **GO1, 2** {CPs, IOPs, OCs}
- 11.1.3 Establish, resources permitting, the necessary procedures for the creation and maintenance of the San José Record for the promotion of wetland management (Resolution VIII.15) and report to COP9 on its implementation. **GO 2** {Bureau, STRP}
- 11.1.4 Promote, as necessary, the establishment and implementation of zoning measures for larger Ramsar sites, wetland reserves, and other wetlands (Recommendation 5.3 and Resolution VIII.14) and strict protection measures for certain Ramsar sites and other wetlands of small size and/or particular sensitivity (Recommendation 5.3). **GO 1, 2** {CPs, IOPs, OCs}
- 11.1.5 Consider as a matter of priority the establishment of cross-sectoral site management committees for Ramsar sites, involving relevant government agencies, local community representatives, and other stakeholders, including the business sector. **GO 2** {CPs}
- 11.1.6 Continue to give high priority in the Operational Guidelines for the Small Grants Fund to support for management planning at Ramsar sites. **GO 2** {CPs, SC}

See also COP8 Resolutions VIII.1, 3, 8, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 34 and 38 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

#### **Operational Objective 11.2:**

**Monitor the condition of Ramsar sites, notify the Ramsar Bureau without delay of changes affecting Ramsar sites as required by Article 3.2, and apply the Montreux Record and Ramsar Advisory Mission as tools to address problems.**

#### **Actions**

- 11.2.1 Establish for each Ramsar site an effective monitoring programme, ideally as part of the site management plan, which is designed to detect and provide early warning of changes in ecological character. In so doing, use the Convention's framework for designing an effective monitoring programme (Resolution VI.1) and its *Wetland Risk Assessment Framework* (Resolution VII.10) (Ramsar Handbook 8). **GO 2** {CPs, OCs}
- 11.2.2 Ensure that sites on the Ramsar List are used as baseline and reference areas for national, supranational/regional, and international environmental monitoring to detect trends in the loss of biological diversity, climate change, and the processes of desertification (Objective 4.1 of the Objectives for the List (Resolution VII.11), and report on status and trends to each meeting of the Conference of the Parties. **GO 1, 2** {CPs, Wetlands International, IOPs}
- 11.2.3 Ensure that at Ramsar sites where change in ecological character may occur as a result of proposed developments or changes in territorial and/or water use which have potential to affect them, an impact assessment is carried out which considers the full range of environmental, social and economic benefits and functions provided by the wetland, and that the resulting conclusions are communicated to the Ramsar Bureau, in line with

Article 3.2 of the Convention, and fully taken into account by the authorities concerned.  
**GO 2** {CPs} (Refer also to Actions 1.2.4 and 1.2.5)

- 11.2.4 In fulfilment of Article 3.2 of the Convention, report to the Ramsar Bureau without delay all actual or likely changes in ecological character on Ramsar sites, and include Ramsar sites “where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring or are likely to occur” in the Montreux Record as appropriate. **GO 2** {CPs, Bureau}
- 11.2.5 For sites included in the Montreux Record, request a Ramsar Advisory Mission of independent experts, where appropriate, to review the problems affecting the site and offer recommendations for remedial actions. **GO 2** {CPs, Bureau}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** For all sites on the Montreux Record, and which have not been subject to a Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM), CPs to request such a Mission prior to COP9.
- 11.2.6 Where a Ramsar Advisory Mission has been completed for a Montreux Record site, take all necessary steps to implement the recommendations, and report at regular intervals to the Bureau on the results of these actions. At the appropriate time, seek the removal of the site from the Montreux Record, having provided the Bureau and STRP with details of the site condition using the approved questionnaire (Ramsar Handbook 7). **GO 2** {CPs, STRP, Bureau}

## **OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 12. MANAGEMENT OF SHARED WATER RESOURCES, WETLANDS AND WETLAND SPECIES**

Note: Where actions are drawn directly from the *Guidelines for international cooperation* (Ramsar Handbook 9), the cross-reference is indicated.

### **Operational Objective 12.1:**

**Promote inventory and integrated management of shared wetlands and hydrological basins.**

#### **Actions**

- 12.1.1 Identify all wetland systems in each Contracting Party shared with other Parties and with non-parties and promote cooperation in their management with the adjoining jurisdiction(s), applying, where appropriate, the *Guidelines on integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management* (Ramsar Handbook 4, Section A1 of the Guidelines), and the *Principles and Guidelines for integrating wetlands into Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)* (Resolution VIII.4) **GO 1, 3** {CPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** All CPs to have identified their transboundary wetlands (see also 1.1.1). 50% of CPs to have identified cooperative management mechanisms.
- 12.1.2 Pursue cooperation on shared hydrological basins, lake systems and coastal systems through the establishment of bi- or multilateral management commissions. (Section A2 of the Guidelines). **GO 1, 3** {CPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** 50% of CPs with shared basins and coastal systems to be part of joint management commissions or authorities.

- 12.1.3 Where appropriate, engage in joint impact assessment processes with neighbouring countries that share wetlands, international river basins, or coastal systems, taking note, where applicable, of the terms of the Espoo Convention on impact assessment in a European transboundary context. **GO 1, 3** {CPs} (Refer also to Action 2.2.3 and 2.2.4)
- 12.1.4 Ensure enhanced accessibility to information, analyses, good practice examples, and experience-sharing on integrating wetlands and biodiversity into integrated river basin management, including through the Ramsar/CBD River Basin Initiative. **GO 1, 3** {CPs, Bureau, CBD, IOPs, OCs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** River Basin Initiative fully operational.

See also COP8 Resolutions VIII.7, 8, 10 and 35 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

### **Operational Objective 12.2:**

**Promote cooperative monitoring and management of shared wetland-dependent species.**

#### **Actions**

- 12.2.1 Identify and designate as Ramsar sites all wetlands which satisfy the relevant Ramsar Criteria in relation to wetland-dependent migratory species, giving priority in the first instance to waterbirds, fish, and marine turtles, especially those that are globally threatened. (Section B1 of the Guidelines) **GO 2, 3** {CPs, IOPs, CMS}
- 12.2.2 Continue to promote and support the development of further regional site networks and initiatives for wetland-dependent migratory species, as exemplified by the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy, the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, and others. (Sections B2 and B4 of the Guidelines) **GO 3** {CPs, IOPs, OCs} (refer also to Operational Objective 12.1)
- 12.2.3 Through the Memorandum of Understanding and associated Joint Work Plan with the Convention on Migratory Species and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement (AEWA), work cooperatively to identify and manage important sites for wetland-dependent migratory species, and promote jointly, where appropriate, the development of site networks referred to in the previous Action. (Section B3 of the Guidelines.) (Refer also to Operational Objective 12.1). **GO 2, 3** {STRP, Bureau, MedWet, OCs}
- 12.2.4 Promote and disseminate research into the population dynamics and sustainable harvesting of wetland dependent species, especially migratory waterbirds. **GO 1, 3** {STRP, Bureau, IOPs, OCs}
- 12.2.5 Ensure that national hunting legislation is consistent with the wise use principle for migratory waterbird and other wetland-dependent species, taking into account geographical range, life-history characteristics of species, and research on sustainable harvesting. **GO 1, 3** {CPs, Bureau, OCs}

See also COP8 Resolution VIII.19 for additional action related to this Operational Objective.

**Operational Objective 12.3:**

**Support existing regional arrangements under the Convention and promote additional arrangements.**

**Actions**

- 12.3.1 Continue to support the operation of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com) and its related action programme, the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet) and its Coordination Unit. **GO 3** [MedWet, Bureau, IOPs, OCs]
- 12.3.2 Encourage development of regional arrangements under the Convention similar to MedWet, where appropriate, applying the *Guidance for the development of Regional Initiatives in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands* (Resolution VIII.30) for example in the Black Sea, Caspian Sea, the Caribbean, South America, and the Altaj-Sayansky region. **GO 3** {Concerned CPs, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs}

See also COP8 Resolution VIII.30 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

**OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 13. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS**

**Operational Objective 13.1:**

**Work as partners with international and regional multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other agencies.**

**Actions**

- 13.1.1 Continue to strengthen cooperation and synergy with the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification, the Convention on Migratory Species and its Agreements, the World Heritage Convention, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in particular through the vehicles of Joint Work Plans and collaboration among the respective subsidiary scientific bodies of the conventions and the secretariats, and at national level among the Ramsar Administrative Authorities and Focal Points of the different MEAs. **GO 3** {STRP, CPs, Bureau, IOPs, OCs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** 3<sup>rd</sup> CBD-Ramsar Joint Work Plan fully implemented. CMS/AEWA Joint Work Plan in place and being implemented. Joint activities developed with UNCCD and UNFCCC, including through participation in the Joint Liaison Group with UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD.
- 13.1.2 Maintain and, where appropriate, seek opportunities to further promote cooperation with UNESCO, in particular its Programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB), especially as regards wetlands within Biosphere Reserves and in the area of the development of curricula to integrate wetland issues. **GO 2, 3** {CPs, CEPA, Bureau, IOPs, OCs}
- 13.1.3 Give priority to the implementation of the Memoranda of Cooperation or Understanding with the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention), the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Mediterranean Sea (Barcelona

- Convention), the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea, other regional seas conventions, and the Danube River Protection Convention, and seek to establish similar cooperative arrangements with other regional instruments, such as the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME). **GO 3** {Concerned CPs, Bureau, IOPs, OCs}
- 13.1.4 Establish working relations with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), noting Sections F2 – F6 of the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands* (Ramsar Handbook 9). **GO 3** {Bureau, CITES}
- 13.1.5 Develop closer working relationships with appropriate regional bodies or programmes which have an interest in wetland conservation and wise use, including the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU), and the Organization of American States (OAS). **GO 3** {CPs, SC, Bureau, MEAs, OCs}
- 13.1.6 Support and contribute to the development and implementation of the Plan of Action to Implement Africa's Wetland Management Strategy under the Environmental Initiative of NEPAD, the New Partnership for Africa's Development. **GO 1, 2, 3** {CPs, SC, Bureau, IOPs, MEAs, OCs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** NEPAD's Action Plan to have fully incorporated Ramsar issues and mechanisms, and being implemented by relevant CPs, in lines with WSSD targets.
- 13.1.7 Continue to contribute, through the application of Ramsar tools and mechanisms, to the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. **GO 1, 2, 3, 4** {CPs, SC, Bureau}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** Review of Ramsar's contribution to the Barbados Programme of Action, as a contribution to the WSSD target.
- 13.1.8 Continue the development and implementation of joint work plans under the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ramsar Convention and the South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP). **GO3** {Concerned CPs, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs}
- 13.1.9 Review the advantages and disadvantages with regard to accession and corresponding financial contributions and, as appropriate, investigate the feasibility of regional economic integration or similar organizations/ institutions gaining Contracting Party status under the Convention, including the possibility of amending the Convention to that effect if necessary. **GO 3** {Bureau, SC, COP}.
- 13.1.10 Promote a UN General Assembly Resolution formally recognizing the Convention. In the meantime, pursue partnership approaches with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and other relevant UN agencies, as well as the Subcommittee on Water of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (Section C2 of the Guidelines.) **GO 3** {Bureau, SC}

- 13.1.11 Further develop working partnerships with other specialized bodies that deal with wetland-related issues, including through collaboration in the Ramsar/CBD River Basin Initiative (RBI). **GO 3** {Bureau, OCs}
- 13.1.12 Continue to contribute to the development and testing of harmonized information management and reporting systems with the appropriate MEAs, including exploration of modular-style national reporting formats, consolidated reporting formats, state of the environment reporting, and regional reporting. **GO 3, 4** {Bureau, OCs}

See also COP8 Resolutions VIII.3, 5, 14, 24 and 42 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

#### **OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 14. SHARING OF EXPERTISE AND INFORMATION**

Note: Where actions are drawn directly from the *Guidelines for international cooperation* (Ramsar Handbook 9), the cross-reference is indicated.

##### **Operational Objective 14.1: Promote the sharing of expertise and information.**

##### **Actions**

- 14.1.1 Using mechanisms such as the national focal points for communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) and for the STRP, promote the sharing of knowledge (traditional, indigenous, and more recently derived technologies and methods) at the global, regional, and national levels. (Section D1 of the Guidelines.) **GO 1, 3** {CPs, CEPA, STRP, Bureau}.
- 14.1.2 Recognize training as an important element of international cooperation under the Convention and provide access to such training, especially for wetland managers, and wetland educators and those others responsible for implementing the Convention, from other countries that would benefit from these opportunities. (Sections D2 and D3 of the Guidelines). **GO 3, 4** {CPs, Bureau, IOPs} (Refer also to Operational Objective 20.1).
- 14.1.3 Develop twinning and/or networks of transboundary wetlands and wetlands sharing common features, as an important mechanism for sharing knowledge and providing training opportunities. **GO 2, 3** {CPs, Bureau, IOPs, OCs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** At least 75 twinning arrangements to be in place and reported to the Bureau for Web publicity on the Ramsar Web site.
- 14.1.4 Further review and develop Internet-based resource kits and knowledge and information sharing, including the Convention's Wetland Expert Database, on topics including impact assessment, incentives, management planning, river basin management, participation, education and public awareness, and Ramsar sites. **GO 1, 2, 3** {CPs, Bureau, IOPs}
- 14.1.5 Further develop, use and advertise the availability of the Convention's Wetland Expert Database. **GO 1, 4**{Bureau, CPs, IOPs, OCs}

See also COP8 Resolution VIII.39 for additional action related to this Operational Objective.

## OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 15. FINANCING THE CONSERVATION AND WISE USE OF WETLANDS

Note: Where actions are drawn directly from the *Guidelines for international cooperation* (Ramsar Handbook 9), the cross-reference is indicated.

### Operational Objective 15.1:

**Promote international assistance to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands.**

#### Actions

- 15.1.1 Mobilize direct funding support from multilateral and bilateral development assistance agencies in order to assist developing countries and countries whose economies are in transition in the conservation and wise use of wetlands and in implementation of the present Strategic Plan. (Based on Section E1 of the Guidelines) **GO 1, 3, 4** {CPs, Bureau, IOPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** Each CP with a bilateral donor agency to have encouraged it to give priority for funding for wetland conservation and wise use projects in relation to poverty alleviation and other WSSD targets and priorities.
- 15.1.2 Mobilize resources to support the implementation of management plans for Ramsar sites in developing countries and countries whose economies are in transition. **GO 2, 3** {CPs, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs} (Refer also to Operational Objective 11.1)
- 15.1.3 For those Parties with bilateral development assistance agencies, respond to sections E1, E2, E5, E7, E10, E11, E14 and E15 of the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands* (Ramsar Handbook 9), and especially consider issues such as long-term fund generation mechanisms, appropriate monitoring of projects, training of development assistance agency staff, priority for institutional capacity building, the need for cooperation between development assistance agencies, and the importance of coordination between bilateral development assistance agencies and the Ramsar Administrative Authorities in the donor and recipient countries. **GO 3, 4** {CPs, Bureau, IOPs}
- 15.1.4 Pursuant to 15.1.3, urge all Parties with bilateral development assistance agencies to report on their performance with regard to wetland-related activities at each COP. (Based on Section E5 of the Guidelines) **GO 1, 3, 4** {CPs}
- 15.1.5 For those Parties involved in the priority-setting for, and the determining of, the *modus operandi* of the multilateral development and environment-related assistance agencies, seek to ensure that wetland conservation and wise use is afforded due attention and priority. **GO 1, 3, 4** {CPs, Bureau, IOPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** Relevant CPs to report to COP9 on ensuring that multilateral donor agencies afford priority to wetlands within poverty alleviation schemes.
- 15.1.6 Provide financial support, preferably on a medium and/or long-term basis, to the operations of the Ramsar Small Grants Fund and its Endowment Fund, and the Voluntary Fund for the Convention's Communication, Education, and Public Awareness

- Programme, seeking to have available a minimum of one million US dollars annually for the former and half a million US dollars for the latter. (Based on Sections E4 and E9 of the Guidelines.) **GO 1, 3, 4** {Bureau, SC, CPs, OCs}
- 15.1.7 Mobilize resources to support the development of wetland training and education centres at Ramsar sites and the training of wetland educators in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. **GO 1, 2, 3, 4** {CPs, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs}
- 15.1.8 For those Parties eligible for development assistance, include projects for conservation and wise use of wetlands in national portfolios and plans for consideration by development assistance agencies, and give priority among these for projects to build institutional capacity. (Based on Sections E8 and E12 of the Guidelines) **GO 1, 3, 4** {CPs}
- 15.1.9 For eligible Contracting Parties of both the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), develop wetland conservation and wise use projects suitable for consideration by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as part of the implementation of the Joint Work Plan with the CBD and in accordance with paragraphs 6 and 7 of Decision IV/4 of CBD's COP4 relating to inland water ecosystems. **GO 1, 3, 4** {CPs, Bureau, IOPs, OCs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** Assistance provided to at least 15 countries in preparing projects for submission to the Global Environment Facility.
- 15.1.10 Maintain close working relations with multilateral agencies that provide development and environment-related assistance in relation to project screening, development and evaluation, notably: the World Bank, UNDP, and UNEP, in particular as partners in the Global Environment Facility (GEF); regional funding agencies such as the Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, Interamerican Development Bank, and the European Investment Bank; and the European Commission. **GO 1, 3, 4** {Bureau}
- 15.1.11 Assist, when requested, Contracting Parties and bilateral and multilateral development assistance agencies in the development, screening and evaluation of wetland projects. **GO 1, 3, 4** {STRP, Bureau}
- 15.1.12 Pursue involvement of the private sector (including corporations and foundations) in wetland conservation and seek opportunities for private sector funding of wetland projects under Ramsar. **GO 1, 3, 4** {Bureau, CPs, IOPs}
- 15.1.13 Promote establishment of effective mechanisms to encourage environmentally sound trade in wetland products, in particular from Ramsar sites, compatible with international trade agreements. **GO 1, 2, 3** {Bureau, CPs, IOPs, OCs}
- 15.1.14 Consider the possibility of creating a voluntary "Ramsar Label" for wetland products and services that are provided in both environmentally sound and socially equitable manners. **GO 1, 3** {Bureau, CPs, IOPs}

See also COP8 Resolutions VIII.1, 5, 6, 10 and 42 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.



**Operational Objective 15.2:**

**Ensure that environmental safeguards and assessments are an integral component of all development projects that affect wetlands, including foreign and domestic investments.**

**Actions**

- 15.2.1 Work with international development agencies, including banks, financial institutions and private investors and developers, to ensure that proposed grants, loans, and development projects include environmental safeguards and environmental assessments of possible impacts upon wetlands. (Based on Section G1 of the Guidelines.) **GO1, 3** {CPs, Bureau, IOPs} (Refer also to Actions 1.2.3 and 1.2.4)
- 15.2.2 Ensure that domestic laws include environmental regulations, compatible with international trade agreements, and environmental impact assessments requirements for development projects that affect wetlands. (Based on Section G2 of the Guidelines.) **GO1, 3** {CPs}
- 15.2.3 Review wetland-related project development approval and consider the introduction of mechanisms to direct resources derived from these activities back to hands-on wetland management in the country. (Based on Section G3 of the Guidelines.) **GO1, 3** {CPs}

**OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 16. FINANCING OF THE CONVENTION**

**Operational Objective 16.1:**

**Provide the financial resources required for the Convention's governance mechanisms and programmes to achieve the expectations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.**

**Actions**

- 16.1.1 Pay annual contributions to the Convention's core budget in full and promptly at the beginning of each calendar year. **GO4** {CPs}
- 16.1.2 Consider providing additional voluntary contributions to the Convention to support the Small Grants Fund and its Endowment Fund, the Voluntary Fund for the Convention's Communication, Education, and Public Awareness Programme, and the Training Service, regionally-based initiatives such as MedWet, the undertaking of Ramsar Advisory Missions for sites included in the Montreux Record and other Ramsar sites, and other priority activities as determined by the Strategic Plan. **GO4** {Bureau, CPs, IOPs, OCs}
- 16.1.3 Continue to consider including in the core budget of the Convention an additional allocation to defray the Ramsar Bureau costs related to the ordinary meetings of the COP, in order to allow the opportunity for all Contracting Parties to be able to offer to host meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties. **GO4** {Bureau, COP, SC}
- 16.1.4 At COP9, consider including within the core budget of the Convention an allocation to establish a Water Officer post and a Communication, Education, and Public Awareness Programme officer post to help accelerate implementation of this work. **GO1, 4** {Bureau, SC, COP}

**2003-2005 global implementation target:** Proposal for Bureau posts of a Water Officer and CEPA Programme Officer to have been prepared for consideration by COP9 for inclusion in the core budget of the Convention.

## **OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 17. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS OF THE CONVENTION**

### **Operational Objective 17.1:**

**Ensure that the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee, Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and Ramsar Bureau are operating at a high level of efficiency and effectiveness to support implementation of this Strategic Plan.**

#### **Actions**

- 17.1.1 Ensure that the Ramsar COP continues to have as its major focus the development of tools to assist Parties in implementing the Convention through the Strategic Plan, and a *modus operandi* that allows full and active participation by small as well as large Contracting Party delegations and the different categories of observers. **GO4** {COP, SC}
- 17.1.2 Keep under review and, if necessary, modify or enhance the roles, responsibilities, and financial resources available to the Standing Committee during each triennium. **GO4** {COP, SC}
- 17.1.3 Through the information provided in National Reports, evaluate and report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan at each meeting of the COP, and prepare for every second meeting a revised and updated Strategic Plan for the forthcoming two triennia. **GO4** {COP, SC, Bureau}
- 17.1.4 Review the working priorities, and *modus operandi*, and ways of financing, of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) at each meeting of the COP. **GO4** {COP, SC}
- 17.1.5 Maintain as an ongoing priority action of the STRP, with the support of the Convention's network of STRP national focal points, IOPs and others, the development of new tools to assist Parties with the implementation of the wise use principle, as well as the review of the Ramsar Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance to ensure that these reflect global wetland conservation and wise use priorities. **GO1, 2, 4** {COP, STRP, Bureau}
- 17.1.6 Ensure that each Contracting Party has nominated a national focal point for the work of the STRP (as called for by Resolutions VII.2 and VIII.28) and two focal points (one government, one non-government) for the Communication, Education, and Public Awareness Programme (as called for by Resolutions VII.9 and VIII.31). **GO1, 4** {COP, CPs}
- 17.1.7 Review and approve annual Ramsar Bureau Work Plans, based on the Convention's Triennial Work Plan approved by the COP. **GO1, 4** {SC, Bureau}
- 17.1.8 Review and make recommendations to the COP regarding the staffing and budget requirements of the Ramsar Bureau which take account of the expectations raised by the Strategic Plan and triennial Convention Work Plans. **GO4** {Bureau, SC, COP}

See also COP8 Resolutions VIII.28, 42 and 45 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

## **OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 18. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF CONTRACTING PARTIES**

### **Operational Objective 18.1:**

**Develop the capacity within, and promote cooperation among, institutions in Contracting Parties to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands.**

#### **Actions**

- 18.1.1 Encourage the review of existing national institutions responsible for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, and on the basis of such a review, identify and implement measures to:
- a) increase cooperation and synergy among institutions with direct or indirect responsibility for wetland issues, especially those responsible for the management of water resources and for biodiversity and wetland conservation and management; **GO1, 2, 4** {CPs}
  - b) promote enhanced cooperation, and where appropriate integrated approaches, among the national focal points of environment-related conventions, and consider establishing a coordinating committee to ensure that integrated approaches are taken; **GO3, 4** {CPs}
  - c) promote enhanced contact, and where appropriate close coordination, between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and national professional, technical, scientific and educational societies and agencies involved in wetland conservation or management, including those involved in social and cultural heritage issues; **GO1, 4** {CPs, OCs} and
  - d) provide appropriately trained staff, in adequate numbers, to enable these institutions to implement the Convention to full effect. **GO4** {CPs} (Refer also to Operational Objective 20.1)
- 18.1.2 Establish National Ramsar/Wetlands Committees to provide the opportunity for input from, and representation of, relevant government agencies, including national water management ministries and/or agencies, where appropriate, and non-governmental organizations, STRP and CEPA National Focal Points, key stakeholders, indigenous people and local communities, the private sector and interest groups, and land use planning and management authorities (Recommendation 5.13). When in place, ensure the proper functioning of these Committees. **GO1, 4** {CPs, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs}
- 18.1.3 Review the designated Ramsar national Administrative Authority (and provincial (sub-national) focal points where appropriate) and STRP and CEPA national focal points in each Contracting Party, with a view to ensuring that these positions are being effective in increasing involvement in the work of the Convention of all relevant agencies and organizations concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands. **GO1, 4** {CPs}

- 18.1.4 Assist in achieving a cohesive and coordinated national effort towards the implementation of the Convention, using Ramsar's national planning tool (based on the National Report Format) as an ongoing planning and monitoring mechanism. Ideally, this tool should be used by all relevant government departments/agencies and include input from National Ramsar/Wetland Committee members and other stakeholders as appropriate. **GO4** {CPs}

See also COP8 Resolutions VIII.3 and 42 for additional actions related to this Operational Objective.

## **OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 19. INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION PARTNERS AND OTHERS**

**Operational Objective 19.1:**  
**Maximize the benefits of working with the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs) and others.**

### **Actions**

- 19.1.1 Establish with each International Organization Partner a programme of joint work based on this Strategic Plan, review it annually, and seek additional funding for the implementation of actions not covered by existing organizational budgets. **GO4** {Bureau, IOPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** Each IOP and the Bureau to have established and be implementing a programme of joint work in support of the Convention, including joint actions by all IOPs.
- 19.1.2 Implement mechanisms for strengthening the contribution of networks of experts of the International Partner Organizations and other collaborating organizations to the work of the STRP and the Convention. **GO4** {Bureau, IOPs, STRP}
- 19.1.3 Review and renew formal agreements with the Convention's International Organization Partners as necessary. **GO4** {Bureau, IOPs}
- 19.1.4 Welcome and expedite review of applications by eligible organizations seeking the status of International Organization Partner of the Convention. **GO4** {SC, Bureau, IOPs}
- 19.1.5 Implement existing memoranda of cooperation with other bodies, such as Eurosite (the network of European natural heritage management bodies), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS), Center for International Earth Science Information Network, Columbia University, USA (CIESIN), the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA), Ducks Unlimited (Canada, Mexico, USA), the Institute for Inland Water Management and Waste Water Treatment (RIZA, The Netherlands), the South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP), the Lake Chad Basin Commission, and the Niger Basin Authority, through establishment of joint programmes of work, and seek to develop similar agreements with other appropriate bodies. **GO4** {Bureau, OCs}

## OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 20. TRAINING

### Operational Objective 20.1:

**Identify the training needs of institutions and individuals concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands, particularly in developing countries and countries in transition, and implement appropriate responses.**

#### Actions

- 20.1.1 Implement, and further develop and publicize, the Convention's Wetland Training Service. **GO4** {CPs, Wetlands International, Bureau, IOPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** Ramsar Wetland Training Service in place and fully implemented.
- 20.1.2 Identify at national, provincial, and local levels the needs and target audiences for training in implementation of the Convention and, in particular, use of the Wise Use Guidelines and Ramsar Handbooks. **GO4** {CPs, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** At least half of CPs to have assessed national and local training needs.
- 20.1.3 Identify and disseminate, nationally, regionally and globally, information describing the current training opportunities in disciplines essential for the conservation and wise use of wetlands through the further development of the Bureau's Ramsar Wise Use Resource Centre ([http://ramsar.org/wurc\\_index.htm](http://ramsar.org/wurc_index.htm)) and the Directory of Wetland Management Training Opportunities ([http://ramsar.org/wurc\\_training\\_directory.htm](http://ramsar.org/wurc_training_directory.htm)). **GO4** {CPs, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs, OCs}
- 20.1.4 Provide financial support, where possible, for expanding the Bureau's internship training programme. **GO4** {CPs, IOPs, OCs}  
**2003-2005 global implementation target:** Resources provided to expand internship programme, including an Oceania intern.
- 20.1.5 Assemble and make available, or develop, new training activities and general training modules as necessary, for the use of the Ramsar Handbooks, with specialized modules including coverage of the following fields:
- a) wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring;
  - b) national wetland policies and plans;
  - c) integrated catchment/river basin and coastal zone planning and management;
  - d) integrated site management planning at the local, provincial or catchment/river basin level;
  - e) wetland restoration and rehabilitation;
  - f) invasive alien species;
  - g) agricultural impacts on wetlands and water resources;
  - h) impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment;
  - i) impacts of climate change, and adaptive management and mitigation of such impacts
  - j) economic valuation of wetlands;
  - k) communication, education and public awareness techniques.
- GO1, 2, 3, 4** {CPs, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs, OCs}

- 20.1.6 Provide opportunities for manager training by:
- a) encouraging personnel exchanges for on-the-job training, possibly between twinned sites;
  - b) holding pilot training courses at specific Ramsar sites;
  - c) siting wetland manager and wetland educator training facilities at Ramsar sites;
  - d) obtaining and disseminating information about training courses for wetland managers around the world;
  - e) establishing further regional training initiatives such as the Wetlands for the Future Initiative funded by the Government of the USA for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- GO2, 3, 4** {CPs, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs, OCs}
- 20.1.7 Continue to encourage the development of projects for submission to the Small Grants Fund for support for training activities. **GO4** {CPs, SC}
- 20.1.8 Encourage further development and use of regional wetland training and research centres, including a Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere (Resolution VII.26) and a Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in Western and Central Asia (Resolution VIII.41). **GO1, 3, 4** {CPs, MedWet, IOPs, OCs}
- 20.1.9 Exchange information, technical assistance and advice, and expertise about training for the conservation and wise use of wetlands through the Communication, Education, and Public Awareness Programme, the Bureau, MedWet, and the IOPs of the Convention. **GO1, 3, 4** {CPs, Bureau, MedWet, IOPs}

## **OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 21. MEMBERSHIP OF THE CONVENTION**

### **Operational Objective 21.1:**

**Secure the universal membership of the Convention.**

#### **Actions**

- 21.1.1 Recruit new Contracting Parties through:
- a) seeking direct contact with non-Contracting Parties to provide information on the benefits of membership and advice or assistance in overcoming obstacles; **GO5** {SC, neighbouring CPs, Bureau, IOPs}
  - b) intensifying contacts with the diplomatic representatives of non-Contracting Parties; **GO5** {Bureau}
  - c) seeking assistance from the secretariats of other conventions, including the Regional Seas Conventions, and in-country offices of the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, and others; **GO5** {CPs, Bureau, MEAs, OCs}

- d) organizing subregional workshops involving Contracting Parties and non-Contracting Parties; **GO5** {CPs, Bureau}
- e) providing assistance for the identification of Wetlands of International Importance that could be listed as Ramsar sites upon accession; **GO5** {Bureau, IOPs, OCs}
- f) encouraging attendance by observers from non-Contracting Parties at regional meetings and meetings of the Conference of the Parties; **GO5** {Bureau, IOPs, OCs} and
- g) publishing and disseminating an accession kit to assist countries in the Oceania region (and Small Island Developing States more generally) through the accession process. {Bureau, CPs, IOPs, OCs}

## **Application of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 by Convention bodies and collaborating partners**

61. As indicated in the Actions designed to deliver each Operational Objective, achieving full implementation of the Strategic Plan requires the involvement of a number of different bodies and organizations. The process of planning and undertaking this implementation by the different bodies of the Convention and other organizations is outlined below.

### **The Contracting Parties, STRP National Focal Points, and National CEPA Focal Points**

62. A substantial part of the implementation of this Strategic Plan is the responsibility of the Contracting Parties to the Convention. It is fully recognized that each Contracting Party is free to choose the extent to which it will implement the Strategic Plan, the resources it will allocate to the implementation, and the timeframes to be used.
63. To assist Contracting Parties in planning their implementation, the Standing Committee has adopted, in fulfillment of COP7 Resolution VII.27, a Ramsar National Planning Tool and National Report Format for reporting to COP8. This was based on the structure and content of the first Strategic Plan and was first issued, in electronic format, to Contracting Parties in 2000.
64. For national action planning and reporting to COP9 in 2005 and COP10 in 2008, the National Planning Tool and National Report Format will be revised so as to conform to the structure and content of this second Strategic Plan, taking into account the experience of Contracting Parties in its use for planning and reporting to COP8.
65. As well as providing a standard format for national reporting to the Conference of Contracting Parties, this National Planning Tool provides a procedure for Parties, through their National Ramsar Committees or other mechanisms, to determine their national priorities and targets for action under the relevant Objectives and Actions of the Strategic Plan.
66. Using the Strategic Plan, Contracting Parties will have prepared and announced their proposed national targets for each triennium prior to COP8 and COP9, such that realistic global and regional targets can be established for the Convention's Work Plans for 2003-2005 and 2006-2008 which are to be adopted by COP8 and COP9 respectively.
67. Government-designated National Focal Points for the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) contribute to the implementation of the STRP work plan (see below).
68. Government-designated National Focal Points (governmental and non-governmental) for wetland-related communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) contribute to the implementation of the Actions in the Strategic Plan related to the Ramsar CEPA Programme (Resolution VIII.31).

### **The Standing Committee and its Regional Representatives**



69. Actions identified for the Standing Committee in the Strategic Plan and COP Resolutions are brought onto the Agenda of its annual meetings in each triennium, and procedures for their delivery are established through Decisions of the Standing Committee. The Regional Representatives in the Standing Committee have a special responsibility in promoting the implementation of the Strategic Plan in their respective regions.

#### **The Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)**

70. From the Actions identified for it in the Strategic Plan and those embodied in COP Resolutions, the STRP prepares its triennial Work Plan at its first meeting of each triennium. The STRP reports to the Standing Committee at each of its annual meetings.

#### **The Ramsar Bureau (the Convention's secretariat)**

71. On the basis of the Actions identified for it in the Strategic Plan, the Ramsar Bureau prepares its annual Work Plan, which is approved by the Standing Committee. Included in the Bureau's Work Plan is that of the MedWet Coordination Unit, which operates under the aegis of the Convention and reports to the Secretary General.

#### **The International Organization Partners (IOPs)**

72. Through Action 19.1.1 of this Strategic Plan, each International Organization Partner of the Convention develops a programme of joint work with the Convention based on the Actions in Section II of the Strategic Plan that the IOPs are expected to contribute to or undertake, and to establish the targets for the delivery of these Actions.
73. Other organizations, particularly those with which the Convention has established a Memorandum of Cooperation or Agreement, are encouraged to develop similar joint plans which contribute to the delivery of Actions under Section II of the Strategic Plan.

#### **Other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs)**

74. A key activity identified for further progress under General Objective 3 on International Cooperation is the establishment of harmonized working frameworks for the delivery of common elements of activity among MEAs. To this end the Ramsar Bureau will continue to develop bilateral joint work plans between the Ramsar Convention and other relevant MEAs, and will seek to further establish multilateral work plans and activities among them, for example, in relation to harmonized reporting requirements.
75. This harmonized implementation approach is designed to assist Contracting Parties in their delivery of commitments to all related MEAs, and to minimize the duplication of effort in doing so.

## REFERENCE

### **Resolutions and Recommendations adopted by the Conference of the Contracting Parties relevant to the Strategic Plan**

The Resolutions and Recommendations adopted by the Conference of the Contracting Parties which are relevant to each General Objective of this Strategic Plan are listed below.

Note that some Resolutions and Recommendations may include elements relevant to the delivery of more than one General Objective.

**General Objective 1. The wise use of wetlands:** To stimulate and assist all Contracting Parties to develop, adopt and use the necessary and appropriate instruments and measures to ensure the wise use of all wetlands within their territories

#### **a) Wise use**

Recommendation 3.3: Wise use of wetlands

Recommendation 4.10: Guidelines for the implementation of the wise use concept

Resolution 5.6: Additional guidance for the implementation of the wise use concept

Recommendation 7.1: A global action plan for the wise use and management of peatlands

Resolution VIII.12: Enhancing the wise use and conservation of mountain wetlands

Resolution VIII.14: New Guidelines for management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands

Resolution VIII.17: Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands

Resolution VIII.32: Wise use of mangrove ecosystem resources

Resolution VIII.35: The impact of natural disasters, particularly drought, on wetland ecosystems

Resolution VIII.39: High Andean wetlands as strategic ecosystems

#### **b) Inventory and assessment**

Recommendation 5.2: Guidelines for interpretation of Article 3 (“ecological character” and “change in ecological character”)

Recommendation 5.3: The essential character of wetlands and the need for zonation related to wetland reserves

Resolution VI.1: Working definitions of ecological character, guidelines for describing and maintaining the ecological character of listed sites, and guidelines for operation of the Montreux Record

Resolution VII.10: Wetland Risk Assessment Framework

Resolution VII.20: Priorities for wetland inventory

Resolution VII.25: Measuring environmental quality in wetlands

Resolution VIII.6: A Ramsar Framework for Wetland Inventory

Resolution VIII.7: Gaps and harmonization of Ramsar guidance on wetland ecological character, inventory, assessment and monitoring

Resolution VIII.8: Assessing and reporting the status and trends of wetlands, and the implementation of Article 3.2 of the Convention

**Need for national inventory:** Recommendation 1.5, Recommendation 4.6, Resolution 5.3, Resolution VI.12

**c) Policies and legislation, including impact assessment and valuation**

Recommendation 4.4: Establishment of wetland reserves

Recommendation 5.3: The essential character of wetlands and the need for zonation related to wetland reserves

Recommendation 6.2: Environmental impact assessment

Recommendation 6.10: Promotion of cooperation on the economic valuation of wetlands

Resolution VII.6: Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies

Resolution VII.7: Guidelines for reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands

Resolution VII.16: The Ramsar Convention and impact assessment: strategic, environmental and social

Resolution VIII.9: “Guidelines for incorporating biodiversity-related issues into environmental impact assessment legislation and/or processes and in strategic environmental assessment” adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and their relevance to the Ramsar Convention

**Need for National Wetland Policies:** Recommendation 1.5, Recommendation 3.3, Recommendation 6.9

**d) Integrating wetlands into sustainable development**

Recommendation 6.1: Conservation of peatlands

Recommendation 6.7: Conservation and wise use of coral reefs and associated ecosystems

Recommendation 6.8: Strategic planning in coastal zones

Recommendation 6.14: Toxic chemicals

Resolution VI.23: Ramsar and water

Resolution VII.18: Guidelines for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management

Resolution VII.21: Enhancing the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands

Recommendation 7.1: A global action plan for the wise use and management of peatlands

Recommendation 7.2: Small Island Developing States, island wetland ecosystems, and the Ramsar Convention

Resolution VIII.1: Guidelines for the allocation and management of water for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands

Resolution VIII.2: The Report of the World Commission on Dams (WCD) and its relevance to the Ramsar Convention

Resolution VIII.3: Climate change and wetlands: impacts, adaptation, and mitigation

Resolution VIII.4: Wetland issues in Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)

Resolution VIII.34: Agriculture, wetlands and water resource management

Resolution VIII.35: The impact of natural disasters, particularly drought, on wetland ecosystems

Resolution VIII.40: Guidelines for rendering the use of groundwater compatible with the conservation of wetlands

**e) Restoration and rehabilitation**

Recommendation 4.1: Wetland restoration  
Recommendation 6.15: Restoration of wetlands  
Resolution VII.17: Restoration as an element of national planning for wetland conservation and wise use  
Resolution VII.24: Compensation for lost wetland habitats and other functions  
Resolution VIII.16: Principles and guidelines for wetland restoration

**f) Invasive alien species**

Resolution VII.14: Invasive species and wetlands  
Resolution VIII.18: Invasive species and wetlands

**g) Local communities, indigenous people and cultural values**

Recommendation 5.8: Measures to promote public awareness of wetland values in wetland reserves  
Recommendation 5.10: The 25th anniversary wetland campaign for 1996  
Resolution VI.21: Assessment and reporting on the status of wetlands  
Recommendation 6.3: Involving local and indigenous people in the management of Ramsar wetlands  
Resolution VII.8: Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands  
Resolution VII.9: The Convention's Outreach Programme, 1999-2002  
Resolution VIII.14: New Guidelines for management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands  
Resolution VIII.19: Guiding principles for taking into account the cultural values of wetlands for the effective management of sites  
Resolution VIII.36: Participatory Environmental Management (PEM) as a tool for management and wise use of wetlands

**h) Private sector involvement**

**i) Incentives**

Resolution VII.15: Incentive measures to encourage the application of the wise use principle  
Resolution VIII.23: Incentive measures as tools for achieving the wise use of wetlands

**j) Communication, education and public awareness**

Recommendation 4.4: Establishment of wetland reserves  
Recommendation 4.5: Education and training  
Recommendation 5.8: Measures to promote public awareness of wetland values in wetland reserves  
Recommendation 5.10: The 25th anniversary wetland campaign for 1996  
Resolution VI.19: Education and public awareness  
Resolution VII.9: The Convention's Outreach Programme, 1999-2002  
Resolution VIII.31: The Convention's Programme on communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) 2003-2008

**General Objective 2. Wetlands of International Importance:** To stimulate and support all Contracting Parties in the appropriate implementation of the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance*, including the appropriate management of listed sites as a contribution to sustainable development.

Recommendation 4.7: Mechanisms for improved application of the Ramsar Convention

Recommendation 4.8: Change in ecological character of Ramsar sites

Recommendation 5.3: The essential character of wetlands and the need for zonation related to wetland reserves

Resolution 5.7: Management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands

Resolution 5.9: Application of the Ramsar Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance

Resolution VI.1: Working definitions of ecological character, guidelines for describing and maintaining the ecological character of listed sites, and guidelines for operation of the Montreux Record

Recommendation 6.2: Environmental impact assessment

Resolution VII.11: Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance

Resolution VII.16: The Ramsar Convention and impact assessment: strategic, environmental and social; and the additional guidance on impact assessment adopted by (Resolution VIII.9)

Resolution VII.10: Wetland Risk Assessment Framework

Resolution VII.23: Issues concerning the boundary definitions of Ramsar sites and compensation of wetland habitat

Resolution VIII.6: A Ramsar Framework for Wetland Inventory

Resolution VIII.7: Gaps and harmonization of Ramsar guidance on wetland ecological character, inventory, assessment and monitoring

Resolution VIII.8: Assessing and reporting the status and trends of wetlands, and the implementation of Article 3.2 of the Convention

Resolution VIII.10: Improving implementation of the Strategic Framework and Vision for the List of Wetlands of International Importance

Resolution VIII.11: Additional guidance for identifying and designating under-represented wetland types as Wetlands of International Importance

Resolution VIII.13: Enhancing the information on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites)

Resolution VIII.14: New Guidelines on management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands

Resolution VIII.15: The “San José Record” for the promotion of wetland management

Resolution VIII.20: General guidance for interpreting “urgent national interests” under Article 2.5 of the Convention and considering compensation under Article 4.2

Resolution VIII.21: Defining Ramsar site boundaries more accurately in Ramsar Information Sheets

Resolution VIII.22: Issues concerning Ramsar sites that cease to fulfill or never fulfilled the Criteria for designation as Wetlands of International Importance

Resolution VIII.33: Additional guidance for identifying, sustainably managing, and designating temporary pools as Wetlands of International Importance

Resolution VIII.36: Participatory Environmental Management (PEM) as a tool for management and wise use of wetlands

Resolution VIII.38: Waterbird population estimates and the identification and designation of Wetlands of International Importance

**The Montreux Record:** Recommendation 4.8, Resolutions 5.4, VI.1, VII.12 and VIII.8  
**Ramsar Advisory Missions:** Recommendation 4.7, Resolutions VI.14 and VII.12

**General Objective 3. International cooperation:** To promote international cooperation through the active application of the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention*, and in particular to mobilize additional financial and technical assistance for wetland conservation and wise use.

Resolution 4.4: Implementation of Article 5 of the Convention  
Recommendation 4.11: Cooperation with international organizations  
Recommendation 5.4: The relationship between the Ramsar Convention, the Global Environment Facility and the Convention on Biological Diversity  
Recommendation 5.6: The role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the Ramsar Convention  
Resolution VI.9: Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity  
Resolution VI.10: Cooperation with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its implementing agencies: the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP  
Resolution VII.4: Partnerships and cooperation with other Conventions, including harmonized information management infrastructures  
Resolution VII.19: Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention  
Resolution VIII.5: Synergies with other environmental conventions  
Resolution VIII.30: Regional initiatives for the further implementation of the Convention  
Resolution VIII.42: Small Island Developing States in the Oceania region  
Resolution VIII.43: A subregional strategy of the Ramsar Convention for South America  
Resolution VIII.44: New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and implementation of the Ramsar Convention in Africa

**MedWet Initiative:** Recommendation 5.14, Recommendation 6.11; Resolution VII.22; Resolution VIII.30

**Flyway agreements:** Recommendation 3.2, Resolution 4.4, Recommendation 4.12, Recommendation 6.4; Resolution VIII.37

**General Objective 4. Implementation capacity:** To ensure that the Convention has the required implementation mechanisms, resources and capacity to achieve its mission.

Recommendation 5.4: The relationship between the Ramsar Convention, the Global Environment Facility and the Convention on Biological Diversity  
Recommendation 5.5: Inclusion of conservation and wise use of wetlands in multilateral and bilateral development cooperation programmes  
Recommendation 5.6: The role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the Ramsar Convention  
Recommendation 5.7: National Committees  
Resolution VI.21: Assessment and reporting on the status of wetlands  
Resolution VII.3: Partnerships with international organisations  
Resolution VII.5: Critical evaluation of the Convention's Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use (SGF) and its future operations  
Resolution VII.26: Creation of a Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere

Resolution VII.28: Financial and budgetary matters  
Recommendation 7.4: The Wetlands for the Future Initiative  
Resolution VIII.25: The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008  
Resolution VIII.26: The implementation of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 during the triennium 2003-2005 and National Reports for Ramsar COP9  
Resolution VIII.28: *Modus operandi* of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)  
Resolution VIII.29: Evaluation of the Ramsar Small Grants Fund for wetland conservation and wise use (SGF) and establishment of a Ramsar Endowment Fund

#### **Development assistance**

Recommendation 3.4: Responsibility of development agencies toward wetlands  
Recommendation 3.5: Tasks of the Bureau in respect to development agencies  
Recommendation 4.13: Responsibility of multilateral development banks (MDBs) towards wetlands  
Recommendation 5.4: The relationship between the Ramsar Convention, the Global Environment Facility and the Convention on Biological Diversity  
Recommendation 5.5: Inclusion of conservation and wise use of wetlands in multilateral and bilateral development cooperation programmes  
Resolution VI.10: Cooperation with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its implementing agencies: the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP

#### **Training:**

Recommendation 4.5: Education and training  
Recommendation 6.5: Establishment of further wetland manager training programmes  
Resolution VIII.41: Establishment of a Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in Western and Central Asia

**General Objective 5. Membership:** To progress towards the accession of all countries to the Convention.

Recommendation 1.1: Expanding the Convention's membership  
Recommendation 1.2: Developing countries in the Convention  
Recommendation 3.6: Further Contracting Parties in Africa  
Recommendation 3.7: Further Contracting Parties in Central America, the Caribbean and South America  
Recommendation 3.10: Further Contracting Parties in Asia and the Pacific  
Recommendation 6.18: Conservation and wise use of wetlands in the Pacific Islands region