NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RAMSAR CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

National Reports to be submitted to the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Republic of Korea, 28 October – 4 November 2008

Please submit the completed National Report, in electronic (Microsoft Word) format, and preferably by e-mail, to the Ramsar Secretariat by **31 March 2008**.

National Reports should be sent to: Alexia Dufour, Regional Affairs Officer, Ramsar Secretariat (dufour@ramsar.org)

Introduction & background

1. This Ramsar COP10 National Report Format (NRF) has been approved by the Standing Committee for the Ramsar Convention's Contracting Parties to complete as their national reporting to the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties of the Convention (Republic of Korea, October/November 2008).

2. Following Standing Committee discussions at its 35th meeting in February 2007, and its Decisions SC35-22, -23 and -24, this COP10 National Report Format has been significantly revised and simplified in comparison with the National Report Formats provided to previous recent COPs.

3. In particular this National Report Format provides a much smaller number (66) of implementation "indicator" questions, compared with the much larger suite of questions on all aspects of national implementation of the Convention's Strategic Plan 2003-2008 included in previous NRFs.

4. The COP10 NRF indicators include, with the agreement of the Standing Committee (Decision SC35-24), certain indicators specifically requested to be included by the Convention's Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP) and CEPA Oversight Panel, in order to facilitate their information gathering and reporting on key aspects of scientific, technical and CEPA implementation under the Convention.

5. The 66 indicator questions are grouped under each of the implementation "Strategies" approved by the Parties at COP9 (Resolution IX.8) in the Convention's "A Framework for the implementation of the Convention's Strategic Plan 2003-2008 in the 2006 -2008 period" (www.ramsar.org/res/key_res_ix_08_e.htm). The indicators have been selected so as to provide information on key aspects of the implementation of the Convention under each of its Strategies.

6. In addition, for each Strategy the option is provided for a Contracting Party, if it so wishes, to supply **additional information** concerning its implementation under each indicator and, more generally, on implementation of other aspects of each Strategy.

The purposes and uses of national reporting to the Conference of the Contracting Parties

7. National Reports from Contracting Parties are official documents of the Convention, and are made publicly available through their posting on the Convention's Web site.

8. There are six main purposes for the Convention's National Reports. These are to:

   i) provide data and information on how the Convention is being implemented;
   ii) capture lessons/experience, so as to allow Parties to develop future action;
   iii) identify emerging issues and implementation challenges faced by Parties that may require further attention through Convention processes;
   iv) provide a means for Parties to be accountable against their obligations under the Convention;
   v) provide each Party with a tool to help it assess and monitor its progress in implementation, and plan for its future implementation and priorities; and
   vi) provide an opportunity for Parties to draw attention to their achievements during the triennium.

9. In addition, the data and information provided by Parties in their COP10 National Reports now have another important purpose, since a number of the indicators in the National Reports on Parties' implementation will provide key sources of information for the analysis and assessment of the "ecological outcome-oriented indicators of effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention" currently being further developed by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel for Standing Committee and COP10 consideration.

10. To facilitate the analysis and onward use of the data and information provided by Contracting Parties in their National Reports, once received and verified by the Ramsar Secretariat all information is entered and held by the Secretariat in a database, which then facilitates extraction and analysis of the information for a number of purposes.

11. The Convention's National Reports are used in a number of ways. These include:

    i) providing the basis for reporting by the Secretariat to each COP on the global and regional implementation, and progress in implementation, of the Convention. This is provided to Parties at COP as a series of Information Papers including:

    - the Report of the Secretary General on the implementation of the Convention at the global level (see, e.g., COP9 DOC 5);
    - the Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 (b), (c), and (d) concerning the List of Wetlands of International Importance (see, e.g., COP9 DOC 6); and
    - the reports providing regional overviews of the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan in each Ramsar region (see, e.g., COP9 DOCs 10-13);

    ii) providing information on specific implementation issues in support of the provision of advice and decisions by Parties at COP. Examples at CO9 included:

    - Resolution IX.15, *The status of sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance*, and
    - Information Papers on *Issues and scenarios concerning Ramsar sites or parts of sites which cease to meet or never met the Ramsar Criteria* (COP9 DOC 15) and *Implementation of the Convention's CEPA Programme for the period 2003-2005* (COP9 DOC 25);

    iii) providing the source of time-series assessments of progress on specific aspects in the implementation of the Convention, included in other Convention products. An example is the summary of progress since COP3 (Regina, 1997) in the development of National Wetland Policies, included as Table 1 in Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 2 (3rd edition, 2007); and

    iv) providing information for reporting to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on the national-level implementation of the CBD/Ramsar Joint Work Plan and the Ramsar Convention's lead implementation role for the CBD for wetlands.

The structure of the COP10 National Report Format

12. In line with Standing Committee Decisions SC35-21 and SC35-22, the COP10 National Report Format is in three sections.

13. **Section 1** provides the Institutional Information about the Administrative Authority and National Focal Points for the national implementation of the Convention.

14. **Section 2** is a "free-text" section in which to provide a summary of various aspects of national implementation progress and recommendations for the future.

15. **Section 3** provides the 66 implementation indicator questions, grouped under each Convention implementation strategy, and with a "free-text" section under each Strategy in which the Contracting Party may, if it wishes, add further information on national implementation of the Strategy and its indicators.

Guidance for filling in and submitting the COP10 National Report Format

IMPORTANT – READ THIS SECTION OF GUIDANCE BEFORE STARTING TO FILL IN THE NATIONAL REPORT FORMAT

16. All three Sections of the COP10 National Report Format should be filled in, in one of the Convention's official languages (English, French, Spanish).

17. The deadline for submission of the completed National Report Format is **31 March 2008**. It will not be possible to include information from National Reports received from Parties after that date in the analysis and reporting on Convention implementation to COP10.

18. All fields with a pale yellow background must be filled in.

19. Fields with a pale green background are free-text fields in which to provide additional information, if the Contracting Party so wishes. Although providing information in these fields in the COP10 NRF is optional, Contracting Parties are encouraged to provide such additional information wherever possible and relevant, since it is the experience of the Secretariat that such explanatory information is very valuable in ensuring a full understanding of implementation progress and activity, notably in informing the preparation of global and regional implementation reports to COP.

20. In order to assist Contracting Parties in their provision of such additional information, for a number of indicator questions some particularly helpful types of such information are suggested. However, of course, Parties are free to add any other relevant information they wish in any of the "Additional implementation information" fields.

21. The Format is created as a "Form" in Microsoft Word. You are only able to move to, and between, each of the yellow or green boxes to give your replies and information. All other parts of the form are locked.

22. To go to a yellow or green field you wish to fill in, move the cursor over the relevant part of the form, and left-click the mouse. The cursor will automatically move to the next field available.

23. To move down the sequence of fields to fill in, you can also use the "Tab" key on the computer keyboard.

24. For a "free-text" field, you can type in whatever information you wish. If you wish to amend any of the text you have put in a green or yellow "free-text" box, it is recommended that you cut-and-paste the existing text into a separate file, make the amendments, and then cut-and-paste the revised text back into the green box. This is because within the "Form" format there is limited facility to make editorial changes within the "free-text" box once text has been entered.

25. For each of the "Indicator questions" in Section 3, a drop-down menu of answer options is provided. These vary between indicators, depending on the question asked in the indicator, but are in general of the form: "Yes", "No", "Partly", "In progress", etc.

26. For each indicator question you can choose only one answer. If you wish to provide further information or clarifications concerning your answer, you can provide this in the green additional information box below the relevant indicator question.

27. To select an answer to an indicator question, use the Tab key, or move the cursor over the relevant yellow box, and left-click the mouse. The drop-down menu of answer options will appear. Left-click the mouse on the answer option you choose, and this will appear in the centre of the yellow box.

28. The NRF is not intended normally to be filled in by one person alone – for many indicators it would seem best for the principal compiler to consult with colleagues in the same and other agencies within the government who might have fuller knowledge of the Party's overall implementation of the Convention. The principal compiler can save the work at any point in the process and return to it subsequently to continue or to amend answers previously given.

29. After each session working on the NRF, remember to save the file! A recommended filename structure is: COP10NRF [Country] [date].

30. After the NRF has been completed, please send the completed National Report to the Ramsar Secretariat, preferably by email, to Alexia Dufour, Regional Affairs Officer, Ramsar Convention Secretariat, email: dufour@ramsar.org. The Secretariat must receive your completed National Report in electronic (Microsoft Word) format.

31. When the completed National Report is submitted by the Party, **it must be accompanied by a letter or e-mail message in the name of the Administrative Authority, confirming that this is that Contracting Party's official submission of its COP10 National Report**.

32. If you have any questions or problems concerning filling in the COP10 NRF, please contact the Ramsar Secretariat for advice (e-mail as above).

SECTION 1: INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

NAME OF CONTRACTING PARTY: BELGIUM

DESIGNATED RAMSAR ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY	
Name of Administrative Authority:	**Flemish Region: Agency for Nature & Forests, Ministry of Environment, Nature & Energy, Flemish Governement** **Walloon Region: Division for Nature and Forests, Ministry of the Walloon Region** **Brussels Region: Division for Nature, Water and Forests, Brussels Instituut for environnemental management** **Federal authorities: FOD Public Health, Food Safety and Environment , DG Environment** **IMPORTANT NOTICE:** **ANSWERS ARE GIVEN SEPARATELY FOR FEDERAL OR REGIONAL AUTHORITIES** **WHERE REQUIRED:** **1) RW = WALLOON REGION** **2) RF = FLEMISH REGION** **3) BCR = BRUSSELS REGION** **3) FED = FEDERAL AUTHORITIES**
Head of Administrative Authority - name and title:	Flemish region: Ir. Filiep Cardoen, Head of Policy Division Walloon Region : Ir. Philippe Blerot, Inspecteur general Division for Nature and Forests Brussels Region: Dr. Machteld Gryseels, Head of Division for Nature Water and Forest Federal: R. Moreau, General Director for Environement
Mailing address:	Flemish Region: Koning Albert II Laan 20, 1000 Brussels, BELGIUM Walloon Region: Avenue Prince de Liège 7, 5100 Jambes, BELGIUM Brussels Region: Gulledelle 100, 1200 Brussels, Belgium Federal: Place Victor Horta 40/10 , 1060 Brussels, Belgium
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DESIGNATED NATIONAL FOCAL POINT *(DAILY CONTACT IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY)* FOR RAMSAR CONVENTION MATTERS	
Name and title:	Flemish region: Dr. Els Martens Walloon Region : Catherine Debruyne Brussels Region: Machteld Gryseels Federal: Geert Raeymaekers
Mailing address:	same as above
Telephone/Fax:	same as above
Email:	els.martens@lne.vlaanderen.be c.debruyne@mrw.wallonie.be mgr@ibgebim.be Geert.Raeymaekers@health.fgov.be

DESIGNATED NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO STRP (SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL)	
Name and title of focal	Flemish region: Dr. Els Martens

point:	
Name of organisation:	Flemish Region: Agency for Nature & Forests, Ministry of Environment, Nature & Energy, Flemish Governement
Mailing address:	same as above
Telephone/Fax:	same as above
Email:	same as above
DESIGNATED GOVERNMENT NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO THE CEPA PROGRAMME ON COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS	
Name and title of focal point:	
Name of organisation:	
Mailing address:	
Telephone/Fax:	
Email:	
DESIGNATED NON-GOVERNMENT NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO THE CEPA PROGRAMME ON COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS	
Name and title:	Wim Van den Bossche;
Name of organisation:	Natuurpunt/BirdLife Belgium
Mailing address:	Coxiestraat 11, 2800 Mechelen , BELGIUM
Telephone/Fax:	Tel: +32(0)15-29 72 20 Fax: +32 (0)15-42 49 21
Email:	wim.vandenbossche@natuurpunt.be

SECTION 2: GENERAL SUMMARY OF NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

In your country, in the past triennium (i.e., since COP9 reporting):

A. What new steps have been taken to implement the Convention?

RW:

The Walloon Region has recently adopted several instruments aiming at the integrated water management, the conservation and the sustainable use of wetlands: Natura 2000, the 'Code de l'eau' which insures the transposition of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/CE) and the 'rain plan'.

Considering the major ecological function of the orohydrographic network, the Walloon natura 2000 network was build on its structure. Wetlands are threreby well represented in our Natura 2000 network. The major challenge of the Natura 2000 network is to maintain or restore natural habitats and wild species at a favourable conservation status. As the fauna and flora of wetlands depend on the water quality, management plans need to be done at the water bassin scale. This is done through the implementation of the Water Framework Directive as it requires to establish river basin districts and for each of these a river basin management plan. It also insists on the specific rôle of peatlands and marshes.

The 'rain plan' was adopted in order to coordinate measures aiming at preventing flood damages. One of its action is the conservation and restoration of wetlands. The cartography of all area's liable to flooding has been done.

Some particular measures also have a great impact on water quality such as:

- limiting cattle access to river banks
- new water treatment plants

RF:

Implementation of the conservation and the sustainable use of wetlands are in the first place compulsory by law and integrated in conservation objectives of protected areas, Natura 2000 and in the implementation action plans of the EU Water Framework Directive such as the river basis plans. Main objectives are covered by following actions and regulations:

- marshes and wetland habitas are protected by law: any project that may have an impact on the habitat structure requires a licence based on an EIA. As all Ramsar sites in Flanders are included in SPA's designated in the framework of the Birds Directive, the more strict regulations related to projects or plans are also valid for the wetland habitats laying within the sites. The implementation and control system has been improved through the transposition of the regulations of the EU Birds Directive and Habitat Directive in the Flemish Decree of 1997 for Nature Conservation as changed on 19 July 2002 (published in the State Journal on 31 August 2002) so that all requests for such licences and the impact report need an advice from the Nature Division.
- changes in the structure of water systems that are located in 'green land use planning maps', thus also outside the Ramsar sites, require a licence.
- specific regulations are developed for buffer sites along water systems , such as regarding use of manure, surface water pollution and are now more restrictive
- transposition of the EU Water Framework Directive into the Decree for Integrated Water Policy includes specific regulations for conservation, protection and monitoring of all wetland and river systems.
- regulation exists on the designation of 'natural flooding areas' in order to prevent inundations of urbanised areas and also gives the framework for rehabilitation of natural

river and flooding areas such as under the SIGMA-plan for the Schelde-area

B. What have been the most successful aspects of implementation of the Convention?

RW:

The cartography of many wetlands is available on the walloon cartography portal:

- area's liable to flooding
- N2000 sites
- Water catchement area's

The atlas of the Walloon watercourses will also soon be available.

RF:

the additional status as a Ramsar sites of the most important wetlands located within SPAs gives those areas an additional flag of international importance.

C. What have been the greatest difficulties in implementing the Convention?

RF:

As the specific regulations under the Convention are not reflected specifically in the law although the overall objectives are integrated under the implementation of EU regulation Ramsar regulations and objectives are as such not so obvious.

D. What proposals and priorities are there for future implementation of the Convention?

RW/RF:

Management plans implementing the Water framework Directive should allow to take many criteria affecting the quality of sites in the protected area register into account. This register includes :

- area's liable to flooding
- relevant N2000 sites
- Water catchement area's
- nutrient sensitive area's ;
- fishing area's ;
- allowed bathing area's;

RF: Proposal for the designation of additional sites that comply with the criteria.

E. Does the Contracting Party have any recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Ramsar Secretariat?

More communication through media and directed to governments about the importance of the ecosystem services and functions of wetlands and about their economic values; highlight concrete synergies with other MEA's and on the crucial importance of integrated approach.

F. Does the Contracting Party have any recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Convention's International Organisation Partners (IOPs)?

RF: support integrated approach and cooperation projects.

G. How can national implementation of the Ramsar Convention be better linked with implementation of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), especially those in the "Biodiversity cluster" (Ramsar, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),

Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), CITES, and World Heritage Convention), and UNCCD and UNFCCC?

Through coordination and integrated approach by national focal points of those agreements, by reflecting the objectives related to biodiversity conservation of each of those agreemtns in the National/Regional strategies/action plans. Stimulate the use of the UNEP issue based modules for coherent implementation of biodiversity conventions

H. How can Ramsar Convention implementation be better linked with the implementation of water policy/strategy and other strategies in the country (e.g., sustainable development, energy, extractive industry, poverty reduction, sanitation, food security, biodiversity)?

FL: By integrating and specifically highlighting the Ramsar objectives in the relevant strategies.

I. Does the Contracting Party have any other general comments on the implementation of the Convention?

Enhancing communication and understanding on the specific role and importance of the convention on national and international level.

SECTION 3: INDICATOR QUESTIONS & FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION INFORMATION

Guidance for filling in this section

1. For each "indicator question", please select one answer from the "drop-down" list in the yellow box.

2. If you wish to add any additional information on either one or more of the specific indicators for each strategy, and/or for other aspects of the national implementation of this strategy, please provide this information in the green "free-text" boxes below the indicator questions for each Strategy.

3. If you wish to amend any of the text you have put in a green "free-text" box, it is recommended that you cut-and-paste the existing text into a separate file, make the amendments, and then cut-and-paste the revised text back into the green box.

4. So as to assist Contracting Parties in referring to relevant information they provided in their National Report to COP9, for each indicator below (where appropriate) a cross-reference is provided to the equivalent indicator(s) in the COP9 NRF, shown thus: {x.x.x}

GOAL 1. THE WISE USE OF WETLANDS

STRATEGY 1.1: *Describe, assess and monitor the extent and condition of wetland resources at relevant scales, in order to inform and underpin implementation of the Convention, in particular in the application of the wise use principle.*

Indicator questions:

1.1.1 Does your country have a comprehensive National Wetland Inventory? {1.1.1}	B - No
1.1.2 Is the wetland inventory data and information maintained and made accessible to all stakeholders? {1.1.3; 1.1.6}	B - No
1.1.3 Does your country have information about the status and trends of the ecological character of wetlands (Ramsar sites and/or wetlands generally)? {1.2.2} [if "Yes", please indicate in Additional implementation information below, from where or from whom this information can be accessed]	A - Yes
1.1.4 If the answer is "Yes" in 1.1.3, does this information indicate that the need to address adverse change in the ecological character of wetlands is now greater, the same, or less than in the previous triennium, for:	
a) Ramsar sites	B - the same
b) wetlands generally	B - the same

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 1.1.1 – 1.1.4 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "1.1.3: [.. additional information …]"

1.1.1: Belgium has regional inventories of wetlands

RW: The Walloon Region has registered all 'protected area's' according to the Water framework Directive. This register includes:

(i) areas designated for the protection of habitats or species where the maintenance or improvement of the status of water is an important factor in their protection, including relevant Natura 2000 sites; (In the walloon Region, the Natura 2000 network is based on the hydrographical network.)

(ii) areas designated for the abstraction of water intended for human consumption;

(iii) areas designated for the protection of economically significant aquatic species;

(iv) bodies of water designated as recreational waters;

(v) nutrient-sensitive areas;

RF: For Flanders, detailed ecological mapping exists at scale 1/25000 with indication of habitat types including wetlands; additional inventories exist on ad hoc basis or as contribution to specific plans (restoration, management of nature reserves etc.) Maps are accessible on http://geo-vlaanderen.agiv.be/geo-vlaanderen.

1.1.2:

RW: Information on the Natura 2000 sites have been collected and are available through the natura 2000 website (http://natura2000.wallonie.be/).

The atlas of all water courses will soon be available.

RF: atlas on water courses in availbale, maps with flooding areas is accessible on

http://geo-vlaanderen.agiv.be/geo-vlaanderen

FED: only one RAMSAR Site in Belgian Part of the North Sea - trend assessment through art 17 Reporting of EU-Habitats Directive as the Ramsar site is an integral part of the SAC under the Directive.

1.1.3:

RW: The ecological character of Wetlands are monitored regularly and the results are availble through the dashboard of the walloon environment (http://environnement.wallonie.be/eew/default.aspx). In 2007, a report focusing on a first assessment of conservation status of all habitats and species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive has been conducted. As many Natura 2000 sites are wetlands, they have been assest for this report.

Assesment of the biological quality of waterways has been persued by the diversity of macroinvertabrates. Databases of fish populations have been developed.

Four data collecting stations have been selected to be included in an european network of stations on waterway's biological quality.

RF: The ecological characteristics of wetlands are monitored regularly. Results for Flanders can be obtained from the Institute for Nature and Forest Research (INBO) www.inbo.be and Vlaamse Milieumaatschappij (VMM) www.vmm.be.

1.1.4

RW: according to the walloon state of the environement, the chemical, physical and biological quality of our waterways has globaly increased the past few years. This has thus increased the possibilities for the developement of fauna and flora populations. The morphological quality of waterways is considered as natural on the 3/4th of the network. However, the quality levels are too low for sensitive species or habitats.There is not enough information on the conservation status of pounds, marshes and wet medows.

BCR 1.1.1,2,3 The Brussels Capital Region has a good overview of its wetlands within the framework of the bleue network. However the existing information on biodiversity, water quality and other wetland properties finds itself scattered over different databases and in a non standardised format.

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 1.1 national implementation:

STRATEGY 1.2: *Develop, review, amend when necessary, and implement national or supranational policies, legislation, institutions and practices, including impact assessment and valuation, in all Contracting Parties, to ensure that the wise use principle of the Convention is being effectively applied, where possible specifying the appropriate policy instrument(s) in each Contracting Party which ensures wise use of wetlands.*

Indicator questions:

1.2.1 Is a National Wetland Policy (or equivalent instrument) in place? {2.1.1} [If "Yes", please give the title and date of the policy in Additional implementation information]	B - No
1.2.2 Does the National Wetland Policy (or equivalent instrument) incorporate any World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) targets and actions? {2.1.2}	C - Partly
1.2.3 Have wetland issues been incorporated into national strategies for sustainable development (including National Poverty Reduction Plans called for by the WSSD and water resources management and water efficiency plans)? {2.1.2}	B - No
1.2.4 Has the quantity and quality of water available to, and required by, wetlands been assessed?	C - Partly
1.2.5 Are Strategic Environmental Assessment practices applied when reviewing policies, programmes and plans that may impact upon wetlands? {2.2.2}	A - Yes

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 1.2.1 – 1.2.5 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "1.2.3: [.. additional information …]"

1.2.1 There is no National Wetland Policy as such but regional plans integrate wetland issues.

RW:

The water framework Directive has reoriented the walloon water management policy in a more coherent way by hydrological bassin (http://environnement.wallonie.be/directive_eau/homepage.cfm). A new water code (code de l'eau) has thus been adopted. 15 sub-bassin have been identified and are considered as the management units to define quality objectives, waterways schemes (contrat de Rivière), fisheries management, water treatment. Other action plans have also been developed on floodings and on sustanable management of nitrogen in agriculture.

Natura 2000 also guides wetlands management as our Natura 2000 network is based on the hydrographical network.

BCR :

With the framework of the bleu network the Brussels Capital Region created an important instrument, having as objectif to revolarise the wetlands within the Brussels region. Different initiatives result from this framework such as the restoration of wetlands and the installation of an sustainable hydrographic network of high quality

Also, with the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, an integral sustainable water policy is being developed carrying instruments such as the rain plan an the water managemlent plan.

RF:

In FL the Environment & Nature Policy Plan MINA 3 (2003-2007) and MINA 3+ (2008-2010) aspects related to water systems and wetlands are integrated in the theme Biodiversity and the various themes related to water systems: ground water aspects, surface water aspects and loss of biodiversity that includes specific attention for habitats of high nature value such as wetlands. Specific objectives and measures include inventarisation, ecosystem vision reports for catchment/river basins and development of management plans for river basins, restoration projects and monitoring.the designation of Natura 2000 sites are largely based upon the hydrographic network that often forms the backbone of the ecological network of nature conservation areas . Site specific management planning therefore takes into account wetland issues as one of the main aspects for the nature objectives and site vision which are based upon the ecosystem approach. The management plans of the river basins are based on the integrated management of the water system, related biodiversity, land use, ecological and socio-economic functions within the whole basis area.

1.2.2

RW: yes in order to keep water drinkable, we protect water catchment area's, waterways, we tent to have water treatment plants covering the high population densities area's..

1.2.4

RF: Water quality of all rivers and most of the smaller water courses and water bodies in Flanders is measured on a regular basis. For most river basins, hydrological models are available.

BCR: Ad hoc projects are executed to investigate water quality and quantity

FED: Water quality assessed through implementation of the EU-Water Framework Directive (coastal waters)

1.2.5:

RW :this has been done when revising/adopting the Environmental code, the Water code and the Forestry code.

RF: Physical planning instruments and environmental legislation indicate where EIA is needed; this includes stronger criteria for Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites.

FED: law of 13 february 2006 on the evaluation of the environmental effects of plans and programmes

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 1.2 national implementation:

STRATEGY 1.3: *Increase recognition of the significance of wetlands for reasons of water supply, coastal protection, flood defence, climate change mitigation, food security, poverty reduction, cultural heritage, and scientific research, with a focus on under-represented ecosystem types, through developing and disseminating methodology to achieve wise use of wetlands.*

Indicator questions:

1.3.1 Has an assessment been conducted of the ecosystem benefits/services provided by Ramsar sites? {3.3.1} [If "Yes" or "Partly", please indicate in the Additional implementation information below, the year of assessment and from where or from whom this information can be obtained]	C - Partly
1.3.2 Have wise use wetland programmes and/or projects that contribute to poverty alleviation objectives and/or food and water security plans been implemented? {3.3.4}	D - In progress
1.3.3 Has national action been taken to implement the Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands (Resolution VIII.17)? {3.2.1}	C - Partly
1.3.4 Has national action been taken to apply the guiding principles on cultural values of wetlands (Resolutions VIII.19 and IX.21)? {3.3.3}	B - No

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 1.3.1 – 1.3.4 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "1.3.3: [.. additional information …]"

1.3.1.

RW: a study has been conducted on the ability of the 'Fagnes' to retain water, prevent floodings etc..

RF: An assessment has been carried out for the Schelde estuary: Prof. P. Meire - University of Antwerp, and for Vijvergebied Limburg: former Nature Division of the Flemish Environment Administration & WWF

1.3.2.

RF: For the Schelde estuary, IJzer estuary and Blankaart wetland area. A project has just been started in Vijvergebied Limburg in a cooperation between the land owners and the Agency.

1.3.3.

RW: A particular attention is given to the protection of remaining peatlands in Wallonia. Most of these are considered as natura 2000 sites. The Ramsar site of the Haute fagnes is our wider peatland area.

1.3.4.

RF: some wetlands are protected landscapes

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 1.3 national implementation:

STRATEGY 1.4: *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, all in the context of implementing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM).

Indicator questions:

1.4.1 Has the Convention's water-related guidance (see Resolution IX.1. Annex C) been used/applied in decision-making related to water resource planning and management? {3.4.2 – r3.4.xiv}	C - Partly
1.4.2 Have CEPA expertise and tools been incorporated into catchment/river basin planning and management?	C - Partly
1.4.3 Has the Convention's guidance on wetlands and coastal zone management (Annex to Resolution VIII.4) been used/applied in Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) planning and decision-making? {3.4.5}	C - Partly
1.4.4 Have the implications for wetland conservation and wise use of national implementation of the Kyoto Protocol been assessed? {3.4.9}	D - Planned

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 1.4.1 – 1.4.4 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "1.4.3: [.. additional information …]"

RF: related guidance, expertise and implications for wetland conservation are integrated in relevant policies

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 1.4 national implementation:

STRATEGY 1.5: *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.*

Indicator questions:

1.5.1 Have wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes or projects been implemented? {4.1.2} [If "Yes", please identify any major programmes or projects in Additional implementation information]	A - Yes
1.5.2 Has the Convention's guidance on wetland restoration (Annex to Resolution VIII.16; Wise Use Handbook 15, 3rd edition) been used/applied in designing and implementing wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes or projects? {4.1.2}	C - Partly

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 1.5.1 – 1.5.2 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "1.5.2: [.. additional information …]"

1.5.1

RW:

- LIFE project aiming at the conservation of pearl mussel's habitats;
- LIFE project aiming at the restoration of the otter's habitat;
- LIFE project (finnished) aiming at the restoration peatlands in the plateau de Saint-Hubert;
- LIFE project aiming at the management and the restoration of military camps; some actions of this project are on wetlands ;
- LIFE project on the restaoration of peatland in the Haute-Fagnes area.
- LIFE project (finnished) aiming at the restaoration of the concrake's habitat
- LIFE project (finnished) aiming at the restaoration of the habitat of birds of the Reedbeds in the bassin de la Haine .
- Study on the developement of a better management of river banks
- Study on the developement of management practices for 3 major invansive alien species affecting river banks.

Several projects intend to improve the populations status of theatened fishes species:

* Restauration of freshwater fish's habitat (spawning grounds);
* Study and scientific monitoring in order to restore populations of the atlantic salmon in the "Saumon 2000 project".
* Protection netting in hydro-electric power station.
* Inventory of obstacles for fish circulation in the hydrographical network in Wallonia.

Other projects aim at a sustainable management and wise use of wetlands:

- Promotion of vedes techniques végétales, en vue du rétablissement d'une végétation riveraine naturelle, garante de stabilité pour les berges.
- Survey of the phytosanitary state of river bank trees
- Study on cattle access to river banks
- Study on the way to evaluate the quality of reedbeds in order to reach a better protection.
- Study on macro-invertebrate populations to assess water courses quality

BCR: within the framework of the bleu network different activities are executed such as:

- restoration of wetlands
- ecological management of parkponds
- revalorisation of open water an river systems in an urbanised area

RF: 1.5.1. & 1.5.2 : Ramsar sites and other wetlands located in Natura 2000 sites or nature reserves receive specific attention in the respective sites specific measures for nature restoration and management. In the river catchment and basin areas restoration of ecological systems are one of the overall objectives and action plans.

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 1.5 national implementation:

STRATEGY 1.6: *Develop guidance and promote protocols and actions to prevent, control or eradicate invasive alien species in wetland systems.*

Indicator questions:

1.6.1 Have national policies, strategies and management responses to threats from invasive species, particularly in wetlands, been developed and implemented? {r5.1.ii}	C - Partly
1.6.2 Have such policies, strategies and management responses been carried out in cooperation with the focal points of other conventions and international organisations/processes? {r5.1.ii}	C - Partly

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 1.6.1 – 1.6.2 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "1.6.2: [.. additional information …]"

1.6.1:

A national contact group has been set up in order to ensure a scientific background to political decisions and to provide an adequate feedback from the international decision-making scene to the scientific community. The steering committees focus on administrative and political aspects in order to prepare Belgian positions for international meetings, to write thematic reports and elaborate programs related to Belgian international obligations.

The National Biodiversity Strategy (adopted in 2006) has 2 operational objectives directly related to IAS (n°3.7.: 'Avoid the introduction and mitigate the impact of invasive alien species on biodiversity' and n°5.7.: 'Consider the potential impact on biodiversity, and in particular the invasiveness of species, in making import and export decisions')

The Belgian Forum on Invasive Alien Species BFIS (http://www.biodiversity.be/bbpf/) aims to provide and gather scientific knowledge about invasive alien species in order to encourage interdisciplinary cooperation among scientists and favours information exchange and dissemination as a support to develop measures dedicated to the prevention and the mitigation of the impacts of invasive species.

The BFIS is responsible for preparing and updating the reference list and a database of alien species invading terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems in Belgium.

RW: A special study is conducted on IAS species along waterways and on ways and means to control/eradicate them. Information is distributed river managers and other relevant stackeholders.

A department of the Walloon Region is in charge of the control mukrat population.

Many River Contract have made information campaign on this specific subject.

FED: problem of invasive species has been fully recognised

RF: control actions have been carried out for invasive water plant species in some river courses and small lakes.

1.6.2:

Yes, focal points of the CBD, the CMS, AEWA are involved in the discussions on IAS at national and regional levels.

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 1.6 national implementation:

GOAL 2. WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

STRATEGY 2.1 *Apply the Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Handbook 7, 2nd edition; Handbook 14, 3rd edition).*

Indicator questions:

2.1.1 Have a strategy and priorities been established for any further designation of Ramsar sites, using the Strategic Framework for the Ramsar List? {10.1.1} [If further Ramsar site designations are planned, please indicate in Additional implementation information, the number of sites and anticipated year of designation]	D - Planned

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicator 2.1.1

2.1.1

RF: Criteria were assessed and priority sites identified as possible additonal Ramsar sites but not yet processed.

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 2.1 national implementation:

STRATEGY 2.2 *Maintain the Ramsar Sites Information Service and constantly update it with the best available information, and use the Ramsar Sites Database as a tool for guiding the further designation of wetlands for the List of Wetlands of International Importance.*

Indicator questions:

2.2.1 Have all required updates of the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands been submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat? {10.2.3}	B - No
2.2.2 Are the Ramsar Sites Information Service and its database used in national implementation of the Convention concerning Ramsar site issues?	B - No

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 2.2.1 – 2.2.2 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "2.2.1: [.. additional information …]"

2.2.1:

RW: Yes

FED: data sheet should be updated (eg: address compiler is no longer valid, physical features and ecological features are not described, hunting is now prohibited in entire Belgian part of the North Sea, ...)

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 2.2 national implementation:

STRATEGY 2.3 *Maintain the ecological character of all Ramsar sites.*

Indicator questions:

2.3.1 Have the measures required to maintain the ecological character of all Ramsar sites been defined and applied? {11.1.1}	C - Partly
2.3.2 Have management plans/strategies been developed and implemented at all Ramsar sites? {11.1.2} [If "Yes" or "Some sites", please indicate, in Additional implementation information below, for how many sites have plans/strategies been developed but not implemented; for how many are plans/strategies in preparation; and for how many are plans/strategies being reviewed or revised]	C - Some sites
2.3.3 Have cross-sectoral site management committees been established at Ramsar sites? {11.1.5} [If "Yes" or "Some sites", please name the sites in Additional implementation information]	C - Some sites
2.3.4 Has any assessment of Ramsar site management effectiveness been carried out? [if "Yes" or "Some sites", please indicate in Additional implementation information below the year of assessment and from whom, or from where, the information is available]	C - Some sites

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 2.3.1 – 2.3.4 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "2.3.3: [.. additional information …]"

2.3.1:

RW: all our Ramsar sites have maintained their ecological character via their management plans and protection status

2.3.2:

RW: Yes, all our Ramsar sites have management plans.

2.3.3:

RW: Yes, our Ramsar sites have commitees involving relevant stakeholders (local authorities, farmers, foresters, naturalists, fishermen...)

FED: user agreements with stakeholders

RF: Relevant administrations, private sectors such as farmers, port authorities, gravel and sand extraction companies, research institutes and universities and research companies are involved in the planning, EIA, and implementation aspects. With reference to water supply, water storage and water effluent purification the relevant water companies are directly involved. For the development of the Natura Objectives Plans for the sites of the Flemish Ecological Network and of Natura 2000 many of which include wetlands, the site relevant administrations and private sectors are involved through formal consultation processes as well as communication and workshop procedures. As an informative basis all actual land uses are compiled and an overview is made of all actors and other stakeholders active in the project site.

2.3.4:

RF: For natura reserves lying within Ramsar site areas management measures have to be monitored - reports give an indication on effectiveness.

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 2.3 national implementation:

2.3.3:

FED through the EU-Habitats and Birds Directive requirements

STRATEGY 2.4 *Monitor the condition of Ramsar sites, notify the Ramsar Secretariat 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.*

Indicator questions:

2.4.1 Are arrangements in place for the Administrative Authority to be informed of changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar sites, pursuant to Article 3.2? {r11.2.iv} [If "Yes" or "Some sites", please summarise the mechanism(s) established in Additional implementation information]	A - Yes
2.4.2 Have all cases of change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar sites been reported to the Ramsar Secretariat, pursuant to Article 3.2,? {11.2.4} [If "Yes" or "Some sites", please indicate in Additional implementation information below for which Ramsar sites Article 3.2 reports have been made by the Administrative Authority to the Secretariat, and for which sites such reports of change or likely change have not yet been made]	---
2.4.3 If applicable, have actions been taken to address the issues for which Ramsar sites have been listed on the Montreux Record? {r11.2.viii} [If "Yes" or "Partly", please provide in Additional implementation information information about the actions taken]	---

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 2.4.1 – 2.4.3 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "2.4.3: [.. additional information …]"

2.4.1: via Ramsar site management team.

2.4.2 Not applicable

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 2.4 national implementation:

STRATEGY 2.5 *Promote inventory and integrated management of shared wetlands and hydrological basins, including cooperative monitoring and management of shared wetland-dependent species.*

Indicator questions:

2.5.1 Have all transboundary/shared wetland systems been identified? {12.1.1}	A - Yes
2.5.2 Is effective cooperative management in place for shared wetland systems (including regional site and waterbird flyway networks)? {12.1.2; 12.2.2} [If "Yes" or "Partly", please indicate in Additional implementation information below for which wetland systems such management is in place]	C - Partly

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 2.5.1 – 2.5.2 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "2.5.1: [.. additional information …]"

2.5.1:

Yes, Through the implementation of the Water framework Directive whose management plans need to be elaborated at the water bassin scale.

2.5.2:

RW:

- Cooperative management of the transboundary Ramsar Site of the Haute-Sûre (Wallonia Luxembourg).
- Cooperative management against floodings occurs on several water bassins
- The international Commission on the Meuse and Escault aim at the coordinantion of the implementation of the water Framework Directive, give advices to Parties for a better prevention and a better protection against floodings and pollutions.
- A project aims at implementing integrated management in the Haine bassin. http://www.gihm.org/index.htm
- Cooperative management is also in place for the European Otter (Wallonia, Luxembourg and Germany).
- A cooperation project aims at producing local ecotypes of trees to be planted on riverbanks (Wallonia, Luxembourg and France) (http://ecoliri.cra.wallonie.be/).

FL: Cooperative management bodies were established for the Zwin area, the Schelde estuary; Kaltmhout-De Zoom and the Grensmaas - however not all of those are designated Ramsar sites.

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 2.5 national implementation:

STRATEGY 2.6 *Support existing regional arrangements under the Convention and promote additional arrangements.*

Indicator questions:

2.6.1 Has the Contracting Party been involved in the development of a regional initiative under the framework of the Convention? {12.3.2} [If "Yes" or "Planned", please indicate in Additional implementation information below the name(s) and collaborating countries of each regional initiative]	B - No

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicator 2.6.1

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 2.6 national implementation:

GOAL 3. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

STRATEGY 3.1 *Collaboration with other institutions: Work as partners with international and regional multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other agencies.*

Indicator questions:

3.1.1 Are mechanisms in place at the national level for collaboration between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and the focal points of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs)? {13.1.1}	A - Yes
3.1.2 Are the national focal points of other MEAs invited to participate in the National Ramsar/Wetland Committee? {r13.1.iii}	C - Partly
3.1.3 [For African Contracting Parties only] Has the Contracting Party participated in the implementation of the wetland programme under NEPAD? {13.1.6}	E - Not applicable

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 3.1.1 – 3.1.3 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "3.1.3: [.. additional information …]"

A sub group called the 'Nature Group' of the coordination commitee on international environmental politics gathers once a month. Its members are involved in all the relevant MEA's (Ramsar, CBD, CMS, OSPAR, CITES, the Bern Convention ..). Its main goal is to coordinate belgian positions in these fora.

3.1.2 FL: The Committee has not been active the last 2 years due to restructuring processes of administrations and ministries, but will be reactivated.

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 3.1 national implementation:

STRATEGY 3.2 *Sharing of expertise and information: Promote the sharing of expertise and information.*

Indicator questions:

3.2.1 Have networks, including twinning arrangements, been established, nationally or internationally, for knowledge sharing and training for wetlands that share common features? {14.1.3} [If "Yes" or "Partly", please indicate in Additional implementation information below the networks and wetlands involved]	A - Yes
3.2.2 Has information about the country's wetlands and/or Ramsar sites and their status been made publicly available (e.g., through publications or a Web site)? {14.1.1}	B - No

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 3.2.1-3.2.2

3.2.1:

RW:

- Twinning arrangements essentially occur for transboundary sites such as for the Hautes Fagnes, the Haute Sûre etc

- The Meuse and the Escault international Commission also work on common features for a better global management of these 2 Rivers.

FL: networking and information exchange with the Netherlands

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 3.2 national implementation:

GOAL 4. IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY

STRATEGY 4.1 *Local communities, indigenous people, and cultural values: Encourage active and informed participation of local communities and indigenous people, including women and youth, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands, including in relation to understanding the dynamics of cultural values.*

Indicator questions:

4.1.1 Has resource information been compiled on local communities' and indigenous people's participation in wetland management? {6.1.5}	C - Partly
4.1.2 Have traditional knowledge and management practices in relation to wetlands been documented and their application encouraged? {6.1.2}	B - No
4.1.3 Does the Contracting Party promote public participation in decision-making (with respect to wetlands), especially with local stakeholder involvement in the selection of new Ramsar sites and in Ramsar site management? {6.1.4}	C - Partly
4.1.4 Have educational and training activities been developed concerning cultural aspects of wetlands? {r6.1.vii}	C - Partly
4.1.5 Have cultural values of wetlands been included in the management planning of Ramsar sites and other wetlands? {r.6.1.vi} [if "Yes" or "Partly", please indicate, if known, how many Ramsar sites and their names in Additional implementation information below]	C - Partly

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 4.1.1 – 4.1.5 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "4.1.3: [.. additional information …]"

4.1.1, 4.1.3. RF : Participatory approach is included in the development of Nature Objectives Plans or other projects for Natura 2000 sites and for river basin management plans

4.1.3

BE:

- In Interreg Projects (projects aiming at regional transboundary cooperation partly financed by europe), local stackeholder participation and involvement is part of the concept.

RW

- River Contracts bring together all the actors of the valley with the aim to reach a consensus on an action programme for the restoration of the water course, the river banks and surroundings and the water resources. It applies the participatory approach principle. Synergies are created to meet all concerns. Invited are representatives of the political, administrative, socio-economic, educational, scientific and associative worlds; Many local integrated management exemples show that implementation of EU Directives are related to water protection.
- A public consultation was conducted on the implementation of the Water framework Directive
- More generally, owners of river sides are involved in management projects having an impact on their properties.

4.1.4:

RW: The Natural park of the Haute-Sure (in which the Ramsar site is included) has published a book on local supernatural legends and also a audio CD telling those stories. River contracts, naturalists associations, fishing schools .. sometimes also inform on cultural values of wetlands.

4.1.5:

RW for the "Vallée de la Haute-Sûre" site.

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 4.1 national implementation:

STRATEGY 4.2 *Promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.*

Indicator questions:

4.2.1 Is the private sector encouraged to apply the wise use principle in activities and investments concerning wetlands? {7.1.1}	A - Yes
4.2.2 Have private-sector "Friends of Wetlands" fora or similar mechanisms been established? {7.1.4} [If "Yes" or "Partly", please indicate in Additional implementation information below the private sector companies involved]	B - No

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 4.2.1 – 4.2.2 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "4.2.2: [.. additional information …]"

4.2.1

RW:

The private sector is encouraged to preserve welands via the application of the environmental permits which is applicable for several activities having impacts on wetlands such as water catchment, waste water discharge. Besides, all plans and projects are subject to the 'unique permit' which is the combination of the environemental permit and the land use permit. If a project, is in the vicinity of a site under the law on Nature Conservation, or could have an impact on one of these sites, then the Nature and Forest department is also consulted.

RF :

Specific measures are listed in the relevant themes of the Environment & Nature Policy Plan, specific regulations are listed into the Decree for Integrated Water Policy includes specific regulations for conservation, protection and monitoring of all wetland and river systems (not only Ramsar sites), including impact assessment and valuation, as well as into the Decree for Nature Conservation regarding Natura 2000 aspects – these measures and policies are also relevant for drinking water companies and other users of wetlands.

In the framework of developments in the Schelde estuary, in the IJzer estuary and in the Grensmaas river basin, specific research projects and plans are carried out with reference to flood defense taking into account the role of restoration of wetland areas and temporary flooding sites along the river system. Private sectors such as farmers, port authorities, gravel and sand extraction companies, research institutes and universities and research companies are involved in the planning, EIA, and implementation aspects. With reference to water supply, water storage and water effluent purification the relevant companies are directly involved.

For the development of the Nature Objectives Plans for the sites of the Flemish Ecological Network and of Natura 2000, the site relevant private sectors are involved through consultation, communication and workshop procedures.

4.2.2

FED: through user agreements as part of management plans

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 4.2 national implementation:

STRATEGY 4.3 *Promote measures which encourage the application of the wise use principle.*

Indicator questions:

4.3.1 Have actions been taken to promote incentive measures which encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands? {8.1.1}	A - Yes
4.3.2 Have actions been taken to remove perverse incentive measures which discourage conservation and wise use of wetlands? {8.1.1}	B - No

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 4.3.1 – 4.3.2 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. “4.3.2: [.. additional information …]”

4.3.1:

RW:

- incentives are given to private owners for individual water treatment with an overvaluation for properties situated in priority area for water quality (Natura 2000 sites, water catchment area's).

- incentives are given to farmers (AEM) to create pounds as elements of the ecological network.

- subsidies are given to River Contracts and Municipal plans for nature Conservation for projects related to wetlands restauration/protection.

4.3.1, 4.3.2.

RF: Specific regulations are listed into the Decree for Integrated Water Policy that includes regulations for conservation, protection and wise use and monitoring of all wetland and river systems (not only Ramsar sites), including impact assessment and valuation, as well as into the Decree for Nature Conservation regarding Natura 2000 aspects. Wetlands are protected by law so that permissions for development activities with possible effect on wetland systems need an impact assessment and approval by the minister for environment & nature. Buffer zones along water courses and specific agri-environment measures stimulate wise use, restoration and protection of wetland ecosystems.

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 4.3 national implementation:

STRATEGY 4.4 *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).*

Indicator questions:

4.4.1 Has a mechanism for planning and implementing wetland CEPA (National Ramsar/Wetland Committee or other mechanism) been established with both CEPA Government and NGO National Focal Point (NFP) involvement? {r9.iii.ii} [If "Yes" or "Partly", please describe in Additional implementation information below the mechanism]	B - No
4.4.2 Has a National Action Plan (or plans at the subnational, catchment or local level) for wetland CEPA been developed? {r.9.iii.iii} [Even if a National Action Plan has not yet been developed, if broad CEPA objectives for national CEPA actions have been established please indicate this in the Additional implementation information section for Strategy 4.4]	C - Partly
4.4.3 Have actions been taken to communicate and share information cross-sectorally on wetland issues amongst relevant ministries, departments and agencies? {r9.iii.v}	A - Yes
4.4.4 Have national campaigns, programmes, and projects been carried out to raise community awareness of the ecosystem benefits/services provided by wetlands? {r9.vi.i} [If: a) support has been provided for the delivery of these and other CEPA activities by other organisations; and/or b) these have included awareness-raising for social, economic and/or cultural values, please indicate this in the Additional implementation information section for Strategy 4.4 below]	A - Yes

4.4.5 Have World Wetlands Day activities in the country, either government and NGO-led or both, been carried out? {r9.vi.ii}	A - Yes
4.4.6 Have education centres been established at Ramsar sites and other wetlands? {r9.viii.i} [If any such centres are part of the Wetland Link International (WLI) Programme of the Wildfowl & Wetland Trust, UK, please indicate this in the Additional implementation information section for Strategy 4.4 below]	C - Some sites

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 4.4.1 – 4.4.6 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "4.4.3: [.. additional information …]"

4.4.3

RW: Consultation procedures with other adminisatrations then the one in charge of the environement are in place. This includes consltations with administrations at the same level (Regiogal), but also with Provinces and Cities. Cross sectoral consultation is also insure through the International Commission 'Meuse' and the International Commision 'Escault'.

RF: An extensive communication programme is included in the framework of the development of Nature Objectives Plans for Natura 2000 sites, of river catchment managemen plans and of relevant agri-environment measures.

4.4.4:

RW: Awareness activities are carried out notably during the 'water days' (each year in march) and the world wetland day (2nd of february).

RF: see 4.4.3

4.4.5:

RW:

The Nature and Forests administration, Ramsar sites management team, River Contracts, Nature organisations regularly organise activities for the world wetland day. The nature and Forests administration also has published a small leaflet in 2007 on that year's theme (fish for tomorrow).

4.4.6:

RW:

Educational centers related to wetlands still exist in the 3 main Ramsar sites wich are the Hautes Fagnes, the Haute Sûre and the Harchies marches.

RF : The general communication and education programmes give attention to all aspects of environment and biodiversity, although for sites that include wetlands specific wetland issues form the main subject of those programmes. Visitors centres in Ramsar sites exist in Kalmthout, the Zwin site and the Blankaart and include activities of education and training. Exhibition centres take into account the wetland functions in the frameworkof the integrated water management, flood prevention plans, nature reserves etc. (imput from Flemish Government and Natuurpunt NGO).

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 4.4 national implementation:

STRATEGY 4.5 *Promote international assistance to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands, while ensuring that environmental safeguards and assessments are an integral component of all development projects that affect wetlands, including foreign and domestic investments.*

Indicator questions:

4.5.1 [For Contracting Parties with development assistance agencies only] Has funding support been provided from the development assistance agency for wetland conservation and management in other countries? {15.1.1} [If "Yes" or "Some countries", please indicate in Additional implementation the countries supported since COP9]	B - No
4.5.2 [For Contracting Parties in receipt of development assistance only] Has funding support been mobilized from development assistance agencies specifically for in-country wetland conservation and management? {15.1.8} [If "Yes" or "Some countries", please indicate in Additional implementation the agencies from which support has been received since COP9]	D - Not applicable

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 4.5.1 – 4.5.2 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "4.5.2: [.. additional information …]"

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 4.5 national implementation:

STRATEGY 4.6 *Provide the financial resources required for the Convention's governance, mechanisms and programmes to achieve the expectations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.*

Indicator questions:

4.6.1 {16.1.1} a) For the last triennium have Ramsar contributions been paid in full and in a timely manner (by 31 March of calendar year)?	A - Yes
b) If "No" in 4.6.1 a), please clarify what plan is in place to ensure future prompt payment:	

4.6.2 {16.1.2} a) Has any additional financial support been provided through voluntary contributions to the Ramsar Small Grants Fund or other non-core funded Convention activity?	B - No
b) If yes, please state the amounts:	

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 4.6.1 – 4.6.2 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "4.6.2: [.. additional information …]"

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 4.6 national implementation:

STRATEGY 4.7 *Ensure that the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee, Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and Ramsar Secretariat are operating at a high level of efficiency and effectiveness to support implementation of this Framework.*

Indicator questions:

4.7.1 Has the Contracting Party used its previous Ramsar National Reports in monitoring its implementation of the Convention? [If "Yes" or "Partly", please indicate in Additional implementation information how the Reports have been used for monitoring]	C - Partly

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicator 4.7.1

4.7.1.

RF: assessment is being carried out in the framework of overall assessment of Nature conservation, the theme Biodiversity and Water themes of the Environment & Nature Policy Plan - not specifically for Ramsar sites only.

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 4.7 national implementation:

STRATEGY 4.8 *Develop the capacity within, and promote cooperation among, institutions in Contracting Parties to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands.*

Indicator questions:

4.8.1 Has a review of national institutions responsible for the conservation and wise use of wetlands been completed? {18.1.1} [If "Yes" or "Partly", please indicate in Additional implementation information if this has led to proposals for, or implemenation of, any changes in institutional responsibilities]	C - Partly
4.8.2 Is a National Ramsar/Wetlands cross-sectoral Committee (or equivalent body) in place and operational? {18.1.2} [If "Yes", please summarise in Additional implementation information its membership and frequency of meetings]	C - Partly

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 4.8.1 – 4.8.2 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "4.8.2: [.. additional information …]"

4.8.1:

RW: yes through the implementation of the water framework directive.

4.8.2

RF: Ramsar Committee was established but has to be re-activated.

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 4.8 national implementation:

STRATEGY 4.9 *Maximize the benefits of working with the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs*) and others.*

Indicator question:

4.9.1 Has your country received assistance from one or more of the Convention's IOPs* in its implementation of the Convention? [If "Yes", please provide in Additional implementation information the name(s) of the IOP(s) and the type of assistance provided]	B - No
4.9.2 Has your country provided assistance to one or more of the Convention's IOPs*? [If "Yes", please provide in Additional implementation information the name(s) of the IOP(s) and the type of assistance provided]	A - Yes

* The IOPs are: BirdLife International, International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Wetlands International, The World Conservation Union (IUCN), and WWF International.

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 4.9.1-4.9.2

4.9.2:

RW: yes trough our annual contributions to Wetlands international and IUCN as we are Members.

RF: Financial assistance to AEWA to compile and publish Wader Atlas being carried out by Wetlands International, and to carry out a study on impact assessments and develop general directives on infrastructures and migratory birds.

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 4.9 national implementation:

STRATEGY 4.10 *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.*

Indicator questions:

4.10.1 Has your country provided support to, or participated in, the development of regional (i.e., covering more than one country) wetland training and research centres? [If "Yes", please indicate in Additional implementation information the name(s) of the centre(s)]	B - No
4.10.2 Has an assessment of national and local training needs for the implementation of the Convention, including in the use of the Wise Use Handbooks, been made? {20.1.2}	B - No

4.10.3 Have opportunities for wetland site manager training in the country been provided? {20.1.6}	A - Yes

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 4.10.1 – 4.10.3 For each piece of additional information text, please clearly identify to which indicator number it refers – e.g. "4.10.3: [.. additional information …]"

4.10.3:

RW: training sessions on the following themes were organized:

- Riverbanks vegetation management
- Otter trace recognition
- Invasive alien species
- Musk rats

The results of scientific studies carried with a contract with the Walloon Region are also being distributed.

RF: training sessions and information exchange for river basin management for local authorities.

B): on any other aspects of Strategy 4.10 national implementation: