



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: ISRAEL	
DESIGNATED RAMSAR ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY	
Name of Administrative Authority:	Ministry of Environmental Protection
Head of Administrative Authority - name and title:	Shai Avital, Director General
Mailing address:	P.O.B. 34033, Jerusalem 95464, Israel
Telephone/Fax:	Tel: 972-2-6553720/ Fax: 972-2-6553939
Email:	shaia@sviva.gov.il
DESIGNATED NATIONAL FOCAL POINT (DAILY CONTACT IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY) FOR RAMSAR CONVENTION MATTERS	
Name and title:	Dr. Eliezer Frankenberg, Deputy Chief Scientist
Mailing address:	Israel Nature and Parks Authority, 3 Am VeOlamo St., Jerusalem 95463, Israel
Telephone/Fax:	Tel: 972-2-5005427/Fax: 972-2-6529232
Email:	eliezer.frankenberg@npa.org.il
DESIGNATED NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO STRP (SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL)	
Name and title of focal point:	Dr. Reuven Ortal, Science Division
Name of organisation:	Israel Nature and Parks Authority
Mailing address:	3 Am VeOlamo St., Jerusalem 95463, Israel
Telephone/Fax:	Tel: 972-2-5005426, Fax: 972-2-659232
Email:	r.ortal@npa.org.il
DESIGNATED GOVERNMENT NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO THE CEPA PROGRAMME ON COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS	
Name and title of focal point:	Ms. Tammy Keren-Rotem, Director, Environmental Education Programs
Name of organisation:	Israel Nature and Parks Authority
Mailing address:	3 Am VeOlamo St., Jerusalem 95463, Israel
Telephone/Fax:	Tel: 972-2-5005400, Fax: 972-2-659232
Email:	tammyk@npa.gov.il
DESIGNATED NON-GOVERNMENT NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO THE CEPA PROGRAMME ON COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS	
Name and title:	Mr. Nir Papay, Director, Environmental Protection Division
Name of organisation:	Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel
Mailing address:	4 Hashfela St., Tel Aviv 66183, Israel
Telephone/Fax:	Tel: 972-3-6388742/ Fax: 972-3-5374302
Email:	papayn@zahav.net.il

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?

Recognition of the water scarcity problem in Israel has led to several initiatives in the last triennium with major implications for the implementation of the Convention:

- In the period 2005-2008, 10 new Israeli wetlands were declared as nature reserves (NR) and national parks. They include: Holot Nitsanim NR, Nahal Dolev NR, Yam Shikma NR (marine reserve), Nahal Tsalmon NR, Nahal HaKibbutsim NR, Brekhat Zmorot NP (rainpool), Nahal Rosh Pinna NR, Kfar Nahum NP (extension of a marine reserve), Bik'at Bet Netofa NR, Shamir - Nahal Rahum NR.

The total area of wetlands declared as protected areas in Israel over the past triennium is 1,848.80 hectares according to the following breakdown: four declarations in 2005, for a total of 1,594.30 hectares; one declaration in 2006 for a total of 7.01 hectares; four declarations in 2007 for a total of 95.59 hectares; and one declaration until March 31, 2008 for a total of 151.90 hectares.

- The Nature and Parks Authority has developed a database on water-related issues. The database includes information on all of Israel's water reservoirs, wastewater treatment plants, wetlands, results of river and spring monitoring and water quality data.

- Major efforts focused on the rehabilitation of wetlands. The most important wetlands currently under rehabilitation are in the following nature reserves: En Afeq and Hula Nature Reserves (Ramsar sites), En Gedi Nature Reserve, Tel Dan Nature Reserve, Sources of the Jordan River, Sources of the Yarkon River, Tanninim River and Berekhat Timsah. Rehabilitation activities include planning and operation of water systems to assure regular water supply, laying of pipelines, rehabilitation of vegetation and surveys and research.

- A Comprehensive National Outline Plan for Building, Development and Conservation was approved by the government in November 2005. The plan grants special protection to previously unprotected areas such as open spaces along watercourses and the urban shoreline as a public open space. In these areas, development will be severely restricted except for leisure and recreation purposes. The plan specifically relates to the protection of coastal strips and river strips. The environmental requirements of the plan define areas for the protection of water resources and call for assessment of each development which may threaten to harm the environment.

- In November 2006, the Israel government approved a National Outline Plan for Rivers and Drainage, within the framework of a National Outline Plan for the Water Sector, which regulates the integrated function of rivers as both ecological and landscape axes and vital drainage arteries. The plan marks some 120 main river channels and hundreds of secondary river channels and defines three strips on both sides of a river channel - a protective strip, an impact strip and an area sensitive to flooding (floodplain) – and defines permitted uses for each of these strips. Fifty rivers, which were recommended by the Ministry of Environmental Protection, are designated as areas of high priority for nature conservation and for recreation development. The plan also relates to reviews of the environmental aspects of drainage plans.

- A Partial National Outline Plan for Seawater Desalination Sites was approved by the government in 2004. In 2008, some 130 million cubic meters of desalinated seawater was produced in Israel to help close the gap between supply and demand.

- A Partial National Outline Plan for the Water Sector - Collection of Surface Water, Infiltration, Enrichment and Protection of Groundwater was approved by the government in 2007.

- A Water Authority was created in Israel in January 2007 to provide comprehensive and integrated water treatment. The Water Authority replaced the Water

Commission.

- Since 2004, when an amendment to the Water Law which recognizes nature as a legitimate consumer of water was enacted, the Nature and Parks Authority has invested major efforts on determining water allocations to nature on the basis of surveys and research. In 2008, 10 million cubic meters of water per year were allocated to nature. Efforts are also focusing on regulating natural flows for purposes of nature protection.
- In 2007, the Israel Knesset (parliament) amended the Protection of the Coastal Environment Law, which was approved in 2004 to protect the Mediterranean coastal environment, so that it applies to the protection of the Red Sea coasts.
- On April 1, 2008, the Israel Knesset (parliament) passed a law on regulating the treatment of the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee) coastal environment. The stated goal of the law is: "to regulate management of the Kinneret coasts with a comprehensive and uniform view, while taking into consideration the entirety of unique aspects of the Kinneret and to increase supervision and enforcement of legislation aimed at preventing or limiting damage to the Kinneret." The law, inter alia, relates to the application of the Law for the Protection of the Coastal Environment, 2004, to the Lake Kinneret (Sea of Galilee) coasts. In addition, the law relates to the establishment of a single agency with overall responsibility for managing the Kinneret coastal environment.
- A Clean Coast project, a joint project of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Nature and Parks Authority and coastal local authorities in Israel, was initiated in 2005. The project includes the following components: routine cleanups by local authorities, information and publicity, enforcement against polluters of the coasts and educational activities in schools and youth movements. A cadre of volunteers, known as "Coast Watch" volunteers, contribute several hours a month to the project and participate in such activities as education and enforcement, cleanup campaigns and promotion of community action. The project relates to coasts along the Red Sea and Lake Kinneret as well as to Mediterranean coasts.
- A national coastal waters policy document, which will update and supplement the water policy document which was approved in 1999, was initiated by the Nature and Parks Authority in 2006 in the wake of the enactment of the Law for the Protection of the Coastal Environment in 2003. The document is being prepared by an interdisciplinary team and its results will be accessible in a database. The document will include a tool kit and measures for implementation. Ecological policy will relate to a wide variety of subjects including riparian rivers and wetlands and preservation of habitats, control of alien species, and more.
- Rehabilitation plans were implemented in wetlands throughout the country, accompanied by monitoring of both water quality and water quantity.
- Major efforts continued to be devoted to the conservation of sea turtles in Israel, with significant success both in terms of protection, establishment of a breeding core, release of hatchlings to the sea and increased public awareness. In 1979, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority initiated a sea turtle conservation project along Israel's coasts, as part of a worldwide project. In 1999, the Israeli Sea Turtle Rescue Center was inaugurated. The Center undertakes surveys along the beach during the nesting season and relocates nests to hatcheries. In September 2002, the center initiated the "green project" aimed at creating a breeding nucleus of green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) due to the real threat of local extinction of this species. Some 30 such individuals which were hatched in Israel were collected and relocated to the rescue center as a core breeding group. When they reach sexual maturity, they will be transferred to large pools for breeding.
- In recent years, research on the possibility of in-situ hatching of the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) was initiated. A dramatic increase in laying of eggs of loggerhead turtles along the Israeli Mediterranean coastline was noted in recent years, reaching 129 in 2006 and 158 in 2007, compared to about half these sums in previous years.
- The Gulf of Eilat's Sea Turtle Project focuses on the breeding of two turtle species and their return to their natural environment: the hawksbill and the green turtle. Some 29 individuals of the hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) are grown in the Underwater

Observatory Marine Park in Eilat in the Red Sea. Once the newborn turtles hatch, they are collected and raised in special pools until they are strong enough to be released to the sea. Between April 1997 and April 2007, more than 220 sea turtles between the ages of 3 months to 4 years were released. Some 5 individuals of the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) are currently grown in the Marine Park. In 2007, for the first time ever, a successful hatching of the green sea turtle was discovered in the Eilat coast.

- Following years of public struggles and government deliberations, the last fish was taken out of the fish cages in the Gulf of Eilat in June 2008 as per a government decision in 2005. The highly successful campaign to remove the fish cages from the Gulf of Eilat was based on surveys and research studies which showed that the massive and regular enrichment of the Gulf water by nutrients leads to deterioration of marine water quality and adverse impact on the coral reef in Eilat. The removal of the fish cages from the Gulf of Eilat is a major environmental achievement which was made possible through joint efforts of government bodies, NGOs, the scientific community and the general public.

- A reform package in the dairy sector was initiated in 1999 and continued until 2007. One of the major aims of the reform was to prevent pollution from dairy farms and to protect the country's water sources by upgrading cowsheds and establishing environmental infrastructure. Within the framework of the reform, strict criteria were formulated for the environment-friendly operation of dairy farms, largely based on guidelines developed by the Ministry of Environmental Protection. The years 2004-2006 were devoted to the implementation of engineering plans and the receipt of grants. By the end of 2007, 98% of Israel's dairy farms presented improvement plans and nearly 90% completed their environmental improvements, thus bringing an end to the pollution of wetlands, especially Lake Kinneret, from dairy farm wastes.

- Within the framework of the European Union LIFE Third Countries project, two projects relate to wetlands: "The Sources of the Jordan River, Humans and Nature" project, approved in 2005 and implemented by the Upper Galilee Regional Council, is developing a master plan for the area of the sources of the Jordan River in northern Israel. The "Southern Arava Sustainable Waste Management Plan, approved in 2004 and implemented by the Hevel Eilat Regional Council, includes the establishment and operation of constructed wetlands in Kibbutz Lotan in southern Israel as part of an ecological-educational Bird Park, in conjunction with the Jewish National Fund and the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel/BirdLife International. The pilot is accompanied by a monitoring and study program to enrich the scientific data on treating agricultural wastes using the constructed wetlands method in desert areas such as those in Israel.

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

The most successful aspects of implementation of the Convention relate to the enactment of new legislation and outline plans, as detailed above, which will increase Israel's integrated treatment of its water sources.

In addition, several other achievements may be enumerated, mostly in the area of increased awareness of the importance of wetlands:

- The past triennium has witnessed major growth in educational activities and programs relating to wetlands. One such activity relates to the organization of an annual "Week of Love for Nature, Water and the Environment." The week, celebrated in March of each year, has served as an excellent means of introducing the public and schoolchildren to wetlands, organizing seminars, educating the public about water savings and more. The week is organized by the Nature and Parks Authority, Ministry of Environmental Protection, Ministry of Education and the Water Authority and includes free water-based guided tours to natural sites, including wetlands throughout the country, as well as a range of activities for the general public and for professionals. The week aims to increase public awareness of water issues, especially the ecological requirements of wetlands, and has also been used as an opportunity to emphasize the importance of wetlands to decision makers on all levels. During celebrations in March 2006, a Covenant on Water for Nature was drawn up and was available for signature by the public both on the website of the Nature and Parks Authority and in nature reserves and public parks. By signing the covenant, signatories obligated themselves to protect the country's water for nature and landscape and to prevent their deterioration for the sake of present and future generations.
- Several of Israel's non-governmental environmental organizations are focusing on water issues, including the restoration of rivers, the protection of the coastline, the protection of Eilat's coral reef, the protection of Lake Kinneret and its coasts.
- The Clean Coast project, which was initiated in 2005, has met with major success along the Mediterranean Sea and the Gulf of Eilat and has been accompanied by the development of educational materials. Thousands of students from schools throughout the country have been exposed to the educational program on the marine and coastal environment. Recently, the project has been extended to the coasts of Lake Kinneret (Sea of Galilee).
- The allocation of water to nature, which is based on a 2004 amendment to the Water Law, is a major achievement. Thus far, 10 million cubic meters of water per year have been allocated to nature.
- The rehabilitation of Israel's wetlands through the establishment of water supply systems, rehabilitation of flora, surveys and research is supported by the government of Israel and several wetlands are rehabilitated each year.
- Major efforts have been devoted to the conservation of sea turtles in Israel, with significant success both in terms of the protection of sea turtle species and increasing public awareness.

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

The greatest difficulties in implementing the Convention relate to the water scarcity problem in Israel. Israel is now in the midst of a major water crisis following four years of below average rainfall. As a result, demand for water surpasses supply. Israel is investing major efforts in developing alternative water sources based on seawater desalination and wastewater treatment and is promoting water conservation, including water saving devices for the home and water saving plants for the garden.

An additional problem relates to inadequate financial resources which impact on the maintenance of water pipes.

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

The main priorities relate to assuring water supply to all wetland nature reserves and other natural sites, even under conditions of water scarcity. Rehabilitation plans for wetlands remain a major priority.

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

Possibilities for cooperation among neighboring riparian countries may be increased within the framework of MedWet.

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

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?

Implementation of the Ramsar Convention in Israel is well linked with the implementation of other MEAs.

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)?

In Israel, implementation of the Ramsar Convention is well linked with the implementation of water policy in the country, especially in terms of water security, sustainable development of water sources and biodiversity.

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

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}	C - In progress
1.1.2 Is the wetland inventory data and information maintained and made accessible to all stakeholders? {1.1.3; 1.1.6}	C - Partly
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) wetlands generally	B - the same 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. Israel is developing a national wetland inventory incrementally. Site specific inventories have been or are being drawn for wetlands within nature reserves.

1.1.2 The Nature and Parks Authority is collecting and maintaining information on wetlands in national parks and nature reserves. The Nature and Parks Authority also maintains a general biological database which records biological observations in the field, which includes many observations on plants and birds from Israel's Ramsar sites - the Hula Nature Reserve and the En Afeq Nature Reserve. This general database may be accessed at the following link: <http://ww2.bgbm.org/natureinfo>

The Waterfowl Census database includes the yearly winter waterfowl census. Most of the major wetlands in Israel are included in this database, which covers about 20 years. Locations and size of the wetlands in the database are part of the permanent site details.

The Israel Ministry of Environmental Protection is collecting and maintaining information on rivers in Israel, which includes a database on pollution loads to rivers.

1.1.3 Information about the status and trends of the ecological character of wetlands in different regions in Israel is maintained in Hebrew in the district offices of the Nature and Parks Authority. Information about the status and trends of the ecological character of wetlands in Ramsar sites is compiled by the managers of these sites. Reports are available in Hebrew only. Information in Hebrew on the Hula Nature Reserve may be obtained, by special request, from:

Ofer Yaakov, Director

Hula Nature Reserve

P.O.B. 340, Yesud Hamaala 12105, Israel

email: st.hula@npa.org.il

Information in Hebrew on the En Afeq Nature Reserve may be obtained from:

Ms. Giselle Hazan, Director

En Afeq Nature Reserve

P.O.B. 1384, Zur Shalom, Kiryat Bialik 27113, Israel

email: st.afeq@npa.org.il

In the Hula Reserve, ongoing monitoring of hydrochemical, hydrophysical and hydrobiological components takes place. The monitoring is implemented jointly by the Nature and Parks Authority, Mekorot (Israel Water Company) and the Geological Survey of Israel.

Within the framework of the Hula Valley restoration project which was based on the reflooding and rehabilitation of the Hula Valley, monitoring has been ongoing for over ten years. Hydrochemical monitoring is funded by the Water Authority and ecological monitoring is funded by the Jewish National Fund. An annual monitoring report is produced within the framework of the project, which relates to the monitoring of vegetation, birds, large mammals and fish as well as to hydrochemical monitoring, monitoring of sediment, groundwater monitoring, and more. An important part of the monitoring includes long term statistical analysis of hydrology (discharge) and water quality of surface running water in the Hula Valley canals, underground water table elevation, Jordan River discharge and water quality and Lake Kinneret chemical and biological parameters.

Similarly, ongoing monitoring of flora and fauna, water quantity and quality, etc. is undertaken in the En Afeq Nature Reserve.

1.1.4 Although major rehabilitation works have been introduced into the two Ramsar sites and other wetlands in Israel, the severe drought period of the past three years necessitates ongoing efforts to assure that the ecological character of the wetlands does not deteriorate. Major engineering initiatives are currently underway in the En Afeq Nature Reserve to minimize the potentially adverse impacts of severe water shortage.

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

Israel is a partner in the European Biodiversity Observation Network (ENBONE), whose objective is to develop and implement a biodiversity observation network that is spatially and topically prioritized and a structure for an institutional framework allowing European and world wide monitoring and projections on trends based on reliable data and indicators. ENBONE is carried out by a consortium of seventeen partners including Israel (Israel Nature and Parks Authority).

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:

<p>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]</p>	A - Yes
<p>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}</p>	C - Partly
<p>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}</p>	C - Partly
<p>1.2.4 Has the quantity and quality of water available to, and required by, wetlands been assessed?</p>	D - In progress
<p>1.2.5 Are Strategic Environmental Assessment practices applied when reviewing policies, programmes and plans that may impact upon wetlands? {2.2.2}</p>	B - No

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 Israel does not have a separate National Wetland Policy, but wetland policy is integrated within the framework of several legislative and policy instruments relating to water.

The Water Law of 1959 states that "the water resources in the State are public property; they are subject to the control of the State and are destined for the requirements of its inhabitants and for the development of the country." The law defines "water resources" very broadly to include above-ground and underground waters, both natural and artificial, and including drainage water and sewage water. In 2004, the Water Law was amended to include the right of nature, including wetlands, to water, in addition to the right of water for domestic purposes, agriculture, industry, handicraft, commerce and services and public services.

In 2003, the Nature and Parks Authority, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection, published a document entitled "The Right of Nature to Water".

In 2004, the Ministry of Environmental Protection published a document entitled "Streams of Israel - Policy and Planning Principles" which relates to national policy on river restoration, regulation and management.

In November 2006, a National Outline Plan on Rivers and Drainage (NOP 34b/3) was approved by the Israel government. The plan regulates the integrated function of Israel's rivers as ecological and landscape axes and as vital drainage arteries. The plan is based on sustainable development principles, and relates to flood control as well as to river cultivation for public benefit.

The National Outline Plan on Rivers and Drainage is part of a comprehensive National Outline Plan for the Water Sector in Israel (NOP 34b). The aim of the plan is to formulate a framework for regulating land uses which relate to the water sector in Israel and to designate areas for national water infrastructures in order to ensure optimal use of the water potential, based on a comprehensive, long range view of sources and needs. The master plan is composed of the following partial master plans: seawater desalination, drainage and rivers, collection of surface water, infiltration, enrichment and protection of groundwater and water systems.

1.2.3 Israel is preparing ministerial sustainable development strategies in which wetland issues are incorporated, especially within the frameworks of the strategies of the Water Authority (formerly the Water Commission). Wetland issues are incorporated into water resources management and water efficiency plans due to Israel's scarcity of fresh water and the gap between supply and demand. A "Master Plan for Water Sector Development," which is based on sustainable development principles, was published by the Water Authority.

1.2.4 Following the last period of drought which occurred in Israel between 1999-2002, special attention was placed on the assessment and documentation of wetlands in need of rehabilitation as well as on allocations of water. The quantity of water available to and required by wetlands has been assessed in recent years for the purpose of establishing water allocations that will allow these wetlands to survive even during drought years. Further information is provided on the English website of the Ministry of Environmental Protection: www.environment.gov.il/english under the subject rivers.

River monitoring is undertaken by the Nature and Parks Authority on behalf of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and an annual report on the results is compiled and published on the website of the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

1.2.5 To date, only the environmental impacts of development projects are subject to environmental impact assessments.

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]	B - No
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}	C - Partly
1.3.3 Has national action been taken to implement the Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands (Resolution VIII.17)? {3.2.1}	E - Not applicable
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}	C - Partly

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 A formal assessment of ecosystem benefits/services has not been conducted, but the En Afeq Nature Reserve has placed major importance on the cultural and archaeological values provided by this Ramsar site and integrated this component in its management plan. The wetlands section of Israel's National Biodiversity Strategy, which will be completed in 2008, relates to the benefits/services provided by wetlands in general.

1.3.2 Israel's "National Master Plan for the Water Sector" relates to all aspects of water supply. Water security is a top priority item on Israel's agenda due to the water scarcity problem and therefore, desalination plans, wastewater treatment plans and conservation plans are being promoted to provide additional sources of water. Israel's National Outline Plan for the Water Sector relates to water security issues. Israel's river restoration program takes account of flood defense needs and one of its main goals is to promote the ability of rivers to serve as drainage channels for flood control. As an example, one of the components of the Tanninim River restoration project is to regulate drainage near Jisr El Zarka as part of joint activity with the Drainage Authority, Nature and Parks Authority, the Antiquities Authority and the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

1.3.4 National action has not been taken, but local action is in place, especially in the case of the En Afeq Nature Reserve, where educational activity strongly focuses on cultural values. In addition, rehabilitation plans for rivers throughout Israel highlight the cultural values of wetlands and focus on restoration and rehabilitation of such archaeological/cultural values as flour mills (e.g., Tanninim River, Amud River, Ayoun River, Yarkon River). The policy with regard to cultural values calls for conservation, restoration, and information dissemination, whether in the form of information sheets, models or signs. In the Tanninim River, efforts have focused on restoring and preserving the ancient water supply and transport system constructed by the Romans in the Caesarea area, with the full participation of the Antiquities Authority. This includes the restoration of the ancient 193-meter long Tanninim River dam.

The document entitled "Policy and Planning Principles of the Rivers in Israel" specifically relates to the cultural importance of the country's rivers. The cultural values of protected national parks which include wetlands are also highlighted.

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}	C - Partly

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 ...]”

1.4.1 River restoration programs in Israel take account of river basin management principles. Stages for river restoration have been developed which largely conform to the Convention's water-related guidance. 30 local river restoration administrations have been established. These are coordinating bodies that assure maximum cooperation among different stakeholders in decision making related to river protection and restoration.

1.4.2 Educational and awareness raising projects, including the adoption of sites, are in place in many wetlands in Israel (including in both Ramsar sites, in numerous rivers, along the Mediterranean coastal strip and along the shores of the Sea of Galilee).

In 2005, a Life project entitled Sources of the Jordan River – Humans and Nature was approved. The project area includes the sources of the Jordan River (Snir, Hermon and Dan rivers), the Jordan River from the northern border to Lake Kinneret, natural watercourses and channels, swamp land and drained areas of the Hula Valley. The focus of the project is on the rivers and their banks with attention given to wider spheres of influence. The project will create a framework for comprehensive management and maintenance of the sources of the Jordan River. Expected results are to transform residents', decision makers', planners', tourists' and visitors' perceptions on development and conduct in the area.

Education and Information are essential components in the project and within this context, the following activities have been promoted, with the participation of both government and NGOs: Some 30 "River Brigade" groups operate in the region and take action to conserve and protect the areas of the source waters of the Jordan River, teacher training seminars have been conducted, some 30 volunteer inspectors help to enforce environmental laws and participated in a training program conducted by the Ministry of Environmental Protection, and brochures and information sheets on river conservation have been distributed to visitors and tourists.

1.4.3 Major emphasis has been placed on coastal zone management in Israel, which is largely in line with the Convention's guidance on this issue. ICZM principles have been integrated into a coastal water policy document, approved in 1999 and currently being updated by the Nature and Parks Authority, and into Israel's Protection of the Coastal Environment Law, 2004.

A very successful Clean Coast Project has been implemented in Israel since 2005, with the participation of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Nature and Parks Authority and local authorities. The project is accompanied by an educational program.

A seashore community action protection program, known as "Friends of the Dunes" and initiated by the Nature and Parks Authority, seeks to increase public awareness and involvement in coastal protection. In 2004-2005, a pilot program was conducted in the educational system in the Sharon region in central Israel, where students "adopted" sections of nearby coastal strips, learned about them and worked on their behalf. In addition, community action is encouraged and includes training and the implementation of projects along the shoreline.

1.4.4 Initial studies have been conducted on the impacts of climate change on Israel's water sources. One study, by Lange and Menzel, was published in 2005 and is entitled "Water resources under global change: Process based hydrological modelling for the lower catchment of the Jordan River." In 2007, yet another study was undertaken entitled "Climate change impact on the water resources of the semi-arid Jordan region". Both studies were undertaken within the framework of 'Global Change in the Hydrological Cycle' (GLOWA) Jordan River Project, which is supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. Additional GLOWA Jordan River projects study the effects of global climate change on the plant community and investigate plant diversity along a climate gradient, checking for the effects of different precipitation scenarios.

In 2007, a report on Israel's preparedness for global climate change was initiated by the Ministry of Environmental Protection. Sections of the report relate to the implications of climate change on water resources in Israel and implications on species diversity.

The potential impacts of climate change on the ecological processes in the Hula Valley are currently being studied, based on the recognition that collaborative maintenance of land use in response to climate change by farmers, water managers and naturalists is necessary for the management of the ecosystem. Efforts are focusing on information about the impact of climate change on the groundwater systems, nutrient migration and soil salinization mechanisms in order to prevent soil deterioration and protect the water quality of the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee).

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:

<p>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]</p>	<p>A - Yes</p>
<p>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}</p>	<p>C - Partly</p>

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 The Nature and Parks Authority is implementing rehabilitation plans in priority wetlands throughout the country, based on a comprehensive survey. The aim is to continue to prepare plans and programs for rehabilitation and to advance the allocation of water to these wetlands. In the Hula Nature Reserve, large-scale engineering works were implemented to meet the challenges of drought periods and in the En Afeq Nature Reserve, engineering-based restoration plans have been completed, and work is scheduled to begin in the latter months of 2008.

In the past triennium, rehabilitation processes were completed in the Hula Nature Reserve and the objectives of the rehabilitation process were largely achieved. Until 2006, the water sources to the reserve were largely made up of poor-quality effluents and water drained from fish pools. Since 2006, the reserve is largely served by higher quality waters, mainly from the Jordan River and, to a lesser extent, from the Einan spring. As a result of significant improvements in water quality, aquatic flora is flourishing, water vegetation has been rehabilitated, and many new flora species have reappeared in the reserve. In parallel, an inventory of flora species in the reserve has been compiled. Ongoing sampling of phytoplankton, flora and fauna and zooplankton is undertaken in the Hula Nature Reserve and ongoing monitoring of hydrochemical, hydrophysical and hydrobiological components takes place. The monitoring is implemented jointly by the Nature and Parks Authority, Mekorot (Israel Water Company) and the Geological Survey of Israel. Over the past two years, investigators from the Hebrew University and the Geological Survey conducted research on the biogeochemical performance of the Hula Nature Reserve system. The aim of the study was to identify and quantify the biogeochemical processes operating within the Hula Nature Reserve largely by means of monthly sampling at sampling stations representing the main reservoirs, water sources and outputs of the Hula Nature Reserve..

Within the framework of the Hula Valley restoration project which was based on the reflooding and rehabilitation of the Hula Valley, monitoring has been ongoing for over ten years. The Hula reclamation project, which was implemented between 1993-1997, saw the conversion of 500 hectares of the Hula Valley into a park, in which 110 hectares in the center of the former swamplands were reflooded. Hydrochemical monitoring is funded by the Water Authority and ecological monitoring is funded by the Jewish National Fund. The project also includes maintenance works, including the installation of online monitoring stations and operation of water systems. An annual monitoring report is produced within the framework of the project, which relates to the monitoring of vegetation (submerged vegetation, invasive plant species), avian monitoring (surveys conducted in 2007 observed 188 species of birds including 50,791 individuals and the monthly waterfowl survey observed 130 species and 22,783 individuals), monitoring of large mammals (nutrias, lutras, mammal observations), fish monitoring, hydrochemical monitoring, monitoring of sediment, groundwater monitoring, and more. An important part of the monitoring includes long term statistical analysis of hydrology (discharge) and water quality of surface running water in the Hula Valley canals, underground water table elevation, Jordan River discharge and water quality and Lake Kinneret chemical and biological parameters.

In the past triennium, the following restoration activities were undertaken in the En Afeq Nature Reserve: deepening of pools and digging of new pools which will also serve as refuge sites during drought years, regularization of the flow channel of the Na'aman River, improvements to the main tunnel which distributes water to the different sites, rehabilitation of vegetation, improvement of soft backed turtle breeding and nesting sites, reintroduction of the Yarqon bleak (*Acanthobrama telavivensis*) after it became extinct in the wild, reintroduction of the blue water-lily (*Nymphaea caerulea*), which was nearly extinct in Israel, and establishment of a special pool and breeding site for this species, activities to reduce sediment during the winter (including installation of experimental sediment traps) and installation of flow meters to allow for hydrological monitoring, inauguration of a birdwatching center and establishment of a refuge garden for rare plant species which will eventually be returned to the nature reserve. Annual monitoring of birds, flora, fish, etc. is undertaken at the En Afeq Nature Reserve.

In the past triennium, rainpools in the Mediterranean coastal plain were deepened as part of a rehabilitation plan for these pools. Also, In the summer of 2007, a shallow experimental pool was dug in Israel's Negev to serve as a drinking pool for sandgrouse to provide these birds much needed water spots in desert areas. In 2006, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel initiated projects on the conservation of rainpools at the heart of the urban area of Herzliya and Holon in order to save them. The projects were accompanied by public participation and promotion of the subject among decision makers, with the intention of preserving these pools as urban nature sites.

Rehabilitation was implemented in tens of wetlands throughout Israel. One example is the Gibbon Springs Nature Reserve near Rehovot in the center of Israel. The previous drought period in Israel

(1999-2002) nearly led to the drying up of this wetland and saw the invasion of the *Acacia saligna*. As part of an experimental plan, the pools in the wetland were deepened to allow them to fill with spring water to a depth of 60-100 cm, with successful results in terms of water in the reserve and disappearance of the *Acacia saligna* from the water filled areas.

The Israel Ministry of Environmental Protection is implementing river restoration plans. The master plans are based on detailed surveys of pollution sources, sensitive areas in terms of flora, fauna and ecosystems and estimates of water quantities and qualities required to support river restoration. Within this work, major efforts and funds are directed toward the establishment or upgrading of wastewater treatment plants to reduce pollution to rivers from wastewater.

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

In light of the severe water scarcity crisis in Israel, major efforts are invested in the rehabilitation of wetland sites throughout the country. These activities are backed up by the allocation of government funds.

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}	A - Yes

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 Israel will complete its National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan in which policy on invasive species is included in 2008. An interministerial committee has been set up which serves as a national steering committee on the problem of invasive species. Among its objectives are: collection of databases of Israeli experts on invasive species, preparation of a list of all invasive species in Israel, determination of indicators to classify the species on the basis of the damage they cause and the preparation of a priority list for treatment based on this information, research grants to national projects and local research, funding of eradication and control measures, increased enforcement and education and information.

Research is currently carried out to identify invasive species in different habitats and to propose prevention and control methods. Guidelines are being developed for the prevention, control and eradication of invasive species and professional seminars on the subject have been held.

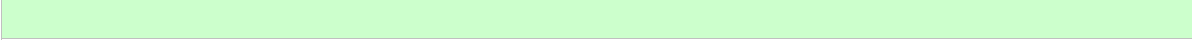
A policy document on invasive plant species in protected and open areas in the central district of Israel was published in 2005.

In the case of invasive species of birds, in the wake of reports on the observation of Sacred Ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*: Threskiornithidae) in the area of En Afeq and Acco Valley, management responses were taken to eradicate this species. Control measures were also taken against escapees of Egyptian Geese (*Alopochen aegyptiacus*: Anatidae) from captivity in some sites.

1.6.2 Issues of invasive species are considered by the focal points of both the Ramsar Convention and the Biodiversity Convention.

Alien species information is shared within the framework of a multi-country consortium known as DAISIE (Delivering Alien Species Inventories for Europe) in which Israel takes part.

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 Priorities relate to the declaration of marine nature reserves that may be designated as Ramsar sites.

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 ...]”

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}	A - Yes
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]	A - Yes
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]	A - Yes
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]	B - No

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 Based on comprehensive plans, the Hula Nature Reserve has completed a major rehabilitation project to maintain its ecological character by improving the quantity and quality of water to the reserve. The En Afeq Nature Reserve has instituted emergency measures in the reserve to assure water availability and has recently completed planning for major rehabilitation which will be initiated in 2008.

2.3.2 Management plans have been developed and implemented in both Ramsar sites: the Hula Nature Reserve and the En Afeq Nature Reserve. In light of recurring periods of drought in Israel, management plans in both sites are constantly being reviewed and updated.

2.3.3 Both Ramsar sites are managed by an interdisciplinary management team appointed by the Nature and Parks Authority.

2.3.4 A formal assessment has not been carried out but informal assessments are ongoing.

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

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]	B - No
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]	D - Not applicable

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 Monitoring programs are an integral part of the management plans for the Hula and En Afeq Nature Reserves. The transmission of information to the Nature and Parks Authority on changes in the ecological character of Ramsar sites is part of the management plan for the sites.

2.4.2 Cases of likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar sites may occur as a result of drought conditions, but efforts are focusing on rehabilitation, including steps to assure adequate supply of water to these sites. The impacts of drought are reported to the Ramsar Secretariat within the framework of the triennial reports.

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 Potential transboundary/shared wetlands include the Jordan River Valley area, the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba as well as Mediterranean transboundary nature reserves or parks. The Hula Valley is part of the Great Rift Valley Migration Flyway.

2.5.2 Cooperative management is only partly in place or planned in transboundary wetland systems. In the Gulf of Aqaba, a Memorandum of Understanding on ongoing monitoring and data management was initiated between Israel and Jordan.

Efforts are focusing on recognizing the Great Rift Valley, including the Hula Valley, as a migration flyway which is critical to the preservation of a wide range of globally threatened species and hundreds of species of migrating birds (within the framework of the World Heritage Convention).

A Red-Dead Sea Canal Project, which will link the Red Sea in the Gulf of Aqaba to the depleted Dead Sea, is currently under review. This initiative calls for the construction of a nearly 200 km open canal along the Israel-Jordan border to transfer waters from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea. Several Israeli research bodies are examining the ecological aspects of the proposal and the World Bank is expected to begin on a feasibility study in 2008. Israel's environmental organizations have called for a thorough review of the environmental/ecological implications of the proposed project.

Rehabilitation of the Jordan River and its environs is beginning with initiatives on both sides of the border. Friends of the Earth Middle East, an NGO, has given major priority to the rehabilitation of the Jordan River Valley. It has launched an awareness building campaign, "Let the Jordan River Flow", which aims to bring local, national and international attention to pollution issues and promote peace and prosperity for the Jordan River Valley and its residents. For further information, please see the Friends of the Earth website - <http://www.foeme.org>

A Final Report on MERC project - M23-019 - Watershed Modeling: BioMonitoring and Economic Analysis to Determine Optimal Restoration Strategies for Transboundary Streams, covering the period September 2004-December 2007 - was published in 2008. The report considers the environmental conditions in two transboundary streams: the Hebron/Besor and the Zomar/Alexander. The report was published by the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies and was jointly prepared by Israeli and Palestinian researchers.

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}	A - Yes
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 ...]”

3.1.1 In most cases, national focal points of Ramsar and other MEAs are members of interministerial committees on similar subjects and in some cases, the focal points are identical. Israel's nature protection system deals with all aspects of biodiversity-related MEAs including the following conventions: Ramsar, CITES, CMS, Biodiversity and World Heritage. The Ministry of Environmental Protection participates in interministerial committees relating to all MEAs in which Israel is a member, including the Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol.

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} <small>[If “Yes” or “Partly”, please indicate in Additional implementation information below the networks and wetlands involved]</small>	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}	A - Yes

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 3.2.1-3.2.2

3.2.1 Nationally, because Israel is small in size, there is wide scale cooperation and information sharing among water related bodies. A training system exists on a regional level on different subjects with the participation of representatives of such organizations as the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Antiquities Authority, Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, river authorities and NGOs. Thematic training sessions relate to such subjects as the soft-shelled turtle, the sea turtle or the waterfowl census. Professional meetings are also organized by the Nature and Parks Authority on such subjects as wetland habitats such as winter pools.

Within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding between Israel and Jordan on monitoring and management of the Gulf of Aqaba, monitoring information is gathered in both countries and is posted on websites. The monitoring program takes into consideration its possible integration in a wider regional monitoring program which will be shared by all of the countries neighboring the Gulf of Eilat/Aqaba.

Within the context of research and conservation of migrating bird species, a website on Migrating Birds Know No Boundaries, www.birds.org.il, provides information on bird migration, with real-time information on birds fitted with satellite transmitters. An educational program, based on this website and field trips, has been developed for Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian schoolchildren.

A regional project entitled "Good Water Neighbors," launched in 2001 by Friends of the Earth Middle East, aims at raising awareness among Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians of shared water problems based on a Partnering Communities Program. The Good Water Neighbors methodology is based on identifying cross border communities and utilizing their mutual dependence on shared water resources as a basis for developing dialogue and cooperation on sustainable water management. Initially eleven Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian communities were selected to participate in Phase I of the project from 2001 to 2005. At present this number has been expanded to seventeen in Phase II of the project. Neighbors Paths have been developed to raise awareness of past and present water management practices and their effects on the community. Each community tour relates to its partner community, emphasizing the interdependence created by shared water resources.

3.2.2 Information about the country's wetlands is available on the websites of the Ministry of Environmental Protection (www.environment.gov.il) and Nature and Parks Authority (www.parks.org.il).

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}	C - Partly
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}	A - Yes
4.1.5 Have cultural values of wetlands been included in the management planning of Ramsar sites and other wetlands? {r.6.1.vi} <small>[if "Yes" or "Partly", please indicate, if known, how many Ramsar sites and their names in Additional implementation information below]</small>	A - Yes

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 Information on the involvement of local communities in wetland management has been compiled in the En Afeq Nature Reserve, where several projects focus on the participation of local communities in the development of new trails, cleanups, site adoption and monitoring and research. Information has also been compiled on public participation in the restoration of the Alexander River. A project initiated by the Nature and Parks Authority seeks to link natural sites, such as wetlands, to communities or institutions. Local communities are encouraged to participate in the Clean Coast Project, which is implemented along the Mediterranean coastline, the Red Sea and the Sea of Galilee as well as in cleanup activities in parks and nature reserves.

4.1.2 In the Hula and En Afeq Nature Reserves, use is made of the water buffalo to control vegetation. In the En Afeq Nature Reserve, major efforts are invested in the documentation and application of traditional knowledge, mostly within the framework of educational activities. Educational activities center around 12 subjects, including how former generations lived in swamp conditions and human use of water over a 900 year history. In addition, visitors to the site, mainly schoolchildren, are provided with the means to bake pita bread, and exhibitions feature paper recycling, ancient agricultural tools and ancient flour mills and their operation. In the Tanninim River major efforts have been made to restore an ancient water system, in cooperation with the Antiquities Authority.

4.1.3 Public participation is promoted within the framework of the National River Restoration Administration and local river restoration administrations. One of the stated objectives of these administrations is to increase public awareness and participation in river restoration and landscape protection. The public takes an active part in different activities in the En Afeq Nature Reserve. Any plan for a nature reserve, such as the two Ramsar sites in Israel, requires full coordination among all stakeholders including government ministries, local authorities, drainage authorities and river authorities. Plans for wetlands are coordinated within the regional water utilization system.

4.1.4 Educational and training activities concerning cultural aspects of wetlands have been developed for the En Afeq Nature Reserve. In wetlands which contain archaeological or historic remains, such as the Tanninim River Reserve, such activities have been developed as well, with the cooperation of the Antiquities Authority. Since river restoration plans are also designated for public benefit, emphasis is placed on the conservation of cultural values and educational activities, including tours, emphasize these.

4.1.5 Cultural values of wetlands are an integral part of management planning of the En Afeq Nature Reserve. These include flour mills and a small museum with remnants of past cultures. Additional flour mills, which are still operational today, are found in the Banias, where local Arab communities may operate the flour mill and bake pita bread. Rehabilitation plans for rivers throughout Israel highlight the cultural values of wetlands and focus on the conservation and restoration of such cultural values as flour mills (e.g. Tanninim River, Amud River, Ayoun River, Yarkon River). Water works, ports or water systems have been restored in numerous nature reserves and archaeological sites including Megiddo, Masada, Shivta, Caesarea, Akhziv, Ashkelon and more.

Policy on cultural values calls for conservation, restoration, and information dissemination, whether in the form of information sheets, models or signs. The Tanninim River restoration project is especially noteworthy due to a series of activities in which historic solutions for water supply were implemented. These included full restoration of an ancient dam and rehabilitation of ancient flour mills. Major efforts were invested on restoring and preserving the ancient water supply and transport system constructed by the Romans in the Caesarea area, with the full participation of the Antiquities Authority, including restoration of the ancient 193-meter long Tanninim River dam.

The document entitled "Policy and Planning Principles of the Rivers in Israel" specifically relates to the cultural importance of the country's rivers. The cultural values of protected national parks which include wetlands are also highlighted.

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}	B - No
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 Most of Israel's wetlands are protected as nature reserves and therefore all activities are supervised by the Nature and Parks Authority. On agricultural land, instructors of the Ministry of Agriculture's Extension Service instruct farmers about the wise use of water. About 90% of the land area of Israel is not private land. Any development in wetlands is legally subject to deliberations in planning committees to receive permits which take account of the environmental and ecological impacts of any activity in the environs of wetlands.

In 2007, an agreement was signed between Kibbutz En Gedi and the Nature and Parks Authority and the Water Authority concerning the use of waters from the oasis springs and En Gedi stream. The agreement stipulated that the kibbutz must let water flow from the spring into the En Gedi stream before drawing it for kibbutz use. The stream dried up in the 1950s because the kibbutz drew water directly from the spring for agricultural purposes. Later the En Gedi mineral water company (which bottles mineral water) also drew water from the spring. As a result of the agreement, water is flowing again in the stream and there are plans to revive the local ecosystem, including the planting of indigenous trees near the stream.

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

STRATEGY 4.3 <i>Promote measures which encourage the application of the wise use principle.</i>
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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}	D - Planned
4.3.2 Have actions been taken to remove perverse incentive measures which discourage conservation and wise use of wetlands? {8.1.1}	C - Partly

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 ...]”

4.3.2 Water subsidies to the agricultural sector, which have a negative impact on water resources, have been reduced

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:

<p>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}</p> <p>[If "Yes" or "Partly", please describe in Additional implementation information below the mechanism]</p>	<p>C - Partly</p>
<p>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}</p> <p>[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]</p>	<p>C - Partly</p>
<p>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}</p>	<p>A - Yes</p>
<p>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}</p> <p>[If:</p> <p>a) support has been provided for the delivery of these and other CEPA activities by other organisations; and/or</p> <p>b) these have included awareness-raising for social, economic and/or cultural values,</p> <p>please indicate this in the Additional implementation information section for Strategy 4.4 below]</p>	<p>A - Yes</p>
<p>4.4.5 Have World Wetlands Day activities in the country, either government and NGO-led or both, been carried out? {r9.vi.ii}</p>	<p>A - Yes</p>
<p>4.4.6 Have education centres been established at Ramsar sites and other wetlands? {r9.viii.i}</p> <p>[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]</p>	<p>A - Yes</p>

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 ...]"

4.4.2 Numerous plans for wetland CEPA have been initiated, mostly for coastal areas along the Mediterranean coast and the shores of Lake Kinneret (the Sea of Galilee), within the framework of the Clean Coast project which was initiated in 2005. These plans are accompanied by educational material which has been introduced into the formal school system and by community involvement including the establishment of a group of volunteers. A project which will see the development of a masterplan for land use designation, environmental management, flood prevention and proper drainage, and which encourages public participation in planning and decision making processes, was initiated in 2005 in the Jordan River area in the north of Israel (within the framework of European Union's LIFE-Third Countries program).

4.4.3 Actions have been taken to communicate information on the Mediterranean coasts of Israel cross-sectorally. A Forum of Coastal Organizations, including 25 non-governmental organizations working along Israel's coastline, have increased awareness of coastal issues, including implementation of the Protection of the Coastal Environmental Law, which was enacted in 2004. The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel represents these coastal organizations in the committee for the protection of the coastal environment which was established within the framework of the law.

4.4.4 There are a multitude of campaigns and projects to raise community awareness of wetlands. In June 2005, the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Nature and Parks Authority and the Union of Local Authorities in Israel initiated a "Clean Coast" project in Israel. Components of the project include: routine cleanup of the coasts by local authorities, enforcement against polluters of the coasts, educational activities in the country's schools and youth movements and information and publicity activities.

In the spring of 2008, a new educational program for fourth to sixth grade students was initiated on preserving a clean coast. The program was initiated by the Nature and Parks Authority and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and was developed in Tel Aviv University. Four books were published on the subject - a teacher's guide and three student books, which emphasize ecological, social and cultural values along the coast.

Over the past five years, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel has spearheaded a campaign aimed at opening up a trail around the Sea of Galilee. In 2007-8, activities centered on residents adopting sections of the trail. In addition, in 2007, the government of Israel adopted the idea, funded it and a law on the subject was passed. The Society for the Protection of Nature operates an annual educational program, funded by the Ministry of Environmental Protection, in schools adjacent to the lake. The program is aimed at acquainting students with the characteristics of the lake and motivating them to preserve the lake and its cleanliness.

In 2007, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel initiated a long-term campaign to restore water to the country's rivers. In this framework a comprehensive report on the state of rivers in the past and today was published, two seminars were conducted, and public activity along rivers was initiated.

In 2006 an NGO known as Zalul began dealing with river pollution, especially with regard to a number of coastal rivers.

In 2008, a joint campaign of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the country's NGOs reached a successful conclusion when fish cages were removed from the Gulf of Eilat. The fish cages were said to pollute the fragile coral reefs of the Gulf.

4.4.5 World Wetland Day activities were concentrated in the En Afeq Ramsar site in 2006, 2007 and 2008. As part of the celebrations, attention was focused on the reintroduction of the Yarqon bleak (*Acanthobrama telavivensis*) to the Na'aman River. In addition a new pool was inaugurated at the nature reserve for the purpose of breeding this species. Additional activities during World Wetland Day included guided tours and activities for schoolchildren, Nature and Parks Authority personnel and the general public.

4.4.6 Education centers are active both at En Afeq and at the Hula Nature Reserves. Some 60,000 visitors come to the En Afeq Nature Reserve each year, half of them schoolchildren. Educational activities include tours for schoolchildren and adults, exhibits, museum tour and more.

In 2005, an innovative educational center was inaugurated at the Hula Nature Reserve which includes a highly advanced audio-visual display entitled "Oforia". The display allows visitors to join the birds' journey over the world using a multi-sensory, six-dimensioned stereoscopic simulation program, which combines display halls, guided tours and observations. During a tour of the area, visitors pass through 4 display halls in which they are exposed to the story of the Hula Nature Reserve and its life – plant and animal life and human history. The tour reaches its peak in a unique screening hall that combines watching the screen using stereoscopic glasses, light effects,

sound, scent and movement of the chairs.

In both Ramsar sites, high school students carry out biotope research as part of their requirements for matriculation.

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]	D - Not applicable
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:	
4.6.1 Ramsar contributions are paid in full at the very latest by the end of each fiscal year.	

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

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:

<p>4.7.1 Has the Contracting Party used its previous Ramsar National Reports in monitoring its implementation of the Convention?</p> <p>[If “Yes” or “Partly”, please indicate in Additional implementation information how the Reports have been used for monitoring]</p>	<p>B - No</p>
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Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicator 4.7.1

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:

<p>4.8.1 Has a review of national institutions responsible for the conservation and wise use of wetlands been completed?</p> <p>{18.1.1}</p> <p>[If “Yes” or “Partly”, please indicate in Additional implementation information if this has led to proposals for, or implementation of, any changes in institutional responsibilities]</p>	<p>C - Partly</p>
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<p>4.8.2 Is a National Ramsar/Wetlands cross-sectoral Committee (or equivalent body) in place and operational? {18.1.2}</p> <p>[If “Yes”, please summarise in Additional implementation information its membership and frequency of meetings]</p>	<p>A - Yes</p>
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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 In recognition of the need for an integrated system of water management, a National Water Authority was established in Israel on January 1, 2007, which replaced the Water Commission. The Authority was established to provide for a comprehensive view of the needs of the water sector and to concentrate authorities within a professional-governmental body with the tools and ability to manage and supervise Israel's water economy in the most effective way possible. The law authorizes the Water Authority Council to establish rules and norms for water use and supply, for water quality, for water distribution to different consumers including farmers, for water conservation and savings, for water production licenses and conditions, for water allocations to nature, and more. The Ministry of Environmental Protection remains responsible for the prevention of water source pollution and the Ministry of Health for the quality of drinking water. As a result of the review of institutional responsibility, Israel's treatment of its water sources is improved and interdisciplinary.

Furthermore, an amendment to the Rivers and Springs Order (2003) determined that Drainage Authorities would also be responsible for river strips. Today, eight out of a total of eleven Drainage Authorities operate as river authorities, allowing for the implementation of an integrated river basin approach.

4.8.2 A national Ramsar team operates on an informal basis in Israel. It meets on an ad-hoc basis and includes representatives of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Nature and Parks Authority, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Infrastructures (Water Authority), Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Justice.

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:

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

* 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

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:

<p>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)]</p>	<p>B - No</p>
<p>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}</p>	<p>C - Partly</p>
<p>4.10.3 Have opportunities for wetland site manager training in the country been provided? {20.1.6}</p>	<p>A - Yes</p>

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 ...]”

4.10.2 and 4.10.3 Assessments of training needs regarding wetland management are ongoing and training sessions are provided for professionals.

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