



Muscat Action Plan for Wetlands in the Arab Countries

Goal 1: Wetland Wise Use

Key issues	Activity	Who does what?	Action in 2010-2012
1.1 Policies in place to address threats from utilities and marine based pollution, e.g. Oil spills.	1.1.1 Make inventory for invasive species living in wetlands and possible ways for resistance it. 1.1.2 Make plans for reducing the pollution resources affect wetland ecosystems.	National environmental and academic organisations with technical and financial help from appropriate organisations.	By the end of 2012, a monitoring program for Ramsar sites in Arab countries must established to detect pollution resources and their effect in wetlands.
1.2 Regulatory mechanisms, e.g. EIA and SEA, in place to assess the possible impact of developments to wetlands.	1.2.1. Review the existence, and effectiveness of existing EIA and SEA procedures. 1.2.2. Where appropriate, establish guidelines for EIA studies for construction projects in or adjacent to wetlands. 1.2.3. Hold stakeholder workshop to draft updated policy addressing utilities in the vicinity of wetlands.	National environmental organisations with technical support from appropriate organisations, e.g. UNEP-ROWA and Ramsar Secretariat.	
1.3 Establish legal framework and mechanisms following international standard for wetland conservation.	1.3.1. Establish national and regional wetland committees that include all stakeholders, e.g. environmental organisations, specialists, NGOs, and local communities.	National environmental organisations with support from LAS, UNEP-ROWA and Ramsar Secretariat.	
1.4 Ensure land use planning incorporates wetland issues.	1.4.1. Mentoring programs to follow the changes in the wetlands ecosystems.	National Environmental and academic organisations.	
1.5 Strengthen and enforce legislation in relation to securing wetland wise use	1.5.1. Give a legislations power for local wetlands workers and directors to could help them for securing the wetlands wise use.	National Environmental organisations with technical support from appropriate organisations, e.g. Ramsar	By the end of 2012, all Arab countries to have signed the Ramsar Convention, established national strategies and action plans for

		Secretariat.	wetlands in their countries.
1.6 Improving mainstreaming of wetland services in and between other sectors.	1.6.1. Establish national and regional committees including all stockholders (e.g. environmental organisations, experts, NGOs, local communities).	National environmental organisations with technical support from appropriate organisations, e.g. LAS and the Ramsar Secretariat.	
1.7 Ensure wetland use is sustainable, e.g. particularly for ecotourism.	1.7.1. Enhance dialogue between National Wetland Committees and national tourism sector. 1.7.2. Submit data to decision makers on the value of Ramsar Sites as destinations for ecotourism and the need for the sustainable management of such uses.	National Wetland Committee and the National Ministry of Tourism, with support from the LAS and the Ramsar Secretariat.	Post 2012 Regional workshop to be discussed in cooperation with Ministries of Tourism in the Arab Region.
1.8 Encourage water management sector to value wetlands as natural infrastructure.	1.8.1. Putting the wise use policies in the industries construct on wetland and be sure that they have not any harmful effect on the wetlands ecosystem.	LAS in cooperation with related partners, e.g. the Arab Water Council	
CEPA:			
1.9 Ensure better understanding of the benefits of wetlands from national government to local community scale.	1.9.1 Establish wetland centres for education and tourism. 1.9.2. Encourage schools and universities to visit Ramsar sites.	National environmental organisations with technical support from appropriate organisations, e.g. LAS, Ramsar Secretariat.	By the end of 2012, to have established wetland centres for education and tourism at each Ramsar site, and to encourage visits by schools and universities.
	1.9.3 Launch CEPA campaigns by using different media outlets targeting all sectors of society (e.g. communities, schools) by creating cartoons videos or electronic games. (Regional, national).	LAS, UNESCO, ALECO, ISESCO with technical support from appropriate organisations, e.g. LAS and the Ramsar Secretariat.	By the end of 2012, production of cartoons videos or electronic games and distribute on Arab Media channels and interests organisations.
1.10 Increase opportunities for raising awareness for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, e.g. through education centres and communication materials.	1.10.1 Establish Government and NGO CEPA Focal Points in each country (National).	National government agencies with support from the LAS, Arab Ministries for communication and the Ramsar Secretariat.	Ramsar Secretariat to write to Arab Contracting Parties who do not have Government and NGO CEPA Focal Points, to encourage them to appoint such people.
	1.10.2 Cooperation between inter and regional organizations, e.g. Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), and Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALESCO), UNIC and UNEP-DCPI (Regional).	LAS, ISESCO, ALESCO, UNEP-ROWA and the Ramsar Secretariat.	Ramsar Secretariat will involve such regional organizations in relevant meetings in future.

	1.10.3 Call for simplified education handbooks/manuals on birds, fish etc. of wetlands for distribution to schools and university students (Regional, national).	a. Regional (LAS, Ramsar Secretary, ISESCO, ALESCO, UNEP-ROWA, BirdLife) b. National government agencies.	By the end of 2012, to produce such materials and distribute to Arab schools and Universities.
	1.10.4 Translate Ramsar Handbooks and manual into Arabic and distribute to relevant stakeholders.	Ramsar Secretariat with the support of RRC-CWA, LAS and UNEP-ROWA.	By the end of 2012, the Ramsar Secretariat to have raised sufficient funds to have translated the remaining Ramsar Handbooks into Arabic.
	1.10.5 Raise awareness of decision makers about economic and environmental value of wetland through workshops and seminars (National, regional).	UNEP-ROWA and the Ramsar Secretariat can provide technical support if requested by governments.	
Wetland assessment:			
1.11 Assess current status of important wetlands – Middle East Directory.	1.11.1 Update wetland directory in Arab region including emerging changes (National, regional).	Ramsar Secretariat, IUCN, BirdLife and national governments.	Ramsar Secretariat to discuss with IUCN, BirdLife and national governments.
General wise use:			
1.12 Urge countries to minimize the risk to wetlands at time of conflicts.	1.12.1 Plan on conserving wetland during wars and natural disasters through awareness raising (National, regional).	LAS with technical support from appropriate organisations, e.g. UNEP-ROWA and the Ramsar Secretariat.	
1.13 Maintain wetlands so as to minimize the impacts of natural disasters, e.g. cyclones and sand storms.	1.13.1 Gather and submitting data to Arabic government on the use of wetlands to reduce the impacts of pollutants and natural disasters (National, regional).	LAS with technical support from appropriate organisations, e.g. ISIDR and the Ramsar Secretariat.	Post 2012, ISIDR, RCDRR, LAS and Ramsar Secretariat to have held a workshop on ways to use wetlands to reduce the impacts of pollutants and natural disasters (Regional).

Goal 2: Ramsar sites

Key issues	Activity	Who does what?	Action in 2010-2012
2.1 Improve guidance on site designation and completion of RIS .	2.1.1 Clarify the relationship between nationally protected area and Ramsar sites (National).	National government agencies with support from the Ramsar Secretariat.	
	2.1.2 Benefitting from the available funds in the countries of the Arab Peninsula, e.g. Kuwait, KSA and Qatar funding bodies (Regional, national).	National government agencies with support from UNEP-ROWA and the Ramsar Secretariat.	

	2.1.3 Engaging and empowering civil society to manage Ramsar sites and raise awareness about them. (National).	National government agencies with support from UNEP-ROWA and the Ramsar Secretariat.	
	2.1.4 Training workshop on monitoring programmes and processes at Ramsar sites (Regional, national).	Ramsar Secretariat, PERSGA, LAS, UNEP-ROWA, NGOs and national governments.	Ramsar Secretariat to hold a workshop on Ramsar site management in 2011 or 2012.
2.2 Improving site identification for site designation	2.2.1 Undertake baseline wetland inventory (National)	National government agencies	
	2.2.2 Identify all wetlands that qualify for designation. (National)	Ramsar Secretariat to support government agencies on this activity with assistance from PERSGA, IUCN and BirdLife	Ramsar Secretariat can provide technical support if requested by governments.
	2.2.3 Develop priorities for designation (National)	National government agencies with technical support from appropriate organisations,	Ramsar Secretariat can provide technical support if requested by governments.
2.3 Assess the status of Ramsar sites and other wetlands	2.3.1 Undertake ecological character status assessments (National)	National government agencies with technical support from appropriate organisations	Ramsar Secretariat can provide technical support if requested by governments.
	2.3.2 Request guidelines on Ramsar site status (National)	Ramsar Secretariat to provide guidelines to those countries that request the guidelines.	
2.4 Improve management of Ramsar sites	2.4.1 Develop management plans for all Ramsar sites (National)	National government agencies with technical support from appropriate organisations, e.g. Ramsar Secretariat, PERSGA, IUCN and BirdLife	Ramsar Secretariat to hold a workshop on Ramsar site management in 2011 or 2012.
2.5 Allocate sufficient resource for Ramsar site management planning , including monitoring	2.5.1 Resources for effective management of Ramsar sites to be set aside each year in the government annual budget. (National)	LAS and Ramsar Secretariat to discuss with national government agencies	Formal letter sent by LAS and Ramsar Secretariat addressed to Contracting Parties in the Arab region
2.6 Increase local stakeholder and NGO involvement in site identification and management.	2.6.1 Establish site management committee for each Ramsar site (National)	Ramsar Secretariat can provide technical support if requested by governments.	
2.7 Ensure that economic, social and cultural benefits to people of designated sites are understood and supported by decision makers.	2.7.1 Develop a specialize study available to decision makers on the economic, social and cultural values of wetlands from an Arab point of view (Regional).	LAS, Ramsar Secretariat and UNEP-ROWA to lead, with support from appropriate international and regional organizations.	By the end of 2012, to produce a publication on the economic values of wetlands in Arab region.

2.8 Ensure that water quality and quantity issues are addressed in management plans, including implementing practices that promote efficient use of water.	2.8.1 Enhance dialogue between national government agencies and their water ministries	National government agencies with support from UNEP-ROWA and the Ramsar Secretariat.	
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Goal 3: International cooperation

Key issues	Activity	Who does what?	Action in 2010-2012
3.1 Better access to wetland information through shared information systems, on a regional as well as on a national level.	3.1.1 Creating database and inform network pertaining to wetlands for Arab Union for Natural Reserves (Regional, national)	LAS, Wetlands International, UNEP-ROWA and the Ramsar Secretariat	By the end of 2012, to produce an Arab Wetlands Database.
	3.1.2 Develop database on special information relating to the countries of the region and publish on website to facilitate access to info (Regional, national)	LAS, Ramsar Secretariat, UNEP-ROWA	
	3.1.3 Strengthen technical assistance and international cooperation in the field (Regional, national)	National government agencies with support from UNEP-ROWA and the Ramsar Secretariat.	
	3.1.4 Cooperation amongst regional organizations, such as PERSGA, IUCN, GCC Secretariat etc., to develop regional projects on wetlands. Suggested projects are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • studying measuring project for the countries of the same oceans; • project on existing desalination plants in the Gulf regions (Arabian Peninsula); • continue 'Mangrove for the Future' project in the Arabian Peninsula; • study economic feasibility for using water in wetlands instead of other uses (Regional, national). 	National government agencies with support from UNEP-ROWA and the Ramsar Secretariat.	
	3.1.5 Consolidate role of GCC Secretariat in order to have regional relations and cooperation. Enhance dialogue between Ramsar Secretariat, GCC and Arab Union for Protected Areas (Regional).	National government agencies with support from UNEP-ROWA and the Ramsar Secretariat.	

	3.1.6 Establish network of declared wetland sites in the Gulf by exchanging experience and expertise (Regional).	National government agencies with support from LAS, PERSGA, Ramsar Secretariat, UNEP-ROWA, NGOs.	
3.2 Development of regional scale projects	3.2.1 Seek technical support from Ramsar Secretariat to create projects to conserve wetlands in the Arab region. (Regional)	National government agencies with support from UNEP-ROWA and the Ramsar Secretariat.	
	3.2.2 Call for establish fund to support help finance Arabic environment project with the help of international bodies and institutions (Regional)	National government agencies with support from UNEP-ROWA and the Ramsar Secretariat.	Note: The High Council of the Arab League has approved the establishment of an Arab Fund for the Environment
3.3 Improved coordination with international and regional organizations	3.3.1 Call for the convening of an Arab meeting of NFPs before COP11 so as to agree on a unified agenda for the conference (Regional)	Ramsar Secretariat, supported by LAS and UNEP-ROW	Ramsar Secretariat to work with partners to raise funds for organizing such a meeting in 2011.
	3.3.2 Call for Ramsar Secretariat, Arab countries to discuss the idea of adopting Arabic as an official language of the Convention at COP11. (Regional)	Ramsar Secretariat, supported by LAS and UNEP-ROW	Ramsar Secretariat to look into the additional cost for adopting Arabic as an additional language.

Goal 4: Institutional Capacity

Key issues	Activity	Who does what?	Action in 2010-2012
4.1 Increased training opportunities on a national and regional level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetland Management • Identification and procedure for designation of new site • Ramsar site public awareness 	4.1.1 Carry out training workshops for NFP and local FP, and the people working at Ramsar site as well as local communities, ministries of education and higher education (National)	Ramsar Secretariat can support if requested by national government agencies.	Ramsar Secretariat to work with partners and hold national workshop where requested
	4.1.2 Conduct field visit to model Ramsar sites in Bahrain, UAE by the other non-CP in the Gulf, e.g. Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and KSA (Regional)	Ramsar Secretariat, LAS, UNEP-ROWA, national government agencies.	
	4.1.3 Conduct study to assess the national institutional capacity in the country (National).	Ramsar Secretariat, LAS, UNEP-ROWA, national government agencies.	
	4.1.4 Conduct regional TOT workshop on managing protected wetlands (Regional)	Ramsar Secretariat, LAS, PERSGA, UNEP-ROWA, UNESCO, NGOs, national government agencies.	Ramsar Secretariat and partners to organize a workshop on Ramsar site management in 2011 -2012.

	4.1.5 Organize workshop on development of international cooperation between the countries in the Gulf and Secretariat, and stakeholder benefitting from wetlands (Regional)	National government agencies with support from UNEP-ROWA and the Ramsar Secretariat.	
4.2 Wetland expert capacity building	4.2.1 Exchange experience between experts and specialists as to establish and maintaining wetlands (Regional, national)		
4.3 Building and strengthening partnerships for wise use	4.3.1 Establishing harmony between international bodies and organizations working on nature conservation, and ensuring synergy with international conventions and initiatives, international financing bodies (Regional)	National government agencies with support from UNEP-ROWA and the Ramsar Secretariat.	Ramsar Secretariat to enhance dialogue with partners and international financing bodies.
	4.3.2 Coordination between national and local FP, civil society organizations and relevant stakeholder, such as by establishing National Wetland Committees (National)	National government agencies with support from the Ramsar Secretariat.	

Goal 5: Membership

Key issues	Activity (level)	Who does what?	Action in 2010-2012
5.1 Support accession process for non-CP in the Gulf	5.1.1 Organize national workshop to clarify benefit of accession and forge cooperation between stakeholders (National)	Relevant national government ministry with support from UNEP-ROWA, LAS and the Ramsar Secretariat	Ramsar Secretariat is proposing to hold a national workshop in Kuwait in February 2011 ,
	5.1.2 Send letter of support to decision maker by Secretariat to clarify importance of accession (National)	Ramsar Secretariat with support from the LAS and UNEP-ROWA	Ramsar Secretariat will send the report from the Muscat Workshop to all countries in the Arabian Peninsula, and explain the benefits of accession.
	5.1.3 Encourage exchange of expertise and learn lesson from countries that have implement the Convention (Regional)	Ramsar Secretariat, UNEP-ROWA, LAS	
	5.1.4 Ensure financial resources and technical support for accession and capacity building (National)	Ramsar Secretariat can provide support if requested by national government agencies.	

It can be seen that for some of the 'Key issues' and 'Activities', that there may be no corresponding 'Action for 2010 – 2012'. This is because the authors wanted this Plan to be achievable, only listing those actions where a lead organization could be identified to be responsible for implementing that action.

Although some of the cells for 'Action for 2010 – 2012' are empty, this does not indicate that the issue is unimportant, only that no lead organization could be identified during the workshop. In the coming 1-2 years, this situation may change so that implementation of that action can begin.