

Report of Finland for COP7 National, 1999

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

NATIONAL REPORT OF FINLAND FOR COP7

National Report prepared for the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Implementation of the Ramsar Convention in general, and of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 1997-2002 in particular, during the period since the National Report prepared in 1995 for Ramsar COP6.

Contracting Party: Finland

Designated Ramsar Administrative Authority

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Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 1

To progress towards universal membership of the Convention.

- 1.1 Describe any actions your government has taken (such as hosting regional or subregional meetings/consultations, working cooperatively with neighbouring countries on transfrontier wetland sites) to encourage others to join the Convention.

The Government of Finland has not taken any direct actions to encourage others to join the Convention.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 2

To achieve the wise use of wetlands by implementing and further developing the Ramsar Wise Use Guidelines.

2.1 Has a National Wetland Policy/Strategy/Action Plan been developed, or is one being developed or planned for the near future? If so:

A National Wetland Policy /Strategy/Action Plan as such has not been developed. Actions and programmes for national wetlands are included in the National Action Plan for Biodiversity in Finland 1997-2005. The main aim is an integration of biodiversity policy into all relevant sectors of the society and to promote cooperation between ministries. The National Action Plan is an important tool for implementation of policy for biological diversity in Finland. See also chapter 6.1.

Finland is implementing the EU's Natura 2000 network. A Government decision to propose a total of 1524 sites (including some on the Åland islands) for Finland's Natura 2000 network was made in August 1998. Many wetlands are also included in national park areas and nature conservation areas.

a. What are/will be its main features?

The main aim is an integration of biological diversity into all relevant sectors by ministries, the trade and industry, municipalities and the NGO's under the joint objective of protection and sustainable use of biological resources. In order to implement and monitor the National Action Plan for Biodiversity 1997-2005 in Finland a broad based follow-up working group has been appointed by the Ministry of the Environment, comprising representatives of all administration sectors and NGO's to coordinate nationwide monitoring of biodiversity. The biodiversity follow-up working group has also appointed two specialist working groups which will focus among other things on sustainable use, research, monitoring and assessment, and public awareness.

The main objective of the Natura 2000 network is the protection of habitats and plant and animal species defined in the EU Habitat and Bird Directives. The proposed sites to the Natura 2000 network will also include the 11 present Ramsar sites and in the near future, the 50 new Ramsar sites.

b. Was it, or is it, intended that the Policy/Strategy/Action Plan be adopted by the whole of Government, the Minister responsible for Ramsar matters or through some other process. Please describe.

The National Action Plan for Biodiversity 1997-2005 in Finland was drawn up in 1997 and was coordinated by the Ministry of the Environment. The responsibility of implementation lies with different ministries according to the Government's Decision-in-Principle on Measures promoting the conservation and research of biodiversity in

December 1995.

The Natura 2000 network has been prepared by the 13 regional environmental centres and with the support of the Finnish Environment Institute and the Finnish Forest and Park Service under the supervision of the Ministry of the Environment. The Government's Natura decision made in August 1998 is subject to a number of complaints which are dealt within the Highest Administration Court.

The main aim of the Action Plan and the Natura 2000 network is to protect biodiversity including important habitats, plant and animal species.

c. How does it relate/will it relate to other national environmental/ conservation planning initiatives (e.g., National Environmental Action Plans, National Biodiversity Action Plans, National Conservation Strategies)?

The key objective is to make conservation of biodiversity part of all national planning and decision-making in Finland. Nature and wetland conservation in Finland is to be integrated into all planning, legislation and environmental policies. Several acts deal implicitly with wetlands and conservation. The most important laws are the Nature Conservation Act (1996), the Water Act (1961, last revision 1998), the Hunting Act (1993), Forest Act (1996), Building Act (1968, total revision 1998) and the Wilderness Act (1991, revision 1996). In addition, the Mire Conservation Programme (1979, 1981) and the Waterfowl Habitats Conservation Programme (1982) approved by the Council of State are important for Finnish wetland conservation. See also chapter 6.1.

2.2 If a policy is in place, how much progress has been made in its implementation, and what are the major difficulties being encountered in doing so?

The National Action Plan for Biodiversity 1997-2005 in Finland, and especially the Natura 2000 network have required large-scale inventories. A monitoring programme for a representative number of sites has been started. Biodiversity studies include different surveys and assessments of species and habitat diversity from intensive site studies to nationwide assessments. These studies require large databases, modern remote sensing techniques and GIS. Some difficulties may arise when applying the research results successfully in habitat management and restoration projects, especially regarding the integration of ecological, economic and technical knowledge.

2.3 If a Policy/Strategy/Action Plan is in place, is the responsibility for implementing it with :

- a. a single Government Ministry,
- b. a committee drawn from several Ministries, or
- c. a cross-sectoral committee?

Please provide details.

The responsibility of implementation lies with the different Ministries, while the Ministry of the Environment acts as the coordinating body.

2.4 For countries with Federal systems of Government, are there Wetland Policies/Strategies/Plans in place, being developed or planned for the provincial/state or regional levels of Government? Yes/No

No.

If yes, please give details.

2.5 Has a review of legislation and practices which impact on wetlands been carried out, and if so, has this resulted in any changes which assist with implementation of the Ramsar Convention? Please describe these.

When Finland joined the EU in 1995, it had to transpose EU environmental legislation into Finnish national law. The most important work was the revision of the Nature Conservation Act in 1996. The new Act came into force at the beginning of 1997. The EU nature conservation directives, the Habitat Directive (92/43/EEC) and, the Bird Directive (79/409/EEC), were the most important.

Other important Acts and conservation programmes are, for example, the Building Act, Water Act, Wilderness Act, Forest Act and the conservation programmes ratified by the Council of State.

2.6 Describe the efforts made in your country to have wetlands considered in integrated land/water and coastal zone planning and management processes at the following levels:

- a. national
- b. provincial
- c. local

According to the National Action Plan for Biodiversity 1997-2005 in Finland and the Natura 2000 network programme all the above-mentioned three levels are used to integrate the management of wetlands including coastal zone areas into other sectorised planning processes. Many steps are being taken to integrate protection of wetlands into, for example, land use planning processes and into the work on inventories and monitoring of the sites included in the Natura 2000 network.

The Integrated Coastal Zone Management Demonstration Programme is a joint EU initiative for the environment, fisheries and regional policy. Its objectives are:

- providing technical information about the factors which effect the sustainable

management of coastal zones.

- stimulating a broad cooperation and exchange of information among the various actors involved in the planning and implementation of coastal zone management. The dialogue should lead to consensus regarding the appropriate measures to be taken at the European and other levels of competence in order to promote the integrated management of European coastal zone.

The following international initiatives besides the Ramsar Convention, are or will be used for protection of coastal and marine areas in Finland:

- **Baltic Sea Protected Areas:** areas to be set aside for the protection of representative ecosystems in the Baltic Sea Area, as well as to guarantee sustainable use of natural resources as an important contribution to ensure ample provident protection of environment and biodiversity (HELCOM Recommendation 15/5).

- **Biosphere reserve:** areas set aside for conservation, for present and future, to protect the diversity and integrity of biotic plant and animal communities within their natural ecosystems and to safeguard the genetic diversity of species, on which their continuing evolution depends.

- **Special Protected Areas (SPA):** areas for conservation of wild birds and their habitats, to be set aside in accordance with the Bird Directive 79/409/EEC. A decision has been made by the Finnish Government to classify 439 areas as SPA's. The Government of Finland also identified the Finnish BSPA areas when deciding on the Finnish Natura 2000 network.

2.7 Have there been any publications produced, or practices documented, which could assist other countries to promote and improve the application of the Ramsar Wise Use of Wetlands Guidelines? Yes/No

If Yes, please provide details and copies.

The National Evaluation of the Finnish Nature Reserve Network project, the Project for Restauration and Management of the Finnish Wetlands, Assessment of Biodiversity and the Project Important Bird Areas in Finland (FINIBA) will be of importance to all parties when the results of the projects are published.

2.8 Noting COP6 Recommendation 6.14 relating to toxic chemicals and pollution, please advise of the actions taken since then to remedy and to prevent pollution impacts affecting Ramsar sites and other wetlands@ (Operative paragraph 9).

There is no evidence that the Finnish Ramsar sites would be affected by toxic chemicals or pollution to any greater extent. However the deteriorated water quality in the Baltic Sea is a threat and may have serious consequences for the fauna and flora in the shallow waters if the present trend is not changed. The reduction of nitrogen

loading will obviously be necessary to prevent harmful effects of climate change in the Baltic. These matters are dealt by the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission), where all the Baltic Sea states are represented.

The ecotoxicological impact of lead shot is currently being monitored. Veterinary institutes make annual toxicological analyses of several waterbird species. The use of lead shot in waterbird hunting is prohibited since August 1996 in Finland.

2.9 Describe what steps have been taken to incorporate wetland economic valuation techniques into natural resource planning and assessment actions.

The aim of the Finnish nature conservation policy is to incorporate wetland and conservation values into all planning at the national, regional and local level. Through close cooperation with relevant ministries, for example the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and local municipalities and regional environmental centres significant results have been achieved. The Evaluation Project of the Finnish Nature Reserve Network includes wetland sites and will be of great assistance in the future planning and assessment.

2.10 Is Environmental Impact Assessment for actions potentially impacting on wetlands required under legislation in your country? Yes/No

Yes, if a project or plan either individually or in combination with other projects and plans is likely to significantly affect the ecological or scenic value of a site included in, or proposed by the Council of State for inclusion in, the Natura 2000 network, the project's planner or implementer is required to conduct an appropriate assessment according to the Nature Conservation Act (chapter 10), unless the project is subject to the assessment procedure described in the Act on Environmental Impact Assessment (1994).

2.11 Is wetland restoration and rehabilitation considered a priority in your country? Yes/No.

If Yes, describe the actions that have been taken to identify wetlands in need of these actions and to mobilise resources for restoration or rehabilitation.

Yes. The main aim of the project of restoration and management of Finnish wetlands, which consists of 163 prioritized wetlands, and is to evaluate the need for restoration, the need for funding of respective sites and the timetable for funding and the restoration work itself. In this respect, the sites of the future Natura 2000 network and the Ramsar sites are at the top of the funding list.

Both the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry allocate resources for this kind of work from the State budget.

2.12 Describe what actions have been taken to encourage active and informed participation of local communities, including indigenous people, and in particular women, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands. @ (refer to Actions 2.7.1-4 in the Strategic Plan).

The legislation in Finland requires that all major stakeholders have a chance to participate in the decision-making process. The participatory process has been carried out by the regional environmental centres for many years with good results. In this process i.e. private landowners have been involved in the decision-making.

2.13 Describe what actions have been taken to encourage involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands @ (refer to Actions 2.8.1-4 in the Strategic Plan).

Has this included a review of fiscal measures (taxation arrangements, etc.) to identify and remove disincentives and introduce incentives for wetlands conservation and wise use?

Yes/No

If yes, please provide details.

See 2.12. as an example. Local municipalities and authorities hold a strategic position in the planning and assessment process. The available EU funding has also strengthened the involvement of local municipalities.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 3

To raise awareness of wetland values and functions throughout the world and at all levels

3.1 Is there a government-run national programme for Education and Public Awareness in your country which focuses on, or includes, wetlands? Yes/No? If yes, what are the priority actions under this programme and who are the target groups? (Refer also to question 9.4)

The National Board of Education has established a programme for promoting sustainable development during 1998-2000. According to the Finnish national programme on education, all schools and institutions should include the principles of sustainable development in their training, education and learning activities.

The values of wetlands, coastal areas, the archipelago, along with matters concerning biological diversity, are included in local planning efforts and programmes for nature and environmental education. The target groups are landowners as a whole and other groups of the society, including the media. Sites in the Natura 2000 network will be the ecosystems on which national and local authorities will focus. These sites include for example threatened species.

3.2 Describe the steps taken to have wetlands issues and Ramsar's Wise Use principles included as part of the curricula of educational institutions. Has this been at all levels of education (primary, secondary, tertiary and adult)? Please give details.

The importance of biological diversity and wetlands is included in the education plans

and programmes of the schools and universities. The Finnish national programme for promoting sustainable development has been one of the priorities in training and education in the curricula for comprehensive schools, secondary schools and vocational institutions. Basic research and applied studies in biological diversity are undertaken by the Academy of Finland (Finnish biodiversity research programme FIBRE, 1997-2002) and the universities.

The Finnish Forest and Park Service provides information on wetlands at nature centres and their information centres. Several brochures and some films have been made and also attention towards the guidance of school children has been done.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 4

To reinforce the capacity of institutions in each Contracting Party to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands.

4.1 Describe the mechanisms in place, or being introduced, to increase cooperation between the various institutions responsible for actions which can have an impact on the conservation and wise use of wetlands. If one of the mechanisms is a National Ramsar/Wetlands Committee, please describe its composition, functions and *modus operandi*.

National guidelines, in accordance with the National Action Plan for Biodiversity 1997-2005 in Finland and Natura 2000 network, include species and habitats types on which monitoring and assessment plans are currently been developed. This work will strengthen the inventories needed and the project for threatened species. Finland does not have a formal Ramsar Committee but relies on the expertise of employees in regional environmental centres, the Ministry of the Environment and in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The State owned land in Finland is governed by the National Board of Forestry and by the Forest Research Institute.

4.2 Of the following, indicate which have been undertaken:

a. a review to identify the training needs of institutions and individuals concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands Yes/No? If yes, please indicate the major findings of the review.

The need for training is great for the specialists working in different institutions and for individuals, especially cross-sectoral for biologists and water managers for example. Differences between regions are large. Some regions have structures in place others not. The use of professionals is important.

b. a review to identify training opportunities for these people both within your country and in

other countries. Yes/No?

Yes. There is need for further training opportunities for wetland managers, especially in the field of restoration and management of wetlands within Finland, and cooperation with the Baltic states and Russia.

c. the development of training modules or a training programme specifically for wetland managers. If yes, please give details.

The Finnish Environment Institute, regional environmental centres and the Ministry of the Environment in cooperation with universities, provide training for wetland managers. These training courses include site visits, issues of funding, legislative matters, biodiversity and monitoring work. Training programmes are provided both on the regional and national level.

d. people from your country have gained wetland-related training either within or outside the country. Yes/No? If yes, please give details.

Some people has and will receive training both in Finland and abroad. There is some cooperation in the field of management of wetlands with Estonia, Russia and China.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 5

To ensure the conservation of all sites included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar List).

- 5.1 Of the Ramsar sites in your country, how many have formal management plan
- a. being prepared?
 - b. fully prepared?
 - c. being implemented?

Please indicate in the attached table of Ramsar sites which sites these are and what category they fall into.

Finland has at the moment 11 Ramsar sites which are:

- 1. Aspskär (Bird station)**
- 2. Söderskär and Långören (Bird station)**
- 3. Björkör and Lågskär (Bird station)**
- 4. Signilskär (Bird station)**
- 5. Valassaaret-Björkögrunden (Bird station)**
- 6. Krunnit**
- 7. Ruskis**
- 8. Vanhankaupunginlahti**
- 9. Patvinsuo**
- 10. Martimoaapa-Lumiaapa**
- 11. Koitelaiskaira**

Vanhankaupunginlahti: A management and conservation plan was launched in 1988, and restoration and management plan in 1998. The restoration and research and education work will be carried out under the EU Life project in 1997-2001, this also includes the ecological monitoring work in the area.

Ruskis: A management and conservation plan was completed in 1997, which includes research on water quality, plants and birds and also eutrophication. A new management plan of the Ruskis Protected Area is being done partly under the EU Life project.

Söderskär and Långören: American Minks (*Mustela vison*) have been captured.

Aspskär: American Minks (*Mustela vison*) have been captured.

Björkör and Lågsjär: Traditional rural landscapes have been restored and archipelago museum has been set up in the Björkör Islands.

Patvinsuo National Park: A management plan was launched in 1986. Two small forest areas in the middle of the mire were burned in 1989, according to the plan, to simulate a natural forest fire. Also, the mire restoration project has started.

Martimoaapa-Lumiaapa: A management and conservation plan for the Peatland Reserve was established in 1991. The restoration, research and education work is being done partly under the EU Life project.

Koitelaiskaira: A management plan is under preparation.

5.2 Of the management plans referred to above, which ones have included a monitoring scheme or programme to allow changes in ecological character to be detected? Please indicate this in the attached table of Ramsar sites also.

Monitoring of migratory and other birds is conducted at the bird stations. During the spring and autumn migration, other Ramsar sites are also monitored.

However, based on requirements in some plans we are at the moment monitoring the changes at several sites.

In addition, we are making improvements to the ecological character at many sites through restoration and management work.

5.3 Has there been a change in the ecological character (either positive or negative) at any of your Ramsar sites or is this likely to occur in the near future? Yes/No. If Yes, please give details.

We are monitoring all the sites, especially Koitelaiskaira because of the planned maining operations in the area.

Monitoring has recently been carried out, and based on the results, the ecological character of the sites is being evaluated.

5.4 In the case of Montreux Record Ramsar sites where the Management Guidance Procedure has been applied, what is the status of the implementation of the MGP report recommendations? What is the expected time-frame for removing the site from the Montreux Record?

5.5 For those countries referred to in COP6 Recommendations 6.17.1-4, ARamsar sites in the Territories of Specific Contracting Parties@, please provide advice on the actions that have been taken in response to the issues raised at that time.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 6

To designate for the Ramsar List those wetlands which meet the Convention's criteria, especially wetland types still under-represented in the List and transfrontier wetlands.

6.1 Has a national inventory of wetlands been prepared for your country? Yes/No.

If no, are there plans for this to be done? Yes/No.

Yes. The Waterfowl Habitats Conservation Programme (1982) inventories were done in 1967-1980 of 1300 areas, of which 287 of the highest biological value were incorporated into the conservation programme. The Mire Conservation Programme (1981) includes 600 sites. In 1988 the number of established Peatland Reserves was 173. The 25 most representative areas were chosen for the Ramsar list of sites.

The national inventory for most of the proposed Natura 2000 network (1524 sites) was done during the preparation work of the Natura 2000. The project on Important Bird Areas in Finland (FINIBA) has listed 2 200 nationally important sites and it includes the identification of 96 internationally important sites of which 75 are wetlands. In this work, both the criteria of BirdLife International and the Ramsar Convention were used. The major inventory work was carried out during 1996-97. All sites with national or international values were given a detailed description, including maps. A complete list of literature/references completes the inventories. The national list, maps and both the register and databases are maintained by the Finnish Environment Institute (FEI).

Where a national inventory exists please provide details of when it was finalised, where it is kept and what information it contains.

6.2 Does there exist a list or directory of Aimportant@ wetlands for your country or region? Yes/No.

Yes, please see 6.1.

If yes, please provide details of when it was finalised, where it is kept, what criteria for Aimportant@ were used, and the types of information it contains.

6.3 If it is known, please provide an estimate of the area of wetlands in your country at present and any information on rates of loss or conversion to other activities.

The amount of undrained and drained mires in Finland 1986-96:

State of drainage of mires				
Total Undrained	Recently drained	Transforming	Transformed	Drained mires
				%
1000 ha				
8921	4252	1083	2682	904
				52,3

If this information is available, please indicate what definition of Awetland@ was used.

The definitions used are from the EU Commission (Wise use and conservation of wetlands) and Ramsar Convention.

6.4 Have any actions been taken in response to the COP6 Resolutions and Recommendations that Contracting Parties should give priority to listing Wetlands of International Importance which:

- meet the criteria for fish habitat (Resolution VI.2),
- meet the 1% criterion for waterbird populations using data provided by the International Waterfowl Census (Resolution VI.4),
- are subterranean karst or cave wetland systems (Resolution VI.5),
- are peatland ecosystems (Recommendation 6.1)
- are coral reefs and associated systems (Recommendation 6.7)
- are under-represented wetland types (which apart from d. and e. above include mangroves and sea grass beds) (Strategic Plan Action 6.2.3)

Yes/No? If yes, please describe these actions.

Yes, for the criteria d and f. Finland has been preparing a proposal to designate 50 new Ramsar sites, which needs a decision by the Ministry of the Environment. The Natura 2000 network includes, when it has been completed, all the 61 Ramsar sites. The Finnish proposal of Natura 2000 network sites will need to be further processed by the EU Commission.

6.5 If your government indicated at COP6 that it would be proceeding to list further specific sites, please advise of the status of this action.

Please see 6.4.

6.6 Please advise which of the sites included in the Ramsar List from your country are transfrontier wetlands (Refer also to 7.1).

None.

6.7 Describe any plans, or actions being taken for further transfrontier sites to be listed (Refer also to 7.1).

None.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 7

To mobilise international cooperation and financial assistance for wetland conservation and wise use in collaboration with other conventions and agencies, both governmental and non-governmental.

7.1 Briefly describe any bilateral or multilateral activities that have been taken, are under way, or are planned for the management of transfrontier wetlands or their watersheds/catchments (Refer also to 6.6 and 6.7).

Finland shares a vast amount of fresh water resources with Sweden, Norway and Russia. Finland was a party to bilateral agreements and joint commissions with Soviet Union 1964. These have been continued with the Russian Federation since 1992 (The Finnish-Russian Joint Commission and The Discharge Rule for Lake Saimaa and the River Vuoksi). Finland has also been party to bilateral agreements and joint commissions with Sweden since 1971 (The Border River Commission between Finland and Sweden) and with Norway since 1980 (Finnish-Norwegian Commission on Border Water Systems).

7.2 Do you have Ramsar sites that are Atwinned@ with others, either nationally or internationally? Yes/No.

If yes, please give details.

No.

7.3 Where your country is also a signatory of any of the following Conventions, describe what mechanism(s) exist to assist regular dialogue and cooperative actions between the personnel responsible for their implementation and the Ramsar Administrative Authority:

a. Convention on Biological Diversity

The Ministry of the Environment coordinates the implementation of the CBD, and the nationwide biodiversity monitoring and assessment work. A regular dialogue and cooperation takes place between the Ministry of the Environment and the Finnish Environment Institute (Ramsar Administrative Authority), in i.e. the national biodiversity

follow-up working group. Finland has a broad representation also from the Finnish Environment Institute (FEI) at COP and SBSTTA.

b. Framework Convention on Climate Change

The Ministry of the Environment coordinates and a national working group has been appointed and Finnish Environment Institute takes part in this work.

c. Convention to Combat Desertification

None at the moment.

d. Convention on Migratory Species

Under the coordination of the Ministry of the Environment.

e. World Heritage Convention

Under the coordination of the Ministry of the Environment.

7.4 Is your country cooperating as part of any bilateral or multilateral activities directed at the conservation of migratory wetland species? Yes/No.

If yes, please provide details.

Yes. Relevant activities include:

A Life Nature Project on the Lesser White-fronted Goose and long-standing cooperation with Sweden, Norway, Russia and Kazakhstan.

Close cooperation with Russia on nature conservation and biological diversity, inventories, national park activities, including the protected areas close to the Finnish-Russian border (Green Belt).

Close cooperation with Russia and Estonia on monitoring the Arctic flora and fauna, and migratory species.

Studies on Arctic bird migration of the northern Baltic and White Sea regions are ongoing between Russia and Estonia; Finland is hosting the voluntary secretariat functions.

7.5 Are there multilateral and/or bilateral donors supporting projects which contribute to

implementation of the Ramsar Convention in your country? Yes/No.

If yes, please provide details.

No.

7.6 Does your government make an annual budgetary allocation to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands within your country? Yes/No.

If yes, is this a specific allocation to a wetlands programme or as part of a larger environment or natural resource management budget?

Yes. An annual budget is allocated by the Ministry of the Environment for management, research, monitoring, and restoration of wetlands. In addition the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has a funding system for restoration of degraded wetlands.

7.7 If your country has a development assistance programme, does it include funds earmarked for wetland conservation and wise use in other countries? Yes/No. If yes, please give details.

Yes. Finnish Development Aid/the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also provided funding also for wetland programmes to several countries, bilaterally and multilaterally. These projects have taken into account biological diversity, coastal zone management, and water use planning, including flood problems.

7.8 Is there a formal process in place for consultation between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and the development assistance programme in your country, where one exists? Yes/No

If yes, what is that process.

Yes. The Minister of the Environment as a member of Council of State, is also responsible for development aid in Finland. There is also exchange of personnel, training and funding projects.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 8

To provide the Convention with the required institutional mechanisms and resources.

8.1 Has your government made voluntary financial contributions, other than the invoiced contributions or to the Small Grants Fund, to further the work of the Convention globally? Yes/No.

. If yes, please provide details.

No, not in addition to the bilateral agreements.

8.2 If your country is in arrears with the payment of its annual contributions to the Ramsar Convention, please indicate the reasons for this situation and the prospects for paying these arrears in the near future.

Optional section - Participation of non-government organizations in the implementation of the Convention

These are optional questions relating to cooperation with and involvement of non-government organizations in the implementation of the Convention.

At COP6 some 42 NGOs made the ABrisbane NGO pledge of support for the Ramsar Convention@. The Standing Committee agreed that for COP7 there should be an effort made to gauge the level and type of cooperation which is occurring between government Administrative Authorities and the national and international NGOs with an interest in wetlands issues.

In this **optional** section of the National Report, you are asked to describe the nature of the cooperation and relationship with any other international, regional, national and provincial NGOs operating within your country.

9.1 Approximately how many NGOs have wetlands as part of their regular Abusiness@ in your country?

Please break this down between international, regional and national/provincial organizations.

International: WWF, BirdLife Finland.

National: WWF, The Finnish Association for Nature Protection and the Natur och Miljö, The Finnish Botanical Society, The Finnish Zoological Society, BirdLife Finland with its 27 local groups.

In addition there are a number of other specialized groups related to protection of animals, and old-growth forests i.e. Luonto-Liitto.

9.2 Is there a regular forum or mechanism through which these NGOs express their views on wetland conservation and Ramsar implementation:

a. to each other? Yes/No

Yes. A few times per year, meetings are held depending on the issues.

b. to the government? Yes/No

If yes in either case, please give details.

Yes. The present Minister of the Environment maintains dialogue with NGO´s on current issues.

9.3 Does your government include one or more NGO representatives on its delegation to Ramsar COPs? Yes/No

No.

9.4 Do any of the NGOs run programmes aimed at Education and Public Awareness about wetlands in your country? Yes/No. If yes, please give details (Refer also to question 3.1).

NGO´s conduct their own Individual activities aiming also at public awareness about wetlands. For example, the EU Life Nature project on the White-fronted Goose includes NGO´s, where the public awareness and educational aspects are important.

9.5 Where they exist, do Ramsar site management advisory committees include NGO representatives? If yes, please give details

No. Finland does not have Ramsar committee but the dialogue continues with the above- mentioned NGO´s in several relevant working groups related to wetlands.

9.6 Describe the themes of the Convention (refer to General Objectives 1-8 of the Strategic Plan) where you perceive the national/provincial NGOs to be most active.

The protection of threatened species and habitats including wetlands, public awareness through the media.

10.1 General comments on implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan.

10.2 Observations concerning the functioning of, relations with, and services provided by:

- a. The Ramsar Standing Committee
- b. The Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel
- c. The Ramsar Bureau
- d. The Ramsar NGO partners

10.3 Any other general observations and/or recommendations for the future.

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