



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: BELARUS	
DESIGNATED RAMSAR ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY	
Name of Administrative Authority:	The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus
Head of Administrative Authority - name and title:	Leonty Choruzhyk (Ivanovich), Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection
Mailing address:	220048, Minsk, Kollektornaya Str., 10
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Email:	
DESIGNATED NATIONAL FOCAL POINT (DAILY CONTACT IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY) FOR RAMSAR CONVENTION MATTERS	
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DESIGNATED NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO STRP (SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL)	
Name and title of focal point:	Alexander Kozulin (Vasilievich), Leading Researcher, Institute of Zoology, National Academy of Sciences of Belarus
Name of organisation:	
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DESIGNATED GOVERNMENT NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO THE CEPA PROGRAMME ON COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS	
Name and title of focal point:	Natalya Minchenko (Vladimirovna), Head of the Specialized State Control Office for the Use and Protection of Wild Life, Management of Hunting Activities and Condition of Protected Areas, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection
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DESIGNATED NON-GOVERNMENT NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO THE CEPA PROGRAMME ON COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS	
Name and title:	Yury Soloviev (Vasilievich), Chairman of the Council of the NGO "Environmental Initiative"
Name of organisation:	
Mailing address:	220048, Minsk, Kollektornaya Str., 10
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ecoin@tut.by

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?

In the indicated period, the following steps have been taken to implement the Convention:

- a new Ramsar site 'Prostyr' has been designated;

- descriptions of two Ramsar sites have been prepared for the Ramsar Secretariat:
 - + the 'Vygonshanskoye' protected area
 - + the wetland complex of the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve

- state nature protection institutions have been created for the management of all Ramsar sites, financed by the government nature protection fund;

- the work has been started on the development of management plans for 4 Ramsar sites: the 'Mid-Pripyat State Landscape Zakaznik' and the 'Prostyr' – within the framework of the UNDP/GEF; 'Yelnia' and 'Osveisky' as part of state scientific and technical programme;

- management plans are being implemented for the 'Zvanets' and 'Sporovsky' Ramsar sites (part of the the UNDP/GEF);

- within the framework of the UNDP/GEF project 'Rehabilitation and sustainable management of the degraded peatbogs in Belarus' the work has been started on the rehabilitation of the first four degraded peatbogs in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, solve the problems of soil degradation and ensure the preservation of biological diversity;

- a new programme of the rehabilitation of disturbed peatbogs for 2008 – 2012 has been developed by the Ministry of Forest Resources;

- has been developed and approved National Development Strategy Projects for creating a system of specially protected natural areas (SPNA) covering the period until 2015 and State Development Programme Projects, aiming at the creation of a system of SPNA for 2008-2015; their implementation will provide direct funding for the activities whose aims are protection and sustainable use of wetlands;

- the Interdepartmental Co-ordination Board for the Implementation of the Ramsar Convention (the National Committee) has been created as a body subordinate to the Ministry of Environment.

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

- state nature protection institutions have been created for the management of all Ramsar sites, financed by the government nature protection fund;

- the work on the development of management plans has been started for 4 Ramsar sites: the 'Mid-Pripyat State Landscape Zakaznik' and the 'Prostyr' – within the framework of the UNDP/GEF; 'Yelnia' and 'Osveisky' as part of state scientific and technical programme;

- a scheme for the wise distribution of SPNA for 2008 – 2015 has been prepared; it will give most of the wetlands which are of crucial importance a national protection status (in the course of the implementation of the scheme, 7 wetland reserves of regional level and 7 reserves of other kinds which will also contain wetland complexes are going to be created)

- within the framework of the UNDP/GEF project 'Rehabilitation and sustainable management of the degraded peatbogs in Belarus', the work has been started on the rehabilitation of the first four degraded peatbogs in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, solve the problems of soil degradation and ensure the preservation of biological diversity (Dokudovskoye, Bartenikha, Miranka, Galoe);

- has been developed and approved National Development Strategy Projects for creating a system of specially protected natural areas (SPNA) covering the period until 2015 and State Development Programme Projects, aiming at the creation of a system of SPNA for 2008-2014; their implementation will provide direct funding for activities whose aims are protection and sustainable use of wetlands.

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

Absence of a Strategy and Action Plan for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention.

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

To develop the Strategy and Action Plan for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention.

To appraise the necessity and quantity of work for implementing sustainable use of wetlands.

The following amendments, connected with wetlands and the Convention implementation obligations, were made to the Act of the Republic of Belarus 'Specially protected territories':

a new term 'specially protected territories of international importance' was introduced. It implies natural zones which are protected with particular caution and are included in the global net of biosphere reserves, lists of objects of world heritage, wetlands of international importance and other lists of natural complexes and objects of international significance, in conformity with the demands imposed by international agreements which Belarus is bound by (included zones which have been declared transboundary SPNA).

For such SPNA as reserves (nowadays all Ramsar territories in Belarus are created on the basis of reserves), a responsible nature protection institution has not only to deal with a reserve's management but also develop a management

programme for it.

For the management of the reserves of world significance, special state nature protection institutions are created.

In the Project of the National Strategy for the Development of the System of SPNA covering the period until 2015 the principles of protection and sustainable use of wetlands have also been reflected.

It was mentioned in the Strategy that the wetlands of Berezinsky biosphere reserve (in particular, lowland and upland bogs), Prip'yatsky National Park, the reserves 'Yelna', 'Koziansky', 'Zvanets' and some other SPNA are unique in Europe and are of great importance for global and regional climate.

The SPNA structure will change to the expansion of meadow and wetland ecosystems. This will ensure the preservation of the most important ecosystems, biological and landscape diversity.

Besides, it is expected that as a result of measures taken to encourage international cooperation, Belarus will meet its obligations imposed by international agreements in the sphere of biological and landscape diversity as well as natural heritage preservation. Action plans have been developed for fulfilling these obligations, with the following transboundary SPNA having been created: 'Kotra – Chepkelay', 'Stokhod - Prip'yat-Prostyr', 'Osveisky – Krasny Bor – Sebezhsy' and transboundary biosphere reserves, including 'Pribuzhskoye Polesie', 'Pradolina reki Prip'yat'. No fewer than 10 specially protected natural territories will have international status. State national protection institutions which are responsible for the SPNA management will be involved in the work of various international nature protection organizations. The National Ecological Network will be intergrated into the All-European Ecological Network.

The State Programme of the SPNA Development System for 2008 - 2012 stipulates, first of all, the development of the Strategy and National Action Plan for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention. Furthermore, it presupposes the following activities:

- optimization of the management structure of the 'Mid-Prip'yat' landscape reserve
- management plan development for Belarusian reserves, including the Kotra Ramsar site and the 'Vygonshanskoye' potential Ramsar site
- implementation of the management plans for the reserves belonging to Ramsar sites ('Yelna', 'Osveisky', 'Srednyaya Prip'yat', 'Prostyr', 'Zvanets', 'Sporovsky', 'Kotra')
- taking measures to prevent exposed lowland bogs and flood-lands from being overgrown with shrubs in the reserves 'Sporovsky', 'Zvanets', 'Prostyr', 'Mid-Prip'yat'
- restoration of the hydrological regime at the existent and potential Ramsar sites (Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve, the reserves 'Zvanets', 'Sporovsky').

- development and providing of functioning of transboundary SPNA
- creation of an international centre for fields practices for students based on the territory of the reserves 'Pribuzhskoye Polesie' and 'Sporovsky'
- creation, equipping and ensuring proper functioning of the environmental education centres in state nature protection institutions of Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve, national parks, the reserves 'Yelna', 'Osveisky', 'Pribuzhskoye Polesie'.

In the National Action Plan for the Conservation and Wise Use of Natural Resources for 2006 – 2010 the following wetland-related activities were also included:

- devising technical approaches and creating a complex ecosystem monitoring network in all Belarusian reserves and national parks, including those of regional importance which have international status
- preparation of an application to the Ramsar Secretariat for proclaiming Polesie Region wetlands in Belarus and Ukraine to be Ramsar transboundary sites
- making and following recommendations for putting specially protected natural and other kinds of territories on the list of wetlands of international importance
- development of plans for controlling the European beaver and the true otter populations in Belarus and devising measures to reduce the negative impact on indigenous fauna of strange wild animals' invasion of water ecosystems.

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

No

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

It is necessary to support and extend the connections with such partners of the Ramsar Convention as BirdLife International, Wetlands International and make new ones with other organizations.

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?

Joint meetings with the participation of Conventions' Focal Points should be held for the coordination in various Conventions' policies. National Strategies and Action Plans for different Conventions should not be mutually exclusive.

National Fokal points of Conventions should be included in the working groups dealing with the development of various Conventions' Strategies and state programmes.

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)?

The link with implementation of the national strategies could be strengthened by considering state programmes dealing with wetlands at the meetings of the National Ramsar Committee. The Ministry of Environment could coordinate such programmes after their being considered at the National Ramsar Committee or at a joint meeting of the Committees of different nature protection Conventions.

- 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]	C - For some sites
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 A - Greater

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: No special complex inventory of the National wetlands has been made with regard to Ramsar demands, but there is some information about wetlands in various specialised reports. In addition to this, investigation into the current state of the accounting system of

state wetlands information gathered, stored and used in Belarus (National Report 2004) brings about a conclusion that in Belarus there is an accounting system of different kinds of wetlands (rivers, lakes, storage pools and ponds), but there is no such system for peatbogs. Therefore, it is necessary to make an urgent complex inventory of natural and degraded peatbogs in Belarus.

To this day, 46 descriptions of wetlands which have international and national significance for the preservation of biodiversity have been prepared. Eight of them belong to the wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites), 10 are potential Ramsar sites and 32 are Important Bird Areas (IBAs).

In addition to the descriptions mentioned above, descriptions of wetlands belonging to SPNA of regional level are also made. Among the 54 SPNA, there are various wetland complexes (lake, river, peatbog, forest-peatbog, forest-lake, forest-river complexes etc) which are situated in Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve, 4 national parks, 49 reserves of regional importance.

The National Water Accounting System has only one priority and it doesn't contain any data about the role of wetlands in biological diversity. According to Article 90 of the Water Code of Belarus, there is state accounting of water bodies and their use. The accounting is aimed at ensuring the current and prospective planning of wise use and protection of water. All water resources uses (including household, medical, sanitary, agriculture, industry, energy, transport, fish-processing uses) are subject to National accounting in Belarus. On the basis of state water accounting and monitoring, the National Water Cadastre is based which contains integrated data about the quantity and quality of waters as well as their use.

In the accounting period, some work has been done to make an inventory and evaluation of wetland complexes, including on SPNA. This work can be used for making a complex inventory of wetlands:

- an inventory has been made to estimate biological diversity, some recommendations have been produced for using spring ecosystems of Braslau National Park as a prospective source of ecotourism and balneology, protection documents have been prepared for the most significant springs to be declared natural monuments;
- in order to develop conservation activities for small rivers of Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve, ecological and hydrobiological evaluation of their current state has been made;
- in order to develop conservation and monitoring activities for the water systems of Belavezhski National Park, ecological and hydrobiological evaluation of their current state has been made;
- the state of Braslau National Park water bodies has been studied and biological proofs for the wise use of its resources have been found;
- an inventory of springs in Minsk District has been made and the most environmentally significant of them have been found for SPNA designation;
- the unique natural complexes of Lake Kroman and the territory adjacent to it have been assessed and scientifically-proved norms of its natural potential for recreation and ecotourism have been developed.

1.1.2: Within the framework of the development and implementation of management plans for six Ramsar sites ('Zvanets', 'Sporovsky', 'Mid-Pripyat', 'Prostyr', 'Yelnia', 'Osveysky'), there is a scheme of providing information for decision-making for all the organisations involved in the protection and wise use of the wetlands mentioned above.

Besides, in Belarus there's also a system of informing local authorities and population about the state of SPNA wetlands.

1.1.3: The most detailed information that can be found on wetland ecological condition changes is about internationally significant wetlands.

From 2006 till 2008, management plans are being developed for 'Yelnia' and 'Osveyskoye'. Some degradation of lake and peat bog ecological situation has been shown as a result of the change of hydrological regime caused by the drain influence of drainage canal.

On the Ramsar territories 'Sporovsky' and 'Zvanets' the increasing process of exposed lowland bogs being overgrown with bushes and reeds can be observed. In addition to this, bottomland meadows have been found to be overgrown with osiers on the Ramsar territories 'Srednyaya Pripyat' and 'Zvanets'.

Similar degradation of ecological situation can be found in the area of peat bogs dehydrated by forest melioration covering 25 thousand hectares. About 260 thousand hectares of degraded peatlands demand restoration of the hydrological regime (exhausted peat bogs, bogs dehydrated by forest melioration) (Resolution of the International Conference about Wetland Preservation and Climate Change, Belarus June 20 - 21).

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

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

Indicator questions:

1.2.1 Is a National Wetland Policy (or equivalent instrument) in place? {2.1.1} [If "Yes", please give the title and date of the policy in Additional implementation information]	D - Planned
1.2.2 Does the National Wetland Policy (or equivalent instrument) incorporate any World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) targets and actions? {2.1.2}	C - Partly
1.2.3 Have wetland issues been incorporated into national strategies for sustainable development (including National Poverty Reduction Plans called for by the WSSD and water resources management and water efficiency plans)? {2.1.2}	C - Partly
1.2.4 Has the quantity and quality of water available to, and required by, wetlands been assessed?	A - Yes
1.2.5 Are Strategic Environmental Assessment practices applied when reviewing policies, programmes and plans that may impact upon wetlands? {2.2.2}	C - Partly

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: The development of the National Strategy for the Conservation and Wise Use of Wetlands in Belarus is planned for 2008 -2009.

1.2.2: The principles and rules of protection and sustainable use of wetlands are part of the unit ‘Protection and sustainable use of natural resources’ of the National Strategy of Sustainable Social and Economic Development of Belarus for the period up to 2020.

1.2.3: The principles of protection and sustainable use of wetlands are observed in various national programmes and strategies:

- The Strategy and Action Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Belarus.
- National Strategy for Sustainable Social and Economic Development of Belarus covering the period until 2020
- National Conservation Action Plan for 2006-2010
- The Wise SPNA Location Scheme covering the period until 2020
- The Strategy for Preserving Biological Diversity of the Dnieper basin
- The Wise Use and Protection Scheme for Lakes
- The Wise Use and Protection Strategy for Peat Resources of Belarus
- The Concept of Environmentally Friendly Use of Natural Resources of the Polesie Region
- The 2000 – 2010 National Programme ‘Conservation and Use of Reclaimed Areas’
- The National Development Scheme for the System of SPNA covering the period until 2015 (approved in 2007)
- The 2008 – 2014 State Development Programme of the System of SPNA (approved in progress)

1.2.4: In Belarus, there is a system of gathering and analysis of data for the evaluation of the quantity and quality of water. The National Water Cadastre of Belarus contains data and documents about the quantity and quality of water and also about water use. It consists of the cadastre of surface water, the cadastre of ground water and the cadastre of water use. The most important documents of the Water Cadastre are materials about water supply, its use and protection; statistical reports of water consumers; the directory of water bodies and water households.

The cadastre of the surface water contains information about rivers, canals, lakes, storage pools, ponds, information about stations and observation periods of hydrological, hydrochemical and hydrobiological regimes of water bodies and the change in the drainage network caused by economical activity. It also includes hydrographic and morphometric characteristics of water bodies and their spillways and the data of yearly standard observations of water level, water temperature, flow, alluviums, ice thickness, water bodies’ heat storage, chemical and biological water composition.

The cadastre of ground waters contains information about useful ground water storage and expected ground water resources. It also contains information about water recording stations (wells, percolation wells, springs) as well as about observations of ground water regime (water level, temperature, quality, withdrawal) and ground water chemical and biological composition. The cadastre of water use contains information about the location and main characteristics of water supply points, waste discharges, treatment facilities, storage pools and ponds, water use, operation of large water supply points and storage pools. It also has information about irrigated areas, drainage areas and dampened areas.

The National Water Cadastre of Belarus is supervised by the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Emergencies and Protection against the Consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe (questions of surface water cadastre), Belarusian production association for geological survey (questions of ground water cadastre) and the Ministry of Public Health.

1.2.5: In Belarus, it was confirmed in compliance with Article 58 ‘Nature Protection’ that the environmental impact evaluation is made regarding planned economical activity and other kinds of human activity which can harm the environment. The procedure of environmental impact evaluation and the requirements for the report on it are set by the state legislation of environment appraisal. State environment appraisal is used for evaluating various state economic plans, and at

the present time the necessity to evaluate state programmes is being discussed as well.

In compliance with the Instruction about the Procedure of the Environmental Impact Evaluation of planned economical and other activities in Belarus, the evaluation is realised at the stage of pre-design and design work and is aimed at defining different kinds of influence on the environment as a result of the implementation of the planned economical and other activities. It is also aimed at singling out the correspondent changes in the environment and forecast of its future condition.

In compliance with the Instruction about the Procedure of the Environmental Impact Evaluation of planned economical and other activities in Belarus, if the population and social organisations are willing to take part in preparation and discussing of environmental impact evaluation of the planned economical and other activities, the initiator provides the people concerned with the necessary information and insures their participation in the preparation and discussion of the impact evaluation materials.

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]	D - In progress
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}	B - No
1.3.3 Has national action been taken to implement the Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands (Resolution VIII.17)? {3.2.1}	C - Partly
1.3.4 Has national action been taken to apply the guiding principles on cultural values of wetlands (Resolutions VIII.19 and IX.21)? {3.3.3}	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: In 2006 – 2007, within the framework of the programme to devise methods for the cost-effectiveness evaluation of scientific and technical activities (including various developments) in the sphere of natural protection, the cost-effectiveness evaluation of the Management Plan for the Ramsar site ‘Zvanets’ was accomplished by the Institute of Zoology of the National Academy of Sciences. As a result, it was concluded that the cost-effectiveness of the planned and implemented management measures of the Five-Year Plan for the reserve ‘Zvanets’ may amount to 25 – 200% of the expenditures on them, depending on the used method of calculation.

Within the framework of the UNDP/GEF programme of the management plan preparation for the Ramsar sites ‘Mid-Prityat’ and ‘Prostyry’, the cost of natural resources of the reserves is being estimated

1.3.3: In Belarus, a medium-term UNDP/GEF 2006 - 2010 plan is in place for restoration and

sustainable management of degraded peatlands in Belarus, aiming at reducing greenhouse gas effusion and solving the problem of soil degradation and biodiversity conservation (renaturalization of degraded peatlands). Currently work is being done to restore the four degraded bogs 'Dokudovskoye', 'Bartenicha', 'Miranka', 'Galoe', a National Action Plan is being developed to fight against soil degradation. It is planned to make an inventory of dehydrated peat bogs.

1.3.4: According to the recommendations confirmed by the Ministry of Environment for developing scientific, industrial and economical proofs for designation, reorganization and cessation of functioning of SPNA, the scientific grounds should contain the 'Historical and Cultural Potential' section. Thus, during the preparation of scientific proofs for designation and reorganization of wetlands, the cultural heritage of the territories whose significant part contains wetlands is evaluated. In this section a list of the history and cultural memorials situated on the concerned territory is given, with their characteristics and maintenance regime, as well as compatibility of the established protection and use regimes with the necessary nature protection regimes.

The 'Cultural and Historical Information' section can also be found in SPNA Management Plans. Work is being done to prepare such sections and to include them in the management plans for the Ramsar sites 'Yelnia', 'Osveysky', 'Mid-Pripyat' and 'Prostyr'.

Social and cultural importance of wetlands is also taken in consideration when a new Ramsar site designation is considered. In 2005 it was the case for the reserve 'Prostyr' and in 2006 for the reserve 'Vygonshanskoye' and the wetlands of Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve.

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}	E - Not applicable
1.4.4 Have the implications for wetland conservation and wise use of national implementation of the Kyoto Protocol been assessed? {3.4.9}	D - Planned

Additional implementation information:

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

1.4.1: In Belarus, there are no special organisations for river basin management. Water body management is realised through administrative division. In the development of the management plans for the Ramsar sites 'Mid-Pripyat', 'Prostyr', 'Zvanets', 'Sporovsky', the principles of the Framework for Integration of Wise Use and Protection of Wetlands into Sustainable Water Basin Resource Management were applied.

At present, in Belarus and Ukraine a joint TACIS project 'Development of a management plan for the Pripyat basin' is being developed. The question of introduction of a basin

management principle and water management system is currently under discussion.

1.4.2: The CEPA expertise and tools is used in the development of management plans for Ramsar sites.

1.4.4: At the Third International conference 'Wetland Conservation and Climate Change in Belarus', it was mentioned that the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol could make a significant contribution to wetland conservation in Belarus only after a decision was made to include wetland drains and absorption of natural and restorable peatbogs in the change estimation scheme of greenhouse gases (Conference Resolution).

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

STRATEGY 1.5: *Identify priority wetlands where restoration or rehabilitation would be beneficial and yield long-term environmental, social or economic benefits, and implement the necessary measures to recover these sites.*

Indicator questions:

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

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: In 2006 – 2010, the UNDP/GEF project 'Restoration and sustainable management of degraded peatbogs in Belarus for the purpose of the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, solution of soil degradation problems and ensuring biodiversity conservation' is being implemented. Within this project, it is planned to restore 17 degraded peatbogs the total area of which amounts to 42000 hectares. In 2007 the first 4 peatbogs (Dokudovskoye, Bartenicha, Miranka, Galoe) have been restored.

A draft of the programme has been developed by the Ministry of Forestry for restoration of degraded peat bogs on forest territories.

In 2007, sponsored by the Coca Cola Company, the non-government organization 'Protection of National Birds Species' encouraged work of volunteers, the SNPI 'Yelnia' staff members and local conservation enthusiasts for the purpose of the restoration of the hydrological regime of the Ramsar site 'Yelnia' (24 dams have been built). It is planned to continue this work in 2008, using the funds of the Small Grant Found GEF.

1.5.2: Within the framework of the UNDP/GEF project for restoration of degraded peatbogs, several normative documents are being developed to make it possible to introduce the principles and strategies of wetland restoration into the National Policy and Wetland Development Plans. Some of the documents are as follows:

- Section of the National Action Plan of Belarus against Soil Degradation 'Sustainable Use, Restoration, and Protection of Degraded Peatbogs'
- Procedure and Recommendations for Determining Various Uses of Exhausted Peatbogs and Other Degraded Peatbogs

- Procedure and Recommendations for the Restoration of Exhausted Peatbogs and Other Degraded Peatbogs

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

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

Indicator questions:

1.6.1 Have national policies, strategies and management responses to threats from invasive species, particularly in wetlands, been developed and implemented? {r5.1.ii}	C - Partly
1.6.2 Have such policies, strategies and management responses been carried out in cooperation with the focal points of other conventions and international organisations/processes? {r5.1.ii}	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: In compliance with the new Wildlife Act of the Republic of Belarus (July 10 2007), the distribution and number of the following invasive species are subject to control. A Procedure Instruction about the control over distribution and number of wild animals, including invasive species, was confirmed by the Resolution of the Ministry of Environment ‘Some questions about control over the distribution and number of wild animals’. This Resolution gives the following list of invasive species:

- Dreissena polymorpha
- Lithoglyphus naticoides
- Corophium curvispinum
- Orcanectes limosus
- Percottus glehni
- Ictalurus nebulosus
- Pseudorasbora parva
- Neogobius melanostomus
- Neogobius fluviatilis
- Neogobius gymnotrachelus
- Nyctereutes procyonoides (raccoon dog)
- Mustela vison.

Besides, in compliance with the Hunting Standards (December 8, 2005) the raccoon dog belongs to invasive species. Hunting of invasive species is allowed anywhere during the open season at the hunting ground provided that the person's staying there is legal and for hunting purposes, and also during the close season or at places where hunting is generally forbidden on the basis of special permission given by the Ministry of Environment.

It is planned to create a centre for invasive species so as to develop a system of acquisition, processing, analysis and presentation of data about invasive animal and plant species.

Nowadays, the following plans concerned with invasive species and based on scientific research are being implemented:

- 'Make an invasive species cadastre in water and forest ecosystems of Belarus' (the National Scientific and Technical Programme 'Environmental safety');

- 'Devise methods for the assessment of the level of lake ecosystem resistance to biological invasions' (2006-2008 rr.);

- 'Develop a management plan for the population of *Mustela vison* in water ecosystems of river basins on the territory of Belarus, seen as an invasive species' (2007-2009 гг.);

Following the research, conducted in 2006 – 2007 by the scientists of the Institute of Zoology, the following conclusions have been made:

1) the investigation of the Pripjat basin, the Dnieper-Bug canal and the Byelorussian Lake Area led to discovery of 4 more invasive species living on the territory of Belarus for 5 years:

- *Limnomysis benedeni*
- *Pontogammarus crassus*
- *Iphigenella chablensis*
- *Proterorhinus marmoratus*;

2) the greatest number of invasive fish species was found in the upper and middle part of the Pripjat and their distribution is mainly attributed to the existence of suitable habitats;

3) in the Byelorussian Lake Area *Mustela vison* (American mink) has almost fully replaced *Mustela lutreola* (European mink);

4) there can be observed an intensive process of the racoon dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*) becoming synanthropised in the northern part of Belarus;

5) the invasion process is very rapid and we can expect the discovery of new invasive species in the future.

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]

A - Yes

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicator 2.1.1

2.1.1: The Ministry of Environment has approved a new list of 18 potential Ramsar sites. In 2008, in accordance with the established procedure it is planned to submit two descriptions of potential Ramsar sites (the 'Vygonshanskoye' reserve and the wetland complex of Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve) to the Convention's Secretariat.

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?

C - Partly

Additional implementation information:

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

2.2.1: Descriptions of six sites need renewing:

- 'Sporovsky' – last described in 1999
- 'Zvanets' – last described in 2000
- 'Mid-Pripyat State Landscape Zakaznik' – last described in 2000
- 'Yelnia' – last described in 2001
- 'Osveisky' – last described in 2001
- 'Olmanskiye bolota' ('Olman bogs') – last described in 2000

Within the framework of the implementation of the UNDP/GEF project for Polesie, it is planned to make new descriptions of the following Ramsar sites:

- 'Sporovsky' – last described in 1999
- 'Zvanets' – last described in 2000
- 'Srednyaya Pripyat' – last described in 2000

2.2.2: On the basis of the information received while describing Ramsar sites, decisions were made to develop management plans for two sites ('Yelnia' and 'Osveisky') and also to start complex monitoring of SPNA ecosystems, including all of the 8 Ramsar sites. The monitoring results will provide opportunities for renewing the descriptions of Ramsar sites and taking management decisions.

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

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

Indicator questions:

2.3.1 Have the measures required to maintain the ecological character of all Ramsar sites been defined and applied? {11.1.1}	C - Partly
2.3.2 Have management plans/strategies been developed and implemented at all Ramsar sites? {11.1.2} [If "Yes" or "Some sites", please indicate, in Additional implementation information below, for how many sites have plans/strategies been developed but not implemented; for how many are plans/strategies in preparation; and for how many are plans/strategies being reviewed or revised]	C - Some sites
2.3.3 Have cross-sectoral site management committees been established at Ramsar sites? {11.1.5} [If "Yes" or "Some sites", please name the sites in Additional implementation information]	B - No
2.3.4 Has any assessment of Ramsar site management effectiveness been carried out? [if "Yes" or "Some sites", please indicate in Additional implementation information below the year of assessment and from whom, or from where, the information is available]	C - Some sites

Additional implementation information:

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

2.3.1: For the Ramsar sites 'Sporovsky' and 'Zvanets', within the implementation of management plans primary measures for the optimisation of the hydrological regime of lowland bogs were determined and implemented.

For the Ramsar sites 'Mid-Pripyat', 'Prostyr', 'Yelnia', 'Osveisky', within the framework of management plan development, measures are going to be decided on to sustain their ecosystem balance.

2.3.2: Management plans for the sites 'Sporovsky' and 'Zvanets' were developed and partially implemented. For the sites 'Mid-Pripyat' and 'Prostyr', management plans were developed and implemented within the UNDP/GEF project (2006 – 2010). The development of the management plans for the sites 'Yelnia' and 'Osveisky' were sponsored by the Ministry of Environment (2006 – 2008). The development of management plans for the sites 'Vigonoschanskoe' and 'Kotra' is still in prospect.

2.3.3: 'Zvanets' was the only site whose management effectiveness was evaluated by monitoring of aquatic warbler density and number changes and subsoil water changes (unpublished BirdLife International data).

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:

<p>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}</p> <p>[If “Yes” or “Some sites”, please summarise the mechanism(s) established in Additional implementation information]</p>	<p>C - Some sites</p>
<p>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}</p> <p>[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]</p>	<p>B - No</p>
<p>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}</p> <p>[If “Yes” or “Partly”, please provide in Additional implementation information information about the actions taken]</p>	<p>D - Not applicable</p>

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: In the National Programme of National Environment Monitoring System (NEMS) Development in Belarus for 2006 – 2010 there is a plan to create a complex ecological monitoring network of the ecosystems (forest, water, bog, meadow and other ecosystems) on SPNA. In 2006 – 2007, in the context of the implementation of the NEMS state programme, local networks of complex ecological monitoring have been created on 4 Ramsar sites (‘Kotra’, ‘Yelna’, ‘Zvanets’, ‘Sporovsky’), 1 potential Ramsar site (Pripyatski National Park) and on 4 SPNA where there are protected wetland complexes (lake, forest-river and other kinds of complexes. In 2008 – 2009 it is planned to create monitoring networks on 4 Ramsar sites (‘Prostyr’, ‘Srednyaya Pripyat’, ‘Osveisky’, ‘Olmanskiye bolota’), on 4 potential Ramsar sites (‘Krasny Bor’, ‘Kozyansky’, ‘Vygonshanskoye’ and Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve) and also on 8 SPNA where there are protected wetland complexes.

The monitoring indices are used by:

- the Ministry of Environment and government authorities for the introduction of nature protection measures
- national nature protection institutions for taking management decisions related to the protection and wise use of ecosystems
- monitoring teams working under the NEMS state programme
- the general public for getting objective information about animals’ life and habitats

The effectiveness of protection regimes on SPNA is evaluated on the basis of monitoring information from the examined sites and recommendations for the optimization of the regimes are produced in order to improve the safety of the main natural resources of SPNA.

2.4.2. Change in ecological character occurred in 4 sites: Yelnia, Osveyskoe, Sporovsky, Zvanets. From 2006 till 2008, management plans are being developed for 'Yelnia' and 'Osveyskoye'. Some degradation of lake and peatlands ecological situation has been shown as a result of the change of hydrological regime caused by the drain influence of drainage canal.

On the Ramsar territories 'Sporovsky' and 'Zvanets' the increasing process of exposed fen mires being overgrown with bushes and reeds can be observed.

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: In 2006 – 2007, within the programme of making an inventory of wetland complexes along the border between Belarus and Latvia to improve transboundary nature protection network and to produce a set of recommendations for the protection of the wetland complexes, there was a field investigation near the border between Belarus and Latvia in order to reveal the most important and the most vulnerable wetland complexes, transboundary wetland complexes which are of special significance for the preservation of biodiversity in both countries were singled out in kind, skeleton maps have been prepared for creation of a network of frontier wetland complexes in the border zone between Latvia and Belarus.

Within the framework of this programme it is also planned by 2009 to evaluate household use of the wetlands and reveal the main threats to the indicated wetland complexes and their components and also produce a set of recommendations for creation of a network of transboundary wetland complexes on the border between Belarus and Latvia.

Earlier, an inventory of the most significant wetlands on the border between Belarus and Lithuania was made. 7 transboundary wetlands were revealed and described. The materials and recommendations were submitted to the corresponding ministries to provide these wetlands with protection.

Potential transboundary wetlands on the border of Belarus and Ukraine have been determined and a plan of unified management has been developed.

2.5.2: Within the UNDP/GEF Project, a system of unified management of the territory 'Prostyr' (Belarus) – 'Pripyat-Stochod' (Ukraine) is being developed.

For the transboundary Ramsar site 'Kotra' (Belarus) – 'Chepkelai' (Lithuania) it is necessary to develop a management plan for the reserve 'Kotra' and co-ordinate it with the management plan for the Ramsar site 'Chepkelai'.

During the development of the management plan for the reserve 'Osveysky', the measures of the existent management plan for the National park 'Sebezhsy' (Russian Federation) which borders on the reserve 'Osveysky' will be taken into account.

Within the Belarusian-Lithuanian programme 'Protection and Sustainable Management of Lake Drysvyaty biodiversity as a transboundary wetland complex of international importance, a two-sided management plan for the biodiversity of the transboundary lake area was developed, which contributes to the reduction of the environmental impact on biodiversity of the nuclear power-station both when it works and in case it stops.

Study of the possibilities of unified management of transboundary wetlands was also reflected in the following works:

- Biological evaluation of the state of water bodies in transboundary areas of the Dnieper and the Pripyat, harmonization of approaches and the development of a system of biological monitoring of transboundary areas (2004 – 2006)
- The development of a concept and scheme for the forming of a system of transboundary ecological corridors between Russia and Belarus within the framework of creation of national ecological networks and their integration into the all-European ecological network.
- The development of the scientific basis of creation of a transboundary biosphere reserve and regional ecological network in Polesie (2006 - 2010).

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

2.6.1: Within the framework of the UNDP/GEF project 'The rehabilitation of the Dnieper ecological condition', a regional agreement between Belarus, Russia and Ukraine about nature protection in the Dnieper basin was signed. This agreement can be given a status of a regional initiative within the Ramsar Convention.

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 ...]”

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

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

Indicator questions:

3.2.1 Have networks, including twinning arrangements, been established, nationally or internationally, for knowledge sharing and training for wetlands that share common features? {14.1.3} [If “Yes” or “Partly”, please indicate in Additional implementation information below the networks and wetlands involved]	A - Yes
3.2.2 Has information about the country’s wetlands and/or Ramsar sites and their status been made publicly available (e.g., through publications or a Web site)? {14.1.1}	A - Yes

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicators 3.2.1-3.2.2

3.2.1: There is regular experience exchange about lowland bog management between Belarus (the Ramsar sites ‘Zvanets’, ‘Sporovsky’), Poland (the Ramsar site ‘Bebzha’), Ukraine and Hungary, maintained by experts and Ramsar managers taking part in annual Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team meetings.

3.2.2: The second edition of the book ‘Treasures of Belarusian Nature’ devoted to Ramsar sites and IBAs has been published. A website containing the descriptions of Ramsar sites has been

created (website reference).

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}	B - No
4.1.2 Have traditional knowledge and management practices in relation to wetlands been documented and their application encouraged? {6.1.2}	A - Yes
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}	A - Yes
4.1.4 Have educational and training activities been developed concerning cultural aspects of wetlands? {r6.1.vii}	B - No
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 ...]"

4.1.2: On the Ramsar sites 'Mid-Pripyat' and 'Prostyr', local population uses osiers as fuel, which prevents exposed bottomland meadows from being overgrown with shrubs. Osiers are also used as raw material for craftsmanship.

An example of encouragement of local management practices in relation to wetlands can be annual festival for hand mowing held on the territory of the reserve 'Sporovsky'.

4.1.3: The Convention's recommendations concerning promotion of public participation in decision-making have been followed and are being acted on during the development and implementation of management plans for the Ramsar sites 'Sporovsky', 'Zvanets', 'Yelnia'. On all the stages of the management plans' development and implementation, members of local population were involved. Moreover, the population of local villages took part in construction and management work in the reserves.

4.1.5. 3 sites: Sporovsky, Zvanets, Mid Pripyat.

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: Forest and water resources as well as SPNA including wetlands are state property in Belarus. However, many wetlands have been leased or handed over for temporary use. Specifically, reservoirs (lakes and storage pools) and watercourses (rivers and canals) are leased to fisheries and forest resources (on whose territories wetland complexes can also be situated) are leased to hunting industries.

A fish industry operates on the basis of piscicultural substantiation and a hunting industry functions on the basis of the project for keeping a hunting industry. The indicated documents are subject to the obligatory environmental impact assessment before they are approved by the authorities. This measure ensures that the principles of sustainable use are observed.

However, there are examples of unsustainable use of fish in leased lakes and other water bodies.

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

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

Indicator questions:

4.3.1 Have actions been taken to promote incentive measures which encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands? {8.1.1}	A - Yes
4.3.2 Have actions been taken to remove perverse incentive measures which discourage conservation and wise use of wetlands? {8.1.1}	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 ...]”

4.3.1: The Ministry of Environment has supported the application of incentive measures which encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands. In particular, it approved the development and implementation of management plans as well as creation of management structures for SPNA and made these methods mandatory for all Ramsar sites and other important SPNA, by including the methods in the SPNA Act.

In Belarus, certifying of forestry activities using international (26% of forestries) and national standards (80% of forestries) is widely supported. This will ensure the introduction of the sustainable use principle on most wetland territories (reference to the website).

4.3.2: In Belarus, no assessment has been made and no measures have been taken to stop activities which have a negative impact on wetland condition and which are examples of unsustainable use.

Nowadays, the possible influence on wetland condition of building hydroelectric power stations on large and small Belarusian rivers (the Western Dvina, the Berezina and the Dnieper) is being investigated.

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>B - No</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>B - No</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>C - Partly</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>D - Planned</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 ...]”

4.4.3: In Belarus, a procedure has been established for the necessary co-ordination with the concerned ministries and authorities of all projects and programmes, including wetland-related ones.

During the development of Ramsar site management plans (‘Yelnia’, ‘Osveysky’,

'Srednyaya Pripyat', 'Prostyr'), meetings and discussions of planned management activities for the organisation of sustainable forestry, agriculture and water industry were held with all parties concerned (local authorities, land users, the mass media and representatives of different services of the Ministry of Environment).

4.4.4: 2 – 3 trailers about the significance of wetlands are daily transmitted on the national TV channel. There are national wader-watching competitions which take place every year. There is a national campaign 'Bird of the Year'. Commemorative postage stamps and coins devoted to Ramsar sites have been issued.

4.4.5: On the World Wetland Day conferences are usually held.

4.4.6: Within the implementation of the UNDP/GEF project for Polesie, the creation of information centers on 3 Ramsar sites ('Sporovsky', 'Zvanets', 'Mid-Pripyat') is planned.

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:

<p>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]</p>	<p>D - Not applicable</p>
<p>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]</p>	<p>A - Yes</p>

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 ...]"

4.5.2: The main funding support has been provided during the implementation of various state programmes. In 2005 – 2007, some international funding was also provided:

- the UNDP/GEF Project for the Restoration of Degraded Peatbogs (2006 - 2010)
- the UNDP/GEF Project 'Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Polesie Region by Means of Integration of Global Biodiversity Interests into Economical Activity on the Key Territories'
- the UNDP/GEF Project 'Creation of Conditions for Sustainable Functioning of the System of Protected Wetlands in Belarusian Polesie (enhancement of their management effectiveness and improving land use)' (2006 - 2010)
- the TACIS Project for the Development of a Management Plan for the Pripyat Basin (2006 - 2007).

Considerable assistance has also been rendered by:

- UNDP in Belarus
- RSPB
- Michael Otto Fund – organization of the international conference ‘Wetland Conservation and Climate Change’ (Minsk, 2007)
- DEFRA (Great Britain) – the project for an inventory of Important Bird Areas (IBAs) (2005-2006).

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

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

Additional implementation information:

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

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

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

Indicator questions:

4.7.1 Has the Contracting Party used its previous Ramsar National Reports in monitoring its implementation of the Convention?

[If “Yes” or “Partly”, please indicate in Additional implementation information how the Reports have been used for monitoring]

A - Yes

Additional implementation information:

A): on Indicator 4.7.1

4.7.1: On the basis of Ramsar reports, activities were formulated to add to the National Nature Protection Action Plan for 2006 – 2010, National Development Strategy for SPNA covering the period until 2022, National Programme of the Development of the System of SPNA for 2008 – 2014

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

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

Indicator questions:

4.8.1 Has a review of national institutions responsible for the conservation and wise use of wetlands been completed? {18.1.1}

[If “Yes” or “Partly”, please indicate in Additional implementation information if this has led to proposals for, or implementation of, any changes in institutional responsibilities]

C - Partly

4.8.2 Is a National Ramsar/Wetlands cross-sectoral Committee (or equivalent body) in place and operational? {18.1.2}

[If “Yes”, please summarise in Additional implementation information its membership and frequency of meetings]

A - Yes

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: There has been no review. However, within the framework of the implementation of some projects, analysis of national organizations involved in wetland-related activities has been made. Besides, it is within such projects and national programmes that experience exchange and discussions of the most significant problems of wetlands take place.

4.8.2: The National Ramsar Committee was established in 2004, in 2007 its complement was renewed. Meetings have been held no less frequently than once a year.

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? [If "Yes", please provide in Additional implementation information the name(s) of the IOP(s) and the type of assistance provided]</p>	<p>A - Yes</p>
<p>4.9.2 Has your country provided assistance to one or more of the Convention's IOPs*? [If "Yes", please provide in Additional implementation information the name(s) of the IOP(s) and the type of assistance provided]</p>	<p>A - Yes</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

4.9.1: In its implementation of the Convention, Belarus received the assistance from BirdLife International/ RSPB in the following ways:

- organization of an international conference about wetland conservation and climate change;
- joint financing of the the UNDP/GEF Project for Restoration of Degraded Peatbogs;
- the implementation of an international project for mapping of special nature protection significant forests;
- implementation of an early field trial to assess the area of degraded peatbogs and the cost of their restoration.

4.9.2: Belarus provided the Convention's IOPs with the following assistance:

- Wetlands International: participation of Belarus in international calculations of non-migratory water birds;
- BirdLife International: participation of Belarus in international events and projects (world days of bird watching - in order to attract publicity; participation in the project for monitoring of common bird species).

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>
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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}	C - Partly
4.10.3 Have opportunities for wetland site manager training in the country been provided? {20.1.6}	C - Partly

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: No assessment of national or local training needs has been done.

4.10.3: The directors of state nature protection Ramsar reserve management institutions took part in the special conferences of the Ministry of Environment and other conferences for experience exchange with experts from the Academy of Sciences about wetland management, ecotourism development and involvement of the population in wetland management.

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