



# DELIVERING THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS



NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS  
AND THEIR ROLES

[www.ramsar.org](http://www.ramsar.org)

# ABOUT THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

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The Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world". Countries that join the Convention, "Contracting Parties", are expressing their commitment toward the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources, both within their own territories and through global cooperation with other Parties. In the broadest sense, their treaty obligations are grouped under the **three Pillars of the Convention**.

## 1 WISE USE OF WETLANDS

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A Party commits to the wise use of wetlands in its territory. This includes taking wetland conservation considerations in its national land-use, hydrological, and river basin plans through the integration of wetlands into sectoral policy, establishment of national wetland committees, and development of national wetland inventories (Article 3.1 of the Convention). A Party should also establish nature reserves in wetlands and promote training in the fields of wetland research, management, and wardening, as well as the exchange of data. (Article 4).

## 2 LISTED SITES

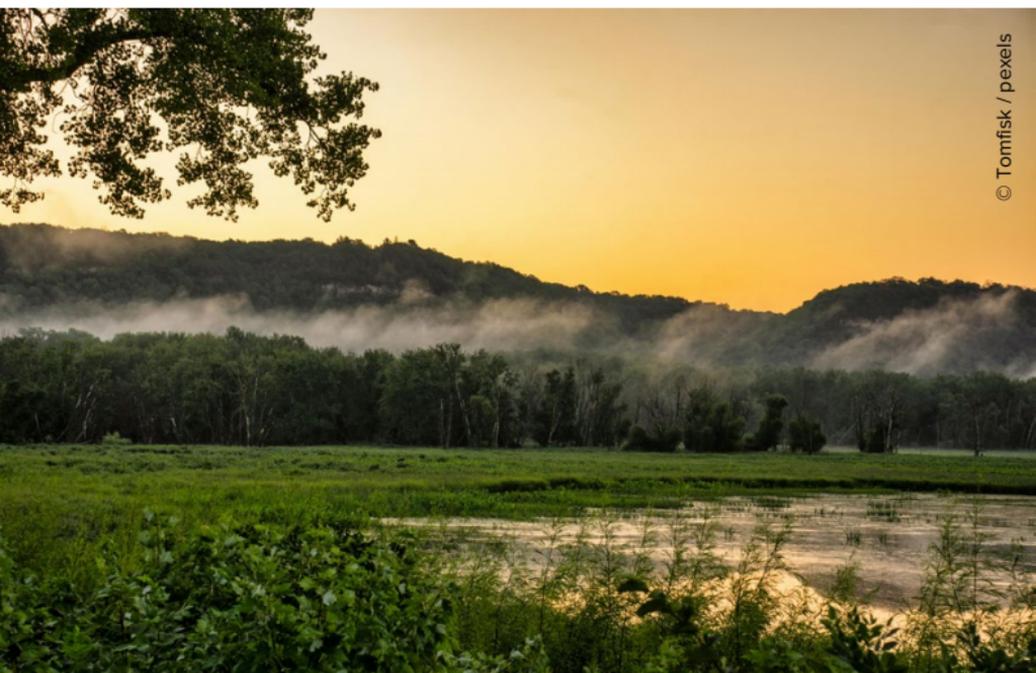
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A Party must also designate at least one Wetland of International Importance ("Ramsar Site") at the time of accession for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (the "Ramsar List") (Article 2.4) and to promote its conservation. In addition, a Party should continue to designate suitable wetlands within its territory for the List (Article 2.1). Each Party is also obliged to inform the Convention Secretariat if the ecological character of any Ramsar Site in its territory has changed, is changing, or is likely to change (Article 3.2).

## 3 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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A Party agrees to consult with other Contracting Parties about implementation of the Convention, especially regarding transboundary wetlands, shared water systems, and shared species (Article 5).



# GLOBAL BODIES AND PROCESSES

## Decision-making Bodies

### The Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP)

The policy-making and decision-making organ of the Convention, meeting once every three years.

### The Standing Committee (SC)

The intersessional executive body that convenes annually to represent the COP between its meetings, guided by the framework of the decisions made by the COP.

## Advisory Bodies (reporting to Standing Committee and COP)

### The Communication, Capacity Building, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Oversight Panel

The subsidiary body of the Convention that monitors and reports on the implementation of the Convention's CEPA Programme and sets priorities for communication, education, and capacity building.

### The Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)

The subsidiary body of the Convention that provides scientific and technical guidance to the COP, the Standing Committee, and the Secretariat.

## Supporting Bodies

### The Convention Secretariat

The administrative office, based in Gland, Switzerland, which supports the three-year cycle of Convention processes.

### The International Organization Partners (IOPs)

International NGOs that have been formally recognized by the Parties as official partners of the Convention. They are BirdLife International, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Wetlands International (WI), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), WWF International, and the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT).

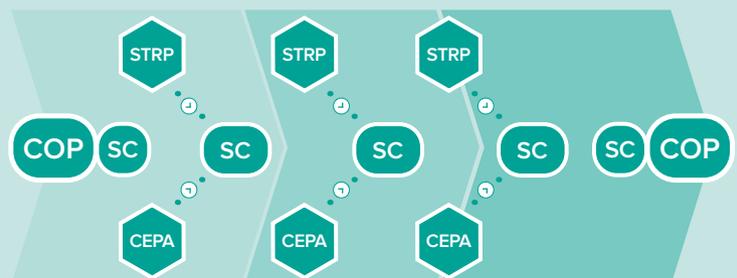
Conference of the Contracting Parties

Standing Committee

CEPA Oversight Panel

STRP

## THE THREE-YEAR 'TRIENNIAL' PROCESS



# NATIONAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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Administrative  
Authority



National  
Focal Point



CEPA  
NFPs

National Ramsar  
or  
Wetland  
Committee\*

Wetland  
managers  
and  
scientists



STRP  
NFPs

## Leading national implementation

**The Administrative Authority (AA)** is the government agency responsible for the national application of the Convention and the focal point for communications with the Secretariat. The AA, led by an identified Head of Administrative Authority, consults and cooperates with as many other government ministries, agencies, and non-governmental organizations as necessary to ensure the best possible results in implementing the Convention. The AA is expected to designate four National Focal Points and **establish a committee by which they collaborate**. These roles are vital to the effective functioning of the Convention and demand a high level of personal commitment.

**The AA National Focal Point (AA NFP)** is a member of staff of the Administrative Authority appointed to coordinate national implementation and acts as the daily contact point for the Convention for people within the country and the Secretariat. For more information on the roles and responsibilities of the National Focal Point, please see the following link. <https://www.ramsar.org/resources/capacity-building/induction-focal-points>

**The STRP National Focal Point** is a committed scientist who advises the Scientific and Technical Review Panel. She or he has acknowledged expertise in wetland-related subjects and the capacity to initiate technical collaboration and communication within the country's scientific networks. STRP NFPs liaise between the STRP's regional members and any national networks of experts.

**CEPA National Focal Points** are recognized experts in communication, capacity building, education, participation, and awareness (CEPA). One represents the government and one an NGO. Together they lead the development and implementation of national and local wetland CEPA programmes and action plans.

**National Wetland Committees** provide a mechanism for promoting the objectives of the Convention beyond the individuals and branches of government that are officially charged with its implementation. National Committees should include as many government agencies and other stakeholders as possible, as well as NFPs from other multilateral environmental agreements.

\* not all Contracting Parties have yet established a National Ramsar/Wetland Committee



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## COORDINATING GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PROCESSES

## COORDINATING NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

### ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY

The government agency designated by the head of state or government or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to take charge of the national implementation of the Convention, and to support its regional implementation in collaboration with other Contracting Parties.

- Maintain regular contact with the Secretariat of the Convention.
- Liaise with Regional Representatives on the Standing Committee and participate in regional meetings.
- Participate in the Conference of Contracting Parties.
- Approve and update Ramsar Information Sheets (RISs) on Wetlands of International Importance.

- Designate suitable wetlands for the List of Wetlands of International Importance, and arrange for their appropriate management.
- Implement a national wetland policy.
- Establish a national committee to support the implementation of the Convention.
- Appoint a National Focal Point, and Focal Points For The Scientific and Technical Review Panel (Strp) and Communication, Capacity Building, Education, Participation and Awareness (Cepa) Activities.
- Work with other government agencies concerned with wetlands, water-related issues, biodiversity, land use, and climate change, to strengthen implementation of the Convention.

### NATIONAL FOCAL POINT

A daily contact person, coordinating activities and liaising with national stakeholders and international partners including the Convention Secretariat.

- Liaise regularly with the Secretariat.
- Coordinate the compilation of national reports to the Secretariat and to each Conference of Contracting Parties on implementation of the Convention and the status of Wetlands of International Importance and other wetlands.
- Liaise with the National Focal Points of other Contracting Parties as necessary.

- Help coordinate the national implementation of the Convention.
- Maintain communication with the STRP and CEPA National Focal Points and update them on national or international progress in the implementation of the Convention.
- Work with the National Focal Points for other water-related and biodiversity multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), to ensure effective and coherent implementation of all the Conventions.

### NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL (STRP)

An acknowledged and committed wetland technical expert from either the government or another organization.

- Liaise with the STRP to promote regional scientific priorities and important national and regional issues.
- Review STRP draft guidance and other reports produced by global Convention bodies on issues within their areas of expertise.
- Engage in thematic work areas or tasks of STRP working groups, giving input through the Panel member leading that work area or task in the STRP work plan.
- Contribute to national reporting on STRP activities to the Conference of Contracting Parties.

- Ensure that global scientific and technical decisions, and guidance inform national decision-making.
- Develop a national network of relevant experts, including National Focal Points of other MEAs, disseminate the work of the STRP to them and seek their advice on key issues.
- Liaise on STRP matters and provide technical advice to the National Focal Point and Wetland / Ramsar Committee.

### NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR COMMUNICATIONS, EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND AWARENESS (CEPA)

Two qualified experts, one from within government and one from a non-governmental organization, who lead implementation of the Convention's CEPA programme.

- Serve as national point of contact on CEPA matters with the Secretariat and other Contracting Parties, and link with peers through CEPA email lists.
- Contribute to national reporting on CEPA activities to the Conference of Contracting Parties.

- Lead the development and implementation of national, subnational, and local wetland CEPA programmes or action plans.
- Help implement national activities, establishing and maintaining contacts, networks, and mechanisms for effective communication.
- Serve as active spokespeople for wetland CEPA, to ensure a prominent and positive public profile for the Convention and its conservation and wise use goals.



## Convention on Wetlands Secretariat

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### USEFUL INFORMATION

Address book of key contacts  
Search The Convention on Wetlands ([www.ramsar.org](http://www.ramsar.org))

Handbooks and other publications on the wise use of wetlands  
[www.ramsar.org/publications](http://www.ramsar.org/publications)

Ramsar Sites Information Service  
[rsis.ramsar.org](http://rsis.ramsar.org)

List of Wetlands of International Importance (the “Ramsar List”)  
[www.ramsar.org/document/list-wetlands-international-importance-ramsar-list](http://www.ramsar.org/document/list-wetlands-international-importance-ramsar-list)

Country profiles page  
[www.ramsar.org/countries](http://www.ramsar.org/countries)

Strategic Plan  
[www.ramsar.org/about/our-mission/strategic-plan](http://www.ramsar.org/about/our-mission/strategic-plan)