



## 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands

**“Protecting wetlands for our common future”  
Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 23-31 July 2025**

**COP15 Doc.22.1**

### **Consolidation of existing Resolutions: Draft consolidated resolution on assessment of wetland values and services**

#### **Note from the Secretariat:**

In paragraph 10 of Resolution XIV.5 on *Review of Resolutions and Recommendations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties*, regarding the review and consolidation of current Resolutions, the Conference:

“10. DECIDES to establish, subject to available resources, an iterative process for the consolidation of Resolutions of the COP, as follows:

- a) the general objective of the consolidation is to facilitate the understanding and implementation of Resolutions by combining into a single Resolution the texts from existing Resolutions that deal with the same subject, or sub-subject, using the words from the existing Resolutions as far as possible, while eliminating discrepancies and inconsistencies, clarifying the meaning, standardizing the terms used, correcting grammatical errors, updating parts that are out of date and eliminating parts that are defunct;
- b) after each meeting of the COP, the Standing Committee will select a small number of subject categories (generally two to four) from the list of categories of Resolutions in Annex 2 of the present Resolution, for which the Secretariat (or its consultant) will prepare draft consolidated resolutions for consideration at the following COP;
- c) the document presenting each draft consolidated resolution will indicate the origins of the texts presented and explain any differences from the existing Resolutions;
- d) draft consolidated resolutions will not include any new concepts, policies, rules or guidance that have not previously been agreed by the COP;
- e) the text of each draft consolidated resolution will indicate that it repeals the Resolutions that are being consolidated and that it is designed to replace;
- f) each draft consolidated resolution prepared by the Secretariat will be presented to the Standing Committee, which will guide the Secretariat and approve the draft to be

submitted for adoption by the Conference of the Parties when it is satisfied that the draft has been correctly prepared;

- g) as the process of consolidation of Resolutions is not intended to revise the substance of decisions previously made by the Conference of the Parties, the Rules of Procedure for considering and adopting draft consolidated resolutions will be different from those for consideration of other draft resolutions in the sense that, as a general rule, the substance should not be presented for discussion as it has in principle already been agreed by the Parties. The primary decision to be made by the Conference is whether the consolidation has been correctly done; and
- h) the process of consolidation of Resolutions will continue until the Contracting Parties are satisfied with the consolidation work done and can be continued when the Parties have identified a need for more consolidation work.”

Pursuant to paragraph 10.b) of the Resolution, the Standing Committee at its 62nd meeting (SC62) selected through Decision SC62-25 “Assessment of wetland values and services” among the categories for which draft consolidations would be prepared for consideration at SC63.

The Secretariat accordingly submitted in document SC63 Doc.16.2<sup>1</sup> the draft consolidated resolution for the Committee to approve as having been correctly prepared and to be submitted for adoption by the Conference of the Contracting Parties at its 15th meeting (COP15).

Pursuant to paragraph 10.c) of the Resolution, the Secretariat included as Annex A of document SC63 Doc.16.2 an explanatory table indicating the origins of the texts presented and explaining any differences from the existing Resolutions.

In Decision SC63-22, the Standing Committee approved the draft consolidated resolution, and instructed the Secretariat to submit it for consideration and adoption at COP15.

As noted in document SC63 Doc.16.2, the Annex to Resolution XIII.17 remains as the Annex to the consolidated resolution.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.ramsar.org/document/sc63-doc162-review-consolidation-current-resolutions-consolidation-recommendations>.

## Draft consolidated resolution on assessment of wetland values and services

1. RECALLING Recommendations 1.6 on *Assessment of wetland values* and Recommendation 6.10 on *Promotion of cooperation on the economic valuation of wetlands*, adopted at the first and sixth meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, respectively; and ALSO RECALLING Resolution VI.21 on *Assessment and reporting on the status of wetlands* and Resolution XIII.17 on *Rapidly assessing wetland ecosystem services*, adopted at the sixth and thirteenth meetings, respectively;
2. RECOGNIZING that, to achieve the Mission of the Ramsar Convention as described in the Strategic Plan 2016-2024, it is essential that vital ecosystem functions and values and the ecosystem services that wetlands provide to people and nature are fully recognized, maintained, restored and wisely used, and that the need to develop approaches for assessing ecosystem functions and ecosystem values and services is recognized;
3. CONCERNED that initiatives which attempt to conserve wetlands without addressing the fundamental forces that lead to wetland degradation and loss are unlikely to succeed in the long run;
4. AWARE that economic valuation of the goods and services that wetlands provide to people can serve as an essential national and international instrument in countering negative impacts on wetlands and as an important complement to the precautionary approach;
5. FURTHER AWARE that senior decision-makers often do not have adequate knowledge of the full economic value of wetlands;
6. RECALLING that a number of networks of expertise have already been established in response to the above concerns, including wetland valuation experts in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas;
7. RECOGNIZING the importance of establishing further linkages among various interest groups on the subject of wetland valuation and a need to coordinate and collaborate on these initiatives;
8. RECALLING that Annex A to Resolution IX.1 on *A Conceptual Framework for the wise use of wetlands and the maintenance of their ecological character* defines the ecological character of wetlands as the combination of the ecosystem components, processes and benefits/services that characterize the wetland at a given point in time ; ALSO RECALLING that the *Guidance for valuing the benefits derived from wetland ecosystem services* (Ramsar Technical Report No.3 / Technical Series No.27 of the Convention on Biological Diversity) provides guidance for valuing wetlands and advice on when and why wetland valuation should be undertaken and sets out a framework for the integrated assessment and valuation of wetland services;
9. NOTING that a priority area of focus for the Convention under the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 (Resolution XII.2) is to enhance the information about ecosystem functions and the ecosystem services that wetlands provide to people and nature; ALSO RECALLING Target 11 of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024, Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated , and that the assessment of ecosystem services of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) is a key indicator of progress against this target;

10. FURTHER RECOGNIZING that, under Resolution XII.3, on *Enhancing the visibility and stature of the Convention, and increasing synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions*, Contracting Parties and other stakeholders are encouraged to increase their efforts to communicate on the values of ecosystem services of wetlands in other sectors' strategies, plans and regulations, and integrate them into a basin approach to land-use plans and other relevant local, national and global decisions;
11. FURTHER NOTING the requirement under Resolution XI.8, on *Streamlining procedures for describing Ramsar Sites at the time of designation and subsequent updates*, to ensure that a comprehensive description of ecosystem services is provided in the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) of a Ramsar Site, and that, if there are other ecosystem services occurring on the Site, which do not fit this classification, they should also be described in the RIS;
12. ACKNOWLEDGING that the important ecosystem functions and services that wetlands provide, as highlighted in the Strategic Plan 2016-2024, have direct relevance to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals related to poverty eradication, food and nutrition, healthy living, gender equality, water quality and supply, water security, energy supply, reduction of natural disasters, innovation and the development of appropriate infrastructure, sustainable human settlements, adaptation to climate change, oceans, seas and marine resources, biodiversity and the sustainable use of ecosystems;
13. RECOGNIZING the importance of indicating the presence or absence of all relevant ecosystem services- and benefits currently provided by each Ramsar Site when completing or updating the RIS and the need also to recognize important ecosystem functions;
14. FURTHER RECOGNIZING the importance of integrating multiple wetland values into decision-making, as described in Ramsar Policy Brief 2 on *Integrating multiple wetland values into decision-making*;
15. CONSIDERING that only 19% of Contracting Parties reported to COP12 in their National Reports that they had assessed the ecosystem benefits and services provided by Ramsar Sites; and
16. ALSO CONSIDERING that, without the application of appropriate methodologies, the multiple functions and values of wetlands may continue to be poorly recognized and integrated into decision-making;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

17. AFFIRMS that it is vital that all wetland economic values be identified, measured and reported upon to increase national and international awareness of the need for and benefits of wetland conservation;
18. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to recognize the need to assess both wetland ecosystem functions and ecosystem services;
19. CALLS ON the existing broadly-based networks of expertise to provide leadership on the valuation of wetlands and to act as advisory groups to the Ramsar Convention on this complex subject;

20. URGES these national and international networks to:
  - a) further their efforts for cooperation on wetland valuation in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and other interested parties;
  - b) shed light on the fundamental economic forces that lead to wetland degradation and loss;
  - c) initiate and/or support ongoing valuation projects in a multidisciplinary fashion to monetarize the unmeasured wealth of goods and services that wetlands provide to Contracting Parties to the Convention, decision-makers, and society in general;
  - d) assist the Convention Secretariat in advising Contracting Parties on their application of wetland valuation results to national wetland and environmental policies; and
  - e) assist in developing new strategies, training initiatives, and instruments appropriate to facilitate the assessment of economic values of wetland functions and benefits in order to further address wetland conservation needs;
21. INVITES support for the promotion of cooperation on the economic valuation of wetlands by all Contracting Parties and interested groups and agencies;
22. TAKES NOTE of the *Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services* annexed to the present Resolution; and RECOGNIZES that it could be applied by Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to assist in their delivery against the targets of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024;
23. INVITES Contracting Parties to volunteer to further develop this methodology in light of scientific and technical advances based on assessments of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the results of the work on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services or other approaches as appropriate;
24. ACKNOWLEDGES the *Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services* annexed to the present Resolution as an example of a voluntary assessment approach that may be useful to Contracting Parties for evaluating the ecosystem services of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) and other wetlands; ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties that are yet to adopt effective approaches for the recognition and evaluation of ecosystem services provided by their Ramsar Sites and other wetlands to consider using the *Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services* approach; and CONFIRMS that the present Resolution does not create additional reporting obligations for Contracting Parties;
25. ENCOURAGES Ramsar Site management authorities to apply, as appropriate, approaches such as the *Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services* as tools to assess the ecosystem services that their Site provides, to contribute to the description of the ecological character of their Site and to ensure the maintenance of these services in their management processes; and ENCOURAGES Parties to use the data and information gathered to update the relevant sections of the RIS for the Site;
26. RECOGNIZES the long-term value of taking a participatory approach, involving indigenous peoples and local communities, subject to the respective national laws of the Contracting Parties, when recognizing and understanding the ecosystem functions and ecosystem services provided by wetlands;
27. INVITES Contracting Parties to support the translation and further development of the *Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services* annexed to the present Resolution into languages that are not official languages of the Convention within the broad context of the Ramsar Strategic Plan;

28. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to promote the use by Ramsar Site management authorities of Ramsar communication tools including websites and social media, to highlight more widely the ecosystem functions and ecosystem services provided by wetlands;
29. ENCOURAGES those who modify and use approaches such as the *Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services* in the broad context of the Strategic Plan to refer also to other relevant Ramsar guidelines, when making these assessments;
30. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to utilize this approach and other relevant approaches for the rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services when preparing their National Reports and describing the status of Sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance; and
31. REPEALS the following Recommendations and Resolutions and specified parts thereof:
  - Recommendation 1.6 on *Assessment of wetland values*;
  - Recommendation 6.10 on *Promotion of cooperation on the economic valuation of wetlands*;
  - Resolution VI.21 on *Assessment and reporting on the status of wetlands*; and
  - Resolution XIII.17 on *Rapidly assessing wetland ecosystem services*.

## Annex 1

### Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services

#### Introduction

1. To achieve wise use, and for wetlands to contribute fully to sustainable development, policy-makers and practitioners (such as site managers) need to recognize the important functions and the multiple values<sup>2</sup> of wetlands, and reflect them in their decisions, policies and actions<sup>3</sup>. Without wetlands, the water cycle, carbon cycle and nutrient cycle would be significantly altered, mostly detrimentally. Yet, often due to a failure to recognize these multiple, interconnected values, policies and decisions do not sufficiently take into account these interconnections and interdependencies<sup>4</sup>.
2. The Ramsar Convention has recognized the need to integrate the important functions and multiple values of wetlands into decision-making and has produced policy briefs<sup>1</sup>, technical reports<sup>5</sup> and wider guidance to address the importance of this issue. However, a review published in 2016 concluded that there is an urgent need to ensure that the requirement to assess a broad range of ecosystem services is achieved in accordance with the reporting obligations under the Ramsar Convention<sup>6</sup>. This improved awareness of and reporting on a comprehensive range of ecosystem functions and ecosystem services is required both for Ramsar Sites and for other wetlands.
3. However, there are inherent limitations, including resourcing, access, cooperation and capacity, which have acted as barriers to more extensive attempts to recognize the functions and multiple benefits that wetlands provide. Therefore, the development of procedures for assessing wetland ecosystem functions and ecosystem services should be targeted and pragmatic in their approach and involve participation of local communities and indigenous knowledge, as appropriate.
4. Many wetland managers have limited time and resources. Therefore, the development of approaches to assessing wetland ecosystem services needs to satisfy the definition of “rapid” insofar that no more than two people should spend more than half a day in the field and another half day on preparation and analysis<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The integral values and benefits, both material or non-material for people and nature, in a non-consumptive approach include spiritual, existential and future-oriented values. Ramsar 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan 2016-2024.

<sup>3</sup> Kumar, R., McInnes, R.J., Everard, M., Gardner, R.C., Kulindwa, K.A.A., Wittmer, H. and Infante Mata, D. (2017). *Integrating multiple wetland values into decision-making*. Ramsar Policy Brief No. 2. Gland, Switzerland: Ramsar Convention Secretariat.

<sup>4</sup> Russi D., ten Brink P., Farmer A., Badura T., Coates D., Förster J., Kumar R. and Davidson N. (2013). *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity for Water and Wetlands*. IEEP, London and Brussels; Ramsar Secretariat, Gland.

<sup>5</sup> De Groot, R.S., Stuij, M.A.M., Finlayson, C.M. and Davidson, N. (2006). *Valuing wetlands: guidance for valuing the benefits derived from wetland ecosystem services*, Ramsar Technical Report No. 3/CBD Technical Series No. 27. Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Gland, Switzerland & Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Montreal, Canada. ISBN 2-940073-31-7.

<sup>6</sup> McInnes, R.J., Simpson, M., Lopez, B., Hawkins, R. and Shore, R. (2016). Wetland ecosystem services and the Ramsar Convention: An assessment of needs. *Wetlands*. 37(1), 1-12.

<sup>7</sup> Fennessy, M.S., Jacobs, A.D. and Kentula, M.E. (2007). An evaluation of rapid methods for assessing the ecological condition of wetlands. *Wetlands* 27 (3), 543–560.

## Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services

5. The development of the *Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services* (RAWES) approach, as an example of approaches that can be developed, has considered the requirements of the Ramsar Convention, and particularly the need for qualitative assessments that are not resource intensive and that can be applied within the context of Ramsar Convention-related reporting. However, consideration has also been given to developing an approach that would have wider utility as part of a broader suite of assessment approaches. Consequently, the objective of the RAWES approach is to facilitate an assessment of the plurality of benefits provided by a wetland, which can be considered genuinely rapid, involving limited resources.
6. Based on an understanding of what is required by a specific, but global, wetland audience, the approach has, at its core, the realization that in many situations the availability of time, money and detailed information will be limited and such barriers need to be overcome if the full range of functions and values is to be recognized. Furthermore, the development of the RAWES approach recognizes that less time-intensive methods can be applied at a range of scales, from the site to the landscape or catchment. Too often, assessments of ecosystem services are limited in their scope and fail to identify the multiplicity of benefits provided by wetlands, focusing on a few easy-to-recognize benefits, and consequently inherently assigning a default value of zero to other services, thereby excluding them from decision-making fora<sup>8</sup>.
7. The RAWES approach builds on similar techniques applied elsewhere<sup>9</sup>. A checklist of services grouped into functional categories, which were originally defined in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, namely provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting services, acts as an initial structured framework. Although in more recent analytical frameworks the category of supporting services is no longer included, it is retained in RAWES as it recognizes the functioning and resilience of productive ecosystems rather than valuation. Supporting services therefore constitute important considerations in terms of the resilience and capacity of ecosystems to provide wider benefits, and are therefore important considerations in management decision-making.
8. The list of ecosystem services in RAWES can be modified and adapted, as appropriate, by each Contracting Party and to the local context through dialogue and consultation with local stakeholders who are familiar with the wetland. Furthermore, when an assessment is being made to inform or update the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) it is important to ensure that the description of the ecosystem services provides information on the services described under Resolution XI.8 as well as on any other services that the site is providing. Delimitation of the exact area to be assessed is defined objectively by the assessor depending on the purpose or scope of the assessment. The RAWES approach is flexible, allowing assessments to be made on different habitat units within a larger wetland complex or on an entire wetland site. The onus is on the assessor to define the “wetland” and record the rationale behind the boundaries set and limits used. Since wetland ecosystems can be dynamic or can be subject to change or degradation, an important issue to be addressed is the definition of the condition at the time of the assessment. In some cases, the “natural” condition will vary over time, and it will be necessary to ensure this temporal pattern is considered in the assessment of ecosystem services. For instance, the assessment could return different outcomes if it is conducted during a drought or when the area is subjected to flooding, both of which may represent natural

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<sup>8</sup> McInnes, R.J. and Everard, M. (2017). Rapid Assessment of Wetland Ecosystem Services (RAWES): An example from Colombo, Sri Lanka. *Ecosystem Services*. 25, 89-105. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoser.2017.03.024>.

<sup>9</sup> Defra. (2007). *An introductory guide to valuing ecosystem services* [online]. Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), pp. 68. Available from: [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk).



phenomena within the broader tolerances of the system. In other circumstances, a wetland may be subject to ongoing degradation, such as through pollution of surface water or infilling. Therefore, it cannot be safely assumed that the current situation reflects a “natural” condition, and that service delivery is not already influenced by the prevailing conditions. The key issues are to ensure that a comprehensive range of ecosystem services is assessed, that the evidence used to achieve the assessment outcome is transparent and clear, and that the prevailing temporal context is recorded.

#### Applying the RAWES approach

9. RAWES is designed as a simple and rapid site assessment system that may obtain input from existing studies but does not rely on detailed, quantitative assessments. As such, it is a genuinely rapid approach that may typically take less than two hours per site with trained assessors working in pairs for cross-referencing. Significantly, the RAWES approach is also systemic, addressing all ecosystem services as a connected set rather than selecting only the most readily evaluated or exploited services, and thereby overlooking other services. The RAWES field assessment sheet is included as Appendix 1, with an accompanying explanatory table to guide assessor thinking included as Appendix 2. The field assessment sheet presents a list of ecosystem services which may be interpreted according to the application. For instance, to inform or update the RIS it is important to ensure that the description of the ecosystem services provides information on the services described under Resolution XI.8 as well as on any other services that the site is providing. The method has been used widely in Asia, Australia, Europe and Africa, with a database of sites and informing a number of scientific publications and site reports about the range and likely importance of ecosystem services provided by wetland sites.
10. RAWES can be used across a range of scales from whole wetlands to localized zones of large and complex wetlands; it is in principle also relevant to other habitat types. The RAWES field assessment sheet is a simple table with cells into which assessors record the importance of each ecosystem service produced at the wetland site, with space for free text descriptions of key features supporting that assessment. Assessors are encouraged to interact with stakeholders so that assessments are informed by local perspectives and indigenous knowledge, ensuring that all services are recognized. Early interaction is recommended in order to refine the list of services to be assessed and subsequently to assess the significance of each service.
11. The RAWES field assessment sheet (Appendix 1) comprises the following sections:
  - Wetland name with GPS coordinates
  - Assessment date
  - Assessor name(s)
  - Table cells to record: (1) the importance of the service assessed using the following relative scale (adapted from Defra 2007, see Table 1 below) where, in order to improve objectivity, the level of significance is decided prior to conducting the assessment but is based on a predetermined number or range of beneficiaries (or of those negatively affected); (2) the benefit; and (3) the scale at which the benefit is realized (local, regional or global), the definition of which needs to be decided prior to conducting an assessment.

*Table 1. Defra (2007) scale of likely significance of ecosystem services*

<i>Score</i>	<i>Assessment of ecosystem service</i>
++	Significant positive contribution
+	Positive contribution
0	Negligible contribution
-	Negative contribution
--	Significant negative contribution
?	Gaps in evidence

12. The assessment sheet provides an initial list of ecosystem services under the four main categories of provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting services. This initial list should act as a starting point for considering the multiple benefits provided by a wetland. Assessors are encouraged to consider whether this list needs to be expanded or made more site- or context-specific in order to address specific services. For instance, “food” is provided as a catch-all term but could be subdivided into more detail such as “harvested crops”, “fish and shellfish” or “collection of fruit and berries” if significant differences are experienced in the wetland being assessed.

*Table 2. Linking services to beneficiaries at different scales*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local benefits: Those experienced by individuals, households or communities living and working in the immediate vicinity of the wetland.</li> <li>• Regional benefits: Those delivered to individuals, households or communities living and working in the wider catchment of the wetland.</li> <li>• Global benefits: Those that extend beyond national boundaries.</li> </ul>
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13. Scores are thus allocated semi-quantitatively, using assessor knowledge and other local and technical input. A more quantitative approach would be more resource-intensive, far from rapid, and would risk overlooking services not initially considered but potentially locally important, as well as skewing assessment towards the more readily exploited, marketable and therefore quantified services to the detriment of other important maintaining processes and wider benefits. The RAWES rapid method thus serves an operational need to incorporate ecosystem service assessment routinely into Ramsar Site assessments and plans.
14. Training in rapid assessment methods has been highlighted as being essential if subjectivity is to be reduced and repeatability of results is to be enhanced<sup>10</sup>. Typically, a one-day training course mixing classroom and field sessions on the RAWES method suffices, with trained assessors undertaking independent surveys following the course for verification by the trainers and also to start building a local site database.

<sup>10</sup> Herlihy, A.T., Sifneos, J., Bason, C., Jacobs, A., Kentula, M.E., Fennessy, M.S. (2009). An approach for evaluating the repeatability of rapid wetland assessment methods: the effects of training and experience. *Environ. Manage.* 44 (2), 369–377.

15. The outputs from applying the RAWES approach can be used to inform subsequent quantitative assessments of targeted ecosystem services, by effectively providing an initial screening, or in more general local or national policy frameworks and decision-making process such as environmental impact assessments. It is recognized that rapid assessment does not replace a comprehensive field assessment.
16. The process for applying the RAWES approach comprises three principle activities: preparation, field assessment and information management (Table 3).

*Table 3. Process for applying the RAWES approach*

Stage	Information
<b>Preparation – key considerations</b>	
Who will undertake the assessment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The assessment should be conducted by a minimum of two individuals working together.</li> <li>• The pair should be knowledgeable about the site and the type of wetland being assessed.</li> </ul>
Where will the assessment be undertaken?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The assessment should cover a defined area.</li> <li>• The level of significance of services with regard to number and range of beneficiaries and negatively affected groups must be determined prior to conducting the assessment.</li> <li>• The scales at which benefits are described (from local to global) must be determined prior to conducting an assessment.</li> <li>• Ideally the area should be of a relatively homogeneous habitat type but if it covers several different habitats this needs to be noted.</li> <li>• Health and safety considerations must be taken into account.</li> </ul>
What is needed to undertake the assessment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that plenty of assessment sheets are available.</li> <li>• Use a clipboard and take several pens/pencils. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a camera and global positioning (GPS) equipment to record images and their location.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Take appropriate personal protective equipment.</li> </ul>
<b>Field assessment – key considerations</b>	
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use field indicators to help recognize ecosystem services (see Appendix 2).</li> <li>• Understand the wider context of the site and the surrounding social and natural environment.</li> <li>• Think about the scale at which the service may be providing benefits.</li> <li>• Record actual, not potential, services. If there is no evidence do not record the service but make a note for future reference.</li> </ul>
Indigenous and local knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use local knowledge of how the site functions and how local communities interact with it.</li> </ul>
Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the assessors discuss issues between themselves and make reasoned conclusions.</li> </ul>

Stage	Information
Stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wherever possible engage with local stakeholders to understand better the relationship between people and the wetland.</li> <li>• Think about a hierarchy of stakeholders, from local (living/working immediately around the wetland), regional (those downstream and upstream of the wetland or in the wider region) and global (stakeholders and beneficiaries beyond national boundaries).</li> </ul>
Recording information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that as much information as possible is recorded so that others can understand the rationale for any assessments made.</li> </ul>
<b>Information management – key considerations</b>	
Data checking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before leaving the field, check that all the required information has been recorded.</li> </ul>
Data entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all data are entered onto Excel spreadsheets.</li> <li>• Use one spreadsheet for each assessment location.</li> <li>• Work in pairs to enter data.</li> <li>• If necessary check latitude/longitude on Google Earth.</li> </ul>
Summarizing for future use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a summary of any key issues recorded such as constraints, uncertainties, impacts and threats.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1. Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services: Field assessment sheet

Note: The list of ecosystem services provided under the rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services (RAWES) approach differs partly from that used in the RIS and therefore should be considered as an example which should be adapted as appropriate to satisfy the relevant situation. For instance, where the RAWES approach is being used to inform the RIS then it is appropriate to make the modification required to ensure that all relevant ecosystem services are assessed.

RAPID ASSESSMENT OF WETLAND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES FIELD ASSESSMENT SHEET						
<b>Key</b>	<b>How important?</b>	<b>Wetland name:</b>				
++	Significant positive benefit	<b>GPS</b>				
+	Positive benefit	<b>coordinates:</b>				
0	Negligible benefit	<b>Date :</b>				
-	N benefit	<b>Assessors :</b>				
--	Significant negative benefit					
?	Gaps in evidence					
				<b>Scale of benefit</b>		
		<b>How important?</b>	<b>Describe benefit</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Regional</b>	<b>Global</b>
<b>Provisioning services</b>	Fresh water					
	Food					
	Fuel					
	Fibre					
	Genetic resources					
	Natural medicines or pharmaceuticals					
	Ornamental resources					
	Clay, mineral, aggregate harvesting					
	Energy harvesting from natural air and water flows					
<b>Regulatory services</b>	Air quality regulation					
	Local climate regulation					
	Global climate regulation					
	Water regulation					
	Flood hazard regulation					
	Storm hazard regulation					
	Pest regulation					
	Disease regulation – human					
	Disease regulation – livestock					
	Erosion regulation					
	Water purification					
	Pollination					

	Salinity regulation					
	Fire regulation					
	Noise and visual buffering					
<b>Cultural services</b>	Cultural heritage					
	Recreation and tourism					
	Aesthetic value					
	Spiritual and religious value					
	Inspiration value					
	Social relation					
	Educational and research					
<b>Supporting services</b>	Soil formation					
	Primary production					
	Nutrient cycling					
	Water recycling					
	Provision of habitat					
Notes :						

**Appendix 2. The example list of wetland ecosystem services considered by the RAWES approach and examples of the indicator questions considered**

	Ecosystem service	Example	Examples of questions assessors can ask about this service
Provisioning services	Provision of fresh water	Water used for domestic drinking supply, for irrigation, for livestock etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the wetland provide a source of fresh water?</li> <li>Does the wetland store fresh water for human use?</li> <li>Is the wetland a net source of pollution, degrading fresh water provision?</li> </ul>
	Provision of food	Crops, fruit, fish etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is grown in the wetland, either formally or from informal harvesting?</li> <li>Are animals harvested from the wetland?</li> <li>Are livestock using the wetland?</li> </ul>
	Provision of fibre	Timber for building, wool for clothing etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are any natural materials such as wood, fibre, straw, animal fibre (wool/hide/sinew/antler/other) taken from the wetland?</li> </ul>
	Provision of fuel	Fuelwood, peat etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is any material taken from the wetland and used as fuel for domestic or other uses?</li> </ul>
	Provision of genetic resources	Rare breeds used for crop/stock breeding etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there any native or rare strains of plants and animals, wild and domesticated, which could contribute genetic diversity for human uses (for instance for drug manufacture, improving resilience of domestic animals and plants, horticultural trade etc.)?</li> </ul>
	Provision of natural medicines and pharmaceuticals	Plants used as traditional medicines etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there any plants, animals or their parts derived from the wetland which are harvested and used for their medicinal properties?</li> </ul>
	Provision of ornamental resources	Collection of shells, flowers etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there any plants, animals or their parts derived from the wetland that are collected and used/sold for their ornamental properties?</li> </ul>
	Clay, mineral, aggregate harvesting	Sand and gravel extracted for building use, clay extracted for brick-making etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What substances are extracted or dug up from the wetland for construction or other human uses?</li> </ul>
Regulating services	Energy harvesting from natural air and water flows	Water wheels driven by flowing water, windmills driven by the wind etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are any technologies (water wheels, wind turbines etc.) used to capture natural flows of energy through or across the wetland?</li> </ul>
	Air quality regulation	Removal of airborne particles from car exhausts, industrial chimneys, dust from agricultural land etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there a source of airborne pollutants?</li> <li>Does the wetland habitat structure help to settle out airborne pollutants?</li> <li>Does the state of the wetland make it a source of air pollutants (microbial, particulate or chemical)?</li> </ul>
	Local climate regulation	Regulation of the local microclimate, through shading, reducing air temperature etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the wetland habitat structure provide shade for humans?</li> <li>Does the wetland have areas of standing water with or without vegetation that will be generating evapotranspiration and consequently reducing air temperatures?</li> </ul>
	Global climate regulation	Regulation of the global climate through control of greenhouse gas emissions, the sequestration of carbon, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the wetland store and/or sequester carbon?</li> <li>Does this balance with generation of methane and other greenhouse gases?</li> </ul>
	Water regulation	Regulation of flows of surface water during high and low flows, regulation of recharge of groundwater, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do the topography, permeability and roughness of the wetland enable it to store water during high rainfall/discharge and to slowly release it back to surface waters or to groundwater?</li> <li>Does the wetland regulate discharges during dry periods to buffer low flows during dry weather?</li> </ul>
	Flood hazard regulation	Regulation and storage of flood water, regulation of intense rainfall events etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the wetland regulate, store and retain floodwaters?</li> <li>Does the wetland store rainfall and surface water that might contribute to flooding and damage to property or ecosystems downstream?</li> </ul>

	Ecosystem service	Example	Examples of questions assessors can ask about this service
	Storm hazard regulation	Regulation of tidal or storm surges, regulation of extreme winds, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the complexity of habitat, particularly trees, tall reeds and other vegetation and surface topography, absorb energy from extreme events such as storms and waves that might otherwise damage property or adjacent ecosystems?</li> </ul>
	Pest regulation	Control of pest species such as mosquitoes, rats, flies, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do natural predation and other ecological processes in the wetland regulate and control pest organisms?</li> <li>Is the wetland a source of pests (for example rats thriving in dirty water systems)?</li> </ul>
	Regulation of human diseases	Presence of species that control the species (vectors) that transmit human diseases such as malaria, West Nile fever, dengue fever, Zika virus, leptospirosis, schistosomiasis, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do natural predation and other ecological processes in the wetland regulate organisms that may cause human diseases?</li> <li>Are faecal deposits, bacteria or other potentially pathogenic microbes immobilized by processes in the wetland?</li> <li>Is the condition of the wetland contributing to the negative spread of populations of disease vectors (such as mosquitoes)?</li> </ul>
	Regulation of diseases affecting livestock	Presence of species that control the species (vectors) that transmit diseases to livestock such as leptospirosis, schistosomiasis, duck virus enteritis, highly pathogenic avian influenza, tick-borne diseases, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do natural predation and other ecological processes in the wetland regulate organisms that may cause diseases in livestock?</li> <li>Are faecal deposits, bacteria or other potentially pathogenic microbes immobilized by processes in the wetland?</li> <li>Is the condition of the wetland countering the spread of populations of disease vectors (such as mosquitoes or snails)?</li> </ul>
	Erosion regulation	Regulation of energy environment to reduce risk of erosion, presence of dense vegetation protecting soils, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the wetland vegetation provide protection from erosion for the soils?</li> <li>Are there any signs of erosion, such as bare earth, in the wetland?</li> </ul>
	Water purification	Cleaning of water, improvement of water quality, deposition of silts, trapping of contaminants and pollutants, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do physico-chemical (sunlight exposure in shallow waters, detention of water in aerobic and anaerobic microhabitats) and biological processes in the wetland result in the breakdown of organic, microbial and other pollutants in the water passing through?</li> <li>Are suspended solids deposited?</li> <li>Is there a noticeable change in the quality, such as the turbidity, of water entering and leaving the wetland?</li> </ul>
	Pollination	Pollination of plants and crops by pollinators such as bees, butterflies, wasps, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do populations of pollinating organisms (butterflies, wasps, bees, bats etc.) in the wetland contribute to pollination within the wetland?</li> <li>Do pollinators using the wetland also help to pollinate nearby crops, gardens, allotments, etc.?</li> </ul>
	Salinity regulation	Freshwater in the wetland provides a barrier to saline waters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the hydrology of the wetland help prevent saline water contaminating freshwaters?</li> <li>Does the presence of freshwater in the wetland prevent the salinization of soils?</li> <li>In tidal wetlands are there man-made or man-altered barriers (levies, roads, railroads) that interrupt connectivity with tidal water?</li> </ul>
	Fire regulation	Providing physical barriers to the spread of fire, maintaining wet conditions to prevent fires spreading, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the configuration of waterbodies (ditches, streams, etc.) help to prevent the spread of fires?</li> <li>Is there water at or near the soil surface that restricts the spread of fire?</li> <li>Are organic rich or peat soils drained and susceptible to fire and burning?</li> </ul>



	Ecosystem service	Example	Examples of questions assessors can ask about this service
	Noise and visual buffering	Wetland trees or tall reeds absorbing and buffering the impact of noise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there a source (busy road, industry, construction etc.) and receptor (houses, wildlife, etc.) for noise pollution?</li> <li>Does the wetland ecosystem structure, particularly tall trees and reeds, provide visual screening as well as suppress noise transmission?</li> </ul>
Cultural services	Cultural heritage	Importance of the wetland for historical or archaeological value, as an example of traditional uses or management practices, as a cultural landscape, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the wetland system have cultural importance, either due to its natural character or traditional uses?</li> </ul>
	Recreation and tourism	Importance of the wetland in providing a location for recreation such as fishing, watersports or swimming, or as a tourism destination, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the wetland used for organized or informal recreational purposes?</li> <li>Is there infrastructure provided for access and recreation?</li> <li>Are their wider tourism/ecotourism benefits flowing from these uses?</li> </ul>
	Aesthetic value	The wetland is overlooked by properties, is part of a known area of natural beauty, is used as a subject by painters and artists, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the wetland provide aesthetic benefits through the desirability of siting houses or commercial development adjacent to it?</li> <li>Does the presence of a wetland have a significant impact on property prices?</li> <li>Is the wetland depicted in many works of art?</li> </ul>
	Spiritual and religious value	The wetland plays a role in local religious festivals, the wetland is considered as a sacred site, the wetland forms part of a traditional belief system, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What spiritual or religious values do people derive from the wetland?</li> <li>Does the wetland hold any important spiritual or cultural value to people?</li> <li>Does the wetland play any part in traditional religious ceremonies?</li> <li>Are there any traditional wetland management practices (such as the timing of planting and cropping of rice according to Buddhist or other traditions and teachings) associated with the wetland?</li> </ul>
	Inspirational value	Presence of local myths or stories relating to the wetland, traditional oral or written histories about the wetland or wetland animals, creation of different art forms associated with the wetland, development of distinct architecture based on the wetland, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there any particular myths or other folklore associated with the wetland?</li> <li>Do any wetland animals appear or are any featured in local stories and myths?</li> <li>Does the wetland inspire people to create music or other forms of art?</li> <li>Have particular ways of designing and building developed which reflect the wetland?</li> </ul>
	Social relations	Presence of fishing, grazing or cropping communities, which have developed within and around the wetland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have communities formed around the wetland and its uses, including for example fishing (subsistence, commercial and recreational), cropping or stock management, walking and jogging, birdwatching and photography, etc?</li> </ul>
	Educational and research	Use of the wetland by local schoolchildren for education, site of long-term research and monitoring, site visited by organized educational study tours, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the wetland used for any educational purposes, organized or informal, ranging from school visits to university research and teaching?</li> <li>Are there any public awareness or educational materials present?</li> </ul>

	Ecosystem service	Example	Examples of questions assessors can ask about this service
Supporting services	Soil formation	Deposition of sediment, accumulation of organic matter, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do accretion processes (both sedimentation of mineral material and the build up of organic material) on the wetland result in the formation of soils?</li> </ul>
	Primary production	Presence of primary producers such as plants, algae, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do photosynthetic processes on the wetland produce organic matter and store energy in biochemical form?</li> </ul>
	Nutrient cycling	Source of nutrients present from inputs from agricultural land, internal cycling of plant material, inputs of nutrients from floodwaters, presence of fauna to recycling nutrients, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do wetland processes biochemically transform nutrients (for example nitrification/denitrification)?</li> <li>Are nutrients settled out in particulate forms, changing the characteristics of water passing through the system?</li> <li>Are there abundant invertebrates and detritivores that are decomposing and cycling organic material?</li> </ul>
	Water recycling	Presence of wetland vegetation and open water result in evapotranspiration and local recycling of water, relatively closed canopies and low exposure to winds retains water in local cycles, sandy or coarse substrates allow exchange with groundwaters, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the structure of the wetland retain water in tight cycles (for example recapture of vapour produced by evapotranspiration)?</li> <li>Does the wetland enable exchanges with groundwater (either discharge or recharge)?</li> </ul>
	Provision of habitat	Presence of locally important habitats and species, presence of species and habitats of conservation concern, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the wetland support a diversity of locally representative biodiversity (plants and animals)?</li> <li>Does the wetland support species which humans consider of conservation concern or charismatic interest?</li> <li>Are there invasive plants and animals that pose a threat to ecosystem services and/or functions?</li> </ul>