



NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RAMSAR CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

**National Reports to be submitted to the 12th Meeting
of the Conference of the Contracting Parties,
Uruguay, 2015**

Please submit the completed National Report in Microsoft Word format (.doc, 97-2003), as an electronic file (not a printed copy) and preferably by e-mail, to Alexia Dufour, Regional Affairs Officer, Ramsar Secretariat (dufour@ramsar.org) by **1 September 2014**.

The structure of the COP12 National Report Format

The COP12 National Report Format (NRF) is in four sections:

Section 1 provides the institutional information about the Administrative Authority and National Focal Points for the national implementation of the Convention.

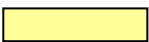
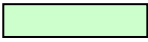
Section 2 is a 'free-text' section in which the Party is invited to provide a summary of various aspects of national implementation progress and recommendations for the future.

Section 3 provides the 66 implementation indicator questions, grouped under each Convention implementation strategy in the Strategic Plan 2009-2015, and with an optional 'free-text' section under each indicator question in which the Contracting Party may, if it wishes, add further information on national implementation of that activity.

Section 4 is an optional annex to allow any Contracting Party that so wishes to provide additional information regarding any or all of its Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites).

General guidance for completing and submitting the COP12 National Report Format

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ THIS GUIDANCE SECTION BEFORE STARTING TO COMPLETE THE NATIONAL REPORT FORMAT

1. All Sections of the COP12 NRF should be completed in one of the Convention's official languages (English, French, Spanish).
2. The deadline for submission of the completed NRF is **1 September 2014**. It will not be possible to include information from National Reports received after that date in the analysis and reporting on Convention implementation to COP12.
3. All fields with a pale yellow background  must be filled in.
4. 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 is optional, Contracting Parties are encouraged to provide such additional information wherever possible and relevant, as it helps us understand Parties' progress and activity more fully, to prepare the best possible global and regional implementation reports to COP.
5. The Format is created as a form in Microsoft Word. You are only able to submit replies and information in the yellow or green boxes, as all other parts of the form are locked to ensure that the structure and wording of indicators will remain uniform and comparable for all Parties.
6. To select a yellow or green field you wish to complete, 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.
7. To move down through the sequence of fields, you can also use the 'Tab' key on the computer keyboard.

8. For a 'free-text' field, you can type in whatever information you wish. Note that there is only limited facility within the Microsoft 'form' format to make editorial changes in the 'free-text' box once text has been entered. Therefore, if you wish to amend any of the text you have put in a green or yellow 'free-text' box, you should cut and paste the existing text into a separate document, make all the amendments, and then cut and paste the revised text back into the box.
9. Certain keyboard characters interfere with the automatic entry of data into the Secretariat's database. For that reason, please **do not use double quote marks " "** in the 'free-text' fields. Please **only use single quote marks ' '**. For the same reason, please **only use simple text in the 'free-text' fields: they cannot accept formatting, colours or objects such as tables and images.**
10. 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, but are generally of the form: 'Yes', 'No', 'Partly', 'In progress'. This is necessary so that statistical comparisons can be made of the replies.
11. For each indicator question you can choose only one answer. If you wish to provide further information or clarification, do so in the green additional information box below the relevant indicator question. Please be as concise as possible (**maximum of 500 words** in each free-text box).
12. 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.
13. An NRF is not usually completed by one person alone: for many indicators it is best for the principal compiler to consult with colleagues in their agency and others within the government and, as appropriate, with NGOs and other stakeholders who might have fuller knowledge of aspects of the Party's overall implementation of the Convention. The principal compiler can save the document at any point and return to it later to continue or to amend answers. Compilers should refer back to the National Report submitted for COP11 to ensure the continuity and consistency of information provided.
14. After each session, **remember to save the file** in Microsoft Word, .doc, 97-2003 format. A recommended filename structure is: COP12NRF [Country] [date], for example: COP12NRFSpain13July2014.doc
15. After the NRF has been completed, please **send it in this format to Alexia Dufour, Regional Affairs Officer, Ramsar Convention Secretariat, preferably by e-mail (dufour@ramsar.org).**
16. The completed NRF **must be accompanied by a letter or e-mail message in the name of the Head of Administrative Authority, confirming that this is the Contracting Party's official submission of its COP12 National Report.**
17. If you have any questions or problems, please contact the Ramsar Secretariat for advice (e-mail as above).

NATIONAL REPORT TO RAMSAR COP12

SECTION 1: INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

Important note: the responses below will be considered by the Ramsar Secretariat as the definitive list of your focal points, and will be used to update the information it holds. The Secretariat's current information about your focal points is available at www.ramsar.org/contacts_en.

NAME OF CONTRACTING PARTY: BULGARIA

DESIGNATED RAMSAR ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY

Name of Administrative Authority:	Ministry of Environment and Water
Head of Administrative Authority - name and title:	Svetlana Zhekova, Minister of Environment and Water
Mailing address:	22 Maria Luiza Blvd., Sofia, 1000, Bulgaria
Telephone/Fax:	Tel: +359 2 988 2577 / Fax: +359 2 986 2533
Email:	contact@moew.government.bg

DESIGNATED NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR RAMSAR CONVENTION MATTERS

Name and title:	Aylin Hasan, Chief expert, National Nature Protection Service Directorate
Mailing address:	22 Maria Luiza blvd., Sofia 1000, Bulgaria
Telephone/Fax:	Tel: +359 2 940 6103 / Fax: +359 2 940 6127
Email:	ahasan@moew.government.bg

DESIGNATED NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL (STRP)

Name and title:	Dr Nevena Kambourova
Name of organisation:	Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
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DESIGNATED GOVERNMENT NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMME ON COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND AWARENESS (CEPA)

Name and title:	Aylin Hasan, Chief expert, National Nature Protection Service Directorate
Name of organisation:	Ministry of Environment and Water
Mailing address:	22 Maria Luiza blvd., Sofia 1000, Bulgaria
Telephone/Fax:	Tel: +359 2 940 6103 / Fax: +359 2 940 6127
Email:	ahasan@moew.government.bg

DESIGNATED NON-GOVERNMENT NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMME ON COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND AWARENESS (CEPA)

Name and title:	Neli Arabadzhieva
Name of organisation:	Green Balkans NGO
Mailing address:	Bulgaria, Plovdiv 4000, 1 Skopie Str. floor 1, office 9 and 10
Telephone/Fax:	+359 884257711, +359 896614312
Email:	narabadzhieva@greenbalkans.org, neliarabadzhieva@gmail.com

**SECTION 2: GENERAL SUMMARY OF NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION
PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES**

REMINDER: Please do not use double quote marks “ ”: use single quotes ‘ ’ instead.

In your country, in the past triennium (i.e., since COP11 reporting):

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

1) Designation of three Transboundary Ramsar sites between Bulgaria and Romania. With a joint letter of 15 April 2013, the Romanian Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Ms Rovana Plumb, and the Bulgarian Minister of Environment and Waters, Mr Julian Popov, have requested the Ramsar Secretariat to recognize the following, already earlier listed Ramsar Sites, part of the Lower Danube Green Corridor, as Transboundary Ramsar Sites:

- Lake Calarasi (Iezerul Calarasi) (RO) – Srebarna (BG)
- Suhaia (RO) - Belene Islands Complex (BG)
- Bistret (RO) - Ibisha Island (BG)

With the designation of these six important wetlands as Transboundary Ramsar sites the governments of Bulgaria and Romania have declared their readiness and shared responsibility for joint coordinated management of these sites.

2) Significant extension of the area of two Ramsar sites on the River Danube. Bulgaria has updated the Ramsar Information Sheets and maps for two Ramsar Sites on the River Danube, significantly extending their extent and taking the total national area of Wetlands of International Importance to almost 50,000 hectares, which is 0.45% of the country territory.

Belene Islands Complex in Pleven Province (Ramsar Site no. 1226) has been extended by 11,432 ha with the inclusion of additional islands and agricultural lands on the river banks. Further upstream, Ibisha Island in Montana Province (Ramsar Site no. 1227) has been extended by 2,993 ha. The Site now includes additional islands and agricultural and semi-natural lands.

3) With a Protocol № 16 of the meeting of the National Biodiversity Council held on 08.10.2013 at the Ministry of Environment and Water, the developed National Plan for the conservation of the most important wetlands in Bulgaria for the period 2013 - 2022 was adopted as the basis for planning and implementation of activities for conservation and sustainable management of the most important wetlands in Bulgaria, both at national level and at the level of wetland. Also the plan is approved as a strategic document and the basis for the implementation of national commitments under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in the period 2013 - 2022.

4) Provision of an adequate administrative capacity and financial resource for wetland conservation, maintenance and restoration measures.

The main sources of funding for this purpose are public - the national budget and co-funding through various EU financial instruments. The main source for funding of the nature protection measures, included in the adopted National Wetlands Plan 2013 -2022 is expected to be the Operational Programme "Environment" for the period 2014 – 2020 that is under approval by the EC. The territories of all most important wetlands are included in the Natura 2000 Network. Due to this the priorities for EU provided funding resources since 2014 are provided by the National Prioritised Action Framework (NPAF) for Natura 2000. This is the first time in which such an approach is included in the 2014 - 2020 EU financial period. The PAF aims to achieving integration of various financial instruments and effective distribution of means corresponding to the nature protection priorities of the member states. In Bulgaria the document is under final approval. All wetlands that are subject of the National Wetlands Plan 2013 - 2022 are part of the Natura 2000 sites. Due to this all of them are subject of detailed analysis and definition of the funding priorities in the NPAF for Natura 2000.

5) Successful completion of the FP7 European project WETLANET.

Enhancing research potential by strengthening a local network of laboratories for studying wetland ecosystems functioning, restoration and management – a project of FP7 EC, CSA – SUPPORT ACTION, REGPOT-2008-1.

A win for wetlands research:

Within the last century around 50 % of the world's wetlands have disappeared as a result of pollution, agriculture and drainage. This drastic decline means that, as one of Europe's most threatened ecosystems, wetlands and their management is a top research priority.

The aim of the EU-funded WETLANET project was to enhance the research potential of the Central Laboratory of General Ecology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (CLGE-BAS). This was achieved by strengthening a local laboratory network, including three field stations at wetlands of major ecological importance, as well as specialised laboratory units at CLGE-BAS.

The approach included improving the human capacity of CLGE-BAS and upgrading the technical capacity of its laboratories. Project members also aimed to promote their activities as widely as possible so as to increase the influence of the CLGE on policy.

In total, 64 research visits were carried out for exchanges of know-how and experience, and 6 researchers with international experience were recruited. Their work diversified and strengthened research capacities. Substantial improvements to the CLGE-BAS technical and information technology (IT) equipment were also achieved. As a result, CLGE is now able to compete for research funding in the European market. It is also a partner in four other EU project proposals related to wetlands and marine topics. In addition, the increased transfer of expertise and participation in training and workshops has helped the CLGE to integrate into the European Research Area (ERA).

WETLANET has thus improved the research capacity of CLGE-BAS, allowing it to become one of Europe's leading institutions on wetland research.

B. What have been the five greatest difficulties in implementing the Convention?

- 1) Insufficient economical incentives to wetlands conservation and wise use;
- 2) Insufficient administrative capacity for implementation of the Convention;
- 3) It has to be stated that the wetlands with higher categories of protection according to the Protected areas act (reserve, managed reserve, national and nature park) and with accepted management plan have significantly higher level of protection and management than the rest.
- 4) The total territory of the wetlands that are subject of legislative protection has been increased significantly. The implementation of the ecological network Natura 2000 that encompasses without exceptions all significant wetlands in Bulgaria has contributed to this the most. In general, the state of the wetlands has not improved due to the diverse anthropogenic pressure and/or transition towards unsustainable use practices.
- 5) The funding for nature protection, maintenance and restoration activities is based on project-wise approach with diverse funding and varying approaches. Horizontal measures are not sufficiently interceded.

C. What are the five priorities for future implementation of the Convention?

1) The current priorities of the Republic of Bulgaria concerning the wetlands are formulized in accordance to the goals of the Ramsar Convention and the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009–2015, the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 as well as on the basis of relevant national strategic documents: Priority 1 – Limitation of the unfavorable anthropogenic factors that affect the wetlands as ecosystems. The general means for protection of the wetlands are the various legislative protection statuses (according to the Protected Areas Act and the Biodiversity Act) and the related regimes and management measures.

2) Priority 2 - Preserving the good ecological status of the wetlands, described in the National Wetlands Plan 2013 - 2022 as of significance for conservation of the biodiversity and non-admission of net loss of wetlands' territories in the country, including maintenance measures;

3) Priority 3 - Wise use of the country's wetlands in relation to their long-term protection of their ecosystem services and the related benefits for the public. The maintenance of the wetland ecosystem function through sustainable utilization of their resources contributes to the quality of life of the local communities, their livelihood and is also an important approach for limitation and adaptation towards the global climate change.

4) Restoration of wetlands, the state of which has been disturbed as a result of various anthropogenic impacts, but which have a restoration potential and/or are an important habitat for rare and endangered species. Restoration and maintenance of the water regime, which is often related to design and construction of hydro technical facilities, plays the most important role in the restoration process.

5) Public awareness raising and creation of public support for wetland conservation, maintenance and restoration. Popularization of the social, economic and ecological benefits of the wetlands may be realized through various forms of ecological education as well as through demonstrations of mechanisms for sustainable use of natural resources. The support for sustainable forms of use of the wetlands is of great significance for the public awareness raising, especially by the local communities.

D. Do you (AA) have any recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Ramsar Secretariat?

No

E. Do you (AA) have any recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Convention's International Organisation Partners (IOPs)? (including ongoing partnerships and partnerships to develop)

No

F. 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?

The accession of the Republic of Bulgaria to the EU in 2007 and the preparatory process for this accession included harmonization of the environmental legislation. We should note first here the complete transposing of the Birds Directive and of the Habitats Directive of the EU, which regulate the creation of the European Ecological Network Natura 2000. This process is significantly advanced in Bulgaria at present which provides completely new tools for conservation and management of the significant wetlands which belong, without exception, to the National Ecological Network. Transposing of the Water Framework Directive has led to substantial changes of the water management approach such as introduction of the basin principle, ecosystem approach, recognition of the biological parameters as leading in determining the environmental status of the water and introduction of integrated river-basin management plans.

The current National Action Plan for Conservation of Wetlands of High Significance in Bulgaria takes into account a number of strategic and program documents that formulize the environmental and sustainable development policy on European and International level such as:

- European strategy “Europe 2020” – an EU fundamental strategic document for intelligent, sustainable and affiliate growth.
- EU Biodiversity strategy to 2020 – aimed at achievement of 6 priority goals: habitat and species conservation, support and restoration of ecosystems and ecosystem services, inclusion of the biodiversity goals in various EU policy fields, control of invasive species and the contribution of EU towards evasion of biodiversity loss on worldwide scale.
- Strategic plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020, including Aichi Biodiversity Targets.
- Strategic plan of the Ramsar Convention on wetlands for the period 2009 – 2015, adopted with Resolution X.1, and modified with Resolution XI.3, determining the main tendencies and guidelines for implementation of the goals of the Convention for the planned period.
- National Environmental Strategy for the period 2009 - 2018 with the relevant Action plan - enunciation the national policy in the field of protection and sustainable management of the biodiversity.

G. How can implementation of the Ramsar Convention be better linked with the implementation of water policy/strategy and other strategies in the country (e.g., on sustainable development, energy, extractive industries, poverty reduction, sanitation, food security, biodiversity)?

The Biodiversity Conservation Act (BCA) regulates the relations among the State, the municipalities, and the juristic and natural persons in respect of the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Acc. to the BCA, the State shall develop a National Ecological Network which includes:

- Natura 2000 sites acc. to both EU Directives, which may incorporate protected areas;
- Protected areas outside those Natura 2000 sites;

CORINE Biotopes sites, Ramsar Convention sites and Important Bird Areas are incorporated into the National Ecological Network on a priority basis.

The MOEW is the institution in charge of the study, assessment and preparation of the documentation for designation of Natura 2000 sites.

Natura 2000 sites are being declared as well by a special order of the minister of environment.

Broad participation of the general public is foreseen when determining the particular regimes for use and utilization. Those regimes are elaborated according to the purpose for designation of the corresponding Natura 2000 site.

As far as Natura 2000 sites are concerned, the Biodiversity conservation Act envisages a particular assessment according to Article 6 of the Habitat Directive of the EU, to be provided on investment proposals, plans and programmes, which are planned to be held in potential Natura 2000 sites, in order to avoid any negative effects on the particular habitats and habitats of species, for which preservation the respective site was proposed as Natura 2000 site.

The terms for making this assessment are regulated by an Regulation of the Council of Ministers.

The general public is involved in this assessment through participating in a public consultation.

Management plans are also envisaged for Natura 2000 sites.

Bulgaria has designated and included for protection under the Water Framework Directive the Natura 2000 Protected Areas (all wetlands and Ramsar sites belong here), which are both protected areas and the WFD, in the first existing river basins management plans for the period 2010 -2015.

The river basin management plans include administrative measures such as bans on certain activities within designated protected areas - Natura 2000 sites incl. Ramsar sites.

The river basin management plans include maintenance and restoration activities, depending on the conservation status of habitats and species subject to conservation in the protected areas and Ramsar sites under the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive.

H. Do you (AA) have any other general comments on the implementation of the Convention?

No

I. Please list the names of the organisations which have been consulted on or have contributed to the information provided in this report:

Ministry of Environment and Water (MOEW)
Regional Inspectorates of Environment and Water (RIEW) under MOEW
River Basin Directorates (RBD) under MOEW
Persina Nature Park Directorate
Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IBER-BAS)
Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB)
Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation (BBF)
Green Balkans NGO
Balkani Wildlife Society NGO
WWF Bulgaria

SECTION 3: INDICATOR QUESTIONS AND FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION INFORMATION

REMINDER: Guidance for completing 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 a specific indicator, please provide this information in the green 'free-text' boxes below the indicator questions.
3. If you wish to amend any of the text you have put in a green 'free-text' box, you should 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. Some characters used in the free text box prevent the automatic data entry into our database National Reports. For that reason, **please do not use double quote marks “ ” in the free text boxes. Use single quotes ‘ ’. Text in the ‘free text’ boxes should be simple text only: they cannot accept formatting, colours or objects such as tables and images.**
5. To help Contracting Parties refer to relevant information they provided in their National Report to COP11, for each appropriate indicator a cross-reference is provided to the equivalent indicator(s) in the COP11 NRF, shown thus: {x.x.x}
6. Where appropriate, a cross-reference is also provided to the relevant Key Result Area (KRA) relating to Contracting Parties implementation in the Strategic Plan 2009-2015.
7. Only Strategic Plan 2009-2015 Strategies and KRAs for which there are significant implementation actions for Contracting Parties are included in this reporting format; those parts of the Strategic Plan that do not refer directly to Parties are omitted.

GOAL 1. THE WISE USE OF WETLANDS

STRATEGY 1.1 Wetland inventory and assessment. *Describe, assess and monitor the extent and condition of all types of wetlands as defined by the Ramsar Convention and wetland resources at relevant scales, in order to inform and underpin implementation of the Convention, in particular in the application of its provisions concerning the wise use of all wetlands.*

1.1.1 Does your country have a comprehensive National Wetland Inventory? {1.1.1} KRA 1.1.i	A - Yes
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1.1.1 Additional information:
Michev, T., M. Stoyneva (eds). 2007. Inventory of Bulgarian Wetlands and their Biodiversity. Publ. House Elsi-M, Sofia, 364 pp. + CD supplement.

1.1.2 Is wetland inventory data and information maintained and made accessible to all stakeholders? {1.1.2} KRA 1.1.ii	A - Yes
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1.1.2 Additional information:

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1.1.3 Has the condition* of wetlands in your country, overall, changed since the last triennium? {1.1.3}

- a) Ramsar Sites
b) wetlands generally

Please comment on the sources of the information on which your answer is based in the green free- text box below. If there is a difference between inland and coastal wetland situations, please describe. If you are able to, please describe the principal driver(s) of the change(s).

* 'Condition' corresponds to ecological character, as defined by the Convention

- a) - No change
b) - No change

1.1.3 Additional information on a) and/or b):

Source of information:

Up-dated RIS for Ramsar sites - Pomorie Lake, Srebarna, Belene Islands Complex and Ibisha Island;

The results of project "Mapping and assessment of the conservation status of the natural habitats and species - Phase 1" during which a huge amount of new data was collected as well as some other smaller projects.

Reporting under Art. 17 of the Habitats Directive and reporting under Art. 12 of the Birds Directive.

The condition of Danube wetlands every year depend on the fluctuation of Danube river waters.

STRATEGY 1.3 Policy, legislation and institutions. *Develop and implement policies, legislation, and practices, including growth and development of appropriate institutions, in all Contracting Parties, to ensure that the wise use provisions of the Convention are being effectively applied.*

1.3.1 Is a National Wetland Policy (or equivalent instrument) in place? {1.3.1} KRA 1.3.i

(If 'Yes', please give the title and date of the policy in the green text box)

A - Yes

1.3.1 Additional information:

With a Protocol № 16 of the meeting of the National Biodiversity Council held on 08.10.2013 at the Ministry of Environment and Water, the developed National Plan for the conservation of the most important wetlands in Bulgaria for the period 2013 - 2022 was adopted as the basis for planning and implementation of activities for conservation and sustainable management of the most important wetlands in Bulgaria, both at national level and at the level of wetland. Also the plan is approved as a strategic document and the basis for the implementation of national commitments under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in the period 2013 - 2022.

1.3.2 Have wetland issues been incorporated into other national strategies and planning processes, including:

- | | |
|---|------------|
| a) Poverty eradication strategies | a) A - Yes |
| b) Water resource management and water efficiency plans | b) A - Yes |
| c) Coastal and marine resource management plans | c) A - Yes |
| d) National forest programmes | d) A - Yes |
| e) National strategies for sustainable development | e) A - Yes |
| f) National policies or measures on agriculture | f) A - Yes |
| g) National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans drawn up under the CBD | g) A - Yes |

{1.3.3} KRA 1.3.i

1.3.2 Additional information:

The Environmental Protection Act (EPA) is the framework act in Bulgaria which determines the State policy in the field of environment. It specifies the place and the role of the state authorities at central and local levels, in relation to:

- protection of environment;
- preservation of biological diversity;
- protection and utilization of the components of the environment;
- control and management of factors, which are harmful for the environment;
- monitoring of the status of the environment and of the causes of pollution;

preventing

and restraint of pollution;

- establishment and functioning of National system for monitoring of environment; collection and access to information about environment;
- economic organisation of activities related to environment protection;
- rights and obligations of the state, municipalities, legal and physical entities in regard to the environment protection.

EPA determines the procedures for accomplishing of :

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for investment proposals for construction;
- Ecological Assessment (EA) for plans and programmes in the implementation of which considerable impact on the environment is possible. This is a kind of a Sectoral Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). It is provided for plans and programmes in the field of forestry, agriculture, fishery, transport, energetics, tourism, territory development, management of waters, management of wastes, etc.

The EIA and the EA procedures aimed at integration of the national environmental protection policy into sectoral policies: transport, energy, construction, agriculture, industry , etc.

The other main goal of the EIA and EA is to ensure adequate participation of the public in decision making in relation to protection and management of nature resources.

The Environmental Protection Act (EPA) provides wide field for development of special legislation, which to regulate the protection of environmental components and the control over factors, which have influence on them, i.e. Waters Protection Act, Clean Air Protection Act, Waste Management Act, Protected Areas Act, Biological Diversity Act, Medicinal Plants Act, Act on the Genetically Modified Organisms.

1.3.3 Are Strategic Environmental Assessment practices applied when reviewing policies, programmes and plans that may impact upon wetlands? {1.3.4} KRA 1.3.ii

A - Yes

1.3.3 Additional information:

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- protection of environment;
- preservation of biological diversity;
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The Environmental Protection Act (EPA) provides wide field for development of special legislation, which to regulate the protection of environmental components and the control over factors, which have influence on them, i.e. Waters Protection Act, Clean Air Protection Act, Waste Management Act, Protected Areas Act, Biological Diversity Act, Medicinal Plants Act, Act on the Genetically Modified Organisms.

1.3.4 Are Environmental Impact Assessments made for any development projects (such as new buildings, new roads, extractive industry) that may affect wetlands,? {1.3.5} KRA 1.3.iii	A - Yes
<p>1.3.4 Additional information:</p> <p>The Development Plans of many municipalities provide for expansion of many urban centers, allowing for new construction in nature sites.</p> <p>The Development Plans or amendments of the Development Plans of Black Sea coastal municipalities in most cases foresee over construction affecting areas of Ramsar sites – Development Plan of the municipality of Durankulak provide expansion of urban areas affecting the territory of Ramsar site “Durankulak Lake”, Development Plan of the municipality of Shabla provide expansion of urban areas affecting the territory of Ramsar site “Lake Shabla”, Development Plan of the municipality of Pomorie provide expansion of urban areas affecting the territory of Ramsar site “Pomorie Wetland Complex”, Development Plan of the municipality of Sozopol provide expansion of urban areas affecting the territory of Ramsar site “Poda”, Alepu Marsh – part of the Ramsar site Complex Ropotamo. During the Environmental Impact Assessments of these plans, many of the proposals are not accepted by the competent environmental authority in the proposed options.</p> <p>The Investment Proposal for the construction of the terrestrial part of South Stream gas pipeline stipulates crossing and negative impact on several rivers on the territory of Bulgaria. In the course of the EIA and Appropriate Assessment procedure, in order to minimize the negative impact on the affected wetlands, specific mitigation measures are envisaged to be implemented .</p> <p>For all investment proposals for construction of new transport infrastructure - roads, highways, railways during the EIA procedure the competent authorities require extensive research and analysis, in cases where of indirect effects on wetlands are exist. Spacial attention is given to the protection of the hydrological regime and the risk of collision with the moving species. In the course of the EIA procedures in order to minimize the negative impact specific mitigation measures are envisaged to be implemented.</p>	

1.3.5 Have any amendments to existing legislation been made to reflect Ramsar commitments? {1.3.6}	B - No
<p>1.3.5 Additional information:</p> <p>.....</p>	

STRATEGY 1.4: Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services. *Increase recognition of and attention in decision-making to the significance of wetlands for reasons of biodiversity conservation, water supply, coastal protection, integrated coastal zone management, flood defence, climate change mitigation and/or adaptation, food security, poverty eradication, tourism, cultural heritage, and scientific research, by developing and disseminating methodologies to achieve wise use of wetlands.*

1.4.1 Has an assessment been made of the ecosystem benefits/services provided by Ramsar Sites? {1.4.1} KRA 1.4.ii	D - Planned
<p>1.4.1 Additional information:</p> <p>.....</p>	
1.4.2 Have wetland programmes or projects that contribute to poverty alleviation objectives or food and water security plans been implemented? {1.4.2} KRA 1.4.i	B - No

1.4.2 Additional information:

.....

1.4.3 Have socio-economic and cultural values of wetlands been included in the management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands? {1.4.4} KRA 1.4.iii

A - Yes

1.4.3 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Partly', please indicate, if known, how many Ramsar Sites and their names):

Management plans:

The Protected Areas Act (PAA) requires the elaboration of management plans for protected areas. Besides the Act there is also a special regulation which determines a comprehensive procedure related to the elaboration of management plans (MP) for protected areas. Management plans are obligatory for the categories of National parks, Nature parks, Reserves and Maintained reserves. For the other two categories – protected areas and natural landmarks management plans could be also developed if there is an interested institution, for example NGO or Municipality, but only after the written approval by the MOEW.

Management plans are developed on the basis of comprehensive socio-economic information, information about cultural and historical heritage, data about the infrastructure within and around the protected areas. Management plans provide zoning of the territories and define specific regimes for use and utilization of the separate zones according to their conservation value.

They are agreements between the interested parties, namely the protected area's managers and local population. They are tools for development of opportunities for sustainable development and use of natural resources.

Management plans are developed for a period of 10 years. For the National parks on every 4 years from the MP entry into force a special public hearing is held which aims to assess the management plan implementation.

MPs are being developed with priority for those sites which are internationally recognized such as Ramsar sites, Biosphere reserves, World Heritage Sites, etc.

For Ramsar Sites:

Belene Islands Coplex

Pomorie Lake (in process of approvement)

Srebarna (in process of elaboration - updatind)

Ibisha Island (in process of elaboration)

Atanosovsko Lake (in process of elaboration - updating)

Complex Ropotamo (in process of elaboration - updating)

STRATEGY 1.5 Recognition of the role of the Convention. *Raise the profile of the Convention by highlighting its capacity as a unique mechanism for wetland ecosystem management at all levels; promote the usefulness of the Convention as a possible implementation mechanism to meet the goals and targets of other global conventions and processes.*

1.5.1 Since COP11, have you brought the 'Changwon Declaration' (Resolution X.3) to the attention of your:

- a. head of state
 - b. parliament
 - c. private sector
 - d. civil society
- {1.5.2}

- a. B - No
- b. B - No
- c. B - No
- d. B - No

1.5.1 Additional information:

.....

STRATEGY 1.6 Science-based management of wetlands. *Promote successful implementation of the wise use concept by ensuring that national policies and wetland management plans are based on the best available scientific knowledge, including technical and traditional knowledge.*

1.6.1 Has research to inform wetland policies and plans been undertaken in your country on:

- a. agriculture-wetland interactions
 - b. climate change
 - c. valuation of ecosystem services
- {1.6.1} KRA 1.6.i

- a. D - Planned
- b. D - Planned
- c. D - Planned

1.6.1 Additional information:

.....

1.6.2 Have all wetland management plans been based on sound scientific research, including research on potential threats to the wetlands? {1.6.2} KRA 1.6.ii

A - Yes

1.6.2 Additional information:

According to the Ordinance on the development of management plans for protected areas, management plans are developed based on the specific structure and content, as an Annex to the Ordinance. The structure of the management plan is indicated by the assignor. The assigning authority shall specify the requirements to the content of each item included in the structure of the plan.

Research reports and studies carried out in the course of the development of the management plan are not part of it and are to be submitted to the assigning authority in a separate Annex.

STRATEGY 1.7 Integrated Water Resources Management. *Ensure that policies and implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), applying an ecosystem-based approach, are included in the planning activities in all Contracting Parties and in their decision-making processes, particularly concerning groundwater management, catchment/river basin management, coastal and nearshore marine zone planning and climate change mitigation and/or adaptation activities.*

<p>1.7.1 Do your country's water governance and management systems treat wetlands as natural water infrastructure integral to water resource management at the scale of river basins? {1.7.2} KRA 1.7.ii</p>	A - Yes
<p>1.7.1 Additional information: All protected areas (Natura 2000 sites), where maintenance or improvement of the water status is an important factor in their protection, are identified in the River Basin Management Plans (RBMP). These are available in the RBMP as detailed lists.</p>	
<p>1.7.2 Have Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) expertise and tools been incorporated into catchment/river basin planning and management (see Resolution X.19)? {1.7.3}</p>	A - Yes
<p>1.7.2 Additional information: Pursuant to Art. 168b of the Water Act and Art. 14 of the WFD in the course of the development of River Basin Management Plans for each Basin Management Region they are benig published and announced to the public, including water users, for consultations and written statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schedule and Work Programme for the development of River Basin Management Plans; - Review of the major problems in the field of water management established in the river basin to which the plan refers; - Draft RBMP; <p>A key point in this consultation is the information in Section 5 on determining the objectives of environmental protection and the terms for achieving them, and the information in Section 7 on the designated measures to achieve these objectives. In more detail the activities within the public consultation and the results are given in Section 9 of the RBMP.</p>	
<p>1.7.3 Has your country established policies or guidelines for enhancing the role of wetlands in mitigating or adapting to climate change? {1.7.5} KRA 1.7.iii</p>	A - Yes
<p>1.7.3 Additional information: Third National Action Plan on Climate Change for the period 2013 - 2020 was adopted. In the sector of 'Land use, land use change and forestry' the development programs for restoration and conservation of wetlands in forest areas is envisaged in order to increase their effectiveness as carbon stores, including a measure 'Restoration and sustainable management of wetlands, wetlands protection and preservation in forest areas, peatlands, marshlands. " A strategy for adaptation to climate change is under preparation, which will consider biodiversity and ecosystems.</p>	
<p>1.7.4 Has your country formulated plans or projects to sustain and enhance the role of wetlands in supporting and maintaining viable farming systems? {1.7.6} KRA 1.7.v</p>	A - Yes

1.7.4 Additional information:

Activities in NATURA 2000 (all wetlands are Natura 2000 sites in Bulgaria) under the provisions of these financial instruments are financed by Bulgaria as a Member State of the EU. Most of the financial tools used for NATURA 2000 during the period 2007 to 2013 are managed at national level through Operational Programmes (OP). Some programmes include measures directly targeting NATURA 2000 for example OP "Environment 2007 to 2013", OP "Development of the Fisheries Sector" and the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013.

European Fisheries Fund (EFF)/Operational program for development of fisheries sector 2007-2013:

FUND	Provision	Level of Use * (MI)	
EFF	Axis 1 Measures for the adaptation of Bulgarian fishing fleet		€3518407, 34
	Axis 2 Aquaculture, inland fishing, processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture		€31030470,76
	Axis 3 Sustainable Development of the Fisheries Sector		€10050228,71
	Axis 4 Technical Assistance		€15888715,89
	Other (national/regional) payment schemes for territory of NATURA 2000 protected areas		

Summary of key NATURA 2000 related measures being undertaken under fund:

The table above specifies the agreed EFF funds in different axes of the OP "Sustainable Development of the Fisheries Sector" as of 25.02.2014. They are distributed among 193 projects under the programme.

There are 126 fully disbursed sums for the projects according to the above four axes with a total public expenditure paid of €25 443 349,53.

Funds for projects contracted in Measure 1.1. "Permanent cessation of fishing activities" (76 contracts of which 62 settled) are used under Priority Axis 1 "Development of the fisheries sector 2007-2013", as eligible activities under this Measure have an indirect positive impact on the conservation status of species and habitats and include reassignment of fishing vessels for the purpose of tourism and training and using fishing vessels to create artificial reefs. Under Measure 1.3. "Investments on board of fishing vessels and selectivity" activities are included with indirect impact on the species and habitats related to the selectivity of the catch. These fall under sector 06 "Purchase of equipment for catch selectivity" of this Measure and six projects are contracted under this Measure. Another measure associated with impacts on the status of species and habitats in the same Priority Axis is Measure of 1.4. "Small-scale coastal fisheries". This supports projects contributing to the improvement of the management and control of access conditions to certain fishing areas, the promotion of voluntary steps to reduce fishing efforts and to preserve resources and to promote the use of technological innovations that do not increase fishing effort related to biodiversity conservation. There are no agreed funds on this Measure as of 25.02.2014. The total contracted EFF resources for these measures are €3 518 407, and the actually disbursed volume of EFF is € 3101084. Thus 88%

The bulk of the EU's contribution for financing in the field of point 1.7.4 for the programming period 2014-2020 is expected to come from the EU funds. These are:

- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD): the Fund has a key role in financing activities in the field of biodiversity. Due to the nature of the contribution from the EAFRD (direct payments), this instrument can support biodiversity-friendly practices for land management by complementing the one-time investment from the ERDF or CF.
- European Fund for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (EFMAF): financial support from this Fund for the purpose of biodiversity conservation is related to the promotion of a sustainable fishery sector and efficient use of resources by „reducing the impact of fishing

on the marine environment” and by „protection and recovery of marine biodiversity and ecosystems and the services they provide, and promotion of the “aquaculture” sector for the implementation of practices with a high level of environmental protection”.

STRATEGY 1.8 Wetland restoration. *Identify priority wetlands and wetland systems 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 and systems.*

1.8.1 Have priority sites for wetland restoration been identified?
{1.8.1} KRA 1.8.i

A - Yes

1.8.1 Additional information:

The National Plan for the conservation of the most important wetlands in Bulgaria for the period 2013 - 2022 includes horizontal measures for protection and wise use of wetlands.

One of the measures is:

Restoration and/or improvement of the water regime of the wetlands with high significance in Bulgaria:

Drainage and degradation of the Bulgarian wetlands due to anthropogenic disturbance of the water regime is valid to a greater or lesser extend for almost all of the natural wetlands in the country. Despite the fact that the improvement of the water regime is pointed as specific measures for most of the wetlands included in the current plan, during public consultations this measure was also identified as a horizontal measure.

Point 7.3. from the Plan includes a list of specific priority measures / projects for protection and improvement the ecological status of wetlands included in the Plan.

1.8.2 Have wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes or projects been implemented? {1.8.2} KRA 1.8.i

A - Yes

1.8.2 Additional information:

- “Urgent measures for restoration and conservation of species and habitats of European significance in the protected areas complex of the Pomorie Lake” of the Green Balkans Federation financed by the European Fund for Regional Development of the EU and by the state budget of the Republic of Bulgaria via the operating program Environment 2007–2013.

- The “Life for the Burgas Lakes” project of the Bulgarian Society for Protection of Birds financed by the LIFE+ EU program (2010–2014).

- “The Dragoman Marsh – an Example of Wetland Conservation in Bulgaria” of the Balkans Wildlife Society with financial support by the Global Environmental Facility and the NGO fund of the EEC. A wetland conservation centre was constructed under this project, direct conservation activities carried out, a management plan was prepared and sustainable practices of biomass use were studied and introduced. The activities in the Dragoman Marsh were supplemented and co-financed under several projects.

- “Conservation and sustainable development of the Karst Complex in the Dragoman Marsh in Bulgaria” implemented by the Balkans Wildlife Society and by the Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation with financial support by the DBU – Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt;

Activities of the WWF – the Danube-Carpathian Program, concerning wetlands along the Danube and restoration of inundated forests on the Bulgarian islands in the Danube, restoration of specific locations such as the Kaikusha Marsh in the Persina Nature Park.

- Creation of economic mechanisms for wetland restoration in the project to study the potential for innovative sources of financing such as the payments for ecological services and nature conservation, of the WWF, co-financed by the GEF.

- “Trans-boundary conservation of the Pygmy cormorant and the Ferruginous duck in key locations in Romania and Bulgaria” (LIFE07 NAT/RO/000681), implemented by the WWF – the Danube-Carpathian Program.

- Restoration of the Kaikusha Marsh in the Persina Nature Park. This WWF project involves improvements of the water regime in the marsh and a demonstration introduction of a biomassfiring and solar power heating plant in the building of the Persina Nature Park.

- Restoration of an old bow of the Veselina River near the Mindya village, carried out by the WWF in the period 2008–2009.

- Project “Trans-boundary model for nature protection and sustainable utilization of nature resources along the stream of Danube River” (2010–2012) carried out by the BSPB, funded by the Trans-boundary Cooperation Program – Romania– Bulgaria 2007–2013. The main goal was elaboration of a map with the sensitive territories along Danube River.

STRATEGY 1.9 Invasive alien species. *Encourage Contracting Parties to develop a national inventory of invasive alien species that currently and/or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands, especially Ramsar Sites, and ensure mutual supportiveness between the national inventory and IUCN’s Global Register on Invasive Species (GRIS); develop guidance and promote procedures and actions to prevent, control or eradicate such species in wetland systems.*

1.9.1 Does your country have a comprehensive national inventory of invasive alien species that currently or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands? {1.9.1} KRA 1.9.i

C - Partly

1.9.1 Additional information:

National inventory of some species and groups of invasive alien species in Bulgarian wetlands was implemented within the frames of the research projects:

Biology, Ecology and Control of the Invasive Alien Species in the Bulgarian Flora (Project DO 02-194/2008, 2009–2012), IBER-BAS

Alien Terrestrial Arthropods and Their Impact on Biodiversity in Bulgaria (ATARTIB, Project DO 02-191/2008, 2009–2012); www.atartib.bg, University of Forestry

Assessment and Management of *Dreissena* spp. Invasions in the Bulgarian Water Bodies (Project DO 02-283/2008, 2009–2012); www.dreissena.info, IBER-BAS

Potential threats to environmental and economic sustainability in the Danube and Black Sea region: Danube River as invasive alien species corridor (2012–2017), ESENIAS, IAD; www.esenias.org

Some of the results were published in:

Petrova A., V. Vladimirov, V. Georgiev 2013. Invasive alien species of vascular plants in Bulgaria. IBER-BAS, Sofia, 319 pp.

Tsoneva S., V. Georgiev, V. Valchev, A. Ganeva 2012. Atlas of aquatic and wetland plants in Bulgaria. Institute of Biodiversity of Ecosystem Research, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, 200 pp. (In Bulgarian)

Uzunov Y., B. B. Georgiev, E. Varadinoiva, N. Ivanova, I. Pehlivanov, V. Vasilev (eds.) 2012. Ecosystems of the Biosphere Reserve Srebarna Lake. Prof. Marin Drinov Acad. Publ. House, Sofia, vi+217 pp.

www.dreissena.info
www.esenias.org

The National Plan for the conservation of the most Important wetlands in Bulgaria 2013–2022, which covers 11 wetlands listed in the Ramsar Convention, and 25 additional wetlands that have great potential for conservation and restoration, includes a horizontal measure of inventory and assessment of the impact of invasive species.

1.9.2 Have national policies or guidelines on invasive species control and management been established for wetlands? {1.9.2} KRa 1.9.iii

D - Planned

1.9.2 Additional information:

A National Strategy and Action Plan on invasive alien species are planned to be developed in Bulgaria.

Guidelines on specific aquatic invasive species were developed. Within the project 'Assessment and Management of Invasion of Mussels of the Genus Dreissena in Water Basins in Bulgaria' (2009–2012, www.dreissena.info) a Guide with measures for monitoring and control of invasive species of genus Dreissena in Bulgaria was elaborated and published in 2012.

The National Plan for the Protection of the Most Important Wetlands in Bulgaria 2013–2022 includes a specific measure 'Combating invasive species', which is proposed for selected wetlands, such as: Srebarna Lake, Atanasovsko Lake, Belene Islands, Ibisha Island, Pomorie Lake, Choklyovo Marsh, Kamchiya Complex.

STRATEGY 1.10 Private sector. *Promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.*

1.10.1 Is the private sector encouraged to apply the Ramsar wise use principle and guidance (Ramsar handbooks for the wise use of wetlands) in its activities and investments concerning wetlands? {1.10.1} KRA 1.10.i

D - Planned

1.10.1 Additional information:

Introduction of, and support for, economic mechanisms for wetland conservation: The EU Biodiversity Strategy to year 2020 as well as other international key strategic documents underline that the biodiversity loss leads to tremendous economic losses for the public and especially for the economic subjects of various economic sectors that depend directly on the ecosystem services.

First, inventorying and valorization of ecosystem services are needed for all of the more substantial wetlands. At present, there are no nationally recognized methods in this regard, but the trend in the entire EU is for a very rapid accumulation of information and elaboration of information in this regard.

According to the Activity 5 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy the ecosystem services values have to be integrated in the national systems for economic analysis and reporting by 2020.

Introduction of compensatory mechanisms for sustainable management of the Natura 2000 sites (all wetlands are Natura 2000 sites), agro-ecological and aqua-ecological measures in the Operational programs for the period 2014–2020 was planned in consideration with the concrete needs for maintenance measures for the wetlands as well as for their water catchment areas (for example maintenance of reedbeds and limiting the biogenic inflow).

Private investments can be supported by introduction of mechanisms for ecosystem services payments (such as direct payments "business to business" and subsidies "state to business").

1.10.2 Has the private sector undertaken activities or actions for the wise use and management of:

a. Ramsar Sites

b. Wetlands in general

{1.10.2} KRA 1.10.ii

a. A - Yes

b. A - Yes

1.10.2 Additional information:

"Chernomorski solnici JSC" is a private commercial organisation and participate as associated beneficiary in the LIFE+ project under implementation "Ensuring Conservation of Priority Bird Species and Coastal Habitats at the Bourgas Natura 2000 Wetland Sites (LIFE FOR THE BOURGAS LAKE) ", 2010-2014. The total budget of the project is 1,775,006 Euro. "Chernomorski solnici JSC" as associated beneficiary in the project contribute 278,696 Euro to the project.

"Chernomorski solnici JSC" participates as associated beneficiary also in the LIFE+ project "Urgent Measures to Restore and Secure Long-term Preservation of the Atanasovsko Lake Coastal Lagoon proposal" (SALT OF LIFE)/ LIFE11 NAT/BG/000362 with duration: 2012 - 2018 and coordinating beneficiary: Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation. The total project budget of the project is 2, 013,027 Euro. "Chernomorski solnici JSC" as associated beneficiary in the project will contribute 517,469 Euro to the project.

Chernomorski solnici JSC is one of the oldest companies in the country. It was founded in 1906. The first 6 000 tons of sea-salt were produced in 1908. During the last 100 years the company has been expanded and increasingly modernised and mechanised.

The Atanassovsko lake managed reserve falls on the Salinas territory. It is one of the most precious Bulgarian sites on the list of Ramsar Convention.

"Chernomorski solnici JSC" are fully aware of the international importance of the site and are dedicated to maintain its favourable conservation status.

The Salinas company maintains facilities for unique traditional salt production technology, as a result of which the salt concentration in waters is increased. The technology of production is completely orientated to the natural processes (solar evaporation) without discharge of noxious emissions in the surrounding environment.

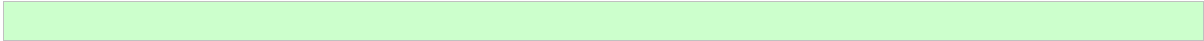
In the course of years the new water environment created by the salt producers, representing wide range of different concentrated sea waters, has contributed for the creation of exceptional ornithological and biological richness.

The key activity in both projects is dykes and barriers repair for the purposes of salt production in Atanassovsko lake as well as for the restoration of roosting and breeding sites for nesting and breeding of globally threatened birds.

In the SALT of LIFE project key action with responsible partner "Chernomorski solnici JSC" is cleaning the Atanasovsko Lake Bypass channel with total length of 22,930 m and restoration of the Protection dyke which will result in improved protection against floods and decreased pollution from surface water inflow at the whole water body of Atanasovsko Lake with total area of 7,208 ha. The improvement of the water quality, hydrological regime and respectively the conservation status of the lagoon habitats will be evident in the peripheral evaporation basins with area of 700 ha.

The Salinas is a natural partner in the endeavour to sustain the habitat of birds, declared priority for Europe as for over a century they have maintained the combination of natural reserve with a company for salt production is not unknown in Europe. They possess all the know how of how to maintain the salt-production facilities in a nature-friendly way and shall build that in the project.

The other example - Fish farmers using reservoirs that are Natura 2000 sites are encouraged to apply wetland wise use principles through management plans of the sites.



STRATEGY 1.11: Incentive measures. *Promote incentive measures that encourage the application of the wise use provisions of the Convention.*

1.11.1 Have actions been taken to implement incentive measures which encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands? {1.11.1} KRA 1.11.i	A - Yes
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1.11.1 Additional information:

European Fisheries Fund (EFF)/Operational program for development of fisheries sector 2007-2013:

FUND	Provision	Level of Use * (MI)
EFF	Axis 1 Measures for the adaptation of Bulgarian fishing fleet	€3518407, 34
	Axis 2 Aquaculture, inland fishing, processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture	€31030470,76
	Axis 3 Sustainable Development of the Fisheries Sector	€10050228,71
	Axis 4 Technical Assistance	€15888715,89

Summary of key NATURA 2000 related measures being undertaken under fund:

The table above specifies the agreed EFF funds in different axes of the OP "Sustainable Development of the Fisheries Sector" as of 25.02.2014. They are distributed among 193 projects under the programme.

There are 126 fully disbursed sums for the projects according to the above four axes with a total public expenditure paid of €25 443 349,53.

Funds for projects contracted in Measure 1.1. "Permanent cessation of fishing activities" (76 contracts of which 62 settled) are used under Priority Axis 1 "Development of the fisheries sector 2007-2013", as eligible activities under this Measure have an indirect positive impact on the conservation status of species and habitats and include reassignment of fishing vessels for the purpose of tourism and training and using fishing vessels to create artificial reefs. Under Measure 1.3. "Investments on board of fishing vessels and selectivity" activities are included with indirect impact on the species and habitats related to the selectivity of the catch. These fall under sector 06 "Purchase of equipment for catch selectivity" of this Measure and six projects are contracted under this Measure. Another measure associated with impacts on the status of species and habitats in the same Priority Axis is Measure of 1.4. "Small-scale coastal fisheries". This supports projects contributing to the improvement of the management and control of access conditions to certain fishing areas, the promotion of voluntary steps to reduce fishing efforts and to preserve resources and to promote the use of technological innovations that do not increase fishing effort related to biodiversity conservation. There are no agreed funds on this Measure as of 25.02.2014. The total contracted EFF resources for these measures are €3 518 407, and the actually disbursed volume of EFF is € 3101084. Thus 88% of the contracted funds under Priority Axis 1 of the EFF are paid and 99% of disbursements are under Measure 1.1.

With respect to Priority Axis 2 of OP "Sustainable Development of the Fisheries Sector Measures 2.1. to 2.6. are relevant to biodiversity conservation. The aggregate contractual EFF resource as of 25.02.2014 is €23 630 521,09 and relates to 61 projects under Measure 2.1. "Productive investments in aquaculture", which includes diversification of production towards new species and production of species with good market prospects; implementing methods for substantial reduction of the negative impact or enhancing positive effects on the environment, compared to the usual practices in the "aquaculture" sector; support for traditional aquaculture activities that are important to the preservation and development of both the economic and social aspects of the environment; support the purchase of equipment to protect farms from wild predators and improve working conditions and safety of employees in the "aquaculture" sector. continue in p.1.11.2

1.11.2 Have actions been taken to remove perverse incentive measures which discourage conservation and wise use of wetlands? {1.11.2} KRA 1.11.i	A - Yes
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1.11.2 Additional information:

Two (2) of the contracted projects under Measure 2.2. "Aqua-environmental measures", which provide grants in the form of premiums for entities involved in breeding and farming aquacultures, and projects aimed at using the methods of aquaculture production, are also supported, including support for protection and improvement of the environment and conservation of resources. The Measure also includes compensation for mitigation of economic losses due to fish-eating birds. It also provides compensation payments for farms within NATURA 2000 sites for up to two years from the declaration of NATURA 2000 protected areas. However these payments were not made. Although currently there are no contracted fund under Measure 2.5. "Inland fishing", it is appropriate to refer to it among the measures under Priority Axis 2, related to NATURA 2000, as it includes activities aimed at reducing the negative impact on the environment and improve the selectivity of fishing gear. While Measure 2.6. "Investments in processing and marketing of fisheries and aquaculture" includes reduction of the negative impact on the environment in general, it can be said that it has an indirect impact on the species and habitats as well. The available information does not allow specification of what part of the nine projects contracted under this Measure incorporate activities aimed at biodiversity conservation. This is actually a problem of information related to the overall performance of the Programme, as the information available for the Measure does not allow identification of specific volumes of contracts and payments from EFF for activities related to biodiversity conservation. In this sense, the table presents the resources generated by various measures related to NATURA 2000. Forty two percent of the disbursed amounts of EFF projects under Priority Axis 2 are under Measure 2.1. Described above. As of 25.02.2014, the payments made for the aqua-environmental measure is for the amount of €4791. There is no payment made under Measure 2.5. 11,5 %of disbursed EFF resources for Priority Axis 2, OP "Sustainable Development of the Fisheries Sector", are with Measure 2.6. As of 25.02.2014, the total disbursed EFF funds for the measures of Priority Axis 2 described above are agreed – €23, 663 032, 13, of which € 12 567 904 56 are paid, and €8 726 377, 99 are fully paid projects under the priority axis.

Priority Axis 3 "Measures of public interest" relate to biodiversity protection Measure 3.1. "Collective actions" is aimed at better management or conservation, promoting the use of selective fishing methods or fishing gear and contributes to reducing bycatch and promoting partnerships in the "Fisheries" sector. The Measure currently has six agreed projects for EFF funding totaling €931,186.34 of which €24,559.37 has been paid. Another measure of biodiversity importance is Measure 3.2. "Measures intended to protect and develop aquatic fauna and flora", where scientific and public authorities in Bulgaria can use EFF support for funding in the field of protection and development of aquatic flora and fauna, for example by deploying artificial reefs. Direct recovery of resources in the form of restocking is possible only in exceptional cases and if expressly provided in a conservation measure of the European Union. As of 25.02.2014 there are no contracted projects and payments under this measure. The only measure implemented under Priority Axis 4 "Sustainable Development of the Fisheries Sector" is Measure 4.1. Financial support for the implementation of local development strategies and operational costs of the fisheries groups. This financial support is available only for fisheries groups. Two types of activities are supported: organisation and functioning of groups and local development activities proposed by local residents or undertaken by the groups themselves. Under this measure 6 projects are agreed with EFF contracted sums of €15,888,715.89.

GOAL 2. WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Note: An optional Annex (Section 4) to this COP12 National Report Format is provided so that a Contracting Party, if it so wishes, can also provide additional information separately on each of its designated Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites).

REMINDER: In 'free-text' boxes please do not use double quotes " "; use single quotes ' ' instead.

STRATEGY 2.1 Ramsar Site designation. *Apply the 'Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance' (Handbook 14, 3^d edition).*

2.1.1 Have a national strategy and priorities been established for the further designation of Ramsar Sites, using the *Strategic Framework for the Ramsar List?* {2.1.1} KRA 2.1.i

A - Yes

2.1.1 Additional information:

The territorial scope of the National Action Plan for conservation of wetlands of high significance in Bulgaria 2013 - 2022 includes 11 wetlands as priority territories which at present are part of the list of the Ramsar Convention. The descriptive part of the plan describes in details 28 additional wetlands that cover one or more of the Ramsar nomination criteria or have big potential for protection and restoration, but are not listed in the Ramsar Convention.

2.1.2 How many Ramsar Site designations are planned for the next triennium (2015-2018)? {2.1.4} KRA 2.1.iii

0 sites

2.1.2 Additional information (If possible, please indicate the name(s) of the Site(s) and anticipated year of designation):

.....

STRATEGY 2.2 Ramsar Site information. *Ensure that the Ramsar Sites Information Service . . . is available and enhanced as a tool for guiding the further designation of wetlands for the List of Wetlands of International Importance and for research and assessment, and is effectively managed by the Secretariat.*

2.2.1 Are the Ramsar Sites Information Service and its tools being used in national identification of further Ramsar Sites to designate? {2.2.1} KRA 2.2.ii

A - Yes

2.2.1 Additional information:

.....

STRATEGY 2.3 Management planning - new Ramsar Sites. *While recognizing that Ramsar Site designation can act as a stimulus for development of effective site management plans, generally encourage the philosophy that all new Ramsar Sites should have effective management planning in place before designation, as well as resources for implementing such management.*

2.3.1 Have all sites being prepared for Ramsar designation (2.1.2 above) had adequate management planning processes established? {2.3.1} KRA 2.3.i	C - Some sites
2.3.1 Additional information:	

STRATEGY 2.4 Ramsar Site ecological character. *Maintain the ecological character of all designated Ramsar Sites, through planning and management.*

2.4.1 How many Ramsar Sites have a management plan? {2.4.1} KRA 2.4.i	7 sites
2.4.2 For how many of the Ramsar Sites with a management plan is the plan being implemented? {2.4.2} KRA 2.4.i	7 sites
2.4.3 For how many Ramsar Sites is a management plan currently being prepared? {2.4.3} KRA 2.4.i	6 sites
2.4.1 – 2.4.3 Additional information:	
Ramsar site:	Management Plan
Atanasovsko Lake	In process of updating
Belene Islands Complex	Developed - Approved
Dragoman Marsh Karst Complex	To be developed
Durankulak Lake	Forthcoming to be updated
Ibisha Island	In process of elaboration
Lake Shabla	Forthcoming to be updating
Poda	In process of updating
Pomorie Lake	Developed, in process of improvement
Ropotamo Complex	In process of updating
Srebarna	In process of updating
Vaya Lake	To be developed

2.4.4 How many Ramsar Sites have a cross-sectoral management committee? {2.4.6} KRA 2.4.iv	2 sites
2.4.4 Additional information (If at least 1 site, please give the name and official number of the site or sites): 1226 Belene Islands Complex 292 Atanasovsko Lake	

2.4.5 For how many Ramsar Sites has an ecological character description been prepared? {2.4.7} KRA 2.4.v	7 sites
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2.4.5 Additional information (If at least 1 site, please give the name and official number of the site or sites):

All Ramsar sites with updated management plan and those in the process of updating:

- 292 Atanasovsko Lake
- 1226 Belene Islands Complex
- 1227 Ibisha Island
- 1228 Poda
- 1229 Pomorie Lake
- 65 Ropotamo Complex
- 64 Srebarna

STRATEGY 2.5 Ramsar Site management effectiveness. *Review all existing Ramsar Sites to determine the effectiveness of management arrangements, in line with the 'Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance'.*

2.5.1 Have any assessments of the effectiveness of Ramsar Site management been made? {2.5.1} KRA 2.5.i	C - Some sites
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2.5.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Some sites', please indicate the year of assessment and the source of the information):

For Ramsar sites with updated management plan and those in the process of updating:

- 292 Atanasovsko Lake
- 1226 Belene Islands Complex
- 1227 Ibisha Island
- 1228 Poda
- 1229 Pomorie Lake
- 65 Ropotamo Complex
- 64 Srebarna

STRATEGY 2.6 Ramsar Site status. *Monitor the condition of Ramsar Sites and address negative changes in their ecological character, notify the Ramsar Secretariat of changes affecting Ramsar Sites, and apply the Montreux Record, if appropriate, and Ramsar Advisory Mission as tools to address problems.*

<p>2.6.1 Are mechanisms in place for the Administrative Authority to be informed of negative human-induced changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites, pursuant to Article 3.2? {2.6.1} KRA 2.6.i</p>	<p>C - Some sites</p>
<p>2.6.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Some sites', please summarise the mechanism or mechanisms established):</p> <p>The results of long-term biological monitoring of Srebarna Biosphere Reserve are given to local administrative authority (Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water - Ruse).</p>	

<p>2.6.2 Have all cases of negative human-induced change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites been reported to the Ramsar Secretariat, pursuant to Article 3.2? {2.6.2} KRA 2.6.i</p>	<p>B - No</p>
<p>2.6.2 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Some cases', please indicate for which Ramsar Sites the Administrative Authority has made Article 3.2 reports to the Secretariat, and for which sites such reports of change or likely change have not yet been made):</p> <p>.....</p>	

<p>2.6.3 If applicable, have actions been taken to address the issues for which Ramsar Sites have been listed on the Montreux Record, including requesting a Ramsar Advisory Mission? {2.6.3} KRA 2.6.ii</p>	<p>B - No</p>
<p>2.6.3 Additional information (If 'Yes', please indicate the actions taken):</p> <p>.....</p>	

STRATEGY 2.7 Management of other internationally important wetlands. *Appropriate management and wise use achieved for those internationally important wetlands that have not yet been formally designated as Ramsar Sites but have been identified through domestic application of the Strategic Framework or an equivalent process.*

<p>2.7.1 Has the ecological character of internationally important wetlands not yet designated as Ramsar Sites been maintained? {2.7.1} KRA 2.7.i</p>	<p>C - Some sites</p>
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2.7.1 Additional information:

Kalimok Complex:

The Kalimok Complex includes a large former Danube River bank marsh located north of the village of Nova Cherna that was transformed into fishponds, the Bezimenen (Nameless) Island covered by flooded forests, as well as the section of the Danube bank between them.

The marsh had been drained during the 50s by being separated from the Danube with a dyke and with drainage channels. Because the lands are not suitable for agriculture fishponds are build, the water surfaces of which are divided by wet and boggy meadows into two sections – eastern and western. The water basins get periodically dried and the water level is maintained by pumping water from the Danube. At present the fishponds are abandoned for economic reasons. South of the fishponds' eastern part the wet meadows get transformed into a marsh.

The Kalimok fish farms are internationally important for water birds along the Danube.

A management plan was elaborated and approved in 2006. The implementation of the management plan and the plan activities are entrusted to the Directorate of Nature park 'Rusenski Lom'.

The wetland is subject of investments from one of the biggest nature conservation projects in Bulgaria 'Restoration of wetlands and pollution reduction' funded by GEF/World Bank (2002–2008). Humidification facilities – sluices at Danube river and south protection dyke were constructed.

The Protected area is considered as a priority site in relation to the project 'Danube parks – a network of protected territories along Danube river: Development and implementation of international strategies for protection of the natural heritage along Danube river'.

The restoration measures implemented until the present moment improved the humidification of key territories from the site, but the succession of the marshes continues to be an ecological problem.

GOAL 3. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
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Note: in 'free-text' boxes please do not use double quotes “ ”: use single quotes ‘ ’ instead.

<p>STRATEGY 3.1 Synergies and partnerships with MEAs and IGOs. <i>Work as partners with international and regional multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other intergovernmental agencies (IGOs).</i></p>

<p>3.1.1 Are the national focal points of other MEAs invited to participate in the National Ramsar/Wetland Committee? {3.1.2} KRAs 3.1.i & 3.1.iv</p>	A - Yes
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3.1.1 Additional information:

Focal points of other conventions in the field of biodiversity always take part in working groups on wetlands issues.

<p>3.1.2 Are mechanisms in place at the national level for collaboration between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and the focal points of UN and other global and regional bodies and agencies (e.g. UNEP, UNDP, WHO, FAO, UNECE, ITTO)? {3.1.3} KRA 3.1.iv</p>	A - Yes
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3.1.2 Additional information:

With Ordinance № РД-110/24.02.2011 г. of the Minister of Environment and Water a working group between competent authorities has been established on the implementation of the Convention for the Biodiversity, chaired by the Deputy Minister of Environment and Water. All focal points of conventions related to biodiversity are members of the working group.

Focal points for other conventions in the field of biodiversity always take part in working groups on wetlands issues.

<p>STRATEGY 3.2 Regional initiatives. <i>Support existing regional arrangements under the Convention and promote additional arrangements.</i></p>
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<p>3.2.1 Have you (AA) been involved in the development and implementation of a Regional Initiative under the framework of the Convention? {3.2.1} KRA 3.2.i</p>	A - Yes
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3.2.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Planned', please indicate the regional initiative(s) and the collaborating countries of each initiative):

1. Ramsar Regional Initiative on Black Sea and Azov Sea Coastal Wetlands - BlackSeaWet.

The geographical focus of BlackSeaWet regional initiative is represented by the Black Sea coastal countries. The need for the Initiative is well supported by Contracting Parties in the region. For today, 5 of them - Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine have supported the initiative. It is expected that in future Russian Federation also will join to BlackSeaWet regional initiative.

2. Ramsar Regional Initiative on Mediterranean wetlands - MedWet. The Initiative is supported from Governments of countries: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, The FYR of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Palestinian Authority.

3.2.2 Has your country supported or participated in the development of other regional (i.e., covering more than one country) wetland training and research centres? {3.2.2}

B - No

3.2.2 Additional information (If 'Yes', please indicate the name(s) of the centre(s):

.....

STRATEGY 3.3 International assistance. *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.*

3.3.1 [For Contracting Parties with a development assistance agency only ('donor countries')]: Has the agency provided funding to support wetland conservation and management in other countries? {3.3.1} KRA 3.3.i

Z - Not applicable

3.3.1 Additional information (If 'Yes', please indicate the countries supported since COP11):

.....

3.3.2 [For Contracting Parties with a development assistance agency only ('donor countries')]: Have environmental safeguards and assessments been included in development proposals proposed by the agency? {3.3.2} KRA 3.3.ii

Z - Not applicable

3.3.2 Additional information:

.....

3.3.3 [For Contracting Parties that have received development assistance only ('recipient countries')]: Has funding support been received from development assistance agencies specifically for in-country wetland conservation and management? {3.3.3}	Z - Not applicable
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3.3.3 Additional information (If 'Yes', please indicate from which countries/agencies since COP11):
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STRATEGY 3.4 Sharing information and expertise. *Promote the sharing of expertise and information concerning the conservation and wise use of wetlands.*

3.4.1 Have networks, including twinning arrangements, been established, nationally or internationally, for knowledge sharing and training for wetlands that share common features? {3.4.1}	D - Planned
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3.4.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Partly', please indicate the networks and wetlands involved):
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To establish the mechanism for joint coordinated management of Transboundary Ramsar sites between Bulgaria and Romania:

- Lake Calarasi (Iezerul Calarasi) (RO) – Srebarna (BG)
- Suhaia (RO) - Belene Islands Complex (BG)
- Bistret (RO) - Ibisha Island (BG)

With the designation of these six important wetlands as Transboundary Ramsar sites the governments of Bulgaria and Romania have declared their readiness and shared responsibility for joint coordinated management of these sites.

Kalimok Complex:

The Kalimok Complex includes a large former Danube River bank marsh located north of the village of Nova Cherna that was transformed into fishponds, the Bezimenen (Nameless) Island covered by flooded forests, as well as the section of the Danube bank between them.

The Protected area is considered as a priority site in relation to the project 'Danube parks – a network of protected territories along Danube river: Development and implementation of international strategies for protection of the natural heritage along Danube river'.

3.4.2 Has information about your country's wetlands and/or Ramsar Sites and their status been made public (e.g., through publications or a website)? {3.4.2} KRA 3.4.iv	A - Yes
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3.4.2 Additional information:

The most of the Ramsar sites have own web page on which there are information about the wetlands and their biodiversity.

Under the WETLANET project was published the leaflet 'Protecting the world's wetlands' and multimedia product 'WETLANET protects the world's

wetlands` (March 2012). The platform contains information about the importance of the wetlands, their protection and sustainable management. The special attention is paid on the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the information about Bulgarian wetlands included in it.

Public awareness material for the BlackSeaWet Initiative:

To raising the awareness both on BlackSeaWet members as an initiative and on the importance and the beauty of the Black Sea coastal wetlands and their biological diversity.

The booklet is titled "DISCOVER BLACK SEA COAST, 38 BLACKSEAWETlands to visit". The publication was produced in 1500 copies in English language and includes three parts: Part with information on Ramsar Convention, second part with information on BlackSeaWet Initiative and last part with profiles of each of Black Sea coastal countries - Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine.

The publication was funded by the Enterprise for Management of Environmental Protection Activities (EMEPA) to the Ministry of Environment and Water, Bulgaria.

The publication was distributed to all Regional structures under the Ministry of Environment and Water, Bulgaria - River Basin Directorates and Regional Inspectorates and also to all Black Sea municipalities and are available also in all Black Sea coastal wetlands visitors centers in Bulgaria.

Part of them was sent to the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority in Tulchea, Romania because it is a coordination unit of the BlackSeaWet Initiative (the hard copies are also available there);

Also at the forthcoming meeting of the Initiative the publication will be distributed among the other partners.

3.4.3 Has information about your country's wetlands and/or Ramsar Sites been transmitted to the Ramsar Secretariat for dissemination? {3.4.3} KRA 3.4.ii

C - Partly

3.4.3 Additional information:

During the last meeting of the BlackSeaWet Initiative in 2012 the representatives from Bulgaria took the responsibility to elaborate public awareness materials for the BlackSeaWet Initiative. The booklet is titled "DISCOVER BLACK SEA COAST, 38 BLACKSEAWETlands to visit" and contribute to raising the awareness both on BlackSeaWet members as an initiative and on the importance and the beauty of the Black Sea coastal wetlands and their biological diversity. The publication was funded by the Enterprise for Management of Environmental Protection Activities (EMEPA) to the Ministry of Environment and Water, Bulgaria. Copy (pdf-file) of publication was sent to the Secretariat for dissemination.

STRATEGY 3.5 Shared wetlands, river basins and migratory species. *Promote inventory and cooperation for the management of shared wetlands and hydrological basins, including cooperative monitoring and management of shared wetland-dependent species.*

3.5.1 Have all transboundary wetland systems been identified? {3.5.1} KRA 3.5.i

D - Planned

3.5.1 Additional information:

.....

3.5.2 Is effective cooperative management in place for shared wetland systems (for example, in shared river basins and coastal zones)? {3.5.2} KRA 3.5.ii

D - Planned

3.5.2 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Partly', please indicate for which wetland systems such management is in place):

.....

3.5.3 Does your country participate in regional networks or initiatives for wetland-dependent migratory species? {3.5.3} KRA 3.5.iii

A - Yes

3.5.3 Additional information:

Bulgaria is a contracting party in the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA).

GOAL 4. IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY

Note: in 'free-text' boxes please do not use double quotes “ ”: use single quotes ‘ ’ instead.

STRATEGY 4.1 CEPA. Support, and assist in implementing at all levels, where appropriate, the Convention's Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness Programme (Resolution X.8) for promoting the conservation and wise use of wetlands through communication, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) and work towards wider awareness of the Convention's goals, mechanisms, and key findings.

4.1.1 Has an action plan (or plans) for wetland CEPA been established? {4.1.1} KRA 4.1.i

- a) At the national level
- b) Sub-national level
- c) Catchment/basin level
- d) Local/site level

- a) D - Planned
- b) B - No
- c) B - No
- d) D - Planned

(Even if no CEPA plans have been developed, if broad CEPA objectives for CEPA actions have been established, please indicate this in the Additional information section below)

4.1.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'In progress' to one or more of the four questions above, for each please describe the mechanism, who is responsible and identify if it has involved CEPA NFPs):

- a) Part 9 of the National Action Plan for conservation of wetlands of high significance in Bulgaria 2013 - 2022 includes a timeframe and budget for implementation of identified nature conservation activities at national level and on wetlands level. One of these activities at national level is: Elaboration of National CEPA Programme with period of realization to 2015.
- d) Management plans for wetlands includes part with CEPA actions and programme on local/site level.

4.1.2 How many centres (visitor centres, interpretation centres, education centres) have been established? {4.1.2} KRA 4.1.ii

- a) at Ramsar Sites
- b) at other wetlands

- a) 8 centres
- b) 2 centres

4.1.2 Additional information (If centres are part of national or international networks, please describe the networks):

1. Belene Islands Complex:

The period between 2002-2008 saw the implementation of the project 'Wetlands Restoration and Pollution Reduction' on the territory of Persina Nature Park, funded by the Global Environmental Facility and bilateral donors and realized by the Ministry of Environment and Water of Bulgaria. Within the project the wetland area on Persin Island was restored and an administrative building and a visitor centre of Persina Nature Park were constructed, located by the Danube. The restored wetland area is the first

in the Bulgarian part of the Danube river basin.

2. Durankulak Lake:

An Information and Nature Conservation Centre was built by the Foundation 'Le Balkan-Bulgaria' at the western bank of the lake.

3. Dragoman Marsh Karst Complex:

Dragoman marsh Wetland Conservation Centre opened in 2009. Currently the building is reconstructed and has an interactive exhibition. The visitors centre will be the first one in Bulgaria which will be intended for wetlands protection.

4. Site Poda:

Within the Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Programme in the protected site was created Poda Ecological Centre managed by the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds /BSPB/.

5. Pomorie Lake:

Pomorie Lake Visitor Centre was established in 2010 by Green Balkans NGO within GEF/WB project. The centre is a member of WLI.

6. Complex Ropotamo:

In 2003, a visitor centre was opened in Ropotamo Reserve. The centre is quipped with a demonstration and information room for tourists and visitor groups. The visitors can receive information about the reserve and its inhabitants, see a film about the natural assets of the reserve and visit certain sites following a special route.

7. Atanasovsko Lake:

A shelter for observing of birds is situated in the north outskirts of Burgas, at the exit for Varna, in the south part of the Atanasovsko lake. The shelter has special observation windows so the birds will not be disturbed. There are appropriate optical devices for observing and information about the reservation species in the shelter.

8. Srebarna:

The Nature museum in Srebarna village, which is neighboring the property acts also as Visitor center. Besides, the permanent museum exhibition there is a video hall, special room for conferences and other events and all the attributes of a Visitor center. The Nature museum is newly refurbished and equipped as a result of a project funded by Operational program Environment (EU funds).

4.1.3 Does the Contracting Party:

- a) promote stakeholder participation in decision-making on wetland planning and management
- b) specifically involve local stakeholders in the selection of new Ramsar Sites and in Ramsar Site management?

a) A - Yes

b) A - Yes

{4.1.3} KRA 4.1.iii

4.1.3 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Partly', please provide information about the ways in which stakeholders are involved):

- a) All most important wetlands in Bulgaria are part of the Natura 2000 sites. Pursuant to the Ordinance on the conditions and procedures for the development and approval of management plans for protected zones (Natura 2000 sites), prior to final approval by the Minister of Environment

and Water Management plans are subject to public consultation with the affected community and all stakeholders. Also, according to current Ordinance on the development of management plans for protected areas, Draft management plans for national parks and nature reserves are subject to mandatory public hearing.

In the process of developing management plans for reserves, natural monuments and protected areas public hearings are being held only:

1. if it is explicitly pointed out in the assignment;
2. in the case of a positive decision of the Ministry of Environment and Water in connection with a request of municipalities, NGOs or owners of land, forests and water areas within the protected area - subject of the plan.

Also out of these specific cases, according to the Ordinance, assigners or contractors can organize public hearings, seminars, informal meetings and other forms of public participation and public authorities interested in the development of the management plans.

- b) Designation of the newest Ramsar site in Bulgaria Dragoman Marsh Karst Complex is supported by the Regional administration of Sofia region where the complex is located. The documentation has been prepared by Balkani Wildlife Society and is a result of the Society work in the region of the Dragoman marsh since 1996, financed by the German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU), EEA Grants, GEF Small Grants Programme, the Danube Environmental Forum and the Netherlands Embassy in Bulgaria.

4.1.4 Has an assessment of national and local training needs for the implementation of the Convention been made?
{4.1.4} KRAs 4.1.iv & 4.1.viii

B - No

4.1.4 Additional information:

.....

4.1.5 How many opportunities for wetland site manager training have been provided since COP11? {4.1.5} KRA 4.1.iv
a) at Ramsar Sites
b) at other wetlands

Number of opportunities:

- a) 3
b) 1

4.1.5 Additional information (including whether the Ramsar Wise Use Handbooks were used in the training):

1. Pomorie Lake

The workshop was elaborated to an international seminar for exchange of information and good practices in the management of coastal wetlands. The event took place in Pomorie Lake Visitor Center on 16 and 17 April, 2013. Host of the event was Green Balkans NGO which is the Bulgarian partner in the project.

During the first day of the seminar, presentations for the progress of their activities within the project were made by most of the project partners and namely: Regional Nature Park "Parco del Delta del Po – Emilia Romagna" (Italy), Municipality of Cervia (Italy) - presented by its mayor Mr. Roberto Zoffoli, Green Balkans NGO (Bulgaria), Regional Nature Park "Camargue" (France), Biological Station "Tour du Valat" (France) and CSME of Salins Group (France).

The project partners gave detailed information about their experience in the management of former and current salt works in Italy, France and Bulgaria, which represent

valuable natural habitats protected by the EU Directives. In the meeting participated also Mr. Michele Lischi – representative of Astrale Timesis, who is doing the monitoring of the Life project.

In the seminar participated also representatives of: Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Waters – Burgas, Institute for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Researches – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Natural History Museum of Burgas, Persina Nature Park, Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds, Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds – Great Britain, Society Terra – Burgas, University “Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov”- Burgas.

During the second day of the seminar the participants visited several key places from the project territory - Pomorie Lake, which is a hyper saline lagoon. They visited the dunes at the east bank of the lagoon, the canal connecting the lagoon with the Black Sea, as well as some of the habitats at the south-west bank of the Pomorie Lake, including the territory around the pumping stations, which is very rich in biodiversity.

2. Atanasovsko Lake

The project Urgent Measures to Restore and Secure Long-term Preservation of the Atanasovsko Lake Coastal Lagoon/ LIFE11 NAT/BG/000362 with acronym Salt of Life is financed by LIFE+ Programme of the EU.

First meeting of the Public council for Atanasovsko Lake was organised on 13th of March 2013 with a main topic Restoration of the lagoon. The stakeholders invited represented state and regional authorities, members of public and environmental organisations (e.g. Hunters' Association, Angling clubs, etc.), owners of agriculture land, etc. Exchanged experience with two Life projects (Life for Bourgas Lakes/LIFE08NAT/BG/000277 and MC -Salt/LIFE10/NAT/IT/256), shared experience with other Life projects in Bulgaria. The team has established first contacts with the Research Centre for the Conservation of Mediterranean Wetlands in Tour de Valat regarding the management of salinas.

3. Life for the Bourgas Lakes

The team of project “Life for the Bourgas Lakes” funded by EU LIFE+ program and implemented by Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds shared its experience in management of Bourgas wetlands with experts from all over the country. The team welcomed the Representatives of Ministry of Environment and Water (MOEW) and its territorial structures as well as of Natural Park 'Persina' at protected area 'Poda' and managed reserve 'Atanassovsko Lake' near Bourgas. During their visit they witnessed the implementation of some of the activities for the recovery and improvement of the wetlands:

http://burgaslakes.org/en/BSPB_shared_experience_and_innovatory_practices_in_wetland_management_with_Bulgarian_experts-p678

4. Conservation and restoration of endangered river fish species and their migratory routes in key Bulgarian Natura 2000 sites

On September 1 2013, WWF Danube – Carpathian Program Bulgaria started working on the project LIFE+ Free Fish:

http://www.wwf.bg/what_we_do/rivers/free_fish/life_free_

4.1.6 Do you have an operational cross-sectoral National Ramsar/Wetlands Committee or equivalent body? {4.1.6} KRA 4.3.v

B - No

4.1.6 Additional information (If 'Yes', indicate a) its membership; b) number of meetings since COP11; and c) what responsibilities the Committee has):

.....

<p>4.1.7 Are other communication mechanisms (apart from a national committee) in place to share Ramsar implementation guidelines and other information between the Administrative Authority and:</p> <p>a) Ramsar Site managers</p> <p>b) other MEA national focal points</p> <p>c) other ministries, departments and agencies</p> <p>{4.1.7} KRA 4.1.vi</p>	<p>a) A - Yes</p> <p>b) A - Yes</p> <p>c) A - Yes</p>
<p>4.1.7 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Partly', please describe what mechanisms are in place):</p> <p>Focal points for other conventions in the field of biodiversity and all stakeholders always take part in working groups on wetlands issues.</p>	
<p>4.1.8 Have Ramsar-branded World Wetlands Day activities (whether on 2 February or at another time of year), either government and NGO-led or both, been carried out in the country since COP11? {4.1.8}</p>	<p>A - Yes</p>
<p>4.1.8 Additional information:</p> <p>Traditionally, each year the World Wetlands Day in Bulgaria is celebrated with campaigns over the country, organized by the regional structures of the Ministry of Environment and Water and directed to kindergartens, schools and universities, and including open lessons, exhibitions, presentations, activities of different environmental school clubs, competition, birdwatching tours.</p> <p>More information can find on http://www.ramsar.org/Activities/World Wetlands Day/;</p> <p>Green Balkans NGO celebrates annually the WWD and reports are submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat. Main sites where the activities take place are: Pomorie Wetland Complex Ramsar site, Maritsa River in city of Plovdiv, Ovcharitsa reservoir near town of Radnevo.</p> <p>2nd February is the date of the event, which involved two schools, two environmental organizations and two municipalities that celebrated World Wetlands Day in a region of two wetlands of international importance</p> <p>On February 7 and 8 , with a little delay due to weather conditions, the important date was celebrated by the training team of the "Safe Ground for Redbreasts" project and students from the schools "Prof. Dr. Zlatarov" - Shabla and "Jordan Jovkov" - Kavarna .</p> <p>Conveying the message "Wetlands are not something given or just a resource— they are sources of life" over 20 Shabla students from 3rd and 4th grade took part in the presentation, the educational games on wetlands and the globally threatened Red -breasted Goose, prepared by the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds, the Green Balkans and the Green Education Center - Shabla .</p> <p>A day later, as many students from Kavarna visited the Shabla Lake Complex and Durankulak Lake and through discussions and quiz games learned about the importance of these wetlands for people and for the species that inhabit them. Finally, the children prepared a poster entitled "Why are wetlands important?", which they will finish at school and present later .</p>	

Shabla and Durankulak lakes, along with nine other Bulgarian wetlands, are wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. Not only thousands of birds find shelter there, but they are also related to the lives of thousands of people. Children appealed "Let's protect them", meaning both their residents us all, because wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems, they are valuable water sources, favoring fishing, tourism, etc.

4.1.9 Have campaigns, programmes, and projects (other than for World Wetlands Day-related activities) been carried out since COP11 to raise awareness of the importance of wetlands to people and wildlife and the ecosystem benefits/services provided by wetlands? {4.1.9}

A - Yes

4.1.9 Additional information (If these and other CEPA activities have been undertaken by other organizations, please indicate this):

CEPA Activities related wetlands under different project have been undertaken by:

1. Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB) under projects:

- LIFE08NAT/BG/000277 Life for the Bourgas lakes

Project objectives:

Ensure long term conservation of the protected areas from the ecological network Natura 2000 – "Mandra-Poda", "Atanassovsko" and "Vaya" lakes which are important for the survival of priority bird species – Dalmatian Pelican, Pygmy Cormorant, Bittern, White-headed Duck and Ferruginous Duck.

Maintain and enhance feeding, breeding and roosting habitats for priority bird species.

Reduce the impact of direct and indirect threats on priority bird species.

Enhance public understanding of and support for the conservation of priority bird species, their habitats and the wider Natura 2000 sites that are crucial for their long-term protection

- LIFE 09/NAT/BG/ Safe Ground for Redbreasts

Project Objectives:

Strengthen the strategic planning framework to minimise the detrimental effect of economic development on Red-breasted Geese in the project area;

Engage stakeholders to reduce anthropogenic mortality and disturbance of Red-breasted Geese at the project sites;

Engage stakeholders to develop sustainable land-management models for Red-breasted Goose conservation at the project sites;

Enhance community pride in and support for the conservation of Red-breasted Geese, and the Natura 2000 sites that they depend on.

2. Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation (BBF) under project:

- LIFE11 NAT/BG/000362 Salt of life - Project objectives:

To establish a functional, efficient and sustainable infrastructure for water management and control of the coastal lagoon in Atanasovsko lake. This will provide long-term improvements to habitat conditions and enable adaptation to the effects of climate change including changing rainfall patterns and rises in sea-level.

To reduce the impact of direct and indirect threats on Atanasovsko Lake lagoon and its priority bird species by securing sustainable habitat management

including improvements to existing and creation of new breeding sites for priority bird species.

To monitor and evaluate the effects of the proposed habitat restoration measures on the lagoon, other significant habitats, and Annex 1 bird species during the project and to feed this information into future site management plans.

To improve the visitor experience at the site and to disseminate the project results to a wide European audience of site managers, ecologists and the general public.

To enhance public understanding of the ecological, economic and social values of the coastal lagoons and raise support for the conservation of priority coastal habitats and bird species.

3. Green Balkans NGO

Regularly provides CEPA activities for Red-breasted geese at Durankulak and Shabla lakes; at Pomorie Lake the campaign is on-going at the visitor centre.

4. Balkani Wildlife Society NGO

The necessity for out-of-school environmental practice bred the idea for establishing the Wetlands conservation educational centre "Dragoman marsh". Due to the lack of awareness of these nature territories and the low support for their wise and sustainable use, today they are still being destroyed. Education activities are the long-term solution for the lack of responsible attitude of society to the environment. Participation of young people and locals in conservation of these valuable territories is one of the main goals of Balkani Wildlife Society.

5. WWF Bulgaria

The Life + project Joint actions to raise awareness on overexploitation of Danube sturgeons in Romania and Bulgaria aims to tackle overfishing, the main direct threat to the survival of Danube sturgeons. Project target groups are fishing communities, law enforcement agencies, decision makers, sturgeon breeders and caviar processors and traders in Romania and Bulgaria.

6. IBER - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences under project FP7 European project WETLANET.

STRATEGY 4.2 Convention financial capacity. *Provide the financial resources necessary for the Convention's governance, mechanisms and programmes to achieve the expectations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, within the availability of existing resources and by the effective use of such resources; explore and enable options and mechanism for mobilization of new and additional resources for implementation of the Convention.*

4.2.1

a) Have Ramsar contributions been paid in full for 2012, 2013 and 2014? {4.2.1} KRA 4.2.i

A - Yes

b) If 'No' in 4.2.1 a), please clarify what plan is in place to ensure future prompt payment:

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4.2.2 Has any additional financial support been provided through voluntary contributions to non-core funded Convention activities? {4.2.2} KRA 4.2.i	B - No
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4.2.2 Additional information (If 'Yes' please state the amounts, and for which activities):

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STRATEGY 4.3 Convention bodies' effectiveness. *Ensure that the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee, Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and Secretariat are operating at a high level of efficiency and effectiveness to support the implementation of the Convention.*

4.3.1 Have you (AA) used your previous Ramsar National Reports in monitoring implementation of the Convention? {4.3.1} KRA 4.3.ii	A - Yes
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4.3.1 Additional information (If 'Yes', please indicate how the Reports have been used for monitoring):

The previous Ramsar National Reports were used for monitoring of implementation of the Convention in process of preparation the new National Plan for the Conservation of the Most Important Wetlands in Bulgaria for the period 2013 - 2022.

STRATEGY 4.4 Working with IOPs and others. *Maximize the benefits of working with the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs*) and others.*

* The IOPs are: BirdLife International, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), Wetlands International, and WWF International.

4.4.1 Has your country received assistance from one or more of the Convention's IOPs in its implementation of the Convention? {4.4.1} KRA 4.4.iii	B - No
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4.4.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' please name the IOP (or IOPs) and the type of assistance received):

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4.4.2 Has your country provided assistance to one or more of the Convention's IOPs? {4.4.2} KRA 4.4.iii	B - No
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4.4.2 Additional information (If 'Yes' please name the IOP (or IOPs) and the type of assistance provided):

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