



"People and Wetlands: The Vital Link"
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**International cooperation under the Convention - Part II:
Mobilising financial support from bilateral and multilateral donors
for the implementation of the Convention.**

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§I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) have long recognized the importance of mobilizing international assistance to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands, and that this forms a central element of international cooperation under Article 5 of the Convention. The first Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) in 1980, in Recommendation 1.2, called on developing countries to "*pay more attention to conservation measures in any request for and programming of assistance*" and "*upon developed countries and international organizations to pay due attention to these requests in their development aid policies*".

2. This project was carried out to examine existing donor arrangements for wetland conservation and wise use, with the purpose of developing guidance for the Contracting Parties with regard to implementation of Article 5 of the Convention. The two main areas reviewed were the:
- Implementation of Recommendations and Resolutions made by previous Ramsar COPs to assess the effectiveness of existing mechanisms to coordinate international support for wetland conservation and wise use, and
 - Effectiveness of other guidelines related to this topic, including the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) “Guidelines for aid agencies for improved conservation and sustainable use of tropical and sub-tropical wetlands” which were launched at COP6.

Background

3. The text of Article 5 of the Convention calls for international cooperation with respect to Contracting Parties implementing all of their obligations arising from the Convention. One of the main mechanisms for cooperation between the Parties has been clearly recognised as financial and technical assistance to developing countries and those in economic transition through development assistance agencies. This mechanism has been elaborated in the form of a series of Resolutions and Recommendations passed by successive Conferences of Parties
4. The Contracting Parties have approved a total of nine Resolutions and Recommendations between 1980 and 1996 calling for enhanced funding for wetland conservation and better management and control of development assistance funding. Box 1 provides a summary of the key issues identified by these decisions.

Box 1: Summary of the issues raised in the nine Recommendations and Resolutions approved by COPs1 to 6

Development of coherent policies

Development Assistance Agencies are urged to:

- Formulate and adopt coherent wetland development policies, procedures and practices directed at sustainable utilization, wise management and conservation of wetlands
- Take steps to assess their policies at regular interval
- Develop guidelines to ensure integration of environmental aspects in all stages of project cycle

Contracting Parties are invited to:

- Study and comment on OECD guidelines on sustainable use of wetlands

Assistance to recipient governments

- Recipient countries urged to pay more attention to conservation measures in requests for and programming of assistance
- Development agencies urged to use their influence to promote wetland policies and strengthen institutional arrangements and capacity building through improved technical assistance.

Enhancing Cooperation

- Contracting Parties urged to strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation.
- Closer cooperation of Contracting Parties with international organizations such as OECD and European Commission to exchange ideas, combined action for conservation of wetlands.
- Extend cooperation with GEF Secretariat and its implementing agencies

(Source: The Ramsar Convention Manual- 2nd edition, 1996)

5. One of the key areas is the Convention's role in stimulating the allocation of funds for wetland conservation and wise use in developing countries and in states whose economies are in transition. In line with this is General Objective 7 of the Ramsar Convention Strategic Plan 1997-2002. Among the key Operational Objectives within General Objective 7 are:
 - Operational Objective 7.3 - Encouraging the development assistance community and multinational companies to apply the Wise Use Guidelines
 - Operational Objective 7.4 - Funding the implementation of the Convention, notably in developing countries and those in economic transition.

Overview of OECD Guidelines

6. To enhance the contribution of development assistance and other funds to the environment and sustainable development, the OECD has prepared a series of guidelines through the Environmental Working group of its Development Advisory Committee (DAC). At the 6th Ramsar COP, OECD presented its *Guidelines for Aid Agencies for Improved Conservation and Sustainable Use of Tropical and Sub-Tropical Wetlands*. These guidelines were prepared for OECD by The World Conservation Union (IUCN), with input from a large number of development assistance agencies, the European Union (EU), the World Bank and non-governmental organizations with expertise in wetland policies and management. Before finalisation, these guidelines were then endorsed by all development assistance agencies of OECD member governments. The Guidelines are designed for policy makers, to address national, regional and international environmental issues in the field of conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.
7. The OECD Guidelines state two fundamental wetland strategies that development assistance agencies should follow.
 - Promote formulation and implementation of National Wetland Policies and Strategies
 - Ensure that wetland conservation and sustainable use is incorporated into sectoral policies, programmes and projects (of the Development Assistance Agencies).
8. In terms of policy and planning for wise use of wetlands, the OECD Guidelines state that development assistance agencies should ensure that wetland conservation and sustainable use is integrated into the planning process and also prepare their own internal policies for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. Development agencies should also ensure that wetlands which may be affected directly, and indirectly, by projects are adequately considered in the environmental assessment process. In particular, the projects supported by the agencies

should preserve the hydrological regime of the ecosystem and ensure the preservation of the species and genetic resources within the area. The Guidelines also urged the development assistance agencies to consider enhancing support for particular wetlands focussed projects.

Assessment approach taken in this review

9. This assessment was carried out over a period of six months, from August 1998 to February 1999. A Task Force comprising focal points in donor/aid agencies and key experts was established to provide input and oversee the review. Information required for the project was collected through several means.
 - Sending request letters to the members of the Ramsar Forum (e-mail discussion group), members of the OECD DAC Working Group on the Environment, Multilateral Development Agencies, and 110 national focal points of Ramsar Convention Contracting Parties, informing them of the project and requesting assistance. An Information Sheet and questionnaire were attached to assist recipients to contribute information to the project. Completed questionnaire and other information obtained were compiled and analysed.
 - Literature and materials were obtained from various donor /development assistance agencies and from Internet Web sites. Information included in the 108 National Reports submitted to the Ramsar Bureau by 10 March 1999 was also reviewed.
 - There was direct consultation with representatives of selected governments, development assistance agencies, and the secretariat of the OECD DAC Working Group on the Environment.
 - The OECD Database on bilateral development assistance projects related to biodiversity and water resources was assessed.
10. Presentation of preliminary results of the project were made at the 2nd International Conference on Wetlands and Development (Dakar, Senegal, November 1998), the Oceania Ramsar Regional meeting (Hamilton, New Zealand, December 1998) and the Asian Ramsar Regional Meeting (Manila, Philippines, February 1999).

Constraints relating to available information

11. The analysis was constrained by the availability (or lack of it) of key information from the development assistance community. The response to the questionnaire, despite regular reminders and follow-up, was not complete. Hence the reviews and conclusions have been made based on that sample of the agencies that responded. Supplementary information was obtained from the National Reports, other reviews and publications and from interrogation of websites. Refer to Section §5: Acknowledgements for details.

§II. MAIN FINDINGS

Level of progress in implementing Previous Ramsar Recommendations

12. Success in implementing the Recommendations and Resolutions of successive Ramsar COPs relating to development assistance has been rather patchy. This section examines progress made in relation to a few issues.

Development of EIA guidelines

13. One of the key Recommendations approved by the Contracting Parties in 1987 at Ramsar COP3 (Recommendation 3.4) urged development assistance agencies to “*develop guidelines to ensure integration of environmental aspects in all stages of project cycle*”.
14. Information in a review of EIA procedures by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in 1998 indicated that a majority of the development assistance agencies developed EIA and related guidelines in the period after 1990. Prior to 1990, there were fewer than five donor agencies with EIA guidelines compared to about 50 after 1990. About 18 of these guidelines were for specific development sectors, while the rest were general guidelines [Donelly *et al.*, 1998]. This indicates that the Ramsar Recommendation to develop environmental guidelines has been gradually fulfilled, although this cannot be attributed solely to the Recommendations of the Ramsar COPs. Other factors that propelled the development of environmental guidelines include a greater awareness of environmental issues in development and pressure from NGOs and concerned citizens, as well as developments in other sectors. Thus one could state that this Ramsar Recommendation has been successfully implemented.

Development of internal wetland policies

15. Recommendation 3.4 also urged development assistance agencies to “*formulate and adopt coherent wetland development policies, procedures and practices directed at sustainable utilization, wise management and conservation of wetlands*”.
16. There has been much less success in implementing this Recommendation as almost no agency contacted had a clear policy towards the conservation and sustainable utilisation of wetlands although certain aspects were included in overall policies. However, it should be noted that over the past five years there has been a significant increase of the number of Contracting Parties developing National Wetland Policies, and nearly 60 such policies have been prepared or are in the final stages of approval (see Ramsar COP7 DOC. 15.6). Some such policies (such as Australia's) include a clear section on the implications of the wetland policy for the development assistance programme. The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) Environmental Assessment (EA) process defines all wetlands as ‘Environmentally Sensitive Locations’ and any AusAID activity occurring in a wetland area is automatically subjected to EA. Through the application of its EA procedures, AusAID ensures that aid projects promote the wise use of wetlands.

Trends in Development Assistance Funding for the Environment

17. In 1992 almost all countries gathered at the Earth Summit in Rio and pledged to enhance their allocations of development assistance towards the United Nations target of 0.7% of Gross

National Product (GNP). Regrettably, although a few countries have met (or even exceeded) this target, the majority of countries have not, and in fact many have reduced the levels of their development assistance since 1992.

Bilateral donors

18. The Official Development Assistance (ODA) from bilateral donors in general has been steadily decreasing over the past decade. From 1992 to 1997, aid from OECD countries to the developing world suffered a drop from US\$61 billion to US\$47.6 billion. In those same years, in spite of renewed commitments by donors at the Earth Summit, aid levels as percentage of GNP continued to reduce in the next five consecutive years from an average of 0.33% in 1992 to 0.22% in 1997, making it the lowest level since 1973 (0.29%) and far from the UN target of 0.7% (OECD, 1998).
19. Despite a decreasing trend in aid levels in terms of GNP percentage, a quick investigation of the OECD database on projects supported over the last 10 years indicates that, in general, the numbers of environmental projects are on the rise. For instance, only two projects from the Netherlands were in the database for 1990 compared to over 25 projects by 1996. Other bilateral donors such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and Danish Cooperation on Environment and Development (DANCED) also showed a similar upward trend.

Multilateral donors

20. Funding from multilateral donors, such as the World Bank, has shown an increase in allocations for environmental projects, while for other institutions, the lending seems to have leveled off or decreased.
21. The World Bank had only one active environmental project in 1986, but by the end of 1997 it had 174 projects, spanning 70 countries, with over US\$ 12 billion in lending under its environmental portfolio (World Bank, 1997). Of this amount, US\$ 8 billion came after 1992. In addition, as one of the implementing agencies of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the World Bank has managed 116 projects in more than 50 countries totaling US\$ 733 million in GEF-grant financing since GEF's inception 1991 (GEF, 1997).
22. In other multilateral donors such as the Inter American Development Bank (IDB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB), there was a decrease in average annual environmental loans in the period between 1991-93 and 1997. IDB's lending for the environmental sector totaled approximately US\$ 6.4 billion for the period from 1990-1996. While lending for 1997 (US\$ 862 million) had shown an increase when compared to 1990 (US\$ 485 million), lending for the environment appears to have leveled off to about 70% of the peak that was achieved in 1993-94 (US\$ 1.2 billion) (IDB, 1997). The ADB showed a similar trend. Annual lending for environmental projects peaked at \$1.5 billion in 1993. From 1994-97, the annual average lending was at \$597 million (ADB, 1998).

Table 1: Average environmental loans per year (in US\$) by selected multilateral development banks for three periods and 1997

Agency	1988-90	1991-93	1994-96	1997
World Bank ¹	\$ 1.30 billion	\$ 4.60 billion	\$ 9.30 billion	\$ 12 billion
Inter-American Development Bank ²	\$ 0.49 billion	\$ 1.05 billion	\$ 0.93 billion	\$ 0.86 billion
Asian Development Bank ³	n.a.	\$ 0.95 billion	\$ 0.61 billion	\$ 0.56 billion

Reference: ¹ World Bank, Advancing Sustainable Development, 1997, ² IDB Annual Report on the Environment and Natural Resources, 1997 and ³ ADB Pattern of Environmental Lending, 1998

Wetland Conservation in the Environmental Sector

General trends or support for wetlands conservation - past, present and future.

Bilateral Donor levels

23. The Ramsar Convention National Reports submitted for COP7 (from 107 Contracting Parties up to 10 March 1999) indicate that 12 out of 16 countries with bilateral donor agencies have specifically allocated funding support to developing countries for wetland-related activities. For agencies that reported an increasing trend in their support for wetland-related projects, including AusAID (Australia), Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), DANIDA (Denmark), one of the main justification was similar to that cited by SIDA (Sweden): *“the recognition and increased awareness of the crucial role of wetlands in food security and improved livelihood for the poorer segments of developing countries’ population”*.
24. In recognition of this, SIDA (Sweden) is increasing its level of support to wetland issues, and thus nine projects to support wetland conservation were initiated in the period between 1996-98, compared to only three prior to 1995 (Box 2.2).

Table 2: Funding support for wetland projects (based on available data) of selected OECD countries

Donor Country	Before 1995	1996-98	1999-2000
Australia ¹	A\$ 4 million	A\$ 10 million	A\$ 10 million
Canada ²	n.a.	CA\$ 28 million	n.a.
Denmark ³	n.a.	DKK 85 million	n.a.
Sweden ⁴	SEK 38 million	SEK 110 million	n.a.

Source: ¹ AusAID, ² CIDA, ³ DANCED and DANIDA, ⁴ SIDA

25. Based on available data and information sources, there is an indication that some bilateral donors have made significant progress in allocating more funds for wetland conservation, recognizing the role of wetlands in elimination of poverty and supporting sustainable development as a whole. However, due to the lack of comprehensive reporting systems for

wetland conservation projects, no clear overall trend in bilateral donor support for wetlands can be observed.

26. From information gathered through the questionnaire distributed under this project, a majority of the bilateral donors have not been able to provide any comments on the general trend of support for wetland conservation under their development assistance programmes. The reasons for this are:
 - **A lack of reporting systems** which specifically categorize wetland conservation projects, hence the difficulty in providing any specific information on wetland projects. For instance, under BMZ's (Germany) assistance programme, there are no specific categories for wetland projects although there is an overall programme for biodiversity. In general, most projects under the development agencies are categorized according to sectors.
 - According to the understanding of the officers concerned, **no wetland-related project** is being supported under the development assistance programme. This was indicated by several bilateral donors including Irish Aid (Ireland) and the Belgium Agency for Development Cooperation (Belgium).
27. One of the problems of developing funding reporting systems for wetland conservation and wise use is that unlike conventional protected area and species projects, wetland projects may involve various different sectors and may provide benefits to significantly different target groups, e.g., foresters, fishers, farmers, etc. That makes the institutional and management base of wetlands unclear, so that it is difficult for development agencies to categorize their projects. Thus, wetland projects may be classified under different sectors such as water resources, biodiversity, forestry, coastal zone management and fisheries.

Multilateral Donor levels

28. From 1988 to 1997, the World Bank supported a broad range of wetland projects under its Water Resource portfolio. Within that portfolio, loans and grants dedicated specifically to the sustainable use and conservation of freshwater biodiversity total approximately US\$ 250 million. This represents approximately 15% of the US\$ 1.76 billion invested by the Bank for biodiversity conservation during the same period (World Bank, 1998). The GEF, under its International Waters and Biodiversity Operational Programme, has shown an increase in support for wetland-related projects in most regions. In the pilot phase (before 1995), GEF supported the initiation of 11 major wetland-related projects. In the period 1996-1998, there were 16 wetland-related project under GEF.
29. The IDB has supported four wetland-related projects in 1996 and three projects in 1997 under its environmental operations in areas of coastal zone management and urban environment, with total funding of \$705 million (1996) and in \$525 million (1997). (IDB, 1996; IDB, 1997).
30. Some of the wetland conservation projects funded by the World Bank include the Lake Malawi project, the Danube Delta programme, the integrated management of Lake Orhid in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania, Coastal Wetlands Management in

Ghana, Lake Balaton Environment Program in Hungary, Action Plan for Biodiversity Conservation in China, and Biodiversity Conservation in the Azov-Black Sea Ecological Corridor in Ukraine. Projects financed by the Inter-American Development Bank include Patanal Waterfowl and Neartic Shorebirds Survey in Brazil, Development of an Action Plan for Abrolhos National Marine Park in Brazil, and Environmental Management of the Mantanza-Riachuelo River Basin in Argentina. The Asian Development Bank funded Coral Reef Rehabilitation and Management and Mangrove Rehabilitation and Management in Sulawesi, both in Indonesia.

Levels of Ramsar Focal Points receiving assistance

31. The general trend of support for wetland-related projects had been increasing in a number of Ramsar Contracting Parties. Examples include China, Slovakia, Turkey, and Ukraine. Various institutions/organizations have been important sources of funding for wetland projects including GEF, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Wetlands International, and the Ramsar Bureau. From the National Reports submitted to the Ramsar Bureau for the upcoming COP7 (from 107 Contracting Parties up to 10 March 1999), 69 of these countries reported that they are receiving wetland-related funding (Source: Ramsar Bureau 1999). Trends could not be established for a number of countries as there are very few wetland projects supported. Development assistance in environment has not been adequate in some of these countries.

Wetland Conservation in other sectors (water resources, forestry, agriculture and others)

Impacts of development assistance on wetlands -past, present and future.

32. One of the main reasons for the loss of wetlands throughout the world, especially in developing countries, is unsustainable development. Development assistance agencies have for many years focused on large-scale development assistance projects such as infrastructure projects, e.g., dam building and conversion of wetlands to agricultural land. These projects have often proved to be unsustainable, causing destruction to wetlands, and more importantly, they have undermined the agencies' stated focus of eradicating poverty and providing sustainable livelihoods to the poor. Examples of such projects identified by various sources include: the Victoria Dam in Sri Lanka; Sardar Sarovar Dam on the Narmada River, India; Large Swamp Inland Fisheries Project, Thailand; Kemasin Semarak Development Scheme in Malaysia and various swamp and transmigration development projects in Indonesia (Parish, 1992).

Bilateral Donor level

33. In general, wetlands are considered as an environmentally important component within the overall development strategy of the bilateral agencies. However, from the questionnaire, seven out of the 11 respondents indicated that the conservation of wetlands is not specifically outlined within their agencies' sectoral policies.

34. For example, an examination of the Agriculture and Forestry and Agroforestry policies of DANIDA (Denmark) revealed that wetlands in general are not specifically addressed in these two policies but they do include a section on watersheds and catchment areas. DANIDA has placed considerable emphasis on the need for integrated approaches for the management of watersheds.
35. Positive progress is continuously being made by several bilateral donors. For instance, under DANIDA's development assistance framework for bilateral environmental assistance, thematic sectors such as agriculture, forestry, water resources, biodiversity and coastal zones have been identified. One focus of DANIDA's assistance is in the area of freshwater resources, where there is an emphasis on efforts to promote *"activities aimed at protecting important water and wetland areas and threatened aquatic ecosystems"*. Under the Coastal zones sector, there is a focus on support for *"preserving and reestablishment of mangrove swamps, coral reefs and wetlands"* ensuring sustainable use and protection of wetlands (DANIDA, 1996).
36. Other bilateral donors, such as SIDA (Sweden), are planning to review relevant aspects of their sectoral policies for Biological Diversity, Water Resources Management and Marine and Coastal Development to take account of wetland issues.

Multilateral Donor level

37. The World Bank is approaching the goal of mainstreaming environmental considerations into all the projects it supports. Environmental issues, which include wetland issues, are increasingly better addressed within all of its sectoral programmes. A growing recognition of the environmental challenges of the non-market values of forests, wetlands and other natural habitats has had a major impact on lending in the agriculture, forestry and natural resources sectors. These resulted in a new focus on improved land, water and forest management.
38. For example, in water, recent emphasis has been on a more integrated approach to water management. The World Bank's Water Resources Management Policy Paper acknowledges that protection of the environment and water resources is essential for sustainable development. It states that the Bank *"will assist governments in developing strategies and cost-effective mechanisms for the ecologically sustainable management, protection and restoration of recharge areas and water dependent ecosystems, such as wetlands, riverine floodplain areas, estuaries and coastal zones"*. This requires that *"the water supply needs of rivers, wetlands and fisheries will be considered in decisions concerning the operation and the allocation of water"* and urges *"more rigorous attention to maintaining biodiversity and protecting ecosystems in the design and implementation of water projects"* (World Bank, 1998).
39. Some examples of projects with direct and indirect support for conservation of wetlands in other sectors include *The Natural Resource Management Program in Colombia* (World Bank); *Technical Assistance for the Protection and management of Critical Wetlands in the Lower Mekong Basin* (ADB); *Water Resources Management and Land Improvement Project in Kazakhstan* (ADB) and *Argentina Flood Protection Project* (World Bank).

Impacts of Guidelines and Policies on wetland conservation

Policies and guidelines addressing wetland issues - specific policies and general documents used by bilateral and multilateral donors

40. Since 1990, most of the bilateral and multilateral donors have been taking progressive steps towards developing guidelines addressing environmental issues for their projects. The main guiding document to address environmental issues in the preparation and implementation of projects are the Environmental Assessment Guidelines of the development assistance agencies or countries.
41. Some examples of general policies and guidelines addressing environmental issues:
- AusAID (Australia) has published “Environmental Assessment Guidelines for Australia’s Aid Program” to ensure that environmental concerns are addressed in project management cycle. Its environmental project must also comply with Australia’s Environmental Protection Act 1974 as well as with obligations under international environment conventions.
 - CIDA (Canada) is guided by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (1995) and CIDA’s Policy for Environmental Sustainability (1992). All overseas project funded by Canada are subject to the CEA Act 1995.
 - BMZ (Germany)’s “Preserving Biodiversity through Nature Conservation” is a broad-based nature conservation policy that generally covers natural habitats such as wetlands.
 - For World Bank, environmental assessment has become a standard procedure for Bank-financed investment projects since 1989, when the Bank adopted Operational Directive (OD) 4.00- Annex A: Environmental Assessment. Between 1989 and June 1995, more than one thousand projects were screened for their potential environmental impact.
 - European Commission’s Environment and Forest Financing Guide: Budget lines B7-6200 and B7- 6201 has a priority theme on “coastal zones, estuaries and wetlands management”.

OECD Guidelines no. 9

42. According to the response to the questionnaire distributed to OECD working group members under this project, the OECD guidelines no. 9 (on wetlands) has not been utilized by most bilateral agencies as a principal guiding document for wetland conservation issues in project development and implementation. Most agencies have used their own existing guidelines to address wetland issues in projects. The OECD guidelines have mainly served as a reference document for most of the OECD countries.
- Only two agencies mentioned specific examples of use of the OECD Guidelines. One of them was DANIDA (Denmark), which had used the OECD Guidelines no.9 in connection with the preparation of the Lake Chilwa conservation and wetland management scheme in Malawi.
 - Nine of the respondents have stated that their internal agency guidelines conform with the OECD Guidelines.

- Some of the environmental focal points contacted were unaware of the existence of the OECD Guidelines or did not have copies available.
43. One reason for the lack of awareness and use of these Guideline may be the lack of active promotion of its use among OECD working group countries. It is understood that IUCN, which had assisted in drafting the Guidelines, had offered to organize a series of targeted training exercises for donors, but this did not take place, apparently due to lack of resources and also the downsizing/reorganization of the secretariat of the OECD-DAC Working Group which took place shortly after the production of the guidelines..

Policies and guidelines of other sectors with key relevance to wetland conservation

Bilateral donors

44. Concerns have been raised that the relevant sectoral policies of most bilateral donors have not adequately addressed the conservation of wetlands within their sectoral development. There seems to be a general lack of awareness about the importance of wetlands among the staffs of some development agencies working in non-environment sectors. For example, the majority of water sector focal points contacted indicated that they were not fully aware of issues related to wetlands, as this matter was only considered within their agencies by the environmental or biodiversity focal points.
- DANIDA's Agriculture and Forestry and Agroforestry policies do not specifically address wetland issues, but a section on watersheds and catchment areas is included in these policies. DANIDA has placed considerable emphasis on the need for integrated approaches to the management of watersheds. As for its fisheries policies, there is no mention of wetlands or the impacts of the fisheries sector on the environment. DANIDA is revising its EIA guidelines in connection with the adoption of a sector focus in Danish development cooperation.
 - The Environmental Guidelines for Fishery Development Projects of Japan's International Cooperation Agency (JICA) deal with evaluation of environmental impacts for projects in the fisheries sector, also describing environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands.

Multilateral Donors

45. The integration of environmental considerations, including those of wetlands, into sectoral strategies is one of the positive steps being taken by multilateral donors such as the World Bank. The World Bank's guiding documents, *Water Resources Management Policy Paper* and *Guide to the Formulation of Water Resources Strategies*, are examples of how the integration of wetland issues into sectoral policies can help conserve and support the wise use of wetlands.
46. Over the past few years, there has been a gradual shift from segmented, sector-based frameworks to one that is more comprehensive and integrated. There is parallel development in this area for other multilateral and as well as major bilateral donors. Other multilateral

donors such as ADB and African Development Bank (AfDB) have also developed sectoral guidelines that address wetland issues, particularly in coastal zone management and forestry sectors.

- AfDB has developed several sectoral environmental assessment guidelines, which include those which address wetland areas. They are the Coastal and Marine Resources Management and Forestry and Watershed Management EIA Guidelines.
- Asian Development Bank's Environmental Evaluation of Coastal Zone Projects, include application of integrated methods and approaches to coastal zone development. The document also covers the potential impact of projects on wetlands.

§III. CONCLUSIONS

47. The following are recommended strategies and guidelines that have been formulated based on the findings of this review. The guidelines outline appropriate actions and measures that should be taken by the bilateral and multilateral donors and recipient governments to further promote conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Enhancing funding support for wetland conservation

48. The support for wetland conservation and wise use from several of the bilateral and multilateral development assistance agencies has been steadily increasing over the last five years. This is as a result of a growing recognition of the functions, values and benefits provided by wetland ecosystems and their importance for food and water security, poverty alleviation, and the conservation of biological diversity. However, it is of concern that the budgets and geographic and thematic coverage of some other development assistance agencies have been significantly reduced during this same time period.

Recommendations

49. A continuing high priority for the Ramsar Convention is for the Contracting Parties, and especially their bilateral development assistance agencies, to increase allocations for wetland conservation and wise use.
- The bilateral development assistance agencies are urged to investigate and consider supporting the establishment in developing countries of innovative mechanisms for long-term fund generation for wetland conservation activities, such as trust funds, user-pays contribution schemes, and the like.
 - Contracting Parties of both the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are urged to examine CBD's Decision IV/4 and where appropriate to respond to its indications in terms of seeking financial support from the Global Environment Facility for suitable proposals relating to inland water ecosystems.
 - Contracting Parties and development assistance agencies are requested to make long-term financial commitments to support the operations of the Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use (SGF) (Ramsar COP7 DOC. 15.5).

Monitoring of Funding Levels for Wetlands Conservation

50. As mentioned earlier in this review, most of the bilateral agencies do not have a comprehensive reporting system for wetland projects. One of the problems faced in monitoring the effectiveness of assistance programmes for conservation of wetlands is a lack of a funding reporting system that incorporates wetland issues.

Recommendations

- Contracting Parties should also ensure that for their bilateral donor agencies there is appropriate monitoring of expenditures which will allow them to indicate to the 8th Conference of the Contracting Parties the level, type, and effectiveness of assistance provided to developing countries in meeting their Ramsar obligations.

Enhancing consideration of wetland issue in sectoral strategies and development programmes

51. In general, development agencies have not placed sufficient priority upon ensuring that their sectoral development policies and practices also promote the wise use and conservation of wetlands in developing countries. Activities have been noted to impact wetlands in the agriculture, fisheries, water resources, forestry, transportation, and power generation sectors. Despite the very important socio-economic contributions of wetland ecosystems and their linkage to these same sectors (e.g., fish breeding/nursery ground (fisheries sector); flood control; groundwater recharge; water quality enhancement (water resources); timber and non-timber forestry products (forestry); water transportation (transportation)), concern for the need for sustainable wetland management is rarely included in respective sector policies. Although it is apparent that significant progress has been made in implementing certain elements of Recommendation 3.4, such as the use of Environmental Impact Assessments, other aspects remain to be implemented fully. A continuing priority is to ensure that wetland issues are appropriately considered within sectoral strategies and the general programmes of the development assistance agencies. Activities in the agriculture, fisheries, water resources, forestry, transportation and power generation sectors can potentially impact on wetlands, and it is vital that the strategies and policies directing the allocation of these financial resources are consistent with the Ramsar principle of wise use and these Guidelines for International Cooperation.

Recommendations

- In order to ensure that wetland issues are appropriately considered within sectoral strategies and the general programmes of the development assistance agencies, Contracting Parties are encouraged to undertake reviews to determine the extent to which the Ramsar principles are adequately considered in the policies relating to the agriculture, fisheries, water resources, forestry, transport and power generation sectors, and to seek the necessary introductions or amendments to these policies.
- Through their bilateral assistance programmes and involvements with multilateral programmes, Contracting Parties should also support projects which apply the wise use

principles of the Convention through environmentally sound development activities in wetlands.

- As recognized by the Wise Use Guidelines, it is important that Contracting Parties prepare a suitable national policy framework for implementing the Convention, and this should remain a priority for those countries seeking donor assistance. The formulation of wetland policies should also be an integral part of broader national planning relating to social issues and economic development.

Capacity Building and Sustainability

Improving Capacity of Development Assistance Agencies

52. The relatively low level of projects supported by development assistance agencies for the protection and sustainable use of wetland resources is partly related to a lack of awareness of the high environmental and socio-economic values of wetland ecosystems amongst planners and policy-makers both from development assistance agencies and at the country level. Some assistance has been forthcoming in this area with publications such as the OECD Guidelines on Aid and Environment No.9 - Guidelines for Aid Agencies for Improved Conservation and Sustainable Use of Tropical and Sub-tropical Wetlands. However, there remains a need to raise the general awareness and understanding of these agencies through a range of actions, many of which have been considered by previous decisions of Conferences of the Contracting Parties.

Recommendations

- The Outreach Programme of the Ramsar Convention (Ramsar COP7 DOC. 15.9) identifies the key decision-makers with the development assistance agencies as a priority target group, and Contracting Parties are urged to ensure that efforts are made to provide appropriate training and resource materials for these officials.
- Further, there remains a need to raise the general awareness and understanding of wetland functions and values among the staff of the development assistance agencies. Actions to be encouraged include internal and external training programmes, enhancing linkages with the Ramsar Administrative Authority within the country, and including representatives of development assistance in the delegations to meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.
- Recommendation 3.4 of COP3 agreed that development assistance agencies should seek to “*strengthen the institutional arrangements and the ecological expertise both at the national level and among regional development authorities in the project regions, in order to implement . . . policies and to train and educate personnel at project implementation level*” and this continues to be needed.

Enhancing capacity of recipient governments

53. Success in mobilizing the flow of development assistance for wetland-related projects is in part determined by the capacities, in terms of project development and implementation, of the

recipient government and its willingness to give priority to wetland projects when seeking development assistance. The issue of capacity is a complex one that has to be considered on a case by case basis. The constraints may be determined by factors such as lack of human resources or the lack of experience with project development and dealings with donor agencies. A failure to have wetland-related projects given priority within national governments is also a complex one and may relate to factors such as a lack of awareness of the true values of wetlands among key decision-makers or a failure to have wetlands considered within the mainstream of government business through instruments such as a integrated planning processes, a National Wetland Policy, or National Ramsar Committee. Both the development assistance agencies and recipient governments have key roles to play in enhancing the capacity of the recipient country in managing wetlands. Capacity building may also be required in the formulation of national wetland policies of recipient governments, which has been recognized as perhaps the best way of integrating wetlands into the national conservation and development agenda.

Recommendations

- In order to increase the level of funds flowing to wetland-related projects, potential recipient countries are encouraged to, as appropriate, seek training opportunities for their personnel to provide them with the necessary technical and project development skills.
- Recipient countries are also urged to seek resources from donors for the development of National Wetland Policies (or similar) and for implementing national communication, education and public awareness programmes for wetlands consistent with the Outreach Programme of the Convention. Both measures should serve to give wetland-related projects higher national priority for gaining funding assistance.

Need for enhanced cooperation among development assistance agencies and with Ramsar Administrative Authorities.

54. As wetland conservation and its wise use continues to be an increasingly important issue in many developing countries, development agencies should “*coordinate their programmes at the international level to ensure that their independent activities do not in combination adversely affect wetlands* (Recommendation 3.4)” and enhance cooperation with other development assistance agencies in sharing experiences and avoiding possible duplication of their activities in countries receiving assistance. The matter of enhancing cooperation between the development assistance agency and the Ramsar Administrative Authority of the country has been recognized as an important aspect of raising the capacity of the former, and is encouraged through Action 7.4.2 of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002.

Recommendations

- Development assistance agencies should “*coordinate their programmes at the international level to ensure that their independent activities do not in combination adversely affect wetlands* (Recommendation 3.4)” and enhance cooperation with other development assistance

agencies in sharing experiences and avoiding possible duplication of their activities in countries receiving assistance.

- Contracting Parties are encouraged to develop a formal mechanism for consultations between their development assistance agency and the Ramsar Administrative Authority, and to ensure that, where it exists, the National Ramsar Committee includes a representative of the development assistance agency.

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