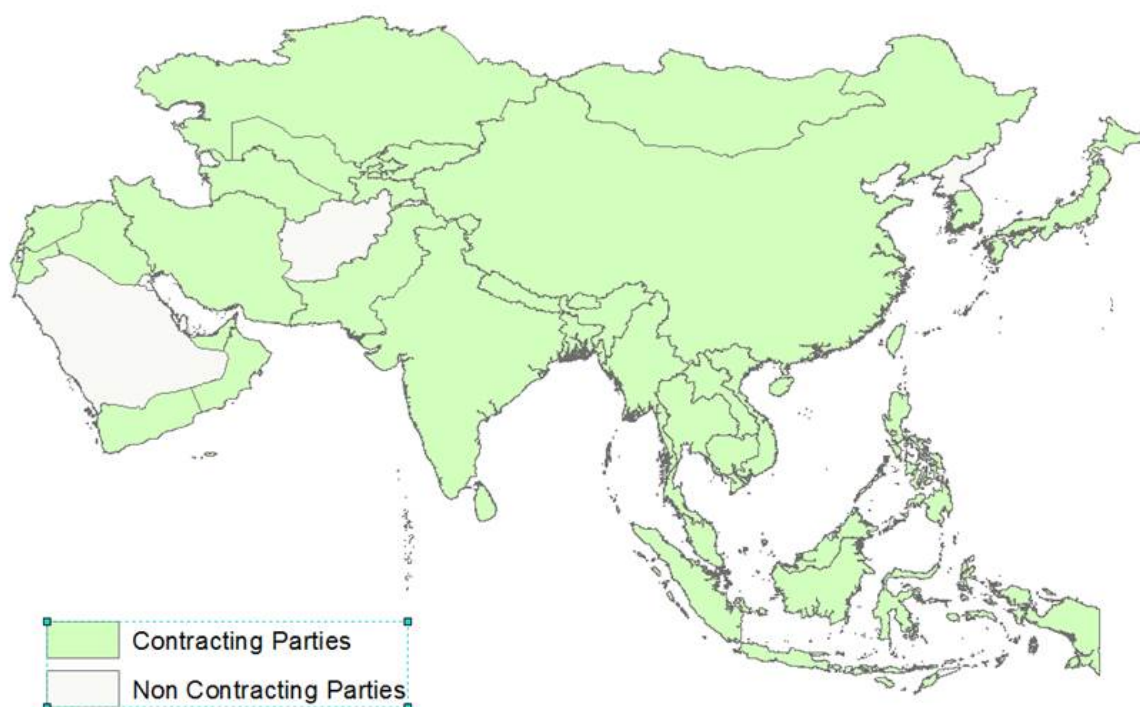


Regional overview of the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan in Asia

National Reports upon which this overview is based can be consulted at:

http://www.ramsar.org/library/field_date/%5B2015-01-01T00%3A00%3A00Z%20TO%202016-01-01T00%3A00%3A00Z%5D/field_document_type/contracting-party-documents-418/field_document_type/national-reports-532/field_tag_countries/asia-13?search_api_views_fulltext=.



January 2015

1. **Number of Contracting Parties (33):** Bahrain**, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia*, China, India**, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan**, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao DPR, Lebanon, Malaysia*, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea*, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic**, Tajikistan**, Thailand, Turkmenistan**, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan**, Viet Nam and Yemen.

* Contracting Party whose National Report was submitted too late to be included in the quantitative analysis

** Contracting Parties yet to submit National Reports

2. **Countries not yet Contracting Parties as of March 2012 (11):** Afghanistan, Brunei Darussalam, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, East Timor, Kuwait, Maldives, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Singapore.
3. This overview is based on analysis of the 23 National Reports submitted by the time of the analysis, November 2014. These were received from 64% of the 33 Parties in Asia, including 50% of the Parties in East Asia, 88% in the ASEAN region, 83% in South Asia, 50% in West Asia, and 40% in Central Asia. Information for this overview was also collected from the results of regional meetings, communications with the Parties, and other sources.

Main achievements since COP11 and priorities for 2015 – 2017

The most successful aspects of implementation of the Convention

4. From the responses in the National Reports received, the most commonly reported successes in implementation of the Convention were as follows:

Greater support (political, policy, financial and public) for the conservation of wetlands

5. A number of Contracting Parties (e.g. Bhutan, China, Philippines, Thailand, and UAE) reported that decision-makers now have a greater recognition of the importance of wetlands. This support for wetland conservation is reflected in the development and endorsement of legislation, policies and guidelines for the conservation and wise use of wetlands (e.g. Kazakhstan, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines Viet Nam), such as for the conservation and management of peat swamps (e.g. Indonesia), and their inclusion in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (e.g. Myanmar).
6. To further strengthen support for wetland conservation, some governments are revising their structure (e.g. Viet Nam), as well as establishing or revitalizing their national wetland committee (e.g. Indonesia, Oman).
7. The increase in support includes financial support. In Malaysia, the Natural Resources Conservation Trust Fund was established in 2012 and in China, funding for wetland conservation and protected wetlands has increased by 13%.
8. There is now also greater cooperation between governments and various agencies to develop and get funding for projects on wetland conservation (e.g. Bhutan, China) and to develop national and local networks for wetland conservation (e.g. Japan). There has been more integration of the wetland concept into water-related strategies, IWRM-ICZM processes and river basin management plans (e.g. Israel, Lebanon), and into ecosystem-based responses to disaster risk reduction (e.g. Philippines).
9. A number of Parties reported increased private sector involvement in wetland conservation.
10. Parties reported a greater public understanding of the conservation value of wetlands since COP11. This was achieved through different means, such as promotion through the media (e.g. Bhutan, China, Sri Lanka), World Wetland Day celebrations (e.g. Bhutan, Iraq, Myanmar, Oman, UAE), evaluation and publication of their economic value (e.g. Japan), emphasizing their role in

sustainable development for local communities (e.g. Lebanon), and developing local and site volunteer groups (e.g. Malaysia).

Knowledge about wetlands

11. Wetland surveys were initiated in a number of Parties, (e.g. Iraq, Philippines) while other Parties updated their inventories. China, for example, completed its second national wetland resources survey. Such activities are important for identifying and prioritizing the wetlands of international importance in the country, and thus selecting the sites for designation as Ramsar Sites (e.g. Kazakhstan, Philippines). Wetland surveys can be especially valuable if supported by waterbird surveys (e.g. Kyrgyz Republic).
12. Other Parties increased their knowledge of wetlands through development of wetland research and university academic programmes (e.g. China, Lebanon).

Conservation and management of wetlands, including Ramsar Sites

13. One of the key challenge facing wetlands is in ensuring that they receive the quantity and quality of water they need at the right time to maintain the ecosystem services that the site provides. In Asia, one of the most common threats to wetlands is the over-extraction of water that would otherwise flow into the site. In Israel, an agreement was signed between the Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA) and the Ministry of Environment and the Water Authority to return some 55 million m³ of water between 2012 and 2014 to wetland that had been taken for other uses. The amount of water supplied artificially to support wetlands also increased from a total of 10 million m³ in 2012 to 31 million m³ in 2014.
14. The designation of Ramsar Sites was stated by many Parties as an implementation success (e.g. Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, and Viet Nam). However, designation is just the start of a long-term commitment to the management of the site to maintain the ecosystem services that it provides. Therefore, it is important to carry out activities such as improving awareness about the value of the site (e.g. Sri Lanka); conducting site inventories (e.g. Lao PDR); drafting and updating a site management plan (e.g. Iraq); updating the site Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) every six years (e.g. China, Lebanon, Nepal); carrying out regular monitoring (e.g. Nepal) and research (e.g. Sri Lanka). Where needed, restoring the physical, hydrological and biological feature of the wetland was also identified (e.g. Israel, Malaysia, Viet Nam), including through activities to control and remove invasive plants (e.g. Israel, Sri Lanka) and carry out improvements to the water quality (e.g. Israel).
15. Many Ramsar Sites contain local communities which have been managing the site for generations using traditional systems that have maintained its ecological character. More and more Parties (e.g. Bangladesh, Bhutan, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Thailand) see the value of involving and empowering the local communities and stakeholders in decision-making processes on the designation and management of the site, and taking into consideration local customs and laws (e.g. Lao PDR). Parties also conducted numerous projects involving the local communities at Ramsar Sites: for example in Japan, at Ramsar Sites that are dominated by rice paddy, there are voluntary agreements with the farmers to maintain shallow flooding of the paddies in winter so that the habitat created is more suitable for feeding waterbirds.
16. Asian Parties explained that there had been greater opportunities for developing relations with other international and national institutions for information and experience sharing through

workshops and training (e.g. Lao PDR, Lebanon, Thailand, UAE, Viet Nam), as well as through developing networks for Ramsar Site managers (e.g. Malaysia).

17. At the invitation of the concerned Parties, the Secretariat organized a Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM) to Pakistan in October 2012 and a pre-RAM to Iraq in February 2014. The Ramsar Administrative Authorities reported that the missions achieved the agreed objectives.

The greatest difficulties in implementing the Convention

Institutional issues

18. The most commonly reported difficulty related to institutional issues within the government (e.g. Pakistan, Thailand, Viet Nam). These included a low level of awareness of the value of wetlands and the ecosystem services they provide, so that the government is unable to make wetland friendly decisions (e.g. Bhutan, China, Iraq, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand); and a lack of cooperation between government sectors because of their diverse interests, desires and priorities (e.g. Bhutan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, UAE, Viet Nam). Insufficient coordination between different departments managing Ramsar Sites was also reported (e.g. Pakistan, Viet Nam).
19. A lack of specialist staff and staff having heavy workload was reported (e.g. Lebanon). The need for an appropriate government structure for natural resources management was also noted (e.g. Kazakhstan) and sometimes, excessively frequent restructuring exercises (e.g. Kyrgyz Republic). In a number of more decentralized Parties, provincial or district-level policy makers do not have adequate understanding of wetlands values and benefits (e.g. Indonesia, Kazakhstan).

Lack of appropriate policies for wetland conservation

20. A lack of appropriate policies for wetland conservation was also commonly reported (e.g. Bhutan, China, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Oman, Philippines, Thailand, UAE).

Lack of information and awareness for effective conservation and management

21. The low level of awareness of the importance of wetland, lack of cooperation and policies is partially due to a lack of information about the wetlands in the country and the services that these wetlands provide. A number of Parties remarked on the need for surveys on the wetlands in the country (e.g. Nepal, Viet Nam) and baseline inventories on the key wetlands in particular (e.g. UAE). Such information would help in the general planning of conservation activities (e.g. Bhutan), the designation of new Ramsar Sites (e.g. Sri Lanka), and updating the RIS (e.g. Lebanon, Sri Lanka). Information from sound wetland research was also said to be critical in supporting practical wetland conservation efforts (e.g. China). Language support for better understanding and implementation of the Convention was also need (e.g. Iraq, Oman, UAE).
22. After information on wetlands is collected, related communication, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) activities are key to their conservation. Parties (e.g. Japan, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan) stated that this is needed to overcome the lack of awareness about wetlands from the highest level to the private sector, general public and the communities local to wetland sites, and so encourage behavioural changes (e.g. Philippines, Viet Nam).

Insufficient resources for effective management of Ramsar Sites

23. The designation of priority wetlands as Ramsar Sites is one of the key obligations of Parties. From discussions with Parties and Ramsar partners in the region, it appears that although Parties are continuing to emphasize the designation of Sites, insufficient resources have been put into the long-term conservation management of the designated Sites to maintain their ecological character and the services they provide. Many Parties reported budget constraints affecting the management of their Ramsar Sites (e.g. Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Israel, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam), which affected management work at the Site (e.g. Oman) such as monitoring, so making it difficult to update the RIS of existing Sites (e.g. Lebanon). Parties also reported that they had insufficient Site management staff (e.g. Malaysia, Oman, Viet Nam) and that staff required training in wetland management and conservation activities including wetland surveys, assessment, monitoring and management (e.g. Bhutan, Iraq, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, Viet Nam).

Threats facing wetlands and Ramsar Sites

24. The most commonly reported threat to wetlands and Ramsar Sites was increasing human pressure, especially wetland conversion due to population increase, overuse of wetland resources (e.g. Myanmar), and expansion of human habitats, agricultural, recreational and development activities (e.g. Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand) and pollution (e.g. Bangladesh, Japan, UAE). These impacts increase the threats in the buffer areas around the wetland and may reduce the area of the buffer and so increase fragmentation of the wetland habitats (e.g. Israel, Sri Lanka).
25. A number of Parties (e.g. Iraq, Kazakhstan) reported a lack of effective schemes for addressing transboundary water issues, such as the uncoordinated regulation of upstream flows reducing water supplies to wetlands downstream (e.g. Bangladesh, Iran, Indonesia, Pakistan).
26. Changes in climate have caused fluctuations in weather and rainfall patterns around the world. While some Parties have reported increasing drought conditions making it difficult to provide sufficient freshwater for their wetlands (e.g. Israel, Kazakhstan), other Parties have reported more coastal storms or bursts of heavier rainfall causing seasonal flooding with impacts on people and the environment (e.g. Bangladesh, Pakistan).

Priorities for future implementation of the Convention

Develop policies and mechanisms for wetland conservation

27. Asian Parties emphasized the need to put in place a range of policy and other instruments to ensure the conservation and wise use of wetlands. These included national wetland inventories (e.g. Bhutan, Kyrgyz Republic, Lebanon, Nepal, Oman, Philippines, UAE); national wetland policies and strategies (e.g. Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, UAE); legislation to protect wetlands and support their wise use (e.g. Thailand, Viet Nam), and to mainstream wetland conservation into other relevant future policies and plans (e.g. Bhutan, China, Lao PDR) such as the NBSAP (e.g. Kazakhstan) and those on climate change (e.g. Kyrgyz Republic) and land-use zoning (e.g. Bangladesh, China, Kyrgyz Republic). China stated that they aimed to advance a systematic wetland protection mechanism by establishing a three-in-one system combining legislation, finance and scientific guidance.

28. Some Parties stated the need to establish a national wetland committee or improve the operation of the existing committee (e.g. Lao PDR, Lebanon, Oman, and UAE). Others reported a need to increase resources (financing and staff) for wetland conservation (e.g. UAE, Viet Nam), identify practical financing, including from the private sector (Malaysia) and payment for ecosystem services schemes, including payment by downstream users to upstream communities for maintaining forest cover in hill areas (Bangladesh).

Designate and manage Ramsar Sites

29. Many Parties reported that their priority for implementation of the Convention is to designate important wetlands as Ramsar Sites and then to ensure their effective management.
30. Apart from designating important wetlands as protected areas and especially as Ramsar Sites (e.g. Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Myanmar, Philippines, Sri Lanka), Parties also mentioned that they plan to enlarge the boundary of existing Sites with the support of the local communities (Japan), as well as to update the RIS and maps of existing sites (Japan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Sri Lanka). Thailand went further to explain that updating the map and boundaries of Sites will help to reduce problems from encroachment.
31. In their reports to Ramsar COP12, Asian Contracting Parties are making more reference to the wider services and benefits that Ramsar Sites provide and reporting that their management should be conducted in a holistic manner under the principle of sustainable development with the involvement of the local community, and be aimed at maintaining the ecosystem services for the benefit of local people (e.g. Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Viet Nam). To this end, Ramsar Sites can be promoted as important centres for research, biodiversity, climate change adaptation and mitigation, education and eco-tourism (e.g. Malaysia, Nepal, and Thailand).
32. Parties reported a range of activities that they aim to conduct at their Sites, such as developing and updating management plans (e.g. Bhutan, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan) and guidelines (e.g. Lebanon, Thailand); identifying financial, logistic and human resources to implement the plans (e.g. Malaysia); ensuring the wetland receives the required quantity and quality of water (Israel), carrying out wetland restoration projects (e.g. Indonesia, Israel, Viet Nam), conducting research and monitoring (e.g. Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka), building the capacity of site management staff (e.g. Bhutan, China), and strengthening transboundary cooperation (e.g. Lao PDR with neighbouring countries).

Raise awareness and enhance cooperation with stakeholders

33. A number of Parties recognized the need to establish a long-term coordinated programme to raise awareness of the importance of wetlands (e.g. Myanmar), by means such as training for relevant government staff (e.g. Philippines, Thailand), development of education centres at wetland sites (e.g. China, Thailand) and special events such as World Wetland Day (e.g. Bhutan, China). The messages, which can be shared using a variety of media such as print and web (e.g. Iraq), can focus on the natural features and cultures of each Ramsar Site (e.g. Japan) and be aimed at local authorities (e.g. Kazakhstan), private sector and the local community to encourage them to engage in wetland conservation and management (e.g. Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines). Parties stressed the need for better collaboration between the wide range of stakeholders (e.g. Iraq, Malaysia, and UAE).

Recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Ramsar Secretariat

34. A number of Parties reported that the Secretariat should establish a financial mechanism to support Parties to implement wetland conservation programmes (e.g. Bhutan, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, and Viet Nam).
35. The Secretariat should establish good practices for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention using science- and evidence-based experiences from around the world (e.g. Kazakhstan) on topic such as Ramsar Site management (e.g. Thailand), wetland restoration, benchmarks for ecological health of Ramsar sites, monitoring of Ramsar Sites (e.g. China), economic evaluation and sustainable financing of wetlands (e.g. Malaysia).
36. A number of Parties asked the Secretariat to establish capacity development mechanisms, such as international workshops, experience sharing, exchange visits and training, especially on the governance and sustainable management of wetlands for wetland site managers (e.g. China, Indonesia, Iraq, Oman, UAE and Viet Nam).
37. Parties (e.g. Lebanon, Nepal and Sri Lanka) also requested technical assistance on a range of topics, such as:
 - acting as resource persons at conferences hosted by Parties (Philippines);
 - acting as advisors on wetland development projects (Philippines);
 - including climate change impacts, mitigation and adaptation into programmes and activities for wetland conservation (Pakistan);
 - supporting the institutional adoption of the Convention nationally (Bhutan);
 - developing national wetland policies and strategies (Myanmar, Oman);
 - designating new Ramsar Sites (Kazakhstan);
 - developing Ramsar Site management plans (Bhutan);
 - supporting biodiversity assessments at Ramsar Sites (Bangladesh);
38. Parties asked the Secretariat to:
 - continue to make available Ramsar Handbooks to people responsible for the management and conservation of wetlands (Viet Nam);
 - set up mailing lists for wetland managers, experts and other stakeholders (Indonesia);
 - support the establishment of wetlands visitors centres and CEPA activities (UAE);
 - organize regular webinars with experts on wetlands issues (Indonesia);
 - support Ramsar Sites that show signs of changes in ecological character (Philippines);
39. Arab Contracting Parties from West Asia also requested support for Arabic to become an official/working language of the Ramsar Convention (Iraq, Oman) with translation of technical guidelines and the Ramsar website as a start (Iraq, UAE). The UAE also requested the establishment of a regional technical support office for the Arabic-speaking Parties, as well as help in defining the ecological character of wetlands in arid areas.

Recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs)

40. Asian Parties asked the IOPs to provide financial and technical assistance (Bhutan, China, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines and Sri Lanka), for example in the designation and management of Ramsar Sites (Philippines, Viet Nam), and the development of national wetland policies (Myanmar), community development programmes, and natural resources inventory and

monitoring (Indonesia). However, IOPs should avoid law enforcement activities due to conflict of interests and matter of authority (Indonesia).

41. Many Asian Parties requested assistance from the IOPs in capacity building and sharing of good practices, especially for site managers (Nepal, UAE). Topics included the wise use of wetlands (Iraq); wetland restoration, conservation and sustainable development (Viet Nam); managing and monitoring the ecological characteristics of Ramsar Sites; and working with local communities (Malaysia, Viet Nam, UAE).

Recommendations on how national implementation of the Ramsar Convention can be better linked with implementation of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs)

42. MEAs often share certain common objectives and so to ensure efficiency of implementation, it is important to develop mechanisms to strengthen communication and coordination. Asian Parties mentioned that greater cooperation between the MEAs could be achieved through:
- introducing a national coordination mechanism such as a national wetland (or biodiversity) committee where the focal points from the different MEAs are present (e.g. Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Indonesia, Kyrgyz Republic, Lebanon, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, UAE and Viet Nam);
 - adopting new policies and plans that encourage synergies between the MEAs, such as the NBSAPs (e.g. Bangladesh, Bhutan, Kyrgyz Republic, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand), as well as national conservation action plans and strategies such as the 'Haritha Lanka' programme for sustainable development in Sri Lanka;
 - developing a uniform reporting system for the MEAs (e.g. Nepal, Thailand);
 - Ministries that are responsible for the implementation of more than one MEA should take greater effort to enhance coordination at national and state level (Malaysia);
 - MEAs themselves can increase coordination by circulating draft COP documents to other MEAs for comment. This would allow the cross-referencing of COP Resolutions and Decisions (Malaysia).

Linking the implementation of the Ramsar Convention with that of water policy/strategy and other strategies in the country (e.g., on sustainable development, energy, extractive industries, poverty reduction, sanitation, food security, biodiversity)

43. As a first step to linking Ramsar implementation with that of water policy/strategy and other strategies, there should be awareness building about the importance of wetlands (Sri Lanka) and the Ramsar Convention (e.g. Nepal, Oman, Philippines) for water sector stakeholders involved, for example, with domestic water usage, irrigation and energy security (e.g. hydropower). The message should also stress the relation between wetland conservation and food security, poverty reduction, sanitation, biodiversity and climate change adaption (Bhutan).
44. Wetland/water related ministries should also be involved in developing and implementing wetland and water related legislation and strategies (e.g. Bangladesh, Kyrgyz Republic, Oman, Pakistan, Thailand, Oman and Viet Nam). This would include policies/strategies such as that on the 'green economy/growth' (Kazakhstan), water resource protection, integrated watershed protection (e.g. Indonesia, Lebanon), the national wetland policy or conservation programme (e.g. China, Malaysia), and the national development plan (Myanmar). To enhance cooperation, there should be committees where representatives from the water and wetland sectors could discuss opportunities for synergies (e.g. Bhutan, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar).

45. Thailand also suggested the development and implementation of joint projects between the water and wetland sectors at the wetland site level or at the basin level.

Other general comments on the implementation of the Convention

46. Comments from Asian Parties on implementation of the Convention can be grouped into a number of areas:
- Experience sharing: A number of Parties considered that the implementation of the Convention can be improved by building the capacity of the Administrative Authorities and the site managers (e.g. Myanmar, Pakistan) through opportunities for experience sharing such as meetings of NFPs (Bangladesh) and short-term staff exchanges between Parties (China);
 - Addressing threats to wetlands: Parties requested support to mitigate the impacts of development on wetlands (Malaysia) through more frequent communication between Parties and the Secretariat (Bhutan);
 - Improving the management of wetlands and Ramsar Sites: China put forward the need to promote wetland restoration through a better understanding of wetland ecosystems and applicable technologies. They also suggested promoting the management of wetlands in tune with their ecological dynamics by monitoring their ecological health and establishing early warning systems. Malaysia also stated that equal attention needs to be given to managing Ramsar Sites to ensure their sustainability;
 - Responding to climate change: Parties proposed linking wetland conservation and wise use to climate change, such as through the National Action Plan for Addressing Climate Change (China), and developing funding proposals promoting wetland-based approaches to greenhouse gas reduction to make use of the many sources of global funds to address climate change, especially through greenhouse gas reduction or increasing carbon sinks (Thailand).

Names of organizations consulted or which have contributed to National Reports

47. Many stakeholder groups have an interest in the conservation and sustainable management of wetlands. As a result, it is important that those groups are consulted and their comments are included in the Ramsar National Reports. It seemed that while most Asian Parties did not consult with other government ministries when compiling the National Report, other Parties did carry out consultations with two (e.g. Bangladesh, Bhutan, Philippines, Sri Lanka) or more ministries (Viet Nam 4, Japan 8, Indonesia 10, China and Thailand 11).
48. Parties reported that they consulted central government ministries, and also provincial (e.g. Pakistan, Philippines) and municipal (UAE) authorities, national and regional organizations (Philippines), funding agencies (Philippines), as well as academic and research institutions (e.g. Indonesia, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam).
49. Parties also reported that they consulted with environmental non-governmental organizations when drafting their National Reports. International NGOs consulted included IUCN (e.g. Bangladesh, Lao PDR and Viet Nam), WWF (e.g. Bhutan, Pakistan, and Viet Nam), the national BirdLife Partner (e.g. Indonesia, Nepal), Fauna and Flora International (Myanmar), International Water Management Institute (Sri Lanka) and Wetlands International (Indonesia). Local NGOs

were also consulted (e.g. Bhutan, Kazakhstan, Philippines). In Japan, the public was consulted and their comments included in the National Report.

Implementation activities undertaken since COP11

50. The topics presented below follow the structure of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015 (adopted through Resolution X.1). As far as possible, the evolution of the implementation of the Convention is analyzed by comparing Strategies and Indicators provided in National Reports to earlier meetings of the COP with the latest information provided for COP12.

GOAL 1. THE WISE USE OF WETLANDS

STRATEGY 1.1: Wetland inventory and assessment

51. Of the Asian Parties that reported, 11 (52%) said that they had comprehensive national wetland inventories (Indicators 1.1.1 and 1.1.2) which are maintained and made available to all stakeholders. Five Parties said that their inventories were in progress and two said that it was being planned. China completed their first inventory in 2003 and their second in 2013. Japan was in the process of updating its first inventory, entitled '500 Important Wetlands in Japan', to be completed by March 2015 with a list of potential Ramsar Sites. Malaysia has a wetland inventory (2009) and is planning to update it. Iraq began its first national inventory in 2013 and has identified 32 wetland sites. The survey is expected to be completed in 2020. Lao PDR is planning to begin its inventory in the coming triennium. Bhutan and the Kyrgyz Republic stated that while the inventory is planned, it is dependent on the availability of funds and qualified specialists.
52. The table below shows the trends in the condition of Asian Parties' Ramsar Sites and other wetlands over the last triennium (Indicator 1.1.3). It shows that the condition of Ramsar Sites either improved (29%) or did not change (71%), while the condition of other wetlands often deteriorated (38%). Globally, the trend was similar, with the condition of Ramsar Sites being better than that of other wetlands.

	% of Asian Contracting Parties reporting		
	Condition improving	No change in condition	Condition deteriorating
Ramsar Site	29%	71%	0%
Other wetlands	19%	43%	38%

53. The value of conducting wetland inventories is shown by the report of China, that while the overall ecological health of its Ramsar Sites improved, the improvement was mainly to inland freshwater wetlands. Coastal wetlands faced more severe threats, with a few even showing signs of ecological deterioration largely due to a), reclamation and encroachment by economic growth and infrastructure development; b) pollution; c) over-harvesting of wetland resources; and d) alien invasive species. The result from the second national wetland inventory completed in 2013 also showed that compared to the first inventory completed in 2003, China had lost an estimated 3,376,200 ha of natural wetlands over the past decade, equivalent to an average annual wetland loss of 9.33%.
54. Malaysia also reported that its coastal wetlands faced greater pressure, for example from aquaculture and the development of desirable sea-facing housing. Overall, the impacts of rapid

economic and population growth in many Asia countries are posing an increasing threat to wetlands, and include pollution, sedimentation due to upstream changes in land use (e.g. deforestation and loss of peatlands), and conversion (especially of peatlands) for other uses such as oil plantation, invasive species and aquaculture ponds (Indonesia).

55. The lack of an integrated approach to water resource management in many river basins is also a serious threat facing many wetlands. This applies not only to international rivers such as the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, Bramaputra, Ganges, Indus, Mekong and Tigris-Euphrates but also national river and lake basins. Downstream wetlands are being affected by the over-extraction upstream of water for agricultural, industrial or urban uses, or storage of the water in reservoirs for hydropower production leading to changes in the natural flow pattern of the rivers (e.g. Bangladesh, Kazakhstan). This problem is exacerbated by changes in rainfall patterns. An effective integrated approach to the management of many river and lake basins in Asia is urgently needed.

STRATEGY 1.3: Policy, legislation and institutions

56. Of the Asian Parties that reported, ten (48%) stated that they had a National Wetland Policy or equivalent instrument in place (Indicators 1.3.1 and 1.3.2). Another four said that they were in progress of developing such a Policy and four reported that they were planning to develop a Policy.
57. Asian Parties also reported that wetland issues had been incorporated into other national strategies and planning processes (see table below).

National strategies and planning process	Yes	In progress	Planned	No	Not applicable
a) Poverty eradication strategies	43% (9)	19% (4)	5% (1)	19% (4)	14% (3)
b) Water resource management and water efficiency plans	71% (15)	19% (4)	10% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)
c) Coastal and marine resource management plans	52% (11)	10% (2)	14% (3)	10% (2)	14% (3)
d) National forests programmes	62% (13)	24% (5)	0% (0)	14% (3)	0% (0)
e) National strategies for sustainable development	57% (12)	19% (4)	10% (2)	10% (2)	5% (1)
f) National policies or measures on agriculture	52% (11)	33% (7)	14% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)
g) NBSAP	81% (17)	5% (1)	5% (1)	5% (1)	0% (0)

58. Most commonly, Parties reported that wetland issues had been incorporated into their NBSAPs (e.g. Japan, Thailand and UAE) and other national policies on biodiversity (e.g. Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Pakistan and Viet Nam). Wetland issues had also been incorporated into action plans and other policies for forest and forestry (e.g. Bhutan, Japan), peatlands (e.g. Indonesia, Malaysia), river management (e.g. Japan, Philippine), marine ecosystems (e.g. Indonesia, Japan), mangroves (Indonesia) and coral reefs (Japan).
59. In addition, wetland issues have been included into national water policies (e.g. Bhutan, Israel, Pakistan and Viet Nam). In Israel's National Freshwater Policy, there is a chapter relating to the right of nature to receive ample freshwater, reflecting the need to prioritize wetlands and their potential for ecological rehabilitation. Wetland issues have also been incorporated into other national strategies and plans for climate change (e.g. Lao PDR, Thailand), poverty reduction (Viet Nam), development and desertification (Philippines).

60. Only nine Parties that reported (43%) applied Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEAs) when reviewing policies, programme and plans that may impact upon wetlands (Indicator 1.3.3). Another nine said that they were in the process of doing so. Israel reported that it does not differentiate between SEA and EIA.
61. 16 Parties (76%) said that Environmental Impact Assessment (EIAs) were used for new development projects that may affect wetlands (Indicator 1.3.4), and another four reported that they were in the process of using EIAs.
62. Only eight Parties reporting (38%) said that amendments had been made to existing legislation to reflect Ramsar commitments (Indicator 1.3.5), while another eight said that they were in the process of doing so. Viet Nam had revised its Land Law (2013), Law on Water Resources (2012) and National Strategy for Environmental Protection (until 2020), while Indonesia had revised its National Spatial Plan. Malaysia and Pakistan stated that amendments have been made but through state or provincial legislation rather than national legislation. Lebanon mentioned that although no amendments have been made, the Ramsar Administrative Authority in the country (Ministry of Environment) implements the Convention in close cooperation with other national agencies to achieve the aims of the Convention.

STRATEGY 1.4: Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services

63. Only six Parties reported (29%) that they had made assessments of the ecosystem benefits/services provided by Ramsar Sites (Indicator 1.4.1). However, 11 (52%) said that partial assessments had been carried out and one reported that they were planning assessments.
64. Asian Parties generally stated that they had only conducted assessments of ecosystem services at a number of their Ramsar Sites (e.g. Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam). In the UAE, the Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Database Initiatives (AGEDI) found that the blue carbon sequestration ability of different coastal wetland types (e.g. mangrove, seagrass, salt marsh, sabkha, and algal mat) were potentially important and in the latter case, were particularly significant. Myanmar said that while it hopes to conduct wetland ecosystem assessment studies, it requires funding support to do so.
65. Indonesia reported that while some research on assessments of wetland ecosystem services has been conducted, further work was needed in order to create a model of wetland services that can be used for decision making. In a similar way, China remarked that while many researchers have conducted assessment at wetlands including 25 Ramsar Sites, the government has not been able to adopt the results because they were non-unified or oversimplified. The AA is now establishing a standardized system for valuing wetland ecosystems.
66. More than half of the Asian Parties reporting (52%) said that they are implementing wetland programmes that contribute to poverty alleviation or food and water security plans (Indicator 1.4.2). Another three said that they have partially implementing such programmes and one that they were planning such programmes. Parties implementing such programmes included China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. In China, a GEF project launched in November 2013 included activities that promoted the wise use of wetland resources and increasing the income of local communities at the project sites. In Lao PDR, a project funded by Finland and led by IUCN is setting up community fisheries, promoting traditional rice farming and eco-tourism in viable areas at the Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Site. In Israel, however, Ramsar Sites are said to be protected areas and not used for fishing or food security.

67. 12 Parties reporting said that they are including the socio-economic and cultural values of wetlands in the management planning of Ramsar Sites (Indicator 1.4.3). They included China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam. A further six said that they were partially doing this and two said that it was planned.

STRATEGY 1.5: Recognition of the role of the Convention

68. The Changwon Declaration on human well-being and wetlands (Resolution X.3, 2008) contained key messages about the role of wetland conservation and wise use in contributing towards six areas of sustainable development: water, climate change, people's livelihoods, human health, land use change, and biodiversity. The Declaration was also a call to the Ramsar community to reach out to those other sectors and to include them in the Convention's work on wetlands (Indicator 1.5.1).
69. More Parties reported that they had mainly brought the Changwon Declaration to the attention of civil society (57% of Parties) and to the private sector (43%), and fewer to the Head of State (29%) and to the parliament (19%). Kazakhstan and Myanmar explained that they had not disseminated the Changwon Declaration due to lack of capacity (e.g. very low number of staff carrying out a wide range of tasks) in the AA.

	Yes	No	Planned
Head of state	29% (6)	43% (9)	19% (4)
Parliament	19% (4)	43% (9)	29% (6)
Private sector	43% (9)	29% (6)	24% (5)
Civil society	57% (12)	19% (4)	19% (4)

STRATEGY 1.6: Science-based management of wetlands

70. Parties reported that they had conducted research to inform wetland policies and plans in the country (Indicators 1.6.1 and 1.6.2) on:
- agriculture-wetland interactions (67%);
 - climate change (76%); and
 - valuation of ecosystem services (71%).

	Yes	No	Planned
Agriculture-wetland interactions	67% (14)	14% (3)	19% (4)
Climate change	76% (16)	5% (1)	19% (4)
Valuation of ecosystem services	71% (15)	10% (2)	19% (4)

71. Parties mentioned that such research was not only conducted by the AA but also other relevant ministries and NGOs (e.g. China, Indonesia, Pakistan, Thailand), researchers (e.g. AGEDI in the UAE), even farmers and members of the public (Japan). However, some Parties were not able to conduct such studies due to insufficient capacity and funding (Myanmar).
72. 10 Parties (48%) said that they based their site management plans on sound scientific research (Indicator 1.6.2) while another nine said that their plans partially did so. China and Lao PDR explained that the work to develop a wetland management plan would begin by a thorough literature review, followed by a data gap-filling exercise. This not only includes the physical, chemical and biological properties of the wetland site and its protection status but also, first-hand data of social context to identify socio-economic stresses and stakeholders' concerns. In

Indonesia, the research work is conducted by universities and research institutes, NGOs and the management staff of the Ramsar Site. Nepal highlighted that scientific data is not only important in developing the management plan but that continuous research and monitoring also needs to be promoted. If there are gaps, then they can be addressed in the plan (Philippines).

73. However, while scientific information is important, it is also necessary to consider traditional means of sustainable use as well as customs and cultures that support conservation and sustainable use of wetlands (e.g. Lao PDR, Thailand).

STRATEGY 1.7: Integrated Water Resources Management

74. 16 Parties (76%) reported that their country's water governance and management treat wetlands as natural water infrastructure (Indicator 1.7.1). while another four said that their government planned to do so. In Lao PDR, the National Law on Water Management is being revised to recognize the important role of wetlands, and in Israel, the National Water Policy stipulates that wetlands are legitimate water consumers and defines how freshwater is to be allocated to wetlands. In Japan, wetlands including rivers are acknowledged as natural water infrastructure integral to water resource management, and are incorporated in the river improvement plans. Due to national water shortages and deterioration of water quality, China has taken unprecedented and decisive steps to conserve its wetlands and to use its water resources sustainably. Wetlands are seen as the prime sources of drinking water and for industrial uses. Bangladesh, however, stated that it was difficult to manage water resources at the basin level because many rivers flow from neighbouring countries.
75. Over half of the Parties (57%) said that they have incorporated CEPA expertise and tools into catchment/river basin planning and management (Indicator 1.7.2), and another 24% planned to do so. Parties used a variety of tools, such as organizing meetings to discuss and prepare assessments and plans for watershed areas (Bhutan, Indonesia). In China, the Yangtze River Water Resources Commission is building public understanding of watershed governance and planning by preparing mid- and long-term environmental education plans for the Yangtze River, organizing the Yangtze River Conservation Forum, and establishing the Yangtze River Media Award. In Malaysia, a Ramsar CEPA Kit has been published for the Lower Kinabatangan – Segama Wetlands Ramsar site. However, Lebanon stated that such activities were difficult due to a lack of personnel and financing issues.
76. Some 57% (12) of Asian Parties reporting said that they had established policies and guidelines for enhancing role of wetlands in mitigating or adapting to climate change (Indicator 1.7.3) (e.g. China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Viet Nam). Another four Parties said that they had partially done this and four said that they planned to do this.
77. Only 38% of the Asian Parties said that they had formulated plans and projects to enhance the role of wetlands in supporting and maintaining viable farming systems (Indicator 1.7.4). However, this still represented a higher percentage than for COP11 (2012). Parties had achieved this through a variety of means (e.g. Bangladesh, Thailand), such as incorporating the role of wetlands in the Third National Agriculture Policy (Malaysia), the Ministry of Agriculture's National Wet Agricultural Land Protection and Utilization Plan 2011-2015 (Japan), and through the 'Action Plan for the Rice paddy Biodiversity Enhancement Decade Project 2013' which was developed mainly by NGO to support Ramsar Resolution X.31 (Japan).

STRATEGY 1.8: Wetland restoration

78. Some 71% (15) of the Asian Parties reporting said that they have identified priority sites for wetland restoration (Indicator 1.8.1), compared with 65% for COP11. Another 24% (5) said that they planned to do so. While some Parties stated that they have identified opportunities at some sites (e.g. Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan and the UAE), other Parties said that surveys and reviews are continuously conducted (e.g. Japan, Viet Nam). In China, wetland restoration is included in the 12th Five-Year Plan for implementing the National Wetland Conservation Programme, targeting swamps, lakes, rivers, near-shore and coastal wetlands.
79. Some 81% of Asian Contracting Parties said that they have implemented wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes or projects (Indicator 1.8.2) while another 14% said that they planned to do so. Parties reported that they had restored a range of wetland types, such as peatlands (e.g. Indonesia, Malaysia), river meanders (Japan), marshes (Iraq), lakes (Myanmar), urban wetlands for flood control (Sri Lanka), mangrove forests (Malaysia, Oman, Philippines and Viet Nam), and tidal flats (Japan, UAE). The aims of such restoration projects were to address issues such as eutrophication, sedimentation, the removal of invasive and unwanted species, and even the reintroduction of endemic species (UAE).
80. Bhutan reported that the restoration projects were at the request of the local communities and were conducted with funding from the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP), while Indonesia and Pakistan mentioned that their projects were often conducted in cooperation with the Ramsar IOPs, such as WWF and Wetlands International. China stated that 63,000ha of wetlands have been restored from 2011 to 2013, and that the Ministry of Transport also conducted restoration projects, to re-establish ecological connectivity and restore wetland habitats and their biodiversity.

STRATEGY 1.9: Invasive alien species

81. Only 33% (7) of the Asian Parties reporting said that they had national inventories of invasive alien species that impact the ecological character of wetlands (Indicator 1.9.1), while 29% (6) said that they had partial inventories and 19% (4) were planning to develop inventories. Although some Parties had high-level cabinet resolutions (e.g. Thailand) or Prime Ministerial decisions (Viet Nam) regarding invasive species, and may even have developed a national invasive alien species inventory and acts (Japan, Viet Nam), they may not have been specially for species that impact upon wetlands (e.g. China, Indonesia, Philippines). While some Parties reported that they cannot develop such inventories due to financial constraints (Myanmar) and requested support from the Secretariat (Nepal, Oman), other Parties stated they cooperate with the local research institutes and universities to develop such inventories (Thailand).
82. Only 29% (6) of the Parties reported having national policies or guidelines on the control and management of invasive species (Indicator 1.9.2) (e.g. China, Japan, Sri Lanka). Myanmar mentioned that the control and management of invasive species has been included in its NBSAP. A further 19% (4) of Parties stated that they had partially developed such national policies or guidelines, and 33% (7) said that they intended to develop such policies and guidelines. The main invasive species of concern to Parties were the water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*), *Mimosa pigra*, *Mimosa pudica*, and the golden apple snail (*Pomacea canaliculata*).

STRATEGY 1.10: Private sector

83. Only 38% (8) of the Parties mentioned that the private sector in their countries are encouraged to apply Ramsar wise use principles (Indicator 1.10.1) and guidance in their activities and investments concerning wetlands. 33% (7) Parties reported that this has partially been done and another 14% (3) said that they plan to do so.
84. Specific examples provided came from Lao PDR and Malaysia. At the Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Site in Lao PDR, private tourism agencies were involved in the drafting of the eco-tourism action plan which aimed to improve benefit sharing from elephant tourism with the local communities. In Sabah, Malaysia, an awareness programme has been initiated with the oil palm industry under the ASEAN Peatland Forest Project, to encourage it to implement an integrated management plan and best management practices in its operations. In other countries (e.g. Bhutan, China, Lebanon), the activities of the private sector are regulated under the regulations on environmental impact assessments as well as other regulations relating to the environment.
85. Just over half of the Parties (52%) reported that the private sector in their countries are involved in the management of Ramsar Sites and wetlands in general (Indicator 1.10.2).

Private sector involvement in the wise use and management of	Yes	No	Planned
a. Ramsar Sites	52% (11)	24% (5)	24% (5)
b. Wetlands in general	52% (11)	14% (3)	33% (7)

86. Parties gave many examples of the activities of the private sector (Pakistan, Viet Nam), such as:
- Indonesia: the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil has produced wetland wise use and management concepts, as well as best management practices for palm oil growers;
 - Kazakhstan: some wetlands that meet Ramsar criteria have been transferred to private sector management as hunting areas or fishery ponds, such as the Kulykol-Taldykol Lake System Ramsar Site;
 - Malaysia: coastal mangroves are being conserved through projects of the Port of Tanjung Pelepas, Khazanah Nasional and Malakoff Corporation; rehabilitation of peat swamp forest is being conducted by Bridgestone Tyre (sales) Malaysia Sdn. Bhd and HSBC Sdn. Bhd.; and plantation companies in the buffer zone of the Tasek Bera Ramsar Site are filtering their waste before it enters into the Site;
 - Myanmar: 27 companies are allowed to operate hotels and promote ecosystem at Inlay Lake, while the SPA tour company is allowed to run ecotourism at the Moeyungyi Ramsar Site;
 - Philippines:
 - Tubbataha Reef Ramsar Site is receiving support from Shell Pilipinas, Oris Swiss Watch and Global Malai;
 - 'Adopt-an- Estero' (creek) is a collaborative programme (since 2010) between and among the estero community, donor-partner (which may be a private company, NGO or volunteer group), local government and the government (Department of Environment and Natural resources) who work to clean up the esteros of Metro Manila;
 - 'Conservation of Laguna de Bay's Environment and Resources' (CLEAR) is a 10-year partnership between Unilever Philippines, Laguna Lake Development Authority and the Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands to ensure the conservation of Laguna de Bay.

- Sri Lanka: Some private companies are helping to remove invasive species (*Prosopis juliflora* and *Opuntia* spp.) from Bundala Ramsar Site which they use as firewood in a power generation plant;
- Thailand:
 - PTT Public Company Limited has conducted mangrove reforestation around Pranburi estuary and in collaboration with Royal Forest Department, and has established the *Sirinart Rajini Mangrove Forest Ecosystem Learning Center*, which will be a training center for PTT's staff, government agencies, students and local people;
 - SCG Chemicals has built a hundred underwater artificial fish habitats in Rayong province under the project 'Beautiful Beaches and Fishes return';
 - Pharmacomet Public Co., Ltd with WWF Thailand, Foundation for Environmental Education for Sustainable Development (Thailand), Tourism Australia, Ecotourism Australia, Qantas Airways Limited and True Music, participated in a Coral Plantation Programme aiming to help restore marine ecosystems in Chon Buri province.
- UAE:
 - Dutco Balfour Beatty LLC and ETA Star LLC have assisted Dubai Municipality to build tracks and created a high-tide roosting area for shorebirds at RAK;
 - HSBC Bank sponsored feasibility studies that lead to the creation of the Wadi Wurayah National Park (Ramsar Site) in 2009 and has been sponsoring the water research and learning programme there since 2013.

STRATEGY 1.11: Incentive measures

87. Although only a minority of Parties (38%) reported implementing incentive measures to encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands (Indicator 1.11.1), and 29% reported they were planning to do so, those Parties that are implementing such measures gave interesting examples of what they were doing. For example:

- China:
 - The Ministry of Agriculture is promoting programmes to integrate wetland conservation and utilization by weaving wetland improvement into wetland friendly agriculture, wetland friendly agriculture sightseeing, intensive utilization of wet agricultural fields, or water-saving agriculture;
 - The Ministry of Finance and the State Forestry Administration (Ramsar AA) are piloting ecological compensation for wetlands budgeting special funds for biodiversity conservation, channelling central government investment into infrastructure for forest conservation, and consolidating the Sanjiangyuan Nature Reserve;
 - The State Forestry Administration is working with the tourism management authorities to implement Ramsar principles, such as by classifying wetlands as one of seven ecotourism sites in China. At pilot sites, at least 10% of the income from tourism goes to 'collecting and compiling natural and cultural data, preserving the environment, promoting environmental education, conducting scientific research, promoting ecological knowledge, and conducting other activities ecologically beneficial to the site'.
- Japan: A number of Ramsar Sites are cultivating rice using methods that promote the use of the fields by migratory waterbirds. These sites then brand the rice and sell it at a higher price to support the farmers who are using this practice. These Sites are Kabukuri-numa and the surrounding rice paddies (Osaki city), Wataraseyusuichi (Oyama city), Biwa-ko (Takashima city), and Lower Maruyama River and the surrounding rice paddies (Toyooka city);

- Philippines: The Gawad Saka Award has been established to recognize the farmers, fisherfolks and others who have contributed to the development , promotion and sustainability of the agriculture-fishery sectors;
 - Thailand: The +annual Green Globe Award is given to individuals or groups who have dedicated themselves in conservation of natural resources and the environment.
88. Only 33% (7) of the Parties reporting said that they were taking actions to remove perverse incentives that discourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands (Indicator 1.11.2), and another 19% (4) said that they were planning to take such actions. Examples given include:
- Thailand: The latest NBSAP (2016-2020), has proposed removing incentives for economic crops such as rubber trees and oil palm tree because of the impact from the expansion of economic crop farming;
 - Viet Nam: The government is strictly prohibiting discharge or construction projects (including hydroelectric projects) that may impact on important wetlands or Ramsar Sites.
89. Malaysia reported that while it recognizes perverse incentives, especially those in the agri- and aquaculture sectors, as a developing countries it finds it difficult to address them because the country is working to develop those sectors to strengthen food security. Conservation and wise use of wetlands cannot compete with the need to develop such areas for food production and a novel approach is needed to dovetail development and wetland conservation together.

GOAL 2. WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

STRATEGY 2.1: Ramsar Site designation.

90. Some 62 % (13) of the Asian Parties that reported said that they had established a national strategy and priorities for further designation of Ramsar Sites (Indicator 2.1.1). In Indonesia, this is done through the “National Strategy for the Management of Wetlands” and in Japan, a list of potential Ramsar Sites was developed in 2010. One other Party said it had partially established such a strategy and priorities, while another five plan to do so.
91. Asian Parties reported that in the next triennium (2012-2015), they are planning to designate a total of 69 Ramsar Sites (Indicator 2.1.2), representing 22% of all planned designations globally. This number includes: 2 Ramsar Sites (Bhutan, Malaysia, Philippines, Nepal), 3 Sites (Indonesia, Israel, Myanmar, Oman, Sri Lanka, UAE), 4 Sites (Bangladesh, China, Kazakhstan, Viet Nam), 5 Sites (Pakistan, Thailand), 6 Sites (Lebanon), 14 Sites (Iraq).
92. The decision on which wetland will be designated will be decided by the National Wetland Committee (Oman), be based on the future national wetland inventory (Nepal), and will also be dependent on where local communities are carrying out conservation activities (Japan).

STRATEGY 2.2: Ramsar Site information

93. Some 71% of Contracting Parties reported that they are using the Ramsar Sites Information Service and its tools in national identification of further Ramsar Sites to designate (Indicator 2.2.1), and another two are planning to do so. In addition, Lebanon is preparing a GIS-based system to integrate all the related data from all existing and future Ramsar Sites, and Malaysia has prepared a Ramsar Information Tool Kit (2011) to guide wetlands managers to learn more about the Ramsar Convention and as a planning tool for future site designations.

STRATEGY 2.3: Management planning – new Ramsar Sites

94. Only six (29%) Parties reported that they have established adequate management planning processes at sites being prepared for Ramsar designation (Indicator 2.3.1), and another six said that they have partially done so. China and Japan have similar systems whereby wetlands nominated for Ramsar designation should already be legally protected as a protected area, wetland nature reserve or a wetland park, and have a park plan, designation plan, guidelines for conservation and management, or master plan equivalent to management planning developed and in place. A number of Parties reported that management plans are being prepared for their Ramsar Sites (e.g. Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam).

STRATEGY 2.4: Ramsar Site ecological character

95. Of the 292 Ramsar Sites that have been designated in Asia at the time of this analysis, some 140 Sites (48%) were reported by Parties to have a management plan (Indicators 2.4.1-2.4.3). Of those Sites, the plans are being implemented at 126 (90%). Management plans are being prepared for a further 26 Sites (9%).
96. China reported that a wetland can only be designated as a Ramsar Site when already protected as either a wetland nature reserve or a wetland park, and that under the Wetland Conservation and Management Provisions (2013), the candidate site should have a), established an early warning mechanism of wetland health b), formulated and are implementing its management plan c), carrying out regular monitoring, and d), creating digital archives. The Ramsar Administrative Authority (the State Forestry Administration), is now also preparing the 'Management Measures for Ramsar Sites in China' and the 'Technical Guidelines for Preparing Management Planning for Ramsar Sites in China', following the conceptual framework and requirements for developing management planning as adopted by the Ramsar Convention.
97. A total of 73 (25%) of the Ramsar Sites in Asia were reported by Contracting Parties to have had a cross-sectoral management committee (Indicator 2.4.4). In both Lao PDR and Malaysia, committees have been set up at the district and provincial/state level to oversee Site management. In the Philippines, the responsibility lies with the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), which is composed of the Ramsar Administrative Authority (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) as Chair, with the provincial planning and development coordinator, concerned municipalities, concerned local districts (barangays), communities (if appropriate), NGOs, peoples' organizations and concerned national government agencies.
98. Asian Parties reported that an Ecological Character Description (Indicator 2.4.5) had been prepared for 146 (12%) of their Ramsar Sites. However, there may be misunderstanding by some Parties between a Ramsar Information Sheet and an Ecological Characteristic Description as described in Resolution X.15.

STRATEGY 2.5: Ramsar Site management effectiveness

99. Only 33% of the Asian Parties said that they have made assessments of the management effectiveness of their Ramsar Sites (Indicator 2.5.1) but this is slightly higher than the rate of 29% reported to COP11. A further 24% (5) mentioned that they had carried out assessments of management effectiveness of some of their Ramsar Sites.
100. Parties who have conducted assessments of the management effectiveness of their Ramsar Sites include China (in 2009 for 36 sites and 2013 for 41 sites), Kazakhstan (in 2012), Philippines

(from 2012 as part of a GIZ funded project) and Thailand. For Thailand, the Ramsar Administrative Authority conducted a survey, monitoring and evaluation of effectiveness of six Ramsar Sites in 2013 and from the results, drafted 'The Management Standards of the Wetlands of International Importance'. Currently, the measures are being considered by the sub-committee on wetland management. Thailand is also promoting the use of the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) by the Ramsar Convention in the form of a Draft Resolution to COP12.

101. Lao PDR plans to use the METT in the coming triennium and in the UAE, the ministerial cabinet has adopted Protected Area Management Tools (PAME) as a national indicator. From 2015, all protected areas will be assessed annually for their management effectiveness. Nepal intends to incorporate assessments of the management effectiveness into their annual budget planning and programming system.

STRATEGY 2.6: Ramsar Site status

102. Some 67% (14) of the Asian Parties stated that they have mechanisms in place to be informed about changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites (Indicator 2.6.1). Another three Parties mentioned that they had mechanisms in place for some sites and a further three said that they plan to put such mechanisms in place. Such mechanisms are reported by Parties to be included in standard operating procedures and regulations (e.g. Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Philippines, Thailand, UAE), the site management plan (e.g. Bangladesh, Myanmar), through the involvement of local people in reporting (e.g. Iraq, Sri Lanka), and monitoring of the Ramsar Site by the national wetland committee (Malaysia). In China, the Administrative Authority has issued the 'Scheme for Early Warning the Changes of Ecological Features in Ramsar Sites (Tentative)', and each Ramsar management authority is requested to track all the changes at the Ramsar Site and take corresponding actions outlined in the Scheme.
103. Only 33% (7) of Asian Parties reported that they had reported all cases of change, or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites to the Ramsar Secretariat (Indicator 2.6.2). 10% (2) said that they had reported some of the cases and 33% (7) said that there were no negative changes to their Ramsar Sites to report. Over the past triennium, the Philippines had reported change to their Tubbataha Reef, LPPCHEA and Naujan Lake Ramsar Sites. The Secretariat was also involved in missions to Iraq, Thailand and the UAE to investigate issues facing Ramsar Sites.
104. Action taken to address issues at Ramsar Sites on the Montreux Record (Indicator 2.6.3): Of the 48 Ramsar Sites on the Montreux Record, 10 (21%) are in Asia. These 10 Sites represent 3% of the Sites in Asia. As a result, 71% (15) of the Parties reporting said that the question was not applicable and 19% (4) said that they had not taken action, presumably because they did not have any Sites on the Record. Only Iraq, with the Hawizeh Marsh Ramsar Site on the Montreux Record, reported that it had undertaken action to address the issues at the Site.

STRATEGY 2.7: Management of other internationally important wetlands

105. 43% (9) of the Asian Parties reporting said that they are maintaining the ecological character of those internationally important wetlands that have not yet been designated as Ramsar Sites (Indicator 2.7.1). Another 29% (6) are maintaining the ecological character of some sites and 10% (2) said that they planned to do so.

106. Parties said that they were able to maintain the ecological character of those other internationally important wetlands through legislation and mechanisms for their conservation (e.g. China, Malaysia, Myanmar, UAE), regular monitoring (e.g. Kazakhstan, Philippines, Viet Nam), and conservation and CEPA activities carried out at those sites (Thailand). However, Nepal said that it has not conducted a national wetland inventory and so has not been able to identify such sites.

GOAL 3. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

STRATEGY 3.1: Synergies and partnerships with MEAs and IGOs

107. Some 47% (10) of the Asian Parties reported that the focal points of other MEAs participated in the National Ramsar/Wetland Committee (Indicator 3.1.1) while 29% (6) planned to arrange for this in future. Some Parties reported that the focal points from the other MEAs were not members of the committee but could be called upon to attend when required (Philippines). In other cases, there were committees other than the National Ramsar/Wetland Committee to carry out the coordination work, such as the Committee of Forestry and Hunting in Kazakhstan.

108. Only 38% of the Asian Parties reported that mechanisms were in place for collaboration between the AA and the focal point of other UN, global and regional bodies (Indicator 3.1.2). 29% (6) said that this was partially achieved and 14% (3) said that it was planned. Some Parties (e.g. Myanmar and the UAE) said that there was cooperation between the AA and those agencies but other Parties said that there may not any mechanism for coordination (e.g. Pakistan, Viet Nam). In Iraq, the Italian/UN-FAO project 'Joint management of water resources, surface and groundwater and the reality of the Iraqi Marshlands' are supporting cooperation in the management of water resources in the Mesopotamia Basin.

STRATEGY 3.2: Regional initiatives

109. Regarding involvement in the development and support of Ramsar Regional Initiatives (Indicator 3.2.1), three Ramsar Regional Initiatives are operating in the Asia region under the framework of the Ramsar Convention. There are two regional centres, the Ramsar Regional Centre (RRC) - Central and West Asia based in the I.R. Iran, and the RRC - East Asia based in the R.O. Korea. The East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership is also based in the R.O. Korea. 57% (12) of the Asian Parties said that they had been involved in the development and support of at least one of these Regional Initiatives, and another 19% (4) said that they planned to do so. In particular, Iraq has been trying to establish an initiative for the Tigris and Euphrates Basins with riparian countries while Lao PDR is drafting a proposal with IUCN for a 'MekongWET' initiative. Lebanon has a project to develop an Arabic language wetland training programme for the MedWetCoast project.

110. Some 62% (13) of the Asian Parties reported that they are involved in supporting or participating in the development of other regional wetland and training and research centres (Indicator 3.2.2), and one said that it planned to do so. These regional initiatives include:

- An MOU signed between Bangladesh and India for the conservation of the Sundarbans (Bangladesh);
- Implementation of the regional project 'Strengthening Regional Cooperation for wildlife Protection' has been implemented (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal);
- Israel and Jordan for the management of the Jordan River (Israel);

- Project on 'Sustainable Development and Biodiversity and Ecosystem Conservation' based in Sabah district of Malaysia. As a part of the project, international training courses have been held in 2013 and 2014 (Japan);
- International training courses have been provided at the Biwa-ko Ramsar Site (2012) and Kushiro Ramsar Sites (2012, 2013) (Japan);
- Central Asian Flyway Initiative with neighboring countries (Kazakhstan);
- GLOBWETLAND II Project: applications of spatial data analysis and GIS in mapping and managing wetlands and Ramsar Sites (Lebanon);
- ASEAN wide initiative on wetlands and especially peatlands to mitigate haze caused by peat fires (e.g. Malaysia, Viet Nam);
- University Network for Wetland Research and Training of Mekong Region (Thailand).

STRATEGY 3.3: International assistance

111. Regarding funding support by Parties who are 'donor countries' for wetland conservation and management in other countries (Indicator 3.3.1), some 48% (10) of the Asian Parties reported that this was not applicable and only three Parties said that they had given funding support to other countries for wetland conservation and management. Japan was the main donor in the Asia region during the past triennium, providing generous funding support to the Ramsar Small Grant Fund, while the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has been an important provider of funding support for wetland conservation and management in a range of countries worldwide.
112. 48% (10) of the Asian Parties said that the indicator for Parties who are 'donor countries', including environmental safeguards and assessments in development proposals (Indicator 3.3.2) was not applicable, but two reported having environmental safeguards and assessments in the development proposals of their development assistance agency.
113. For Asian Parties that receive development assistance, 48% (10) said that they had received funding support from development assistance agencies of other countries for in-country wetland conservation and management (Indicator 3.3.3). Parties receiving funding support stated that they received support mainly from Japan (e.g. Bhutan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines), Germany (e.g. China, Philippines), USA (e.g. China, Philippines), Australia (China), Denmark (Philippines), and Finland (Lao PDR).
114. Parties reported receiving funding support from other sources, such as the GEF (e.g. China, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand), Ramsar Regional Centre – East Asia (e.g. Lao PDR, Philippines, Viet Nam), UNDP (e.g. Nepal, Philippines), ADB (Philippines), MRC (Lao PDR), UNDB (Philippines) and the World Bank (Sri Lanka).

STRATEGY 3.4: Sharing information and expertise

115. Only 24% of the Asian Parties reported they had established networks for knowledge sharing and training (Indicator 3.4.1), while 19% (4) said that such networks had been partially established and 14% (3) said they planned to establish such networks. Examples include:
- An MOU between India and Bangladesh on Conservation of the Sundarbans (Bangladesh);
 - Five twinning agreements between Ramsar Sites in Japan and Australia (Japan);
 - Partial network between Iran and Pakistan (Pakistan);
 - Project for the 'Sustainable Use and Protection of Peatlands' (e.g. Indonesia, Malaysia, Viet Nam, Philippines);

- Coral Triangle Initiative (e.g. Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Philippines, Timor-Leste);
- University Network for Wetland Research and Training of Mekong Region (Thailand);
- International Network for Water and Ecosystem in Paddy Fields (Thailand).

116. A large percentage (71%, 15) of Asian Parties reported that information about wetlands and Ramsar Sites and their status have been made available to the public (Indicator 3.4.2). A further 14% (3) said that information had partly been made available and 10% (2) are planning to make such information available. Information has been made available on the website of the AA (e.g. Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Philippines, Thailand) or on the websites of NGOs (e.g. China, Japan, Kazakhstan, Philippines). Information is also made available using posters, brochures, documentaries and other media (e.g. Bhutan, China, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, UAE).

117. A high percentage (71%, 15) of Asian Parties reported that information on the wetlands and Ramsar Sites in their country has been made available to the Ramsar Secretariat (Indicator 3.4.3). 14% (3) said that the information had been partially been available and 19% (2) said that they planned to make it available.

STRATEGY 3.5: Shared wetlands, river basins and migratory species

118. 43% (9) of Parties reported that they had identified all their transboundary wetland systems (Indicator 3.5.1), and 5% (1) said that such systems had been partially identified. Three Parties reported that the question on identification of transboundary wetlands was not applicable. Examples of transboundary wetland systems reported by Parties where they had joint projects include the Heart of Borneo programme between Indonesia-Malaysia-Brunei Darussalam (Indonesia), and the Tri National Wetlands programme between Indonesia-Papua New Guinea-Australia (Indonesia). Kazakhstan reported having a number of transboundary wetlands with China, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia and Uzbekistan.

119. Only a small percentage (10%, 2) of Parties stated that they have effective cooperative management for shared wetland systems (Indicator 3.5.2), although 43% (9) said that they had partial cooperation. One Party reported that it planned to develop such a cooperative management system and three mentioned that the question was not applicable. Examples quotes by Parties of cooperative management of shared wetland systems include:

- Co-management agreement signed between Xingkaihu Ramsar Site and Sanjiang Ramsar Site (China);
- Indus River water-sharing between India and Pakistan under the World Bank (Pakistan);
- Mekong River Commission (MRC) has a mission for cooperation between riparian countries (Myanmar, Lao PDR, Thailand, Cambodia and Viet Nam) but further cooperation/initiatives is needed (Lao PDR);
- Cooperative management for the Salawin river and Kraburi river (Myanmar, Thailand);
- Agreement for sharing of the water of the Jordan River between Jordan and Israel (Israel);
- There is some cooperative management for sharing of the water of the Ganges between India and Bangladesh, but there are no agreements for other shared river basins (Bangladesh).

120. While effective cooperative management for shared wetland system is an objective, geopolitical realities makes it difficult to achieve (Israel). Likewise, Kazakhstan stated that the country has agreements with China on the water resources of the Ili-Balkhash and Ob'-Irtysh basins, and with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan on transboundary rivers, but implementation of all the

agreements face several challenges. In addition, national water system shared between provinces and states need to be effectively shared, such as in the Lake Urmia Basin (I.R.Iran).

121. Over half of the Asian Parties (62%, 13) said that they participated in regional networks for wetland-dependent migratory species (Indicator 3.5.3), and another 19% (4) said that they planned to. Such regional networks include:

- Asian Waterbirds Census (Philippines);
- Other regional networks for migratory waterbirds, such as the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (China), Central Asian Flyway, African Eurasian Waterbirds Agreement (Israel);
- Regional networks for the Giant Mekong Catfish *Pangasianodon gigas* (Lao PDR);
- Turtle Island Heritage Protected Area, the first transboundary protected area for marine turtles in the world (Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia);
- Regional network for dugongs (Thailand);
- Various MOUs signed under CMS, e.g. for Marine Turtle, raptors, and Siberian Crane (Pakistan).

GOAL 4. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

STRATEGY 4.1: CEPA

122. All the Asian Parties are carrying out wetland CEPA activities in some form but less than half have established CEPA action plans to guide their work (Indicator 4.1.1 a-d). While 38% of Asian Parties have CEPA action plans at the national level and 43% at the local/site level, only 14% reported having such plans at the sub-national level and similarly 14% at the catchment/basin level (see table below).

	Yes	No	In progress	Planned
At the national level	38% (8)	29% (6)	14% (3)	19% (4)
Sub-national level	14% (3)	33% (7)	29% (6)	24% (5)
Catchment/basin level	14% (3)	38% (8)	33% (7)	14% (3)
Local/site level	43% (9)	19% (4)	24% (5)	14% (3)

123. At the national level, Japan and Malaysia stated that the need to develop CEPA activities is included in their respective NBSAP. At the local level, China, Japan and Malaysia reported that some of their Ramsar Sites have developed their own site level CEPA action plan. The UAE mentioned that while wetland CEPA is being implemented, the activities are limited due to insufficient facilities and capacity.

124. Regarding the establishment of centres at Ramsar Sites and wetlands (Indicator 4.1.2), Asian Parties reported having established a total of 114 centres at their Ramsar Sites, representing 18% of the total number of centres at Ramsar Sites globally. At other wetlands, Asian Parties have 15 centres, representing just 5% of the global total. This emphasizes the important role of Ramsar Sites in promoting wetland CEPA. Parties that reported having such centres included Bangladesh (1 at a Ramsar Site and 0 at other wetlands), Bhutan (0,1), China (32, 0), Indonesia (7, 4), Israel (2, 0), Japan (30, 0), Kazakhstan (4, 0), Lebanon (1, 0), Malaysia (5, 3), Myanmar (1, 5), Oman (1, 0), Pakistan (8, 2), Philippines (5, 0), Sri Lanka (4, 0), Thailand (11, 0), UAE (2, 0) and Viet Nam (7, 0).

125. In China, Ramsar Sites are expected to establish an education centre as indicated in their master plan or management planning. In the country's 12th Five-Year Plan for 'Implementing National Wetland Conservation Programme (2011-2015)', wetland education centres will be established

or upgraded at ten wetland sites. Apart from government sponsored centres, NGOs have also established centres at some wetlands and Ramsar Sites.

126. Some 62% (13) of the Asian Parties said that they promoted stakeholder participation in decision-making (Indicator 4.1.3a) with respect to wetland planning and management (e.g. Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Viet Nam). This is higher than that reported by 47% of the Parties for COP11 (2012). A further 19% (4) said that partly involved stakeholders and another 19% said that they planned to do so.
127. China stated that “active engagement and support of all stakeholders have proved to the secret to sustain wetlands. Over the past three years, the stakeholders that care about wetlands contributed to the promulgation of a series of wetland-related regulations, bylaws, plans, policies, and business practices.”
128. Regarding the promotion of stakeholder participation in selection of new Ramsar Sites and Site management (Indicator 4.1.3b), 52% (11) of the Asian Parties said that they specially involved local stakeholders in the selection of new Ramsar Sites and in Ramsar Site management (e.g. Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka). 19% mentioned that they partly involved stakeholders and another 14% said that they planned to do so.
129. In Thailand, the process for the designation of new Ramsar Sites is carried out by the responsible agency or community of that area. It is similar in the Philippines where the designation of new Sites requires the local stakeholders to send a letter of request to the Ramsar AA indicating that they are fully aware of the responsibility of the designated site. In the UAE, new designations come from the municipalities to the central ministry.
130. Concerning stakeholder participation in the management of Ramsar Sites, the Philippines stated that the preparation of site management plans is participatory. In Japan, stakeholder participation is especially important at Ramsar Sites that includes rice paddies, such as at Kabukuri-numa. In the UAE, the site management committee is the main opportunity for stakeholder involvement.
131. Only 29% (6) of the Asian Parties have made assessments of their national and local training needs to implement the Convention (Indicator 4.1.4), but this figure is higher than that for reported for COP11. A further 29% (6) of the Parties said that they have partially made assessments of their training needs and another 14% (3) planned to do so. In China, training need assessments were conducted at the national, provincial, and site levels in projects funded by Australia, Germany and the United States.
132. Since COP11, Asian Parties reported 52 training opportunities for wetland site managers at Ramsar Sites and 20 opportunities for managers from other wetlands (Indicator 4.1.5). Although the number available for managers at Ramsar Sites was higher than reported to COP11 (21 opportunities), it still only represented opportunities for 14% of Site managers worldwide.
133. Parties reporting training opportunities included Bangladesh (2 training opportunities for managers of Ramsar Sites, 0 for managers of other wetlands), China (8, 6), Indonesia (3, 0), Japan (6, 0), Kazakhstan (5, 0), Myanmar (1, 6), Nepal (4, 2), Philippines (3, 1), Sri Lanka (6, 0), Thailand (1, 2), UAE (10, 0) and Viet Nam (3, 3). Parties reporting no training opportunities included Bhutan, Iraq, Israel, Kyrgyz, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Malaysia and Oman.

134. Many Parties in East and South-east Asia stated that the training opportunities for their site managers was provided by the Ramsar Regional Centre – East Asia, to whom they were grateful. In Iraq, the Ministry of Water Resources has signed an agreement under the India-Iraq Economic Cooperation Council to set up specialized training courses to staff working in the area of wetlands, related to integrated wetland management.
135. Training opportunities were also organized at the national level. In Japan, the Hokkaido Ramsar Network of Site managers held lectures, workshops and excursions as wetland site manager trainings on the occasion of its annual general meeting. In Kazakhstan, five trainings courses were organized for Site staff in the last three years as part of the routine capacity development for protected area staff. The trainings were not specifically for Ramsar convention implementation but for general management and conservation questions. National level training was also provided in Thailand.
136. The percentage of Asian Parties reporting that they have an operational cross-sectoral national Ramsar/wetlands committee (Indicator 4.1.6) increased from 13% in 2005 (COP9) to 33% in 2008 (COP10), 71% in 2012 (COP11) and now 62% (COP12). In their report to COP12, a further 14% (3) of the Parties stated that they plan to establish a committee. China mentioned that its committee included ten state sectors, while some Parties said that their committees were supported by sub-committees (e.g. Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, Thailand). In Kazakhstan, Ramsar and wetlands issues are discussed at meetings of the scientific-technical Council of Forestry and Hunting Committee and intersectoral meetings of the 'MEAWT'. Generally, although Parties may have established a committee to discuss Ramsar and wetland issues, it is just as important that the committee has responsibility and also meets on a regular basis. In China and Malaysia, the committees meets annually. In the Philippines, the committee meets twice per year. However in Lao PDR, the committee has met only once since COP11.
137. Around half of the Asian Parties reporting said that they had other communication mechanisms in place (Indicator 4.1.7) to share information with a), Ramsar Site managers (48% of Parties) b), the national focal points of other MEAs (52%) and c), other ministries, departments and agencies (52%).

	Yes	No	Partly	Planned
Ramsar Site managers	48% (10)	19% (4)	24% (5)	10% (2)
Other MEA NFPs	52% (11)	14% (3)	24% (5)	10% (2)
Other ministries, departments and agencies	52% (11)	24% (5)	24% (5)	0% (0)

138. The main means of communication with all three stakeholder groups were phone and email (e.g. Bhutan, China, Kazakhstan, Malaysia), as well as by invitation to attend Ramsar-related activities such as World Wetland Day, meetings and workshops (e.g. Bhutan, China, Thailand, UAE), and the national Ramsar/wetland committee (Japan). Thailand mentioned that social media, such as Facebook, was also used for communication.
139. World Wetland Day (WWD) are popular events with Asian Parties, with 95% (20) of the Parties reporting having them since COP11 (Indicator 4.1.8). This compares with 88% of Parties reporting having organized WWD events at COP11 (2012).
140. Apart from WWD events, 95% of the Asian Parties reporting that they have organized other campaigns, programmes and projects since COP11 to raise awareness of the importance of wetlands to people and wildlife, and the ecosystem benefits/services provided by wetlands

(Indicator 4.1.9). This compares to 82% of the Parties in Asia indicating that they had done this prior to COP11.

141. Parties organized many events to highlight the importance of wetlands, such as World Biodiversity Day, World Earth Day, World Migratory Bird Day, Forest Day, Wildlife Day and Environment Day (e.g. Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Iraq, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR). China co-organized the Asia Wetland Symposium (2012), the 'Yangtze River Wetland Conservation Network Annual Meeting', and the 'China Wetland Culture Festival' to promote greater awareness and consensus for wetland conservation. In 2013, Japan celebrated the 20th anniversary of COP5 in Kushiro. Malaysia was also active in promoting awareness of wetland using trailers on television.

STRATEGY 4.2: Convention financial capacity

142. Some 76% of Asian Parties mentioned that they had paid in full their contributions for 2012, 2013 and 2014 (Indicator 4.2.1). This is quite an improvement since 2012 when only 47% of Asian Parties reported having paid their contributions in full.
143. Regarding voluntary contributions to non-core funded Convention activities (Indicator 4.2.2): apart from their annual contributions, Japan has also provide generous financial support for small projects in Asia; Cambodia generously hosted the Asia Pre-COP12 meeting (November 2014); while Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iraq, Malaysia and Thailand either partially or completely covered their costs to attend the meeting.

STRATEGY 4.3: Convention bodies effectiveness

144. 62% (13) of the Asian Parties stated that they had used their previous Ramsar National Reports in monitoring its implementation of the Convention (Indicator 4.3.1) (e.g. China, Kazakhstan, Myanmar, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, UAE). This compares with 47% of the Parties when they reported to COP11. Japan and Kazakhstan mentioned that they had used their report to COP11 to draft their report to COP12.

STRATEGY 4.4: Working with IOPs and others

145. Some 67% of the Asian Parties said that they have received assistance from one or more of the Convention's IOPs (Indicator 4.4.1), as well as national NGOs in their implementation of the Convention. This compares with 59% of the Parties reporting to COP11. Examples of such cooperation include:
- Organization of meetings (China-WI, China-WWF, China-IWMI, Lao-IUCN);
 - Wetland surveys (Sri Lanka-IUCN, Sri Lanka-IWMI);
 - Biodiversity surveys (China-WWF, Japan-Birdlife, Japan-WI, Philippines-WWF);
 - Scientific cooperation (Israel-Birdlife, IUCN, WI, Philippines-WWF);
 - Management of Ramsar Sites and other habitats (Bangladesh-IUCN; China-WWF, Lao-IUCN, Philippines-WWF, Philippines-IUCN, UAE);
 - Awareness activities (China-WWF, Philippines-WWF);
 - Working with local communities (Philippines-WWF, Viet Nam-IUCN);
 - Funding support for projects (Thailand-IUCN).
146. Compared to receiving support from IOPs, a smaller percentage of Asian Parties (48%) mentioned that they had provided assistance to IOPs (Indicator 4.4.2). Examples of support provided included providing:

- Funding support to Wetlands International-China for the production of their wetland newsletter so that it can be distributed free of charge. The Hong Kong SAR government provides about 230ha of land at a nominal annual fee and some HK\$1.6 million annually to WWF Hong Kong to carry out wetland habitat management at the Mai Po Nature Reserve (China);
- Funding support to Wetlands International (Japan);
- Technical and organizational support (Lao-IUCN, Thailand-IUCN);
- Data (Israel).

Annex 1.a

General overview of answers to selected indicators: Goals 1 and 2

* “yes” ○ “in progress”, “partly”, or “planned”, × “no”

Goal 1: Wise Use of Wetlands

- 1.1.1 Does the country have a comprehensive National Wetland Inventory?
- 1.3.1 Is a National Wetland Policy (ore equivalent instrument) in place?
- 1.3.3 Are EIA made for those development projects that may affect wetlands?
- 1.6.2 Have all wetland management plans been based on sound scientific research?
- 1.8.2 Have wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes been implemented?
- 1.11.1 Have actions been taken to encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands?

Goal 2: Wetlands of International Importance

- 2.1.1 Have a national strategy and priorities been established for further wetland designation?
- 2.2.1 Are the Ramsar Sites Information Service and its tools being used in national identification of new sites?
- 2.3.1 Have the management planning processes been established for sites being prepared for designation?
- 2.5.1 Have any assessments of the effectiveness of the site management been carried out?
- 2.6.2 Are arrangements in place for reporting the change of ecological character of Ramsar Sites?

Contracting Party	Goal 1: Wise Use of Wetlands						Goal 2: Wetlands of International Importance				
	1.1.1	1.3.1	1.3.3	1.6.2	1.8.2	1.11.1	2.1.1	2.2.1	2.3.1	2.5.1	2.6.2
Bangladesh	○	*	*	○	*	*	*	*	○	*	*
Bhutan	○	○	○	×	*	×	○	*	×	×	*
China	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	n.a.
Indonesia	*	*	*	○	*	*	*	*	*	○	n.a.
Iraq	○	○	○	*	*	○	*	*	○	×	*
Israel	*	○	*	*	*	×	○	○	*	*	n.a.
Japan	*	*	×	○	*	*	*	×	*	○	*
Kazakhstan	*	○	*	○	*	×	*	*	○	○	n.a.
Kyrgyz Republic	×	○	×	*	○	×	×	×	×	×	n.a.
Lao PDR	*	○	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Lebanon	×	×	×	*	○	○	○	*	×	×	○
Malaysia	○	○	*	*	*	○	*	*	*	×	○
Myanmar	*	×	○	○	*	×		*	×	*	×
Nepal	○	*	○	○	*	○	*	○	×	×	*
Oman	×	×	○	×	*	○	○	*	×	×	×
Pakistan	*	*	*	○	*	○	*	*	○	○	n.a.
Philippines	○	*	×	*	*	*	*	*	○	*	*
Sri Lanka	*	*	○	○	*	*	*	*	×	○	×
Thailand	*	*	×	*	○	*	*	*	○	*	*
UAE	○	×	○	*	*	n.a.	○	*	○	×	*
Viet Nam	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Annex 1.b

General overview of answers to selected indicators: Goals 1 and 2

* “yes” ○ “in progress”, “partly”, or “planned” , × “no”

Goal 3: International Cooperation

- 3.1.1 Are mechanisms in place for collaboration between the Ramsar AA and the focal points of other MEAs?
- 3.1.2 Are mechanisms in place for collaboration between the Ramsar AA and focal points of UN and other global agencies?
- 3.4.1 Have networks for wetlands sharing common features been established, nationally or internationally, for knowledge sharing and training?
- 3.4.2 Has the wetland related information of your country been made publicly available?
- 3.5.1 Have all transboundary/shared wetland systems been identified?
- 3.5.2 Is effective cooperative management in place for shared wetland systems?

Goal 4: Implementation Capacity

- 4.1.1a Has an Action Plan for wetland CEPA been established at the national level?
- 4.1.1b Has an Action Plan for wetland CEPA been established at the sub-national level?
- 4.1.3a Does the Contracting Party promote public participation in decision-making with respect to wetland planning and management?
- 4.1.6 Does the Contracting Party have an operational National Ramsar/Wetlands Committee?
- 4.3.1 Has the Contracting Party used its previous Ramsar National Reports in monitoring its implementation of the Convention?
- 4.4.1 Has the Contracting Party received assistance from the Convention’s IOPs on implementation?

Contracting Party	Goal 3: International Cooperation						Goal 4: Implementation Capacity					
	3.1.1	3.1.2	3.4.1	3.4.2	3.5.1	3.5.2	4.1.1a	4.1.1b	4.1.3a	4.1.6	4.3.1	4.4.1
Bangladesh	*	○	○	*	*	○	*	×	*	*	*	*
Bhutan	○	×	×	*	×	×	×	×	○	○	×	×
China	*	*	○	*	*	○	*	○	*	*	*	*
Indonesia	*	*	*	*	*	○	*	○	*	*	*	*
Iraq	○	○	×	○	*	×	○	○	○	*	×	*
Israel	○	○	×	*	*	○	×	×	*	×	×	*
Japan	×	○	*	*	n.a.	n.a.	*	○	○	*	*	*
Kazakhstan	*	*	○	○	*	○	×	×	○	×	*	*
Kyrgyz Republic	○	○	×	*	×	×	○	○	○	×	×	×
Lao PDR	×	×	×	*	×	○	×	×	*	*	×	*
Lebanon	○	*	○	○	×	×	○	○	○	○	*	×
Malaysia	*	*	×	*	n.a.	*	○	×	*	*	*	*
Myanmar	×	*	×	*	×	n.a.	×	×	○	×	○	*
Nepal	*	○	○	○	×	○	*	○	*	○	○	○
Oman	○	○	×	○	×	○	×	○	○	×	×	×
Pakistan	*	○	○	*	*	○	○	○	*	*	*	×
Philippines	*	*	*	*	n.a.	n.a.	○	○	*	*	*	*
Sri Lanka	*	○	○	*	○	○	*	*	*	*	*	*
Thailand	○	×	*	*	*	×	*	*	*	*	*	*
UAE	*	×	×	*	×	×	○	○	*	*	*	*
Viet Nam	×	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Annex 2

Summary statistics

The table provides a general overview of the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the Asia region from COP8 to COP12, using data submitted in the National Reports. Insufficient National Reports were received on time before COP9 to make an analysis of the progress in implementation at that stage.

The table also shows if particular actions are more (or less) widely addressed in the Asia region compared to the global average; based on the percentages of the Contracting Parties having answered positively.

* = Progress; ○ = no change; × = regression

Indicator	Affirmative countries (%)					Progress in Asia since COP11
	Asia COP 9	Asia COP10	Asia COP11	Asia COP12	Globally COP12	
Inventory and Assessment: country has a comprehensive national wetland inventory (1.1.1.)	40	50	53	52	47	○
Policy and legislation: National Wetland Policy (or equivalent instrument) in place (1.3.1)	36	58	71	48	55	×
Wetland restoration and rehabilitation: wetland restoration/ rehabilitation programmes or projects implemented (1.8.2)	80	71	71	81	70	○
Ramsar site designation: strategy and priorities established for further designation of Ramsar Sites, using the Strategic Framework (2.1.1)	60	54	53	62	41	*
Condition of Ramsar sites: all cases of change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites have been reported to the Ramsar Secretariat (Article 3.2) (2.6.1)	27	13	41	67	73	*
Collaboration: mechanisms in place at the national level for collaboration between the Ramsar AA and the focal points of other MEAs (3.1.1)	53	50	47	48	45	○
Sharing expertise and experience: networks established for knowledge sharing and training (3.4.1)	13	33	47	24	35	×
National Wetland Committee: National Ramsar/Wetlands cross-sectoral Committee (or equivalent body) is operational (4.1.6)	13	33	71	62	63	×

Annex 3

Asian Ramsar Sites designated since COP11

	Country	Number of Sites	Total area of new Sites (ha)
1	China	5	292,387
2	India	1	12,000
3	Indonesia	1	408,286
4	Kazakhstan	1	330,000
5	Korea, Republic of	1	611
6	Oman	1	172
7	Philippines	2	22,377
8	Sri Lanka	1	165,800
9	Thailand	2	20,022
10	United Arab Emirates	3	6,958
11	Viet Nam	2	61,853
	TOTAL	20	1,320,466

Annex 4

Number of Asian Ramsar Sites for which information is not up to date

Country	Number of sites ¹	Country	Number of sites ¹
BAHRAIN	2	LEBANON	4
BANGLADESH	2	MALAYSIA	5
CHINA ²	8	MONGOLIA	11
INDIA	25	NEPAL	8
INDONESIA	3	PAKISTAN	19
IRAN, I.R.	21	PHILIPPINES	3
IRAQ	1	SRI LANKA	3
ISRAEL	2	SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC	1
JAPAN	32	TAJIKISTAN	5
JORDAN	1	THAILAND	10
KAZAKHSTAN	2	UZBEKISTAN	1
KOREA, R.O.	7	VIET NAM	2
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC	1		

¹ Numbers in this column are the numbers of Sites for which the Administrative Authorities have submitted an updated RIS that is currently being processed by the Secretariat and/or for which further information or clarification has been requested from the Contracting Party.

² The Contracting Party has advised the Secretariat that it will update its Ramsar Site information once the RIS – 2012 revision adopted at COP11 becomes operational.

Annex 5

Siem Reap Message

Siem Reap Message On Wetlands for our Future¹

Asian Wetland Symposium/Ramsar Pre-COP12 Asia Regional Meeting

Siem Reap, Cambodia

3 to 7 November, 2014

Introduction

1. Thanking the Government of Cambodia for their generosity and hospitality in successfully hosting the joint Asian Wetland Symposium and Ramsar Pre-COP12 Asia Regional Meeting in Siem Reap, from 3rd to 7th November 2014;
2. Appreciating the diversity of presentations made on wetland conservation and wise use in the Asia Region in general, and in particular from Cambodia regarding the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve and the Mekong river basin;
3. Following the field visit to the Prek Toal Core Area of the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve, the meeting participants recognise the international importance of the site and its considerable potential for designation as a Wetland of International Importance ('Ramsar Site'), and to be managed under the principle of the wise use of wetlands;
4. Recognizing that this first joint meeting of the Asian Wetland Symposium and the Ramsar Pre-COP12 Asia Regional Meeting, as called for in Resolution IX.19, has proved to be effective in increasing understanding among the various wetland stakeholders in Asia and has provided a platform to promote and enhance partnerships between them;

Wise use of wetlands

Wetland ecosystem services

5. Recognizing that wetlands are water infrastructures and that wetlands and the resources that they support, e.g. water and biodiversity, are connectors of nations
6. Recognizing that wetland ecosystem services, and in particular the provision of and delivery of water, are vital for human well-being; recognizing also, that healthy functioning wetlands contribute to sustainable development, for example in ensuring livelihood, food security, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation;
7. Recognizing the importance of inter-linkages between wetland conservation and poverty eradication, and the need to use a wetland ecosystem based approach which simultaneously involves relevant stakeholders at the different scales/levels – from policy to the site management level and local community - to mainstream this concept into national programs, policies and action plans;
8. Recognizing also the role of wetlands in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, the meeting participants encourage Contracting Parties to put in place policies that will ensure the conservation of wetlands, and to manage and restore wetlands so as to maintain this vital service;

¹ This document is a report of the main points discussed during the joint Asian Wetland Symposium and the Ramsar Pre-COP12 Asia Regional Meeting

9. Contracting Parties are encouraged to put in place policies that will ensure conservation of wetlands and protection of the rights of wetland-dependent people displaced by natural hazard
10. Recognizing the cultural values of wetlands in Asia, including religious institutions, and their importance in supporting the conservation and wise use of wetlands, invites all interested persons to become members of, and participate in the Ramsar Culture Network (www.ramsarculture.org);
11. In decision-making related to infrastructure development, give priority to maintaining the ecological integrity of wetland ecosystems, and to the cultural and socio-economic values of wetlands, particularly for wetland-dependent communities;
12. Emphasizing the need for policies that encourage independent environmental impact assessment (EIA) for infrastructure development which could potentially impact the functionality of wetlands, and the need to develop a mechanism to minimize negative impacts of developments on wetlands with the aim for conservation and wise use of wetlands;
13. Urging Contracting Parties to develop and implement energy saving policies, and to explore, whenever possible, alternative, clean energy resources that do not impact negatively on wetlands;

Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA)

14. Recognizing the good practices and lessons learnt under the Ramsar Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) program, the Contracting Parties reiterate and reaffirm the crucial need to increase awareness of government policy makers and the private sector, and to enhance the understanding and take into consideration the importance of wetlands and their ecosystem services in decision-making processes;
15. Promoting the CEPA program at all levels; and recognizing the value of wetland education centres, and the interest expressed by the participants of this meeting for such centres to be connected, such as through Wetland Link International (<http://wli.wwwt.org.uk>);
16. Recognizing the vital role that local communities play in the management of Ramsar Sites and other wetlands, and the need to consider local and cultural knowledge and practices in wetland management practices;
17. Noting that there is a wealth of experience, information and knowledge in Asia from wetland projects and that this should be shared in more efficient manner;
18. Encouraging Contracting Parties to ensure capacity development of stakeholders for effective management and wise use of wetlands;

Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)

19. Noting the importance of priority wetlands identified under the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) Regional Initiative, and calling on Contracting Parties to recognise the value of these ecosystems and to designate these sites as Wetlands of International Importance, and to designate sites that meet the relevant criteria as EAAFP Flyway Network Sites;
20. Recognising the need to promote the conservation of Ramsar Sites in terms of both quantity and quality, and encouraging Contracting Parties to develop a set of best practices guidelines for Ramsar Site management and to provide support at the policy level to implement these best practices. Contracting Parties are encouraged to consider adopting simple and effective tools to evaluate the management effectiveness of their Ramsar Sites and other wetlands;
21. Noting the need for Contracting Parties to ensure that the Ramsar Information Sheets for their Ramsar Sites are updated every 6 years and encouraging NGOs and local site managers to support the Contracting Parties in making these updates;
22. Encouraging Contracting Parties to use the Ramsar Advisory Missions mechanism to address and respond to threats to their Ramsar Sites; Noting that Ramsar Advisory Missions have

already been implemented in Pakistan (post-floods disaster), and requested by Iraq (potential oil industry threats), and urging Contracting Parties to request such Advisory Missions when change or likely change of ecological character of Ramsar Sites occurs;

National and international cooperation

23. Encouraging countries to consider ecosystem services mapping and valuation at the basin scale as a way to inform and improve decision making process;
24. Urging policy makers to establish bi-lateral or multilateral technical committee to consider the issue of collaborative management of transboundary river basins, especially with addressing the needs of local communities at both sides;
25. Encouraging Contracting Parties to engage with and support the work of the current Ramsar Regional Initiatives and the Regional Training Centre in Thailand, and to support the establishment of other regional initiatives such as the proposed regional initiative among the Mekong river basin countries and the proposed regional initiative for South Asia;
26. Encouraging Contracting Parties to offer technical and financial support to the Governments of the Least Developed Countries and countries in special situations who are Parties to the Convention, to fulfil their obligation under the Convention as well as ensure participation in all important forums including the COP.

Looking forward to Ramsar COP12

27. Presenting the view of the Asian Contracting Parties on the Draft Resolutions, as well as the priority themes and actions for the STRP to undertake during the 2016-2018. These are:
 1. Best practice methodologies/tools to monitor Ramsar Sites, including surveying, mapping, and inventorying;
 2. Balancing wetland conservation and development: infrastructure;
 3. Best practices for developing and implementing management plans for protected areas/ Ramsar Sites;
 4. Methodologies for valuation of wetlands goods and services, and then jointly:
 - 5a. Balancing wetland conservation and development: urbanization, and
 - 5b. Legal frameworks for conservation of wetlands;
28. Presenting the views of the Asian Contracting Parties on other priorities identified. There were:
 - a) The need to enhance the linkages between science and policy and;
 - b) Addressing climate change adaptation-disaster risk reduction-ecosystem management (including restoration) nexus and focussing on improving community resilience.
29. Acknowledging the interest of most of the Contracting Parties for the concept of a Ramsar Community Accreditation scheme and requests them to provide written suggested improvements to the DR to the Secretariat;
30. Urging the Convention to support the adoption of new working/official languages of the Convention and the important role of effective communication in improving the visibility of the Convention at all levels