



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Ramsar COP12 DOC.13 Rev.1
English only

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

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/oceania-17.

Background to the Oceania Region and the Regional Overview

1. **Contracting Parties in Oceania** (8): Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands*, New Zealand, Palau**, Papua New Guinea**, Samoa (*Contracting Party whose National Report was submitted too late to be included in the quantitative analysis; ** Contracting Parties who, as of January 2015, have still not submitted their National Report).
2. **Countries not yet Contracting Parties as of January 2015** (8): Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru*, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tonga*, Tuvalu, Vanuatu* (*countries that are making preparations for accession to the Ramsar Convention).
3. The overview below gives examples of how the Contracting Parties in Oceania have been implementing the Convention since the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (2012) and is based on analysis of the five National Reports submitted by the time of the analysis, September 2014. Information was also collected from regional meetings, communications with the Parties, and other sources. A summary of the Regional Preparatory Meeting for COP12 held in Nadi, Fiji, in August 2014, is at:
www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/orm6_meeting_summary_final.pdf.

Main achievements since COP11 and priorities for 2016-2018

A. Most successful aspects of implementation of the Convention

Wise use of wetlands

Wetland inventory and assessment

4. In 2014, the wetland inventories for Palau, Kiribati and Vanuatu (non-Contracting Party) were updated through funding support from the Australian Government and the Noumea

Convention¹. This project aimed to update the wetland inventories for those countries as a means of strengthening the baseline state of knowledge of wetlands in these countries. Such baseline information is valuable for informing conservation decisions, raising awareness of the importance of wetlands, influencing public perception of wetlands, creating ongoing monitoring, revealing trends over time, identifying priority sites for conservation management (e.g. for designating Ramsar Sites or other types of protected areas) and as a tool for planning and implementing effective conservation interventions for wetlands, especially in light of the impacts of climate change. The project built national capacity to conduct future wetland inventory updates, and to use information collated in the inventory process in national decision making. The collated data is held by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), which acts as the central depository and dissemination point. Updating wetland inventories is a priority under the SPREP Regional Wetlands Action Plan 2011-2013.

5. In 2014, Australia prepared 'Boundary descriptions and mapping guidelines' to improve Ramsar Site boundary descriptions and maps. These guidelines assist jurisdictions and site managers to prepare accurate and legally defensible boundary demarcations (descriptions, spatial data and maps). In Western Australia, an 'Audit of Wetlands' has been undertaken by the Department of Parks and Wildlife. The Audit has resulted in better information on the location, extent and biodiversity values of wetlands throughout the state.

Policy, legislation and institutions

6. The Fijian Government is formulating National Protected Area legislation and, as part of the process, the Fiji Environment Law Association reviewed all environment-related legislation to identify gaps and to gauge areas needing strengthening. Papua New Guinea has developed a draft National Protected Areas System (NPAS) Policy. The NPAS has been developed primarily to address the issue of biodiversity loss; it will support the development and management of a National Protected Area Network and guide organizations and agencies involved in biodiversity conservation to harmonise their efforts in a structured and logical approach to the establishment of protected areas, including Ramsar Sites.

Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services

7. For Samoa, environmental sustainability and wetlands conservation have been effectively mainstreamed and integrated into national and sector level development plans. The 'Strategy for the Development of Samoa' (SDS) 2012-2016 identifies Environment Sustainability as a priority area and includes wetlands in its indicator on 'Critical ecosystems'. The 'State of Environment' (SoE) report 2013 and the National Environment Sector Plan (NESP) 2013 have identified wetlands as a key priority. Activities for the sustainable management and conservation of wetlands have also been incorporated into current project proposals, for example, the GEF5 proposal on Strengthening Multi-Sectoral Management Approach to Critical Landscapes (SMSMCL).

Science-based management of wetlands

8. In New Zealand, the Department of Conservation (DOC) has been developing Conservation Management Strategies (CMS) which will describe the management of sites and biodiversity in different regions, including Ramsar Sites. Each draft CMS is prepared by DOC in consultation with stakeholders, integrating national and local priorities. The CMS is approved by the regional Conservation Board and the New Zealand Conservation Authority (citizen advisory bodies established by statute to advise on conservation in New Zealand). The CMS is a statutory document and is updated/reviewed approximately every ten years. In the last triennium,

¹ The Convention for the Protection of Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific region.

Conservation Management Strategies relevant to four Ramsar Sites have been reviewed and updated.

9. In Samoa, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), working closely with local communities, has developed participatory three-dimensional models for their Ramsar Site, Lake Lanoto'o National Park and other national sites of ecological importance. Participatory 3D modeling (P3DM) combines community mapping with open discussions on land-use and land-use planning scenarios. It combines geographic precision with local, individual spatial knowledge and 'mind-maps' of locality and familiar settings. The P3DM is a useful tool to plan for the protection and restoration of key natural features, especially Samoa's wetlands.

Integrated Water Resource Management

10. In Australia, the Victorian State Government released the 'Victorian waterway management strategy' (VWMS) in October 2013 which adopts an integrated approach for the management of rivers, wetlands, and estuaries (waterways) until the year 2021.

Wetland restoration

11. In Australia, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority prepared the 'Basin Plan 2012'. Water reform has continued in the current triennium under this plan. The Basin Plan is intended to ensure the sustainable use of the Murray-Darling Basin's water resources and promotes the wise use of all Basin resources and the conservation of declared Ramsar Sites within the Basin, and takes account of the ecological character of these wetlands.
12. The 'Environmental watering plan', also required by the Australian Water Act (2007) and contained in the Basin Plan, has a number of objectives including protecting and restoring declared Ramsar wetlands through the management and delivery of environmental water.
13. The South Australian Government is implementing the Riverine Recovery Project that aims to improve connectivity of the Riverland and Banrock Station Ramsar Sites on the Murray River. The project is scheduled to be completed by 31 December 2016.
14. A number of restoration projects have been implemented at the Hunter Estuary Wetlands Ramsar Site including the reintroduction of tidal flow and removal of encroaching mangroves from saltmarsh areas; restoration of 300 hectares of degraded wetland; and restoration of wetland values for migratory shorebirds through weed and fox control and re-vegetation by WetlandCare Australia.
15. The Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) in Australia, established by the Water Act, manages Commonwealth environmental water holdings – tradable water rights acquired to contribute to meeting the Basin Plan's long-term average environmentally sustainable diversion limits. As at 31 May 2014, the Commonwealth's current water holdings totalled over 1,700 gigalitres of registered water entitlements.
16. Over the past triennium, the New Zealand government has been implementing the Arawai Kākāriki wetland restoration programme at three freshwater/wetland systems, including the Awarua Wetland and the Whangamarino Ramsar Sites, making use of strong community involvement. The programme covers more than 40,000 ha and promotes research into wetland restoration techniques. The New Zealand Ministry for the Environment 'Fresh Start for Fresh Water Clean-Up' Fund provided NZD 15 million over two years to help communities clean up waterways affected by historical water quality issues.

17. In Samoa, four significant surveys have been completed since 2012, the 'Rapid Biodiversity Assessment of Upland of Savaii Island' (BIORAP) for uplands forests in Savaii island 2012, the 'National Forestry Inventory' (NFI) 2013, national mangrove surveys under the IUCN Mangrove EcoSystem for Climate Change Adaptation and Livelihoods (MESCAL) project and the baseline ecological surveys conducted through the UNDP-GEF 'Integration of Climate Change Risks and Resilience into Forestry Management in Samoa' (ICCRIFS) which was implemented at Samoa's first Ramsar Site, Lake Lanoto'o National Park. These surveys would inform the development or review of management plans for the Lake Lanoto'o Ramsar Site and other future Ramsar Sites in Samoa.

Private sector

18. Private sector activities have a major influence on the health of wetlands worldwide. In New Zealand, the dairy industry adopted the 'Sustainable Dairying: Water Accord' in 2013. The Accord aims to improve environmental performance on dairy farms, including the management of effluent. Most regional councils have engaged in specific sustainable farming initiatives, e.g. to protect stream banks and facilitate riparian planting.
19. In March 2013, the 'Community Investment in Water (CIW)' partnership was launched by DOC and Fonterra, the world's largest milk processor and dairy exporter, to improve the natural habitats of five key waterways in significant dairying regions around New Zealand. Two of the country's Ramsar Sites (The Firth of Thames and Awarua Wetland) are included in this initiative.

Wetlands of International Importance

Ramsar Site designation

20. For New Zealand, the 'New Zealand guidelines for assessment of potential Ramsar wetlands' (Denyer and Robertson in preparation) are currently in the peer review and final editing stage. When published by DOC they will be available for use by any interested community groups, central and local government authorities, Iwi (local tribes) and other stakeholders to systematically determine which wetlands within New Zealand are strong candidates for Ramsar listing.
21. Australia has developed the 'Australian Ramsar Site nomination guidelines' (2012) which provides a nationally consistent framework for Ramsar Site nominations in Australia and its offshore territories.

Ramsar Site ecological character

22. Australia's 'Rolling Review of Australia's Ramsar Sites' provides information on the status of the country's 65 Ramsar Sites every three years and targets management actions to the highest priority threats. The government has also published a 'National Framework and Guidance for Describing the Ecological Character of Australia's Ramsar Wetlands' and is working to complete ecological character descriptions for all 64 Australian Ramsar Sites. A number of these have already been posted on the Ramsar Site Information Service (RSIS).
23. The New Zealand Landcare Trust developed WETMAK (<http://www.landcare.org.nz/wetmak>), a web-based training resource for private landowners and local or central government authorities to initiate monitoring of wetlands under their jurisdiction and/or ownership. The tribal Authority 'Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu' developed the 'State of the Takiwa' tool that allows Tangata Whenua (indigenous peoples) to systematically record, collect and collate information, and report on the cultural health of significant sites, natural resources and the environment within their respective takiwa (tribal area).

Ramsar Site status

24. Australia has been progressing and gaining experience in applying limits of acceptable change (LACs) as a tool to assist in monitoring and managing the ecological character of its Ramsar Sites. It has also commenced with the development of an online wetland management toolkit, which would provide a central portal for information and resources on wetland management, such as Ramsar Convention guidance, best practice management plans, and relevant policies and legislation.

Management of other internationally important wetlands

25. There are many internationally important wetlands in the Oceania region and some have been conserved under different international designations other than as Ramsar Sites. In 2012, for example, Palau inscribed the Rock islands southern lagoon as its first World Heritage Site, and the Imeong Conservation Area is applying to be inscribed as its Palau's second. The latter encompasses savannah, rain forest, wetland and mangrove swamp with several small streams.

International cooperation

Integration of work with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs)

26. With countries continuing the process of revising and updating their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), there remains a good opportunity for Ramsar AAs to ensure that targets for wetlands are included. This has been done for the revised draft of Samoa's 2014 NBSAP, which includes a number of targets related to wetlands, such as those focused on replanting mangroves and corals, conducting an assessment of Samoa's marshlands, reviewing independently conducted EIAs for major projects with significant potential impacts on habitats and species of high conservation value, reducing coral destruction, use of unsustainable fishing methods and sources of coastal pollutants, eliminating the disposal of solid and liquid wastes into mangrove areas and in streams and lagoons, and encouraging ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change, among others. Under the current Fiji NBSAP, 'wetlands' is a specific thematic area.

Institutional capacity and effectiveness

National Wetland Committee

27. Australia's national Ramsar Committee, the Wetlands and Aquatic Ecosystems Sub Committee, continues to coordinate the development of national tools and guidance that facilitate wetland management.
28. Fiji has a National Wetland Steering Committee to assist the Ramsar AA with implementation of the Convention and to facilitate integration of wetlands issues into national policies.

World Wetlands Day (WWD)

29. The Oceania Contracting Parties who reported have organized World Wetland Day (WWD) activities over the past triennium to highlight the diversity and importance of wetlands, targeting a wide range of audiences, e.g., students, local communities, government officials from the national to the local level (including traditional leaders), and NGOs. In Australia, they compile the online 'Wetlands Australia' magazine to coincide with World Wetlands Day each year. The 2014 edition of the magazine focused on 'wetlands and agriculture'.
30. SPREP, the Ramsar Convention's main partner in Oceania, is providing assistance to a number of Pacific island countries to help with their accessions to the Ramsar Convention. These countries

include Kiribati, Tonga and Vanuatu. Some of them have already identified their first Ramsar Site(s) and final endorsement for accession is now needed from the higher levels in government.

B. Greatest difficulties in implementing the Convention

31. The main difficulties facing Oceania Contracting Parties relate to both institutional factors and specific implementation issues. Their greatest challenges relate to institutional issues such as inadequate human and financial resources, expertise and capacity for implementing the Convention. They also mentioned high staff turnover, communication with remote outer islands and cross-sectoral coordination as difficulties over the last triennium. For specific implementation issues, Kiribati raised poaching by nearby communities and Fiji mentioned encroachment of site boundaries by logging companies.

Development and land use changes

32. For New Zealand, development pressure and adjacent land use changes (including expansion and intensification of dairy farming) and nutrient loading are primary issues to be addressed by long term planning and management of their wetlands, including Ramsar Sites.
33. For Australia, there has been pressure on their coastal wetlands from population growth and residential and industrial development. More than 80% of the population lives within the coastal zone and there are as many as 30 Ramsar Sites in the coastal and marine zone, with many under pressure.

Climate Change/Climate Variability

34. Australia has a highly variable climate and distinguishing between natural variability, climate change and human-induced change can be a challenge. The predicted impacts of climate change such as rising sea levels, reduced rainfall and mangrove encroachment are expected to cause long term changes to Australia's wetlands. The coastal wetlands of Australia and the Pacific island Contracting Parties are particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels, which will lead to inundation, accelerated erosion, and saline intrusion into coastal waterways and wetlands. Given these factors, it can be difficult to develop robust limits of acceptable change for Australian wetlands. Assessing and reporting on real or potential changes in ecological character is a further challenge.
35. New Zealand recognizes that long term management will need to incorporate climate change effects which may change long-term inflows to wetlands, or lead to significant changes in peak water inflows due to increased intensity of major storm events.
36. For Samoa, flooding in low lying and coastal areas, saline intrusion, coastal erosion and increased rates of coral bleaching, drought, temperature fluctuation and changes in precipitation patterns have led to changes in the habitats of endangered and endemic species found in their wetlands. The intense wave activity from storm surges during Cyclone Evan (2012) overturned much of the coral near shore and severely damaged corals to a depth of up to 10 metres.

Remoteness

37. For Australia, the remoteness of many Ramsar Sites makes site management and monitoring a challenge. For example, in the far north of Western Australia, the Ord River Floodplain Ramsar Site (141,453 ha) is located in a catchment that covers more than 64,000 km². It is 8km east of the town of Wyndham (population: 787 in 2011), and 3,229 kilometres from the state's capital city. Regular and safe monitoring of bird numbers requires significant investment.

38. For Kiribati, remoteness, communication and transport between the islands are issues as the island nation consists of three island groups which spans approximately 4,500 km east to west across the north Pacific. Many of the wetlands identified in Kiribati's updated national wetland inventory (2014) are very isolated, uninhabited or far from the main commercial and administrative centre of Kiribati, South Tarawa. For example, an important seabird nesting island in the Phoenix Group (McKean Island) is approximately 3,313km from South Tarawa.

C. Priorities for future implementation of the Convention

Funding, awareness and capacity building

39. The four most common responses in the National Reports for COP12, especially from the Pacific island countries, were to strengthen awareness raising on the importance of wetlands and their conservation at all levels of society, to secure funding to support national implementation of the Convention, to recruit further personnel and strengthen their capacity to facilitate national Ramsar activities, and to carry out training on monitoring for wetlands.

RIS updates and site nominations

40. For New Zealand, the preparation and submission of Ramsar Information Sheet updates for three of its Ramsar Sites (Awarua Wetlands, Whangamarino and Firth of Thames) is a priority. It also raised the preparation of a further Ramsar nomination for Lake Wairararapa-Moana as its seventh Wetland of International Importance.

National Wetlands Policy and similar mechanism

41. Australia has begun developing a National Wetlands Policy to address issues including the wise use principle, raising awareness of wetland values and ecosystem services they provide. The policy will also identify knowledge gaps; strategic designation of additional Ramsar Sites and CEPA-related activities. Similarly, Fiji aims to establish a national framework to guide the establishment of national wetlands sites, monitor impacts of wetlands and integrate the convention's objectives in sectoral policy.
42. Kiribati developed the 'Kiribati Integrated Environment Policy' (KIEP) in 2013. The KIEP sets out a solid policy platform for long term planning and action to respond to priority environmental issues, in particular the impacts of global climate change on Kiribati. It is a statement of intent and a document providing guidance and direction for government, local communities, development partners and all other stakeholders. Kiribati's obligations related to national implementation of the Ramsar Convention are embedded in the KIEP.

Climate Change Adaptation

43. Australia highlighted that climate change adaptation will be a focus of future implementation of the Convention. They recognize that it is important for wetland management plans to include a description of known impacts from climate change and consideration of climate change adaptation management strategies and targets, climate-ready conservation objectives as well as identification of research gaps. Similarly, New Zealand would like to increase its understanding of climate change effects on wetlands and the role that wetlands can play in climate change adaptation. New Zealand recognizes that long term wetland management will need to incorporate climate change effects.

Research to support ongoing improvements in wetland management

44. For Australia, a key priority for the next triennium is to carry out targeted, coordinated research that assesses the effectiveness of management practices in achieving positive changes in

ecological condition. Such research would also ensure that wetland restoration and management programs are realizing identified objectives.

45. Samoa would like to strengthen capacity to be able to conduct trainings on ecological survey on wetland areas, payment of ecosystem services (PES), environmental-flow (e-flow), and water quality testing (water testing parameters).
46. New Zealand would like to increase its knowledge and understanding of invasive alien species management and how to effectively address the changing pressures on Ramsar Sites and wetlands in general.

D. Recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Ramsar Secretariat

47. While some Oceania Contracting Parties were satisfied with the assistance they had received from the Secretariat, e.g., advice on draft guidelines and feedback on Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS), others considered that more support could be given to the region, especially to Pacific island countries. This would include:
 - identifying funds to support national Ramsar implementation activities;
 - providing technical expertise for updating national wetland inventory and RIS compilation;
 - providing training on the management and wise use of wetlands;
 - continuing to encourage partnerships at all levels for effective implementation of the Convention at the national level.
48. Australia noted that it had received considerable, constructive assistance from the Ramsar Secretariat over the last triennium including feedback on draft Ramsar Information Sheet updates and advice from members of the Ramsar STRP on Australia's draft 'Boundary description and mapping guidelines'.

E. Recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Convention's IOPs

49. Samoa recommends that the IOPs provide assistance through technical support, data sharing, reports and provision of resources which are relevant to achieving Ramsar's overall goal and objectives.
50. Australia engages with Australian-based IOPs on relevant matters, such as the development of the National Wetlands Policy, compilation of the 'Wetlands Australia' magazine and preparations ahead of COP meetings. It recognizes that scope remains to broaden these relationships.

F. Steps to better link implementation of the Ramsar Convention with implementation of other MEAs, especially those in the 'Biodiversity cluster'

51. The Ramsar Convention has memoranda of cooperation and sometimes joint work plans with many other MEAs, and the secretariats of those MEAs work closely to look for opportunities for collaboration where possible. Such opportunities were highlighted during COP11 (Resolution XI.6, 2012) and would improve the coordination and effectiveness of global conservation efforts, and reduce duplication of work.
52. Solutions for improving collaboration include having the national focal points of the related MEAs within the same coordinating ministry, as is the case in Australia, Kiribati, and New Zealand. Another would be to harmonize the national strategic and implementation plans (e.g.

NBSAPs) and national reporting for biodiversity-related MEAs so as to achieve closer on-the-ground implementation, as is the case of Samoa.

G. Steps to better link Ramsar implementation with the implementation of water policy/strategy and other strategies in the country

53. The close linkage between wetlands and water has been highlighted by the Ramsar Convention (Resolution VI.23, Resolution X.3). Despite this, there are still hurdles to raising greater awareness about the link. For example, many international processes still do not refer to 'wetlands', but instead use the term 'water related ecosystems' or 'inland and coastal waters' when talking about water-related issues.
54. The Kiribati Integrated Environment Policy (KIEP) adopted in 2013 brings together all related sectoral interests, including water resources, under one framework.
55. In New Zealand, the government has over the past triennium implemented a programme of freshwater reforms over the past triennium that aims to provide national guidelines to maintain the ecological health of freshwater ecosystems.
56. For Australia, the provision of legal entitlements to water for the environment is one important mechanism that integrates the implementation of the Ramsar Convention with water/food security. In addition, the current development of the National Wetlands Policy is another opportunity to strengthen the linkages between the objectives of the Convention and other sectors.

H. Other general comments on the implementation of the Convention

57. The main response was from Australia, to the effect that the limited capacity of Contracting Parties to carry out increased obligations under the Convention should be acknowledged. The focus of additional work by Convention bodies, including Contracting Parties, needs to be on tasks that would meaningfully contribute to the achievement of the Convention's mission and therefore a prioritization of tasks is needed to inform the future work programmes of Convention bodies. Factors that could inform such a prioritization include the extent to which proposed work implements previously agreed actions that are essential to the ongoing business of the Convention. Furthermore, improving the efficient and effective administration of the Convention would enable Convention bodies to remain focused on the Convention's strategic direction and mission.

Goal 1. The wise use of wetlands

STRATEGY 1.1: Wetland inventory and assessment.

National Wetland Inventory

58. In 2014, the wetland inventories for Palau and Kiribati were updated through funding support from the Australian Government and the Noumea Convention.
59. For Fiji, the national inventory is in progress. The last update was carried out in 2008 and this information is currently being updated as some of the sites have been developed. Information collection for new national wetland sites identified is being assisted by national NGOs which have projects running at these sites and which can fund the collection of needed information.

60. New Zealand has developed the Freshwater Ecosystems of New Zealand (FENZ) geo-database, which provides an independent, national representation of the biodiversity values and pressures on rivers, lakes and wetlands. FENZ can be used to objectively map and quantify various aspects of New Zealand’s freshwater. For more information on FENZ:
<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/land-and-freshwater/freshwater/freshwater-ecosystems-of-new-zealand/>
61. In Samoa, a comprehensive national inventory was conducted for mangrove ecosystems in 2012 through the support of the IUCN Mangrove Ecosystems for Climate Change and Livelihoods (MESCAL) project, which discovered and mapped 26 new mangrove sites for Samoa. For more information:
<http://www1.mnre.gov.ws/documents/projects/environment/MESCAL%20Samoa%20Project%20web%20info.pdf>
61. In Australia, there remains no single comprehensive wetland inventory although there is a large amount of information on their wetlands. Information on Australia’s Ramsar Sites and other wetlands are listed in ‘A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia (DIWA, 2001). However, there are wetland inventory projects being progressed by state and territory governments; for example, in Western Australia the whole of the state has been mapped at a scale of 1:250,000 and various other parts of the state have wetlands that have been mapped at 1:100,000 or better. The Biodiversity Audit II has also updated wetland information across the state and includes information on wetland values, wetland classification, historical and future trends and threats and current and proposed management actions.

Condition of Ramsar Sites and wetlands generally over the previous triennium

62. Of the Contracting Parties who reported, a larger percentage said that the condition of their Ramsar Sites had improved (25%) than had deteriorated (19%) over the past triennium. However, for the condition of wetlands in general in the country, the response was for a greater percentage to have deteriorated (41%) than improved (11%). In the Oceania region, there was considerable variation in responses to this question (see table below).

	Australia	Fiji	Kiribati	New Zealand	Samoa
Ramsar Sites	No change	No change	Status improved	No change	Status improved
Wetlands generally	No change	Status deteriorated	No change	No change	Status improved

63. Improvements to the condition of Ramsar Sites are often due to funds being found to restore the Sites because of their international recognition after listing. For example in New Zealand, the ‘Community Investment in Water (CIW)’ partnership initiative includes two of New Zealand’s Ramsar Sites (The Firth of Thames and Awarua Wetland). In Australia, the condition of the Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Wetlands Ramsar Site has continued to improve due to significant inflows from the basin and through environmental restoration activities since 2010. They have funded the development of a long-term plan for this Ramsar Site to assist the South Australia state government in addressing the long-term challenges faced by the site.
64. Whilst the condition of Ramsar Sites may generally be improving, wetlands in general continue to face a range of threats, notably from a lack of awareness, dedicated legislation and/or enforcement to control the impacts from encroaching development in the catchment area which may cause a decline in water quality, alter the hydrological regimes, bring about a loss of

habitat, increase disturbance, etc. Whilst these threats and their consequences need to be addressed, the responses from Contracting Parties also highlight the value in designating priority wetlands as Ramsar Sites as a tool for the long-term conservation of these important sites.

STRATEGY 1.3: Policy, legislation and institutions.

National Wetland Policy

65. Australia, Fiji, Kiribati and New Zealand reported having some form of National Wetland Policy in place. In New Zealand, there are two statutory national policy statements that cover wetlands, one for freshwater wetlands and the other for coastal wetlands, with the former being proposed in 2013 for amendment. These policies are supported by more detailed regulatory rules and non-statutory guidance for implementation. In Kiribati, the national integrated environment policy (KIEP) covers wetland issues as does the NBSAP.

Incorporation of wetland issues into other national strategies and planning processes

66. Oceania Contracting Parties generally stated that wetland issues had been incorporated or are being incorporated into other national strategies and planning processes, including water resource management and water efficiency plans; coastal and marine resource management plans; national forest programmes; national strategies for sustainable development; national policies or measures on agriculture; and NBSAPs. Samoa is the only Oceania Contracting Party reporting that it has fully integrated wetland issues into national strategies and planning processes, such as those for poverty eradication, water resource management, sustainable development and agriculture; among others the only exception was in Australia and New Zealand where water issues were not applicable in the countries' poverty eradication strategies.

Strategic Environmental Assessments and wetlands

67. Kiribati, New Zealand and Samoa reported environmental legislation or policy in place that requires strategic environmental assessments of policies, programmes and plans that may impact upon wetlands and the broader natural environment. However, Australia and Fiji mentioned that they have only partially addressed this obligation.

EIA legislation

68. All the Oceania Contracting Parties which completed the National Report mentioned that they had some form of environmental legislation in place to assess the impact of development activities that may have adverse impacts on the environment, including wetlands. In Australia, the responsibility for enacting the relevant legislation can lie at the local, state or national level depending on the scale of the individual project and the importance of the wetland that may be impacted; therefore, EIAs are applied to development projects on a case by case basis. The Resource Management Act (1991) in New Zealand controls developments that are not permitted by their Regional and District Plans (i.e. that have not already been fully considered). Only low-impact activities are likely to be permitted in these plans. The consent process under the Act incorporates an EIA process, which includes public submissions, and the possibility for appeal to the Environment Court.

Inclusion of Ramsar commitments in existing legislation

69. In Australia, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) is the central piece of environmental legislation and Ramsar Sites continue to be protected under this Act as a matter of national environmental significance. In New Zealand, amendments to legislation relating to wetlands have taken Ramsar commitments into account, though that has not been the primary driver. The other Oceania Contracting Parties reported that relevant draft legislation is nearing approval and amendments to existing legislation are in progress.

STRATEGY 1.4: Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services.

Assessment of wetland ecosystem benefits/services

70. New Zealand reported having conducted assessments of wetland ecosystem benefits/services for its Ramsar Sites, but not specifically during this triennium. In addition, for wetlands in general, New Zealand published in 2013 the 'Ecosystem Services in New Zealand' which contains chapters on the status and trends of ecosystems and related services of wetlands, lakes, estuarine ecosystems and marine ecosystems. Fiji completed an assessment in 2006 and recognizes that it needs to be updated. In Australia, an assessment for the Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Wetlands Ramsar Site was undertaken in 2013 and identified the local community's present understanding of ecosystem services provided by the site. For Kiribati, a preliminary assessment of the ecosystem services of their national wetlands is contained in the updated national wetlands inventory (2014).

Programmes and projects contributing to poverty alleviation, food and water security

71. Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Samoa and to some extent Kiribati reported that they are implementing wetland programmes/projects that contribute to poverty alleviation/food or water security.

Consideration of the cultural value of wetlands

72. Australia, New Zealand and Samoa reported that they have incorporated socio-economic and cultural values into the management planning for their Ramsar Sites. In New Zealand, management of Ramsar Sites includes due consideration of socio-economic and cultural values, and includes iwi, community, business and other stakeholder involvement. In addition, the cultural value of wetlands is embedded in the Treaty of Waitangi (1840), signed between the indigenous people and the British Crown at the time of New Zealand's colonization, which ensures the full involvement of indigenous people in processes at all levels of government. For Australia, a review of indigenous involvement in water planning in 2013 found that while approaches are variable, most Australian governments have made significant advances in recognizing indigenous water issues and engaging indigenous people in water planning and management process. Fiji and Kiribati both reported that they are planning to address this obligation in the near future.

Consideration of the socio-economic value of wetlands in management planning

73. There is still a strong sense of traditional culture in Oceania and, as a result, the socio-economic and cultural values of wetlands have been included in the management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands, for example in the management plan for the Lake Lanoto'o National Park Ramsar Site. In Australia, most state governments have provisions for recognizing socio-economic and cultural values in site management plans. In New Zealand, the management of Ramsar Sites on Crown land engages the Tangata Whenua (iwi) to ensure the strength and nature of their interests in these places are understood and that this understanding is incorporated into the DOC's ongoing management of sites.

STRATEGY 1.5: Recognition of the role of the Convention

Raising awareness of the Changwon Declaration

74. 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, i.e., 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 workers in those sectors and include them in the Convention's work on wetland. Only Australia and New Zealand reported having disseminated the Declaration since COP11 (2012), mainly to other government departments, the private sector and civil society. For Australia, national NGOs have been raising the profile of the Declaration through the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership. For New Zealand, a factsheet with the key messages of the Declaration and a summary of Ramsar COP10 is prominent on the DOC website and the attention of civil society and the private sector can be drawn to this in an ongoing manner.

STRATEGY 1.6: Science-based management of wetlands

Policy-related research on agriculture-wetland interactions

75. Oceania Contracting Parties reported that they had conducted research to inform wetland policies and plans on agriculture-wetland interactions (4 Parties), climate change (5) and valuation of ecosystem services (4). In addition, Australia and New Zealand also reported that they have undertaken other projects relevant to wetland sustainability, such as aquatic rehabilitation, environmental flows, restoring wetland ecosystem functioning, incorporating climate change into water allocation planning, and valuation of ecosystem services.

Wetland management plans

76. Wetland management plans have not only been based on scientific evidence and sound scientific research but also on local expert knowledge; for example, in Australia, management plans are designed to address the key threats facing wetlands which include river regulation and water diversion, development and catchment disturbance, climate change and introduced weeds and pests. In New Zealand, management plans are often based on the general understanding of wetland ecology and function in association with local expert knowledge, in cases where there are insufficient resources for scientific study.

STRATEGY 1.7: Integrated Water Resources Management

Water Governance and Management

77. All the five Oceania Contracting Parties reporting said that their countries' water governance and management consider wetlands as natural water infrastructure integral to water resource management at the river basin scale. In New Zealand, freshwater management is generally undertaken at a catchment or multiple catchment level while marine wetlands are managed through regional scale plans. Australia added that its states and territories have in place legislation that requires the development of water resource or water sharing plans. In New South Wales, for example, water and natural resource management is coordinated at a catchment scale and this approach facilitates sound governance across a wide range of stakeholders and uses throughout a watershed.

Incorporating CEPA tools into catchment/river basin planning

78. Australia, New Zealand and Samoa reported that CEPA expertise and tools had been incorporated into catchment/river basin planning and management. Fiji reported that it is planning to do so and Kiribati said that catchment/river basin planning and management was not applicable to it as an Atoll nation. New Zealand has a Land and Water Forum which brings together a range of industry groups, electricity generators, environmental and recreational NGOs, iwi, scientists, and other organisations with a stake in freshwater and land management. They are joined by central and local government observers to develop a common direction for freshwater management and provide advice to the Government. In Australia, the national water initiative provides for water sharing plans to include substantial stakeholder engagement processes in their development and review.

Policies and guidelines for enhancing the role of wetlands in climate change

79. Australia, Kiribati and Samoa reported that they have established policies and guidelines for enhancing the role of wetlands in mitigation and/or adaptation to climate change. New Zealand recognizes that wetlands can play a local role in climate change adaptation, such as flood mitigation; however, a complicating factor is that increased flood frequency puts the ecological values of wetlands at greater risk. Therefore, there is a careful balance required between flood management and conservation, and the DOC and Regional Councils are working together to address this challenge.

Wetlands and supporting and maintaining viable farming systems

80. All the Contracting Parties reporting, except Kiribati, said that they have formulated plans or projects to sustain and enhance the role of wetlands and water in supporting and maintaining viable farming systems. For New Zealand, farming is an important economic activity (especially dairy, but also beef and sheep). The pasture-based nature of such farming makes water quality a key issue in sustainable management. Australia has in place a number of programmes and projects that recognize the role of wetlands in supporting viable farming systems; for example, the Queensland state government funds the 'Wetland management in agricultural production systems' project, which is aimed at supporting the uptake of improved wetland management on farms.

STRATEGY 1.8: Wetland restoration

Identifying and implementing wetland restoration projects at priority sites

81. All Oceania Contracting Parties reporting said that they have identified the country's priority wetlands for restoration and that they have been implementing wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes or projects. For example, Kiribati reported that mangrove replanting has been conducted through voluntary community participation at their first Ramsar Site, Nooto-North Tarawa.

STRATEGY 1.9: Invasive alien species

National inventories of invasive alien species

82. Kiribati, New Zealand and Samoa reported that they have national inventories of invasive alien species. Australia and Fiji reported that they have partially done this. For example, Fiji has an inventory but is more focused on terrestrial invasive species that has an impact on the economy of Fiji rather than on wetlands invasive species. Australia has national lists of invasive weeds and pest animals but these are not specifically targeted at species that currently, or potentially, impact on the ecological character of wetlands.

Invasive species control and management in wetlands

83. Kiribati, New Zealand and Samoa reported that they have national policies or guidelines in place on invasive species control and management in wetlands. In Zealand, the National Wetlands Trust regularly organises National Wetland Restoration Symposia, including weed and pest management issues.

STRATEGY 1.10: Private sector

Private Sector support for the wise use of wetlands

84. Australia, Fiji and New Zealand have activities in place that encourage the private sector to apply the Ramsar wise use principle and guidance in their activities and investments concerning

Ramsar Sites and wetlands in general. In Fiji, a private company (Rivers Fiji), is assisting the government to manage the Upper Navua Ramsar Site by organizing river rafting tours which also help to raise awareness of the site. A percentage of the income from these tours is returned to benefit the local community. In Australia, the New South Wales Ramsar Managers Network bring together private and government wetlands managers twice yearly to discuss current issues, share learning and resources and to advance sustainable wetland management. In New Zealand, there has been extensive involvement by the private sector (individual landowners, businesses and community groups) in reducing the impacts on wetlands and restoring degraded wetlands.

Private Sector activities for the wise use and management of Ramsar Sites

85. All of the Oceania Contracting Parties reporting, except Kiribati, said that the private sector in their countries has undertaken activities for the wise use and management of their Ramsar Sites and wetlands in general. In Australia, the Banrock Station Wetland Complex is a good privately owned demonstration site for the concept of 'wise use'. While the site is owned by a wine making company that utilizes adjacent land for grape production, it is at the same time managing the Ramsar Site on their property for conservation.

STRATEGY 1.11: Incentive measures

Incentive measures for the conservation and wise use of wetlands

86. Australia, New Zealand and Samoa are implementing incentive measures that encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands. In Australia, there are a number of incentive programs that continue to operate, for example, the Australian Government's 'Reef Programme Systems Repair' funding supports agricultural and community groups to protect, restore and rehabilitate wetland areas with the aim of improving biodiversity and assist in improving water quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef. In New Zealand, the 'Fresh Start for Freshwater Clean-up' Fund addresses the problem of poor quality fresh water as a result of historical decisions and practices. The fund provides regional councils and their project partners with financial assistance to remediate water bodies of national significance.

Perverse incentives impacting on the wetland conservation and wise use

87. Australia and New Zealand reported that they have taken action to remove perverse incentives that impact on the conservation and wise use of wetlands. In Australia, such perverse incentives were tackled through the development of the National Water Initiative and the Water Act 2007; in New Zealand, there are no subsidies for agriculture and land development.

GOAL 2. Wetlands of International Importance

STRATEGY 2.1: Ramsar Site designation

Use of the Strategic framework to prioritize further Ramsar Sites

88. Fiji, Kiribati and Samoa stated that they have used the Strategic Framework to establish a national strategy and priorities for the further designation of Ramsar Sites. Both Australia and New Zealand reported that they are preparing or finalizing national guidelines for the nomination of Ramsar Sites which aim to make the process for nomination more standardized and transparent for site managers, governments and the community.

Ramsar Information Sheet updates

89. At the time of reporting, Australia have 21 Ramsar Sites that require information to be updated,

and 14 have had updated information provided to the Ramsar Secretariat. For New Zealand, updated RIS for all their six Ramsar Sites will be progressively submitted during the next triennium.

New Ramsar Site designations

90. Australia and Kiribati have one site each that are currently being reviewed for designation. In the coming triennium, Fiji plans to designate three new Ramsar Sites and Samoa two new Sites. New Zealand intends to designate Lake Wairarapa-Moana and at least two other additional Sites in the next triennium.

STRATEGY 2.2: Ramsar Site information

Use of the Ramsar Sites Information Service (RSIS)

91. Whilst Fiji, New Zealand and Samoa said that the Ramsar Sites Information Service has been useful in identifying further Ramsar Sites for designation, Australia replied that the RSIS is not being used in national identification of further Ramsar Sites to designate and that they have considerable information on the environmental, cultural, social and economic values of Australian wetlands and that they access this information in preference to the Ramsar Sites Information Service.

STRATEGY 2.3: Management planning – new Ramsar Sites

Management planning for new Ramsar Sites

92. Australia, New Zealand and Samoa reported that they have put in place management planning for their sites prepared for Ramsar designation. For New Zealand, any sites subject to new designation under the Convention will be expected to have efficient management planning.

STRATEGY 2.4: Ramsar Site ecological character

93. Please refer to the table below for the number of Ramsar Site with management plans etc.

	Australia	Fiji	Kiribati	New Zealand	Samoa
Number of Ramsar Sites (RS)?	65	1	1	6	1
How many RS have a management plan?	56	1	0	6	1
For RS with a management plan, for how many is the plan being implemented?	48	1	0	6	1
How many RS have a management plan in preparation?	5	1	0	0	1
How many RS have a cross-sectoral management committee?	26	1	1	2	0
For how many RS has an ecological character description been prepared?	53	0	0	2	0

94. In summary, Fiji, New Zealand and Samoa have management plans in place and under implementation for all their Ramsar Sites. Fiji and Kiribati have cross-sectoral committees for all their Ramsar Sites. Australia has prepared the most ecological character descriptions (ECDs) and for most of their Ramsar Sites compared with New Zealand, which has prepared ECDs for two of its six Ramsar Sites. Fiji, Kiribati and Samoa have not yet prepared ECDs for their Ramsar Sites.

STRATEGY 2.5: Ramsar Site management effectiveness

Assessments of management effectiveness

95. Australia and New Zealand reported that assessments of the management effectiveness of their Ramsar Sites have been carried out. In New Zealand, for all wetland sites in general, performance reporting is part of the DOC's operational programmes. Furthermore, Conservation Management Strategies define specific expected outcomes which will be reported on, including for Ramsar Sites.

STRATEGY 2.6: Ramsar Site status

Mechanisms for Article 3.2 notifications

96. All Oceania Contracting Parties reporting, with the exception of Samoa, have mechanisms in place for the Administrative Authority to be informed of negative human-induced changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites, pursuant to Article 3.2. In Fiji, the site management reports to the Wetlands Steering Committee, which then communicates to the government agencies for their response. For Kiribati, the community and the council at their Ramsar Site have good communication channels with the national administrative authority for reporting such cases. Australia has its 'National Guidelines for Notifying Change in Ecological Character of Australian Ramsar Sites (Article 3.2)', endorsed in 2009, which describe the process and arrangements for the Administrative Authority to be informed of changes in ecological character. The Rolling Review provides information on the status of Australia's Ramsar Sites and helps to identify Sites that may require assessment in relation to a possible change in ecological character. In New Zealand, there are clear lines of communication between Ramsar Site managers, the STRP National Focal Point and the Ramsar Convention National Focal Point. During the preparation of each National Ramsar Report, updates on changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites are collated.

Reporting of negative human induced change or likely change to ecological character

97. For Ramsar Sites that are being affected by negative human-induced change or likely change, Australia and Fiji have already reported those cases to the Secretariat, and New Zealand provided updates in their National Reports. For Fiji, the encroachment of logging activities on the Site boundary has been reported as a major threat to the site.

Montreux Record

98. Currently, none of the Oceania Contracting Parties have Ramsar Sites listed on the Montreux Record.

STRATEGY 2.7: Management of other internationally important wetlands

Protection of Ecological Character

99. Whilst one of the obligations of Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention is to place priority wetlands on to the List of Wetlands of International Importance, another is for Parties to promote the wise use of wetlands in their territory as far as possible (Article 3.1). This is especially important for those wetlands that have not yet been listed as Ramsar Sites but have been identified through domestic application of the Strategic Framework or other similar process (Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015, Strategy 2.7). Australia mentioned that there are management arrangements in place to protect the ecological character of one of its proposed Ramsar Sites (Lower Glenelg Estuary and Long Swamp) as its nomination process moves forward. For New Zealand, the ecological character of these other internationally important wetlands has not yet been assessed; however, sites that currently are under active consideration as potential future candidates for designation as Ramsar Sites already have some

form of management in place for their conservation and/or ecological restoration.

GOAL 3. International cooperation

STRATEGY 3.1: Synergies and partnerships with MEAs and IGOs

Collaboration between Ramsar national focal points and other MEA national focal points

100. Fiji reported that it had mechanisms in place at the national level for collaboration between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and the focal points of other MEAs. In Australia and New Zealand, this has been made possible by the fact that the MEA focal points are all mainly in the same government agency. Samoa and Kiribati have not yet established a national Ramsar/Wetlands Committee

Collaboration between Ramsar national focal points and UN focal points

101. All Oceania Contracting Parties reporting, except Australia, had mechanisms in place at the national level for collaboration between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and the focal points of UN and other global and regional bodies and agencies (e.g., UNEP, UNDP, WHO, FAO, UNECE, ITTO). For Australia such a mechanism was only partially in place due to these focal points being located within a number of other government agencies.

STRATEGY 3.2: Regional initiatives

Involvement in regional initiative activities under Ramsar

102. Australia and New Zealand both play an active role in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership.

STRATEGY 3.3: International assistance

Provision of funding support for wetland conservation and management

103. Australia and New Zealand were the only countries to report that they had provided funding support for wetland conservation and management in other countries from their development assistance agencies and programmes. Examples include Australia's provision of core funding to the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) to assist in the implementation of their work on biodiversity conservation, coordination and implementation of MEAs, including the Ramsar Convention, in the Pacific region. In addition, the Australian government provided funding support in 2014 for updating national wetland inventories in three Pacific island countries. Similarly, New Zealand is a principal donor of SPREP.

Environmental safeguards and assessments

104. New Zealand reported that sustainability is one of the cross-cutting issues that must be addressed in project proposals that are submitted to and approved by their Government's international aid and development programme (NZAID). For Australia, the 'Environment Management Guide for Australia's Aid Programme 2012' supports the integration of environmental considerations across Australia's aid programme.

Funding assistance from development assistance agencies

105. In the past triennium, Fiji, Kiribati and Samoa have been successful in receiving support from the Ramsar Small Grant Fund, IUCN, WWF, GEF, World Bank, and ISME for projects that address wetland conservation and management.

STRATEGY 3.4: Sharing information and expertise

National and international networking and twinning

106. Australia, Fiji and New Zealand reported a range of national and international networking and twinning activities that have been carried out by the government, academics and NGOs to help share knowledge and provide training on wetlands issues. Examples at the government level include:

- the twinning of the Hunter Wetlands Centre (Hunter Estuary Wetlands Ramsar Site, Australia) and the Kushiro wetlands (Japan);
- the Ramsar AA in New Zealand regularly participates in the Australian government's Wetlands and Waterbird Taskforce (WWTF), to exchange information wetland management and research.

107. At the non-governmental level, examples of networking include: `

- international academic exchanges between wetland managers and scientists at wetland symposia;
- the work by the Australasian Wader Studies Group on training and information gathering on migratory waterbirds along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway;
- the work of the Australian Wetland Alliance (AWA), which is an association of non-government organizations working with wetlands and which operates nationally and internationally.
- A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Miranda Naturalists Trust (Firth of Thames Ramsar Site, New Zealand) and Yalu Jiang National Nature Reserve (China), providing New Zealand support for shorebird site surveys and training.
- Various wetland scientists from Crown Research Institutes, universities and the government regularly engage with international colleagues, e.g. at joint meetings of the New Zealand and Australian freshwater science societies, meetings of the Society for Wetland Scientists, at the National Wetland Restoration Symposium, and through invited presentations at other international fora.

Availability of information on wetlands and Ramsar Sites

108. All the Oceania Contracting Parties reporting said that they have made information about the wetlands and Ramsar Sites in the country publicly available. The common way in which this has been done was by having dedicated websites or web-pages, set up by the central or state government, where the information can be easily accessed by anyone interested. Printed information on wetlands is still popular and still being produced. For example, the national Wetland Trust in New Zealand has produced a book titled 'Our Wet and Wild Places' that profiles five of the six New Zealand Ramsar Sites. Some of the websites are listed below:

- New Zealand - <http://www.doc.govt.nz/about-doc/international/ramsar-convention-on-wetlands/nz-wetlands-of-international-importance/>
- Australia - www.environment.gov.au/wetlands
- Kiribati - <http://www.environment.gov.ki/index.php/component/content/article/19-sample-data-articles/joomla/24-joomla>

Transmittal of country wetland information to the Ramsar Secretariat

109. All Oceania Contracting Parties reporting had transmitted information about their wetlands and/or Ramsar Sites to the Ramsar Secretariat for dissemination. For New Zealand, this includes annual World Wetland Day reports. For Australia, the national focal point and CEPA national focal point maintain regular communication with the Ramsar Secretariat on Convention implementation issues.

STRATEGY 3.5: Shared wetlands, river basins and migratory species.

Transboundary wetlands

110. None of the reporting Contracting Parties have wetlands that extend across national borders.

Cooperation for shared wetland systems

111. Only Australia reported that effective cooperative management is in place for its shared wetland systems. The Murray Darling Basin Authority works closely with jurisdictions and communities throughout the basin at both the broad basin scale for the implementation of the Basin Plan and to facilitate active operational coordination of water management along the River Murray.

Participation in regional networks or initiatives

112. All Oceania Contracting Parties reporting, except for Kiribati, have participated in regional networks or initiatives for wetland-dependent migratory species, with both Australia and New Zealand being members of the East Asian-Australasia Flyway Partnership, one of the Regional Initiatives under the framework of the Ramsar Convention. In addition, Australia mentions having separate bilateral agreements in place for the conservation of migratory birds with Japan (JAMBA), China (CAMBA), and the Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA).

GOAL 4. Institutional capacity

STRATEGY 4.1: CEPA

Development of CEPA action plans

113. Most of the Oceania Contracting Parties reported having developed Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Action Plans from the national down to the site/local level (table below).

	Australia	Fiji	Kiribati	New Zealand	Samoa
National level	✓	✓	Planned	✗	In
Sub-national level	✓	✓	Planned	✓	Planned
Catchment/basin level	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Local/site level	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Number of wetland centres	39	1	1	3	0

114. To summarize, Australia has the greatest number of wetland centres (39), followed by New Zealand (3). Kiribati and Fiji reported having established similar means at their wetlands and Ramsar Sites to promote greater awareness of the importance of the sites and of wetlands in general. Whilst some centres may be large and well equipped, others are small but can play an equally important role in promoting wetland CEPA. The most important function of these centres is that they provide school students, special interest groups, and all sectors of the community with the opportunity to participate in practical, fun and hands-on activities that will show how the wetlands work, the wildlife that live in a wetland, the area's culture and history, its importance, and how visitors can help in its conservation. Depending on the funding available, centres may also offer a variety of facilities to visitors, including wildlife viewing areas, walking tracks, interpretive signs, boardwalks, classrooms, libraries, and an area where food and drinks are available.

115. All the Contracting Parties reporting said that they promoted public participation in decision-

making with respect to wetland planning and management. Examples included the following:

- In New Zealand, the statutory process for preparing management strategies or plans, including Conservation Management Strategies, requires public participation and the opportunity for submissions on how wetlands should be managed. Furthermore, stakeholder participation (including iwi) is included in management and If a proposed development project in Australia has, will have, or is likely to have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance (including Ramsar wetlands), then there are opportunities for the public to comment on the proposal.
- For Australian reserves covering Ramsar Sites, the management planning process for the preparation of national park management plans involved a formal public comment period as well as consultation with key stakeholders and local communities. The Murray Darling Basin Authority promotes stakeholder participation through the requirements of the Basin Plan and undertakes regular consultation with indigenous peoples, regional water advisory groups, scientific and academic community, irrigators, landholders and local community representatives, conservation organizations and relevant state/territory governments.

116. Most (4) of the Contracting Parties reporting said that they specifically involved local stakeholders in the selection of new Ramsar Sites and in Ramsar Site management. In New Zealand, local stakeholder involvement is one of the criteria for selection of new Ramsar Sites. In Australia, public consultation is a key component of the selection process for all new Ramsar Sites as outlined in the 'Australian Ramsar Site Nomination Guidelines'. Local councils and indigenous people are consulted regarding the designation and management of new Ramsar Sites. Many Ramsar Sites in Australia have resulted from public support and leadership.

117. Oceania Contracting Parties generally reported not having made or having only partly made an assessment of national and local training needs for the implementation of the Convention over the past triennium. However, training was still provided in Australia (18 opportunities), Fiji (1), Samoa (1) and Kiribati (2).

- Examples of training courses in Australia include:
 - Government staff involved in the management of wetlands, including Ramsar Sites, have regular access to training. For example, in South Australia, staff regularly attend training and conferences to update skills on wetland management, monitoring and ecology and to share ideas and compare projects.
 - The University of Melbourne supported by the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries offers a Graduate Certificate in River Health Management, which is accredited as a 12-month part-time course designed for rural and urban waterway management professionals.
- For New Zealand, Crown Research Institutes and some technical institutes run a number of courses linked to training in wetlands, including identifying wetland biodiversity. Most of these training opportunities are offered to anyone wishing to attend.
- For Samoa, various donor funded projects offered trainings for local community representatives on the wise use of mangrove resources. Local NGOs also provide similar training programmes at the national level for many communities.

118. Australia, Fiji and Kiribati reported having operational National Ramsar/Wetlands Committees (or equivalent). New Zealand reported that they do not have a national Ramsar committee and Samoa reported that they are planning to form such a committee in the coming triennium.

119. Apart from having some form of wetland committee, Oceania Contracting Parties all mentioned that they had other mechanisms in place to share Ramsar implementation guidelines and other information between the Ramsar AA and a) Ramsar Site managers (except Fiji), b) other MEA

national focal points, and c) relevant ministries, departments and agencies.

120. All the Oceania Contracting Parties stated that WWD activities have been carried out in their countries since COP10, with the activities being organized by the national, state and territory governments as well as by community organizations. They reported that they also carried out other campaigns, programmes, and projects to raise awareness of the importance of wetlands and the ecosystem benefits/services that they provided. These activities include:
- For New Zealand, World Wetlands Day activities are organised each year. Guidelines for organising a wetland event and designing a wetland challenge for World Wetlands Day have been jointly published by the nz/gettinginvolved/events-and-awards/national-events/worldwetlands-day/In addition, the DOC and NWT websites host wetland event pages that promote World Wetland Day events.
 - Each year in Australia, World Wetlands Day activities are carried out by Australian State, territory and local governments as well as a variety of community organizations.
121. The Contracting Parties that reported carried out other campaigns, programmes and projects that highlight the importance of wetlands to people and wildlife and the essential services they provide.
- In New Zealand, a 'Wetland Life' poster and stickers were published by DOC in 2012, which features native species living in a lowland swamp – birds, fish, invertebrates and plants. There is also a sheet of stickers of 10 species from the poster, ideal as an educational tool: (www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/conservation/land-and-freshwater/wetlands/poster-life-in-lowland-swamp.pdf).
 - The National Wetland Trust publishes a quarterly newsletter 'Wet & Wild' which raises awareness about many aspects of wetlands (www.wetlandtrust.org.nz).
 - New Zealand Landcare Trust works with farmers, landowners and community groups to improve the sustainability of landscapes and waterways. It has several projects, sometimes dealing with wetland issue at a 'catchment level'. They often involve the Trust working together with multiple agencies plus landowners, farmers and landcare groups.
122. A tour to Fiji's first Ramsar Site, the Upper Navua Conservation Area, was organised for government officials and NGOs for educational purposes. A school wetland competition was carried out in the Nasinu area just outside the capital city, Suva. Children made wetland models, drawings and essays on the protection of wetlands. Awareness materials were produced (posters, pocket booklets, electronic booklets and pull up banners). A National Mangrove Campaign was organised by WWF Pacific and the Department of Environment on the importance of the protection of mangroves.

STRATEGY 4.2: Convention financial capacity

Annual Contributions

123. All but one of the Oceania Contracting Parties (Samoa) that reported said that their Ramsar contributions have been paid in full for the past triennium. Samoa replied that its contributions have been partly paid and that further payments will be processed upon receipt of invoices from the Ramsar Secretariat.

STRATEGY 4.3: Convention bodies effectiveness

Use of previous national reports for monitoring implementation

124. Three of the five Oceania Contracting Parties (Australia, Fiji and New Zealand) reporting said that they had used their previous Ramsar National Reports in monitoring their implementation

of the Convention. For example, Australia has used its national reports during the last triennium to analyse its implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan.

STRATEGY 4.4: Working with IOPs and others

Assistance from Ramsar IOPs

125. Three Contracting Parties (Australia, Fiji and Samoa) said that they have received assistance from one or more of the Convention's International Organization Partners in their implementation of the Convention. For example, in Australia IOPs provide input to and advice on the development of government policy including the national wetlands policy and Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds. Australian IOPs also provided input to Australia's COP12 national report and provided advice to the government on the draft resolutions to be considered by COP. In Samoa, IUCN Oceania had provided support with mangrove assessments and training.

Annex 1

General overview of answers to selected indicators

(Symbols: ✓ “yes” O “in progress”, “partly”, “planned” “in some cases” “some sites”, **n/a** “not applicable” ✗ “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 (or equivalent instrument) in place?
- 1.3.4 Are EIAs made for any 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 (RS) 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 on designation process?
- 2.5.1 Have any assessments on the effectiveness of the site management been carried out?
- 2.6.1 Are arrangements in place for reporting the change of ecological character of the RS?
- 3.1.1 Are the national focal points of other MEAs invited to participate in the National Ramsar Committee?

Contracting Party	Goal 1: Wise Use of Wetlands						Goal 2: Wetlands of International Importance					
	1.1.1	1.3.1	1.3.4	1.6.2	1.8.2	1.11.1	2.1.1	2.2.1	2.3.1	2.5.1	2.6.1	3.1.1
Australia	O	✓	O	✓	✓	✓	O	✗	✓	✓	✓	O
Fiji	O	✓	✓	O	✓	O	✓	✓	O	✗	✓	✓
Kiribati	✓	✓	✓	n/a	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	O
New Zealand	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	O	✓	✓	✓	✓	O
Samoa	✓	O	✓	O	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	O	O

Annex 2

Summary statistics

The table provides a general overview of the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the Oceania region during the period between COP8 to COP11, using data submitted in the National Reports. Insufficient National Reports were received on time before COP9 to make an analysis of the progress implementation at that stage.

The table also shows whether particular actions are more (or less) widely addressed in the Oceania region, compared to the global average, based on the percentages of the Contracting Parties having answered positively. (Symbols: ✓✓ = Significant progress; ✓ = some progress; ✗ = regression)

Strategy	Indicator	Affirmative countries				Progress since COP11
		Oceania COP8	Oceania COP10	Oceania COP11	Oceania COP11	
1.1	Inventory and Assessment: country has a comprehensive national wetland inventory (1.1.1.)	0%	50%	20%	43%	✓✓
1.3	Policy and legislation: National Wetland Policy (or equivalent instrument) in place (1.3.1)	67%	50%	60%	51%	✓
1.8	Wetland restoration and rehabilitation: wetland restoration/ rehabilitation programmes or projects implemented (1.8.2)	0%	50%	80%	69%	✓✓
2.1	Ramsar Site designation: strategy and priorities established for further designation of Ramsar sites, using the Strategic Framework (2.1.1)	67%	25%	20%	42%	✓
2.6	Condition of all Ramsar Sites: all cases of change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar sites been reported to the Ramsar Secretariat (Article 3.2) (2.6.1)	67%	50%	60%	62%	✗
3.1	Collaboration: mechanisms in place at the national level for collaboration between the Ramsar AA and the focal points of other MEAs (3.1.1)	33%	100%	100%	66%	✓✓
3.4	Sharing expertise and experience: networks established for knowledge sharing and training (3.4.1)	67%	75%	60%	39%	✓✓
4.1	National Wetland Committee National Ramsar/ Wetlands cross-sectoral Committee (or equivalent body) operational (4.1.6)	100%	25%	60%	54%	✓

Annex 3

Oceania Ramsar Sites designated since COP11

Country	Number of sites	Total area of sites (ha)
Australia	1	862
Kiribati	1	1,033
TOTAL	2	1,895

Annex 4

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

Country	Number of sites	Country	Number of sites
Australia	21	Palau	0
Fiji	0	Papua New Guinea	2
Marshall Islands	1	Samoa	0
New Zealand	5		