

**14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**

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Report on implementation of the CEPA Programme 2016-2024

Summary

1. This paper provides both a review of progress in implementing the Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) during the 2019-2022 period and recommendations by the CEPA Oversight Panel on a new approach to CEPA implementation.
2. During the reporting period 2019-2022, significant activity has been undertaken against the nine goals of the CEPA Programme, with achievements in increasing visibility and awareness of wetlands, support and capacity building for site managers, engaging new stakeholders, leveraging World Wetlands Day and other campaigns, and the availability of a variety of promotional and educational materials.
3. Recommendations on a new approach to CEPA have been developed to inform a draft resolution for the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14) on the future of CEPA and to provide input to the review of the Ramsar Strategic Plan, and the broader approach to implementation of the Convention beyond 2024.

Introduction

4. Communication, capacity-building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) activities have a long history within the Convention evolving from the Outreach Programme in 1999 to the CEPA Programme of 2009-2015 and the current 2016-2024 Programme.
5. Resolutions of the Convention on Wetlands (including Resolutions VII.9, X.8 and XII.9) show a clear recognition by Contracting Parties of the important role of CEPA in the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan, by engaging, enlisting and enabling people to act for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
6. At COP12 in 2015, the Contracting Parties approved a new CEPA Programme for 2016-2024, through Resolution XII.9. The Programme includes nine CEPA goals and 43 targets.
7. Responsibilities for implementation are shared between Contracting Parties, the Secretariat of the Convention, the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs), NGOs, community-based organizations and other stakeholders. Contracting Parties are the key implementers of the CEPA Programme, working through their National Focal Points, CEPA Focal Points, community-based organizations, Ramsar Regional Initiatives and wetland education

centres. Contracting Parties are invited to formulate CEPA National Action Plans to identify priority CEPA activities, and to report on their progress through National Reports to the COPs.

8. The Secretariat supports CEPA implementation, and developed a CEPA Action Plan for 2016 to 2018 to guide its actions. The Plan was reviewed to improve its focus and, at the 53rd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC53), a [report on progress in implementing the Action Plan](#) was published. Moving towards a more cohesive approach, the CEPA Action Plan was integrated into the Secretariat's annual and triennial work plans.
9. The IOPs (Birdlife International, the International Water Management Institute, IUCN, Wetlands International, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust and WWF) have been active in promoting the Convention and implementing the Strategic Plan of the Convention.
10. The CEPA Oversight Panel was established in 2006 (by SC34, following Resolution IX.18) to monitor and report on CEPA issues at the national level within the Convention and the progress of implementation of the CEPA Programme. The CEPA Oversight Panel has been active in overseeing implementation of CEPA activities and informing the new approach to CEPA and new governance for the Panel.
11. The Secretariat and the Chair of the CEPA Oversight Panel have provided input to this report.

CEPA achievements during 2019-2022

12. The following review of progress in implementing the CEPA Programme draws on an analysis of Contracting Parties' National Reports to COP14 and information provided to the Secretariat from stakeholders supporting the CEPA Programme.
13. The National Reports provide the following information on the implementation of the CEPA Programme:
 - Action plans for wetland CEPA are in place in 35% of Contracting Parties (a 45% change from the 24% reported at COP13). This Improvement in CEPA planning at the national level is likely to contribute to a better focus on key priorities.
 - Sixty-one percent of Parties report that communication mechanisms are in place to share Convention guidance and information with site managers, focal points of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other ministries, departments and agencies. This figure, while improved from 50% at COP13, remains concerning, as such mechanisms are critical to support site managers in their management of wetlands of international importance, and to engage relevant agencies in understanding and implementing the Convention.
 - Regarding operational cross-sectoral national Ramsar/wetland committees, a decrease has been reported over time, from 63% at COP12, 49% at COP13 and 46% in this reporting period. This is also of concern, as these committees are an important tool to integrate wetland conservation and wise use into national policy considerations, and ensure decision-making takes account of the ecological services provided by wetlands. In particular, Targets 1 and 13 of the Strategic Plan encourage Contracting Parties to feature wetland benefits in national/local policies and plans relating to key sectors, and to enhance the sustainability of key sectors when they affect wetlands.

14. For the nine Goals of the CEPA Programme 2016-2024, the following actions and accomplishments are noted for the 2018-2022 reporting period.

Goal 1 – Leadership, institutional support and networks

- The Secretariat and Contracting Parties raised the visibility of the Convention and improved engagement in strategic policy processes, through contributions to indicators for Sustainable Development Goals. Highlights included participation in:
 - The 8th, 10th, and 12th meetings of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (2018, 2019, 2022)
 - The SDG Summit (September 2019)
 - The 13th and 14th meetings of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions (2018, 2021)
 - The 24th, 25th and 26th meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (2018, 2019, 2021)
 - The 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (February 2020)
 - The 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD (September 2019)
 - The 4th and 5th meetings of the UN Environment Assembly (2019, 2022)
 - IUCN World Conservation Congress (2021)
 - The 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD (Part 1);
 - Open-ended Working Groups on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and Subsidiary Body on Implementation (2019-2022)
 - The UN Oceans Conference (June 2022).
- The visibility of the Convention is raised thanks to InforMEA, the United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements. The portal currently includes 17 MEAs from 12 Secretariats. It is open to observers involved in MEA information and data management. The InforMEA Portal presents Convention on Wetlands COP decisions and Resolutions, country membership, national focal points, national reports and Ramsar Sites (see www.informea.org/en/treaties/ramsar). The InforMEA learning platform includes a popular introductory course on the Convention in which 1,773 people enrolled, with 1,001 receiving certificates of completion during the reporting period. The Secretariat is in the process of updating and expanding course content, with a new introductory course on the Convention to be made available on the platform as well as on the Convention on Wetlands website in the last quarter of 2022.

Goal 2 – Integration of CEPA into Convention activities

- CEPA is an integral part of implementation of the Convention, playing a key role in promoting the values of wetlands, in engaging wetland managers and the broader community in wetland conservation and wise use, in building capacity to understand and manage wetlands and address emerging issues, and in reporting locally and globally on progress.
- The Convention website is an important element of Convention implementation, including making publicly available the decisions and information from Convention meetings, holding data on Ramsar sites (in the Ramsar Site Information Service), disseminating scientific and technical material and promoting Ramsar sites and wetland news stories. Visitors to the Convention website totalled 1.2 million over the reporting period.

- The Convention on Wetlands Newsletter, published biannually, provides a regular means of communication between the Secretariat and the Contracting Parties.

Goal 3 – Support on wise use for Ramsar site and other wetland managers

Goal 4 – Capacity-building

- The Secretariat strengthened its role in providing support to strengthening the capacity of individual Contracting Parties through the provision of a variety of materials, tools, trainings and webinars. During the reporting period, the Secretariat organized the following webinars:
 - “How to Access Green Climate Fund (GCF) for the Conservation of Wetlands” (March 2020)
 - “Guidance on utilizing Earth observation as a tool for wetland management, provided for Eastern and Southern African parties” (September 2020)
 - “Grant Writing: How to write effective project proposals” (September and October 2020)
 - “Preparation of National Reports to COP14” (November 2020)
 - “Wetlands as Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)” (December 2020)
 - “Training Webinar: Preparation of Draft Resolutions for COP14” (March 2021)
 - “Training Webinar: Mainstreaming Gender under the Convention on Wetlands” (March 2021)
 - “Wetlands: Key Enablers for a Resilient and Sustainable Recovery” (July 2021)
 - “Connecting for Wetlands Action: An Intergenerational Dialogue” (October 2021)
 - “Financing Mechanisms for Freshwater Ecosystems” (December 2021)
 - “Acting for Wetlands: Challenges and Opportunities” (January 2022)
 - “Training Webinar on Nagao Wetland Fund 2022” (February 2022)
 - “Wetlands and Climate Change: Actions to protect blue carbon ecosystems and peatlands for mitigation and adaptation” (May 2022)
 - “Wetlands and Agriculture: Transformative actions for sustainable agricultural practices and the wise use of wetlands” (July 2022).
- Information on Ramsar Sites continued to be uploaded to the Ramsar Site Information Service. A training manual and videos were produced as well as yearly online training sessions for compilers provided in the three languages of the Convention.
- A Ramsar Sites management toolkit, providing guidance to site managers on the key steps and components involved in managing a Ramsar Site, has been developed with the Secretariat and published online, at: <https://www.ramsar.org/resources/ramsar-sites-management-toolkit>.
- The Secretariat produced a number of wetland publications which were disseminated to Contracting Parties and other interested entities, and produced 42 videos on different wetland-related topics.
- Nominations were sought for the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards which will be presented at COP14 to recognize and honour the achievements of individuals, organizations and governments around the world for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. The Danone Group has offered an Evian Special Prize of USD 10,000 in each category.

- Ramsar Regional Initiatives (RRIs) continued to support the implementation of the Convention through various CEPA activities. During 2019-2022 many RRIs developed CEPA action plans and reported on their implementation. Key activities included WWD events, training and capacity-building programmes targeting wetland managers, and the production of communication materials. Details are available in RRI annual reports and various Secretariat reports on RRIs to the Standing Committee (SC57-59).

Key highlights of achievements during this period include:

- **Ramsar Centre for Eastern Africa** – finalized its CEPA Action Plan, created a website, supported the Earth observation toolbox distribution and conducted a capacity needs assessment on wise use principles for Parties. Completed training for Parties on using earth observation data for wetland monitoring and published a policy brief on the subject matter and SDG 6.6.1 reporting.
- **Ramsar Regional Initiative for West African Coastal Zone Wetlands** – organized a governing board meeting in which 12 countries participated.
- **Ramsar Regional Initiative for the Niger River Basin** – trained national focal points on the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) project development process and facilitated the translation and publication of statutes and Rules of Procedures of the organization into English.
- **Ramsar Regional Initiative for the Senegal River Basin** – developed a Wetlands Charter for the institution. It sponsored a study on conflicts and water resource use in the Senegal River Basin.
- **Regional Initiative for the Conservation and Wise Use of the Plata River Basin** – conducted training projects for Paraguay and Bolivia.
- **Regional Initiative for the Integral Management and Wise Use of Mangroves and Coral Reefs** – implemented a capacity building project titled “Regional blue carbon” in 2021.
- **Mediterranean Wetlands Ramsar Regional Initiative** – has a specific CEPA programme and successfully operated MedWet Academy, a three-year training programme for wetland managers, as well as promoting wetland activities through communication campaigns, webinars, its newsletter, website and social media. MedWet has been coordinating WWD activities throughout the Mediterranean basin since 2020, compiling lists of all events, and it launched in 2022 a call for awareness-raising projects, out of which the 35 best ones were provided with financial support. Since 2020, MedWet has been translating Ramsar’s awareness tools into Arabic for wider distribution.
- **Carpathian Wetland Ramsar Regional Initiative** – has been operating its regional wetland centre and developed a training programme on wetland management and restoration. It has published information booklets on the Initiative and on Carpathian wetlands as well as translating guidelines.

- **Nordic-Baltic Wetlands Ramsar Regional Initiative** – countries within the initiative have organized WWD events and maintained information websites.
- **Ramsar Regional Initiative on Black and Azov Seas Coastal Wetlands** – has created web resources and organized several public awareness activities e.g. WWD activities, activities on restoration of the Danube Delta.
- **Ramsar Regional Centre – East Asia** – provides multiple training programmes for wetland managers as well as developing training modules. It operates a website, web magazine, and developed contents for social media such as YouTube.
- **East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership** – organized 100 webinars, operates a resource webpage for site managers, cases studies, training manual, provides small grant in celebration of the World Migratory Bird Day, Youth Think Tank Competition and Civil Walking Festival to promote awareness.
- **Ramsar Regional Centre - Central and West Asia** – has conducted virtual training workshops and organized WWD activities
- **Ramsar Regional Initiative for Central Asia** – has organized WWD events, developed Communication Strategy and conducted eco-tourism assessment of a wetland site in its member countries.
- **Indo-Burma Ramsar Regional Initiative** – organized technical workshop for capacity building, organized WWD Day and developed communication outputs for IBBRI.

Goal 5 – Multi-stakeholder participation

- A number of initiatives, many reflecting the World Wetlands Day themes, were undertaken to engage additional sectors in wetland conservation and wise use.
- IOPs continued to play an important role in promoting awareness and engagement of people in wetland conservation and wise use.
 - WWT
 - IUCN
 - Birdlife
 - Wetlands International
 - IWMI
 - WWF
- During the reporting period nominations for the Wetland City Accreditation scheme were received, with 25 new cities being designated with the status at COP14. The scheme has been well received with a broad international response, engagement from many parties, and the profile of the Convention lifted across the many nominating cities. Successful cities will be acknowledged at COP14 and a side event to share learnings and best practices from accredited cities has been proposed.

Goal 6 – Programmes and campaigns to promote wetlands

- World Wetlands Day (WWD) celebrations continue to focus attention on important wetland issues. Themes during the reporting period included; Wetlands and climate

change (2019), Wetlands and biodiversity (2020), Wetlands and water (2021), Wetlands action for people and nature (2022).

- In September of 2021 World Wetlands Day was recognized as an official UN day by UN General Assembly Resolution [75/317](#).
- For WWD 2022 there were 1,591 registered events from 86 countries, more than 3,000 online web articles mentioning WWD and 436 million social media posts with a potential reach of 3.5 billion people.
- The number of visits to the WWD website was 48,000 in 2021, but increased significantly to 73,000 in 2022. Parties are to be congratulated on their efforts in lifting the profile of the Convention through these many successful events.
- A total of 91% of countries reported holding WWD activities during the reporting period. This is also reflected in the strong numbers of events reported on the event map held on the Secretariat's website.
- The number of events registered on the map of events across the reporting period are as follows:
 - 1,495 events in 108 countries in 2019
 - 1,595 events in 85 countries in 2020
 - 1,139 events in 82 countries in 2021
 - 1,591 events in 86 countries in 2022
- Danone continues to provide funding support for World Wetlands Day.
- To mark the Convention's 50th anniversary in 2021, the Secretariat designed a year-long communications campaign to engage and activate partners and stakeholders to conserve, protect and restore wetlands. The Secretariat launched the Convention's 50th Anniversary campaign in March 2021, following World Wetlands Day. A suite of campaign materials was shared with Parties including a campaign website, 50th Anniversary logo, video, brand guidelines, social media toolkit and fact sheet series on wetland values. All campaign resources were available in English, French and Spanish.
- The 50th Anniversary campaign highlighted the importance of wetlands to key international days throughout 2021, including World Water Day (22 March), International Day for Biological Diversity (22 May), World Ocean Day (8 June), International Youth Day (12 August), and International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (13 October). Overall engagement and participation of stakeholders in the campaign was strong. Social media analytics show 4,869 instances of the campaign hashtag being used on Twitter and Instagram posts with a reach of 32 million viewers across all regions. Page visits to the campaign website totalled 40,000.
- There has been widespread activity on other campaigns, programmes and projects relating to wetland CEPA, with 87% of countries reporting such initiatives over the reporting period. These have included making use of other international days, such as World Environment Day, World Migratory Bird Day and World Turtles Day, to support global campaigns and draw attention to national and local situations.

- Contracting Parties have undertaken a variety of activities, which demonstrate effective approaches to engage and build capacity across a wide range of stakeholders and sectors. Examples are at **Annex A**.
- The Secretariat continued its communication outreach through social media (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram). Social media impressions topped 76 million for the reporting period, a 74% increase from the last triennium.

Goal 7 – Wetland education centres

- The Wetlands Link International (WLI) network of centres is an effective mechanism to link wetland education centres and provide an opportunity for sharing experiences, materials and innovative education and engagement ideas in support of CEPA. WLI has over 350 member centres and has established several regional networks, including in the East Atlantic Flyway (Migratory Birds for People), WLI in the Americas and the newly launched WLI Asia-Oceania, run through the Ramsar Regional Centre East Asia. WLI celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2020, producing an educational wall map for its members, collecting project case studies, distributing commemorative pin badges and launching the new Star Wetland Centre Awards, to celebrate best practice in wetland education centres.
- Wetland education centres undertook a variety of World Wetland Day and other activities to engage their local communities. Details of many of these events were uploaded to the Secretariat’s World Wetlands Day online map and register of events. WLI also celebrated the World Migratory Birds Day theme through work with local sites and school activities.
- WLI also held its annual webinar with input from local partners, celebrated the 8th WLI Asia meeting in the Philippines in July 2022, and supports flyway CEPA initiatives through AEWA and the East Asia Australasia Flyway Partnership.

Goal 8 – Education materials

- Convention on Wetlands publications launched during the reporting period included:
 - *Guidance on mainstreaming gender under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands* (2021)
 - *Factsheet – Wetlands restoration: unlocking the untapped potential of the Earth’s most valuable ecosystem* (2021)
 - *Factsheet – Restoring drained peatlands: now an environmental imperative* (2021)
 - *Factsheet – Realizing the full potential of marine and coastal wetlands: why their restoration matters* (2021)
 - *Brochure – Ramsar Advisory Mission: Help for Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands* (2021)
- The Secretariat produced educational videos on wetlands’ values in English, French and Spanish during the reporting period, including:
 - *Wetlands: Rich ecosystems*
 - *Wetlands: Powerful nature-based solutions*
 - *Convention on Wetlands: The Value of wetlands*
 - *World Wetlands Day 2021: Water, wetlands and life are inseparable*

Goal 9 – Development and communication of STRP materials

- During the reporting period the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) finalized the following outputs, pursuant to the requests of Contracting Parties, as reflected in its work plan:
 - *Global Wetland Outlook: Special Edition 2021;*
 - *Policy Brief No.5: Restoring drained peatlands: A necessary step to achieve global climate goals;*
 - *Policy Brief No.6: Transforming agriculture to sustain people and wetlands;*
 - *Briefing Note No.11: Practical peatland restoration;*
 - *Briefing Note No.12: The contribution of blue carbon ecosystems to climate change mitigation;*
 - *Briefing Note No.13: Wetlands and agriculture: impacts of farming practices and pathways to sustainability;*
 - *Technical Report No.11: Global guidelines for peatland rewetting and restoration.*
- The Secretariat worked closely with the STRP Chair to ensure the products were appropriate for target audiences and supported by strong, targeted outreach plans.
 - The *Global Wetland Outlook: Special Edition 2021* was launched as part of the 50th Anniversary campaign. The report was launched with a revised microsite, news story, press release, key messages and social media campaign. An op-ed relating to the *Global Wetland Outlook* authored by the Secretary General was published on 20 December by the Thompson Reuters Foundation.
 - To launch the STRP Policy Briefs, Briefing Notes and Technical Reports, the Secretariat developed an online social media toolkit with key messages, tiles and proposed posts and shared it actively with Parties, networks and partners. The Secretariat also organized webinars on “Wetlands and climate change” and on “Agriculture and wetlands” to disseminate the STRP outputs. The webinars were conducted in the three languages of the Convention.

A new approach on advising and supporting CEPA in the Convention

15. Resolution XIII.5 on *Review of the fourth Strategic Plan of the Ramsar Convention* instructed the CEPA Oversight Panel to, at SC59, “present its proposed new approach and a draft resolution on this subject to be submitted to COP14; and FURTHER INSTRUCTS the Standing Committee to take this matter further, for decision at COP14”. This new approach was to take into account the work already carried out by the Panel and the Working Group on CEPA Implementation, incorporate the advice of the STRP and complement the work of the Strategic Plan Working Group.
16. Further, Resolution XIII.5 instructs the CEPA Oversight Panel to review the implementation of the CEPA Programme, coordinate its efforts with the Strategic Plan Working Group, and report to SC58 on the results, which will then be considered at COP14.
17. In response, the CEPA Oversight Panel undertook a survey in late 2019 in the context of considering a new approach to CEPA, to get input about priorities for change, and what elements of the existing CEPA Programme should be retained. Results of the survey are presented in **Annex B**.

18. The CEPA Oversight Panel has discussed the findings of the survey in the context of Resolution XIII.5 and the advice provided to COP13 by the former Oversight Panel, and synthesized these points into a set of broad recommendations to shape the new CEPA programme. These recommendations are:
1. A reduced set of activities clearly linked to the Strategic Plan.
 - The effort should be focused on a smaller number of high-priority activities.
 - CEPA activities should be incorporated into the Strategic Plan, but with a separate CEPA document providing supporting guidance, as needed.
 2. Make CEPA more strategic, integrated and effective.
 - The CEPA Programme would better support and strengthen the Strategic Plan if integrated into it. The next Strategic Plan should include both stand-alone CEPA activities, and CEPA elements.
 - In general, CEPA activities and CEPA elements should be integrated in planning and activities of the Convention (locally, nationally, internationally) where appropriate.
 3. Work to support focal points, and build more networks and partnerships.
 - National Focal Points and CEPA National Focal Points are considered important to ensure a coordinated and strategic national approach to Ramsar implementation. Contracting Parties should ensure that the Focal Points are informed about their responsibilities. The CEPA Focal Points should be recognized as the key implementers of CEPA and should be provided with adequate tools and training opportunities when necessary.
 - Encourage Contracting Parties with similar CEPA needs to co-operate on CEPA activities. Such co-operation can include exchange of experiences of CEPA campaigns as well as working cooperatively to produce communication material and translating them into languages as needed by the Contracting Parties involved. Contracting Parties should also be encouraged to coordinate with their focal points for other MEAs.
 - The Secretariat should seek opportunities to build networks and partnerships at the international level, including with other MEAs, in order to identify opportunities for common or complementary CEPA activities and to bring relevant tools, resources, and practices to Contracting Parties.
 - The Contracting Parties should increase engagement with other sectors, consistent with priorities identified in the strategic plan at the national level. Messaging should be tailored to emphasize themes that matter to the target audience.
 4. Strategic support by the Secretariat.
 - The Secretariat to provide advice and information to Contracting Parties, for example introduction materials about Ramsar CEPA work for new CEPA NFPs and CEPA NGO FPs and sharing good examples from other countries.
 - The Secretariat to revise the handbook on Wetland CEPA from 2010. The revised version probably needs to reflect the new CEPA approach, include other changes in the Convention since 2010, and include new content on social media, how to enhance networking etc.
 - The Secretariat to provide opportunities for the CEPA NFPs to learn more about CEPA tools. This can take place in conjunction with other relevant meeting, such as COPs or regional meetings as appropriate, or via on-line resources.

5. More efficient governance of the Ramsar global CEPA work.
 - Better described work task (separating what may be mandatory and what may be voluntary) for the Ramsar CEPA working group/-s
 - Better way of composing and establishing the Ramsar CEPA working group/-s - Modus operandi for Ramsar CEPA working group/-s
 - Better sharing of workload, also engaging more Contracting Parties

19. These recommendations have been incorporated into a draft resolution on the new CEPA approach (COP14.Doc.18.10) for consideration by the COP.

Annex A

Campaigns, programmes and projects by Contracting Parties relating to wetland CEPA during the 2018-2022 reporting period

- In Albania, the results of the International Wintering Waterfowl Census are presented to celebrate World Wetlands Day.
- In Algeria, programmes are carried out to raise public awareness on the benefits of wetlands throughout the year in arid regions, through activities such as blue classes, educational visits, conferences and field trips organized by universities and research centres.
- In Antigua and Barbuda, World Wetlands Day activities have included social media postings, interviews with local media outlets and facilitated field trips to wetlands around the islands.
- In Australia, World Wetlands Day activities annually focus on the theme carried out by state, territory and local governments, as well as a variety of community organizations. Australian Government activities included the publication of an annual online Wetlands Australia magazine supplemented by videos, fact sheets, brochures, displays and social media postings.
- In Bangladesh, World Wetlands Day is celebrated by the MoEFCC, IUCN, NGOs and youth clubs. The Department of Environment, Forest Department and IUCN also observed other important days such as World Environment Day, World Migratory Bird Day and World Wildlife Day, to raise awareness on wetlands role in the conservation of wildlife and their habitats.
- In Belgium, the implementation of the Birds Directive has helped gain greater exposure on wetland conservation. Each year at the Ramsar site of “la Vallée de la Haute-Sûre”, activities take place by the Parc Regional de la Vallée de la Haute-Sûre with similar events in the Flemish regions (such as guided tours) organized (sometimes by NGOs) related to water birds.
- In Benin, World Wetlands Day is honoured through actions bringing together the Ministry of the Environment and its technical departments, non-governmental organizations, associations for the management of community areas for the conservation of biodiversity and the designated national authority of the Convention "ABE". NGOs conduct campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of wetlands (BEES NGO, Nature Tropicale)
- In Botswana, World Wetlands Day is marked through events led by the Government, the Ministry of Environment and the Natural Resources Conservation and Tourism office.
- In Brazil, World Wetlands Day themes are promoted on the Ministry of Environment website. Several newspapers and other media (blogs, websites, etc.) publicize the day. Events are also organized, involving debates, hikes on Ramsar Sites and various other activities involving educational institutions and several NGOs operating in the country, thus maintaining long-term environmental educational campaigns.
- In Bulgaria, World Wetlands Day is celebrated via campaigns across the country, organized by the regional structures of the Ministry of Environment and Water and directed to kindergartens, schools and universities. This includes open lessons, exhibitions, presentations and activities of different environmental school clubs involving competitions and birdwatching tours.

- In Cambodia, World Wetlands Day is commemorated annually through inviting site managers, other MEA national focal points and relevant departments for the wetland-related meetings or workshops. Other CEPA activities were organized in the form of exhibitions, fairs, wetland festivals and celebrations of World Migratory Birds Day.
- In Cameroon, ceremonies centred on the theme of the year are organized. This provides an opportunity for the Ministry to increase awareness through the news outlets, posters and fun/recreational activities led by well-known local comedians. Cameroon Radio Television (CRTV) has set up a focus with a set of frequent productions showing the wealth and national potential of wetlands.
- In the Central African Republic, and with the support of WWF, broadcasts were made on national radio and television in addition to organized public debates on migratory birds. Bandoleers and T-shirts are distributed to participants and the press.
- In China, the main event for celebrating World Wetlands Day 2018 unfolded at the Haizhu National Wetland Park in the city of Guangzhou, Guangdong Province. The event was presided over by Mr. Wang Zhigao, then Director General of the former Center for Wetland Management of the State Forestry Administration (SFA).
- In Colombia, the commemoration of World Wetlands Day is carried out annually through a series of educational events, workshops, forums, exchange of experiences, cycle walks, etc. in which regional actors of institutional, community and productive sectors participate.
- In Côte d'Ivoire, combined awareness raising sessions and a field trip took place with the AEWA National Focal Point for school children in the town of Adiaké focusing primarily on the importance of wetlands and water birds in 2018.
- In Croatia, special public events are organized on World Wetlands Day in addition to presentations, lectures, exhibitions, field visits and art competitions for children. These reflect the importance and given theme of the respective year.
- In the Dominican Republic, the Ministry of Environment and NGOs work in collaboration to support educational institutions by giving talks in schools, colleges and universities in the localities where the commemoration events are hosted.
- In Ecuador, a wide variety of activities and events are held at national level to celebrate World Wetlands Day throughout the month of February. NGOs, environmental clubs and state institutions all participate. Events such as forums, symposiums, etc. related to wetlands are also held throughout the year.
- In El Salvador, the World Wetlands Day activities are scheduled at Ramsar Sites by the MARN, local governments and environmental units with different local actors related to each Ramsar Site involved. This serves to reflect on the goods and services that wetlands provide, as well as reinforcing the guidelines of the Convention.
- In Estonia, during 2018 and 2020, conferences organized and supported by WWF Estonia, Estonian Wetland Society, Estonian Ministry of Environment and Environmental Board were held. 200 attendees were present, in-person and virtually.

- In France, World Wetlands Day is organized by a national steering committee bringing together all the networks of natural area managers and environmental education stakeholders, and benefits from a national launch day with media coverage. Numerous communication and awareness-raising actions (seminars, competitions, training courses, exhibitions) are carried out by the Ministry and its public establishments.
- In Georgia, a conference for school students was held during 2019 at the administrative Centre of Kobuleti Protected Areas (Ispani mire). Students prepared presentations focused solely on the services that wetlands provide.
- In Germany, selected Ramsar Sites have been organizing events for many years, some of which have a local theme and are relevant to the Convention. Examples include events on the Upper Rhine, where a specialist annual conference to mark World Wetlands Day is hosted in alternate years by France and Germany, addressing current issues in the French-German Site 'Rhin Supérieur'.
- In Guatemala, CONAP, together with various NGOs and partners, plan activities to commemorate World Wetlands Day throughout the country, using different platforms to convey the message to the population about the importance of wetlands.
- In Honduras, the Bay Islands, World Wetlands Day and World Oceans Day are celebrated annually. Traditionally, this is conducted by raising awareness of the importance of wetlands in communities, schools and colleges; through talks, reforestation, clean-ups and competitions.
- In Hungary, the Wild Goose Festival is held annually at Lake Tata (Ramsar Site). 7,000-14,000 visitors usually attend during the festival. Activities include presentations on wetland values, an eco-market, a bird race as well as the spectacular flight of thousands of geese towards the lake at dusk.
- In India, the Ministry supports World Wetlands Day celebrations. In 2019, the WWD was held at Bhitarkanika, Odisha and in Sur Sarovar (Keetham) at Agra, Uttar Pradesh the following year. A virtual event was held in 2021.
- In Iran, an official ceremony is held on World Wetlands Day alongside one of the country's most important wetlands with the presence of local, national and international officials. This ceremony was held in 2020 near the Zarivar wetland of Kordestan province which was registered as a Ramsar Site in 2019. In addition, other local events have been held in provinces by the General Directorate and the Provincial Bureau of the Environment and local NGOs.
- In Iraq, events have been staged annually by the CRIMW since 2011 focused on the slogan of the Convention for each year and with wide-ranging participation from various groups. Promotional festivals for traditional industries, in addition to promotional activities and events were held during the last three years by CRIMW.
- In Ireland, a website was created to provide information on the implementation of Committee actions for Irish wetlands. The Community Wetlands Handbook was produced by the Community Wetlands Forum (CWF) as part of a small-scale study funded by the EPA under its IRWC remit.
- In Jamaica, Birdlife Jamaica, NEPA and Birds Caribbean coordinated with Caribbean Water Bird Centres during World Wetlands Day 2017. Institute of Jamaica (IOJ) led activities that included

school outreach, tours, presentations to communities and schools. Social media was also used for greater outreach.

- In Japan, a liaison conference is hosted amongst the relevant ministries and agencies for the Ramsar Convention to regularly share information and exchange views among the Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism offices and NGOs.
- In Kenya, WWD is celebrated every year in Kenya led by the Government in partnership with the local communities, NGOs, CBOs and civil society organizations. A number of build-up activities are undertaken to raise awareness on the importance of wetlands. The most recent events have been held at Enapuyapui swamp in Mau Forest complex Nakuru county and Sabaki Estuary at the Coast, Kilifi County.
- In Kuwait, clean-up campaigns are organized by the Government as well as NGOs at different sites. Educational television series assist in highlighting coastal sites in Kuwait.
- In Latvia, most Convention-branded activities were organized by the Nature Conservation Agency and Latvian Museum of Natural History. Various types of presentations, lectures, hiking trips, bicycle tours, green afternoons, creative lessons, workshops, reeds sculpture festivals, TV stories and interactive games have taken place all over the country, particularly in schools, museums, libraries and municipalities around Ramsar Sites.
- In Malaysia, the CEPA programme has been continuously conducted in schools and villages over the past three years. A community-based Mangrove Restoration and Awareness Program has also been developed.
- In Morocco, World Wetlands Day is celebrated annually in collaboration with relevant partners. Waterfowl and wetlands days are held in partnership with GREPOM. Several other events at regional level are also organized with local universities on the theme of wetlands.
- In Peru, at the local site level, outreach campaigns on the importance and values of wetlands are carried out.
- In the Philippines, in support of the Presidential Proclamation No. 74 s. 1999 declaring February 2 of every year as National Wetlands Day, activities geared towards promotion of the wise use of wetlands are pursued by both the Government and Non-Government sectors of the country.
- In Portugal, World Wetlands Day has been celebrated through a diverse set of activities (e.g. workshops, guided tours and educational activities) and promoted by several entities (the administration, non-governmental organizations, universities, municipalities, among others). The programme consists of events organized by both Government and Non-Governmental Organizations.
- In Rwanda, World Wetlands Day was celebrated through a guided high-level tour in the wetlands of Kigali.
- In Saint Lucia, the Forestry Division celebrates and promotes World Wetlands Day with tree planting initiatives and school visits to wetlands.

- In South Africa, 33 primary schools within Vhembe and Waterberg District Municipalities were visited one week prior to the WWD 2020 event commemoration to draw awareness to the campaigns.
- In Suriname, the CEPA focal point visits schools to inform school children on the importance of wetlands to people. Information is also provided on wildlife and the ecosystem benefits/services provided by wetlands.
- In Sweden, regular events have been held covering wetlands at or in the same week as World Wetlands Day on topics such as peatlands, restoration and greenhouse gases. There was also a large CEPA campaign included in the wetland restoration programme.
- In Switzerland, NGOs, the scientific community, national and subnational authorities organize the “Festival for Nature” during which many activities related to biodiversity are presented. The Festival takes place annually in May. The festival usually includes activities specifically related to the Convention, though is intended to promote awareness of biodiversity primarily.
- In Thailand, ONEP has implemented activities under the topic “Wetlands and biodiversity” at Samut Prakan Province for 300 participants representing Governmental and NGOs, local administrative organizations, educational institutions, the private sector and the general public. Each year several organizations also organize related activities, such as Botanical Garden Organization, Walairukhavej Botanical Research Institute of Mahasarakham University, RECOFTC, and Phrachomklao Na Wa Ko Prachuap Khiri Khan Science Park visits.
- In Türkiye, during 2019 and 2020 an advertisement campaign was designed by a dishwashing detergent trademark with the support of the Ministry. The purpose of the campaign was to save water and wetlands by minimizing the use of both and was developed at the Burdur Lake and Kuyucuk Lake Ramsar Sites.
- In Ukraine, protected areas administrations regularly organize eco-educational initiatives aimed at raising awareness of the values of nature and wetlands whilst involving local people and visitors into the conservation of wetlands. The nationwide celebrations which are The Day of Birds, celebration of Midsummer's Day and Fisherman's Day. Specific regions hold their own festivals, such as, Marine Day, Day of the Dniester and Dnipro Day.
- In the United Arab Emirates, the celebration of World Wetlands Day is in line with the Dubai Municipality's efforts to strengthen strategic plans and pillars of environmental protection and sustainability of natural resources. The celebration was organized at Jabal Ali Wetland Sanctuary in which 400 participants attended taking part in planting mangrove saplings inside the sanctuary.
- In the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, public awareness raising has been undertaken by the Alderney Wildlife Trust in collaboration with Visit Alderney, including citizen science research projects and educational programmes. Walks, tours and boat trips are available to visitors and islanders helping to fund conservation.
- In the United States of America, campaigns, programmes, and projects to raise awareness of the importance of wetlands have been carried out. The Wisconsin Wetlands Association hosted a virtual “Wetland Coffee Break” series to shed light on wetlands issues. The Departments of State and Interior use social media platforms to focus on the benefits of protecting these resources.

Annex B

A short compilation of the results of the November 2019 survey about CEPA

The survey

In October 2019 the CEPA Oversight Panel conducted a survey of the thoughts and experiences of National Focal Points, CEPA Government Focal Points and CEPA NGO Focal Points on a new approach to CEPA, based on the recommendations from the CEPA Oversight Panel 2015-2018. There were questions seeking free text responses, but also questions with suggested choices, mostly indicating to what level the respondents agreed with different statements or to choose the most important among suggested choices.

In the questions where the respondents chose to what level they agreed with a statement on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 is thinking something is “very useful”, “very likely” etc., and 1 is thinking that something is not at all useful or likely, they also had the opportunity to answer “I don’t know”. For such questions it has been possible to calculate weighted averages. In the text below the support for suggestions among the respondents are described according to the weighted average.

An average of 3.0 – 3.4 is considered to be a weak majority, 3.5 – 3.9 a clear majority, 4.0 – 4.4 a strong majority and 4.5 – 5.0 a very strong majority.

The results from the survey have been guiding the CEPA Oversight Panel. This is a short compilation of the results.

The respondents

The survey received 64 responses. There was an equal representation from the three NFP groups. More than 65% of the respondents have worked with CEPA issues for more than five years. All Ramsar regions are represented in the answers.

When it comes to representation in the actual answers, they vary from 4% from North America to 33% from Africa. When including all that could answer in a region the results vary from 6% for Latin America and the Caribbean to 22% for North America.

| Region | Regional representation of the total answers in % | Regional response (response/total number of countries per region* 3 roles) in % |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Africa | 33 | 13 |
| Asia | 22 | 14 |
| Europe | 28 | 12 |
| Latin America & Caribbean | 8 | 6 |
| North America | 3 | 22 |
| Oceania | 6 | 17 |

Analysis

1. Reduce the number of CEPA goals

A weak majority of the respondents think a reduction of the number of goals for CEPA will result in a more effective CEPA implementation.

2. Build an evaluation strategy

A clear majority of the respondents think that it would be useful to build a strategy for evaluating the effectiveness of CEPA measures.

The negative responses included:

- Evaluation is stealing resources from other activities
- Reduce all kinds of reporting
- Difficulties in measuring actual impact on wetlands achieved by CEPA activities

If we are to build a strategy for evaluation, the respondents suggest that:

- It should be integrated in the National Report
- Every country needs to have its own indicators
- It should be better aligned with other reporting

3. Make CEPA more strategic, integrated and effective

Examples from the respondents on how to work more strategically:

- Integrate CEPA into the Ramsar Strategic Plan
- Work together with other conventions/international work, especially CBD and IPBES
- Use new technology (webinars, social media, exchange on-line)
- CEPA programmes covering several countries with similar conditions and issues
- Investigate where there are gaps in the CEPA
- CEPA programme should focus on the future and possible solutions
- More training at national level
- Share experiences in CEPA networks, create place for CEPA issues at regional level
- Provide guidance to CEPA FPs
- Prioritize messages and target audiences
- Bottom up approach, having local CEPA activities

Better integrate the CEPA work into other activities of the Convention and national activities:

Convention level:

- All activities by the Convention including Resolutions should integrate CEPA activities
- Larger Convention CEPA activities should be adopted at the COP or Standing Committee
- Integrate the CEPA programme into the Strategic Plan
- Joining CBD and other international fora in common activities
- Leadership from the Secretariat is needed

International co-operation:

- Stronger networks for sharing ideas and best practices among CEPA focal points, wetland managers and CEPA practitioners - for example regionally-focused webinars

Nationally:

- All wetland activities nationally should integrate CEPA activities
- Integrate CEPA programme into national plans, education etc.
- National context for identifying useful tools and methods etc. is necessary
- Interaction/cooperation between CEPA National Focal Points and national Ramsar Committee
- National co-operation with implementation of other MEAs
- World Wetlands Day is one of the best tools

How to make the work more effective:

Strategies/systems:

- Use a system to assess how implementation of the CEPA programme impacted promotion of wetlands conservation and management
- Focus on policy makers, decision makers and wetland managers - aligns with the instructions given to the STRP
- Rather than reducing the number of global goals, prioritize them
- Support from the national government (funds)
- Include CEPA in all relevant national programmes
- Involving all the relevant stakeholders
- Each country has different priorities and needs

Capacity building exchange of experiences:

- Facilitation and networking both on regional and national level
- Increase the capacity of national focal points and wetland managers – training

4. Integrate the CEPA programme into the Strategic Plan

A clear majority of the respondents think that it would be useful to include the CEPA programme into the Strategic Plan. But there are also many respondents that think a separate CEPA programme can have a value.

Comments on the value of a separate CEPA programme:

- A separate CEPA programme makes CEPA visible and shows its importance
- CEPA might be underestimated or lost if it does not have its own programme
- CEPA will not have to compete with other issues
- Increased focus on CEPA
- Value of documents with supporting guidance apart from the Strategic Plan
- CEPA is a specialist area of work
- Easier to achieve goals

5. Reporting to be better aligned with other international conventions and initiatives

A clear majority of the respondents think that Ramsar CEPA reporting has to be better aligned with the reporting requirements of other international Conventions. They also think that CEPA reporting in the National Reports has to be streamlined.

6. Small number of high priority activities that follow the four goals of the Strategic Plan

A very strong majority of the respondents think that it would be useful to align CEPA activities with the goals of the Strategic Plan.

7. Working through networks and partnerships

A very strong majority of the respondents think that building strong networks among the National Focal Points, CEPA Focal Points and Wetland education/Visitors Centres is a useful way to strengthen CEPA work. They also find think that training packages for CEPA Focal Points would be useful.

8. CEPA integrated in all planning and activities of the Convention

A strong majority of the respondents think that including the CEPA National Focal Point in each country's Ramsar Committees would be useful.