

Contributions of Ramsar's culture-related activities to Strategic Plan goals and targets

Strategic Plan goals and targets	Contributions of Ramsar's culture-related activities
GOAL 1: ADDRESSING THE DRIVERS OF WETLAND LOSS AND DEGRADATION	
<p><i>Target 1:</i> Wetland benefits are featured in national/local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries at the national and local level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MAVA project includes activities addressing advocacy on the integration of culture and livelihoods into policies and strategies at regional, national and local levels, including reference to the financial dimension (Activities A1 and B4). • Resolutions VIII.19 and IX.21 on cultural matters are due to be reviewed, and proposals will be brought forward for new decisions/guidance and/or rationalisation of these existing texts at COP13 if necessary (Activity A2). • Attention will be given to particular sectoral interests by the five thematic groups currently being established within the Ramsar Culture Network, namely Bio-cultural diversity, Agriculture and food heritage, Tourism, Arts, and Youth engagement (Activity C1). • The generic Terms of Reference for members of the RCN include a role in supporting Ramsar Contracting Party attention to cultural aspects in formal documentation and other processes under the Convention, including National Wetland Policies. • Account will be taken in this context also of the potential linkages between these cultural aspects of Ramsar Strategic Plan implementation and the targets defined in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (eg Aichi Biodiversity Targets 1, 2, 14, 18, 19) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (eg SDG Targets 2,5, 4.7, 8.9, 11.4 and 12.b).
<p><i>Target 2:</i> Water use respects wetland ecosystem needs for them to fulfil their functions and provide services at the appropriate scale inter alia at the basin level or along a coastal zone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some situations, activities towards this target may be supported by traditional knowledge, religious customs or gender-specific roles (see under Target 10 below).
<p><i>Target 3:</i> The public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of the existing Ramsar guidance on culture (<i>Culture and wetlands - a Ramsar guidance document</i> - Ramsar Culture Working Group, 2008) may where appropriate be directed towards the wise use activities of both public and private sectors. (N.B. wise use includes maintenance of cultural ecosystem services, as part of maintaining wetland ecological character). • Concerning the public sector, implementation by Parties of Resolution VIII.19 on <i>Guiding principles for taking into account the cultural values of wetlands for the effective management of sites</i> will also contribute to the achievement of this target.
GOAL 2: EFFECTIVELY CONSERVING AND MANAGING THE RAMSAR SITE NETWORK	
<p><i>Target 5:</i> The ecological character of Ramsar sites is maintained or restored, through effective planning and integrated management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the adopted definitions (Resolution IX.1 Annex A), maintenance of a site's ecological character includes maintenance of its cultural ecosystem services. Documentation of these services is provided for in the Information Sheet for Ramsar Sites (RIS), and Ramsar Culture Network members are encouraged (in the RCN's ToRs) to support Contracting Parties in compiling the requisite information where this will help, assisted as appropriate by the guidance given in Resolution IX.21 on <i>Taking into account the cultural values of wetlands</i>. • The MAVA project activity on "Rapid Cultural Inventories" (Activity B1;

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	<p>and see Target 11 below) will also assist with the identification of cultural aspects of ecological character as mentioned above; and in addition it will provide a basis for incorporating relevant values and objectives into integrated planning and management of wetlands. Activity A1 (a policy report on culture and wetlands) will also address this at a strategic level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolution VIII.19 on <i>Guiding principles for taking into account the cultural values of wetlands for the effective management of sites</i> further addresses the issue of integrated planning and management. MAVA project A2 includes keeping this Resolution under review and suggesting updating revisions to it, if warranted by evolving knowledge and/or by lessons learned from the implementation experience accumulated since the Resolution's adoption in 2002. • Questions addressing cultural values feature prominently in the <i>Ramsar Site Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool</i> (Resolution XII.15). Assistance in implementing this tool in respect of those values will be a growing area for support for Parties from the Convention's culture activities in the coming years, thereby contributing to the achievement of Target 5.
<p><i>Target 6:</i> There is a significant increase in area, numbers and ecological connectivity in the Ramsar Site network, in particular under-represented types of wetlands including in under-represented ecoregions and Transboundary Sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramsar Site selection is limited by Article 2.2 of the Convention to reasons of ecology, botany, zoology, limnology and hydrology, and it follows the criteria of international importance defined in Resolution XI.8 Annex 2. Resolution IX.21 however identifies certain cultural characteristics that may be relevant to take into account in the designation of Ramsar sites, once the ecological criteria are satisfied in each case. The Convention's culture work will assist Parties in applying this provision, and advice on the issue can be mobilized through the Ramsar Culture Network.
<p><i>Target 7:</i> Sites that are at risk of change of ecological character have threats addressed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and advice on the cultural dimensions of ecological character are applicable to the achievement of this target in the same ways as described for Target 5 above. (Target 7 is in practice a sub-target of Target 5). • Specific tools for addressing threats include the Ramsar Advisory Missions, and it has been acknowledged good practice for these Missions to take place on a joint basis with UNESCO where the sites concerned carry both Ramsar and World Heritage designations. In such cases where the latter designation partly or wholly involves cultural values, the Convention's Culture Team will often be in a position to make relevant input.
<p>GOAL 3: WISELY USING ALL WETLANDS</p>	
<p><i>Target 8:</i> National wetland inventories have been initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAVA project Activity B1, on "developing and disseminating 'Rapid Cultural Inventories for Wetlands'", will in many places allow for a culture-related component to be incorporated into the compilation or updating of national wetland inventories. In addition to specific initiatives on this catalysed through the MAVA project, a detailed guidance document has been produced (<i>Guidance: Rapid Cultural Inventories for Wetlands</i> - January 2016), and this is available for anyone to use in undertaking such work on their own initiative. Advice and support is also available from the Convention's Culture Team. • In relation to the part of Target 8 which concerns the use of inventories for promoting conservation and effective management, Activity B2 in the MAVA project includes synthesizing lessons and recommendations from information provided on cultural values and services in relevant data

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	<p>sources, which would include inventories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The generic Terms of Reference for members of the RCN include a role in supporting Ramsar Contracting Party attention to cultural aspects in formal documentation and other processes under the Convention; which would include national wetland inventories.
<p><i>Target 9:</i> The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, inter alia, within a river basin or along a coastal zone.</p>	<p>(No specific links; but the achievement of this target may be supported in a more general way by activities listed here against several of the other targets in the Plan, such as Targets 1, 3, 5, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 16).</p>
<p><i>Target 10:</i> The traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities relevant for the wise use of wetlands and their customary use of wetland resources are documented, respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention, with a full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities at all relevant levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The knowledge, innovations and practices referred to in Target 10 will form a key part of the “Rapid Cultural Inventories for Wetlands” to be undertaken as part of Activity B1 in the MAVA project; and they will also be an important focus of the case studies/global report on culture and wetlands which are to be produced as part of the same Activity. Activity B4 (preparing an options paper on regional interests) will also give attention to traditional, indigenous and local issues (as well as gender-related issues); and Activities E3 (web content) and E4 (disseminating materials on thematic group activities) will do likewise. • Concerning the reference in the target to the effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, the Parties adopted formal guidance on this in 1999 (Resolution VII.8 on <i>Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities’ and indigenous people’s participation in the management of wetlands</i>), and the Convention’s culture work is helping to promote renewed attention to this issue. • A proposal has been submitted for a paper and/or side-event at the UN Indigenous People’s Forum in New York in May 2016. • The defined role for RCN members in “supporting Contracting Party attention to cultural aspects in formal documentation and other processes under the Convention” is also be relevant to this target.
<p><i>Target 11:</i> Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAVA project activity B1 on “developing and disseminating Rapid Cultural Inventories for Wetlands” will make a key contribution to the achievement of this target, in respect of the cultural values, functions, services and benefits of wetlands. In addition to specific initiatives on this catalysed through the MAVA project, a detailed guidance document has been produced (<i>Guidance: Rapid Cultural Inventories for Wetlands - January 2016</i>), and this is available for anyone to use in undertaking such work on their own initiative. Capacity-building elements are planned, and advice and support more generally is available from the Convention’s Culture Team. • MAVA project activity B2 is “to analyse, synthesize, report and extract lessons and recommendations from information provided on cultural values and services in the database of Ramsar Sites Information Sheets and Ramsar Contracting Party national reports to Conferences of the Parties”; and this will also support the achievement of Target 11. • Further input will be made via MAVA project activities B4 (options paper on promoting cultural interests at regional level), C1 (projects in the framework of the RCN thematic groups on Bio-cultural diversity; Agriculture and food heritage; Tourism; Arts; and Youth engagement), E3 (web content) and E4 (disseminating materials on thematic group activities).

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The generic Terms of Reference for members of the RCN include a role in supporting Ramsar Contracting Party attention to cultural aspects in formal documentation and other processes under the Convention, including Ramsar Information Sheets, National Reports to COPs, National Wetland Policies and National Wetland Committees.
<p><i>Target 12:</i> Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p>	<p>(No specific link; although Med-INA has investigated the role of cultural aspects in selected wetland restoration projects in the Mediterranean).</p>
<p><i>Target 13:</i> Enhanced sustainability of key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries, when they affect wetlands, contributing to biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAVA project activity C1 (projects in the framework of the RCN thematic groups, particularly perhaps those on Agriculture and food heritage and on Tourism), may have a contribution to make here.
<p>GOAL 4: ENHANCING IMPLEMENTATION</p>	
<p><i>Target 14:</i> Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels are developed on relevant topics and are available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical guidance and methodologies are a major part of the planned outputs of the Convention's culture work. An overview/synthesis of the issues, set in the content of existing Resolutions/guidance and also addressing emerging issues, is to be provided in the policy-oriented report on culture and wetlands due to be produced in the framework of the MAVA project (Activity A1). Activity B4 foresees a separate report that will specifically address regional-level opportunities. Both reports will be supported by the "lessons learned" synthesis and recommendations to be drawn from analyses of information provided on cultural values in Ramsar Information Sheets and Contracting Party national reports (Activity B2). Close liaison with the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel is being maintained on the issues mentioned above, and collaborative work with the Panel is foreseen on specific tasks defined in the STRP's Thematic Work Areas 1 (<i>Best practice methodologies/tools to monitor Ramsar Sites, including surveying, mapping and inventorying recognizing traditional practices of indigenous peoples and local communities</i>) and 3 (<i>Methods for economic and non-economic values of goods and services of wetlands</i>) in both of which there are particular overlapping interests and shared objectives. A Proposal is in development at the time of writing (February 2016) for producing a dedicated Handbook on the subject of culture and wetlands, to be included in the forthcoming 5th edition of the Ramsar Wise Use Handbooks series. Resolutions VIII.19 and IX.21 on cultural matters are due to be reviewed, and proposals will be brought forward for new decisions/guidance and/or rationalisation of these existing texts at COP13 if necessary (Activity A2).

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A further specific activity in the MAVA project (B3) is addressing integrated management of sites with multiple designations (eg Ramsar and World Heritage). • Projects in the framework of the RCN's five thematic groups (Activity C1) should also help to contribute to the achievement of target 14.
<p><i>Target 15:</i> Ramsar Regional Initiatives with the active involvement and support of the Parties in each region are reinforced and developed into effective tools to assist in the full implementation of the Convention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity C3 in the MAVA project concerns engaging Ramsar Regional Initiatives in the project; and the Terms of Reference for Ramsar Culture Network members refer to championing the development of in-region partnerships on culture and wetlands, citing Ramsar Regional Initiatives in particular. Exact deliverables on this front remain to be elaborated, and they will naturally vary from region to region. In the meantime the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet) has launched a regional Culture Network in its region, and modalities for coordination between this Network and the RCN are in the process of being refined.
<p><i>Target 16:</i> Wetlands conservation and wise use are mainstreamed through communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Conservation" and "wise use" in the Ramsar context both include maintenance of the cultural ecosystem services of wetlands (as explained earlier above); hence the Convention's culture-related work is part of delivering these objectives. • The difference made to the "mainstreaming outcome" part of Target 16 may be difficult to attribute specifically, but several of the MAVA project activities will contribute to the "CEPA output" parts, including projects in the framework of the five RCN thematic groups (Activity C1), development of options for promoting culture at regional level (B4) and production of website content (E3). Capacity-building activities for Rapid Cultural Inventories for Wetlands (Activity B1) and workshop events, publications, presentations at conferences and other <i>ad hoc</i> outreach work will also make a contribution. Due attention will be given to gender equality in the course of this work, in line with paragraph 13 of Resolution VII.8 and Guiding Principle 7 of Resolution VIII.19.
<p><i>Target 17:</i> Financial and other resources for effectively implementing the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 - 2024 from all sources are made available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External funding for the Convention's culture activities (including staff costs) has been secured through the MAVA Foundation grant. It is a grant condition however that this must be accompanied by significant fundraising efforts (Activity E5) to match the grant amount. Proposals and applications are therefore in constant development to meet the target of 372,000 EUR; and even when the target is met these efforts will continue, in order to seek further support. • In-kind resources are an important part of the contributions to be made (and already being made) to the Convention's culture work, notably through the unpaid time of the members of the Ramsar Culture Network. MAVA project Activity E2 concerns the effective operation of the Network; and capacity-building aspects feature elsewhere in the project (see Target 19 below).
<p><i>Target 18:</i> International cooperation is strengthened at all levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAVA project Activity D1 concerns enhancing co-operation with existing Ramsar Convention partners on cultural issues, with particular reference to IUCN (including the World Commission for Protected Areas and the Specialist Group on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas) and UNESCO (including the World Heritage Centre). Liaison, co-ordination and updating of partnership agreements are all mentioned. • Activity B3 specifically addresses integrated management of sites with multiple designations, involving collaboration in particular with UNESCO-World Heritage. • Activity D4 concerns investigating and assessing systematically the scope

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	<p>and opportunities for additional cooperation with the bodies and processes named in paragraph 13 of Resolution VIII.19.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activity D2 concerns the development of new partnerships that are relevant to the five particular thematic interest areas of the Ramsar Culture Network (Bio-cultural diversity; Agriculture and food heritage; Tourism; Arts; and Youth engagement); linked as appropriate to the projects in these thematic areas which are foreseen as part of Activity C1. ● The Ramsar Culture Network itself is constituted as a platform for international cooperation, and effective operation of all aspects of the Network is the subject of Activity E2 in the MAVA project framework. ● Activity A1 on a policy-related culture and wetlands overview report (at international level) makes specific reference to considering other Multilateral Environmental Agreements in addition to Ramsar. ● The generic Terms of Reference for members of the RCN include a role in championing the development of in-region partnerships on culture and wetlands, for example in collaboration with Ramsar International Organization Partners or Ramsar Regional Initiatives. ● Account will be taken in this context also of the potential linkages between cultural aspects of Ramsar Strategic Plan implementation and the targets defined in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (eg Aichi Biodiversity Targets 1, 2, 14, 18, 19) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (eg SDG Targets 2, 5, 4.7, 8.9, 11.4 and 12.b).
<p><i>Target 19:</i> Capacity building for implementation of the Convention and the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 - 2024 is enhanced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A key purpose of the Ramsar Culture Network is to develop the capacity of the Ramsar community to engage with cultural issues, and the Terms of Reference for members include supporting capacity development relating to the integration of natural and cultural values in wetland conservation. ● Within Activity C2 of the MAVA project, a survey of the RCN membership will include an assessment of their needs, which will then inform the on-going servicing of the Network. The five specific RCN thematic groups (and any future geographically-based groups) will form an additional self-help mechanism within the Network, by which members will be able to exchange knowledge, strengthen collaboration and mutually grow their capacity, often with a focus on specific projects (Activity C1). ● In the context of the initiative to undertake Rapid Cultural Inventories for Wetlands (Activity B1), specific capacity-building activities are foreseen, and a guidance document to support this has already been produced.

