



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Administrative Authorities and National Focal Points

Administrative Authorities (national focal points)

The head of state or government or the Foreign Office of each Contracting Party designates a national agency to act as the **implementing agency**, or “Administrative Authority”, of the Convention in that country. The Administrative Authority is the focal point for communications with the Ramsar Secretariat and the main agency responsible for the implementation of the treaty. (Unlike many other conventions, Ramsar treats the designated agency as its “national focal point”, not any individual within it.) It is expected that the Administrative Authority will consult and cooperate with as many other government agencies and non-governmental institutions as possible in order to ensure the best possible results in achieving the goals of the Ramsar Convention.

Formal communications concerning Convention business are transmitted by the Secretariat through diplomatic notifications sent to either the permanent mission to the United Nations in Geneva or the embassy in Bern as determined by each Contracting Party. Copies of notifications are normally sent to the Administrative Authority in each Contracting Party.

The Administrative Authorities are often the most knowledgeable people to ask about implementation of the Ramsar Convention and the status of wetland conservation within their territories, as well as about individual Wetlands of International Importance, for which they can also provide links to the responsible officials at the sites themselves. In addition, inclusion of additional wetlands in the Ramsar List must be accomplished through designation by the Administrative Authority of the Contracting Party, so citizen groups inquiring about the possibility of such a designation are urged to make contact with the Administrative Authority in their country as early as possible.

National Ramsar Committees

Recommendation 5.7 (1993) and the Convention’s Strategic Plan encourage Contracting Parties to establish **National Ramsar Committees** (sometimes called National Wetland Committees).

National Ramsar Committees can provide a focus at national level for the implementation of the Convention, involving all relevant government agencies, scientific and technical institutions, regional and local authorities, NGOs, community-based organizations, and the private sector, to deal with such issues as:

- national wetland policies
- management of Ramsar sites and other wetlands
- inclusions in and deletions from the Montreux Record of sites with particular conservation problems
- inclusion of new sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance
- submission of project proposals for the Ramsar Small Grants Fund

In addition, National Committees may provide expert input in the preparation of national reports to meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties and review implementation of resolutions and recommendations adopted by the Conference.

A considerable number of Contracting Parties have already established National Ramsar Committees. These vary considerably in size and form from one country to another. For example, some committees consist of representatives of government and relevant non-governmental organizations, sometimes also including individuals with appropriate expertise, whilst others may be organized as governmental committees (including regional governments in federal States), or as essentially non-governmental bodies. Ideally, National Committees should include as many sectors of government and representatives of stakeholders as possible.

Additional National Focal Points

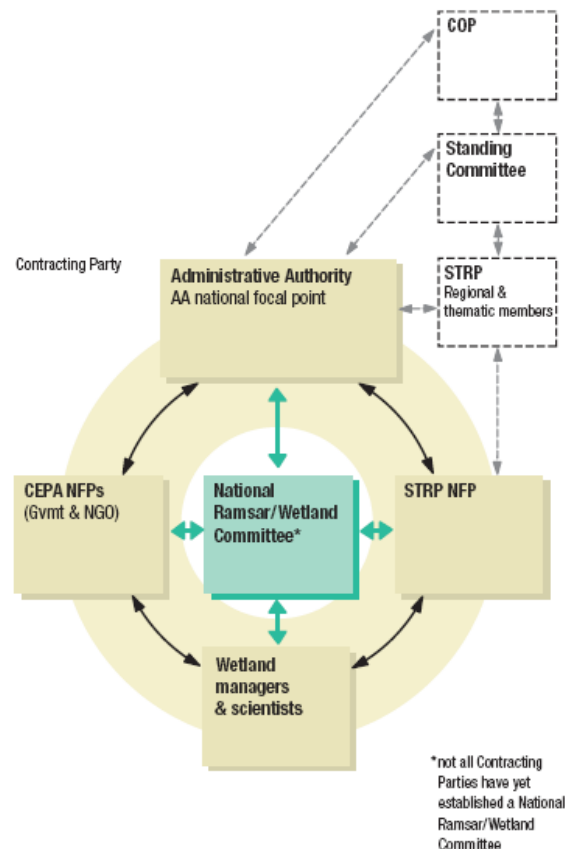
The National Focal Points (NFPs) are the people within the Contracting Parties who have been designated to work with the Ramsar Secretariat in implementing the Convention and achieving its wise use objectives. Their role is vital to the effective functioning of the Convention and requires a high level of personal commitment.

STRP National Focal Points

The **STRP National Focal Point** is a committed scientist who advises the Scientific and Technical Review Panel. He/she has acknowledged expertise in wetland-related subjects and the capacity to initiate technical collaboration and communication at national level through wide contacts within scientific networks. STRP NFPs provide liaison between the STRP's regional members and the national networks of other relevant experts.

CEPA Focal Points

CEPA Government and Non-Government Focal Points are recognized experts in Communications, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA) from within the government and from a non-governmental organization (NGO). Together they provide shared leadership within the country for the development and implementation of a national wetland CEPA programme or action plan.



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