



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

# *Ramsar Guidance and the Handbooks for the Wise Use of Wetlands*

Over the years, the Conference of the Contracting Parties has adopted a considerable body of scientific, technical, and policy guidance to assist the Parties in addressing the issues embodied in the Convention's "three pillars": the wise use of all wetlands, Wetlands of International Importance, and international cooperation. Beginning in 2000, all of the guidance then existing was gathered into a series of nine handbooks that blended the official guidelines themselves with illustrative materials and case studies meant to provide additional practical help to implementation. Officially entitled *The Ramsar Handbooks for the Wise Use of Wetlands*, the set soon became known as the "**Ramsar Toolkit**".

A subsequent edition of the Handbooks produced in 2004 included as well the guidance adopted by the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties (November 2002), and the third edition, now 17 volumes and including the results of the 9<sup>th</sup> COP (November 2005), was published in 2007.

The Ramsar guidance documents cover a wide range of areas of concern to environmental policy-makers and wetland managers, from National Wetland Policies and legal frameworks, to communications and public awareness planning and stakeholder participation in management, to broad issues of water allocation, river basin management, and managing groundwater resources and coastal zones, to carrying out inventory, assessment, and monitoring of wetlands and impact assessment, to cooperating internationally under the Ramsar Convention, to the nuts and bolts work of designating wetland sites for the Ramsar List and managing Wetlands of International Importance.

Amongst the new materials developed by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel for consideration and adoption at COP9 was a helpful set of "framework" documents that serve to identify all of the other more specific guidelines and describe when and how they should be used in relation to one another – these are the "*Conceptual Framework for the wise use of wetlands*", the "*Integrated Framework for the Convention's water-related guidance*", the "*Integrated Framework for wetland inventory, assessment, and monitoring*", and "*Frameworks for managing Ramsar sites and other wetlands*".

The contents of the Handbooks for the Wise Use of Wetlands can be found on the verso page, and the Handbooks can be downloaded in PDF format from [www.ramsar.org/lib/lib\\_handbooks2006\\_e.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/lib/lib_handbooks2006_e.htm) or ordered free of charge on CD-ROM from the Secretariat.

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## The Ramsar Convention 'toolkit' for the conservation and wise use of wetlands

### *Convention pillar 1: Wise Use*

#### Wise use of wetlands

Handbook 1	<b>Conceptual Framework for the wise use of wetlands</b>
<b>Wetland policies and legislation</b>	
Handbook 2	<b>National Wetland Policies</b> Developing and implementing National Wetland Policies
Handbook 3	<b>Laws and institutions</b> Reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands
<b>Wetlands and people</b>	
Handbook 4	<b>Wetland CEPA</b> The Convention's Programme on communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) 2003-2008
Handbook 5	<b>Participatory skills</b> Establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands
<b>Wetlands and water</b>	
Handbook 6	<b>Water-related guidance</b> An Integrated Framework for the Convention's water-related guidance
Handbook 7	<b>River basin management</b> Integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management
Handbook 8	<b>Water allocation and management</b> Guidelines for the allocation and management of water for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands
Handbook 9	<b>Managing groundwater</b> Managing groundwater to maintain wetland ecological character
<b>Wetlands and spatial planning</b>	
Handbook 10	<b>Coastal management</b> Wetland issues in Integrated Coastal Zone Management
<b>Wetland inventory, assessment, and monitoring</b>	
Handbook 11	<b>Inventory, assessment, and monitoring</b> An Integrated framework for wetland inventory, assessment, and monitoring
Handbook 12	<b>Wetland inventory</b> A Ramsar framework for wetland inventory
Handbook 13	<b>Impact assessment</b> Guidelines for incorporating biodiversity-related issues into environmental impact assessment legislation and/or processes and in strategic environmental assessment
<i>Convention pillar 2: Ramsar sites designation &amp; management</i>	
<b>Wetlands of International Importance</b>	
Handbook 14	<b>Designating Ramsar Sites</b> Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance
Handbook 15	<b>Addressing change in ecological character</b>
<b>Managing wetlands</b>	
Handbook 16	<b>Managing Wetlands</b> Frameworks for managing Ramsar sites and other wetlands
<i>Convention pillar 3: International cooperation</i>	
<b>International cooperation</b>	
Handbook 17	<b>International cooperation</b> Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands