

National planning tool for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

(And the approved format for National Reports to be submitted for the 8th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Spain, 2002)

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Institutional information

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Note – Not all actions from the Convention Work Plan 2000-2002 are included here, as some apply only to the Bureau or Conferences of the Contracting Parties. As a result, the numbering system that follows contains some gaps corresponding to those actions that have been omitted.

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GENERAL OBJECTIVE 1

TO PROGRESS TOWARDS UNIVERSAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE CONVENTION

Operational Objective 1.1: To endeavour to secure at least 150 Contracting Parties to the Convention by 2002.

Actions – Global Targets

1.1.1 Recruit new Contracting Parties, especially in the less well represented regions and among states with significant and/or transboundary wetland resources (including shared species), [CPs, SC regional representatives, Bureau, Partners]

- **The gaps remain in Africa, central Asia, the Middle East and the Small Island Developing States. Refer to Recommendation 7.2 relating to Small Island Developing States.**
- **Global Target - 150 CPs by COP8**
- **These are the countries which at present are not CPs of the Convention: Afghanistan, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Barbados, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Cook Islands, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica,**

Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Holy See, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Federated States of Micronesia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nauru, Nigeria, Niue, Oman, Palau, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, St Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Is your country a neighbor of, or does it have regular dealings or diplomatic-level dialogue with, one or more of the non-Contracting Parties listed above? (This list was correct as of January 2000. However, accessions to the Convention occur on a regular basis and you may wish to check with the Ramsar Bureau for the latest list of non-CPs.) **No** If **No**, go to Action 1.1.2.

If **Yes**, have actions been taken to encourage these non-CPs to join the Convention? **Yes/No**

If **Yes**, have these actions been successful? **Please elaborate.**

If **No**, what has prevented such action being taken? **Please elaborate.**

Proposed national actions and targets: **_____**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **_____**

1.1.2 Promote membership of Ramsar through regional meetings and activities, and through partners' regional offices. [SC regional representatives, Bureau, Partners]

- **These efforts are to continue and to focus on the above priority regions and the Small Island Developing States.**
- **The current member and permanent observer States of the Standing Committee are Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Costa Rica, France, India, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Slovak Republic, Spain, Switzerland, Togo, Trinidad & Tobago, and Uganda**

Is your country a member of the Standing Committee? **No** If **No**, go to Action 2.1.1.

If **Yes**, have actions been taken to encourage the non-CPs from your region or subregion to join the Convention? **Yes/No**

If **Yes**, have these actions been successful? **Please elaborate.**

If **No**, what has prevented such action being taken? **Please elaborate.**

Proposed national actions and targets: **_____**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **_____**

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**GENERAL OBJECTIVE 2
TO ACHIEVE THE WISE USE OF WETLANDS BY IMPLEMENTING AND
FURTHER DEVELOPING THE RAMSAR WISE USE GUIDELINES**

Operational Objective 2.1: To review and, if necessary, amend national or supra-national (e.g., European Community) legislation, institutions and practices in all Contracting Parties, to ensure that the Wise Use Guidelines are applied.

Actions - Global and National Targets
<p>2.1.1 Carry out a review of legislation and practices, and indicate in National Reports to the COP how the Wise Use Guidelines are applied. [CPs]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This remains a high priority for the next triennium. The <i>Guidelines for reviewing laws and institutions</i> (Resolution VII.7) will assist these efforts. Global Target – For at least 100 CPs to have comprehensively reviewed their laws and institutions relating to wetlands by COP8.
Has your country completed a review of its laws and institutions relating to wetlands? Yes
If No , what are the impediments to this being done? Please elaborate.
If a review is planned , what is the expected timeframe for this being done?
If the review has been completed , did the review result in amendments to laws or institutional arrangements to support implementation of the Ramsar Convention? Yes
If No , what are the impediments to these amendments being completed? Please elaborate.
If Yes , and changes to laws and institutional arrangements were made, please describe these briefly. A new version of the National Parks, Nature Reserves, National Sites and Memorial Sites Law was enacted in 1998. It created the framework for operating a united Nature and National Parks Protection Authority (Nature and Parks Authority) and for achieving the targets of the unification of previously separate authorities: budgetary, professional and organizational efficiency. An amendment to the Fisheries Regulations relates to declaring a period of time in which trawling is prohibited in the Mediterranean Sea. A draft amendment has been prepared to the Water Law which stipulates that water should be allocated for nature protection. A bill has been proposed to the Knesset (Parliament) calling for the protection of the Gulf of Eilat.
Proposed national actions and targets: The review of legislation has shown that Israel has the necessary framework for protecting its natural assets and wetlands. The focus of future years will be on better implementation of existing legislation, on the one hand, and on amendments to legislation to assure better conservation and wise use of wetlands, on the other hand.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.

2.1.2 Promote much greater efforts to develop national wetland policies, either separately or as a clearly identifiable component of other national conservation planning initiatives, such as National Environment Action Plans, National Biodiversity Strategies,

or National Conservation Strategies. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **The development and implementation of National Wetland Policies continues to be one of the highest priorities of the Convention, as does the integration of wetland conservation and wise use into broader national environment and water policies. The *Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies* (Resolution VII.6) will assist these efforts.**
- **Global Target - By COP8, at least 100 CPs with National Wetland Policies or, where appropriate, a recognized document that harmonizes all wetland-related policies/strategies and plans, and all CPs to have wetlands considered in national environmental and water policies and plans. The *Guidelines for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management* (Resolution VII.18) will assist these efforts.**

Does your country have **in place** a National Wetland Policy (or similar instrument) which is a comprehensive statement of the Government's intention to implement the provisions of the Ramsar Convention? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this being put in place?

If the development of such a Policy is **planned**, what is the expected timeframe for this being done?

Has your country taken its obligations with respect to the Ramsar Convention into consideration in related policy instruments such as National Biodiversity Strategies, National Environmental Action Plans, Water Policies, river basin management plans, or similar instruments? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to doing so? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, please provide brief details. **Israel is inherently poor in water bodies (about 90% of the area of the country is characterized as dryland) and about 97% of its wetlands have been drained. Moreover, the average size of Israel's inland water systems ranges between a quarter of a hectare to ten hectares, and the largest are between 50-300 hectares. With few exceptions, Israel's rivers are actually wadis, in which water flows only during winter. These rivers are very small, with a typical catchment area of a few hundred square kilometers and a length of tens of kilometers. Therefore, a separate national policy on wetlands has not been developed, but rather has been integrated into the country's policy on nature conservation and into the country's proposed biodiversity strategy.**

In practice, several programs take the Ramsar Convention into consideration. Most importantly, planning and policy principles for river restoration have been formulated in a comprehensive document (in Hebrew) which relates to Israel's coastal rivers, Kinneret Basin and eastern basin rivers, Arava rivers and Gulf of Eilat basin. The recently-completed document calls for the preparation of master plans for each river which relate to social, ecological, hydrological, legal, institutional and economic aspects.

Other programs which take the Ramsar Convention into consideration include the proposed national biodiversity strategy, drainage basin plans, and water policies. An

interdisciplinary team has formulated a proposed biodiversity strategy which takes special account of wetlands in light of the fact that Israel is poor in aquatic ecosystems.

The past few years of drought in Israel have highlighted the need for allocating sufficient quantities of good quality water for nature. As a result, projects and emergency actions have been taken to regulate water supplies to rivers and wetlands. A government decision on water management, taken in July 2000, calls for the allocation of 50 million cubic meters of water for restoring Israel's streams.

The Ministry of the Environment has prepared landscape sensitivity maps which classify and characterize open spaces according to sensitivity and value criteria, including vulnerability, continuity and social function. These maps are serving planning agencies on the national and regional levels and form the basis for guidelines on the protection of open spaces, including wetlands.

Has your government reviewed and modified, as appropriate, its policies that adversely affect intertidal wetlands (COP7 Resolution VII.21)? **No**

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening? **Israel does not have intertidal wetlands.**

If **Yes**, what were the conclusions of this review? and what actions have been taken subsequently?

Proposed national actions and targets: **Israel is preparing a document which will determine the amounts of water required for the dynamic conservation of its wetlands. Planned actions relate to the allocation of sufficient quantities of good quality water for the restoration and rehabilitation of its wetlands, according to a detailed program of priorities. Special attention will be paid to restoration of rivers through clean up and prevention of pollution, release of sufficient quantities of good quality water to river channels, and rehabilitation of adjacent landscapes and ecosystems, to promotion of the ability of rivers to serve as drainage channels for flood control, and to controlled development in the environs of rivers on the basis of existing and potential nature and landscape values for the purpose of nature protection, recreation, tourism, education and research.**

The Nature and Parks Authority has initiated a policy for restoring wetlands. Based on an assessment of wetland sites throughout the country, a master plan will be formulated for the conservation of wetlands sites. It will define the quantities and qualities of water required for the sustainable existence of wetland habitats which will be based on an allocation of 150 million cubic meters of water for nature conservation.

An integrated masterplan for building, development and conservation is undergoing review prior to approval. The plan proposes open spaces along water courses and calls for preserving the urban shoreline as public open space. In these areas, development will be severely restricted except for leisure and recreation purposes.

Furthermore, a sustainable development strategy has been formulated in Israel within the framework of the Coastal Area Management Programme of the Mediterranean Action Plan. The strategy focuses special attention on the protection of Israel's scant wetlands.

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

Operational Objective 2.2: To integrate conservation and wise use of wetlands in all Contracting Parties into national, provincial and local planning and decision-making on land use, groundwater management, catchment/river basin and coastal zone planning, and all other environmental planning and management.

Actions - Global and National Targets

2.2.2 Promote the inclusion of wetlands in national, provincial and local land use planning documents and activities, and in all relevant sectoral and budgetary provisions. [CPs]

- **Achieving integrated and cross-sectoral approaches to managing wetlands within the broader landscape and within river basin/coastal zone plans is another of the Convention's highest priorities in the next triennium.**
- **Global Target - By COP8, all CPs to be promoting, and actively implementing, the management of wetlands as integrated elements of river basins and coastal zones, and to provide detailed information on the outcomes of these actions in the National Reports for COP8.**

Is your country **implementing** integrated river basin and coastal zone management approaches? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this being done? **Please elaborate.**

If integrated management approaches are being applied in part of the country, indicate the approximate percentage of the country's surface area where this is occurring and to which river basins and coastal areas this applies. **The major areas in which integrated management approaches are being applied are in the Mediterranean coastal area and territorial waters, the watershed basin of the Sea of Galilee (Lake Kinneret), river basins, and the Gulf of Eilat. These areas constitute over 10% of the area of the country.**

If **Yes**, are wetlands being given special consideration in such integrated management approaches? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this being done? **Please elaborate.**

Has your country undertaken any specific pilot projects to implement the *Guidelines for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management* (COP7 Resolution VII.18)? **Yes**

If **Yes**, please describe them briefly. **Israel's river restoration program takes account of the guidelines. For example, the river restoration program at the Alexander River has taken account of water quantity and quality considerations, and has been developed with the cooperation of all stakeholders. It includes a 750-meter long demonstration project which illustrates the components of the river rehabilitation program.**

Emergency operations have been taken to save a fish species which is endemic to the

Yarkon River: *Acanthobrama tel avivensis*. To protect this species from the impacts of the severe drought which has affected this coastal stream, measures for ex-situ conservation were taken whereby water tanks in the Zoology Department of Tel Aviv University have been used to help restore a viable population of this species. When the water regime in the Yarkon River will be restored, the fish will be returned to the river.

Two research projects were initiated in the year 2000: a research project on coastal river management and a research project on indicators of river pollution. These studies will aid in the establishment of a water management plan for the country's coastal rivers under water scarcity conditions to provide nature conservation.

Several projects have been undertaken in recent years to assure the supply of water to wetlands, in light of ongoing drought conditions. As a result of the current drought, for example, water levels in the Na'aman Springs, which feeds the En Afeq reserve, one of Israel's Ramsar sites, have dropped. Numerous actions were taken including supplying water from a nearby well. In addition, a computerized hydrological model was developed to assess the water needs for nature conservation in the reserve vis a vis the pumping policy from the regional aquifer. The model provides an optimization of water supply for different purposes.

Proposed national actions and targets: **To continue to incorporate wetland management approaches in land-use plans throughout the country and to conduct a quantitative valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services of wetlands. One of the targets is to value the benefits of development against the costs of the lost biodiversity and ecosystem services.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

Operational Objective 2.3: To expand the Guidelines and Additional Guidance on Wise Use to provide advice to Contracting Parties on specific issues not hitherto covered, and examples of best current practice.

Actions - Global and National Targets

2.3.1 Expand the Additional Guidance on Wise Use to address specific issues such as oil spill prevention and clean-up, agricultural runoff, and urban/industrial discharges in cooperation with other bodies. [CPs, STRP, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - Following COP7, the Bureau, with other appropriate collaborators, will produce a series of Wise Use handbooks, based on the outcomes of Technical Sessions at COP7.**
- **(added by the Ramsar Bureau pursuant to Resolution VII.14 *Invasive Species and wetlands*) CPs are requested “to provide the Ramsar Bureau with information on databases which exist for invasive species, information on invasive species which pose a threat to wetlands and wetland species, and information on the control**

and eradication of invasive wetland species.”

Does your country **have** resource information on the management of wetlands in relation to the following which could be useful in assisting the Convention to develop further guidance to assist other CPs :

- oil spill prevention and clean-up? **Yes**
- agricultural runoff? **Yes**
- urban/industrial discharges? **Yes**
- invasive species? **Yes**
- other relevant aspects such as highway designs, aquaculture, etc.? **Yes – Israel has information on aquaculture.**

In each case, if the answer was **Yes**, has this information been forwarded to the Ramsar Bureau for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre (see 2.3.2 below)? **No** **The information has not been formulated into official documents on wetland management and is available only in Hebrew. With regard to alien species, Israel has submitted a general survey of alien invasive plant species to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The information was included in the material submitted to the sixth meeting of SBSSTA in Montreal (March 2001).**

Information in English on oil spill prevention and clean-up and on urban/industrial discharge has been prepared within the framework of the Coastal Area Management Program (CAMP) for Israel within the context of the Mediterranean Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Programme.

Israel is currently studying the impacts of aquaculture and specifically fish cages on the marine and coastal environment and is preparing guidelines for the minimization of damage from these activities.

Proposed national actions and targets: **Israel intends to continue to prepare resource information on the management of wetlands, but it is anticipated that these materials will largely be available in Hebrew for the local population.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

2.3.2. Publicize examples of effective application of existing Guidelines and Additional Guidance on Wise Use. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Promoting and improving the availability of such resource materials is a priority under the *Convention's Outreach Programme* (Resolution VII.9)**
- **Global Target - By COP8, to have included in the Wise Use Resource Centre 500 appropriate references and publications as provided to the Bureau by CPs and other organizations.**

Further to 2.31. above, has your country, as urged by the Outreach Programme of the Convention adopted at COP7 (Resolution VII. 9), **reviewed** its resource materials relating to wetland management policies and practices? **Yes**

If No , what has prevented this being done? Please elaborate.
If Yes , have copies of this information been forwarded to the Ramsar Bureau? No
If No , what has prevented this being done? With few exceptions, the material is available in Hebrew only.
Proposed national actions and targets: To continue to prepare resource material, especially on such subjects as water conservation and water allocation to nature, based on Israel's specific conditions and needs.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.

Operational Objective 2.4: To provide economic evaluations of the benefits and functions of wetlands for environmental planning purposes.

Actions - Global and National Targets
2.4.1 Promote the development, wide dissemination, and application of documents and methodologies which give economic evaluations of the benefits and functions of wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the guidelines available for this activity (see below: <i>Economic Valuation of Wetlands</i> handbook), this will be an area of higher priority in the next triennium. Global Target - By COP8, all CPs to be incorporating economic valuation of wetland services, functions and benefits into impact assessment and decision-making processes related to wetlands.
Does your government require that economic valuations of the full range of services, benefits and functions of wetlands be prepared as part of impact assessments and to support planning decisions that may impact on wetlands? No
If No , what are the impediments to this being done? Economic valuations of environmental services and resources have only been initiated in recent years and are not required as part of impact assessments and to support planning decisions.
If this applies in some, but not all cases, what is the expected timeframe for this to be required in all cases?
If Yes , has the inclusion of economic valuation into impact assessment resulted in wetlands being given special consideration or protection. Yes/No If Yes, please elaborate.
Proposed national actions and targets: One of the major recommendations of Israel's proposed policy on biodiversity calls for cost benefit assessments of all development projects in order to evaluate the social and economic benefit vis a vis the cost to biodiversity. According to the recommendations, the criteria for "costing" the damage that development schemes may cause to ecological systems such as wetlands include the extent of damage to water resources (in terms of surface area, water quantity and water quality) and the minimum quantities of water necessary to guarantee the existence and

functioning of aquatic ecosystems. As a first step, the Ministry of the Environment and the Water Commission have commissioned a study on the economic value of water allocations (freshwater and recovered) for river rehabilitation, using the Soreq River as a model.

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.

Operational Objective 2.5: To carry out environmental impact assessments (EIAs) at wetlands, particularly of proposed developments or changes in land/water use which have potential to affect them, notably at Ramsar sites, whose ecological character “is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference” (Article 3.2 of the Convention).

Actions - Global and National Targets

2.5.2 Ensure that, at Ramsar sites where change in ecological character is likely as a result of proposed developments or changes in land/water use which have potential to affect them, EIAs are carried out (with due consideration of economic valuations of wetland benefits and functions), and that the resulting conclusions are communicated to the Ramsar Bureau and fully taken into account by the authorities concerned. [CPs]

- **Global Target - In the next triennium, CPs will ensure that EIAs are applied to any such situation and keep the Bureau advised of the issues and the outcomes of these EIAs.**

Has an EIA been carried out in **all** cases where a change in the ecological character of a Ramsar site within your country was likely (or possible) as a result of proposed developments or changes in land/water use? **No**

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring? **Since Israel's two Ramsar sites have been declared as nature reserves, developments or changes in land/water use which threaten the ecological character of the sites are prohibited by law.**

If **Yes**, has this EIA, or have these EIAs, given due consideration to the full range of environmental, social and economic values of the wetland? (See also 2.4.1 above) **Yes/No**

AND: Have the results of the EIA been transmitted to the Ramsar Bureau? **Yes/No**

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring?

Proposed national actions and targets: **To continue to implement the provisions of the law to ensure that activities which threaten the ecological character of the Ramsar sites are not carried out.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

2.5.3 Carry out EIAs at other important sites, particularly where adverse impact on wetland resources is likely, due to a development proposal or change in land/water use.

[CPs]

- **Global Target - By COP8, all CPs to require EIAs under legislation for any actions which can potentially impact on wetlands and to provide detailed reports on advances in this area in their National Reports for COP8.**

Are EIAs required in your country for **all** cases where a wetland area (whether a Ramsar site or not) may be adversely impacted due to a development proposal or change in land/water use? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, are such EIAs required to give due consideration to the full range of environmental, social and economic values of the wetland? (See COP7 Resolution VII.16, also 2.4.1 & 2.5.2 above.) **No**

Are EIAs “undertaken in a transparent and participatory manner which includes local stakeholders” (COP7 Resolution VII.16)? **No**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring? **Israel's EIS regulations were promulgated under the Planning and Building Law. As such, they are available to the public for review only once the plan is completed and deposited. Furthermore, EIAs currently give consideration to the full range of environmental values and less consideration to social and economic values.**

Proposed national actions and targets: **To amend the EIA regulations to allow for greater vigilance in cases where adverse impact on wetland resources are anticipated. In January 2001, the National Planning and Building Board recommended new EIA regulations which, inter alia, require EIAs in cases where a planning body anticipates significant environmental impact in an area characterized by high environmental sensitivity, due to a natural resource including coast, sea, lake, river or infiltration basin. Additional amendments that are still required relate to social and economic aspects and to wider public review and public hearings prior to deposition of the plan.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of the Interior**

2.5.4 Take account of Integrated Environmental Management and Strategic Environmental Assessment (at local, provincial and catchment/river basin or coastal zone levels) when assessing impacts of development proposals or changes in land/water use. [CPs]

(Refer to 2.5.3 above) In addition to the assessment of the potential impact of specific projects on wetlands, has your country **undertaken** a review of all government plans, programmes and policies which may impact negatively on wetlands? **Yes**

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring?

If **Yes**, has this review been undertaken as part of preparing a National Wetland Policy or similar instrument? (refer 2.12 above) **No**

Or as part of other national policy or planning activities? **Yes** – **Although a systematic review of all government plans, programs and policies which may impact negatively on wetlands has not been taken, such reviews are carried out on an ongoing basis by planning agencies at national, regional and local levels.**

The National Masterplan for the Mediterranean Coast determines land use along the coastal strip and aims to prevent development for which a coastal location is not essential. It prohibits development within 100 meters of the coastline and requires environmental assessments as prerequisites for considering coastal projects.

In 1997, the Territorial Waters Committee, a statutory committee of the National Planning and Building Board, initiated an integrated coastal zone management approach in a policy document which was completed in 1999. The document, which has been approved as official policy, stresses the importance of management of the coast and coastal waters as a primary national and public asset according to principles of sustainability.

Israel's newest masterplan on planning, building and conservation takes account of river planning, conservation and management as an integral part of overall physical planning and designates rivers and wetland areas for conservation.

Planning committees at the local, regional and national levels take account of the potential impacts of development proposals and land-use changes on wetlands.

Proposed national actions and targets: **It is anticipated that as a result of growing awareness of water management issues, more thorough reviews of the impacts of development proposals will be undertaken with respect to their potential impacts on wetlands.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

Operational Objective 2.6: To identify wetlands in need of restoration and rehabilitation, and to implement the necessary measures.

Actions - Global and National Targets

2.6.1 Use regional or national scientific inventories of wetlands (Recommendation 4.6), or monitoring processes, to identify wetlands in need of restoration or rehabilitation. [CPs, Partners]

- **The completion of such inventories is a continuing area of priority for the Convention.**
- **Global Target - Restoration/rehabilitation inventories to be completed by at least 50 CPs by COP8.**

Has your country **completed** an assessment to identify its priority wetlands for restoration or rehabilitation? (COP7 Resolution VII.17) **Yes**

If **No**, what has prevented this from being done? **Please elaborate.**

If this has been done for only part of the country, please indicate for which areas or river basins.

If **Yes** (that is, an assessment has been **completed**), have actions been taken to undertake the restoration or rehabilitation of these priority sites? **Yes**

If **No**, what has prevented this from being done? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, please provide details. **A recent assessment of wetlands in Israel has shown that out of 160 wetland habitats in nature reserves and national parks, about 100 have been damaged by lack of water as a result of three consecutive years of drought and of overexploitation in previous years. The Nature and Parks Authority has prepared a list of 20 priority wetlands for restoration or rehabilitation, which include the two Ramsar sites: the Hula Reserve and the En Afeq Reserve. Major efforts have been invested in assuring water supplies for the protection of nature and the restoration of rivers.**

Within nature reserves and national parks, some 220 specific wetland habitats or sites (e.g., individual spring, stream, rainpool or vernal pool, swamp) have been identified for which water allocations should be instituted. Water allocation permits have been granted for 120 of these. Emergency measures were taken to assure water supply to drought-ridden wetlands by restoring ponds which were filled with runoff and sediment, deepening and expanding existing water reservoirs, connecting dried-up sites to nearby water systems and wells, and repairing leaking dikes.

In 1999, the pond in the Hula Reserve was intentionally dried up in order to solve pollution problems due to nutrient-rich sediments. During the drying process, an unprecedented quick growth of papyrus was noted and species which had previously disappeared began to reappear. Upon refilling, the water remained clear.

Emergency plans for both Ramsar sites - En Afeq and Hula - have been prepared and both are currently undergoing large-scale restoration planning.

The Ministry of the Environment, in cooperation with the Jewish National Fund, governmental and non-governmental organizations and local authorities, has identified priority rivers for restoration. River restoration master plans for 15 rivers are already being implemented. The master plans are based on detailed surveys of pollution sources, sensitive areas in terms of flora, fauna and ecosystems, and estimates of water quantities and qualities required to support river restoration.

Proposed national actions and targets: **The Nature and Parks Authority has formulated a policy for restoring wetlands throughout the country. Terms of Reference (TORs) for the rehabilitation of 20 priority sites are being prepared. Based on the assessment of wetland sites throughout the country, a master plan will be formulated for the conservation of wetland sites, in cooperation with the Water Commission. The master plan will define the quantities and qualities of water required for the sustainable existence of wetland habitats which will be based on an allocation of 150 million cubic meters of water for nature conservation, in addition to the 50 million cubic meters of water approved for river restoration. In parallel, major allocations of funds by government will be necessary to complete the emergency activities until such time that**

the master plan is formulated.

At the same time, special attention will be focused on the continued restoration of the country's rivers according to an integrated and comprehensive policy which takes account of the ecological, social, cultural and economic assets of the river basin.

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

2.6.2 Provide and implement methodologies for restoration and rehabilitation of lost or degraded wetlands. [CPs, STRP, Bureau, Partners]

- **There is considerable information resource on this subject, although it is not as readily accessed as desirable.**
- **Global Target - The addition of appropriate case studies and information on methodologies, etc., to the Convention's Wise Use Resource Centre (refer to 2.3.2 above also) will be a priority in the next triennium.**

Refer to 2.3.1 and 2.3.2. Does your country **have** resource information on the restoration or rehabilitation of wetlands? **Yes**

If **Yes**, has this been forwarded to the Ramsar Bureau for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre and for consideration by the STRP Expert Working Group on Restoration? **No**

If this material has not been forwarded to the Bureau, what has prevented this from occurring? **Most of the material was produced in Hebrew for internal purposes. It largely consists of plans, maps, and documents. It has not been edited or produced as an official publication. Some material on the restoration and rehabilitation of degraded rivers and on the reflooding of the Hula wetlands exists in English.**

Proposed national actions and targets: **Terms of reference have been formulated for the preparation of a policy document on "Water for Nature and Landscape Conservation." The policy document will present the joint position of Israel's "green bodies" on water allocation for conservation, rehabilitation, restoration and development of nature and landscape values in Israel. In parallel, it will formulate professional principles which can be translated into planning parameters to be incorporated into Israel's water management master plan.**

Methodologies for the restoration and rehabilitation of degraded rivers in Israel have been documented (in Hebrew) over the past several years and will be implemented in future years. National planning and policy principles for river restoration have been formulated in a comprehensive document (in Hebrew) which relates to Israel's coastal rivers, Kinneret Basin and eastern basin rivers, Arava rivers and Gulf of Eilat basin. The recently-completed document calls for the preparation of master plans for each river which relate to social, ecological, hydrological, legal and institutional aspects.

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

2.6.3 Establish wetland restoration / rehabilitation programmes at destroyed or degraded wetlands, especially in association with major river systems or areas of high nature conservation value (Recommendation 4.1). [CPs]

- **The Convention will continue to promote the restoration and rehabilitation of wetlands, particularly in situations where such actions will help promote or retain the ‘health’ and productivity of waterways and coastal environments.**
- **Global Target - By COP8, all CPs to have identified their priority sites for restoration or rehabilitation and for projects to be under way in at least 100 CPs.**

Refer to 2.6.1 above.

Operational Objective 2.7: To encourage active and informed participation of local communities, including indigenous people, and in particular women, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Actions - Global and National Targets

2.7.1 Implement Recommendation 6.3 on involving local and indigenous people in the management of wetlands. [CPs, Bureau]

- **Global Target - In the next triennium, the implementation of the Guidelines on local communities’ and indigenous people’s participation (COP7 Resolution VII.8) is to be one of the Convention’s highest priorities. By COP8, all CPs to be promoting local stakeholder management of wetlands.**

Is your government **actively** promoting the involvement of local communities and indigenous people in the management of wetlands? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, describe what special actions have been taken (See also 2.7.2, 2.7.3 and 2.7.4 below) (COP7 Resolution VII.8). **All water plans undergo review by local planning and building committees and by the Water Commission. Representatives of local residents participate in regional councils and in river basin and drainage authorities. The River Administration, which coordinates the restoration of some 14 rivers in Israel, includes representatives of local communities. In some of the rivers, the public is actively involved in the restoration program. In the Alexander River, for example, children and students collaborated in such activities as planting trees along the river, documenting the restoration tasks, returning fish to the river, preparing ecological studies, etc.**

Within the framework of a multi-annual educational program targeted at promoting student responsibility for the nearby environment, students take part in restoration, maintenance and research activities undertaken in the country's rivers by the Nature and Parks Authority and other bodies.

The National Parks and Nature Reserves Law makes provision for public hearings which allow the public to learn about development plans for nature reserves and

national parks and to respond to them. Representatives of public organizations including non-governmental environmental organizations, academic institutions, tour guide organizations, etc. are invited to attend public hearings on development plans and master plans for major reserves and parks. Thus far, two public hearings have been held.

Proposed national actions and targets: **To expand the system for public hearings and reviews. The proposed policy document on water allocations for nature will include a provision for both professional and public review and hearings.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

2.7.2 Encourage site managers and local communities to work in partnership at all levels to monitor the ecological character of wetlands, thus providing a better understanding of management needs and human impacts. [CPs]

- **The Convention's Outreach Programme (COP7 Resolution VII.9) seeks to give such community participation higher priority as an education and empowerment tool of the Convention.**

Does your government **actively encourage or support** site managers and local communities in monitoring the condition (ecological character) of Ramsar sites and other wetlands? (Also refer to Operational Objective 5.1.) **Yes**

If **No**, what prevents this from occurring?

If **Yes**, does this include both site managers and local communities, where they are not the same people? **No** **Site managers monitor the ecological character of wetlands in accordance with management plans. Local communities are not directly involved in the monitoring effort since only about 5% of the area of each nature reserve is open to the public in order to protect sensitive ecosystems. In the area closed to the public, monitoring and research activities are undertaken by professionals that work according to special conditions. Monitoring results are available to students and to the general public for review.**

A notable exception relates to the Winter Waterfowl Census which takes place in January each year and monitors waterbirds at all water bodies in Israel. Birdwatchers from the general public join official inspectors in the census and the general public is advised of the results of the census.

In addition, outreach activities which have been initiated within the framework of the Binational Red Sea Marine Peace Park - Gulf of Aqaba/Bay of Eilat involve the public in coral reef and beach clean up and in volunteer reef monitoring. A recruitment program for volunteers for coral reef monitoring has been initiated and a training program for a small number of volunteers has been set up.

As part of their biology and ecology studies, high school students undertake research projects, involving monitoring, observations and surveys, in wetlands throughout the country, under professional guidance and supervision.

AND, where such monitoring occurs, are the findings being used to guide management practices? Yes
If No , what prevents this from happening? Please elaborate.
Proposed national actions and targets: Further involvement of students and specially-trained volunteers in monitoring activities for research and education purposes.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.

<p>2.7.3 Involve local communities in the management of wetlands by establishing wetland management committees, especially at Ramsar sites, on which local stakeholders, landowners, managers, developers and community interest groups, in particular women's groups, are represented. [CPs, Partners]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - Ramsar site management committees operating in at least 100 CPs, and including non-government stakeholder representation.
Are there wetland site management committees in place in your country? No
If No , what are the impediments to such being established? In Israel, wetlands are State-owned and therefore there are no private landowners. In addition, the country's remaining wetland sites are extremely small in area.
Communication with local communities and water consumers is largely within the framework of Drainage Basin Authorities rather than within the framework of wetland management committees.
The River Administration entrusts actual restoration work to regional river administrations which are comprised of representatives of local authorities, drainage authorities, relevant regional organizations, representatives of green bodies and representatives of the National Administration.
At En Afeq, a Ramsar site, visitors are encouraged to fill in questionnaires in which they may propose changes or improvements. As a result of feedback from the general public, the nature reserve has improved its signposts, upgraded its guidance and instruction system and instituted new programs targeted at children.
Stakeholder representation in management exists within the framework of the Hula Valley Administration which was established to accompany the plan to reflood part of the Hula Valley. Given the scope and complexity of the problems, stakeholders, including green bodies and farmers, were included in the preparation of the multi-use plan for this wetland which combined agriculture with open nature reserves developed for tourists and visitors.
If Yes , for how many sites are such committees in place?
AND: How many of these are Ramsar sites?

AND: Of these committees, how many include representatives of local stakeholders? [REDACTED]

AND: Of these, how many have women's groups represented? [REDACTED]

Proposed national actions and targets: **At present, there are no plans for the establishment of specifically-designated Ramsar site management committees. However, all plans for wetland management and river restoration call for greater involvement of the public and of non-government stakeholders in planning and rehabilitation.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

2.7.4 Recognize and apply traditional knowledge and management practice of indigenous people and local communities in the conservation and wise use of wetlands. [CPs]

- **Refer to 2.7.1 above.**
- **Global Target - This will be addressed in the next triennium, possibly in partnership with the Convention on Biological Diversity and Convention to Combat Desertification, which have already initiated work in this area.**

Has your government **made any special efforts** to recognize and see applied traditional knowledge and management practices? **No**

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring? **The small size of Israel's wetlands has precluded national efforts in this direction.**

If **Yes**, please provide details of how this traditional knowledge was recognized and then put into practice. [REDACTED]

Proposed national actions and targets: **As part of the restoration process for Israel's wetlands, efforts are being made to preserve and restore archaeological and historical remains such as flour mills which were still in use at the beginning of the 20th century, such as those at En Afeq, and ancient dams which existed as far back as the Roman period, such as those in the Taninim River.**

At En Afeq, a Ramsar site, a "paper workshop" has been initiated which focuses on producing paper from aquatic plants based on traditional knowledge. The paper is produced from plants which are uprooted within the framework of the management program for En Afeq and outside of the reserve. The project is being implemented with the aid of paper artisans who have both contributed of their know-how and provided plant-derived artistic creations which are displayed in exhibitions and workshops at the reserve.

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

Operational Objective 2.8: To encourage involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Actions - Global and National Targets

2.8.1. Encourage the private sector to give increased recognition to wetland attributes, functions and values when carrying out projects affecting wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - In the next triennium, the efforts to work in partnership with the private sector will be further increased and the Bureau will seek to document and make available case studies on some of the more effective and innovative approaches. By COP8, the target is to have private sector support for wetlands conservation in more than 100 CPs.**

Have **special efforts been made** to increase the recognition of wetland attributes, functions and values among the private sector in your country? **Yes/No**

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening? **In recent years, special efforts have been directed toward increasing the recognition of government and the public, rather than the private sector, of wetland attributes, functions and values.**

If **Yes**, describe these special efforts. **There are a few instances of private sector support for the conservation and development of wetlands. One example relates to restoration of the Hadera River and to the establishment of a park. In this case, the Israel Electric Corporation is helping to finance restoration activities, under its commitment to develop a park for the benefit of local residents as compensation for the construction of a power station in the area.**

Another project relates to the creation of a small International Birdwatching Center north of Eilat at the site of marshlands (now destroyed by development) which served as a stopover point for billions of birds on their biannual migrations between Africa and Eurasia. To continue to provide avian feeding grounds, a garbage dump was purchased, treated effluent is utilized for irrigating the natural vegetation that was planted, and brine is used from the "Mekorot" desalination plant for the ponds in the center. A salt factory, adjacent to the center, provides infrastructure and support such as a donated pond that is stalked with shrimp and other feed for the birds. In addition, engineers at the salt factory coordinate the level of salinity in the primary evaporation ponds with the scientists at the birdwatching center so that an optimal salt concentration is achieved to suit the birds' needs.

A private company has developed water vegetation for the treatment of polluted rivers (phytoremediation) which is being tested in river restoration projects.

AND: Have these efforts been successful? **Yes**

If **No**, why not? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, how do you judge this success? Financial support for management or monitoring? Active involvement in management or monitoring? (Refer to 2.8.3 below) Application of Ramsar's Wise Use principles by private sector interests? (Refer to 2.8.2 below)? Other criteria? **Financial support and active involvement in management.**

Proposed national actions and targets: **Specific national actions and targets have not been formulated in this area, but it is anticipated that efforts will be directed at the private sector in future years. The recently completed planning and policy principles for river restoration call for the recruitment of the private sector in the vicinity of rivers to help finance maintenance and restoration work. Non-governmental organizations, such as MAALA (Business for Social Responsibility in Israel) are promoting action in this area.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

2.8.2 Encourage the private sector to apply the Wise Use Guidelines when executing development projects affecting wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - In the next triennium the application of this tool for promoting Wise Use will be a priority under the Convention. By COP8, the target is to have more than 50 CPs which have completed reviews of their incentive measures.**

Refer to 2.8.1 above. Has your government **completed** a review of its “existing, or evolving, policy, legal and institutional frameworks to identify and promote those measures which encourage conservation and wise use of wetlands and to identify and remove measures which discourage conservation and wise use” (COP7 Resolution VII.15)? **No**

If **No**, what has been the impediment to this being done? **Since Israel's wetlands are very small and few, the bulk of efforts have been directed at water conservation and allocation of water resources to wetlands.**

If **Yes**, what actions have been taken to introduce “incentive measures designed to encourage the wise use of wetlands, and to identify and remove perverse incentives where they exist” (COP7 Resolution VII.15). **Please elaborate.**

AND: Have these actions been effective? **Yes/No**

If **No**, why not? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, please describe how.

AND if **Yes**, COP7 Resolution VII.15 requested Parties to share these “experiences and lessons learned with respect to incentive measures and perverse incentives relating to wetlands, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable use of natural resources generally, by providing these to the Ramsar Bureau for appropriate distribution and to be made available through the Wise Use Resource Centre of the Convention’s Web site”. Has this been done? **Yes/No**

Proposed national actions and targets: **Specific national actions and targets have not been formulated in this area. The recently completed planning and policy principles for river restoration call for the recruitment of the private sector to help finance maintenance and restoration activities.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

2.8.3 Encourage the private sector to work in partnership with site managers to monitor the ecological character of wetlands. [CPs]

- **This action will be promoted further in the next triennium.**

Refer to 2.7.2 above. In addition, have **any special efforts** been made to encourage the private sector involvement in monitoring? **No**

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening? **Monitoring is conducted by professionals and scientists only.**

If **Yes**, describe these special efforts.

AND: How successful has this been? **Please elaborate.**

Proposed national actions and targets: **Specific national actions and targets have not been formulated in this area.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

2.8.4 Involve the private sector in the management of wetlands through participation in wetland management committees. [CPs]

- **Global Target - As indicated under 2.7.2 and 2.7.3 above, the establishment of cross-sectoral and stakeholder management committees for wetlands, and especially Ramsar sites, will be a priority in the next triennium.**

Refer to 2.7.3 above

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**GENERAL OBJECTIVE 3
TO RAISE AWARENESS OF WETLAND VALUES AND FUNCTIONS
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AND AT ALL LEVELS**

Operational Objective 3.1: To support and assist in implementing, in cooperation with partners and other institutions, an international programme of Education and Public Awareness (EPA) on wetlands, their functions and values, designed to promote national EPA programmes.

Actions - Global Targets

3.1.1 Assist in identifying and establishing coordinating mechanisms and structures for the development and implementation of a concerted global programme of EPA on wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

Refer to Operational Objectives 3.2 and 3.3 below

3.1.2 Participate in the identification of regional EPA needs and in the establishment of priorities for resource development. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

Has your country **taken any action** to help with the identification of regional EPA needs and in the establishment of priorities for information/education resource development? **Yes**

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, please provide details, and as appropriate, provide samples to the Ramsar Bureau for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre's clearing house for Wetland Communications, Public Awareness, and Education (CEPA) (COP7 Resolution VII.9). **Israel, Jordan and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have joined together to conduct a comprehensive research and monitoring program directed at a new Binational Red Sea Marine Peace Park which has a strong educational/outreach component. The program is based on a new paradigm for the interaction of integrated, multi-disciplinary science, management and educational/outreach efforts. An internet site on the project is currently under construction (www.marinepeacepark.org). As part of the program, joint meetings and seminars are held between investigators from Israel and Jordan which are open to the general public. Public meetings have been held in Tel Aviv and Eilat in order to increase public awareness of coral reef conservation. Furthermore, public awareness of the coral reefs in both Eilat and Aqaba is raised by means of guidance, brochures, posters, stickers and leaflets.**

Coastal and underwater clean-ups in the Gulf of Aqaba have been undertaken jointly by Israelis and Jordanians. In addition to the cleanup itself, the project is meant to increase public awareness of the sensitivity of this area and to enhance cooperation between Eilat in Israel and Aqaba in Jordan.

An NGO, Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME), has launched an international campaign, together with local NGO partners in Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority, to "Let the Dead Sea Live". As part of the effort, the FoEME has published documents, reports, brochures, posters and stickers to the general public. Further information may be found on the web site of the organization: www.foeme.org.

Proposed national actions and targets: **It is hoped that regional EPA needs will continue to be identified with a view to developing additional information/education resources.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment, Nature and Parks Authority, Friends of the Earth Middle East (an NGO).**

3.1.3 Assist in the development of international resource materials in support of national EPA programmes [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

Refer to 3.1.2 above also. Has your country **taken any action** to assist with the development of international wetland CEPA resource materials? **No**

If **Yes**, please provide details, and as appropriate, provide samples to the Ramsar Bureau for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre's clearing house for Wetland CEPA

(COP7 Resolution VII.9). [REDACTED]
If No, what has prevented this from happening? Lack of funds.
Proposed national actions and targets: Specific actions and targets have not been formulated.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.

3.1.4 Support international programmes that encourage transfer of information, knowledge and skills between wetland education centres and educators (e.g., Wetland International's EPA Working Group, Global Rivers Environment Education Network (GREEN), Wetland Link International). [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
Refer to 3.2.4 also. Does your country support any international programmes that encourage transfer of information, knowledge and skills among wetland education centres and educators? Yes
If No, what are the impediments to this occurring? Please elaborate.
If Yes, please provide details. Israel has professional ties with both Wetland Link International and the Global Rivers Environment Education Network (GREEN). This is being implemented through visits and exchange of information.
Is your country specifically supporting the Wetlands Link International initiative (COP7 Resolution VII.9)? No
If No, what is preventing this from happening? Lack of funds.
If Yes, please provide details. [REDACTED]
AND indicate which Wetland Centres (refer 3.2.3 below), museums, zoos, botanic gardens, aquaria and educational environment education centres (refer 3.2.4) are now participating as part of Wetlands Link International. [REDACTED]
Proposed national actions and targets: Israel presented a proposal to RAMSAR and to MedWet/Com to hold a workshop on managing coastal areas in this country.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.

Operational Objective 3.2: To develop and encourage national programmes of EPA on wetlands, targeted at a wide range of people, including key decision-makers, people living in and around wetlands, other wetland users and the public at large.

Actions - Global and National Targets
3.2.1 Encourage partnerships between governments, non-governmental organizations and other organizations capable of developing national EPA programmes on wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - By COP8 to see the global network of proposed CP and non-government focal points for Wetland Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) in place and functioning effectively in the promotion and execution of the national Outreach Programmes in all CPs. To secure the resources to increase the Bureau's capacity for implementing the Outreach Programme.**

Did your Government **inform** the Ramsar Bureau by 31 December 1999 of the identity of its Government and Non-Government Focal Points for wetland CEPA (COP7 Resolution VII.9)?

Yes

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring? **Please elaborate.**

Has your country **established** an “appropriately constituted Task Forces, where no mechanism exists for this purpose (e.g., National Ramsar Committees), to undertake a review of national needs, capacities and opportunities in the field of wetland CEPA and, based on this, to formulate its National Wetland CEPA Action Plans for priority activities which consider the international, regional, national and local needs” (COP7 Resolution VII.9). **No**

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring? **The small size and number of Israel's wetlands precludes the necessity of establishing a separate task force to review education and awareness programs. These activities are being conducted by both governmental and non-governmental organizations as part of an ongoing program for wetland conservation.**

If **Yes**, please provide details of the organizations, ministries, etc., represented on this Task Force.

AND: Has a National Wetland CEPA Action Plan been finalized by 31 December 2000?

No

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring? **Due to the scarcity of wetlands in Israel, action plans are formulated by governmental and non-governmental organizations within the overall framework for nature conservation and river restoration in the country.**

If **Yes**, is the Action Plan being implemented effectively? **Yes**

If **No**, what is preventing this from occurring? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, what are the priority target groups of the Action Plan and the major activities being undertaken? **The Nature and Parks Authority runs a multi-annual educational program for students in their natural environment. The program is being implemented in coastal and inland rivers, on the coastal stretch of the Mediterranean and Red Seas, and in the marine environment of the Gulf of Eilat. It includes four components: survey of the wetland including its ecosystem, impact of past and present human activity, including the ways in which the community and other bodies affect the river or wetland; active conservation, maintenance and research with the aid of the Nature and Parks Authority and other bodies; implementation of activities (mainly education and information) vis a vis the bodies which impact on the wetland; and implementation of activities with the local community including educational material, presentation of posters and models,**

and competitions to highlight the impact of the community on the wetland.

Israel's river restoration project makes provision for education and information activities largely aimed at youth and students. Six issues of a newsletter in Hebrew, entitled "Streams of Our Land" have been produced since 1998 for the purpose of disseminating information to students and to the general public on river restoration activities. In addition, two seminars for the interested public have been held on river restoration in Israel. Several educational initiatives have centered on the Yarqon River and a teaching center has been set up on its banks. The program aims at increasing awareness of the river as a green area in an urban environment and promoting activities with the participation of the surrounding population. Schools in the vicinity of rivers have initiated "Adopt a River" projects in which students clean up and care for river sections in their immediate environment. In addition, a joint initiative of the Nature and Parks Authority and the Ministry of the Environment will see the initiation in 2002 of ecological projects ("ecotopes") by high school students in six rivers throughout the country.

The Nature and Parks Authority has developed educational material, visitor, educational and ecological centers, and guided tours at several wetland nature reserves. As a result, Israel's population is exposed to public outreach programs which are initiated at nature reserves and national parks. Non-governmental organizations, such as the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, along with the Nature and Parks Authority, work closely with the formal school system in bringing students to field instruction centers. The Nature and Parks Authority has reported that out of more than 80,000 student visits to its educational centers in 2001, over 57,000 were to wetland instruction centers. In addition, tens of thousands of students participate in educational activities related to wetland conservation which are run by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel.

In 2000, the Ministry of the Environment initiated a "Day of Love for the Environment" in which free entrance (and free transportation) were permitted to the country's national parks and nature reserves. Tens of thousands of visitors toured wetland sites during the course of this day in the summer of 2000 and 2001. Israel's wetland education centers provided free guidance to thousands of visitors during the course of one day alone.

As part of the Nature and Parks Authority's multiannual program to create artificial rainpools (vernal pools) throughout Israel in order to restore this important habitat and to promote amphibian conservation, high school students will conduct biology projects in rainpools (beginning in 2002), as part of the biology matriculation program.

Special priority is focused on protection of endangered marine turtles in Israel, both loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*) and green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*). As part of a national effort which began in 1979 and was expanded in 1993, instruction booklets, posters and labels have been produced. Several colorful posters have been produced which emphasize human responsibility for marine turtle conservation. These posters depict the risks associated with coastal construction, four-wheel vehicles, human activity on the beach at night, and littering and rubbish. High school students take part in ecological studies, some of which include surveys to discover nesting sites along the Mediterranean coast, excavation and translocation to protected hatcheries, and

immediate release of the hatchlings to the sea after emergence, preferably at the original nesting beach. In addition, the students monitor the conditions necessary for breeding and identify coastal nuisances which threaten the marine turtle population. Every summer, the general public takes part in the release of marine turtles to the sea following hatching. The media informs the public of important events concerning the marine turtles. Hatchlings are released backed by a V shaped screen made of a thick, opaque cloth, open to the sea. This enclosure facilitates the presentation of the release process to the public while avoiding the disorientation of hatchlings by terrestrial light sources. Prior to the release, rangers give a brief presentation on the biology of marine turtles, the need to protect them and the aims of the project.

Israel's foremost environmental non-governmental organization, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, has initiated a project, with the financial support of the Ministry of the Environment, to restore the otter (*Lutra lutra*) population in Israel. Alongside surveys and research activities, special attention will be focused on educational activity to expose students to the few remaining otter grounds in Israel and to involve local communities in actual restoration and information activities.

Friends of the Earth Middle East, a non-governmental organization that represents regional environmental NGOs committed to promoting conservation of shared ecosystems, has produced pamphlets, stickers and posters on the natural resources of the Gulf of Aqaba and the Dead Sea. These pamphlets emphasize the importance of public participation in conservation and cleanup activities. The most recent campaign - "Saying No to Plastic Bags" - aims to raise awareness of pollution sources in marine areas by reducing or even eliminating the use of plastic bags in the Gulf of Aqaba.

AND: Has a copy of this plan been provided to the Ramsar Bureau? **No**

Proposed national actions and targets: **Israel plans to continue to develop its education and information activities on wetlands in the future. An present an educational program on marine pollution and coastal conservation is being formulated. The subject of "The Right of Nature to Water" will be a leading subject for instruction and guidance at the educational centers of the Nature and Parks Authority this year.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

3.2.2 On the basis of identified needs and target groups, support national programmes and campaigns to generate a positive vision of wetlands and create awareness at all levels of their values and functions. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - see 3.2.1 above.**

3.2.3 Encourage the development of educational centres at wetland sites. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - The Convention will aim to have more than 150 active education centres (and similar venues - see 3.2.4 below) promoting the principles of the Convention by COP8 and to ensure that all CPs have at least one such centre.**

Has your country encouraged the establishment of educational centres at wetland sites? Yes
If No , what has been the impediment to such action being taken? Please elaborate.
If Yes , how successful has this been? Educational centers in nature reserves and national parks have been very successful in Israel. They promote educational activities for individuals and groups and are targeted at all sectors of the population. The education center at En Afeq, a Ramsar site, runs a special program in Arabic which is targeted at the Arab sector. Alongside educational and instruction centers, ecological centers provide instruction to about a thousand junior and high school students each year on geographical, ecological and biological issues, as part of the matriculation program. In addition, these centers conduct training sessions for teachers from all educational institutes on wetland related issues such as conservation of marine turtles. In the year 2000, nearly 51,000 people visited the En Afeq Reserve, of which more than 50% were guided by the educational center.
AND: How many such centres are in place? and at what sites? Israel has established 10 educational centers in nature reserves throughout the country. Most relate directly or indirectly to wetlands. They include En Afeq (a Ramsar site), Tel Hazor in the north (which covers the Hula area), Carmel and Yarqon on the coastal plain and Eilat in the south. Ecological instruction centers have been set up in En Afeq - for wetland habitats, Nahal Me'arot - for coastal habitats, and Hai Ramon - for desert habitats.
How many centres are being established? and at what sites?
How many centres are being planned? and at what sites?
Of the sites in place, how many are participating as part of Wetlands Link International (Refer 3.1.4 above)? and at which sites are they? En Afeq participated in the past in Wetlands Link International.
Proposed national actions and targets: The objective is to increase educational activities at existing centers and to establish new centers in other wetlands.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.

3.2.4 Work with museums, zoos, botanic gardens, aquaria and environment education centres to encourage the development of exhibits and programmes that support non-formal EPA on wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - see 3.2.3 above**

Do **all** museums, zoos, botanical gardens and similar facilities in your country **have exhibits** and/or programmes that support non-formal wetland CEPA? **Only for some facilities**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring?

If such exhibits or programmes are in place for some facilities, how many and what types of facilities are they? **The main exhibits are in botanical gardens in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv which are associated with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv University.**

In addition, several museums include wetland exhibits and programs. These include the Museum of Natural History in Jerusalem which includes a colorful display of a Red Sea coral reef, the Emeq Hefer Regional Museum which includes a collection of indigenous animals and waterfowl in their natural habitats in large dioramas of the seashore, marshlands and streams, Bet Ussishkin which includes exhibits relating to the Hula basin, and the Coral World underwater observatory and museum in Eilat which focuses on marine life in the Red Sea. Nearly all of the country's universities include natural history collections.

If Yes, how many facilities does this apply to and how many of these are participating as part of Wetlands Link International (Refer 3.1.4 above)? and which facilities are they?

Proposed national actions and targets: It is proposed to expand the collections in the different museums and universities, to allocate sufficient funds toward increasing university participation, and to create a computerized system for biological collections.

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Nature and Parks Authority, Ministry of Education, Planning and Budgeting Committee of the Council for Higher Education.

3.2.5 Encourage the inclusion of modules related to wetlands in the curricula at all levels of education, including tertiary courses and specialized training courses. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - By COP8, to see wetland issues incorporated into curricula in over 100 CPs.**

In your country are there modules related to wetlands in the curricula at all levels of education, including tertiary courses and specialized training courses? **Yes**

If No, what is preventing this from occurring? **Please elaborate.**

If this is the case for some levels of education, or some parts of the country, please provide details.

If Yes, have samples of this curriculum material been provided to the Ramsar Bureau for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre? **No**

Proposed national actions and targets: **To expand wetland related studies at all levels of education.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment, Nature and Parks Authority, Ministry of Education**

Operational Objective 3.3: To improve the Ramsar Bureau's communications activities and to develop a Convention Communications Strategy, capable of further promoting the Convention and its wider application, and of raising awareness of wetland values and functions.

Actions - Global and National Targets
3.3.1 Review the Bureau's communications activities, especially those related to the creation and functioning of regional and national communication networks; develop new material and use of technology, and improve existing material. [Bureau]
Refer to 3.2.1 "To secure the resources to increase the Bureau's capacity for implementing the Outreach Programme.". Has your government provided any voluntary contributions to increase the Bureau's capacity for implementing the Outreach Programme? No
If Yes, please provide details.
Proposed national actions and targets: Israel is ready to hold workshops on coastal management and wetland conservation in the country as part of an outreach program.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment, Nature and Parks Authority, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
3.3.4 Seek the support of an electronic communications carrier to provide and maintain an electronic mail network and electronic bulletin board/ mailing lists linking the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee members, the STRP, the Bureau, and partner organizations. [All]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - By COP8, to gain a sponsor(s) for the Convention's Web site, to ensure that all CPs have Internet access, to increase the use of French and Spanish in the Ramsar Web site, and to see over 300 Ramsar site managers also communicating with the Bureau, and each other, via the Internet.
The Standing Committee and Bureau will consider the issue of a sponsor for the Convention's Web site, and increased presence of French and Spanish materials on the Web site.
With respect to Ramsar site managers, has your government taken steps to provide for Internet links for these people? Yes
If No, what are the impediments to this action being taken? Please elaborate.
If Yes, how many Ramsar site managers have Internet access? 2
AND: Which Ramsar sites have this facility? Both sites: Hula Reserve and En Afeq Reserve
Proposed national actions and targets: Internet access is already available. Israel hopes that future years will see increased exchange of information and experience over the Internet.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.

Please go to file 2.

National planning tool for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

(And the approved format for National Reports to be submitted for the 8th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Spain, 2002)

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file 2

GENERAL OBJECTIVE 4

TO REINFORCE THE CAPACITY OF INSTITUTIONS IN EACH CONTRACTING PARTY TO ACHIEVE CONSERVATION AND WISE USE OF WETLANDS

Operational Objective 4.1: To develop the capacity of institutions in Contracting Parties, particularly in developing countries, to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Actions - Global and National Targets

4.1.1 Review existing national institutions responsible for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. [CPs]

Has your country reviewed the national institutions responsible for wetland conservation and wise use and the “designated national Administrative Authority for the Convention to ensure [that] these have the necessary resources to support the increasing demands being placed upon them by the growing expectations of the Convention” (COP7 Resolution VII.27)?

Yes

If No, what is the impediment to this being done? Please elaborate.

If Yes, what were the conclusions and outcomes of the review? (Refer to 4.1.2 also). In 1998, Israel's existing National Parks, Nature Reserves, National Sites and Memorial Sites Law of 1963 was amended and reenacted. The amended law established a new and united Nature and National Parks Protection Authority. The creation of a unified authority to replace the previously existing separate entities (Nature Reserves Authority and National Parks Authority) was meant to facilitate concentration of efforts and resources to achieve budgetary, professional and organizational efficiency for the purpose of promoting conservation and development of natural assets, landscapes and heritage values. The amended law strengthens the administrative enforcement powers of the director of the Authority in minimizing or preventing damage to a nature reserve, national park or natural asset. It also ensures that all stakeholders are represented on the National Parks, Nature Reserves and National Sites Council which advises the relevant ministries, planning bodies and local authorities on matters pertaining to implementation of the law, including recommendations for new sites for protection. The Council is composed of government, local government and public representatives as well

as experts in zoology, botany, ecology, archaeology, geology, geography, history, economics, landscape architecture and conservation.

Today, in light of the continuing water crisis in Israel, it has become apparent that national institutions require additional financial and human resources to deal with the water crisis which has affected wetlands throughout the country. Site-specific action plans accompanied by budgetary allocations are necessary to implement restoration plans for different sites as well as to undertake emergency actions such as immediate supply of water to different reserves. This must be undertaken in conjunction with the Water Commission.

Proposed national actions and targets: **To draw up a national action plan for wetland restoration accompanied by the necessary budgetary allocations.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

4.1.2 On the basis of such a review, identify and implement measures to:

- **increase cooperation and synergy between institutions;**
- **promote the continued operation of these institutions;**
- **provide appropriately trained staff, in adequate numbers, for these institutions.** [CPs]
- **Global Target - By COP8, to see coordinating mechanisms in place in all CPs, and more particularly to see National Ramsar Committees including government and non-government stakeholder representatives, in place in more than 100 CPs. In addition, by COP8, all CPs that have reported the existence of NRCs at COP7 to have evaluated their effectiveness (COP7 Resolution VII.27).**

Refer also to 8.1.9. Does your country have a National Ramsar Committee or similar body?

No

If **No**, what has prevented the establishment of such a committee? **Israel is a dryland country and, therefore, the conservation of wetlands is not a major issue at the present time. Nevertheless, an ad-hoc Ramsar Committee has been established. In addition, a River Administration was set up in 1994 to restore or rehabilitate damaged streams which constitute a large portion of the wetlands in Israel. Similarly, interdisciplinary committees operate in the Lake Kinneret (Sea of Galilee) watershed and in the Hula restoration project. On the other hand, the River Administration is the coordinating body for actions taken by various governmental and non-governmental bodies. The Administration is composed of representatives of the Ministry of the Environment, Jewish National Fund, Water Commission, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Parks Authority and local authorities adjacent to rivers.**

If **Yes**, is the committee cross-sectoral, including representatives of appropriate government ministries and non-government expert and stakeholder groups? **No Reply**

What is the composition of this Committee?

Has there been an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Committee? No Reply
If No , what has prevented this from happening? Please elaborate.
If Yes , did the review show the Committee was proving to be effective? No Reply
If No , why not? Please elaborate.
Refer also to 7.2.1 with reference to coordinating the implementation of international conventions.
Proposed national actions and targets: The immediate goal is to continue to strengthen the professional and cooperative links among all members of the River Administration. At the same time, an agreement has been reached to initiate activities to establish an interministerial committee with the participation of such bodies as the Ministry of the Environment, the Nature and Parks Authority, the Water Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and non-governmental organizations, to coordinate the implementation of the Ramsar Convention.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment

Operational Objective 4.2: To identify the training needs of institutions and individuals concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands, particularly in developing countries, and to implement follow-up actions.

Actions - Global and National Targets
4.2.1 Identify at national, provincial and local level the needs and target audiences for training in implementation of the Wise Use Guidelines. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - By COP8, to have training needs analyses completed in more than 75 CPs.
Has a training needs analysis been completed? Yes
If No , what has prevented this from happening? Please elaborate.
If Yes , have the results of this analysis been used to provide direction for training priorities in the future? Yes
If No , why not? Please elaborate.
If Yes , how has this been done? In each of the country's regions, ten training sessions for workers of the Nature and Parks Authority are held each year, of which some are dedicated to wetland management, conservation of wetland species and wetland monitoring. Recent training sessions have focused on emergency actions under conditions of severe drought. In addition, national-level training courses are held on such subjects as management of wetlands and habitats.
AND: What impact has this had on the national training effort? Regional and national workshops and training sessions have had a positive impact on the national training

effort. One of the results was the preparation of a computerized program. Once a year, a professional forum is held on marine-related issues. The results of the deliberations have direct impact on the preparation and implementation of future programs.

Proposed national actions and targets: **To continue to analyze training needs in light of changing conditions, especially water scarcity.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

4.2.2 Identify current training opportunities in disciplines essential for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - By COP8, to have reviews of training opportunities completed in more than 75 CPs.**

Has your country **completed** a review of the training opportunities which exist therein? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this being done? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, have the results of this review been used to provide direction for training priorities in the future? **Yes**

If **No**, why not? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, how has this been done? **As a small country whose wetlands are few and small in area, it has been relatively easy to identify training opportunities in disciplines essential for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. Where necessary, additional courses have been added at the university level.**

AND: What impact has this had on the national training effort? **The reviews have had a positive impact on the national training effort.**

Has this information on training opportunities been provided to the Ramsar Bureau for inclusion in the Directory of Wetland Manager Training Opportunities? (Refer to 4.2.3 below also) **No**

Proposed national actions and targets: **To continue to identify training opportunities in a variety of disciplines.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

4.2.3 Develop new training activities and general training modules, for application in all regions, concerning implementation of the Wise Use Guidelines, with specialized modules covering [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - To launch a major wetland manager training initiative under the Convention, possibly in partnership with one or more of the Convention's International Organization Partners, which can promote and take advantage of these new training tools. Refer also to 4.2.4 below regarding the *Wetlands for the***

<i>Future Initiative.</i>
Following its review of training needs and opportunities, has your country developed any new training activities, or training modules? No
If Yes , please provide details.
AND: Has information on these training activities and modules been provided to the Ramsar Bureau for inclusion in the Directory of Wetland Manager Training Opportunities and the Wise Use Resource Centre? (Refer to 4.2.2 above also) No
Proposed national actions and targets: To continue to study the Wise Use Guidelines and to adapt future training sessions to new training tools.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.

4.2.4 Provide opportunities for manager training by: personnel exchanges for on-the-job training; holding pilot training courses at specific Ramsar sites; siting wetland manager training facilities at Ramsar sites; obtaining and disseminating information about training courses for wetland managers around the world. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - Refer to 4.2.3 above. Also to seek the resources from donors or interested CPs to establish <i>Wetlands for the Future Initiatives</i> for the Asia-Pacific, Eastern European, and African regions.
Refer to 4.2.1, 4.2.2, and 4.2.3 above. Has training been provided for wetland managers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through personnel exchanges for on-the-job training? No, Nevertheless, personnel from a variety of countries including France, U.K. and Hungary have visited wetland reserves in Israel. Holding pilot training courses at specific Ramsar sites? Yes, Courses for instructors and guides are held at both Ramsar sites. The wetland nature reserve at En Afeq was the site of a pilot study for applying Dutch methods for conservation management scenario modeling to Israeli conservation problems. Correlations derived from field data were used in scenario modeling to extrapolate changes in landscapes when given changes in driving environmental factors. Siting wetland manager training facilities at Ramsar sites? Yes, At En Afeq, training activities take place within the framework of the educational center. Obtaining and disseminating information about training courses for wetland managers? Yes, This information is only available in Hebrew and is disseminated within the country by means of announcements in professional publications.
Has your country provided resources to support the establishment of <i>Wetlands for the Future</i> style programmes in any part of the world? (COP7 Recommendation 7.4) No
If Yes , please provide details.
Proposed national actions and targets: Israel is ready to expand its activities in this area

and to hold training sessions in this country.

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

4.2.6 Exchange information, technical assistance and advice, and expertise about the conservation and wise use of wetlands, also with regard to South-South cooperation. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

Refer to 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 4.2.1-4 above. Has your country specifically undertaken activities as indicated here which could be deemed to be South-South cooperation? **No**

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening? **Political circumstances have precluded Israel from promoting and implementing such cooperation in the Asia region.**

If **Yes**, please provide details.

Proposed national actions and targets: **Israel is ready to provide technical assistance and advice about the conservation and wise use of wetlands to developing countries, especially under conditions of water scarcity.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment, Nature and Parks Authority, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.**

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GENERAL OBJECTIVE 5

TO ENSURE THE CONSERVATION OF ALL SITES INCLUDED IN THE LIST OF WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE (RAMSAR LIST)

Operational Objective 5.1: To maintain the ecological character of Ramsar sites.

Actions - Global and National Targets

5.1.1 Define and apply the precise measures required to maintain the ecological character of each listed site, in the light of the working definitions of ecological character adopted at the 6th COP (1996) and amended by Resolution VII.10 of COP7. [CPs]

- **Global Target - By COP8, each CP will seek to ensure that the measures required to maintain the ecological character of at least half of the Ramsar sites have been documented.**

Have the measures required to maintain the ecological character of Ramsar sites in your country been documented? **Yes**

If **No**, what has prevented this being done? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, has this documentation been developed as part of management planning and associated action at the sites? **Yes**

AND: Has a copy been provided to the Ramsar Bureau? **No**

Proposed national actions and targets: **To continue to define and apply measures to maintain the ecological character of Ramsar sites and to document them. To document such data as meteorological measurements, water allocations, maintenance, visits by the public, guidance activities, results of the management plan, and areas of success. Based on these data, to carry out assessments and formulate new guidelines to improve restoration projects.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

5.1.2 Conduct regular internal reviews to identify potential changes in ecological character, with input from local communities and other stakeholders; take remedial action and/or nominate the site for the Montreux Record. [CPs]

- **Refer to 2.5.2 - In the COP7 National Reports, 35 CPs reported Ramsar sites where some change in ecological character had occurred or was likely to occur in the near future. This was true for 115 sites in 33 CPs, and two other CPs stated that changes had occurred to all or some of their sites. In COP7 Resolution VII.12, these CPs were urged to consider nominating these sites to the Montreux Record.**
- **Global Target – In the period up to COP8, promote the application and benefits of the Montreux Record as a tool of the Convention through disseminating reports and publications on the positive outcomes achieved by a number of countries which have now removed sites from the Record.**

Refer to 2.7.2 and 2.8.3 also. Are regular internal reviews undertaken to identify factors potentially altering the ecological character of Ramsar sites? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, have these reviews detected situations where changes in ecological character have occurred or may occur? **Yes**

If **Yes**, for how many sites was this case, which sites were they, and what actions were taken to address these threats? **As a result of the third consecutive year of drought, emergency measures were taken to assure the maintenance of water in all wetland reserves, including En Afeq and the Hula. At the En Afeq Reserve, activities to augment water supply included: supply of water to the nature reserve from a nearby well, deepening of the water ponds and removing the sediment build-up, and repair of dikes. In addition, drinking holes for water buffalos were deepened to allow free water supplies to these animals, special efforts were made to remove tamarisks which covered the drought-drained area in order to open the area for natural species, and various activities to rehabilitate the Upper Na'aman River were undertaken including planting of willows from local seed sources along the dikes and riverbanks. As a result of these and other actions, the water-covered area at the end of the summer of 2001 increased from 0.2 to 3 hectares.**

At the Hula Nature Reserve, efforts concentrated on dike repairs to prevent water leaks

as the main target, drying of the central pond in order to improve water quality, planting of native flora in order to assure development, review of alternative sources of water supply, and closing of the western drainage tunnel of the Jordan to assure a minimal groundwater level near the reserve.

AND: Were these sites where change in ecological character was detected, or may occur, added to the Montreux Record? **No**

If **No**, why not? **The monitoring and assessment program was able to detect changes and to undertake the necessary actions to supply water and preserve ecosystems.**

Proposed national actions and targets: **To continue research and monitoring activities which are undertaken at both sites. Terms of Reference for restoration have been prepared for both Ramsar sites and both are currently at the stage of preparing a master plan for restoration.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

5.1.3 Review and regularly update the Montreux Record (Resolutions 5.4, 5.5, and VI.1). [CPs, STRP, Bureau]

- **Global Target - CPs with Ramsar sites in the Montreux Record, and for which Ramsar Advisory Missions (RAMs) have been completed prior to COP7, are expected to have taken the actions necessary to warrant their removal from the Record before COP8.**

For those CPs with a site, or sites, included in the Montreux Record, and for which RAMs (previously Management Guidance Procedures, MGPs) have been completed, have all actions recommended by the RAM been undertaken for each site? **Yes/No**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, have these actions resulted in a restoration of the ecological character? **Yes/No**

AND: If **Yes**, has the site been removed from the Montreux Record following the completion of the necessary questionnaire (COP6 Resolution VI.1)? **Yes/No Additional comment?**

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action:

Operational Objective 5.2: To develop and implement management plans for all Ramsar sites, consistent with the Convention's Guidelines on Management Planning and emphasizing involvement of local communities and other stakeholders.

Actions - Global and National Targets

5.2.3 Ensure that, by the 8th COP (2002), management plans or other mechanisms are in preparation, or in place, for at least half of the Ramsar sites in each Contracting Party,

beginning with pilot programmes at selected sites with input from local communities and other stakeholders. [CPs, Partners]

- **Global Target - By COP8, management plans will be in preparation, or in place, for at least three-quarters of the Ramsar sites in each CP and all CPs will seek to ensure that these are being implemented in full.**

Do all the Ramsar sites in your country have management plans **in place**? **Yes**

If **No**, how many sites do not have management plans in place and which sites are they?

If plans are being prepared for some sites, please indicate which sites these are.

For those sites where management plans are in place, how many of these are being implemented fully, and which sites are they? **Both Ramsar sites - En Afeq and the Hula - have management plans in place which are fully implemented.**

Where plans are not in place, or not being fully implemented, what has prevented this from being done? **Please elaborate.**

Proposed national actions and targets: **To continue to implement and to improve the management plans for both Ramsar sites.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

5.2.4 Promote the establishment and implementation of zoning measures related to larger Ramsar sites, wetland reserves and other wetlands (Kushiro Recommendation 5.3). [CPs, Partners]

For those sites where it is warranted, are zoning measures being used to regulate the activities allowed in different parts of the wetlands? **Yes**

If **No**, what is preventing these from being implemented? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, for which sites are these in place? **Both Ramsar sites, although small, are divided into smaller ecological management units. For example, there are units which are open to the public and units which are closed to public visits. Moreover, in the area open to the public, there are designated areas for trails, picnics, observation sites, visitor centers and entrance.**

AND: Are they proving a successful management tool? **Yes, such division has allowed for the preservation of the ecological character of the reserves.**

Have you provided the Ramsar Bureau with information regarding such cases of zoning for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre? **No**

Proposed national actions and targets: **There are plans to expand the visitor centers in the reserves.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

5.2.5 Promote the establishment and implementation of strict protection measures for certain Ramsar sites and other wetlands of small size and/or particular sensitivity (Recommendation 5.3). [CPs, Partners]

- **This aspect of Ramsar site management was not considered in the COP7 National Reports and will have to be reviewed in time for COP8.**
- **Global Target - Provide for consideration at COP8 detailed information on the implementation of strict protection measures at small and/or sensitive sites.**

For those sites where it is warranted, are strict protection measures being used to regulate the activities allowed in different parts of the wetlands? **Yes**

If **No**, what is preventing these from being implemented? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, for which sites are these in place? **Both Ramsar sites - En Afeq and Hula.**

AND: Is this proving to be a successful management tool? **Yes, especially with regard to restricted visitor access in some areas.**

Have you provided the Ramsar Bureau with information regarding such cases for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre? **No**

Proposed national actions and targets: **To continue to enforce strict protection measures in sensitive sites.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

Operational Objective 5.3: To obtain regularly updated information on wetlands of international importance, in accordance with the approved standard format.

Actions - Global and National Targets

5.3.1 Ensure that the maps and descriptions of Ramsar sites submitted to the Ramsar Database by the Contracting Parties at the time of designation are complete, in the approved standard format of the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands, and provide sufficient detail to be used for management planning and monitoring of ecological character. [CPs, Bureau, Wetlands International]

5.3.2 Ensure that missing or incomplete data sheets and/or maps of listed sites are submitted as a matter of priority and in the shortest possible time, as a means to enhance the relevance and use of the Ramsar Database. [CPs]

- **Global Target – By the end of 1999, for there to be no Ramsar sites for which appropriate sites descriptions and maps are still required.**

If yours is one of the CPs referred to in COP7 Resolution VII.12 as not having provided a Ramsar (Site) Information Sheet in the approved format, with a suitable map, in one of three working languages of the Convention, has this now be rectified? **Does Not Apply**

If **No**, what is preventing this from being done? **Please elaborate.**

5.3.3 Ensure that data sheets on Ramsar Sites are regularly updated, at least for every second meeting of the COP, so that they can be used for reviewing the achievements of the Convention, for future strategic planning, for promotional purposes, and for site, regional and thematic analysis (Resolution VI.13). [CPs, STRP, Bureau, Wetlands International]

- **Global Target - By the end of 1999, for there to be no Ramsar sites designated before 31 December 1990 for which updated site descriptions are still required.**

If yours is one of the CPs referred to in COP7 Resolution VII.12 as not having provided an updated Ramsar (Site) Information Sheet for sites designated before 31 December 1990, has this now be rectified? **Does Not Apply**

If **No**, what is preventing this from being done? **Please elaborate.**

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action:

Operational Objective 5.4: To keep under review the content and structure, as well as the hardware and software, of the Ramsar Database, in order to ensure that it retains its relevance in light of evolving information and communication technology.

Actions - Global and National Targets

5.4.1 Assess data currently available in the database and identify any gaps in the data provided by Contracting Parties. [CPs, STRP, Bureau, Wetlands International]

Refer to 5.2.2, 5.2.3, and 5.2.4 above.

5.4.4 Support the establishment of national wetland databases compatible with the Ramsar Database and develop a common protocol to facilitate exchange and interaction. [CPs, Partners]

- **Global Target - By COP8, to have national wetland databases in over 50 CPs which are accessible globally.**

Refer also to 6.1.1 and 6.1.2. Does your country have a national wetland database? **Yes**

If **No**, what is preventing such a database being established?

If **Yes**, is this database generally available for reference and application by all ministries and stakeholders? **Yes**

If **No**, why not? **Please elaborate.**

AND: Is it available through the Internet? (COP7 Resolution VII.20) **Yes**

If **Yes**, please provide details. **To make taxonomic information more widely available, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem has launched BioGIS, a Geographical Information**

System established to create a national database of Israel's flora and fauna. The database is open to the public and compiles records of plant and animal species from herbaria and museum collections and from surveys carried out by academic institutions, individual scientists, government authorities and non-governmental organizations. This database is GIS-based and is accessible at the following site: www.biogis.huji.ac.il. Data is presented along with maps and projected environmental attributes.

The Israel Nature and Parks Authority has inaugurated an Internet site - www.natureinfo.org.il - which presents its animal and plant observation database. It is open to the public and provides tools for querying on observations of a specific species in a given area, inventories of different species in specific areas, and distribution of specific species in the entire area of Israel. It is SQL/ACCESS based (relational databases). The vertebrate and vascular plant database of the Nature and Parks Authority currently has half a million records based on 30 years of data, of which 380,000 records (up to 1996) are available on the Internet.

If No, why not?

AND: Is it available on CD-Rom? (COP7 Resolution VII.20) No

If Yes, please provide details.

If No, why not? Inadequate financial resources.

Proposed national actions and targets: **Plans focus on networking at three levels: integrating all databases within the Nature and Parks Authority (e.g., invertebrates, waterbirds, etc.) and linking them to the database on vertebrates and vascular plants; networking on the national level through the creation of a national node where data will be accessible; and international networking through BioCASE, a Biodiversity Collection Access Service for Europe, consisting of 34 centers with expertise in biodiversity research, biological collections and biodiversity informatics. Israel's Nature and Parks Authority is one of the contractors.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

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GENERAL OBJECTIVE 6

TO DESIGNATE FOR THE RAMSAR LIST THOSE WETLANDS WHICH MEET THE CONVENTION'S CRITERIA, ESPECIALLY WETLAND TYPES STILL UNDER-REPRESENTED IN THE LIST AND TRANSFRONTIER WETLANDS

Operational Objective 6.1: To identify those wetlands that meet the Ramsar criteria, and to give due consideration to their designation for the List.

Actions - Global and National Targets

6.1.1 Develop, regularly update -- especially in the case of Africa -- and disseminate

regional wetland directories, which identify potential Ramsar sites. [CPs, Partners]
Refer to 6.1.2 and 6.2.1. Does there exist for your country a directory or similar listing of sites which are potential Ramsar sites? Yes
If No , what are the impediments to such a list of sites being prepared? Please elaborate.
If Yes , when was it prepared and was it prepared taking into consideration the <i>Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance</i> (COP7 Resolution VII.11)? 1999 Yes
AND: How many potential Ramsar sites are identified within the important sites directory for your country? 5
Proposed national actions and targets: To advance the declaration of marine reserves which are now at various stages of declaration.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment, Nature and Parks Authority, Ministry of the Interior.

6.1.2 Establish, update and disseminate national scientific inventories of wetlands which identify potential Ramsar sites and wetlands of provincial or local importance in the territory of each Contracting Party. [CPs, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - By COP8, to have national wetland inventories completed by over 50 CPs and the information housed in databases (Refer to 5.4.4) which are accessible globally
Does there exist a comprehensive national inventory (as opposed to a directory of important sites; see 6.1.1 above) for your country? No
If No , what are the impediments to such an inventory being prepared? Lack of manpower and lack of resources.
If only some parts of the country have had inventories completed, please indicate which parts these are. Areas in which Ramsar sites exist are well documented. Out of some half a million observations, one-third relate to the Hula area alone. Pilot projects on inventories in six nature reserves have been conducted in order to test the methodology for a national scientific inventory.
AND: What is the likely timeframe for completing the national inventory? Within 10 years.
If a national inventory has already been completed, when was it finalized?
AND: Is the information housed where it is accessible to stakeholders and the international community? (COP7 Resolution VII.20) Yes
If No , what are the impediments to this occurring? Please elaborate.
Has national/subnational inventory information been provided to the Ramsar Bureau (if it is not accessible through the Internet)? No
Proposed national actions and targets: The first goal is to clarify targets and goals in

conservation management. Then, Israel plans to establish an adequate minimal inventory which would be extensive geographically rather than intensive locally in order to serve as a baseline and to undertake feasible monitoring in sensitive areas which will be goal-oriented.

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

6.1.4 Support the work of Wetlands International and IUCN in updating information on population sizes of waterfowl and other taxa, and utilize these data in identification of potential Ramsar sites. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

Does your country regularly gather waterbird population data? **Yes**

If **No**, what prevents this from happening? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, is this information provided to Wetlands International? **Yes**

If **No**, why not? **Please elaborate.**

Proposed national actions and targets: **To continue to gather information on population sizes of waterfowl and to analyze them.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

Operational Objective 6.2: To increase the area of wetland designated for the List of Wetlands of International Importance, particularly for wetland types that are under-represented either at global or national level.

Actions - Global and National Targets

6.2.1 Promote the designation for the Ramsar List of an increased area of wetland, through listing by new Contracting Parties, and through further designations by current Contracting Parties, in particular developing countries, in order to ensure the listing of a representative range of wetland types in the territory of each Contracting Party and in each Ramsar region. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - As proposed in the Strategic Framework, the short-term target of the Ramsar List should be to achieve the designation of 2000 sites, in accordance with the systematic approach advocated therein, by the time of COP9 in the year 2005. In addition, by COP8 the target is to have at least 20 CPs that are applying a systematic approach to site selection nationally.**

Refer also to 6.1.1, 6.1.2, and 6.2.3. Has your country taken a systematic approach to identifying its future Ramsar sites (as promoted in the *Strategic Framework for the List – COP7 Resolution VII.11*)? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this being done?

If **Yes**, has this included considerations to ensure the designation of a representative range of

wetland types? Yes
If No , why not? Please elaborate.
If Yes , has this resulted in the designation of a representative range of wetland types? No
Proposed national actions and targets: To date, Israel has not yet designated future Ramsar sites because the proposed new sites are still in the process of being declared as nature reserves under Israeli law. However, Israel hopes to expedite the declaration of a representative range of wetland types .
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment, Nature and Parks Authority, Ministry of the Interior.

<p>6.2.3 Give priority attention to the designation of new sites from wetland types currently under-represented on the Ramsar List, and in particular, when appropriate, coral reefs, mangroves, sea-grass beds and peatlands. [CPs]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Targets - The long-term targets are set by the <i>Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance</i> (COP7 Resolution VII.11). Based on this, short-term targets for each wetland type will be derived [by the STRP].
Further to 6.2.1 above: If your territory includes under-represented wetland types, has special attention been given to identifying suitable sites for designation? Yes
If No , what has prevented this from occurring? Please elaborate.
<p>If Yes, has this included designations of wetlands including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> coral reefs? Yes mangroves? No seagrass beds? No peatlands? No intertidal wetlands? (COP7 Resolution VII.21) No
Proposed national actions and targets: To designate additional wetlands especially vermetid reefs on the Mediterranean coastline which are currently under-represented. Priority attention is being focused on Shiqmona which is in the process of becoming a legally declared nature and marine reserve. The Shiqmona reserve preserves a part of the once extensive vermetid reefs that extended south of Haifa bay.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment, Nature and Parks Authority, Ministry of the Interior.

<p>6.2.4 Pay particular attention to the designation of new sites currently enjoying no special conservation status at national level, as a first step towards developing measures for their conservation and wise use. [CPs]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This question was not considered in the National Reports for COP7. It will be

included for consideration in the NRs for COP8.

- Global Target - All CPs to consider this approach to ensuring the long-term conservation and wise use of wetlands that are subject to intense human use.**

Has your country designated wetland sites for the Ramsar List which previously had no special conservation status? **No**

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening? **The approach taken by Israel calls for the declaration of sites on a national level in order to assure conservation, monitoring and management as prescribed by law before designating them as Ramsar sites.**

If **Yes**, please provide details.

AND: Are there plans for further such designations? **Yes/No**

If **No**, why not? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, please elaborate.

Proposed national actions and targets: **To expedite the process of declaring new reserves in order, inter alia, to designate them as wetland sites for the Ramsar List.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment, Nature and Parks Authority, Ministry of the Interior,**

6.2.5 Consider as a matter of priority the designation of transfrontier wetland sites. [CPs]

- The issue of transfrontier or shared wetlands is addressed in the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention (COP7 Resolution VII.19)* and the *Guidelines for integrating wetlands into river basin management (COP7 Resolution VII.18)*.**
- Global Target - By COP8, for there to be over 50 transfrontier wetland sites designated under the Convention.**

For those CPs which 'share' wetlands with other CPs, have all suitable sites been designated under the Convention? **No**

If **No**, what has prevented this action being taken? **These sites have not yet been declared on a national level under Israeli law and political circumstances have precluded sufficient progress in this area.**

If **Yes**, are there arrangements in place between the CPs sharing the wetland for the cooperative management of the site? **Yes/No**

If **No**, what has prevented such arrangements from being introduced? **With the exception of cooperation in the management of the Gulf of Aqaba's coral reef, political circumstances have precluded cooperative management.**

Proposed national actions and targets: **To promote joint monitoring and sustainable management and development of Jordanian-Israeli marine parks in the Gulf of Aqaba**

and in the Dead Sea area. Tentative proposals call for establishing the entire Dead Sea Basin as a World Heritage site and biosphere reserve under UNESCO protection.

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment, Nature and Parks Authority, Friends of the Earth Middle East.

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GENERAL OBJECTIVE 7

TO PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND MOBILIZE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR WETLAND CONSERVATION AND WISE USE IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER CONVENTIONS AND AGENCIES, BOTH GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL

Operational Objective 7.1: To identify international and/or regional needs for managing shared wetlands and shared catchments, and develop and implement common approaches.

Actions - Global and National Targets

7.1.1 Identify transfrontier wetlands of international importance (including those within shared catchment/river basins), and encourage preparation and implementation of joint plans for such sites, using a “catchment approach” (Recommendation 5.3). [CPs, Partners]

Refer to 6.2.5 above.

7.1.2 Encourage twinning of transfrontier wetlands, and of other wetlands with similar characteristics, and use successful cases for illustrating the benefits of international cooperation. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Both the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention* (COP7 Resolution VII.19) and the *Convention’s Outreach Programme* (COP7 Resolution VII.9) promote site twinning as a mechanism for accelerating the flow of knowledge and assistance and promoting training opportunities.**
- **Global Target - By COP8 to have in place over 100 Ramsar site twinning arrangements. The Bureau will keep a record of which sites are twinned and make this available through the Convention’s Web site.**

Does your country have Ramsar sites twinned with those in other CPs? **No**

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening? **Political circumstances have precluded twinning with neighboring CPs.**

If **Yes**, please note how many such twinning arrangements are in place and indicate which sites are involved.

AND: Do these arrangements involve:

- sharing of information resources? **Yes/No**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transfer of financial resources? Yes/No • exchanges of personnel? Yes/No • other activities? Please elaborate.
Proposed national actions and targets: To promote cooperation with neighboring countries toward the objective of preparing and implementing joint plans with Jordan with regard to protection of the coral reef at Aqaba, the Dead Sea and the Hai Bar Yotvata in the south of the country, and with Lebanon on protection of the Rosh Haniqra Reserve.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.

Operational Objective 7.2: To strengthen and formalize linkages between Ramsar and other international and/or regional environmental conventions and agencies, so as to advance the achievement of shared goals and objectives relating to wetland species or issues.

Actions - Global and National Targets
7.2.1 Participate in, or initiate, consultations with related conventions to foster information exchange and cooperation, and develop an agenda for potential joint actions. [SC, Bureau]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - A Joint Work Plan between the Ramsar Convention and the Convention to Combat Desertification which encourages cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local levels.
Refer also to 4.2.1. Does there exist a mechanism (such as an inter-ministry committee) at the national level with the charter of coordinating/integrating the implementation of international/regional conventions/treaties to which your country is a signatory? Yes
If No, what are the impediments to such a mechanism being introduced? Please elaborate.
If Yes, describe the mechanism and the conventions/treaties it is expected to consider. A department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the coordination of international conventions. To increase the integration and synergy among conventions, an identical focal point is frequently appointed to deal with conventions on similar themes. For example, the Nature and Parks Authority is the focal point for conventions on biodiversity, wetlands, trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora, and migratory species. The focal point for the Convention to Combat Desertification has organized an international conference on synergies between the desertification, climate change and biodiversity conventions.
AND: Has the mechanism proven to be effective? Yes
If No, why not? Please elaborate.
If Yes, please elaborate. Integration of responsibility for different conventions within one institution has promoted implementation.

Proposed national actions and targets: **To promote the effective implementation of all environmental conventions in Israel and to adapt national legislation and policy to the provisions of these conventions.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment, Nature and Parks Authority, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.**

7.2.2 Prepare project proposals together with other conventions and partner organizations, and submit them jointly to potential funding agencies. [CPs, SC, Bureau, Partners]

For eligible countries, have there been project proposals prepared and submitted to funding agencies which were intended to assist with implementation of the Ramsar Convention? **Yes**

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, were such proposals successful in gaining funds? **Yes - The European Union, within the framework of the LIFE program, approved funds for the joint financing of two (three year) environmental projects which contributed to the implementation of the Ramsar Convention beginning in 1997: restoration and conservation of fauna and flora in the reflooded Hula wetland habitat and restoration of rivers in Israel's coastal plain.**

Funds were made available by the Middle East Cooperation Program of the U.S. Agency for International Development for a three-year program in the Gulf of Aqaba (Peace Park) for the development of a coordinated management and educational outreach program and for the development of a coordinated, long-term monitoring and research program with the participation of Jordan and Israel. The overall goal of the project is to foster cooperation between Jordan and Israel in studying, managing, promoting awareness of, and protecting their shared marine resources.

In 2000, a proposal was submitted to SMAP within the framework of regional cooperation, for developing a conservation strategy for Mediterranean marine and coastal reserves, which relates, inter alia, to a marine reserve in Israel - Rosh Haniqra.

Israel is participating in a four-year project (2000-2004) entitled European Aquatic Modelling Network within the framework of the European Cooperation in the Field of Scientific and Technical Research (COST). The main objective is to define and develop integrated methods and models of assessing the interactions between aquatic flora and fauna and riverine habitats on reach scale and provide transferability to a catchment scale.

In 1997, the Ramsar Small Grants Fund approved a financial grant to the Israel Ornithological Center of the Society for the Protection of Nature for a research project on two of the endangered raptor species that winter in the Hula Valley: the Imperial Eagle and the Spotted Eagle. In 1999, a project proposal was approved by the Small Grants Fund on the biodiversity and dynamics of the vermetid reef of Shiqmona (Haifa). The funds were allocated to elaborate the scientific arguments needed to declare the area as a Marine Nature Reserve, a Ramsar Site and a Special Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance (under the Barcelona Convention).

A Coastal Area Management Programme (CAMP) was launched in Israel in November 1997 as part of an agreement between the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Ministry of the Environment on behalf of the Government of Israel. Within the framework of the three year program, studies and activities related to such subjects as integrated coastal zone management, climate change, and sustainable development, including conservation of biodiversity.

Proposed national actions and targets: **To obtain additional funding to increase the base of knowledge in order to facilitate the declaration of additional wetland sites and to improve monitoring and management programs.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

7.2.3 Strengthen cooperation and synergy with the Convention on Biological Diversity, in particular as regards inclusion of wetland concerns in national biodiversity strategies, and planning and execution of projects affecting wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - To see the Joint Work Plan implemented in full and resulting in cooperative implementation of both Conventions at the international, national and local levels.**

Further to 7.2.1 above: Has there been a review **completed** of the Joint Work Plan between Ramsar and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to establish the areas of priority for cooperative implementation of these Conventions? **Yes**

If No, what has prevented such a review being done? **Please elaborate.**

If Yes, what are the areas established as priorities for national cooperation between Ramsar and CBD implementing agencies/focal points? **Completion of an assessment of all aquatic reserves in order to decide on priorities for declaring nature reserves and completion of a national inventory of wetland invertebrates and flora.**

Proposed national actions and targets: **To declare Shiqmona as a marine reserve and as a Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Interest (SPAMI) under the Barcelona Convention and to expedite the declaration of additional marine and coastal reserves.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**

7.2.4 Develop cooperation with the World Heritage Convention and UNESCO's Programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB), especially as regards wetlands designated as World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves and/or Ramsar sites. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - A Memorandum of Cooperation with the Man and the Biosphere Programme, leading to Joint Work Plans with the MAB Programme and with the World Heritage Convention which encourages cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local, levels.**

Refer to 7.2.1 above.

7.2.5 Enhance Ramsar's contribution to international cooperation on shared wetland species, notably through cooperative arrangements with the Convention on Migratory Species, flyway agreements, networks and other mechanisms dealing with migratory species (Recommendation 6.4). [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **The *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention* propose an increase in the joint efforts between Ramsar and CMS (COP7 Resolution VII.19)**
- **Global Target - A Joint Work Plan between the Conventions which encourages cooperative implementation of both at the international, regional and national and local levels.**

Refer to 7.2.1 above.

7.2.6 Develop Ramsar's contribution to wildlife trade issues affecting wetlands, through increased interaction with CITES. [Bureau]

- **The *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention* propose an increase in the joint efforts between Ramsar and CITES (COP7 Resolution VII.19)**
- **Global Target - A Memorandum of Cooperation with CITES, leading to a Joint Work Plan between the Conventions which sees cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local levels.**

Refer to 7.2.1 above

7.2.7 Initiate links with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in view of the potential impacts on wetlands of climate change. [CP, Bureau]

- **Global Target - A Memorandum of Cooperation with UNFCCC, leading to a Joint Work Plan between the Conventions which encourages cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local levels.**

Refer to 7.2.1 above.

7.2.8 Extend cooperation with conventions and agencies concerned with conservation and wise use of wetlands at regional level, and in particular: with the European Community, as regards application of its Habitats Directive to wetlands, and adoption and application of measures like the Habitats Directive for wetlands outside the states of the European Union; with the Council of Europe (Bern) Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats as regards the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy; with the Barcelona Convention and Mediterranean Action Plan in relation to the MedWet initiative; with the Western Hemisphere Convention; with UNEP programmes, in particular the Regional Seas Conventions; and with the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). [CPs, Bureau]

- **Global Target - With the European Commission and SPREP, develop and sign a Memorandum of Cooperation and prepare and implement a Joint Work Plan. For**

<p>Medwet, secure the long-term funding base for this important initiative and continue to develop new programmes of regional action. For the others referred to, and others which are appropriate, develop an appropriate working relationship.</p>
<p>Refer to 7.2.1 above.</p>
<p>7.2.9 Develop relationships with other specialized agencies that deal with wetland-related issues, such as the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and the World Water Council (COP7 Resolution VI.23). [Bureau]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - To progress to closer working relations with these and other relevant initiatives, as appropriate.
<p>Refer to 7.2.1 above.</p>

Operational Objective 7.3: To ensure that the development assistance community, and multinational corporations, follow improved wetland practices such as the Wise Use Guidelines in developing countries and countries whose economies are in transition.

<p>Actions - Global and National Targets</p>
<p>7.3.2 Work with multilateral and bilateral development agencies and multinational corporations towards a full recognition of wetland values and functions (Recommendation 4.13), and assist them to improve their practices in favor of wetland conservation and wise use taking account of the <i>Guidelines for Aid Agencies for Improved Conservation and Sustainable Use of Tropical and Sub-Tropical Wetlands</i>, published by OECD's Development Assistance Committee (Recommendation 6.16). [Bureau, Partners]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - At the Bureau level, to consider ways and means to increase its ability to work more systematically in this area, so as to increase the level of donor agency support for wetland conservation and wise use activities, and to see an increasing number of multinational corporations adopting voluntary codes of conduct for protecting wetlands.
<p>While this action is directed at the Bureau principally, CPs also have a role to play in this area; refer to 7.4.2 below with respect to bilateral development agencies. For the multilateral donors: Is your government represented on the governing bodies or scientific advisory bodies of the multilateral donors, or the GEF? No</p> <p>If Yes, has this person/agency/ministry been briefed on the obligations of your country under the Ramsar Convention, and the relevant expectations raised of each CP by the Strategic Plan and COP decisions? Yes/No</p> <p>Additional comments?</p>

7.3.3 Interact with multilateral development agencies and through bilateral development programmes, to assist developing countries in meeting their Ramsar obligations, and report on actions taken and results achieved (Recommendation 5.5). [CPs]

Refer to 7.4.2 to 7.4.6 below.

Proposed national actions and targets: **There are no proposed national actions and targets in this area.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of Foreign Affairs.**

Operational Objective 7.4: To obtain funds to fulfil obligations contracted under the Convention, notably for developing countries and countries whose economies are in transition.

Actions - Global and National Targets

7.4.1 Allocate funds for conservation and wise use of wetlands in the budget of each Contracting Party. [CPs]

- **Global Target - By COP8, to see allocations for wetlands made by all CPs and also for specific wetland programmes in more than 40 CPs.**

Does your government allocate funds for wetland conservation and wise use activities? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this happening? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, is this:

- As a separate allocation to a Wetlands Programme (or similar)? **Yes**
- As part of a broader allocation for the environment? **Yes**
- As part of the programmes maintained by a range of Ministries? **Yes**

AND: What mechanisms are in place for determining priorities and coordinating the expenditure of these funds? **A statutory board (plenum) establishes the policy of the the Nature and Parks Authority, its action plan and its budget. The Nature and Parks Authority has a professional committee on water issues which commissions professional opinions from academic and professional bodies.**

The River Administration, a multidisciplinary committee including a variety of stakeholders, is the main committee for determining priorities and coordinating the expenditure of funds with regard to river restoration. In the Qishon and Yarqon Rivers, statutory stream authorities have been established whose functions include nuisance abatement and pollution prevention. A stream authority may impose rates or quotas for the purpose of draining its area.

Within the framework of the Drainage and Flood Control Law, 1957, 11 drainage authorities have been established to cover the entire area of Israel (on the municipal, regional and national level) which are authorized to establish, maintain and develop drainage projects and to prevent "sanitary nuisances." Drainage authorities may impose a fee on owners of land in a drainage authority to cover or partially cover the costs of drainage projects.

Is it linked to a National Wetland Policy, Biodiversity Plan, Catchment Plan or something

similar? Yes The focal points of the Biodiversity and Ramsar Conventions are represented on various committees.
Proposed national actions and targets: To assure the continuous supply of water to wetlands and the necessary budgetary allocations.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment, Nature and Parks Authority, Water Commission in the Ministry of National Infrastructures, Soil Conservation and Drainage Division in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

7.4.2 Include projects for conservation and wise use of wetlands in development plans funded by development assistance agencies, and ensure the latter consult the Ramsar administrative authority in each Contracting Party. [CPs]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - To see this trend continue such that all eligible CPs are receiving donor support for a range of major wetland-related projects by the time of COP8. In particular, to see this support being provided, as appropriate, for the priority areas of policy development, legal and institutional reviews, inventory and assessments, the designation and management of Ramsar sites, training and communications.
If your country has a bilateral development assistance programme, does it allocate funds for wetland-related projects on a regular basis? No
If No , what are the impediments to this occurring? Israel's assistance program is largely based on instructional workshops and seminars abroad and in Israel.
If Yes , are these projects subjected to rigorous impact assessment procedures, which take account of the full environmental, social and economic values of wetlands? Yes/No
If No , why not? Please elaborate.
If Yes , is the Ramsar Administrative Authority consulted during the screening and assessment phases of the projects? Yes/No
If No , why not? Please elaborate.
AND: Is there a formal consultative process in place (such as a National Ramsar Committee) which ensures that the development assistance agency is fully aware of the Ramsar Convention obligations of the country with respect to international cooperation? Yes/No
If No , why not?
If Yes , please elaborate.
Proposed national actions and targets: To provide assistance in the form of training and workshops to developing countries in such areas as water conservation and wetland management.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

7.4.4 Mobilize direct funding support from multilateral and bilateral development assistance agencies to assist developing countries and countries whose economy is in transition, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands and in implementation of the present Strategic Plan. [CPs. Bureau]

- **Global Target - By COP8 for all the bilateral donors from appropriate CPs to have funds earmarked for wetland projects, and for all of these CPs to have in place mechanisms for consultation between the development assistance agency and their Ramsar Administrative Authority.**

Refer to 7.4.2 above

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**GENERAL OBJECTIVE 8
TO PROVIDE THE CONVENTION WITH THE REQUIRED INSTITUTIONAL
MECHANISMS AND RESOURCES**

Operational Objective 8.1: To maximize achievement of Ramsar’s mission and objectives by evaluating and, if necessary, modifying the Convention’s institutions and management structures.

Actions - Global and National Targets

8.1.9 Promote the establishment of National Ramsar Committees to provide the opportunity for input from, and representation of, governmental and non-governmental organizations, key stakeholders, indigenous people, the private sector and interest groups, and land use planning and management authorities (Recommendation 5.13). [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

Refer to 4.1.2.

8.1.10 Review the designated national focal point in each Contracting Party, with a view to increasing involvement in the work of the Convention from all agencies concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands. [CPs]

Refer to 4.1.1

Operational Objective 8.2: To provide the financial resources required to carry out Ramsar activities.

Actions - Global and National Targets

8.2.1 Pay invoiced contributions to the Convention’s core budget in full, and promptly at the beginning of each calendar year. [CPs]

- **Global Target - During this triennium to achieve full and timely payment of all dues by all CPs. The SC to prepare a proposal on sanctions for non-payment for**

consideration at COP8 (COP7 Resolution VII.28).
Is your country completely up to date with its annual contributions to the core budget of the Convention? Yes
If No , what is the impediment to this being done? Please elaborate.
Proposed national actions and targets: To continue to pay annual contributions.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry of the Environment.

8.2.4 Give priority to funding for training programmes, education and public awareness work, development of the Ramsar Database, and the Convention's Communications Strategy. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - To secure the resources needed to establish regional training initiatives (like *Wetlands for the Future*) in other regions, to allow the Bureau to progress the implementation of the Outreach Programme, and to support the proposed developments for the Ramsar Sites Database into a fully online and Web-based promotional and planning tool of the Convention.**

Refer to 3.3.1 (Convention Outreach Programme), 4.2.4 (Wetlands for the Future).

Operational Objective 8.3: To maximize the benefits of working with partner organizations.

Actions - Global and National Targets
8.3.1 Strengthen cooperative planning mechanisms with the partners and improve communications and information exchange, including exchange of staff. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
Refer to 3.2.1 and 4.1.2. Does your country include representatives of the Convention's official International Organisation Partners (BirdLife International, IUCN, WWF, Wetlands International) on its National Ramsar Committees or similar bodies, where they exist? No
If No , what prevents this from occurring? Israel does not yet have an official National Ramsar Committee (only an ad-hoc committee). However, strong professional and cooperative links do exist between representatives of all nature protection organizations. Strong ties exist between the Ministry of the Environment and the Nature and Parks Authority and the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (an NGO) which is represented in the Convention's official International Organisation Partners. In some cases, the focal points of the Ramsar Convention are also the representatives of these organizations.
Proposed national actions and targets: To strengthen cooperative links among representatives of different organizations.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Ministry

of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.

Operational Objective 8.4: To secure at least one million US dollars per annum for the Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetlands Conservation and Wise Use (Resolutions 5.8 and VI.6) and to allocate these funds effectively.

Actions - Global and National Targets

8.4.1 Develop a strategy for securing at least one million US dollars annually for the Ramsar Small Grants Fund, to be approved by the first full meeting of the Standing Committee after the 6th COP (1996) and proceed immediately to its implementation. [Bureau, SC, CPs, Partners]

- **Global Target - To establish a mechanism to ensure one million US dollars annually for the Ramsar Small Grants Fund (COP7 Resolution VII.28).**

Refer also to 8.2.4. For developed countries, do you provide additional voluntary contributions to support the Small Grants Fund? **No**

If **No**, what prevents this from happening? **Budgetary constraints.**

If **Yes**, is an irregular or regular voluntary contribution?

Proposed national actions and targets: **None at present.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Ministry of the Environment and Nature and Parks Authority.**