



"People and Wetlands: The Vital Link"
**7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971),
San José, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999**

The Convention Work Plan 2000-2002

1. RECALLING Resolution VI.14 which adopted the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 of the Convention and NOTING that Contracting Parties were requested to submit National Reports for this Conference using the same format;
2. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION to the 107 Contracting Parties that submitted their National Reports for this Conference, and URGING the remaining Parties to do so as a matter of priority;
3. EXPRESSING SATISFACTION that the format of the National Reports adopted for this Conference permitted a more structured and in-depth analysis of the implementation of the Convention; and TAKING NOTE of the recommendations made by the Secretary General in his report to this Conference to further improve the format of the National Reports;
4. NOTING the content of the Regional Overviews of the implementation of the Convention, and the Reports of the Chairpersons of the Standing Committee and of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), and the Report of the Secretary General;
5. NOTING WITH SATISFACTION the progress made in the implementation of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002, in particular in the areas of new members, legislative reviews, policy formulation, environmental impact assessment, restoration, involvement of local people, management planning at Ramsar sites, and synergy with other conventions at the global level;
6. CONCERNED that the application of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 has been uneven in the Contracting Parties and that only slow progress has been made, globally, in relation to some of its General Objectives, in particular in relation to the application of economic valuation methods, private sector involvement, introduction of wetlands into formal education programmes, establishment of National Ramsar/ Wetland Committees, training, Ramsar site designations, national inventories, Ramsar site twinnings and designation of transboundary Ramsar sites, harmonised implementation of environment conventions at the national level, the ongoing level of support for the Small Grants Fund, and liaison between Ramsar focal points and their bilateral development assistance agencies;
7. CONVINCED that for an effective implementation of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 in the next triennium it will be useful to establish more precise targets for a range of appropriate actions in order to encourage more significant results in some areas;

8. WELCOMING the proposal to approve a Work Plan for the next triennium based in the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 that involves the Convention as a whole, including the Contracting Parties, the COP subsidiary bodies, the Ramsar Bureau and the International Organization Partners;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

9. APPROVES the Convention's Work Plan for the 2000-2002 triennium as attached in Annex I, noting that the Standing Committee in its annual approval of the Ramsar Bureau's Work Plan may have to establish an order of priority for the many actions expected of the secretariat;
10. INVITES the International Organization Partners of the Convention and other relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions to continue to provide policy, technical and financial assistance to the Convention in order to ensure the effective implementation of the Work Plan 2000-2002;
11. ENDORSES the global targets for the Convention set under a range of themes in the Work Plan 2000-2002 and requests the Ramsar Bureau to prepare, based on the information contained in the COP7 National Reports and the Regional Overviews, regional targets for each for these same themes, for consideration and approval by the 24th meeting of the Standing Committee, and to disseminate these to all Contracting Parties for their information and consideration in guiding national and regional priority setting;
12. INVITES Contracting Parties to consider preparing and adopting by the end of 1999 "National targets for the Ramsar Strategic Plan for the period 2000-2002" on the basis of consultative processes involving National Wetland/Ramsar Committees, or similar bodies, and taking into consideration those targets set in the Convention Work Plan 2000-2002 and the subsequently determined regional targets;
13. REQUESTS the Standing Committee, at its 24th meeting, to review the National Report format used for COP7 and to introduce appropriate changes with a view to making the Ramsar COP8 format available in early 2000, so that Contracting Parties wishing to apply this framework can establish and maintain at the earliest opportunity an ongoing record of implementation for national planning and reporting purpose;
14. URGES all Contracting Parties to undertake the preparation of their National Reports for Ramsar COP8 in consultation with their National Ramsar/Wetland Committees, where they exist, and also with all other relevant Government Ministries;
15. REITERATES its encouragement, as expressed through Actions 8.1.9 and 8.1.10, for Contracting Parties to establish National Ramsar/Wetland Committees and to constitute these with appropriate representation from government and non-governmental stakeholders;
16. REQUESTS the Ramsar Bureau to prepare for consideration at Ramsar COP8 a detailed review of the membership, terms of reference and operations of National Ramsar/Wetland Committees, so that Contracting Parties may benefit from each others' experiences in this area;

17. URGES Contracting Parties, pursuant to Action 8.1.10 of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002, to review their designated national Administrative Authority for the Convention to ensure these have the necessary resources to support the increasing demands being placed upon them by the growing expectations of the Convention;
18. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to review their internal processes and mechanisms for harmonising the implementation of international and regional conventions and agreements to which they are signatories, and to report on actions taken in this regard in their National Reports prepared for Ramsar COP8;
19. URGES the Ramsar Bureau, as resources allow, to continue its efforts to assist and work with the bilateral and multilateral donors in mobilizing funds for development assistance projects relating to the conservation and wise use of wetlands and integrated river basin and coastal zone management; and CALLS UPON all Contracting Parties with bilateral development assistance agencies to ensure close collaboration with their Ramsar Administrative Authority to ensure that their obligations pursuant to Article 5 (Resolution VII.19) are met;
20. FURTHER URGES all Contracting Parties, and especially the member countries of the Standing Committee in each region, those with neighboring countries that are not yet Parties to the Ramsar Convention, and those that share the range area of wetland-dependent migratory species with non-Contracting Parties, to increase their efforts for achieving the goal of universal membership contained in General Objective 1 of the Strategic Plan by encouraging those countries to accede to the Convention, so that the target of 150 member States can be reached before Ramsar COP8 and the Convention can pursue its global mission more effectively;
21. GREATLY APPRECIATES the advice received during this Conference of the accession of Lebanon (the 115th Contracting Party) and the impending accession of Cuba;
22. INSTRUCTS the Standing Committee to prepare for consideration and adoption at Ramsar COP8 a revised Strategic Plan for the Convention to cover the period 2003-2008, in consultation with the Contracting Parties, International Organization Partners, other convention secretariats and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions.

Annex

Ramsar Convention Work Plan 2000-2002

Abbreviations

Bureau	Ramsar Convention secretariat	Partners	International Organization Partners (presently BirdLife International, IUCN, Wetlands International, and WWF)
COP	Conference of the Contracting Parties	SC	Standing Committee
CPs	Contracting Parties	STRP	Scientific and Technical Review Panel
NRs	National Reports		
NRC	National Ramsar Committee		

GENERAL OBJECTIVE 1

TO PROGRESS TOWARDS UNIVERSAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE CONVENTION.

Operational Objective 1.1: To endeavour to secure at least 120 Contracting Parties to the Convention by 2002.

Actions	Progress, priorities and 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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 115 Contracting Parties (CPs) as of COP7, representing 23 new CPs since COP6. In order of accession these are as follows: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Israel, Malawi, Botswana, Bahamas, Georgia, Republic of Korea, Nicaragua, Monaco, Jamaica, Bahrain, Mongolia, Syria, Luxembourg, Belize, Thailand, Congo, Colombia, Madagascar, El Salvador, and Lebanon. • 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. • Target - 150 CPs by COP8
1.1.2 Promote membership of Ramsar through regional meetings and activities, and through partners' regional offices. [SC regional representatives, Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The very significant number of new CPs since COP6 in part reflects the efforts of many countries, the Bureau and the International Organization Partners to promote membership. • These efforts are to continue and to focus on the above priority regions and the Small Island Developing States.

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	Progress, priorities and targets
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globally, 45 CPs advised in their COP7 National Reports (NRs) that reviews of legislation had been undertaken and of these, 36 indicated that appropriate revisions and amendments had been made. The degree to which these reviews effectively apply to wetlands and promoting the objectives of the Convention has yet to be established. • This remains a high priority for the next triennium. The <i>Guidelines for laws and institutions</i> (Resolution VII.7) will assist these efforts. • Target - At least 100 CPs to have comprehensively reviewed their laws and institutions related to wetlands by COP8.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 CPs indicated that they had a National Wetland Policy/Strategy or Action Plan in place, a further 31 said these were being developed and 24 more advised that such instruments were planned for the near future. A more detailed analysis of this information is provided in Resolution VII.6 Annex. 91 CPs indicated that wetlands were considered in other national environment plans, but only 27 advised that this included water management plans or policies. • 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 <i>Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies</i> (Resolution VII.6) will assist these efforts. • Target - By COP8 at least 100 CPs with National Wetland Policies or, where appropriate, a recognised document that harmonises 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.

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	Progress, priorities and targets
2.2.1 Gather and make available to Contracting Parties information on land use planning related to wetlands, and catchment/river basin and coastal zone planning in particular. [Bureau]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A partial response to this are the <i>Guidelines for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management</i> (Resolution VII.18). • Target - In the next triennium guidelines for integrating wetlands into coastal zone planning and management will be developed for consideration at COP8.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74 CPs reported that efforts had been made to have wetlands considered in integrated land/water and coastal zone planning and management processes. The degree to which such integrated approaches are proving effective has yet to be established. It is encouraging that a number of CPs (14) with federal systems of government indicate that wetland policies/strategies are being developed by their provincial administrations. • 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. • 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.

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

Actions	Progress, priorities and 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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme for COP7 was designed to provide such guidance on a range of priority issues. It included a review of the impact of invasive species on wetlands and recommends a range of actions for the Convention to pursue (Resolution VII.14). • 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.
2.3.2. Publicize examples of effective application of existing Guidelines and Additional Guidance. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 CPs advised that they had produced publications demonstrating some aspect of implementing Wise Use. It is disappointing that more of these publications were not provided to the Bureau for inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre of the Convention's Web site as launched on World Wetlands Day in 1998. • Promoting and improving the availability of such resource materials is a priority under the <i>Convention's Outreach Programme</i> (Resolution VII.9) • Target - By COP8 to have included in the Wise Use Centre 500 appropriate references and publications as provided to the Bureau by CPs and other organizations.

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

Actions	Progress, priorities and 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"> • Only 34 CPs indicated in their COP7 NRs that some actions had been taken to incorporate economic valuation techniques into natural resource planning and assessments relating to wetlands. • Given the guidelines available for this activity (see below), this will be an area of higher priority in the next triennium. • 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.
2.4.2 Publish, with the assistance of IUCN and other collaborators, information on economic evaluations of wetlands presented at the 6 th COP. [Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was completed with the publication of the <i>Economic Valuation of Wetlands</i> book in 1997.
2.4.3 Initiate specific activities which implement the findings on economic evaluations published under 2.4.2 [CPs]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See 2.4.1 above. Also, the Bureau has initiated a project, in collaboration with IUCN and supported by funds from the Swiss Government, in the countries of the Southern Africa Development Community on economic valuation of wetlands.

2.4.4 Review content and implementation of recommended best practice in economic evaluations of wetlands at a technical session of the 7 th COP (1999). [STRP, Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This did not gain sufficient support from CPs when surveyed for their priorities for the Technical Session themes for COP7. It has therefore been deferred until COP8. At COP7 economic valuation issues were considered as part of the discussions of incentives (Resolution VII.15) and impact assessment (Resolutions VII.16).
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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	Progress, priorities and targets
2.5.1 Expand the Additional Guidance on Wise Use by preparing, for a technical session at the 7 th COP (1999), the results of a review of environmental appraisal guidelines and examples of current best practice in EIA. [SC, STRP, Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These issues were considered at COP7 in Technical Session IV in the paper entitled “The Ramsar Convention and impact assessment - strategic, environmental and social”. Refer to Resolution VII.16. Target - In the next triennium, the development of further guidance in this area will be done in collaboration with CBD, CMS, IUCN and the International Association for Impact Assessment.
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 evaluations 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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For COP7, 35 CPs reported 115 Ramsar sites where some change in ecological character had occurred or was likely to occur in the near future. Two CPs advised that changes had occurred to all or some of their sites. (Refer to Resolution VII.12.) While some CPs provided details, it is not possible to know if EIAs have been applied in all cases. 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.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 92 CPs indicated that EIAs for actions potentially impacting on wetlands are required under legislation. Assuming that this implies that the highest standards of EIA are being applied, and the full range of wetland functions and benefits are being appropriately taken into consideration, then this is a very encouraging advancement for the Convention. 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.

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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to 2.5.1 and 2.5.3 above.
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Operational Objective 2.6: To identify wetlands in need of restoration and rehabilitation, and to implement the necessary measures.

Actions	Progress, priorities, and 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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At COP7, restoration and rehabilitation was reviewed in Technical Session II (Resolution VII.17). This review indicated that only a handful of CPs have undertaken inventories of their wetlands requiring restoration or rehabilitation. • The completion of such inventories is a continuing area of priority for the Convention. • Target - Restoration/rehabilitation inventories to be completed by at least 50 CPs by COP8.
2.6.2 Provide and implement methodologies for restoration and rehabilitation of lost or degraded wetlands. [CPs, STRP, Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a considerable information resource on this subject although it is not as readily accessed as desirable. • 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.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 76 CPs reported in their NRs that wetland restoration or rehabilitation is being undertaken in their countries. It would seem that in many countries this is at the small, or even pilot project scale at present, although there are some major projects happening as well. • 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. • 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.
2.6.4 Organize at the 7 th COP (1999) a technical session on restoration and rehabilitation, and identify ten best practice case studies at local, provincial and catchment levels. [STRP, Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to 2.6.1 and 2.6.2 above. • In addition, a number of the case studies assembled under other projects completed for COP7, such as <i>Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands</i> (Resolution VII.8) include elements of restoration or rehabilitation and these will be published after the conference.

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	Progress, priorities and targets
2.7.1 Implement Recommendation 6.3 on involving local and indigenous people in the management of wetlands. [CPs, Bureau]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 72 CPs advised in their NRs that actions had been taken to encourage active and informed participation of local communities, including indigenous people and especially women, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands. The NRs provide clear evidence in many countries of local stakeholders mobilising to take responsibility for the sustainable use of their wetland resources. At COP7, in Technical Session II, <i>Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands</i> (Resolution VII.8) were considered. This project, undertaken by a number of NGOs and led by IUCN, was in response to Recommendation 6.3. Target - In the next triennium, the implementation of the above Guidelines is to be one of the Convention's highest priorities. By COP8 all CPs to be promoting local stakeholder management of wetlands.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This was not a specific question posed in the NRs and so it is not possible to give a clear indication of the degree to which this is taking place. The <i>Convention's Outreach Programme</i> (Resolution VII.9) seeks to give such community participation higher priority as an education and empowerment tool of the Convention.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The optional section of the COP7 NR format sought advice on the involvement of NGOs in various aspects of the Convention's work. 63 CPs answered the question about whether or not NGOs were part of Ramsar site management committees and 37 of these indicated that this was the case. It was not possible from the NRs to gain a clear view of the more general involvement of local communities in such committees. Target - Ramsar site management committees operating in at least 100 CPs, and including non-government stakeholder representation.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to 2.7.1 above. Also, the issues relating to traditional knowledge and management practices have not been fully considered by the Convention to date. This was noted by the Pan-African regional meeting in 1998 as a priority for consideration by the Ramsar Convention. 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.

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

Actions	Progress, priorities and targets
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<p>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]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47 CPs reported that actions had been taken to encourage the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands. The NRs contain descriptions of a wide range of situations and cases of partnerships with the private sector which is clearly a growth area of the Convention that needs to be further fostered. • In this triennium the Bureau has also entered into the innovative “Evian Project” in partnership with the multinational Danone Group and several French government agencies through which projects on training and communications are being sponsored. • Target - In the next triennium the efforts to work in partnership with the private sector will be further escalated 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.
<p>2.8.2 Encourage the private sector to apply the Wise Use Guidelines when executing development projects affecting wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One aspect of this action is the use of incentive measures. Only 13 CPs advised in their National Reports that they had undertaken reviews of incentives measures and sought to introduce positive incentives and, conversely, remove perverse incentives. • At COP7 incentive measures for wetlands were considered in Technical Session III (Resolution VII.15). • 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.
<p>2.8.3 Encourage the private sector to work in partnership with site managers to monitor the ecological character of wetlands. [CPs]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Reports do not indicate any situation where this is occurring except through sponsorship arrangements. • This action will be promoted further in the next triennium.
<p>2.8.4 Involve the private sector in the management of wetlands through participation in wetland management committees. [CPs]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has not been possible to ascertain the occurrence of such involvement through the COP7 National Reports. • 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.

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	Progress, priorities and 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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Convention's Outreach Programme</i> is the response to this action (Resolution VII.9). • Target - By COP8 to see the global network of proposed CP focal points for Wetland Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) in place and functioning effectively in the promotion and execution of the global Outreach Programme. To secure the resources to increase the Bureau's capacity for implementing the Outreach Programme.
3.1.2 Participate in the identification of regional EPA needs and in the establishment of priorities for resource development. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to 3.1.1 above.
3.1.3 Assist in the development of international resource materials in support of national EPA programmes [CPs, Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to 3.1.1 above.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to 3.1.1 above. • These Programmes, and several others, participated in the workshop held in September 1998 which helped develop the Outreach Programme.
3.1.6 Facilitate a review of international EPA initiatives for wetlands, in conjunction with the 7 th COP. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to 3.1.1 above.

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	Progress, priorities and 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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Convention's Outreach Programme is intended to further encourage such partnerships (Resolution VII.9). • 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.
3.2.2 On the basis of identified needs and Target groups, support national	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to 3.2.1 above. • 62 CPs reported that they have government-run

programmes and campaigns to generate a positive vision of wetlands and create awareness at all levels of their values and functions. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]	programmes for education and public awareness. 66 CPs advise that there are NGOs undertaking such activities in their country. • Target - see 3.2.1 above.
3.2.3 Encourage the development of educational centres at wetland sites. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]	• Wetland Education Centres and the Wetlands Link International initiative are a central component of the Outreach Programme. • 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.
3.2.4 Work with museums, zoos, botanic gardens, aquaria and educational environment education centres to encourage the development of exhibits and programmes that support non-formal EPA on wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]	• Museums, zoos, etc., are also a key part of the Outreach Programme, and efforts will be made to encourage these facilities to promote the Convention's work. • Target - see 3.2.3 above.
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]	• 43 CPs advised that steps have been taken to incorporate wetland considerations in the curricula of educational institutions. • Target - By COP8 to see wetland issue incorporated into curricula in over 100 CPs.

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	Progress, priorities and 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]	• The Outreach Programme fulfils this expectation (Resolution VII.9).
3.3.3 Prepare material, complementary to the existing Ramsar information package, to highlight specific regional issues and the benefits of membership for non-Contracting Parties. [SC regional representatives, Bureau, Partners]	• This was done for Small Island Developing States in this triennium and similar material is under preparation by the Bureau for the countries of west Asia. • Target - By COP8 to have produced such material for west Asia and Africa.

<p>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]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Convention's site on the World Wide Web is increasingly the Bureau's primary communication tool. During the month of August 1998 the site received nearly 6,500 visitors from 87 countries who examined nearly 23,000 documents. In addition, there are e-mail groups operating effectively (Ramsar Forum, Ramsar Exchange, STRP and Standing Committee). No private sector support has been sought as yet. The Outreach Programme proposes a continuing escalation in the use and application of the Internet as a communication tool of the Convention. With funds from the "Evian Project" (refer to 2.8.1 above), a number of developing country Administrative Authorities have been assisted to gain access to the Internet during this triennium. • 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.
<p>3.3.5 Prepare for the 7th COP a Convention Communications Strategy, on the basis of the experience gained during the triennium 1997-1999. [SC, Bureau, Partners]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to 3.3.1 above.

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	Progress, priorities and targets
<p>4.1.1 Review existing national institutions responsible for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. [CPs]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was not a specific question in the NR format for COP7. Refer to 4.1.2 below for further information.
<p>4.1.2 On the basis of such a review, identify and implement measures to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase cooperation and synergy between institutions; • promote the continued operation of these institutions; • provide appropriately trained staff, in adequate numbers, for these institutions. [CPs] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to 8.1.9 also. 87 CPs advised that some form of mechanism is in place, or being introduced, to increase cooperation between the institutions responsible for wetland-related actions. Of these, eight indicated that they have a government-only National Ramsar Committee (NRC) and 44 reported that they have NRCs which include both government and non-government representatives. At the meeting of the Standing Committee in 1995 it was indicated that there were 21 NRCs in place, so this has been a growth area of the Convention. • Target - By COP8 to see coordinating mechanisms in place in all CPs, and more particularly to see NRC

	including government and non-government stakeholder representatives in place in more 100 CPs. In addition, by COP8 all CPs that have reported the existence of NRCs at COP7 to have evaluated their effectiveness (Resolution VII.27).
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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	Progress, priorities and 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"> Only 22 CPs advised that a training needs analysis had been completed or was under way, representing a poor response to this action. Target - By COP8 to have training needs analyses completed in more than 75 CPs.
4.2.2 Identify current training opportunities in disciplines essential for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As for 4.2.1 above, relatively few CPs (only 23) would seem to have systematically reviewed the training opportunities which exist for the nationals in their countries. Target - By COP8 to have reviews of training opportunities completed in more than 75 CPs.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By comparison with 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 above the NRs indicate a slightly higher level of activity with 40 CPs reporting the development of new training tools in this triennium. 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 Future Initiative.
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"> 74 CPs report that nationals from their country have gained wetland-related training either within or outside the country. This would seem to be an encouraging statistic; however, the information provided regarding training needs (4.2.1) and opportunities (4.2.2) suggests strongly that such training is probably ad hoc and opportunistic rather than directed at addressing priority management problems. A special mention should be made here of the Wetlands for the Future Initiative, funded by the USA, and managed by the Bureau which provides US\$250,000 per year for wetland-related training activities in the Neotropics. Target - Refer to 4.2.3 above. Also to seek the resources from donors or interested CPs to establish Wetlands for the Future Initiatives for the Asia-Pacific, Eastern European and African regions.

4.2.5 Give higher priority in the 'Operational Guidelines' of the Small Grants Fund to support for training activities. [CPs, SC]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has been done in this triennium and will continue to be a priority in the next.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to 4.2.3 and 4.2.4 above.

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	Progress, priorities and 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 6 th COP (1996). [CPs]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This work has been completed by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and was reported to COP7 (Resolution VII.10). 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 has been documented.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to 2.5.2 - In the COP7 NRs, 35 CPs reported Ramsar sites where some change in ecological character had occurred or was likely to occur in the near future. This was for 115 sites in 33 CPs and two others advised that changes had occurred to all or some of their sites. Through Resolution VII.12 these CPs were urged to consider nominating these sites to the Montreux Record. 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.
5.1.3 Review and regularly update the Montreux Record (Resolutions 5.4, 5.5, and VI.1). [CPs, STRP, Bureau]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Montreux Record is kept up to date by the Bureau. Target - CPs with Ramsar sites in the Montreux Record, and for which Ramsar Advisory Missions have been completed prior to COP7, are expected to have taken the actions necessary to warrant their removal from the Record before COP8.
5.1.4 Increase application of the Management Guidance Procedure (Recommendation 4.7) to provide advice on future management of Ramsar sites. [CPs, SC, Bureau]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since COP6 Ramsar Advisory Missions [formerly called Management Guidance Procedures] have been conducted for 9 Ramsar sites in 5 CPs. In addition, 6 sites have been removed from the Montreux Record since COP6. The Bureau has also visited and provided advice on the management of 19 sites on the Montreux Record since COP6. Target - Refer to 5.1.2 and 5.1.3.

5.1.5 Improve implementation of the recommendations made in reports of Management Guidance Procedure missions. [CPs]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to 5.1.3 above.
5.1.6 Identify the potential impact on the ecological character of Ramsar sites of global threats, including toxic chemicals (Recommendation 6.14), climate change and sea level change. [STRP, Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The STRP has responded in part to this action through the development of a Wetland Risk Assessment Framework (Resolution VII.10). • Targets - By COP8, to see the <i>Wetland Risk Assessment Framework</i> being regularly applied in all CPs. The STRP will prepare for consideration at COP8 a comprehensive review of the potential impacts of climate change on wetlands and the roles that wetlands can potentially play in mitigating the effects of climate change and sea level rise.

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	Progress, priorities and targets
5.2.1 Review the Guidelines on Management Planning in the light of practical experience and Recommendation 6.13. [COP]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The STRP, with support from the Bureau, has completed this review since COP6 (Resolution VII.12). The STRP recommend the development of additional guidance to assist CPs with preparing the best possible management plans. • Target - The STRP to prepare for consideration at COP8 the additional guidance on management planning recommended by the review undertaken in this triennium.
5.2.2 Publish for the guidance of Contracting Parties, before the 7 th COP (1999), ten best practice case studies of management planning for Ramsar sites, at local, regional and catchment or coastal zone levels. [STRP, Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As indicated in 2.6.4, a number of the case studies assembled under other projects completed for COP7, such as <i>Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands</i> (Resolution VII.8) and the <i>Guidelines for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management</i> (Resolution VII.19) include management planning activities. These will be published after COP7.
5.2.3 Ensure that, by the 8 th 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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Reports for COP7 indicate that management plans are in place or being prepared for 416 or 44% of Ramsar sites at present (Resolution VII.12). • 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.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zonation was identified in the review of the Ramsar management planning guidelines as one area where further guidance is needed by CPs. • Target - Refer to 5.2.1 above.

<p>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]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This aspect of Ramsar site management was not considered in the COP7 National Reports and will have to be reviewed in time for COP8. • Target - Provide for consideration at COP8 detailed information on the implementation of strict protection measures at small and/or sensitive sites.
<p>5.2.6 Give high priority in the Operational Guidelines for the Small Grants Fund to support for management planning at Ramsar sites. [CPs, SC]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has been the practice since COP6 and will continue to be the case.

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

Actions	Progress, priorities and 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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since COP6 the Bureau has reviewed each new site description submitted with a designation and, where necessary, delayed inclusion of the site in the List until more detailed information, conforming with the approved Ramsar Information Sheet and/or a detailed map, has been provided. • This will continue to be the practice in future.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since COP6 considerable progress has been made in this regard; however, there remain 54 sites in 11 CPs where appropriate site descriptions have not been provided, 8 sites in four CPs where a suitable map has not been submitted, and 21 sites in two CPs where site descriptions have yet to be provided in one of the three official working languages of the Convention (Resolution VII.12). • Target - By the end of 1999, for there to be no Ramsar sites for which appropriate sites descriptions and maps are required.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following COP6, all CPs which had designated sites prior to 31 December 1990, and not revised the information subsequently, were asked to provide updated descriptions using the revised Ramsar Information Sheet. This applied to 172 of the 512 sites designated before this date in 31 CPs. By 10 March 1999, such updates had not been received from 11 CPs for 27 sites. • Target - By the end of 1999, for there to be no Ramsar sites designated before 31 December 1990 for which updated sites descriptions are required.
5.3.4 Review, update and reprint the <i>Directory of Ramsar Sites</i> for the 7 th COP (1999), and produce, for the 8 th COP (2002), a summary of sites listed between the 7 th and 8 th COPs. [Bureau, Wetlands International]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A Directory of the Wetlands of International Importance</i> has been prepared for distribution at COP7. It is available on CD-ROM.

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	Progress, priorities and targets
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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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to 5.2.2, 5.2.3 and 5.2.4 above.
5.4.2 Upgrade and update the database to meet assessed needs and revise its structure accordingly, including the feasibility of developing a Geographical Information System (GIS). [Bureau, Wetlands International]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has been foreshadowed in the <i>Convention's Outreach Programme</i> (Resolution VII.9). • Target - By COP8, or sooner, to have the Ramsar sites Database on-line on the World Wide Web, complete with mapping GIS and facility for interactive interrogation of the database.
5.4.3. Make the database widely accessible (read only versions) through electronic networks (the Internet), run-time versions on diskettes and CD-ROMs, and by the publication of special reports and other outputs. [Bureau, Wetlands International]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to 5.3.4 and 5.4.2. In addition, Wetlands International prepared and distributed at COP7 a revised edition of the <i>Overview of the World's Ramsar Sites</i> publication.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is foreshadowed in the <i>Convention's Outreach Programme</i> (Resolution VII.9). The report prepared by Wetlands International for COP7 Technical Session IV entitled "Global review of wetland resources and priorities for inventory" and the related resolution (Resolution VII.20) propose that the Convention promote standard protocols for inventory and data housing to facilitate exchange and interaction. • Target - By COP8 to have national wetland databases in over 50 CPs which are accessible globally.

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	Progress, priorities and 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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 67 CPs reported that there exists a directory of sites for their country or region which identifies potential Ramsar sites. Refer to 6.2.1 below relating to the <i>Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance</i> (Resolution VII.11). Target - Refer to 6.2.1.
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"> 46 CPs reported that a national wetland inventory had been completed for their country and a further 41 CPs that the preparation of an inventory was planned for the near future. It is suspected that some CPs may have misunderstood the term national inventory and responded 'yes' to this question when they only have a directory of important sites, or an inventory completed for part of their country. This conclusion is reinforced by the findings of the report prepared by Wetlands International for COP7 entitled "Global review of wetland resources and priorities for inventory" (Resolution VII.20). Target - By COP8 to have national wetland inventories completed by over 50 CPs and the information housed in databases (Refer 5.4.4) which are accessible globally.
6.1.3 Utilize information from regional wetland directories, national scientific inventories of wetlands and other sources, to begin development of a quantification of global wetland resources, as baseline information for considering trends in wetland conservation or loss. [Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Report prepared by Wetlands International (Refer to 5.4.4 and 6.1.2 above) on the extent of the global wetland resource provides an estimate of area, but not with great confidence given the poor state of wetland inventory globally. In their NRs, 63 CPs advised that they have an estimate of wetland area in the country and 17 CPs reported the existence of some information on rates of loss or conversion of wetlands. Target - By COP8 to have undertaken a more detailed follow-up study to the Wetlands International Report to ensure that the Convention has available the best possible information relating the extent of the world's wetland resources. As national wetland inventories are completed (refer to 6.1.2), include the findings into the global dataset.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is an ongoing process which will now serve to inform the implementation by CPs of the <i>Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance</i> (Resolution VII.11, refer 6.2.1). Target – Draft of the 4th edition of the publication <i>International Waterfowl Population Estimates</i> to be prepared

	for presentation at COP8.
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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	Progress, priorities and 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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since COP6 there have been a further 151 sites designated under the Convention in 43 CPs, bringing the total to 970 in the 114 CPs as of 10 March 1999. Between COP5 and COP6, 202 sites were designated in 43 CPs. As was noted at the time of COP6, it is a concern that 548 of all sites are located in just 13 CPs. At the same time there remain 69 CPs which have fewer than 5 Ramsar sites and 35 CPs which have only one site - that which was designated at the time of accession. • At COP7 the CPs had for consideration a document entitled <i>Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance</i> (Resolution VII.11) which, as the title suggests, aims to provide a vision and framework for taking a more systematic approach to future site designations. • 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.
6.2.2 Provide assistance and advice to Contracting Parties in the process of ensuring that wetlands being considered for Ramsar designation meet the criteria (Resolution 5.3). [Bureau]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an ongoing part of the Bureau's responsibilities and will continue to be so.

<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"> • Refer to 6.2.1 above. As was noted under 6.2.1 above, since COP6 there have been 151 sites designated. Of these 55 sites include wetland types which were identified at the time of COP6 as being under-represented types. The breakdown of new site designations by type is as follows: 12 sites with seagrass beds, 8 with mangroves, two with coral reefs, 36 with non-forested peatlands and 14 with forested peatlands. This has to be recognised as an extremely disappointing response. • However, in their NRs, 25 CPs say they are considering the designation of peatland sites, 10 CPs are considering coral reef sites, and 17 CPs mangrove and sea grass wetland sites. Further, 11 CPs are moving to designate karsts system wetlands. 46 CPs indicate they have taken actions to prepare site designations based on the fish criteria, and 29 for the waterbird criteria. • 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> (Resolution VII.11). Based on this, short-term targets for each wetland type will be derived.
<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 one considered in the National Reports for COP7. It will be included for consideration in the NRs for COP8. • Target - All CPs to consider this approach to ensure the long-term conservation and wise use of wetlands that are subject to intense human use.
<p>6.2.5 Consider as a matter of priority the designation of transfrontier wetland sites. [CPs]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the NRs 42 CPs advised that they have transfrontier sites which have been included in the Ramsar List. A further 40 CPs indicated they have plans for such designations. • The issue of transfrontier or shared wetlands is addressed in the <i>Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention</i> (Resolution VII.19) and the <i>Guidelines for integrating wetlands into river basin management</i> (Resolution VII.18). • Target - By COP8 for there to be over 50 transfrontier wetland sites designated under the Convention.

Operational Objective 6.3: To keep under review the Ramsar Criteria for identifying wetlands of international importance (Resolution VI.3).

Actions	Progress, priorities and targets
<p>6.3.1 Keep general criteria under review to ensure they reflect global wetland conservation priorities and values. [COP, STRP, Bureau]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance</i> (Resolution VII.11) - Refer to 6.2.1 - has incorporated into it the products of the STRP's review of the Criteria. • Target – STRP to prepare for consideration at COP8 draft additional guidance for the identification and designation of peatland, wet grassland, mangrove, and coral reef wetland types as Ramsar sites.
<p>6.3.3 Provide further guidance on the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is provided by the Strategic Framework for the List

application of existing criteria in different regions. [COP, STRP, Bureau]	document referred to above.
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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	Progress, priorities and 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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 CPs advise that they have site twinning arrangements in place. This seems very few given that the concept has been promoted by the Convention for several years. Both the <i>Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention</i> (Resolution VII.19) and the <i>Convention's Outreach Programme</i> (Resolution VII.9) promote site twinning as a mechanism for accelerating the flow of knowledge and assistance and promoting training opportunities. 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.

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	Progress, priorities and targets
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<p>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]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the advice provided below for a number of related conventions. In addition, in December 1998 a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed with the Convention to Combat Desertification through which a range of joint actions will be pursued in the next triennium. At COP7, an Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ramsar Bureau and the World Heritage Centre (see 7.2.4). Refer to Resolution VII.4 (Annex II). • Target - A Joint Work Plan between the Ramsar Convention on the Convention to Combat Desertification which sees cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local levels.
<p>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]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has occurred on a number of occasions since COP6 and will continue to be pursued by the Bureau. It has to be somewhat opportunistic in nature, and related to the Bureau's approved programme of work.
<p>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]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ramsar Convention has a Memorandum of Cooperation with CBD, and prepared a Joint Work Plan between the Conventions which was endorsed by CBD's COP4 in 1998. Refer to Resolution VII.4 (Annex I). • 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.
<p>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]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Memorandum of Understanding between the Ramsar Bureau and the World Heritage Centre was signed at COP7. Links with the Man and the Biosphere programme have yet to be established and this will be a priority over the next triennium. • 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 sees cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local levels.
<p>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]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ramsar Convention has a Memorandum of Understanding in place with the Convention on Migratory Species (Resolution VII.4). • The <i>Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention</i> propose an escalation of the joint efforts between Ramsar and CMS (Resolution VII.19) • Target - A Joint Work Plan between the Conventions which sees cooperative implementation of both at the international, regional and national and local levels.
<p>7.2.6 Develop Ramsar's contribution to wildlife trade issues affecting wetlands, through increased interaction with CITES. [Bureau]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention</i> propose an escalation of the joint efforts between Ramsar and CITES (Resolution VII.19) • Target - A Memorandum of Cooperation with CITES, leading to a Joint Work Plan between the Conventions and which sees cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local levels.

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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These links have yet to be established and this will be a priority over the next triennium. • Target - A Memorandum of Cooperation with UNFCCC, leading to a Joint Work Plan between the Conventions and which sees cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local levels.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These links are at differing stages in their evolution and each will be advanced as resources allow over the next triennium. • Target - With the European Commission and SPREP - develop and sign a Memorandum of Cooperation, prepare and implement a Joint Work Plan. For 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.
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 (Resolution VI.23). [Bureau]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts were made to establish closer working relations with ICRI. The Bureau has been an active participant in the meetings of the World Water Council and Global Water Partnership. The participation in these in the next triennium will be determined by the human resources available within the Bureau and the future evolution of these initiatives. • Target - To progress to closer working relations with these and other relevant initiatives, as appropriate.

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.

Actions	Progress, priorities and Targets
7.3.1 Identify representative examples of best practice in wetland projects supported by development agencies and/or initiated by multinational corporations. [Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first part of this action has been considered in part by COP7 DOC. 20.4 entitled "Mobilising financial support from bilateral and multilateral donors for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention", and the conclusion of this review of donor agency support for the work of the Convention is provided as part of the <i>Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention</i> (Resolution VII.19). • Target - To complete this action before COP8.

<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 favour 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"> • The Bureau's work in this area has not progressed as expected due to the lack of resources to employ a Development Assistance Officer fully devoted to this important area of work. • The OECD's Guidelines have been considered as part of the review of donor agency support for the work of the Convention in the document COP7 DOC 20.4. The conclusions of this review, including recommendations for how to mobilise more funds from the donor agencies, are presented in the <i>Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention</i> (Resolution VII.19). • The issue of multinational corporations is also addressed in these Guidelines, with a recommendation that the Convention promote the concept of voluntary codes of conduct. • 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>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]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to 7.4.2 to 7.4.6 below.
<p>7.3.4 Develop, for consideration at a technical session of the 7th COP (1999), guidelines for Contracting Parties on how to carry out their obligations in the field of international cooperation, particularly as regards obligations concerning national funding agencies which provide assistance that may affect wetlands in developing countries. [SC, Bureau]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention</i> (Resolution VII.19) were prepared and adopted at COP7. • Refer to 7.3.1, 7.3.2 and 7.3.3 regarding national agencies.

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	Progress, priorities and targets
<p>7.4.1 Allocate funds for conservation and wise use of wetlands in the budget of each Contracting Party. [CPs]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 84 CPs advised that their government makes an annual allocation to support actions related to wetland conservation and wise use. Of these, 65 report that this is as part of larger environmental appropriations, while 19 say that funds are provided to a specific wetlands programme. Twelve CPs indicate that allocations are made to both larger programmes and a specific wetlands programme. • Target - By COP8 to see allocations for wetlands made

	in all CPs and also to specific wetland programmes in more than 40 CPs.
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"> • 73 CPs reported to have received, or to be receiving at present, donor support for wetland-related projects. • A range of measures to further increase the level of donor support for wetland-related projects are proposed in the <i>Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention</i> (Resolution VII.19). • Target - To see this trend escalate 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.
7.4.3 Maintain close working relations with multilateral agencies that provide development assistance in relation to project screening, development and evaluation, notably:[Bureau]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See 7.2.3 above. In this triennium, and in spite of its human resource constraints, the Bureau has developed some form of working relationship with all of these multilateral agencies. Increasingly this allows the Bureau to provide either direct or indirect advice to them. • Target - By COP8 to have increased the Bureau's capacity in this area and to see these relationships mature to full and frequent dialogue and advice.
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 CPs indicated that they have a bilateral development assistance agency which has funds earmarked for wetland conservation and wise use projects. Of these, only 7 advised that a mechanism was in place between the donor agency and the Ramsar Administrative Authority for regular consultations. • Resolution VII.19 and document COP7 DOC. 20.4 examine these issues in more detail. Refer also to Resolution VII.4 in relation to accessing the GEF for wetland-related projects. • Target - By COP8 to have all the bilateral donors from appropriate CPs with funds earmarked for wetlands projects, and for all of these CPs to have in place mechanisms for consultation between the development assistance agency and their Ramsar Administrative Authority.
7.4.5 Assist developing countries and countries whose economies are in transition to prepare wetland projects for funding by other agencies. [Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is becoming increasingly common, with both the Bureau and the Convention's International Organization Partners taken on such advisory and assistance roles. • Target - Refer to 7.4.4.
7.4.6 Assist bilateral development assistance agencies in the screening, development and evaluation of wetland projects. [STRP, Bureau]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is becoming increasingly common, with both the Bureau and the Convention's International Organization Partners taking on such advisory and assistance roles for the development agencies. • Target - Refer to 7.4.4.

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	Progress, priorities and targets
8.1.1 Reorganize, as of the 7 th COP (1999), the meeting into a business session, focusing upon administrative matters, and a technical session, focusing upon wetland conservation and wise use priorities, with smaller working groups as required. [SC, Bureau]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Standing Committee decided in this triennium to reorganize the arrangements for the Technical Sessions at COP7. • Target – The Standing Committee to review the structure and organization of the Conference of Contracting Parties and adopt changes to facilitate its implementation and effectiveness.
8.1.2 Keep under review the regional representation in the Standing Committee as the number of Contracting Parties increases. [COP, SC]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to Resolution VII.1 entitled <i>Regional categorisation of countries under the Convention and composition, roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee, including duties of Standing Committee members</i>
8.1.3 Review and, if necessary, redefine the roles, responsibilities and possible financial needs of the Standing Committee, prior to the 7 th COP (1999). [COP, SC]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to Resolution VII.1 - see above.
8.1.4 Review the working priorities of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) at each meeting of the COP. [COP, SC]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These priorities are determined by the Convention's Work Plan and the Resolutions and Recommendations adopted by COP7.
8.1.5 Review requirements for the Bureau's staff structure and size in line with decisions on programme, and review linkages between the Bureau, other convention secretariats and partner organizations. [COP, SC]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be considered through reflection upon this document and the triennial budget adopted by COP7 (Resolution VII.28). • Resolution VII.4 reviews linkages between the Bureau and other Convention secretariats, and Resolution VII.3 between the Bureau and International Organization Partners.
8.1.6 Evaluate and report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan at each meeting of the COP and prepare for every other meeting a draft Strategic Plan for the forthcoming two triennia. [COP, SC, Bureau]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This document provides the evaluation for the first triennium of the Strategic Plan. • At COP7 the Standing Committee was charged with preparing the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 (Resolution VII.27).
8.1.7 Prepare annual Bureau Business Plans, based on the Strategic Plan and Triennial Programmes approved by the COP, for the consideration and approval of the Standing Committee. [SC, Bureau]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has been the practice in this triennium and will continue for the next. This document provides a Triennial Programme for the Convention, from which the Bureau's annual Plan will be developed for approval by the Standing Committee.

<p>8.1.8 Develop liaison mechanisms based with Contracting Parties or partner organizations to enhance implementation of the Convention in the regions, in coordination with the Bureau. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many examples of such mechanisms, one of the more notable being the partnership between Environment Australia and Wetlands International - Oceania. Under this arrangement the Oceania office of Wetlands International is co-located with Environment Australia (the national environment agency) and resources are provided for promoting wetland conservation and wise use in the Pacific Islands, and for furthering the development of the East Asian-Australasian migratory bird flyway. • Target - To see more of these types of arrangements being supported by CPs.
<p>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]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to 4.1.2 above. 87 CPs advised that some form of mechanism is in place, or being introduced, to increase cooperation between the institutions responsible for wetland-related actions. Of these, eight indicated that there have a government-only National Ramsar Committee (NRC) and 44 reported that they have NRCs which include both government and non-government representatives. At the meeting of the Standing Committee in 1995 it was indicated that there were 21 NRCs in place so this has been a growth area of the Convention. • Target - By COP8 to see coordinating mechanisms in place in all CPs, and more particularly to see NRCs including government and non-government stakeholder representatives in place in more 100 CPs. In addition, by COP8 all CPs that have reported the existence of NRCs at COP7 to have evaluated their effectiveness.
<p>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]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The increase in the number of National Ramsar Committees (Refer to 4.1.1 and 4.1.2.) suggests that wetlands and the Ramsar Convention are becoming mainstream business in many CPs. The indications that wetlands are increasingly being considered as integrated elements of land/water management are another sign of this (Refer 2.2.1 and 2.2.2). • Target - refer to those set for the related actions as specified herein.
<p>8.1.11 Establish and ensure regular implementation of processes for evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of all Ramsar Convention institutions, mechanisms, and programmes, including National Reports to the COP (Resolution VI.21); implement recommendations arising, and report to the COP and Standing Committee on the results obtained. [COP, SC, Bureau]</p>	<p>During this triennium the Standing Committee, supported by the Bureau has reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the regional structure and operations and of the Standing Committee (Resolution VII.1), • the composition and <i>modus operandi</i> of the STRP (Resolution VII.2), • the Convention's partnerships with international organizations (Resolution VII.3); and • operations of the Small Grants Fund (Resolution VII.5).

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

Actions	Progress, priorities and targets
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8.2.1 Pay invoiced contributions to the Convention's core budget in full, and promptly at the beginning of each calendar year. [CPs]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most CPs have regularly paid their dues, yet in this triennium some problems have continued in this area. Document COP7 DOC. 14 examined the issues and proposed remedial measures. (Refer to Resolution VII.28 on budgetary matters.) 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 (Resolution VII.28).
8.2.2 Provide sufficient support in both financial and staffing terms to enable the SC representatives from developing countries and countries whose economies are in transition to function effectively in coordinating Convention activities and information flow throughout their regions. [COP, SC]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to Resolution VII.1 for a review of the roles and responsibilities of the members of Standing Committee.
8.2.3 Ensure the Bureau has adequate staff to play a catalytic role in presenting projects to potential donors for funding. [COP]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At present the Bureau does not have a member of staff dedicated solely to this function. It is a role shared between the senior staff of the Bureau. Target – The Bureau to consider establishing a post of Development Assistance Officer by 1 January 2000 (Resolution VII.28).
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]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of voluntary contributions from CPs and the private sector are helping to support these types of activities. These have been referred to above, such as the Wetlands for the Future training initiative in the Neotropics supported by the USA, funds provided by the Swiss Government for projects in Africa, support for the MedWet initiative from the European Commission and MedWet members, the support for the activities of Wetlands International - Oceania by Australia, and the Evian Project sponsored by the multinational Danone Group, the French GEF, and a range of other French government agencies. Bureau staff assist in the annual International Course in Wetland Management offered by the Institute for Inland Water Management and Waste Water Treatment (RIZA) in the Netherlands. Resources are also being sought to add to the Bureau's capacity for implementing the <i>Convention's Outreach Programme</i> (Resolutions VII.9 and VII.28) Target - To secure the resources needed to establish regional training initiatives (like Wetlands of 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.

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

Actions	Progress, priorities and targets
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8.3.1 Strengthen cooperative planning mechanisms with the partners and improve communications and information exchange, including exchange of staff. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the 21st meeting of the Standing Committee the Bureau and the International Organization Partners considered this issue and agreed that the best results would be obtained from undertaking such planning on a bilateral basis in future.
8.3.2 Review and renew formal agreements with partners to ensure there is no duplication of effort and to maximize effective use of resources, and establish new partnerships, especially in relation to the Wise Use Guidelines. [Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreements are in place between the Bureau and IUCN, Wetlands International, and BirdLife International. Resolution VII.3 considers the issues of the Convention accepting further international partners. Target - to review the existing cooperative arrangements with all International Organization Partners by 31 December 1999 and in the light of COP7 decisions.

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	Progress, priorities and 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 6 th COP (1996) and proceed immediately to its implementation. [Bureau, SC, CPs, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to Resolution VII.5. The contributions to the SGF remain unpredictable on a year by year basis. Target - To establish a mechanism to ensure one million US dollars annually for the Ramsar Small Grants Fund (Resolution VII.28).
8.4.2 Evaluate critically, at the 7 th COP (1999), the performance of the Small Grants Fund. [COP, SC, Bureau]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to Resolution VII.5 entitled <i>Critical evaluation of the Convention's Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use (SGF) and its future operations</i>.
8.4.3 Encourage and assist the preparation of high quality applications to the Small Grants Fund. [SC, Bureau, Partners]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is an ongoing task of the Bureau. Refer to the review of the SGF – Resolution VII.5 - for suggested improvements to be made in this area in the next triennium.