

**Implementation of the Ramsar Convention in general,  
and of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 1997-2002 in particular,  
during the period since the National Report prepared in 1995  
for Ramsar COP6 and 30 June 1998**

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- 1) Federal Ministry of Environment, Youth and Family Affairs
- 2) The 9 Laender ( 9 Aemter der Landesregierungen )

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## **Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 1**

### **To progress towards universal membership of the Convention.**

- 1.1 Describe any actions your government has taken (such as hosting regional or subregional meetings/consultations, working cooperatively with neighbouring countries on transfrontier wetland sites) to encourage others to join the Convention.

All of Austria's neighbouring countries are already contracting parties of the Ramsar Convention.

## **Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 2**

### **To achieve the wise use of wetlands by implementing and further developing the Ramsar Wise Use Guidelines.**

- 2.1 Has a National Wetland Policy/Strategy/Action Plan been developed, or is one being developed or planned for the near future? If so:

- a. What are/will be its main features?

Definition of wetlands and their ecological and socio-economic role, threats to wetlands, international commitments, National Wetland Strategy containing: aims, strategies, examples, instruments for financing, responsibilities.

- b. Was it, or is it, intended that the Policy/Strategy/Action Plan be adopted by the whole of Government, the Minister responsible for Ramsar matters or through some other process. Please describe.

Not yet decided.

- c. How does it relate/will it relate to other national environmental/ conservation planning initiatives (e.g., National Environmental Action Plans, National Biodiversity Action Plans, National Conservation Strategies)?

It will be integrated in Austria's National Environmental Action Plan and Austria's National Biodiversity Strategy Plan.

- 2.2 If a policy is in place, how much progress has been made in its implementation, and what are the major difficulties being encountered in doing so?

Not yet relevant.

- 2.3 If a Policy/Strategy/Action Plan is in place, is the responsibility for implementing it with :

- a. a single Government Ministry,
- b. a committee drawn from several Ministries, or
- c. a cross-sectoral committee?

Please provide details.  
( not yet relevant )

- 2.4 For countries with Federal systems of Government, are there Wetland Policies/Strategies/Plans in place, being developed or planned for the provincial/state or regional levels of Government?

Yes. A National Wetlands Strategy is currently in preparation. It will take into consideration the autonomous status of the 9 Laender regarding nature conservation and is to serve as a working document at national as well as regional and local level. A brochure is planned.

- 2.5 Has a review of legislation and practices which impact on wetlands been carried out, and if so, has this resulted in any changes which assist with implementation of the Ramsar Convention? Please describe these.

No, so far there was no need for it.

- 2.6 Describe the efforts made in your country to have wetlands considered in integrated land/water and coastal zone planning and management processes at the following levels:

a. national:

Amending law in 1995 for the „Environment Impact Assessment Law“, during which wetlands have received more consideration in connection with road planning (see also 2.10).

b. provincial

c. local

- 2.7 Have there been any publications produced, or practices documented, which could assist other countries to promote and improve the application of the Ramsar Wise Use of Wetlands Guidelines? No

If Yes, please provide details and copies.

- 2.8 Noting COP6 Recommendation 6.14 relating to toxic chemicals and pollution, please advise of the actions taken since then “to remedy and to prevent pollution impacts affecting Ramsar sites and other wetlands” (Operative paragraph 9).

Wastewater treatment plants: Between 1993 and 1997 Austria supported construction of 2.736 plants with a total investment amount of 58 billion ATS (about 4 billion US \$). Towards this amount public funding of 1,5 billion US \$ has been provided. These new plants lead to a significant improvement of the water quality of many rivers. Since 1991 heavy restrictions on the emission of toxic chemicals and other polluting substances from industry have come into force. About 50 ordinances to the Austrian Water Act (relating to different industry branches) have been elaborated, almost all of them already being in force.

- 2.9 Describe what steps have been taken to incorporate wetland economic valuation techniques into natural resource planning and assessment actions.

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- 2.10 Is Environmental Impact Assessment for actions potentially impacting on wetlands required under legislation in your country?

Yes, if the planned action is road building and if the wetland is an area, which is protected by national, state or European law.

2.11 Is wetland restoration and rehabilitation considered a priority in your country? Yes/No.

If Yes, describe the actions that have been taken to identify wetlands in need of these actions and to mobilise resources for restoration or rehabilitation.

Yes, for example the „Living River Campaign“, which was launched in March 1998 and gives riverine wetlands a special importance also in integrated water management planning. The Basis was provided by two investigations by the University of Agriculture about the status of Austria´s rivers. The programme not only deals with the protection of existing wetlands along rivers (only 21 % of Austria´s larger rivers have remained in their natural state), it also appeals to regional initiatives in order to create new areas for periodical flooding and restore degenerated floodplains. Based on some political commitments, actions taken were the preparation and initiation of river restoration pilot projects in each of the 9 Austrian Laender, a number of informative and other events, especially in cooperation with local NGOs and local people, e.g. a planters´ week to create new river bank vegetation, events for pupils and children, sports and tourist events, the edition of a river catalogue („book of rivers“), a special newspaper for the campaign, involving TV stations etc. The campaign is supported by the Federal Ministry of Environment, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Austrian WWF and a well known brewery in Salzburg.

2.12 Describe what actions have been taken to “encourage active and informed participation of local communities, including indigenous people, and in particular women, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.” (refer to Actions 2.7.1-4 in the Strategic Plan).

Wien und Niederösterreich: During the period of creating legislative measures for the National Park „Donau-Auen“ (Ramsar sites „Untere Lobau“ and „Donau-March-Auen“) the public was given chance to comment on future regulations considered by the legislative bodies.

Steiermark: The management of Ramsar sites has been handed over to specifically created agencies operating at a local level. The conservation of damp meadows is carried out as part of a specific programme of cooperation with land owners by means of subsidizing favourable management practices.

Salzburg: In several communities in the land of Salzburg (e.g. Bürmoos, Saalfelden) local people are working on a private basis on the protection and the improvement of wetlands. The land of Salzburg gives financial support to these endeavours.

Oberösterreich: Local communities are involved and tied-up in the management of the Ramsar site „Stauseen am Unteren Inn“ .

Niederösterreich: The management of the Ramsar site „March-Thaya-Auen“ is carried out by the „Distelverein“ association. It consists of representatives from nature protection agencies (2 associations), hunters and farmers. This provides a more easy access to the local people and has resulted in a comparatively high level of mutual trust.

Kärnten: Private associations founded by local people care for the two Ramsar sites „Sablatnigmoor“ and „Hörfeld“, both supported by the nature protection department of the government of Kärnten and the nature protection NGO „Arge Naturschutz“. The „Hörfeld“ site has a special advisory board for management planning with a strong involvement of the local population. Furthermore the extensive management of wet meadows is supported by the funding programme „ÖPUL“ (Austrian programme for environment-conscious farming) and funding by the nature protection department. By now several hundred hectares of wet meadows are protected through contracts with the landowners. There is also a separate wet meadows programme for the „Keutschacher Seentaal“ valley south east of Klagenfurt. Also the protection of floodplains along Kärnten´s largest river, the „Drau“, is supported

through contracts and compensation payments for the loss of income. Furthermore some bog management projects and oxbow revitalizing projects with involvement of schools and interested people carried out.

Burgenland: In preparation of a new Ramsar site along the river „Lafnitz“ (border region Burgenland-Steiermark) the local population plays an integrated role in managing agricultural areas contained within the site. To this effect a LIFE project initiated and started in 1998 is now run by the local inhabitants of the area.

- 2.13 Describe what actions have been taken to “encourage involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands” (refer to Actions 2.8.1-4 in the Strategic Plan). Has this included a review of fiscal measures (taxation arrangements, etc.) to identify and remove disincentives and introduce incentives for wetlands conservation and wise use? Yes/No

If yes, please provide details.

Yes. The Laender use the project-orientated funding instrument „Landschaftsfonds“ as incentive for the involvement of the private sector in wetlands conservation and wise use.

### **Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 3**

#### **To raise awareness of wetland values and functions throughout the world and at all levels**

- 3.1 Is there a government-run national programme for Education and Public Awareness in your country which focuses on, or includes, wetlands? Yes/No? If yes, what are the priority actions under this programme and who are the target groups? (Refer also to question 9.4)

Yes, the „Living Rivers Campaign“ focuses on riverine wetlands. Target groups are Austrian schools, nature conservation NGOs and all authorities involved in river management See also 2.11 !

- 3.2 Describe the steps taken to have wetlands issues and Ramsar’s Wise Use principles included as part of the curricula of educational institutions. Has this been at all levels of education (primary, secondary, tertiary and adult)? Please give details.

The Federal Ministry of Environment and the Laender upon request disseminate information material (posters, brochures) on wetland protection .

### **Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 4**

#### **To reinforce the capacity of institutions in each Contracting Party to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands.**

- 4.1 Describe the mechanisms in place, or being introduced, to increase cooperation between the various institutions responsible for actions which can have an impact on the conservation and wise use of wetlands. If one of the mechanisms is a National Ramsar/Wetlands Committee, please describe its composition, functions and *modus operandi*.

The Austrian National Ramsar Committee serves as a mechanism for coordinating the efforts in implementing the Ramsar Convention and to ensure the cooperation between the Federal

Ministry of Environment, the 9 Laender, local governments, NGOs and other agencies. The details of the National Committee's structure have already been communicated to the Ramsar bureau earlier this year and may be taken from there.

4.2 Of the following, indicate which have been undertaken:

a. a review to identify the training needs of institutions and individuals concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands Yes/No? If yes, please indicate the major findings of the review.

No.

b. a review to identify training opportunities for these people both within your country and in other countries. Yes/No?

No.

c. the development of training modules or a training programme specifically for wetland managers. If yes, please give details.

Concerning National Parks in Austria, the Federal Ministry of Environment has launched an investigation entitled „Status quo of visitor guides' education in National Parks“, which contains conclusions for nationwide uniform criteria for the basic and further education and training of visitor guides.

d. people from your country have gained wetland-related training either within or outside the country. Yes/No? If yes, please give details.

Wetland-related training relating to national parks was gained within the country.

## **Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 5**

### **To ensure the conservation of all sites included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar List).**

5.1 Of the Ramsar sites in your country, how many have formal management plans:

- a. being prepared?
- b. fully prepared?
- c. being implemented?

Please indicate in the attached table of Ramsar sites which sites these are and what category they fall into.

Wien: For the Viennese Ramsar site „Untere Lobau“ the National Park Authority works out annual working programmes with the main focus on managing forestry, hunting and fishing, research programmes, long term monitoring and visitor guidance. Presently, management plans for hunting and fishing are in preparation.

Oberösterreich: „Stauseen am Unteren Inn“: management plan in preparation.

Steiermark: Steiermark's two Ramsar sites both have a formal management plan. A recent land survey carried out for „Hörfeld-Moor“ shows that the size of the area given on the information

sheet on Ramsar wetlands has to be corrected from 173 ha to 133 ha.

Niederösterreich: Ramsar site „Donau-March-Auen“: For one part of the Ramsar site, the „Donau-Auen“, which has been National Park since 1996, a management plan has been completed and will be implemented by the beginning of 1999. For the second part „March-Thaya-Auen“ a Ramsar concept exists and has been integrated in the LIFE projects „Ramsar Management March-Thaya-Auen“ (1995-1998) and „Water World March Thaya-Auen“ (1998-2002).

Burgenland: Ramsar site „Neusiedler See-Seewinkel“: Management plan includes aspects of monitoring in the core area of the site.

- 5.2 Of the management plans referred to above, which ones have included a monitoring scheme or programme to allow changes in ecological character to be detected? Please indicate this in the attached table of Ramsar sites also.
- 5.3 Has there been a change in the ecological character (either positive or negative) at any of your Ramsar sites or is this likely to occur in the near future? Yes/No. If Yes, please give details.

Kärnten: The ecological character of both Ramsar sites in Kärnten has basically remained unchanged. The ecological condition has improved through several measures.

Niederösterreich and Wien: „Untere Lobau“ and „Donau-March-Auen“: in near future improvement can be expected. The establishing of a backwater connecting-project is thought to be the priority measure for a long term maintainance of the sites´ ecological character.

Oberösterreich: No change („Stauseen Unterer Inn“).

Salzburg: No remarkable change („Rotmoos“)

Steiermark: („Pürgchachener Moor“, „Hörfeld“) no change.

- 5.4 In the case of Montreux Record Ramsar sites where the Management Guidance Procedure has been applied, what is the status of the implementation of the MGP report recommendations? What is the expected time-frame for removing the site from the Montreux Record?

Niederösterreich: „Donau-March-Auen“: As long as the main threat of a „Danube-Oder-Elbe shipping channel“ exists the site cannot be removed from the Montreux record. A time-frame cannot be given for removing it.

- 5.5 For those countries referred to in COP6 Recommendations 6.17.1-4, “Ramsar sites in the Territories of Specific Contracting Parties”, please provide advice on the actions that have been taken in response to the issues raised at that time.

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**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.**

- 6.1 Has a national inventory of wetlands been prepared for your country?  
Yes.

If no, are there plans for this to be done? Yes/No.

Where a national inventory exists please provide details of when it was finalised, where it is kept and what information it contains.

The Austrian wetlands inventory had been elaborated by the Austrian Federal Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt), Mrs. Irene Oberleitner and Mr. Gerald Dick with the support of the 9 Laender's nature conservation departments and was finalised in March 1996. It is kept in the Austrian Federal Environment Agency, Wien. In total, 357 wetlands have been included and described in the inventory. These regions have a total surface area of approx. 266.000 ha, representing about 3 % of the total Austrian surface area. Information about these areas is available in form of data sheets, containing data about size, level of threat and protection status. Wetlands have been classified into 20 different types. The most frequent ones are „peatlands“ and „permanent brooks“.

- 6.2 Does there exist a list or directory of "important" wetlands for your country or region? Yes/No.

If yes, please provide details of when it was finalised, where it is kept, what criteria for "important" were used, and the types of information it contains.

Yes. In addition to the existing Ramsar sites a preliminary list of further wetlands of international importance meeting the new structure of the Ramsar Convention („suitable wetlands“) was provided in 1995 by the Federal Environment Agency in cooperation with the nature conservation departments of the 9 Laender. This directory was entitled „Österreichischer Ramsar Plan“, published in March 1995 (UBA-Monographie 58) and - amongst others- contains the following sites: „Hörfeld“, „Rotmoos im Fuschertal“, „Lafnitztal“, „Ettenau“, „Schwemm“ and „Lechauen“. The first two of these sites have already been designated as Ramsar sites. The publication also contains the criteria for the nomination of wetlands of international importance.

- 6.3 If it is known, please provide an estimate of the area of wetlands in your country at present and any information on rates of loss or conversion to other activities.

If this information is available, please indicate what definition of "wetland" was used.

The area of wetlands in Austria covers about 100.000 hectares or 1000 sqkm of land. 26 % of which are peatlands, 74 % river floodplains (including oxbow lakes, wet meadows, swamp forests, meanders). Additionally, about 500 sqkm of the land is covered by natural lakes and ponds. Austria's river network (including brooks) has an estimated length of 100.000 km.

- 6.4 Have any actions been taken in response to the COP6 Resolutions and Recommendations that Contracting Parties should give priority to listing Wetlands of International Importance which:
- meet the criteria for fish habitat (Resolution VI.2),
  - meet the 1% criterion for waterbird populations using data provided by the International Waterfowl Census (Resolution VI.4),

- c. are subterranean karst or cave wetland systems (Resolution VI.5),
- d. are peatland ecosystems (Recommendation 6.1)
- e. are coral reefs and associated systems (Recommendation 6.7)
- f. are under-represented wetland types (which apart from d. and e. above include mangroves and sea grass beds) (Strategic Plan Action 6.2.3)

Yes/No? If yes, please describe these actions.

a., b., c., e., f. : No.

d.:

Steiermark: nominated „Hörfeld-Moor“ on 30/10/96 to be included in the list of Wetlands of International Importance. The Hörfeld-Moor contains a small area of peatbog.

Kärnten: „Hörfeld“ and „Sablantnig-Moor“ are important habitats for waterbirds. „Hörfeld“ is a peatland.

- 6.5 If your government indicated at COP6 that it would be proceeding to list further specific sites, please advise of the status of this action.
- 6.6 Please advise which of the sites included in the Ramsar List from your country are transfrontier wetlands (Refer also to 7.1).

„Rheindelta“, „Donau-March-Auen“, Neusiedler See-Seewinkel“ and „Stauseen am Unteren Inn“.

- 6.7 Describe any plans, or actions being taken for further transfrontier sites to be listed (Refer also to 7.1).

Niederösterreich: In the region Gmünd-Litschau (north western part of Niederösterreich, along the border to Czech Republic) a big Ramsar site is in preparation nearby the rivers Lainsitz and Reissbach including bogs and ponds. A large Ramsar site already exists nearby in the Czech Republic.

## **Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 7**

### **To mobilise international cooperation and financial assistance for wetland conservation and wise use in collaboration with other conventions and agencies, both governmental and non-governmental.**

- 7.1 Briefly describe any bilateral or multilateral activities that have been taken, are under way, or are planned for the management of transfrontier wetlands or their watersheds/catchments (Refer also to 6.6 and 6.7).

Salzburg: There is an actual project concerning the river Salzach downstream the city of Salzburg, especially the alluvial forests on both sides of the river (right hand side: Austria [Salzburg and Oberösterreich], left hand side Germany, „Freistaat“ Bavaria).

Oberösterreich: „Stauseen am Unteren Inn“: A steering committee with representatives of the Land Oberösterreich and Bavaria with an ancillary advisory council was set up in 1996. The main task of the committee and its working group is to provide legal entities (bilateral attuning), settling user conflicts and ensuring the long-term quality of the area by implementing a

management plan.

Niederösterreich: „Donau-March-Auen“: Concerning the March-Thaya-area good cooperation between Austrian, Czech and Slovak nature conservation organizations has been existing for some years. Actions include information exchange, joint seminars and meetings etc.

Burgenland: „Neusiedler See-Seewinkel“ : close contact with the Hungarian authorities regarding the management of the transboundary National Park.

- 7.2 Do you have Ramsar sites that are “twinned” with others, either nationally or internationally?  
Yes.

If yes, please give details.

Austrian Ramsar sites „Untere Lobau“ and „Donau-March-Auen“ are connected through the Austrian „Danube National Park“. Austria and Hungary have started a twinning partnership between Austrian „Danube National Park“ and the Hungarian „Danube-Drau-National Park“, which itself contains two Ramsar sites, namely „Gemenc“ and „Beda-Karapanca“. A contract for cooperation has been signed between the two National Park authorities in 1998.

- 7.3 Where your country is also a signatory of any of the following Conventions, describe what mechanism(s) exist to assist regular dialogue and cooperative actions between the personnel responsible for their implementation and the Ramsar Administrative Authority:

- a. Convention on Biological Diversity
- b. Framework Convention on Climate Change
- c. Convention to Combat Desertification
- d. Convention on Migratory Species
- e. World Heritage Convention

a.

The Federal Ministry of Environment created a National Biodiversity Committee, in which at least one delegate of the 9 Laender and representatives of other Ministries are involved . The Federal Ministry of Environment, Youth and Family Affairs has the chair in the National Biodiversity Committee.

b.

The Federal Ministry of Environment founded a Interministerial Committee for the coordination of measures for the protection of the global climate, in which delegates of several Ministries and of the 9 Laender work together.

c.

The Federal Ministry of Environment, Youth and Family Affairs has regular meetings with the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning this convention.

d.

was not signed by Austria.

e.

The nature protection departments of the 9 Laender (and in some Laender the department

for spatial planning) are responsible for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and for the Ramsar Convention . Therefore regular dialogue and cooperative actions lie within the same administrative unit.

- 7.4 Is your country cooperating as part of any bilateral or multilateral activities directed at the conservation of migratory wetland species? Yes.

If yes, please provide details.

The government of Steiermark and the Federal Ministry of Environment provide funding in cooperation with the Ramsar bureau for Kenya to carry out studies on the wintering grounds of the White Stork with a possible view to the twinning of suitable sites.

- 7.5 Are there multilateral and/or bilateral donors supporting projects which contribute to implementation of the Ramsar Convention in your country? Yes.

If yes, please provide details.

Wien and Niederösterreich: A LIFE project entitled „Restoration and management of the alluvial flood plain of the River Danube“ was started by the Danube Flood Plain National Park ltd.

Steiermark: Both sites „Hörfeld“ and „Pürgschachenmoor“ are receiving funds through the LIFE mechanism. An INTERREG-Project including the area of the transfrontier river Mur and its adjacent riverine forests is receiving funds by the European Union.

Salzburg: Some projects dealing with wetlands are supported by the EU (INTERREG II) , for example the „Programme for the protection of ground-breeding birds in damp meadows“ (a project of the Laender of Salzburg and Oberösterreich and the „Freistaat“ of Bavaria).

Niederösterreich: The LIFE-Projects „Ramsar Management March-Thaya-Auen“, „Wetland Management Oberes Waldviertel (Gmünd-Litschau)“ and „Water World March-Thaya-Floodplains“ have been/ are funded by EU at a level of 50 % of the project costs.

Kärnten: „Hörfeld“ receives EU-LIFE funding, „Sabltnig Moor“ receives EU-Regional development (5b)-funding.

Vorarlberg: „Rheindelta“ receives INTERREG-funding and EU-LIFE-funding.

- 7.6 Does your government make an annual budgetary allocation to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands within your country? Yes.

If yes, is this a specific allocation to a wetlands programme or as part of a larger environment or natural resource management budget?

The Federal Ministry of Environment has an annual budgetary project-orientated allocation to support projects for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, which are implemented by the 9 Laender. It supports especially LIFE-projects or the elaboration of wetland strategies and plans on a national basis.

Burgenland: General annual nature conservation budget.

Kärnten: „Kärntner Naturschutzprogramm“ N.A.B.L. for nature conservation projects of all kinds. No separate budget for wetlands.

Salzburg: Annual budgetary allocation for nature conservation, through which the measures necessary for wetland conservation are financed.

Steiermark: Government of Steiermark provides a regular annual „Ramsar budget“ specifically for the conservation and wise use of wetlands as well as a separate budget for the conservation management meadows, including damp meadows.

Wien: No particular Ramsar budget. A Budget for implementation of the management plans is provided by the management authority of the National Park.

- 7.7 If your country has a development assistance programme, does it include funds earmarked for wetland conservation and wise use in other countries? Yes/No. If yes, please give details.

No.

- 7.8 Is there a formal process in place for consultation between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and the development assistance programme in your country, where one exists? Yes/No

If yes, what is that process.

( - )

### **Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 8**

#### **To provide the Convention with the required institutional mechanisms and resources.**

- 8.1 Has your government made voluntary financial contributions, other than the invoiced contributions or to the Small Grants Fund, to further the work of the Convention globally? Yes/No.

If yes, please provide details.

Yes. The Federal Ministry of Environment has supported and will again support the Small Grants Fund, because it is a project orientated instrument. Furthermore the Ministry supported for example , the participation of Eastern European delegates to the European Ramsar Regional Meeting in Riga, Latvia in 1998 and the participation of additional delegates at COP 7 in Costa Rica.

See also 7.4.

- 8.2 If your country is in arrears with the payment of its annual contributions to the Ramsar Convention, please indicate the reasons for this situation and the prospects for paying these arrears in the near future.

( - )

## Optional section - Participation of non-government organizations in the implementation of the Convention

These are **optional** questions relating to cooperation with and involvement of non-government organizations in the implementation of the Convention.

At COP6 some 42 NGOs made the “Brisbane NGO pledge of support for the Ramsar Convention”. The Standing Committee agreed that for COP7 there should be an effort made to gauge the level and type of cooperation which is occurring between government Administrative Authorities and the national and international NGOs with an interest in wetlands issues.

In this **optional** section of the National Report, you are asked to describe the nature of the cooperation and relationship with any other international, regional, national and provincial NGOs operating within your country.

- 9.1 Approximately how many NGOs have wetlands as part of their regular “business” in your country?

Please break this down between international, regional and national/provincial organizations.

International Organizations: WWF, BirdLife, Stiftung Europäisches Naturerbe

National Organizations: ÖNB (Österr. Naturschutzbund), ÖNJ (Österr. Naturschutzjugend), ÖGNU (Österr. Gesellschaft für Natur- und Umweltschutz), Forum österr. Wissenschaftler für den Umweltschutz, Öko-Büro, Naturfreunde

Provincial Organizations: (Steiermark): Biologische Arge, Stmk. Berg- und Naturwacht

- 9.2 Is there a regular forum or mechanism through which these NGOs express their views on wetland conservation and Ramsar implementation:

If yes in either case, please give details.

- a. to each other? Yes. The Austrian National Ramsar Committee.
- b. to the government? Yes: as an umbrella organization ÖGNU has the function of coordinating most of the NGOs (except of WWF, which is connected with Ökobüro).

- 9.3 Does your government include one or more NGO representatives on its official delegation to Ramsar COPs? No

- 9.4 Do any of the NGOs run programmes aimed at Education and Public Awareness about wetlands in your country? Yes. If yes, please give details (Refer also to question 3.1).

Steiermark: Stiftung Europäisches Naturerbe, WWF, ÖNJ

Wien: WWF and BirdLife

Salzburg: Naturschutzbund

Kärnten: Naturschutzbund, ARGE Naturschutz

- 9.5 Where they exist, do Ramsar site management advisory committees include NGO representatives? If yes, please give details

Yes.

Burgenland: NGO representatives in the Scientific Advisory Committee of the National Park

„Neusiedler See-Seewinkel“.

Steiermark: both Ramsar sites in the Land Steiermark have management advisory committees involving local NGOs.

Wien and Niederösterreich: NGO representatives are members of the advisory council of the National Park.

- 9.6 Describe the themes of the Convention (refer to General Objectives 1-8 of the Strategic Plan) where you perceive the national/provincial NGOs to be most active.

## **Final comments:**

### 10.1 General comments on implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan.

Steiermark: Ramsar Strategic Plan provides a very useful tool for specifying projects and actions aimed at the implementation of the Convention.

### 10.2 Observations concerning the functioning of, relations with, and services provided by:

- a. The Ramsar Standing Committee
- b. The Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel
- c. The Ramsar Bureau
- d. The Ramsar NGO partners

- a. The Ramsar Standing Committee has proved to be very efficient in providing the necessary guidance for the development of new policies.
- b. The Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel is providing an excellent expert service and should continue to define technical terms in order to reach more accurate global understanding of the purpose of the Ramsar policies.
- c. The Ramsar Bureau is always a very helpful partner in clarifying and dispensing of information.
- d. The Ramsar NGO partners are an invaluable part in the functioning of the Ramsar Convention with their expertise much needed and appreciated.

### 10.3 Any other general observations and/or recommendations for the future.

The Ramsar Convention should not lose sight of its primary aim - the conservation of wetlands.



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