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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

Contracting Party: ITALY

Designated Ramsar Administrative Authority

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Nature Conservation Service

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Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 1

To progress towards universal membership of the Convention.

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.

The organization of the Conference on the Mediterranean wetlands - Venice, 5-9 June 1996

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 National Strategic Plan has been planned for development in the near future.

What are/will be its main features?

Management
Restoration
Rehabilitation
Conservation
Education

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.

It is intended that the Plan will be inserted in the National Strategic Plan for Protected Areas at national and EU level.

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 related to the National Strategic Plan for protected Areas and Biodiversity Action Plan at national and EU level.

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?

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.

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/No

YES

If yes, please give details.

It will be developed at the regional system level, taking into account EU legislation and National System of Protected Areas.

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.

Law No. 431 of 1985 for conservation of rivers, coasts, shores, forests and wetlands considers them as landscape heritage that cannot be therefore modified and consequent Law No. 312 of 1985 with urgent provisions for conservation of areas of particular environmental interest (landscape bindings)

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:
national

Law No. 431/85 for conservation of rivers, etc.

Law No. 36/94 for Provisions in water resources

Law 37/94 with Provisions for environmental conservation of rivers, torrents, lakes State zones and other public waters.

Law Decree No.130/92 as implementation of the CEE Directive 78/659 on fresh waters needing conservation to consent fish life

provincial

Regional plans are implemented with the above law No.312 (at local level specific provisions for wetlands are foreseen)

local

See above

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? Yes/No

If Yes, please provide details and copies.

"Guidelines for a Wetland National Plan in Italy" edited in June 1996 by the Ministry of the Environment in the framework of the Medwet Project.

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).

NOT YET. Nevertheless, is already implemented in Italy a specific Law for water pollution remedy and prevention.

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

No steps have been taken yet for Ramsar sites.

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

Decree of the Ministers Council 27 December 1998 "Technical Provisions for Environmental Impact Assessment Studies"

Decree of the President of the Republic 12 April 1996 " Guidelines and coordination Act for Environment Impact Assessment"

Law No. 305/89 on triennial programmes for environment protection, which provides for specific interventions in areas presenting high risk of environmental crisis.

Is wetland restoration and rehabilitation considered a priority in your country?

Yes.

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.

The actions will be taken upon approval of the Strategic National Plan. In any case above Law No. 305 is enforceable.

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).

From 1992 to 1996 the Medwet Project for "Information and Public Awareness", with a specific intervention in the Diaccia Botrona wetland for monitoring and participation of local communities. The results have been presented at the Venice Conference of June 1996.

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

YES

If yes, please provide details.

This action is foreseen, as a whole, in the Frame Law No. 394/91 for protected Areas

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 3

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

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

It exists a national programme for Education and Public awareness, which includes also wetlands.

Priority actions: Environmental education on habitat and species

Target group: Students of various levels

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.

Steps are indicatively taken to inform, educate and raise awareness in matter of protected areas and nature conservation.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 4

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

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.

A National Ramsar Committee was in place till 1996. A new one has now to be approved. (see point 9.1.)

4.2 Of the following, indicate which have been undertaken:

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

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

NO

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

YES. See 2.12 (wetlands management course)

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

NOT YET

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.

See attached Table

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.

See above attached Table

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.

Only in the Sites still included in the "Montreux Record", as detailed in questionnaires submitted the 12 May 1998.

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?

A MGP visit in the Laguna di Orbetello, Diaccia Botrona and Torre Guaceto wetlands has been planned for november 1998.

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.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - 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.

Has a national inventory of wetlands been prepared for your country? Yes/No.

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.

Planned in 1991 and printed in 1992. It refers to Italy and its two isles. It contains an inventory of all italian wetlands at international and national levels, in compliance with Ramsar and nationwide criteria:

Identification data
Conservation levels
Stakeholders
Environmental contains: morphology, fauna and flora
Uses and functions of the sites
Environment risks
Thematic maps (soil, vegetation, etc.)

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

NO. But exists a Directory for all Protected Areas, including wetlands.

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.

It is the Frame Law No. 394/91 for Protected Areas, which gives principles for institution and management of Protected Areas to ensure and improve conservation and valorization of national natural heritage.

It is kept at the MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT - Nature Conservation Service

The adopted criteria are those of the classified protected areas.

It states characteristics, classifies and provides data on extension, geographic coordinates, etc.-

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.

The estimate of total wetlands area in Italy at present is 180.000 hectars.

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

The definition given by the Ramsar Convention.

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:

- a. meet the criteria for fish habitat (Resolution VI.2),
- b. 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.

YES

For the Orbetello Lagoon and the Molentargius wetlands two restoration projects have been financed.

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.

NO

Please advise which of the sites included in the Ramsar List from your country are transfrontier wetlands (Refer also to 7.1).

NOONE

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

The Nature Conservation Protocoll of the Alpine Convention (list of Biotopes) and ASPIM Protocoll (Barcelona Convention)

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.

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).

NOONE at the moment. But we intend to approach again Medwet programmes envisaging to join IUCN and Wetlands International in.

7.2 Do you have Ramsar sites that are "twinned" with others, either nationally or internationally? Yes/No.

NO

If yes, please give details.

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

Dialogue is activated with a.b.c.d. .

Is your country cooperating as part of any bilateral or multilateral activities directed at the conservation of migratory wetland species? Yes/No.

If yes, please provide details.

YES. In the framework of the 79/409 CEE Directive and the BONN Convention.

Are there multilateral and/or bilateral donors supporting projects which contribute to implementation of the Ramsar Convention in your country? Yes/No.

NO

If yes, please provide details.

Does your government make an annual budgetary allocation to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands within your country? Yes/No.

YES

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

It is an allocation including other national Action Plans (i.e. National Plan on Protected Areas.

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

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

YES

If yes, what is that process.

Through the State-Regions Conference. It meets periodically on specific items, environment included.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 8

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

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.

NOT YET. It is under evaluation

.

If yes, please provide details.

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 :WWF and LIPU (BirdLife)

NATIONAL: Legambiente, Società Italiana Scienza del Suolo, Società Geografica Italiana, Marevivo, Società Botanica Italiana, Società Italiana di Ecologia, Club Alpino Italiano, Amici della Terra, Federazione Nazionale Pro Natura, FAI, Green Peace, Società Speleologica italiana, Unione Zoologica Italiana.

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

- a. to each other? Yes/No : NOT KNOWN
- b. to the government? Yes/No YES :

If yes in either case, please give details.

It exists an Advisory Body (the National Council for Protected Areas) whose members are representatives of the ONG stated in point 9.1.

9.3. Does your government include one or more NGO representatives on its official delegation to COPs? Yes/No

NO

Do any of the NGOs run programmes aimed at Education and Public Awareness about wetlands in your country? Yes/No.

If yes, please give details (Refer also to question 3.1).
YES

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

They exist within the Advisory Committee of any National Park and some Natural Reserves.

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.

Management
Restoration
Education

Final comments:

General comments on implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan.

This implementation could be approached more deeply after completion and approval of the National Strategic Plan.

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
- e. The Ramsar NGO partners

We fully appreciate actions and efforts implemented by all the structure of the Convention, including the Standing Committee, RSTR Panel, Ramsar Bureau and NGO partners, and we would like to improve together communication and relationship between GO and NGO Partners.

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

We are convinced that big progress and better implementation at strategic level could be realized if the Ramsar Convention is played at biogeographic region level (i.e. Mediterranean, etc.)

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