

National Report

Contracting Party : **MALTA**

Designated Ramsar Administrative Authority

Full name of the institution:

Environment Protection Department

Name and title of the head of the institution:

Vince Gauci

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Principal Environment Officer

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1.1 No actions have been taken.

2.1 As the Ramsar sites are the only two wetlands in Malta and are very small (6 and 5 ha respectively), Malta does not have a National Wetland Policy. However the Ramsar administrative authority has a policy to use both sites for educational and recreational purposes. This policy is already implemented in the case of Ghadira and is being planned for the second Ramsar site Is-Simar. Its implementation is the responsibility of the

Environment Protection department in co-operation with a Non-Government Organisation.

2.2 Malta has a general policy to safeguard all habitats that are scarce. Both Ramsar sites fall in this category. A national biodiversity strategy is in preparation and this will continue to reinforce the nature conservation measures already existing. Malta also has a Structure Plan and the Ramsar Sites fit in those policies which prohibits any development in such areas.

2.3 a single Government Ministry

2.4 not applicable

2.5 An Environment Protection Act came into force in 1991. This empowers the Minister for the Environment to issue regulations for the protection of the flora and fauna and declare sites of ecological importance as nature reserves. Both Ramsar sites are legally protected. A Development Planning Act was issued in 1992 and introduced a Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands. This Act protects the two Ramsar from any type of development.

2.6 Both Ramsar sites have been taken in consideration in the formulation of the North-West Local Plan (in prep. by the Planning Authority).

2.7 Ramsar sites in Malta are used for recreation and education. Leaflets/pamphlets available give a brief overview of the sites' natural aspects.

2.8 The sites do not suffer from any toxic chemicals although noise pollution from traffic is a nuisance. To prevent or lessen its negative impact bushes and trees have been planted.

2.9 not applicable.

2.10 EIA's are compulsory for any significant development anywhere in Malta (not just in wetland areas)

2.11 Wetland restoration and rehabilitation is considered as a priority. In fact both Ramsar sites, which are the only wetlands in Malta, other than small pockets of saltpans, have been restored and re-created by heavy machinery engineering works.

2.12 Both sites are available for educational purposes and the public, school children in particular, are encouraged to make use of the sites by visiting them. This includes a government cum NGO programme for education and public awareness of the sites through these visits and the publication of leaflets.

2.13 The private sector is encouraged to sponsor utilities at the Ramsar sites (e.g. building of a visitors' centre at Ghadira by Mid-Med Bank).

3.1 Yes. Awareness in the appreciation of the natural environment which is aimed at the general public, particularly school children.

3.2 Being a small country, the educational institutions tackle the whole environmental issues, not specifically on wetlands. However visits to Ramsar sites are included in schools' programmes.

4.1 Good relations and communications exist between concerned Government Departments.

4.2 People working at the sites have had some form of training whilst attending seminars, workshops etc. both within the country or abroad.

5.1 Both sites have a management plan and are being implemented. They aim at improving the ecological quality of the sites as nature reserves.

5.2 Both include monitoring.

5.3 At is-Simar there is a problem with the spread of *Phragmites australis* and it is being controlled physically.

5.4-5.5 not applicable

6.1 Yes. Kept at the Environment Protection Department.

6.2 not applicable. Malta has only two wetlands.

6.3 11 ha.

6.4-6.7 not applicable

7.1-7.2 not applicable

7.3 The Environment Protection Department is the administrative authority of other conventions related to the Ramsar.

7.4-7.5 not applicable

7.6 The budget used to implement the wetland policy of the Environment Protection Department is included in the general budget for reserves and nature conservation.

7.7-7.8 No

8.1 No

8.2 Malta is not in arrears with the payment of its annual contribution.

9.1-9.2 Both Ramsar sites are run and managed in co-operation with an NGO (BirdLife Malta).

9.3 No

9.4 Programme of research, and public and schools visits to the Ramsar sites are co-ordinated by BirdLife Malta.

9.5 Yes. Management advisory committees are set up by representatives of the Environment Protection Department and BirdLife Malta.

9.6 where applicable the NGO is active in all the objectives.

Vince Gauci
Acting Director

