

**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: **Nepal**

Designated Ramsar Administrative Authority

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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.

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:

Management plan is developed for Ghodaghodi tal area of Kailali district and Gaidahawa tal of Rupandehi district. The main feature is participatory approach including implementation by local user groups. IUCN-Nepal is providing technical support to them. It is guided by National Conservation Strategy of Nepal.

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

- 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/No

If yes, please give details.

- 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.
- 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
 - 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? Yes/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).
- 2.9 Describe what steps have been taken to incorporate wetland economic valuation techniques into natural resource planning and assessment actions.
- 2.10 Is Environmental Impact Assessment for actions potentially impacting on wetlands required under legislation in your country?

Yes, if the wetland is within the protected area

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

Yes.

In Koshi-Tappu Ramsar site - assistance to the implementation of Ramsar strategic plan such as visitor centre strengthening, construction of machans, monitoring of ecosystems and community awareness program.

In Lumbini tal - Development of wetland by damming river.

In Gaidahawa - Strengthening of embankment.

In Ghodaghodi tal area - dam construction, watch tower, nature trail and wetland conservation program in local school.

- 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).

Actions taken were: Public hearing, Community meeting, wetland conservation program in local school, endorsement of management plan by local community including women and indigenous Tharu people in the Ghodaghodi tal 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?

Partner NGO was formed while preparing management plan. Implementation of the Gaidahawa tal management rests with village development committee (local governmental body) whereas with local NGO in case of Ghodaghodi tal area.

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)
- 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.

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*.

Informal wetland group has been formed in 1992 comprising 25 professionals from 11 institutions. They suggest actions to be taken in the wetland conservation in Nepal.

- 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.

- b. a review to identify training opportunities for these people both within your country and in other countries. Yes/No?
- c. the development of training modules or a training programme specifically for wetland managers.

Training program was developed while preparing management plan of Ghodaghodi tal.

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

**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:

None. Being prepared for the only Ramsar 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.
- 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?
- 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.**

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

An Inventory of Nepal's Terai Wetlands is completed. Tentative listing of wetlands has been done for midhills and high himals and process is going on to update information. The inventory of Nepal's terai wetlands is kept in IUCN-Nepal. Bishnu Bhandary (Compiled by) 1998. An inventory of Nepal's Terai Wetlands. IUCN-Nepal.

This provides following information on 163 wetlands of Terai region of Nepal:

- * information on different types of wetlands (both natural as well as human made).**
- * description of wetlands that are larger than five hectare in size.**
- * primary data on physical, biological (flora and fauna), limnological, hydrological and socio-economic information.**
- * information on socio-cultural and socio-economic values and conservation status.**
- *overview of land tenure systems, people's perspectives on wetland conservation, uses, threats and disturbances.**

6.2 Does there exist a list or directory of “important” wetlands for your country or region?

Seventeen sites are listed in the directory of Asian wetlands (Derek A. Scott 1989. A Directory of Asian wetlands, IUCN). Sites were selected for inclusion in the directory as per criteria under Article 2 of the Ramsar Convention. In Nepal, listing of important wetland sites is in progress and 40 sites are tentatively listed.

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.

About 7,31,500 ha. of wetland area is estimated (Bhandary, 1998) in Nepal.

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

The informal wetlands group of Nepal in its first consultative meeting held in Kathmandu defined wetland as follows : "Wetlands represent land mass saturated with water due to high water table through either groundwater, atmospheric precipitation or inundation; it may be natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, static or flowing, freshwater or brackish."

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.

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

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).

Transboundary meeting between Nepal and India (1997). Forthcoming transboundary meeting between Nepal and India (planned for Nov. 1998).

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

Nepal is signatory of (a), (b), (c), and (e). Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MOFC) is focal point for Convention on Biological Diversity and has direct link with Ramsar Administrative Authority, being a line Ministry. Ministry of Environment and Population is focal ministry for (b) and (c). No direct interaction has been seen yet with Ramsar Administrative Authority. The interaction with MOFC is frequent through workshops and meetings. Ministry of Education is focal point for (e) and interaction and dialogue is regular, through workshops and personnel level meetings.

- 7.4 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.

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

IUCN-Nepal and Swiss development agency are assisting for the implementation of Ramsar Convention in Koshi-Tappu Ramsar site.

- 7.6 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?

This budget is allocated for the overall management of the Ramsar site (Koshi-Tappu Wildlife Reserve).

- 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.
- 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.

- 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.

Ten national NGOs and 16 INGOs have contributed in the conservation of wetlands in Nepal.

- 9.2 Is there a regular forum or mechanism through which these NGOs express their views on wetland conservation and Ramsar implementation:
- to each other? Yes/No
 - to the government? Yes/No

If yes in either case, please give details.

IUCN-wetland and heritage unit is a forum to share the views on wetland conservation.

- 9.3 Does your government include one or more NGO representatives on its official delegation to Ramsar COPs? Yes/No
- 9.4 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).

IUCN-Nepal provides education and public awareness programs for a few wetland sites of Nepal.

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

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.

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

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