

National Report to be prepared in advance of the
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

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: NORWAY

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.

No actions taken to directly 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:

What are/will be its main features?

A National Wetland Policy/Strategy/Action Plan as such has not been developed. However, the national wetland policy may be seen as an integrated part of the National Biodiversity Strategy, which was presented in White Paper no. 58 (1996-1997). The main feature is an integration of the policy with all relevant sectors, including the different Ministries. Main elements in the previous years have been protection of nationally or internationally important sites by the Nature Conservation Act and protection of ca. 350 watercourses according to the Water Resources Act. The strategy points out that a National Biodiversity Action Plan is to be developed. A White Paper is also under development for protected areas in the coastal zone, scheduled to be presented to the Storting (parliament) in spring 1999.

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.

The Biodiversity Strategy was worked out by the Government (co-ordinated by the Ministry of the Environment), and was approved by Parliament in spring 1998.

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)?

Please see 2.1a.

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?

The White Paper no. 58 (1996-1997) on the National Biodiversity Strategy aim to present national inventories from each municipality on wetland (and other) sites by the year 2003 to be used in local, regional and national planning. Nationally, relevant Ministries are to present their initiatives concerning their sectors in connection with the development of the National Action Plan on biological diversity and in Sectoral Environmental Plans. Guidelines for establishment of new local inventories has been produced and the work has started recently in the 430 municipalities. Through the co-ordination of the Ministry of the Environment the different Ministries have started to work on national guidelines for the relevant sectors.

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.

The responsibility of implementation lies with the different Ministries, while the Ministry of the Environment performs co-ordination.

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.

No recent review of the legislation has been performed. However, development of new and supplementary of legislation is in process for mainland Norway and for Svalbard. Notably, this include national guidelines for the sectors on the handling of wetlands and other natural habitats of national interest.

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

According to the National Biodiversity Strategy, both the national and local level are to integrate management of wetlands in their planning processes. Much effort has been put into establishing a basis for the integration of wetland values into the planning processes, such as establishment of new inventories and guidelines for mapping. The establishment of this basis is expected to be fulfilled by the year 2003.

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

Guidelines for establishment of local inventories of wetlands (and other natural habitats) of local or national interest have been drafted. The final version will be published in May 1999. The methodology for identification of wetland values and the process of establishing an inventory may be of interest for other parties.

Concerning the Tautra Ramsar site a cross-sectoral co-operation between the transport authorities, research institutions (biological and hydrological) and the Government has

resulted in a plan on how to restore the ocean currents in the area since the current was changed after the construction of a causeway.

If Yes, please provide details and copies.

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).

No Norwegian Ramsar sites are generally affected by toxic chemical emissions. However, one incident in 1997 in the Åkersvika Ramsar site resulted in fish being poisoned. The long-term effects of this incident are currently being monitored by the Norwegian Water Research Institute (NIVA). The results will form the basis for measurements that may be required.

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

Our main aim is to incorporate wetland values into all planning and use of natural resources by the different sectors. Through close co-operation with relevant Ministries, for example the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Transport, significant voluntary actions have been taken to measure wetland values in the scope of planning and assessment.

Is Environmental Impact Assessment for actions potentially impacting on wetlands required under legislation in your country? Yes/No

Yes, however, depending on the scope of the potential impact as according to guidelines.

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

Yes/No.

No, however, close to 100 smaller sites have been restored in the last few years, partly in relation to a programme run by the agricultural authorities.

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.

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).

See 2.6. on local involvement in mapping and establishing of inventories as part of the basis for planning and assessment of new initiatives.

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

Since the planning and assessment process is controlled both by the local communities and by the Government through the County Governors private initiatives are subject to evaluation on the same level as public initiatives.

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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)

Some focus on wetlands and other aspects related to biological diversity are included in national efforts and programmes for environmental education. This includes work on various ecosystems under a newly developed “Network for environmental education”, a joint programme between national authorities for the environment, agriculture and education. □□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.

We are not fully aware of all activities in this area, but some focus on wetlands and other aspects related to biological diversity are included in national efforts and programmes for environmental education. This includes curricula work at the primary, secondary, tertiary levels under the network for environmental education.

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.

The National Biodiversity Strategy describes how the different sectors are to cooperate and under what guidelines. National Political Guidelines for planning and use of natural habitats are currently being developed, which will strengthen the use of wetland inventories and on threatened species. Norway does not have a formal Ramsar Committee, but this is under consideration.

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.

A review was completed in 1998. Major differences between the different regions were reported. Some regions have structures in place that may be copied in other

areas. Successful arrangements include the use of professionals being in charge and supervising the management.

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.

Training programmes are executed both on the regional and national level, and wetland issues are usually incorporated into modules on the general management of natural habitats.

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

Some individuals may have received such training, but we do not have information on this.

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? 6

b. fully prepared? 1

c. being implemented? 7

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

Kindly see the attached table for such information.

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.

Kindly see the attached table for such information.

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.

We have not found that there has been any change in the ecological character (as defined for inclusion in the Montreux Record) or that this is likely to occur in the near future.

However, based on known plans we are monitoring the situation closely in some of the sites. This includes development plans in or near the Ørlandet (wind power plant at Grandefjæra and road bridge at Kråkvågsvaet), Lista (pipeline and related infrastructure), Tyrifjorden (railway) and Froan (fish farming) Ramsar sites.

In addition, we are following closely work for possible improvements in the ecological character in the Tautra (changed road bridge construction), Øra (improved water quality) and Nordre Øyeren (waterflow regulation) Ramsar sites.

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? 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.

The national inventory of wetlands is made up of 19 inventories, one from each county. The inventories grades all wetland sites according to their local, regional, national or international values. Criteria for inclusion is assigned to each site. All sites with national or international values are given a detailed description including maps. A complete list of literature completes the inventories. Similar inventories have been developed for other important nature types. The list is kept by the Directorate for nature management.

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

Yes, see 6.1. In addition we have the Important Bird Areas (IBAs) initiative. Recently a new IBA list has been produced, to be published in the near future. Criteria for inclusion follow the standards set by the IBA initiative. The Norwegian Ornithological Society (NOF / BirdLife member) is the main focus for the IBA work in Norway.

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.

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.

No complete national figure is available for the total area of wetlands in Norway.

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

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. As part of the peatland ecosystems initiative, Norway assigned two new Ramsar sites shortly prior to COP6. Further peatland sites for inclusion have also been identified.

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.

Norway presently has under consideration the nomination of Ramsar status to new sites of international importance.

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

Pasvik Ramsar site is situated on the border between Norway and Russia. On the Russian side it is linked with the Pasvik Nature Reserve (Zapovednik). See also 7.1 below.

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

Norway is reviewing a proposal from Sweden to establish a transfrontier Ramsar site in the southern part of the country.

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).

There exists a close cooperation between Norway and Russia for protected areas in the Pasvik region concerning monitoring and management. This takes place under the Norwegian-Russian working group on biological diversity.

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:

Convention on Biological Diversity (Close contact with the Ministry of the Environment on implementation. Representation from the Directorate for Nature management at COP and SBSTTA meetings.

b. Framework Convention on Climate Change (Close contact between authorities, but not extensive with regard to wetlands.

c. Convention to Combat Desertification (Close contact between authorities, but not extensive with regard to wetlands.

d. Convention on Migratory Species (Closely co-ordinated, as the Directorate for Nature management is management authority for both conventions.

e. World Heritage Convention (Close contact between authorities, but not extensive with regard to wetlands.

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

Yes

If yes, please provide details.

Some relevant activities include:

The project on Lesser White-fronted Goose has been initiated from Norway and now run cooperation with Wetlands International and a number of European and central Asian countries.

Close cooperation with Russia on biological diversity, including for protected areas (including projects related to the Pasvik area and other wetland sites) and for species management (including projects related to sea birds and other wetland species and for salmon).

The flyway management plan for Barnacle Goose has recently been completed as a cooperation between Scottish Natural Heritage and the Directorate for Nature Management.

As part of the Norwegian-Indonesia bilateral agreement development of a management plan for Indonesia’s first Ramsar site has started.

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

No.

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?

With regard to specific allocations, an annual budget is allocated for the management of protected wetlands. This allocation is part of the budget for management of all sites protected by the Nature Conservation Act. In addition the Ministry of Agriculture has established a funding mechanism for conservation, or restoration of degraded wetlands.

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.

Under our bilateral aid programme, the Norwegian Agency for International Development Assistance (NORAD) follows a recently developed strategy for the environment in development co-operation. The strategy includes elements related to biological diversity, including for capacity building, integrated coastal zone management, water use planning, sustainable agriculture and living marine resources.

Based on this NORAD allocates funds for a programme for environmentally related aid. This includes funding of individual projects related to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, including wetlands. Environment related aid channelled through NORAD from Norway will in 1998 total 1,78 billion NOK.

In addition, our bilateral agreements with Russia, the three Baltic states and Indonesia also include funding of wetland activities, including management of natural habitats like Ramsar sites. Budgets have to be allocated in each agreement according to proposals and acceptance of programs.

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

Yes, there is regular contact between us and the Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD).

If yes, what is that process.

A regular cooperation exists involving co-operation on biodiversity related programmes and projects. There is also an agreement on the exchange of personnel and funding of personnel from the development assistance programme towards environmental issues and management of natural habitats.

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.

No, not in addition to the bilateral agreements.

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: 3 (Bellona, WWF, The Norwegian Ornithological Society/NOF).

National: 5 (Bellona, WWF, The Norwegian Society for the protection of nature/NNV, The Norwegian Botanical Society, The Norwegian Zoological Society, The Norwegian Ornithological Society/NOF and Nature and Youth/NU)

In addition there are a number of provincial sub-organizations under these national bodies, and there are also other specialised bodies related to species having wetlands as important habitats (including with relation to mires and peatlands and insects).

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? No

b. to the government? No

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/No. If yes, please give details (Refer also to question 3.1).

Individual activities aimed at Education and Public Awareness about wetlands take place, but we are not aware of larger programmes as such.

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

Yes, particularly when developing management plans. On flora and fauna issues these representatives often supply basic data and participate in development and implementation of wise use approaches.

□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.

Establishment of active societies in other countries is an important aim for some of the NGOs. Through the flyway management of Lesser White-fronted Goose project the wise use concept has been introduced, this also include raising awareness on wetlands values. Establishment of new nature protected sites in other countries has been successful.

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.

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National Reports form, page 12