

**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: Thailand

Designated Ramsar Administrative Authority

Office of Environmental Policy and Planning (OEPP)

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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 such action has been undertaken yet.

Note : Most of Thailand's neighbouring countries (Vietnam and Malaysia) have ratified 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:

Yes (The National Policy and Action Plan on Wetlands).

- a. What are/will be its main feature

The main feature of the national policy on wetlands is conservation of wetlands to ensure their ecological function and development potential and sustainable benefit to the national economy and society.

- 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.

The policy was adopted (on September 23, 1997) by the Cabinet as the administrative framework for action for all relevant public agencies.

- 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)?

The policy provides specific guidelines for relevant institutions in carrying out the implementation of their own plans and policies including Ministerial directives on forestry, fishery and land use.

- 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?

There has been limited implementation of the activities indicated in the national policy, particularly due to the shortage of public funding experienced during the current Asian economic crisis.

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

A committee drawn from several Ministries called the "National Committee on Wetland Management" which is chaired by Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Science Technology and Environment with the Office of Environmental Policy and Planning as secretariat.

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.

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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.

Such a review is currently being carried out.

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

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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

No.

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).

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

None.

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

Yes , but it does not cover every wetland type described under the Convention.

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

Yes, The notable example of such activity is the reforestation of mangrove forest which is being undertaken through cooperative actions of various organizations including the Royal Forest Department, Ministry of Education and the private sector.

- 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).

None.

- 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

None.

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 national policy on wetland (1998-2002) includes measures on strengthening awareness of the importance and value of wetlands, targeting youth and the general public. The implementation of this measure will be through cooperative efforts with local NGOs in each area.

- 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.

Conservation of natural resource and environment has been included in the curricula at all levels. Wetland ecology issues have been incorporated substantially under this general topic.

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 National Committee on Wetland Management has been established under the National Environment Board with functions to oversee all wetlands related activities, enhance cooperation between relevant institutions, initiate the necessary cross-sectoral activities and supervise implementation of the Ramsar Convention.

- 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.

No.

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

Yes. Certain officers have received funding from the Netherlands and Japanese government to attend wetland related training programmes in these countries.

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:

Being prepared.

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.

Yes. There is a monitoring programme for water quality and the populations of wildlife and waterfowls in the Ramsar site.

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.

No.

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?

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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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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. The National Inventory of Natural Wetlands has been supported by the Danish Government under the DANCED (Danish cooperation on Environment and Development) programme since 1996 and is expected to be completed in mid-1999. The inventory will result in the listing of all natural wetlands sites in Thailand, classified into 3 categories (see 6.2 for details) and with a brief description of the ecological and physical features of each site.

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

Yes. Wetland sites listed in the inventory are grouped according to their importance as follows;

- **International importance; using Ramsar criteria**
- **National Importance; including sites with ecological, historical and cultural importance as well as those located in protected areas**
- **Local Importance; the remaining sites which are of importance in the culture and tradition and for the livelihood of local communities.**

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.

IUCN and Royal Forest Department conducted a survey of wetlands in Thailand in 1993 and found wetlands of international importance especially for migrant waterfowl to cover approximately 25,100 sq. km. of area. The Ramsar definition of "wetland" was used in the survey.

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, such criteria have been used in identifying wetlands of national and local importance.

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.

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

No.

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

No.

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).

Thailand is currently participating with the other Indochinese countries in the Mekong River Basin on a Wetland Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use project where management plan for wetland sites of the Basin will be formulated.

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

No.

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 co-operative 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

No such mechanism has been established.

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

There has been some discussion but no activity has been initiated so far.

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

Yes. With DANCED (as described in 6.1) and Netherlands and Japanese government (as described in 4.2 (d)).

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. With the approval of the National Policy and Action Plan on Wetlands, the Cabinet also endorsed, in principle, funding of 472.5 million Baht for the implementation of 43 activities of 14 relevant agencies as stated under the National Policy.

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

No.

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.

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.

The annual contribution has been requested for allocation from the year 2000 governmental budget and will include those for previous contribution of 1998-1999.

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?

20-30 NGOs in Thailand have been involved in wetland related activities. Most of these are local NGOs such as the Yard-fon Foundation of Trang Province which is actively campaigning for the conservation of seagrass and dugongs. Those which can be considered as NGOs at national level are Wildlife Fund Thailand (WFT) and Bird Conservation Society of Thailand.

- 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

Yes. As a network of organizations, such as the Swamp Forest Conservation network in Southern Thailand.

- b. to the government? Yes/No

Yes. The WFT and the Bird and Bird Conservation Society of Thailand are represented in the National Committee on Wetland Management.

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

Yes. A representative from the Bird Conservation Society of Thailand participated in COP6 as an observer.

- 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).

Yes. In cooperation with public agencies in activities such as reforestation of mangrove forest and conservation of sea turtles.

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

No.

- 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.

NGOs could play a beneficial role in assisting the government to implement General Objective 3 (to raise awareness of wetlands values and functions throughout the world and at all level).

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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