

## **Communication, Education and Public Awareness**

### **A Five Year Karst CEPA Strategy**

**Ramsar Project : 7501-000/SGF/04/SI**

#### **Introduction**

In 2002, The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands adopted the Convention's Programme on communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) for the period 2003 to 2008 (Resolution VIII/31). Since its adoption, this resolution has been a guiding document for the activities organised by the Škocjanske jame Ramsar site. It has also provided basis for the one year Ramsar Small Grants Fund project and a strategy which is setting priorities for the "Network of Karst Wetlands" established in the karst area in the South West part of Slovenia. The Strategy will primary focus on bringing together and strengthening cooperation between schools, local people, other stakeholders and management authorities of the protected areas. By the involvement of national institutions, research organisations, NGOs and other interested partners it will also enhance cooperation across the country.

Škocjanske jame were included in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance in 1999. In January 2006, Cerknjško jezero and its Environs became the third Slovenian Ramsar site. These two Ramsar sites are good examples of karst wetlands at the regional and global levels, and therefore, the strategy also aims at promoting the knowledge of this area at all levels of the implementation of the Ramsar Convention and in close cooperation with the other biodiversity related conventions.

It has to be emphasised that although the Karst CEPA Strategy is focused on improving communication, raising awareness, exchanging knowledge and experience on karst wetlands it needs to be incorporated into an overall national CEPA policy, formal and informal programmes of education. This aim has to be achieved through the implementation of the guiding principles, objectives and actions of the Karst CEPA Strategy.

#### **Vision**

The vision of the Karst CEPA Strategy is:

**"Young people acting for the wise use of karst wetlands."**

## Guiding principles

The Karst CEPA Strategy is following the guiding principles that underpin the Ramsar CEPA Programme:

- a) Wetlands provide important goods and services which help sustain human life, conserve biological diversity, and combat the impacts of climate change and desertification. Communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) are the tools for placing people's social, political, economic and cultural realities within the context of the goods and services provided by wetland ecosystems. *In the karst areas, subterranean wetlands are important sources of drinking water and habitats of endemic animal species.*
- b) The Ramsar Convention seeks to motivate people to appreciate the values of wetlands so that they become advocates for wetland conservation and wise use and may act to become involved in relevant policy formulation, planning and management. *Young people aware of the importance of their natural resources and cultural values are not just the present, but also future advocates and caretakers of their wetlands.*
- c) The key actors in the implementation of the Ramsar Convention need effective CEPA tools and expertise to engage major stakeholders and to convey appropriate messages in order to mainstream the wise use principle throughout society. *Formal and informal education and field work provide expertise and knowledge to all involved.*
- d) Wise use issues and concepts need to be communicated effectively to ensure participation of major stakeholders from different sectors and mainstreaming of the issues in sector plans and actions. This communication needs to operate laterally, across and between relevant sectors, and also vertically from stakeholders to governments and back.
- e) Support for the CEPA Programme should be recognized by Parties to the Convention as an investment which will reduce conflicts over wetland resources, increase the number of advocates, actors and networks involved in the issues, and build an informed decision-making and public constituency. CEPA mobilises actions directed at achieving the wise use of wetlands. CEPA should form a central part of implementing the Ramsar Convention by each Contracting Party.

## General and Operational Objectives

The Ramsar CEPA Programme has three General and a number of Operational Objectives which are used to underpin the priority actions in the Karst CEPA Strategy.

**General Objective 1 - To gain acceptance of the value and effectiveness of wetland-related communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) processes at all levels throughout the Convention.**

Operational Objective 1.1 - Integrate CEPA processes into *regional, national and local* of policy development, planning and implementation of the Convention.

*Action: 1.1.1.: Implementation of CEPA processes also into management planes of the Karst Biosphere Reserve and future MAB area at Lake Cerknica.*

**Action 1.1.2:** Active interaction of both Ramsar sites with wetlands of international importance in Italy and Croatia.

Operational Objective 1.2 - Demonstrate that CEPA processes are effective in achieving Ramsar's wetland wise use objectives at the global, national and local levels.

**Action: 1.2.1:** Exchange of experience and knowledge at European and global levels by organizing seminars and workshops in the framework of international conventions and associations.

**General Objective 2 - To provide support and tools for the effective national and local implementation of wetland-related communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) activities.**

Operational Objective 2.1 - Provide national leadership, networks and cohesive frameworks to support and catalyse CEPA for the wise use of wetlands.

**Action: 2.1.1:** In the framework of PŠJ and NRP activities, cooperation with experts from the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Institute of Education of the RS is continued and strengthened.

Operational Objective 2.2 - Transfer, exchange and share CEPA information and expertise that promotes and results in the wise use of wetlands.

**Action: 2.2.1:** Holding regular annual meetings as forums, conferences and seminars will give teachers and experts opportunity for presentation of their work and dissemination of the results. Conclusions of meetings will be evaluated at the national level.

**Action: 2.2.2:** CEPA information and results of training and education activities will be posted on web site [www.ramsar.si](http://www.ramsar.si) and discussed at local seminars and international conferences.

**Action: 2.2.3:** Seminars on wetlands topics continue to be organized in cooperation with Institute of Education of the RS and the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning.

Operational Objective 2.3 - Improve the individual and collective capacity and opportunities of people to participate in and contribute to using wetlands wisely, through the recognition of the values of wetland resources.

**Action: 2.3.1:** The two Parks authorities will enable local and national NGOs to participate in the ongoing and new activities in the karst area.

**Action: 2.3.2:** The two Parks authorities will implement educational activities in accordance with school curriculum.

**Action: 2.3.3:** The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning and the Ministry of Education and Sport will support projects which are prepared and carried out in cooperation between the two protected areas authorities and schools.

**Action: 2.3.4:** *Informal education in the protected areas will be additionally stimulated by involving the respective institutions in implementation of protected areas educational programmes.*

**General Objective 3 - To mainstream the wise use of wetlands within society and enable people to act.**

Operational Objective 3.1 - Foster sustained national campaigns, programmes and projects to raise community awareness of the important ecosystem services provided by wetlands as well as their social, economic and cultural values.

**Action: 3.1.1:** *The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning and the Ministry of Education and Sport will enable expertise in the projects that are consistent with the protected areas CEPA programmes.*

**Action: 3.1.2:** *The two Parks authorities will encourage, organise and promote thematic meetings involving stakeholders, governmental and nongovernmental organizations and taking into account school projects.*

Operational Objective 3.2 - Support and develop mechanisms to ensure that CEPA processes are incorporated into participatory, multi-stakeholder wetland management.

**Action: 3.2.1** *The establishment of "Network of Karst wetlands" and exchange of knowledge and experiences between partners.*

Operational Objective 3.3 - Promote and support the role of wetland and other education centres as focal points of global, national and local CEPA efforts.

**Action: 3.3.1:** *Cooperation with nationally and internationally recognized institutions and individuals in the field of higher education for the establishment of Ramsar education centres.*

**Action: 3.3.2:** Exchange of knowledge and experiences between educational programmes in the Parks, and other governmental and nongovernmental organisations.