



**RAMSAR CENTRE FOR EASTERN AFRICA (RAMCEA)
2016 Report**

1. Introduction

The idea to establish a regional centre was first conceived in 2005 as a legacy for Uganda's hosting of the 9th Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar COP9). RAMCEA is a regional initiative established under Article 5 of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and endorsed at the 10th Conference of the Contracting Parties held in Changwon Republic of Korea in 2008. The Centre started its operations in 2009 and is hosted by the Wetlands Management Department in the Ministry of Water and Environment of the Republic of Uganda.

The goal of RAMCEA is to “support the East African Contracting Parties, Non-Contracting Parties and other stakeholders to improve their capacity to implement the Ramsar Convention in the respective countries and institutions”. This includes among others, sharing regionally the policies, legislation, procedures, systems, tools, techniques, Best Practices, lessons learnt and experiences in wetland management.

The Vision of the RAMCEA Strategic Framework is “Eastern Africa wetlands understood, valued and sustainably managed”. This is inspired by the mission of RAMCEA which is to “Strengthen wetland management through institutional coordination, capacity building and experience sharing”.

The overall goal of RAMCEA is to have a “well-coordinated, strengthened and networked institutions for wise use and conservation of wetlands in the region”.

The Centre initially covers the five countries of the East African Community namely: Republic of Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Rwanda, Republic of Burundi, and Republic of Uganda, but will seek to establish links with other interested relevant Contracting Parties and non-Contracting Parties' in the region such as Djibouti, South Sudan and Ethiopia.

RAMCEA will also have links to other African regional and sub-regional wetland initiatives such as the Lake Victoria Basin Commission, Nile Basin Initiative, The Centre for African Wetlands of Accra Ghana, Kenya Wildlife Service Training Institute Naivasha and the network for wetland professionals based in UNESCO-IHE (Delft).

2. 2016 activities

Table 1 summarizes RAMCEA work and activities undertaken during the year 2016.

Table 1: Work and activities undertaken by RAMCEA during 2016

Objectives	Activities planned	Achievements	Coherence with SP4 (Ramsar Targets)	Indicators (verification of success)	Beneficiaries
To promote and ensure best practices on sustainable wetlands management in the region	Publish and disseminate Lessons learnt documents and case studies that demonstrate best practices	A wetland wise use model was developed printed A regional symposium with 53 participants comprising of Local and Central Government Technical Officers, a Wetland Specialist from the Nile Basin, the Regional Director for Africa, BirdLife International and the National Focal Point for Ramsar from Burundi, was held to disseminate lessons learnt in Uganda.	Goal 3 Targets 8 - 13 And Goal 2: Target 5	Wetlands best practices publication	Practitioners at local, national and regional levels
To determine the status and trends of wetland resources in the region to guide decision making	Conduct Wetland Assessments	Development of the wetland assessment tool under the Globwetland Africa project technically supported A tool for detailed wetland assessment for Uganda developed and printed	Goal 1: Target 1 Goal 3: Targets 8 and 11	Technical support reports/ tools	Technical Officers, Academia and Decision Makers
To Enhance the knowledge base and stakeholder awareness on sustainable wetland management in the region	Conduct periodic update and upgrade of the RAMCEA Website	RAMCEA Website routinely maintained	Goal 4: Target 14	Functional website	The Public, Academia, Wetland Professionals and stakeholders
	Conduct refresher courses and tailor made capacity development programmes on Wetland Management	National training for all District Natural Resources Officers (104 Officers in total) on wetland wise use conducted Hands on skills imparted through Field excursions to the National Wetland Management Project pilot sites in Eastern Uganda to facilitate learning for selected Local Government Officials (104 Officers in total) undertaken	Goal 3: Targets 11, 12 and 13 Goal 4: Targets 16 and 17	Number of Trainees, Training Reports	Natural Resources District Technical Officers

To support wetland policies and institutional processes in the region to enhance wetland management	Facilitate preparation of sustainable wetland management policy briefs	Not undertaken	Goal 1: Target 1 Goal 3: Targets 9 and 13 Goal 4: Targets 14 and 15	Policy brief	Policy and Decision Makers
To develop and maintain a regional network of Ramsar sites and other wetlands that provide important ecosystem services	Carry out consultations for twinning of three Ramsar sites namely Lake Natron (Tanzania), Lake Nakuru (Kenya) and Lake George (Uganda) Ramsar sites	Concept note on the Modalities for twinning developed and yet to be shared with partner states	Goal 2: Targets 5,6 and 7 Goal 3: Targets 9, 10, 11 and 12 Goal 4: Targets 15, 15 and 19	Reports Twinning agreements	National Focal Points, Administrative Authorities and Riparian Communities
To facilitate the operations of the RAMCEA Regional Advisory Council and Secretariat	Hold 1 meeting of RAMCEA Regional Governing Council	There was no face to face meeting held during the period under review due to limited funding.	Goal 4: Targets 14, 15, 18 and 19	Record of Discussion Approved annual work plan and budget	National Focal Points and Administrative Authorities
	Maintain the RAMCEA Offices	RAMCEA offices equipped and functional	Goal 4: Target 17 and 18	Functional Offices	RAMCEA Partner States
Update the Ramsar information Sheets of Ramsar Sites in the RAMCEA country member states	Capacity building of Ramsar focal points and Ramsar site managers on the use of the new Ramsar Sites Information Service(RSIS)	6 Wetland Officers from Uganda trained by the Africa team of the Ramsar Secretariat. 12 Ramsar site maps for Uganda updated 1 Ramsar Information Sheet for Nabugabo Ramsar site updated.	Goal 2: Targets 6 and 7 Goal 4: Target 19	SC54 document on status of Ramsar sites	

3. On-going activities

RAMCEA has over the last year engaged in a number of collaborations geared at effort to mobilise resources to support the implementation of the RAMCEA strategic framework and also creating networks for implementation of the various outputs. Joint proposal were developed between European Space Agency, Danish Hydraulic Institute and Geoville to harness on the strengths of the various players.

RAMCEA is currently implementing several projects that include “Sustainable use of critical wetlands in the Lake Victoria Basin Project” which is collaboration with Birdlife International; GlobWetland Africa, a large Earth Observation application project funded by the European Space Agency (ESA) in partnership with the African Team of the Ramsar Convention on wetlands. GlobWetland Africa project is initiated to facilitate the exploitation of satellite

observations for the conservation, wise-use and effective management of wetlands in Africa and to provide African stakeholders with the necessary Earth Observation (EO) methods and tools to better fulfill their commitments and obligations towards the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

However, there have been challenges with implementation of several planned activities due to limited funding. Much as Government of Uganda contributed substantially to most of the implemented activities, the funding was inadequate.

Therefore, a lot of effort will be placed in resource mobilization, lobbying of the various partner states to support implementation of key outputs and creating of networks with other local, regional and international institutions that can finance and support implementation.

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4. Photos



Figure 1: Participants listen attentively during the Regional Wetland Symposium in Mbale



Figure 2: Director Environment Affairs, Paul Mafabi chats Mr. Murakami Wetland Focal Officer, JICA during the Regional Wetland Symposium in Mbale



Figure 3 Dr. Paul Ouédraogo giving a key note addresses during the symposium



Figure 4: Participants of the Regional Wetland Symposium during a group photograph