

The Ramsar Convention's Swiss Grant for Africa



Swiss Grant for Africa - Supplement to the Report for 1999

The Swiss Grant for Africa is a generous voluntary contribution offered annually to the Ramsar Convention Bureau by the Federal Government of Switzerland, over and above the annual contribution provided to the Convention's core budget, in order to support wetland conservation and wise use and the implementation of the Convention in Africa. This annual contribution dates back to 1989 following the establishment of the Convention secretariat in Switzerland in 1988.

The Swiss Grant is extremely useful in financing suitable emergency action or specific activities in needy areas of wetland conservation and wise use. This contribution is also particularly helpful in promoting the Convention in the region.

Report of the activities and funding disbursements from the Swiss Grant for Africa 1999

The following activities sponsored by the 1999 Swiss Grant for Africa are still ongoing:

- Formulation of a training programme on wetland inventories
- Enhancing the capacities of local communities for the conservation and wise use of three wetlands in Burkina Faso (Mare d'Oursi, mare aux hippopotames and Lac Tangrela).
- Awareness and information on invasive species in Africa

1. Training: formulation of a programme of wetland inventory training

Considering the fact that the subject of wetland inventory is large and complex and needs careful planning so that it fits with national needs, a workshop was held in Kampala, Uganda, from 6-9 December 2000 to begin a programme of wetland inventory training.

This workshop began the process of wetland inventory training in English speaking countries as a response to the developing needs of national wetlands programmes and the general requirements for Ramsar Convention members to "know their wetlands" for inclusion in national planning. A three-day meeting was organised. The workshop produced a set of findings and define a training scheme.

In this respect, the major outcome of the Uganda workshop has been forwarded by the Ramsar Bureau to the STRP Working Group on Wetland Inventories.

The proposed process is described on page 4.

Disbursed budget: SFR 30 500

1.1 background information

Ramsar's 7th Meeting of the Conference of Parties (Costa Rica, 1999) placed a high priority for countries to undertake national wetland inventories, which the Conference considered as the essential information base from which to develop policies and implementation of wetland wise use. Comprehensive inventory can, however, be costly and time-consuming and so difficult to achieve in developing countries.

The Uganda National Wetlands Conservation and Management Programme offered technical support to the workshop which was held in Kampala and had inputs from the Makerere University Institute for Environment and Natural Resources – which has been involved in such training in the past. Logistics and organisation were managed by the IUCN Eastern Africa Regional Programme through its wetlands component and the IUCN Uganda Country Office in Kampala as well as the East Africa Regional Office in Kenya. Financial support was provided by the Swiss Grant Fund through the Ramsar Convention Bureau which also assisted in promoting the concept of regional training in this important aspect of wise wetland use.

1.1.1.Objectives

The project objectives to be developed through a workshop were:

- Define the needs for wetland inventory in relation to wise wetland use – at national and local levels,
- Examine the choices of wetland inventory types to provide the most cost-effective information that is required,
- Discuss the various methods and approaches to wetland inventory and the basic minimum information to be gathered,
- Learn from the practical experiences of Uganda and other countries involved in wetland inventory,
- Begin to develop training needs – at local and national levels,
- Begin to draft a training process with a suitable institution or group of institutions in the region,
- Report on findings for the next steps and for wider discussion

1.2 Progress report

To help develop cost-effective approaches and prioritisation of inventory, assessment and monitoring a workshop (Uganda, December 2000) brought together wetland experts from seven African countries who developed a 'route-map' designed to guide practitioners through the inventory and assessment process.

The workshop examined the need for wetland inventories in relation to wise wetland use at national and local levels. Important issues discussed during this workshop including the choice of wetland inventory types, the various methods and approaches, training needs and suitable institutions for training. The workshop was also an opportunity to learn from the practical experience of undertaking inventory and assessment in Uganda and other countries. A route-map based on the Uganda's experience was adopted (Figure 1). A significant feature of the route-map is the relationship between rapid assessment and national inventory. The route-map recommends that rapid assessment is undertaken as the first step, before waiting for the completion of a national wetland inventory.

The following countries took part in the training course:

- Uganda
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Tanzania
- Ghana
- Nigeria
- Zimbabwe

The workshop was intended to train English speaking countries because another training session was carried out in March 2000 for French speaking countries thanks to the financial support of the Evian project sponsored by the French government and the Danone Group.

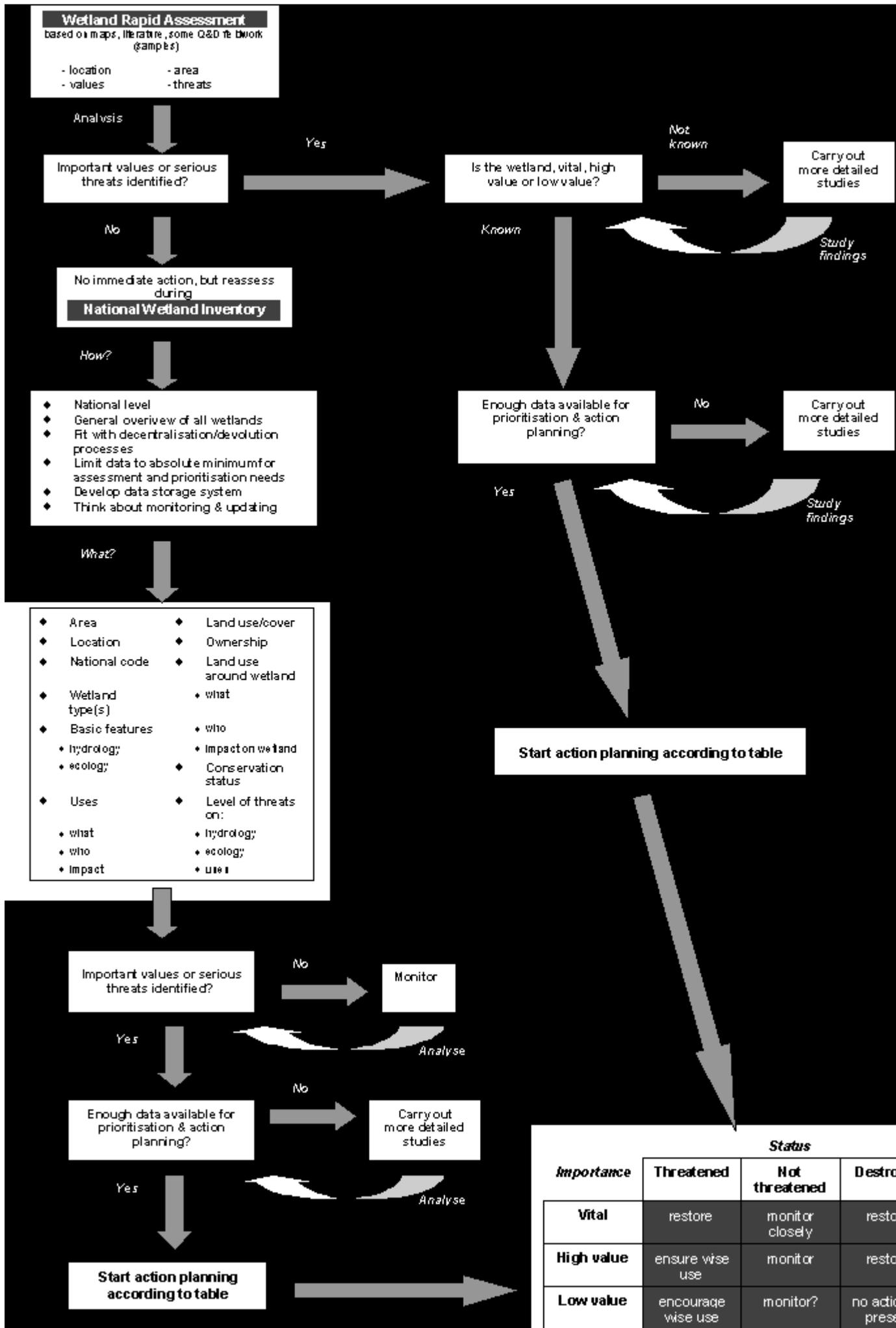
The Kampala workshop was successful and the above objectives were achieved as follows:

- Each delegate made a presentation on the current knowledge on the importance of wetlands in his/her country. All delegates reported that a national wetland inventory is one of the first steps to be taken in order to promote an effective national action for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
- Presentations followed by discussions were made on existing methods and inventory types

- The Uganda case studies on the planning and carrying out of a national wetland inventory were exemplary and the participants were pleased to adopt the Uganda experience as model for planning and implementing a national wetland inventory. In this regard, the participants adopted the following process called "inventory map" (see figure 1 on page 4).

This process takes account of a series of steps, including the "Kampala matrix" whereby the relative importance and the conservation status of each wetland at local and national levels are identified in order to define the appropriate conservation and management measures.

In order to integrate this action into the overall Ramsar programme on wetland inventories, results of this meeting are used to draw an African perspective to wetland inventories so as to contribute to the global debate on this issue.



2. Enhancing the capacities of local communities for the conservation and wise use of three wetlands in Burkina Faso (Mare d'Oursi, mare aux hippopotames and Lac Tangrela).

2. 1 Background information

The proposed project is intended to follow up and implement the recommendations that have been made following a project sponsored by the Ramsar Small Grant Fund (SGF).

Initial consultations and joint actions with the local communities were made by a national NGO with the support of the Ramsar SGF mechanism. Further training activities remain to be completed which now are underway for anticipated project completion in 2001.

The aim of this project is to enhance the capacities of local communities so as to establish appropriate conditions for the sustainable use of three wetlands:

- la mare d'Oursi, Ramsar site
- la mare aux hippopotames, Ramsar site
- le lac de Tengrela, a wetland with high biodiversity

The project activities are as follows:

- The establishment of local committees for the management of la Mare d'Oursi, la Mare aux Hippopotames and the Lac Tangrela.
- Training of technical staff working around these wetlands

Disbursed Budget: SFR20 000

2. 2. Progress report

Achievements

- Consultations with the local authorities and reaching consensus on the project implementation
- Preparation of the training session in Banfora on the following issues: the Ramsar Convention, wetland functions and values, wetland classification in Burkina Faso, criteria for designation of wetland of international importance, the Ramsar Information Sheets, wetland biodiversity and integrated approach for wetland conservation and wise use.

- Identification of trainers

This training session was useful for a cross-sectoral common approach that involve Interest groups and various government institutions.

- Purchase of communication equipment

-Discussion with local stakeholders on the major issues and concerns

2.3. Next steps:

- Carrying out the training course for 40 people
- Training session for local communities

3. Invasive species: Wetlands and harmful invasive species in africa – awareness and information

This initiative is co-operative project involving initially IUCN, the Ramsar Convention Bureau, the MacArthur Foundation. A contract was signed in November 1999 between the IUCN Regional Office for East Africa in Nairobi, Kenya and the Bureau of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran 1971). The IUCN Regional Office in Nairobi was designated as the project manager. However, the project has not been implemented according to the initial schedule.

Consultations have been made with various partners, including IUCN, Wetlands International, WWF International OMPO and others in order to join efforts and make the first move of this important initiative.

This initiative is part of the global programme on invasive species under the Ramsar Convention and it is also in line with the Ramsar partnership with other global players on invasive species.

To initiate the process, a workshop is planned in Djoudj National Park, a Ramsar site, as well as a World Heritage site in Senegal that is threaten by invasive species.

The project also includes the establishment of a network of expertise (a "rapid response service" type of network) that can be accessed quickly by wetland managers in need of further information, and possibilities for prevention and control of invasions. A training programme will complement the publications described in the proposal. (See 2001 proposal for Swiss Grant Fund in Africa).