



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS  
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES  
CONVENCIÓN SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES  
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

## SWISS GRANT FOR AFRICA

2009 REPORT

## Acknowledgement

The Swiss Grant Fund for Africa administered by the Ramsar Secretariat is a generous voluntary contribution offered by the Federal Government of Switzerland over and above the annual dues provided to the Convention's core budget. This contribution dates back to 1989 following the establishment of the Secretariat of the Convention in 1988.

The Swiss Grant Fund for Africa is extremely useful in financing suitable activities in needy areas of wetlands conservation and wise use. This contribution is also particularly helpful in promoting the Convention in the Africa region.

The Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention wishes to convey to the Swiss government the sincere appreciation of the African Ramsar Contracting Parties for the valuable support from the Swiss voluntary contribution to the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in Africa.

We express our gratitude and our encouragement to the Swiss government for this fruitful contribution that opens up opportunities and promising prospects for the conservation and wise use of wetlands in Africa.

The Swiss Grant report of the year 2009 represents a barometer to measure the level of implementation or non implementation of the Convention. In addition, this time around, the SGA came as co-financing for most of the projects as it was the case last year. It has also permitted to activate the collaboration with the UN World Tourism Organization which is likely to become an important partner of the Convention.

We are pleased to submit the following summary report on the approved projects for the year 2009.

We would like to note that most of the activities sponsored by the 2009 Swiss Grant for Africa are still being implemented as the funds were disbursed only in December 2009.

# A. 2009 ALLOCATION - UPDATE

## 2009 Proposal Summary

Initiative/ Activity	Recipient countries/ Institutions	Allocation	Purpose
Tourism Development Strategic Plan for Park W	Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger	SFR 40,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a planning framework for a sustainable development of tourism in the Park W</li> </ul>
Eco-tourism and Namibia's wetlands	Namibia	SFR 30,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of the current and potential role that wetlands can play in eco-tourism.</li> <li>• Exploring ways of raising the profiles of a number of target pilot wetlands, and eco-tourism and job-creation opportunities</li> <li>• Contributing to poverty alleviation.</li> </ul>
Implementation of article 3.2 of the Convention	Congo-Brazza	SFR 25,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ramsar Advisory Mission for Cayo-Loufouéléba Ramsar site</li> </ul>
	Morocco	SFR 25,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ramsar Advisory Mission for Embouchure de La Moulaya Ramsar site</li> </ul>
Administration Fees and contingencies	10%	SFR 16,000	Administration of the fund, communication and coordination of fieldwork.
Total	4 initiatives	SFR 156,000	

In 2009, 4 activities were supported by the voluntary Swiss contribution to Africa. Most of these activities were initiated in late 2009 and some of them in early 2010 as the funds were disbursed in December 2009.

Six countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo-Brazza, Morocco, Namibia and Niger) were granted financial support for the implementation of projects related to (i) developing a planning

framework for a sustainable development of tourism in the Park W, (ii) carrying out two Ramsar Advisory Missions in Congo and Morocco and (iii) developing wetlands based tourism in Namibia.

## B. PROJECT REPORT

### 1. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR PARK W

#### 1.1. Background and information.

The Park W is a major transfrontier national park in West Africa around a meander in the River Niger shaped like a "W". While most of the park is in Niger it also extends through areas of Benin and Burkina Faso, and is governed by the three governments and UEMOA. It's a trans boundary Ramsar site shared by the three countries.

In Benin, the site has a total size of 895,480 ha and is located at 11°50'N 002°30'E. It's a National Park, part of UNESCO Transboundary Biosphere Reserve. Comprises the W du Benin National Park and other protected zones, as well as the free zone between the Park and the River Niger (which is state protected and offers right of use to inhabitants). Its diversified landscape has a rugged relief and is made up of rivers, ponds, meadows and floodplains, gallery forests and savannah. The site is host to the most important savanna population of the African Elephant (*Loxodonta Africana*) in West Africa, populations of the Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubitus*) and the West African Manatee (*Trichechus senegalensis*). Significant numbers of waterbirds have been recorded, and the floodplains of the rivers Niger, Mékrou and Alibori offer a breeding ground and passage zone for fish species like *Alestes baremoze*, *Distichodus rostratus*, *Labeo senegalensis* and *Citharinus citharinus*. It serves as reception point for surface water runoff and is important for water infiltration, recharge of groundwater, sediment trapping, and flood control and thus contributes to improving the quality of waters in the area. The site is important for tourism, environmental education and fish production, and it holds traditionally sacred sites such as the Koudou Falls. Threats to the site include poaching, illegal farming, toxic fishing methods and bush fires. A new management law for protected areas, aiming at participative management, has been elaborated and submitted to the National Assembly for adoption.

In Burkina Faso, the site has a total surface of 235,000 ha and is a major floodplain composed of shrubby and wooded savannah supporting various bird species, ungulates, carnivores and a gallery forest along the river. Human activities include livestock rearing and agriculture.

In Niger, the site has a total surface of 220,000 ha and is located at 12°15'N 002°2'E. It's a World Heritage site; a National Park. Part of transboundary protected area shared by Benin, Burkina Faso, and Niger and contiguous with the Ramsar site of the same name in Burkina Faso. Located in the biogeographical region of the Sudanese wooded savannah, vegetation consists of annual grasses, woody savannah, and gallery forest. There is a rich avifauna, including numerous species of wintering migratory waterbirds, e.g, Anatidae (ducks, geese, swans, etc.), storks, and Ardeidae (herons, bitterns, etc.), and important numbers of elephants, buffaloes, lions and antelope are supported as well as an economically valuable fishery. The Niger River is a critically important source of domestic and irrigation water

Poverty levels of the population living in the buffer zones of the park are among the highest in West Africa, and local economic benefits from the park have so far been limited. Sustainable tourism development is considered as one of the few options for the local people living in the area to increase their income levels. Based on the Tourism Development Strategic Plan, the local authorities together with NGO's operating in the area can formulate and implement ST-EP (Sustainable Tourism to Eradicate Poverty) projects in Park W to help increasing the communities' benefits from tourism and improve management of the wetlands and other natural resources.

The objective of the project is to join hands with the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to develop a planning framework for a sustainable development of tourism in the Park W, which will help enhancing the local economic impact from tourism in the area.

At the outset of the project, UNWTO/Ramsar will field a formulation mission to the Park W. During the mission, a UNWTO/Ramsar expert will meet with representatives from the public sector, including UEMOA, private sector and local and international NGO's to agree on the topics that need to be addressed in the strategic plan, the

process to formulate the plan and the possible inputs and contributions to the implementation of it. The expert will prepare a detailed work programme for the development of the strategic plan, describing the process, timeframe, components, and costs for each component.

### 1.2. Achievements:

- The Ramsar and UNWTO Secretariats have signed a contract for the project execution and UNWTO Division for Sustainable Tourism will implement the project in collaboration with Ramsar and other partners.
- Detailed work plan, indicators of performance and budget are now available
- UNWTO contribution to the project (SfR 497,000) is available
- The process to select the 15 guides (5 in each of the 3 countries) to be trained in ornithological tourism has started.
- The process to select the trainers on ornithological tourism has started.

### 1.3. The way forward:

- Organizing the training session in ornithology in early March 2010
- Purchase of books and equipment (e.g. binoculars, etc.)
- Organizing the training session on ecosystem conservation and tourism in early April 2010
- Public awareness campaign among the communities living around the park.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Allocated budget: CHF 40,000 for Ramsar and CHF 497,059 from UNWTO.

## 2. ECO-TOURISM AND NAMIBIA'S WETLANDS

### 2.1 Background and information.

Tourism is one of the main contributors to Namibia's economy. Currently this focuses mainly on Namibia's desert environment and abundant wildlife. Namibia has several spectacular wetlands and the importance of these to the tourism industry needs to be better understood and emphasized. Two of Namibia's Ramsar sites, Etosha Pan and Walvis Bay, are already important tourist destinations, yet many of the visitors will not consider these places as wetlands. The scope for wetland eco-tourism in Namibia is astonishing considering the huge variety of wetlands in this desert country, ranging from coastal lagoons, swamps, marshes, huge pans and floodplain systems. Activities such as bird-watching, wildlife photographic safaris and canoeing are already being

offered but have definitely not yet reached their maximum potential. Other activities such as educational visits to wetlands are almost non-existent.

The general objective of the project falls under Ramsar strategic objective # 1: Wise use of wetlands. In order to achieve this goal several strategies are proposed of which Strategy 1.4 "cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services" and Strategy 1.10 "Private sector" apply to this project.

Specific Objective(s):

to assess the current and potential uses and values of wetlands to local residents (communities) and the tourism industry in Namibia

to raise the profile of target wetlands and increase awareness of local communities and the tourism sector of the value of wetlands and their potential for eco-tourism

to assess how wetland ecotourism can improve the livelihoods of especially rural communities

## 2.2. Achievements

The Ramsar Convention Secretariat has signed a contract with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Namibia.

The Namibia Nature Foundation was designating as an implementation NGO.

The following target wetlands have been identified for the project: (i) Walvis Bay, (ii) Sandwich Harbour, (iii) Etosha Pan and its associated Cuvelai system, (iii) The lower Okavango River in Namibia (from Mukwe to Mohembo on the Botswana border), (iv) The Kwandu-Linyanti system in Namibia and, (v) The Zambezi-Chobe system in Namibia and associated Eastern Caprivi floodplains

The project activities have now been narrowed down more precisely and a logical framework has been prepared.

A number of projects have been approached to contribute towards the documentary film, including the ICEMA projects (for the Kwandu-Linyantu swamps area), the SPAN project (for the Etosha Pans area), the NACOMA project (for the Sandwich Harbour and Walvis Bay wetlands) and the Zambezi-Chobe Fisheries project for the Zambezi-

East Caprivi floodplains area). These projects will contribute for an amount of N\$ 250,000 which is CHF 33,000.

### 2.3. The way forward:

A report assessing the key ecological and socio-economic attributes of six major wetland systems in Namibia, with emphasis on eco-tourism attributes, a catalogue of wetland related eco-tourism activities currently taking place and recommendations on how these wetlands could be sustainably used in future to optimise eco-tourism opportunities. Production of the draft policy document.

A brochure and a short documentary movie capturing the ecological and socio-economic importance of these wetlands, their key features and their eco-tourism uses and potential.

A preliminary economic assessment of the importance of these wetlands in terms of goods and services, as well as the current and potential economic returns of the wetlands through eco-tourism.

## 3. RAMSAR ADVISORY MISSIONS IN CONGO-B AND MOROCCO

### 3.1. Background and information.

In accordance with article 2.4 and 2.5 of the Ramsar Convention text, the Government of Morocco designated on January 15, 2005, La Moulaya as a Ramsar site of international importance which covers a surface area of 3,000 hectares.

It's the most significant estuary and floodplain complex of Maghreb's biggest Mediterranean river, this site comprises five systems: marine, estuarine, lacustrine, riverine and palustrine, in addition to the coastal dunes. It is a compulsory stop, given the surroundings' aridity, for European migrants that find refuge in the Tamarix vegetation system. These include Moussier's Redstart (*Phoenicurus moussieri*), the Marbled Teal (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*), and Audouin's Gull (*Larus audouinii*).



However, since 2007 the Ramsar Secretariat keeps on receiving complaints from various NGOs and universities about a major tourism development project (from the Spain based company FADESA) that would have significant negative impacts on the site.

As for the RAM in Congo, the Government designated on 13 December 2007 Cayo-Loufoualeba as a Ramsar site of international importance which covers a surface area of 15,366 hectares.

A complex of marine and continental wetlands in the south, including the Malonda mangrove, the Loémé and Malonda rivers, Cayo and Loufoualeba lakes, small streams, marshes and submerged forested islets, resulting in a highly diversified ecosystem. It is an important refuge for the Hippopotamus and Chimpanzee, species of conservation concern. About 378 bird species (including about 284 breeding birds) and a significant number of waterbird species restricted to the Congo-Guinea biome have been spotted, thus contributing significantly to maintaining the biodiversity of the region. Some months back, some information was communicated to the Ramsar Secretariat concerning threats to the Cayo-Lafueleba Ramsar site.

The correspondences extended to the Ramsar Secretariat concern the planned Potash project which is a greenfield potash project under development in the Republic of Congo (ROC), with an initial annual design capacity of 600,000 tonnes of potash

The future operation is expected to be the world's first new entrant into an industry which has little new greenfield supply forecast over the next five years. Additionally, the Project's feasibility study predicts that FOB potash costs will be amongst the lowest in the world.

However, there would be an important quantity of water used from Loémé River which is upstream the Ramsar site as some of the project components include a power plant, a water pumping station on the Loémé River and a water pipeline, port facilities, roads and facilities for workers.

After discussions with the Convention administrative authorities both in Congo and Morocco, we have decided to carry out two Ramsar Advisory Missions there to see what could be done to mitigate the impacts on the site.

### 3.2. Achievements

- Finalization of the Terms of Reference for the two missions
- Finalization of the mission work plan and budget
- Identification of the team of experts and organizations to carry out the missions
- Confirmation of the missions' dates with the contracting parties
- Terms of reference of a radio program on the subject in collaboration with the FAO Resident Mission in the country.

### 3.3. The way forward

- The missions are scheduled to take place during the first week of April in Congo and the last week of May or first week of June in Morocco.
- Preparing the report and recommendations
- Monitoring the mission recommendations implementation