



10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

“Healthy wetlands, healthy people”

Changwon, Republic of Korea,
28 October-4 November 2008

Ramsar COP10 DOC. 13
Available in English only

Regional overview of the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan 2003 – 2008 in Oceania

National Reports upon which this overview is based can be consulted on the Ramsar Web site,
http://www.ramsar.org/cop10/cop10_natlrpts_index.htm.

Background to the Oceania Region

1. **Contracting Parties in Oceania** (7): Australia*, Fiji, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea*, Palau*, Samoa.
2. **Contracting Parties that had not yet submitted their National Reports in time for analysis** (3): Australia, Palau, Papua New Guinea.
3. **Oceania island states not yet Contracting Parties as of July 2008** (17): Cook Islands*, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati*, Nauru*, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, , Solomon Islands, Tonga*, Tuvalu*, Vanuatu. (* Preparations are now being made on accession to the Ramsar Convention.)
4. The overview below gives examples of how the Contracting Parties in the region have been implementing the Convention since the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (2005) and is based on analysis of the four (57%) National Reports submitted by the time of the analysis, 15 June 2008. Information was also collected, however, from the results of regional meetings, communications with the Parties, and other sources.
5. Overall, the Parties in Oceania are made up of many small island countries that are not only separated from one another by considerable distances but the islands that make up individual nations are often distant from each other. This can make regular communication difficult between the main island where the government is located and the surrounding islands. As a result, the cost of carrying out wetland surveys and monitoring increases, as well as the difficulties with the logistics for those works.
6. Whilst the great distances involved have been a hinderance to the implementation of the Convention in Oceania, it is fortunate that amongst the indigenous people of the Parties there is often a strong awareness of the importance of wetlands in their culture and

For reasons of economy, this document is printed in a limited number, and will not be distributed at the meeting. Delegates are requested to bring their copies to the meeting and not to request additional copies.

traditions, and these people often also own the land where the wetlands are situated. These Parties also recognize that the relationship between human health and wetlands is a critical issue for the region. The communities rely heavily on healthy wetlands as a key contributor to cultural, spiritual, and physical well-being and understand that wetlands are a key mechanism for maintaining healthy ecosystems, producing and supporting many of the services essential to human health (**Annex 1**). In Fiji, for example, various wetland programs are conducted because of their critical importance, such as coral reefs, mangroves and estuarine waters, in providing food and income for local people, the majority of whom are rural dwellers. These coastal wetlands are also important for commercial activities, thus their maintenance and protection is important to the social and economic life of the country.

7. In many of the Oceania Parties, the local communities still own or have customary rights over much of the land, especially where the wetlands are located. As a result, many of the Parties have made great efforts to work with these local stakeholders to gain their support for the implementing the Convention in Oceania. This is discussed further below.

1. Main achievements since COP9 and priorities for 2009-2011

New accessions and site designations

8. The number of Parties in Oceania has increased only slowly from 5 in 2002, to 6 in 2005, and now 7 in 2008. This represents some 3 to 4% of the world's total number of Parties during this six-year period. Fiji became the new Contracting Party during this triennium and the Convention came into force for Fiji on 11th August 2006.
9. Similarly, the growth in the number of wetlands being added to the Ramsar List has been very slow over the past six years. In 2002 (COP8), the region had 70 Ramsar sites, and this increased to only 74 sites in 2005 (COP9) and 75 sites in 2008 (COP10). This slow growth of sites in Oceania can also be seen when expressed as a percentage of the number of sites in the world, falling from 5.6% in 2002 to 4.6% in 2005 and now 4.2% in 2008. Of the total number of sites in Oceania, the majority (80%, 64 sites) are located in Australia, with another 8% (6 sites) being located in New Zealand. Relatively few sites (only 6) have been listed from the Pacific Island Parties. .

Status of Ramsar sites

10. Many of the Parties in Oceania have yet to send updated Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) as requested by the Conference of the Contracting Parties. However, we have received one update from Australia (with extension and another new designation) and one extension from New Zealand. RIS updates have yet to be received from Fiji (1), Palau (1), Papua New Guinea (2) and Samoa (1).
11. In February 2008 New Zealand extended the Waituna Ramsar site from around 3,500 hectares to around 20,000 ha and renamed it the Awarua Wetland. The site is now the largest protected wetland complex in the country.
12. None of the Ramsar sites from Oceania have yet been listed on the Montreux Record.

Improving mechanisms for wetland conservation

13. After Fiji acceded to the Convention in August 2006, the government appointed a Wetland Steering Committee to provide advice on wetlands to the Department of Environment (DOE), and they have also passed Environment Management Regulations (2008) which aim to address many of these threats to wetlands through mechanisms such as environmental impact assessment and control and management of waste and pollution.

Working with local communities

14. One of the issues in Oceania mentioned above is that many of the wetlands are managed by indigenous groups. In Fiji and Samoa, for example, over 80% of the land including wetlands is owned by the indigenous communities. As a result, Parties have been working closely with these communities to gain their support for the designation and sustainable management of wetlands and for the successful implementation of the Convention. For example:
 - **Marshall Islands** have been working to raise awareness of traditional leaders and mayors from selected atolls and islands that have mangrove forests, by engaging them in a national planning workshop. This resulted in many of these leaders requesting the RMIEPA (the Ramsar national focal point) to extend the project from Jaluit Atoll Conservation Area Ramsar site to their islands as well.
 - **New Zealand:** there is a growing public interest in conservation and wetlands in particular, indicated by the significant increase in the number of volunteers assisting in the management of the country's rare and threatened sites, including wetlands. To further involve public participation, the government is planning to establish a community advisory group at each Ramsar site and to encourage local initiatives within the framework of a long-term management strategy for the sites.

CEPA

15. Apart from indigenous communities, all the Parties that reported have also been carrying out CEPA activities to raise awareness of the importance of the wise use of wetlands for a broad spectrum of the community. Using the Marshall Islands as an example, this included conducting educational field trips for students, involving them in celebrations for the annual World Wetlands Day, carrying out replanting of mangrove seedlings by high school students in Jaluit Atoll Conservation Area Ramsar site, and entering into arts and essay competitions. The government has also established additional new focal points from the NGO and public information and education sectors, and it is hoped that this will improve the implementation of the Convention on the ground. There are also good examples from Fiji and Samoa of World Wetlands Day celebrations

Priorities for 2009-2011

General issues

16. Before discussing the more specific issues and priorities for the coming period (2009 – 2012), some general discussion need to be made based on comments in the National Reports received and the outcomes from the Oceania Regional Meeting in April 2008.

17. One of the three pillars of the Convention is that of the listing of Wetlands of International Importance. However, we can see from the results of Strategy 1.1, particularly the replies to Indicator 1.1.4a-b, that Parties feel that there is now a greater need to address adverse changes to the ecological character of both listed Ramsar sites and non-listed wetlands. This indicates that despite listing, wetland sites are continuing to be faced with threats and that even the degree of these threats is increasing. New Zealand, in its National Report, indicated that although legislation has been in place for the planning and management of wetlands, the deterioration of their wetlands still continues due to development pressures in the surrounding areas and land use change. However, it is now hoped that new legislation that has come into force in the past five years can control this decline. The problems with listed sites show that the Convention still has much work to do, especially in putting resources into the wise use and conservation of listed sites. This issue needs to be discussed in more detail with the Parties on how more effective management of sites can be achieved.
18. Apart from the challenges facing listed sites, there also appears to be slow progress in implementing other aspects of the Convention, such as:
 - developing and implementing management plans/strategies at all Ramsar sites (Indicator 2.3.2);
 - developing a National Action Plan for wetland CEPA at the subnational, catchment or local level (Indicator 4.4.2);
 - forming cross-sectoral National Ramsar/Wetland Committees – apart from Fiji, Marshall Islands has reported that they are using their existing National Biodiversity Steering Committee as their National Ramsar/Wetland Committee (Indicator 4.8.2).
19. However, this apparent slowness in progress is due to a number of reasons that are also a reflection of the unique challenges that the implementation of the Convention is facing in many parts of the world. These reasons include a lack of resources, whether it be human (Fiji), expertise or funding (Samoa) to implement the Convention. In the Marshall Islands, the remoteness of the various islands from the District Centre in Majuro already poses great difficulties in implementation, but it is compounded by a lack of funding to make site visits to these islands to encourage and support the people there in their conservation activities.
20. The Parties made some specific requests for training courses to build up the capacity of their staff, including the:
 - development of country-specific training courses on the Ramsar Convention about the obligations and expectations placed on various government departments (Fiji);
 - provision of training to Fijian inspectors and community representatives to monitor and police their own wetland areas, as more than 80% of land including wetlands in Fiji is owned by the indigenous community;
 - provision of training in techniques for conducting surveys of wetland resources and mapping of wetlands (Marshall Islands).
21. Whilst the International Organization Partners (IOPs) can assist in providing such training, Parties felt that additional funding was needed to improve training for on-the-ground wetland conservation in the region. Currently, there are not enough people working on the

practical implementation of wetland conservation in the region to ensure that the value that wetlands provide to the region is maintained for future generations. It was felt that the Convention should focus greater attention on developing a financial mechanism to support the implementation of its work in the Oceania region (**Annex 1**).

22. There was a consensus amongst Parties during their regional meeting in April 2008 that there is a need to establish a more active network to share information, experiences, challenges, solutions, new ideas and knowledge among Oceania Ramsar parties. Such information exchange would enhance the region's ability to designate Ramsar sites in the future, and would engender more frequent communication and interaction between parties in the region. The Parties considered that the Ramsar Secretariat and regional agencies, e.g. SPREP, could take a greater role in promoting closer collaboration, especially with traditional leaders who own many of the wetlands, as well as in promoting better coordination in exchanging and harmonizing data to enable more effective work on the ground. Parties also stated that it was more important to facilitate the engagement of Ramsar activities and principles for all countries in the Oceania region, as well as to encourage stronger engagement of Oceania Ramsar Parties to promote the appreciation and critical importance of wetlands, than focusing on the addition of Ramsar sites.
23. The sections below refer to more specific comments on priorities for the coming triennium.

New accessions and site designations

24. Work is being done to increase the number of countries joining the Convention in the period after COP10. Discussions are in progress with a number of Pacific Island States on their accession to the Convention.
 - **Kiribati:** Discussions are progressing well with the accession activities that were initiated through an SGF project. A draft cabinet briefing paper has already been produced and site boundaries demarcated.
 - **Nauru:** The cabinet has already approved accession to the Convention but the required documentation is still being finalized (including a landowner consent letter, RIS for their first Ramsar site, Buada Lagoon, and the instrument of accession).
 - **Tonga:** An SGF project was completed in 2006 to assist their accession to the Convention and the required documentation has been drafted. Approval is now needed from the cabinet.
 - **Tuvalu:** They have expressed keen interest in joining the Convention and initial discussions have commenced from July 2008.
25. Hopefully, with more countries joining the Convention, this will lead to more sites being listed. For example:
 - **Kiribati:** As part of the accession to the Convention, they are considering listing Noto village, in North Tarawa, as their first Ramsar site. A map showing accurate marine and terrestrial boundaries and a RIS for the site have already been drafted.
 - **Nauru** is considering designating Buada Lagoon as their first Ramsar site as they accede to the Convention.

26. Current Parties are also planning on listing additional sites in the coming years, including:
- **Marshall Islands** is developing a nomination for Madmad Mangrove Forest in Namdrik Atoll for 2008-09, and one in Mili Atoll in about 2011/12. A successful workshop was held in August 2007 with the community leaders, who were very supportive of the Convention and for listing their atolls.
 - **Samoa** is planning a second Ramsar site at a mangrove conservation area in Vaiusu Bay, and possibly considering two more sites on Savaii Island.
 - **Fiji:** Indigenous landowners are planning on designating their wetland area, which is a ridge to reef area with important mangroves (north of Vanua Levu), and they have sought the help of IUCN Oceania and SPREP to move this forward.

Status of Ramsar sites

27. In 2007, the New Zealand government initiated the Arawai Kākāriki project where funds were allocated for three wetland sites, two of which were Ramsar sites, to collect baseline information on how the wetlands worked, the major threats, and biodiversity composition. The data from the projects will be useful in helping to identify new areas where research and management could be targeted, and the lessons learnt would then be used to inform the management of other national wetland sites.

Improving mechanisms for wetland conservation

28. New Zealand is currently considering the potential role, composition and feasibility of establishing a National Wetlands Committee. At the moment, they are represented on the Australian Wetlands and Waterbirds Taskforce (WWTF).

CEPA and capacity building

29. **Fiji:** Logging and associated siltation of the river is a major concern. As villagers are carrying out the logging themselves, it is recommended that educational workshops are conducted, ensuring that logging is more selective (less removed) and that the villagers enforce a greater buffer zone around the rivers. This will be addressed under the SGF project that Japan is funding.

Implementation activities undertaken since COP9

GOAL 1. The wise use of wetlands

Strategy 1.1: National Wetland Inventories and assessment

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
1.1.1 Is National Wetland Inventory present?	Yes	Planned	In progress	Yes
1.1.2 Is wetland inventory data maintained and accessible to all?	Yes	No	Planned	Planned
1.1.3 Is the status and trends of the ecological character of wetlands available?	Yes	For some sites	For some sites	For some sites

1.1.4a If answer in 1.1.3 is 'Yes', how is the need to address adverse changes to the ecological character of Ramsar sites?	Greater	-	Greater	-
1.1.4b If answer in 1.1.3 is 'Yes', how is the need to address adverse changes to the ecological character of wetlands generally?	The same	-	Greater	-

30. Whilst there is recognition that comprehensive wetland inventories are important for decision making and planning at the national level, there continues to be a lack of such inventories to enable the formulation of government policies and interventions aimed at the conservation of wetlands (**Annex 1**). Although Parties may have the data that can contribute to the drafting of the National Wetland Inventories (NWI), data is often lacking (especially spatial data) and dispersed over a range of different reports produced by NGOs, institutions and government agencies; data are also fragmented and held by different agencies and organizations. Parties admitted that they need time to gather the data; verify its accuracy; conduct surveys where necessary in wetlands that have not yet been surveyed, or to collect any data that is missing or were wrongly recorded before; and then to compile it into a single, easily accessible database where stakeholders can search for the information. For example, New Zealand has a number of regional wetland databases that are available to stakeholders, and work is now underway to compile the data to produce a comprehensive NWI (*Indicator 1.1.1 and 1.1.2*).
31. The pilot update of part of Derek Scott's Directory of Wetlands in Oceania (1993) is currently wrapping up. This project aimed to update the wetland information contained in the first edition for Samoa, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, and Fiji. The updated information is important as it essentially forms a baseline for each of these island nations/territories from which comprehensive national wetland inventories can be developed. The information will be presented in database format as well as online.
32. New Zealand also reported they were carrying out ecological monitoring in their Ramsar sites on topics ranging from substrate quality, invertebrate, vegetation to waterbirds. The trends in these data over time provides an important indication of how the ecological character of the site is changing, and such trends from sites in New Zealand and Fiji are showing that the character of their sites were changing adversely – these Parties considered that greater steps were needed to reverse such trends (*Indicator 1.1.4a*). There were similar declining trends for the condition of undesignated wetlands in New Zealand but were not apparent for undesignated wetlands in Fiji (*Indicator 1.1.4b*). Unfortunately, no indications were given in the National Reports on the possible causes for the adverse changes in ecological character.

Strategy 1.2: National Wetland Policies and legislation

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
1.2.1 Is a National Wetland Policy in place?	No	In prep.	Yes	Yes
1.2.2 Does the Policy (or equivalent) incorporate any WSSD targets and actions?	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
1.2.3 Have wetland issues been incorporated into national strategies for sustainable development?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

1.2.4 Has the quantity and quality of water available to, and required by, wetlands been assessed?	Yes	In progress	Partly	Yes
1.2.5 Are Strategic Environmental Assessments practices applied when reviewing policies and plans that may impact on wetlands?	Yes	Partly	Partly	-

33. Whilst some Parties have clear National Wetland Policies (e.g., New Zealand), others are in the process of developing their policies, especially in wetland habitats that are of particular concern to them – for example, the Cabinet of the Marshall Islands is now reviewing their ‘Coastal Management Framework’. Other Parties may not be working towards developing a National Wetland Policy at the moment because they may have other mechanisms to protect their wetlands; e.g., Fiji is able to protect their important wetlands through their EIA legislation (*Indicator 1.2.1*). Samoa has a national biodiversity policy that also encompasses wetlands.
34. Whilst most of the Parties reported that their National Wetland Policy (or equivalent) also incorporated WSSD targets and actions, New Zealand went further and explained that they have drafted ‘The Sustainable Water Programme of Action 2006’, which incorporated WSSD targets and actions (*Indicator 1.2.2*).
35. Particularly encouraging was that all four reporting Parties said that they had incorporated wetland issues into national strategies for sustainable development. In Fiji, Marshall Islands and Samoa, this was done under their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans, and for New Zealand, it was incorporated in their Resource Management Act 1991. However, in terms of linking wetland issues with water policy and strategies, this could be improved in the Marshall Islands if the Ramsar NFP was a member of the national planning committee for these other national priority areas, since the members are not aware of the national obligations under the Ramsar Convention (*Indicator 1.2.3*).
36. Whilst Parties have been monitoring the quantity and quality of water in their wetlands, only New Zealand appears to be carrying out studies on assessing the quantity and quality of water **required** by wetlands, but these studies are at a very early stage (*Indicator 1.2.4*).
37. From their differences in responses, Parties appear to need further time to fully apply Strategic Environmental Assessments when reviewing policies and plans that may impact on wetlands. New Zealand mentioned, however, that most of their regional policy statements contain overall guidance for activities in relation to wetlands (*Indicator 1.2.5*).

Strategy 1.3: Wetland ecosystem services

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
1.3.1 Has assessment been made of the ecosystem services provided by Ramsar sites?	Yes	No	Partly	No
1.3.2 Have wise use wetland programmes/projects that contribute to poverty alleviation and/or food or water security plans been implemented?	Yes	Partly	Partly	Partly

1.3.3 Has national action been taken to implement the Guidelines for Global action on Peatlands (ResVIII.17)?	No	N.A.	Partly	Yes
1.3.4 Has national action been taken to apply the guiding principles on cultural values of wetlands (Res. VIII.19 & IX.21)?	Yes	Planned	Yes	Yes

38. Many of the local communities, institutions and NGOs in the Oceania region are aware of the importance of wetland systems in peoples' daily lives, such as food security, flood mitigation, as a source of water and for social and cultural values, as well as being important for biodiversity. Whilst some Parties have been able to conduct assessments of such benefits that their wetlands provide, e.g. Fiji and New Zealand, other Parties have found it more difficult because of the remoteness of the sites and the unavailability of transport, e.g., Marshall Islands (*Indicator 1.3.1*).
39. Certain Parties have been implementing programmes that contribute to water security plans, in particular, New Zealand, where water security (quantity and quality) and wetlands are becoming more of an issue as the demand for water increases. At certain wetlands, there are examples of multi-agency management to provide multiple use, e.g., water storage (flood control and irrigation), recreation, fisheries, and cultural enhancement (*Indicator 1.3.2*). Samoa has developed and finalised a Water Sector Plan and Framework for Action for the period 2008-2013
40. Many of the Pacific Islands do not have peatlands (e.g., Marshall Islands), and so *Indicator 1.3.3* will not be applicable to them. However, three of New Zealand's Ramsar sites are peatlands and they are applying the *Guidelines for Global action on Peatlands* (Resolution VIII.17).
41. Oceania Parties strongly value the use of traditional culture and knowledge in managing wetlands, and they are working to revive these techniques because they have enabled the people to sustain their livelihoods in balance with the natural environment for millennia. The people feel that their heritage is being lost forever and so want to nurture and restore it (**Annex 1**). As a result, all the Parties have been taking action to apply the *Guiding principles on cultural values of wetlands* (Resolutions VIII.19 and IX.21). In Fiji, this is done through projects initiated by the Department of Culture and Heritage in collaboration with NGOs and various institutions, whilst in New Zealand the cultural value of wetlands is strongly embedded in legislation and other mechanisms between the government and the indigenous people of the country (*Indicator 1.3.4*). Of particular interest is the Awarua Wetland Ramsar site in New Zealand where the indigenous people have cultural, spiritual, historical and traditional links to the site. These people's relationship with the area and dependence on it were, and still are, vital for the sustainable use of its precious resources. There are sacred sites and sacred treasures along the shores of the site, and it is possible that particular sections of the wetlands were used for water burial.

Strategy 1.4: Ramsar's water-related guidance

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
1.4.1 Has the Convention's water-related guidance (Res. IX.1. Annex C) been applied?	Yes	Partly	Yes	Planned

1.4.2 Have CEPA expertise and tools been incorporated into catchment/river basin planning and management?	Yes	No	Yes	Planned
1.4.3 Has the Convention's guidance on wetlands and coastal zone management (Annex to Res. VIII.4) been applied?	Yes	Partly	Partly	Planned
1.4.4 Have the implications for wetland conservation and wise use of national implementation of the Kyoto Protocol been assessed?	No	No	Partly	Yes

42. There is a great need for integrated policies on river basin management in the Pacific because of the close connection between freshwater, estuarine, and marine systems. There are pressures on the high island rivers due to increasing population, which quickly leads to pressures on the downstream estuaries, mangroves and coral reefs, the region's critical ecosystems. Coral reefs in particular are important sources of livelihoods for the peoples of the region. The connection between Pacific atoll freshwater lenses and their estuarine and marine areas is even closer. Maintaining a healthy connectivity is therefore critical in supporting the livelihoods of Pacific island communities (**Annex 1**).
43. Application of the Convention's water-related guidance (Resolution IX.1 Annex C) has been mixed, but where it has been used the Party has found that the Guidelines have been useful (e.g., the Marshall Islands). This is especially so when there is a need, e.g. in Fiji, to manage water resources sustainably in view of population increases and the need to ensure food security and poverty alleviation (*Indicator 1.4.1*).
44. A couple of the Parties have begun incorporating CEPA expertise and tools into catchment/river basin planning and management (*Indicator 1.4.2*). In Fiji, most of the population is located in catchments and so greater understanding of wetlands and their sustainable use is important in view of the increasing number of people in these areas. CEPA activity here is being implemented at various levels by government agencies, NGOs and institutions, using a range of tools for information dissemination. In New Zealand, the statutory planning processes allow for public participation in integrated catchment management plans, e.g., through public meetings, focus groups, community involvement, etc..
45. Some Parties have well developed systems to manage their wetlands and coastal zones that follow the Convention's guidelines (Annex to Resolution VIII.4). For example, Fiji has a National Coast Management Committee (NCMC) with members made up of government agencies, institutions, NGOs, industries such as tourist resorts, and local community representatives, and it is involved in managing coastal areas. The Convention guidelines on Coastal Zone Management are therefore part and parcel of activities carried out by the NCMC. In New Zealand when plans are prepared, many of the practices identified in the Guidelines are advocated for (*Indicator 1.4.3*).
46. Although climate change is a key issue for the region's wetlands, particularly given their vulnerability to its impacts (**Annex 1**), only Samoa reported that they had assessed the implications for the conservation and wise use of wetlands in view of the national implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. New Zealand is in the process of carrying out such an assessment through their national biodiversity strategy, whilst Fiji and the Marshall

Islands have yet to make such assessments (*Indicator 1.4.4*). Generally, though, the Parties in Oceania feel that the Convention should take a strong stance on climate change in order to convey a powerful message on the seriousness of its impacts (**Annex 1**).

Strategy 1.5: Wetland restoration and rehabilitation

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
1.5.1 Have wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes or projects been implemented?	Yes	Planned	Yes	Planned
1.5.2 Has the Convention's guidelines on wetland restoration (Annex to Res. VIII.16) been applied?	Yes	Planned	Partly	Planned

47. Fiji reported that they were active in the restoration and rehabilitation of their wetlands, especially coastal wetlands, such as coral reefs, mangroves and estuarine waters because of their importance for the local rural people in providing food, but also because those areas are important for economic activities and so contribute to the socio-economic life of the country. The New Zealand government also conducts a range of wetland restoration and rehabilitation projects, often in conjunction with the local community, NGOs or research agencies. Interestingly, New Zealand also has a Web-based community database that brings together a large number of projects from the country to promote exchange of information on wetland restoration and rehabilitation (*Indicator 1.5.1*). There have been some mangrove restoration activities carried out for Samoa as well.
48. The Ramsar guidance on wetland restoration (Annex to Resolution VIII.16) has been used by both Fiji and New Zealand and has been reported to have influenced the development of the wetland management process in New Zealand and Australia (*Indicator 1.5.2*). A private New Zealand environmental company is now planning to produce a wetland restoration handbook (2005-2013).

Strategy 1.6: Invasive alien species in wetland systems

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
1.6.1 Have national responses to threats from invasive species, especially in wetlands, been developed and implemented?	No	Partly	Partly	Yes
1.6.2 Have such responses been carried out in cooperation with the focal point of other conventions and international organisations?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

49. Many Parties appreciate the problems of invasive species in wetlands. For example, in Fiji, there is a growing problem with the exotic 'tilapia' which was introduced as a food fish but is now a pest and a threat to the native fish species that indigenous communities have relied upon as food for centuries. Although the Fijian government does not have a clear policy to address invasive species, NGOs and local universities are taking action against them. Both Samoa and New Zealand have developed and are implementing a national response to threats from invasive species in their wetlands, with that from New Zealand appearing to be a better developed system. This is because they are tackling the problems at the borders through customs control as well as within the country itself, and they have

developed strategies to tackle invasive species in particular wetland types, e.g., freshwater habitats, as well as targeting particular invasive species groups, e.g., weeds and fish such as koi carp and gambusia, which have now been eliminated in some areas (*Indicator 1.6.1*).

50. In tackling invasive species, some Parties (e.g., Samoa) have been collaborating with international NGOs (Conservation International) and regional organizations (SPREP), whilst other Parties (e.g., New Zealand) have been aligning their work with the Convention on Biological Diversity and the World Heritage Convention; as well as the Convention on Migratory Species (*Indicator 1.6.2*).

GOAL 2. Wetlands of International Importance

Strategy 2.1: Strategic Framework for Ramsar site designation

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
2.1.1 Have a strategy and priorities been established for future designation of Ramsar sites, using the Strategic Framework for the Ramsar List?	Planned	Yes	Partly	Planned

51. The New Zealand government is currently working with a range of academics and private environmental consultants to map and prioritise freshwater sites (i.e., rivers, lakes, inland palustrine and saline wetlands, and rare ecosystems) where restoration and conservation efforts should be directed in future, to enable more effective use of resources. Ramsar Criteria were used to assess ecosystem importance for biodiversity. In 2007, a book entitled 'Wetlands of New Zealand' was published that listed several sites that were identified as 'Ramsars in waiting' including Whataroa Ecological Region Wetland Complex, Mangarakau Wetland, Paparua Karst Wetland, Wairau River, Lake Wairarapa, Kaipara Harbour, Ohiwa Harbour and Te Henga Swamp. Other wetlands include Kaitoke wetland, Whangapoa, Harbour and Manukau Harbour.
52. The Marshall Islands are working to establish two more Ramsar sites in the coming years (Madmad Mangrove Forest, Namdrik Atoll in 2008-09, and Mili Atoll around 2011-12), whilst Fiji and Samoa are planning to develop priorities for future designation of Ramsar sites (*Indicator 2.1.1*)

Strategy 2.2: Maintaining and updating Ramsar Site Information Service

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
2.2.1 Have all required updates of the RISs been submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
2.2.2 Are the Ramsar Site Information Service and its database used in implementation of the Convention?	Yes	Planned	Partly	Planned

53. Most of the reporting Oceania Parties had updated their RISs and had submitted them to the Secretariat (*Indicator 2.2.1*). However, it seems that few Parties fully use the Ramsar Site Information Service and its database to help them in implementing the Convention. Whilst

New Zealand Ramsar site managers use the Ramsar Web site for guidance, the government of Fiji's Department of Fisheries and Department of Agriculture have their own separate database available to them (*Indicator 2.2.2*).

Strategy 2.3: Maintaining the ecological character of Ramsar sites

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
2.3.1 Have measures required to maintain the ecological character of all Ramsar sites been defined and applied?	Yes	Partly	Planned	Defined only
2.3.2 Have management plans/strategies been developed and implemented at all Ramsar sites?	Yes	Planned	Some sites	Planned
2.3.3 Have cross-sectoral site management committees been established at Ramsar sites?	No	Yes	Some sites	Planned
2.3.4 Has any assessment of Ramsar management effectiveness been carried out?	Yes	No	Some sites	No

54. Parties were at different stages in the process of defining and applying measures to maintain the ecological character of their Ramsar sites. Even within countries, e.g., New Zealand, some sites had prepared operational plans and were applying them to maintain the ecological character the site. Other sites had only developed or were planning to develop their plans (*Indicator 2.3.1*).
55. Similarly with management strategies, Parties were at different stages of developing and implementing the plans for their sites. Fiji gave an account of how their only Ramsar site (Upper Navua Conservation Area) was leased to a commercial company that uses the waters for rafting and scenic tours. The company had drafted a management plan which included the establishment of a 200-metre buffer zone on each side of the river and streams, where activities were only allowed that were not detrimental to the protection of the wildlife of the area and ensured the maintenance of ecological services of the whole ecosystem (*Indicator 2.3.2*).
56. The success of that example from Fiji is heavily dependent on a good working relation between various government agencies under the Fiji National Wetland Steering Committee, rather than a separate cross-sectoral management committee set up specially for the site. However, such site specific management committees have been established for the sole site in the Marshall Islands, and for more than half of the sites in New Zealand. Samoa is planning to establish such as committee for its only site (*Indicator 2.3.3*).
57. The site in Fiji and all the sites in New Zealand are subject to regular reviews of the effectiveness of their site management. The New Zealand sites incorporate government operational programmes which include annual performance reporting to assess their management effectiveness. In addition, all pest and weed operational programmes are required to provide operational reports and five-yearly reviews. The Marshall Islands and Samoa have yet to set up an assessment system (*Indicator 2.3.4*).

Strategy 2.4: Monitoring condition of Ramsar sites

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
2.4.1 Are arrangements in place for the AA to be informed of changes, or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar sites (Article 3.2)?	Yes	No	Some sites	Yes
2.4.2 Have all cases of change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar sites been reported to the Secretariat (Article 3.2)?	Yes	No	Some sites	Yes
2.4.3 If applicable, have actions been taken to address the issues for which Ramsar sites have been listed on the Montreux Record?	Not applicable	No	Not applicable	No

58. Most of the Parties reporting had arrangements for the Administrative Authorities to be informed of changes, or likely changes, to the gross ecological character to their sites. In addition, New Zealand also mentioned that they conducted coordinated wetland monitoring at two of their sites and that water quality monitoring was conducted at all of their sites. This would allow for finer assessment of any trends in the ecological character of the sites (*Indicator 2.4.1*).
59. Although the mechanism was available, none of the Parties that supplied their National Reports reported significant ecological changes to their sites because, presumably, such change did not occur (*Indicator 2.4.2*).
60. As none of the Parties in Oceania have sites on the Montreux Record, *Indicator 2.4.3* was not applicable.

Strategy 2.5: Management of shared wetlands and hydrological basins

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
2.5.1 Have all transboundary/shared wetland systems been identified?	Not applicable	Planned	Not applicable	Not applicable
2.5.2 Is effective cooperative management in place for shared wetland systems (including regional site and waterbird flyway networks)?	Not applicable	No	Yes	Not applicable

61. As nearly all of the Parties in Oceania are island states, *Indicator 2.5.1* is not applicable to them. However, as the wetlands in some of the Parties are essential for certain migratory wildlife species, especially migratory waterbirds in the East Asian–Australasian Flyway, there is a need for cooperative management of those wetlands (*Indicator 2.5.2*). New Zealand has been a member of the East Asian–Australasian Flyway group that promotes a coordinated approach to the wise use of the wetlands used by these migratory waterbirds, as well as research and conservation of the waterbirds themselves.

Strategy 2.6: Support existing and promote new regional initiatives in Oceania

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
2.6.1 Has the Party been involved in the development of a regional initiative under the framework of the Convention?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

62. Most of the Parties in Oceania have been involved in some form of regional initiatives (Indicator 2.6.1):

Regional initiatives under the framework of the Convention

63. The Pacific Island Countries (PICs), especially Fiji, Marshall Islands and Samoa, have all been involved with the Pacific Islands Wetlands Initiative which was approved at COP9. This initiative has a number of components, including:
- *Update of the 1993 Directory of Wetlands of Oceania.* This is a pilot targeting the wetlands in four particular PICs (Fiji, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia and Samoa), and is nearing completion.
 - *Wetland Managers Workshop.* This is being co-funded by the French government and co-organized with IUCN Oceania.

Regional initiatives outside the framework of the Convention

64. Most of the countries in Oceania are members of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP), which aims to protect and manage the environment and natural resources of the Pacific region.
65. Work is ongoing to develop a Pacific mangrove initiative together with IUCN Oceania and other partners. A concept proposal of the initiative has been developed and is being presented to potential donors for support.
66. The Marshall Islands has joined the other Pacific Island Countries and Territories of the Micronesia Subregion to establish a network group on invasive species. Under the Micronesian Challenge, the Marshall Islands has committed to setting aside marine and terrestrial areas (which include wetlands) for conservation and resource protection.

GOAL 3. International cooperation

Strategy 3.1: Collaboration with other institutions

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
3.1.1 Are mechanisms in place at the national level for collaboration between the Ramsar AA and the focal points of other MEAs?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3.1.2 Are the national focal points of other MEAs invited to participate in the National Ramsar/Wetland Committee	Yes	Planned	Planned	Yes

67. In all the Parties that reported, there is collaboration at the national level between the Ramsar AA and the focal points of other MEAs (*Indicator 3.1.1*). However, it is only in Fiji and Samoa where the National Focal Points (NFP) of other MEAs are invited to participate in the National Ramsar/Wetland Committee (*Indicator 3.1.2*)
68. In Fiji, the NFP for Ramsar is the same as that for CBD, CITES, UNFCCC, CMS and regional conservation agreements. Fiji also has a National Environment Council (NEC) which meets quarterly and discusses Fiji's obligations to Ramsar and other MEAs. Issues on Fiji's wetlands are therefore not isolated as they are part and parcel of matters discussed in various other environmental committees before it comes up to the NEC.
69. For the Marshall Islands, a national committee is being established consisting of the NFPs of the different MEAs, working as a national team to coordinate their efforts as the work of these MEAs are interrelated, if not overlapping in some areas. However, the work of the committee needs to be improved as it is not as active as it used to be.
70. In Samoa, data and reports are shared between MEAs as they all have the same objectives.

Strategy 3.2: Sharing of expertise and information

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
3.2.1 Have networks, including twinning arrangements, been established for knowledge sharing and training for wetlands that share common features?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
3.2.2 Has information about the country's wetlands and/or Ramsar sites and their status been made publicly available?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

71. Not all the Parties in Oceania have fully established networks for knowledge sharing and training for wetland but for those that do have, there are a range of interesting networks. For example, the Marshall Islands organized a successful workshop to establish communication with the traditional leaders and mayors of several atolls in the country that have the potential to become Ramsar sites in the future. It was agreed that the government would continue the momentum to share information with the leaders and to conduct future workshops in their respective atolls to make their people aware of the needs to protect wetlands. In New Zealand, local networks have been established by wetland specialists, government officials as well as specially formed trusts (i.e. the New Zealand Wetland Trust) to share information about wetlands and to provide training. Another trust, the Miranda Naturalist Trust (Firth of Thames Ramsar site) has also signed a MoU with the Yalu Jiang National Nature Reserve in China, part of which involves staff exchanges between the two sites as well as the New Zealand side providing support for shorebird site surveys and training at Yalu Jiang (*Indicator 3.2.1*).
72. All of the Parties that reported said that they have made information about the country's wetlands and/or Ramsar sites publicly available through a range of means, such as local newspapers, television programs, books, workshops, and World Wetland Day activities (*Indicator 3.2.2*).

GOAL 4. Implementation capacity**Strategy 4.1: Local communities, indigenous people, and cultural values**

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
4.1.1 Has resource information been compiled on local communities' and indigenous people's participation in wetland management?	Yes	Yes	Partly	Planned
4.1.2 Have traditional knowledge and management practices in relation to wetlands been documented and their application encouraged?	Partly	Planned	Partly	Yes
4.1.3 Does the Party promote public participation in decision-making, especially with local stakeholder involvement in selecting new Ramsar sites and in the site management?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4.1.4 Have educational and training activities been developed concerning cultural aspects of wetlands?	Yes	Planned	Partly	Yes
4.1.5 Have cultural values of wetlands been included in the management planning of Ramsar sites and other wetlands?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

73. Fiji and the Marshall Islands both reported having compiled resource information on indigenous people's participation in wetland management, with Fiji saying that this work was done by relevant government agencies as well as NGOs and institutions. In New Zealand, it is mainly universities and consultants who have taken the lead in conducting such compilation work rather than the government (*Indicator 4.1.1*).
74. A number of Parties are fully or partially encouraging the application of traditional wetland knowledge and management practices in their countries (*Indicator 4.1.2*). In New Zealand, this encouragement is being done through financial mechanisms such as funds, e.g.,
- The Maturanga Kura Taio fund, which seeks to support and improve the retention of traditional Maori knowledge about indigenous biodiversity and its use in managing biodiversity, and
 - The Nga Whenua Maori fund, that assists Maori in undertaking biodiversity enhancement projects on Maori-owned land.
75. Maori are also encouraged to use traditional knowledge to monitor their wetlands through the development of a Cultural Health Index which they can use to assess the cultural and biological health of a stream or catchment and then communicate this information to water managers so that it can be integrated into the management processes.
76. All the Parties that reported said that they promoted local stakeholder involvement when selecting new Ramsar sites and in the management of those sites (*Indicator 4.1.3*). In New Zealand, the need for such consultation is included in treaties between the government and the indigenous people, e.g. the Treaty of Waitangi, and through special programmes, e.g., the 'Conservation with Communities' programme.

77. Fiji, Samoa and New Zealand have developed educational and training activities on cultural aspects of wetlands, with the latter reporting that they had included cultural aspects in their wetland education kits (*Indicator 4.1.4*).
78. All the Parties also reported that they included the cultural values of wetlands in the management planning of Ramsar sites and other wetlands (*Indicator 4.1.5*). In the Marshall Islands, such activity was carried out for management planning of Jaluit Atoll Conservation Area/Ramsar site. In New Zealand, the Treaty of Waitangi ensures that in all government projects, local Maori are consulted and brought into all stages of the decision making process at all levels.

Strategy 4.2: Private sector involvement

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
4.2.1 Is the private sector encouraged to apply the wise use principle in activities and investments concerning wetlands?	Yes	-	Yes	Partly
4.2.2 Have private-sector "Friends of Wetlands" fora or similar mechanisms been established?	Yes	-	Yes	Partly

79. The activities of the private sector, e.g., farmers, industrialists, property developers, etc., has an important influence in ensuring the wise use of wetlands, and so it is important to work with the private sector to gain their support for wetland conservation. However, this is not always easily done. In the case of Fiji, control over the private sector at this stage may only be achieved through newly established environmental legislation on pollution and EIA. Similarly in New Zealand, legislation is needed to encourage private land owners to covenant their land in order to protect their biodiversity value (*Indicator 4.2.1*).
80. In Fiji, support from the private sector is gained through giving them representation on committees overseeing the protection and sustainable use of wetlands and their natural biological resources. In New Zealand, the private sector is invited to attend the biennial wetland symposium, as well as through numerous 'Friends of Wetland' groups (*Indicator 4.2.2*).

Strategy 4.3: Measures to promote wetland wise use

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
4.3.1 Have actions been taken to promote incentive measures which encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands?	Partly	Yes	Yes	Planned
4.3.2 Have actions been taken to remove perverse incentive measures which discourage conservation and wise use of wetlands?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

81. Not all the Parties in Oceania have fully taken action to provide incentives to encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands but for those that have, there is a range of such incentives. For example in Fiji, such incentives will be provided in the country's new environmental legislation, e.g., on environmental impact assessment, for projects that

protect wetlands. Then in New Zealand, many of the regional councils provide funding for the protection and restoration of wetlands, offer a free advisory and project management service, provide plants for riparian margins, and have guides on managing wetlands. The country has also established a number of funds to encourage the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity (*Indicator 4.3.1*). Community trust funds have been developed for some important wetland areas in Samoa (with the assistance of Conservation International)

82. Few Parties reported there being perverse incentive measures in their country that discouraged the conservation and wise use of wetlands, and so *Indicator 4.3.2* may not be applicable. However, Fiji reported that with the passing of their Environment Management Act (2005), many government projects became subject to the EIA process. Previously, government agencies such as the Public Works Department (PWD) had the right to build and maintain roads in ways that had negatively impacted wetlands, but this would not now be possible under the new Act.

Strategy 4.4: Communication, Education, and Public Awareness Programme (CEPA)

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
4.4.1 Has a mechanism for planning and implementing wetland CEPA been established for both CEPA Government and NGO National Focal Point (NFP) involvement?	Yes	Planned	Planned	Planned
4.4.2 Has a National Action Plan for wetland CEPA (or at the subnational, catchment or local level) been developed?	Planned	No	Planned	Yes
4.4.3 Have actions been taken to communicate and share information cross-sectorally on wetland issues amongst relevant ministries, departments and agencies?	Yes	Planned	Yes	Planned
4.4.4 Have national campaigns, programmes, and projects been carried out to raise community awareness of the ecosystem benefits/services provided by wetlands?	Yes	Yes	Partly	Planned
4.4.5 Have World Wetland Day activities in the country been carried out?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4.4.6 Have education centres been established at Ramsar sites and other wetlands?	Yes	Planned	Planned	Planned

83. Fiji was the only Party to report that they have established a mechanism for planning and implementing wetland CEPA for both CEPA Government and NGO National Focal Point involvement, but the other Parties said that they were planning to establish such mechanisms (*Indicator 4.4.1*).
84. In the case of an action plan for wetland CEPA (at the national, subnational, catchment or local level), only Samoa reported that they have developed such a plan, whilst Fiji and New Zealand were planning to do so (*Indicator 4.4.2*). In the case of New Zealand, CEPA action plans for site-based wetland projects is currently being developed for three sites to trial, and once tested, refined and adopted, this template will be available for use at other sites.

85. Fiji and New Zealand have been more active in taking action to communicate and share information cross-sectorally on wetland issues amongst relevant ministries, departments and agencies (*Indicator 4.4.3*). In Fiji, such communication is done through the National Taskforce in Education and Awareness, whilst in New Zealand this is done through their Department of Conservation. The Ministry for Environment also has a ‘Sustainable Plan of Action for Water’ which is an across-agency national programme involving both central and local government.
86. Parties have generally carried out national campaigns, programmes, and projects to raise community awareness of the ecosystem benefits/services provided by wetlands. Of particular interest is that in the Marshall Islands, where there is a weekly radio program that discusses activities related to conservation and the wise use of wetlands for the general public. Then in New Zealand, biennial wetland symposia are organized by multiple agencies, landowners and community groups to provide a forum for knowledge exchange, training and networking for a range of wetland stakeholders from across the country. The programme caters for all, including plenary and technical sessions, as well as soapbox, practical sessions and fieldtrips with practical training on site (e.g., coordinated wetland monitoring training) and environmental education (*Indicator 4.4.4*).
87. All the Parties have carried out World Wetland Day activities in their countries involving government (national, regional and local), NGOs, and local communities, and using material provided by the Secretariat as well as those produced locally (*Indicator 4.4.5*).
88. Parties either already have education centres established at their Ramsar sites and other wetlands, or else are planning them (*Indicator 4.4.6*). In Fiji, an education center has been established at their first Ramsar site whilst other government agencies have established similar centres containing information on wetlands that are easily accessed by students and the public. In New Zealand, education centres currently exist at the Firth of Thames Ramsar site and Travis wetland, while centres are being planned at two more Ramsar Sites (Whangamarino wetland and the Manawatu Estuary).

Strategy 4.5: International support for the conservation and wise use of wetlands

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
4.5.1 [For Parties with development assistance agencies] Has funding support been provided from the development assistance agency for wetland conservation and management in other countries?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
4.5.2 [For Parties in receipt of development assistance only] Has funding support been mobilized from development assistance agencies for in-country wetland conservation and management?	No	No	Not applicable	No

89. As one of the more developed countries in Oceania, New Zealand has been providing funding support for wetland conservation and management in other countries (*Indicator 4.5.1*). Apart from their international contributions, e.g., to the Global Environment Facility Fund, they also provide financial support regionally, such as to the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), and they have also supported a

wetland restoration and conservation project in Samoa (Apolima Fou marsh conservation project).

90. Over the years, various forms of assistance have been provided to Pacific Island Country Parties from agencies such as UNDP (GEF), UNEP (GEF), Conservation International, AUSAID, and NZAID that have contributed to in-country wetland conservation and management both directly and indirectly.

Strategy 4.6: Financial contributions for the conservation and wise use of wetlands

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
4.6.1a For the last triennium have Ramsar contributions been paid in full and in a timely manner (by 31 March of calendar year)?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
4.6.1b If "No" in 4.6.1 a), please clarify what plan is in place to ensure future prompt payment:	-	Need to work more closely with Min. of Foreign Affairs for prompt payment.	-	-
4.6.2a. Has any additional financial support been provided through voluntary contributions to the Ramsar Small Grant Fund or other non-core funded Convention activity?	No	Yes	No	No
4.6.2b If yes, please state the amounts:	-	-	-	-

91. Most of the Oceania Parties were able to pay their Ramsar contributions for the last triennium in full and in a timely manner, i.e., by 31 March (*Indicator 4.6.1a*). For the Party where there was a delay in payment, this was explained by the need to work more closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in future, which is responsible for paying the membership contributions of all conventions that their country is a member of. The Party also requested the Secretariat to forward the invoices for annual contributions at least three months before payment is due, or even earlier.
92. As many of the countries in Oceania that reported are on the DAC list, it is not surprising that most said that they had not provided any additional voluntary financial contributions to the Convention, such as for the Small Grants Fund (*Indicator 4.6.2a*). However, there are some Parties that have developed economies, and so it is hoped they will be able to make voluntary contributions to the Convention for its work.

Strategy 4.7: Using National Reports to monitor implementation of the Convention

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
4.7.1 Has the Party used its previous Ramsar National Reports in monitoring its implementation of the Convention?	No	No	Partly	Planned

93. One of the Oceania Parties explained the value of the Ramsar National Reports in providing an opportunity to do a stocktake of activities in wetland management nationally; to assess the effectiveness of management actions at wetlands; and to assess the implementation of national obligations under the Ramsar Convention. Despite this importance, though, few of the Oceania Parties have fully utilized the National Reports in monitoring their implementation of the Convention (Indicator 4.7.1). Parties are therefore strongly encouraged to make greater use of their National Reports.

Strategy 4.8: National Wetland Committees

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
4.8.1 Has a review of national institutions responsible for the conservation and wise use of wetlands been completed?	Planned	Yes	No	In progress
4.8.2 Is a National Ramsar/Wetlands cross-sectoral Committee in place and operational?	Yes	Planned	Planned	Planned

94. Few of the reporting Parties from Oceania, except the Marshall Islands, have made a review of national institutions responsible for the conservation and wise use of wetlands (*Indicator 4.8.1*), and few have established a cross-sectoral National Ramsar/Wetlands Committee (*Indicator 4.8.2*). However, the Marshall Islands has formed a broader national biodiversity committee that also deals with Ramsar/wetlands issues.

Strategy 4.9: Working with International Organization Partners (IOPs)

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
4.9.1 Has your country received assistance from one or more of the Convention's IOPs in its implementation of the Convention?	Yes	Yes	No	No
4.9.2 Has your country provided assistance to one or more of the Convention's IOPs?	Yes	No	Yes	No

95. The Convention is fortunate to be able to have five International Organizational Partners (IOPs) assist the Parties in the implementation of the Convention. In many cases, these IOPs can provide experts with the technical skills, or assist in finding financial support, for a wide range of wetland-related activities in the territory of Parties which may otherwise be difficult to find.
96. It appears that whilst some Oceania Parties have formed good working relations with the Convention's IOPs, e.g. Fiji and New Zealand, time is still needed for that relationship to grow in other Parties. These relations may be in the form of the Party receiving small grant projects from the IOP, e.g. Fiji, or the Party providing expert advice to the IOP on particular groups of wildlife, e.g. New Zealand providing advice to IUCN and in particular the Species Survival Commission, on wetland birds.

Strategy 4.10: Wetland training needs

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Western Samoa
4.10.1 Has your country provided support to, or participated in, the development of regional wetland training and research centres?	Yes	Planned	Yes	No
4.10.2 Has an assessment of national and local training needs for the implementation of the Convention, including in the use of the Wise Use Handbooks, been made?	Yes	Planned	Partly	Planned
4.10.3 Have opportunities for wetland site manager training in the country been provided?	Yes	Planned	Yes	No

97. Of the Oceania Parties, New Zealand has been particularly active in developing regional wetland training. Each year, they send a delegation to China to undertake training of national park rangers in shorebird site surveys and management. Chinese rangers have also visited New Zealand twice for practical, hands-on work experience (*Indicator 4.10.1*). However, generally, training happens at the local level with workshops on topics such as plant identification and weed management.
98. Fiji, Marshall Islands and New Zealand have made assessments of national and local training needs for the implementation of the Convention. In New Zealand, training needs assessment is undertaken as part of individual staff performance assessment and career development to identify skill gaps and training needs. However, training requirements for implementation of the Convention have not been specifically examined (*Indicator 4.10.2*).
99. Certain Parties such as New Zealand are able to provide in-country training for their wetland staff as well as allow those staff to attend international conferences and to gain experience by working with wetland scientists from other countries. However, other Parties (e.g., Marshall Islands) have trouble finding funds to carry out such capacity training for their wetland staff based on the training needs in the country which have been identified (*Indicator 4.10.3*).

Annex 1

KEY MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 4th OCEANIA REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR COP10 10 – 11 APRIL 2008, Apia, Samoa

The 4th Oceania Regional Preparatory Meeting for COP10 (ORM-4) was attended by a total of 24 participants, according to the following breakdown:

- 13 participants representing the 7 member countries in the Oceania region;
- One participant representing a non-party Pacific Island country nearing accession to the convention, Kiribati.
- 10 participants representing international organizations, academic institutions and regional organizations and Ramsar international partner organizations.

The meeting discussed issues and challenges (administrative, technical and scientific) in implementing the Ramsar Convention at the regional and national levels, as well as priorities and assistance needed to enhance the implementation of the Convention in the region over the next three years.

Key messages from the meeting

1. The relationship between human health and wetlands is a critical issue for the region. Communities rely heavily on healthy wetlands as a key contributor to cultural, spiritual, and physical well being. Wetlands are a key mechanism for maintaining healthy ecosystems, which produce and support many of the services essential to human health. A healthy wetland means a healthy community.
2. Climate change is a key issue for the region's wetlands, particularly given their vulnerability to its impacts. A strong stance by the Convention on climate change is welcomed in order to convey a powerful message on the seriousness of its impacts.
3. The connection between freshwater, estuarine and marine systems in the Pacific is very close. Pressure on high island rivers quickly leads to pressure on their estuaries and coral reefs. The connection between Pacific atoll freshwater lenses and their estuarine and marine areas is even closer. Maintaining healthy connectivity is critical in supporting the livelihoods of Pacific island communities.
4. In some high islands of the region, the most vulnerable wetlands are in the coastal and marine zones, particularly mangroves and coral reefs that are under constant pressure from development. Highlighting the connectivity of these critical wetlands would ensure that the consequences of development are well understood.
5. Coral reefs are a very high priority throughout the region, particularly as 2008 is the International Year of the Coral Reef. The Oceania region contains 25% of the world's coral reefs, and they are an important source of livelihoods for the peoples of the region.
6. Extractive industries have major implications for wetlands in the Oceania region, especially island ecosystems that are fragile and particularly vulnerable to damage. In particular, coral

mining/extraction is of great concern to the region. It has been difficult for national governments and conservation efforts to compete with these industries.

7. Integrated catchment management and other integrated planning processes are important for the conservation and management of the region's wetlands, particularly for mangroves and coral reefs, the region's critical wetland ecosystems.
8. Strengthening the application of cultural knowledge and traditional conservation methods is needed to revive the way in which wetland sites are managed in the region. The traditional knowledge and practices of the Oceania region have enabled our peoples to sustain our livelihoods in balance with the natural environment for millennia, we need to nurture and restore these aspects of our heritage as they are under threat of being lost forever. This will foster self-reliance and the documentation and sharing of experiences.
9. Additional funding is needed to improve training for on-the-ground wetland conservation in the region. Currently, there are not enough people working on the practical implementation of wetland conservation in the region to ensure the value that wetlands provide to the region is maintained for future generations. The Convention should focus greater attention on developing a financial mechanism to support the implementation of its work in the Oceania region.
10. Coordination is a key issue for the Ramsar Secretariat and other organizations. There needs to be better coordination in exchanging and harmonizing data to enable more effective work on the ground.
11. Wetland inventory is important for decision making and planning at the national level. However, there continues to be a lack of wetland inventory to enable the formulation of government policies and interventions aimed at the conservation of wetlands.
12. Establishing a more active network to share information, experiences, challenges, solutions, new ideas and knowledge between Oceania Ramsar parties is needed. Such information would enhance the region's ability to nominate Ramsar sites in the future, and would engender more frequent communication and interaction between parties in the region.
13. There is a need to facilitate the engagement of Ramsar activities and principles for all countries in the Oceania region and stronger engagement of Oceania Ramsar parties to promote the appreciation and critical importance of wetlands, rather than focusing on the addition of Ramsar sites.

Annex 2

General overview of countries' answers to selected indicators

(☼ = Implemented; ★ = in progress or planned; ▲ = to be implemented)

	Fiji	Marshall Islands	New Zealand	Samoa
1.1.1 Is National Wetland Inventory present?	☼	★	★	☼
1.2.1 Is a National Wetland Policy in place?	▲	☼	☼	-
1.2.3 Have wetland issues been incorporated into national strategies for sustainable development?	☼	☼	☼	☼
1.5.1 Have wetland restoration/ rehabilitation programmes or projects been implemented?	☼	★	☼	★
2.2.1 Have all required updates of the RISs been submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat?	☼	★	☼	☼
2.3.1 Have measures required to maintain the ecological character of Ramsar sites been defined and applied?	☼	★	★	★
2.3.2 Have management plans/ strategies been developed and implemented at all Ramsar sites?	☼	★	★	★
2.3.3 Have cross-sectoral site management committees been established at Ramsar sites?	▲	☼	★	★
2.3.4 Has any assessment of Ramsar management effectiveness been carried out?	☼	▲	★	▲
2.4.2 Have all cases of change, or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar sites been reported to the Secretariat?	☼	▲	★	☼
3.1.1 Are mechanisms in place for collaboration between the Ramsar AA and the focal points of other MEAs?	☼	☼	☼	☼
4.4.2 Has a National Action Plan for wetland CEPA been developed?	★	▲	★	▲
4.4.5 Have World Wetland Day activities been carried out?	☼	☼	☼	☼
4.4.6 Have education centres been established at Ramsar sites and other wetlands?	☼	★	★	★
4.6.1a For the last triennium have Ramsar contributions been paid in full and in a timely manner?	☼	▲	☼	☼
4.7.1 Has the Party used its previous National Reports in monitoring its implementation of the Convention?	▲	▲	★	★
4.8.2 Is a National Ramsar/Wetlands cross-sectoral Committee in place and operational?	☼	★	★	★
4.10.2 Has an assessment of training needs been made?	☼	★	★	★

Summary of country's achievements in implementation	Most indicators implemented	Some indicators implemented	Some indicators implemented	Some indicators implemented
--	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

Annex 3

Summary statistics

The table provides a general overview of the Strategies from the the document “A framework for the implementation of the Convention’s strategic plan 2003-2008 in the 2006-2008 period” briefly analysed above. Where possible, the table compares information provided in National Reports to COP8 with those provided to COP10 in order to assess progress during the triennium. Insufficient National Reports were received on time before COP9 to make an analysis of the progress implementation at that stage.

The table also shows if particular actions are more (or less) widely addressed in the Oceania region, compared to the global average; based on the percentages of the Contracting Parties having answered positively. (Abbreviations: (★ = Significant progress; ★ = some progress; ▲ = regression)

Strate gy	Indicator	Affirmative countries in Oceania at (COP 8)	Affirmative countries in Oceania (COP10)	Affirmative countries globally (COP10)	Progress since COP8
1.1	Inventory and Assessment country has a comprehensive national wetland inventory (1.1.1.)	0%	50%	37%	★
1.2	Policy and legislation National Wetland Policy (or equivalent instrument) in place (1.2.1)	67%	50%	40%	★
	wetland issues incorporated into national strategies for sustainable development (1.2.3)	100%	100%	46%	★
1.5	Wetland restoration and rehabilitation wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes or projects implemented (1.5.1)	0%	50%	66%	★
2.1	Ramsar site designation strategy and priorities established for further designation of Ramsar sites, using the Strategic Framework for the Ramsar List (2.1.1)	67%	25%	50%	▲
2.4	Condition of Ramsar sites all cases of change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar sites been reported to the Ramsar Secretariat (Article 3.2) (2.4.2)	67%	50%	20%	★
3.1	Collaboration mechanisms in place at the national level for collaboration between the Ramsar AA and the focal points of other MEAs (3.1.1)	33%	100%	56%	★
3.2	Sharing expertise and experience networks established for knowledge sharing and training for wetlands (3.2.1)	67%	75%	36%	★

4.4	CEPA mechanism established for planning and implementing wetland CEPA with both CEPA Government and NGO National Focal Point involvement (4.4.1)	67%	25%	22%	▲
4.8	National Wetland Committee review completed of national institutions responsible for the conservation and wise use of wetlands (4.8.1)	33%	25%	26%	▲
	National Ramsar/Wetlands cross-sectoral Committee (or equivalent body) operational (4.8.2)	100%	25%	45%	▲

Annex 4**Oceania Sites designated since COP9**

	Country	Number of sites	Total area of new sites (ha)
1	Australia	1 (Paroo River Wetland) in progress	138,304
		-	

Annex 5**Number of Oceania sites for which information is not up to date**

Country	Number of sites
Australia	63
Fiji	1 (Need to receive first RIS)
Marshall Islands	X
New Zealand	4
Papua New Guinea	2
Palau	1 (Need to receive RIS)
Samoa	1 (Need to receive RIS)