

Guidance for development of regional initiatives in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands

Introduction

In 2002, the 8th meeting of Ramsar's Contracting Parties (COP8) adopted *Guidelines for the development of regional initiatives* (Resolution VIII.30, cf. Annex I) as a reference against which to judge the value of regional initiatives for the implementation of the Convention. In conformity with these *Guidelines*, a number of Contracting Parties developed proposals for regional initiatives (including regional networks as well as regional centres for training and capacity building) and submitted them for the consideration of the Ramsar Standing Committee. The Committee submitted the proposals to COP9 in 2005 (information paper COP9 DOC. 21), which endorsed nine initiatives for the triennium 2006-2008 as operating within the framework of the Ramsar Convention and recognized a number of additional initiatives as having the potential to become operative within the framework of the Convention at a later stage (Resolution IX.7).

A similar procedure is now proposed for regional initiatives – ongoing or new – to obtain formal endorsement by COP10 in November 2008 as operating in the framework of the Convention during the triennium 2009-2011.

Procedure for submitting requests for COP10 endorsement and possible Ramsar funding

Contracting Parties that seek endorsement of a regional initiative by COP10 are requested to submit a proposal, following the format provided below. In order to be included in the list to be considered by COP10, the request must reach the Ramsar Secretariat not later than **31 March 2008**; it will then be submitted by the Secretariat to the 37th meeting of the Standing Committee in June 2008 for evaluation and transmittal to COP10.

The format to be used follows the structure of the *Guidelines* adopted in 2002 (attached in Annex I). Please consult the *Guidelines* when preparing your proposal. The information you provide about the initiative needs to be precise, brief, and to the point and should not exceed six pages in total.

Please submit your proposal in electronic form – as a Microsoft Word document – and send it to: salathe@ramsar.org only. Should you need further help, please contact this address.

AIM OF THE REGIONAL INITIATIVE

1. Implementation of the Ramsar approach

1.1 Describe briefly how your initiative is promoting the objectives of the Convention and how it is implementing the Ramsar Strategic Plan through cooperation in your region:

- THE NORDIC-BALTIC REGION COVERS A WIDE GEOGRAPHIC AREA AND COUNTRIES, OF WHICH SOME ARE MEMBERS OF THE E.U. AND SOME ARE MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA. THE NORDIC BALTIC WETLANDS INITIATIVE (WLI) WILL MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO COORDINATE WORK WITH THE RAMSAR STRATEGIC PLAN IN THIS REGION, INCLUDING BI- OR MULTILATERAL COOPERATION PROJECTS, AWARENESS RAISING, ETC.
- THE NORDIC-BALTIC REGION WORKS BOTH ON CONSERVATION OF RAMSAR SITES IN PARTICULAR AND ON WETLANDS IN GENERAL, ON WISE USE OF WETLANDS AND ON INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION RELATED TO WETLANDS.

SUBSTANTIVE ELEMENTS OF THE REGIONAL INITIATIVE

2. Complete regional adherence and bottom-up approach

2.1 Describe briefly if your initiative is based on a bottom-up approach:

- At present the NorBalWet Initiative is based on annual conferences with a back-to-back arrangement (workshop) in selected issues e.g. management issues related to selected wetland habitats... Besides National Ramsar Authorities a wide range of NGOs, local and regional administration - e.g. county governors, environmental staff, political authorities, as well as professional environmental groups are invited to actively participate.

2.2 List the countries in the region that your initiative covers:

- Denmark, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and relevant/adjacent Russian regions (to be further considered).
An idea to include Poland and Germany has been raised (as they are Baltic Sea states).

2.3 Specify those countries in your region that do not participate in the initiative (if any):

- All countries are taking part in the initiative to a greater or lesser extent. However, it seems that several countries face a general lack of capacity (and funding?) to follow up/take part in e.g. workshop/meeting arranged as NorBalWet events.

3. Active involvement of all relevant stakeholders

3.1 List the participants in your initiative and their affiliation:

- See 12.1

3.2 Indicate if only Ramsar Administrative Authorities at national level or also other relevant stakeholders (including other ministries, intergovernmental bodies, NGOs, academia and economic actors) are actively involved:

- See 2.1

4. Development of collaboration based on commonly agreed terms

4.1 Describe briefly how your regional network or centre is operating (attach the terms of reference (or other agreements) elaborated to guide its activities as separate documents where they exist):

- At present the work of the NorBalWet is administered through a coordinating committee that largely represents the national wetlands administrative agencies. There is no formal document for this temporary organization, but the document from the constitution of NorBalWet in Trondheim, Norway, March 2005 gives some guidelines.
- The secretariat and chairmanship rotates annually. The annual conferences/workshops (see 8.1) have been used as meeting places for the coordinating committee and for discussions about the future development of NorBalWet.
- The further development of the NorBalWet administrative infrastructure will be taken after discussion with the Ramsar administration at the 6th European Ramsar Meeting in Stocholm, Sweden - May 2008.
- **Attachment:** The Nordic-Baltic Wetlands Initiative - Summary from the Working Group Meeting in Trondheim, Norway, 3 – 4 March 2005

5. Involvement of other regional partners

5.1 List relevant intergovernmental or international organizations operating in your region:

- Nordic Council of Ministers, The Euro-Arctic Barents Council (BEAC), The Baltic Council, E.U.

5.2 List those with which you have established common activities:

- Nordic Council of Ministers on joint projects.
- European Union (and European Economic Area) concerning some activities, inter alia on the EU Framework Directive on Water and on the Natura 2000 Network.
- Plans for wetland conservation issues to be discussed at the 5th Habitat Contact Forum Meeting of the Barents Region (BEAC) in fall 2008.

5.3 List your activities in common:

- Nordic Council of Ministers has supported the process to establish and develop NorBalWet - both financially and by participation. The E.U. has also contributed financially through the Interreg. 111 program.

6. Scientific and technical backing

6.1 List the scientific and technical partners that provide a solid backing to your initiative:

- Not yet identified, but nationally we are drawing on the partners used for national implementation of the convention.

7. Targets of the initiative and their links with Ramsar

7.1 List your initiative's strategic and operational targets for the period 2009-2011:

- Acceptance of NorBalWet as a regional Ramsar initiative within the Convention on Wetlands, 2008 (COP 10).
- The establishment of a permanent administration system within 2008(2009).
- Annual conferences/workshops (separate or back-to-back with meetings of the steering group)
- More regular specific seminars.
- The establishment and running of a website for NorBalWet, www.norbalwet.org, 2008-2009. The website, in English will function as the initiatives communication centre on a daily basis, and link NorBalWet to the other Ramsar initiatives. It will also communicate CEPA by communicating case studies of wise-use, restoration, environmental education programs, research, and ecological tourism. (The Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management has contributed to the to the development costs for such web site (seed money only), being executed by the team planning the Dokkadeltaet National Ramsar Centre.)
- The establishment of functioning networks. Amongst others a Wetland Link International (WLI) section within NorBalWet.
- NorBalWet will investigate the establishment of NorBalWet competences.

7.2 Specify the relations of these targets to the objectives of the draft Ramsar Strategic Plan (attach your work plan for 2009-2011, or for 2009, where it exists):

- .- The ambition is to compile such a document after the sub group meeting of NorBalWet in connection with the 6th European Ramsar Meeting.

8. Raising awareness of Ramsar objectives

8.1 Describe briefly your activities in the fields of communication, education, and participatory processes with relevant stakeholders:

- NorBalWet was established at a meeting in Norway in March 2005. Since then there have been three conferences/workshop where CEPA related themes have been focused on:
 - In Sweden, May 2006, "*Wetland seminar on restoration of mires and wet forests*".
 - In Norway, September 2006, "*Conference on restoration of wetlands in the Nordic and Baltic countries, with special focus on the restoration of deltas, lakes and rivers*".
 - In Estonia, September 2007, "*NorBalWet conference on the monitoring of wetlands*".
 - A conference/workshop will hopefully be executed in Finland fall 2008.

8.2 Describe briefly the increased support for Ramsar objectives resulting from these activities (this information may be used by Ramsar's CEPA Oversight Panel, according to Standing Committee Decision 35-14):

- As a result of contact from the conferences [The Dokka Delta National Wetlands Centre](#) in Norway, and [The North Vidzeme Biosphere](#) in Latvia have started wetland co-operation projects, including a large European Economic Area grant application.
- There may also be other initiatives on which we do not have information.

FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT FOR THE REGIONAL INITIATIVE

9. Who provides political and financial support?

- There has been financing from the National Ramsar Management Authorities, the Nordic Council of Ministers and Interreg 111.
- 9.1 List all your sources and the amounts of financial support for the triennium 2009-2011. Specify the amounts which are already confirmed:
- No details available, but the Nordic Council of Ministers will hopefully continue to be a source for planning of specific conferences/workshops. Some of the National Ramsar Authorities will probably be able to contribute. This is also a key issue for discussion at the 6th European Ramsar Meeting.
- 9.2 List your sources and amounts of financial support for the year 2009. Specify the amounts which are already confirmed:
No details available yet.
- 9.3 List concisely, according to main budget lines, your expenditures planned for 2009:
No details available yet.

10. Financial planning

- 10.1 Summarize your remaining funding needs for 2009 that are not yet covered by confirmed donations, according to the main budget lines used above:
No details available yet.
- 10.2 Provide information about your fundraising plan to cover such outstanding needs:
| No details available yet.

11. Request for Ramsar core budget support

- 11.1 If you request a financial contribution from the Ramsar core budget, specify the amount for 2009, and for the triennium 2009-2011:
We understand that other Regional Initiatives will have greater needs, but a very preliminary amount could be 5-10.000 euro annually, following which national Ramsar Authorities should contribute additional amount. However, discussions are needed.

GOVERNANCE OF THE REGIONAL INITIATIVE

12. Governance mechanisms in place

- 12.1 Describe the governance and advisory mechanisms and structures (e.g., committees) in place or to be established to provide guidance and insight to your initiative (attach terms of references, rules of procedures, or operational guidelines, where such exist):
The coordinating committee presently in place consists of:
- Denmark: Sten Asbirk, Danish Forest and Nature Agency.
 - Finland: Tiina Nükkonen, Metsähallitus, Southern Finland Natural Heritage Services
 - Greenland: Inge Thaulow, Greenland Home Rule

Iceland: Arni Bragason, Environmental Agency, Nature Conservation division.
Norway: Jan-Petter HuberthHansen, Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management.
Sweden: Ann Wahlstrom, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency.
Estonia: Kai Kimmel, State Nature Conservation Centre.
Latvia: Vija Busa, Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection, dept.
Lithuania: N.N., State Services of Protected Areas, Ministry of Environment.
Russia: N.N., Ministry of Natural Resources (and/or regional representative)

13. Coordination with the Ramsar Secretariat

13.1 Specify the established or anticipated operational arrangements between the governance structures of your initiative and the Ramsar Secretariat:

- Tobias Salathe, Senior adviser for Europe, has actively participated in this process, including planning and conferences.

13.2 List the full name, telephone and e-mail contact of the main focal point of your initiative:

For the time being, the contact point will be Jan-Petter Hubert Hansen, senior adviser,
Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management, N-7485 Trondheim, Norway.
Jan-p.huberth-hansen@dirnat.no; +47 73580500, +47 91372303.

Report Format End
