

REGIONAL INITIATIVE

BLACK SEA

BlackSeaWet is presented as a Regional Initiative that is in an advanced stage of development and planned to start in 2009. Widespread consultations have been undertaken and the aims, principles and architecture of the Initiative developed. Consultations are continuing with stakeholders through 2008 (having begun in 2007) to finalise a technical work plan and the details of the Initiative's operational basis (governance, coordination). This is expected to be complete in 2008 before COP10, ready for a 2009 start.

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:

Background: Coastal wetlands in the Black Sea include habitats such as reed-dominated marshes, forest riverine flood plains, inland lakes and lagoons, limans, deltas, coastal lagoons and bays, silt and sand flats, as well as artificial wetlands such as fish ponds, rice paddies and salt ponds. 2,486,372 ha of Black Sea coastal wetlands are considered to be of national and international importance and 35 sites totalling 1,953,576 ha, are designated as Ramsar sites. These ecosystems provide important services and benefits to people that have economic value. They act as sources of food and building materials, supply fresh water, provide nursery and breeding grounds for (often commercially important) fish and waterbird species, contribute to sustaining local farming, improve water quality (including to some degree a role in wastewater treatment), help to mitigate floods, protect the shoreline from erosion and recharge groundwater. They also have a vital role in ensuring the health of the Black Sea itself, buffering it from some of the upstream impacts of agriculture, industry, forestry and urbanization and providing habitats that are important to the life cycle of many of the species living there.

Despite the clear importance to biodiversity and benefits to people, Black Sea coastal wetlands have been seriously degraded in recent years, both through activities in the catchment, and also through direct impacts from land reclamation, drainage, pollution and overexploitation. These have been related to unsustainable industry, agriculture, aquaculture, silviculture, navigation and tourism related practices. The result is that many Black Sea coastal wetlands are no longer able to perform their natural functions. In the Black Sea this has damaged fisheries, water quality and tourism generating costs that are considered to be in the region of hundreds of millions of dollars per year. In the coastal wetlands and their surrounding areas it continues to degrade biodiversity and is denying local people access to the resources that they use in their day to day lives.

Regional Initiative: These issues are all amongst those identified in the draft Ramsar Strategic Plan for the coming triennium. A Regional Initiative is needed to stimulate and coordinate cooperation around these issues in the region, acting as a means to address regional issues, share knowledge and expertise to address shared issues amongst different countries and stakeholders in the region and stimulate the development of capacity to address them. The issues require a multi-stakeholder approach that engages with government, civil society and increasingly the private sector. The Regional Initiative will undertake to bring these parties together. It has been agreed that key targets will be to

- Stop the loss and degradation of wetlands and their biodiversity by 2020
- Ensure wise use principles are integrated into coastal zone developments
- Engage local people in planning and decision-making
- Complete the ecological network around the Black and Azov Sea coasts
- Combine wetland conservation in integrated water resource management and integrated coastal zone management approaches

- Mainstream wetland conservation in sectors whose activities are contributing to degradation

The overall aim of new regional initiative – BlackSeaWet is to catalyse the conservation and sustainable development of Black Sea coastal wetlands.

Goal 1. Wise use: Promotion of the wise use of coastal wetlands is a key focus of BlackSeaWet. Territorial spatial planning, water resource management, river basin and coastal zone management, agricultural management, and sustainable management of economic activities and other decisions affecting wetlands all need to take more account of wise use. Furthermore fully recognizing the values and functions of wetlands, including the wide range of social benefits and cultural significance embodied in them, particularly for people directly dependent upon wetlands are also an important part of BlackSeaWet. Regional cooperation will enable sharing and the development of new approaches / experiences.

Goal 2. Wetlands of International Importance: Although many of the major Black Sea coastal wetland are listed, maintenance of the ecological character of Ramsar sites is one of the most important and difficult tasks for today. Facilitation of information exchange and stimulation of monitoring of ecological characteristic of coastal wetlands are important parts of BSW.

Goal 3. International cooperation: Sound International cooperation is a crucial part of BSW. It is planned to bring a new level of cooperation between all the main stakeholders in the region related to coastal wetlands management, conservation and research. In addition cooperation on specific issues that confront the region's wetlands and species such as pollution from the Black Sea, the conservation of migratory waterbird species and avian influenza will be important foci of the Initiative.

Goal 4. Institutional capacity and effectiveness: BlackSeaWet will build the regional capacity to implement the Convention focusing on enhanced CEPA activities to catalyse implementation of wise use. A strong emphasis will be placed on engaging civil society and strengthening their engagement in planning and decision making processes. Furthermore fundraising will be a key area with a strong emphasis on engaging the EU through its Nearest Neighbour Programme and the developing Black Sea Synergy Initiative to develop a major regional wetlands focused initiative.

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:

The need for the Initiative is well supported by Contracting Parties in the region. The BlackSeaWet concept was originally a recommendation of the workshop on Black Sea coastal wetlands held in Odessa in September 2000 attended by representatives of all the major Basin countries. At this meeting Wetlands International was asked to take the lead in the Initiative's development. The development of the Initiative was again supported by the Ramsar European Regional meeting in Bled, Slovenia 2001. Most recently Basin countries represented by the Ukrainian government (the host country for Wetlands International Black Sea Programme) indicated their support for the developing Initiative during Ramsar COP9, Uganda (see Resolution IX.7).

A Dutch funded project, lead by Wetlands International is facilitating the development of the foundations for the Initiative and has received letters of support from Bulgaria, Romania, Russian Federation (Krasnodvar Oblast), Turkey and Ukraine. The project has supported a regional needs analysis that has consulted each Basin country to

identify priority needs and actions. This information was brought together at a regional conference “Stopping the loss of Black Sea Coastal Wetlands: the establishment of a regional initiative”, held on 30-31st October 2007 in Odessa, Ukraine. 46 participants representing government ministries, national and international non-government organisations, international Conventions (including the Ramsar Convention) and scientific institutions from Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine discussed the basis for future cooperation in the field of wise use of coastal wetlands along the coast of the Black and Azov Seas. The conference, organized by Wetlands International Black Sea Programme in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine, concluded that:

- The need for a regional wetland initiative as expressed in the Odessa 2000 declaration is still necessary and urgently required.
- That the establishment of a regional wetland initiative under the Ramsar Convention (as described under Ramsar CoP Resolution XIII.30) should be undertaken and submitted in time for consideration at the Next Ramsar CoP to be held in South Korea in Changwon, 24th October to 4th November 2008

It was recommended that the Regional Initiative will be named ‘BlackSeaWet’ and should address the coastal wetlands and biodiversity of the six States whose territories border the Black and Azov Seas (Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine)

The same meeting also adopted a Declaration (see Annex 1) in which the main component parts of the Initiative are summarized based on consultations leading up to the meeting and stakeholder discussions at the meeting. This consultation process is continuing during 2008 to finalise the specific details of the Initiative. It is planned that by CoP10 later this year in Korea, stakeholders will have agreed to a technical workplan, and the details of governance and coordination. It is then planned that by mid 2009 the Initiative will begin, marked by the first full management Body meeting.

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

Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine

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

None – the Initiative is designed to include all coastal states in the Black Sea Basin and they have all been included in the consultations and are interested to participate.

3. Active involvement of all relevant stakeholders

3.1 List the participants in your initiative and their affiliation:

Formal appointment of individuals to be the focal points for the initiative has not yet been confirmed. Further consultations this year will achieve this. The government institutions are listed below. Formal appointment of individuals will be achieved during a planned meeting of the participant countries later this year.

Country	Organisation
Bulgaria	Ministry of Environment and Water of Bulgaria
Georgia	Ministry of Environment Protection & Natural Resources
Romania	Ministry of Environment and Water Management
Russian Federation	Ministry of Natural Resources
Turkey	Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Turkey
Ukraine	Ministry of Environmental Protection

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:

Governance of the Initiative will involve the Ramsar Administrative Authorities and a national level non-governmental organisation from each country. Furthermore a maximum of four international non-governmental organisations will also be involved.

Implementation will be achieved through the involvement of national and sub-national agencies from government ministries, scientific institutions, protected areas, civil society organisations. Their engagement began during the consultative process to develop the Initiative and will be continued through national level working groups. Organisations that have been engaged and participated at the international conference in 2007 (in addition to the Government organisations listed above) are: National research institution and universities: Institute of zoology of Bulgarian Academy of Science; Sinop University (Turkey); Centre for Regional Studies (Ukraine); Odessa National University (Ukraine); Kiev Shevchenko university (Ukraine). Protected areas: Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (Romania); Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine). National and Regional NGOs: BSPB/BirdLife Bulgaria; Doga Dernegi (Turkey); The Bugday Association for supporting Ecological Living (Turkey); Romanian Ornithological Society; Environmental association PSOVI (Georgia); NGO Biotica-Moldova; Wetlands International office for Russia; IUCN programme office for the Southern Caucasus; WWF International Danube - Carpathian Programme. International NGOs: Birdlife International; Wetlands International

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):

The Regional Initiative is currently under development with a planned start in 2009. Wetland wise use and conservation has been initiated in the region for many years through various unrelated regional and national activities. The Initiative is being built on networks and partners that have been active in these. These organisations have proven experience and a familiarity from working together. For instance this includes the organisations that the Wetlands International Black Sea Office has been coordinating under the auspices of the International Waterbird Census, the BirdLife International partners in the region, the various government knowledge and research institutions in the region and senior staff involved in the management of some of the major wetlands areas such as the Danube Delta. This network has been broadened through the activities under the Wetlands International coordinated project that has undertaken consultations through national focal points in which a network of civil society, government, scientific and inter-government organisations has been developed.

The network has been the focus of consultations to shape the main objectives and targets of the Initiative and the principles for its governance and coordination and finally to develop and agree a workplan. The recent Conference in Odessa agreed the aim, targets and principles of governance and coordination (see the resulting Resolution; Annex 1 to this document). The meeting also recognised that further steps are needed to secure full endorsement by the countries prior to the Initiative starting. These steps were identified in the Conference Resolution (See section "Official endorsement and approval" in Annex 1). In summary the key steps are:

- Finalize a BSW 'Vision' and 'Portfolio of Actions' (and based on this a draft workplan and budget) for consideration by the Contracting Parties for each Black Sea country;
- Secure formal Government endorsement for the workplan and operational issues together with financial commitments (a side-event on the BlackSeaWet Initiative planned to be held during a Ministerial Conference, Kiev in 2008 is planned as the occasion to achieve this);
- Engage the Bucharest Convention support through the Black Sea Commission Permanent Secretariat aiming for it to be recognised as a work programme priority under the Convention.

5. Involvement of other regional partners

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

Relevant Multilateral Agreements and related bodies: Ramsar Convention (International); UN Convention on Migratory Species and particularly the African Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (International); Bucharest Convention (Regional: the Black Sea Commission Secretariat is located in Turkey); Black Sea Commission Landscape and Biodiversity Protocol; Various River Basin Organisations and Agreements including the Danube Convention and the International Centre for the Protection of the Danube River.

International organisations: Birdlife International; World Wide Fund for Nature; International Union for the Conservation of Nature; The Coastal Union - EUCC; Regional Environment Centre; Black Sea NGO network

5.2 List those with which you have established common activities:

The establishment of a BlackSeaWet Vision and Priority Actions has been undertaken in consultation with most of the above organisations. Development of the workplan will make specific reference to the partner and target organisations.

5.3 List your activities in common:

From the regional conference held in Odessa, the agreed objectives of the Initiative are:

Objective 1: Harmonise and strengthen conservation legislation in the Black Sea Countries and improve its implementation and enforcement.

Objective 2: Ensure that wetland conservation, management and restoration is underpinned by biodiversity, environmental and socio-economic information and knowledge based on standard approaches to monitoring, data processing and storage.

Objective 3: Raise awareness of civil society, government and private sector stakeholders of wetlands values, degradation and wise use approaches

Objective 4: Reach out to key sectors whose activities affect wetlands and develop innovative approaches and best practices to wetland management

Objective 5: Maintain a regional coordination mechanism for governments, civil society and the private sector that will act as a focus for regional wetland conservation, including information management and exchange, research, communication, resource mobilisation and capacity development

Objective 6: Mainstream wetland conservation into frameworks, strategies, plans and implementation of integrated approaches to water resources and coastal zone management, including river basin management

A Portfolio of priority actions is being finalized through consultation with each of the Black Sea countries (government, civil society and knowledge / science based institutions). Once finalized later in 2008, these actions will be considered by the Initiative to form the basis for a technical workplan which will be in line with these objectives.

6. Scientific and technical backing

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

The following scientific organizations are already involved in the development of BlackSeaWet: Institute of zoology of Bulgarian Academy of Science, Sinop University (Turkey), Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine), Centre for Regional Studies (Ukraine), Kiev Shevchenko university (Ukraine). Azov Black Sea ornithological station. Odessa Branch of the Institute of Biology of Southern Seas

In addition the following NGOs also have strong knowledge based approaches to wetland conservation in the region and provide a solid technical backing to the Initiative: BSPB/BirdLife Bulgaria; Romanian Ornithological Society; NGO Biotica-Moldova; Environmental association PSOVI (Georgia); Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine). Consultations in the region through the national working groups are also in contact with other scientific and technical partners. It is planned that the Initiative will continue to maintain these links and develop them in the coming years.

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:

During the Odessa conference 30-31st October 2007, stakeholders in the Initiative agreed a Vision, Objective (see above) and Targets (see Annex 1 for full details).

BlackSeaWet Vision: In 20 years time the coastal wetlands of the Black Sea and Azov Seas are sustainably used, healthy ecosystems that provide the basis for conservation of wetland dependent biodiversity, support services for people and are equal in area and health to the current time. **Key strategic targets** will be to:

- Stop the loss and degradation of wetlands and their biodiversity by 2020
- Ensure wise use principles are integrated into coastal zone development
- Engage local people in planning and decision-making
- Complete the ecological network around the Black and Azov Sea coasts
- Combine wetland conservation in integrated water resource management and integrated coastal zone management approaches
- Mainstream wetland conservation in sectors whose activities are contributing to degradation

The operational targets in the workplan have not yet been finalized but are currently under preparation based on a stakeholder consultation that took place in 2007. These will then be prepared for endorsement later in 2008.

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 strategic objectives of the Initiative are entirely in line with the mission of the Ramsar Convention and its draft Strategic Plan 2009-14. Based on knowledge of the development of the priority actions that are being identified under BlackSeaWet it is expected to contribute to the following Strategies beneath the Goals of the draft Ramsar Strategic Plan for 2009-14:

1.1 Wetland inventory and assessment; 1.3 Policy, legislation and institutions; 1.4 Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services; 1.5 Integrated Water Resources Management; 1.6 Wetland restoration; 1.8 Private sector; 1.9 Incentive measures; 2.1 Ramsar site designation; 2.2 Ramsar site information; 2.3 Management planning - new Ramsar sites; 2.4 Ramsar site ecological character ; 2.5 Ramsar site management effectiveness; 2.6 Ramsar site status; 3.2 Regional initiatives; 3.3 International assistance; 3.4 Sharing information and expertise; 3.5 Shared wetlands, basins and species; 4.1 CEPA; 4.4 Working with IOPs and others.

8. Raising awareness of Ramsar objectives

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

The entire premise of the BlackSeaWet Initiative is built around the fact that it is only through collaboration with a very wide range of organisations that the future of Black Sea coastal wetlands and their biodiversity can be secured. Creation of National Working Groups in each Black Sea country and their involvement in preparation of BlackSeaWet Vision were important

steps for the stakeholders' consultation process and initiation of a bottom-up approach to development of the BlackSeaWet regional initiative. The successful international conference in Odessa, Oct 2007, formulated the aim, targets, main objectives, governance and first implementation steps for the Initiative based on National Working Groups in Black Sea countries who were in close contact with key organizations and experts. All stakeholders strongly stressed necessity of raising awareness of local people, NGOs and governments on importance conservation and sustainable use, as well as development of communication tools for exchange of information. Therefore raising public awareness on wetlands conservation and development of communication and collaboration are among the top priorities for the BlackSeaWet Initiative.

BlackSeaWet CEPA activities are in currently development and will be finalized as part of the workplan. The targets of the Initiative identified at the Odessa Conference will require a strong commitment to CEPA if they are to be achieved.. Integrated approaches to river and coastal zone management are identified as a key target and will require activities to raise awareness at all levels from local to Ministerial on the importance of these approaches, the need for policy development and the types of tools and approaches that will be necessary. A further target is the engagement of local people in planning and decision making; this will require intensive CEPA activities at local levels and the then the communication of the results of these approaches to regional stakeholders to promote learning and replication across the region. Furthermore ensuring wise use is integrated into coastal development will require a wide range of stakeholders including the public and private sectors be engaged.

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):

It is anticipated that support for Ramsar's CEPA objectives will be strengthened in a number of areas. A website, training courses in different aspects of wetland management, outreach and awareness raising activities targeting different levels of society from local communities to national level policy makers and planners are anticipated. Raising public awareness of wetland conservation issues will be a major area of work, with campaigns highlighting the importance and values of wetlands and the threats they currently face playing a central role.

FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT FOR THE REGIONAL INITIATIVE

9. Who provides political and financial support?

9.1 List all your sources and the amounts of financial support for the triennium 2009-2011. Specify the amounts which are already confirmed:

As part of the finalization of the BlackSeaWet Vision document, priority actions and Work Plan a budget addressing the technical activities will be proposed and participating stakeholder organisations will cooperate to raise funds to support these activities. Already some, partners are cooperating on securing financing for specific priority actions that will form part of activities carried out through the Initiative.. For instance, this year Wetlands International has submitted a project proposal "Stop-over Black Sea: The importance of the Black Sea region in the migratory systems of waterbirds in the African Eurasian Flyway". The total budget is €219.786. The decision is expected in early autumn 2008.

For coordination and operation of the Initiative an Interim Coordination Unit will be established. Some costs related to the hosting of the office and the holding of annual management body meeting will be carried by the host country during the first triennium. Negotiations are ongoing with Contracting Parties to secure this commitment.

9.2 List your sources and amounts of financial support for the year 2009. Specify the amounts which are already confirmed:

There are currently no confirmed sources of financing. During 2008 work-planning will continue and a Host Country will come forward. This country will support the costs of the rent for the Interim Coordination Unit and (from 2010) annual Management Body meeting costs.

9.3 List concisely, according to main budget lines, your expenditures planned for 2009:

It is anticipated that in 2009 the main costs will centre around the establishment of the Interim Coordination Unit, a first full meeting of the Initiative's Management Body, the establishment of a website and costs incurred in mobilizing additional resources for the implementation of the technical workplan. An estimate of these costs has been made for 2009 based on an assumption of a full start to the Initiative taking place in mid 2009 and a six month period of implementation.

	Amount (€)	Comments
	2009	
1. Interim Coordination Unit Coordinator	11.000	
2. Interim Coordination Unit Travel	8.000	
3. Interim Coordination Unit Rent	[4.200]	Host country
4. Management Body meeting	7.000	
5. CEPA related activities	6.000	
6. Experts and consultants	6.000	
Annual total	42.200	

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:

In accordance with the above estimate (see 9.3) funding needs for 2009 that are not covered by the Host Country will be €38.000.

10.2 Provide information about your fundraising plan to cover such outstanding needs:

The process of finalizing the Initiative is being supported by the continuing Dutch funded project that will end early in 2009. During this process contributions will be requested from Basin partners to support core costs related to the Interim Coordination Unit and to find a host country. The costs of funding the actions under the workplan will be sought from other sources. The overall aim will be to secure a long-term Black Sea wetlands programme to start during the first triennium. Furthermore participants in the Initiative will be encouraged to raise additional funds for projects and initiatives to complement this. Wetlands International has already begun this by preparing and submitting the proposal "Stop-over Black Sea: The importance of the Black Sea region in the migratory systems of waterbirds in the African Eurasian Flyway".

The Interim Coordination Unit will be responsible for implementation of the Initiative between Management Board meetings and will coordinate the stakeholders around the preparation of funding requests focused around the actions identified in the Initiative workplan.

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:

The Initiative is planned to become operational in 2009. Ramsar Support is requested to support the core coordination and communication functions of the Regional Initiative whilst the participants will take responsibility for seeking support for the implementation of the technical activities. Currently the Initiative is in the process of finalizing the workplan and technical activities and so a budget is not presented below for these. It is expected this will be available

later this year. Therefore the budget below for the coming triennium describes the costs of coordination and communication with those being requested from the Ramsar core budget indicated.

	Amount (€)			Remarks
	2009	2010	2011	
1. Interim Coordination Unit Coordinator	11.000	22.000	22.000	Ramsar core
2. Interim Coordination Unit Travel	8.000	14.000	14.000	Ramsar core
3. Interim Coordination Unit Rent	[4.200]	[8.400]	[8.400]	Covered by Host country
4. Management Body meeting	7.000	[7.000]	[7.000]	Partly covered by Host country
5. CEPA related activities (website, communications)	6.000	8.250	8.250	Ramsar core
6. Experts and consultants	6.000	12.000	12.000	Ramsar core
Annual total	42.200	71.650	71.650	
Host country contribution	4.200	15.400	15.400	Host Country
Requested Ramsar Contribution	38.000	56.250	56.250	Ramsar core

Note: The aim is that through the activities of stakeholders in the project coordinated by the Interim Coordination Unit funds will be raised such that by the following triennium the Coordination Unit is self-funded. Therefore budget estimates for 2010 and 2011 would be subject to revision once fundraising is underway.

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):

During the recent Odessa conference (30-31st October 2007) the governance and advisory mechanisms of the Initiative were discussed and the main elements agreed upon (see Annex 1).. This will be refined as part of stakeholder consultations during 2008.

BSW be organized based on the following principles and structures:

Governance: BSW will be governed by a Management Body which will comprise the following representatives: Ministries of Environment from the six Black Sea countries, six national level non-government organisations, one from the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, one from the Black Sea Commission Secretariat, up to four international non-governmental organisations active in the region (e.g. Wetlands International, BirdLife International, WWF, IUCN). Meetings of the Management Body will be conducted annually. The costs for annual Management Body meetings should be covered by the host country.

Regional coordination and communication: Between meetings of the Management Board an Interim Coordination Unit will be responsible for coordination, administration, communication, monitoring and implementation of BSW plans and preparing annual meetings and reports. The Unit will comprise 2 persons – one representative of the Ministry of Environment and the other from a national NGO of the host country. The Interim Coordination Unit will be hosted by a Black Sea country with responsibility rotating periodically.

National coordination and implementation: National Working Groups will be established in each country for implementation of BSW. They will be responsible for coordination and implementation of initiatives in the country in line with regionally defined goals and targets. They

will include representatives of ministries, non-government organisations, scientific and other relevant organizations. Participation will be on a voluntary basis.

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:

Wetlands International has been mandated by the stakeholders of this initiative to lead its development up to its initiation. During the development of the Initiative in 2008, Wetlands International will actively engage with the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention to ensure they are kept informed of progress and to assist them in establishing the best arrangements for coordination. After official endorsement of BSW, its Management Body and Interim Coordination Unit will be responsible for communication and coordination their work with Ramsar Secretariat. The Interim Coordination Unit will employ a Coordinator who will be the focal point for the Secretariat and the Management Body (comprising inter alia the Contracting Parties Focal Points) The process of development during 2008 will identify a host country for the Interim Coordination Unit for the remainder of the triennium.

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

For 2008 the Wetlands International Black Sea Office will be the focal point:

Name: Vasily Kostyushin
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