

*AIMS OF THE RRC-EAST ASIA**1 Implementation of the Ramsar approach***Ramsar Regional Center for Networking, Training and Research on Wetlands in East Asia (RRC-East Asia) in the Republic of Korea**

The RRC-East Asia aims at advancing the mission of the Ramsar Convention in general and implementing the Ramsar Strategic Plan in particular, through regional cooperation on the conservation and wise use of wetlands in East Asia. The RRC will focus on resolving wetland-related challenges originating from East Asia's unique environmental, social, and economic diversity. To realize the goals mentioned above, the Center will:

- Contribute to the enhanced recognition of the critical role of wetlands for sustainable development and the health and well-being of people
- Assist decision makers and practitioners in developing and implementing necessary and appropriate instruments and measures for sustainable management of wetlands
- Promote scientific and technical cooperation among experts and institutions with direct or indirect responsibility for wetland issues
- Support active and informed participation of stakeholders by providing adequate information and knowledge

To avoid duplication of efforts and increase synergy, the Center will equally important seek to cooperate, communicate, and coordinate with existing mechanisms for resolving wetland related issues in the region.

***SUBSTANTITIVE ELEMENTS OF THE RRC-EAST ASIA******2. Complete regional adherence and bottom-up approach******2.1 Bottom-up approach***

The experts and practitioners including those from seven Asian countries who participated in the *International Symposium on Regional Wetland Issues in Asia and Preparation of Ramsar COP10* that was convened (30 Nov. – 1 Dec. 2006) in Bugok, Republic of Korea adopted the “Changnyeong Statement” in which they confirmed the need to establish an East Asian Regional Wetland Center in Korea. At the *Workshop for the Establishment of the RRC-East Asia* held in Gyeongnam, Republic of Korea in 2007, the representatives from eight Asian environment related ministries and institutions expressed their advocacy to establish the proposed Center. The proposal of the RRC-East Asia was warmly received by Asian member countries at the Asia Regional Preparatory Meeting for COP10 held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 14 to 18 January 2008.

***2.2 Coverage***

The RRC-East Asia welcomes the full participation of all Ramsar Convention Contracting Parties in East Asia. Those countries covered by the Ramsar Regional Center, Iran will be excluded from

the main coverage of the RRC-East Asia to avoid duplication, however opportunities to cooperate with the Ramsar Regional Center, Iran will be encouraged and developed.

### ***3. Active involvement of all relevant stakeholders***

#### ***3.1. Participating countries and their affiliation***

At an early stage, three Northeast Asian countries (i.e., China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea) will play a catalytic role in mobilizing and attracting support from other East Asian countries. The major participating countries will vary according to the programs of the RRC-East Asia. For example, the capacity building programs of the RRC-East Asia will first invite ASEAN countries.

#### ***3.1 Participating Administrative Authorities and stakeholders***

The RRC-East Asia will promote cooperation with universities, research centers, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and intergovernmental institutions. Especially, the Center will develop working partnerships with specialized bodies that deal with wetland-related issues. Priority institutes of the Republic of Korea will include:

- National Institute of Environmental Research, National Institute of Biological Resources and the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute

The Center will also initiate and maintain appropriate working relationships with international organizations and regional bodies or programs that have an interest in wetlands management of the region. Those will include but are not limited to:

- UNEP, UNESCAP and other UN agencies
- Tripartite Environment Ministers' Meeting of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, ASEAN and other regional bodies in East Asia

The cooperation efforts will start from such existing institutions as:

- BirdLife International-Asia, Wetland International-China, International Lake Environment Committee and the ASEAN Regional Center of Biodiversity Conservation in the Philippines
- Kushiro International Wetland Center and Ramsar Center Japan

### ***4. Development of collaboration based on commonly agreed terms***

The RRC-East Asia will create networks for information and knowledge sharing with relevant stakeholders by using advanced information technology (IT). Particular emphasis will be placed on the promotion of active stakeholder participation in decision-making processes and improvement of capacity for, as well as effective application of the wise use concept. In the early stages, the Center will draw upon existing avenues of collaboration in the region. The opportunities include but are not limited to various collaborative activities among Wetlands International-China, Wetlands Korea and Ramsar Centre Japan. Partnership relations with BirdLife International, the International Water Management Institute, and possibly other INGOs will be researched.

## ***5. Involvement of other regional partners***

### ***5.1 Relevant regional intergovernmental or international organizations***

Many intergovernmental and international organizations are working in the East Asia region. With respect to environmental protection, the Regional Office of Asia and the Pacific/UNEP and UNESCAP are important. ASEAN countries and three NE Asian countries maintain ministerial and senior official level dialogues. Three environmental ministers of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea meet every year at the 'Tripartite Environment Ministers' Meeting. Importantly, these regional intergovernmental organizations or meetings deal with a wide scope of environmental issues and do not focus on wetland related issues and concerns.

### ***5.1 Regional partners for common activities***

When considering potential collaboration on wetland related issues, BirdLife International-Asia, Wetland International-China, International Lake Environment Committee, the ASEAN Regional Center of Biodiversity Conservation in the Philippines, the Kushiro International Wetland Center, and Ramsar Center Japan may be considered as potential partners.

### ***5.1 Common activities***

The RRC-East Asia will conduct wetland conversation activities that include but will not be limited to public awareness, capacity-based training, networking, information and knowledge sharing, and practical research. The Center will be the only organization devoted exclusively to wetland conservation in East Asia.

## ***6. Scientific and technical backing***

The RRC-East Asia will ensure appropriate scientific and technical support from relevant institutions (including Scientific and Technical Review Panels) in each participating country, universities and research centers. For continued scientific and technical assistance, working partnerships will be established first with Korean national scientific institutes (e.g., National Institute of Environmental Research, National Institute of Biological Resources, and National Fisheries Research and Development Institute). The Center will also seek to make agreements with International Organization Partners (IOPs), such as BirdLife International and Wetlands International for technical cooperation and assistance as needed.

## ***7. Targets of the initiative and their links with Ramsar***

### ***7.1 Strategic and operational targets for the period of 2009-2011***

#### **Work plan for the year 2009**

- Establishment and formal inauguration of the Center
- Development of the Charter for the Center
- Launch web site for RRC-East Asia
- Preparation of 2009 – 2011 work plan

Implementation of training programs for wetland managers  
International workshop on the implementation of Changwon Declaration

#### **Work plan for the year 2010**

Evaluation of the Center's activities in the previous year  
Maintenance and regular updating of RRC-East Asia website  
Development of web-based knowledge database  
Implementation of training programs for practitioners  
Workshops and Symposiums (themes are subject to the decision of governing bodies)

#### **Work plan for the year 2011**

Evaluation of the Center's activities in the previous year  
Maintenance and regular updating of RRC-East Asia website  
Expansion of web-based knowledge database  
Implementation of training programs for NGOs  
Workshops and Symposiums (themes are subject to the decision of governing bodies)

#### ***7.1 The relations to the Ramsar Strategic Plan of 2009-2011***

The RRC-East Asia will contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan of 2009-2011 in the region. More specifically, Goal 1. Wise Use, Goal 2. Wetlands of International Importance, Goal 3. International cooperation, and Goal 4. Institutional capacity and effectiveness are closely related to the Center's activities.

### ***8. Raising awareness of Ramsar objective***

#### ***8.1 CEPA activities***

The RRC-East Asia will conduct projects and activities for the improvement of Communication, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA) regarding the wise use of wetlands. The Center will:

- Provide researchers, policy makers, and practitioners with updated information on wetlands management pursuant to their needs
- Offer training programs, workshops, and conferences for the relevant stakeholders
- Raise public awareness and the profile of wetland resources through publication, internet and interactive forums
- Provide consultation and advice to governments, NGOs and the private sector, as and when requested
- Actively publicize and share lessons learned from CEPA programs and activities in the region through the internet and periodic newsletters

#### ***8.1 Support for Ramsar objectives***

The RRC-East Asia aims at increasing public awareness regarding the importance of wetland conservation. The Center will also encourage and in selective cases support active and informed participation of local communities in collaborative wetland decision making mechanisms.

## ***FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT FOR THE RRC-EAST ASIA***

### ***9. Who provides political and financial support?***

#### ***9.1 Financial sources and the amount***

The RRC-East Asia will receive its annual operating budget through a grant from the Wetland Foundation and the Government of the Republic of Korea, if necessary. The two financial sources will cover basic activities that include operation of the Center and major projects. The Center may receive grants and donations from Contracting Parties, any interested public or private sectors and NGOs on a voluntary basis. Special projects will be conducted on the basis of fund availability..

A detailed financial plan for the 2009-2011 period, including the allocation of necessary budget for the triennial plan of activities, will be prepared in 2009.

#### ***9.2 Financial support for 2009***

The Wetland Foundation plans to grant USD 225,000 to the RRC-East Asia for 2009. The grant will cover the basic budget of the Center. Financial support from the Government of Korea will be determined following a careful review of Center's work plans.

#### ***9.3 Expenditure plan for /2009***

The Wetland Foundation grant (USD 225,000) will be used for office costs (\$25,000), personnel expenses (\$145,000), and project costs (\$55,000) during the year 2009.

## ***10. Financial planning***

### ***10.1 Balance of identified funding needs for 2009***

Additional projects may be considered for additional funds. At this time it is not feasible to specify remaining funding needs until the Board of Directors has approved the annual work plan.

### ***10.2 Fundraising plan***

The plan for fundraising will be dependent on work plans of the RRC-East Asia. It is clear that the fundraising will be project based.

## ***11. Request for Ramsar core budget support***

No funding will be sought from the Ramsar Convention's core budget for the support of the RRC-East Asia during 2009-2011. However, core budget allocation for special projects will be welcomed.

## ***12. Governance mechanisms in place***

The governing and advisory mechanisms for the RRC-East Asia will include a Board of Directors and Advisory Committee. The Board of Directors, as a final decision making body of

the Center, will be represented by, among others, Contracting Parties, IOPs, NGOs, and academia. The functions of the Board will be as follows:

- Decision making on strategic long-term plans of the Center
- Approval of the budget and annual work plan of the Center
- Review and evaluation of the activities implemented by the Center
- Selection of members of the Advisory Committee
- Recruitment and appointment of an executive director
- Amendment to the Charter of the Center

The Advisory Committee will provide advice and guidance to the Centre on scientific and technical matters.

### ***13. Coordination with the Ramsar Secretariat***

#### ***13.1 Operational arrangements between the RRC-East Asia and the Secretariat***

A detailed operational arrangement between the RRC-East Asia and the Ramsar Secretariat will be developed. At this stage, the Center plans that the Ramsar Senior Advisor for the Asia-Pacific Region will be included as a member of Board of Directors. Reports and any other publications on the Center's activities and projects will be prepared and submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat on a regular basis and as needed..

#### ***13.2 Focal point of the RRC-East Asia***

Mr. YOON Yong Heui, Deputy Director, T/F Team for Ramsar COP10, Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea, Tel;+82+2+5097932, Fax: +82+2+5097938, e-mail; [yongheui@me.go.kr](mailto:yongheui@me.go.kr)