

REGIONAL INITIATIVE

EASTERN AFRICA CENTRE

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 Ramsar Convention Secretariat dedicated Africa staffing is limited to a Senior Advisor supported by an intern, who services the 45 Contracting Parties on a regular basis; with no likely possibility of this being expanded in the near future.

The Ramsar Centre for East Africa (RAMCEA) will therefore drive forward the work of the Convention in Africa and build the capacity for implementation of the Convention in Africa. Current initiatives in wetland management have focused on aspects of the Convention relating to designation of Ramsar sites, management and research. However, there is no institutional framework or structure to handle the administrative and legal issues in the implementation of the Convention in Africa.

The RAMCEA will focus on the strategic objective of building capacity for implementation of the Convention in Africa. It will focus on institutional structure to deal with the general implementation of the Convention in Africa.

Goal: The Goal of RAMCEA will be to support the East African Contracting Parties, non-contracting parties and other stakeholders to improve their capacity to implement the Convention in the respective countries and institutions.

Strategies

- Assist in the development and implementation of national wetland policies and strategies
- Assist the Parties to integrate and incorporate wetland issues into national development frameworks;
- Provide a link between the Ramsar Convention, New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), Nile Basin Initiative and other regional frameworks
- Assist the Ramsar Secretariat to review proposed Ramsar sites and assist the Parties with the designation and management of Ramsar sites;
- Assist the Parties with the development and implementation of wetland management plans;
- Develop and disseminate best practices for wise use of wetlands ;
- Develop and disseminate tools for wetland inventories, assessment and monitoring;
- Build capacity of Ramsar Administrative Authorities, National Focal points for Communication Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) and STRP;
- Support the Regional Representatives for Africa on the Standing Committee and STRP in the execution of their duties;
- Develop skills in negotiation, conflict resolution and management;

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:

RAMCEA regional initiative was recognized by the COP9 as having the potential to become operative within the framework of the Convention, subject to further development and reporting to COP10 for endorsement. In addition the demand for sharing Uganda's wide experiences has been expressed by several countries and indeed Uganda has hosted several wetland managers on request. It is expected that the Centre will provide a coordination approach to sharing Uganda's

experiences and exchange of information on wise use in the region. The Hon Minister of State for Environment has written to Ministers responsible for Environment in Kenya and Tanzania and a response is awaited. A copy of the letter is attached for information.

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

Initially the Centre will cover especially the five countries under the East African Community namely Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and Ethiopia but it will seek to link to other interested relevant party and non-party governments in the region

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

Currently Sudan is not part of the initiative but it is planned to involve her in the initiative.

3. Active involvement of all relevant stakeholders

3.1 List the participants in your initiative and their affiliation:

The Centre will have links to other African regional and sub-regional wetland initiatives such as the Lake Victoria Basin Commission, Nile Basin Initiative (Nile Trans-boundary Environmental Action Plan), the Centre for African Wetlands of Accra Ghana, Kenya Wildlife Service Training Institute Naivasha and the network for wetland professionals based in UNESCO-IHE (Delft) and RIZA (The Netherlands).

Initially the Centre will start as a virtual centre (unit) within the Wetlands Management Department, Ministry of Water and Environment, of the Republic of Uganda. This will be expanded easily as resources are mobilised.

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:

The Ramsar Administrative Authority has established a National Ramsar Committee which is responsible for guiding the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in Uganda. The member institutions of this committee will be actively involved in this initiative.

This National Ramsar Committee is comprised of representatives from the Directorate of Water Development, Directorate of Water Resources Management Department, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, National Environment Management Authority, IUCN-The World Conservation Union, Makerere University Institute of Environment and Natural Resources, Fisheries Department, Fisheries Research Institute, Department of Farm Management, Ministry of Local Government, Uganda Wild Life Authority, National Forestry Authority, Nature Uganda, Environmental Alert, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, among others.

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 Ramsar Centre for Eastern Africa will be managed by an Advisory Board comprised of representatives from each of the participating countries (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania), International Organisation Partners based in the region, NGOs and representatives of development partners and the private sector. Each country will strengthen/establish a National Ramsar Committee.

5. Involvement of other regional partners

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

A number of relevant intergovernmental or international organizations operate in the eastern Africa region. These include but not limited to:

- United National Environment Programme world headquarters in Nairobi;
- IUCN Eastern Africa Regional Office, Nairobi;
- WWF Eastern Africa Regional Office, Nairobi;
- World Bank Regional Office, Nairobi
- Lake Victoria Basin Commission, Kisumu
- East African Community, Arusha Tanzania
- Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat, Entebbe Uganda. NBI is in process of implementing a Wetlands Component which would provide an important link to the Centre
- Birdlife International African Partnership which is currently chaired by a Ugandan NGO,
- Wetlands International
- Uganda is also proposed to host the Pan African Ornithological Congress offices.
- International Course of African Wetland Management, Kenya Wildlife Service Training Institute, Naivasha

5.2 List those with which you have established common activities:

Uganda has received technical and financial assistance received from IUCN or Ramsar site management, Wetlands International for training, WWF for Ramsar site designation, Birdlife International - financial assistance with Important Bird Area process and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds supported the designation of Ramsar sites. Birdlife International through its partner Nature Uganda is also supporting the management of Ramsar sites and operation of community based site support groups.

Uganda is already implementing several regional wetland programmes including the Lake Victoria Environment Management Project under the Lake Victoria Basin Commission, the Eastern Africa Regional Wetlands Programme coordinated by IUCN. These will be scaled up and transformed to support the Centre as the long term framework.

5.3 List your activities in common:

- Designation and management of Ramsar sites (IUCN, Birdlife, WWF)
- Transboundary management of wetlands and biodiversity resources (NBI)
- Training of wetland managers and practitioners (Wetlands International)
- Wetland Research and Management (Lake Victoria Basin Commission)

6. Scientific and technical backing

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

- Makerere University Institute of Environment and Natural Resources (MUEINR) provides training at Masters and PhD level and also participates on the National Wetlands Advisory Group;
- The National Fisheries Resources Institute provide scientific information on wetlands and fisheries;
- IUCN provides technical backstopping to the National Wetlands Programme in wetland policy formulation and implementation.

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:

- Inception workshop involving participants from the five countries of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi

- Capacity needs assessment for Ramsar Administrative Authorities and plan developed to address the identified needs
- Administrative Authorities, National Focal Points for CEPA and STRP, National Focal Points for each of the five participating countries trained and equipped with skills in implementing the Convention

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):

STRATEGY 1.1 Wetland inventory and assessment

Training wetland managers and practitioners in wetland inventory and assessment

Develop and establish a regional wetlands metadatabase

STRATEGY 1.3: Policy, legislation and institutions

Developing a regional wetland management protocol under the auspices of the East African Community

STRATEGY 1.4: Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services

Developing and disseminating methodologies to integrate wetlands issues into national development strategies and frameworks

STRATEGY 1.5: Integrated Water Resources Management

In collaboration with the Nile Transboundary Environment Action Plan incorporate wetland issues into the Integrated Water Resources Management

STRATEGY 1.6: Wetland restoration

Documenting and disseminating best practices in wetland restoration

Training and capacity building of wetland managers and practitioners

STRATEGY 2.1: Ramsar site designation

Identify and designate trans-boundary wetlands such as Minziro (Uganda and Tanzania) Mt Elgon (Kenya and Uganda)

STRATEGY 2.3: Management planning – new Ramsar sites

Disseminate the Wetlands Management Planning Manual and promote adoption by the partner states

STRATEGY 2.6: Ramsar site status

Conduct Ramsar Advisory Missions in collaboration with the Ramsar Secretariat

STRATEGY 3.1: Synergies with MEAs and IGOs

Implement relevant regional aspects of the Wetlands component of the Action Plan for NEPAD

STRATEGY 3.4: Sharing information and expertise

Scaling up of the International Course on African Wetland Management

STRATEGY 3.5: Shared wetlands, basins and species

Develop a regional site network and arrange exchange visits and study tours

STRATEGY 4.1: CEPA

National training needs assessed and appropriate training programmes developed.

STRATEGY 4.3 Convention bodies' effectiveness

Assess needs of AA, NFPs and develop appropriate training programme

STRATEGY 4.4 Working with IOPs and others

Support for the Convention's scientific, technical and policy work integrated into the ongoing programmes of the IOPs.

The workplan for 2009 is attached in Annex 1

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 overall aim is to support the African Countries to effectively implement the Convention through the training of Administrative Authorities, developing a network of wetland professionals, practitioners and managers. This initiative will build on Uganda's 15 years experience in wetland management. This will provide an opportunity to disseminate lessons learnt from Uganda's experience to other country in the sub-region and ultimately to the whole of Africa. In particular the Centre will:

- develop and implement a systematic communication strategy geared towards positioning wetlands as a conservation priority in the African region;
- promote the Ramsar Convention at different fora, courses and other events related to environment management and conservation;
- initiate the creation of networks of wetland resource users at national and regional level through sharing of knowledge and information from various countries;
- ensure increased presence in the local, regional and international media like print, television, radio and internet;
- promote the integration of wetland management and conservation issues in various national programs like the school curriculum;
- organize training programs for targeted groups like politicians, academicians and private sector.

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):*

Exchange of information and sharing knowledge and experience from respective countries as a result of the networks of wetlands resource users;

Wetland management integrated in various national programs like the school curriculum;

Non-contracting parties encouraged to Ratify the Ramsar Convention as a result of increased awareness on wetlands and wise use concept;

Increased funding opportunities for the wetlands sector;

More conservation measures put in place as a result of training of stakeholders like politicians, private sector and academicians

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:*

Convention's core Budget	\$100,000
Government of Uganda	\$45,000
Other Partner States and donors	\$166,850

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

Convention's core Budget	\$40,000
Government of Uganda	\$15,000
Other Partner states and donors	\$45,000

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

The estimated cost for establishing and operating the centre is approximately US\$ 311,850 for a period of 3 years from 2009-2011. Details of the budget for 2009 are given here below:

Item	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total Cost
STAFF COSTS			
RAMCEA Coordinator	1	1500	18,000
Communication Officer	1	1000	12,000
Bilingual secretary	1	500	6,000
EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS	3	5000	15,000
INVESTMENTS			
Computer and accessories	3	2,500	7,500
Printers	2	1250	2,500
Photocopiers	1	2000	2,000
TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING			
Exchange visits	2	5,000	10,000
Workshops/ seminars	2	5,000	10,000
LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRAVEL			
Air tickets, per diems	3	1500	4,500
OFFICE COSTS			
Fax/ photocopy/internet/telephone	1	300	3,600
Administration costs	1	1,000	12,000
Contingencies (10% of total budget)	1	1	9,160
GRAND TOTAL			100,760

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:

STAFF COSTS			
RAMCEA Coordinator	1	1500	18,000
Communication Officer	1	1000	12,000
Bilingual secretary	1	500	6,000
EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS	3	5000	15,000
INVESTMENTS			
Computer and accessories	3	2,500	7,500
Printers	2	1250	2,500
Photocopiers	1	2000	2,000
TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING			
Exchange visits	2	5,000	10,000
Workshops/ seminars	2	5,000	10,000
LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRAVEL			
Air tickets, per diems	3	1500	4,500
TOTAL			87,500

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

In the short run a request was submitted to the Royal Danish Embassy in Kampala and a response is awaited. In the long run it is proposed to set up a trust fund for wetland conservation or such similar financial mechanism.

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:

It is proposed to seek seed funding to the tune of \$ 87,500 from the Ramsar Convention core budget support in 2009 as seed funding for establishment of the regional initiative.

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 Ramsar Centre for Eastern Africa will be managed by an Advisory Board comprised of representatives from Each of the participating countries (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania), IOPs based in the region, NGOs and representatives of development partners and the private sector. Each country will strengthen her National Ramsar Committee to serve as the local steering committee at the national level.

There will be a multi-sectoral steering/coordination committee drawn from the region, to provide policy direction and guidance to the Centre. The Centre will be headed by a Coordinator assisted by a Communication Officer who will also serve as a network administrator. In addition the centre will have a bilingual secretary with capabilities in both English and French.

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:

The Centre will operate within the framework of the Convention. It will establish its own advisory mechanisms, involving all the stakeholders, in order to provide guidance and insight.

The Conference of the Parties and the Standing Committee shall receive, through the Ramsar Bureau, reports on their activities and shall oversee their general policies relating to the implementation of the Convention.

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

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