

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

24th Meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland: 29 November – 2 December 1999

DOC. SC24-12

Agenda item 9.2.v

Issues arising from COP7 requiring action by the Standing Committee – Format for National Reports to be submitted prior to COP8

Action requested: The Standing Committee is requested to review the proposed National planning tool/COP8 National Report format and approve it, subject to any modifications agreed by the members, for distribution to Contracting Parties in early 2000.

Background

1. For each Ramsar Conference the Contracting Parties prepare and submit a National Report detailing their activities undertaken in the triennium since the previous meeting. Following the adoption of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 of the Convention at COP6, the Standing Committee decided that for COP7 the structure of the National Report should mirror that of the Strategic Plan. With this decision the Standing Committee signalled its desire to use the National Reporting process in a more systematic way, in order to assess global progress in implementation of the Strategic Plan and use this assessment to identify the Convention's priorities for the following triennium. The result was that COP7 allowed the Convention, for the first time, to quantify its progress against nearly 50 "indicators" of progress and, using this, to adopt (through Resolution VII.27) a Work Plan for the Convention for the period 2000-2002 which includes targets.
2. Resolution VII.27 from COP7 also included the following two operative paragraphs relating to the National Reporting process leading up to COP8 in 2002:
 13. REQUESTS the Standing Committee, at its 24th meeting, to review the National Report format used for COP7 and to introduce appropriate changes with a view to making the Ramsar COP8 format available in early 2000, so that Contracting Parties wishing to apply this framework can establish and maintain at the earliest opportunity an ongoing record of implementation for national planning and reporting purpose;
 14. URGES all Contracting Parties to undertake the preparation of their National Reports for Ramsar COP8 in consultation with their National Ramsar/Wetland Committees, where they exist, and also with all other relevant Government Ministries.
3. The feedback received by the Bureau regarding the format of the National Report for COP7 was generally positive, and it is therefore recommended that the Convention continue to use the Strategic Plan, and more specifically the Work Plan 2000-2002 based

upon it, as the structure for the National Reports for COP8. One request made to the Bureau by several countries was that for COP8 it would be helpful to seek further information from Contracting Parties regarding those activities they have not been able to undertake. It was felt by a number of Parties that when they had answered 'no' to a question in the National Report, great value could be gained (for them at the national level, as well for international assessment) if they were then invited to describe the factors preventing them from completing this action. The Bureau is recommending changes to the format of the COP8 National Reports to respond positively to this request (see below).

4. In addition, paragraph 12 of Resolution VII.27 states:

12. INVITES Contracting Parties to consider preparing and adopting by the end of 1999 "National targets for the Ramsar Strategic Plan for the period 2000-2002" on the basis of consultative processes involving National Wetland/Ramsar Committees, or similar bodies, and taking into consideration those targets set in the Convention Work Plan 2000-2002 and the subsequently determined regional targets.

In response to this request from the COP, the Bureau has prepared for consideration by Standing Committee what it is calling a "National planning tool for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands", which is intended to assist Contracting Parties to "*establish and maintain . . . an ongoing record of implementation for national planning and reporting purpose*", as stated in paragraph 13 of the Resolution, and to prepare national targets as encouraged by paragraph 12. **It is proposed that the format for this national planning tool be that used for the National Reports to be submitted in advance of COP8.**

5. Through this action, the Bureau believes that the Standing Committee will be recognized for responding to concerns expressed in the past that the National Reports are extremely labour intensive with little direct benefit for national governments. The approach being recommended by the Bureau will signal to all Contracting Parties a **significant shift in the purpose of the National Reports** – from the previous 'one-off' description of actions which is prepared every three years for primarily global consideration – to a dynamic and ongoing framework for strategic planning and action by national governments, **which also meets** the obligation to provide a National Report every three years.
6. As indicated above, all Contracting Parties will be urged to adopt this comprehensive national planning tool as soon as possible and to use it to identify gaps and areas of highest priority for action and to set targets for action. If Contracting Parties take the time to complete this form with care, and through broadly-based consultative processes, it will provide a ready-made national strategic plan for implementation of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.
7. Attached for the consideration of Standing Committee is a sample section of the hard copy form of the proposed **National Planning Tool/Ramsar COP8 National Report**. It is intended to provide a checklist of actions seen as desirable if Contracting Parties are to implement the Convention fully.
8. At the meeting itself the Bureau will demonstrate this in full using an interactive electronic form. Such an interactive form is being proposed in order to promote this approach for

all future National Reports – so that they can be made easier to prepare, and to facilitate them being made available through the Ramsar Web site and those maintained by national governments (where they exist). It should be noted that the Bureau will be prepared to assist those Contracting Parties that may encounter difficulties in using the electronic format to overcome those limitations, so that ALL CPs can be in a position to use this tool effectively.

SAMPLES FROM THE

**National planning tool for the implementation of the
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**

and

for preparing the National Report for Ramsar COP8 (2002)

**GENERAL OBJECTIVE 2
TO ACHIEVE THE WISE USE OF WETLANDS BY IMPLEMENTING AND
FURTHER DEVELOPING THE RAMSAR WISE USE GUIDELINES.**

Operational Objective 2.1: To review and, if necessary, amend national or supra-national (e.g., European Community) legislation, institutions and practices in all Contracting Parties, to ensure that the Wise Use Guidelines are applied.

Actions - Global and National Targets
2.1.1 Carry out a review of legislation and practices, and indicate in National Reports to the COP how the Wise Use Guidelines are applied. [CPs]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This remains a high priority for the next triennium. The <i>Guidelines for laws and institutions</i> (Resolution VII.7) will assist these efforts. • Global Target - At least 100 CPs to have comprehensively reviewed their laws and institutions related to wetlands by COP8.
Has your country <u>completed</u> a review of its laws and institutions relating to wetlands? Yes/No
If No – what are the impediments to this being done? Please elaborate.
If a review is <u>planned</u> – what is the expected timeframe for this being done?
If the review has been <u>completed</u> – did the review result in amendments to laws or institutional arrangements to support implementation of the Ramsar Convention?
If No – what are the impediments to these amendments being done? Please elaborate.
If changes to laws and institutional arrangements were made describe these briefly.
Proposed national actions and targets
Ministry, agency/department or organisation responsible for leading on this action

Operational Objective 2.4: To provide economic evaluations of the benefits and functions of wetlands for environmental planning purposes.

Actions - Global and National Targets
2.4.1 Promote the development, wide dissemination and application of documents and methodologies which give economic evaluations of the benefits and functions of wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the guidelines available for this activity (see below – <i>Economic Valuation of Wetlands</i> handbook), this will be an area of higher priority in the next triennium. Global Target - By COP8 all CPs to be incorporating economic valuation of wetland services, functions and benefits into impact assessment and decision-making processes related to wetlands.
Does your government <u>require</u> that economic valuations of the full range of services, benefits and functions of wetlands are prepared as part of impact assessments and to support planning decisions that may impact on wetlands? Y/N
If No - what are the impediments to this being done? Please elaborate.
If this applies in some, but not all cases, what is the expected timeframe for this been required in all cases.?
If Yes – has the inclusion of economic valuation into impact assessment resulted on wetlands being given special consideration or protection. If Yes, please elaborate.
Proposed national actions and targets
Ministry, agency/department or organisation responsible for leading on this action

Operational Objective 4.2: To identify the training needs of institutions and individuals concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands, particularly in developing countries, and to implement follow-up actions.

Actions - Global and National Targets
4.2.1 Identify at national, provincial and local level the needs and target audiences for training in implementation of the Wise Use Guidelines. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - By COP8 to have training needs analyses completed in more than 75 CPs.
Has a training needs analysis been completed? Y/N
If No – what are the impediments to this being done?
If Yes – Have the results of this analysis been used to provide direction for training priorities in the future? Y/N
If No – why not?
If Yes – How has this been done?
AND
What impact has this had on the national training effort?
Proposed national actions and targets
Ministry, agency/department or organisation responsible for leading on this action

4.2.2 Identify current training opportunities in disciplines essential for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - By COP8 to have reviews of training opportunities completed in more than 75 CPs.
Has your country <u>completed</u> a review of the training opportunities which exist there? Y/N
If No – what are the impediments to this being done?
If Yes – Have the results of this review been used to provide direction for training priorities in the future? Y/N
If No – why not?
If Yes – How has this been done?
AND
What impact has this had on the national training effort?
Has this advice on training opportunities been provided to the Ramsar Bureau for inclusion in the Directory of Wetland Manager Training Opportunities? (Refer to 4.2.3 below also) Y/N
Proposed national actions and targets
Ministry, agency/department or organisation responsible for leading on this action

Operational Objective 5.2: To develop and implement management plans for all Ramsar sites, consistent with the Convention's Guidelines on Management Planning and emphasizing involvement of local communities and other stakeholders.

Actions - Global and National Targets
5.2.1 STRP action required
5.2. Bureau action required
5.2.3 Ensure that, by the 8 th COP (2002), management plans or other mechanisms are in preparation, or in place, for at least half of the Ramsar sites in each Contracting Party, beginning with pilot programmes at selected sites with input from local communities and other stakeholders. [CPs, Partners]
Global Target - By COP8 management plans will be in preparation, or in place, for at least three-quarters of the Ramsar sites in each CP and all CPs will seek to ensure that these are being implemented in full.
Do all the Ramsar sites in your country have management plans <u>in place</u> (noting that COP7 agreed that the target was for CPs to have plans in place for at least three-quarters of their Ramsar sites by COP8 - it is assumed that CPs with only one site will have a management plan in place for this)? Y/N
If no, how many sites do not have management plans in place and which sites are they?
If plans are being prepared for some sites, please indicate which sites these are also.
For those sites where management plans are in place, how many of these are being implemented fully?
Where plans are not in place, or not being fully implemented – what has prevented this from being done?
Proposed national actions and targets
Ministry, agency/department or organisation responsible for leading on this action

Operational Objective 6.2: To increase the area of wetland designated for the List of Wetlands of International Importance, particularly for wetland types that are under-represented either at global or national level.

6.1.2 Establish, update and disseminate national scientific inventories of wetlands which identify potential Ramsar sites and wetlands of provincial or local importance in the territory of each Contracting Party. [CPs, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - By COP8 to have national wetland inventories completed by over 50 CPs and the information housed in databases (Refer 5.4.4) which are accessible globally
Does there exist a comprehensive national inventory (as opposed to a directory of important sites - see 6.1.1 above) for your country? Y/N
If No - What are the impediments to such being prepared?
If only parts of the country have had inventory completed indicate which parts these are.
AND
What is the likely timeframe for completing the national inventory?
If a national inventory is already completed - When was it finalised?
AND
Is the information housed where it is accessible to stakeholders and the international community? (Resolution VII.20)
If No - What are the impediments to such occurring?
Has national/sub-national inventory information been provided to the Ramsar Bureau, where it is not accessible through the Internet? Y/N
Proposed national actions and targets
Ministry, agency/department or organisation responsible for leading on this action

Operational Objective 7.4: To obtain funds to fulfil obligations contracted under the Convention, notably for developing countries and countries whose economies are in transition.

Actions - Global and National Targets
7.4.1 Allocate funds for conservation and wise use of wetlands in the budget of each Contracting Party. [CPs]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - By COP8 to see allocations for wetlands made in all CPs and also to specific wetland programmes in more than 40 CPs.
Does your government allocate funds for wetland conservation and wise use activities? Y/N
If NO – what are the impediments to this happening?
If Yes – Is this:
- As a separate allocation to a Wetlands Programme (or similar)? Y/N
- As part of a broader allocation for the environment? Y/N
- As part of the programmes maintained by a range of Ministries? Y/N
AND
What mechanisms are in place for determining priorities and coordinating the expenditure of these funds?
Is it linked to a National Wetland Policy, Biodiversity Plan, Catchment Plans? Please elaborate
Proposed national actions and targets
Ministry, agency/department or organisation responsible for leading on this action

7.4.2 Include projects for conservation and wise use of wetlands in development plans funded by development assistance agencies, and ensure the latter consult the Ramsar administrative authority in each Contracting Party. [CPs]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - To see this trend escalate such that all eligible CPs are receiving donor support for a range of major wetland-related projects by the time of COP8. In particular to see this support being provided, as appropriate, for the priority areas of policy development, legal and institutional reviews, inventory and assessments, the designation and management of Ramsar sites, training and communications.
If your country has a bilateral development assistance programme, does it allocate funds for wetland-related projects on a regular basis? Y/N
If No – what are the impediment to this occurring?
If Yes – Are these projects subjected to rigorous impact assessment procedures, which take account of the full environmental, social and economic values of wetlands? Y/N
If No – why not?
If Yes – Is the Ramsar Administrative Authority consulted during the screening and assessment phases of the projects? Y/N
If No – why not?
AND
Is there a formal consultative process in place (such as a National Ramsar Committee) which ensures the development assistance agency is fully aware of the Ramsar Convention obligations of the country with respect to international cooperation? Y/N
If No – why not?
If yes – Please elaborate
Proposed national actions and targets
Ministry, agency/department or organisation responsible for leading on this action