

# The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-24

Vision: “Wetlands are conserved, wisely used, restored and their benefits are recognized and valued by all.”

The Fourth Ramsar Strategic plan lays out a new vision under the Convention mission, four overall goals and 19 specific targets which are designed to support the efforts of Parties, partners and other stakeholders in preventing, stopping and reversing the global decline of wetlands.



Convention  
on Wetlands



**The Ramsar Mission:**  
Conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.



## Strategic Goal 1: Addressing the Drivers of Wetland Loss And Degradation

Human impacts on wetlands are growing. Influencing the drivers of wetland degradation and loss and the integration of the role of wetland values (monetary and non-monetary) into planning and decision making requires the development of a methodology that enables wetland resources and ecosystem benefits to be assessed so that the multiple environmental functions and benefits are understood widely within societies. Contracting Parties, the Secretariat, Regional Initiatives and IOPs will enhance their engagement with relevant stakeholders in order to diminish threats, influence trends, restore wetlands and communicate good practices.

- 1 Wetland benefits are featured in national/local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries at the national and local level.
- 2 Water use respects wetland ecosystem needs for them to fulfil their functions and provide services at the appropriate scale inter alia at the basin level or along a coastal zone.
- 3 The public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands.
- 4 Invasive alien species and pathways of introduction and expansion are identified and prioritized, priority invasive alien species are controlled or eradicated, and management responses are prepared and implemented to prevent their introduction and establishment.

## Strategic Goal 3: Wisely Using All Wetlands

The wise use of all wetlands requires that Parties ensure they are addressing wetlands beyond those currently included in the Ramsar Site network. This work may occur at the national, subnational, regional, and transboundary levels, including at basin level. Mainstreaming recognition of ecosystem functions, services and benefits into a wide range of sectors and with a broad array of actors will help ensure the success of this effort.

- 8 National wetland inventories have been initiated, completed, updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands.
- 9 The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, inter alia, within a river basin or along a coastal zone.
- 10 The traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities relevant for the wise use of wetlands and their customary use of wetland resources are documented, respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention, with a full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities at all relevant levels.
- 11 Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated.
- 12 Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 13 Enhanced sustainability of key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries, when they affect wetlands, contributing to biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods.

## Strategic Goal 2: Effectively Conserving and Managing the Ramsar Site Network

Ramsar Sites constitute the largest network of officially recognized internationally important wetland areas in the world. This network constitutes the backbone of a larger network of wetlands. Parties must commit themselves to efforts to protect and effectively manage the existing Ramsar Sites and enable the full and effective participation of stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as to expanding the reach of the Convention by continuously working to add more sites and areas of wetlands recognized under the Convention.

- 5 The ecological character of Ramsar sites is maintained or restored, through effective planning and integrated management.
- 6 There is a significant increase in area, numbers and ecological connectivity in the Ramsar Site network, in particular under-represented types of wetlands including in under-represented ecoregions and Transboundary Sites.
- 7 Sites that are at risk of change of ecological character have threats addressed.

## Operational Goal 4: Enhancing Implementation

It will be vital for the survival of wetlands and the success of the Convention for Parties to enhance implementation of the Strategic Plan. Various approaches will help strengthen the implementation of the three Strategic Goals, and ultimately of the Convention itself. They involve critical actions to be undertaken by Contracting Parties themselves, and in partnership with other Parties and other entities, in particular with regard to scientific and technical advice and guidance, resource mobilization, public awareness, visibility and capacity building. The Ramsar Secretariat will also play a vital role in raising awareness and visibility of the Convention, as well as mobilizing resources to support enhanced implementation.

- 14 Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels are developed on relevant topics and are available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.
- 15 Ramsar Regional Initiatives with the active involvement and support of the Parties in each region are reinforced and developed into effective tools to assist in the full implementation of the Convention.
- 16 Wetlands conservation and wise use are mainstreamed through communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness.
- 17 Financial and other resources for effectively implementing the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 from all sources are made available.
- 18 International cooperation is strengthened at all levels.
- 19 Capacity building for implementation of the Convention and the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 is enhanced.



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