



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

# Role of Basin Organisation in Wetlands Conservation and Wise Use

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# Outline



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1. What is the Ramsar Convention?
2. What is the strategic relevance for River Basin Organisations?
3. What are the existing/emerging connections and opportunities?
4. What are the longer term possibilities?



# 1. What is the Ramsar Convention?



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- **Mission:** Conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international co-operation, as a contribution to Sustainable Development all over the world
- **Definition:** Lakes, rivers, swamps, marshes, wet grasslands, peatlands, oases, estuaries, deltas, tidal flats, near shore marine areas, mangroves and coral reefs, human made sites such as fishponds, rice paddies, reservoirs and salt plains
- **Main characteristics:** 168 parties, 3 pillars, 2187 sites of international importance, commitments



## 2. What is the strategic relevance?



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- A fuller understanding of the role of wetlands in ecology points to their value:
  - Deliver clean water and good sanitation
  - Flood protection, increase water storage
  - Filter nutrients and other pollutants
  - Provide habitat for biodiversity
- And the importance of their 'wise use':
  - Sustainable food production (e.g. inland fisheries)
  - Better regulation of flow (e.g. dams, irrigation and water drainage systems)



### 3. **What connections and opportunities?**



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- **MOUs:** Niger Basin, Lake Chad
- **Demonstrated usefulness:** Murray-Darling, Mekong, Sava (e.g. sites)
- **Observer status:** Danube
- **Emerging themes:**
  - Strategic Plan 2016-21, drafted vision, and priority areas
  - Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate and Water Security agendas, IWRM, cross-sector approaches
  - Global Partnership for Wetlands Restoration, co-benefits
  - Earth Observation, GlobWetland Africa
- **Huge gap / opportunity exists**



## 4. What are the longer term possibilities?



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- Sustainable Development Goals motivate more action / finance for Ecosystems Approach within River Basin Organisation's activities
- Further strengthening International Co-operation pillar of Ramsar, in response to a need
- Central questions that emerge:
  - What improvements in environmental management / conservation of wetlands can reduce potential future geo-political risks?
  - In order to maximise co-benefits (e.g. avoid drought, improve water quality, etc.), and minimize economic costs (e.g. clean up), which specific wetlands in a basin require the most attention?

