



NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RAMSAR CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

**National Reports to be submitted to the 12th Meeting
of the Conference of the Contracting Parties,
Uruguay, 2015**

Please submit the completed National Report in Microsoft Word format (.doc, 97-2003), as an electronic file (not a printed copy) and preferably by e-mail, to Alexia Dufour, Regional Affairs Officer, Ramsar Secretariat (dufour@ramsar.org) by **1 September 2014**.

The structure of the COP12 National Report Format

The COP12 National Report Format (NRF) is in four sections:

Section 1 provides the institutional information about the Administrative Authority and National Focal Points for the national implementation of the Convention.

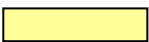
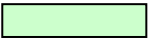
Section 2 is a 'free-text' section in which the Party is invited to provide a summary of various aspects of national implementation progress and recommendations for the future.

Section 3 provides the 66 implementation indicator questions, grouped under each Convention implementation strategy in the Strategic Plan 2009-2015, and with an optional 'free-text' section under each indicator question in which the Contracting Party may, if it wishes, add further information on national implementation of that activity.

Section 4 is an optional annex to allow any Contracting Party that so wishes to provide additional information regarding any or all of its Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites).

General guidance for completing and submitting the COP12 National Report Format

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ THIS GUIDANCE SECTION BEFORE STARTING TO COMPLETE THE NATIONAL REPORT FORMAT

1. All Sections of the COP12 NRF should be completed in one of the Convention's official languages (English, French, Spanish).
2. The deadline for submission of the completed NRF is **1 September 2014**. It will not be possible to include information from National Reports received after that date in the analysis and reporting on Convention implementation to COP12.
3. All fields with a pale yellow background  must be filled in.
4. Fields with a pale green background  are free-text fields in which to provide additional information, if the Contracting Party so wishes. Although providing information in these fields is optional, Contracting Parties are encouraged to provide such additional information wherever possible and relevant, as it helps us understand Parties' progress and activity more fully, to prepare the best possible global and regional implementation reports to COP.
5. The Format is created as a form in Microsoft Word. You are only able to submit replies and information in the yellow or green boxes, as all other parts of the form are locked to ensure that the structure and wording of indicators will remain uniform and comparable for all Parties.
6. To select a yellow or green field you wish to complete, move the cursor over the relevant part of the form and left-click the mouse. The cursor will automatically move to the next field available.
7. To move down through the sequence of fields, you can also use the 'Tab' key on the computer keyboard.

8. For a 'free-text' field, you can type in whatever information you wish. Note that there is only limited facility within the Microsoft 'form' format to make editorial changes in the 'free-text' box once text has been entered. Therefore, if you wish to amend any of the text you have put in a green or yellow 'free-text' box, you should cut and paste the existing text into a separate document, make all the amendments, and then cut and paste the revised text back into the box.
9. Certain keyboard characters interfere with the automatic entry of data into the Secretariat's database. For that reason, please **do not use double quote marks " "** in the 'free-text' fields. Please **only use single quote marks ' '**. For the same reason, please **only use simple text in the 'free-text' fields: they cannot accept formatting, colours or objects such as tables and images.**
10. For each of the 'indicator questions' in Section 3, a drop-down menu of answer options is provided. These vary between indicators, depending on the question, but are generally of the form: 'Yes', 'No', 'Partly', 'In progress'. This is necessary so that statistical comparisons can be made of the replies.
11. For each indicator question you can choose only one answer. If you wish to provide further information or clarification, do so in the green additional information box below the relevant indicator question. Please be as concise as possible (**maximum of 500 words** in each free-text box).
12. To select an answer to an indicator question, use the Tab key, or move the cursor over the relevant yellow box and left-click the mouse. The drop-down menu of answer options will appear. Left-click the mouse on the answer option you choose, and this will appear in the centre of the yellow box.
13. An NRF is not usually completed by one person alone: for many indicators it is best for the principal compiler to consult with colleagues in their agency and others within the government and, as appropriate, with NGOs and other stakeholders who might have fuller knowledge of aspects of the Party's overall implementation of the Convention. The principal compiler can save the document at any point and return to it later to continue or to amend answers. Compilers should refer back to the National Report submitted for COP11 to ensure the continuity and consistency of information provided.
14. After each session, **remember to save the file** in Microsoft Word, .doc, 97-2003 format. A recommended filename structure is: COP12NRF [Country] [date], for example: COP12NRFSpain13July2014.doc
15. After the NRF has been completed, please **send it in this format to Alexia Dufour, Regional Affairs Officer, Ramsar Convention Secretariat, preferably by e-mail (dufour@ramsar.org).**
16. The completed NRF **must be accompanied by a letter or e-mail message in the name of the Head of Administrative Authority, confirming that this is the Contracting Party's official submission of its COP12 National Report.**
17. If you have any questions or problems, please contact the Ramsar Secretariat for advice (e-mail as above).

NATIONAL REPORT TO RAMSAR COP12

SECTION 1: INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

Important note: the responses below will be considered by the Ramsar Secretariat as the definitive list of your focal points, and will be used to update the information it holds. The Secretariat's current information about your focal points is available at www.ramsar.org/contacts_en.

NAME OF CONTRACTING PARTY: AUSTRIA

DESIGNATED RAMSAR ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY

Name of Administrative Authority:	Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management
Head of Administrative Authority - name and title:	Mag. Viktoria Hasler
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DESIGNATED NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR RAMSAR CONVENTION MATTERS

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Telephone/Fax:	+43 1 151 522 - 1416 / 7402
Email:	gerhard.schwach@lebensministerium.at

DESIGNATED NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL (STRP)

Name and title:	A.o. Univ. Prof. Dr. Gert Michael Steiner
Name of organisation:	University of Vienna, Dep. of Conservation Biology, Vegetation- and Landscape Ecology
Mailing address:	A-1100 Vienna, Rotenhofgasse 81/2/39
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Email:	gert.michael.Steiner@univie.ac.at

DESIGNATED GOVERNMENT NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMME ON COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND AWARENESS (CEPA)

Name and title:	Dipl.-Ing. Dr. Gerhard Schwach
Name of organisation:	Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management
Mailing address:	A-1010 Vienna, Stubenbastei 5
Telephone/Fax:	+43 1 151 522 - 1416 / 7402
Email:	gerhard.schwach@bmlfuw.gv.at

DESIGNATED NON-GOVERNMENT NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMME ON COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND AWARENESS (CEPA)

Name and title:	Mag. Birgit Mair-Markart
Name of organisation:	Austrian League for Nature Conservation
Mailing address:	Museumsplatz 2, A-5020 Salzburg
Telephone/Fax:	+43 662 - 642909 / 6537344
Email:	birgit.mair-markart@naturschutzbund.at

SECTION 2: GENERAL SUMMARY OF NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

REMINDER: Please do not use double quote marks “ ”: use single quotes ‘ ’ instead.

In your country, in the past triennium (i.e., since COP11 reporting):

A. What have been the five most successful aspects of implementation of the Convention?

- 1) Implementation of four new Ramsar Sites: Autertal/St. Lorenzener Hochmoor (2011), Güssinger Ponds (2013), Wilder Kaiser (2013), Upper Drava River (2014)
- 2) Increase the recognition of the value of wetlands which have international importance in the local population and administration (Salzburg)
- 3) Increased protection of periodically wetlands ('Sutten') by means of authorization for drainage or embankment of these sites in Lower Austria.
- 4) Restoration projects/revitalisation of rivers and their surroundings, for example Donau, Enns, Mur, Inn, Pielach, Traisen, and of mires/peatlands (for example mires of the Austrian Federal Forests in the region Salzkammergut).
- 5) Inclusion of peatlands as CO₂ storage in Lower Austria's Climate and Energy Programme 2000

B. What have been the five greatest difficulties in implementing the Convention?

- 1) At governmental level there are some other political priorities (z.B. Energy Strategy, Agriculture)
- 2) Huge administrative demands for the nomination of a new Ramsar Site (missing approval of landowners, borough councils and provincial government resolutions)
- 3) Conflict of interests in relation to the infrastructure project for crossing the Danube (Vienna)
Problem of indicating a cross-border Ramsar Site with Switzerland (area of the Rhine Delta) due to the fact that there is no interest on the part of Switzerland
- 4) Reducing the impact of invasive species (Styria)
- 5) Lack of personnel and financial resources (Tyrol, Salzburg)

C. What are the five priorities for future implementation of the Convention?

- 1) Implementation of the new Austrian "Floodplain Strategy 2020" on the basis of the Austrian Floodplain Inventory listing 823 sites larger than 3 hectares
- 2) Further restoration of rivercourses, mires, lake shores and other wetlands
- 3) Increasing public awareness for wetlands
- 4) further designation of wetlands of international importance
- 5) implementation of the Bilateral (AT-SK) Management Strategy for Morava River Ramsar Sites and its extension to a Trilateral (AT-CZ-SK) Management Strategy as a pilot project for other transboundary wetland areas

D. Do you (AA) have any recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Ramsar Secretariat?

Presence of Ramsar Secretariate in National Ramsar celebrations e.g. by awarding Ramsar diplomas and early delivering of files for WWD materials in a way that we can need them for producing national posters and materials in german language.

- E. Do you (AA) have any recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Convention's International Organisation Partners (IOPs)? (including ongoing partnerships and partnerships to develop)

Any international assistance in case of infrastructure projects with negative effects on Ramsar sites or other important wetlands. Support for implementing significant national wetland strategies, initiatives or projects e.g. Ramsar Wetland Education Centers

- F. How can national implementation of the Ramsar Convention be better linked with implementation of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), especially those in the 'biodiversity cluster' (Ramsar, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), CITES, and World Heritage Convention), and UNCCD and UNFCCC?

Convention on Biological Diversity: Streamlining of strategies and measures, as well as setting priorities.

Convention on Migratory Species (CMS):

World Heritage Convention: Austria's cooperation with the World Heritage Convention needs to be established. Both Austrian Ramsar Sites, namely 'Neusiedler See-Seewinkel' and 'Rhine Delta/Bodensee' are World Heritage sites of international importance: Cultural landscape Fertö-Neusiedler See, in conjunction with Hungary (2001); prehistoric lake dwellings in the Alps jointly with Germany, France, Italy, Slovenia and Switzerland (2011).

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna - CITES: Saving Waterbirds: Increased cooperation with southern countries in order to protect endangered water birds.

International Water Institute - IWMI: Transfer of knowledge, technology for sustainable water use.

Professional support of the newly-founded Wetlands International - European Association.

Bonn Convention/Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS):

UNFCCC -United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change:

Not relevant for Austria: UNCCD - Convention on Combat Desertification

- G. How can implementation of the Ramsar Convention be better linked with the implementation of water policy/strategy and other strategies in the country (e.g., on sustainable development, energy, extractive industries, poverty reduction, sanitation, food security, biodiversity)?

Improved communication between the European Commission with regard to the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Ramsar Convention. The Ramsar guidelines are increasingly adhered to in Austria. When planning water improvement measures the Austrian floodplain strategy is taken into consideration.

- H. Do you (AA) have any other general comments on the implementation of the Convention?

No.

I. Please list the names of the organisations which have been consulted on or have contributed to the information provided in this report:

Federal Governments of Austria - Nature Conservation Authorities of Carinthia, Vienna, Styria, Upper Austria, Lower Austria, Tyrol, Burgenland, Salzburg, Vorarlberg.

Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, University of Vienna, Austrian League for Nature Conservation.

SECTION 3: INDICATOR QUESTIONS AND FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION INFORMATION

REMINDER: Guidance for completing this section

1. For each 'indicator question', please select one answer from the 'drop-down' list in the yellow box.
2. If you wish to add any additional information on a specific indicator, please provide this information in the green 'free-text' boxes below the indicator questions.
3. If you wish to amend any of the text you have put in a green 'free-text' box, you should cut and paste the existing text into a separate file, make the amendments, and then cut and paste the revised text back into the green box.
4. Some characters used in the free text box prevent the automatic data entry into our database National Reports. For that reason, **please do not use double quote marks “ ” in the free text boxes. Use single quotes ‘ ’. Text in the ‘free text’ boxes should be simple text only: they cannot accept formatting, colours or objects such as tables and images.**
5. To help Contracting Parties refer to relevant information they provided in their National Report to COP11, for each appropriate indicator a cross-reference is provided to the equivalent indicator(s) in the COP11 NRF, shown thus: {x.x.x}
6. Where appropriate, a cross-reference is also provided to the relevant Key Result Area (KRA) relating to Contracting Parties implementation in the Strategic Plan 2009-2015.
7. Only Strategic Plan 2009-2015 Strategies and KRAs for which there are significant implementation actions for Contracting Parties are included in this reporting format; those parts of the Strategic Plan that do not refer directly to Parties are omitted.

GOAL 1. THE WISE USE OF WETLANDS

STRATEGY 1.1 Wetland inventory and assessment. *Describe, assess and monitor the extent and condition of all types of wetlands as defined by the Ramsar Convention and wetland resources at relevant scales, in order to inform and underpin implementation of the Convention, in particular in the application of its provisions concerning the wise use of all wetlands.*

1.1.1 Does your country have a comprehensive National Wetland Inventory? {1.1.1} KRA 1.1.i	A - Yes
<p>1.1.1 Additional information:</p> <p>National Wetland Inventory Austria: 889 sites with a total Area of 2744 km². www.feuchtgebietsinventar.at</p> <p>Österreichischer Moorschutzkatalog/Mire Conservation Catalogue Austria: 1500 mires (Steiner, G.M. 1992).</p> <p>A separate inventory was set up for floodplains in Austria (Lazowski et al. 2014). This encompasses 823 floodplains with a total area of 955 km². Some of these are also included in the National Wetland inventory Austria.</p>	

1.1.2 Is wetland inventory data and information maintained and made accessible to all stakeholders? {1.1.2} KRA 1.1.ii	A - Yes
<p>1.1.2 Additional information:</p> <p>Wetland Inventory Austria: Data are available online (Web-Gis) for the general public: www.feuchtgebietsinventar.at. An update of Austrias Ramsar sites list needs to be drawn up.</p> <p>The inventory of flood plains was made assessable by a report: Lazoski, L., Schwarz, U., Essl, F., Goetzl, M., Peterseil, J. & Egger, G. (2011): Aueninventar Österreich. Bericht zur bundesweiten Übersicht der Auenobjekte. Lebensministerium, Wien: 57p. Download: http://www.umweltbundesamt.at/oed_naturschutz</p> <p>The Mires were made assessable by a report: Steiner, G. M. (1992): Österreichischer Moorschutzkatalog. Grüne Reihe des Bundesministeriums für Umwelt, Jugend und Familie. Graz, styria medienservice.</p> <p>Report on Wetlands in Burgenland: Michalek, K. G., Lazowski, W. & Zechmeister, T. (2012): Burgenländische Feuchtgebiete und ihre Bedeutung im Naturschutz. Naturschutzbund Burgenland.</p> <p>Report on Mires in Styria: Matz, H. & Gepp, J. (2008): Moorreiche Steiermark. 389 Moore in der Steiermark. Naturschutzbund Steiermark und Institut für Naturschutz.</p>	

1.1.3 Has the condition* of wetlands in your country, overall, changed since the last triennium? {1.1.3}

- a) Ramsar Sites
- b) wetlands generally

Please comment on the sources of the information on which your answer is based in the green free- text box below. If there is a difference between inland and coastal wetland situations, please describe. If you are able to, please describe the principal driver(s) of the change(s).

* 'Condition' corresponds to ecological character, as defined by the Convention

- a) - No change
- b) - No change

1.1.3 Additional information on a) and/or b):

a) Ramsar Sites

The condition of wetlands has generally remained the same in most of Austria's Ramsar Sites. In the Ramsar Sites 'Mires of Pass Thurn', 'Mires of the Überling', 'Bayerische Wildalm - Wildalmfilz' and 'Upper Drava River' the status could be improved. However, in the Ramsar sites 'Waldviertler Ponds, Peat Bogs & Floodplains' a deterioration is expected.

b) Wetlands generally

In Austria, waters are the most endangered biotopes (Essl, E. & Egger 2010; Fiala, I. 2013). Only 14% of the running waters are in a very good condition, while 21% can be considered to be in a good ecological condition (Essl, E. & Egger 2010). Many water ways were changed hydromorphologically due to regulation measures. This can be seen in the deterioration of the FFH-Habitat Type 3240 'Alpine rivers and their ligneous vegetation with *Salix elegans*' (FFH-Report Austria 2007-2012), Floodplains as well are characterized by water engineering measures. Only half of the floodplains can be considered intact (Lazowski et al 2011). Austria's lakes are in a very good ecological state (BMLFUW www.bmfluw.g.at/wasser-oesterreich/Zahlen/Zustand.html).

In the past few years many measures to improve floodplains have been carried out. The focus of the first NGP (2009) was the set-up of permeability, improvement of water structures and drain ratios in the priority rehabilitation areas. At both, existing and new hydro power plants, ladders for upstream fish migration and ramps were built in, and rivers were connected to tributaries and the surrounding area. Special improvements of water structures were carried out on a voluntary basis, e.g. removal of artificial river banks. A number of steps were carried out in conjunction with flood control measures.

In the past few years, several projects focussing on the restructuration and renaturization were executed with EU-LIFE funds. Important improvements were made along the big rivers, e.g. Danube and its tributaries and the river Drau.

Catalogue 'Austrian Water Catalogue - Protecting Water - Using Water' (2012): A catalogue of criteria was worked out for the assessment of sustainable water plant use in the Austrian National Water Management of 2009, which states the necessity to increase the share of renewable energy, as well as the protection of ecologically valuable water ways. Criteria were laid down for the assessment of water power plant projects and the stretch of waterway with a view to their applicability. Based on these criteria, concrete plans can be made by the provinces and individual interests can be gauged.

STRATEGY 1.3 Policy, legislation and institutions. *Develop and implement policies, legislation, and practices, including growth and development of appropriate institutions, in all Contracting Parties, to ensure that the wise use provisions of the Convention are being effectively applied.*

1.3.1 Is a National Wetland Policy (or equivalent instrument) in place? {1.3.1} KRA 1.3.i
(If 'Yes', please give the title and date of the policy in the green text box)

A - Yes

1.3.1 Additional information:

The Austrian Wetlands Strategy (Jungmeier & Werner 1999) and the National Ramsar Action Plan 2006-2010, adopted by the Austrian National Ramsar Committee (not adapted by the Austrian Government). The update of the Wetlands Strategy/Action Plan is intended. An Austrian Floodplain Strategy is prepared to be finalized in autumn 2014 to be refined by an Action Plan on Floodplains.

Relevant for the protection of wetlands are, among others, the guidelines and the national use of the EU Habitats and Birds Directives, the EU Water Framework Directive as well as the on EU Directive on the assessment and management of flood risks. Access to data and information can be obtained at the platform 'Waterinformationsystem Austria - WISA': <http://wisa.bmlfuw.gv.at/>.

1.3.2 Have wetland issues been incorporated into other national strategies and planning processes, including:

- a) Poverty eradication strategies
 - b) Water resource management and water efficiency plans
 - c) Coastal and marine resource management plans
 - d) National forest programmes
 - e) National strategies for sustainable development
 - f) National policies or measures on agriculture
 - g) National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans drawn up under the CBD
- {1.3.3} KRA 1.3.i

- a) Z - Not applicable
- b) A - Yes
- c) Z - Not applicable
- d) A - Yes
- e) A - Yes
- f) A - Yes
- g) A - Yes

1.3.2 Additional information:

- b) Austrian National Water Management Plan 2009-2015
- d) Austrian Forest Strategy 2020
- e) Austrian Strategy for Sustainable Development - ÖSTRAT 2010
- f) Austria Agri-environmental Programm ÖPUL
- g) Austrian Biodiversity Strategy 2020+.

1.3.3 Are Strategic Environmental Assessment practices applied when reviewing policies, programmes and plans that may impact upon wetlands? {1.3.4} KRA 1.3.ii	C - Partly
<p>1.3.3 Additional information:</p> <p>Legal obligation for some strategies and plans by EU law; nevertheless wetland conservation and wise use are only partially included. At the moment, the Strategic Environment Audit of the Austrian National Water Management Plan 2015 is carried out.</p>	
1.3.4 Are Environmental Impact Assessments made for any development projects (such as new buildings, new roads, extractive industry) that may affect wetlands,? {1.3.5} KRA 1.3.iii	C - In some cases
<p>1.3.4 Additional information:</p> <p>The Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment Directives prescribed by the European law have been implemented by the Austrian Environmental Impact Assessment Act ('UVP-Gesetz 2000'). The stratetic environmental assessment is based on the Austrian Water Rights Law.</p> <p>The Austrian UVP-Law 2000 encompasses a list of envisioned projects, like infrastructure, water and energy-based projects. However, only new projects surpassing certain levels are obligatory.</p> <p>Areas protected by the European Natura 2000 (Habitats Directive) require an assessment should there be a likelihood that the projects or plans violate the European protected areas. Habitats Directive Art 6.3: Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site, but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives.</p>	
1.3.5 Have any amendments to existing legislation been made to reflect Ramsar commitments? {1.3.6}	A - Yes
<p>1.3.5 Additional information:</p> <p>Nine laws on nature conservation in Austria: These stipulate a general commitment to protect and conserve nature and landscape. In some provinces, wetlands or certain biotopes, e.g. near natural water bodies and their river banks, are generally protected.</p>	

STRATEGY 1.4: Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services. *Increase recognition of and attention in decision-making to the significance of wetlands for reasons of biodiversity conservation, water supply, coastal protection, integrated coastal zone management, flood defence, climate change mitigation and/or adaptation, food security, poverty eradication, tourism, cultural heritage, and scientific research, by developing and disseminating methodologies to achieve wise use of wetlands.*

1.4.1 Has an assessment been made of the ecosystem benefits/services provided by Ramsar Sites? {1.4.1} KRA 1.4.ii	C - Partly
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1.4.1 Additional information:

Within the framework of the project 'Development of a Regional Action Programme for the Multifunctional, Ecologically Optimized Use of Landscape and Environment Resources' - MUFLAN, the landscape of Carnuntum was assessed. Carnuntum is situated east of Vienna and is part of the Ramsar site 'Donau-March-Auen' (www.umweltbundesamt.at/MUFLAN/)

Austro-Hungarian case study 'Assessment Framework for Landscape Services in European Cultural Landscapes' (Hermann et al. 2014). The project region covers the Austro-Hungarian transboundary region of the Neusiedler See/Fertö.

The report 'Status and Significance of the Biological Diversity in Austria' (BMLFUW 2013) states which ecosystem services certain landscape types generate, e.g. wetlands and floodplain forests.

http://www.bmlfuw.gv.at/land/laendl_entwicklung/le-07-13/monitoring/monitoring-umwelt/Monitoring.html.

Booklet "Was die Landschaft für uns leistet", u.a. on the importance of the Ramsar Site 'Donau-March-Thaya-Auen' as naturally flood protection and Biodiversity 'Hot Spot' (http://noel.gv.at/bilder/d38/Broschuere_Oekosystemlesitungen.pdf).

1.4.2 Have wetland programmes or projects that contribute to poverty alleviation objectives or food and water security plans been implemented? {1.4.2} KRA 1.4.i

Z - Not applicable

1.4.2 Additional information:

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1.4.3 Have socio-economic and cultural values of wetlands been included in the management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands? {1.4.4} KRA 1.4.iii

C - Partly

1.4.3 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Partly', please indicate, if known, how many Ramsar Sites and their names):

Socio-economic and cultural values of wetlands have been included in the management planning of the Ramsar sites 'Wilder Kaiser' and 'Donau-March-Auen' and are planned for 'Lafnitztal'. Within the ETZ-project 'Ramsar Eco NaTour' a plan for soft tourism in the March-Thaya wetlands was worked out. Visitors shall be guided away from noise-sensitive areas towards so-called 'nature zones', 'adventure zones' and 'white zones' i.e. into nature compatible zones. www.march-thaya-auen.at

Within the Project „Natura 2000 erleben am Grünen Band“ four Natura Trails at the European Green Belt (natural heritage along the line of the former 'Iron Curtain') have been established. www.natura2000amgruenenband.at; www.europeangreenbelt.org

STRATEGY 1.5 Recognition of the role of the Convention. *Raise the profile of the Convention by highlighting its capacity as a unique mechanism for wetland ecosystem management at all levels; promote the usefulness of the Convention as a possible implementation mechanism to meet the goals and targets of other global conventions and processes.*

1.5.1 Since COP11, have you brought the 'Changwon Declaration' (Resolution X.3) to the attention of your:

- a. head of state
 - b. parliament
 - c. private sector
 - d. civil society
- {1.5.2}

- a. A - Yes
- b. B - No
- c. B - No
- d. B - No

1.5.1 Additional information:

The Changwon Declaration was cited in the "Ministerial Declaration on the preparation of the establishment of the "Mura-Drava-Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve" (MDD-TBR), signed by 5 Ministers in Budapest (HU) on March 25th, 2011, which forms the basis for the 5-country-cooperation along Mura-Drava-Danube.

STRATEGY 1.6 Science-based management of wetlands. *Promote successful implementation of the wise use concept by ensuring that national policies and wetland management plans are based on the best available scientific knowledge, including technical and traditional knowledge.*

1.6.1 Has research to inform wetland policies and plans been undertaken in your country on:

- a. agriculture-wetland interactions
 - b. climate change
 - c. valuation of ecosystem services
- {1.6.1} KRA 1.6.i

- a. B - No
- b. A - Yes
- c. A - Yes

1.6.1 Additional information:

b) climate change

Schimon, W. (Ed., 2011): Studie über Anpassungsstrategien an den Klimawandel für Österreichs Wasserwirtschaft/Study on Climate Change Adjustment Strategies for Austria's Water Management. Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft: 486p.

http://www.bmlfuw.gv.at/publikationen/wasser/wasserwirtschaft_wasserpolitik/anpassungstrategien_an_den_klimawandel_fuer_oesterreichs_wasserwirtschaft.html

Prutsch, A. et al. (2014): Methoden und Werkzeuge zur Anpassung an den Klimawandel. Ein Handbuch für Bundesländer, Regionen und Städte/Methods and Tool Kit for Climate Change Adaptation. A Handbook for provinces, regions and towns.

http://www.umweltbundesamt.at/aktuell/publikationen/publikationssuche/publikationsdetail/?pub_id=2052

Within the transnational Im Rahmen LEADER-Project 'CO2-Recycling – Klimaschutz durch Boden-, Humus- und Biotopmanagement/CO2-Recycling - Climate Protection by Means of Soil, Topsoil and Biotope Management' of the cities Bleiburg and Eberndorf and the Regional Development Association Völkermarkt measures were taken to financially and professionally support the extensivisation of arable land, the recultivation of wet meadows and planting of groves.

c) valuation of ecosystem services

Within the scope of the project 'MUFLAN-Entwicklung regionaler Aktionsprogramme zur multifunktionalen, ökologisch optimierten Nutzung von Landschaft und Umweltressourcen/Development of Regional Action Programmes for a Multifunctional, Ecological Optimum Use of Lands and Environment Resources') the landscape benefit for the project region 'Römerland Carnuntum' (part of the Ramsar Site 'Donau-March-Auen') was evaluated. www.umweltbundesamt.at/MUFLAN

The ecosystem services of the 290km-long river Mur were evaluated economically (Getzner et al. 2011).

1.6.2 Have all wetland management plans been based on sound scientific research, including research on potential threats to the wetlands? {1.6.2} KRA 1.6.ii	A - Yes
1.6.2 Additional information:	
Management plans based on information from Natura-2000 implementation projects and national parks.	

STRATEGY 1.7 Integrated Water Resources Management. *Ensure that policies and implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), applying an ecosystem-based approach, are included in the planning activities in all Contracting Parties and in their decision-making processes, particularly concerning groundwater management, catchment/river basin management, coastal and nearshore marine zone planning and climate change mitigation and/or adaptation activities.*

<p>1.7.1 Do your country's water governance and management systems treat wetlands as natural water infrastructure integral to water resource management at the scale of river basins? {1.7.2} KRA 1.7.ii</p>	A - Yes
<p>1.7.1 Additional information:</p> <p>The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) integrates wetlands into the catchment-based area planning (River Basin Management Plan). The environmental objectives according to WFD also include protected areas (see Art. 4 (1) c) & Annex IV), as well as Natura 2000 areas. The water-relevant Natura 2000 areas in Austria comprise mainly the Ramsar-designated Sites.</p> <p>The programme not only includes measures to be taken directly at the water, but also measures to improve and reconnect wetland systems. The evaluation according to WFD is based on water types. These include the corresponding wetlands, e.g. big rivers (Danube, March etc.) and their flood plains. Plans in the area of flood prevention factor in the importance of wetlands for flood retention.</p>	
<p>1.7.2 Have Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) expertise and tools been incorporated into catchment/river basin planning and management (see Resolution X.19)? {1.7.3}</p>	A - Yes
<p>1.7.2 Additional information:</p> <p>With a view to the European Water Framework Directive and the European Floods Directive compulsory public participation as to the individual implementation steps is envisaged (e.g. concerning important issues as to water management, national water management plan, flood risk management plan), as well as experts' opinion on drafts. Detailed information on WISA - Water Informationssystem Austria http://wisa.bmlfuw.gv.a/.</p> <p>Measures to involve the public are e.g. 'River Dialogues' (www.flussdialog.at), PR - political awareness, e.g. 'Aktiv fuer unser Wasser' (www.wasseraktiv.at) and 'Generation Blue' (www.generationblue.at).</p>	
<p>1.7.3 Has your country established policies or guidelines for enhancing the role of wetlands in mitigating or adapting to climate change? {1.7.5} KRA 1.7.iii</p>	A - Yes

1.7.3 Additional information:

Data was collected and evaluated within the project 'Anpassungsstrategien an den Klimawandel für Österreichs Wasserwirtschaft/Climate Change Adaptation Strategies for Austria's Water Management' (BMLFUW 2010).

Lower Austria's Climate and Energy Programme 2020 envisages that near-natural areas with a high potential of CO₂ storage will be maintained and improved (e.g. peatlands, natural forests; wet meadows).

The Austrian Climate Research Programme (ACRP) was created in 2008 under the auspices of the Austrian Climate and Energy Fund (Klima- und Energiefonds). It is a broad policy initiative promoting climate-related and energy-related research in Austria. The ACRP provides a conceptual and institutional framework for supporting climate research in Austria. <http://klimafonds.gv.at/assets/Uploads/Downloads-Förderungen/ACRP/ACRP2014-03-24web.pdf>

Project EU Lakes (2010-2013): Austria participated in this project with Lake Neusiedl. Improved strategies were worked out by the lake management to reduce the effects of climate change. www.eulakes.eu

More publications (selection):

BMLFUW (2014): Klimawandel - Was tun? Booklet, 50pp
<http://www.bmlfuw.gv.at/publikationen/umwelt/klimawandel.html>

Kronwetter-Kießwetter et al. (2013): Österreichische Strategie zur Anpassung an den Klimawandel. BMLFUW, Wien.

Essl, F. & Rabitsch, W. (ed., 2013): Biodiversität und Klimawandel. Auswirkungen und Handlungsoptionen für den Naturschutz in Mitteleuropa. Springer Berlin Heidelberg: 458 pp. The authors of this study point out that the protection and recultivation of wetlands is gaining in importance, in order to support the extension of wandering species due to climate change.

Wiesner, C.; Woler, C.; Rabitsch, W. & Nering S. (2010): Gebietsfremde Fische in Deutschland und Österreich und mögliche Auswirkungen des Klimawandels. BfN-Skripten 279, Bonn, 196 pp. Study on invasive fish species in Germany and Austria under the aspect of climate change.

1.7.4 Has your country formulated plans or projects to sustain and enhance the role of wetlands in supporting and maintaining viable farming systems? {1.7.6} KRA 1.7.v

A - Yes

1.7.4 Additional information:

The Austrian Programme ÖPUL for an environmentally-friendly management helps to protect wetlands in rural areas by, e.g. stopping the use of fertilizers, coordinated mowing times. Samples of ÖPUL measures: preventive soil and water protection, maintenance of ecologically-valuable areas and no increase of production for pastures. The measure 'greening of arable land in autumn and winter' reduces nutrients flowing into bordering water bodies and the ground water.

Contract-based nature conservation: Restrictions of cultivation are compensated and implies higher acceptance by those involved. Contracts are signed for a specific duration.

STRATEGY 1.8 Wetland restoration. *Identify priority wetlands and wetland systems where restoration or rehabilitation would be beneficial and yield long-term environmental, social or economic benefits, and implement the necessary measures to recover these sites and systems.*

1.8.1 Have priority sites for wetland restoration been identified?
{1.8.1} KRA 1.8.i

A - Yes

1.8.1 Additional information:

Vienna implements measures outside the Ramsar Site 'Untere Lobau' mainly in the range of water ecological goals, e.g. revitalization of the Liesing river, cleaning of and water management at the Alte Donau.

Little border river Kutschenitza (Austria/Slovenia): Within the framework of the EU-sponsored project 'GreenNet' the Austrian League for Nature Conservation, in conjunction with the Slovenian Nature Park Goricko, works out proposals for renaturation.

Identified as priority site for wetland restoration were the areas Untere Salzach between Salzburg and at the border to Upper Austria, as well as the Rhine Delta.

Priority sites for the protection and improvement of wetlands are in particular national parks, Natura 2000 areas and nature protection areas. In Lower Austria, these are in addition the designated areas in the 'Konzept zum Schutz von Lebensräumen und Arten in Niederösterreich/Concept for the protection of Habitats and Species'.

The wetlands inventory Austria (Lazowski et al. 2014) points out strongly changed river landscapes. A wetland strategy is planned.

Austrian National Water Management Plan (2009): Priority rivers to be revitalized are the bigger rivers (e.g. Danube). Focus of measures to be taken are improvement of wetland habitats, as well as improving and reconnecting still existing flood plains.

1.8.2 Have wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes or projects been implemented? {1.8.2} KRA 1.8.i

A - Yes

1.8.2 Additional information:

Measures of the Austrian National Water Management Plans (priority rehabilitation water bodies). Funds are available for ecological improvement (Umweltförderungsgesetz).

Several restoration/rehabilitation projects (selection):

Burgenland: First trials for restoration of salt ponds at Ramsar Site 'Neusiedler See - Seewinkel'.

Kärnten: Restoration projects at Ramsar Sites 'St Lorenzen Hochmoor' and 'Hörfeld Moor'. LIFE+Gail (2010+2014), LIFE+Lavant (2011-2015).

Lower Austria: LIFE+Netzwerk Donau, LIFE+restauration Untere Marchauen, LIFE+Traisen (2009-2014), ETZ Ramsar SKAT, ETZ Ramsar Eco Natour, ETZ Alpen-Karpaten-Korridor, ETY MoRe (revitalization of March; www.etc-more.eu), ETZ Polder Soutok (near nature flood protection March and Thaza; <http://soutok.pmo.cy/>). Various projects in national parks 'Thayatal' and 'Donau Auen'.

Salzburg: LIFE+ 'Naturwald, Moore und Lebensraumverbund im Ausseerland' (2013-2019), restoration of the mires of Pass Thurn (Ramsar Site).

Styria: ETZ DRAMURCI at the Styrian border Mur (www.dramurci.eu). LIFE+Murerleben II (2010-2015), LIFE+river landscape Enns (2011-2015), rewetting projects of mires; e.g. Nature reserve 'Attemsmoor', Ramsar sites 'Mires of Pass Thurn', 'Mires of the Uberling' and 'Bayerische Alm-Wildalmfilz'.

Vorarlberg: Project 'Rhesi' at the Alpine Rhine region (Austria/Switzerland) www.rhesi.org, rewetting project Rhine Delta.

Vienna: Project water network Neue Donau - Untere Lobau (National Park 'Donauauen').

STRATEGY 1.9 Invasive alien species. *Encourage Contracting Parties to develop a national inventory of invasive alien species that currently and/or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands, especially Ramsar Sites, and ensure mutual supportiveness between the national inventory and IUCN's Global Register on Invasive Species (GRIS); develop guidance and promote procedures and actions to prevent, control or eradicate such species in wetland systems.*

1.9.1 Does your country have a comprehensive national inventory of invasive alien species that currently or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands? {1.9.1} KRA 1.9.i

A - Yes

1.9.1 Additional information:

Inventories of alien species in Austria are available online at different European alien species databases (www.europe-aliens.org, www.nobanis.org) and irregularly updated at the National Focal Point established at the Environment Agency Austria on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management.

There are only limited data available on the detailed distribution of the alien species, hence occurrence within Ramsar-Sites is insufficiently known. As well, there is only limited information on the impact of alien species at most Sites, however, there is good general knowledge about the impact of selected invasive species that is deduced from studies of impacts in other regions.

Recent surveillance data confirm that alien species continue to arrive and spread in aquatic ecosystems in Austria. Several invasive plants have established along rivers, compete with native plants and change ecosystem structure, e.g. Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* or Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica*. Canadian Waterweed *Elodea canadensis* is considered problematical in some lakes. Invasive animals, particularly fish, gammarids and molluscs can locally dominate animal communities and replace native species. Examples include *Neogobius* spp., *Potamopyrgus antipodarum*, *Chelicorophium curvispinum*, *Dikerogammarus villosus*, *Corbicula fluminea* and *Pacifastacus leniusculus*.

It is expected that climate change will further promote some generalist alien species, such as *Pseudorasbora parva* and *Lepomis gibbosus*.

References

BMLFUW (2013): Aquatische Neobiota in Österreich – Stand 2013. Bundesministerium für Landwirtschaft, Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft, Wien.

<http://www.lebensministerium.at/publikationen/wasser/Aquatische-Neobiota-in--sterreich--Stand-2013.html>

Rabitsch, W., Milasowszky, N., Nehring, S., Wiesner, C., Wolter, C. & Essl, F. (2013): The times are a changing: temporal shifts in patterns of fish invasions in Central European freshwaters. *Journal of Fish Biology* 82: 17-33.

1.9.2 Have national policies or guidelines on invasive species control and management been established for wetlands? {1.9.2} KRa 1.9.iii

C - Partly

1.9.2 Additional information:

Federal nature conservation laws prohibit the release of alien species with slight differences between the federal states and some exceptions for economically profitable species (e.g. rainbow trout). Alien species are also an issue in other national and federal policies, e.g. laws on hunting and fisheries, again with noticeable differences between the federal states.

The Austrian Action Plan on Alien Species was released in 2004 on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. It presents responsibilities and suggests priorities for action in four topical issues: i) Education and awareness-raising, ii) Capacity building, iii) Research and monitoring, iv) Legal and organisational implementation.

The new Austrian Biodiversity Strategy adjusts strategic goals to international guidelines and commitments, such as the EU-Biodiversity Strategy (Target 5) and the CBD (Aichi Target 9).

There are no specific guidelines or management programmes in place to mitigate the impacts of invasive alien species in wetlands or Ramsar-Sites, but management actions are conducted in some protected areas (e.g. National Parks, Biosphere Reserves) accompanied by awareness-raising of different stakeholders.

Further steps for realization depend on the EU directive which is being developed on alien species.

Regarding neophytes near water characteristics have been developed. (<http://oewav.at/home/Service/Neophyten>).

STRATEGY 1.10 Private sector. *Promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.*

1.10.1 Is the private sector encouraged to apply the Ramsar wise use principle and guidance (Ramsar handbooks for the wise use of wetlands) in its activities and investments concerning wetlands? {1.10.1} KRA 1.10.i

C - Partly

1.10.1 Additional information:

NGOs and private companies provide a number of benefits for wetlands through obligatory compensation measures.

Lower Austria: The campaign 'Gemeinsam für mehr Biodiversität' offers activities for enterprises and private persons: ecosponsoring, sponsorships, corporate volunteering and voluntary maintenance work <http://naturland-noe.at/win>.

LIFE+Eco Business: Nature & Economy - establishing regional win - win relationships (2014-2017). The project aims to increase support for the protection of natural ecosystems and to foster sustainable spatial development.

Vienna: Outside the Ramsar site at 'Untere Lobau' near Fuchshäufel, maintenance work is carried out by a private shepherd, which was preceded by a pilot phase, equalling the 'wise-use' concept.

The Agri-environmental Programme ÖPUL, Austria's programme for the promotion of agriculture which is appropriate to the environment, extensive and protective of natural habitats, is intended to enhance the environmentally-benign management of agricultural areas. 76% of all Austrian agricultural enterprises are taking part (BMLFUW 2014) and are hereby putting in place measures for the protection of water and nature. One of the main nature protection measures is the 'maintenance of ecologically valuable areas'.

Activities of NGOs (e.g. WWF-Austria and Austrian League for Nature Conservation) and companies (samples):

Sponsorship by WWF Austria and KNORR Enterprise of Tyrol's Inn (2014).

Many activities of the Austrian League for Nature Conservation with companies: e.g., excursions, maintenance work in wetlands.

1.10.2 Has the private sector undertaken activities or actions for the wise use and management of:

a. Ramsar Sites

b. Wetlands in general

{1.10.2} KRA 1.10.ii

a. A - Yes

b. A - Yes

1.10.2 Additional information:

a) Ramsar sites: pls see 1.10.1

Maintenance of marsh areas in protected areas using the Agri-environmental Programme ÖPUL.

Most of the Austrian Ramsar sites have been designated under the Birds and Habitats Directives as part of the EU Natura 2000 network. Maintaining of the favourable conservation status of Habitats and areas which are protected in the EU Directives is an obligation for landowners and land users.

b) Wetlands in general

Moor alliance in the Alps (2009-2012). The Moor Alliance consists of six moor regions in Bavaria, Tyrol and Salzburg. The alliance partners set measures in the areas of environment education and marketing.

WWF Austria and partners in the economy: WWF river programme, projects to protect the March-Thaya Auen etc.

Austrian League of Nature Conservation: maintenance work in wetlands, partly in cooperation with various companies. Salvage of wetlands through purchase in cooperation with the drugstore company 'dm'. Apart from the purchase of areas the maintenance of nature is a 'permanent task' for the Austrian League for Nature Conservation. Moor protection in Carinthia: Carinthia's League for Conservation possesses a number of moor areas and wetlands which are taken care of.

The foundation for nature protection of the Austrian League for Nature Conservation has been set up together with the province of Upper Austria in order to acquire and administer, in a professional manner, nature-protected areas.

Interreg-project 'Sustainable moor management' <http://www.moormanagement.net/> Austrian League for Nature Conservation Vorarlberg, Natural History Museum 'inatura', BirdLife Switzerland, Nature Museum St Gallen and regional association Bodensee-Oberschwaben, have cooperated in this Interreg-project, coordinated by the Landratsamt Ravensburg. The Arrisrieder Moos, the Haubacher Moos, as well as the Götzner Moos and the Mösle wet meadows were upgraded through rewetting measures etc.

The platform 'Lebendiger Alpenrhein' is an association of environmental organizations in Alpenrhein: Austrian League for Nature Conservation Vorarlberg, WWF Switzerland, Society for the Protection of the Environment Liechtenstein, Pro Natura St Gallen-Appenzell (www.lebendigerrhein.org).

Efforts for the border river Kutschenitza (pls see 1.8.1)

STRATEGY 1.11: Incentive measures. *Promote incentive measures that encourage the application of the wise use provisions of the Convention.*

1.11.1 Have actions been taken to implement incentive measures which encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands? {1.11.1} KRA 1.11.i	A - Yes
<p>1.11.1 Additional information:</p> <p>Within the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation Project 'Ramsar SKAT' and 'Ramsar Eco NaTour' measures for the advancement of a sustainable development of the March-Thaya-Auen were carried out. Important contributions are submitted by protection area network in the Wein- and Waldviertel for the wise use of wetland habitats.</p> <p>Wasserlebensfonds 2011: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and the Nature Conservation League Austria have instituted a joint fund for the promotion of water habitats and have both selected and supported eight exemplary water engineering projects to increase the number of species along rivulets and rivers http://naturschutzbund.at/wasserleben/Sieger.html</p> <p>European Green Belt: The Green Belt, and its valuable habitats, which developed in the shade of the Iron Curtain is today Europe's largest biotope system. Austria's border at the Green Belt is 1,300 km long - of which a big part at the former 'east block border' runs along rivers. The Austrian League for Nature Conservation works for the realization and the maintenance of the Green Belt and carries out biotope protection projects, as well as giving out information on the ecological importance of the Green Belt (annual Green Belt camp at Maltsch, purchase and maintenance of areas, conflict management, etc.)</p> <p>'Jointly for the protection of species and habitats': Under this motto, the Austrian League of Nature Conservation and the Austrian Federal Forests are working on the promotion of diversifying species and habitat network. Since 2012 water habitats are at the core of their efforts.</p> <p>LE-Project 'Basics for a National Floodplain Strategy' Project of Arge Nature protection and Austrian League for Nature Conservation jointly with Fluvius-Lazowski: Based on the floodplain inventory basics for a common strategy regarding the maintenance and promotion, sustainable cultivation, as well as the restoration of affected floodplains are worked out. Following the publication of a brochure on the current status of floodplains, national priorities will be formulated in a number of workshops, interviews, stakeholder appointments and discussions. This will lead to a Federal-provincial memorandum of common core activities and concrete measures, which shall then form the basis for an official formulation of a common floodplains strategy 2020.</p>	
1.11.2 Have actions been taken to remove perverse incentive measures which discourage conservation and wise use of wetlands? {1.11.2} KRA 1.11.i	A - Yes

1.11.2 Additional information:

Vienna: As the Ramsar site 'Untere Lobau' is both part of the Natura 2000 area 'National Park Donau-Auen' and of Vienna's part of the National Park Donau-Auen, all lawsuits, which might contradict protection, are to be handled in accordance with UVP-G (Law on the assessment of the effects of certain projects on the Environment), or according to Vienna's law for the protection of nature.

Booklets 'Schutzzonen an den Trumer Seen' and 'Lebensraum Schilf'.

For the protection of hydropower there are the following guidelines: In 2011, the Ministers of the Alpine countries agreed on 'Common Guidelines for the Use of Small Hydropower in the Alpine Region'. Austria's water catalogue (2012) states criteria for the assessment of stretches of water as to their suitability for hydropower use, taking into consideration both energy and ecological aspects. Tyrol has a catalogue of criteria for hydropower: 'Gemeinsame Leitlinien für die Kleinwasserkraftnutzung im Alpenraum' (2011). Styria has a catalogue stating ecological first class water ways (2008).

GOAL 2. WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Note: An optional Annex (Section 4) to this COP12 National Report Format is provided so that a Contracting Party, if it so wishes, can also provide additional information separately on each of its designated Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites).

REMINDER: In 'free-text' boxes please do not use double quotes " "; use single quotes ' ' instead.

STRATEGY 2.1 Ramsar Site designation. *Apply the 'Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance' (Handbook 14, 3rd edition).*

2.1.1 Have a national strategy and priorities been established for the further designation of Ramsar Sites, using the *Strategic Framework for the Ramsar List?* {2.1.1} KRA 2.1.i

A - Yes

2.1.1 Additional information:

Austria's Ramsar Plan (Oberleitner & Dick 1995) has not yet been fully implemented (pls see 2.1.2).

2.1.2 How many Ramsar Site designations are planned for the next triennium (2015-2018)? {2.1.4} KRA 2.1.iii

3 sites

2.1.2 Additional information (If possible, please indicate the name(s) of the Site(s) and anticipated year of designation):

At least three Ramsar Sites out of the following list are planned: Lech, Schwemm, Isel, Hornspitzmoore, Rückersdorfer Seenplanne (Gösselsdofer See, Turner See, etc.), Irrsee, Ibmer Moor, Südsteirische Grenzmuir, Water Pipe Hochschwab-Wien, Water Pipe Rax-Schneeberg-Wien.

STRATEGY 2.2 Ramsar Site information. *Ensure that the Ramsar Sites Information Service . . . is available and enhanced as a tool for guiding the further designation of wetlands for the List of Wetlands of International Importance and for research and assessment, and is effectively managed by the Secretariat.*

2.2.1 Are the Ramsar Sites Information Service and its tools being used in national identification of further Ramsar Sites to designate? {2.2.1} KRA 2.2.ii

A - Yes

2.2.1 Additional information:

Designating of peatlands ("mires") and as Wetlands of International Importance because they are under-represented wetland types.

STRATEGY 2.3 Management planning - new Ramsar Sites. *While recognizing that Ramsar Site designation can act as a stimulus for development of effective site management plans, generally*

encourage the philosophy that all new Ramsar Sites should have effective management planning in place before designation, as well as resources for implementing such management.

2.3.1 Have all sites being prepared for Ramsar designation (2.1.2 above) had adequate management planning processes established? {2.3.1} KRA 2.3.i

C - Some sites

2.3.1 Additional information:

For some sites, which are being prepared for Ramsar designation, adequate management planning processes were established. For the following Ramsar areas to be established as future Ramsar sites, namely 'Water Pipe Hochschwab-Wien' and 'Water Pipe Rax/Schneeberg-Wien', talks are required between the provinces of Styria, Lower Austria and Vienna. There are, therefore, no management plans for these areas yet.

STRATEGY 2.4 Ramsar Site ecological character. *Maintain the ecological character of all designated Ramsar Sites, through planning and management.*

2.4.1 How many Ramsar Sites have a management plan? {2.4.1} KRA 2.4.i

21 sites

2.4.2 For how many of the Ramsar Sites with a management plan is the plan being implemented? {2.4.2} KRA 2.4.i

21 sites

2.4.3 For how many Ramsar Sites is a management plan currently being prepared? {2.4.3} KRA 2.4.i

2 sites

2.4.1 – 2.4.3 Additional information:

2.4.1 Most of the Austrian Ramsar sites have management plans. For the Ramsar site 'Untere Lobau' management plans for hunting and fishing are in place. However, management plans for the National Park 'Donau-Auen' of which Vienna's part is the Lobau, are still outstanding.

2.4.2 All management plans are implemented.

2.4.3 The management plan for Burgenland Natura 2000 Site within (actually going beyond) the Ramsar Site 'Lafnitztal' is in preparation. The management plan for the Styrian "Natura 2000" area within the Ramsar site 'Lafnitztal' has been completed. A management plan for the Ramsar-Site 'Güssinger Ponds' is nearly completed.

2.4.4 How many Ramsar Sites have a cross-sectoral management committee? {2.4.6} KRA 2.4.iv

6 sites

2.4.4 Additional information (If at least 1 site, please give the name and official number of the site or sites):

Six Austrian Ramsar sites have a cross-sectoral management committee. Since 1994, the Nature Conservation Club Hörfeld Moor is responsible for the Ramsar site 'Hörfeld Moor'. The Club is supported by representatives of the province, as well as government agencies and various organizations of the provinces Carinthia and Styria. Furthermore, external advisors are invited in case of specific issues.

In the case of the 'St Lorenzener Hochmoor' a working group has been established since the wetland has been designed as Natura 2000 area in order for its nomination as Ramsar area. The group consists of representatives of landowners, hunting associations, agrarian communities, boroughs, agricultural authorities, biosphereparks and the Province of Carinthia.

Also, cross-sectoral management committees are in place in the Ramsar sites 'Rheindela', 'Mires of Pass Thurn' and 'Untere Lobau'. In 2001, the 'Trilateral Ramsar-Platform' was established in order to enable cross-border dialogue in the Ramsar sites 'Floodplains of the 'Morava-Dyje-Danube Confluence'', which serves as an information platform between Austria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

For the Ramsar sites 'Bayerische Wildalm and Wildalmfilz' and 'Wilder Kaiser' cross-sectoral management committees are planned.

2.4.5 For how many Ramsar Sites has an ecological character description been prepared? {2.4.7} KRA 2.4.v

19 sites

2.4.5 Additional information (If at least 1 site, please give the name and official number of the site or sites):

The general ecological features of all Austrian Ramsar Sites are described in the Ramsar Information Sheets. The official numbers of all 23 Austrian sites are: 271, 272, 273, 74, 275, 532, 558, 719, 864, 1013, 1169, 1367, 1368, 1369, 1370, 1371, 1404, 1489, 1490, 1979, 2146, 2137, 2208.

The ecological character description of the Ramsar site 'Lafnitztal' has been prepared partly. The book 'Das Lafnitztal. Flusslandschaft im Herzen Europas' (Cejka et al. 2005) describes the Lafnitztal.

For the Ramsar sites 'Hörfeld Moor', 'Pürgschachen Moor', 'Rheindelta', 'Rotmoos im Fuschertal', 'Sablatnig Moor' and 'Waldvierel Ponds, Pat Bogs & Floodplains (Teich-, Moor- und Flusslandschaft Waldviertel)' the book 'Moore in Österreich unter dem Schutz der Ramsar Konvention' (Jungmeier & Werner 2004) describes the ecological character. The Ramsar site 'Mires of Pass Thurn' is extensively described in a brochure of the Moorverein Wasenmoos of Mittersill .

The description of the ecological character for the following three Ramsar Sites: 'Mires of the Sauerfelder Moor', 'Mires of the Schwarzenberg' and 'Mires of the Überling' can be found in the book "Moore von Sibirien bis Feuerland: Mires from Siberia to Tierra del Fuego", G.M.Steiner, Stapfia Nr.85, Linz 2005.

Information on the ecological state of the areas are obtained by Environmental Impact Assessment. Various monitoring projects are carried out in the National Parks 'Donau-Auen' and 'Neusiedler See-Seewinkel' (this concerns the Ramsar Sites 'Donau-March-Thaya-Auen', 'Untere Lobau' and 'Neusiedler See-Seewinkel'.

STRATEGY 2.5 Ramsar Site management effectiveness. *Review all existing Ramsar Sites to determine the effectiveness of management arrangements, in line with the 'Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance'.*

2.5.1 Have any assessments of the effectiveness of Ramsar Site management been made? {2.5.1} KRA 2.5.i

C - Some sites

2.5.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Some sites', please indicate the year of assessment and the source of the information):

1. Donau-March-Thaya-Auen: Yes. Parts of the Ramsar site were evaluated within the framework of Lower Austria's protected areas evaluation.
2. Untere Lobau: No
3. Rheindelta: Yes, but more for the effectiveness of Natura 2000 Site management.
4. Neusiedler See, Seewinkel & Hanság: No
5. Stauseen am Unteren Inn: No
6. Pürgschachen Moor: No, but an ongoing site management is in place.

7. Sablatnig Moor: No
8. Rotmoos im Fuschertal: No
9. Hörfeld-Moor: No, but an ongoing site management is in place.
10. Waldviertel ponds, peatbogs and floodplains: Yes. Parts of the Ramsar site were evaluated within the framework of Lower Austria's protected areas evaluation.
11. Nationalpark Kalkalpen: No
12. Lafnitztal: No, but an ongoing site management is in place for the 'Natura 2000' part of the Ramsar Site.
13. Mires of PassThurn: Yes
14. Mires of the Sauerfelder Wald. No
15. Mires of Schwarzenberg: No
16. Mires of the Überling: No
17. Mires of Nassköhr: No
18. Bayerische Wildalm and Wildalmfilz: No
19. Moor- und Seenlandschaft Keutschach-Schiefling: PLANNED for 2014 for parts of the Ramsar site.
20. Autertal / St. Lorenzener Hochmoor: No
21. Güssinger Fishponds: PLANNED
22. Wilder Kaiser: No
23. Uppe Drava River: No

In addition to the assessments of the Ramsar Sites management effectiveness, species and habitats pursuant to the EU Habitats Directive (Art 17 reporting) are listed. The Article 17 reporting covers the habitat types and species in the whole territory of the Member State concerned, not only those within Natura 2000 sites. A report has to be sent to the European Commission every six years. The current information covers the reporting period of 2007-2012.
http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/activities/Reporting/Article_17

STRATEGY 2.6 Ramsar Site status. *Monitor the condition of Ramsar Sites and address negative changes in their ecological character, notify the Ramsar Secretariat of changes affecting Ramsar Sites, and apply the Montreux Record, if appropriate, and Ramsar Advisory Mission as tools to address problems.*

2.6.1 Are mechanisms in place for the Administrative Authority to be informed of negative human-induced changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites, pursuant to Article 3.2? {2.6.1} KRA 2.6.i

C - Some sites

2.6.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Some sites', please summarise the mechanism or mechanisms established):

All nine nature protection laws of Austria's provinces state that voluntary nature protection workers support the authorities, e.g. when supervising protected areas (nature protected areas, Ramsar Sites etc.)

In the case of the street project S1 (Danube crossing) the national Ramsar Committee was involved, as the tunnel is planned in a distance of 1km from the western border of the Ramsar site 'Untere Lobau'. As the Ramsar site is both part of the European protected area (Natura 2000 site) and of the National Park 'Donau-Auen' the lawsuits are to be in line with the Austrian Law on Environmental Impact Assessment, according to Vienna's nature conservation law, which could endanger the protection goals.

Mechanisms are in place by means of the EU nature protection network Natura 2000. Many Austrian Ramsar Sites for example, like the 'Lafnitztal', 'Pürgschachen Moor' and 'Hörfeld Moor', are Natura 2000 sites with site managers. These are in direct contact with the responsible provincial authorities, submit information on changes and give advice.

In the Ramsar Site 'Rheindelta' mechanisms are in place, as it is a Natura 2000 site and it is administered by the nature conservation club 'Rheindelta'.

2.6.2 Have all cases of negative human-induced change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites been reported to the Ramsar Secretariat, pursuant to Article 3.2? {2.6.2} KRA 2.6.i

Z - No negative change

2.6.2 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Some cases', please indicate for which Ramsar Sites the Administrative Authority has made Article 3.2 reports to the Secretariat, and for which sites such reports of change or likely change have not yet been made):

In the Ramsar Site 'Waldviertel Ponds, Peat Bogs and Floodplains' interventions at the Karlstifter Moore have been carried out by means of drainage ditches. A hydrological report is still missing and the matter is still pending at the competent authorities for forest management.

2.6.3 If applicable, have actions been taken to address the issues for which Ramsar Sites have been listed on the Montreux Record, including requesting a Ramsar Advisory Mission? {2.6.3} KRA 2.6.ii

A - Yes

2.6.3 Additional information (If 'Yes', please indicate the actions taken):

Ramsar Site 'Donau-March-Auen' (Nr. 272), designated 16/12/82, Montreux Record 04/07/90

In the area March-Thaya-Auen several projects were carried out in order to guarantee a positive development, e.g. the European Territorial Co-operation Projects 'Ramsar SKAT', 'Ramsar Eco NaTour', 'Alpen-Karpaten-Korridor', 'MoRe - Revitalisierung der oberen March' (www.etc-more.eu) and 'Naturnahe Hochwasserschutz im Zusammenfluss von March und Thaya - Polder Soutok' (<http://www.soutok.pmo.cy>). LIFE+Project 'Untere Marchauen' (<http://www.life-march.at/>). Schutzgebietsnetzwerk Weinviertel mit der Schwerpunktregion March-Thaya-Auen (www.enu.at).

STRATEGY 2.7 Management of other internationally important wetlands. *Appropriate management and wise use achieved for those internationally important wetlands that have not yet been formally designated as Ramsar Sites but have been identified through domestic application of the Strategic Framework or an equivalent process.*

2.7.1 Has the ecological character of internationally important wetlands not yet designated as Ramsar Sites been maintained? {2.7.1} KRA 2.7.i

C - Some sites

2.7.1 Additional information:

Hornspitzmoore (Upper Austria): yes

Gail and Lavant (Carinthia): Regulated parts of these two rivers were improved ecologically within the framework of LIFE-Nature-Projects. <http://www.life-gail.at/> and <http://www.life-lavant.at/>.

Mösener Moor (Carinthia): A provincial nature project was carried out in order to preserve the river crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*).

River Vellach (Carinthia)

Irrsee and Ibmer Moor (Upper Austria): yes

Südsteirische Grenzmur (Styria): additional river restoration projects have been carried out.

Rehabilitation of the 'Mandlinger Moor', 'Ursprunger Moor' and "Saumoos-Mur Valley" in Salzburg.

Measures to direct visitors in Salzburg's protected areas: 'Bayrhamer Spitz', 'Wengermoor', Trumerseen' and 'Fischtaginger Spitz' (including the set-up of ponds).

'Bürmooser Moor' (Salzburg): Habitatmanagement for the Kammmolch/Great Crested Newt.

'Tauglgries' (Salzburg): Improvement of the habitat to preserve the Kiesbankgrashüpfer (*Chorthippus pullus*).

GOAL 3. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
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Note: in 'free-text' boxes please do not use double quotes “ ”: use single quotes ‘ ’ instead.

<p>STRATEGY 3.1 Synergies and partnerships with MEAs and IGOs. <i>Work as partners with international and regional multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other intergovernmental agencies (IGOs).</i></p>

<p>3.1.1 Are the national focal points of other MEAs invited to participate in the National Ramsar/Wetland Committee? {3.1.2} KRAs 3.1.i & 3.1.iv</p>	<p>B - No</p>
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3.1.1 Additional information:

Convention on Biological Diversity: No
 Convention on Migratory Species (CMS): No
 CITES: No
 World Heritage Convention: No

Comment: NFP for CBD is constantly informed about the work in the National Ramsar Committee

<p>3.1.2 Are mechanisms in place at the national level for collaboration between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and the focal points of UN and other global and regional bodies and agencies (e.g. UNEP, UNDP, WHO, FAO, UNECE, ITTO)? {3.1.3} KRA 3.1.iv</p>	<p>C - Partly</p>
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3.1.2 Additional information:

The focal points of MEAs are public officers of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and the Austrian Federal Provinces. Some of these experts are members of several national committees for different conventions.

<p>STRATEGY 3.2 Regional initiatives. <i>Support existing regional arrangements under the Convention and promote additional arrangements.</i></p>
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<p>3.2.1 Have you (AA) been involved in the development and implementation of a Regional Initiative under the framework of the Convention? {3.2.1} KRA 3.2.i</p>	<p>A - Yes</p>
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3.2.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Planned', please indicate the regional initiative(s) and the collaborating countries of each initiative):

no

3.2.2 Has your country supported or participated in the development of other regional (i.e., covering more than one country) wetland training and research centres? {3.2.2}

A - Yes

3.2.2 Additional information (If 'Yes', please indicate the name(s) of the centre(s):

Education and guided tours on the topic wetlands are conducted, among others, by the National Parks. Within the framework European Territorial Co-operation Project 'Ramsar SKAT' tourleaders were trained, who are offering excursions in Austria and Slovakia.

STRATEGY 3.3 International assistance. *Promote international assistance to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands, while ensuring that environmental safeguards and assessments are an integral component of all development projects that affect wetlands, including foreign and domestic investments.*

3.3.1 [For Contracting Parties with a development assistance agency only ('donor countries')]: Has the agency provided funding to support wetland conservation and management in other countries? {3.3.1} KRA 3.3.i

Z - Not applicable

3.3.1 Additional information (If 'Yes', please indicate the countries supported since COP11):

.....

3.3.2 [For Contracting Parties with a development assistance agency only ('donor countries')]: Have environmental safeguards and assessments been included in development proposals proposed by the agency? {3.3.2} KRA 3.3.ii

Z - Not applicable

3.3.2 Additional information:

.....

3.3.3 [For Contracting Parties that have received development assistance only ('recipient countries')]: Has funding support been received from development assistance agencies specifically for in-country wetland conservation and management? {3.3.3}

Z - Not applicable

3.3.3 Additional information (If 'Yes', please indicate from which countries/agencies since COP11):

STRATEGY 3.4 Sharing information and expertise. *Promote the sharing of expertise and information concerning the conservation and wise use of wetlands.*

3.4.1 Have networks, including twinning arrangements, been established, nationally or internationally, for knowledge sharing and training for wetlands that share common features? {3.4.1}

C - Partly

3.4.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Partly', please indicate the networks and wetlands involved):

Within the Project 'Ramsar SKAT' - Improvement of a cross-border regional nature management in the March-Thaya-Auen - tourleaders were trained, who are offering excursions in Austria and Slovakia.

Network of Protected Areas along the Danube River. It currently consists of 17 Protected Areas from nine Danube countries, all hotspots for biodiversity. (www.danubeparks.at).

Alps-Carpathians Corridor as major migration route for wild animals between the Alps and the Carpathian mountains. The project has brought together various institutions, NGOs, universities, as well as highway companies and regional and federal authorities from Austria and Slovakia to create a common cross-border platform facilitating the migration and genetic exchange of wild animal populations. (www.alpenkarpatenkorridor.at).

The project 'SURF-Nature' gathered 14 partners of different EU Member states to enhance regional policies for the promotion and preservation of biodiversity and nature. (www.surf-nature.eu).

Since 2003, the Austrian League for Nature Conservation Vorarlberg, the Liechtensteinische Gesellschaft für Umweltschutz, Pro Natura St. Gallen-Appenzell, WWF St. Gallen and WWF Graubünden are cooperating in the Platform 'Lebendiger Alpenrhein'. (<http://www.lebendigerrhein.org>).

3.4.2 Has information about your country's wetlands and/or Ramsar Sites and their status been made public (e.g., through publications or a website)? {3.4.2} KRA 3.4.iv

C - Partly

3.4.2 Additional information:

In Austria, Public Relations is done on an ongoing basis.

Information on the Ramsar Convention and description of Ramsar sites can be found on the official websites of almost all 9 Laender, e.g. Tyrol (www.tiroler-schutzgebiete.at) and Carinthia (www.schutzgebiete.ktn.gv.at/). The webpage of Austria's League for Nature Conservation reports regularly on Ramsar news and introduces Ramsar sites. <http://www.naturschutzbund.at/projekte-aktionen/ramsar-national-focal-point.html>

The Ramsar logo and a link to the Austria's Ramsar Homepage www.ramsar.at can be

found on the homepages of Schiefing ('Moor- und Seental Keutschach-Schiefing') and Reichenau ('St. Lorenzener Hochmoor'). Efforts are made to motivate all other Carinthian Ramsar communities to follow suit. The community of Schiefing printed the Ramsar logo on their road signs. The 'Auenstrategie-Prozess' used the Ramsar logo on all its publications (Workshop, Newsletter).

Information on wetlands can be found, among others, on the Nature 2000 page of the Province of Lower Austria: <http://noel.gv.at/Umwelt/Naturschutz/Natura-2000.html>

The Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management gives information on Ramsar Sites on the web page www.ramsar.at.

Wetlands Inventory Austria 2012 (889 wetlands), Inventory of Floodplains 2011 (822 Objects), Central Points of the Mires of the Austrian 'Moorschutzkatalog' (1992): http://www.umweltbundesamt.at/oed_naturschutz.

Publications (Selection)

'Auenland Österreich' (2014)
http://naturschutzbund.at/tl_files/Inhaltsbilder/Projektseiten/Auen/Downloads/Auenland_Broschuere.pdf

Professional journal 'Natur & Land': Hefte 3/2012 and 2/2014.

Brochures on routes about selected wetland areas. <http://www.wasserwege.at/downloads/>.

Reports in the paper 'NaturLandSalzburg'. <http://www.salzburg.gv.at/naturLand-Salzburg>.

3.4.3 Has information about your country's wetlands and/or Ramsar Sites been transmitted to the Ramsar Secretariat for dissemination? {3.4.3} KRA 3.4.ii

A - Yes

3.4.3 Additional information:

Forwarding of the publication 'Auenland Österreich' (2014) - pls see 3.4.2

STRATEGY 3.5 Shared wetlands, river basins and migratory species. *Promote inventory and cooperation for the management of shared wetlands and hydrological basins, including cooperative monitoring and management of shared wetland-dependent species.*

3.5.1 Have all transboundary wetland systems been identified? {3.5.1} KRA 3.5.i

A - Yes

3.5.1 Additional information:

Cooperation with neighbouring countries:

Project DRAMURCI – Drava-Mura Crossborder Water Management Initiative (2009-2013). The project aims to connect the field of water management in the area of the large rivers Drau and Mur, shared by members of the EU, Austria and Slovenia, according to two EU Directives: Water Framework Directive and Flood Directive. <http://www.dramurci.eu/>

Donau-March-Thaya-Auen: Trilaterale Ramsar Platform (Austria, Czech Republic, Slovak Republik) established in 1995. Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2001. Consequently, the 'Trilateral Ramsar-Platform' was established in order to enable cross-border dialogue in the Ramsar Site 'Floodplains of the 'Morava-Dyje-Danube Confluence', which serves as an information platform between Austria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The platform members meet once a year .

3.5.2 Is effective cooperative management in place for shared wetland systems (for example, in shared river basins and coastal zones)? {3.5.2} KRA 3.5.ii

A - Yes

3.5.2 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Partly', please indicate for which wetland systems such management is in place):

Coordination with border water commissions in the case of boundary water bodies.

International coordination by river commissions (e.g. ICPRD-International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River; www.icpdr.org)

Within the Project 'Ramsar SKAT' a bilateral management strategy for the March-Thaya-Auen was developed. Furthermore, in the course of the two projects 'MoRe' (revitalization of the river March) and 'Polder Soutok' (near-natural flood protection March-Thaya) concepts are being worked out for a bilateral management strategy.

3.5.3 Does your country participate in regional networks or initiatives for wetland-dependent migratory species? {3.5.3} KRA 3.5.iii

B - No

3.5.3 Additional information:

Austria is a member state of the Bonn Convention (Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals), but not a Contracting Party to th African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA).

GOAL 4. IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY

Note: in 'free-text' boxes please do not use double quotes “ ”: use single quotes ‘ ’ instead.

STRATEGY 4.1 CEPA. *Support, and assist in implementing at all levels, where appropriate, the Convention's Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness Programme (Resolution X.8) for promoting the conservation and wise use of wetlands through communication, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) and work towards wider awareness of the Convention's goals, mechanisms, and key findings.*

4.1.1 Has an action plan (or plans) for wetland CEPA been established? {4.1.1} KRA 4.1.i

- a) At the national level
- b) Sub-national level
- c) Catchment/basin level
- d) Local/site level

- a) A - Yes
- b) A - Yes
- c) B - No
- d) A - Yes

(Even if no CEPA plans have been developed, if broad CEPA objectives for CEPA actions have been established, please indicate this in the Additional information section below)

4.1.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'In progress' to one or more of the four questions above, for each please describe the mechanism, who is responsible and identify if it has involved CEPA NFPs):

a) A PR campaign is foreseen in the current project 'Auenstrategie/Floodplain Strategy'.

The webpage 'Aktiv für unser Wasser' of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management contains information on the topics of water, rivers and water bodies.
www.wasseraktiv.at.

b) sub-national level: Styria: Training course for nature and landscape experts (Ländliche Fortbildungsinstitute Steiermark). Upper Austria: IFAU - Institute for Environment Education for Children and Adolescents. Lower Austrian Nature Protection Academy. In Tyrol, training courses are held for nature experts by the association NATOPIA, sponsored by the Department of Nature Protection.

d) At the local level, actions plans for wetland CEPA have been established:
National Park Neusiedler See: Focal points for students are, among others, the reed belt and the water of Lake Neusiedl. National Park Donau-Auen: floodplain forest, animals and plants of the Donau-Auen.

The new Ramsar Centre in Purbach, a municipality of the Transboundary Ramsar Site 'Neusiedler See Seewinkel – Fertő-Hanság' (Austria-Hungary) is a promising public-private venture between the commune of Purbach and many local producers of wine and other specialities grown in the

surroundings.

At the Ramsar Site 'Moor-und Seenlandschaft Keutschach-Schiefling' the 'nature scientist kids' (6-11 year-old children) are conducting activities, experiments and observations once a month. <http://www.arge-naturschutz.at/naturforscher-kids/>

Ramsar Site 'Unter Lobau': Annually, 30,000 visitors are taking part in guided tours. Outside the Ramsar area, the following centres were set up: National Park Information Centre, including Vienna Waldschule, Lobau Museum and National Park Camp.

The following environmental education offers have been set up by Tyrol's National Parks for schools (www.naturpark-tiroler-lech.at; www.naturpark-oetztal.at; www.kainergrat.at; www.naturpark-zillertal.at; www.karwendel.org).

In the Ramsar Site 'Rheindelta' interesting excursions and lectures are being offered throughout the year.

4.1.2 How many centres (visitor centres, interpretation centres, education centres) have been established? {4.1.2} KRA
4.1.ii

a) at Ramsar Sites

a) 17 centres

b) at other wetlands

b) 5 centres

4.1.2 Additional information (If centres are part of national or international networks, please describe the networks):

a) Visitor centres at Ramsar Sites

Visitor-Centres at Ramsar Sites:

Neusiedlersee, Seewinkel & Hanság (2: National Park Information-Centre Illmitz & Ramsar Visitor-Centre Purbach),
Donau-March-Thaya-Auen (4: National Park Donau Auen Center in Orth a.d. Donau, `Schloss Marchegg`, 'Storchenhaus' in Marchegg, Vereinshaus Auring in Hohenau), Untere Lobau (1), Staauseen am Unteren Inn (0), Rheindelta (1), Pürgschachen Moor (0), Sablatnigmoor (1), Rotmoos im Fuschertal (0), Hörfeld-Moor (planned), Waldviertel ponds, peat bogs & floodplains (2: Unterwasserreich Schrems, NUP Heidenreichstein), Lafnitztal (1), Mires of Pass Thurn (1), Mires of the Sauerfelder Wald (planned), Mires of the Schwarzenberg (planned), Mires of the Überling (planned), Nationalpark Kalkalpen (2), Moore am Nassköhr (0), Bayerische Wildalm and Wildalmfilz (0), Moor- und Seenlandschaft Keutschach-Schiefling (planned), Autertal - St. Lorenzener Hochmoor (0), Wilder Kaiser (1), Güssing Fishponds (0), Obere Drau (0). At the Ramsar site 'Autertal-St. Lorenzener Hochmoor' a viewing platform is planned.

b) Visitor centres at other Wetlands

Visitor center in the Schwemm (Nature and European Reserve).

Nature Park Centre, Nature Park Tiroler Lech (Nature Park, Nature Reserve and European Reserve).

Nature Park Centre Alpenpark Karwendel (Nature Park, Nature Reserve Landscape Protected Area and European Reserve).

National Park Gesäuse

National Park House Thayatal-Podji

4.1.3 Does the Contracting Party:

a) promote stakeholder participation in decision-making on wetland planning and management

a) A - Yes

b) specifically involve local stakeholders in the selection of new Ramsar Sites and in Ramsar Site management?

b) A - Yes

{4.1.3} KRA 4.1.iii

4.1.3 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Partly', please provide information about the ways in which stakeholders are involved):

For example Nature Conservation Associations Rheindelta, Hörfeldmoor and Sablatnigmoor; Austrian Federal Forests. via donau Wasserstrassengesellschaft, VERBUND Austrian Hydro Power GmbH (in LIFE Nature projects)

4.1.4 Has an assessment of national and local training needs for the implementation of the Convention been made?

B - No

{4.1.4} KRAs 4.1.iv & 4.1.viii

4.1.4 Additional information:

4.1.5 How many opportunities for wetland site manager training have been provided since COP11? {4.1.5} KRA 4.1.iv

Number of opportunities:

a) at Ramsar Sites

a) 5

b) at other wetlands

b) 7

4.1.5 Additional information (including whether the Ramsar Wise Use Handbooks were used in the training):

a) at Ramsar Sites

Ramsar sites 'Neusiedler See-Seewinkel', 'Untere Lobau' and 'Donau-March-Thaya-Auen' (all three are part of National Parks): In Austria, a common curriculum exists for National Parks. Rangers were trained within the framework of the European Territorial Co-operation Project 'Ramsar SKAT' (development of a cross-border nature management in the March-Thaya-Auen). Ramsar site 'Rheindelta': Training for the Natura 2000 site managers.

b) at other wetlands

Natura 2000 Conference (Steyr/Upper Austria, 2014); Natura 2000 Workshops in Vorau (Styria), Eben am Achensee (Tyrol), Bad Vigaun (Salzburg), Loosdorf (Lower Austria) and Bregenz (Vorarlberg). <http://www.komm-natura.at/>.

University of Klagenfurt - Master of Science Programme: Management of

protected areas. <http://mpa.e-c-o.at/>.

4.1.6 Do you have an operational cross-sectoral National Ramsar/Wetlands Committee or equivalent body? {4.1.6} KRA 4.3.v

A - Yes

4.1.6 Additional information (If 'Yes', indicate a) its membership; b) number of meetings since COP11; and c) what responsibilities the Committee has):

The National Ramsar-Committee is headed by the representative of The Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (BMLFUW) and the deputy of the Austrian Federal Governments for the Ramsar-Convention. The Committee is composed of representatives of national administrative authorities of the Austrian Federal Provinces for Nature Conservation, representatives of WWF Austria, Austrian League for Nature Conservation (CEPA National Focal Point), BirdLife Austria, University of Vienna, of Austrian Ramsar Sites, of the Environment Agency and associations of Land Users (e.g. Austrian Federal Forests and Via Donau), chamber for agriculture and forestry, together with experts on wetlands conservation. National Focal Points for STRP and CEPA are members, as well as a representative from the Ramsar-Bureau. The National Ramsar-Committee of Austria takes place at least once a year. The Venue of the meeting is every year close to one of the Austrians Ramsar Site.

4.1.7 Are other communication mechanisms (apart from a national committee) in place to share Ramsar implementation guidelines and other information between the Administrative Authority and:

- a) Ramsar Site managers
 - b) other MEA national focal points
 - c) other ministries, departments and agencies
- {4.1.7} KRA 4.1.vi

- a) A - Yes
- b) C - Partly
- c) C - Partly

4.1.7 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Partly', please describe what mechanisms are in place):

a) Ramsar Site managers

The site managers of protected areas (Natura 2000, National Parks) are in direct contact with the respective provincial authorities.

At the Ramsar site 'Untere Lobau' a National Park Council, and a scientific committee were set up.

Staff of the 'Schutzgebietsnetzwerk Weinviertel' participated at a meeting of the Trilateral Ramsar Platform. <http://www.enu.at/schutzgebietsnetzwerk-weinviertel-lebensraeume-managen>.

b) Other MEA (CBD; CITES, CMS,...) national focal points:

The focal points of MEAs are public officers of the Austrian Federal Ministry of

Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and the Austrian Federal Governments. Some of these experts are members of several national committees for different conventions.

c) other ministries, departments and agencies:

Ramsar site 'Untere Lobau': There is an exchange of ideas with groups representing hunters, fishermen, as well as water and flood protection groups.

4.1.8 Have Ramsar-branded World Wetlands Day activities (whether on 2 February or at another time of year), either government and NGO-led or both, been carried out in the country since COP11? {4.1.8}

A - Yes

4.1.8 Additional information:

Annual international WWD walk along the river Mur (Austria/Slovenia) and various press send-outs (e.g. Austrian Federal of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Federal Government of Salzburg).

Excursion to Ramsar Site Donau-March-Thaya-Auen (Lower Austria) on WWD 2014. Event with students for the new 'Water:Ways' topical year 'Mires and Peatlands' in June 2014 (Ramsar Site 'Moore am Pass Thurn'). A torchlight walk was organized at Ramsar Site 'Hörfeld' (2012). At the Ramsar Sites 'Neusiedler See-Seewinkel', 'Untere Lobau', 'Donau-March-Thaya-Auen', 'Rheindelta' and 'Nationalpark Kalkalpen' tours are offered throughout the year.

4.1.9 Have campaigns, programmes, and projects (other than for World Wetlands Day-related activities) been carried out since COP11 to raise awareness of the importance of wetlands to people and wildlife and the ecosystem benefits/services provided by wetlands? {4.1.9}

A - Yes

4.1.9 Additional information (If these and other CEPA activities have been undertaken by other organizations, please indicate this):

Austrian campaign on wildlife conservation 'vielfaltleben' for the protection of 20 species and their habitats. The highlight of the campaign is the week of biodiversity with a manifold programme <http://naturschutzbund.at/list-wda.html>

Info campaign 'Lebendiger Rhein': <http://www.lebendigerrhein.org/index.php?id=8432> – z.B. Excursion.

Each year, events are taking place in the Alpenzoo Innsbruck, Tyrol, on the day commemorating biodiversity (August). Throughout the year, the club NATOPIA organizes events, excursions with rangers to Nature Parks and the National Park 'Hohe Tauern'.

In Carinthia, local communities and organizations were asked to organize activities and projects along lakes and rivers within the framework of 'kärnten.wasserreich'

(Carinthia - water-rich). PR initiatives were undertaken on the topics wetlands and protection of wetlands (e.g. Nature trails, Initiative Naturland Niederösterreich www.naturland-noe.at).

Burgenland: The annual one-week long event 'Pannonian BirdExperience' combines the concept of a bird fair (outdoor products, camera and optics equipment) with lectures and guided excursions to the Ramsar Site 'Neusiedler See – Seewinkel' and also other Ramsar Sites and wetlands in adjoining areas of Lower Austria, Slovakia and Hungary. Each year this event attracts a large crowd of visitors and is a very attractive means of promoting wetland issues to the public, as wetlands and their role as hotspots for bird migration are being emphasised throughout the programme. For more information see www.birdexperience.org

Federal forest organizations and friends of nature are actively lobbying for the protection and upkeep of sensitive water worlds. The project 'Wasser:Wege' was started in 2011. UNESCO honoured this project for its environment and nature education. The year 2014 is dedicated to 'Moore and Bruchwälder'. Since 2012, pedagogical excursions are offered in a project entitled 'Water:Rucksack'. This outdoor toolkit comprises of scoops, magnifiers and instructions on games. Thus equipped, children can explore water habitats.

In Upper Austria, [Natureschauspiel.at](http://natureschauspiel.at) offers many activities in one of the most beautiful landscapes of Upper Austria, e.g. at moors, rivers and floodplains.

http://natureschauspiel.at/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=340&Itemid=879

Salzburg: Annual activities on the Austrian Day of Nature.

Events by the platform 'Plattform Auwald' in Vorarlberg and Switzerland. <http://auwald.info/>

The six Austrian National Parks are important centres for education on the environment. The National Park House Wien-Lobau organizes events throughout year. Also, Austria's 48 Nature Parks, e.g. Hochmoor Schrems and Tiroler Lech, are offering activities and guided tours for children and adults. www.naturparke.at

The 'Neptun Wasserpreis' is Austria's environment and innovative prize for topics focussing on water. It is given away every two years. Generation Blue is a website for youngsters, containing information on the topic of water. www.generationblue.at

The European-wide campaign 'Natura Trails' promotes awareness for the European network of protected areas, Natura 2000. Some trails run along rivers, as well as through Ramsar areas, e.g. the Rhine Delta, Hörfeld Mooer and Bayerische Wildalm.

Special seasonal events:

International Day of biodiversity (22. May), European Day of Parks (24.05.), Day of Nature (Austria, second weekend in June), Geo Day of Biodiversity (Magazine GEO): biggest field research in Central Europe.

STRATEGY 4.2 Convention financial capacity. *Provide the financial resources necessary for the Convention's governance, mechanisms and programmes to achieve the expectations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, within the availability of existing resources and by the effective use of such resources; explore and enable options and mechanism for mobilization of new and additional resources for implementation of the Convention.*

4.2.1

a) Have Ramsar contributions been paid in full for 2012, 2013 and 2014? {4.2.1} KRA 4.2.i

A - Yes

b) If 'No' in 4.2.1 a), please clarify what plan is in place to ensure future prompt payment:

4.2.2 Has any additional financial support been provided through voluntary contributions to non-core funded Convention activities? {4.2.2} KRA 4.2.i

B - No

4.2.2 Additional information (If 'Yes' please state the amounts, and for which activities):

STRATEGY 4.3 Convention bodies' effectiveness. *Ensure that the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee, Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and Secretariat are operating at a high level of efficiency and effectiveness to support the implementation of the Convention.*

4.3.1 Have you (AA) used your previous Ramsar National Reports in monitoring implementation of the Convention? {4.3.1} KRA 4.3.ii

A - Yes

4.3.1 Additional information (If 'Yes', please indicate how the Reports have been used for monitoring):

The National Report was sometimes used in monitoring the implementation of the Ramsar Convention by representatives of the ministry.

STRATEGY 4.4 Working with IOPs and others. *Maximize the benefits of working with the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs*) and others.*

* The IOPs are: BirdLife International, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), Wetlands International, and WWF International.

4.4.1 Has your country received assistance from one or more of the Convention's IOPs in its implementation of the Convention? {4.4.1} KRA 4.4.iii

A - Yes

4.4.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' please name the IOP (or IOPs) and the type of assistance received):

There is close cooperation only with the national branches of IOPs (e.g. Birdlife Austria and WWF Austria), as well as with the Austrian League for Nature Conservation and they carry out projects. In few cases there was also assistance needed from Wetlands International for the participation of WI in a strategic international meeting . Jane Madgwick CO of WI participated on request of the Austrian ministry.

4.4.2 Has your country provided assistance to one or more of the Convention's IOPs? {4.4.2} KRA 4.4.iii

B - No

4.4.2 Additional information (If 'Yes' please name the IOP (or IOPs) and the type of assistance provided):