

# **Rapid Cultural Inventories for Wetlands**

This brief provides an overview of Rapid Cultural Inventories and how they can benefit the management of Ramsar Sites and other wetlands. If you are interested in collaborating with the <a href="Secretariat's Culture & Livelihoods Team">Secretariat's Culture & Livelihoods Team</a> to undertake or participate in a Rapid Cultural Inventory for Wetlands please contact Mariam Kenza Ali, Manager for Culture & Livelihoods, Ramsar Secretariat, at culture@ramsar.org

### What are Rapid Cultural Inventories?

Rapid Cultural Inventories for Wetlands are a simple, quick and practical way to identify, document and make available information about notable cultural values and practices associated with wetland areas. They can be undertaken at a variety of scales. The information they provide supports both the conservation of cultural heritage and the Ramsar Convention's aim of integrating cultural aspects in the management of Ramsar Sites and other wetlands.

### Why undertake an inventory?

Currently, there is limited information available on cultural values and practices relating to Ramsar Sites and other wetlands. Rapid Cultural Inventories can benefit wetland conservation and wise use (as well as cultural heritage conservation) by:

- ✓ Identifying and documenting the cultural values and practices related to a Ramsar Site or wetland area.
- ✓ Bringing to light the powerful role that these values and practices can play in wetland conservation and wise use.
- ✓ Empowering wetland managers and other stakeholders to integrate cultural values and practices in day-to-day wetland management, for example by reinstating traditional management activities where these are more effective than other methods.

### How will they work in practice?

Rapid Cultural Inventories can be undertaken independently by wetland management authorities, Ramsar Regional Initiatives, International Organisation Partners, community groups, non-government organisations, researchers and other stakeholders.

These inventories are applicable at site, river basin, national and regional levels. The scope can include historical or contemporary values and practices. Inventories should make use of and ideally expand upon any relevant information already recorded in the *Ramsar Information Sheets*, and draw upon relevant existing cultural studies.

The process for Rapid Cultural Inventories for Wetlands is outlined below (see the short <u>Guidance for Rapid Cultural Inventories for Wetlands</u> for more details.)

### **Overview: Rapid Cultural Inventories for Wetlands**

#### STAGE 1: DESK STUDY

1.1 SCREEN EXISTING STUDIES

✓ A first step before embarking on new data collection is to identify whether any existing studies or relevant data sources exist for the area which a given Rapid Cultural Inventory is planning to address.

#### **STAGE 2: CONSULTATION**

2.1 IDENTIFY POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS

✓ Input to an Inventory may need to be drawn from a range of people who have knowledge that has not been published. Stakeholder consultation is also important for involving people who are affected by the issues or are in relevant positions of influence.

2.2 CONTACT AND CONSULT KEY STAKEHOLDERS

✓ Consultation should be planned carefully, giving thought to any particular sensitivities that apply.

#### **STAGE 3: DOCUMENTATION**

3.1 DESCRIBE THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE INVENTORY

✓ In constructing the report, database or other records which will comprise the Inventory's content and output, a key section to document unambiguously at the start is a statement of the purpose and scope of the particular Inventory.

- 3.2 LIST AND DESCRIBE SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL VALUES/PRACTICES
- ✓ The main part of the content of the Inventory consists of a description of the values and practices of interest, noting various features of importance about them, and (in most cases) categorising them according to a recognised typology.
- 3.3 NOTE ANY
  CONSERVATION
  IMPLICATIONS
- ✓ Particular cultural values and practices may or may not be an important influence on the ecological status of the wetland(s) to which they relate; and where there is such a link, the link may be either positive or negative.
- 3.4 SUMMARISE THE STATUS
  OF THE CULTURAL
  VALUES/PRACTICES
- ✓ This will be the section of an Inventory in which to include comments on whether the values and practices concerned are past, present, changing or vulnerable to change.
- 3.5 INCLUDE SUPPORTING MATERIALS
- Inventories can include further information in the form of appended supporting materials.

#### **STAGE 4: ACTION**

- 4.1 RECOMMEND ANY
  ACTIONS TO PROMOTE
  AND INTEGRATE
  THE VALUES/PRACTICES
- ✓ Inventories are likely to pull together or generate useful suggestions for conservation actions; for example to address threats, restore or enhance values, improve integrated management or strengthen policy. This is where much of the beneficial impact of the work may

## Rapid Cultural Inventories & the Ramsar Convention

Rapid Cultural Inventories support the implementation of a number of Resolutions on cultural issues, including on taking the cultural values of wetlands into account in policy, strategies and management (**Resolutions VIII.19** and **IX.21**), and on strengthening local communities and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands (**Resolution VII.8**).

These inventories also support the implementation of **Target 10** in **Ramsar's Strategic Plan 2016-2024**, which promotes the documentation and full integration of the traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities in wetland management.