

**DRAFT PROJECT PROPOSAL - INVESTING IN NATIONAL WETLAND INVENTORIES: A KEY BUILDING BLOCK TO MEETING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND INCREASING RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Version: 05 February 2020**

**SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICANT**

Name of the organisation	<b>Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands</b> (hereafter referred to as the Secretariat)
Address	Rue Mauverney 28, 1196 Gland, Switzerland
Contact details	

**SECTION 2: PROPOSAL SUMMARY**

<b>Main objectives of the project proposal</b>	To enable those Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands that have not yet completed a National Wetland Inventory (NWI) with the required technical, organisational, and in some cases financial, support required to do so.
<b>Expected outcomes</b>	The 39 Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands that have not yet conducted or completed an NWI will have completed an NWI.  Once completed, the outcomes of this project therefore in turn, also contribute to substantial positive outcomes in the conservation and effective management of wetlands in the 39 Contracting Parties that have not yet completed an NWI.
<b>Implementing organisation and partners (if any)</b>	The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands, which is responsible for carrying out the day-to-day coordination of the Convention on Wetlands activities and has a mandate to continue working with Contracting Parties on the completion of national wetland inventories and wetland extent to report on SDG Indicator 6.6.1, will manage and implement the project along with the 39 Contracting Parties.
<b>Key targets for project support</b>	<b>Group 1 Contracting Parties from lower-middle and upper-income countries:</b> Australia, Austria, Norway, Oman, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Grenada, Montenegro, Suriname, Bhutan, Cambodia, Eswatini, Ghana, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Moldavia, Sao Tome and Principe and Sudan  <b>Group 2 Contracting Parties from low-income countries:</b> Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Togo Chad and South Sudan

<p><b>Time frames for implementation and duration of funding</b></p>	<p>The project will be implemented across two different timeframes for the two different groups of countries that will receive support to develop an NWI. For the 30 wealthier Contracting Parties, the project will be implemented across a 24-month period. For the nine low-income Contracting Parties receiving support, the project will be implemented across a 60-month period.</p>
<p><b>Total budget and funding request</b></p>	<p>The total proposed budget the project is <b>\$1,752,360.00</b> (one million seven-hundred and fifty-two thousand, three-hundred-and-sixty dollars).</p>

**SECTION 3: BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION FOR INVESTING IN WETLANDS**

**3.1 Importance of wetlands to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and increasing resilience to climate change**

It is widely recognised that natural wetlands are essential to human wellbeing, sustainable development and climate mitigation and adaptation, as well as for biodiversity. They provide water for human consumption and agriculture. They protect our shores and help make cities and settlements safe and resilient. They are the Earth’s greatest natural carbon stores and play an essential role in regulating the global climate. Peatlands and vegetated coastal wetlands are large carbon sinks; salt marshes sequester millions of tonnes of carbon annually. They support biodiversity and abundant and unique nature. They are vital to mitigate and adapt to climate change. They provide sustainable livelihoods and are essential to human health and wellbeing. In short, wetlands provide myriad benefits and services (Convention on Wetlands, 2018). Wetlands are also among the most complex and productive ecosystems in the world, comparable to rainforests and can host an enormous variety of species of microbes, plants, insects, birds, fish, reptiles and mammals. All these species are closely linked to wetlands and together form complex sets of interactions and life cycles across all parts of the globe, presenting unique and life-supporting environments for some three billion people.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent an ambitious agenda to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development by 2030. As we begin the next – and final – decade approaching the 2030 target date set under the SDGs, it is important to consider the vital links between protecting and enhancing wetlands and the specific SDG goals and targets to which effective stewardship of wetlands can contribute. Table 1 below details some of the most important linkages and highlights the importance of wetlands across a range of sectors.

**Definition of wetlands:**

The Convention on Wetlands uses a broad definition of wetlands. It includes all lakes and rivers, underground aquifers, swamps and marshes, wet grasslands, peatlands, oases, estuaries, deltas and tidal flats, mangroves and other coastal areas, coral reefs, and all human-made sites such as fishponds, rice paddies, reservoirs and salt pans.

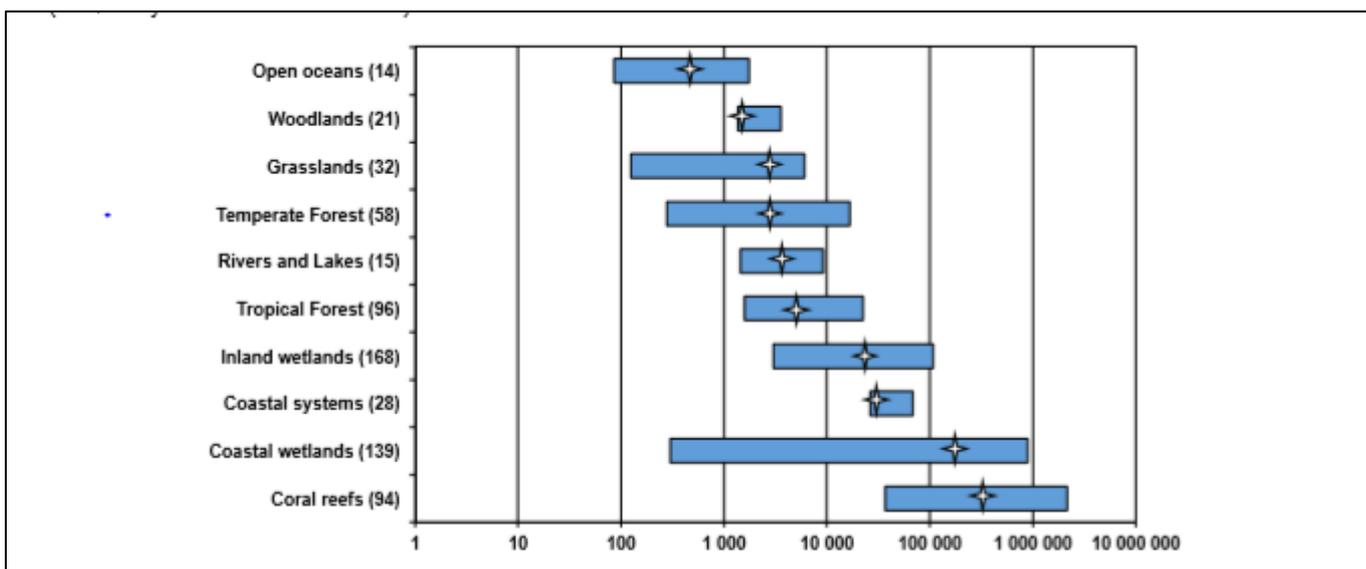
The wetlands classification system of the Convention recognises 42 wetland types in three categories: marine and coastal wetlands, inland wetlands and human-made wetlands

(Source: Convention on Wetlands ).

In addition to the contribution wetlands can make to the SDGs, investing in wetlands makes good ‘business sense’. Although each wetland site must be considered as

a unique case, literature on the monetary value of wetlands shows that they can be of particularly high value as a regulator of water quality and flow, and therefore help to provide clean water and mitigate natural hazard events for nearby towns and cities; see figure 1 below (Russi et al.; 2013). Economic benefits can be attractive to potential funders, who may also seek attributable social impact returns in terms of supporting livelihoods and unique human cultures that have developed around wetland environments.

Figure 1: Range of values of all ecosystem services provided by different types of habitat (Int.\$/ha/yr2007/PPP-corrected)



### The Convention on Wetlands

The Convention on Wetlands, is the intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The Convention on Wetlands was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975. Since then, almost 90% of UN member states, from all the world’s geographic regions, have acceded to become “Contracting Parties”. The purpose of the Convention on Wetlands is to promote wetland conservation and wise use. This ensures that the benefits of wetlands contribute towards meeting the SDGs, Aichi Biodiversity Targets and new Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and other related international commitments. Parties to the Convention on Wetlands have already committed to maintaining the ecological character of over 2,300 Wetlands of International Importance (13-18% of global wetlands), covering nearly 250 million hectares.

**Table 1: Linkages between wetlands and selected SDG goals and targets**

SDG	Target	Links with Wetlands
	<p><b><i>Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</i></b></p>	<p>Wetlands are critical to ensuring water availability. Almost all of the world’s consumption of freshwater is drawn either directly or indirectly from wetlands. Wetlands provide the essential infrastructure through which freshwater is delivered for human consumption, making wetlands foundational to ensuring the availability of water for all.</p>
	<p>6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.</p>	
	<p>6.3 Improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimising release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.</p>	<p>Wetlands provide a natural water filter. Wetland vegetation captures nutrients, pollutants and sediments, thus cleaning and improving water quality. In contrast, mismanaged wetlands are often heavily polluted, and, if used for irrigation or drinking water, may prove dangerous to human health. In this context, restoring the functional qualities of healthy wetlands is critical.</p>
	<p>6.6 Protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.</p>	<p>The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands is a co-custodian of Indicator 6.6.1 that monitors the change in the extent of water-related ecosystems over time. The Convention on Wetlands provides data submitted by Contracting Parties through their National Reports is critical to monitoring the status and taking decisions on managing water ecosystems.</p>
	<p><b><i>Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</i></b></p>	<p>Wetland soils contain 35% of the world’s organic carbon. Coastal ecosystems and particularly mangroves, saltmarshes and seagrass beds sequester two to four times more carbon than terrestrial forests, and these “blue carbon ecosystems” play an essential role in climate change mitigation. This carbon is stored for the long-term in wetland soils. Further, peatlands, in particular, although only accounting for 3% of the earth’s surface, hold twice as much carbon as the world’s forests. Preventing further degradation, drainage and loss of wetland ecosystems is critical to preventing further green house gas emissions.</p>
<p>13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.</p>		



### ***Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development***

14.5 Conserve at least 10% of coastal and marine areas.

Healthy and productive oceans rely on well-functioning coastal and marine wetlands. Sustainable management and protection of coastal ecosystems, including coral reefs, mangrove and seagrass beds, is critical to ensuring the future of marine resources and the livelihoods of some three billion people.



### ***Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss***

15.1 Ensure conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems.

Terrestrial ecosystems such as forests and wetlands and the biodiversity they harbour, can be considered nature's contribution to people. One target under this goal (target 15.1) relates to the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, including wetlands specifically. Wetlands have been estimated to provide 40% of global renewable ecosystem services.

Source: adapted from Scaling up wetland conservation, wise use and restoration to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals; Convention on Wetlands; July 2018

## **3.2 Importance of National Wetland Inventories and current progress**

The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands (hereafter referred to as the Secretariat), has a mandated role as co-custodian of SDG indicator 6.6.1 (cf. change in the extent of water-related ecosystems) and carries out the day-to-day coordination of the Convention's activities. It is based at the headquarters of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature in Gland, Switzerland. One key role for the Secretariat, as part of its core support for the progress of the Convention on Wetlands, is to track global wetland status and trends, which helps to measure progress toward SDG 6. To do this, the Secretariat relies on information provided by the network of 171 Contracting Parties, who are committed to carrying out **National Wetland Inventories (NWIs)** and reporting on progress on a regular basis. NWIs are a fundamental tool for developing and implementing effective policies and actions for the mission of the Convention on Wetlands: the conservation and effective management of all wetlands<sup>1</sup>. Without an NWI, it is very challenging for Contracting Parties to ensure the effective management of their wetlands.

Since January 2018, Contracting Parties are reporting data on the character of wetlands and their extent in their regular reports to the Convention on Wetlands. In October 2018, the Secretariat produced a report on the progress of the implementation of the Convention on

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<sup>1</sup> Highlighted in the Convention on Wetlands Strategic Plan 2016-204, under strategic goal 3 – wisely using all wetlands, target 8.

Wetlands between mid-2015 and January 2018 using data from 140 reports received by that date (Convention on Wetlands. 2018b). The headline finding from this progress report was that, despite the recognised importance of wetlands, their true value and benefits remain largely underestimated by policy and decision-makers. The result is that although wetlands still constitute a very large area of the earth's surface - equivalent to almost the size of Greenland - where data is available, 35% of wetlands have been lost since 1970, at a rate three times greater than that of forests. Additionally, the quality of remaining wetlands is also suffering due to drainage, pollution, invasive species, unsustainable use, disrupted flow regimes and climate change. This represents a grave threat to the environment, human livelihoods and sustainable development.

Among several key recommended responses to the findings outlined in the Global Wetland Outlook report (Convention on Wetlands 2018), is a commitment to improving NWIs and tracking wetland extent. The report highlights the importance of access to reliable, current data and the knowledge this generates to support innovative approaches to wetland conservation, use and also to drive policy support for protecting wetlands. As well as reporting on over 2,300 Ramsar sites, many of which remain vulnerable, NWIs are intended to provide information on all wetland areas within a country under the responsibility of a Contracting Party.

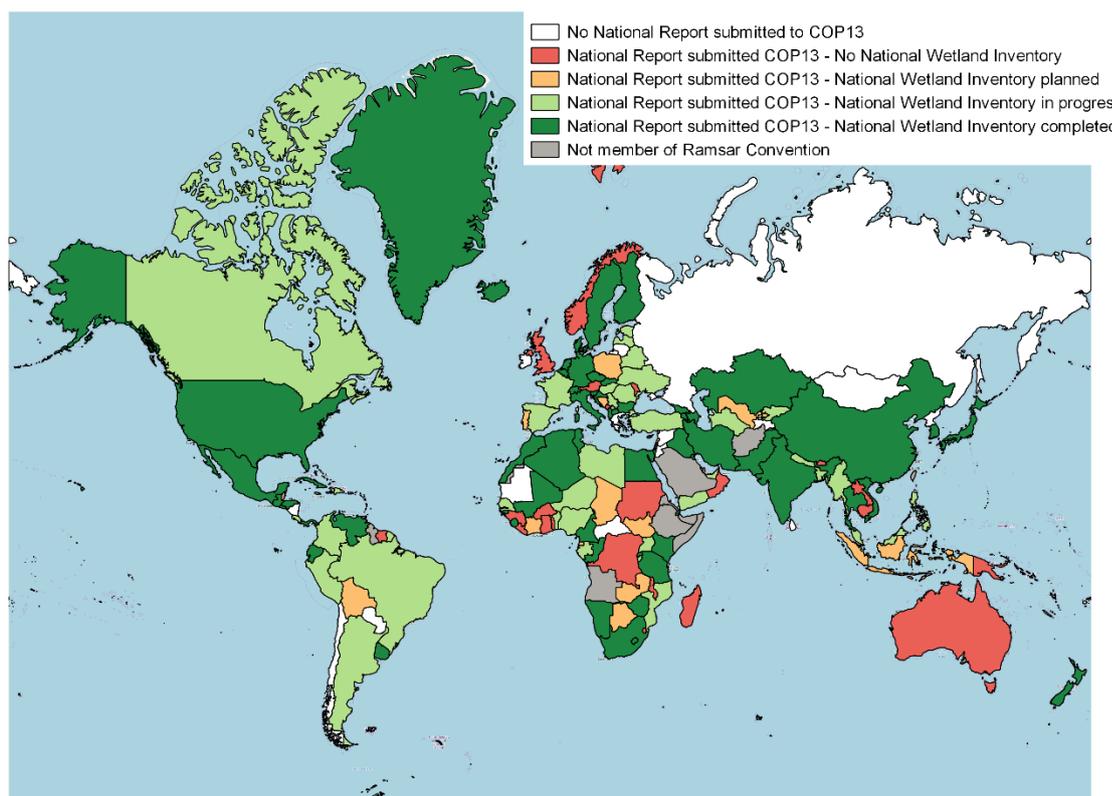
### **Analysis of progress of National Wetlands Inventories**

To accelerate the progress of NWIs, the Secretariat commissioned a study in mid to late 2019 to analyse the scale of the gap in reporting and to identify the barriers encountered by Contracting Parties in carrying out or completing such inventories. This gap analysis found that significant progress has been made to date, with 44% of Contracting Parties having completed an NWI and a further 27% reporting that there is an NWI in progress; see figure 2 below<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, 49% of the respondents provided a baseline figure for wetlands extent for SDG indicator 6.6.1. However, the Convention on Wetlands, faces a significant challenge in supporting Contracting Parties, which have not yet carried out an NWI or are only in the planning stage.

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<sup>2</sup> Note: in the gap analysis was based on a total of 150 National Reports (140 National Reports included in the Global Implementation Report and ten late submissions)

Figure 2: World map of National Wetlands Inventory (Source: National Report COP13 - 150 National Reports (and including ten late submissions))



### Assessment of support requirements for implementing National Wetlands Inventories

As part of the gap analysis, Contracting Parties were consulted through an online survey to gain more qualitative insights into the difficulties they are encountering in carrying out, finalising or updating NWIs, as well as the type of themes or resources they see as important to supporting them. When submitting responses, the Contracting Parties were asked to provide a self-assessment in terms of their experience with NWIs across three possible categories: “no or limited”, “moderate” or “advanced” experience. Responses were also assessed about socio-economic data, the level of fragility of the country and a proxy measure of commitment to environmental issues of the Contracting Party in question.

The overall analysis of contextual and economic factors compared with Contracting Parties’ progress against the completion of an NWI indicates that Contracting Parties with a higher income tend to have completed an NWI or have an NWI in progress. Similarly, Contracting Parties that are on track with their environmental commitment, also tend to have completed or are in the process of undertaking an NWI. Unsurprisingly, fragile countries with lower income levels tend to have made less progress towards completing an NWI. For example, all countries in the low-income bracket which have not yet undertaken an NWI or are planning to undertake an NWI also correspond to high levels of fragility (as assessed by the Fund for Peace’s Fragile State Index).

Based on the online survey, Contracting Parties indicate that they face a combination of financial, technical and governance issues to undertake, complete or update an NWI, with financial and technical support being the most commonly cited areas of support requested.

Depending on their relative level of self-assessed experience with NWIs, Contracting Parties are facing different challenges to undertake or complete an NWI and have different needs. Those which consider themselves as having “advanced” experience indicate that financial

support is the major requirement and have a lower demand for technical and governance support. Conversely, Contracting Parties with “limited” experience reported requiring more technical assistance than financial or governance support, to undertake an NWI. More than half of Contracting Parties with “moderate” experience indicate financial assistance as the major category of support required. Technical assistance comes as a secondary support requirement, and no governance support requirements are indicated. Other responses reflected demand for a combination of all three types of assistance.

### **Technical support for implementing NWIs: Toolkit on wetland inventories**

Based on the above-mentioned consultation, the Secretariat commissioned the development of a toolkit to support Contracting Parties implement or update an NWI. The aim of the toolkit is to provide guidance, recommendations and examples to solve the challenges faced by Contracting Parties. It includes an introduction linking NWIs to SDG targets and sections following the main steps and activities in carrying out an NWI. The toolkit provides references for specific technical approaches, building on the large repository of technical documentation developed by the Convention over the years, and suggestions on how to utilise and communicate the outputs of an NWI. This toolkit has been finalised, including with feedback from a group of Contract Parties, but is yet to be tested through ‘real-life’ application. The Secretariat will launch the toolkit in April 2020 and will develop a set of training materials to offer on-going support to Contracting Parties.

## **SECTION 4: PROJECT PROPOSAL - INVESTING IN NATIONAL WETLAND INVENTORIES: A KEY BUILDING BLOCK TO MEETING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND INCREASING RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Problem statement:** National Wetland Inventories are a key foundation for understanding the status of wetlands and the first step in effective management and policy reform to elevate the importance of wetland protection. In turn and based on the importance of wetlands for a range of functions relating to bio-diversity and ecosystem health, improving wetlands makes a direct contribution to increasing resilience to climate change and mitigating risks from climate-related disasters. Investors in wetlands can attain both financial returns, as well as environmental and social benefits, as a form of impact investment. In recent years, considerable progress has been made in the development of National Wetland Inventories; however, 39 Contracting Parties have not yet carried out a National Wetland Inventory or are only in the planning stage. Completing these outstanding National Wetland Inventories is fundamental to ensuring the effective management of wetlands and, given the importance of wetlands, in turn, supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

### **4.1 Strategy for support to Contracting Parties in undertaking or finalising NWIs**

This proposal for funding is directly concerned with improving the availability and quality of NWIs, without which Contracting Parties will find it very challenging to ensure the effective management of wetlands and fulfil their commitments under the Convention. Based on the gap analysis carried out by the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands, it is clear that significant progress has been made across the 170 member countries. However, the Secretariat has identified 39 Contracting Parties that have not yet carried out an NWI or are only in the planning stage (see Annex I).

The range and variation of this group of Contracting Parties with outstanding work to do on NWIs calls for a manageable approach that accounts for the current status of progress, the financial and technical resources available, as well as broader contextual challenges in each country. Due to the variability of results and country contexts within the Convention on

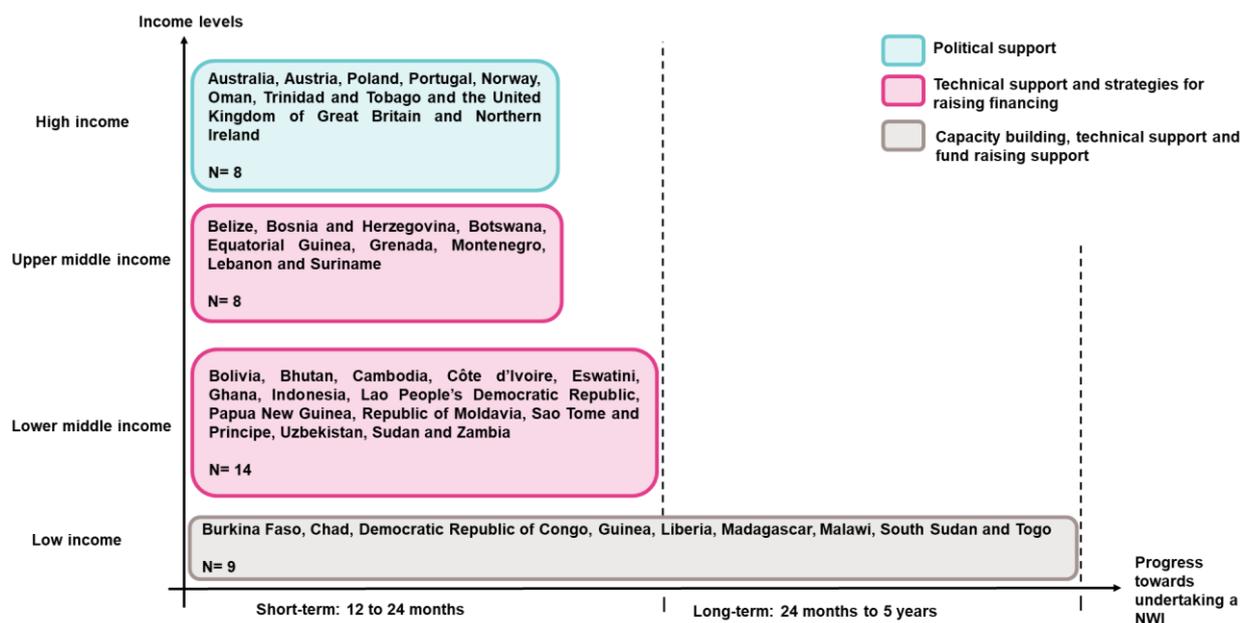
Wetlands’s regions, this approach focuses on specific countries and groupings of countries rather than the regions themselves.

### A two-pronged approach for supporting Contracting Parties

Based on the comparison of economic indicators with the progress that Contracting Parties have made towards completing an NWI, the 39 focus Contracting Parties can be divided into two groups. The first group contains 30 Contracting Parties in the high income, upper-middle income and lower-middle-income<sup>3</sup> brackets. The second groups consists of nine low-income countries which are likely to require support over a longer period (see figure 3 below). Due to the marked differences in terms of income levels and enabling environments across the Contracting Parties that have not yet undertaken or are planning to undertake an NWI, this proposal is based on two different but complementary approaches:

1. A short-term approach to supporting the 30 Contracting Parties from wealthier countries, where conditions are more favourable to complete a maximum number of NWIs within a realistic time-frame of 12 to 24 months.
2. A longer-term approach for the remaining nine low-income countries in more challenging contexts that will require more substantial capacity building and technical support. These Contracting Parties are only likely to be able to undertake an NWI in the medium to longer-term future (between two and five years).

Figure 3: Distribution of 39 Contracting Parties by income levels between the short-term and long-term strategies



### Short-term approach for higher income level groups: Group One of 30 Contracting Parties

For the group of countries in the higher income brackets, the approach is based over a 12 to 24 month period with differentiated support for the sub-groupings depending on their relative wealth (see table 2 below).

<sup>3</sup> Lower-middle income countries are included because this group also demonstrates a relatively high level of completion of NWIs or NWIs in progress (63% of this income bracket).

It is proposed that the Secretariat provides support to the high-income grouping to improve internal awareness for greater political support for NWIs, largely because they already have relatively advanced technical capacity and possibilities for more immediate financing (or the potential to obtain financing). By contrast, upper-middle and lower-middle-income countries should receive a combination of technical and financial support, as well as support to strengthen political commitment to ensure support for the sustainable management of wetland areas.

Table 2: Proposed intervention for wealthier Contracting Parties to undertake an NWI based on their income level

Income level	NWI status		Proposed intervention
	No NWI undertaken	Planned NWI	
High income	Australia*, Austria*, Norway*, Oman, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*	Poland and Portugal	Increase internal awareness for political support.  (*note: in some cases, improving coordination and data sharing)
Upper-middle income	Grenada, Montenegro and Suriname	Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Equatorial Guinea and Lebanon	Technical support through capacity building (e.g. toolkit) and strategies for fundraising
Lower-middle income	Bhutan, Cambodia, Eswatini, Ghana*, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Moldavia, Sao Tome and Principe and Sudan	Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Côte d'Ivoire, Indonesia*, Uzbekistan, and Zambia	Technical support through capacity building (e.g. toolkit) and strategies for fundraising  (*note: in some cases, improving coordination and data sharing)

### The longer-term approach for low-income countries: Group Two of nine Contracting Parties

For the nine low-income countries, a longer-term and more intensive approach focusing on building capacity and providing technical support over time is required (see table 3 below). This means working closely with Contracting Parties in each of the countries, as well as providing political and governance support for greater commitment by national governments. By strengthening capacity and providing targeted technical and governance support over the first stage, it can be expected that the overall enabling environment for carrying out or completing an NWI will improve over time. This would then be followed by a second phase within the approach that focusses on support for fundraising. This approach may vary between two and five years, depending on the challenges faced by Contracting Parties. The countries involved in this group include:

1. **No NWI undertaken:** Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi and Togo; and
2. **Planned NWI:** Chad and South Sudan.

**As part of this approach, the Secretariat proposes establishing two groups (one francophone and one anglophone) across these nine African countries to provide mutual support, share experiences and ensure cost efficiencies in terms of more in-depth training.** These groups would be an informal mechanism, linking Focal Points (plus any relevant members of the National Wetlands Committees or similar bodies), and establishing a platform for sharing experiences and challenges and to encourage mutual support through peer-to-peer learning. Such groups may operate remotely through webinars and online group meetings, but could also benefit from face-to-face meetings where this is (financially) viable.

The approach should focus on going into more depth regarding the bottlenecks encountered by these countries in terms of financial, governance, human and technical resources to start an NWI, which, in some cases, maybe similar between countries. By setting common targets and deadlines, countries could collaborate and share learning through a process guided by the Secretariat. By grouping these countries, the Secretariat would also benefit from efficiencies in technical support and cost-savings for running orientation or training events.

Table 3: Proposed intervention for nine low-income Contracting Parties to undertake an NWI

PHASE	NWI status		Proposed intervention
	No NWI undertaken	Planned NWI	
I	Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi and Togo	Chad and South Sudan	<p>Increase internal awareness for political support for undertaking NWI.</p> <p>Technical support through capacity building (e.g. toolkit) and strategies for fundraising</p> <p>Peer to peer learning and support</p>
II			<p>Small grant funding (as appropriate)</p> <p>Technical support for implementing NWI and for data management and interpretation</p>

It is further proposed to identify one or two neighbouring countries for each of the two groups which have already made good progress on NWIs to play a **peer-support and mentoring** role. Suitable candidates could include Mali and Kenya for the francophone and anglophone countries, respectively. Finally, the Secretariat will set up and manage an online platform for technical support and guidance between more advanced and experienced Contracting Parties and those just starting out with an NWI. The precise nature of this mechanism will need to be determined, but could be based on a **virtual community of practice**, chat-board, forum or a form of online help-desk with frequently asked questions. To function effectively, more advanced Contracting Parties must show willingness to commit time and resources to supporting such a platform.

## 4.2 Description of main tasks and activities for the NWI project

The main sets of activities relating to the programme of support for NWIs are set out below and divided into four main phases: 1. preparatory phase; 2. support to Group One countries; 3. support to Group Two countries and 4. project management and reporting. See the main work plan at Annex II for a detailed Gantt chart.

### 4.2.1 Preparatory phase

During the first six months of the project, the Secretariat will mobilise staff, appoint a project coordinator, establish effective coordination and liaison mechanisms for providing support to all 39 Contracting Parties across Groups One and Two, and work to develop the training and orientation materials required:

- Staff mobilisation: identification of a full-time project coordinator or focal person at the Secretariat (also potentially hiring for this post), as well as the required technical specialists to provide support to Contracting Parties over the life-time of the project.

- Intensive liaison with Contracting Parties in Groups One and Two, including outreach and where necessary in-country and/or regional meetings to provide orientation on the project, medium-term planning and getting buy-in from National Focal Points.
- Development of core training materials based on the NWI Toolkit, reporting on wetland extent, including a set of desk-based learning modules, virtual resources and training materials for face-to-face events. Training materials should include gender sensitive materials and be aimed at equal participation of women and men. This activity will focus on the toolkit but may also require further training needs assessments and the development of bespoke training resources:
  - Development of specialist technical training materials on Earth Observation and fundraising approaches, including video and other web-based interactive training materials.
  - Development of a data collection template for collecting the key data points needed, such as wetlands extent. Templates should include gender disaggregation for data. This data collection template could be accessible on a free online platform such as an app (e.g., mWater, Open Data Kit, Akvo), and Contracting Parties could then fine-tune this depending on their needs and share among shareholders (including National Wetlands Committee members) to standardise data collection.
  - Piloting of training modules and modification of content and delivery channels, including field testing of the wetlands data app in one or two countries (where this is relevant).
- Design and establishment of a community of practice or forum or chatroom, which is linked to the toolkit to connect those Contracting Parties seeking practical guidance, advice and examples from those that are more experienced and have advanced further on NWIs; and
- Establishment and management of two groups for Group Two Contracting Parties (a francophone group: Burkina Faso, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Madagascar and Togo; and an anglophone group: Malawi, Liberia and South Sudan).

#### **4.2.2 Group One: support for thirty higher-income level Contracting Parties**

Once the roles and responsibilities for project management have been established and the core training materials and tools have been developed and tested, work on regular and intensive engagement with group one countries can start. For this group of Contracting Parties, there is less of a need for intensive support, as many of these countries will have the core technical expertise and access to financing required. However, some Contracting Parties that are facing specific challenges may still require more intensive face-to-face support. As such, the specific nature, frequency and timing of inputs will be determined during the preparatory phase, but for this group the following interventions can be anticipated over a more condensed 24-month period to help countries start and/or finalise their NWI:

- Working with Contracting Parties to identify internal awareness requirements to generate support for NWI processes, including, where necessary, technical assistance on crafting messaging support for increased political commitment;
- Where needed, support for fundraising and resource mobilisation from national funding sources to carry out inventories and report writing (e.g., inputs into budget preparation and identification of in-country donors either for grant funding or social impact investment);

- Targeted capacity building and training using the toolkit and other Convention resources (where relevant);
- Specialist training on reporting on wetland extent, publicly available Earth Observation and use of data/outputs, including database management/merging, data analysis, quality control (in GIS/Excel);
- Support and guidance for the adaptation of a wetlands data collection app to the specific country requirements (where relevant);
- Specialist support for packaging and use of inventory outputs for awareness and communications purposes; and
- Establishment of a forum or community of practice linking Contracting Parties with different levels of experience and skill sets to facilitate access to expert technical advice throughout the NWI process (e.g., for training on GIS, database management, merging of databases).

#### **4.2.3 Group Two: support for nine-low income Contracting Parties**

As previously noted, this group of countries will require more intensive support for an extended period (up to five years). However, there needs will vary and will be assessed during the project's preparatory phase. An emphasis for this group should be on face-to-face interactions and training, which will imply consistent follow-up support and monitoring of progress from the Secretariat and/or experts from other, more advanced, Contracting Parties. The following interventions can be anticipated over an extended period starting approximately at the end of the first year of project activity and once the Secretariat has carried out all the preparatory work:

- Working with Contracting Parties to identify internal awareness requirements to generate support for NWI processes, including technical assistance, where necessary, on crafting messaging support for increased political commitment.
- Support for fundraising and resource mobilisation from national funding sources (public sector financing and donor grant funding) to carry out inventories, data collection, data analysis and report writing (e.g., inputs into budget preparation and identification of in-country donors either for grant funding or social impact investment).
- Direct funding for implementing inventories for Contracting Parties which cannot identify external funding; individual Contracting Parties may apply for grant funding from a pool of money to be administered by the Secretariat under this project for a range of uses including purchasing data (where needed), hiring specialist technical support, GIS mapping expertise, purchasing equipment for wetlands assessment or mobilisation of staff, among others. It is anticipated that typical amounts to be disbursed would be in the range of \$10,000 to \$20,000 per Contracting Party depending on demand and requirements.
- Capacity building and training on existing Convention on Wetlands resources and the new toolkit, plus other non-Convention resources based on the methodology for NWIs as set out in the toolkit.
- Specialist training on publicly available Earth Observation and use of data/outputs, including database management/merging, data analysis, quality control (in GIS/Excel).
- Support and guidance for the adaptation of the wetlands data collection app to specific country requirements (where relevant).
- Coordination and facilitation of two groups (one Francophone and one Anglophone) including face-to-face training, learning events, and peer-to-peer exchange visits.

- Specialist support for packaging and use of inventory outputs for awareness and communications purposes.
- Provision of drawdown expert technical advice for Contracting Parties throughout the NWI process.

#### 4.2.4 Project management and reporting

As well as leading on the preparation and coordination of specific technical inputs and training sessions, the Secretariat will play a key role in the overall management and facilitation of this project to support 39 Contracting Parties to start or finalise their NWIs. Management and reporting tasks will include, but not be limited to the following:

- Regular liaison with funder(s).
- Establishment of fund governance mechanisms and disbursement criteria and the tracking of small grants to qualifying Contracting Parties in Group One and Two countries to facilitate NWI processes. This refers to lump-sum amounts to be secured under this funding proposal and channelled directly to targeted Contract Parties that face specific resource challenges to finalising their NWI. The Secretariat will be in charge of administering the fund which would be for an initial amount of \$250,000 over five years.
- The fund should be established under the project in a dedicated budget line, with sub-budget lines for each grant and conform with standard financial reporting and auditing procedures of the Secretariat who would act as overall guarantor of the funding as part of their headline contract with the funder. In terms of governance and screening of proposals received from CPs the fund should be organised as follows:
  - To establish clear, but concise guidance on eligibility criteria and disseminate this among all CPs that may be included;
  - To develop and disseminate a short application form that provides a clear template for CPs to apply giving the rationale, planned activities, overall costs and any reporting requirements;
  - To establish a number of distinct funding windows, nominally in years two, three and four to allow for a phased approach to granting and to learn from the first round;
  - To establish a small review or reference group from among the strongest and most capacitated CPs who would be willing to review and provide feedback on the proposals and to flag any major concerns or unrealistic assumptions being made<sup>4</sup>;
  - To establish a simple monitoring system to track grant disbursement and to collate proof of application of the grant and a record of activities undertaken and progress.
- Narrative reporting on progress against agreed milestones and key performance indicators, including gender disaggregation where relevant (quarterly or bi-annually).
- Financial audits and reporting on all funding.

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<sup>4</sup> Note, if at all possible this group should be conformed of CP staff from countries who can provide time for free so that the overall costs of administering and managing the grant fund is commensurate with the relatively small volume of funding

- Lesson learning and documentation of support to Contracting Parties and dissemination of learning through relevant global platforms (e.g., The 14<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties COP 14 to be held in China in 2021).

Indicative progress monitoring targets and milestones would include the following:

Project outputs:

- No. of Contracting Parties receiving training (persons attending training, disgregated by gender);
- No. of technical and/or working group meetings held;
- No. of peer-to-peer exchange visits held;
- No. learning events hosted;
- No. of Contracting Parties receiving grant funding under small grants fund;
- Amount of money disbursed as part of the small grants fund (in US\$ and as percentage of planned over time); and
- No. Contracting Parties that secure additional funding from domestic or donor sources for the NWI process and the amount of overall new funding secured dedicated to carrying out an NWI.

Project outcomes:

- No. of Contracting Parties starting a new NWI (from a baseline of not having an NWI in place);
- No. of Contracting Parties starting a new NWI (from a baseline of having an NWI plan in place);
- No. of Contracting Parties finalising an NWI (from a baseline of not having an NWI in place);
- No. of Contracting Parties finalising an NWI (from a baseline of having an NWI plan in place); and
- No. of new national government policy/strategy commitments to wetland management and/or Ramsar sites and NWI processes.

### 4.3 Risks and assumptions

Based on the consultations with Contracting Parties that were conducted as part of the recent gap analysis and research into the design of the toolkit, several critical risks and challenges that are facing Contracting Parties which are planning or starting NWI processes have been identified. These are summarised in the table below.

*Table 4: Risks and assumptions for NWI processes with associated mitigating measures*

<b>Risks or assumptions</b>	<b>Mitigating measures</b>
Limited willingness to participate in the NWI process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secretariat invests in liaison with national focal points and works to build argument for NWI to go ahead</li> </ul>
Limited technical capacity of relevant staff within Contracting Parties to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project has built in small grant funding mechanism to provide resources (for materials, equipment or consultant support) to</li> </ul>

produce or update an NWI

boost capacity

- Project has incorporated mechanisms to provide targeted capacity building support to relevant Contracting Parties
- Project envisions establishment of forum or 'support-desk' to encourage links between Parties with more experience to provide peer-to-peer learning and advice

Limited political support from line ministry and/or ministry of finance or other critical government body

- Secretariat invests in increasing internal awareness with key national government and other wetlands stakeholders to build appetite for supporting NWI processes
- Budget and personnel time built in for fact-to-face meetings as necessary

Fragmented data sets relating to wetlands existing across a range of different stakeholders

- Guidance in the toolkit plus additional technical support to build capacity in merging of databases and database management
- Community or practice/support forum to share lessons and experiences

Limited donor financing released to Contracting Parties to support them to produce or update an NWI

- Secretariat invests in donor liaison and fund-raising efforts at regional and/or global level to support individual Contracting Parties

## **Section 5: Work plan and budget**

See Annexes II and III for a detailed Gantt chart and an indicative budget, respectively.

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## Annex I: Overview of status of 39 outstanding Contracting Parties

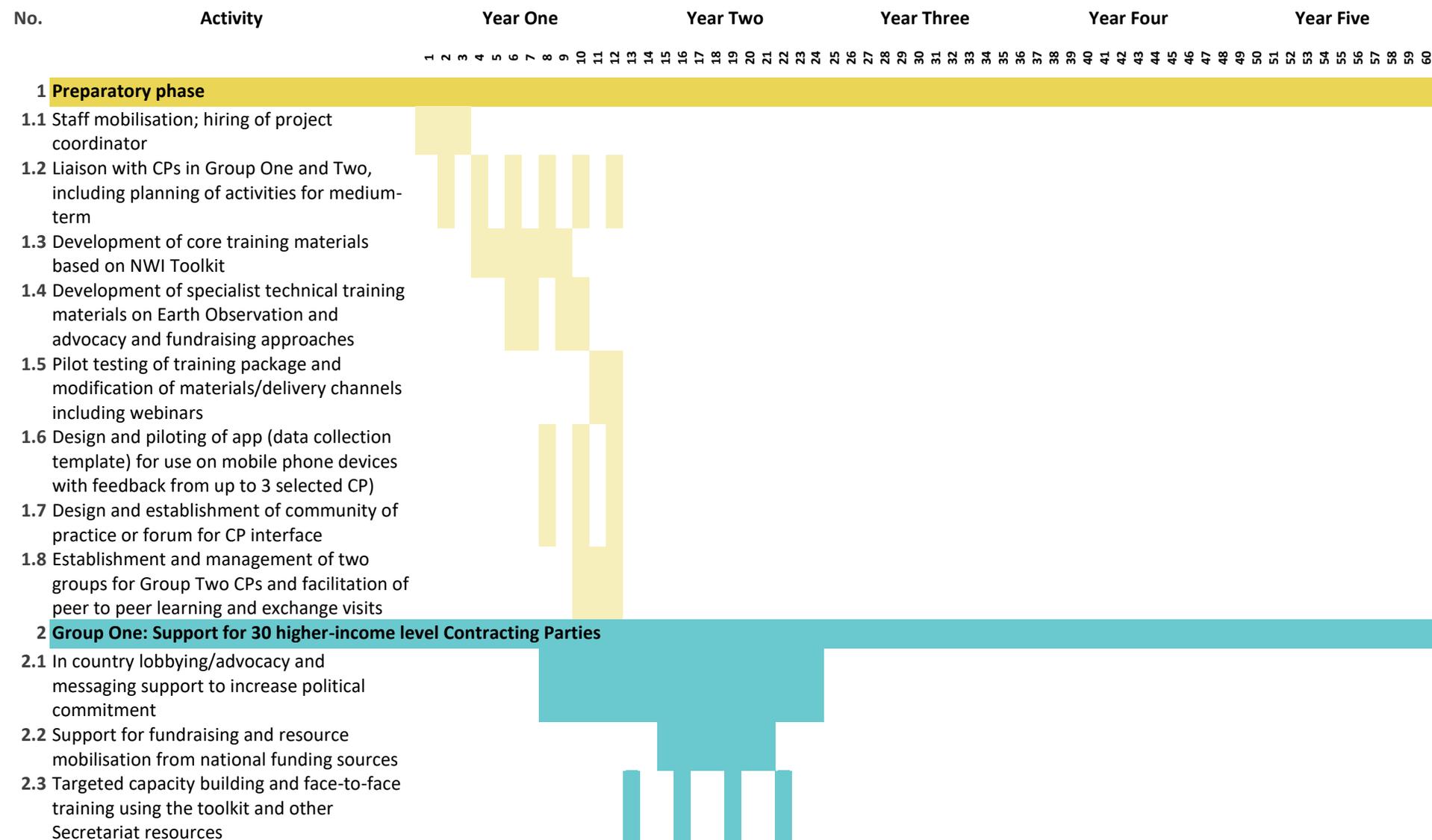
Income level	Country	Region	Status of NWI	No. of Ramsar sites
<b>Group 1: Contracting Parties</b>				
High	Australia	Oceania	No NWI	66
High	Austria	Europe	No NWI	23
High	Norway	Europe	No NWI	63
High	Oman	Asia	No NWI	1
High	Trinidad and Tobago	Latin America and the Caribbean	No NWI	3
High	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe	No NWI	175
High	Poland	Europe	NWI plan	19
High	Portugal	Europe	NWI plan	31
Upper middle	Grenada	Latin America and the Caribbean	No NWI	1
Upper middle	Montenegro	Europe	No NWI	2
Upper middle	Suriname	Latin America and the Caribbean	No NWI	1
Upper middle	Belize	Latin America and the Caribbean	NWI plan	2
Upper middle	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Europe	NWI plan	3
Upper middle	Botswana	Africa	NWI plan	1
Upper middle	Equatorial Guinea	Africa	NWI plan	3
Upper middle	Lebanon	Asia	NWI plan	4
Lower-middle	Bhutan	Asia	No NWI	3
Lower-middle	Cambodia	Asia	No NWI	5
Lower-middle	Ghana	Africa	No NWI	6
Lower-middle	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Asia	No NWI	2

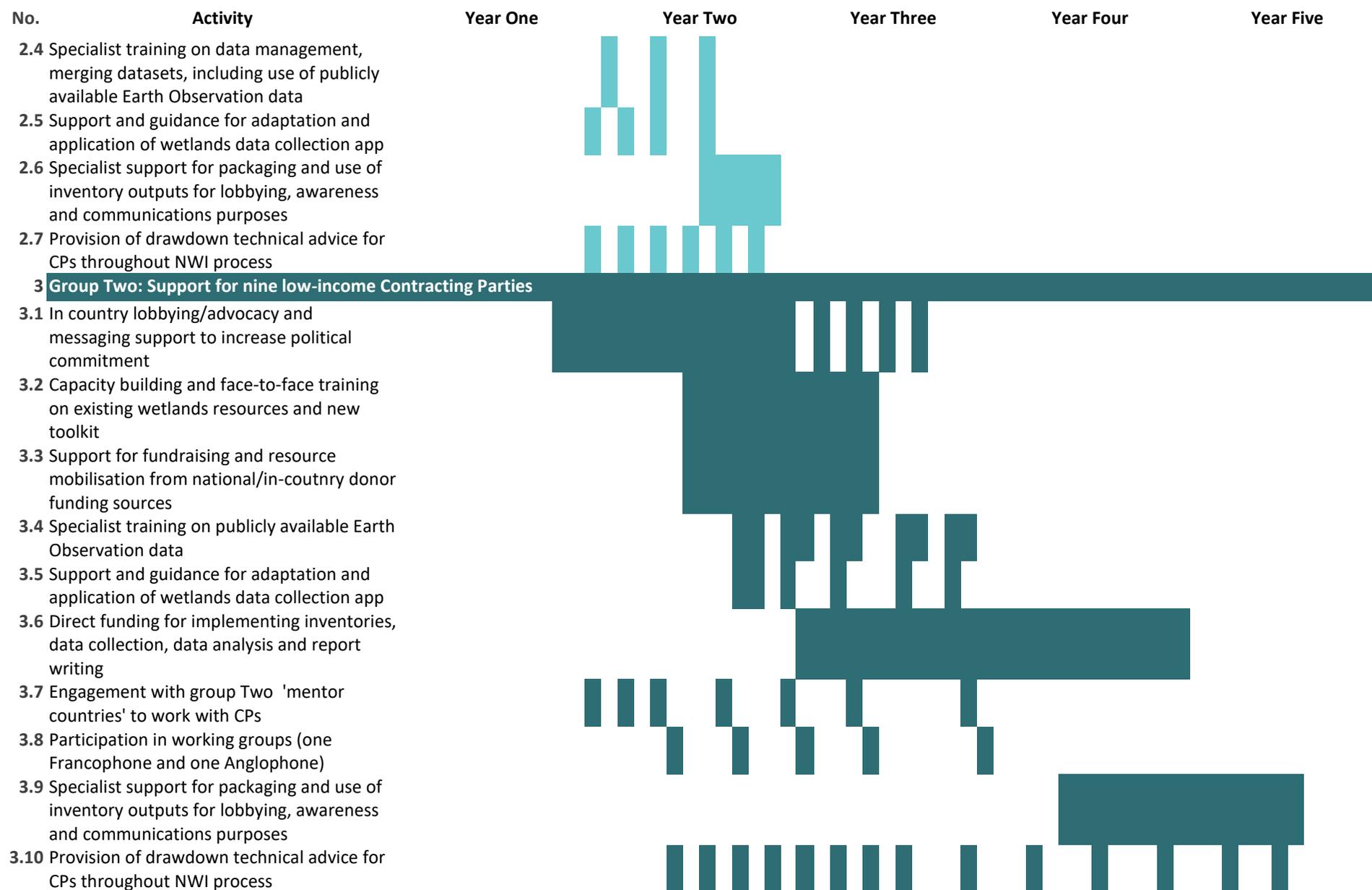
Lower-middle	Papua New Guinea	Oceania	No NWI	2
Lower-middle	Republic of Moldova	Europe	No NWI	3
Lower-middle	Sao Tome and Principe	Africa	No NWI	1
Lower-middle	Sudan	Africa	No NWI	3
Lower-middle	Eswatini	Africa	No NWI	3
Lower-middle	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Latin America and the Caribbean	NWI plan	11
Lower-middle	Côte d'Ivoire	Africa	NWI plan	6
Lower-middle	Indonesia	Asia	NWI plan	7
Lower-middle	Uzbekistan	Asia	NWI plan	2
Lower-middle	Zambia	Africa	NWI plan	8

### Group 2: Contracting Parties

Low	Burkina Faso	Africa	No NWI	22
Low	Democratic Republic of Congo	Africa	No NWI	4
Low	Guinea	Africa	No NWI	16
Low	Liberia	Africa	No NWI	5
Low	Madagascar	Africa	No NWI	20
Low	Malawi	Africa	No NWI	2
Low	Togo	Africa	No NWI	4
Low	Chad	Africa	NWI plan	6
Low	South Sudan	Africa	NWI plan	1

## Annex II: Work plan and activities Gantt chart





No.	Activity	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five	
4	<b>Project management and reporting</b>	[Continuous activity across all years]					
4.1	Regular liaison with funder(s)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	
4.2	Development of monitoring framework reporting against project targets and milestones	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	
4.3	Establishment of NWI small grants funding pool with eligibility criteria and approval processes	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	
4.4	Disbursement of grant funding to qualifying Group One and Two CPs (as appropriate)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	
4.5	Ongoing monitoring of progress against agreed milestones and targets	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	
4.7	Narrative reporting on progress	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	
4.8	Financial audits and reporting on all funding	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	
4.9	Lesson learning and documentation of support to CPs and dissemination of learning through relevant global platforms	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	