

RAMSAR ADVISORY MISSIONS -

HELP FOR CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS










What is a RAM?

- Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands have committed to *maintain the [ecological character](#)* of their wetlands.
- When the ecological character of a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar Site) is threatened by change, the [Ramsar Advisory Mission](#) (RAM) is an effective tool for providing independent advice to find solutions.

How does it work?

- Missions can be requested by the [national authority](#) responsible for Convention matters in the country concerned.
- The Secretariat of the Convention, together with the national authority, and according to agreed [Operational Guidance](#), then organizes a small team of experts to visit the site, consult local authorities and stakeholders, and produce a report with concrete Recommendations.
- Missions offer pragmatic Recommendations that can be implemented. The RAM is not a ‘compliance’ mechanism.
- All steps are decided by agreement with the authorities and concerned stakeholders.

Why do Parties to the Convention on Wetlands find RAMs useful?

- RAMs bring in independent specialist expertise to help solve technical problems. 
- Independent advice can help to break political deadlock and find consensus. 
- The process is straightforward and flexible, adapting to the needs of each case. 
- Stakeholder participation is actively promoted, strengthening public support. 
- RAMs demonstrate a country's positive commitment to wetlands. 
- Understanding and capacity to manage wetlands are enhanced as a result. 
- Sharing knowledge internationally helps the Convention as a whole. 

Summary of the process

The key steps are shown below. A RAM does not end when its report is produced: its Recommendations are an agenda for action, so follow-up and review are important.



Further information and guidance



For further information, follow the links below:

[Ramsar COP Resolution XIII.11: Ramsar Advisory Missions](#)

[Operational Guidance for Ramsar Advisory Missions](#)

[Policy Brief 3 \(4 pages\): Ramsar Advisory Missions – a mechanism to respond to change in ecological character of Ramsar Sites](#)

[Briefing Note 8 \(7 pages\): Ramsar Advisory Missions – Technical advice on Ramsar Sites](#)

[Ramsar Handbook 19 \(76 pages\): Addressing change in wetland ecological character](#)

[Previous Ramsar Advisory Mission reports](#)



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