

Regional initiative on Black Sea Coastal wetlands - BlackSeaWet

BlackSeaWet is presented as a Regional Initiative that is in an advanced stage of development and planned to start in 2009.

AIM OF THE REGIONAL INITIATIVE

Background: Coastal wetlands in the Black Sea include a wide variety of habitats and plant and animal species. 2,486,372 ha of Black Sea coastal wetlands are considered to be of national and international importance and 35 sites totalling 1,953,576 ha, are designated as Ramsar sites. These ecosystems provide important services and benefits to people that have economic value. They also have a vital role in ensuring the health of the Black Sea itself, buffering it from some of the upstream impacts of agriculture, industry, forestry and urbanization and providing habitats that are important to the life cycle of many of the species living there. Despite the clear importance to biodiversity and benefits to people, Black Sea coastal wetlands have been seriously degraded in recent years. This has been related to unsustainable industry, agriculture, aquaculture, silviculture, navigation and tourism related practices. The result is that many Black Sea coastal wetlands are no longer able to perform their natural functions and is denying local people access to the resources that they use in their day to day lives.

1. How is it implementing the Ramsar approach ?

The overall aim of new regional initiative – BlackSeaWet is to catalyse the conservation and sustainable development of Black Sea coastal wetlands. Wetland wise use and conservation has been initiated in the region for many years through various unrelated regional and national activities. A Regional Initiative will stimulate and coordinate cooperation around coastal wetlands issues in the region, acting as a means to address regional issues, share knowledge and expertise to address shared issues amongst different countries and stakeholders in the region and stimulate the development of capacity to address them. The issues require a multi-stakeholder approach that engages with government, civil society and increasingly the private sector. The Regional Initiative will undertake to bring these parties together.

The BlackSeaWet Initiative will strongly promote the goals of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-14. Of the five main goals, the Initiative will strongly contribute to the realisation of 1-4 (the fifth not being relevant in the region as all countries are already Contracting Parties):

Goal 1. Wise use: Promotion of the wise use of coastal wetlands is a key focus of BlackSeaWet. Territorial spatial planning, water resource management, river basin and coastal zone management, agricultural management, and sustainable management of economic activities and other decisions affecting wetlands all need to take more account of wise use. Furthermore fully recognizing the values and functions of wetlands, including the wide range of social benefits and cultural significance embodied in them, particularly for people directly dependent upon wetlands are also an important part of BlackSeaWet. Regional cooperation will enable sharing and the development of new approaches / experiences.

Goal 2. Wetlands of International Importance: Although many of the major Black Sea coastal wetland are listed, maintenance of the ecological character of Ramsar sites is one of the most important and difficult tasks for today. Facilitation of information exchange and stimulation of monitoring of ecological characteristic of coastal wetlands are important parts of BSW.

Goal 3. International cooperation: Sound International cooperation is a crucial part of BSW. It is planned to bring a new level of cooperation between all the main stakeholders in the region related to coastal wetlands management, conservation and research. In addition cooperation on specific issues that confront the region's wetlands and species such as pollution from the Black Sea, the conservation of migratory waterbird species and avian influenza will be important foci of the Initiative.

Goal 4. Institutional capacity and effectiveness: BlackSeaWet will build the regional capacity to implement the Convention focusing on enhanced CEPA activities to catalyse implementation of wise use. A strong emphasis will be placed on engaging civil society and strengthening their engagement in planning and decision making processes. Furthermore fundraising will be a key area with a strong

emphasis on engaging the EU through its Nearest Neighbour Programme and the developing Black Sea Synergy Initiative to develop a major regional wetlands focused initiative.

2. Which geographical region is covered and who participates ?

Geographical scope of BlackSeaWet regional initiative are Black Sea coastal countries. The need for the Initiative is well supported by Contracting Parties in the region. For today, 5 of them - Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine have supported the initiative. It is expected that in future Russian Federation also will join to BlackSeaWet regional initiative.

COOPERATION WITH THE RAMSAR SECRETARIAT

3. What are the strategic and operational targets of the initiative?

During the Odessa conference 30-31st October 2007, stakeholders in the Initiative agreed a Vision, Strategic objective and Targets.

BlackSeaWet Vision: In 20 years time the coastal wetlands of the Black Sea and Azov Seas are sustainably used, healthy ecosystems that provide the basis for conservation of wetland dependent biodiversity, support services for people and are equal in area and health to the current time.

BlackSeaWet strategic objective: The overall aim of new regional initiative – BlackSeaWet is to catalyse the conservation and sustainable development of Black Sea coastal wetlands

Key strategic targets will be to:

- Stop the loss and degradation of wetlands and their biodiversity by 2020
- Ensure wise use principles are integrated into coastal zone development
- Engage local people in planning and decision-making
- Complete the ecological network around the Black and Azov Sea coasts
- Combine wetland conservation in integrated water resource management and integrated coastal zone management approaches
- Mainstream wetland conservation in sectors whose activities are contributing to degradation

The regional conference held in Odessa, also had agreed operational objectives of the Initiative, which are the following:

Objective 1: Harmonise and strengthen conservation legislation in the Black Sea Countries and improve its implementation and enforcement.

Objective 2: Ensure that wetland conservation, management and restoration is underpinned by biodiversity, environmental and socio-economic information and knowledge based on standard approaches to monitoring, data processing and storage.

Objective 3: Raise awareness of civil society, government and private sector stakeholders of wetlands values, degradation and wise use approaches

Objective 4: Reach out to key sectors whose activities affect wetlands and develop innovative approaches and best practices to wetland management

Objective 5: Maintain a regional coordination mechanism for governments, civil society and the private sector that will act as a focus for regional wetland conservation, including information management and exchange, research, communication, resource mobilisation and capacity development

Objective 6: Mainstream wetland conservation into frameworks, strategies, plans and implementation of integrated approaches to water resources and coastal zone management, including river basin management

Planned activities for 2009 are presented in Workplan (section D). Action Plan for 2010-2012 will be agreed after official approval of BlackSeaWet by Ramsar Convention, at first meeting of BSW Management Body.

4. Who coordinates the initiative?

Wetlands International has been mandated by the stakeholders of this initiative to lead its development up to its initiation. During the development of the Initiative in 2008, Wetlands International was engaged with the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention to ensure they are kept informed of progress and to assist them in establishing the best arrangements for coordination. After official endorsement of BSW, its Management Body and Interim Coordination Unit will be responsible for communication and coordination their work with Ramsar Secretariat. The Interim Coordination Unit will employ a Coordinator who will be the focal point for the Secretariat and the Management Body (comprising inter alia the Contracting Parties Focal Points). The process of development during 2009 will identify a host country for the Interim Coordination Unit for the remainder of the next four years.

Until official endorsement of BSW the Wetlands International Black Sea Office will be the focal point:

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GOVERNANCE OF THE INITIATIVE

5. What are the governance and advisory mechanisms for the initiative ?

The BlackSeaWet concept was originally a recommendation of the workshop on Black Sea coastal wetlands held in Odessa in September 2000 attended by representatives of all the major Basin countries. At this meeting Wetlands International was asked to take the lead in the Initiative's development. The development of the Initiative was again supported by the Ramsar European Regional meeting in Bled, Slovenia 2001. Most recently Basin countries represented by the Ukrainian government (the host country for Wetlands International Black Sea Programme) indicated their support for the developing Initiative during Ramsar COP9, Uganda (see Resolution IX.7).

A Dutch funded project, lead by Wetlands International is facilitating the development of the foundations for the Initiative. The project has supported a regional needs analysis that has consulted each Basin country to identify priority needs and actions. This information was brought together at a regional conference "Stopping the loss of Black Sea Coastal Wetlands: the establishment of a regional initiative", held on 30-31st October 2007 in Odessa, Ukraine. 46 participants representing government ministries, national and international non-government organisations, international Conventions (including the Ramsar Convention) and scientific institutions from Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine discussed the basis for future cooperation in the field of wise use of coastal wetlands along the coast of the Black and Azov Seas. The conference, organized by Wetlands International Black Sea Programme in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine, concluded that:

- The need for a regional wetland initiative as expressed in the Odessa 2000 declaration is still necessary and urgently required.
- That the establishment of a regional wetland initiative under the Ramsar Convention should be undertaken and submitted.

The same meeting also adopted a Declaration (see Annex 1) in which the main component parts of the Initiative are summarized based on consultations leading up to the meeting and stakeholder discussions at the meeting. This consultation process had been continued during 2008. It is planned that by end 2009 the Initiative will begin, marked by the first full management Body meeting.

In accordance to decisions of Odessa conference, BSW will be organized based on the following principles and structures:

Governance: BSW will be governed by a Management Body which will comprise the following representatives: Ministries of Environment from the six Black Sea countries, six national level non-government organisations, one from the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, one from the Black Sea Commission Secretariat, up to four international non-governmental organisations active in the region (e.g.

Wetlands International, BirdLife International, WWF, IUCN). Meetings of the Management Body will be conducted annually. The costs for annual Management Body meetings should be covered by the host country.

Regional coordination and communication: Between meetings of the Management Board an Interim Coordination Unit will be responsible for coordination, administration, communication, monitoring and implementation of BSW plans and preparing annual meetings and reports. The Unit will comprise 2 persons – one representative of the Ministry of Environment and the other from a national NGO of the host country. The Interim Coordination Unit will be hosted by a Black Sea country with responsibility rotating periodically.

National coordination and implementation: National Working Groups will be established in each country for implementation of BSW. They will be responsible for coordination and implementation of initiatives in the country in line with regionally defined goals and targets. They will include representatives of ministries, non-government organisations, scientific and other relevant organizations. Participation will be on a voluntary basis.

SUBSTANTIVE ELEMENTS OF THE INITIATIVE

6. What does the initiative contribute to regional collaboration?

The entire premise of the BlackSeaWet Initiative is built around the fact that it is only through collaboration with a very wide range of organisations that the future of Black Sea coastal wetlands and their biodiversity can be secured. Creation of National Working Groups in each Black Sea country and their involvement in preparation of BlackSeaWet Vision were important steps for the stakeholders' consultation process and initiation of a bottom-up approach to development of the BlackSeaWet regional initiative. The successful international conference in Odessa, Oct 2007, formulated the aim, targets, main objectives, governance and first implementation steps for the Initiative based on National Working Groups in Black Sea countries who were in close contact with key organizations and experts. All stakeholders strongly stressed necessity of raising awareness of local people, NGOs and governments on importance conservation and sustainable use, as well as development of communication tools for exchange of information.

7. How does the initiative make optimal use of Ramsar tools ?

BlackSeaWet initiative is in development and currently don't use Ramsar tools in practice.

8. How does the initiative provide increased visibility for Ramsar ?

Raising public awareness on wetlands conservation and development of communication and collaboration are among the top priorities for the BlackSeaWet Initiative. The targets of the Initiative identified at the Odessa Conference will require a strong commitment to CEPA if they are to be achieved. Integrated approaches to river and coastal zone management are identified as a key target and will require activities to raise awareness at all levels from local to Ministerial on the importance of these approaches, the need for policy development and the types of tools and approaches that will be necessary. A further target is the engagement of local people in planning and decision making; this will require intensive CEPA activities at local levels and the then the communication of the results of these approaches to regional stakeholders to promote learning and replication across the region. It is anticipated that support for Ramsar's CEPA objectives will be strengthened in a number of areas. A website, training courses in different aspects of wetland management, outreach and awareness raising activities targeting different levels of society from local communities to national level policy makers and planners are anticipated. Raising public awareness of wetland conservation issues will be a major area of work, with campaigns highlighting the importance and values of wetlands and the threats they currently face playing a central role. Furthermore ensuring wise use is integrated into coastal development will require a wide range of stakeholders including the public and private sectors be engaged. All these planned directions of activities will strongly increased visibility for Ramsar in Black Sea region.

FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT

9. Who provides political and financial support for the initiative ?

The government institutions provided BlackSeaWet initiative with political support are listed below.

Country	Organisation
Bulgaria	Ministry of Environment and Water of Bulgaria
Georgia	Ministry of Environment Protection & Natural Resources
Romania	Ministry of Environment and Water Management
Turkey	Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Turkey
Ukraine	Ministry of Environmental Protection

Beside this initiative is strongly supported by national and international non-government organisations, international Conventions (including the Ramsar Convention) and scientific institutions from Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine, which are members of the National Working Groups and participants of an the international conference (Odessa, 2007) on establishing of BlackSeaWet : National research institution and universities: Institute of zoology of Bulgarian Academy of Science; Sinop University (Turkey); Centre for Regional Studies (Ukraine); Odessa National University (Ukraine); Kiev Shevchenko university (Ukraine). Protected areas: Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (Romania); Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine). National and Regional NGOs: BSPB/BirdLife Bulgaria; Doga Dernegi (Turkey); The Bugday Association for supporting Ecological Living (Turkey); Romanian Ornithological Society; Environmental association PSOVI (Georgia); NGO Biotica-Moldova; Wetlands International office for Russia; IUCN programme office for the Southern Caucasus; WWF International Danube - Carpathian Programme. International NGOs: Birdlife International; Wetlands

The process of launching the Initiative is being supported by the continuing Dutch funded project that will end early in 2009. During this process contributions will be requested from Basin partners to support core costs related to the Interim Coordination Unit and to find a host country. The costs of funding the actions under the workplan will be sought from other sources. The overall aim will be to secure a long-term Black Sea wetlands programme to start during the first triennium. Furthermore participants in the Initiative will be encouraged to raise additional funds for projects and initiatives to complement this. Wetlands International has already begun this by the project "Stop-over Black Sea: The importance of the Black Sea region in the migratory systems of waterbirds in the African Eurasian Flyway" (2009-2010), supported by BBI MATRA. The total budget of it is €197.695

Beside this there are currently no confirmed sources of financing. During 2009 work-planning will continue and a Host Country will come forward. This country will be asked to support the costs of the rent for the Interim Coordination Unit and (from 2010) annual Management Body meeting costs.

It is anticipated that in 2009 the main costs for BlackSeaWet will centre around the establishment of the Interim Coordination Unit, a first full meeting of the Initiative's Management Body, the establishment of a website and costs incurred in mobilizing additional resources for the implementation of the technical workplan (see section D Financial and Work Plan). An estimate of these costs has been made for 2009 based on an assumption of a start to the Initiative taking place in mid 2009 and a six month period of implementation.

10. Does the initiative request Ramsar core budget financial support ?

The Initiative is planned to become operational in 2009. Ramsar Support is requested to support the core coordination and communication functions of the Regional Initiative whilst the participants will take responsibility for seeking support for the implementation of the technical activities. The provisional budget for BlackSeaWet against workplan for 2009 is presented in section D Financial and Work Plan. In total it is 44.000 Euro. The core coordination and communication expenditures for BSW during 2010-2012 is expected as about 50.000 Euro per year:

	Amount (€)		
	2010	2011	2012
1. Interim Coordination Unit Coordinator	18.000	18.000	18.000
2. Interim Coordination Unit Travel	4.000	4.000	4.000
3. Interim Coordination Unit Rent	9.000	9.000	9.000
4. Management Body meeting	10.000	10.000	10.000
5. CEPA related activities (website, communications)	3.000	3.000	3.000
6. Experts and consultants	6.000	6.000	6.000
Annual total	50.000	50.000	50.000
Requested Ramsar Contribution	50.000	50.000	50.000

Therefore total amount of financial support requested from Ramsar core budget is 194.000 Euro.

At the same time the aim is that through the activities of stakeholders in the projects coordinated by the Interim Coordination Unit funds will be raised such that by the following the Coordination Unit is partly self-funded. Therefore budget estimates for 2010-2012 would be subject to revision once fundraising is underway.

1. Title of the regional initiative

Regional initiative on Black Sea Coastal wetlands - BlackSeaWet

2. Financial planning for the period 2009-2012 (4 years)

Provide a summary table according to the format below:

sources of income (donors)	income confirmed	anticipated income
Ramsar core budget		194.000 Euro *

* for today there is no another anticipated or confirmed sources of income for BSW core activity (coordination, communication etc.). At the same time some priority actions related to coastal wetland biodiversity conservation will be funded in 2009-2010 through 'Wetlands International' project "Stop-over Black Sea: The importance of the Black Sea region in the migratory systems of waterbirds in the African Eurasian Flyway". The total budget for the project is €197.695.

3. Work plan for the year 2009

Provide a simple logical framework table according to the format below:

objectives	activities	results/outputs	indicators
1. To launch BSW through the first implementation steps for it	1.1 Nomination from Ministries and non-government organisations representatives in the BSW Management Body	agreed list of persons, who will represent countries in the BSW Management Body	list of nominated persons
	1.2 Preparation draft ToR for BSW Management Body and draft of first Action Plan	agreed drafts of background documents for BSW	draft of ToR and draft of Action Plan
	1.3 Conducting first meeting of BSW	conducted first meeting of BSW and	acting Management

	Management Body for approval of ToR and Action Plan	approved its background documents	Body, approved ToR and Action Plan
	1.4 Establishing of Interim Coordination Unit and formalizing of National Working Groups	established technical coordination body for BSW and strengthened stakeholders participation in BSW	acting Interim Coordination Unit and National Working Groups involved in further development of BSW
	1.5 Conducting CEPA related activities (website, communications)	disseminated information on BSW and raised public awareness on coastal wetlands importance	creation of website for BSW and printing at least one leaflet on BSW and coastal wetlands conservation
	1.6 Preparation of several project proposals for actions on sustainable use and conservation of coastal wetlands	created background for financial self-sustaining. Initiatives	at least two prepared project proposals

4. Financial plan for the year 2009

Provide a detailed summary of income and expenditure forecast:

activities	forecast/budgeted expenditures (Euro)
1.1 Nomination from Ministries and non-government organisations representatives in the BSW Management Body	2.000
1.2 Preparation draft ToR for BSW Management Body and draft of first Action Plan	6.000
1.3 Conducting first meeting of BSW Management Body for approval of ToR and Action Plan	10.000
1.4 Establishing of Interim Coordination Unit and its operation	15.000
1.5 Conducting CEPA related activities (website, communications)	8.000
1.6 Preparation of several project proposals for actions on sustainable use and conservation of coastal wetlands	3.000
total	44.000

sources of income (donors)	budgeted amount of income
requested from Ramsar core budget	44.000 Euro

total	44.000 Euro
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Annex 1 Resolution of Odessa-2007 conference

Odessa-2007 Resolution on the establishment of a regional initiative to stop the loss of the coastal wetlands of the Black and Azov Seas

During the international conference “Stopping the loss of Black Sea Coastal Wetlands: the establishment of a regional initiative”, held on 30-31st October 2007 in Odessa, Ukraine, 46 participants representing government ministries, national and international non-government organisations, international Conventions and scientific institutions from Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine discussed the basis for future cooperation in the field of wise use of coastal wetlands along the coast of the Black and Azov Seas. The workshop was organized by Wetlands International Black Sea Programme in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine and financed by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Food Quality and the Dutch Embassy in Kiev, Ukraine.

The participants of the workshop:

Recognising that the biological diversity of the Black and Azov Sea represents a natural and cultural heritage of exceptional international interest which should be conserved and sustainably used for present and future generations

Further recognising that the services provided by these wetlands to people are often of great significance at the local, regional and national and international levels providing social and economic benefits that should be taken into account during the planning and implementation of activities by different sectors in and around coastal areas

Noting that the degradation and loss of these ecosystems has been proceeding over many years and seems likely to continue at an increasing rate for years to come as the region develops and pressure on land use increases.

Taking into account:

- the adoption of the Bucharest Convention on ‘The Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution’ in 1992
- the establishment of the Black Sea Environmental Programme in 1993 and its achievements through the implementation of the two action plans that have so far been implemented
- the establishment of the Landscape and Biodiversity Protocol in 2002 and its subsequent ratification in 2007
- the achievements and progress made through the implementation of the Regional UNDP-GEF ‘Black Sea Ecosystems Recovery Project’ (2002-07)
- the progress made in implementing the actions identified under the 1994 IWRB report ‘Conservation of Black Sea Wetlands: a review and preliminary action plan’ and the Wetlands International 2002 report ‘Black Sea Conservation Priorities’
- the success of regional wetland initiatives established under the Ramsar Convention in promoting the wise use of wetlands and the guidance of the Convention under CoP Resolution XIII.30
- the request of the 4th European Regional Meeting on the Ramsar Convention held in Bled, Slovenia in 2001 for a regional wetland initiative for the Black Sea Region and the reference to the development of such an initiative in the report of the meeting (point 39)
- the importance of the coastal wetlands of the Black and Azov Seas for internationally significant populations of migrating waterbirds in relation to the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)
- the Odessa-2000 ‘Declaration on the Wetlands of the Black and Azov Seas’ that arose from the meeting held in September 2000, in which the need for a Ramsar Convention regional initiative to promote activities on the conservation and sustainable use of the coastal wetlands in the Black Sea region, based on inter-regional cooperation was highlighted
- the recent accession to the European Union by Bulgaria and Romania and the implications for policy and implementation that are associated with this in the Black Sea Region

- the European Commission 'Black Sea Synergy' initiative (2007) that is designed to develop cooperation between the Black Sea Region and the EU as a means to help stimulate development and stability and which specifically addresses environment amongst other key focal areas
- the programmes of key international conservation organisations (BirdLife International, IUCN, Wetlands International, WWF) active in the region

Unanimously concluded that:

- The need for a regional wetland initiative as expressed in the Odessa 2000 declaration is still necessary and urgently required.
- That the establishment of a regional wetland initiative under the Ramsar Convention (as described under Ramsar CoP Resolution XIII.30) should be undertaken to ensure submission to the next Ramsar CoP to be held in South Korea in Changwon, 24th October to 4th November 2008

Recommended that:

- the Regional Initiative will be named 'BlackSeaWet' (BSW) and should address the coastal wetlands and biodiversity of the six States whose territories border the Black and Azov Seas (Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine)
- the Initiative should have a Vision and Objectives based on the following:

Vision: In 20 years time the coastal wetlands of the Black Sea and Azov Seas are sustainably used, healthy ecosystems that provide the basis for conservation of wetland dependent biodiversity, support services for people and are equal in area and health to the current time.

Key targets will be to:

- Stop the loss and degradation of wetlands and their biodiversity by 2020
- Ensure wise use principles are integrated into coastal zone developments
- Engage local people in planning and decision-making
- Complete the ecological network around the Black and Azov Sea coasts
- Combine wetland conservation in integrated water resource management and integrated coastal zone management approaches
- Mainstream wetland conservation in sectors whose activities are contributing to degradation

This should be achieved through activities that address the following objectives:

Objective 1: Harmonise and strengthen conservation legislation in the Black Sea Countries and improve its implementation and enforcement.

Objective 2: Ensure that wetland conservation, management and restoration is underpinned by biodiversity, environmental and socio-economic information and knowledge based on standard approaches to monitoring, data processing and storage.

Objective 3: Raise awareness of civil society, government and private sector stakeholders of wetlands values, degradation and wise use approaches

Objective 4: Reach out to key sectors whose activities affect wetlands and develop innovative approaches and best practices to wetland management

Objective 5: Maintain a regional coordination mechanism for governments, civil society and the private sector that will act as a focus for regional wetland conservation, including information management and exchange, research, communication, resource mobilisation and capacity development

Objective 6: Mainstream wetland conservation into frameworks, strategies, plans and implementation of integrated approaches to water resources and coastal zone management, including river basin management

- BSW be organized based on the following principles and structures:

Governance: BSW will be governed by a **Management Body** which will comprise the following representatives: Ministries of Environment from the six Black Sea countries, six national level non-government organisations, one from the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, one from the Black Sea Commission Secretariat, up to four international non-governmental organisations active in the region (e.g. Wetlands International, BirdLife International, WWF, IUCN). Meetings of the Management Body will be conducted annually. The costs for annual Management Body meetings should be covered by the host country.

Regional coordination and communication: Between meetings of the Management Board an **Interim Coordination Unit** will be responsible for coordination, administration, communication, monitoring and implementation of BSW plans and preparing annual meetings and reports. The Unit will comprise 2 persons – one representative of the Ministry of Environment and the other from a national NGO of the host country. The Interim Coordination Unit will be hosted by a Black Sea country with responsibility rotating periodically.

National coordination and implementation: **National Working Groups** will be established in each country for implementation of BSW. They will be responsible for coordination and implementation of initiatives in the country in line with regionally defined goals and targets. They will include representatives of ministries, non-government organisations, scientific and other relevant organizations. Participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Request that:

- The following steps be facilitated by Wetlands International Black Sea Office and supported by the Ministries and national level non-government organisations to ensure that BSW is established and subsequently implemented:

Official endorsement and approval:

- Rationale and technical basis for BSW: finalize a BSW ‘Vision’ and ‘Portfolio of Actions’ for submission to Ministries of Environment for each Black Sea country;
- Government endorsement:
 - o the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine to formally invite other Black Sea ministries to officially endorse BSW;
 - o the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine to support a meeting during which BSW will be formally endorsed ready for submission to the Ramsar Convention (a side-event on the BlackSeaWet Initiative will be included in the agenda of a Ministerial Conference, Kiev in 2008);
- Bucharest Convention support: Through the Black Sea Commission Permanent Secretariat secure recognition of BlackSeaWet as a work programme priority under the Convention and secure a letter of support;
- Cooperation between Ramsar and Bucharest convention: Establish a MoU between Ramsar and the Bucharest Convention to provide a frame and formally identify the mutual interest and political support for a common initiative
- Ramsar Convention recognition: submit all necessary documents to the Ramsar Convention for official recognition of BSW at the next Ramsar COP (South Korea, 2008)

First implementation steps:

- Ministries and non-government organisations will nominate representatives in the BSW Management Body;
- prepare draft ToR for BSW Management Body and draft of first Action Plan
- conduct first meeting of BSW Management Body for approval of ToR and Action Plan
- establish Interim Coordination Unit and formalize National Working Groups
- agree and develop several programme and project proposals for actions on sustainable use and conservation of coastal wetlands