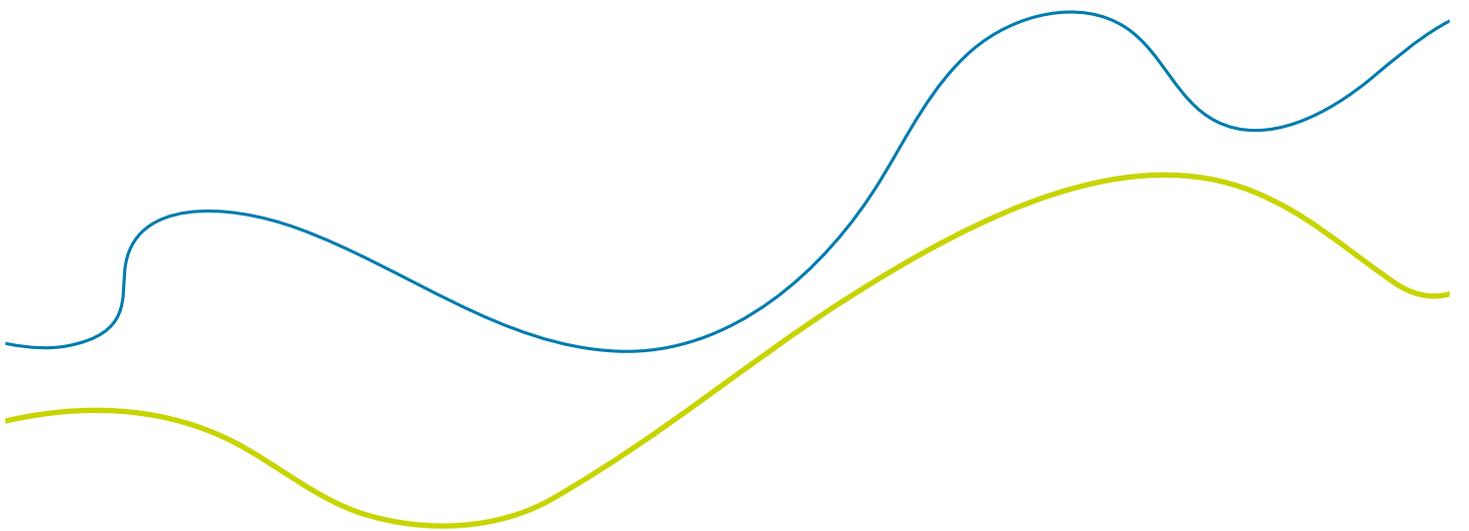


Written feedback to the Sixth consultative discussion with CSOs and ALAs on the implementation of the EU RMIP for Sub-Saharan Africa



Wetlands
INTERNATIONAL

*Written feedback to the Sixth
consultative discussion with CSOs and
ALAs on the implementation of the EU
RMIP for Sub-Saharan Africa*



Wetlands International Africa’s vision is that **“African communities derive their livelihoods sustainably from healthy wetlands in a peaceful social climate by 2030”**. Its strategic objective is to ensure that governments, decentralized institutions, civil society organizations and communities have the knowledge and tools to take necessary actions to maintain the natural resources of wetlands, so that livelihoods, biodiversity and economy can adapt to a changing environment.

We believe that the regional action plans for 2024 are very relevant and align with Wetlands International’s main strategic goals and actions in each sub-Saharan African region.

Key recommendation for the 2024 actions and for the remaining years of the RMIP:

- **Investing in wetlands to invest in human well-being through EU Wetland Partnerships.**

Why investing in wetlands?

Wetlands are ecosystems which occur wherever land and water meet, including rivers, lakes, swamp forest mires (with tropical forest), bogs, marshes, deltas, floodplains, flooded forests, mangroves, saltmarshes, coral reefs, and rice-fields. They represent a high value to people and nature. Indeed, the values of both coastal and inland wetland ecosystems to society and the economy are the highest of any ecosystem type. They are integral resources for people and society, providing food, water, medicine and fuel, among others. Additionally, they are also vital in maintaining ecological processes. They control our water

security, one of the key natural resource challenges that humanity is facing.^{1,2}

In Africa, wetlands perform these socio-economic and ecological functions. They have also shaped African civilizations. Indeed, all of the most significant and largest African kingdoms and empires have been organized around wetlands, providing the natural resources that allowed the development of activities such as agriculture, livestock breeding and fishing.³

Many wetlands in the African hydrological systems are sites of international importance for waterfowl under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Additionally, they are hotspots for biodiversity whose protection is provided for under international agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA).⁴

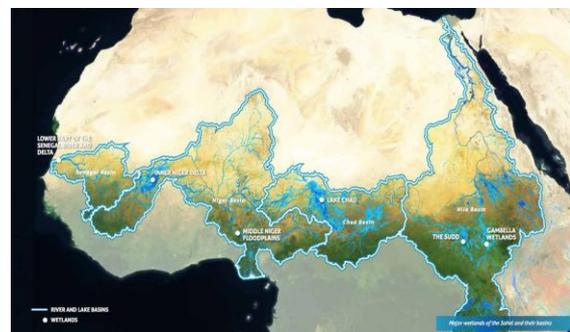


Fig 1. Major wetlands of the Sahel and their basins.

The Sahel sub-region is home to large rivers basins such as the Niger, Senegal and Volta, as well as the most important lake ecosystems, such as Lake Chad, Lake Victoria, Walado Debo and Faguibine. Together with perennial ponds and temporary ecosystems, they constitute

1 Wetlands International (2020) Scaling up the power of wetlands – Wetlands International Strategic Intent, 2020-2030.

2 Wetlands International. Eastern Africa Strategic Intent 2017 – 2027.

3 Wetlands International (2021) Africa Regional Strategy 2020-2030.

4 Wetlands International (2021) Africa Regional Strategy 2020-2030.

asource of life for many communities.⁵ Fig. 1 indicates how the area could look if all of these water systems were to be flooded at the same time.

In Eastern Africa specifically, wetlands are distributed extensively, including the Great Rift Valley and Nile River basin. They provide many functions, products, refuge for fauna and other attributes. They provide a source of livelihood for millions of East Africans.⁶

A call for EU Wetland Partnerships

African wetlands are for most African countries the lever of their development. In fact, wetlands are the primary sources of livelihood production through the services provided by the ecosystems linked to them (agriculture, livestock, fishing, wood production, ecotourism, etc.).

From the point of view of pressure and acting force, among the threats, there are the pressure of irrigation in agriculture, land colonization, urbanization, pollution and hunting. Climate change, poverty marked by the human development index generally below 0.5, and leading to overexploitation of natural resources, high insecurity and social instability, poor governance, strong demographic growth and finally the rural exodus are additional pressures.

We need to act now to ensure that these precious ecosystems can be a tool to achieve climate and biodiversity goals, but also a support to sustainable economies and societies in Africa.

Our vision is that the European Union, its members states and partner countries commit

to cooperate closely through **Wetland Partnerships** to sustainably manage and restore the world's most important wetlands, to reduce their degradation and to contribute to sustainable, inclusive economies and societies. The Partnerships would be tailor-made, demand-driven and aligned with the specific situations, needs and objectives of each of the signatory countries and will help enable their global commitments.

The **main objective of the** Wetland Partnerships will be to protect, restore and/or ensure the sustainable use of wetlands, in a comprehensive and integrated way to reversing their degradation in supported countries and consequently enhance climate and biodiversity protection.

The Wetland Partnerships will be an instrument to deliver on the EU Green Deal priorities in terms of different nexus approaches, related to climate, energy, human security, biodiversity, farms-to-forks, and circular economy as well as EU's development cooperation objectives like poverty alleviation, good governance, human rights.

⁵ Wetlands International (2020) Sahel Regional Strategy 2020-2030.

⁶ Wetlands International. Eastern Africa Strategic Intent 2017 – 2027.

Examples of successful initiatives in Africa

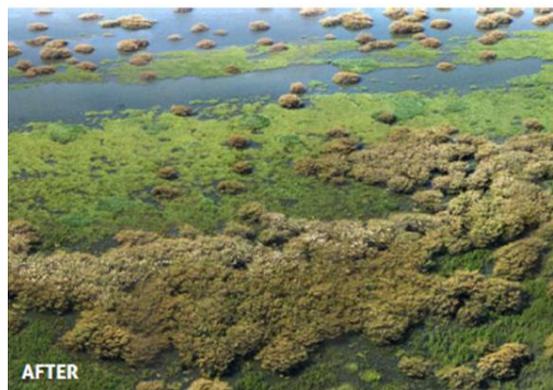
Wetlands International Africa has been contributing to conserve and restore wetlands, their resources and biodiversity for future generations in Africa since 1998. In order to highlight these contributions, these are some examples of successful initiatives:

Safeguarding Sahelian wetlands for food security

This project has enabled local farming communities gain access to technologies and resources, building knowledge on hydro-ecological functioning of landscapes. It has also established an ecological buffer zone along the Lake Ziway to reduce negative impacts from crop production. This enables sustainable food production in Lac Wegnia and the Sourou Basin in Mali, and around Lake Ziway in Ethiopia. It has also helped to overcome issues with access to technologies, knowledge, credit and markets.⁷



Restoration of flood forest in Mali's Inner Niger Delta – called "local banks" due to the value of their products



Restored flood forest in Mali's Inner Niger Delta

Senegal Saloum Delta – Mangroves management

This project has mobilized community groups in the Saloum Delta, in Senegal, to develop management plans for their mangroves. Investment in new livelihood activities has been provided. Additionally, savings groups and access to microfinance have been established in collaboration with business schools.⁸

Partners for Resilience programme – Horn of Africa

This programme has highlighted the major role that healthy ecosystems play in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, improving livelihoods and biodiversity conservation. The resilience of communities was increased by providing solutions for human conflicts and natural disasters. Practical ecosystem management and restoration approaches were implemented, including: restoration of degraded ecosystems, sustainable agricultural practices and improved water and natural resources management.⁹

7 Wetlands International (2022) White paper: We need wetlands: the urgent case for global wetland targets.

8 Wetlands International (2020) Scaling up the power of wetlands – Wetlands International Strategic Intent, 2020-2030.

9 Wetlands International. Eastern Africa Strategic Intent 2017 – 2027.

Recommendations

We expect the Regional Annual Action Plans to focus more on wetlands and freshwater ecosystems:

Investing in wetlands to invest in human well-being through EU Wetland Partnerships.

We call on the European Union, its members states and partner countries to establish **Wetland Partnerships** to sustainably manage and restore the world's most important wetlands, to reduce their degradation and to contribute to sustainable, inclusive economies and societies and deliver on the EU Green Deal priorities.

Watch our call here: <https://f.io/P39upyH>

Key areas to be considered in the formulation of SSA regional initiatives

For Eastern Africa

The EU should incorporate the following recommendations and identified landscapes in the upcoming actions plans:

a) Invest in sustainably managed landscapes that support livelihoods and healthy habitats for biodiversity; additionally, support the blue lifelines for the people that depend on them, and strengthen public and community institutions working towards improved natural resources use.

Landscape: Horn of Africa Rivers (Ewaso-Ng'iro North Landscape, Fafan catchment, larger Juba and Shabelle catchment).

Suggested actions:

- Improving Food Security and Nutrition in the Sahel through the Conservation

of Wetlands through Ecological and Sustainable Agricultural Water Management (SaWeL).

- Engage and empower community members for ecosystem restoration/protection, water spreading weirs sustainable management, train communities to prepare for local DRR plans preparation.

b) Support projects that utilize, restore and conserve ecosystems and biodiversity through an integrated landscape management approach.

Landscape: Upper Nile Rivers and Wetlands (Albertine, Upper Nile and Kyoga Water Management Zones, Kinaite Water Catchment, Bar-Akobo-Sobat Catchment, Blue Nile, Sudd Wetlands, Lake Victoria and associated wetlands).

Suggested actions:

restoring the balance of water in the basin by interventions on Water Allocation Planning, water efficient/climate smart agriculture, and Sustainable Watershed Interventions to reduce erosion.

c) Ensure the wise use of wetlands and water resources to sustain economic growth, improve livelihoods, a healthy environment, and biodiversity and climate resilience. Additionally, turn water crises into opportunities for peacebuilding via knowledge building, mobilising action and dialogues.

Landscape: Rift Valley Lakes and Wetlands (Ziway Shalla Basin, Lake Albertine Rift Ecoregion, Ewaso Nyiro South Landscape - Kajiado, Lake Natron, Omo-Turkana basin).

Suggested action:

Strengthen landscape and community resilience through landscape restoration with a priority on enclosures of communal land and Soil Water Conservation structures on agricultural land (e.g. Fanya Juu); agroecological practices (including water efficient practices) with intensive agriculture around Lake Ziway; buffer zoning of lake embankments; and continuation & strengthening of multistakeholder platforms

d) Support the sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems.

Landscape: Eastern Africa Mangrove ecoregion (Rufiji - Tanzania, Tana/Lamu - Kenya, Mozambique, Madagascar ecoregion), Coastal forest (Mnazi Bay).

e) Support community-based conservation and restoration to improve community resilience, and reduce and use change of peatlands for RCR.

Landscape: Kogera basin, Blue Nile, Lake Victoria basin, Sudd.

Suggested actions: EA peatland programme: Building knowledge about peatlands, capacity building and for policy makers in order to improve governance and to include peatlands in climate mitigation and adaptation plans. The programme will start in Uganda with plans to expand to other neighbouring countries.

Peatland community-based project: Engage and empower community members around peatlands' contribution to climate mitigation and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, but also incorporate communities in climate adaptation and wetland resources protection. The programme will start in

Uganda with plans to expand to other neighbouring countries.

For the Sahel:

The EU should incorporate the following recommendations in the upcoming actions plans:

a) Promote the increased participation of civil society and other stakeholders in the process of reducing violent conflicts related to water sharing and management.

Landscape: Inner Niger Delta (Ji ni lakana).

Suggested action: IKI Niger Basin programme 2022-2026, WISO activities in Sankarani Basin (Mali-Guinee-Ivory Coast), Transboundary Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) work with climate change adaptation focus, in collaboration with Niger Basin Authority (NBA). Improve implementation of transboundary IWRM measures for climate change adaptation and mitigation in the Niger basin; management of groundwater resources, regional dialogues.

b) Support the implementation of IWRM in the Sahel countries to safeguard wetlands.

Landscape: Western Sahel.

Suggested action: Improving Food Security and Nutrition in the Sahel through the Conservation of Wetlands through Ecological and Sustainable Agricultural Water Management (SaWeL).

c) Improve the status of migratory wetland fauna in Sahelian countries.

Landscape: wetlands of the Sahel.

For more information, please have a look at the tables below.

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Eastern Africa

Wetlands International strategic goals and actions in Eastern Africa

Priority landscapes and geographical focus - Goals				
Landscape	- Rift Valley Lakes and Wetlands and Nile River Lakes and Wetlands		Coast and Deltas Western Indian Ocean Coastal Wetlands	Peatlands Nile River Lakes and Wetlands
Current Geographical focus	Horn of Africa Rivers (Ewaso-Nyrir North Landscape, Fafan catchment, larger Juba and Shabelle catchment)	Upper Nile Rivers and Wetlands (Albertine, Upper Nile and Kyoga Water Management Zones, Kijaito Water Catchment, Bar-Akobo-Sobat Catchment, Blue Nile, Sudd Wetlands, Lake Victoria and associated wetlands)	Eastern Africa Mangrove ecoregion (Rufiji - Tanzania, Tana/Lamu - Kenya, Mozambique, Madagascar ecoregion), Coastal forest (Mnazi Bay)	Kagera basin, Blue Nile, Lake Victoria basin, Sudd
	A sustainably managed landscape that supports livelihoods and healthy biodiversity habitats	To utilize, restore and conserve ecosystems and biodiversity through an integrated landscape management approach	Sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems	Community based conservation and restoration to improve community resilience
Goals	Blue Lifelines for the people that depend on them Strengthen public and community institutions working towards improved natural resources use	To ensure wise use of wetlands and water resources to sustain economic growth, improve livelihood, healthy environment, and biodiversity and climate resilience Turn water crises into opportunities for peacebuilding: Knowledge, mobilise action, dialogues		Reduce and use change of peatlands for RCR

	<p>Improving Food Security and Nutrition in the Sahel through the Conservation of Wetlands through Ecological and Sustainable Agricultural Water Management (SaWek, phase 2 programme 2023–2026 in Mali + West-Africa region (SaWel-1 runs till Jun '23).</p> <p>Preventing water related conflicts by bringing together knowledge, capacities and initiatives directed at scaling up preventative and mitigation actions in the context of water stress-induced conflict (Water Peace & Security – phase 2 programme)</p> <p>Engage and empower community members for ecosystem restoration/protection, water spreading weirs sustainable management, train communities to prepare for local DRR plans preparation. (Upscaling Community Resilience through Eco-DRR (Ethiopia) – Phase 2)</p>	<p>Restoring the balance of water in the basin by interventions on Water Allocation Planning, water efficient/climate smart agriculture, and Sustainable Watershed interventions to reduce erosion (ZSBIB programme 2019–2024).</p> <p>Developing management plans and conservation investment plans for transboundary wetlands landscapes of international significance in the Nile Basin: So for Sio-Sireko, Sango-Bay Münzig and Semliki wetlands have been completed (Wetlands across borders programme)</p> <p>Phase 2: to focus on other wetlands</p>	<p>Landscape restoration with a priority on exlosures of communal land and Soil Water Conservation structures on agricultural land (e.g. Fanya Juy); agroecological practices (includes water efficient practices) with intensive agriculture around Lake Ziway; buffer zoning of lake embankments; and continuation & strengthening of multistakeholder platforms (Strengthen landscape and community resilience).</p> <p>a) Accessibility to knowledge and data b) Strengthening/increasing capacity for wetland management and biodiversity conservation c) developing and implementing integrated landscape regeneration and livelihood enhancement strategies d) supporting the development of ecoregional management plans and strategies (Source to Sea – Phase 1 (till 2024))</p>	<p>Contributing towards the conservation of 1 million Ha of mangroves and 2 million people in Africa (Mangrove Capital Africa (2017 – 2027)).</p> <p>Mobilizing political decision makers and support actors towards halting and reversing the loss of mangroves, both globally and with a special focus on the Western Indian Ocean countries (Future programme: EA peatland programme).</p>	<p>Building knowledge about peatlands, enhancing capacity of our people and for policy makers in order to improve governance and to include peatlands in climate mitigation and adaptation plans. Programme will start in Uganda with plans to expand area to other countries (Future programme: EA peatland programme).</p> <p>Engage and empower community members for peatlands contribution to climate mitigation and to NDC targets, but also incorporate community in climate adaptation and wetland resources protection. (Future programme: Peatland community-based project, will start in Uganda with plans to expand area to other countries).</p>
<p>Overall strategic themes</p>	<p>Actions (programmes)</p>				<p>Landscapes planning and management and IWRM - Ensure that landscapes can provide the present and future needs of the stakeholders to improve water use planning and prevent water conflicts</p>
	<p>Sustainable management of wetlands and water resources for water and food security - Healthy ecosystems as the underlying basis for sustainable water resources and stable food security for a more productive, resilient and compatible food supply</p>				<p>Sustainable management of wetlands and water resources for water and food security - Healthy ecosystems as the underlying basis for sustainable water resources and stable food security for a more productive, resilient and compatible food supply</p>
	<p>Conservation of key biodiversity resources - Ensure wetlands and nature are conserved by developing and sharing knowledge on the status and trends of wetlands and their biodiversity</p>				<p>Conservation of key biodiversity resources - Ensure wetlands and nature are conserved by developing and sharing knowledge on the status and trends of wetlands and their biodiversity</p>
<p>Climate change and disaster risk reduction - Ecosystems based approaches to reduce the vulnerability to climate change, reduce physical exposure to hazards and increase people and communities' socio-economic resilience</p>				<p>Climate change and disaster risk reduction - Ecosystems based approaches to reduce the vulnerability to climate change, reduce physical exposure to hazards and increase people and communities' socio-economic resilience</p>	

Sahel ecoregion

Wetlands International strategic goals and actions in the Sahel eco region

Priority landscapes and geographical focus - Goals		Rivers and Lakes Sahel eco region				
Landscape	Upper Niger between Mali and Guinea; Inner Niger Delta Middle Niger, covering Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso; Souyou Basin, between Burkina Faso and Mali; Baobab , Wagogo , Park (Wetlands city), the blue zone of the city of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso					
Geographical focus	Niger River basin (BASS project RAMSAR sites)	Supporting the implementation of IWRM in Sahel countries for the safeguarding of wetlands	Improve biodiversity conservation and restoration in wetlands in Sahel countries	Contribute to strengthening the resilience of vulnerable households to the risks of food insecurity and climate change in the Inner Niger Delta and the Souyou sub-basin.	Strengthen relations with political-social-ecological and security agents, reach, disseminate and expand the lessons into transboundary Souyou sub-basin.	Improve food Security and Nutrition in the Sahel.
Goals	Supporting the implementation of IWRM in Sahel countries for the safeguarding of wetlands	Improve biodiversity conservation and restoration in wetlands in Sahel countries	Contribute to strengthening the resilience of vulnerable households to the risks of food insecurity and climate change in the Inner Niger Delta and the Souyou sub-basin.	Strengthen relations with political-social-ecological and security agents, reach, disseminate and expand the lessons into transboundary Souyou sub-basin.	Improve food Security and Nutrition in the Sahel.	Contribute to ensuring the food security and resilience of communities in the Souyou sub-basin in a changing climate by the end of 2029
Actions (programmes)	Support integrated transboundary water resources management in the Western Sahel	Support the conservation and restoration of biodiversity in the wetlands of the Western Sahel.	Support the resilience of vulnerable populations of wetlands in the Inner Niger Delta and the Souyou sub-basin.	Complementing the existing reward-volta River Basin initiative and World Bank's Cooperation on International Waters, the proposed work will improve shared knowledge and synergize with local and regional stakeholders/actors for effective transboundary decision-making around conflict-sensitive water management. (Water, Peace, Security/ ADA-aided funds)	Improving Food Security and Nutrition in the Sahel through the Conservation of Wetlands through Ecological and Sustainable Agricultural Water Management (SAWEL) (SAWEL) phase 2 programme 2023-2026 in Mali + West-Africa regional (SAWEL-1 runs till Jun '23))	Transboundary IWRM work with CCA focus, in collaboration with Niger Basin Authority (NBA) Improve implementation of transboundary IWRM measures for climate change adaptation and mitigation in the Niger basin. Management of groundwater resources, regional dialogues. (IKI Niger Basin programme 2022-2026, WISO activities in Souyou Basin (Mali-Guinee-Côte d'Ivoire), "CLIMCO")
Overall strategic themes	Peace and security through facilitation of inclusive dialogue around water management and environmental impact studies					
	Biodiversity - limit loss of biodiversity through identification and protection of high ecological value sites and continuation of knowledge mobilization					
	Water quantity, quality and equitable sharing - Ensure countries of the Sahel region can develop long-term IWRM and implement water codes, policies and programmes					
Overcome cooperation, dialogue and governance challenges through joint planning, knowledge management, good governance principles and innovation promotion						
Livelihoods - Resilience building through prevention of water-borne diseases linked to hydro-agricultural infrastructures, citizen participation, climate change adaptation, DRR						

Wetlands International Europe

Inspiring and mobilizing society to safeguard and restore wetlands



Wetlands International Europe is the single network organization in Europe united by the vision of a world where wetlands are treasured and nurtured for their beauty, the life they support and the resources they provide.



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