

RAMSAR SMALL GRANTS FUND

The Ramsar Small Grants Fund was established by Ramsar COP4 in 1990 as a mechanism to assist developing countries and those with economies in transition in implementing the Convention and to enable the conservation and wise use of wetland resources. Since that time, it has provided funding and co-funding, up to 40,000 Swiss francs (about US\$ 34,000) per project, for something like 175 projects totaling about 7 million francs.

Suitable project proposals are those that contribute to the implementation of the Convention's Strategic Plan 2003-2008 for

the conservation and wise use of wetlands; provide emergency assistance for Ramsar sites; or provide 'preparatory assistance' to allow non-Contracting Parties to progress toward accession. Eligibility is restricted to countries on the List of Aid Recipients established by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), effectively meaning developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Projects may be proposed and implemented by any agency, NGO, or individual, but proposals **MUST** be endorsed and monitored by the Administrative Authority (the Ramsar implementing agency) in the Party's government, and seldom is more than one proposal approved from the same Party in any year. Successful proposals receive 80% of the allocated funds upon signature of the contract and the remainder upon submission of an adequate final report, but countries from which adequate final project reports have not been received may be denied further consideration for funding until those outstanding project dossiers have been closed.

Projects for the 2004 cycle will be selected by the Standing Committee's Subgroup on Finance in March 2005. The call for proposals is now being made for the 2005 cycle, with a deadline of 30 June 2005 for application and with a decision by the Standing Committee around the end of the year. The current edition of the "SGF Operational Guidelines", which include complete information and the required forms, are now available on the Ramsar Web site, as well as directly from the Secretariat. The Secretariat's regional teams also offer an advisory service to help with the preparation of suitable proposals,

for which drafts should be submitted to the Senior Regional Advisors by 15 April 2005.

Readers can also find lists of successful project proposals and news reports of successfully completed projects, which may provide useful tips as to the kinds of projects and approaches most often selected for assistance, on the Ramsar website at: http://ramsar.org/key_sgf_index.htm

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