

RAMSAR CENTRE FOR EASTERN AFRICA (RAMCEA)

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2011- 2020

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

- Constitutes a ten-year strategy for the Eastern Africa Region
- Time scale: To run from 2011 – 2020
- Developed through a participatory process involving all the key stakeholders

Intentions of the framework are :

- To the operations RAMCEA in the Eastern Africa region
- To stipulates the vision, mission, core values, overall goal, strategic objectives, actions, milestones, assumptions and risks.

1.2 WHY WETLANDS?

- Wetlands are highly productive ecosystems that provide the world with nearly two thirds of its fish harvest
- Wetlands are faced with many challenges, because of the enormous varieties of wetland types
- Wetlands are the broadest grouping of habitat types according to their basic biological and physical characteristics
- Wetlands are dynamic; changing with seasons and over longer period of time it is frequently difficult to define their boundaries with precision

1.3 IMPORTANCE OF WETLANDS IN THE EAST AFRICAN REGION

Wetlands are extensively distributed in East Africa

They provide many valuable functions

- flood alleviation, ground water recharge, retention and regulation of pollutants and water plant nutrients
- Offer products (e.g., fish, fuel wood, timber, crafts, herbal medicines, rich sediments for agriculture)
- Provide refugia for fish and other fauna
- other attributes (biodiversity, aesthetic beauty for tourists, cultural heritage).

Permanent swamps, dominated by papyrus (*Cyperus papyrus*) are inhabited by unique assemblages of plants and animals

however, the permanent swamps may still be very important in the maintenance of faunal structure and diversity

Their degradation may precipitate declines in the diversity and richness of swamp taxa through loss of habitat, faunal mixing, and loss of refugia.

1.4 THE RAMSAR CONVENTION AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

1.4.1 EVOLUTION OF THE RAMSAR CONVENTION

- ❖ The first of the modern global intergovernmental treaties on the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, and specifically wetlands.
- ❖ It provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.
- ❖ The Convention entered into force in 1975
- ❖ The mission of the Ramsar Convention, as adopted by the Parties in 1999 and refined in 2005, is ***“the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world”***.

1.4.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RAMSAR CONVENTION

❖ Member states commit themselves to implementing the “three pillars” of the Convention:

- i. to designate suitable wetlands for the List of Wetlands of International Importance (“Ramsar List”) and ensure their effective management;
- ii. to work towards the wise use of all their wetlands through national land-use planning, appropriate policies and legislation, management actions, and public education; and
- iii. to cooperate internationally concerning trans-boundary wetlands, shared wetland systems, shared species, and development projects that may affect wetlands.

2.0 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

2.1 WETLAND ISSUES AT GLOBAL LEVEL

Arose from realization of their potential values and therefore eminent threat to their existence.

The main issues if wetlands at the global level:

- i. increasing demands for water services to be allocated to agriculture, industry and human consumption in relation to the role of wetlands and the need for water allocation and management to maintain their ecological functions;
- ii. climate change and its predicted impacts (change and more extreme patterns of drought, storms and flooding; rises in sea temperature and sea level; thawing of permafrost and glaciers; changes in ecosystem distribution and quality; and the implications of these for species' survival;
- iii. increasing globalization of economic development, affecting agricultural, fisheries and other natural resources products;
- iv. the changing role of national governments through increasing privatization of services (including water supplies), devolution of decision-making responsibilities, and greater empowerment of local communities;

The main issues if wetlands at the global level cont...

- v. increasing land-use pressures leading to continued loss and damage to the ecological character of wetlands and their values and functions;
- vi. increasing population pressure and economic challenges placing some local communities in the developing world on the edge of survival;
- vii. the increasing influence in the developing world of development banks and international development agencies and the need to ensure that such agencies are fully engaged in the major issues affecting wetlands; and
- viii. the need to ensure continuing political support and public interest in biodiversity issues and sustainable development ten years after the establishment of Agenda 21 through the Rio 92 process.

2.2 WETLAND MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES IN THE EASTERN AFRICA REGION

Communities have lived with and within wetlands

Witnessed changes on wetlands since the 1950s include:

- ✓ large-scale swamp conversion and population pressure on small wetlands threatened the integrity of many African wetlands;
- ✓ declines in indigenous wetland organisms; and
- ✓ altered ecosystem functions.

Wetland Management Challenges in Eastern Africa sub-region:

- i. Lack of a specific wetland law (wetland issues are scattered in different laws making it difficult to flag them as important resources);
- ii. Limited and unsustainable funding for wetland;
- iii. Knowledge gaps especially on wetland functions and the economic value (negative attitude of the communities towards their conservation);
- iv. Wetland decision making is biased towards development vis- a –vis conservation (conservation being pushed off the agenda depending on the priorities of government);

Wetland Management Challenges in Eastern Africa sub-region cont...

- v. Inadequate human and institutional capacity to address wetland management issues and enforce the law is a great concern in the region;
- vi. Conflicting mandates and policies between different government departments;
- vii. Some wetlands are trans-boundary in nature and most lack harmonized management plans (management challenges): and
- viii. Ownership, user rights and access of wetlands are not clearly defined even in existing laws, made worse by “shifting wetland boundaries.

2.3 OPPORTUNITIES FOR WETLAND MANAGEMENT IN THE REGION

If utilized, the opportunities can provide an environment for significant impacts to sustainable utilization of wetlands

The opportunities range from regional, national and local level status

- I. Commitment and good will from the Ramsar Secretariat:** To strengthen impact, there is need to devolve the responsibilities to different regions. The RAMCEA Strategic Framework will benefit from the good will and experience by the RAMSAR Secretariat and implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Framework.
- II. Experiences from other existing networks:** Experiences can be borrowed from already established networks such as MedWet and The East Asia Network.
- III. Institutional commitment to wetland management in the region:** All the states subscribing to the developing of the RAMCEA strongly support wetland management and conservation.
- IV. Existing regional wetland related initiatives:** Wetland management conservation initiatives the LVBC, Nile Basin Initiative and LVFO help provide a strong impetus from the implementing institutions to mobilize technical support and explore possibilities of leveraging support to interventions.

V. Experiences from previous regional cooperation among the member states: There are other strong regional cooperation mechanisms that the RAMCEA can solicit experiences and support from. These include EAC, IGAD, COMESA and SADC. The institutions can also be used as opportunities for mobilizing resources for implementation of the RAMCEA Strategic Framework.

Examples of initiatives RAMCEA can borrow experiences from:

- Lake Victoria Basin Commission Programs
- Lake Victoria Environment Management Programme Phase II
- Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation (LVWATSAN) Initiatives Project
- The Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO)
- The Kagera Basin Organization
- WWF Environmental Education Programme
- The Lake Victoria Research Initiative (VicRes)
- EAC/AMREF Lake Victoria Partnership (EALP)
- Nile Basin Initiative
- Nile Trans-boundary Environmental Action Project (NTEAP)
- Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (BSAP)
- Regional Wetlands Biodiversity Working Group, (RWBWG)
- The Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP)
- The Anglophone Regional Training Programme
- The International Course on African Wetland Management (ICAWM)

2.4 RESPONSE BY THE EASTERN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

All the countries of the Eastern Africa sub-region have ratified the Ramsar Convention as shown in the table below:

Contracting Party	Date Ratified	Number of Ramsar sites designated
Burundi	2002	1
Djibouti	2002	1
Kenya	1990	5
Rwanda	2005	1
Tanzania	2000	4
Uganda	1988	12

2.5 THE FUTURE OF WETLAND MANAGEMENT IN THE REGION

- Effort has been made to promote the wise use of wetlands
- Wetlands benefit of the people and the environment
- Wise use is in accordance to the requirements of the Ramsar Convention

There is however need for

- Further sensitization of natural resource managers and stakeholders on the need for wetlands management;
- Training on sustainable wetlands management especially in countries where this has not yet been seriously taken up, especially specialized skills like inventorying and wetland assessments;
- Development of National Wetlands Policy, Strategy and Regulations;
- Establishment of National wetlands, CEPA and STRP committees to guide various stakeholders in wetland management;
- Enhance information sharing within the region; and
- Documentation of best practices and set up database for information sharing.

3.0 THE RAMSAR CENTER FOR EASTERN AFRICA (RAMCEA)

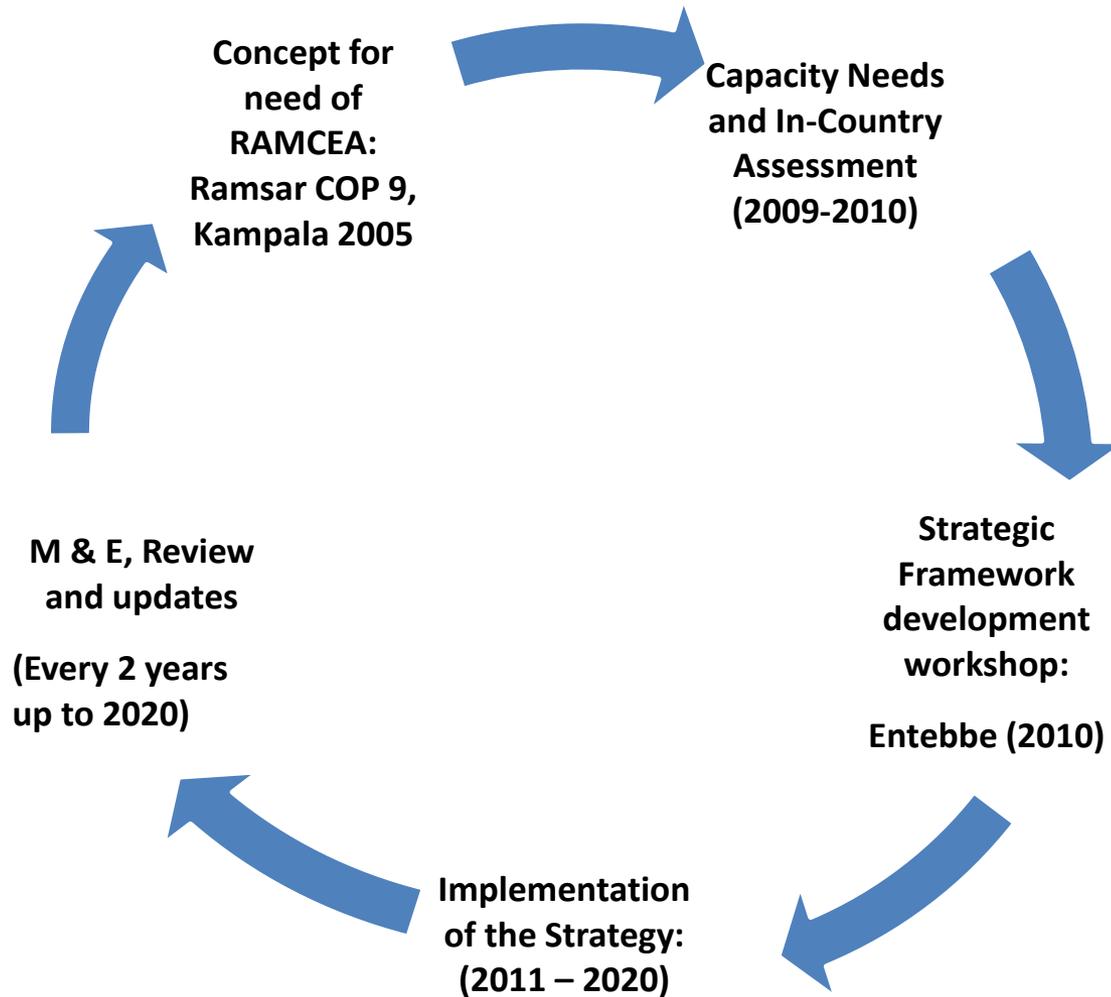
3.1 Genesis and evolution of RAMCEA

Conceived in November 2002 and recognized by the COP9 in Kampala, Uganda in 2005

The interim goal of RAMCEA is to **“support the East African Contracting Parties, non-contracting parties and other stakeholders to improve their capacity to implement the Convention in the respective countries and institutions”**.

The Centre covers five countries under the East African Community namely Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda, but will seek to establish links with other interested such as Djibouti and Ethiopia.

The RAMCEA Strategic Framework constitutes a ten-year strategy for the Eastern Africa Region, running from 2011 – 2020. This does not only apply to planning, but also to resource allocation for wetland conservation and management.



Summary process for the RAMCEA Strategic Framework

3.2 VISION OF RAMCEA

To create **“A regional centre of excellence for cooperation, capacity development and sustainable wetland management”**

This is inspired by the mission of RAMCEA having been set up to **“Strengthen institutions and coordinate wetland management through resource mobilization and experience sharing”**

3.2 CORE VALUES OF RAMCEA

The core values RAMCEA is built on include, but are not limited to:

- Excellence
- Committed
- Transparent and Accountable
- Integrity

3.4 OVERALL GOAL

The overall goal of RAMCEA is having “**well coordinated, strengthened and networked institutions for wise use and conservation of wetlands in the region**”

3.5 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- i. To promote [and ensure] best practices on sustainable wetlands management in the region
- ii. To Enhance the knowledge base and stakeholder awareness on sustainable wetland management in the region
- iii. To determine the status and trends of wetland resources in the region to guide decision making
- iv. To support wetland policies and institutional processes in the region to enhance wetland management
- v. To develop and maintain a regional network of Ramsar sites and other wetlands that provide important ecosystem services

3.6 STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Narrative Summary

Vision:

A regional Centre of excellence for cooperation, capacity development and sustainable wetland management (1)

Alternative Vision

East African wetlands understood, valued and managed with support from governments and local communities alike (2)

Mission:

Strengthen institutions and coordinate wetland management through resource mobilization and experience sharing (3)

Alternative Mission

A regional Centre of excellence serving to strengthen institutions through cooperation, capacity development, sustainable wetland management and experience sharing (4)

[1] Vision as agreed at the November planning meeting

[2] Vision based on initial stakeholder consultations

[3] Mission as agreed at the November planning meeting

[4] Mission based on initial stakeholder consultations

Narrative Summary	Assumptions	Verifiable Indicators	Milestones
<p><i>Well coordinated, strengthened and networked institutions for wise use and conservation of wetlands in the region</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of functional wetland institutions ▪ Number of active regional wetland networks ▪ Number of wetland managers and practitioners trained ▪ Number of information sharing mechanisms in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political will from the partner states • Political stability in the region • Resources will be available • Openness and trust among the partner states • Commitment from Partner States Relevant expertise available • Channels of dissemination conducive • Data and information available from the different countries • Emerging issues, such as climate change, do not significantly affect the planned actions • Beneficiaries of best practices willing to take them up • Ability to adapt to relevant technological changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional Secretariat • Active Wetland Think Tank • RAMCEA Operational Guidelines • Decision Support Tools • Tools for policy mainstreaming and harmonisation • Regional CEPA guide • RAMSAR site management tool with an active link and profiling • Operational Meta-database • Operational Website • Cadre/ critical mass of wetland managers and practitioners

Strategic Objectives	Strategic Actions	Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification
SO #1: To promote [<i>and ensure</i>] best practices on sustainable wetlands management in the region	Document best practices and set up information data base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of best practices documented • Active information database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication • Database reports
	Promote collaboration with relevant centres and other initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of collaborative meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes/ reports
	Advocacy on best practices for wetland management and livelihood improvement e.g. crafts, eco-tourism, regulated hunting and fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of livelihood projects related to wetlands • Number of policies reflecting best use practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project proposals and reports • Advocacy/ meeting/ workshop reports
	Promote collaboration with relevant centres and other initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of collaborative meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes/ reports

Narrative Summary	Strategic Actions	Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification
<i>SO #2: To Enhance the knowledge base and stakeholder awareness on sustainable wetland management in the region</i>	Facilitate a regional platform to coordinate implementation of CEPA activities by partner states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of dialogue sessions among the partner states 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity implementation reports
	Support the development and dissemination of a regional CEPA guide for execution of related actions in partner states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEPA guide developed and disseminated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEPA guide
	Profile wetland education centers and reserves for purposes of replication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of education centres and reserves profiled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profile reports
	Create a data base/ network hubs and portals of Experts, Focal Points and other Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A functional database in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database
	Put in place Monitoring and evaluation mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M & E tool in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M & E tool
	Facilitate and coordinate a regional platform of experts, focal points and other partners on effective information sharing for sustainable wetland management	Active regional platform in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platform minutes and reports

Narrative Summary	Strategic Actions	Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification
<p><i>SO3: To determine the status and trends of wetland resources in the region to guide decision making</i></p>	<p>Prepare and disseminate a research strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research strategy prepared and disseminated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Strategy Document
	<p>Develop tools and framework for wetland resource assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools and framework for wetland assessment disseminated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools and Guidelines document
	<p>Develop a regional wetland information system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional information system in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional wetland information system • Data and information management reports
<p><i>SO #5: To develop and maintain a regional network of Ramsar sites and other wetlands that provide important ecosystem services</i></p>	<p>Twinning of Ramsar and other sites</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of RAMSAR sites linked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports
	<p>Coordinate designation of trans-boundary Ramsar Sites</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of trans-boundary Ramsar sites designated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramsar designation certificate • Ramsar Information Sheets

Strategic Objectives	Strategic Actions	Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification
<i>SO4: To support wetland policies and institutional processes in the region to enhance wetland management</i>	Establish and operationalise the RAMCEA Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAMCEA Secretariat operationalised Guidelines for RAMCEA operations in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functional RAMCEA Secretariat
	Facilitate formation of a think tank of policy analysts in RAMCEA (to work virtually)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A team of experts on topical wetland issues in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion / deliberation reports
	Backstop policy formulation, reviews and harmonization within partner states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of policy reviews and/ or wetland policies/ strategies in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy review reports Wetland policies
	Mainstream wetland conservation issues in relevant legislations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of legislation reflecting wetland conservation issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes and reports
	Coordinate implementation of RAMSAR resolutions and decisions within partner states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of RAMSAR resolutions implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country Reports

3.7 MILESTONES

The following milestones will be monitored during implementation of the Strategic Framework:

- i. RAMCEA Secretariat established and functional by 2011
- ii. RAMCEA Strategic Plan 2011-2015 produced by 2011
- iii. Capacity building programmes and training packages developed and disseminated
- iv. A wetland platform for exchange of information developed
- v. Website and database operational by 2012
- vi. RAMCEA Sustainability Plan Developed by end of 2012

3.8 MONITORING AND EVALUATION, REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

A robust Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy will be developed for the Strategic Framework during the first one year. It will be based on the existing logical framework

Periodic reviews, at least every 2 years, to capture lessons and challenges during implementation

At the end of the period of this Strategic Framework (10 years), a review will be conducted.

Results from the review will be incorporated in the periodic M & E results to update the strategic Framework.

N/B: Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation and review and update will be coordinated by the RAMCEA Secretariat.

3.9 ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS

Implementation will be subject to a number of risks and assumptions. These factors could obstruct successful achievement of the Strategic Framework

3.9.1 Assumptions

- i. Funding – finding and retaining support for the required resources and change in donor priorities;
- ii. Willingness by the partner countries to contribute to the RAMCEA budget;
- iii. Continued political will and commitment;
- iv. Support from NGOs Inadequate availability of information to guide the development and/or implementation of programs across whole region.

Risks

- i. Too elaborate a Secretariat is a real risk that will depend on funding.
- ii. Possible competition from other regional initiatives
- iii. Risk that states will not use RAMCEA to help implement the Ramsar convention
- iv. Management of wetlands may not improve in any way attributable to RAMCEA
- v. Donor fatigue and changed donor priorities
- vi. Language barriers between Anglophone and Francophone Contracting Parties

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

a) Governing Council

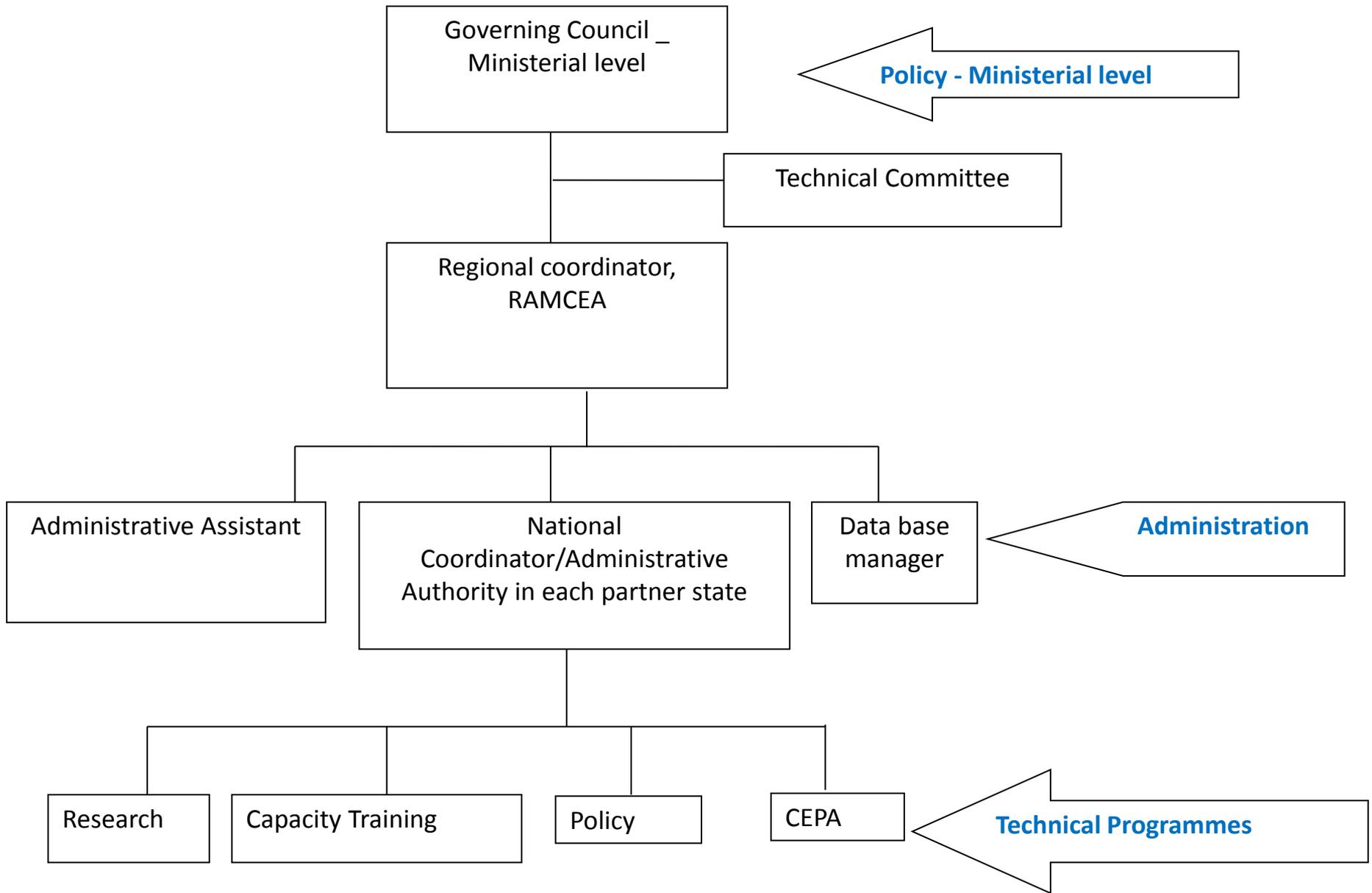
- It is proposed that operations of RAMCEA will be coordinated by the Governing Council as the supreme body

- Governing council will provide Policy guidance and will operate within the framework of the Ramsar Convention.

- The Governing Council is a forum for advice and higher level steering

- The Governing Council will get technical advice from the Technical Coordination Committee.

- The implementation will be at 2 levels national and regional levels.



The proposed organogram

b) Secretariat

- Liaise with and build the capacity of partner states to deal with wetlands issues within their jurisdiction and in the region, specifically those of a trans-boundary nature.
- Coordinate the implementation of the Ramsar Convention activities and address information needs and exchange between partners and with the Ramsar Secretariat.
- Set-up a central database for information storage, use and exchange for the region wetlands and their management.
- Provide a Portal for information exchange and posting by partner states
- Programme the strategy by preparing medium-term (three-year) plans, annual operations plans, etc. in collaboration with other implementation partners.
- Mobilize resources for implementation of the RAMCEA Strategy
- Oversee and monitor implementation of the RAMCEA Strategy
- Reporting to the Ramsar Secretariat

4.2 FINANCING OF THE STRATEGY

The strategy and its implementation require a minimum resource envelope of US\$ 15 million over the period of ten years.

Implementation of the RAMCEA Strategic Framework will explore funding sources.

Such funding may include, but not be limited to the following sources:

- Funding from partner states, through operational budgets provided by government for institutional support activities such as routine management/administration and development budgets,
- Donor funding solicited by individual countries, regional institutions,
- Support from the Ramsar Secretariat, especially in form of seed funding to kick- start RAMCEA.

In the long term however, it is proposed that measures should be put in place to initiate sustainable funding mechanisms such as a regional wetland trust fund.

The End