



The Centre for African Wetlands

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Background

The initial concept of the Centre for African Wetlands (CAW) goes back to the mid-1990s. The idea was to establish a wetland research and training centre in Ghana. Subsequent bilateral discussions with key partners confirmed the need for such a centre within the West African sub-region and highlighted the necessity to reinforce the regional character of the centre and extend its mandate beyond research and training activities. Several regional workshops involving wetland scientists, managers and advocates, from government, academia and the NGO community have all reiterated the mandate of the centre. The main support for the Centre has come from the people and government of the Netherlands, additional support in the form of projects and activities implemented or currently active has come from, the World Bank, ITTO and the UK Darwin Initiative.



Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal,



The Centre works through National Focal Points:
National focal points with the Centre for African Wetlands may be any organised group within a country such as a;
•University Faculty or Department,
•Government Ministry or Department,
•National or Local NGO or
•Local/regional branch of an International NGO.

The key requirements are as follows:
•Demonstrated interest in Wetlands and Wetland issues
•Sufficient credibility within the country to serve as a link (Centre of Excellence)
•Sufficient staff and resources and willingness to commit these to CAW activities
•Presence of one or more dedicated individuals in the institution
•Demonstrated ability to organise national level events
•Functional communication network, such as fax, e-mail, telephone.
•Ability to handle bilingual (French/English communication)
•National Creditability and acceptance

The CAW Mission is as follows:

To study of wetlands through high quality and internationally recognised research leading to a better understanding and quantification of the biophysical, socio-economic and policy interactions of wetland and wetland resources so as to enhance the ecological integrity of wetlands and hence improve the quality of human life,

- To study through monitoring and modelling, the biophysical, socio-economic and policy changes using thematic areas so as to assess both past changes and current trends, and to predict future human impact on wetlands,
- To secure, expand and provide relevant wetland data for further scientific research and to serve as the basis for advice on wetland conservation, management and sustainable utilisation for the benefit of society as a whole,
- To promote the use of the Centre's own research facilities and data and that of the CAW network, so as to provide research training of the highest quality, and to enhance the region's research base for biophysical, socio-economic and policy concerns, and
- To promote through formal and informal agreements, collaborative research and networking and information flow on all wetland issues to wetland stakeholders in the region.

CAW Thematic Areas

A needs assessment carried out in the 12 CAW countries identified 127 research priorities for wetlands these can be summarized as:

Wetland Inventory and Classification

Mapping; Hydrology; Biodiversity; Sustainable Use

Long term Assessment and monitoring

Methodologies; Indicators; Key wetland areas; Ramsar support activities

Pollution/Degradation/Contamination

Climate Change; Invasive and Exotic Species; Watersheds; Disease

Conservation and Utilization

Local Livelihoods; Ecotourism; Traditional Knowledge Systems; Wetland Laws and Policy

The *over-riding issues* are Poverty Alleviation; Gender equity; Capacity building; Partnerships; Conflict Resolution; Trans-boundary Issues; Good Governance



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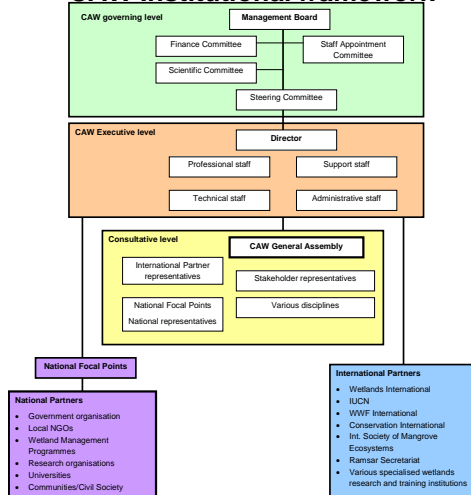
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CAW Institutional framework



Supporting IGBP-LOICZ (Land Ocean Interaction in the Coastal Zone)

Supporting The Wetland Thematic Area in the NEPAD Environment Initiative

