



**Kingdom of Eswatini**  
**Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs**  
**(MTEA).**

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**National Wetlands Policy.**

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## FOREWORD

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The conservation and management of wetlands is very important for a healthy ecosystem. Wetlands are particularly important as they provide a habitat for thousands of species of aquatic and terrestrial plants and animals. They are valuable for flood protection, water provision plus quality improvement, riverine erosion control, natural products, recreation, and aesthetics. For the Kingdom of Eswatini, wetlands provide critical ecosystem services that contributes immensely in the country's economic performance. In an effort to join the global community in the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, the Kingdom of Eswatini on, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2013, completed the accession to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, Iran. 1971). Globally, wetlands are estimated to occupy 6% of the Earth's land surface and in Eswatini, the wetland area coverage is estimated at approximately 2% of the total land area including protected areas (PA). Wetlands are a very valuable natural resource to the people of Eswatini, yet they are increasingly threatened and degraded by human activities including population growth, large-scale agricultural, and development initiatives amongst others. Currently, the overall management of wetland resources is on an ad hoc basis realised through several uncoordinated pieces of legislations and policies spread through several institutions which compounds the mismanagement of such valuable resources.

This National Wetlands Policy seeks to promote the conservation and sustainable/ wise use of wetlands and their products. It provides a framework for actions to improve legal, institutional and organizational arrangements. The Policy presents 6 (*six*) *key pillars* with their related Policy pronouncements and the strategic action plan (2023 – 2033) for action and guidance on the 6 (*six*) under listed thematic areas as presented below:

- a) Wetlands management and wise use.
- b) Education, Training & Capacity Building
- c) Regulatory and Institutional framework.
- d) Partnerships and Cooperation.
- e) Cross Cutting Issues for Wetlands Sustainable Management.
- f) Resource Mobilisation.

The effective implementation of this policy will contribute to the country's efforts in the domestication and implementation of several international agreements including the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Paris Agreement. It will also contribute indirectly to the implementation of other Conventions including the chemicals and waste conventions (the Basel Convention, the Stockholm Convention and the Rotterdam Convention). The Ministry urges other Ministries, Departments, the Civil Society and the Private Sector to take into considerations the policy initiatives outlined in this policy document in the implementation of their activities.

Finally, the Ministry appreciates and on behalf of the Government of Eswatini would like to express its gratitude to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for the provision of financial support for the formulation of this policy and UNDP as the implementing agency and for the provision of technical support throughout the process.

“Our wetlands are a precious resource; let us unite and conserve them for current and future generations”.

**HON. MP. JANE MKHONTA-SIMELANE**

**MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

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## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS.**

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**Artificial or Constructed wetlands-** refer to a series of shallow, densely planted, man-made ponds that help filter water through physical and biological processes. They provide a natural way to treat and remove pollutants from storm water before it enters the creeks, rivers and oceans.

**Biodiversity** - (also referred to as biological diversity) is the variety and variability of life on Earth, the variety within and between all species of plants, animals and micro-organisms and the ecosystems within which they live and interact.

**Conservation** - in relation to wetlands means the wise use and management of wetland resources, achieved through measures such as water saving devices, water demand management, protection from over-utilisation of wetland plants and animals and protection from pollution.

**Ecosystem** - is a dynamic complex of living communities of organisms and their non-living environment interacting as an entity of its own.

**Environmental Impact Assessment** - is a process that assesses the impacts of a planned activity on the physical, social and economic environment – thus providing decision-makers with an indication of the potential consequences of development decisions and actions. When it is part of the planning process, EA enables potentially negative impacts of a development to be mitigated and positive impacts to be maximised.

**Gender** - refers to the socially and culturally constructed roles, privileges, responsibilities, power and influence, social relations, expectations and value of men and women, girls and boys.

**Gender Mainstreaming-** is the process of assessing the implications of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes for women and men in any area and at different levels.

**Industrial use** - refers to the use of wetlands for industrial, manufacturing and mining purposes.

**Integrated Wetland Management** - is a process that promotes the coordinated development and management of wetland resources, in order to maximise the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems.

**Invasive species** -mean organism (plant, animal, fungus, or bacterium) that is usually not native (in that case referred to as an alien invasive species) and has negative effects on the economy, environment or health.

**Polluter pays principle** - The polluter (or developer) should bear the costs of any pollution prevention and control measures which are necessary in order to ensure that the environment is in an acceptable state.

**Precautionary principle** - is a principle that provides that when an activity carries a potentially high environmental risk that cannot be fully assessed (e.g. for lack of time, money or information) action should be taken to prohibit or restrict the activity before the uncertainty is resolved.

**Protection** - (as opposed to conservation) the prevention of harm, usually by passive means, without intervention and active management.

**Ramsar Convention** - is a Convention on Wetlands signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, as an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

**Ramsar site** - is a wetland site designated to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

**Stakeholder** - any individual, group, or institution that has a vested interest in the wetland system and/or who/which potentially will be affected by activities within and have something to gain or lose if conditions change or stay the same.

**Sustainable utilization** - demands that wetlands and wetland resources are developed and managed in such a way as to promote equitable socio - economic development, without jeopardizing the benefits and opportunities of future generations.

**Sustainable Wetland Management** - meeting current wetland use demand for all users without impairing future supply.

**Trans-boundary wetland** - is any wetland that cuts across political (especially country) boundaries.

**Wetland Resources Utilization** - includes use of wetlands for domestic water supply, irrigation, navigation, fisheries, environment, tourism, aquaculture, industrial / manufacturing and forestry.

**Wetlands** - refer to areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salty, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six (6) meters.

**Wetlands Management Plan** - is a written, circulated and approved document which describes a wetland site or area and the problems and opportunities for management of its nature conservation, landform or landscape features, and enabling objectives based on this information to be met through relevant work over a stated period of time.

**Wetlands of significant importance** - refer to those that are considered to be important if they support plant and/or animal species at a critical stage in their life cycles or provides refuge during adverse conditions.

**Wise use of wetlands** - is the maintenance of their ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW.

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### 1.1. Background.

Eswatini's range of wetlands are found along the country's rivers, flood plains, swamps, bogs, vleis, and dams (manmade) and are locally called, '**ematete**', '**emachaphoti**', '**emachibi**', and/or '**tihlambo**'. These serve as valuable ecological/natural infrastructure for supporting many purposes; agriculture, chiefly water provision, maintaining fertile soils, climate regulation services, and much more. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar. Iran. 1971) also referred to as the "Ramsar Convention" wetlands are defined under articles 1.1 and 2.1 as shown below. This definition has been accepted in this policy.

#### **Article 1.1:**

*"For the purpose of this Convention, wetlands are areas of marsh, fen, peat land or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres."*

#### **Article 2.1 provides that wetlands:**

*"may incorporate riparian and coastal zones adjacent to the wetlands, and islands or bodies of marine water deeper than six meters at low tide lying within the wetlands".*

Ecosystems and their biodiversity are considered key for the delivery of all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and they play an irreplaceable role in the promotion of socio-economic development in the country. The Kingdom of Eswatini completed its accession to the Ramsar Convention on 15 June 2013. The Ramsar Convention is an intergovernmental treaty whose mission is the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions as well as international cooperation aimed towards achieving sustainable development. Eswatini currently has 3 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), Hawane Dam & Nature Reserve, Sand River Dam and Van Eck dam all with a total surface area of

1,183 hectares (GoE-ENTC, 2012). The Kingdom is composed of a variety of freshwater wetlands. In the year 2010, wetlands in the country were estimated to cover about 0.1% of the total land area (Masarirambi et al., 2010). The wetlands are often referred to as 'sponges' or 'bog systems' since they absorb rainwater and release it slowly during the dry periods. They are characterised by standing water, hydromorphic soils, and the presence of hydrophytes such as floating plants (Manyatsi et al., 2010). Some of the wetlands are recognised as important conservation areas such as National Parks, National Reserves, Ramsar sites, Important Bird Areas and World Heritage Sites. The country also contains one of the largest remaining intact altitudinal gradients of natural ecosystems in Southern Africa and is the only place where this continuum is concentrated in relatively short distance of about 200 km (GoE-ENTC, 2016). Such an intact gradient holds great significance for biodiversity conservation because it allows ecological processes such as migration and gene flow and provides the opportunity for population shift as an adaptation to climate change. The conservation and the wise use of wetlands therefore are vital aspects for the people of Eswatini.

Apart from being biodiversity hotspots, the wetland resources are equally crucial for income generation and a source of livelihood and well-being to the communities living around them. A number of plant species found in Eswatini wetlands areas are important economic resources especially for women in rural areas where they are used for making food, sleeping mats, bags, baskets, handicraft, and edible fruits. Wetlands are also utilised for building material, livestock grazing and for crop production, amongst the many values and functions (Edje, 2006; Mwendera, 2003). Wetlands store carbon regulate the water supply, store energy and they are crucial for biodiversity.

The Swazi people are uniquely linked to the ecosystems and biodiversity culturally and religiously because a number of their cultural practises and traditional attires items are sourced from biodiversity. For instance, the National Prayer (Incwala), Reed Dance (Umhlanga) as well as the National Hunt (Butimba) and Lusekwane etc are all inextricably tied to the country's biodiversity resources (GoE-EEA, 2016).

Despite their significant role, wetlands in Eswatini, are being degraded at a much faster rate due to; over-utilisation, drainage for cultivation, construction of structures and overgrazing, prone to erosion, agricultural expansion, invasive alien plant species and unsustainable grazing and natural, and resource harvesting and not least numerous anthropogenic threats (GoE-ENTC, 2014; GoE-EEA, 2016). A major portion of the wetland areas located in settlement areas have been converted from their natural state to support alternative land uses including agriculture, urbanisation, industry and recreational pursuits. The major causes of wetland degradation in Eswatini include the lack of a national wetlands policy and legislation, ad-hoc institutional arrangements, lack of understanding and appreciation of the functions and values of wetlands and failure to implement indigenous knowledge, research, planning, and decision making (GoE-EEA, 2016).

As has been evidenced in several projects and programmes geared towards wetlands restoration and protection in the country, ‘the maintenance of wetlands’ natural functions affords communities benefits that otherwise would be very costly to provide through other means in instances where wetlands become degraded or disappear’, (Zwane et al, 2010). There is therefore an urgent need to slow down degradation of wetlands through strategic interventions guided by a sound national wetlands policy.

### **Problem Statement.**

The National Development Plan (NDP), 2023/2024 and 2027/28, strategic goal no.5, identified the need for “well managed natural resources and environmental sustainability, and disaster risk management’, with a major focus on ‘fundamentals of an inclusive, sustainable and effective management of our natural resources and the environment, while also building resilience to climate change, environment degradation and disaster risk reduction through adaptation and mitigation’. The National Development Plan (NDP) further stresses that ‘climate change, environment and disaster risk are an important topic for the Government, and improvements in governance and private sector coordination can be achieved by consolidating activities and finances of the agencies to streamline institutional fragmentation and policy coordination challenges’, and this will be

fundamental 'in increasing productivity, inclusiveness and wellbeing of the population as well as in improving the quality of life of Swazis.

### **Policy Development Process.**

This policy is a product of extensive consultations between government and other stakeholders across sectors in Eswatini, involving four (4) regional (Manzini, Mbabane, Hhohho, and Shiselweni) workshops to address a number of key issues affecting wetlands in the county. Issues that emerged on wetlands loss and degradation include; land use practices and poor coordination between the public sector and the private sector that have resulted in vegetation destruction, nutrient and toxin loading, sedimentation, turbidity, and altered flow regimes. Dredging, intensive aquaculture, logging and acid rain have also affected the natural balance of wetlands. Also noted, continuing loss of wetlands demands a new approach to wetland management. By implication, there is also a lack of a national wetland governance policy to be used to mitigate wetland degradation caused by land use practices that result in vegetation destruction, nutrient and toxin loading, sedimentation, turbidity, and altered flow regimes among other issues. Other challenges include:

- i. The lack of policy tools aimed at safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity so as to conserve the functions and values of wetlands in the country.
- ii. Lack of mechanism to enhance the restoration of degraded wetlands to improve their ecological functions,
- iii. The need for improved demarcate and mapping of all wetlands of significance to promote wetlands protection and wise use,
- iv. Lack of a comprehensive National Wetland Management Plan at the sectoral and community levels,
- v. Poor support and compliance with all wetland related international and regional conventions, protocols and policies that the country is a signatory to and/or has ratified,
- vi. The need to engage in sustainable wetland management principles that promote adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts in line with the Climate Change Policy (2016) and other national and international climate related legal instruments, and
- vii. The need to promote food production technologies that will ensure sustainable wetlands resources for improved food security for improved livelihoods.

Finally, a national wetland policy, strategic action plan validation workshop preceded the final revision and production of the final national Wetlands Policy and Strategy and Action Plan draft documents.

### **Policy Implementation.**

This Policy will be implemented in line with the implementation of other national laws, policies, regulations, in particular the Water Policy (2019), Forest Policy (2002), Climate Change Policy (2016), the Second National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP2, 2016) as well as other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). The MEAs of significance to this Policy are those in the 'biodiversity cluster' (Ramsar, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), CITES and World Heritage Convention), UNCCD and UNFCCC.

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## **2.0 POLICY VISION, GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES.**

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### **2.1 VISION.**

Wetland resources of Eswatini are conserved, restored, managed and utilised sustainably, their functions are valued to sustain biodiversity and to provide ecosystem services for present and future generations.

### **2.2 POLICY AIM:**

The National Wetlands Policy, therefore, seeks to; ensure that the benefits, values and functions of wetlands are clearly articulated and understood. It also aims at providing a management framework for mitigating the diverse challenges affecting wetlands conservation and utilisation in the country as outlined in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2016). The Policy will also assist the country to fulfil its obligations under the Ramsar Convention by assisting the country on providing a framework for addressing wetland threats.

### **2.3 POLICY MISSION.**

A conserved and resilient wetland resource with capacity to sustain socio-economic development.

### **2.4 POLICY GOAL.**

To promote the wise use and sustainable management of wetland resources to enhance sustenance of their ecological and socio-economic functions for the present and future generations of Eswatini.

### **2.5 POLICY OBJECTIVES.**

To achieve the vision, the overall objective of this Policy is:

To preserve, conserve, protect, restore and ensure sustainable utilization of Eswatini's wetland resources.

The following are the specific objectives:

- a) To manage, protect and conserve wetland ecosystems by promoting wise use, restoration and productivity.

- b) To establish an effective and efficient institutional framework for sustainable management of wetland resources.
- c) To strengthen legal framework for coordinated management and wise use of wetland resources which will provide an enabling environment for the participation of all stakeholders.
- d) To promote demand driven research, monitoring, communication, education and public awareness to improve scientific information and knowledge base and to enhance stakeholder appreciation and participation in wetland conservation.
- e) To promote partnership and cooperation at local, national, regional and international levels for the management of transboundary wetlands and migratory species.
- f) To ensure that wetlands management and development is supported by sufficient financial resources.

## 2.6 POLICY GUIDING PRINCIPLES.

The challenges affecting wetlands are impacting negatively on their ability to function optimally thereby impeding their sustainable use and contribution to socio-economic development. To address the challenges, the National Wetlands Policy is guided by the following principles:

- a) **Wise use:** Due to the significant contribution of wetlands to health and well-being in Eswatini, wetlands should be integrated into national economic planning for sustainable development, wealth creation and environmental management.
- b) **Total Economic Value:** The vulnerability of Eswatini's wetlands require that their total economic value (TEV) is recognised, and that their utilisation, management and conservation is efficient and environmentally sound.
- c) **Wetlands are to be conserved** based on three hierarchical priorities: (1) Protect – retain area and functions of existing wetlands; (2) Mitigate –

minimize any further damage to wetlands, and (3) Restore – improve and re-establish wetland area and function on the landscape

- d) **Sustainable Management of wetland resources:** Sustainability of wetland ecosystem is necessary for various important functions such as food storage, water quality continuation and providing habitat for different species of flora and fauna. An inventory of wetlands of any region is a prerequisite for their conservation and management.
- e) **Precautionary principle:** Where information is inadequate for decision making, the precautionary principle will apply. Lack of full scientific information should not prevent implementation of measures to minimize/ manage wetland degradation.
- f) **Collaborative and participatory approach:** An integrated approach to wetland conservation and management should involve stakeholders at all levels including government, local communities, civil society organizations and the private sector to enable knowledge and experience sharing.
- g) **The global and regional dimension:** The global dimension of environmental impacts of actions and policies should be recognised and considered.
- h) **Polluter pays principle:** Persons who pollute wetland environments should meet the cost of cleaning them up, and meet the cost of the pollution to resource users.
- i) **Preventative Principle –** Measures need to be undertaken to avoid degradation of the wetlands ecosystem instead of focusing on restoration after wetlands are degraded.
- j) **Payment for Ecosystem Services –** Investors have a duty to pay for the management of wetlands which provide ecosystem goods and services which they derive.
- k) **Intergenerational equity –** Wetland resources and assets will be managed for the benefit of present and future generations. Development and utilization of the wetlands shall not lead to degradation of the wetland resources.

- l) **Ecosystem approach** – The wetlands will be managed in an integrated manner as a part of a catchment or system.

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## **3.0 POLICY STATEMENTS AND KEY ISSUES.**

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In order to achieve the National Wetlands Policy goals, Government has set itself a number of objectives outlined under the following seven (7) areas; 3.1 Wetlands management and wise use, 3.2 Communication, Education, Training & Capacity Building, 3.3 Regulatory and Institutional frameworks, 3.4 Institutional arrangements, 3.5 Partnerships and Cooperation, 3.6 Cross Cutting Issues for Wetlands Sustainable Management, 3.7 Funding and Resource mobilisation as further discussed below;

### **3.1 Wetlands management and wise use.**

#### **3.1.1 Wetlands Management.**

##### **3.1.1.1 Management approaches that improve the status of wetlands biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity.**

Wetlands are an important social – ecological resource, being fundamentally important to many natural processes, human wellbeing and livelihoods. This policy calls for the integration of wetland services and benefits into conservation and adaptation planning.

##### **Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini will develop and implement approaches and improve policy tools aimed at safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity so as to conserve the functions and values of wetlands in the country.*

##### **Objective:**

To manage, protect and conserve wetland ecosystems as integrated parts of natural resource management at local, regional, national and regionally.

##### **Strategies:**

- a) Wetlands conservation and wise use is mainstreamed through communication, capacity development, education, participation, and

awareness programmes where shared experience is used to develop management responses at all levels of wetlands management.

- b) Assess threats to wetlands and formulate mitigation measures and develop integrated wetland management demonstration sites.
- c) Facilitate the showcasing of models and approaches that demonstrate the 'wise use' (ecologically sustainable use) of wetlands and their various environmental, social, economic, and cultural values at the national and community levels.
- d) Strengthen the legal frameworks that seek to prevent pollution, over-exploitation, degradation and enhance wetlands biodiversity conservation by examining the scope of relevant Eswatini legislation and associated administrative procedures to ensure they operate to allow this Policy to be effectively implemented.
- e) Support and implement management approaches and policy tools such as regulations, standards, and guidelines to improve the management of all wetlands including those on private land.
- f) Strengthen enforcement and compliance on the introduction, importation of, and trade in, seeds, plants and animals that are alien to Eswatini and that have the ability to invade natural wetland habitats and thus compete with or threaten the survival of indigenous species through the existing law-enforcement wetlands management agencies.
- g) Develop and implement measures to detect, prevent, control and manage introduction of Invasive Alien Plant species (IAPs) in wetlands.
- h) Formulate and roll out a plan for controlling expansion of invasive plant and animal species in wetlands.
- i) Promote indigenous knowledge approaches in the conservation and protection of wetlands.
- j) Promote catchment management and correct land use measures in wetlands management.
- k) Develop and implement mechanisms that support the Water Act, National Climate Change Policy, and Aquaculture and Fisheries Act and all related

laws and policies for promotion of wetlands as tourism and recreational centres.

- l) Identify, develop, and implement income generating initiatives that will contribute to the sustainable management of wetlands.

### **3.1.1.2 Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Wetlands.**

#### **Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini will enhance the restoration of degraded wetlands to improve their ecological functions.*

#### **Objective:**

To establish, implement and maintain wetland eco-systems restoration mechanisms.

#### **Strategies:**

- a) Prioritize wetlands restoration based on desired outcomes.
- b) Strategically target restoration measures for wetlands that provide the greatest environmental benefits.
- c) Improve coordination of wetlands restoration efforts.
- d) Design and produce better wetland restorations that stand the test of time and provide lasting functional benefits.
- e) Develop and implement wetlands restoration and rehabilitation programmes/projects.
- f) Formulate and implement wetlands restoration and rehabilitation awareness programme.
- g) Assist wetlands management entities to identify wetlands that are considered priorities for rehabilitation or restoration.
- h) Seek to foster additional business sector support and investment in wetland conservation, rehabilitation, and restoration.

### **3.1.1.3 Wetland Mapping and Demarcation.**

#### **Policy Statement:**

The Government of Eswatini will continue initiatives already ongoing to demarcate and map all wetlands of significance to promote wetlands protection and wise use.

#### **Objective:**

To ensure proper demarcation, inventorying, and mapping of all wetlands in Eswatini.

#### **Strategies:**

- a) Conduct research to establish the characteristics, services, functions and value of wetlands in given defined locations.
- b) Conduct a scientific and field-based inventory and mapping of all wetlands in the country using GIS and remote sensing and classify them as per the RAMSAR guidelines and prioritize them for local, national and global importance.
- c) Once established, ensure the database of wetland resources is updated regularly using new information as it becomes available and based on the ongoing monitoring data gathered as part of tracking and assessing the implementation of this Policy.
- d) Include in the wetlands section of the State of the Environment Report more information regarding the health and status of wetlands in Eswatini.
- e) Establish wetland buffer zones within the wetlands law to restrict activities within wetlands.

### **3.1.1.4 Wetlands Conservation Management Plans.**

#### **Policy Statement:**

The Government of Eswatini will coordinate the development and implementation of a comprehensive National Wetland Management Plans and the development of such plans at the sectoral and community levels.

**Objective:**

To ensure that wetlands of significant importance have their own management plans.

**Strategies:**

- a) Facilitate the review and approval of the Draft Land Policy (1999) to improve wetlands conservation in ENL as this Policy has a huge bearing on land use and management aspects without which, the goal and objectives of this Policy will not be achieved.
- b) Develop and implement conservation plans, programmes, and guidelines for sustainable management of all wetlands including private wetlands.
- c) Expand existing programs and projects such as the SNPAS, LUSLM etc
- d) Develop and implement wetlands conservation action plans at sectoral and local levels.

**3.1.1.5 Managing wetlands of international importance.**

The country has 3 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), Hawane, Sand River and van Eck dams with a total surface area of 1,183 hectares (www.entc.org.sz).

**Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini is committed to support and comply with all wetland related international and regional conventions, protocols and policies that the country is a signatory to and/or has ratified.*

**Objective:**

To protect and conserve wetlands of international importance for the benefit of the country.

**Strategies:**

- a) Comply with the obligations of promoting the conservation of the wetlands under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance,

(1971).

- b) Ensure effective management and conservation of all Ramsar sites.
- c) Develop and update indicators of the individual Ramsar sites.
- d) Develop scientific tool and guideline for assessing the health of Ramsar sites.
- e) Document and disseminate Health report cards of each Ramsar.
- f) Facilitate the protection of identified Ramsar sites and potential Ramsar sites including sites with important ecological value.
- g) Conduct performance monitoring of each Ramsar site to identify changes in ecological character of the sites.
- h) Effectively conserve and manage the Ramsar Site Network.
- i) Enhance the participation of national stakeholders and local communities in the conservation and management of the Ramsar sites.
- j) Ratify all Conventions and agreements relevant to sustainable management of wetlands.
- k) Domesticated all ratified international agreements relevant to wetlands management into relevant national legal instruments, policies, plans and programmes.
- l) Strengthen and support synergy and coordinated national approach in implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) relating to wetlands.

### **3.1.1.6 Managing Trans-boundary wetlands.**

#### **Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini in collaboration and/or jointly with South Africa shall promote cooperation in wetland resources development and management, including exploring twining opportunities with other wetland resource management institutions in the region and internationally.*

#### **Objective.**

To ensure cooperation, effective and efficient management, and wise use of transboundary wetland resources.

#### **Strategies:**

- a) Develop and implement mechanisms for monitoring of compliance and implementation of agreements relevant to transboundary wetlands management including the Revised Protocol on Shared Watercourses in SADC, (2000).
- b) Develop mechanisms for linking up national wetland management institutions, regional bodies and international institutions for effective collaboration and management of wetlands.

### **3.1.1.7 Managing wetlands under a changing climate.**

The National Climate Change Policy (2016) asserts that climate change is already affecting the Kingdom of Eswatini and its key economic sectors. It is increasingly recognised that wetlands are highly vulnerable to anthropogenic climate change and this is likely to have significant consequences for their ecological character.

**Policy Statement:**

The Government of Eswatini will work towards adopting and implementing sustainable wetland management principles that promote adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts in line with the Climate Change Policy (2016) and other national and international climate related legal instruments.

**Objective.**

To enhance wetland contributions towards climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in line with the Climate Change Policy (2006), the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).

**Strategies:**

- a) Adopt the 'no net loss' wetland principle which requires that sites to be lost for development or other reasons have to be offset by wetland conservation elsewhere.
- b) Adopt an avoid – mitigate – compensate framework for maintaining the ecological character of wetlands.
- c) Promote and implement the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) strategy that will also address integrated river basin development and protection of water catchment areas.
- d) Support the ecosystem-based approach recognizing that ecosystem services increase resilience.
- e) Scale-up investments in restoring and maintaining ecological infrastructure, with a focus on the highest value ecological assets in wetlands.
- f) Establish monitoring systems of GHG emissions in wetlands.
- g) Adopt emissions reduction programmes in wetlands in Climate Change financing.
- h) Develop health information systems to facilitate a better understanding of the relationship between climate, wetlands health and disease outbreak.

### **3.1.2 Socio-economic development and wise use of wetlands.**

#### **3.1.2.1 Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) in wetlands.**

The Swaziland's Fourth National Report to the CBD, (2009) affirms that development activities in general tend to impact upon natural resources and the environment in various ways.

#### **Policy Statement:**

*EIA shall be conducted for all projects within wetlands and must include Total Economic Value.*

#### **Objective:**

To promote the inclusion of wetland management in all applicable Environmental Assessments as a basis for informed decision making on developments and investments in wetland ecosystems.

#### **Strategies:**

- a) Promote implementation of initial ESIA's as a basis for informed decision on developments and investments in wetland ecosystems.
- b) Ensure that all ESIA studies on wetlands factor in Total Economic Value (TEV).
- c) Promote continuous reporting, monitoring and evaluation of all projects and programmes affecting wetlands and that have been subjected to ESIA.
- d) Ensure the design and related operational activities of infrastructure minimise impacts on wetlands.

#### **3.1.2.2 Management of Constructed or Artificial Wetlands.**

#### **Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini will promote artificial or man-made wetlands to reduce the over-dependence on natural wetlands and to maximise benefits from these systems.*

**Objective:**

To conserve and protect all artificial or man-made wetlands and to explore possible opportunities available in these systems for the socio-economic benefit of the country.

**Strategies:**

- a) Strengthen the management and conservation of existing man-made wetlands in the country.
- b) Promote, establish, restore and utilise artificial wetlands as sources of water and as a way of alleviating pressure on natural wetlands.
- c) Establish and sustainably manage man-made wetlands for food production, water supply, hydro power production and livelihoods support.
- d) Encourage and support the construction of artificial wetlands where they will have water quality and environmental benefits without compromising naturally occurring permanent or ephemeral wetland areas.

**3.1.2.3 Wetland management for food security.****Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini will promote food production technologies that will ensure sustainable wetlands resources for improved food security.*

**Objective:**

To promote food production technologies that ensure sustainable use of wetland resources for food security.

**Strategies.**

- a) Promote sustainable agricultural practices that ensure the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
- b) Promote efficient techniques and technologies for harvesting and processing fish and other food products within wetlands.

- c) Promote conservation measures that protect fish nurseries and breeding grounds.
- d) Explore wetlands utilisation for food security through research.

#### **3.1.2.4 Wetland management for poverty eradication, improved livelihoods and human welfare.**

##### **Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini will enhance income generation from wetlands to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods and human welfare especially in rural areas.*

##### **Objective:**

To enhance income generation through wetland conservation with the aim of reducing poverty and improve livelihoods and human welfare.

##### **Strategies:**

- a) Support harvesting, processing and selling of acceptable wetlands resources at local and international markets.
- b) Promote growing of plants species that are important economic resources in wetland areas.
- c) Promote biodiversity and cultural measures as a secondary livelihood support to supplement to the income for wetland agriculture.
- d) Review, strengthen and enforce existing laws and policies on the control of plant and animal species movement and trade.
- e) Review and strengthen institutional arrangements mandated with the responsibility to manage plant and animal species movement and trade.
- f) Promote indigenous / traditional knowledge systems for improved wetlands management.
- g) Facilitate information and knowledge exchange forums between scientific and indigenous knowledge technocrats.

### **3.1.2.5 Wetland management for cultural, religious and medicinal purposes.**

#### **Policy Statement:**

*The Government shall protect and conserve wetlands to enable the nation to enjoy the full cultural, religious and medicinal benefits derived from the wetlands of the country.*

#### **Objective:**

To promote cultural, religious and medicinal benefits derived from wetlands.

#### **Strategies:**

- a) Promote recognition and application of traditional indigenous knowledge in wetland management.
- b) Promote the conservation of wetlands of religious and cultural significance.
- c) Promote the growing of plant species in wetlands that are of cultural, religious and medicinal importance.
- d) Recognize and explore permitting cultural, traditional and religious practices for use of wetland resources subject to existing guidelines, policies, laws and legislation.

### **3.1.2.6 Wetlands for Tourism and Recreational Use.**

#### **Policy Statement:**

*The Government shall protect and conserve wetlands as recreation and tourism attractions.*

#### **Objective:**

To promote recreation and tourism activities in wetlands.

#### **Strategies:**

- a) Promote and preserve wetland resources that are of importance to recreation and tourism activities.
- b) Promote eco-tourism activities in wetland areas.
- c) Map out, assess and report on the performance and status of the

implementation of wetlands eco-tourism projects and programmes in the country starting with those implemented by the MTEA, ENTC, EEA, and ESWADE among others.

- d) Enhance current eco-tourism initiatives and ensure their sustainability through institutional, technical, management, regulatory and financial support.

#### **3.1.2.7 Wetlands for water supply and sanitation.**

##### **Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini will enhance WASH services taking all necessary measures to protect wetlands from degradation and contamination.*

##### **Objectives:**

To promote wetland resources as sources of water supply, sanitation and hygiene.

##### **Strategies:**

- a) Review existing WASH related laws, policies, regulations and strategies.
- b) Develop and implement water quality guidelines.
- c) Put in place the necessary institutional framework for identification, designation, management and supervision of wetlands serving as a source of water supply.
- d) Develop and implement mechanisms for protection of water sources in wetlands such as implementing measures that promote the ponding of water to protect the wetlands.
- e) Encourage the integration of WASH issues in wetlands conservation and management.

#### **3.1.2.8 Wetlands for wastewater treatment.**

##### **Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini will take all necessary measures to facilitate appropriate waste discharge management and to avoid improper disposal of waste.*

##### **Objectives:**

To address current waste management challenges and will explore opportunities for utilising wetlands for wastewater treatment without compromising the other socio-economic benefits of that wetland or any nearby wetland.

**Strategies:**

- a) Review existing laws and develop and implement guidelines to provide for regulation of discharge of effluent into wetlands.
- b) Review existing international standards in the management of waste in wetlands.
- c) Adapt and implement relevant standards in the management of waste to Eswatini context.
- d) Put in place the necessary institutional framework for supervising the treatment of wastes and discharge into wetlands.
- e) Develop and implement standard operating procedures for extraction, processing, transporting and management of waste relating to wetland resources.
- f) Promote waste disposal, management and recycling within the context of wetland management.

**3.1.2.9 Coordinated and Collaborative Management of Wetlands.**

The coordination role rests with the Eswatini National Trust Commission (ENTC) with support from the Eswatini Environment Authority (EEA).

**Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini will promote cooperation and collaboration in the management of wetlands in the country.*

**Objective:**

To strengthen the inter-agency coordination for wetlands management through the development and implementation of an integrated wetlands management system.

**Strategies:**

- a) Encourage and support stakeholders to work in partnership.
- b) Develop management responses using shared experience at local and national levels.
- c) Develop and implement collaborative arrangements with local communities.
- d) Promote basin-wide collaboration on wetlands management.
- e) Promote the generation of alternative sources of income by wetland users whose use is otherwise detrimental to the wetland resources.
- f) Develop and implement incentives on collaborative wetlands conservation and management.
- g) Promote and encourage sustainable wetland resource harvesting practices.

**3.1.2.10 Development of Incentives and Appropriate Technology for Wetlands Management.****Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini shall develop and implement Incentives and Appropriate Technology with appropriate penalties for the conservation of wetlands.*

**Objectives:**

- a) To encourage wetland conservation and protection through giving incentives to the wetland users, communities and agencies who sustainably use and wisely utilize wetland resources.
- b) To promote the development of green technologies for utilisation and value addition of wetland resources.

**Strategies:**

- a) Promote and support Payment of Ecosystem Services (PES).
- b) Promote wetland resource harvesting technology to support the existing traditional knowledge and practices.
- c) Encourage the development of green technologies for utilisation and value-addition of wetland resources.
- d) Develop and implement guidelines and incentives on green technologies for

wetland resources.

- e) Establish linkages with institutions in the region and internationally on green technologies for wetland resources.

### **3.1.2.11 Stakeholder participation.**

#### **Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini will promote and support stakeholder participation in the management of wetlands.*

#### **Objective:**

To facilitate stakeholder participation for effective management of wetlands and to promote equitable sharing of benefits accrued from wetlands.

#### **Strategies:**

- a) Establish mechanisms to identify and involve stakeholders in planning and management of wetlands.
- b) The management of wetlands and wetland resources shall provide for broad community involvement at all levels and shall be based on continuous education and awareness-building concerning the benefits of wise wetland management.
- c) Provide fora for open discussion around wetland management between agencies and stakeholders, particularly local communities, to identify the issues, needs and problems of the community.
- d) Support the capacity building of government technocrats, traditional leader units, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations and NGOs to develop skills for monitoring or management of wetlands.
- e) Clearly identify and make known for individual private landholders their rights, responsibilities and opportunities with respect to current and future management of their wetlands.

## **3.2 Communication, Education, Training & Capacity Building.**

3.2.1 The Policy recognises that wetland values and functions are not yet fully understood nor are they fully enjoyed, research is needed to investigate specifically wetland functioning, benefits, wise use and the conservation measures needed for each identified wetland in the Eswatini.

### **Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini will promote research inform policy making, planning and decision making in wetlands management.*

### **Objective.**

To promote science based policy and decision making in wetland conservation.

### **Strategies:**

- a) Develop research concepts and promote research programmes that facilitate conservation, sustainable use, restoration and adaptive management of wetlands.
- b) Conduct research on new uses of wetlands and explore wetland species that are sustainable and generate income for long-term protection and management.
- c) Facilitate knowledge enhancement system, and grants/awards for researchers and champions of wetlands management.
- d) Avail research results pertaining to wetland functioning and wetland resources to all institutions and stakeholders who share the responsibility of wetland management.
- e) Conduct research studies on each of the wetlands of significance in the country prioritising Ramsar sites and protection worthy sites.
- f) Create awareness regarding the Total Economic Value (TEV) of healthy wetland systems and how best to achieve wise wetland management shall be enhanced through environmental education programmes.
- g) Conduct research on ecotourism opportunities and income generation initiative types suitable for each wetland identified.

- h) Document indigenous knowledge, belief systems, skills, innovation, and practices of wetlands and use these to augment scientific research, planning and wetland conservation, monitoring and management.
- i) Develop the wetlands database that will be managed by the lead agency and avail it to all stakeholders.
- j) Conduct research on impacts of land tenure on the Wetlands Policy and related policies' implementation.
- k) Enhance collaboration and coordination between local and international research institutions in wetlands management.

### **3.2.2 Communication and Public Awareness.**

#### **Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini will promote public education and awareness raising about wetland resources management.*

#### **Objective:**

To raise community appreciation of wetlands as natural assets and generate support for their gaining attention in integrated natural resource management.

#### **Strategies:**

- a) Promote information dissemination on wetlands management through use of booklets, resource books, audio-visuals, journals brochures, TV and radio programmes, poster and newspaper articles on wetlands conservation and management.
- b) Promote use of social media to disseminate information on wetlands conservation and management.
- c) Establish regional wetlands resource and information centres.
- d) Establish wetland parks.
- e) Use key celebrations and events (World Wetlands Day, World Environment Day, World Water Week, Biodiversity Month etc) to raise awareness of the environmental, social, economic and cultural importance of wetlands to be commemorated in each and every Umphakatsi or else Inkhundla.

### 3.2.3 Training and Capacity Development.

#### **Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini will promote capacity in wetland resources management.*

#### **Objective:**

To strengthen human and institutional capacity of the Eswatini National Trust Commission (ENTC) for the conservation, protection, wise use and management of wetland resources.

#### **Strategies:**

- a) Develop wetlands training programmes for professionals in wetlands management.
- b) Train trainers of professionals in wetlands management.
- c) Develop a comprehensive manual for wetlands management for the Eswatini National Trust Commission (ENTC).
- d) Train communities including the youth, Community Development Committees, Faith Based Organisations and Health Motivators, Agriculture Extension Workers, on the importance and benefits of wetlands and as well as their role in wetlands management.
- e) Educate Chiefs, Tindvuna, Bandlancane, Bucopho, MPs on wetlands conservation and management.
- f) Establish wetland education centres across the four regions of the country.
- g) Facilitate the incorporation of wetlands conservation and wise use of wetlands in the curricula of schools and higher learning institutions to include consideration of the importance of wetlands, their environmental, social, economic and cultural values, and their improved management and management.
- h) Establish collaboration and coordination with national and international and intergovernmental institution for synergy in Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) implementation.

### **3.3 Regulatory and Institutional frameworks.**

#### **3.3.1 Legal and Regulatory Framework.**

##### **Policy Statement:**

*The Government will strengthen and where needed, develop appropriate regulatory framework to bolster wetland resources management in Eswatini.*

##### **Objective:**

To strengthen the legal and regulatory framework for wetlands management and use in Eswatini.

##### **Strategies:**

- a) Revise and update the policy, legal and regulatory framework for wetland management to incorporate new changes in the sector, as well as in protocols and agreements signed and ratified by Eswatini.
- b) Pursue the necessary mechanisms and actions to ensure wetlands policy, legal and regulatory framework including sector strategies, protocols and ratified agreements are being operated to fully support this Policy.
- c) Facilitate initiatives geared to ensuring that wetlands are featured in national policy strategies, plans and programmes / projects.
- d) Formulate the Wetlands Bill / Act that harmonizes wetlands related strategies, policies and legal frameworks of sectoral agencies.
- e) Formulate regulations to enforce the proposed Wetland Act.
- f) Establish a permit system for wetland resources use.
- g) Develop a system for imposition of penalties for degradation of wetland resources.
- h) Regularly review and disseminate natural laws and have them translated in Siswati.
- i) Support the formulation of wetland by-laws for local traditional leaders.
- j) Actively engage Chiefs, Bandlancane and local communities in the development of the laws and programmes on wetlands.

### 3.3.2 Institutional Arrangement.

#### **Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini will strengthen institutional arrangements through promoting coordination and collaboration to manage and regulate wetland resources in Eswatini.*

#### **Objective:**

To strengthen institutional arrangements for wetland management and use in Eswatini.

#### **Strategies:**

- a) Institutions shall be structured so as to devolve decision-making regarding wetland use to the lowest appropriate administrative level, (e.g., River Basin Authorities, Irrigation Districts, Water User Associations and Community Water User Schemes) accompanied by the necessary human and financial resources for training and effective implementation in line with the Water Act (2003).
- b) Formulate a multi-stakeholder National Wetland Management Committee with ENTC providing secretariat support and EEA providing technical support, with UNESWA serving as lead experts for purposes of advising on wetland issues and for the implementation of the policy.
- c) Strengthen and capacitate the Wetlands Management Unit within ENTC entrusted the responsibility to ensure coordination, conservation and protection of wetlands in Eswatini.
- d) Establish a Regional Wetland Management fora to be responsible for wetlands management at regional levels.
- e) Empower traditional leaders take full responsibility on wetlands management.
- f) Facilitate, support and encourage the participation of currently not so active stakeholders in wetlands management such as the academia / research institutions, municipalities / town boards, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Ministry of Education, National Curriculum centre, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Land Management Board, Media, Faith Based Organisations and Traditional healers.

### **3.4 Partnerships and Cooperation.**

#### **Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini will promote and strengthen cooperation and partnerships to focus and maximize conservation efforts for sustainable wetlands management.*

#### **Objective:**

To promote partnership and cooperation at national, regional and international levels for the management of transboundary wetlands and migratory species.

#### **Strategies**

- a) Enhance conservation of Ramsar sites and other protection-worthy wetlands through the national and community cooperation.
- b) Strengthen conservation of Ramsar sites and protection-worthy wetlands through the regional and international cooperation.
- c) Develop collaborating arrangements with all-natural resources management institutions and agencies, municipalities, chiefs, NGOs and faith-based organizations etc.
- d) Establish a coordination network between local stakeholders and sector stakeholders.
- e) Create an online interactive portal to exchange knowledge and raise wetlands related issues and concerns.
- f) Intensify communication and cooperation between the institutions responsible for the conservation and management of the wetlands and its biodiversity.
- g) Ensure coordination and cooperation between the National Focal Points of all Conventions related to the nature conservation.
- h) Put in place mechanisms to ensure the findings of wetland-related studies are made available in a timely and appropriate form to government agencies/Departments, catchment and regional planning boards and committees, as well as local government, private landholders, the private sector, and the wider stakeholders.

### **3.5 Cross Cutting Issues for Wetlands Sustainable Management.**

#### **3.5.1 Mainstreaming Gender, youth and people with special needs in Wetland Resources management.**

**Policy Statement:**

The Government of Eswatini will endeavour to achieve gender balance in the development and management of wetland resources.

**Objective:**

To ensure active involvement and participation of women, men, boys, girls and people with special needs in wetland resources conservation, protection and management.

**Strategies:**

- a) Develop and implement guidelines to ensure that gender equity in utilisation of wetland resources is prioritized.
- b) Establish and strengthen gender focal points within relevant institutions responsible for wetlands management.
- c) Actively involve women, youth and people with special needs in participatory wetland planning, management, decision making and implementation processes.
- d) Enforce the one-third gender mainstreaming rule in wetland management structures.
- e) Ensure equity in benefits, define roles and responsibilities for women, youths, and people with special needs in wetlands management.

#### **3.5.2 Public Health and Wetlands management.**

**Policy Statement:**

The Government of Eswatini will promote public programmes to strengthen public health among wetland communities.

**Objective:**

To maintain and strengthen existing programmes on public health among wetland communities.

**Strategies:**

- a) Actively involve Community Health Motivators in wetlands management and train them on wetlands-health interlinkages.
- b) Promote and mainstream disease prevention and control in wetland management programmes and projects implemented by wetland management institutions.
- c) Enhance good hygiene behaviors through wetlands conservation.
- d) Capacitate communities and all wetlands' stakeholders to prevent and or control pollution causing activities.
- e) Promote bio-control mechanisms to mitigate the impacts of vectors and viruses especially among wetland communities.

**3.5.3 Wetlands in disaster risk reduction.****Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini will promote wetlands conservation to minimise Disaster Risk related risks in the country.*

**Objective:**

To implement measures necessary for the protection of wetlands and their catchment areas to enhance the resilience of wetland ecosystems to natural and anthropogenic hazards and shocks.

**Strategies:**

- a) Incorporate wetlands protection and management in existing disaster risk reduction, climate action and environmental conservation laws and policies.
- b) Embed wetland wise-use within ecosystem-based DRR/M.
- c) Strengthen the existing DRR/M institutions to enhance wetlands protection and management.
- d) Promote linkage between development planning and land use, wetland degradation and disaster risk patterns taking into account, the importance of promoting cooperation at the local, regional and global levels.

### **3.6 Funding and Resources Mobilisation for wetlands conservation.**

#### **3.6.1 Resource mobilisation for wetland resources.**

##### **Policy Statement:**

*The Government of Eswatini will regulate and promote sustainable investments for wetlands conservation.*

##### **Objective:**

To regulate investments and promote sustainable management of wetlands so that they are maintained for the foreseeable future.

##### **Strategies:**

- a) Encourage investors to uphold the principle of corporate social responsibility.
- b) Incorporate wetlands management activities within the Environment Fund.
- c) Conduct Fundraising initiatives for wetlands management.
- d) Facilitate Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) through a payment/licensing system for wetland resources use.
- e) Promote sustainable eco-tourism initiatives to enhance livelihoods.
- f) Strengthen existing/traditional resource partnerships through establishing an enabling environment that supports these mechanisms.
- g) Develop mechanisms that will allow wetlands programs and activities required for the management of Ramsar sites to benefit from government fund on an ongoing basis until these are self-sustaining.
- h) Develop proposals to solicit funding support from the international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of the Ramsar sites and other protection-worthy wetlands.
- i) Support propositions by NGOs for leveraging external fund towards the conservation and wise use of the wetlands of significance.
- j) Promote Private sector investment in wetlands ecotourism and wetlands-based enterprises in the Ramsar sites and in other wetlands.
- k) Enhance involvement of the public and private sectors in wetlands management and conservation.

### **3.7 Monitoring and Information Mechanisms.**

#### **Policy Statement:**

*The government of Eswatini will provide a comprehensive wetlands monitoring and Evaluation framework that will apply to all wetlands, to promote efficient wetlands management.*

#### **Objective:**

To implement measures for developing a recognized monitoring system for all wetlands in the country, in order to provide adequate, sufficient and reliable information sharing, to inform national decisions affecting wetlands.

#### **Strategies:**

- a) Ensure that wetland conservation is based on sound scientific principles.
- b) Conduct a full inventory of all wetlands in Eswatini, to determine their location, type, status, values and threats. The information acquired must be made available to wetlands management bodies, and local authorities in a form that is user friendly.
- c) Promote standardized national monitoring protocols and data management.
- d) Facilitate a set-up of a central wetlands information centre.
- e) Facilitate the documentation of Indigenous knowledge on wetlands in order to be incorporated in decision making.

## **4.0 GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY.**

### **4.1 Policy Implementation Responsibilities and Institutional Framework.**

The overall implementation of the National Wetlands Policy shall be the task of the The Eswatini National Trust Commission (ENTC), the Administrative National Focal Point (NFP) on wetland conservation to engage all national stakeholders (Government ministries, Government parastatals, Non-governmental organisations, Academic institutions, Community-based organisations, Private sector businesses, etc.) in strengthening the conservation and management of national wetlands which are targeted by the Ramsar Convention. These stakeholders shall undertake responsibilities and tasks towards executing this National Wetlands Policy; Executive and Legislative Arms of Government, Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs (MTEA), Eswatini Environment Authority (EEA), Forestry Department, Attorney General, Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy (MNRE) through DWA, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Deputy Prime Minister's Office through the National Disaster Management Agency, Other Stakeholders (Private Sector, Wetland-users, Academic and Research Institutions, Civil Society Organisations, Traditional leaders and communities, Non-Government Organisations, International Development Agencies / Financing Agencies). Notably, the Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development (MTAD) in collaboration with ESWADE and the ENTC shall ensure the integration of community based natural resources management (CBNRM) into the Chiefdom Development Plans (CDPs) (ESWADE, 2017). The CDPs should include a component on the identification and protection of natural resources such as wetlands assets and further promote their management and restoration through fencing and indigenous tree planting where needed and appropriate. The Eswatini Environment Authority (EEA), also regulates and protects through the "Environment Fund". The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) shall support the wise use of wetlands in this regard. Wetlands falling within forests is with the Forestry Unit, and at the catchment and basin level wetland areas are managed by traditional leaders (Chiefs) and the

institutions recently established by the Water Act e.g. National Water Authority, River Basin Authorities and Irrigation Districts most of which have limited legal mandate to enforce compliance. The Land Management Board has responsibility for resettlement issues and generally undertakes decision-making process, including decisions attached to land transfers and permissions.

The involvement of all stakeholders with their expected responsibilities is paramount in the implementation of the Wetlands Policy. It is the responsibility of the ENTC to enable full participation and ownership by every stakeholder. Action is indispensable in the implementation of the Wetlands Policy. Accordingly, any involvement of or support by key stakeholders in executing the Wetlands Policy will require active participation, commitment, and empowerment throughout the entire process. The implementation plan as outlined in the Wetlands Strategy and Action Plan shall contain a comprehensive inventory on the total wetland resources of the country and present a comprehensive programme of action in which the maximum value can be obtained from this resource for the benefit of the people of Eswatini.

#### **4.2 Monitoring and Evaluation.**

The Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs (MTEA) will be the overall custodian of this National Wetlands Policy and will oversee its implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). MTEA through the Eswatini National Trust Commission (ENTC) shall develop a comprehensive M&E Framework in order to effectively monitor and evaluate the implementation of this National Wetland Policy. To ensure that the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts are achieved, the framework will emphasize on regular monitoring of progress and on periodic in-depth evaluations which will be with the involvement of relevant stakeholders. The M&E Framework of this policy will be reviewed periodically to take on board emerging issues related to wetlands management.

The M&E framework will introduce mechanisms for policy monitoring and evaluation (alignment with Government Wide Monitoring and Evaluation Systems), with the aims to promote, facilitate and institutionalize actual result impact evaluations, to improve

the Wetland National Policy performance. As part of Policy Monitoring and Evaluation, the framework will also conduct appraisals of the policy content, its implementation and impact to determine the policy's value and effectiveness.

Performance information on programs designed to implement this policy should determine whether to continue with the policy as an option or establish ways in which it can be modified. In order to effectively evaluate this policy, 'the prerequisites are to have data on the policy design, implementation and results from policy monitoring (monitoring data). This shall include; input resources committed to policy implementation); process (requirements for good public policy); output (actual implementation of good practices; intermediate outcomes (improvements to regulations due to implementation of good practices) and outcomes (achievements of strategic objectives). By implication, this policy therefore recognizes the importance of the developing an M&E framework for the National Wetland Policy in order to track the effectiveness of the policy in addressing the policy's problem statement.

The M&E framework shall ensure that data and information on every step on the implementation is provided in order to ensure ease in identifying policy performance deficit and make adjustments and improvements were there is a need. This will ensure that there are sunset clauses which will clearly indicate by when the policy needs to be revised, to ensure that it remains on course in achieving its intended outcomes and impacts. The framework will also incorporate a gender responsive, participatory and inclusiveness approach in decision-making, at all levels, through providing for extensive stakeholder engagements throughout all policy programmes and initiatives. This will ensure that there is evidence of actual performance impact of the policy, and so to ensure improvement of the nature of the Eswatini wetlands management.

#### **4.3 Policy Review.**

The Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs (MTEA) through the ENTC shall develop a comprehensive M&E Framework in order to effectively monitor and evaluate the implementation of this Strategic Action Plan. To ensure that the

expected outputs, outcomes and impacts are achieved in line with the National M&E System, the framework will emphasize on regular monitoring of progress and periodic in-depth evaluation with the involvement of relevant stakeholders. The M&E Framework of this Strategic Action Plan will be reviewed periodically to take on board emerging issues related to wetlands management. The policy should be reviewed preferably on a three yearly basis subject to monitoring results.

#### **4.4 Legislation or legal frameworks to fully implement the policy.**

The implementation of this Strategic Action Plan will be supported by the various pieces of legislation as outlined in the policy to include the National Constitution, the Eswatini National Trust Commission Act of 1972, Water Act, SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses, and International Treaties such as Ramsar Convention. All relevant legislation and associated regulations will be developed or reviewed where necessary to facilitate unhindered and trouble-free implementation of this Wetlands Strategic Action Plan.

#### **4.5 Resource Mobilization.**

Government will commit to mobilise resources (finance, human, etc.) to fund the implementation of this Strategic Action Plan through the national budget. Partnerships will be forged with development partners, regional, and international finance institutions and donor agencies to raise indicated capital funds to finance the implementation of this Strategic Action Plan.