

# Partnering for Sustainable Business

Most companies have a multi-faceted interaction with wetlands: On the one hand they rely on wetlands and the services they provide, above all water security. On the other hand they have an impact on wetlands, e.g. through water use or land-use change.

Wetlands regulate water quantity and quality, thus creating the conditions for economic activity and for life in general. Besides water, wetlands also provide food, fibre and other vital commodities and support-functions to society.

The changing governance landscape means that companies are being held more accountable by their stakeholders and consequently must be more transparent in their use of natural resources and impacts on the environment. This is where Wetlands International, as a partner, can help.



## Hawizeh Marshes in Southern Iraq

Water returned to the marshes in Spring 2013, after many years of drought. In a few months this turned an almost desert-like environment into a lush wetland teeming with life and local communities benefitting from returning ecosystem services. Oil developments in this Ramsar site will need to take this dynamic into consideration and actively contribute to the maintenance and restoration of the ecosystem and its service-provisioning. Wetlands International is working with Shell Iraq Petroleum Development to make this happen.

## Chilika Lake in East India

Chilika Lake is home to 400,000 people and provides an estimated US \$62.8 million in benefits per annum, related to hydrological features, biodiversity and related tourism. Understanding and maintaining all these values and consolidating that understanding in an integrated management plan has been a major contribution of Wetlands International working with partners for the survival of this Ramsar site.



**Wetlands**  
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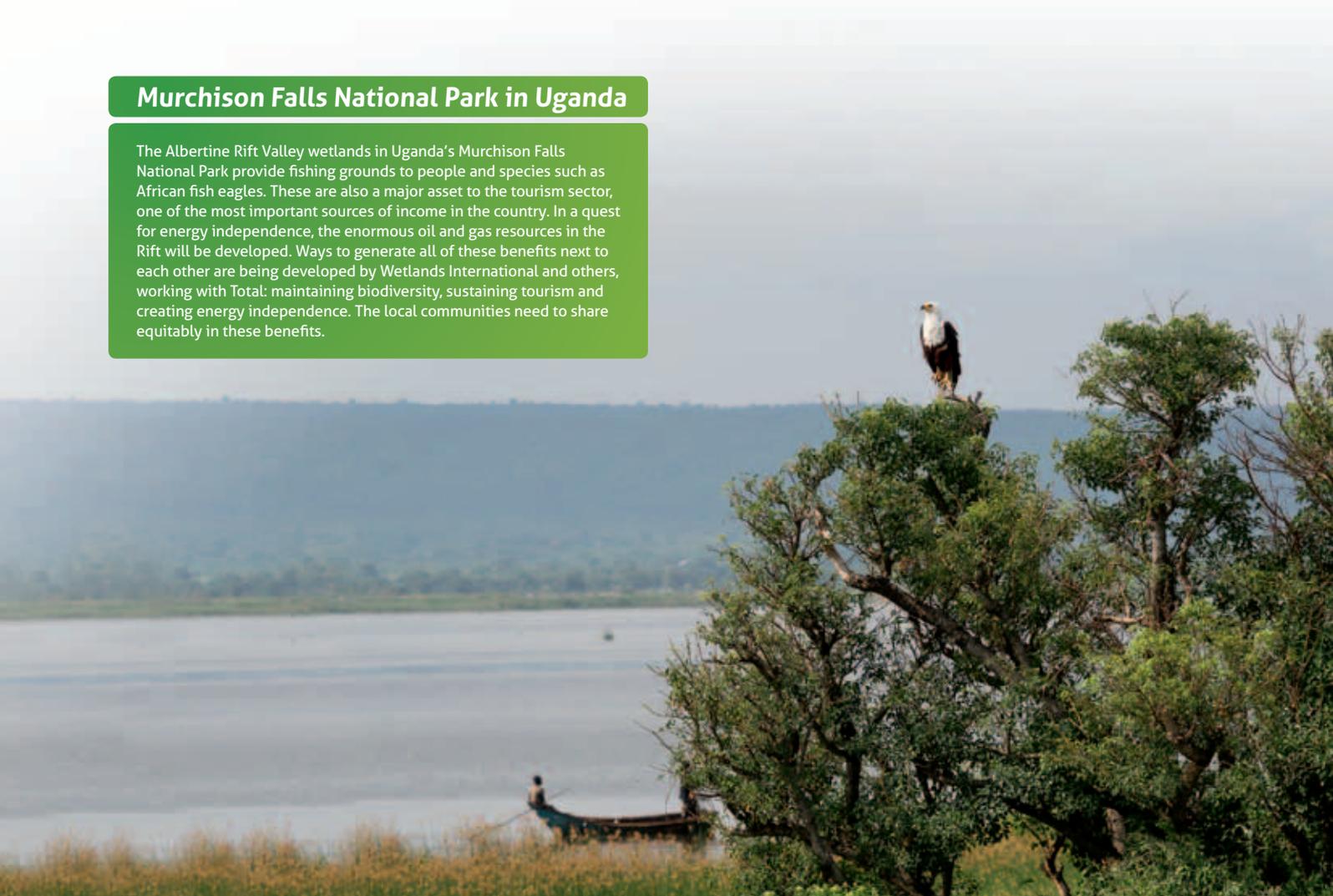
# Why are wetlands important for companies?

We bring together science, field experience, stakeholder relations, and an understanding of regulatory processes to create practical and efficient solutions to address wetland risks.

Potential risks to your company	How wise use of wetlands can help
<b>Physical risks</b> Losses from storm damage or freshwater shortages, limited access to resources	Well-managed wetlands function as green infrastructure, buffering against erosion and flooding and securing water availability throughout the year
<b>Regulatory risks</b> Increasing government intervention and regulations around issues of water security, biodiversity and climate change	Wetlands and their values are well-recognised by governments and in regulations. Secure your license to operate by seizing the water security, biodiversity and climate change benefits that wetlands can provide
<b>Reputational risks</b> Failure to sustain wetlands as a precious lifeline for local people can result in negative publicity	Wetlands are valued by society at large. Pro-actively demonstrated wise use provides positive interaction and visible proof of being a good corporate citizen at an early stage
<b>Financial risks</b> These various risks may translate into increased costs and/or reduced revenues	Mitigate risks through wise use and increase cost efficiency by seeking the integration of natural processes into hybrid engineering solutions, rather than using grey infrastructure (dykes and dams) only

## Murchison Falls National Park in Uganda

The Albertine Rift Valley wetlands in Uganda's Murchison Falls National Park provide fishing grounds to people and species such as African fish eagles. These are also a major asset to the tourism sector, one of the most important sources of income in the country. In a quest for energy independence, the enormous oil and gas resources in the Rift will be developed. Ways to generate all of these benefits next to each other are being developed by Wetlands International and others, working with Total: maintaining biodiversity, sustaining tourism and creating energy independence. The local communities need to share equitably in these benefits.



# Why companies engage with Wetlands International

## *Risk reduction and Corporate Social Responsibility*

Companies collaborate with us to improve their environmental and/or social performance in relation to wetlands. We help them mitigate the risks and seize the opportunities that wetlands offer in a rapidly changing world.

## *Innovation and cost savings*

As critical friends we bring new perspectives to the table that trigger innovations and reveal alternative, often cost-effective pathways.

## *Level playing field*

With our broad government membership we are well placed to help create a level playing field.

## *Stakeholder engagement*

We are able to mobilise the local private sector, governments and communities in the 100+ countries where we have offices and/or projects. We organise multi-stakeholder platforms and introduce micro-credit mechanisms for effective engagement.

## *Expertise*

To ensure that our work is based on the latest and most solid science we work closely with knowledge institutes. This enables us to be an honest broker.

**We safeguard and restore wetlands for people and nature**

## Guiding principles for company engagement

Recognising the investment needed and inherent risks, engagements with a company partner should meet the following conditions:

1. Provide significant strategic opportunities to contribute to our goals and targets;
2. Are feasible within the available or readily buildable capacity to deliver;
3. Do not jeopardise other policies.

Any engagement should trigger at least one of the points below:

- Support and add value to our organisational capacities and/or our past and existing programmatic efforts (thematically and/or geographically);
- Provide opportunities for complementarity (with relation to skills, locations, networks) with the rest of our work;
- Leverage major impact (because this corporate or industry group strongly impacts wetlands).

In principle, the cost of the engagement and related activities should be borne by the company partner.

### Wetlands International's Flyway programme

People and birds share tidal mudflats around the world. Wetlands International is stimulating the wise use of such sites, which makes possible the provisioning of benefits to people and the survival of migratory birds that use these flats as stepping stones in their flyway journeys. Birds are attractive ambassadors to communicate positive examples of wise use to a wider public.

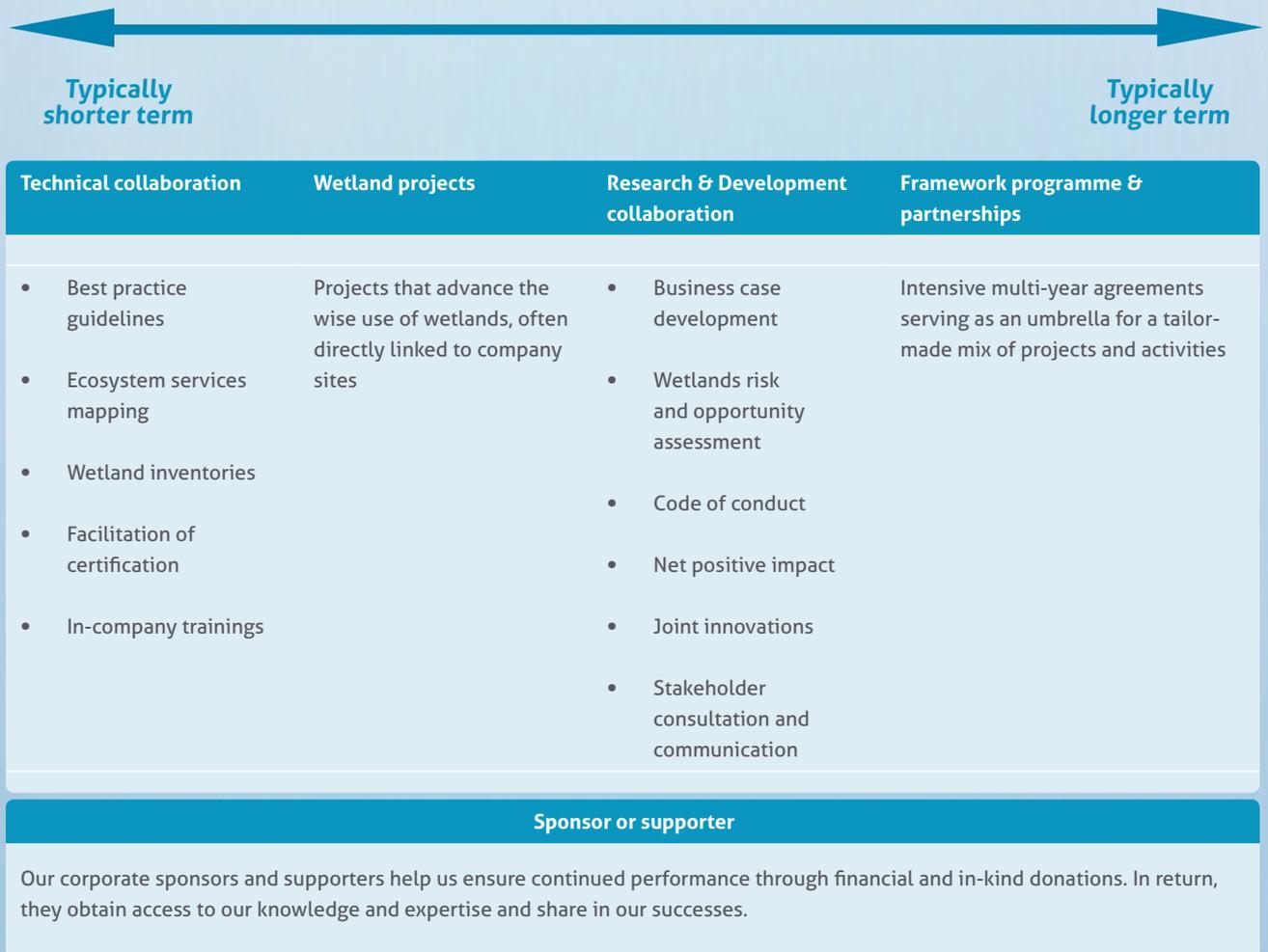


# How Wetlands International works with companies

Wetlands International engages with companies in multiple ways to achieve mutual goals, ranging from one-off technical advice to full-fledged multi-year framework collaborations - from one-on-one collaboration to working in sector platforms. We also welcome companies that see the overall value of what

we do and help us advance our mission as a corporate sponsor or supporter.

The graphic below illustrates a menu of potential options that can be tailor-made and combined to fit a particular context.



Water transport lines for the oil and gas industry running through a peat swamp forest in Brunei.



In the Niger Delta of Nigeria mangrove-lined creeks provide water, fish, fuel and building materials, making them a natural location for settlements.

## What are wetlands?

Wetlands occur where land meets water. Wetlands can be water bodies but also include land. They can be freshwater, brackish or saline, inland or coastal, seasonal or permanent, natural or man-made. They include rivers, lakes, marshes, rice paddies, floodplains, peat bogs, glaciers, coral reefs as well as flooded forests. Wetlands exist in every country and in every climatic zone from the polar regions to the tropics. Wetlands are connected systems rather than sites - and are best considered from a broader river basin perspective. Wetlands are among the world's most important environmental assets, providing a cornerstone for human survival and development.



Transport is an important service provided by wetlands in Vietnam.

# Join our mission

Companies impact wetlands, but they also have the power to trigger positive change on a scale that Wetlands International can never reach alone. We encourage you to engage with us to see how we can work together to ensure the success of your business and the wise use of our shared wetlands.

For more information, please contact:

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## About Wetlands International

Wetlands International works globally, regionally and nationally to achieve the conservation and wise use of wetlands, to benefit biodiversity and human well-being. We are the only global NGO dedicated fully to the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

We are an independent, not-for-profit, global organisation supported by government and NGO membership from all continents of the world, a specialist expert network and volunteers.

We strongly believe that people's spiritual, physical, cultural and economic well-being depends on safeguarding and restoring wetlands worldwide.

In all our work, we maintain the following core values:

- Our work is globally relevant
- Our work is based on sound science
- We work through partnerships and with a wide range of sectors
- We respect traditional values and knowledge
- We respect human rights and aim to contribute to gender equality
- We work in a transparent and accountable way

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