

*Ramsar  
Handbooks*  
4<sup>th</sup> edition

# Handbook 5 Partnerships

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## About the Convention on Wetlands

The Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) is an intergovernmental treaty whose mission 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”. As of October 2010, 160 nations have joined the Convention as Contracting Parties, and more than 1900 wetlands around the world, covering over 186 million hectares, have been designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.

## What are wetlands?

As defined by the Convention, wetlands include a wide variety of habitats such as marshes, peatlands, floodplains, rivers and lakes, and coastal areas such as saltmarshes, mangroves, and seagrass beds, but also coral reefs and other marine areas no deeper than six metres at low tide, as well as human-made wetlands such as waste-water treatment ponds and reservoirs.

## About this series of handbooks

This series has been prepared by the Secretariat of the Convention following the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP7, COP8, COP9 and COP10) held, respectively, in San José, Costa Rica, in May 1999, Valencia, Spain, in November 2002, Kampala, Uganda, in November 2005, and Changwon, Republic of Korea, October-November 2008. The guidelines on various matters adopted by the Parties at those and earlier COPs have been prepared as a series of handbooks to assist those with an interest in, or directly involved with, implementation of the Convention at the international, regional, national, subnational or local levels. Each handbook brings together, subject by subject, the various relevant guidances adopted by Parties, supplemented by additional material from COP information papers, case studies and other relevant publications so as to illustrate key aspects of the guidelines. The handbooks are available in the three working languages of the Convention (English, French, and Spanish).

The table on the inside back cover lists the full scope of the subjects covered by this handbook series at present. Additional handbooks will be prepared to include any further guidance adopted by future meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties. The Ramsar Convention promotes an integrated package of actions to ensure the conservation and wise use of wetlands. In recognition of these integrated approaches, the reader will find that within each handbook there are numerous cross-references to others in the series.

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# Handbook 5 Partnerships

**Key  
partnerships for  
implementation  
of the Ramsar  
Convention**



This 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the Ramsar Handbooks replaces the series published in 2007. It includes relevant guidance adopted by several meetings of the Conference of the Parties, in particular COP7 (1999), COP8 (2002), COP9 (2005), and COP10 (2008), as well as selected background documents presented at these COPs.

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## **Acknowledgements**

The Ramsar Convention's two initial private sector collaborators, the Danone Group and the Star Alliance, must be acknowledged for their pioneering efforts which have significantly helped to prepare the ground for the more general thinking now reflected in this Handbook. The Danone Group has generously supported the Secretariat's communications activities over a ten year period, including funding of materials for World Wetlands Day and the Evian Special Prize associated with the triennial Ramsar Conservation Award, and the Star Alliance, through its "Biosphere Connections" partnership, has been very helpful in supporting travel for sponsored delegates to Ramsar meetings.

The Ramsar Secretariat and the Standing Committee together during 2008 generated the guidance on partnerships with the business sector ultimately adopted at the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties and presented here.

The many international organizations, multilateral environmental agreements, technical bodies, NGOs and others with whom the Ramsar Convention has structured collaboration arrangements must also be thanked for their continued role in making the Convention a more broadly-based field of endeavour than it would otherwise be. Their contributions, and the experience built up over the years of working in this way, have been a key foundation for other aspects of guidance reflected in this Handbook. The Convention's unique "International Organization Partners" system is of course a key part of this, and the IOPs are always appreciated for their long history of support.

All Resolutions of the Ramsar COPs are available from the Convention's Web site at [www.ramsar.org/resolutions](http://www.ramsar.org/resolutions). Background documents referred to in these handbooks are available at [www.ramsar.org/cop7-docs](http://www.ramsar.org/cop7-docs), [www.ramsar.org/cop8-docs](http://www.ramsar.org/cop8-docs), [www.ramsar.org/cop9-docs](http://www.ramsar.org/cop9-docs), and [www.ramsar.org/cop10-docs](http://www.ramsar.org/cop10-docs).

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## Getting the most out of this Handbook

### The Handbooks in general

The purpose of the Ramsar Handbooks is to organize guidance material from relevant decisions adopted by the Contracting Parties over the years, according to subject themes. This helps practitioners to implement the internationally-agreed best practice in a way that is convenient to handle and more naturally matches their own everyday working environment.

The intended readership includes national and local staff of the government departments, ministries and agencies that act as Administrative Authorities for the Ramsar Convention in each country. Equally important users in many cases are managers of individual wetland areas, as some aspects of the guidance relate specifically to site management.

The Ramsar guidance has been adopted by member governments as a whole, and increasingly it addresses itself to the crucial roles of other sectors beyond the “environment” or “water” sectors. It is thus very important that these Handbooks should be used by **all** whose actions may benefit from or impact upon the wise use of wetlands.

A vital first step in each country therefore is to ensure adequate **dissemination** of these Handbooks to all who need or can benefit from them. Copies are freely available in PDF format from the Ramsar Secretariat in three languages on CD-ROM or by download from the Convention website ([www.ramsar.org](http://www.ramsar.org)).

Other early steps would be, in each particular context, to **clarify** lines of responsibility and **actively check** how to align the terms used and approaches described with the reader’s own jurisdiction, operating circumstances, and organizational structures.

Much of the text can be used in a **proactive sense**, as a basis for framing policies, plans and activities, sometimes by simply importing relevant sections into national and local materials. It can also be used in a **reactive sense** as a source of help and ideas for responding to problems and opportunities, navigating subjects by the need of the user.

Cross-references, original sources, and further reading are liberally cited: the Handbooks will often not be the “last word”, but they provide a helpful “route-map” to further sources of information and support.

**Strategic direction** in the Ramsar Convention is provided by the Strategic Plan, the latest version of which was adopted by COP10 in 2008 for the period 2009-2015. All thematic implementation frameworks, including the Handbooks, sit within the context of the goals and strategies of this Plan and the priorities it highlights for the period covered.

In this fourth edition of the Handbooks, additions to and omissions from the text of the original guidelines, required by the results of COP8, COP9 and COP10, are shown in square brackets [...].

The Handbook series is updated after each meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and feedback on user experience is always appreciated in helping to refine each new edition.

## **This Handbook (Partnerships)**

Strategy 1.10 of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015, on the “Private sector”, embodies the commitment to

“Promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands”, and includes the following KRAs, to be achieved by 2015:

“1.10.i - Significant progress in the private sector applying the concepts and approaches for conservation and wise use of wetlands contained in Ramsar guidance . . . and other relevant guidelines in their activities and investments affecting wetlands.

1.10.ii - Increased private sector engagement in the wise use of wetlands and in the management of Ramsar sites.

1.10.iii - Awareness-raising material made available to the public to enable wetland-friendly consumer choices.”

Strategy 3.1, on “Synergies and partnerships with MEAs and IGOs”, is to “Work as partners with international and regional multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other intergovernmental agencies”. Associated with this are five individual KRAs to be achieved by 2015 on issues including joint work plans, initiation of new partnership approaches, and harmonization of information management and reporting systems.

Strategy 4.4, on “Working with IOPs and others”, is to “Maximize the benefits of working with the Convention’s International Organization Partners (IOPs) and others”. Associated with this are three KRAs covering Memoranda of Understanding; support for the Convention’s scientific, technical and policy work; and helping to mobilize partnerships for high priority issues for the Convention.

In each section of this Handbook, relevant implementation commitments made by Contracting Parties in Conference of the Party Resolutions are provided, in addition to the guidances adopted by Parties as annexes to COP Resolutions.

The text in this Handbook is drawn mainly from Resolution X.12 and its Annex, along with extracts from some other Resolutions, and the substance of it thus reflects decisions adopted by the Conference of the Contracting Parties. The Handbook also includes other information relevant to the issue. The views expressed in this additional information do not necessarily reflect the views of the Ramsar Secretariat or the Contracting Parties, and it includes material which has not been endorsed by the Conference of the Parties.

## Foreword

For a significant part of its early history, the Ramsar Convention existed in a way that would be unthinkable for any such organization nowadays, having neither a Secretariat nor a formal core budget. Although both of these have long since become proper features of the operation of the Convention, the Secretariat remains disproportionately small, and this together with the initial mode of operation perhaps explain the very strong ethos of “partnership working” which characterizes much of Ramsar’s approach to the conduct of its business. The Convention has a strong record of achieving the leverage and “multiplier effects” that are necessary to tackle its daunting mission through a range of inventive collaborations and partnerships.

Some of these concern the increasing range of joint working arrangements with other international organizations and initiatives, including other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) concerned with ecosystem conservation, biodiversity and sustainable resource management. The Ramsar Convention is a prominent player and provides good leadership in aspects of the notable efforts that have been made in recent years towards harmonisation and synergy in policy development, priority-setting, knowledge and information management, and performance assessment among MEAs. This involves both coordination at global level and coordination among the implementing agencies of Contracting Parties at regional, national and local levels.

The Convention on Wetlands is unique in its system of officially-appointed “International Organization Partners” (IOPs), which include the four NGOs that were instrumental in founding the Convention in the late 1960s and that continue to play a variety of key roles today, as well as the International Water Management Institute, which became the fifth IOP in 2005. These bodies are integral to the functioning of many aspects of the Convention at all levels, and their inestimable contribution is a very particular model of partnership working pioneered by Ramsar.

The private sector is also a very important arena for collaborative interactions, both for material support (including financial) of the Convention’s work and for direct delivery of its aims, in respect of corporate land and resource management, consumer market behaviours, influence on public policy, and engagement of communities. Here too there are innovative examples in Ramsar’s history, notably in the partnerships with the Danone Group and the Star Alliance. In 2008 the Convention’s Contracting Parties addressed this issue in a more generic way, by adopting *Principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector* in the Annex to Resolution X.12.

Each of these dimensions is reflected in the present Handbook, capturing a positive and important moment in a fast-evolving area of the Convention’s development.



## **Key partnerships for implementation of the Ramsar Convention**

Note: the paragraphs of explanatory text in the following sections 1 to 4 have been prepared by the Secretariat and do not comprise texts adopted by the Conference of the Parties (COP).

### **1. Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other institutions**

1. Objective 7.2 of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 identified a range of actions to strengthen and formalize linkages with other international and/or regional environment conventions, and since then there has been an ever-expanding variety of collaborative arrangements and activities with these Conventions and other institutions working in fields relevant to the conservation and wise use of wetlands. These arrangements have led not only to links, but also to enhanced coherence and interoperability among the different regimes. Effective synergies have resulted at global, regional, national and local levels when objectives are similar and capabilities and opportunities are complementary.
2. Resolutions VII.4 (COP7, 1999), VIII.5 (COP8, 2002), IX.5 (COP9, 2005) and X.11 (COP10, 2008) have progressively defined the Ramsar Parties' positive attitudes on these issues. (See the "Relevant Resolutions" section at the end of this Handbook for the text of Resolution X.11). In many instances the partnership arrangements are framed by a Memorandum of Cooperation or Memorandum of Understanding, and in some instances by a Joint Work Plan as well (see Section 3 below).
3. In the case of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), for example, there have already been four successive Joint Work Plans, the latest covering the period 2007-2010. CBD COP Decision III/21 in 1996 established Ramsar as its "lead implementation partner" on wetlands (a role which is applicable to all programmes of work, cross-cutting issues and other CBD activities of relevance to wetlands). In Decision VIII/15, the CBD COP invited Ramsar to contribute to the implementation of the targets adopted for the inland waters and marine and coastal programmes of work, to the monitoring of progress towards them, and to the further development of the targets. Decision VIII/20 invited Ramsar to explore ways of improving mechanisms for assessing inland water ecosystems, including drivers of change, and to take the lead in developing for the two conventions a framework for harmonized reporting on inland waters biodiversity.
4. Cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions was summarized in Information Paper DOC. 23 for Ramsar COP9 in 2005 on *Options for enhanced cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions*, prepared jointly by those convention secretariats participating in the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG). The BLG was established by Decision VII/26 of the CBD's seventh COP in 2004: it is convened by the Executive Secretary of the CBD, and involves the Executive Heads of the CBD, the Convention on Migratory Species, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention (see <http://www.cbd.int/cooperation/related-conventions/blg.shtml>). Its agenda includes consideration of options for developing harmonised reporting processes under the conventions (covered also in Ramsar COP9 Information Documents DOC. 29 and DOC. 32, available at [www.ramsar.org/cop9-docs](http://www.ramsar.org/cop9-docs)).

5. The Biodiversity Related Conventions also maintain a Joint Web Site at <http://www.cbd.int/blg/> .

**Relevant implementation commitments made by Contracting Parties in COP Resolutions**

**Resolution X.11: Partnerships and synergies with Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other institutions**

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

11. REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue to cooperate closely with relevant conventions through its observer status in the Joint Liaison Group for the three Rio Conventions . . . and through the work of the UNEP Environment Management Group (EMG) . . . ;
12. ALSO REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue to be fully involved in the work of the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG) established under the *aegis* of the CBD and to report regularly to Standing Committee on progress achieved by this group;
14. INVITES the Secretariat to continue to develop cooperative relations with UN agencies . . . , as well as with other relevant intergovernmental organizations . . . , and to seek to reduce duplicative activities;
16. ENCOURAGES the Secretariat to establish and strengthen partnerships to develop closer working relations with intergovernmental regional groups . . . with a view to enhancing the role of the Convention in those regions;
17. ALSO REQUESTS the Secretariat to develop closer working and consultative relationships with financial institutions . . . , with a view to facilitating greater access to those resources by the Parties to the Convention;
20. REQUESTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), subject to the availability of time and resources, to exchange information and coordinate activities with the equivalent subsidiary bodies of other MEAs and relevant regional fora . . . ;
25. URGES Contracting Parties to take active steps at national level to improve regular liaison and collaboration between Ramsar Administrative Authorities and focal points and the focal points for related conventions and agreements, including as appropriate through their inclusion in National Ramsar/Wetland Committees, in order to ensure national responses to global environmental issues that will be as consistent as possible with the objectives and values of the Ramsar Convention;
27. REQUESTS that the collaboration between the Secretariat and the other conventions should include a provision for harmonizing their reporting needs with a view to lightening the burdens on the Contracting Parties.

## 2. The Ramsar Convention's International Organization Partners

6. The Convention works very closely with four global non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have been associated with the treaty since its beginnings – BirdLife International, IUCN-International Union for Conservation of Nature, Wetlands International, and WWF International. In Resolution VII.3 (COP7, 1999) these four were confirmed in the formal status of International Organization Partners (IOPs) of the Convention. In Resolution IX.16 (COP9, 2005), the Parties endorsed the addition of the

International Water Management Institute as a fifth official partner of the Convention, based on fulfillment of criteria adopted in Resolution VII.3.

7. The IOPs provide invaluable support for the work of the Convention at global, regional, national, and local levels, chiefly by providing expert technical advice, field level implementation assistance, and financial support, both from their headquarters units and from their national and regional offices and affiliates and from their expert networks. In addition, they themselves embody the philosophy of the Ramsar Convention and its wise use concept and support the use of the Ramsar guidelines in their own work around the world. The IOPs also participate regularly as observers in all meetings of the Conference of the Parties and the Standing Committee and as full members of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel.
8. In the Annex to Resolution VII.3 on *Partnerships with international organizations*, the Parties adopted *Rules for conferring the status of International Organization Partner of the Convention on Wetlands*, mentioned above, as follows:
  - i) International organizations, both intergovernmental and non-governmental, formally recognized as Partners of the Convention on Wetlands by its Conference of the Contracting Parties will be expected to contribute on a regular basis and to the best of their abilities to the further development of the policies and technical and scientific tools of the Convention and to their application.
  - ii) Partners shall be invited to participate in an observer capacity and as advisors in all activities of the Convention, including the meetings of the Conference of Contracting Parties, the Standing Committee, and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, as well as regional and subregional meetings.



Members of the Ramsar Secretariat and IOP representatives meeting to establish future collaboration priorities, Gland, September 2010.

- iii) Partners may also be invited, if required, to contribute to the evaluation of project proposals, project implementation, and the evaluation of project results, as well as to participate in the development of policy and technical and/or scientific instruments for the application of the Convention.
- iv) Thus, the status of Partner shall be conferred to international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations taking into account the following characteristics:
  - Have a programme of activities that is global or at least covers many countries in one or more regions of the world.
  - Have a statement of purpose that explicitly, or by clear implication, includes the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.
  - Have a track record of experience in providing support to and/or implementing on-the-ground projects that contribute to wetland conservation and sustainable use.
  - Have demonstrated experience in implementing partnership ventures such as training and education, technical and/or scientific expertise, policy development, and/or evaluation and assessment, particularly where such ventures would bring new and additional benefits to the functioning of the Ramsar partnership.
  - Have a positive reputation for being willing and able to cooperate with national and international bodies, including both governmental and non-governmental ones.
  - Have stated their readiness to actively contribute on a regular basis to the further development of the policies and tools of the Convention on Wetlands and their application on the ground, particularly by assisting Contracting Parties to meet their obligations under the Convention.
  - Are prepared to sign a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Bureau of the Convention, where the partnership agreement should be spelt out fully.
9. In Resolution IX.16 on *The Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs)*, the Parties, following the endorsement of IWMI as the fifth IOP, "encourage[ed] other relevant and interested organizations to consider applying for the status of IOP of the Convention", and also "request[ed] the Standing Committee to keep under review from time to time the performance of International Organization Partners in supporting Convention implementation and to report on such reviews to the Conference of the Contracting Parties".
10. In particular individual Key Result Areas in both the Convention's Strategic Plan (Resolution X.1) and its *Programme on communication, education, participation and awareness (CEPA)* (Resolution X.8 and Handbook 6, 4<sup>th</sup> edition), the IOPs are identified as key actors responsible for the

implementation of those KRAs as appropriate, alongside other Convention bodies.

11. For more information on the International Organization Partners see [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-about-ramsar-partners/main/ramsar/1-36-57\\_4000\\_0\\_\\_](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-about-ramsar-partners/main/ramsar/1-36-57_4000_0__).

**Relevant implementation commitments made by Contracting Parties in COP Resolutions**

**Resolution VII.3: Partnerships with international organizations**

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

7. DECIDES that international organizations interested in formal recognition as Partners to the Convention should present an application to the Convention's [Secretariat] for its inclusion in the agenda of the next meeting of the Standing Committee, which in turn shall make a recommendation to the Conference of the Contracting Parties for final decision.

### **3. Other stakeholders**

12. Reference has been made above to the Memoranda of Understanding and Cooperation which have been concluded between the Ramsar Convention and other conventions and international organizations. These include the following (asterisks indicate where a Joint Work Plan also exists):

**Multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs)**

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) \*
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention) \* (Joint Work Plan includes the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, AEWA)
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (UNCCD)
- Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO, World Heritage Convention)
- Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention)
- The Coordinating Unit of the Mediterranean Action Plan of the Secretariat of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention)
- Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians ("Carpathian Convention")

**UN agencies and programmes**

- UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme \*

- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)<sup>1</sup>
- Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA)
- The Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- The UN World Tourism Organization
- The UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre

#### **River basin commissions & authorities**

- International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
- Lake Chad Basin Commission
- Niger Basin Authority
- Commission Internationale du Bassin Congo-Oubangui-Sangha (CICOS)

#### **International Organization Partners**

- BirdLife International
- International Water Management Institute, IWMI
- IUCN – International Union for Conservation of Nature
- Wetlands International
- WWF International

#### **Scientific, technical, and other organizations**

- European Environment Agency
- Global Terrestrial Observing System
- Wetland Link International (Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust)
- World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA)
- The Society of Wetland Scientists
- International Ocean Institute
- The Nature Conservancy
- Eurosite
- Center for International Earth Science Information Network, Columbia University (USA) and Wetlands International (three-way agreement)
- International Association for Impact Assessment
- Ducks Unlimited (USA, Canada, and Mexico)
- Global Nature Fund
- Stetson University School of Law
- World Bank (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development)

#### **Business Sector**

- The Danone Group for the Ramsar Evian Project/Projet d'Evian
- Star Alliance Network

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<sup>1</sup> There was a formal Joint Work Plan for 2002-2003, but it was not renewed thereafter, though the fruitful relationship has continued.

For the texts of these documents, see [www.ramsar.org/mous](http://www.ramsar.org/mous).

13. The Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) benefits, not only from its core membership of appointed thematic experts, regional network members, and the Ramsar IOPs, but also from the participation as observers from a wide range of other bodies and organizations that are invited to collaborate in STRP work on matters of common interest. The list of invited STRP observers for the 2009-2012 period was established by the Parties in Resolution X.9 at COP10 (2008), as follows:
  - the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
  - the Scientific Council of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)
  - the Committee on Science and Technology of the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
  - the Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technical Advice of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
  - the Secretariats of the CBD, CMS, CITES, UNCCD, UNFCCC, the World Heritage Convention (WHC); UNESCO – Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB), the UNECE “Water Convention” and the Antarctic Treaty
  - the Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)



Ramsar Secretary General Anada Tiega and UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre Director Jon Hutton sign a Memorandum of Cooperation between their organizations, June 2010.

- the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- the UNEP – World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)
- the World Health Organization (WHO)
- the Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS)
- the Coordinating Committee for the Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands (GGAP-CoCo)
- the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA)
- the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO)
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Ducks Unlimited (DU)
- the Global Water Partnership (GWP)
- the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT)
- the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER)
- the International Society for Ecological Economics (ISEE)
- the European Space Agency – ESRIN (ESA-ESRIN)
- the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)
- UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education

See Handbook 7  
Participatory skills

14. A further key dimension of partnership working in the Convention relates to community groups, indigenous peoples and other stakeholders at local level, elaborated in another Ramsar Handbook.

#### **4. The business sector**

15. Beginning with the pioneering collaborative relationship, inaugurated in 1998, between the Ramsar Convention and the Danone Group and its Evian water company, the Convention has welcomed opportunities to expand the resource base of the Convention and its activities by developing mutually beneficial relationships with the business sector.

16. The Danone Group, through the “Evian Initiative” and most recently through a number of additional programmes, has provided generous financial support for the Convention’s efforts to raise awareness of the importance of water resources amongst decision-makers and the public, most visibly through the annual production of World Wetlands Day materials and the Evian Special Prize accompanying the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards. In 2008 the Danone Group, IUCN and Ramsar established a further partnership, the *Danone Fund for Nature* to work towards establishing and implementing mechanisms for carbon storage and offsets in wetlands, especially mangroves.

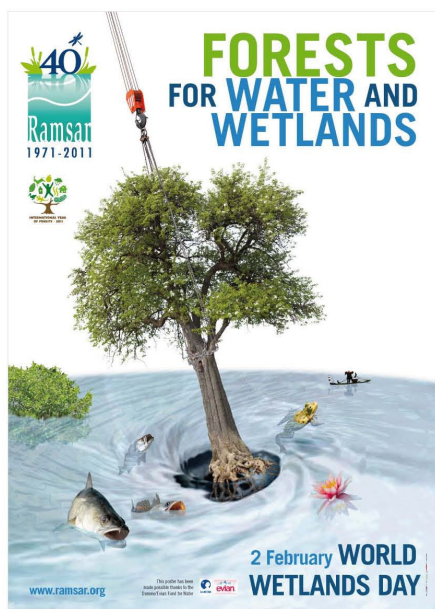


17. Another example is the Star Alliance Network of airlines, which has established a partnership agreement with a group of international organizations promoting environmental sustainability, comprising the Ramsar Convention, the UNESCO Man & Biosphere Programme,





Ramsar's WWD 'Package' for 2011



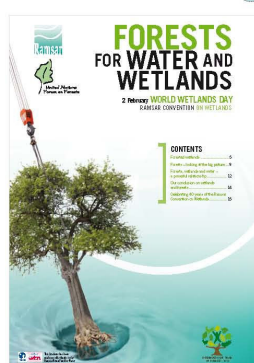
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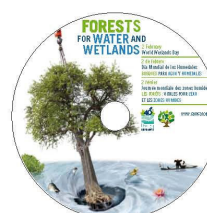
Sticker



Do-it-yourself facemask for children



Brochure



CD with all the WWD materials in high resolution

World Wetlands Day 2011 materials prepared with the generous support of the Danone Group.

and IUCN – International Union for Conservation of Nature. The initiative aims to promote the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources, and the Convention benefits by subsidized travel for delegates from the Parties, particularly from the developing world, to meetings and conferences. For more information on these two examples see [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-about-ramsar-private-sector/main/ramsar/1-36-50\\_4000\\_0\\_\\_](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-about-ramsar-private-sector/main/ramsar/1-36-50_4000_0__).

18. A full statement of the objectives of such relationships from the Convention's point of view are stated in the *Principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector*, adopted as the Annex to Resolution X.12 (COP10, 2008). Present and future such arrangements are governed by these Principles. The text of the Resolution Annex is reproduced in paragraphs 19-44 which follow below.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Note: the paragraph numbering flows directly from the preceding parts of this Handbook and is therefore different from the numbering in the original Annex to Resolution X.12.

## **Principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector**

*(adopted as the Annex to Resolution X.12 by the 10th Conference of the Contracting Parties, Changwon, Republic of Korea, 2008)*

19. In giving effect to the following guiding principles, the Ramsar Contracting Parties encourage the Secretariat to further develop partnerships with the business sector, in the spirit of Strategy 1.10 of the Strategic Plan 2009-2015, in order to promote co-operation with a view to maintaining the ecological values of wetlands as assets for sustainable development.

### **Objectives**

20. [The objectives are]:
- To improve environmentally sustainable business practices by increasing dialogue and understanding of the socio-economic benefits and business opportunities provided by the ecosystem services of fully functioning wetland systems.
  - To expand the resource base of the Convention and its activities by developing mutually beneficial relationships with the business sector.
  - To promote the engagement of the business sector directly in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
  - To facilitate dialogue between business and key stakeholders of wetlands, particularly governments and relevant communities, in order to build trust, stimulate and develop concrete partnership activities.
  - To increase local, national and regional investments in promoting wetland conservation, wise use, restoration and rehabilitation.
  - To promote a better understanding of the values of wetlands and the mission of the Convention.
  - To nurture and intensify the synergy between the ecological requirements for sustainable development and the socio-economic benefits derived from sound wetland management.
  - To explore new areas of cooperation and develop appropriate sustainability measures for further cooperation between government and the private sector at national level.
  - To identify and apply methodologies for innovative compensation of wetland loss as far as possible in the same areas with the same ecological functions in accordance with the Convention.
21. The key expectations of partnership development between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector are:
- to build an agreed strategy for best practices;
  - to jointly carry out positive activities;
  - to benefit mutually from the outcomes of joint activities.

### **General principles**

22. There is an increasing recognition that the business sector is not only part of environmental problems but can also be part of the solutions, that sustainable development can be best achieved by the commitments and interactions of governments and civil society, including local communities, influential individuals, and private or public companies.
23. The Contracting Parties recognize that unsustainable business activities and the increasing poverty in various parts of the world are some of the root causes of environmental degradation, but that the increasing role played by globalization and economic growth is sometimes a source of great opportunities as well.

### **Criteria for identifying a potential private partner with the Ramsar Convention**

24. The fundamental criterion is the commitment by the company, including all its branches, to strengthen, and in no way to undermine, the integrity and reputation of the Ramsar Convention and its ability to carry out its mission in accordance with the decisions of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.
25. The second criterion is support for the mission of the Convention by the business entering in partnership with Ramsar and the recognition of environmental sustainability as one of the key conditions that sustain life and human health.
26. The third criterion is the commitment to incorporate the concept of environmental sustainability into their existing business practices and to develop and adopt new strategies that include wetland conservation and wise use, amongst the main concerns of the company.

### **Specific principles**

27. It is imperative for the Secretariat to obtain a thorough understanding of the company, to assess the appropriateness of possible collaborative efforts, and to understand the potential mutual benefits and possible negative aspects. Care must be taken to assess the potential partner's activities throughout the world and throughout the breadth of its business strategies, and not only in the immediate area of the proposed relationship, in order to avoid any possible embarrassment to the Convention.
28. The assessment of the possible establishment of a partnership initiative should take into account immediate, short-term, and long-term mutual benefits as well as any potential negative aspects.
29. Any potential negative aspects of a partnership initiative must be carefully assessed, keeping in mind the possible immediate, underlying and root causes of misunderstandings that could damage the integrity of the Convention. In the event that negative aspects are identified, the partnership should be reconsidered or cancelled.
30. Care should be taken to avoid partnerships that require exclusivity and prohibit other partnerships of a similar nature.

31. Any suggestion about a possible Ramsar partnership with the business sector must first be discussed and assessed within the Secretariat, and then with the Standing Committee's Management Working Group. Following a preliminary assessment of any suggested initiative with the business sector, the Secretariat is responsible for undertaking the necessary consultations in order to seek the approval of the Standing Committee for further development of the new partnership relationship. Additionally, a notification should be sent to all Contracting Parties. In the event of an objection by a Contracting Party, the issue should be remitted to the next Conference of the Parties.
32. In any initiative with the business sector, the Secretariat should also consult with all applicable Contracting Parties to ensure that the relevant Administrative Authorities are kept fully informed and have agreed on the initiative.
33. Technical cooperation and capacity building programmes should be given due consideration in any planned collaborative activities with the business sector.
34. A monitoring and evaluation framework should be part of signed agreements to facilitate periodic assessment of the effectiveness of the partnership and prompt recommendations to improve the outcomes, and a mechanism should be designed to do that – all partnership agreements should include a budget line to provide the necessary resources to carry out that process.
35. Private companies that enter into partnerships with the Ramsar Convention should align their efforts with the Ramsar Convention's policies and assist Contracting Parties in pursuing the implementation of the Convention, as resources permit.
36. Care should be taken, in developing any partnership with a business company, that both the senior officers of the company and their operational units throughout the company are fully aware of and supportive of the relationship. The Ramsar representatives must arrive at a clear understanding of the cultures of the organizations and what makes them willing to be committed to support wetland conservation and wise use.
37. Care must be taken at the outset of any such partnership that there is full agreement on its objectives, on the potential mutual benefits for both parties, and on any areas of potential friction and conflict that must be avoided.
38. The partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector could take any of several forms; for example,
  - a) informal provision of information on wetland issues to improve understanding of the trends of wetlands in a given geographic or professional area;
  - b) formal provision of information on positive and negative impacts on wetlands in a given geographic area;
  - c) long-term respective commitment through contractual arrangements to achieve previously defined goals.

39. It is important to maintain a positive attitude of frank and transparent collaboration that enables the Convention and its partners to be most effective and agree on constructive convictions, outlooks, ideas, and actions. The key approach is to build trust and add confidence in working together to identify and take actions that meet shared needs.
40. When conflict or friction cannot be avoided, however, it is necessary to take the interests of the Convention as the highest priority, in spite of possible loss of immediate or short-term benefits.
41. Since companies interested in collaboration with the Ramsar Convention might be very large, with interests and activities over a large area or throughout the world, care must be taken to monitor and evaluate, not only the ongoing partnership relationship with certain elements within the company, but also unrelated activities of the company elsewhere in the world, in order to avoid potential embarrassment to the Convention through that association.
42. Reports on the activities and progress of all such partnerships between the Convention and the business sector should be provided to each meeting of the Conference of the Parties, according to a standard summary format. All resources received from the partners for the Convention's use should be accounted for.
43. Only business companies with which formal partnerships that correspond to the above principles have been agreed may make direct reference to the Ramsar Convention and use its logo. Other partnerships with commercial enterprises must not do so, and the Secretariat will have a watchful eye that this condition is fulfilled. Conversely, partners operating under a formal Ramsar partnership should state this in all their relevant communication and outreach activities and include the Ramsar logo in publications and other activities, whenever feasible.
44. On the other hand, the Secretariat encourages non-commercial uses of the Ramsar name and/or logo by wetland site managers, government authorities, non-governmental organizations, the press and other media without prior permission, because it is understood to be in the Convention's interests to expand the awareness of its name and objectives to the widest extent possible, and to make it as easy as possible for people to do so. The sole restriction made upon use of the Ramsar name and logo on the products of non-commercial entities is that the name and/or logo must not be positioned in such a way as to suggest that the Convention or the Secretariat has participated in or endorsed the product. (For example, publications about Ramsar sites are free to use the Ramsar logo as long as it is used in such a way as to make it clear that they are not Ramsar publications.)

**Relevant implementation commitments made by Contracting Parties in COP Resolutions**

**Resolution X.12: Principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector**

5. CONSIDERING the potential that the wise use of wetlands can offer to sustain the economic and social activities of a wide range of public and private stakeholders;
6. RECOGNIZING the vital role of an effective communication between governments and other decision makers, managers, and various groups of interests, including governments, business leaders and communities in the implementation of the Ramsar Convention;

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11. URGES Contracting Parties, the Secretariat and the Ramsar partners to make good use of [the *Principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector* provided in the annex to this Resolution], as appropriate, including within the frameworks of existing national, regional, and global initiatives and commitments;
13. ENCOURAGES the business sector to seek practical ways, in collaboration with the Ramsar Secretariat as resources permit, to understand the linkages between their activities and wetlands ecosystems, to avoid negative impacts, and to mitigate unavoidable effects throughout the supply and production chain; to assess the status and trends of conservation of wetlands, including the threats and opportunities to maintain the structure and functions of wetland ecosystems throughout various stages of commercial activities; and to understand and appreciate the values of the ecosystem services and products on which they rely and the wetland types that produce those benefits;
14. ENCOURAGES private and public companies in the business sector to calculate their water 'footprint', expressed in both local and global contexts, and to reduce impacts in areas where water is either already scarce or is likely to become scarce (...);
15. ENCOURAGES decision makers, especially business leaders, to develop and adopt policies, strategies and operational approaches according to existing national and international guidelines and standards for ecosystem management, including wetlands, which avoid, remedy or as a last option "offset" adverse impacts on wetland ecosystems (...);
17. ENCOURAGES governments, donors, international organizations, and the civil society at large, including business companies, NGOs and local communities, to join their efforts to stop and reverse the degradation of wetlands in order to sustain the services they provide as a prerequisite for future growth opportunities;

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*Relevant Resolutions*

**Resolution VII.3**

*(adopted by the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, San José, Costa Rica, 1999)*

**Partnerships with international organizations**

1. CONSIDERING that a number of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) played a significant role in the inception of the Convention and that they have been instrumental in the development and application of the treaty over the years;

2. RECOGNIZING FULLY the important contribution that BirdLife International, IUCN - [International Union for Conservation of Nature], Wetlands International, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) continue to make to the implementation of the Convention in their capacity as International NGO Partners of the Convention;
3. AWARE that the status of “International NGO Partner” emerged as a consequence of the historical relationship between the above-mentioned INGOs with the Convention, though it was never formalized through a decision of the Conference of the Contracting Parties; and
4. FURTHER AWARE that other international organizations, both intergovernmental and non-governmental, have the potential of contributing to the Mission of the Convention as stated in the Strategic Plan 1997-2002, which reads: “The Convention’s mission is the conservation and wise use of wetlands by national action and international cooperation as a means to achieving sustainable development throughout the world”;

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5. ADOPTS the attached rules for conferring the status of International Organization Partner of the Convention to organizations that meet the criteria established in those rules;
6. FORMALLY CONFIRMS this status for the following organizations: BirdLife International, IUCN-The World Conservation Union, Wetlands International, and the World Wide Fund for Nature;
7. DECIDES that international organizations interested in formal recognition as Partners to the Convention should present an application to the Convention’s Bureau for its inclusion in the agenda of the next meeting of the Standing Committee, which in turn shall make a recommendation to the Conference of the Contracting Parties for final decision; and
8. FURTHER DECIDES that the performance of International Organization Partners vis-à-vis the Convention may be reviewed from time to time by the Conference of the Contracting Parties on the basis of a report submitted by the Standing Committee when deemed necessary.

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**Resolution X.11**

*(adopted by the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Changwon, Republic of Korea, 2008)*

**Partnerships and synergies with Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other institutions**

1. NOTING the benefits to be gained from synergy and integrated implementation, where appropriate, among environment-related conventions, at all levels: global, regional, national and local, and from mutually supportive collaboration amongst all relevant players, as increasingly recognized in Resolutions VII.4 (1999), VIII.5 (2002), and IX.5 (2005), while also RESPECTING the independence of the mandates embodied in each convention;
2. WELCOMING the progress made by the Ramsar Convention in the past triennium in cementing and expanding its cooperation with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and with other institutions working in fields relevant to the conservation and wise use of wetlands;
3. RECOGNIZING the generous support from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for the “Strengthening the Implementation of the Biodiversity-related Conventions

through the Strategic Use of Information” project, led by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), which with Ramsar participation is working to streamline and harmonize on-line tools for conventions and their secretariats;

4. NOTING that the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in its decision VIII/20 invited the Ramsar Convention to take the lead in developing a framework for harmonized reporting on inland waters, and that UNEP and UNEP-WCMC have commenced this work, as acknowledged by decision IX/19 of the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CBD COP;
5. ALSO NOTING that the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in its decision IX/27 invited the scientific bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions and the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions (BLG) to address at their future meetings options for enhanced cooperation with regard to work on cross-cutting issues, such as climate change and invasive alien species;
6. WELCOMING the endorsement in its decision IX/19 by the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD of the Fourth Joint Work Plan (2007-2010) between the Ramsar Convention and the CBD;
7. AWARE that 2010 has been declared the International Year for Biological Diversity by the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-first session (in decision 61/203 of 20 December 2006) and that there are close links between wetlands and biodiversity;
8. ALSO AWARE that 2011 has been declared the International Year of Forests by the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-first session (in decision 61/193) and that some wetlands are forested;
9. RECOGNIZING that the UNEP/IUCN TEMATEA project has developed “issue-based modules for the coherent implementation of biodiversity-related conventions” including the Ramsar Convention, which *inter alia* provides thematically-organized modules for inland waters, protected areas, biodiversity and climate change, invasive species, and sustainable use, designed to support collaborative national planning and implementation among conventions; and
10. EXPRESSING AGAIN ITS APPRECIATION to the five International Organization Partners (BirdLife International, IUCN, the International Water Management Institute, Wetlands International, and WWF International) for their invaluable efforts in the past triennium to support the Ramsar Convention globally, nationally, and locally;

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11. REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue to cooperate closely with relevant conventions through its observer status in the Joint Liaison Group for the three Rio Conventions – the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) – and through the work of the UNEP Environment Management Group (EMG), of which the Ramsar Secretariat is a member;
12. ALSO REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue to be fully involved in the work of the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG) established under the *aegis* of the CBD and to report regularly to Standing Committee on progress achieved by this group;
13. ENCOURAGES the Secretariat to continue its close collaboration with the Secretariat of the CBD presently under the 4<sup>th</sup> Joint Work Plan between the two conventions; URGES the Secretariat to pursue as actively as possible, time and resources permitting, the review



- and streamlining of its joint work programme with the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) and to explore development of a joint programme with UNCCD under the existing Memorandum of Cooperation; and URGES the Secretariat to review its joint programmes of work with the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme and the World Heritage Centre with a view to reinvigorating those collaborative mechanisms;
14. INVITES the Secretariat to continue to develop cooperative relations with UN agencies such as UNEP, UNESCO, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN-Water, the World Tourism Organization, and the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as with other relevant intergovernmental organizations such as the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), UNEP-WCMC, and the CGIAR networks, to seek membership in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and to seek to reduce duplicative activities;
  15. REQUESTS the Secretariat to undertake a review of its memoranda of cooperation, resources permitting, with other global and regional environment agreements and other organizations with a view to renewing and reinvigorating those most likely to be beneficial to the work of the Convention within the time and resources available;
  16. ENCOURAGES the Secretariat to establish and strengthen partnerships to develop closer working relations with intergovernmental regional groups (such as, for Africa, SADC, EC, ECOWAS, IGAD, etc.) with a view to enhancing the role of the Convention in those regions;
  17. ALSO REQUESTS the Secretariat to develop closer working and consultative relationships with financial institutions, such as the Global Environment Facility, regional development banks, other environment funding organizations, and other institutions such as the European Commission and its relevant divisions for environment and biodiversity funding, with a view to facilitating greater access to those resources by the Parties to the Convention;
  18. URGES the Secretariat to continue its extremely valuable collaboration with the five International Organization Partners and ENCOURAGES the IOP representatives to take steps to increase awareness of Ramsar objectives and the collaborative relationship with the Convention to the greatest extent possible throughout their organizations, including coordination with IOPs' country and regional offices, where appropriate, in the context of Joint Work Plans prepared with the Ramsar Secretariat;
  19. FURTHER URGES the Secretariat to remain alert for opportunities for developing similarly fruitful relationships with other non-government organizations as they may appear and, following a review of MOUs already in place with other NGOs, to foster increased cooperation with those NGOs that can most benefit the work of the Convention;
  20. REQUESTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), subject to the availability of time and resources, to exchange information and coordinate activities with the equivalent subsidiary bodies of other MEAs and relevant regional fora, including through continued active involvement in meetings of the chairs of scientific and technical subsidiary bodies (CSAB) convened by the Secretariat of the CBD, and to report through the Standing Committee to the Conference of the Parties on these activities;
  21. REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue its participation in the UNEP-WCMC project for developing tools for the on-line use of the biodiversity-related conventions, including those for possible on-line harmonized reporting by the respective parties;
  22. ALSO REQUESTS the Secretariat and the STRP to continue to cooperate with the CBD Secretariat, UNEP, and UNEP-WCMC in the development of a framework for harmonized reporting on implementation on inland waters for the CBD and the Ramsar Convention;
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23. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties, other governments, International Organization Partners and other relevant organizations to make a special effort to contribute to the International Year of Biological Diversity (2010) by all appropriate means, including, *inter alia*, by drawing special attention to: the critical role of wetlands in supporting many components of biodiversity in the terrestrial, freshwater, and marine biomes; raising awareness of the linkages between wetlands, biodiversity, and the achievement of human development targets; the role of wetlands in responding to climate change; and the contribution of the wise use of wetlands to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;
24. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and other governments and organizations to make use of the web-based UNEP-IUCN “TEMATEA” issue-based modules resource (<http://www.tematea.org>) when developing and implementing mutually supportive activities among biodiversity-related conventions so as to improve coherence in the implementation of these conventions;
25. URGES Contracting Parties to take active steps at national level to improve regular liaison and collaboration between Ramsar Administrative Authorities and focal points and the focal points for related conventions and agreements, including as appropriate through their inclusion in National Ramsar/Wetland Committees, in order to ensure national responses to global environmental issues that will be as consistent as possible with the objectives and values of the Ramsar Convention;
26. URGES the Secretariat to support the work of the STRP in implementing Resolution VIII.26 on developing biological indicators on the results of the Convention’s activities, such that the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Convention occurs at least once in each reporting cycle, and REQUESTS the Secretariat and STRP to provide advice on how reporting on these indicators may be incorporated into the National Reports of the Parties; and
27. REQUESTS that the collaboration between the Secretariat and the other conventions should include a provision for harmonizing their reporting needs with a view to lightening the burdens on the Contracting Parties.

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### **Resolution X.12**

*(adopted by the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Changwon, Republic of Korea, 2008)*

#### **Principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector**

1. RECOGNIZING the importance of the ecological and socio-economic values of wetlands and the vital roles of wetland ecosystems in delivering a wide range of critical benefits and services to all human beings;
2. RECALLING that in Resolutions VIII.31 (1999) and X.8 (2008) on the Convention’s CEPA programme, the Parties recognized that wetland issues can increasingly become part of the business of other sectors and not just that of the environment sector, thereby mainstreaming the conservation and wise use of wetlands into society and government;
3. AWARE of the fact that several business organizations and networks have developed and adopted their own guidelines to seek to share good practices relating to ecosystem management;

4. WELCOMING the Business and Biodiversity Initiative launched at the 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biology Diversity (CBD), and RECALLING CBD Decision IX/26 on Promoting Business Engagement;
5. CONSIDERING the potential that the wise use of wetlands can offer to sustain the economic and social activities of a wide range of public and private stakeholders;
6. RECOGNIZING the vital role of an effective communication between governments and other decision makers, managers, and various groups of interests, including governments, business leaders and communities in the implementation of the Ramsar Convention;
7. NOTING that promoting greater involvement and the adoption of commitments by the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands is emphasized in Strategy 1.10 of the Strategic Plan 2009-2015; but
8. RECOGNIZING the role that the business sector plays in improving the management of water resources and reducing the risk of unsustainable environmental management, and their need to make efficient use of water, and NOTING the potential for sustainable water management to be addressed throughout a supply chain; and
9. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION to the Danone Group for its continued generous support for the Convention, and in particular for the communications activities of the Ramsar Secretariat over ten years' time, its World Wetlands Day materials, and the Evian Special Prize associated with the triennial Ramsar Conservation Award, and WELCOMING the recently launched "Biosphere Connections" partnership with the Star Alliance, which has been very helpful in supporting travel for sponsored delegates to Ramsar regional meetings;

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10. WELCOMES the "Principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector" provided in the annex to this Resolution;
11. URGES Contracting Parties, the Secretariat and the Ramsar partners to make good use of these Principles, as appropriate, including within the frameworks of existing national, regional, and global initiatives and commitments;
12. ENCOURAGES Parties' Administrative Authorities to draw these principles to the attention of relevant stakeholders, including *inter alia* private companies, government ministries, departments and agencies, water and basin management authorities, non-governmental organizations, and civil society at large;
13. ENCOURAGES the business sector to seek practical ways, in collaboration with the Ramsar Secretariat as resources permit, to understand the linkages between their activities and wetlands ecosystems, to avoid negative impacts, and to mitigate unavoidable effects throughout the supply and production chain; to assess the status and trends of conservation of wetlands, including the threats and opportunities to maintain the structure and functions of wetland ecosystems throughout various stages of commercial activities; and to understand and appreciate the values of the ecosystem services and products on which they rely and the wetland types that produce those benefits;
14. ENCOURAGES private and public companies in the business sector to calculate their water 'footprint', expressed in both local and global contexts, and to reduce impacts in areas where water is either already scarce or is likely to become scarce, using the background information from the assessment of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) mentioned in paragraph 21 below;

15. ENCOURAGES decision makers, especially business leaders, to develop and adopt policies, strategies and operational approaches according to existing national and international guidelines and standards for ecosystem management, including wetlands, which avoid, remedy or as a last option “offset” adverse impacts on wetland ecosystems, including considering the potential benefits that could be derived from the Business and Biodiversity Offsets Programme (BBOP) and outputs from The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) initiative;
16. SUPPORTS joint efforts between the Ramsar structures and partners and the business sector in building alliances with scientific and research organizations, with a view to improving understanding of wetland ecosystem services, identifying and scaling up solutions, and sharing their tools and experience;
17. ENCOURAGES governments, donors, international organizations, and the civil society at large, including business companies, NGOs and local communities, to join their efforts to stop and reverse the degradation of wetlands in order to sustain the services they provide as a prerequisite for future growth opportunities;
18. ENCOURAGES private and public companies to develop alliances with relevant stakeholders to implement collective agreements and economic incentives such as payment for those environmental services which contribute to the conservation of wetlands and water resources;
19. INVITES concerned business enterprises to discuss with the Ramsar Secretariat possible ways and means of developing mutually beneficial partnerships, in accordance with the annexed principles, and INVITES concerned business enterprises to consider joining the Business and Biodiversity Initiative;
20. ENCOURAGES the Secretariat to continue working closely with the Danone Group and the Star Alliance in mutually beneficial ways and to be prepared to develop similar relationships with the private sector where these can be beneficial to the Convention and consistent with the Convention’s mission and objectives;
21. REQUESTS the STRP to assess guidelines, such as those of the Water Footprint Network, that have been developed to support companies in assessing their water ‘footprint’ as a part of programmes of corporate environmental and social responsibility;
22. REQUESTS the Ramsar Secretariat, in all cases of developing projects or activities in partnership with the private sector in the territory of one or more Contracting Parties, to inform and consult in advance with the applicable Administrative Authorities for their agreement; and
23. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to give effect to the annexed principles when exploring new opportunities and pursuing new joint initiatives with private or public companies.

## The Ramsar Convention 'toolkit' for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (2010)

### Convention pillar 1: Wise Use

Handbook 1	<b>Wise use of wetlands</b> Concepts and approaches for the wise use of wetlands
Handbook 2	<b>National Wetland Policies</b> Developing and implementing National Wetland Policies
Handbook 3	<b>Laws and institutions</b> Reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands
Handbook 4	<b>Avian influenza and wetlands</b> Guidance on control of and responses to highly pathogenic avian influenza
Handbook 5	<b>Partnerships</b> Key partnerships for implementation of the Ramsar Convention
Handbook 6	<b>Wetland CEPA</b> The Convention's Programme on communication, education, participation, and public awareness (CEPA) 2009-2015
Handbook 7	<b>Participatory skills</b> Establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands
Handbook 8	<b>Water-related guidance</b> An Integrated Framework for the Convention's water-related guidance
Handbook 9	<b>River basin management</b> Integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management
Handbook 10	<b>Water allocation and management</b> Guidelines for the allocation and management of water for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands
Handbook 11	<b>Managing groundwater</b> Managing groundwater to maintain wetland ecological character
Handbook 12	<b>Coastal management</b> Wetland issues in Integrated Coastal Zone Management
Handbook 13	<b>Inventory, assessment, and monitoring</b> An Integrated Framework for wetland inventory, assessment, and monitoring
Handbook 14	<b>Data and information needs</b> A Framework for Ramsar data and information needs
Handbook 15	<b>Wetland inventory</b> A Ramsar framework for wetland inventory and ecological character description
Handbook 16	<b>Impact assessment</b> Guidelines on biodiversity-inclusive environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment

### Convention pillar 2: Ramsar sites designation and management

Handbook 17	<b>Designating Ramsar Sites</b> Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance
Handbook 18	<b>Managing wetlands</b> Frameworks for managing Ramsar Sites and other wetlands
Handbook 19	<b>Addressing change in wetland ecological character</b>

### Convention pillar 3: International cooperation

Handbook 20	<b>International cooperation</b> Guidelines and other support for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
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### Companion document

Handbook 21	<b>The Ramsar Convention Strategic Plan 2009-2015</b> Goals, strategies, and expectations for the Ramsar Convention's implementation for the period 2009 to 2015
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*Ramsar*  
*Handbooks*  
4<sup>th</sup> edition

# Handbook 5

# Partnerships

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