



**COP14**  **2022**

## **14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**

**“Wetlands Action for People and Nature”  
Wuhan, China, and Geneva, Switzerland 5-13 November 2022**

### **Resolution XIV.8**

#### **The new CEPA approach<sup>1</sup>**

1. RECALLING Resolution IX.18 on *Establishment of an Oversight Panel for the CEPA activities of the Convention*; Resolution VIII.31 on *The Convention’s Programme on communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) for 2003-2008*; and Resolution XII.9 which includes the communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) programme for 2016-24;
2. RECALLING Resolution XIII.5 *Review of the fourth Strategic Plan of the Ramsar Convention* that instructed the CEPA Oversight Panel to develop a new approach for advising on and supporting CEPA in the Convention;
3. RECOGNIZING that, while there is an active programme of CEPA work underway, there are limitations and lost opportunities associated with a separate CEPA programme and that the closer alignment of CEPA activities with the core work of the Convention will better deliver on its goals and mission;
4. NOTING that the new CEPA approach has been developed so that it may be integrated into the current fourth strategic plan of the Convention for 2016-2024 (SP4) using a thematic annex (see Annex 2) and the new strategic plan (SP5) as appropriate;
5. RECOGNIZING that Contracting Parties, International Organization Partners and other partners will have different capacities and priorities, and that the new CEPA approach provides flexibility in implementation; and
6. COMMENDING the excellent work already undertaken with very scarce resources by all actors in the Convention’s CEPA activities;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

7. AGREES TO the new communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) approach as described in Annex 1 of the present Resolution, and encourages its implementation by Parties, International Organization Partners and other partners, noting that it is designed to recognize and be complementary to existing CEPA activities;

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<sup>1</sup> Corrected on 3 February 2023 in accordance with paragraphs 417 and 418 of the COP14 report; see <https://www.ramsar.org/document/cop14-conference-report>.

8. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to cooperate, using their CEPA National Focal Points to increase the impact of each of their CEPA activities;
9. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to make efforts to integrate as appropriate the implementation of the Strategic Plan with the new CEPA approach described in the Annexes to the present Resolution;
10. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to initiate the nomination process for the CEPA Oversight Panel following the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14) to enable the Standing Committee to take an intersessional decision on the composition of the Oversight Panel for the following triennium;
11. INSTRUCTS the CEPA Oversight Panel to develop a work plan for the next triennium to be presented to the 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC62) for its information;
12. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat, in collaboration with the CEPA Oversight Panel, and in consultation with Parties, to prepare for SC63 a proposal on the future operations of the Oversight Panel to support the new approach, including the nomination procedure, using the terms of reference contained in Annex 3 as general guidance;
13. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to assign an additional Communications Officer to underpin implementation of the new approach, within existing resources;
14. FURTHER INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to include in its work programme provisions detailing how it will support the Contracting Parties in the implementation of the new CEPA approach; and
15. Encourages the CEPA Oversight Panel, in cooperation with the Strategic Plan Working Group, to integrate into the fifth Strategic Plan, as appropriate, the CEPA new approach drawing on Annex 2 of the present Resolution, for consideration at COP15.

## **Annex 1**

### **The new approach to CEPA has the following characteristics**

- 1. A reduced set of activities clearly linked to the Strategic Plan**
  - The effort should be focused on a smaller number of high-priority activities.
  - Communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) activities should be incorporated into the Strategic Plan, but with a separate CEPA document providing supporting guidance, as needed.
- 2. Make CEPA more strategic, integrated and effective**
  - The CEPA Programme would better support and strengthen the Strategic Plan if integrated into it. The next Strategic Plan should include both standalone CEPA activities and CEPA elements.
  - In general, CEPA activities should be integrated in planning and activities of the Convention (locally, nationally, internationally) where appropriate.
- 3. Work to support focal points, and build more networks and partnerships**
  - National Focal Points and CEPA National Focal Points are considered important to ensure a coordinated and strategic national approach to Ramsar implementation. Contracting Parties should ensure that the Focal Points are informed about their responsibilities. The CEPA Focal Points should be recognized as the key implementers of CEPA and should be provided with adequate tools and training opportunities when necessary.
  - Contracting Parties with similar CEPA needs are encouraged to co-operate on CEPA activities. Such co-operation can include exchange of experiences of CEPA campaigns as well as working cooperatively to produce communication material and translating them into languages as needed by the Contracting Parties involved. Contracting Parties should also be encouraged to coordinate with their focal points for other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), where appropriate.
  - The Secretariat should seek opportunities to build networks and partnerships at the international level, including with other MEAs, in order to identify opportunities for common or complementary CEPA activities and to bring relevant tools, resources, and practices to Contracting Parties.
  - The Contracting Parties, where appropriate, should increase engagement with other sectors, consistent with priorities identified in the Strategic Plan at the national level. Messaging should be tailored to emphasize themes that matter to the target audience.
- 4. Strategic support by the Secretariat**
  - The Secretariat to provide advice and information to Contracting Parties, for example introduction materials about Ramsar CEPA work for new CEPA NFPs and CEPA NGO FPs and sharing good examples from other countries.
  - The Secretariat to revise the handbook on Wetland CEPA from 2010. The revised version probably needs to reflect the new CEPA approach, include other changes in the Convention since 2010, and include new content on social media, how to enhance networking etc.
  - The Secretariat to provide opportunities for the CEPA NFPs to learn more about CEPA tools. This can take place in conjunction with other relevant meeting, such as COPs or regional meetings as appropriate, or via online resources.
- 5. More efficient governance of global CEPA work**
  - Better described work task (separating what may be mandatory and what may be voluntary) for the Ramsar CEPA working group/-s

- Better way of composing and establishing the Ramsar CEPA working group/-s
- *Modus operandi* for Ramsar CEPA working group/-s
- Better sharing of workload, also engaging more Contracting Parties

## Annex 2

### The new CEPA approach and integration into the Strategic Plan

1. Table A below contains the goals and targets of the existing (fourth) Strategic Plan and how communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) activities based upon the new approach can be integrated into implementation of the Plan. The activities in the table can also be used to inform, as appropriate, the preparation of the fifth Strategic Plan by the Strategic Plan Working Group.
2. Unless otherwise indicated “partners” below refers to Contracting Parties, International Organization Partners (IOPs), different kinds of regional co-operation, and the Secretariat. IOPs are welcome to join in any of the activities which are suitable for their scope.

*Table A. Indicative CEPA activities for consideration in the Strategic Plan*

Legend: Text in *italic* in the parts of the new approach are those activities that Contracting Parties can start to implement before the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15). Those activities are also included in the annex to the DR on the review of the Strategic Plan. Targets 20-22, both in parentheses and in italic are examples to show potential targets that might be supported by the new approach.

Targets	CEPA activities
<b>Goal 1: Addressing the Drivers of Wetland Loss and Degradation</b>	
1. Wetland benefits are featured in national/local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries at the national and local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.1 Secretariat to prioritize global CEPA activities that promote the Convention and its objectives, including wide promotion of COPs and their outcomes, as well as to continue to contribute wetland input to the debate on global policy issues, and work for a greater sectoral input to wetlands and CEPA planning.</li> <li>• 1.2 <i>Encourages Contracting Parties to continue to contribute wetland input to the debate on global policy issues.</i></li> <li>• 1.3 <i>Encourages Contracting Parties to identify mechanisms for greater sectoral input to wetlands and CEPA planning, including recognizing the value, experience and resources of International Organization Partners, NGOs, Contracting Parties, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, business partners, academia, the education sector and youth organisations with interest in wetlands in planning, resourcing, developing and implementing wetland CEPA messages and products.</i></li> </ul>

Targets	CEPA activities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.4 Encourages Contracting Parties, in communication activities and materials, to specifically highlight the role of wetlands as part of nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches, and green infrastructure to address multiple social, environmental and economic challenges, and the values of wetlands for water supply, water quality, transport, food production and livelihoods, flood regulation, coastal protection, climate mitigation and adaptation, addressing biodiversity loss, pollution control, fishing and hunting, recreation and tourism.</li> <li>• 1.5 The Secretariat to support with information materials including pictures in formats that are easily transformed for national and sub-national use.</li> <li>• 1.6 The Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to continue to develop targeted products (Policy Briefs, Fact Sheets, the Global Wetland Outlook etc.) for sectors.</li> <li>• 1.7 Encourages Contracting Parties to increase engagement with sectors that have an impact on wetlands, consistent with priorities identified in the strategic plan at the national level. In particular, messaging should be tailored to emphasize themes that matter to the target audience.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Water use respects wetland ecosystem needs for them to fulfil their functions and provide services at the appropriate scale inter alia at the basin level or along a coastal zone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.1 Secretariat to support Contracting Parties with CEPA materials, including case studies and good examples from the Wetland City Accreditation, that can be used when addressing stakeholders.</li> <li>• 2.2 Encourages Contracting Parties to promote case studies of sustainable wetland management, including examples from Wetland City Accreditation, and CEPA activities that engage stakeholders and promote wise use and management of their wetlands and their surroundings in a way that considers both water quality and water quantity.</li> </ul>
<p>3. The public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3.1 Encourages Contracting Parties to promote existing Convention guidance and share between Parties practical local guidance, best practices and case studies which may be relevant more broadly.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Invasive alien species and pathways of introduction and expansion are identified and prioritized, priority invasive alien species are controlled or eradicated, and management responses are prepared and implemented to prevent their introduction and establishment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.1 Encourages Contracting Parties to raise awareness of invasive alien species in wetland ecosystems through the development and dissemination of training and communication materials among the public and private sectors.</li> </ul>

Targets	CEPA activities
<b>Goal 2: Effectively Conserving and Managing the Ramsar Site Network</b>	
5. The ecological character of Ramsar sites is maintained or restored, through effective planning and integrated management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>5.1 Encourages Contracting Parties to integrate CEPA activities in all Ramsar Site management plans and/or activity plans, to the extent possible.</i></li> </ul>
6. There is a significant increase in area, numbers and ecological connectivity in the Ramsar Site network, in particular under-represented types of wetlands including in under-represented ecoregions and Transboundary Sites.	
7. Sites that are at risk of change of ecological character have threats addressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>7.1 Encourages Contracting Parties to identify current and emerging threats, including the umbrella threat of climate change and biodiversity loss, and develop, and share between Parties, practical CEPA tools and guidance for addressing such threats at Ramsar Sites and other wetlands in the long term.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Goal 3: Wisely Using All Wetlands</b>	
8. National wetland inventories have been initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>8.1 Encourages Contracting Parties to communicate the results of national wetland inventories for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands.</i></li> </ul>
9. The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, inter alia, within a river basin or along a coastal zone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>9.1. Encourages Contracting Parties to integrate CEPA activities in the management plans and/or activity plans of all wetlands other than Ramsar Sites. See Target 1 and Target 13.</i></li> </ul>
10. The traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of Indigenous Peoples and local communities relevant for the wise use of wetlands and their customary use of wetland resources are documented, respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention, with a full and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>10.1 Encourages Contracting Parties to better engage Indigenous Peoples and local communities in wetland research, planning, management, restoration and CEPA activities (including case studies) as well as promoting the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of Indigenous Peoples and local communities relevant for the wise use of wetlands at national and local levels.</i></li> <li>• <i>10.2 The Secretariat to promote the exchange of lessons learned from the activities mentioned above.</i></li> </ul>

Targets	CEPA activities
effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities at all relevant levels	
11. Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11.1 The Secretariat to support Contracting Parties to develop stories about the values of wetlands and how to manage them to optimize their benefits (to be customized with local facts/figures).</li> <li>• 11.2 Encourages Contracting Parties to support Ramsar Site managers to develop signage and other CEPA activities to communicate Site values, including ecosystem services.</li> <li>• 11.3 The STRP to update information on the valuation of wetland ecosystem services for use in decision-making and engagement with key stakeholders.</li> </ul>
12. Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation	
13. Enhanced sustainability of key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries, when they affect wetlands, contributing to biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13.1 Encourages Contracting Parties to give priority to engaging sectoral decision makers in integrating wetland values in their planning and decision making.</li> <li>• 13.2 The Secretariat to focus on messages and tools that support the concept of wise use, to assist decision making to involve communities and negotiate trade-offs between wetland users.</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 4: Enhancing Implementation</b>	
14. Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels are developed on relevant topics and are available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14.1 The STRP to better align outputs to support CEPA activities for different stakeholders, to enable outcomes of the STRP's work to be effectively communicated with Contracting Parties, other wetland stakeholders and the broader community.</li> </ul>
15. Ramsar Regional Initiatives with the active involvement and support of the Parties in each region are reinforced and developed into effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15.1 Use regional cooperations to build CEPA capacity at the national level to enable more effective planning and implementation by Contracting Parties.</li> </ul>



Targets	CEPA activities
tools to assist in the full implementation of the Convention	
16. Wetlands conservation and wise use are mainstreamed through communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>16.1 Encourages Contracting Parties to build on the effective CEPA activity and engagement achieved through for example World Wetlands Day, Ramsar Regional Initiatives and Wetland Education Centres.</i></li> <li>• 16.2 The Secretariat to continue communication with and support for Contracting Parties' National Focal Points and CEPA NFPs (both government and NGO) in promoting conservation of Ramsar Sites and wise use of wetlands.</li> <li>• 16.3 The Secretariat to use the results of the CEPA Oversight Panel survey of NFPs and ongoing consultation with NFPs to identify useful tools and approaches to support them in pragmatic ways to implement outcomes for the Convention through better engagement of people.</li> <li>• 16.4 All partners to use networks and structures (Wetland Link International network, Ramsar Regional Initiatives, Wetland Education Centres, Youth Engaged in Wetlands) to improve support in implementing the Convention, such as raising awareness, engagement in activities, and capacity building.</li> <li>• 16.5 All partners to use various media channels which are appropriate for the purpose, such as social media, to raise public awareness (and potentially lead to public concern and pressure on decision makers) along with other approaches to engage sectoral decision makers.</li> <li>• 16.6 All partners to identify new communication avenues and opportunities to promote the Convention's goals.</li> <li>• 16.7 All partners are encouraged to adjust communication and capacity-building efforts, when appropriate, to meet the needs of targeted audiences, recognizing local or regional cultural, socio-economic or ethnic differences.</li> </ul>
17. Financial and other resources for effectively implementing the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 from all sources are made available.	
18. International cooperation is strengthened at all levels, (locally, nationally, sub-regionally (for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>18.1 Encourages Contracting Parties with similar CEPA needs to cooperate on CEPA activities. Such cooperation can include exchange of experiences of CEPA campaigns as well</i></li> </ul>

Targets	CEPA activities
<p>example RRI and river basin Commissions), regionally and globally).</p>	<p><i>as working cooperatively to produce communications materials and translating them into languages as needed by the Contracting Parties involved.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18.2 Encourages Contracting Parties to encourage their Ramsar NFPs to facilitate CEPA activities with their focal points for other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).</li> <li>• 18.3 The Secretariat should seek opportunities to build networks and partnerships at the international level, including with other MEAs, in order to identify opportunities for common or complementary CEPA activities and to bring relevant tools, resources, and practices to Contracting Parties.</li> <li>• 18.4 All partners to ensure that CEPA aspects are considered when planning and developing all Resolutions, guidance materials, STRP products and other outcomes from the Convention.</li> <li>• 18.5 All partners to investigate opportunities to improve wetland conservation by applying techniques drawn from behavioural economics and psychology and undertaking joint projects with behavioural insights teams or “nudge” units.</li> </ul>
<p>19. Capacity building for implementation of the Convention and the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 is enhanced</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19.1 All partners to build an emphasis on capacity building, to support people with a range of roles in wetland conservation and wise use. This would involve using the expertise of the STRP, communications and networking by the Secretariat, and sharing of experiences between Contracting Parties.</li> <li>• 19.2 The Secretariat and Contracting Parties to refine understanding of gaps in implementation, and the priority needs of Contracting Parties for practical engagement, communications and training/capacity building, in order to target activities that can be done by the Secretariat and different regional co-operations.</li> <li>• 19.3 Secretariat to provide effective web-based access to their materials, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- searchable access to portals with information on wetland issues, and research and management techniques (both Secretariat and Contracting Party materials).</li> <li>- access to a user-friendly Ramsar Sites Information Service to enable Ramsar Site managers to update, upload or download Site information and use it for management.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><i>(20. Improve the Ramsar National Reports in a way that they become more useful for identifying gaps and measures needed.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20.1 All partners to improve the usefulness of National Reports from Contracting Parties as a tool for the Convention to obtain feedback on the effectiveness of implementation, to identify gaps in implementation, support needed and emerging issues. It is important that</li> </ul>

Targets	CEPA activities
	<p>the National Report format is not so extensive that it is a burden to Contracting Parties, but that it can focus on gathering the key information needed to assist the Secretariat and Contracting Parties to identify priorities for future activities including CEPA.</p>
<p><i>(21. Improve evaluations and assessments of work done by the Convention.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21.1 All partners to evaluate the reach and effectiveness of activities including CEPA, so that effective approaches are identified, shared and implemented.</li> </ul>
<p><i>(22. Make sure that focal points get the support they need to do good work.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>22.1 Encourages Contracting Parties to ensure that the Focal Points are informed about their responsibilities. The CEPA Focal Points should be recognized as the main facilitators of implementing CEPA and should be provided with adequate tools and training opportunities when necessary.</i></li> <li>• 22.2 The Secretariat to provide advice and information to Contracting Parties, for example introduction materials about the Convention’s CEPA work for new CEPA NFPs and CEPA NGO FPs, and good examples from other countries.</li> <li>• 22.3 The Secretariat and CEPA Oversight Panel to revise the 2010 handbook on Wetland CEPA. The revised version needs to reflect the new CEPA approach, include other changes in the Convention since 2010, and include new content on social media, how to enhance networking etc., with a more practical implementation approach for CEPA activities instead of one with more focus on Convention Resolutions.</li> <li>• 22.4 The Secretariat to provide opportunities for the CEPA NFPs to learn more about CEPA tools. This can take place in conjunction with other relevant meeting, such as COPs or regional meetings as appropriate, or via online resources.</li> </ul>

## **Annex 3**

### **Terms of reference of the CEPA Oversight Panel as part of the new CEPA approach**

#### **Functions of the CEPA Oversight Panel (hereafter referred to as the Panel):**

- i. Deliver results originating from specific communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) requests included in Resolutions of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) and the Strategic Plan.
- ii. Examine CEPA needs and gaps in implementation in order to identify CEPA activities to be integrated in the Strategic Plan.
- iii. Monitor and report on current CEPA issues within the Convention and the progress of implementation of current CEPA Priorities, especially with reference to the CEPA activities included in the Strategic Plan as well as COP Resolutions.
- iv. Advise the Standing Committee and the Secretariat on CEPA work priorities at the national and international levels, including the CEPA priorities of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP).
- v. Liaise with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) to improve CEPA synergies among Conventions.

#### **Composition of the CEPA Oversight Panel**

The CEPA Oversight Panel for each triennium should be comprised of between 10 and 15 people guided by the criteria below. All members should be nominated in advance of each meeting of the COP. It is the task of the Secretariat to ensure the timely distribution of the requests for nominations as well as the compilation of nominations for approval at each meeting of the COP. Should a need for further expertise arise during the triennium that cannot be met by the selected composition of the Panel, it is recommended that the Panel invite additional CEPA experts as required.

#### **Selection criteria**

- i. CEPA activities are diverse and thus require a range of expertise. This diversity of expertise should be reflected in the composition of the Panel.
- ii. The Panel should have balanced representation from all regions of the Convention.
- iii. The Panel should ideally be comprised of at least one CEPA NGO Focal Point and one CEPA Government Focal Point.
- iv. International Organization Partners should select one representative that will act as the liaison between the Panel and the six IOPs.
- v. The Panel should include a youth representative.
- vi. The Panel should include an Indigenous member as feasible.

- vii. The Panel should be supported by two Secretariat staff members with responsibility to work on CEPA implementation.
- viii. To ensure institutional memory, it is recommended that at least one of the Panel's members has served as Panel member during the previous triennium.
- ix. In order to ensure collaboration and information exchange between the CEPA Oversight Panel and other Convention bodies, specifically the Standing Committee and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, a representative from each body should be nominated to serve on the CEPA Oversight Panel.

#### **Modus operandi**

- i. Members should be appointed for the period of each triennium between meetings of the COP with the option to extend their appointment.
- ii. The Panel for each triennium will convene for the first time at the meeting of the COP at which it was established. At this occasion it will select its Chair and Vice-Chair for the triennium.
- iii. The CEPA National Focal Point representatives should, as much as possible and as necessary, consult with and seek input from all other government and NGO CEPA Focal Points.
- iv. The Panel will operate as much as possible through electronic means (e-mail, video conferences, etc.). If it is thought necessary, and if funding permits, the Panel may seek to meet during the triennium.
- v. The Panel should report on its progress to each meeting of the Standing Committee.
- vi. Due to financial limitations, the main working language of the Panel will be English and the results will be translated into the official languages of the Convention and other languages and posted on the Convention website as well as the Ramsar CEPA electronic network.