

Memorandum of Cooperation
between
The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
and
The Society for Ecological Restoration (SER)

Preamble

Since its inception in 1971, the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) has provided the single most important intergovernmental forum on wetland conservation issues. According to the Convention's mission statement, the Contracting Parties agree to "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".

The Convention is founded on three pillars of:

- promoting wise use of wetlands,
- establishing a network of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), and
- developing international cooperation.
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The conservation and wise management of wetlands through the designation of wetlands for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance, especially the responsibility to maintain the ecological character of designated sites, deserves special recognition. This responsibility recognizes the importance of wetlands for the maintenance of healthy and productive inland freshwater and coastal systems. In the context of water and wetlands, the Convention on Wetlands thus addresses issues which guide its Contracting Parties on ways to achieve sustainable development. Within the general commitments set out by the treaty, Contracting Parties, meeting as the Conference of the Parties (COP) identify priorities for action through a Strategic Plan.

The Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) works globally, regionally and nationally to promote the science and practice of ecological restoration so as to provide multiple co-benefits to biodiversity, including ecosystems and human well-being. SER's mission is "to promote ecological restoration as a means of sustaining the diversity of life on Earth and re-establishing an ecologically healthy relationship between nature and culture". SER disseminates the science, best practices, tools and guidance needed to inform and facilitate the science-policy-practice interface with regard to restoration and related ecosystem management issues. As an international membership organization, SER is responsive to the needs expressed by its members, NGOs, government agencies, the private sector, local communities and other stakeholders.

The Convention on Wetlands and the Society for Ecological Restoration recognize the fundamental role that wetland restoration and rehabilitation plays in protecting biodiversity values, enhancing the delivery of ecosystem services, fostering sustainable development, and mitigating and adapting to climate change.

The Convention on Wetlands and the Society for Ecological Restoration share similar conservation, restoration, and management goals, and the positive cooperation between the two institutions to date has been expressed through the recognition of the Society for Ecological Restoration as a Ramsar STRP observer organisation (confirmed through COP10 Resolution X.9). Going forward, it will be ideal to establish specific mechanisms for enhancing synergies and partnerships to achieve common goals, whilst avoiding duplication of effort, especially since the joint implementation of the

Ramsar Convention Strategic Plan currently in force also contributes to the programmes of other major environmental agreements.

Implementation of this Memorandum of Cooperation shall be through joint actions, set out in the annex to this Memorandum, within the framework of the Ramsar Strategic Plan.

Article 1. Mechanisms for Programme Cooperation

A. The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and the Society for Ecological Restoration will develop a collaborative work programme on wetland restoration and related issues by increasing current consultation and cooperation between them.

B. The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and the Society for Ecological Restoration will inform their focal points and chapters at the regional and national level of their cooperative activities. For general matters, the focal points for the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and the Society for Ecological Restoration are respectively the Secretary General and the Executive Director, or their assigned delegates.

C. The focal points, or their assigned delegates, may meet from time to time to assess the implementation of this Memorandum, exchange documents and review on-going activities.

Article 2. Joint Activities

A. Common areas for a collaborative work programme, as identified in the annex to this Memorandum of Cooperation, relate clearly to the Ramsar Strategic Plan (notably Strategy 1.8 on wetland restoration) and SER Strategic Plan currently in force and will be reviewed annually or at the request of either party.

B. The Society for Ecological Restoration and the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands will communicate agreement on common areas with their respective networks, and the Society for Ecological Restoration will endeavour to mobilise the expertise available on wetland restoration and related issues within its organisation in support of these activities.

C. The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and the Society for Ecological Restoration will provide each other with details of their annual work programmes to ensure harmonisation of activities at global, regional and country levels.

D. The extent to which the collaborative work programme and the joint activities are implemented will be subject to the availability of resources.

Article 3. Obligation, Review and Termination

A. This Memorandum of Cooperation constitutes an expression of a shared objective and vision. However, each party's actions will be considered to be that party's sole and separate action, for all purposes, and neither party shall claim to be acting on behalf of, or as agent for the other party to this Memorandum of Cooperation.

B. The term for this Memorandum of Cooperation is six years. The agreement may be reviewed at the request of either party (usually annually), may be renewed by mutual agreement, and may be terminated by either party subject to six months notice in writing.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Travaglini', written over a horizontal line.

Mary Travaglini
Interim Executive Director
Society for Ecological Restoration

Done at: Gland, Switzerland

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to be 'Anada Tiega', written over a horizontal line.

Anada Tiega
Secretary General
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

Date: 31 January 2012

ANNEX

Collaborative Work Programme of the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER)

1. The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and the Society for Ecological Restoration will continue to work together to update and revise existing guidelines on wetland restoration and on related issues in other thematic work areas of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) including, but not limited to, climate change and ecological character.
2. The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and the Society for Ecological Restoration will continue to collaborate on the development of a proposal for a joint work programme on ecosystem restoration guidance for the Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies (CSAB) of the biodiversity-related conventions that is consistent with SER's ecological restoration guidelines and principles.
3. The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and the Society for Ecological Restoration will work towards developing a joint wetland restoration case study database that builds on SER's existing Global Restoration Network database.
4. The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and the Society for Ecological Restoration, when appropriate, will continue to facilitate and host reciprocal presentations, workshops, and side events at each other's conferences and events.
5. The Society for Ecological Restoration will endeavor to establish a Task Force to mobilize expertise from within SER's membership and networks to inform and support the collaborative work listed above.