

Meeting of the 5th Strategic Plan (SP5) Working Group

Monday 11 December 2023, 13:00 – 15:15 CET (by videoconference)

Participants

- Working Group members: Australia, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Eswatini, Finland, Japan, Kenya, R.O. Korea, Slovakia, South Africa, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Zambia, STRP, WWT.
- Observer: BirdLife International
- Secretariat: Deputy Secretary General
- Consultant: Rob McInnes + team members

Minutes

1. The Co-Chair, Luiz Eduardo Andrade de Souza, the National Focal Point for Brazil, opened the meeting, welcomed participants and introduced the agenda. The Co-Chair noted that Co-Chair Jacey Scott of Canada has been reassigned and that Elena Sanchez McAuley has been designated as the temporary National Focal Point for Canada and will serve as a Co-Chair of the Strategic Plan Working Group. Ms. Sanchez McAuley then introduced herself.
2. The Consultant (Rob McInnes) was invited to share an update on the engagement and consultation process. The Consultant provided an overview of the process since SC62. He then shared a presentation that provided an overview of the results from the online survey and regional virtual workshops. A copy of the presentation is attached to these notes. The Consultant brought attention to the variances in survey responses to what are perceived to be the negative drivers of wetland loss/degradation and what are possible solutions by region, sectors and socio-economic status.
3. The Consultant provided an overview of inputs received from the virtual consultations held with regional groups, sector representatives, academia, etc. noting the interest from participants that targets and indicators align with other reporting mechanisms particularly the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), that they be specific as possible and consideration given to indicators that can report on multiple drivers/solutions. He closed his presentation with an overview of the desk review process and the documents and reports being analyzed.
4. The Co-Chair introduced five questions where inputs from Working Group members would be useful in informing the development of targets and indicators for the new Strategic Plan.
 1. Do all SP5 targets (and therefore indicators) need to be universal for the Convention or should there be focussed regional targets (and indicators)?
 2. Should all targets carry the same weight, or could there be a prioritisation of targets?
 3. In the 4th Strategic Plan, the majority of targets (and indicators) are about 'processes' (i.e., establishing a National Wetland Committee, etc.) rather than 'outcomes' (i.e., state of wetlands has been improved). Should the emphasis in the 5th Strategic Plan seek to move away from 'process' indicators towards more 'outcome' indicators?
 4. How can we build upon and update the existing targets?
 - a. What are elements that countries feel are missing from the 4th Strategic Plan?

- b. How much new information should we include in the 5th Strategic Plan?
5. Through the 5th Strategic Plan, how can we enhance the Convention's synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements (e.g. the Convention on Biological Diversity) and other international institutions while respecting the mandate of the Convention on Wetlands?
5. Interventions on question #1 as to whether SP5 targets should be global or regional were made by Australia, Brazil, Costa Rica, China and the United Kingdom. It was noted that there are nuances and differences between regions, with overall agreement that targets (and therefore indicators) should be global within a flexible framework for regions. Other views shared included that global targets could be more simplified and evidence based. Some views suggested that the Ramsar Regional Initiatives could provide valuable space for identifying topics of regional relevance that would require further attention.
6. Interventions on question #2 on whether targets should be prioritized were made by China, Kenya, United Kingdom and the STRP Vice -Chair. There was an overarching view that prioritization in some form would benefit implementation and measurement noting that it was important for Parties to establish priorities based on their individual context and situation. Suggestions for prioritization included using a simpler structure for SP5 which would assist with prioritization as well as a framework that allowed for regions and Parties to prioritize. There was agreement that an ability to prioritize is needed at the national level and should not be done globally through a hierarchical approach. It was noted that attention needs to be given to ensuring that while targets could be prioritized, that data provided through reporting be globally consistent.
7. Interventions on question #3 on whether targets and indicators are focused on 'processes' or 'outcomes' were made by Brazil, China, Japan and Birdlife International. There was general agreement that targets and indicators that were more 'outcome' focused would be beneficial. It was noted that 'outcome' oriented targets and indicators are difficult to measure and could result in a reporting burden for Parties. Questions were raised including whether the current SP4 indicators are working and do we have confidence that processes are resulting in outcomes? The Consultant responded that the evidence is that the implementation of processes as found in SP4 has not resulted in positive outcomes for wetlands. A further comment was made on the importance of having alignment with relevant targets and indicators within the GBF.
8. Intervention on question #4 were made by Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Costa Rica, United Kingdom and the STRP Vice-Chair. Members identified a number of elements that they felt should be in SP5 including social and economic challenges of wetland dependent communities (e.g. livelihoods), participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and their contributions to wetlands conservation, restoration and wise use, climate adaptation, means of implementation, including innovative financial mechanisms, interlinkages with the GBF, a focus on sustainable development and global environmental priorities of climate, biodiversity and pollution, and youth, women and other underrepresented groups. It was suggested that a GAP analysis of SP4 targets would be useful and that SP5 targets should be timebound and measurable.
9. Interventions on question #5 were made by Brazil, China, Eswatini and the STRP Vice-Chair. Members expressed the importance of alignment with GBF targets and indicators as well as those of other MEAs. The STRP Vice-Chair reported on STRP task 5.2 that is looking into how better alignment between GBF indicators and indicators in SP5 can be achieved and that this matter is to

be discussed extensively at STRP 26 taking place the first week of February and will feed into the development of SP5 targets and indicators.

10. The Co-Chair thanked members for their participation in the meeting, noted agreed upon actions and next steps (see below) and thanked members for their active engagement and participation in the meeting.

Action Items

- The Secretariat will include the Consultants presentation in the meeting report.
- The Consultant will prepare an updated timeline which will be circulated with the meeting report with members invited to comment by 10 January 2024.
- Members to provide any additional written comments to the results of the survey by 10 January 2024, building on the discussions during the 11 December SPWG meeting.
- The next meeting of the Strategic Plan Working Group to take place the week of 4 March.

Date	Activity	Lead	Notes
2023			
12 October – 21 December	Further consultation and engagement	Consultant and all	Virtual workshops One-to-one meetings Additional targeted survey Other activities
24 November – 11 December	Consolidation of initial Phase 2 findings and production of headline issues and key findings in brief report for SP5WG	Consultant	Drafting brief report
11 December	Quarterly SP5WG Meeting (virtual)	Co-Chairs/Secretariat/ Consultant	Consultant to present headline issues and key findings from Phase 2
13 December	Minutes from SP5WG circulated	Secretariat/Co-Chairs	
15 December	Feedback from SP5WG	All	Feed back information to the Consultants for consideration in the Phase 2 report
20 December	SP5WG minutes and PPT uploaded to website page	Secretariat/Co-Chairs	Possible outreach communication
2024			
10 January	Deadline for submission of any additional written comments to the results of the survey, building on the discussions during the virtual SP5WG meeting	SP5WG	Members of the WG may wish to provide additional comments to the results of the survey and the regional workshops, building on the exchange of views from the SP5WG meeting
19 January	Submission of Draft Phase 2 Report to SP5WG with comments and feedback to be submitted by January 30.	Consultant	Evidence base for the development of SP5 including results of consultation and desk-based review
22 – 24 January	Consultancy Team Workshop	Consultant	Developing draft structure and content of SP5 including goals, targets and indicators
26 January	Share draft goals, targets and indicators with STRP, Ramsar YWG, and Co-Chairs	Consultant	This will be a working document that will be updated after STRP26
30 January	SP5WG provide feedback to Consultant on Draft Phase 2 Report	SP5WG	

5 - 9 February	STRP26 – Working with STRP on targets and indicators	Consultant/STRP	
12 February	Share initial draft SP5 targets and indicators with Co-Chairs	Consultant	Provide a post-STRP26 update
20 February	YWG provide feedback on draft goals, targets and indicators	YWG	
26 February	Share initial draft SP5, including overall structure and content along with goals, targets and indicators with Co-Chairs	Consultant	
1 March	Co-Chairs provide initial feedback on draft SP5	Co-Chairs/Consultant	Consultant to incorporate Co-Chairs comments and to revise draft SP5
4 March	Document publication deadline for SC63		
5 March	Draft SP5 circulated to SP5WG	Consultant/Secretariat	
11 March	Quarterly SP5WG Meeting (virtual), SP5WG provide feedback on draft SP5	Secretariat/Chairs/Consultant/SP5WG	Consultant to present progress on Phase 3 and SP5WG members to provide feedback Update work plan
20 March	First draft of SP5 published on SC63 event page for review and consideration by the SC	Co-Chairs/Secretariat/Consultant	Also circulated more widely to stakeholders and partners for additional feedback. Translation into SP and FR required
20 March	Progress report posted on web	Secretariat	c.3 months before SC
19 April (TBC)	Quarterly SP5WG Meeting (virtual)	Secretariat/Chairs/Consultant	Regional webinars Contractor to present progress on Phase 3 Update work plan Comment on progress report
20 April – 30 May	Consultation on preliminary results on Phase 3 and round of comments	All	Consultation on draft SP5, building on results of Phase 3
31 May	Outreach	Chairs	Broad communication to CPs, IOPs, etc. to update on progress towards SP5
3 June	SC63	Secretariat/Chairs/Consultant	

	F2F meeting of SP5WG		Work plan updated
	Submission of Draft SP	Consultant	
1 – 30 June	Consultation on draft SP	All	WG members to reach out to their regions and networks
15 July	Draft resolution and updated SP circulated	Chairs/Consultant	
1 August (TBC)	Quarterly SP5WG Meeting (virtual)	Secretariat/Chairs/Consultant	Consultant to present Final SP for red flag review of WG Review DR Update work plan Review Draft Progress report
31 August	Draft resolution and draft SP, Progress report submitted to Secretariat	Chairs/Consultant	For translation to SP, FR
1 September (TBC)	Outreach	Chairs	Broad communication to CPs, IOPs, etc. to update on progress towards SP5
15 September (TBC)	DR, SP5, progress report posted on web	Secretariat	3 months before SC
1 October	Quarterly SP5WG Meeting (virtual)	Secretariat/Chairs/Consultant	Consultant to present Final SP for red flag review of WG Update work plan
XX November (TBC)	SC64	All	6 months before COP15 Half day workshop to present Final SP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hybrid • Session to accommodate different time zones • Address outstanding issues • Prepare for presentation to COP Work plan updated

2025			
January	Outreach	Chairs	Broad communication to CPs, IOPs, etc. to update on progress towards SP5
20 – 24 January	SC64 (TBC)		
28 February (TBC)	Updated DR and SP5 submitted to Secretariat	Chairs/Consultant	For translation to SP, FR
23 April	Draft Resolution and SP5 posted on web	Secretariat	SP, FR, EN 60 days before COP15
23 - 31 July 2025	COP15		Consideration of SP5 by COP