

**Preparation of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties  
(COP15):  
Process for preparation, submission and review of draft resolutions**

**Action requested:**

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- i. note the indicative timeline for events related to the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15), in paragraph 3;
- ii. instruct the Secretariat to share with Contracting Parties the guidance for the preparation of draft resolutions for COP15, as presented in Annex 1, with deadlines for submission updated to reflect the dates decided for the Committee's 64th meeting (SC64);
- iii. approve guidance on the Secretariat's role in engaging with Contracting Parties in preparing draft resolutions, and the processes for doing so both before and after SC64, as proposed in paragraphs 7 to 10; and
- iv. instruct the Secretariat to follow for COP15 the process for review of draft resolutions applied at COP14, applying logistical refinements as appropriate.

**Introduction**

1. This document is provided by the Secretariat as a basis for the preparation and review of draft resolutions for the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15). The proposed process for preparation, submission and review of draft resolutions builds on the process that was successfully followed at COP14, which is described in document SC58 Doc.20.4 Rev.5 *Process for preparation, submission and review of draft resolutions*. That document was prepared in accordance with the instructions contained in Resolution XII.4 on *The responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Ramsar Convention*; the present document has been updated to include instructions provided in paragraph 10 of Resolution XIV.3 on *The effectiveness and efficiency of the Convention on Wetlands* and paragraphs 11 and 12 and Annex 3 of Resolution XIV.5 on *Review of Resolutions and Recommendations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties*.

**Indicative timeline for the preparation of draft resolutions**

2. According to Rule 5.1 of the Rules of Procedure:

*The Secretariat shall notify all Contracting Parties of the dates, venue, and provisional agenda of an ordinary meeting at least 12 months before the meeting is due to commence. The notification shall include the draft agenda for the meeting and the deadline for submission of proposals by the Contracting Parties, which normally shall be 60 calendar days prior to the opening of the Standing Committee meeting at which recommendations are made for documents for consideration by Contracting Parties at the Conference of the Parties.*

3. At its 62nd meeting (SC62), the Standing Committee in Decision SC62-08 approved the dates of 23-31 July 2025 for COP15, to be held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. It also approved the dates of 3-7 June 2024 for SC63 (Decision SC62-58), but decided to defer the decision on SC64 dates until SC63. As SC64 dates have not been set, for planning purposes, an indicative timeline showing dates and deadlines relevant to the preparation of draft resolutions is provided below at Table 1.

**Table 1: Indicative timeline of events relating to consideration of draft resolutions for COP15**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
October 2024 (90 days in advance of SC64)	SC64 documents published
November 2024 (60 days in advance of SC64, Rule 5.1)	Submission of draft resolutions for review at SC64
January 2025 (c. 6 months before COP15, in accordance with the indicative schedule approved through Resolution XIV.2)	SC64 held
23 April 2025	COP15 documents published, including draft resolutions
23-31 July 2025	COP15 held

4. The Secretariat shared the dates for COP15 and a summary of the indicative timetable in Table 1 above through Diplomatic Note 2023/9 in October 2023. It will inform Contracting Parties of the precise deadline for submission of draft resolutions once the dates for SC64 are approved by the Standing Committee at SC63.

#### **Preparation and submission of draft resolutions for COP15**

5. The Secretariat has prepared guidance for the Contracting Parties on the preparation and submission of draft resolutions and other documents for COP15. This guidance, which is provided in Annex 1 to the present document, is based upon the guidance prepared for COP14 and updated to reflect the instructions provided in Resolution XIV.3 and XIV.5 noted above.

#### Role of the Secretariat in the preparation of draft resolutions

6. Resolution XIV.3 in paragraph 10:

*ENCOURAGES the Secretariat to provide administrative support to Contracting Parties, at their request, in preparing draft resolutions so as to provide transparent and timely advice regarding the cost of implementing proposed draft resolutions, and improve cross-references, avoid duplication and support consolidation of draft resolutions in future;*

7. The Secretariat may, at the request of the proponent(s) of a draft resolution, also provide limited technical support after the draft is submitted, e.g. to highlight incorrect formatting, ambiguous language, or incorrect use of terminology, and suggest simple ways these issues may be addressed
8. The Secretariat will also prepare cover notes to accompany each draft resolution. These cover notes will include information on possible duplication with other draft resolutions, inconsistencies and technical errors that the Secretariat feels should be brought to the attention of Contracting Parties.
9. It is important to recall that, following SC64, in accordance with Rule 34.3:

*The Secretariat will edit and finalize the proposals, on the basis of the recommendations of the Standing Committee, for distribution in the official languages to the Contracting Parties at least three months before the opening of the Conference of Parties, as required by Rule 10.*

10. Given the provisions of Rule 34.3, the Standing Committee at SC64 will be in a position to give specific instructions to the Secretariat on revisions to each draft resolution to be submitted to COP15, which may include engagement with the proposing Contracting Party.
11. Some Resolutions are reviewed by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, as provided for in Annex 1, paragraphs 12 (iii) and 59, of Resolution XII.5 *New framework for delivery of scientific and technical advice and guidance on the Convention*.

#### **Consideration of draft resolutions and other documents at COP15**

12. At COP14, following approval by the Standing Committee through Decision SC60-04, the Secretariat followed the guidance provided in Annex 2 of document SC60 Doc.4.2 on *Arrangements for COP14: Running order and process for reviewing draft resolutions* for supporting the process for the review, revision and approval of draft resolutions. The Secretariat suggests that the same process be followed at COP15, applying logistical refinements as appropriate.

## Annex 1

### Guidance note on preparation of submissions for draft resolutions

#### Process and timeline

1. The 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (COP15) will take place in 2025 in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, from 23 to 31 July 2025.
2. According to Rule 5.1 of the Rules of Procedure, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions is 60 days before the Standing Committee meeting at which recommendations are made for documents for consideration by Contracting Parties at the COP. This meeting (SC64) will take place from [xx-yy (insert dates after SC63 decision)] January 2025, with the resulting deadline for submission of draft resolutions being zz November 2024.
3. The Secretariat encourages Contracting Parties to submit draft resolutions as early as possible in advance of the deadline, so that they can be published in the three official languages of the Convention three months before SC64, with the other documentation for that meeting.
4. Early submission of draft resolutions will ensure that Contracting Parties have adequate time to review them in advance of SC64. An early submission will also enable the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel to consider any draft resolutions it is requested to review during its 27th meeting [insert dates after SC63], in order to make technical inputs where appropriate prior to SC64.
5. Submissions should be sent by email to the Documentation Officer at the following address: [documents@ramsar.org](mailto:documents@ramsar.org). Any questions regarding the process or content of submission should be sent to the same address.

#### Content of submissions to Standing Committee

6. Documents submitted for consideration by the Standing Committee should include:
  - i) A summary introduction for the Standing Committee, including an indication of the potential implications for the workload of the Secretariat and funding from the Convention's core budget that would be required for the implementation of the Resolution;
  - ii) The text of the draft resolution; and
  - iii) Any annexed guidance, tables or text which may be needed to provide ongoing context, guidance, or additional critical information and which would be included in the final resolution if adopted by the Conference of the Parties.

Further guidance on each of these elements is set out in sections below.

7. Existing Resolutions, which may provide useful models, are found on the Ramsar website at: <https://www.ramsar.org/resolution-status-tracker>.

## Drafting guidance

### Avoiding duplication or conflict with existing Resolutions

8. Contracting Parties intending to prepare a draft resolution should note [Resolution XIV.5](#) on *Review of Resolutions and Recommendations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties* which, in paragraphs 11 and 12:
  11. *RECOMMENDS to Parties that, when drafting a resolution that is intended to treat a subject comprehensively, or to make significant changes in the way in which a subject is dealt with, the draft be prepared so that, if adopted, it will replace and repeal all existing Resolutions (or, as appropriate, the relevant paragraphs) on the same subject;*
  12. *REQUESTS Parties, chairs of committees, panels and other Convention bodies and the Secretariat, to follow the guidance in Annex 3;*
9. The Resolution status tracker on the Convention website (<https://www.ramsar.org/resolution-status-tracker>) enables Contracting Parties to search for Resolutions in effect on a given subject. [In addition, Annex 2 of Resolution XIV.5 organizes Resolutions and Recommendations approved prior to COP14 into “preliminary groupings”.](#)

### Suggested length

10. It is suggested that submissions should be a maximum of ten pages in length, including the summary introduction, the draft resolution text and any annexes. Shorter ones are most welcome.
11. This limit will:
  - i) enable Standing Committee members and other stakeholders to read all the documents, and understand the issues in advance of meetings;
  - ii) maintain the focus on the key issues and avoid discussion of unnecessary details in a crowded agenda;
  - iii) help the Secretariat publish related documents, such as the summary of costs of implementing the proposed draft resolutions, in good time; and
  - iv) save translation time and funds.

### Language

12. Drafters should:
  - i) use short sentences and simple language to foster the greatest understanding;
  - ii) use language that will be relevant long after the COP at which it is agreed, which may mean avoiding details about specific formats, methods, technical tools, etc.; and
  - iii) use specific descriptions of timing, e.g., specific dates/years, or time frames that refer to specific meetings of the Convention on Wetlands.

### Summary introduction for the Standing Committee

13. The introduction should include an invitation to the Standing Committee to review and approve the draft resolution for consideration at COP15 as part of the package with draft resolutions going forward to the COP.
14. In addition, it may include accompanying background information in order to provide context and help inform the decision of the Standing Committee. This accompanying background would not be amended by Contracting Parties nor would it be intended to advance to the COP as part of the draft resolution text. The rationale for the proposed draft resolution should be made explicit within the preambular paragraphs of the actual draft resolution.
15. To conform with Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure, the introduction must include a table indicating the potential impact on the Secretariat's workload and on the Convention's core or non-core budgets of each action included in the operative paragraphs. The table should describe the actions, and the costs in Swiss francs (CHF). Any recurrent costs should be made clear. The Secretariat can identify the workload potentially created and the sum required to support the action, if the submitting Party identifies the specific actions, as in Table 1 below.

*Table 1: Example of information on financial implications of implementing draft resolutions*

Paragraph	Action	Cost (CHF)
20.REQUESTS the Standing Committee to prepare a summary report...	Secretariat to coordinate drafting project, consultant to draft report (10 days)	CHF 5,000 (one-off cost)

### Text in the proposed draft resolution

16. All paragraphs of a draft resolution, including preambular and operative paragraphs, should be numbered consecutively 1, 2, 3, etc., starting with the first paragraph of the preamble. Subparagraphs should be numbered i), ii), iii), etc. Contracting Parties are encouraged to try to keep the structure of their text simple and to maintain consistency throughout the document.
17. Preambular paragraphs should present brief background information necessary to contextualize the actions proposed for agreement by the Contracting Parties in the operative paragraphs. Not every operational paragraph needs to be justified in the preamble, just the content of the operational part in general. These paragraphs must begin with a verb in the form of a participle or an adjective (e.g. "Concerned", "Recalling", etc.); see the examples listed in Annex A.
18. Any prior Ramsar Resolutions or Recommendations to be cited should be combined into a single initial preambular paragraph that simply lists the Resolutions in chronological/numerical order and includes the Resolution title within parenthesis e.g.:

*"1. Recalling Resolutions IX.4 (The Ramsar Convention and conservation, production and sustainable use of fisheries resources), IX.21 (Taking into account the cultural values of wetlands), X.13 (The status of sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance), XII.15 (Evaluation of the management and conservation effectiveness of Ramsar Sites), and XIII.5 (Review of the fourth Strategic Plan of the Ramsar Convention).*

This helps streamline the text and is also neutral regarding characterization of the contents of the Resolution, which can cause controversy and unnecessary extended debate among Contracting Parties.

19. When appropriate, a second paragraph can be used to reference decisions/resolutions of other Conventions – these are not recalled, they are more commonly acknowledged, noted, welcomed, etc., since they do not represent text that has been considered and adopted by Parties to the Convention on Wetlands. All citations of other decisions/resolutions from other Conventions should be combined in one paragraph, indicate the Convention, the number of the decision/resolution, show its title in parenthesis, and be listed chronologically.
20. A further paragraph may note information from other sources, ensuring that any references are precise and follow a similar style of referencing the document by its title in order to avoid any present or future ambiguity (for example “Noting the 2014 Synthesis Report (SYR) of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5)” rather than “the latest IPCC Assessment Report”). Similar to references to the work of other Conventions, these are likewise not recalled, but are more commonly acknowledged, noted, welcomed, etc.
21. Operative paragraphs contain the actions that the Contracting Parties recommend or agree to take. These paragraphs begin with an action verb (such as “Approves”, “Calls upon”, “Emphasizes”, “Invites”, “Notes”, “Recommends”, “Requests”, or “Urges”).
22. The verb used should correspond to the role of the body called to act. For example, it is appropriate: to encourage, call upon or urge Contracting Parties to act; to request an action of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP); and to instruct the Secretariat. Drafters should also note that entities that are not subject to the purview of the Convention, such as the International Organization Partners (IOPs), private sector and other stakeholders, can only be invited to do something – it is not appropriate to use any other verb in such instances since these entities do not answer to the COP.

### Annexes

23. An annex may provide information that is necessary in order to understand what is being agreed in the resolution, e.g., budget tables, terms of reference, lists of countries, or – in some instances – best practices or other technical information – that is otherwise not appropriate or possible to reflect in prose within the resolution text itself. Use of annexes should be carefully considered and only used when necessary and reflect information that is important for ongoing reference purposes. Annexes may include links to further background information if needed.
24. Annexes are numbered: Annex 1, Annex 2, etc., following the order in which they are referred to in the draft resolution. Each annex should start on a new page.

## Annex A

### Template for draft resolutions to be submitted to Standing Committee

This template provides a basis for the summary introduction and the text of the proposed draft resolution.

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THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS  
64th Meeting of the Standing Committee  
Venue, xx-xx January 2025

### Proposed draft resolution on [insert subject]

Submitted by *[insert Contracting Party name]*

**Action requested:**

- The Standing Committee is invited to review and approve the attached Draft Resolution for consideration by the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

[Insert any other actions requested of the Standing Committee]

### Introduction

*Short background/contextual information for the Standing Committee*

*Financial implications of implementation*

Paragraph (number and key part of text)	Action	Cost (CHF)

### Draft Resolution XV.xx

**[insert subject]**

1. RECALLING...;[per paragraph 15 of Annex 1]



2. ACKNOWLEDGING/NOTING/WELCOMING/AWARE OF etc. ...;(delete this section if not applicable) [per paragraph 16 of Annex 1]
3. ACKNOWLEDGING/NOTING/WELCOMING/AWARE OF etc. ...;(delete this section if not applicable) [per paragraph 17 of Annex 1]
4. AWARE of ...:
  - i. This...;
  - ii. That...; and
  - iii. The other....
5. ACKNOWLEDGING...; and
6. CONCERNED that...;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

7. AFFIRMS...;
8. REQUESTS...;
9. ENCOURAGES...;
10. ALSO ENCOURAGES ...;
11. URGES ...; and
12. CALLS ON... .
13. INVITES the International Organization Partners to...
14. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to...
15. CONFIRMS that the present Resolution supersedes [paragraph x of] Resolution XX.yy, which is retired.  
or  
CONFIRMS that this updated text and its annexes supersede those adopted as Resolution XX.yy, which is replaced by the present Resolution.  
or  
CONFIRMS that the guidance annexed to this Resolution supersedes the earlier guidance on this matter adopted as Annex x to Resolution XX.yy.