

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

Thursday 18 April 2024, 13.00 – 15:00 CEST (by videoconference)

Participants

- Working Group members: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Iran, Japan, Kenya, R.O. Korea, Slovenia, Uganda, United Kingdom, Zambia, BirdLife International, STRP Chair, WWT
- Observer: CEPA Co-Chair
- Secretariat: Deputy Secretary General
- Consultant: Rob McInnes + team members

Minutes

1. The Co-Chair, Chair Luiz Eduardo Andrade de Souza, the National Focal Point for Brazil, opened the meeting, welcomed participants and indicated he would be chairing the meeting. He acknowledged Co-Chair ZuZu Gadallah, the National Focal Point for Canada. The Co-Chair introduced the agenda for the meeting which was approved.
 - Overview of process to date
 - Continuity between SP4 and SP5: strengths of SP4 that should be retained in the new Strategic Plan
 - Increasing effectiveness: new elements to include in SP5
 - Framing of the goals and targets
 - Target-by-target discussions, if time allows
2. The Consultant (Rob McInnes) was invited to provide an overview of the process to date for the development of the Strategic Plan. He presented a report that has been published on the Strategic Plan webpage on the Convention website. The consultant's presentation can be found [here](#).
3. The Co-Chair invited members to share views on the continuity between SP4 and SP5 including elements of SP4 that should be included in SP5. A number of Parties expressed that the elements of wise use and the Ramsar Sites Network as pillars of the Convention were missing in the zero draft and that these should be included. Those Parties indicated that the topics related to wise use and the Ramsar Sites Network should be retained as "goals" rather than as targets and activities, to maintain coherence with SP4 and not to downplay their visibility. One member suggested that goal 1 could be broadened to reflect improving the human relationship with wetlands. Other elements suggested for consideration in SP5 included support for capacity building, technology transfer, and financing mechanisms, particularly for developing countries. It was further suggested that elements related to traditional knowledge under Target 10 of SP4 should be retained as well.
4. There was discussion on the importance of defining wise as use as this term is somewhat specific to the Convention with one member proposing that the language in paragraph 2 of SP4 be retained in SP5. One member suggested possible targets under wise use with another member expressing the importance of being able to monitor and evaluate implementation of SP5.

5. The Co-Chair of the CEPA Oversight Panel on behalf of the Panel requested that CEPA be integrated into SP5. There was agreement that CEPA activities will be important in implementing the new plan and that consideration should be given to how CEPA is integrated into SP5.
6. The Co-Chair concluded this agenda item noting that there was agreement with the members that goals 2 and 3 and their respective targets from SP4 should largely be retained in SP5 with an effort to make the goals and targets more strategic. He further noted that he had heard members express that the targets in SP4 were largely process rather than action oriented and that adjusting targets to be more action oriented would result in SP5 being more strategic. One member suggested that targets would need to be rearranged. The Co-Chair invited those who had made interventions to provide their comments in writing by email to the Secretariat.
7. The Co-Chair introduced the next agenda item, inviting comments on what would increase the effectiveness of SP5, while noting that a number of suggestions had been made during the discussion of the previous agenda item.
8. A member expressed that the new Strategic Plan should be inclusive of different stakeholders and have targets for engagement of different stakeholder groups. Another member noted the importance of having activities and targets for inclusion of Indigenous Peoples.
9. Several members expressed a desire for the new Strategic Plan to be more ambitious and transformative, referring back to earlier discussion as to what will make SP5 strategic. Suggestions for strengthening the plan included the inclusion of timebound indicators, possible use of a few headline indicators and quantitative and measurable targets. Some members cautioned that the inclusion of quantitative targets would need to be coupled with the provision of adequate means of implementation. It was further suggested by a member that there be SMART objectives and that indicators be aligned with existing processes. Several members expressed the importance of alignment with KMGBF indicators.
10. The STRP Chair reminded members of STRP task 5.2 to prepare *Guidance to support global implementation of Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) for wetlands* which includes the preparation of a submission on wetland indicators to be made to the Ad hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Indicators for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) which could be of use in the development of SP5 indicators.
11. Several members reminded the Group of the need to stay within the mandate of the Convention on Wetlands and to avoid creeping into the mandates of other Conventions and processes.
12. The Co-Chair introduced the next agenda item and invited comments on the framing of goals and targets. Comments from members included the addition of mangroves in target 2.1, inclusion of timebound references to global agendas such as 2030 and 2050, that timebound targets be determined at the national level and improving the clarity of the text used for targets and activities. Additional comments included a desire for overall alignment with the KMGBF targets and specifically on the targets of inclusivity and equity, and that activities within SP5 be policy relevant options that are not prescriptive.

13. A member referred to the intervention made by the STRP Chair on STRP task 5.2 and suggested that the STRP could present the outcomes of its work to the Working Group at the Group's next meeting at SC63.
14. The Co-Chair noted that there was little time left in the meeting and that it would not make sense to begin discussion of targets. He thanked members for their contributions during the meeting noting that some members of the Working Group did not make comments during the meeting and encouraged engagement by all members as it is important that the new Strategic Plan reflect the views of all Contracting Parties and not a small subset. He then reminded those who had made comments during the meeting to submit them in writing to the Secretariat.
15. The Co-Chair then outlined the next steps:
 - The consultant to prepare, in cooperation with the Co-Chairs, a revised SP5 draft based on written comments received and comments provided during the meetings of 19 March and 18 April. This revised draft will be considered a 'Co-Chairs' draft'.
 - The 'Co-Chairs' draft' will be circulated to Working Group members approximately 2 weeks in advance of SC63 for review by Working Group members in advance of the next meeting of the Working Group scheduled for 3 June. The Co-Chair clarified that this new document will seek to identify language proposals that could address the concerns that were raised during this meeting and the previous one, in order to facilitate agreement during SC63.
 - Discussions within the Working Group will continue on 3 June. At that time, the Working Group will decide whether it wished to proceed using the 'Co-Chairs' draft' as the working document. Other working sessions of the Working Group may be scheduled during the week of SC63.
 - The Co-Chairs will report orally to SC63 on the progress of the Working Group under agenda item SC63.11 – Report of the Strategic Plan Working Group, including progress made at this meeting and any other discussions prior to SC63.
16. A member asked how will Contracting Parties know that a new draft is being prepared that supersedes the zero draft Strategic Plan that was published as SC63 Doc.11. Another member suggested that Contracting Parties can be informed of the current and proposed work of the Working Group through updates provided at pre-SC63 regional meetings. It was further suggested the report from the 18 April meeting could be used as the basis for providing updates during regional meetings. The Secretariat noted that the meeting minutes are expected to be available before any regional meetings take place.
17. The Co-Chair adjourned the meeting.