

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

Tuesday 6 August 2024, 12.00 – 15:00 CEST (by videoconference)

Draft Minutes

Participants

- Working Group members: Algeria, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Georgia, Japan, Kenya, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Chair of the STRP, WWT
- Observers: Hungary
- Secretariat: Deputy Secretary General
- Consultant: Rob McInnes

Minutes

1. The Co-Chair, Luiz Eduardo Andrade de Souza (Brazil) opened the meeting, welcomed participants and indicated he would be chairing the meeting. The Co-Chair informed the Group that the aim of the meeting was to finalize targets for Goals 2 and 3 and begin discussion on Goal 4.
2. The Co-Chair proposed 'parking' terminology around Indigenous Peoples and local communities (Goal 2 Target 2.3) to be informed by outcomes from the Convention on Biodiversity COP in October. There was support from members for this proposal.
3. The Co-Chair introduced the proposed Goal 2 targets and invited China to provide further information on the proposed Target 2.2 as follow-up to discussion on 'innovation' during the previous meeting of the Working Group as this addition to the text could potentially change the established concept of 'wise use'. China explained their views on the importance of new and innovative approaches to wetland management and proposed alternative language emphasizing an ecosystem approach and suggested that the idea of innovation could be achieved through improved scientific methodologies. A number of members expressed the importance of retaining the established definition of wise use both in this target and other aspects of the Strategic Plan. The Group agreed on the following language for T2.2.

~~T2.2 Maintain the ecological character of wetlands through implementing an Ecosystem Approach [and innovative [sustainable] utilization of wetland resources including by improving scientific methodologies]~~

Take effective legal, policy and administrative measures at all levels, by 2034, to ensure the ecological character of wetlands is maintained and an ecosystem approach is applied to the planning and management of [all] wetlands, within the context of sustainable development. ~~[and innovative utilization of wetlands and their associated resources [for components, processes and ecosystem services]]~~

4. The Co-Chair recalled that there had been a proposal for a Goal 2 target on wetland inventories and invited Georgia to provide suggested text. There was broad agreement that a target on wetland inventories would be useful given the importance of improved evidence and knowledge on the extent and status of wetlands. A suggestion was made to move a target on wetland inventories to

Goal 4 noting that this target was cross cutting across all Goals. Following discussion on the wording, the Group agreed on the following language for Target 4.x.

T4.x Wetland inventory

Advance a national wetland inventory

By 2034, wetland inventories are progressed and their databases are updated in line with the Ramsar wetland classification system.

5. The Group discussed the text for target 2.1. Some members advocated for inclusion of language on wise use and an ecosystem approach with other members expressing that this was covered in Target 2.2 and would dilute the clarity of Target 2.1. The following text was agreed to by the members noting that the Group would need to return to the text remaining in brackets.

T2.1 Recognise and transform human's relationship with wetlands through enhancing our understanding of wetland values, functions and services and wise use.

Promote ~~and safeguard~~ the values wetlands provide to people and nature and the contributions wetlands make to achieving sustainable development, including food security and poverty eradication, to transform the human-wetland relationship from one of exploitation, extraction, and depletion to one where humans and nature live in harmony, **including by incorporating wise use and an ecosystem approach within policy and planning at all levels**.

6. The Co-Chair invited members to look at targets for Goal 3 beginning with T3.1 noting that there was text proposed in the Co-Chair's non-paper and by the United Kingdom highlighting that there was some convergence between the two proposals. The United Kingdom shared their view of the importance of measurable and time-bound targets. Some members expressed support for a quantitative target and other members noted challenges with a quantitative target given differing country contexts and capacity. One member noted that the target should focus on Ramsar Sites and not protected and conserved areas. Another member recalled the quantitative targets for an increase in the size and number of Ramsar Sites in the 3rd and 4th Strategic Plans. After considerable discussion the Group agreed to the following text with the Co-Chair inviting members to further reflect on how a quantitative element could be included for this target.

[3.1 Designate quantitative target of International Importance

~~Designate sites that qualify as Wetlands of International Importance under the Convention.] [CCNP] [CANADA]~~By, 2034, There is a [significant] quantitative target increase in the area and number of sites in the [global] Ramsar Site network, and their inclusion in ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures is promoted, contributing to global conservation targets and aligning with the KM-GBF.

7. Discussion moved to Target 3.2 and Target 3.x. The Co-Chair noted the only difference between the proposals was the reference timeframe of 2034 noting that some targets have a reference timeframe of 2034 with others having a different or no reference timeframe. One member proposed inclusion of climate change in the target noting that climate change in many cases undermines capacity to maintain ecological character. Following discussion, the Group agreed to the following text.

~~{3.2 Effectively manage Wetlands of International Importance~~

~~Ensure that all Wetlands of International Importance maintain good or improving ecological character through effective management.] [CCNP] [CANADA]By 2034, the management effectiveness of Wetlands of International Importance is enhanced, to maintain or improve their ecological character.~~

8. The Co-Chair invited Australia to introduce their proposed Target 3.x on a network of site managers. Australia expressed the importance of strengthening the capacity of site managers and that a target that reflects this would be useful noting that this target may fit better under Goal 4. There was support for this target from the Group and agreement on the following text.

~~{3.x Establish national and regional networks of site managers.~~

~~Networks of ~~volunteers and~~ professionals and volunteers that manage wetlands of international importance are established, strengthened, and expanded, ensuring improving effective information exchange on best practice management.][AUSTRALIA]~~

9. The Group discussed the proposal for Target 3.x from Australia on mitigating the climate vulnerability of Ramsar sites. Several members expressed that enhancing the resilience of Ramsar Sites rather than mitigating climate vulnerability better expressed the desired outcome of this target. Others raised the question of whether actions to address climate change were addressed under Goal 1 and if so, should this target be placed under Goal 1, and should other drivers of wetland loss be included in this target. The following text was agreed to by the members noting that the Group would need to return to the text remaining in brackets.

~~{3.x Mitigate the climate vulnerability}~~Enhance the resilience of Wetlands of International Importance

~~Guidance is available and best practices are implemented to ~~address the vulnerability~~enhance the resilience of sites to current and emerging pressures from [drivers of wetland loss and degradation] [climate change] [, such as climate change].][AUSTRALIA]~~

10. The Co-Chair introduced the proposal from the Republic of Korea for Target 3.x on Updating Ramsar Information Sheets and invited the Republic of Korea to explain their proposal. The Republic of Korea articulated the importance of having current and updated information on Ramsar Sites and how this information underpins many Convention processes. One member suggested this target be moved to Goal 4 and another member requested that the language “ensure that” be removed. The Group supported the following text.

~~{3.x Regularly update Ramsar Information Sheets~~ [Ensure that] Ramsar Information Sheets for all Wetlands of International Importance are up-to-date, with support from the Secretariat and Ramsar Regional Initiatives.][REPUBLIC OF KOREA]

11. The Co-Chair noted that a request had been received from Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden for a target on the overall quality of protected area networks and invited Slovenia to provide specific text. Slovenia provided placeholder text and agreed to provide specific proposed text in writing following the meeting. The placeholder text is as follows.

By 2030, at least [X]% of protected wetland network are under effective protection, contributing to the overall goal of protecting at least 30% of terrestrial, inland water, coastal and marine areas.

12. The Co-Chair noted that Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden had requested to continue discussion on the targets in Goal 1. He reminded members that targets for Goal 1 had been discussed during past meetings and text had been agreed and that he was hesitant to reopen text as that would open the door to reopening other text that Working Group members has worked hard to reach consensus on.
13. The Group agreed to meet again in early September to continue work on targets under Goal 3, and Goal 4 and its targets. A proposal was made to meet at an alternative time that would be more conducive to members in Asia, Oceania and the Americas. The Co-Chair indicated he would consult with his Co-Chair and revert with a date and time for the next meeting requesting flexibility from members for whom the next meeting time would fall outside of normal work hours.
14. A member requested that the *Table of Goals and Targets* reflecting the agreed upon text in track change be shared with members.
15. The Co-Chair thanked members for their cooperative spirit and flexibility during the meeting expressing that while there was considerable work still to be done, much was accomplished during the meeting. He then adjourned the meeting.