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1. Introduction

These guidelines aim to assist you as a lead or contributing author in the preparation of draft outputs for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. They summarize the process of drafting and production, and provide guidance on structure and style.

These guidelines will help to foster consistency in all the drafts and publications of the Convention, and reduce time and resources needed for final document preparation. Regarding scientific and technical publications, they are in line with paragraphs 54 to 62 of Resolution XII.5, Annex 1¹.

¹ See https://www.ramsar.org/document/resolution-xii5-new-framework-for-delivery-of-scientific-and-technical-advice-and-guidance.

2. Defining roles and processes

2.1. Roles of authors

Responsibility for and copyright of any final output lies with the Convention Secretariat (except for supporting data drawn from external sources). Authors seeking to use information prepared for outputs of the Convention, such as for personal publications, need to consult with the Secretariat.

Lead authors are responsible for preparing draft outputs, which respond to the content, structure and deadlines identified in these guidelines and agreed in the plan for each project. They will:

- provide text with formatted references (see section 4.4. below), and any accompanying images, tables and figures (as outlined below);
- ensure that draft materials are logically coherent, concise and unambiguous;
- ensure that sources are properly cited and that accompanying images, tables and figures are accurately credited;
- identify further contributing authors who may provide additional information as necessary;
- liaise with contributing authors to integrate their contributions, ensuring their quality and fit within the overall structure and style of the document;
- allocate responsibilities and tasks to contributing authors as appropriate; and
- liaise with the Secretariat as necessary to finalise the text(s).

Contributing authors will:

- prepare information such as text, tables or figures for inclusion by the lead authors in the draft:
- cite sources and format references that support the information provided to lead authors; and
- liaise with lead authors as necessary.

Lead authors will be acknowledged in all outputs if they so wish, and contributing authors will be acknowledged if their contributions are included in the final publication. The "suggested citation" of the publications should be agreed in advance with the Secretariat.

2.2. Drafting process

Authors will be responsible for providing a clean draft to the Ramsar Secretariat by the agreed deadline, with the agreed structure and content.

To ensure consistency and quality, there will be a number of stages in the development of draft outputs:

- Annotated outline (required for all outputs): will provide a preliminary structure, identifying data and knowledge needs and gaps. The agreed type of output (see section 3 below), the target audiences and objectives of the output should be recorded. The outline should be agreed by the Secretariat before authors start working on the first draft text. Chapters/sections and subsections should be identified and numbered for clarity (to a maximum of two levels only, and one level for policy briefs). The outline should indicate whether case studies, tables and figures might be included.
- Consultation/working drafts: incomplete
 drafts will be shared among authors for
 development, and for consultation as
 appropriate and helpful. The number of draft
 versions and the drafting process will be
 determined by the authors and the Secretariat,
 and depend on the type and complexity of the
 output.
- The Secretariat will review the final working draft to ensure that the structure and content are appropriate for the agreed type of output (see

section 3 below) and reflect the agreed outline. It may edit the text, in consultation with lead authors, to ensure it is clear and appropriate for the target audiences.

- Review draft: this is a complete draft with agreed case studies, tables and figures. It will be circulated for peer review as outlined below at section 2.3.
- **Final draft**: authors will take into account comments from the peer review process, and submit a complete, "Clean" draft (including all bibliographic references and graphic materials) to the Secretariat, with no tracked changes.

2.3. Peer review process

Draft outputs of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) will undergo the following peer review process:

- The STRP Chair and Vice-chair in consultation with the STRP and the Secretariat will select reviewers. To avoid any potential conflict of interests, STRP members or observers authoring draft materials will not review them.
- Two experts, external to the STRP, will review Ramsar Technical Reports.²
- For all other outputs, at least two STRP members or observers not engaged in the drafting process will review the drafts.

 Lead authors will address comments from the review process and provide written explanations (on a standard template) on how those comments were addressed.

2.4. Production Process

The Secretariat will be responsible for the finalization and production of outputs, which includes copyediting, translation, design and layout, publishing, and printing if necessary.

Once the final draft text (see section 2.2 above) is provided to the Secretariat, further changes by authors will be limited to those requested by the Secretariat. This will ensure that outputs are produced within the established deadlines. The Secretariat will liaise with authors to resolve any new issues that have arisen within the peer review process.

2.5. Amendments and errors after publication

After publication, if, exceptionally, there are substantive corrections³ that need to be made to an output, the Secretariat will make any necessary amendments in consultation with the authors.

² Depending on the complexity of the subject matter or scope of the publication, additional experts may be engaged. A modest honorarium fee will be paid to RTR reviewers.

³ Substantive corrections would include instances in which the following issues, inter alia, are raised: misspelling authors' names, omission of important information, an error in calculations/ figures, claims of plagiarism or issues of authorship, misattribution of sources, or claims of data falsification.

3. Considerations when drafting outputs

The standard structure of three types of written output is summarized below at Annex 1. Please respect word count limits indicated for each section of each output. (These will be confirmed or refined in preparing the annotated outline.)

3.1. Target audiences

The material you are authoring will have a clearly defined target group or groups (below in this document you can check the target group for each output). To ensure the audience is adequately targeted please discuss in advance with the Secretariat. Consider their perspective and needs as you structure the document, frame arguments and provide case studies and recommendations.

Rather than simply outlining a given situation, please draw conclusions for what a specific finding might mean for the specified audience. This should include:

- checklists of things to remember and actions to take – if necessary provide separate checklists and actions if your document is targeted at different audiences; and
- recent case studies relevant to the target group's situation; try to ensure regional balance and diverse examples.

3.2. Language style

Ensure that language is as plain, concise and accessible as possible (mindful of the target audience). Is the text and the argument clear to a reader who is not an expert in the subject matter and not a mother-tongue English speaker? Avoid complex, multi-clause sentences and "academic" styles of complex expression.

3.3. Examples and case studies

Examples and case studies may provide strong support for recommendations, and make messages more accessible and engaging. A short illustration of one or two sentences may be included in the body text; longer examples and more detailed case studies should be set apart in text boxes, possibly with links to more detailed information. Clean drafts should include such text in boxes or indicated by notes to the text (e.g., *Start text box.... End text box*).

3.4. Expressing confidence in findings

Information about the status and trends of wetlands requires clear communication about the degree of confidence authors have in existing information and what issues need to be the subject of further research to facilitate informed decision-making and action.

IPBES has developed a four-box model of confidence for its assessments based on evidence and agreement that provides four confidence terms: "well established" (much evidence and high agreement), "unresolved" (much evidence but low agreement), "established but incomplete" (limited evidence but good agreement) and "speculative" (limited or no evidence and little agreement). Authors are encouraged to use such a model. The model and guidance are available on the IPBES website⁴.

⁴ See section 2.2.6 of https://www.ipbes.net/system/tdf/180719_ipbes_assessment_guide_report_hi-res.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=28500.

3.5. Sources of information

To ensure the credibility and robustness of the scientific and technical outputs of the Convention,

authors should use reliable sources of information. Sources such as peer-reviewed and grey literature, as well as other knowledge systems such as indigenous and local knowledge, can be used.



4. Formatting and graphic content

4.1. Document formatting

Use the least formatting possible, to make editing and layout easier.

- Switch off automatic numbering before starting your document and if your document already has automatically numbered sections, please go through and remove them all; use manual numbering for sections and subsections, as in this document.
- Set paragraph formatting to zero spacing before and after the paragraph, and leave a line break between paragraphs. Use a hard return/enter to end paragraphs.
- Do not wrap text around figures or tables.
- Do not use automatic figure and table captions, or auto cross-references from the main text to figure and table captions.
- Bullet points may be used to help break up the text.
- Bold text may be used sparingly to draw attention to key words.
- Hyperlinks should be spelled out so they can be read in printed versions. If they are long it may be better to do so in a footnote (or preferably converted to a shortened version using https://tinyurl.com).

4.2. Tables and graphics

These should be titled and numbered (Table 1, Table 2, etc. for tables; Figure 1, Figure 2 etc. for all other graphics). Do not abbreviate to Tab. 1 or Fig. 1.

In the draft text, include at the appropriate point in the text, in square brackets, the title of the table or graphic to guide the editor and designer. Please submit the source data in a separate file (e.g., doc, .xls, .ppt), with a corresponding filename, so the designer can remake the table or graphic using Adobe

Illustrator and place it in the laid out version. Please also embed in the text an image of the intended graphic, to help the designer to replicate the source data in the intended manner.

For graphics from other published material, please also indicate the source and the copyright holder, so the Secretariat can request copyright. Please keep tables as simple as possible and check that the numerical and graphical information is explained in the body text and complements it. Tables should be designed to clearly fit one A4 page or less – more complex material should be avoided.

4.3. Images

Generally, only one picture should be used per topic unless the intention is to show contrasting situations, for example before and after effects of wetland management. Mark their place in square brackets in the draft text, along with a caption, so that it will be clear to the graphic designer where they should go. Please also indicate the source and the copyright holder, so the Secretariat can request copyright. Send image files (.jpg or .tif) separately. The minimum resolution should be 300 dots per inch in the final publication. A page-width image should be at least 2,400 pixels wide and a smaller sidebar image at least 500 pixels wide.

We encourage you to use the online Ramsar Photo Library⁵, a gallery of over 1,500 copyright-free images maintained by the Secretariat.

4.4 Citations and references

Information from external sources should be appropriately cited (in text and in the bibliographic references section of the document). If you are using information verbatim from an external source, please

⁵ See https://www.ramsar.org/gallery.

use quotation marks – even if you have authored the original source.

Please provide web links wherever possible after the citation, and always for grey literature reports. Please double-check citations in the text against the full reference list before you submit the clean draft.

Style of references

See the Global Wetland Outlook (https://www.global-wetland-outlook.ramsar.org/outlook) for reference style guidance. For journal papers the format is:

Urák, I., Hartel, T., Gallé, R. & Balog, A. (2017). Worldwide peatland degradations and the related carbon dioxide emissions: the importance of policy regulations. Environmental Science & Policy, 69, 57-64.

For books:

UNEP (United Nations Environment Program). (2014a). UNEP Year Book 2014: Emerging issues in our global environment. Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme.

For chapters within books:

Pittock, J., Finlayson, C.M., Roux, D., Arthington, A., Matthews, J., et al. (2014). Chapter 19:
Managing fresh water, river, wetland and estuarine protected areas. In G.L. Worboys, M. Lockwood, A. Kothari, S. Feary, & I. Pulsford (eds). Protected area governance and management. Canberra: ANU Press.

4.5 General issues of style and language

Below are some key points:

 The Convention uses British English as opposed to American English. Please set the language in Word to English (United Kingdom) and refer to the Oxford English Dictionary when in doubt.

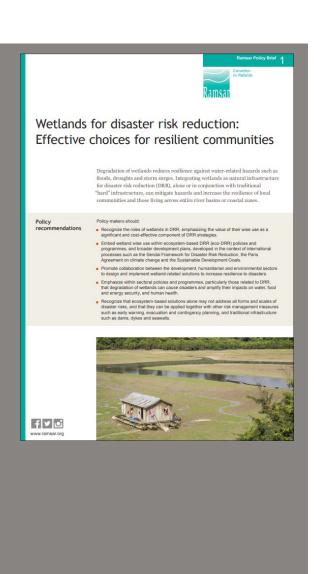
- The Secretariat encourages reference to the Convention as "the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands". Subsequently, "the Convention" may be used, and "the Convention on Wetlands" or "the Ramsar Convention" if necessary to distinguish it from other Conventions mentioned.
- Titles (e.g., of organizations) should be spelled out in full the first time they are used, followed by the abbreviation or acronym within brackets: e.g., The World Health Organization (WHO). Thereafter the abbreviation or acronym can be used by itself, although the full name can be repeated later as a reminder to the reader if helpful.
- Do not use capitals except for formallyassigned titles (e.g., "Wetlands of International Importance", their title according to Article 2 of the Convention, and "Ramsar Sites"). Phrases in lower case can still be assigned acronyms (e.g., "terms of reference (TORs)").
- Numbers less than 11 should be spelled out (e.g., Most individuals were present in all four years of our study), but not in statistical statements (e.g., We had 3-6 years of data for each individual) or in lists including larger numerals (e.g., Age of the individuals was 8, 10 and 14 years, respectively). Numbers above 999 should have a comma delimiter (e.g., 1,000).
- Write currencies as figures preceded by the relevant ISO currency code: e.g., EUR 70,000 or USD 20,000 and with a space between the unit and the amount.
- Use "day-month-year" date format with no internal punctuation: e.g., 21 January 2019.
- Measurements should use standard abbreviations and there should be a space between the number and the unit (e.g., 145 km). Negative powers can intimidate: use m/s rather than ms-1. Leave a space between the value and the unit, e.g., 145 km not 145km.
- At the first mention of a species, give the common language name (where this exists) followed by the full scientific name, in italics, e.g., red knot *Calidris canutus*. Do not add scientific authorities (e.g. *Calidris canutus piersmai* (Tomkovich 2001)) unless this is material information.

5. Review of these guidelines

These guidelines will be reviewed on a regular basis. If there are issues not covered above, or unclarity as to processes or style issues, please advise the Secretariat (bonells@ramsar.org), and these will be included in subsequent versions.







1. Policy Briefs

View the Policy Brief series here: https://www.ramsar.org/resources/ramsar-policy-briefs.

Policy Briefs are short summary papers, which gather information on a particular wetland-related subject or issue to facilitate decision-making. They provide policy recommendations and analysis for policy makers, typically within governments or their agencies.

Policy makers are a broad audience. It is key to identify from the outset what specific audiences the document seeks to target and what levels of government. Policy briefs can also address nontechnical audiences including journalists and researchers.

Policy briefs are short documents for a non-academic and non-technical audience, but they should provide sufficient information grounded in sound scientific evidence to facilitate informed decision-making. A policy brief does not include a lengthy analysis or review of the literature.

When developing a policy brief, it is key to identify from the outset what decision the policy brief is seeking to facilitate. Keep the following considerations in mind:

- What information would policy makers expect or be surprised by from the policy brief?
- What questions would policy makers like answered?
- What information do policy makers need in order to make a decision or to implement change?
- What information would help a policy maker convince others of the rationale for further action?

Number of laid-out pages: four x A4. The total word count should be around 2,000 words (excluding the authors' information and boilerplate sections). The word counts for sections below would lead to this total. Please provide in-text citations and bibliographic references, even though these will not be included in the final published brief. (See also the "Further reading" section below.)

Structure

Title

Summary (c. 200 words)

- Begin with an overview and state the issue.
- Explain why change is needed and where your argument will take the reader.
- State the recommended course(s) of action.

Policy recommendations⁶ (up to six bullet points, c. 150 words)

- Clearly and concisely, state your recommendations.
- Recommendations should be backed up by evidence. They should be action-oriented but not prescriptive.
- Look at existing policy briefs for ideas on styles of expression.

The issue (c. 300 words)

- Describe the context; explain why it matters and the stakeholders involved.
- Explain the causes and effects of the current situation.

Analysis (c. 1,000 words)

This part provides the basis for recommendations; it may be divided into two or more sections.

• Present and evaluate the arguments and the evidence, which supports them.

- Outline the policy options and implications of each option.
- Confidence terms should be applied and the range of views on a topic that a policy maker should be aware of should be presented.
- Use evidence summarized from academic literature and other sources to support your findings and advance your recommendations.

Limitation and further research (c. 150 words)

• State any limitations to the knowledge and state of evidence on the issue, and identify any further research which could further inform policy options.

Authors

 Provide your name and any affiliation as well as those of contributing authors.

Citation

• Secretariat to complete.

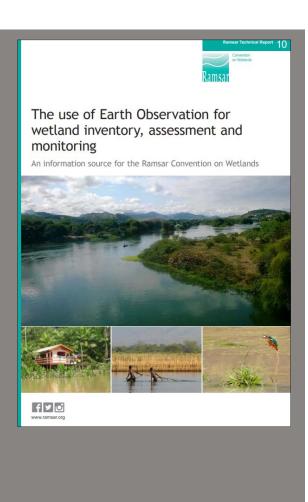
Further reading (c. 200 words)

 Provide a list of sources of further information for interested readers. This should be based on but not limited to the sources referenced in the text of the final draft text.

Boilerplate end text

Secretariat to complete.

For examples of useful key policy messages please refer to IPBES' authors guidelines: https://www.ipbes.net/system/tdf/downloads/pdf/lPBES_MEP_8_5_for%20posting_0.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=15103.



2. Technical Reports

View the Technical Reports Series here: https://www.ramsar.org/resources/ramsar-technical-reports.

Ramsar Technical Reports (RTRs) are research-based documents, which include detailed technical notes, background reviews and reports for Contracting Parties and the wider wetland community.

They contain summaries of the best available wetland science and aim to ensure the increased and longer-term accessibility of technical information of the Convention.

RTRs are aimed at an expert audience, including the scientific and academic communities, as well as wetland practitioners. These reports are peer reviewed externally.

When developing an RTR, it is important to identify from the outset what aspect of wetland conservation and wise the report is seeking to support. Keep the following considerations in mind:

- What aspect of wetland wise use and conservation or Convention implementation is the report seeking to support and at which scale?
- Is the report seeking to fill a gap in existing Convention guidance?
- Is the subject matter an emerging or urgent issue on which valuable research has been carried out?
- Would the report have a positive impact for wetland wise use and conservation? How can practitioners and members of the scientific community use the findings of this report?

Number of laid-out pages: 30 x A4. The total word count should be around 15,000 words (excluding the foreword and acknowledgments sections and authors' information). The word counts for sections below would lead to this total. Please provide in-text citations and complete bibliographic references.

Structure

Title

Authors

• Provide your name and any affiliation as well as those of contributing authors.

Citation

• Secretariat to complete.

Acknowledgements

Foreword

• STRP Chair and Secretary General to complete.

Executive summary (c. 1,500 words)

The executive summary will be the most important part of your document. It could form the basis for a shorter policy brief or fact sheet. Therefore, it is worth spending time and effort to ensure that this section stands out completely on its own. The reader should gain a comprehensive overview of what the report discusses.

- Present succinctly the main arguments, findings and messages contained in the report.
- Use confidence terms supporting each key finding (see section 3.4 above)
- As applicable, include a list of suggested actions or action-oriented recommendations.
- Refer to the sections in the report that contain the relevant supporting evidence and literature mentioned.
- Include a concluding statement, which mirrors the concluding section in the report.

Key findings/ messages (up to 10 bullet points, *c. 500 words*)

 Key findings/ messages should be clear, succinct and supported by confidence terms.

- They should be action-oriented and include the main "take away" messages for the reader
- They should be based on the information and evidence contained in the report and not present new findings or arguments.

Introduction (c. 1,000 words)

- Describe the context for the report, explaining the importance of the subject matter and relevant stakeholders.
- Outline the purpose of the report.
- Provide a brief outline of the material that will be discussed in the following sections of the report.

Body (c. 10,000 words)

- For each of the sections in the body of the report, briefly summarize what the section will discuss.
- Present the state of the information.
- Describe your arguments, and the supporting evidence, accompanied by confidence terms.
- Include relevant, current and regionally balanced case studies and best practices.

Limitations and future research developments (c. 500 words)

- State the limitations in the state of the science or availability of information.
- Outline any foreseen research developments.
- Identify any future trends or scenarios.

Conclusions (c. 500 words)

- Conclude with a summary of the findings and one take-away message.
- Do not introduce new arguments.

Bibliographic references (c. 1,000 words)

Provide full bibliographic references for interested readers.

Boilerplate end text

• Secretariat to complete.

Wetland Restoration for Climate Change Resilience Purpose The bodies has ment to apport whether the continue to change, our ability to adapt will depend on our ability to put in place a range of responses. Key among these are the wise use of wetlands and the restoration of degraded wetlands. Harnessing the natural analysis to the form of the continue to the form of the f

3. Briefing Notes

View the Briefing Note series here: https://www.ramsar.org/resources/ramsar-briefing-notes.

Briefing Notes serve to share scientific and technical information on wetlands with a broader audience than Ramsar Technical Reports (RTRs).

Briefing Notes are shorter than RTRs and provide a more hands-on, practical approach. They are peer reviewed by STRP members.

They are aimed at wetland practitioners (including wetland managers and others from related fields, such as protected area managers and staff of wetland education centres), and people tasked with ensuring the wise use and implementation of the Convention nationally.

Briefing Note 1⁷ gives further information on the Briefing Note series. Remember, however, that provisions of Resolution XII.5 have superseded some of the content.

⁷ See https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/bn1.pdf.

Structure

Number of laid-out pages: ten x A4. The total word count should be around 5,000 words (excluding the relevant Ramsar documents, authors' information and boilerplate sections). The suggested word counts for sections below would lead to this total. Please provide in-text citations as well as bibliographic references.

Title

Purpose (side bar, c. 100 words)

• Describe the purpose of the Note and its intended benefits for specific audiences.

Background (side bar, c. 100 words)

• Briefly describe the mandate for the Note.

Relevant Ramsar documents (side bar)

Secretariat to complete.

Summary (c. 200 words)

• Begin with an overview and state the issue.

Key messages (up to eight bullet points, c. 300 words)

- Summarize the specific findings of the Note and their implications.
- Key messages should be action-oriented and concise.
- Look at existing Briefing Notes for ideas on different wording.

The issue (c. 300 words)

- Describe the context, and explain why it matters, and the stakeholders involved.
- Briefly summarize the content and objectives of the following body sections.

Body sections (c. 3,000 words, maximum 1,000 words per section including box text)

These might include (adapted from Briefing Note 1):

- a report on the results of initial scoping of a larger STRP task, identifying target audiences, terms of reference for technical work to be carried out, and results of an exploratory review of scientific literature;
- a thematic collation of STRP and other work to date on a specific topic or issue;
- a review of relevant scientific information on an issue of specific interest to the Convention;
- advice and recommendations from the STRP on a relevant emerging issue; or
- background and supporting information for a scientific or technical draft Resolution, which is being submitted to the COP for consideration.

Review existing Briefing Notes for ideas on how to organize the subject matter into sections.

Authors

• Provide your name and any affiliation as well as those of contributing authors.

Citation

• Secretariat to complete.

References (c. 1,000 words)

• Provide full bibliographic references for interested readers.

Boilerplate end text

Secretariat to complete.

