

Agenda item 14.1

Report of the STRP Oversight Committee

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to note the report of the STRP Oversight Committee.

Introduction

1. The Oversight Committee for the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) was established by Resolution IX.11 of the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP9) and its role and responsibilities reaffirmed by COP10 Resolution X.9.
2. The STRP Oversight Committee reports to the Standing Committee and its composition is: the Chair and Vice Chair of the Standing Committee, the Chair and Vice Chair of the STRP, and the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General *ex officio*. The Oversight Committee is chaired by the Chair of Standing Committee.
3. The responsibilities of the STRP Oversight Committee are to:
 - i) appoint the members, Chair and Vice Chair of the STRP;
 - ii) provide intersessional advice, guidance and support to the operations and work of the Panel;
 - iii) keep under review, and advise the Standing Committee on, the operations of the Panel under the revised *modus operandi*; and
 - iv) provide advice to the Secretariat on expenditures under the STRP budget line.

Activities undertaken since COP10

4. The main task for the STRP Oversight Committee since COP10 has been to appoint the Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the STRP for the 2009-2012 period.
5. In line with the STRP *modus operandi* adopted by Resolution X.9, in December 2008 the Secretariat issued a call for STRP member and Chair nominations to all Ramsar Administrative Authorities, all STRP National Focal Points, and all 2006-2008 STRP members and observers. The closing date for nominations was 31 January 2009.
6. A total of 35 administratively complete nominations were received by the Secretariat. Many of the candidates were nominated for several different STRP member posts. By Ramsar region, the nationality of the candidates is as follows:

Ramsar region	No. of nominations
Africa	8
Asia	3
Europe	8
Neotropics	7
North America	5
Oceania	4
TOTAL	35

7. Overall, this may be considered a rather disappointing response, particularly for some regions, notably Asia. Notwithstanding that nominations could be made by Administrative Authorities, STRP National Focal Points, and STRP members/observers of persons from anywhere in the world, most nominations came from national Administrative Authorities, nominating a person or persons from their country, or from STRP members and observers. Very few nominations were received from STRP National Focal Points.
8. Following a review of all nominations by the Secretariat's senior regional and global technical staff, which took into account the criteria and characteristics for the members and the Chair as set out in the *modus operandi*, recommendations for appointments were made in early February to the STRP Oversight Committee. After considering these recommendations, the Oversight Committee has made the following appointments for the membership of the STRP 2009-2012:

Chairs:

Chairperson	Dr Heather MacKay
Vice-Chairperson	Ms. Rebecca D'Cruz

Regional networkers:

Africa	Dr Stanley Liphadzi
Asia	Ms. Rebecca D'Cruz
Europe	Ms Rebecca Lee
Neotropics	Dr Montserrat Carbonell
North America	Mr Randy Milton
Oceania	Mr Philippe Gerbeaux

Thematic experts:

Wetland inventory, assessment and indicators	Mr Dave Pritchard
Ramsar site designation	Mr David Stroud
Wetland restoration and management	Mr Kevin Erwin
Wetlands and climate change	Prof Max Finlayson
Wetlands and human health	Dr Pierre Horwitz
Wetlands and water resources	Prof. Mike Acreman
Wetlands and agriculture	Mr George Lukacs
CEPA	Ms Christine Prietto

IOP representative members:

BirdLife International	Dr Vicky Jones
Wetlands International	Mr Ritesh Kumar
International Water Management Institute (IWMI)	Dr Matthew McCartney
IUCN	Dr Mark Smith
WWF	Mrs Archana Chatterjee

9. All those nominees selected for appointment have accepted their appointments. The STRP *modus operandi* requires that all such nominations and appointments be made of persons for their expertise in their own right, and thus STRP members are not appointed as representatives of their countries, governments or organizations. The STRP Oversight Committee believes that together these appointees will bring a very high level of experience and expertise to the work required of the Panel in the coming four years.
10. In view of the fact that the Oversight Committee received many more nominations of highly qualified experts than could be appointed to the Panel for this cycle, the Committee has also invited a number of the other nominees from different Ramsar regions to act as “STRP Invited Experts” for 2009-2012. All these persons have been contacted and a number have accepted this role, but the Secretariat is awaiting confirmation from others. Following receipt of confirmation from all Invited Experts, the Secretariat will publicly announce this list. Although the core funding for the STRP is insufficient to cover the costs of participation in STRP meetings by these Invited Experts, it is hoped that other sources of funding can be identified to cover participation costs of some of these people. STRP Invited Experts will also contribute their expertise intersessionally through the Panel’s electronic communications mechanisms, including through the STRP Support Service web discussion forums.
11. In addition, the Oversight Committee recognized that all nominees have experience and expertise relevant to one or more aspects of the STRP’s priority work for 2009-2012, and it has invited all of the unsuccessful nominees to participate in the work of the Panel through its electronic communications mechanisms, including through the STRP Support Service.
12. The first full meeting of the STRP for the 2009-2012 cycle (STRP15) will take place at the Secretariat offices in Gland, Switzerland, from 30 March to 3 April 2009. All STRP appointed members will be participating, along with several of the 2009-2012 Invited Experts, some through the provision of air tickets through the “Biosphere Connections” agreement with Star Alliance airlines. The main focus of STRP15 will be to develop the Panel’s 2009-2012 Work Plan from the instructions and prioritisation provided by COP10 Resolution X.10 on future scientific and technical priorities for the Convention.
13. The STRP 2009-2012 draft Work Plan prepared by STRP15 will be transmitted to the Standing Committee at its 40th meeting for its consideration and approval, under Agenda item 14.2.