

Agenda item 15.2

Report on the World Wetlands Day assessment

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to note the WWD assessment report and suggested next steps.

1. As reported at the 36th meeting of the Standing Committee in DOC. SC36-20, a consultant was contracted in January 2008 to carry out a review and assessment of World Wetlands Day (WWD), an annual event led by the Secretariat and supported by many WWD actors since 1997. Due to various unforeseen problems encountered by the consultant after the contract had been signed, the consultant only began the work in the middle of 2008; a full report was delivered at the end of the year and finalised in January 2009. This report is available on the Ramsar web site at www.ramsar.org/sc/40/key_sc40_doc20_rpt.pdf.
2. The assessment set out to look at:
 - the efficiency and effectiveness of the Secretariat in identifying themes, preparing and disseminating appropriate materials, and reporting on WWD activities;
 - the diversity of WWD actors and their targets, and, if possible, the apparent impact of their WWD actions;
 - the needs and expectations of WWD actors in terms of WWD materials from the Secretariat;
 - the need and potential for further development of WWD, in the light of the above, to reach out effectively to a broader range of WWD actors and targets on key wetland issues, and to assess the financial implications of this.
3. The assessment relied on two sources of information: the WWD web reports from 2003-2007 inclusive and an online survey in English, French, and Spanish developed and run largely by the consultant, which was directed at 335 wetland actors who reported their WWD activities to the Secretariat in 2006 and 2007. Due to non-functional email addresses, 305 e-mails inviting people to complete the survey were successfully delivered and 155 people, covering all Ramsar regions, completed the survey. This was a highly credible response rate of 51%.
4. A number of key conclusions from the assessment help inform us about the Convention's WWD actors:
 - Predictably they are mostly NGOs, although they were only slightly more numerous than government personnel as WWD actors (see Fig. 1)

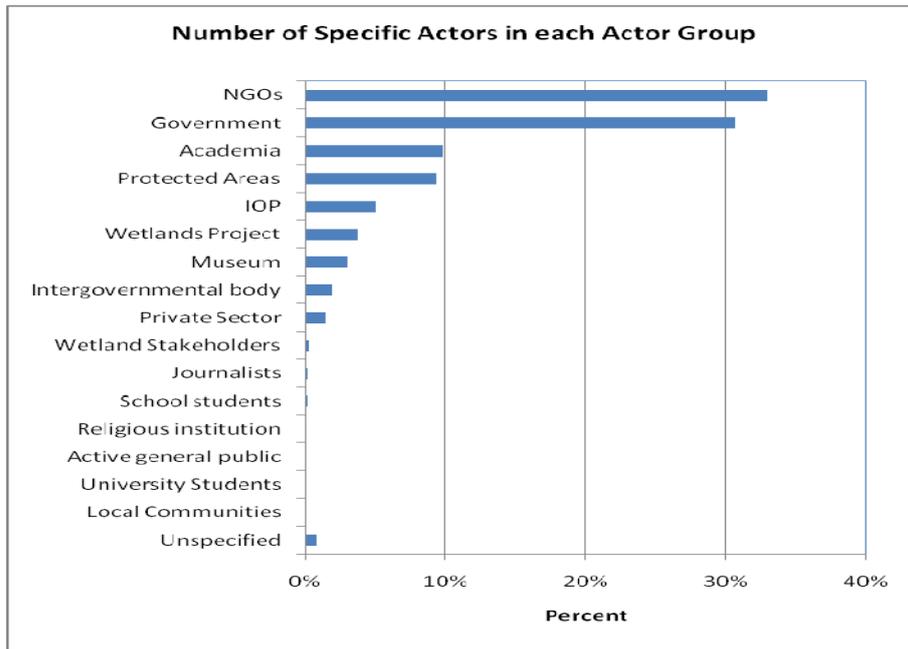


Fig. 1

- In terms of the regional distribution of the WWD actors who sent web reports on their WWD activities, Europe produced the most reports (particularly because of the effectiveness of the Pôle-relais network in France), followed by Asia and the Neotropics (Fig. 2).

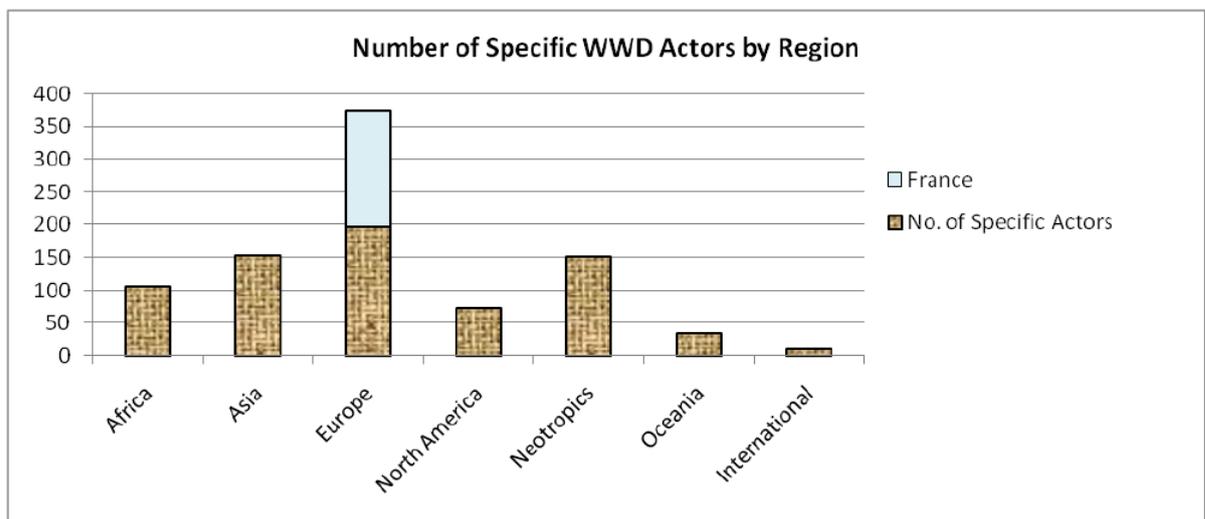


Fig. 2

- The main target audiences for WWD activities are the ‘active’ general public (those willing to attend a WWD event) and children. Together these constituted 53% of all targets. Government officials, specific stakeholder groups (such as fishermen, pastoralists, and wetland managers) collectively formed less than 10% of the targets. While 82% of respondents said they **had** identified their target audience before designing their WWD activity, it would seem that there is a strong tendency to target

either children (19%) or the general public (34%), the latter a very broad group indeed.

- An analysis of the utility of the four main types of WWD materials produced by the Secretariat (poster, stickers, information fact sheets/leaflet, do-it-yourself sheet for children) indicated a high level of appreciation of these, with the poster and leaflet scoring equally highly in the ‘extremely useful’ and ‘very useful’ categories and both being quite clearly more highly appreciated than the stickers or do-it-yourself sheet for children.
- While 51% of respondents said that providing only electronic versions of our materials would not affect their decision to hold a WWD event, 28% of respondents said that it would make them either less likely to hold an event (25.5%) or they definitely would not (2.6%).
- The responses to how actors assessed the impact of their WWD activities were very varied and indicated some awareness of the need to assess impact.
- In responding to how the Secretariat could strengthen the impact of WWD, many ideas were put forward, some of which merit further consideration.
- Over 60% of respondents recorded that posting of the WWD reports on our web site was of “great importance” to them and another 24% thought it “important” (Fig 22). These were of course already a ‘filtered’ group in that they were part of the survey *because* they had filed a report for the web. It does emphasize, however, that this matters to at least a subgroup of WWD actors: we need to consider again the practical implications of this in terms of the staff time involved and our current methods of posting. There are now several organizations using online systems that allow people to upload their reports directly, but of course there are both positive and negative aspects of this to be taken into consideration.
- In section 6 of the report, the consultant collated recommendations for WWD actors and for the Secretariat based on the results of the analysis (thus the consultant’s professional view) and on some of the suggestions emanating from the online survey. These recommendations are reproduced in Annex 1 to this report.

Next steps

5. Following discussions within the Secretariat it is suggested that a ‘popular’ illustrated report about WWD for posting on the web should be prepared. This should be broadly distributed electronically to our main Administrative Authority contacts, WWD contacts, and potential new WWD actors. At this early stage in our discussions it is suggested that it should be a celebration of WWD as well as including sections on:
 - identifying WWD targets (how and why);
 - assessing event impact (perhaps some suggested tools);
 - references to some of the useful suggestions made in section 4.8;
 - improving reporting by providing a simple, helpful template that would encourage identifying targets, purpose, etc.;
 - brief information on the uploading of reports to the web, depending on our decision on this.
6. While it is hoped to produce this popular report in time for the mailing of WWD 2010 materials, it must be noted that this will be challenging in terms of the availability of staff time.

7. Finally, it is worth noting that since the first launching of WWD in 1997, all WWD materials provided to WWD actors have been funded through the Danone/Evian Fund and not from core funding.

Annex 1

Recommendations from the WWD Assessment Report

In section 6 of the full WWD Assessment report, the consultant made a large number of recommendations based on both the results of the analysis and the suggestions made by the online respondents. These are reproduced in their entirety here.

6. Recommendations

Some of the recommendations herein are made as a result of the analysis; others draw on some of the many excellent suggestions received through the web survey.

Recommendations for the WWD Actors

Designing a WWD Event

1. **Theory of Change:** To get the most out of WWD events and celebrations, they should be intentionally designed for a strategic outcome, i.e., a behavioural change in those people, groups or organisations who are likely to have the greatest influence on the health of the wetlands targeted. To make the Theory of Change explicit, four questions need to be answered at the outset:
 - **Why?** What is the vision to which WWD actors want to contribute?
 - **Who?** What target groups or individuals are likely to have the greatest influence?
 - **What?** What are the specific changes being sought?
 - **How?** How will WWD activities contribute to the changes sought?
2. **KAP Survey:** Know and understand your target group(s). As a prerequisite to designing a WWD event, carry out a survey to document the baseline situation of your target group(s) in terms of their Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice (KAP).
3. **Design WWD Activities** based on the specific KAP changes sought. Design practical and meaningful activities based on the knowledge and needs of the target groups. Generally to change behaviour (Practice), one must first change Attitudes, and to Attitudes, Knowledge must first be transmitted and assimilated. For each specific target group, identify the problem to be solved, the main message or learning to be delivered, and the most suitable vehicle(s) to convey it.
4. **Coordination:** Set up a nationwide coordination system based on a National Wetlands Action Plan, such as the “Pôle-Relais” in France, and be sure that it is representative of a wide variety of WWD actors.
5. **Follow-up:** Design follow-up activities so that WWD is not just a one-off event. More continuity will enhance the long-term impact of WWD events.
6. **Set Indicators and Benchmarks** for how progress toward KAP outcomes will be measured.

7. **M&E:** Prepare a monitoring and evaluation plan for how and when to measure progress towards the KAP outcomes sought.

WWD targets

8. The most important change that many WWD actors need to make is to systematically identify their target audiences well in advance. WWD actors are encouraged to put the emphasis on target groups who are likely to have the greatest impact on the health of wetlands, for example: the media, decision-makers (government, opinion makers, village chiefs...), the private sector, polluters, wetland stakeholders, competitors for water allocations, etc.
9. Liaise more strongly with the media. Provide them with specific background information and materials produced by the Secretariat specifically for the media.

WWD activities

10. In addition to WWD programmes based on the most common types of activities (educational activities, site visits, conferences and workshops, distribution of communications materials, and creative or performance activities), actors could enrich their programmes, and perhaps make them more strategic, by considering activities such as: a policy launch, memoranda to the government, protests against destructive practices, television programmes, religious services, etc. Locally made videos targeting decision-makers have produced good results in motivating local officials to take action.
11. Emphasise interactive activities, which are known to enhance KAP outcomes.

Follow-up

12. Establish wetland volunteer groups in key areas all over the country.
13. New audiences could be engaged by combining WWD with important cultural events.
14. Look for multiplier effects, using the WWD slogan for other wetland campaigns during the year.

Recommendations for the Ramsar Secretariat

Support to WWD actors

15. Announce the theme for the next year as early as possible.
16. The focal point alone cannot always fulfil national needs; recommend to the focal points in each country to ensure an effective collaboration with local NGOs and civil society.
17. Produce a handbook on identifying target groups, carrying out baseline KAP surveys, designing WWD activities, identifying indicators, and monitoring and evaluating progress. Include illustrated case studies of exemplary WWD events in each region and examples of different types of activities that have been effective with different target groups.

18. In the interest of strengthening both the impact of WWD activities and the quality of WWD reports, it is strongly recommended that the Secretariat request WWD actors to follow a standard outline for all WWD reports. WWD reports should be as brief as possible and include the following:
- Organisation(s) carrying out the WWD activities
 - Author of the WWD report (with contact information)
 - Theme (if any)
 - Theory of Change (Why? Who? What? How?)
 - Specific target groups and explanation of the strategic importance of these specific groups
 - Results of the baseline KAP Survey of the target groups
 - WWD activities and how these were tailored to the target groups
 - National coordination mechanism
 - Follow-up activities throughout the year
 - Indicators used for assessing the outcomes of WWD activities (changes in practice) within the target groups
 - Types of assessment methodologies used to measure outcomes; limitations of assessment methodologies
 - Results of monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes sought
 - Recommendations on how to strengthen the impact of WWD.

Materials

19. In general, provide WWD materials by posting them on the Internet rather than mailing out hard copies, but produce and send hard copies to those WWD actors who request them.
20. To enhance the reach and impact of WWD worldwide, in addition to providing materials posted on the Internet in English, French and Spanish, translate them into the other three official UN languages as well: Arabic, Chinese and Russian.
21. Help WWD actors to engage the media by providing substantive videos on the annual theme, short TV and radio spots or public service announcements, feature articles, photos, press releases and jingles.
22. Dedicate more resources to producing fact sheets and briefing notes.
23. Create two versions of each poster – one with and one without writing – to allow WWD actors to add their own, locally-specific text.
24. Produce a brief summary of global WWD activities of the last year to WWD actors and Contracting Parties, together with materials for WWD of the coming year.
25. Create materials for different social actors, for example easy-to-read materials (with less text) for communities who have low education levels and cannot understand the terms used.

26. Provide suggestions for games, puzzles and competitions around WWD.

Media

27. Make the Ramsar Web site the ultimate vehicle for reaching out to people. Make more specific information on the theme available on the Ramsar Web site. Create a forum to exchange experiences and publish news about WWD. Organise and publish on the Web site an International WWD Quiz competition every year.
28. Promote wetlands in general and WWD specifically more widely. Carry out publicity campaigns in massive communications media. Run more advertisements at the global level.
29. Get free advertising.
30. Use Facebook (150 million users worldwide) to spread the word by creating a Facebook page for the Ramsar Convention that members can become fans of. As a fan, they will then receive an update on wetland issues every time the Secretariat chooses to send one out.
31. Appoint celebrity (such as Raphael Nadal or Angelina Jolie) as a global ambassador for wetlands protection and conservation.

Funding

32. Mobilise more resources to support WWD: get sponsorships and create a specific fund for WWD.
33. Provide funding to WWD actors, especially in developing countries, using small grants.