

Memorandum of Cooperation 2017-2023 between the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) and the Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS)

May 5, 2017

Preamble

Since its inception in 1971, the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) has provided the single most important intergovernmental forum on wetland conservation issues. According to the Convention's mission statement, the Contracting Parties agree to "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".

The Convention is founded on the three pillars of:

- promoting the wise use of wetlands,
- developing and managing a network of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), and
- establishing international cooperation.

The conservation and wise management of wetlands through the designation of wetlands for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance, especially the obligation to maintain the ecological character of designated sites, deserves special recognition. This obligation recognizes the importance of wetlands for the maintenance of healthy and productive inland freshwater and coastal systems. In the context of water and wetlands, the Convention on Wetlands thus addresses issues that guide its Contracting Parties on ways to achieve sustainable development.

Within the general obligations set out by the treaty, Contracting Parties, meeting as the Conference of the Parties (COP), identify priorities for action through a Strategic Plan. Implementation of this Memorandum of Cooperation shall be through joint actions within the framework of the Ramsar Strategic Plan.

The mission of the Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS) is to promote understanding, conservation, protection, restoration, science-based management, and sustainability of wetlands. The objectives of

the Society are to: operate solely and exclusively as a charitable and educational organization to foster conservation and understanding of wetlands; advance public education and enlightenment concerning wetland resources; provide an independent forum for an interchange of ideas and data developed within wetland science; develop and encourage wetland science as a distinct discipline by supporting student education, curriculum development and research; encourage and evaluate the educational, scientific and technological development and advancement of all branches of wetland science and practice; and encourage the knowledge management of wetland resources.

The Convention on Wetlands and the SWS recognize the fundamental role played by wetlands in regulating and providing water, in supporting maintenance of cultural and biological diversity, in ensuring high ecosystem integrity, in regulating climate, and in providing ecosystem services and benefits for people and the planet.

The Convention on Wetlands and SWS share similar conservation and management goals and the positive cooperation between the two institutions to date has been expressed through mutual recognition by our respective governing bodies. The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and the SWS have entered into a cooperative relationship to reinforce existing mechanisms, through a Memorandum of Cooperation first signed in 1999 and renewed in 2004 and in 2011, including any specific joint work plans, and to establish new and specific mechanisms for enhancing synergies and partnerships to achieve common goals, whilst avoiding duplication of effort through implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan.

To facilitate this ongoing collaboration, in 2010 SWS established a formal Ramsar Section.

Therefore, the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and SWS, through this further renewal of the Memorandum of Cooperation, agree to the following:

Article 1. Mechanisms for Programme Cooperation

- A. The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and the SWS Executive Board will continue to identify and develop collaboratively joint activities for sustainable wetland and water resource conservation and management by maintaining and increasing current consultation and cooperation between them.

- B. For general matters, the leading officers for the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and SWS are respectively the Secretary General and the President, and/or their delegated representatives.
- C. The leading officers, or their assigned delegates, may meet from time to time to assess the implementation of this Memorandum, exchange documents, and review on-going activities.

Article 2. Joint Activities

- A. Common areas for specific joint activities will be identified and developed collaboratively between the Ramsar Secretariat, Ramsar Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP) and the SWS Ramsar Section, will be linked as implementation support to the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 and will be reviewed annually or at the request of either party.
- B. SWS and the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands will communicate agreement on common areas with their respective networks, and SWS will endeavor to mobilize the expertise available on wetlands and water resources within its organization in support of these activities. This will include support and encouragement of both the SWS Education and Outreach Committee and SWS's Ramsar Section, whose goals include facilitating the transfer of scientific and technical advice between the Ramsar Secretariat and SWS, facilitating the development of joint educational activities and community programs, and stimulating discussions of Ramsar related issues in the SWS membership through symposia, internet discussion and informal networking.
- C. An SWS representative will participate as an observer in the work of the Ramsar Convention's Scientific & Technical Review Panel, with the goal of establishing a working relationship with the STRP on matters of common interest and expertise. The SWS representative will be the elected Chair of the SWS Ramsar Section (or his/her delegated representative). Additional SWS experts may be identified to contribute to the work of the STRP to be identified by the SWS Ramsar Section Chair in consultation with the SWS President and Executive Board and with the agreement of the STRP Chair, in relation to the priority themes of the current STRP work plan.
- D. The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and SWS will provide each other with details

of their annual work programmes and those of relevant bodies, especially of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), to ensure harmonization of activities at global, regional and country levels.

- E. The extent to which the collaborative programme and the joint wetland science and conservation activities are implemented will be subject to the availability of resources.

Article 3. Obligation, Review and Termination

- A. This Memorandum of Cooperation constitutes an expression of a shared objective and vision. However, each party's actions will be considered to be that party's sole and separate action, for all purposes, and neither party shall claim to be acting on behalf of, or as agent for, the other party to this Memorandum of Cooperation.
- B. The term for this Memorandum of Cooperation is six years. The agreement may be reviewed at the request of either party (usually annually) and may be terminated by either party subject to six months notice in writing.



Martha Rojas-Urrego
Secretary General
Convention on Wetlands
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)



Gillian T. Davies
President
Society of Wetland Scientists