

Memorandum of Understanding
between
the International Association for Impact Assessment
and
the Bureau of the Convention on Wetlands
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Background

Whereas the Parties to the Ramsar Convention recognise the potential role of impact assessment in ensuring that the ecological, social and economic effects of development on wetlands are taken into account in the planning process;

Whereas the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and to the Ramsar Convention have called for the International Association of Impact Assessment (IAIA) to become involved in defining and developing the role of impact assessment tools in achieving the aims and objectives of the conventions;

Whereas the Ramsar Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) has formed a working group on impact assessment which involves IAIA members and representatives;

Whereas the IAIA recognises the part its members can play in providing relevant experience and case studies relating to the application of impact assessment to developments potentially affecting wetlands in general and in particular those declared as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention;

Whereas the IAIA recognises its role in developing best practice guidance concerning the use of impact assessment at the strategic or project level in relation to development potentially affecting wetlands;

Whereas the formation of a biodiversity and ecology section in IAIA and the aforementioned strategic directions within the Ramsar Convention indicate a common purpose, linking the objectives of the two organisations;

This memorandum of understanding is established to define those common objectives and to provide a framework for mutual collaboration in support of progress towards the wider application of impact assessment tools to ensure that the ecological, social and economic impacts of development on wetlands in general and in particular those declared as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention are taken into account.

Common objectives

1. To improve the use and application of impact assessment tools in the conservation and wise use of wetlands;
2. To develop, where necessary, new or innovative impact assessment tools for managing wetlands;

3. To extend the use of impact assessment to strategic decision-making levels in all countries in relation to wetlands;
4. To ensure the use of impact assessment tools in the development and implementation of incentive measures for wetlands conservation and wise use;
5. To identify and develop cross-linkages between the impact assessment agenda item and other components of the Ramsar Convention tools;
6. To ensure that all policies, programmes and projects potentially affecting wetlands are subjected to an adequate impact assessment that addresses impacts on biodiversity and other wetland functions and values, and include recommendations for safeguarding, mitigating adverse impacts, and enhancing the benefits that are derived from wetland biodiversity and other functions and values.

Activities

In pursuance of these objectives, IAIA and the Ramsar Convention Bureau each designate a focal point responsible for coordinating joint activities which will include a joint work plan on impact assessment as outlined by the working group of Ramsar's STRP. This work plan will be regularly visited and updated.

Financial considerations

This Memorandum does not imply any obligation for either party to provide financial support, but notwithstanding:

- a) from time to time, each organisation may invite and support representatives from the other to its meetings;
- b) each organisation shall seek opportunities for mutual joint action and fundraising; and
- c) when joint programmes are established, they may be administered by either organisation using its usual procedures, and subject to its rules.

Any dispute concerning the interpretation or implementation of this MOU shall be settled amicably by the parties.

This MOU can be terminated by either party by giving notice to this effect within a minimum of two months time.

For the International Association for
Impact Assessment (IAIA)

Elvis Au
President of IAIA

Date: 20 June 2001

For the Ramsar Convention Bureau

Delmar Blasco
Secretary General

Date: 22 June 2001