

**CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**

**29<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee  
Gland, Switzerland, 26-28 February 2003**

**DOC. SC29-5**

Agenda item 6.2

**Establishment of the STRP Support Service**

**Action requested:** The Standing Committee is requested to note the procedure for establishing the STRP Support Service and to provide direction concerning the full establishment of the Service in the light of an update on progress which will be provided to the Committee at its meeting.

1. Resolution VIII.28, *Modus operandi of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel*, endorsed the establishment of an STRP Support Service, working in open and transparent partnership with all International Organization Partners, STRP observer organizations and others, and instructed the Ramsar Bureau to establish, with the approval of the Standing Committee, a contractual arrangement and terms of reference for the delivery of this Service.
2. Paragraph 36 of the Annex to Resolution VIII.28 established that the role of the STRP Support Service will be to:
  - a) establish improved links with, and knowledge of, existing expert networks operated by the Convention (Ramsar Experts Database, STRP National Focal Points), IOPs, and other organizations with observer status to STRP and/or with which the Convention has developed links;
  - b) further develop and build the capacity of the network of STRP National Focal Points and their within-country expert networks;
  - c) identify gaps in expert network coverage in relation to the STRP's work, and seek to fill those gaps through identification and establishing linkage with other existing networks and the establishment of new networks as appropriate;
  - d) advise the STRP on appropriate experts from these networks to contribute to the work of the STRP; and
  - e) support the work of Expert Working Groups established by the STRP, on behalf of the Bureau.
3. The STRP's *modus operandi* also indicates (paragraph 38 g) that the work of the STRP Support Service under 2 e) above will include supporting the preparation of substantive guidelines and other reports by external experts, as resources permit, and assisting the Ramsar Bureau in identifying the costs of preparing each substantive task identified for the work of the STRP.

4. The Convention's core budget for the 2003-2005 triennium, adopted by Resolution VIII.27, includes CHF 110,000 per annum for the running of the STRP Support Service.
5. The Bureau has issued an invitation to each of the Convention's four International Organization Partners (IOPs) to offer to provide the STRP Support Service functions, and has requested IOPs to provide to the Bureau an indication of interest in undertaking the STRP Support Service by 15 February 2003, and to provide a costed proposal for delivering this Service by 24 February 2003 so that any such proposals received can be made available for consideration by the Standing Committee during its 29<sup>th</sup> meeting.
6. For the effective delivery of the functions it is being established to undertake, it will be essential for STRP Support Service to be operational by the time of the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the STRP in April 2003.