

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
36th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland, 27-29 February 2008

SC36: Management Working Group Report

Future Secretariat Structure and staffing (DOC. SC36-16)

1. During discussions in the Management WG, 25 February 2008, the following matters emerged:
 - i. general consensus that the proposal for the interim structure for 2008 is acceptable;
 - ii. the need for developing a “partnerships capacity” is generally supported, as a key role for the Secretariat;
 - iii. that the SG’s review and proposals for a 2009-2011 staffing and structure is appropriate in a general sense to consider as a realistic vision for a future structure to deliver the aspirations and development of the Convention in an evolving world and the increasing recognition of the Convention as a global and national/regional player in the sustainable use of wetland ecosystems;
 - iv. that the SG’s proposals for future staffing should be seen as a recognition of needs, and that there are a number of opportunities which can be considered by SC36 concerning how such a structure might be achieved – separate from issues concerning debate on core budget issues – such as encouraging secondments from Parties and other organizations; and concerns that there should not be too many “chiefs” without a concomitant increasing in staff delivering on-the-ground support;
 - vi. the very broad management and leadership role of the current DSG ToR need reworking to streamline the effectiveness and efficiency of Secretariat operations in supporting global and national Secretariat CP support processes;
 - vi. in the light of these considerations, a simpler and clearer senior management structure can be proposed (see attached Annex diagram), whereby the DSG is directly responsible to the SG, and the DSG then co-ordinates each of the other teams proposed, through a lead person in each team;
 - vii. there may be a need to therefore identify which posts and proposals should be taken up in Finance SG discussions, and which can be recognized as realistic expectations for supporting future Secretariat structure up to and following 2011, and which need addressing in SC recommendations to COP10; and
 - viii. that the Secretariat needs to provide further information about current work overloads; and what un-resourced priorities which are set by priorities set by COP (aspirational) decisions (Resolutions) cannot be delivered by current Secretariat resourcing and staffing.

Recommendation:

The Management Working Group recommends that the Standing Committee:

- i. endorses the interim Secretariat staff structure for 2008;
- ii. recognizes that the SG's review and proposals for a 2009-2011 staffing and structure are appropriate in a general sense to consider as a realistic vision for a future Secretariat structure to deliver the aspirations and development of the Convention;
- iii. endorses this staffing and structure, subject to its amendment with the simplified senior management structure [annexed to this report], noting that nothing in this decision relates to issues concerning core budget matters to be considered further by SC37 and COP10 in relation to any core funding allocations for additional posts indicated; and
- iv. requests the Secretary General to revise and update, as necessary, the post descriptions and Terms of Reference of Secretariat staff posts in the light of this Decision, and to provide further information to SC37 on a) what options exist for additional staffing other than from core budget allocations; b) on Secretariat current work overloads, and c) on what un-resourced priorities which have been set by COP decisions (Resolutions) cannot be delivered by current Secretariat resourcing and staffing.

Legal status of the Secretariat (DOC. SC26-15)

Recommendation:

The Management Working Group, after consideration of the paper prepared by the Secretariat, recommends that the Standing Committee:

- i. recognizes that none of the three options so far evaluated by the Secretariat addressed all the issues and problems identified;
- ii. encourages the Secretariat to continue to explore the implications of the three options with *inter alia* IUCN, Switzerland as host country, UNEP and UNESCO, and to report back to SC37;
- iii. have as a guiding principle that nothing in these proposals should increase the costs to Parties in relation to their annual contributions to the core budget.

Transition Committee for Management Working Group

The Working Group agreed that a transition committee would be helpful to establish, and also noted that aspects of COP9 Resolution IX.24 are implicitly time-limited to the current triennium only.

Recommendation:

The Management Working Group recommends that the Standing Committee:

- i. requests the Secretariat, working with the Chair of the Management Working Group to prepare a COP10 draft Resolution for consideration by the 37th meeting of the Standing Committee, which *inter alia* establishes a Transition Committee in line with Decision SC35-

10, and revises paragraphs 7-9 of Resolution IX.24 so as to remove time-limited aspects; and

- ii. requests the Secretariat, working with the Chair of the Management Working Group, to prepare a COP10 Information Paper reporting, as requested in Resolution IX.24, paragraphs 7 and 9, on aspects of the work of the Management Working Group.

Options for mechanisms for Ramsar initiatives to “reach the ground”

The Management Working Group identified a number of concerns in relation to the handling of regional initiatives which are operating within the framework of the Convention (Resolution IX.7), which it also recognizes as a potentially important mechanism for rolling out Convention implementation at national and (sub)regional levels. These include:

- Proliferation of initiatives in several regions;
- Uncontrolled increase in funding requests;
- Increasing demands on Secretariat core staffing to mentor and support initiatives
- Funding allocations inequitable between Ramsar regions; and
- Process promotes fragmentation of (potentially competing and overlapping) initiatives, rather than co-operation within each region

Recommendation:

The Management Working Group recommends that the Standing Committee transmit to COP10 proposed amendments to the process and operations of regional initiatives, such that:

1. There will be one ‘umbrella’ regional initiative per Ramsar region;
2. Each ‘umbrella’ regional initiative can have as many sub-regional elements as the region desires. These can be organized thematically, geographically, or in any other way that the region desires;
3. Each region will be directly responsible to unite their present and proposed future initiatives under one ‘umbrella’ regional initiative;
4. Regional Standing Committee representatives will take the lead in reviewing and guiding the development of this mechanism, and reporting to Standing Committee on its implementation;
5. Ramsar Secretariat staff will advise and co-ordinate these mechanisms only through the ‘umbrella’ initiative in each region;
6. The SC Sub-group on Finance will revisit the current policy of a three-year maximum of financial support from the Convention’s core budget support for each individual regional initiative, in the light of these proposals and will make recommendations to the Standing Committee and COP.

[Note. This matter was also subsequently discussed by the Sub-group on Finance]

Secretary General performance assessment and travel authorizations

Recommendation:

The Management Working Group recommends that the Standing Committee agree that:

- i. the Secretary General's performance assessment for 2007 is undertaken using the form developed and used by the Executive Team for the SG's probation period, and for the Executive Team to complete performance assessment by the end of March 2007;
- ii. in line with Swiss legal requirements, approvals for travel by the Secretary General will be made by the Chair of Standing Committee, following submission by the Secretary General of travel requests, including identification of purpose and related costs.

Secretariat ombudsman arrangements

Recommendation:

The Management Working Group recommends that Standing Committee agree a clarification to Decision SC35-12, whereby staff issues arising will be addressed in the first instance through established IUCN staff procedures, and that the SC Chair will act as ombudsman if and when a staff issue arises which is not covered by IUCN staff rules and procedures.

Ramsar Convention Secretariat – Mgmt WG:
alternative Senior Management structure proposal - 2009 onwards

