

Agenda item 18

## Update on business partnerships activities

**Action requested:** The Standing Committee is invited to take note of this report on business partnership activities and advise as appropriate on future steps.

### Introduction

1. The purpose of this document is to update the Standing Committee on business partnerships under the Convention and highlight the work planned.
2. Currently, there are two business partnerships: The Danone/Evian Initiative and the Biosphere Connections. As illustrated in the summary table annexed to this document, these continue to help fund and support important activities under the Convention which could not be completed otherwise. Activity reports concerning the Danone Fund for Water, Danone Fund for Nature, and Ecoles de protection de l'eau are available on the Ramsar website (French only).

### Partnerships with the business sector

3. It has been reiterated in previous Convention documents that private sector engagement offers positive opportunities and ways forward in furthering the implementation of the Convention and promoting the conservation and wise use of wetlands. Such engagement provides a mechanism to harness additional resources – scientific/technical, knowledge-based, and financial. The most significant end result of partnership with the business sector is not the level of funding, however, but rather the degree of awareness that can be deployed to improve the consequences on the environment, especially wetland ecosystems.
4. The Annex to Resolution X.12 sets out *Principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector*. The Resolution demonstrates the continued support from Contracting Parties for business sector partnerships and encourages the Secretariat to further such relations “in order to promote cooperation with a view to maintaining the ecological values of wetlands as assets for sustainable development”.

### Current Partnerships

5. A key Ramsar partnership with the business sector has long been the collaboration with the Danone Group under the Evian Initiative; it began in 1998, but since 2003 its ‘Fund for Water’ has been a core part of the relationship. A major outcome of this Initiative has been generous financial support for the preparation of materials to raise awareness by means of the

annual celebration of World Wetlands Day on February 2<sup>nd</sup> every year, an event which serves to raise public awareness of wetland values and benefits and of the Ramsar Convention's mission and achievements.

6. By this and other means, the partnership continues to provide generous financial support towards Convention implementation, awareness raising, advocacy, regional initiatives and expert networks. A new Memorandum of Understanding for the Fund for Water for 2011-2015 was signed by the Secretary General and Mr Franck Riboud, Chairman of the Danone Group, in March 2011. In addition to the project funding and support for World Wetlands Day and other work, the agreement for 2011 continues to provide funding for a Project Officer who will manage the projects and activities undertaken through this initiative specifically. Previously, the Project Officer was funded through the initiative Ecoles de protection de l'eau, but as that project will close over the next year, it was necessary to renew the agreement through the Fund for Water. The Ecoles de protection de l'eau initiative and the Danone Fund for Nature are to be replaced by a new initiative called Danone Livelihood Funds, which is currently under discussion.
7. An exciting new initiative presently in preparation as part of this collaboration is a 3D documentary film project in collaboration with the Upside Television news agency. Depending on the additional funding received from investors and sponsors, the end-product will be a 3D film called "Ondia & the 7 Wetland Wonders", using 20-30% animation of the story of a little girl facing challenges in wetland conservation and the rest comprising 3D live footage of selected Ramsar Sites.
8. In addition to the Convention's relationship with Danone, the Biosphere Connections is an important tripartite partnership of UNESCO, IUCN, and Ramsar with the Star Alliance Network of airlines aimed at promoting the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources. Each year 25,000 Euros (32,315 CHF) in flights are provided for delegates to attend official meetings and workshops. In 2010, twenty-six delegates/experts were provided air tickets to attend such Ramsar events, an invaluable support for the Convention's work.
9. The *Biosphere Connections* newsletter, produced monthly by Star Alliance, delivers the latest news from the partners to the Star Alliance network, featuring new site designations, special events, etc., to build awareness of these environmental organizations and their work. During 2010 Star Alliance partnered with National Geographic to produce five films to be released in 2011 for in-flight entertainment. One of these is focused on the Chilika Lake Ramsar Site in India and another on Abrolhos Ramsar Site in Brazil.
10. There are 27 airlines that are a member of the Star Alliance, which serves 181 countries. Star Alliance members include the following Airlines:





### Future Directions

11. With the hiring of a Coordinator for the partnership programmes, there will be a heightened focus on current partnerships and future directions. An immediate task for the Coordinator is to develop a strategy for the future, and the first steps will be to assess the current situation and identify the different types of partnerships and prospective partners that can add value to the implementation of the Convention. It is expected that a strategic framework specific to the engagement of business will be prepared in parallel with the overall strategy in order to expedite work in this area, and the strategic framework would be integrated into the overall partnership strategy.
12. The strategy for engagement of the private sector would be organized to identify entry points and actions to be taken over the next five years to develop this part of the partnership programme. It will be aligned with the implementation of Strategic Plan adopted by Resolution X.1 and its annex, in particular, Strategy 1.10. This strategic framework will also address factors such as key decision points for undertaking a new partnership, analysis of the direct and indirect benefits from each partnership, and the basic criteria for entering into partnerships that will take into account Resolution X.12, *Principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector*.

13. With respect to the closing of two Funds (Ecoles de protection de l'eau and the Danone Fund for Nature) as mentioned above, the Danone Group has decided to replace these initiatives with another fund called the Danone Livelihood Funds. Details of this new fund are under discussion with IUCN, but in principle, it will focus on carbon offsets. Further details on the evolution of discussions and involvement in this fund can be reported at the next Standing Committee meeting.

ANNEX - TABLE 1 - This table provides an overview of actions concerning the two business partnerships.

Partnership	Donation	Status of partnership	Status of work	Outputs		
<b>Danone Fund for Water</b>	250,00 € annual contribution for the next 5 years (2011-2015)	The MoU for 2011-2015 was signed by Secretary General, February, 2011.	Ongoing	<p><b>The main deliverables during 2011 as listed in the MoU are:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A film teaser titled “Ondia and the 7 Wetland Wonders”. Full production of the film is dependent on the investor commitments that the filmmakers and Danone are pursuing.</li> <li>2. Development and production of World Wetlands Day (WWD) 2011 awareness raising and publication materials</li> <li>3. Activities with the League pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO) to be defined in addition to WWD 2011 activities. A meeting is scheduled for 9 May 2011 with LPO to discuss the project.</li> </ol>		
<b>Ecoles de protection de l'eau (This is a 3-year fund)</b>	620,772 € for the total funds term 2008 – 2010	The fund ends on 31 July 2011.	Closing	<p><b>The remaining projects in Thailand and Argentina will close on 31 July 2011.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The project in Argentina aims to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands in the Ramsar Sites of Jaaukanigas and Humedales Chaco (La Plata river basin) by implementing a global management plan for fishing and the uses of the wetlands for the fishing communities and local government in order to reduce poverty.</li> <li>2. The project in Thailand aims to empower the local communities through wise use and wetland management on a long-term plan of the Ramsar Site Beung Kong Long Wetlands. This project has also developed a visitor centre, a nature trail, and school activities with educational material.</li> </ol> <p><b>Jagdishpur Reservoir (Nepal) project - closed July 2010)</b>                      Jagdishpur Reservoir (Nepal) project ended in July 2010. In collaboration with Bird Conservation Nepal, the project improved significantly the wise use of the Jagdishpur Reservoir wetlands thanks to education and a strong management plan. It has also provided alternative income generation activities for the local people such as visitor centre, handicraft and farming groups with the Jagdishpur Agricultural Cooperative.</p>		
<b>Danone Fund for Nature: Tripartite partnership with IUCN*</b>	250,00 € contribution over 2011 for IUCN and Ramsar	Closure expected December 2011 and March 2012 as projects are completed.	Ongoing	<p>Closure of contract depended on projects. A sub-contract will be made in 2011 between IUCN and Ramsar which sets out deliverables under this agreement.</p> <p>Discussions underway regarding the <i>the Danone Livelihood Funds initiative (see next)</i></p>		
<b>Danone Livelihood Funds</b>	n/a	Under discussion	n/a	<p>This is a new initiative of the Danone Group. Ramsar’s participation is currently under discussion with Danone and IUCN. The Fund is expected to be activated in 2012.</p>		
<b>Biosphere Connections</b>	25,000 € (32,315 CHF) for wetland managers (non-Ramsar staff) travel to wetland-related meetings	Expect to have final signature on new 3-year agreement by May 2011.	ongoing	In 2010, the Biosphere Connections Partnership supported attendance of delegates to meetings and workshops:	Name of meeting/workshop	Number of delegates supported
					Ramsar STRP 2010	4
					Flyways meeting	1
					CEPA Workshops	5
					Oceania Regional Action Plan Meeting	2
					UNECE Transboundary Water Workshop	1
					STRP Workshop South Africa	13
						<b>26 total</b>