DOC. SC47-20

Ramsar Culture Network – report on activities

Actions requested:
Standing Committee is invited to:
   a. take note of this progress report;
   b. support the activities of the Ramsar Culture Network and its cooperation with UNESCO's World Heritage Centre;
   c. provide advice for its further work; and
   d. suggest modalities for seeking the 50% co-funding needed to match the expected MAVA Foundation commitment for the work plan 2014-2016.

Introduction

1. This document provides an update on the progress of the work since SC46 (April 2013) of the Ramsar Culture Network (RCN) in cooperation with UNESCO's World Heritage Centre. A concise overview of how cultural values of wetlands became part of the Convention's programme of work (through Resolutions VIII.19 and IX.21) is provided in DOC. SC46-10 submitted to the last meeting of Standing Committee under the agenda item on *Governance, planning and funding of activities on culture and wetlands in the framework of the Ramsar Convention*.

The decisions taken by Standing Committee at its 46th meeting

2. Based on the report noted above, Standing Committee (through Decision SC46-12) recognized the work of the former Culture Working Group and encouraged it to continue through the more appropriate structure of the RCN, in cooperation with UNESCO's World Heritage Centre, and to report progress to SC47.

3. Standing Committee also called for the Network to contribute to the work of the Secretariat, and for this contribution to be appropriately reflected in the new Ramsar Strategic Plan for 2015-2021.

4. Finally, Standing Committee asked the Network to take into account and cooperate with the proponents of the development of an accreditation mechanism for wetland cities or villages, to which Standing Committee referred to in its Decision SC46-05.

The operation of the Culture Network in 2013

5. The RCN is led by a small Steering Group and its two coordinators. They report below on their activities during 2013, organised under five topic headings, and summarise the main areas of work intended for the remainder of 2014. More details are provided in seven Annexes.

6. The Network receives no funding from Convention budgets. An earlier phase of activity was part-funded by the MAVA Foundation, which has already indicated that a new project proposal for 50% of the funding for a three-year programme covering the period 2014-2016 would be favourably received. The coordinators undertook the work of preparing this proposal and the application was formally submitted in November 2013. Success in the application could fund the work programme, but the RCN has also to commit to seek the 50% co-financing expected by the MAVA Foundation. At the time of writing the outcome of this process is awaited, and a verbal update will be provided at the meeting if there is news to report.

7. Activities over the past months have necessarily been limited to what has been possible on a voluntary basis, and the planned activities referred to below at paragraph 6 are subject both to a positive response from MAVA and to success in raising the required 50% co-funding from other sources.

    a) Network (re-)launch, governance and servicing:
        *   Agenda paper provided to 46th meeting of Ramsar Standing Committee (April 2013) on 'Governance, planning and funding of activities on culture and wetlands in the framework of the Ramsar Convention' (document SC46-10).
        *   Renewed mandate and approval for Ramsar Culture Network (RCN) governance arrangements secured from Ramsar Standing Committee, April 2013.
        *   Network formally launched (as successor to Ramsar Culture Working Group). Call for expressions of interest issued, member list constructed, and correspondence tracking system devised.
        *   RCN Steering Group appointed, and *modus operandi* document produced.
        *   Three update circulars issued to RCN membership (July, September and December), in addition to initial announcement/call for expressions of interest.
        *   Correspondence maintained with 105 members around the world (collectively and, in over 50 cases, on an individual basis) on specific matters of interest; significant issues reported on websites (see section (e) below).
        *   Written briefing on RCN provided for the incoming Ramsar Secretary General.

    b) Planning, funding and coordination:
        *   Input to Ramsar Secretariat's Standing Committee paper on post-2015 Ramsar Strategic Plan.
        *   Document produced on 'Culture and wetlands in strategic planning for the Ramsar Convention'.
        *   Actions to engage with the Strategic Plan Sub-Group in order to strengthen reference to culture in the post-2015 Plan.
        *   Extension up to mid-2013 secured from MAVA Foundation for completion of 2012 project on culture and wetlands (covering activities including at COP11, Agadir Symposium on Water and Wetlands in the Mediterranean, and subsequent follow-up). Final technical and financial project reports compiled and submitted to MAVA.
        *   Initial concept-stage proposal for three-year project on 'Conservation of the natural and cultural heritage in wetlands: Global leadership for an integrated approach through the Ramsar Convention' developed and submitted to MAVA Foundation, March 2013. (Total budget EUR 744,000: For the list of the main activity lines proposed see Annex 2). Approval received in June 2013 to develop a full project proposal. Several meetings were held with MAVA staff and the full proposal dossier (including application forms, work plans, monitoring plans, theory of change models and budgets) were drafted and submitted to MAVA in November 2013. The outcome is currently awaited.

- Initial steps taken to seek necessary co-funding and in-kind support for the project described above.
- Meeting of coordination team, Athens, June 2013, including meeting with website consultant.
- Coordination maintained with Ramsar STRP, including through cross-representation of key members and participation in the Panel's meetings.
- Liaison maintained with key members of the Ramsar CEPA Oversight Panel.
- Project concept developed on 'Cultural ecosystem services: the role of art in internationally designated ecosystems' (see Annex 3).
- Document drafted which updated the relevant Mediterranean region activity areas defined in the context of the 'Agadir Commitments' (see Annex 4).

c) Cooperation with UNESCO:
- Meetings convened on Ramsar-UNESCO cooperation on wetlands and culture, at UNESCO headquarters, Paris, May 2013. Included production of 13 supporting agenda papers.
- Formal agreement secured to inclusion of link with UNESCO World Heritage Centre in the Ramsar Culture Network brand identity.
- Frequent liaison, consultation and information-exchange with UNESCO World Heritage Centre throughout the year.
- Document produced on 'Collaboration between the World Heritage Centre and Ramsar Culture Network at operational and project levels' (see Annex 5).
- Analysis and discussion document produced on 'Sites with overlapping Ramsar and UNESCO designations' (see Annex 6).
- Participation in MedPartnership UNESCO-IHP meeting on management and protection of coastal wetlands at UNESCO headquarters, Paris, June 2013. Gave presentation on 'Cultural services of Mediterranean wetlands: a Ramsar perspective'.
- Input to UNESCO-Medpartnership project draft report on 'Management and protection of Mediterranean groundwater related coastal wetlands and their services'.

d) Other external relations:
- Participation in international conference on 'Landscapes of water, source of life – traditional water management associations and systems', organised by Fundación Valle Salado de Añana in conjunction with UNESCO Etxea, Basque Country, Spain, July 2013. Included giving presentation on 'Water, wetlands and people: integrating culture and ecology in the Ramsar Convention' (see Annex 7).
- Proposal submitted for paper to be given on 'Water, wetlands and people: integrating biological and cultural diversity through the Ramsar Convention' at the 1st European Conference for the Implementation of the UNESCO-SCBD Joint Programme on Biological and Cultural Diversity, Florence, April 2014.
- Briefings provided to Secretariat for other meetings; including MAB International Coordinating Council and 3rd Chinese Wetlands Cultural Festival.
- Input made to Ramsar STRP thematic working group on ecosystem services, concerning scoping of the group's tasks in the current triennium.
- Engagement in dialogues and information-exchange through IUCN Task Force on Cultural & Spiritual Values of Protected Areas.
- Liaison maintained with IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management Thematic Group on Ecosystem Services.
- Chapters on 'Cultural services: an overview' and 'Wetland management: cultural, aesthetic and associated services' submitted for forthcoming 'Encyclopaedia of

Wetlands' (Springer). Input also made to a further draft chapter on 'Spiritual services: Religious aspects of wetland management'.
- Contributing lectures to post-graduate programme on International Heritage Management, University of Durham, UK.
- Several cross-convention inputs on cultural agendas involving Ramsar and the Convention on Migratory Species, including meeting with the Chair of the CMS Scientific Council on this subject.
- Input to development by the International Centre for Water Civilisation of proposals for a 'water museum' in Venice.

e) Communication and awareness:
- Document produced on communications media for RCN, including website specifications.
- Design and launch of RCN website (www.ramsarculture.org). Case studies and other material uploaded.
- Brand identity devised for RCN including logo, strapline and house style.
- Provision of news items and other material for publication on Ramsar website.
- Discussions with Ramsar Secretariat concerning strategy for eventual integration of RCN website into main Ramsar site.

Plans for 2014

8. The main work planned for 2014 essentially consists of the first year of activities specified in the project proposal submitted to MAVA (subject to the application being approved, and the requisite co-funding being found) (see Annex 1). The full programme involves 24 main activities (see Annex 2), structured under five objectives as follows:
   a) Strengthened international policy;
   b) Better documented values;
   c) More widely shared and applied good practices;
   d) Enhanced partnerships; and
   e) Effective coordination.

Annexes

Annex 1

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**Global leadership for an integrated approach
through the Ramsar Convention**

Conservation of the natural and cultural heritage in wetlands

Ramsar Culture Network programme proposal

Expected Activities in first year

(Progress with these activities remains subject to funding being secured)

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Activity A1: Develop and maintain an up to date overview document on Ramsar policy on culture and wetlands, derived from existing Resolutions and Guidance, and addressing emerging issues as necessary in conjunction with activities A2 and A3 below and present this work during Ramsar COP12 in 2015.

Activity A3: Provide input on culture to the development of the post-2015 Ramsar Strategic Plan.

Activity C1: Undertake an analysis of user needs for support in implementing Ramsar Resolutions VIII.19 and IX.21. Use the findings in targeting other efforts under this programme, and as a baseline for future assessments of progress.

Activity D1: Provide support and leadership where appropriate for enhancing effective cooperation between the Ramsar Convention and UNESCO, in particular through sub-activities D1.1-D1.6 below.

D1.1 Stimulate the development of demonstration initiatives at a selection of sites with multiple designations (Ramsar and WHC / MaB).

D1.2 Publish and disseminate a short report on shared values and coordinated management approaches in respect of shared sites.

D1.3 Catalyse the documentation and dissemination of specific case studies of shared values and coordinated management approaches in respect of shared sites.

D1.4 Support [a] joint workshop[s] and or side-event[s] in an appropriate context to showcase aspects of the collaboration undertaken.

D1.5 Catalyse the update and extension of the 1999 Ramsar / World Heritage Centre Memorandum of Understanding to add reference to key areas of cooperation on culture and wetlands.

D1.6 Hold an annual Ramsar-UNESCO liaison meeting for review and coordination.

D1.7 Report to relevant global governing bodies of Ramsar and UNESCO (and to regional processes where appropriate) on progress with activities under this programme as a whole, and on proposals for future activities related to wetlands and culture, including specific cooperation actions.

Activity D2: Further develop the roster of relevant projects and action commitments initiated at the Agadir Symposium on Water and Wetlands in the Mediterranean, February 2012 (the

`Agadir Commitments'), plus the additional suggestions from Workshop 4 at the Symposium, in order to strengthen the cultural content of the roster and promote implementation of the projects.

<u>Activity E3</u>: Ensure the operation of the Ramsar Culture Steering Group and effective coordination of the Culture Network.

<u>Activity E4</u>: Stimulate options for setting up and operating a wiki-space, Facebook page, Basecamp site or other interactive web-based forum and document-sharing facility for the Network.

<u>Activity E6</u>: Prepare a systematic and vigorous strategy for securing funding and support in kind, and implement it with the goal of reaching a total equivalent to 372,000 EUR during the three-year project period.

<u>Activity E7</u>: Participate -and assist in coordinating participation- in key relevant events in order to integrate Ramsar perspectives on culture and wetlands and strengthen the coherence of collaboration, especially with UNESCO-related organisations and initiatives (estimated at two per year).

Annex 2

Ramsar Culture Network programme proposal (2014-2016)

Expected Results and Activities overall

There are five <u>EXPECTED RESULTS</u>, with <u>EXPECTED IMPACT</u> as follows:

A: Strengthened international policy.

> Global and regional policymaking reflects where necessary the best current knowledge and thinking on culture and wetlands, including ways of taking account of cultural values in decision-making, and ways of increasing understanding of the cultural ecosystem services of wetlands.

B: Better documented values.

> Cultural values associated with wetlands are more completely identified, understood and documented at national and site level.

C: More widely shared and applied good practices.

> Good practices, experiences and lessons learned in wetland planning and management that integrates cultural aspects are investigated, shared, promoted and applied more widely and successfully, resulting in better outcomes for wetlands and for people.

D: Enhanced partnerships.

> Strategic collaborations and partnerships are enhanced, broadening stakeholder engagement and producing efficient synergies of action.

E: Effective coordination.

> This programme and relevant associated activities are efficiently coordinated, resourced in ways which do not dilute any other Ramsar programmes, and the results are promoted to wide audiences, building further support for the long term.

There are 24 proposed <u>ACTIVITIES</u>, grouped under the Expected Results as follows [Numbers that follow each item indicate the year the activities are planned for, with 1 meaning 2014, 2 2015 and 3 2016.]

Expected result A: Strengthened international policy

<u>Activity A1</u>: Develop and maintain an up to date overview document on Ramsar policy on culture and wetlands, derived from existing Resolutions and Guidance, and addressing emerging issues as necessary in conjunction with activities A2 and A3 below and present this work during Ramsar COP12 in 2015. 1-3

<u>Activity A2</u>: Keep the Ramsar Resolutions VIII.19 and IX.21 and the Ramsar Culture Guidance document under review, and develop proposals as necessary for their further updating; taking account inter alia of lessons arising from the implementation of activities C1 and C2 below. 1-3

 <u>Activity A3</u>: Provide input on culture to the development of the post-2015 Ramsar Strategic Plan. 1-2

Expected result B: Better documented values

Activity B1: Analyse, synthesise, report and extract lessons and recommendations from information provided on cultural values in the database of Ramsar Sites Information Sheets. 2

Activity B2: Analyse, synthesise, report and extract lessons and recommendations from information provided on cultural values, including status and trends, in the database of Ramsar Contracting Party national reports to Conferences of the Parties. 1-3

Activity B3: Hold [a] workshop[s] for experience sharing, action planning and/or as a writing workshop, making use as appropriate of opportunities to schedule these in association / back-to-back with other meetings where relevant individuals / organisations may be present. 2-3

Activity B4: Encourage and support Ramsar Contracting Parties to compile national inventories of wetland-related cultural practices, inter alia by providing them with templates and guidance; and make the results widely known. 1-3

Expected result C: More widely shared and applied good practices

Activity C1: Undertake an analysis of user needs for support in implementing Ramsar Resolutions VIII.19 and IX.21. Use the findings in targeting other efforts under this programme, and as a baseline for future assessments of progress. 1

Activity C2: Provide other practical support to Ramsar Contracting Parties, wetland managers and others in implementing Ramsar Resolutions VIII.19 and IX.21 and the Ramsar Culture Guidance document; with a focus on wetland site management. 2-3

Activity C3: Provide information, support and advice on wetlands and culture issues for cultural practitioners through targeted publications. 2-3

Activity C4: Based on information on user needs arising from activity C1, develop proposals for a guide to existing guidance on cultural issues of relevance to wetland management. 2

Activity C5: Review the Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) programmes of Ramsar and MedWet to assess relevant content on cultural issues, and make recommendations as appropriate. 2-3

Expected result D: Enhanced partnerships

Activity D1: Provide support and leadership where appropriate for enhancing effective cooperation between the Ramsar Convention and UNESCO, in particular through sub-activities D1.1-D1.6 below.

D1.1 Stimulate the development of demonstration initiatives at a selection of sites with multiple designations (Ramsar and WHC / MaB).

D1.2 Publish and disseminate a short report on shared values and coordinated management approaches in respect of shared sites.

D1.3 Catalyse the documentation and dissemination of specific case studies of shared values and coordinated management approaches in respect of shared sites.

D1.4 Support [a] joint workshop[s] and or side-event[s] in an appropriate context to showcase aspects of the collaboration undertaken.

D1.5 Catalyse the update and extension of the 1999 Ramsar / World Heritage Centre Memorandum of Understanding to add reference to key areas of cooperation on culture and wetlands.

D1.6 Hold an annual Ramsar-UNESCO liaison meeting for review and coordination.

D1.7 Report to relevant global governing bodies of Ramsar and UNESCO (and to regional processes where appropriate) on progress with activities under this programme as a whole, and on proposals for future activities related to wetlands and culture, including specific cooperation actions.

All D1 activities: 1-3

Activity D2: Further develop the roster of relevant projects and action commitments initiated at the Agadir Symposium on Water and Wetlands in the Mediterranean, February 2012 (the `Agadir Commitments'), plus the additional suggestions from Workshop 4 at the Symposium, in order to strengthen the cultural content of the roster and promote implementation of the projects. 1-3

Activity D3: Maintain active liaison with the IUCN Specialist Group on Cultural & Spiritual Values of Protected Areas (CSVPA). 2-3

Activity D4: Investigate the scope for collaboration and cross-fertilisation on this programme with the Sacred Natural Sites and Delos Initiatives. 2-3

Activity D5: Investigate and assess systematically the scope and opportunities for cooperation with the other bodies and processes named in paragraph 13 of Resolution VIII.19, and produce recommendations. 2-3

Expected result E: Effective coordination

Activity E1: Monitor and report on the implementation of this 2014-2016 programme, to the Ramsar Standing Committee and to COP. 1-3

Activity E2: Ensure the effective operation of the Ramsar Culture Network; including mobilisation of its membership on relevant activities, and facilitation of good levels of information-exchange. 1-3

Activity E3: Ensure the operation of the Ramsar Culture Steering Group and effective coordination of the Culture Network. 1-3

Activity E4: Stimulate options for setting up and operating a wiki-space, Facebook page, Basecamp site or other interactive web-based forum and document-sharing facility for the Network. 1 (options and setup) 1-3 (operation)

Activity E5: Catalyse the development of concepts and proposals for projects and other specific initiatives in support of the implementation of this programme. 1-3

Activity E6: Prepare a systematic and vigorous strategy for securing funding and support in kind, and implement it with the goal of reaching a total equivalent to 372,000 EUR during the three-year project period. 1-3

Activity E7: Participate -and assist in coordinating participation- in key relevant events in order to integrate Ramsar perspectives on culture and wetlands and strengthen the coherence of collaboration, especially with UNESCO-related organisations and initiatives (estimated at two per year). 1-3

Annex 3

<h1 style="text-align:center">Cultural ecosystem services: the role of art in
internationally designated ecosystems</h1>

Project concept: most recent version as submitted in context of the Environmental Art Festival Scotland, 2013, subtitled "**Dumfries & Galloway as a flagship for a global project relating to Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage Sites and Ramsar Sites**".

The opportunity

"Cultural services" provided by ecosystems were defined in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment's conceptual model (2005), now widely adopted in environmental policymaking. Tangible and intangible aspects of social heritage, sense of identity and artistic inspirations should theoretically be as relevant in the mix of management values as provision of food and water.

In reality however, understanding and attention to the cultural dimension lags behind, and suffers from a fragmentation of specialist disciplines. There are numerous initiatives trying to address this, but they do not yet sufficiently feature the arts.

Happily, many ingredients are available to catalyse the necessary leap forward, and EAFS offers an ideal context in which to do so. This proposal aims to capitalise on three particular advantages:

- the special opportunities already available to the proponent to mobilise and link up the interests of a wide range of institutional key players;
- an unusual representation in Dumfries & Galloway, together with the Solway, of all three of the main intergovernmental ecosystem management systems that are relevant;
- an exceptional richness of environmental arts activity in the region, offering scope to pioneer approaches for application elsewhere.

Linking key players

While working at UNESCO, the proponent previously developed a project concept for global mapping of arts in Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage sites and Ramsar sites, but internal reorganisation prevented it proceeding. A UK pilot is now seen as a useful way to revive the idea. Some initial networking has been undertaken with arts initiatives in the Jurassic Coast and Hadrian's Wall World Heritage sites, and the North Devon Coast Biosphere Reserve.

Wider institutional linkages are key; both as an input to the work and as an outcome of it. The proponent will draw on his position as (among others) Chair of the UK Arts & Environment Network, Joint Coordinator of the Ramsar Culture Network (in cooperation with UNESCO's World Heritage Centre), member of the IUCN Specialist Group on Cultural & Spiritual Values of Protected Areas, arts adviser to the Forestry Commission, member of the Ecoart Network and Trustee of the Centre for Contemporary Art & the Natural World.

The Ramsar and IUCN groups mentioned above, as well as IUCN's Ecosystem Services Working Group, all have "place-holders" for relevant work in their current programmes.

Nationally, supportive engagement would also be sought from Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland, the UK MaB Committee, the UK Ramsar Committee, the UK IUCN Committee, the UK Commission for UNESCO, the Local Authority World Heritage Forum, Ecoart Scotland and Arts & Heritage. Links with academic researchers would also feature, for example with the International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies (Newcastle University), the Research in Art, Nature & Environment cluster (Falmouth University) and OPENspace (College of Art, Edinburgh University).

The Dumfries & Galloway sites

Dumfries & Galloway is home to five of the UK's designated Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance) and the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve (formerly Cairnsmore, Silver Flowe and Merrick Kells). Including the wider Solway Firth brings in part of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage site, thus together representing all of the only three protected area systems established intergovernmentally at global level.

Delivery, outcomes and benefits

Prevailing approaches to sustainable landscape management tend to show undue practical and philosophical separation between social and ecological values, and between historic heritage and contemporary cultural expression (including responses to environmental change). The designated areas mentioned above are ideal test-beds for a more integrated approach, and in fact their future depends on it.

This proposal offers one distinct and manageable contribution, focused on the value-system represented by environmental art; both as a facet of ecosystem services and in turn, in its most engaged and "process-led" forms, as a service to communities and the biosphere. Stakeholder engagement will be a central feature of the project.

EAFS seed-funding would be used to cover travel and preparatory dialogues with stakeholders and partners. Synergy with the proposed Environmental Art Map, and with any relevant Festival proposals in the "venues, places, organisations" category, will be sought. A workshop could be convened.

The principal outcomes will be:

- documentation, analysis and profile-raising for the variety, relevance and lessons learned from arts activities associated with the listed sites (analogous to the proponent's previous nationwide review of art in forests, presented at a DGAA/SNH conference in Dumfries in 2009);
- animating a network of interest and knowledge-exchange among concerned institutions and individuals;
- input to current work by the statutory agencies and others on ecosystem services research, mapping and policy development, to reflect an enhanced vision for the role of art in understanding and managing the environment.

Annex 4

The Agadir Commitments: Wetland programmes and projects on wise use and synergy in the Mediterranean (identifying cultural components)

[Document in development, this draft dated June 2013]

The *International Symposium on Water and Wetlands in the Mediterranean – From Grado to Agadir: The next 20 years*, was held in Agadir, Morocco, on 6-8 February 2012, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the wetland symposium held in Grado, Italy, in 1991, which launched the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative. MedWet was the first regional initiative associated to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) and consequently, the Agadir International Symposium was also a fitting occasion to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Convention.

One of the major outputs of the Symposium has been *The Agadir Commitments.* The programmes and projects inscribed in it —with the approval of the main actors concerned-- are a concrete contribution to wetland conservation and wise use in the Mediterranean Basin with the key objective of creating synergy. They represent activities that are on-going, just starting or being planned, promoted by national governments, regional and international organisations, civil societies, the private sector and donors aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of water-related ecosystems in the Mediterranean. They concern policies, strategies, administrative measures, legal instruments and frameworks, initiatives or measures at the local, national or regional level. Promoting synergy and best practice can be achieved through networking, common actions, sharing of lessons, capacity building, strategies, policies and transboundary coordination.

Quite a few of them ("Category A" below) have a clear cultural component and are of particular interest to the Ramsar Culture Network (RCN) and its Steering Group (CSG). Others ("Category B" below) have the potential for taking into account cultural values and services, which would require encouragement and guidance. For all those, the RCN intends to work closely with MedWet to strengthen their cultural components and to create synergy through collaboration on complementary activities.

It should be noted that *The Agadir Commitments* are directly connected to the following four axes of the MedWet Strategic Vision:

1.   Improving the knowledge on Mediterranean wetland functions, services and values, (including cultural) as well as on their status and trends.
2.   Promoting, developing and implementing national wetland policies and inter-sectoral action plans.
3.   Ensuring the sustainable integrated management of wetlands.
4.   Moderating the impact of climate change.

These are in harmony with the mission and goals of the Ramsar Culture Network.

Axis 1: Improving the knowledge on Mediterranean wetland functions, services and values, (including cultural) as well as on their status and trends

CATEGORY A

1.1   **Cultural values in wetland restoration** (in progress):
-    *Lead organisation*: Med-INA (Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos).
-    *Other partners*: MAVA Foundation, MedWet.
-    *Brief description*: The project aims at demonstrating how cultural aspects can contribute to the restoration of degraded wetlands. It uses as case studies Karla Lake in Greece, Larnaca Lagoon in Cyprus and the Lake of Tunis in Tunisia. Lessons learned from this project will be proposed for similar situations around the Basin.
-    *Time schedule*: 2011-2013.
-    *Current status*: Background research on the three sites completed, proposals formulated and being implemented.
-    *CSG interest*: Analyse and evaluate lessons learned in view of their broad dissemination.

1.3   **Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory** (in progress):
-    *Lead organisation*: Tour du Valat.
-    *Other partners*: Ramsar Convention, MedWet, Plan Bleu, Wetlands International, Greek Biotope-Wetland Centre/EKBY, European Thematic Centre on Land Use and Spatial Information. MAVA Direct funding until 2011, MAVA funding through the TDV program since 2011.
-    *Brief description*: this Mediterranean programme launched in 2008 under the MedWet initiative is a management tools to monitor and assess the status and trends of wetlands in the region, as well as to analyse and explain the causes of changes. The aim of the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory is to help decision-making towards improved wetland conservation and management. A culture-related indication is being developed based on the operation of wetland visitor centres.
-    *Time schedule*: 2009 onwards.
-    *Current status*: First "Mediterranean Wetland Outlook" report prepared. as well as its Synthesis dedicated to decision makers, including 19 factsheets. Also published, the first issue of the thematic collection titled "Biodiversity: status and trends of species in Mediterranean wetlands". A culture-based indicator related to wetland visitor centres is being elaborated, starting with Sidi Boughaba in Morocco.
-    *CSG interest*: Assess cultural indicator in development for broader use.

1.3.2 **Valuation of wetlands cultural services in the Mediterranean** (launched)
-    *Lead organisation*: Tour du Valat (Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory).
-    *Other Partners*: SPANA NGO, University of Casablanca, Med-INA.
-    *Brief description*: The study aims at assessing the status and trends of leisure and educational roles of wetlands. Starting with Sidi Boughaba area, Morocco, this project will prepare the ground for a larger project among different wetlands related visitor centres in the Mediterranean region.
-    *Time schedule*: 2012-2013.
-    *Current status*: Preparation of cultural service studies in 6 sites (in Algeria, Tunisia and France) and preliminary contacts for similar studies in Lebanon and Israel.
-    *CSG interest*: See 1.3 above.

CATEGORY B

(None)

CATEGORY C

1.2 **GlobWetlandII** (in progress):
- *Lead organisation*: European Space Agency.
- *Other partners*: JENOPTIK, KEYOBS, DLR DFD, EKBY, MWO, MedWet, Terrasphere, I-MAGE CONSULT.
- *Brief description*: The GWII project aims at using Earth Observation and GIS technologies to better monitor the status and trends of wetlands and as a consequence improve our knowledge base and management capacities. The pilot work of the GWII information system is taking place in the South and East Mediterranean in 200 sites in order to produce a number of wetland related geo-information maps and indicators. Overall, it aims to contribute to the setup of a Global Wetlands Observing System (G-WOS), as decided in the Ramsar COP10.
- *Time schedule*: 2010-2012.
- *Current status*: The maps are being produced, the first GW-II software toolboxes have been delivered and training seminars for the users of the system are taking place.

1.3.1 **RhoMeo Project** (in progress):
- *Lead organisation*: Agence de l'Eau Rhone-Méditerranée (France).
- *Other partners*: Tour du Valat, regional Conservancy Trusts of PACA, LR, RA, Bourgogne and Franche-Comté (regional NGOs), Universities.
- *Brief description*: the main objective is to test & develop methods and tools that could form the backbone of a future Observatory of wetlands of the Rhone-Méditerranée catchment, to be created in 2013 or beyond. One key component where Tour du Valat is involved is the use of satellite imagery to calculate some of the indicators that are common to those developed by the MWO.
- *Time schedule*: 2011-2012 (1st phase); 2nd phase likely from 2013 onwards.
- *Current status*: First year of test on field and space data completed; methods being adjusted for 2nd round of tests in 2012. Second round of tests in RhoMeO seminar (Lyon, France, December 2012), to make appraisal of three years of development of wetland indicators at the scale of the Rhone-Méditerranée catchment.

1.4 **Pan-European High Resolution Layers (HRL) for Water, Wetlands and Grasslands.** (in progress):
- *Lead Organization*. Indra Espacio (space division of Indra, a major technology global company based in Spain)
- *Other partners:* EUROSENSE, RapicEye, UAB GEOMATRIX, EKBY, DLR
- *Funding:* The project is funded by the GMES Initial Operations program 2011-13 under a public contract awarded by The European Environment Agency.
- *Brief Description:* The project falls in the Land Monitoring Service of the pan-European Land Cover component. It is part of a framework service contract which has as overall objective the production of 5 seamless European coverages (all of the EEA39 countries) of high resolution land cover characteristics of 5 main land cover types (i.e. artificial surfaces, forest areas, agricultural areas, wetlands, and water bodies) for the reference year 2012. In particular, this project regards the mapping of Wetlands, as areas covered permanently or temporarily of surface water considering seasonal changes too, Permanent Water Bodies and Permanent Grasslands, at a spatial resolution of 1 ha.
- *Time schedule*: 2012 – 2014 (36 months)

- *Current status*: Kick off meeting is going to be organized by EEA at the end of January 2012.

> **Axis 2: Promoting, developing and implementing national wetland policies and inter-sectoral action plans**

CATEGORY A

(None)

CATEGORY B

2.1.1 **Algeria Wetland Strategy** (in formulation):
- *Lead organisation*: General Direction of Forestry.
- *Other partners*: MAVA, WWF.
- *Brief description*: The project aims at preparing in a participatory manner a national Wetlands Strategy.
- T*ime schedule*: 2012 – 2013.
- *Current status*: Research of consultants and starting preparation.
- *CSG interest*: Contact those responsible for the preparation of the study in order to advise them on incorporating cultural values.

2.1.2 **Moroccan Wetland Strategy** (in progress):
- *Lead organisation*: High Commissariat for Water, Forests and Desertification Control of Morocco.
- *Other partners*: Dutch Government (DLG), Tour du Valat, Conservatoire du Littoral France in the early stages, MAVA in the 3rd phase
- *Brief description*: The project aims at finalising a national Wetlands Strategy and at preparing an action plan to implement the strategy.
- T*ime schedule*: 2011 – 2012.
- *Current status*: The project is n phase II. The report prepared by the experts is being finalised and a validation workshop of the report by all partners will be organized. The project was extended until March 2013.
- *CSG interest*: Although late, contact those responsible for the preparation of the study in order to advise them on incorporating cultural values.

2.3 **Prespa Park Transboundary Initiative** (in progress):
- *Lead organisation*: Albania, FYR of Macedonia, Greece, European Union.
- *Other partners*: MedWet, local Municipalities, Society for the Protection of Prespa.
- *Brief description*: Concerns the transboundary collaboration of three Balkan states for the conservation of the Prespa Lakes region and the sustainable use of its resources, for the benefit of both inhabitants and nature.
- *Time schedule*: Initiated on 2 February 2000 and on-going.
- *Current status*: Formal Agreement approved by EU Council and ratified by the FYR of Macedonia Parliament. Albania is already bound to the Agreement by the signature of its Minister. Greece has not completed its internal ratification procedure. Three national NGO's, from the three countries sharing the Prespa lakes, MES (FYR of Macedonia), PPNEA (Albania) and the SPP (Greece) have established Prespa Net – a network of environmental NGOs for Prespa. Prespa Net aims to bring civil society in the three countries together to combine efforts in fulfilling their roles in protecting transboundary Prespa; in a way that the International Agreement for the Prespa Park will provide for state

institutions to do so at the higher, formal level. On 2 February 2013 the network released its first joint press release, calling for the ratification of the International Agreement by Greece, the only state left to ratify. And on 2 April 2013 the network announced its formal establishment and a signing of an agreement of cooperation between its members.

- *CSG interest*: Although this effort seems inactive, CSG should approach the Society for the Protection of Prespa, which has a strong interest in cultural aspects, to develop a partnership for the future in the framework of the Prespa Park.

CATEGORY C

2.2 **PEGASO project** (People for Ecosystem Based Governance in Assessing Sustainable Development of Ocean and Coast) (in progress):
- *Lead organisation*: Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona.
- *Other partners*: 25 partners and 16 countries?
- *Funding instrument*: European Commission (FP7-ENV.2009.2.2.1.4 Collaborative Project-Large scale integrating projects).
- *Brief description*: The main objective of PEGASO is to build on existing capacities and develop common new approaches to support integrated policies for the coastal and marine aspects of the Mediterranean and Black Sea Basins. It is also assisting the implementation of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Protocol for the Mediterranean, signed in 2008 under the auspices of the Barcelona Convention. Main achievements are the ICZM-ecosystem based Governance platform and the building of tools (SDI, indicators, LEAC, scenarios, socio economic valuations, etc). Most of studies areas (CASES) are wetlands. Proposal for opening the ICZM network to the water and wetlands networks, sharing data and building the SDI together and testing PEGASO tools on all interested wetlands.
- *Time schedule*: 2010-2014.
- *Current status*: PEGASO's workshop "Envisioning the Future-Workshop for the Mediterranean Region" (Arles, France, Nov. 2012) helped take stock of progress on Integrated coastal zone management so far.

2.4 **WIMED – Wetlands as natural infrastructure** (in formulation):
- *Lead organisation*: Wetlands International.
- *Other partners*: GWP-Med, WWF MedPO, MedWet, Tour du Valat, MAVA.
- *Brief description*: The programme aims to influence water governance in the region to invest in wetlands as natural infrastructure, through two approaches; (a) a campaigning approach that builds on establishing a partnership between the different networks existing in the region; (b) a partnership approach that will seek to unite some of the key players in the field of water and ecosystems to join forces. Their collaboration will both underpin the civil society campaign and seek to strengthen the connection between technical resources and water resource management actors in the region.
- *Time schedule*: To be determined.
- *Current status*: Has been submitted to MAVA which has encouraged its presentation. The project title has been changed to "MedWet Partners for Water".

Axis 3: Ensuring the sustainable integrated management of wetlands

CATEGORY A

3.2 **LIFE+ Project "MC-SALT"** (Environmental Management and Conservation in Mediterranean Salt Works and Coastal Lagoons) (in progress):
- *Lead organisation*: Consorzio del Parco Regionale del Delta del Po dell'Emilia-Romagna.

- *Other partners*: Consorzio del Parco Naturale Regionale Molentargius-Saline, Parc naturel régional de Camargue, Tour du Valat, Green Balkans NGO, Compagnie des Salins du Midi et des Salines de l'Est.
- *Brief description*: The overall objective is the restoration and conservation of coastal wetlands inside 5 sites (10 Natura 2000 perimeters) located in Italy, France and Bulgaria. The project will target 7 habitats (including coastal lagoons) and 16 bird species (including Greater Flamingo and a range of colonial waterbirds). Other objectives include the elaboration of a management model for saltworks.
- *Time schedule*: October 2011 to March 2016.
- *Current status*: Project is under way with activities in most sites.-
- CSG interest: Create a link with Katia Hueso (RCN member) in order to develop collaboration.

CATEGORY B

3.3 **Wetland management and ecosystem services' delivery** (in progress):
- *Lead organisation*: University of Tel-Aviv, La Tour du Valat.
- *Other partners*: The University of Jerusalem.
- *Brief description*: the main objective of this research is to understand the relationship between ecosystem management, focusing on water management, and the provision of ecosystem services in wetlands, by comparing two Mediterranean wetlands: the Camargue, France, a large coastal wetland with delta flowing into the Mediterranean Sea and the Hula, an inland wetland in Israel.
- *Time schedule*: 2011-2012.
- *Current status*: First year of data collection and analysis, scientific paper in redaction.
- *CSG interest*: Contact with Emmanuelle Cohen-Shacham (RCN member) already developed and permitting monitorin of this activity.

3.5 **Sustainable management of Mediterranean coastal wetlands and lagoons** (in formulation)
- *Lead organisation*: RAC-SPA (UNEP-MAP).
- *Other partners*: FAO, GFCM, IUCN Med, Tour du Valat, MedWet.
- *Brief description*: The project aims to provide Mediterranean countries with an integrated strategy to conserve and manage their unique coastal biodiversity, promoting the use of aquaculture and capture fishery as a base for habitat restoration, climate change mitigation, and the improvement of local communities' welfare. The project also promotes the sharing of development experiences on coastal areas, providing high opportunities for countries partnerships in order to exchange information, maintaining a common database on the status of their coastal wetlands and lagoons, and facilitate decision making processes.
- *Time schedule:*
- *Current status*: Planning meeting held in Malaga on 18-19 October 2011.
- *CSG interest*: Information on the development of this project to be obtained from MedWet. Accordingly, contact with RAC/SPA should be established.

3.7 **The MedWet Civil Society Network** (in formulation):
- *Lead organisation*: WWF MedPO.
- *Other partners*: MAVA, Wetlands International, IUCN Med, Tour du Valat, MedWet.
- *Brief description*: The Ramsar Convention encourages the participation of civil society in the conservation and wise use of wetlands. To this end, the project will establish the MedWet Civil Society Network in six Mediterranean countries of the Western Balkans and North Africa and strengthen the capacity of its members to promote the conservation and wise

use of ecologically valuable wetlands currently under threat. The members of the Network will play the role of MedWet resource people in their river basins by gaining knowledge and skills on a broad range of technical / managerial / networking subjects.

- *Time schedule*: 2012-2014.
- *Current status*: Planning meeting was organised on 8-9 October 2011 in Rabat in the framework of the MAVA North African Partners Meeting. Project concept has been accepted by the MAVA Foundation and must now be refined by the project partners. A preparation and information workshop for Tunisian NGOs has been organised by WWF Tunis with the participation of the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO). Project concept has been presented in the Agadir Symposium.
- *CSG interest*: Close collaboration with MedWet in Athens to be established, as well as with WWF MedPO in Rome. It requires a careful approach as there are doubts as to the effective development of this project.

CATEGORY C

3.1 **Dinaric Arc Sustainable Hydropower Initiative – DASHI** (in progress)
- *Lead organisation*: WWF MedPO.
- *Other partners*: Green Home (Montenegro), Youth Center Livno (Bosnia and Herzegovina), REC (Livno (Bosnia and Herzegovina). MAVA Foundation is the main donor of the project.
- *Brief description*: DASHI intends to address the threat of unsustainable hydropower boom in the western Balkans where inadequate environmental assessment processes allow destructive projects to be implemented. It intends to mobilise the civil society around the issue basing actions on scientific basis and fostering a dialogue with all the sectors, in particular the energy one.
- *Time schedule*: 2010-2012.
- *Current status*: Dialogue with investors and financiers interested in building or financing dams in priority areas is intense to secure that no destruction due to unsustainable dams is happening. Some very concerning dam development projects have put on hold due to lack of solid Environmental Impact Assessments. The capacity of a selected number of water managers and NGOs on sustainable hydropower is being increased. Finally sustainable hydropower guidelines have been developed for Montenegro by a multistakeholder working group including the government.

3.4 **NEREUS project** (Towards a Representative Network of Mediterranean Marine Managed Areas) (in progress):
- *Lead organisation*: IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation.
- *Other partners*: UNEP-MAP, RAC/SPA, WWF MedPO, MedWet, ACCOBAMS. MAVA Foundation is the main donor of the project.
- *Brief description*: The primary aim of this project to gather, produce, synthesize and communicate information on the marine environment (species, features, resources and threats) and to identify conservation priority sites in the Mediterranean Sea. Integrated management of marine resources and coastal wetlands will be an important component of the project. Ultimately, it will provide focused scientific information to help policy makers, managers and practitioners when planning and prioritising their conservation and management actions. Funding to be provided by the MAVA and TOTAL Foundations.
- *Time schedule*: 2011-2015.
- *Current status*: Presently, NEREUS is implemented jointly between IUCN Mediterranean, MedWet, ACCOBAMS, RAC/SPA and MedPAN. Specific activities are decided between the partners and implemented at the regional level or country level.

3.6. **Hotspot and Key Biodiversity Areas in The Mediterranean (Critical Ecosystems Partnership Funds** (in formulation)
- *Lead organization*: CEPF.
- *Other Partners*: Several (waiting results of call for proposals).
- *Brief description*: Regional and site projects towards safeguarding globally threatened species and critical sites in the Mediterranean, including Wetlands. Some priority corridors and key birds areas (KBA) includes wetlands such as Ichkeul (Tunisia) and El Kala (Algeria).
- *Time schedule*: 2012-2014.
- *Current status*: Call for proposals for regional projects.

Axis 4: Moderating the impact of climate change.

CATEGORY A

(None)

CATEGORY B

(None)

CATEGORY C

4.1 **Effects of climate change on wetland ecosystems of Attica Region of Greece**: (in formulation)
- *Lead Organisation:* Attica Region.
- *Other Partners:* EKBY, Center for Technological Research of Crete (CTRC), Ministry of Environment Energy & Climate Change (YPEKA).
- *Brief Description:* The project constitutes one of the 6 pilot vulnerability studies of the SEE strategic project "ORIENTGATE: a structured network for integration of climate knowledge into policy and territorial planning" which has been submitted under the coordination of the Euro Mediterranean Center on Climate Change (CMCC). ORIENTGATE has been designed to foster concerted and coordinated climate adaptation actions across the SEE region. The Greek pilot vulnerability study will support the territorial planning and policy formation in the Region of Attica in regard to the effects of climate change on wetland ecosystems.
- *Time schedule*: 2012 – 2014 (30 months)
- *Current status*: Results of the second step evaluation of the SEE 3rd call strategic projects will be announced soon (first trimester of 2012).

Annex 5

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**Collaboration between UNESCO World Heritage Centre and
Ramsar Culture Network at operational and project levels**

[Working document prepared for Ramsar-UNESCO liaison meeting, May 2013]

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0.   Background

During the past few years, within the broader framework of cooperation between UNESCO and the Convention on Wetlands, closer links have been established between the Ramsar Culture Working Group (CWG) and the World Heritage Centre (WHC). In 2012, for example, these two entities worked closely together in organising:
-   a joint technical session on culture and wetlands in the International Symposium on Water and Wetlands in the Mediterranean, held in Agadir (Morocco) in February;
-   a special event on culture and wetlands during the Ramsar Conference of the Contracting Parties, in Bucharest (Romania) in July.

To broaden its activities on culture related to wetlands, the Ramsar Convention is re-launching the CWG as a Ramsar Culture Network (RCN) (for further details see Documents 2 and 3 for the 13 May Paris meeting referred to above). In this framework it intends to invite the WHC to participate actively and to be represented in the Culture Steering Group.

As an initial prompt for discussion about cooperation specifically at the project level, this note identifies some likely priority areas to consider.

1.   Sharing of information

Already an exchange of information between UNESCO (World Heritage Centre) and the RCN exists. It is however not systematic but rather sporadic, and should be improved in the months to come. Discussions might usefully identify in advance the types of intelligence which would be most helpful to share (a) routinely (such as major upcoming set-piece opportunities, including relevant agenda items on meetings of the principal bodies of the two Conventions - see item 6 below) and (b) on a more *ad hoc* basis (such as new initiatives of relevance, whenever they happen to be noticed). Any joint projects will include specific agreements about how all concerned should keep each other updated on progress, and about more structured progress-reporting milestones.

It is proposed that one expert from each side is designated as a principal contact person, whose responsibility will be to ensure that information that would be of interest to both is made promptly available in an appropriate form.

To ensure a minimum regular flow, the two contact persons would exchange e-mail messages at the beginning of each month, even if no new information is available.

As activities and needs develop in future, on-line workspace and discussion forum tools could also be developed.

2. Reciprocal web postings

Information of interest to a broader circle should be designated for uploading in a proper place on relevant websites.

In the case of the Ramsar Convention, its website (www.ramsar.org) includes a section on 'Culture and Wetlands' under the heading of 'Activities'. This section is being redesigned at present and it is intended to include a page for specific World Heritage news.

The general news pages of the Ramsar website may also from time to time feature items concerning culture, including matters relating to World Heritage.

For the posting of Ramsar news on culture and wetlands in the World Heritage Centre website (www.whc.unesco.org) an appropriate place should be designated, as needed.

In both cases, the contact persons of the two organisations should liaise with those responsible for the websites to ensure the posting of items suggested.

3. Linking experts and networks

The Ramsar Culture Network will include organisations and individual experts interested in the cultural values and services of wetlands. In this context, organisations and experts related to the World Heritage Centre with similar interests might be identified and encouraged to participate in the RCN.

Ramsar experts might similarly participate in networks of the WHC.

4. Analyses of shared sites

Quite a number of wetland sites have been designated both as World Heritage Sites and Ramsar Sites of International Importance. About 70 have been already identified and listed, although their names and especially their delineation are not always identical (see May 13 meeting documents 10 and 11).

More work is needed by the two organisations to establish an agreed approach to the construction, maintenance and use of lists and other data concerning shared sites. This would naturally also help to inform future thinking about harmonised, rationalised or streamlined reporting processes on the status of these lists.

A further level of analysis could target the qualifying aspects of significance of these sites ("international importance" in the Ramsar regime and "Outstanding Universal Value" or OUV in the WH regime). Brief (2-3 page) reports on OUV have been recently requested by the WHC and submitted by the State Parties. The RCN could contribute to this process by reviewing the OUVs of wetland sites by reference to data included in the RSIS (Ramsar Sites Information Service) and relevant status information in Party national reports to COPs.

5. Further work on case studies

A strong priority for the RCN will be the identification and promotion of case studies in wetland management incorporating cultural values and services, both successful and problematic, analysing the factors that have determined the outcome in each case.

Where possible, case studies would be selected that concern shared sites; these could be analysed jointly so that common lessons learned could be extracted.

These case studies, once completed, would be posted on the Ramsar and WH websites. A joint publication on them should also be considered in the near future.

6.   Calendar of meeting opportunities

As part of the exchange of information, events in which members of the World Heritage Centre and of the Ramsar Culture Network could participate should be made known to each other in the form of a common calendar. Such a calendar should be prepared by the two contact persons responsible for information flow.

This would allow better communication between the two sides, in case both are represented in a given event, and sharing of useful inputs, in case of a unique participant.

7.   Other projects

The Ramsar Culture Network has plans for a considerable number of activities during the period 2013-2016 (as analysed in Doc. 4 and Doc. 5), depending on the outcome of its fundraising efforts.

Within the scope of its cooperation with the World Heritage Centre, joint activities on projects could be considered in the following ways:
- Provision of expert advice from the WHC to a RCN-developed project.
- Provision of expert support from RCN members to WHC initiatives.
- Jointly developed projects, in which one or both can take the lead.

The financial considerations would be agreed on a case by case basis, ensuring as a minimum the coverage by each project of direct costs.

8.   The way forward

After the discussion of the contents of this note during the Paris meeting of 13 May, the document will be revised and agreed in a suitable form, for example as a memorandum of understanding between the WHC and the Ramsar Culture Steering Group.

Annex 6

Sites with overlapping Ramsar and UNESCO designations

Discussion note prepared on behalf of the Ramsar Culture Network
Dave Pritchard, March 2013

1. Introduction: the scope of this note

1.1   The Ramsar Convention and UNESCO have a number of areas of cooperation which include legal Convention Depositary functions, International Hydrological Programme links, and shared interests in wetlands and culture. It is the latter which is the subject of this note. More specifically it concerns the respective networks of sites designated under each organisation (Ramsar Sites, World Heritage Sites and Biosphere Reserves).

1.2   These networks represent a key dimension of the shared interest in wetlands and culture. The principles and processes of cooperation in respect of sites with two or all three of these designations however have relevance to other issues too, and where it is more efficient to do so, and if capacity exists, it will be wise for the Ramsar Culture Network (RCN) to address itself to these principles and processes (at global level) in a more general sense. To that extent, and to that extent only, the scope of this note goes a little wider than strictly cultural matters.

1.3   The RCN envisages action on shared sites under its proposed programme for 2013-16 (subject to funding) in relation to demonstration projects, monitoring, management and other aspects. For the time being the present note focuses primarily on issues of information management.

2. Objectives defined in Ramsar Culture Network programme

2.1   The RCN has defined a (proposed) list of "Ramsar activities on culture and wetlands" for the period 2013-16, which includes a range of cooperation activities between Ramsar and UNESCO. Implementation of most of these is dependent on the success of an external funding proposal, currently under consideration.

2.2   In the meantime however several actions are seen as ongoing, or as able to be progressed in the first half of 2013 with existing resources and input from others. Under "*Expected result D: Enhanced partnerships*" this includes the following:

"Update and maintain lists of wetland sites having overlapping designations as Ramsar Sites, World Heritage Sites and/or Biosphere Reserves, and present on the respective organisations' websites with enhanced supporting information, e.g. on extent of overlap. Although an on-going programmatic activity, this would begin with:

- an information note on the status of the different website information sources on this, mentioning any obvious new additions from recently-designated sites;
- an expression of intent concerning the way in which this kind of information should be maintained in future;
- some proposals for how case study and experience-exchange material might be piloted with one or two examples that would be relatively well-placed ones to try;

- comments on other useful associated steps, such as ways of identifying and linking more strongly the primary contacts at site level in authorities with responsibility under the respective Conventions for cultural and ecological matters respectively".

3. Other relevant adopted (strategic) objectives

3.1   The Ramsar Strategic Plan 1997-2002 included as its Action 7.2.4: "Develop cooperation with the World Heritage Convention and UNESCO's Programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB) especially as regards wetlands designated as World Heritage Sites, Biosphere Reserves and/or Ramsar sites". In the current Strategic Plan, for 2009-2015 (Resolution X.1, 2008) there is no specific equivalent of this. There is instead merely Key Result Area 3.1.v: "Harmonized information management and reporting systems available and widely used at national level with the appropriate MEAs".

3.2   In the intervening period, various COP Resolutions and other frameworks have been agreed concerning cooperation between the Convention and other Multilateral Environmental Agreements and related processes. Two of these mention the issue of sites with overlapping designations.

3.3   One is the Memorandum of Understanding between Ramsar and the World Heritage Centre, dating from May 1999. (The question of its potential updating, and potential extension to cover UNESCO more generally, is an on-going discussion covered elsewhere). The stated objective of the MoU is for the Secretariat and the Centre "to cooperate with a view to enabling the Contracting Parties to the Conventions to identify and strengthen conservation of those sites of international importance which are recognized by both Conventions". (Note this formulation should not be mis-read as relating only to designated sites, since it covers the considerably wider matter of all sites which *qualify* for designation).

3.4   The text refers to sharing information on candidate sites and threatened sites, but curiously omits to mention sharing information on designated sites/overlapping designated sites in general. This latter issue could however be implied in the clauses for "exchange of information on a regular basis on specific aspects of the work of the World Heritage and the Ramsar Conventions which are of mutual interest and benefit" and "in cooperation with the Contracting Parties to the Conventions, develop programmes and projects for strengthening conservation of specific sites which are recognized by the two Conventions and identify and mobilize human and financial resources and the knowledge to implement such programmes and projects".

3.5   Ramsar has also agreed a Programme of Joint Work (PJW) with UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB). The latest version of this was agreed by the MAB International Coordinating Council in October 2004 and by the Ramsar Standing Committee (intersessionally) in February 2005. This version has however never been posted on the Ramsar website, which unfortunately still carries the earlier version agreed by Ramsar in December 2001 and by MAB in 2002. In any event the 2004-5 version (= 2nd PJW) had a theoretical end-date of 2010, so the general status of this cooperation (as with UNESCO, mentioned above) would merit review.

3.6   The first PJW included as item 11.1: "Assess the status of those sites wholly or partially designated as Ramsar sites and Biosphere Reserves, and those joint sites also designated as World Heritage Sites (including natural heritage sites and those designated as cultural

landscapes), and review their status, boundary relationships, and inclusion of the requirements of both instruments in management planning". "Status" here is assumed to refer to designation status and significance in terms of qualification for designation, rather than conditions and trends in a wider sense. Data on shared sites have been presented (see 4) below, but no systematic examination of "boundary relationships" has been carried out.

3.7   The second PJW includes as item 5.1: "The Ramsar and MAB Secretariats, to the extent possible also in joint arrangements with the World Heritage Centre, will establish and maintain a process for ensuring that the existence on any of their sites of one or both of the other designations is accurately and completely noted, and that this can be updated with information on new designations as and when they occur. They will further establish a simple process for compiling and updating a list of all such 'joint sites', and for reading updates to it across into other relevant lists, databases and publications".

3.8   It further includes as item 5.2: "The Ramsar and MAB Secretariats, to the extent possible also in joint arrangements with the World Heritage Centre, will establish and maintain a simple process for comparison of site boundaries of all their joint sites, and for documenting the nature, degree and location of differences".

3.9   It further includes as item 13.4: "Maintain and update joint MAB/Ramsar web site pages so as to raise awareness amongst those responsible for site designation and management under Ramsar and MAB, and encourage access and consistent use of the available tools and assistance under each instrument". Specific suggestions are included also for various links which should feature, notably including "listing of sites designated under both instruments".

3.10   Other related activities are also mentioned, such as 13.3: "Seek opportunities to establish regional site manager networks for managers of joint Ramsar sites/Biosphere Reserves in order to encourage sharing of information and experience".

4. The status of the different web-based information sources

4.1   A review of Ramsar-UNESCO cooperation in 2004[1] discussed this in some detail, but most of the websites and listing processes described have changed since then. It remains true in general however that overlaps are presented in different ways in different lists, in terms of the organisation of site names, and in terms of whether overlap/coincidence is judged on a basis of point location, boundary maps, coordinates, site names, or national authorities simply reporting that there is an overlap. In one case (a CBD document referring to World Heritage Sites, Ramsar Sites and Biosphere Reserves) the scope also included sites "immediately adjacent" to each other. Errors arise for different reasons in different places too, and for example sites are sometimes missed because even within each site network, designation information is entered in different places on datasheets by different compilers.

4.2   Several locations in the Ramsar website offer a link to the same two lists of sites with overlapping designations. When accessed in March 2013 the list of Ramsar-World

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[1] Pritchard, D E (2004). Review of cooperation between the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). RSPB Sabbatical Report. RSPB, Sandy and UNESCO, Paris. 111pp. Version also presented as an agenda paper for the 18th Session of UNESCO Man & The Biosphere Programme International Coordinating Council, Paris, 25-29 October 2004.

Heritage overlaps[2] was dated 15 October 2012 and offered 54 Ramsar Sites corresponding to 45 World Heritage Sites. The list of Ramsar-Biosphere overlaps[3] was dated 30 January 2013 and offered 162 Ramsar Sites corresponding to 142 Biosphere Reserves.

4.3   Using the search facility to query the on-line Ramsar Sites Information Service[4] produced (also in March 2013) very different numbers, *viz* 79 Ramsar Sites overlapping with (an unknown number of) World Heritage Sites, 135 Ramsar Sites overlapping with (an unknown number of) Biosphere Reserves, and 29 Ramsar Sites overlapping with (an unknown number of) both of the other designations. The higher number of Ramsar-WH overlaps here than in the list described in the preceding paragraph might be thought to result from the database being more up to date than the packaged lists; but the discrepancy in relation to Ramsar-BR overlaps goes in the opposite direction (ie is lower in the database), so that is unlikely to be the explanation.

4.4   Using the search facility to query the World Heritage Convention website's list[5] of 962 World Heritage Sites (at March 2013) with the term "Ramsar" brought up only 14 World Heritage Sites, which is even more anomalous. (Using the terms "Biosphere" or "Biosphere Reserve" brought up 37 World Heritage Sites, and combining "Biosphere" and "Ramsar" brought up no sites).

4.5   The search facility in the Biosphere Reserve database on the MAB website[6] does not allow queries by designation type. The site provides fixed lists of overlaps in PDF format. When accessed in March 2013 the list of Biosphere-Ramsar overlaps was dated 21 April 2009 and offered 107 Biosphere Reserves corresponding to 122 Ramsar sites. The list of Biosphere-World Heritage overlaps was dated 24 August 2009 and offered 88 Biosphere Reserves corresponding to 91 World Heritage Sites. The site advertises the existence of a third PDF list of three-way overlaps (Ramsar-WH-BR) but when accessed in March 2013 that document was not present.

4.6   The following summary table highlights the scale of discrepancies revealed by these figures.

Source　　　　　　Overlap	Ramsar website - packaged lists	Ramsar Sites Information Service	World Heritage Convention website	MAB website
Ramsar-World Heritage	54 R = 45 WH	79 R	14 WH	N/A
Ramsar-Biosphere	162 R = 142 BR	135 R	N/A	107 BR = 122 R
World Heritage-Biosphere	N/A	N/A	37 WH	88 BR = 91 WH
Ramsar-World Heritage-Biosphere	N/A	29 R	0 WH	N/A

[2] http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-list-ramsar-and-world/main/ramsar/1-31-218%5E21960_4000_0__

[3] http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-list-mab-sites/main/ramsar/1-31-218%5E25272_4000_0__

[4] http://www.ramsar.wetlands.org/Database/Searchforsites/tabid/765/Default.aspx

[5] http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/

[6] http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/biosphere-reserves/world-network-wnbr/wnbr/

4.7   The discussion above relates to overlaps in the designations as a whole. Within this picture there would be further stratification of the data to be done, for example to distinguish between "natural" and "cultural" World Heritage Sites. The Ramsar Culture Network's interests relate to a sub-set of the data, namely sites with cultural interest. (In the case of World Heritage overlaps this does not necessarily equate to those labelled as "cultural" sites, since the latter signifies cultural interest of Outstanding Universal Value, whereas the RCN is also interested in other levels of cultural value). The RCN's main interest also is in sites where cultural value has a necessary association with the fact of the site's being a wetland and with its ecological functioning (whether arising from it or contributing to it), rather than representing merely an accidental coincidence of location.

5. Maintaining this information in future

5.1   The 2004 review mentioned above recommended that the Ramsar and MAB Secretariats and the World Heritage Centre should each confirm a process within their own site information management systems for ensuring that the existence on any of their sites of one or both of the other designations is accurately and completely noted, and that this can be updated with information on new designations as and when they occur. It was also recommended that all three bodies liaise and agree a simple process for establishing and updating lists of "double-" and "triple-badged" sites, and for ensuring that updates in one information source or data set on this are translated into updates to the other lists and sources carrying data on these shared sites. Recommendations were also made on a process for the comparison of site boundaries.

5.2   The "Indicative World Heritage and Ramsar Secretariats workplan for mutual cooperation" (March 2012) includes as Task 1: "Maintain [an] updated web-based list of overlapping sites". There was a target date of 30 September 2012 for the World Heritage Centre to update its website to match the information on the Ramsar site.

5.3   During 2012 the Centre engaged part of the time of two interns to address the updating of overlap lists, beginning with sites in the Mediterranean region. A dedicated web-page was also to be constructed. Questions concerning the method for spatial identification of overlaps proved to be a challenge in taking this work forward (see also 4.1 above). Any mechanistic method (eg based on reported coordinates) is probably best combined with some general familiarity with the respective site networks and a well-informed ability to "read between the lines" of derived datasets.

5.4   The Ramsar Secretariat is currently (March 2013) recruiting a replacement Documentation Officer, and the updated job description for this post includes a task described as "track the common sites among World Heritage Sites, Biosphere Reserves and Ramsar Sites; and provide webmaster with the information to update web".

5.5   As proposed in the RCN programme, it would be desirable for the three organisations, drawing on the present discussion note, to draft an agreed expression of intent concerning the way in which this kind of information should be maintained in future.

6. Case studies

6.1   (*Note*: where reference is made here to studies of individual cases, it should be understood that this always needs to involve an element of lesson-learning and transfer of experience, rather than simply documenting stories).

6.2   The RCN programme suggests that in the first half of 2013, some proposals might be made "for how case study and experience-exchange material [concerning shared sites] might be piloted with one or two examples that would be relatively well-placed ones to try". Suggestions for this are invited, and it is hoped that progress might be made in the near future, at least in identifying a short list of good candidates. Development of a simple presentation format might also be helpful.

6.3   Bearing in mind the point made in paragraph 6.1 above, some of this might be accomplished relatively readily by adapting any existing relevant "documented stories" by adding the "lessons learned" element. Expert input from practitioners familiar with each case will nevertheless be required. Joint Advisory Mission reports (from which salients could be extracted) might be one possible source (though inclusion of a cultural dimension is to be preferred, and existing mission reports probably lack this).

6.4   The RCN programme then also includes items described as "catalyse the documentation and dissemination of specific case studies of shared values and coordinated management approaches in respect of jointly designated sites" (D9) and "stimulate the development of demonstration initiatives at a selection of jointly designated sites" (D7). These activities are to be progressed in future if new funding is secured. (NB since strictly speaking sites are not designated "jointly", reference instead to "overlapping" or "shared" sites is probably more appropriate. Some eventual regularisation of this terminology may be useful).

7. Other potentially useful steps

7.1   The "Indicative World Heritage and Ramsar Secretariats workplan for mutual cooperation" (March 2012) includes as Task 10: "Systematically copy each other on all formal correspondence dealing with sites that are both WH and Ramsar". This is self-explanatory, except that it depends on having an agreed and up to date list of such sites, which the foregoing shows is only partially in place. It also depends on awareness of shared designation always being triggered in instances of formal correspondence where it applies; and internal mechanisms for ensuring this may need some thought.

7.2   Task 2 in the same workplan reads: "Maintain [an] information exchange capacity on [the] state of conservation of Ramsar/WH sites. Arrange an annual meeting to go over sites of concern. By March 31 each year WH sends note to Ramsar on all WH sites to be considered by WH Committee in June/July meeting, inviting feedback". This will be valuable. (In 2012 a note as described was sent on 7 June, but a "meeting to go over sites of concern" has not yet taken place).

7.3   In June 2012 the World Heritage Centre was reportedly[7] working on "an informative pamphlet" on the differences between Ramsar Sites, World Heritage Sites and Biosphere

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[7] M Patry, communication 30 June 2012

Reserves, to provide a way of responding to questions frequently asked about this by various types of stakeholder.

7.4 The RCN programme seeks to develop some thinking on "ways of identifying and linking more strongly the primary contacts at site level in authorities with responsibility under the respective Conventions for cultural and ecological matters respectively". This lies partly beyond the scope of the present note, but lists of shared sites may be the best entry-point, and early progress is expected.

7.5 In the proposed future RCN activities which remain subject to funding, a task is included to "Publish and disseminate a short report on shared values and coordinated management approaches in respect of jointly designated sites" (D8).

7.6 In 2006, UNEP's Division of Environmental Law and Conventions initiated a knowledge management programme for Multilateral Environment Agreements, which mostly comprised various projects focusing on sharing strategic information, harmonization of national reporting, and developing issue-based modules for coherent implementation of MEAs. This has subsequently evolved into the Multilateral Environment Agreement Information and Knowledge Management initiative (MEA IKM), which seeks to develop harmonized and interoperable information systems in support of knowledge management activities among MEAs, including through UN system-wide information and communication tools[8]. This has seemingly not yet addressed issues relating to site lists, but the initiative's interest could conceivably be drawn to the subject.

7.7 The Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions (BLG)[9] may also have an interest, for example in providing a common web entry portal for site list-linking issues.

7.8 Finally, it would seem logical also for the World Database on Protected Areas[10] to offer relevant capabilities, although data reported there will likely lag behind MAB and the Conventions' own listing processes.

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[8] http://www.cbd.int/mea/ikm/default.shtml
[9] http://www.cbd.int/blg
[10] A joint initiative run by IUCN and UNEP-WCMC - see http://protectedplanet.net/

Annex 7

Water, wetlands and people:
integrating culture and ecology in the Ramsar Convention

Paper given to International conference on "Landscapes of water, source of life – traditional water management associations and systems"
Organised by Fundación Valle Salado de Añana in conjunction with UNESCO Etxea
Vitoria-Gasteiz, Alava, Basque Country, Spain; 12 -13 July 2013

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Abstract:

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (1971) was the first of the modern global environmental treaties, and the only one to address a particular ecosystem type. Now much broader than its early beginnings in waterbird conservation, the Convention provides the primary global intergovernmental cooperation mechanism for sustainable use of wetlands and water resources. Ramsar has pioneered new understandings of the value of these systems, and the application to them of concepts of "ecosystem services". From the outset, the scope of this has included cultural values; but it is mainly in more recent years that guidance and other specific activities have been developed on this aspect. This paper will describe these developments, highlighting in particular the work of the Ramsar Culture Network and some areas of strong cooperation with UNESCO. Fragmentation of specialist disciplines between cultural and natural domains is a relatively recent problem in human history. The Ramsar Convention shows one example of ways of taking a more integrated approach in our strategies for the future.

Scope of this paper

This paper addresses relationships between water, biodiversity and culture, and the prospect of taking a more integrated approach to these issues. The pre-eminent context for this is the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention). The paper briefly introduces the Convention, and comments on the way in which it covers cultural values as well as ecological values. Reference is made to the Ramsar Culture Network which is taking this agenda forward, including increasing cooperation with UNESCO.

The Ramsar Convention

Ramsar is the name of the place in Iran where the treaty was signed in 1971. Ramsar was the first of the modern conservation Conventions, and the only global one to focus on a particular ecosystem. It was innovative in aiming to combine conservation with sustainable use of natural resources.

At the beginning there was an emphasis on waterbirds, but now Ramsar deals with a broad range of matters, from groundwater modelling to sustainable fisheries, the wetland-related aspects of climate change, poverty reduction and many others.

Contracting Parties (there are now 168) accept three main obligations: international cooperation, which includes various transboundary and regional arrangements; conservation of sites designated for the Ramsar List; and the wise use (or sustainable use) of *all* wetlands, which includes integrated management of water catchments and, in effect, the entire hydrological cycle.

Wetlands under the Convention cover a wider range of systems than commonly thought, including areas underground, areas in the sea, rivers, peat forests, temporary wetlands, systems that can be thought of as "natural water infrastructure", and, importantly, human-made wetland systems too.

"Ecological character" is the term in the Convention that defines the target state and the baseline condition of wetlands, as a basis for setting management objectives and detecting and responding to change. Various requirements and expectations have been agreed in relation to this. "International importance" of a wetland is a separate concept, reflecting its relative value.

As with most modern conservation regimes, policy attitudes evolved under Ramsar stress the interdependence of healthily-functioning ecosystems and human well-being. Local community involvement in planning and decision-making, and the role of the social sciences alongside ecological knowledge, are strongly emphasised.

Ramsar and culture

More than 40 years ago, the interconnected importance of ecology, economics and culture of wetlands was formally recognised in the original treaty text.

It was not until later that it received more focused attention, with a series of steps in the 1990s, and two formal Resolutions of the Conference of Parties in 2002 and 2005. The Resolutions give a rationale for the subject, refer to collaboration with relevant organisations, recognition of indigenous peoples' and local communities' rights, and to factoring cultural values into wetland management and site designation; with a list of 27 guiding principles.

These are all consensus texts, but this does not mean there have not been arguments along the way. Some countries made controversial proposals to insert culture in the Ramsar site selection criteria; and others have expressed concerns about non-tariff trade barriers and the jurisdictional divide with World Heritage.

In 2006 a Ramsar Culture Working Group was formed, and it was re-launched in 2013 as a wider Ramsar Culture Network. In addition to advice and facilitation it has overseen some project work and organised events and publications, including a major guidance document in 2008.

Cooperation with UNESCO

The Culture Network is also enhancing important areas of cooperation between Ramsar and UNESCO. This includes the several culture Conventions, but there is also a general Memorandum of Understanding with World Heritage, as well as a Joint Work Plan with the Man & the Biosphere programme; and there are links with the Hydrological Programme and education initiatives too.

Culture and wetland ecosystem services

The typical scientific/analytical way in which wetlands have tended to be valued looks at the ecosystem as a kind of functional "machine", which regulates various equilibria in the environment and generates "outputs" that provide for the mechanics of life, such as water supply, food cultivation and waste removal. There are widely-adopted methods for expressing the value of this in more or less cash-convertible units, such as energy, traded commodities, and the investments required to keep the "machine" maintained and repaired.

There has been a tendency to see other types of value as occupying some separate domain - examples might include a non-utilitarian identification with sense of place or belonging, worshipping the gods of the river, and aesthetic celebrations of landscape. Methods for quantifying these kinds of values also exist; but this is not always straightforward.

Definitions of "culture" normally involve reference to some kind of integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief and behaviour which depends on a capacity for symbolic thought and a capacity for social learning. Culture may also involve a set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices forming the characteristics of an institution, an organisation or a group.

Culture is not static, and does not relate only to historic heritage. It covers all of the contemporary attitudes, new norms, societal strengths and creativity which could be humankind's most important resources with which to face today's environmental challenges.

The two types of value referred to earlier are therefore more similar and interdependent than it may at first appear. Policymaking on environmental sustainability partly concerns the mechanics of the self-renewing capacity of natural systems, but it also involves a choice of societal attitudes to questions such as whether a moral obligation is owed to future generations, and the spatial scale on which we perceive our place in the world. Such questions are informed by the language of cultural value. Practical wetland management strategies therefore depend as much on a good understanding of the cultural context as they do on water chemistry or animal population dynamics.

In truth, all concern for environmental sustainability begins from a mixture of utilitarian and ethical values that are unavoidably anthropocentric constructs, and so are part of human culture.

Societal weaknesses such as deficient governance, and the lack of a common currency of values, are often the limiting factors that prevent the adoption of more effective strategies; and fundamentally these factors are culturally determined.

The issue therefore is much deeper than simply documenting the particular benefits of a particular wetland. In this sense the entire Ramsar agenda could be seen as one of culture.

More specifically, over the years there has been an interesting evolution of the two main Ramsar obligations: the wise use (or sustainable use) of all wetlands, and the conservation of listed sites. These were once somewhat distinct ideas, but the respective interpretations have progressively converged, and they are both now defined in terms of "maintaining the ecological character" of wetlands. Ecological character is in turn defined under the Convention as including "wetland ecosystem services"; and, consistent with the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), these are defined as including tangible and intangible cultural services.

This approach has been challenged by some who champion "intrinsic" or "existence" values of nature, or who otherwise reject an overly utilitarian view of nature's significance to humanity. Such a view potentially overlooks the fact that values like these are themselves human constructs, since it is people who are recognising and championing nature's intrinsic right to exist. To that extent, this can be seen as part of an intangible cultural service, and therefore also covered by the MA model.

Ramsar's culture guidance addresses 17 categories of human interaction with wetlands, grouped under "habitation", "primary and secondary use of wetland resources", and "knowledge, belief systems and social practices".

In the MA construct, some of these would be classified as provisioning, regulating or supporting services. The MA more strictly applies the label "cultural" to the sub-set of services concerned with spirituality, inspiration, recreation and tourism, aesthetic appeal, knowledge and education. Some other aspects, such as sense of identity, historical continuity and social cohesion factors are not mentioned so explicitly, but they are also relevant.

When a wetland has great cultural significance, and might for example even be a World Heritage property as well as a Ramsar site, sometimes this is merely a matter of geographical coincidence. A site might be sacred because a saint was born there, or a temple was built there, and it simply happens also to be a wetland. The cultural services idea however is different - it rests on the existence of some necessary and intimate link with the functioning of the ecosystem. Examples therefore could include mythologies concerning the seasonality of the water regime, traditional uses of the wetland's products, or its special aesthetic value.

Salinas and other traditional water landscapes

The best documented region of the world for these matters is probably the Mediterranean, which, loosely speaking, includes the whole of the countries that border it.

It is perhaps unsurprising that some of the leadership on these issues has come from here, given the long history and special richness of what exists in the region. It has been a crucible for the historic development of major civilisations, empires and religions; and a fundamental role has been played in this by water and wetland systems.

This has resulted in some hugely interesting water landscapes of cultural and ecological significance. The book "Culture and Wetlands in the Mediterranean", published by Med-INA in 2011, draws together probably the largest compilation of material on the subject existing anywhere in the world at present.

The variety is remarkable, including religious rituals, secular celebrations and events, resource management traditions, artistic and literary inspirations, protective taboos, gastronomic and landscape-based tourism, and understanding of history from research in archaeo-ecology.

The various combinations of natural and man-made ingredients that make up the economic and biological importance of salinas systems is one example, with their specialised biodiversity and variety of cultural significances, ranging from trade-routes and philosophies to customs, language and architecture.

Some of the areas concerned, such as Seçovlje in Slovenia and Añana in Spain, now also have a new modern-day economic and educational significance, for natural history and culture-based tourism as well as their productive uses.

This has had benefits in terms of employment, and an enhanced sense of belonging and identity in the local communities. This in turn gives stronger motives for maintaining traditional management practices and conserving the areas, with tools such as Ramsar and World Heritage designations, hopefully all in ways that are both socially and environmentally sustainable.

Future challenges

Culture provides services to wetlands, and wetlands provide services to culture. To safeguard the positive functioning of this relationship there are several challenges to face.

One is improving understanding and recognition of the cultural context which wetland management sits within, and where necessary protecting this cultural context too.

Another is making the reasons why cultural services of wetlands are beneficial more apparent to the people who benefit, and raising awareness of the factors which can jeopardise those services.

There is a particular challenge in doing this imaginatively enough for the more intangible, indirect and long-term types of services. Evaluation and monitoring techniques need to evolve further to cover this fully, and good trans-disciplinary shared frameworks of aims and values will be needed for expressing things in operational terms. Spatial mapping is likely to be important, both in terms of where services are delivered, and in terms of the source conditions and pathways that cause them to arise. Sociology, ethnography, psychology, ethics and aesthetics must therefore all play a part, in conjunction with ecological and hydrological science.

For wetland management purposes too, more integrated approaches are required. This is a modern problem. At one time, culture, spirituality, interaction between humankind and the natural world, innovation, development and knowledge would have been unified inseparably in a whole way of being. This is still the case in some indigenous societies. Elsewhere however there has been a centuries-long process of fragmentation of agendas and deconstruction of understandings, to the point where the boundaries are hotly contested between disciplines, and undue sectoralism is diagnosed as a key obstacle to achieving policy objectives.

There are, however, some signs of a counter-current of thinking, and some new interest in a more holistic approach. Ultimately this is what will provide the basis for strategies that are more practically sustainable in the long term.