

Proposed new framework for delivery of scientific and technical advice and guidance on the Convention

Action requested

- Standing Committee is invited to take note of the report of the review committee on Resolution XI.16 and review the attached Draft Resolution concerning the proposed new framework for delivery of scientific and technical advice and guidance on the Convention, for consideration by the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

1. The **Scientific and Technical Review Panel** of the Ramsar Convention was established in 1993 by Resolution 5.5 as a subsidiary body of the Convention to provide scientific and technical guidance to the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee and the Secretariat.
2. Through Resolution XI.16 in 2012 the Contracting Parties agreed to undertake a review of the delivery, uptake and implementation of scientific and technical advice and guidance to the Convention for consideration by the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP12).
3. Through Decision SC46-25 in 2013 “the Standing Committee confirmed the establishment of the review committee on the delivery of scientific and technical advice (Resolution XI.16), with the United States of America as the lead Party, regional representation by other Parties, the STRP Chair and the Chair of the Subgroup on Finance.”
4. Standing Committee Decision SC47-07 confirmed “the process recommended by the Review Committee on the delivery of scientific and technical advice (Resolution XI.16) to have a shortlist of candidates to discuss with the Chair, Secretary General, STRP Chair and Senior Regional Advisers, and to make decisions on the consultants to be hired by the close of SC47, and further requested the Review Committee to report on progress at SC48”.
5. The Review Committee, based on the results of its review, proposes the attached Draft Resolution for COP12 for the Standing Committee’s consideration.

Draft Resolution XII.xx

Proposed new framework for delivery of scientific and technical advice and guidance on the Convention

1. RECALLING the establishment by Resolution 5.5 of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Ramsar Convention as a subsidiary body of the Convention to provide scientific and technical guidance to the Conference of the Parties, to the Standing Committee, and to the Ramsar Secretariat;
2. ALSO RECALLING Resolutions VI.7, VII.2, VIII.28, IX.11, X.9, and XI.18 on this same matter, which made successive modifications to the way in which the STRP and its work were organized;
3. THANKING all members of the STRP and its observer organizations and invited experts for their contributions since COP5 and for their expert advice on numerous scientific and technical issues of importance to the implementation of the Convention;
4. ALSO THANKING the many governments which have supported the work of the STRP with financial contributions, and EXPRESSING GRATITUDE to observer organizations and the Convention's International Organization Partners for their sustained contributions to the work of the Panel;
5. RECALLING that through Resolution XI.16 the Contracting Parties agreed to undertake a review of the delivery, uptake and implementation of scientific and technical advice and guidance to the Convention, for consideration by the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
6. WELCOMING the report of the review committee established by Standing Committee in its Decision SC46-25 and the findings of the review which it undertook and which is posted in Ramsar web site (at http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/final_report_and_components_ramsar_scientific_technical_advice.pdf);
7. RECOGNIZING that the review and the recommendations of the review committee revealed that, while Ramsar scientific and technical guidance is well appreciated and has contributed to scientific and technical knowledge on wetlands, it does not reach all of its intended audiences, and therefore does not fully respond to the needs of Contracting Parties and people in their countries who may contribute to the implementation of the Convention;
8. NOTING the ten specific challenges which were identified through the review process and the 26 recommendations proposed to respond to these challenges; and
9. Further RECOGNIZING the recommendations of the review committee to amend the structure and processes of the STRP and thereby make it more responsive to the current and future needs of Contracting Parties;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

10. DECIDES to restructure the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) as established by Resolution V.5 (1993) and amended by successive Resolutions, to further help Contracting Parties respond to challenges of wetland conservation and wise use, by providing national and

regionally-specific scientific and technical guidance in an efficient, timely and effective manner, following the processes described in Annex 1;

11. REAFFIRMS the critical importance to the Convention of the work of the STRP in developing and providing scientific and technical guidance, linking wetland science to effective technical communications, and building understanding of the guidance needs of regional and national audiences;
12. REAFFIRMS that this Resolution supersedes all previous Resolutions on matters of the STRP and the successive modifications on the way in which the STRP and its work have been organized;
13. CONFIRMS that the organization and the processes of the STRP adopted by this Resolution will apply for the 2016-2018 triennium and beyond unless amended by subsequent COP decisions as a result of a future review;
14. Further CONFIRMS that the Conference of Parties will approve the STRP's programme of work for each triennium, that the Standing Committee will continue to have overall responsibility for the delivery of this programme, and that the Chair of the STRP will report to each Standing Committee meeting on the Panel's progress with tasks, and propose for the consideration of the Standing Committee any adjustments to the programme which the Panel considers necessary.
15. DECIDES to dissolve the STRP Oversight Committee and INSTRUCTS the Management Working Group of the Standing Committee to take over the role of the STRP Oversight Committee which was established in Resolution IX.11, and to oversee the work of the STRP as indicated in Annex 1 to this Resolution;
16. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to continue to provide support to the STRP;
17. RECOGNIZES the continuing need to ensure both that the Panel has the resources to undertake its work effectively and that the Secretariat has sufficient capacity to support this work, and URGES Contracting Parties and others to assist in securing continuity of such funding;
18. APPROVES the list, at Annex 2 of this Resolution, of bodies and organizations which may be invited to participate as observers in the meetings and processes of the STRP and INSTRUCTS the Standing Committee to amend the list during the triennium as appropriate ; and
19. INVITES the bodies and organizations listed at Annex 2 to consider establishing close working arrangements with the STRP on matters of common interest, particularly in relation to themes identified for action during the 2016-2018 triennium.

Annex 1

How the Scientific and Technical Review Panel works

Purpose of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel

1. The purpose of the STRP is to provide scientific and technical guidance and advice to the Ramsar Contracting Parties, the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee, the Ramsar Secretariat and to other wetland users working on wetlands issues, in order to foster the implementation of the Convention.
2. The STRP should provide in an efficient, timely and effective manner, national and regional specific scientific and technical advice, guidance and tools to enable these audiences to respond to the challenges of wetland conservation and wise use.

Oversight of the STRP

3. The programme of work and priorities of the STRP will be established at each meeting of the COP. The Conference of the Contracting Parties will approve the STRP work plan for the coming triennium and the budget to implement it. The work plan will be built around the priority tasks determined and approved by the Conference of the Parties, in line with the current Strategic Plan and COP Resolutions.
4. Between the COPs, the Standing Committee will continue to direct and oversee the implementation of the programme, review priority tasks and amend them as necessary, and approve the allocation of funds. The Chair of the STRP will report to each Standing Committee meeting on the Panel's progress and recommend for the consideration of the Standing Committee any adjustments as necessary.
5. The Standing Committee's Management Working Group will oversee the work of the STRP, replacing the STRP Oversight Committee, according to the terms defined for that Committee in Resolution IX.11 and with the following responsibilities:
 - i) to appoint the members of the STRP and appoint the Chair and Vice-chair from among them;
 - ii) to oversee the implementation of the STRP's programme, and report progress to each Standing Committee with recommendations for action as required;
 - iii) to guide and support the Panel as required;
 - iv) to recommend the allocation of funds for STRP tasks to the Standing Committee Sub-group on Finance; and
 - v) to work with the Secretariat to oversee STRP expenditures.
6. The Secretariat will continue to support the STRP. Relevant staff includes the Deputy Secretary General, Senior Regional Advisors, the Head of Communications and the Scientific and Technical

Support Officer. The Head of Communications will serve as the CEPA expert defined in Resolution IX.11. The Secretariat's responsibilities include:

- i) facilitating the work of the STRP, including by organizing and administering its meetings and maintaining the STRP Workspace;
- ii) fostering opportunities for collaboration with other conventions, intergovernmental institutions, and national and international NGOs, and facilitating such collaboration as required;
- iii) Facilitating linkages between potential collaborators within countries, regions and globally;
- iv) identifying the needs of potential audiences and thematic priorities in different countries or regions to suggest to the Parties for their consideration;
- v) creating a comprehensive database of contacts including Administrative Authorities, STRP CEPA and general National Focal Points, National Ramsar Committees, managers of Ramsar Sites, wetland organizations, past STRP members and other relevant contacts and other relevant organizations and conventions and disseminating to them Ramsar decisions, Resolutions and Recommendations of the COP and the Standing Committee;
- vi) keeping the Contracting Parties, the Ramsar community, and the public informed of developments related to the Convention, including the availability of finalized STRP products;
- vii) ensure all materials from the STRP are developed for target audiences as clear, readable materials;
- viii) support modification of technical and scientific products for communication to targeted audiences;
- ix) publishing and disseminating the guidance and products of the STRP, ensuring that policy-makers and other identified audiences have timely and accessible guidance they need on identified priority issues; and
- x) monitoring the application of the guidance.

Structure of the Panel

7. The Scientific and Technical Review Panel will be made up of 18 members with appropriate scientific and technical knowledge, plus observers representing the International Organization Partners and other organizations recognized by the COP. They will include:
 - i) six scientific members¹;
 - ii) 12 technical expert members², including six regional expert representatives and six other experts on issues identified for action during the triennium;

¹ Responsible to provide advice on the strategic direction of scientific work needed to enhance the development of STRP products, and ensure the scientific quality of the finished products.

- iii) one observer representative of each of the Convention's International Organization Partners; and
 - iv) a small number of observer experts from scientific and technical organizations and networks recognized by the COP (and listed in Annex 2), which may be invited to support the work of the Panel as appropriate.
 - v) The chairs of scientific and technical subsidiary bodies and relevant secretariat staff of other environmental agreements will continue to be invited to participate as observers.
8. Organizations will be asked to nominate a representative who is able to access the organization's national, regional and international networks of wetland experts and who is committed to serve for the entire triennium to ensure continuity of participation.
 9. Representatives of other organizations requesting to participate as observers in meetings or intersessional processes of the STRP may do so with the approval of the STRP Chair.
 10. The Chair and Vice-chair will be selected from among the appointed members to the Panel.

Role and responsibilities of the STRP members

11. The main collective responsibilities of the Panel members are to:
 - i) establish the scope, deliverables and approach to delivery for each assigned task, including through scoping workshops as appropriate, and in so doing ensure input from the network of STRP National Focal Points, Ramsar Regional Initiatives, and any other relevant organizations;
 - ii) ensure appropriate peer review of draft materials, and consult with peers and the Communications team of the Secretariat on how best to ensure their effective communication and implementation;
 - iii) review all scientific and technical materials drafted by Convention bodies, consulting with STRP Focal Points as required, before they are shared with Parties and the Conference of the Parties, in line with the terms of Resolution VIII.45; and
 - iv) encourage their own national and international networks of wetland experts to contribute more widely to the work of the Panel and disseminate its final products.
 - v) Assist the Ramsar Secretariat on Ramsar Advisory Missions, as appropriate and subject to the availability of resources;
 - vi) To avoid any conflict of interest, STRP members involved in defining the workplan for the next triennium should not then undertake any substantive scientific or technical work within that work plan. Equally, members preparing substantive work should not be

² Responsible for preparation of technical products in the form of guidance, technical briefing notes, Ramsar Technical Reports, etc., and solicit input and feedback on these from stakeholders and partners in all the Ramsar regions.

involved in reviewing it. All members should sign a “conflict of interest” declaration when they accept the nomination to the panel, and at each subsequent STRP meeting.

12. The STRP Chair must have broad knowledge of wetland issues and be familiar with the work of the Panel and the Convention. He or she will:
 - i) prepare the agendas for STRP meetings with the assistance of the Secretariat and Vice-Chair, and approve it and other relevant meeting papers;
 - ii) chair plenary sessions of STRP meetings and oversee the conduct of all aspects of those meetings;
 - iii) manage the implementation of the STRP work plan and ensure timely delivery of the STRP’s products;
 - iv) lead the STRP’s work and coordinate the Panel’s advice to the next COP concerning new and emerging priorities the Parties may wish to consider for the Panel’s work in the next triennium;
 - v) appoint leads and co-leads of any thematic working groups established by the Panel, and advise them on the membership of groups;
 - vi) with the STRP Vice-Chair, agree upon the division of responsibilities regarding oversight of the thematic working groups or specific task groups established by the Panel;
 - vii) coordinating inputs from the Panel, its thematic working groups and the Secretariat on new and emerging priorities and with the assistance of the panel, identify priority tasks and draft the STRP work plan for the coming triennium, for approval by the COP;
 - viii) report to each meeting of the COP and the Standing Committee the progress of the STRP work plan and the priority tasks included in it, and STRP-related matters, and provide feedback and guidance to the STRP;
 - ix) resources permitting, represent the STRP at meetings of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other processes and initiatives relevant to the STRP’s work, such as meetings of the Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies of the Biodiversity-related Conventions (CSAB) and the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES);
 - x) at the request of the Secretary General represent the Convention’s scientific and technical work externally by maintaining relationships with partner organizations and, resources permitting, by participating in scientific forums and conferences;
 - xi) recommend to the Standing Committee Management Working Group for its consideration the names of three members eligible for reappointment for a subsequent triennium based on their contributions to the STRP’s work and the relevance of their expertise to the COP-assigned priority tasks; and
 - xii) maintain records of the hours devoted to contributing to the work of the Panel, to facilitate reporting of inputs.

13. The STRP Vice-chair must also have broad knowledge of wetland issues and be familiar with the work of the Panel and the Convention. He or she will:
 - i) help the Secretariat and STRP Chair prepare agendas and other papers for STRP meetings;
 - ii) substitute for the STRP Chair in chairing plenary sessions of STRP meetings and overseeing the conduct of all aspects of STRP meetings;
 - iii) advise, along with the STRP Chair and the Secretariat, the leads and co-leads of working groups on the membership of groups;
 - iv) with the STRP Chair, agree upon the division of responsibilities regarding oversight of the thematic working groups or specific task groups established by the Panel;
 - v) resources permitting, substitute for the Chair in representing the STRP at meetings of other MEAs and relevant processes and initiatives;
 - vi) represent the Convention's scientific and technical work externally, through maintaining relationships with partner organizations and, resources permitting, by participating at scientific forums and conferences; and
 - vii) when requested, substitute for the STRP Chair in any other of his or her functions; and maintain records of the hours devoted to contributing to the work of the Panel, to facilitate reporting of inputs by the STRP Chair.

14. The scientific members will:
 - i) ensure the scientific quality of finished products;
 - ii) provide independent advice to the Secretary General and STRP Chair on emerging scientific issues; and
 - iii) support and champion the STRP and its work.

15. The technical members will:
 - i) prepare technical guidance to inform policy-makers and practitioners, and seek input and feedback on these from stakeholders and partners in all the Ramsar regions; and
 - ii) assist with the dissemination, promotion and implementation of guidance in relevant networks, countries and regions.

16. IOP nominees should be wetland experts and have a role within their IOPs for maintaining and accessing the wetland conservation and wise use expertise of their organization's regional and global networks. STRP's IOP representatives are expected, in addition to the role for all STRP Members (above), to:
 - i) seek the views of experts within their organizations (including relevant specialist groups and networks) of the work plan of the STRP;
 - ii) participate in working groups and task forces established by the Panel;

- iii) ensure that the scientific and technical capacity of their organization's networks of wetland experts is available to the Panel, and establish mechanisms to identify and engage experts from their networks in the work of the STRP;
- iv) leverage the outreach capacity of their organization to promote and disseminate the outputs of the STRP;

17. Representatives of Observer Organizations are expected to:

- i) ensure that the scientific and technical capacity of their organizations' national, regional and international networks of wetland experts (where applicable) are available to the Panel, and establish mechanisms to identify and engage experts from their networks in the work of the STRP;
- ii) identify to the Panel and its working groups any work relevant to STRP tasks already in existence or underway through their processes and initiatives;
- iii) advise on emerging and priority development issues and trends.
- iv) participate in any relevant working group and tasks forces established by the Panel;
- v) Support and promote the STRP's work:
- vi) Create opportunities for partnerships, collaborations and financing.
- vii) Leverage the outreach capacity of their organization to share information about and help disseminate STRP products after they are finalized.

18. The STRP National Focal Points of each Contracting Party act as a liaison between their national wetland practitioners and the STRP. They are appointed to the role for their scientific and technical expertise in wetland conservation, management and wise use. They will represent their organization or government in undertaking their liaison role in the work of the STRP, and are expected to:

- i) provide input and support to the implementation of the work plan of the STRP;
- ii) maintain regular contact with other Ramsar National Focal Points in their country (Ramsar Focal Point and CEPA Focal Points),;
- iii) mobilize local capacity and, to the extent possible, consult with and seek input from other experts and bodies and wetlands centres in their country, including focal points of other MEAs;
- iv) the STRP NFPs should provide advice to, and participate in, meetings of the National Wetland/Ramsar Committee or similar bodies (e.g., National Biodiversity Committees) where they exist, and provide advice in the preparation of National Reports to Conferences of Contracting Parties. They should also assist in disseminating information on the work of the STRP, interpreted as appropriate to the national context, to relevant individuals and bodies in their countries;

- v) provide technical support to national wetland activities such as the preparation of wetland inventory,
- vi) help disseminate STRP products and information on its work, adapted as appropriate to the national context.

Selection of Panel members

19. Immediately after the COP, the Secretariat will make a call for nominations of the STRP members for the coming triennium, which includes information on the specific profiles required for the technical and scientific members.
20. The members and observer representatives for each triennium will be appointed by the Management Working Group of the Standing Committee as soon as possible after the COP, from the candidates nominated according to the process below.
21. Administrative Authorities from each region will reach agreement internally and nominate one technical expert who will be accepted automatically.
22. STRP members will be appointed in their personal capacity for their scientific and technical expertise, and will not represent any organization or government in their interaction with the STRP except for the IOP members. Selections will be made to secure the scientific and technical expertise required for the STRP's work during the triennium, and ensure regional and gender balance.
23. Administrative Authorities of Contracting Parties, IOPs and observer organizations will make nominations for the six scientific members. The Administrative Authorities will nominate candidates for the six regional technical expert representatives (one for each Ramsar region), while Administrative Authorities, IOPs and observer organizations may make nominations for the other six technical members.
24. Each International Organization Partner will nominate its representative member.
25. Any observer organization may nominate a representative as observer to the Panel.
26. Organizations nominating members or observers must provide a letter of recommendation summarizing the expertise of the candidate and the relevance of their work to the Panel's work plan.
27. Nominees will provide a curriculum vitae and a declaration that they are willing to be considered for appointment to the Panel that they have, where relevant, the required support of their organizations on a voluntary basis to deliver the work expected of Panel members and the time and availability for meetings. They will note whether they will need any financial support to participate in meetings and will provide a brief summary of how their skills and expertise might contribute to the Panel's work.
28. The Secretariat will assess the nominations and make recommendations for appointments for consideration by the Management Working Group of the Standing Committee, which will reach its decisions through electronic communication and teleconferences as soon as possible after each COP, to enable the Panel to start work as early as possible.

29. If a vacancy for a member of the Panel arises between COPs, the Management Working Group of the Standing Committee will review other nominations and appoint a replacement member as soon as practicable.
30. Candidates for appointment as members of the STRP must have the following: :
 - i) capacity and experience in local, national and international networking with wetland conservation and wise use experts, including when appropriate STRP National Focal Points;
 - ii) recognized experience and expertise in one or more aspects of wetland conservation and wise use, particularly those relevant to the identified priorities for the forthcoming work of the Panel;
 - iii) full access to electronic mail and the online systems which the Panel will use;
 - iv) proficient comprehension of English, and fluent written and spoken English, French or Spanish; and
 - v) commitment to undertake the work of the Panel and its working groups, and the support, where relevant, of their organization, enabling them to deliver the work expected of Panel members on a voluntary basis.

Term of Panel membership

31. With the exception of the IOP observers, membership to the panel will not in principle be for more than one triennium, to allow rotation in the panel composition. The maximum tenure of any member including the Chair and Vice-chair will be two triennia (six years).
32. For each triennium, three members of the outgoing STRP will be retained to ensure continuity. On each occasion, the STRP Chair and Vice-chair and the Secretariat will propose STRP members for reappointment, for endorsement by the Management Working Group of the Standing Committee.
33. Members being proposed for reappointment must have demonstrated the ability to contribute effectively to the work of the Panel and must confirm their willingness to be reappointed.

Operation of the STRP

34. The STRP will develop collaborative relationships with the International Organization Partners, thematic experts and regional organizations relevant to its priority work areas, and where feasible, directly with wetland managers and users of wetlands.
35. The STRP and the communications team of the Secretariat will also work with Administrative Authorities and CEPA Focal Points, with IOPs and other bodies, to build up a network of wetland practitioners and users, and the Secretariat will maintain regular contact with them.
36. The STRP will meet face-to-face annually to review progress on identified tasks, to consider urgent emerging issues and, in the year leading up to the COP, to discuss the areas of work to recommend to the Conference of Parties for its consideration for the next triennium.

37. The appointed STRP members will, where appropriate and with the assistance of the Secretariat, establish working groups at the start of each triennium and lead or co-lead them as appointed by the STRP Chair.
38. Meetings of the STRP will operate in the three Convention languages and meeting documents will be made available in the three Convention languages, subject to the availability of resources.

The STRP's three-year cycle of work

39. There are six stages in the STRP's triennial cycle of work. Each has specific targets to be met before the STRP can progress to the next stage.

Stage 1: Setting the Priorities for the coming triennium

40. The STRP will report to the final full meeting of the Standing Committee before each COP on the status of issues addressed in the triennium, including all tasks agreed by Contracting Parties in previous COPs.
41. The STRP will propose how it will complete any remaining tasks, or propose alternative solutions if necessary.
42. The STRP, in consultation with the Secretariat and the Standing Committee, will recommend scientific and technical priorities for the coming triennium, identify anticipated associated funding needs, and indicate potentially relevant partner organizations, for the consideration of the Conference of Parties.
43. The list of priorities will reflect the content of the Ramsar Strategic Plan for the coming triennium, resolutions of the last COP, and other priority issues which have been identified by regional or global wetland networks.

Stage 2: COP approval of priorities for STRP programming

44. A draft resolution will be presented to the COP which reports on the products delivered during the last triennium, and proposes a list of potential themes for the coming triennium and a revised list of potential observer organizations (Annex 3).
45. The COP will approve a maximum of five thematic work areas for each triennium, and approve an appropriate allocation of core funds. Selection of these five areas of work will take into account their relationship and alignment with the Strategic Plan and tasks already assigned by the previous COP.

Stage 3: Convening the STRP

46. The STRP will convene as soon as possible after the COP. The Management Working Group of the Standing Committee will select the STRP members intersessionally, as soon as possible after receiving the nominations from the Secretariat. The Management Working Group will first select the Chair and Vice-chair, who will participate in the selection of the other members.

Stage 4: Developing the STRP work plan

47. The first task of the new STRP will be to develop the work plan, in consultation with the Secretariat (Secretary General /Deputy SG, Senior Regional Advisors and communications team), based on the thematic work areas selected by the Contracting Parties.

Stage 5: Approval by the Standing Committee of the work plan

48. The STRP Chair will present the work plan to the Standing Committee at its first full meeting after the COP.

Stage 6: Deliver and disseminate the products

49. The various scientific and technical products will be prepared and communicated to target audiences during the triennium, with assistance from the Secretariat's communications team.

Target audiences and the process of developing guidance materials

50. Two target audience categories have been identified for the materials to be developed by the STRP for the 2016-2018 triennium (subject to future review):
- i) Policy-makers, including those from the environment and water sectors and other related sectors such as energy, health and sanitation, agriculture, infrastructure; and
 - ii) Practitioners and in particular wetland managers, but also others from related fields, such as protected area managers and staff of wetland education centres.
51. The STRP will produce the following types of guidance:
- i) Scientific guidance, which provides the basis for technical guidance for practitioners.
 - ii) Technical guidance, which responds to specific methodological needs of policy-makers and practitioners with each receiving a different type of technical guidance.
52. The main audience for the scientific guidance will be practitioners. The guidance will draw on published peer-reviewed research and other scientific sources to help advance implementation of the Convention.
53. Technical guidance will be the main focus for STRP products. Scientific guidance will primarily serve to underpin the technical guidance.
54. The main audience for the technical guidance will be policy-makers, while users of wetlands may also benefit from it. It will be delivered through formats including handbooks, manuals, fact sheets, webinars and videos.
55. The approach to the development of guidance will reflect national needs but also seek a regional approach. Senior Regional Advisors and the STRP National Focal Points will collaborate to define national and regional priorities and needs.
56. The Secretariat's communications team will ensure all materials are clear and accessible, and relevant to targeted audiences. It will monitor and evaluate the reach and impact of the products, and report its findings to the STRP.
57. The process for developing guidance will be as follows:
- i) The Contracting Parties will identify the audience for each of the proposed technical products, and the Secretariat will help to define the needs of each audience group.

- ii) The Secretariat will work with the STRP members to determine the type, content, format and design for each technical product.
- iii) The STRP members will identify sources of information and existing guidance, and then develop the guidance, in line with the thematic priorities and the current Strategic Plan.
- iv) Additional explanatory summaries, and interpretive information related to the technical guidance directed at policy-makers will be developed by the Secretariat's communications team.
- v) The Secretariat will communicate and distribute the guidance, with assistance from STRP members, International Organization Partners, STRP National Focal Points and other partners.
- vi) The Secretariat will lead on monitoring the application of the guidance and report on this to the STRP and the Standing Committee.
- vii) The Secretariat will commission a periodic review of the use of the guidance and report on this to the Standing Committee.

Annex 2

Bodies and organizations invited to participate as observers in the meetings and processes of the STRP for the 2016-2018 triennium

Observer organizations are defined as global and regional multilateral environmental agreements, global intergovernmental organizations and processes (IGOs), regional intergovernmental organizations and processes (IROs), international organization and other NGOs and organizations devoted to wetlands.

They include:

- Conservation International (CI)
- Consultative Group on Biological Diversity
- Ducks Unlimited (DU)
- Environmental Law Institute
- Group on Earth Observation – Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO-BON)
- ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability {Reserve made by Argentina}
- Flora and Fauna International {Reserve made by Argentina}
- NatureServe
- The Business and Biodiversity Offsets Program (BPOP)
- The Committee on Science and Technology of the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- The Coordinating Committee for the Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands (GGAP-coco)
- The European Space Agency – ESRIN (ESA-ESRIN)
- The Global Water Partnership (GWP) {Reserve made by Argentina}
- The Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)
- The interim Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)
- The International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO)
- The International Society for Ecological Economics (ISEE)
- The Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) of the Global Environment Facility
- The Scientific Council of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)
- The Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- The Secretariats of the CBD, CMS, CITES, UNCCD, UNFCCC, the World Heritage Convention (WHC); UNESCO – Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB), the UNECE “Water Convention”, and the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) working group of the Arctic Council
- The Society for Ecological Restoration (SER)
- The Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS)
- The Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technical Advice of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- The Technical Committee of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)
- The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- The UNEP – World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)
- The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)
- The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT)
- The World Bank

- The World Health Organization (WHO)
- Tour du Valat Research Centre for the Conservation of Mediterranean wetlands
- UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education
- UNESCO-IHP International Hydrological Programme
- UN-HABITAT
- UN Regional Economic Commissions

Annex 3

STRP priorities and thematic areas for 2016-2018

STRP priorities were selected based on the following criteria (a) the ones with the most overlap in prioritization across regions that provided views (Africa, Americas and Asia) combined with (b) the strongest case vis-à-vis matching the strategic plan goals and targets.

STRP Thematic Areas, as matched to Ramsar Strategic Plan Targets 2016 – 2021	Ramsar Strategic Plan Targets 2016 – 2021
	Goal 1: Addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation
<p>Methodologies for valuation of goods and services of wetlands.</p> <p>Balancing wetland conservation and development – infrastructure, urbanization and agriculture.</p>	<p>Target 1 Wetlands and wetland benefits and ecosystem services feature in national/ local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure at the national and local level.</p> <p>Target 3 Public and private sectors have taken steps to apply guidelines and good practices for wise use of water and wetlands</p>
	Goal 2: Effectively conserving and managing the Ramsar Site network
<p>Best practice methodologies / tools to monitor Ramsar sites, including surveying, mapping, and inventorying.</p>	<p>Target 5 Ramsar sites are effectively managed</p> <p>Target 7 Sites that are at risk of loss of ecological character have threats addressed.</p>
	Goal 3: Wisely using all wetlands
<p>Best practices for developing and implementing management plans for protected areas / Ramsar sites.</p>	<p>Target 8 The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the scale of the basin.</p> <p>Target 9</p>

<p>Methodologies for valuation of goods and services of wetlands.</p> <p>Balancing wetland conservation and development—infrastructure, urbanization and agriculture.</p> <p>Climate change and wetlands: methodologies for carbon capture.</p>	<p>Wetland services and benefits are widely demonstrated and documented</p> <p>Target 10 Restoration is in progress or completed in degraded wetlands , with priority to wetlands that are relevant for disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p> <p>Target 11 National wetland inventories have been completed, disseminated and used for the effective management of wetlands.</p>
	<p>Goal 4: Enhancing Implementation</p>
<p>Best practice methodologies / tools to monitor Ramsar sites, including surveying, mapping, and inventorying.</p> <p>Best practices for developing and implementing management plans for protected areas / Ramsar sites.</p> <p>Methodologies for valuation of goods and services of wetlands.</p> <p>Balancing wetland conservation and development – infrastructure, urbanization and agriculture.</p> <p>Climate change and wetlands: methodologies for carbon capture.</p>	<p>Target 12</p> <p>Scientific and technical guidance is developed on relevant topics and is available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.</p>