

## Allocation of Ramsar core budget funds to regional initiatives operating in the framework of the Ramsar Convention in 2015

### Actions requested:

- Standing Committee is invited to accept the annual reports of progress 2014 and work plans 2015 of the 15 endorsed regional initiatives 2013-2015.
- Standing Committee is invited to allocate the following amounts from Ramsar core budget line D (“Support to regional initiative network and centres”) to the following initiatives for their activities in 2015:

- Niger river basin network	CHF 42,000
- La Plata river basin network	CHF 18,000
- Caribbean network	CHF 18,000
- American mangroves and reefs network	CHF 20,000
- Carpathian Wetland Initiative	CHF 6,300
- Black and Azov Sea coast	CHF 2,500

### Introduction

1. The Ramsar Contracting Parties at COP7 in 1999 recognized regional cooperation as an effective way for them to promote and better implement the objectives of the Convention, and adopted Resolution VII.19 providing guidelines for international cooperation, Resolution VII.22 on a collaborative structure for the Mediterranean, and Resolution VII.26 on the creation of a regional centre for training and research in the Western Hemisphere. This triggered the establishment and development of formally established regional cooperation mechanisms which have since been referred to as ‘regional initiatives’. This regional cooperation between Parties at international level is realized in two forms: through either physically established *centres* for regional training and capacity building, or *networks* that operate for regional cooperation.
2. The Parties agreed that to be formally recognized as operating under the Ramsar Convention, a regional initiative has to conform to specific guidelines. The original guidelines were adopted through Resolution VII.19 in 1999 and regularly updated since. Most recently, at its 46<sup>th</sup> meeting in 2013 (SC46), the Standing Committee endorsed improved ‘Operational Guidelines 2013-2015 for Regional Initiatives in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands’.
3. In 2012 the Parties at COP11 instructed the Standing Committee (through Resolution XI.5) to evaluate the activities of the regional initiatives, their administrative and financial management and their long-term sustainability, and to use the updated Guidelines to determine the level of support (financial or otherwise) during the triennium 2013-2015.
4. SC46 endorsed 15 regional initiatives, including four regional centres for training and capacity building and eleven regional networks (listed in Table 1 below) as meeting the Operational

Guidelines and requested that they report annually on progress with their work and plans for future activities.

5. SC47 accepted their annual reports of progress in 2013 and work plans for 2014 through Decision SC47-26. In early 2015, the Secretariat received their new annual reports on progress with work during 2014 and work plans for 2015; these are available in PDF format at [http://www.ramsar.org/library/field\\_date/%5B2015-01-01T00%3A00%3A00Z%20TO%202016-01-01T00%3A00%3A00Z%5D/field\\_tag\\_body\\_event/regional-bodies-and-events-464](http://www.ramsar.org/library/field_date/%5B2015-01-01T00%3A00%3A00Z%20TO%202016-01-01T00%3A00%3A00Z%5D/field_tag_body_event/regional-bodies-and-events-464).

#### **Allocation of Ramsar core budget funds to regional initiatives for activities in 2015**

6. COP11 agreed through Resolution XI.5 (paragraph 12) 'to earmark financial support to regional initiatives in the Convention core budget for their activities during the period 2013-2015, provided that they are determined by the Standing Committee to fully meet the Operational Guidelines'.
7. COP11 decided through Resolution XI.5 (paragraph 13) 'that the levels of financial support to individual Regional Initiatives for the years 2013, 2014, and 2015 through that budget line will be determined by the Standing Committee during its annual meetings, based upon updated financial and work plans to be submitted in the required format not later than two months prior to its annual meetings, and with the benefit of the specific recommendations made by the Subgroup on Finance'.
8. COP11 also specified rules regarding eligibility for Ramsar core budget financial support: notably that this support 'will, in principle, only be provided for a period corresponding to the interval between two meetings of COP' (paragraph 15), 'that financial support for Ramsar Regional Centres that meet the Operational Guidelines can be obtained for a period of up to six years in total' (paragraph 16), and 'that Regional Initiative Networks that have already received financial support from the Convention's core budget for one triennium may have a three-year phasing out period, giving them the opportunity to find complementary means of financing their activities, and that financial support from the Convention's core budget will then cease' (paragraph 17).
9. The regional initiative for the Mediterranean (MedWet) has received funding support from the Ramsar budget during two consecutive periods between 2003 (COP8) and 2008 (COP10). The regional centres for the Western Hemisphere and for Central and West Asia, and the networks for the High Andean region and the West African coast, have also received Ramsar financial support for two consecutive periods between 2006 (COP9) and 2012 (COP11). According to Resolution XI.5 (paragraphs 15-17), these five initiatives are thus no longer eligible for Ramsar core budget funding support.
10. The regional centre for East Africa (RAMCEA) has received Ramsar funding during two consecutive periods (COP10 -COP12) for six years (2009-2014). According to Resolution XI.5 (paragraphs 15-16), it is thus no longer eligible for Ramsar funding.
11. Six regional networks have received Ramsar core budget start-up funding during two periods between COP10 and COP12 and are eligible for additional Ramsar funding support in 2015 for the last year of the three-year phasing-out period between COP11 and COP12 (Resolution XI.5, paragraph 17). They are the networks for the Niger and La Plata river basins, the Caribbean, Black and Azov Sea coastal wetlands, American mangroves and coral reefs, and the Carpathian Wetland Initiative.
12. Table 1 on page 4 below provides the most relevant financial overview information for all

Ramsar regional initiatives, based on the details provided in their annual reporting. The table shows in its columns, from left to right:

- A) The total accumulated Ramsar funding (of CHF 1,883,311) provided to the initiatives from the specific Ramsar core budget line up to the end of 2013.
  - B) The subsequent allocations made by SC47 in 2014 from the Ramsar core budget line (totalling CHF 120,000). Most of these funds were disbursed, except those concerning two initiatives (Niger river basin and Carpathian). The final payments 2014 for these two initiatives were accrued to 2015 and are included in column D.
  - C) The total overall expenditure (Ramsar and non-Ramsar funds) reported by the initiatives during 2014 (totalling CHF 1,369,935).
  - D) All funds (from Ramsar and other sources) currently available (in early 2015) to the initiatives for their activities in 2015 (adding up to CHF 644,022).
  - E) The planned expenditure for activities in 2015 (totalling CHF 2,554,703), to be covered by Ramsar and other funds.
  - F) New additional funding requests from the initiatives, to be covered from the Ramsar core budget line for activities of the initiatives in 2015 (totalling CHF 106,800).
  - G) The proposed allocations by Standing Committee to six eligible initiatives (totalling CHF 106,800) from Ramsar core budget line D.
13. The requests from the six eligible regional initiatives for additional Ramsar funding in 2015 amount to CHF 106,800. This can be covered by the CHF 120,000 allocated in the 2015 Ramsar core budget line D ('Support to regional initiative network and centres', Resolution XI.2). It is suggested that the Standing Committee allocates Ramsar core budget funds for a final year 2015 to these initiatives according to their requests, as listed in the right-hand column (G) of Table 1 below.
14. Based on the decision by Standing Committee on how to allocate 2015 funds, the Secretariat will prepare individual contracts for the initiatives concerned, following the procedure already established by Standing Committee.

**Table 1: Financial overview  
of regional initiatives**

all amounts in CHF  
0.95 CHF/USD  
1.05 CHF/EUR

	Past accumulated Ramsar funding (total up to and including 2013)	2014 additional Ramsar funds allocated	2014 TOTAL real expenditure	2015 TOTAL left-over early in the year	2015 TOTAL planned expenditure	2015 additional request of Ramsar funds	2015 proposed allocation of Ramsar funds
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
<b>Regional centres for:</b>							
East Africa (Kampala)	211,357	28,000	14,000	7,121	215,000	not eligible	
Western Hemisphere (Panama)	223,286	<i>nil</i>	137,633	73,413	219,913	not eligible	
Central and West Asia (Teheran)	285,000	<i>nil</i>	48,500	1,500	no information	not eligible	
East Asia (Changwon)	<i>nil</i>	<i>nil</i>	395,000	<i>nil</i>	390,000	<i>nil</i>	
<b>Regional networks for:</b>							
West African coast	167,700	<i>nil</i>	5,277	<i>nil</i>	76,825	not eligible	
Niger river basin	90,000	30,000	16,296	13,703	46,999	42,000	<b>42,000</b>
High Andean	143,000	<i>nil</i>	15,600	950	31,000	not eligible	
La Plata river basin	51,400	16,000	39,215	<i>nil</i>	231,000	18,000	<b>18,000</b>
Caribbean	58,800	16,000	29,000	<i>nil</i>	52,000	18,000	<b>18,000</b>
American mangroves and reefs	122,000	20,000	35,000	<i>nil</i>	75,000	20,000	<b>20,000</b>
East Asian-Australasian flyway	<i>nil</i>	<i>nil</i>	414,800	347,360	483,200	<i>nil</i>	
Mediterranean	310,930	<i>nil</i>	107,200	148,600	573,600	not eligible	
Carpathian	133,579	10,000	62,771	6,891	60,585	6,300	<b>6,300</b>
Nordic-Baltic	<i>nil</i>	<i>nil</i>	49,280	<i>nil</i>	53,081	<i>nil</i>	
Black and Azov Sea coast	86,259	<i>nil</i>	363	44,484	46,500	2,500	<b>2,500</b>
Totals	<b>1,883,311</b>	<b>120,000</b>	1,369,935	644,022	2,554,703	106,800	<b>106,800</b>