

Review of the fourth Strategic Plan of the Ramsar Convention

Actions requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to review the attached draft resolution on the scope and modalities for the review of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024, for consideration at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

Background

1. In Resolution XII.2, on *The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024*, paragraph 26, the Conference of the Contracting Parties:
 26. *DECIDES to undertake a review of the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan at COP14 and to establish the modalities and scope for this review at COP13, taking into account inter alia the outcomes of the discussions of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, the work of IPBES and the coordination needs with regard to the review of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to facilitate this.*
 27. *INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to convene, initially, a small, regionally representative expert group back-to-back with the meeting of the CBD's Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators in Switzerland in July 2015, including interested Contracting Parties, expert support from the STRP, IOPs and other relevant MEAs and international processes to develop options, for additional indicators for the Strategic Plan having regard in particular to:*
 - *previous Resolutions of the Conference of the Parties related to indicators, including Resolution IX.1;*
 - *the need for indicators to address outcomes and effectiveness and to be capable of practical implementation;*
 - *the need to minimize cost of indicator implementation by using existing data and information flows, including through national reporting and reporting on Ramsar Sites; and*
 28. *REQUESTS the expert group to report on possible indicators to the Standing Committee; and INSTRUCTS the Standing Committee, as a high priority, to refine the potential indicators and present the proposal to COP13 for approval.*
2. The expert group on indicators met in Geneva, Switzerland, on 18 September 2015 and the outcomes were made available at the 51st meeting of the Standing Committee (SC51) in document SC51. INF.DOC.05. At its 52nd meeting, the Committee noted the work that had been completed, as reported in document SC52-Inf.Doc.03.

3. The Standing Committee has however not yet refined the potential indicators. The Secretariat therefore suggests that this task be undertaken as part of a process to review the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Recommendation

4. A draft resolution on modalities and scope for the review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan is attached for review by the Standing Committee, and for subsequent consideration at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

Draft Resolution XIII-xxx

Scope and modalities for the review of the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024

1. RECALLING that, through the adoption of Resolution XII.2 on *The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024* at its 12th meeting (Punta del Este, 2015), the Conference of the Contracting Parties approved the Strategic Plan 2016-2024 “as the basis for the implementation of the Convention during this period”;
2. FURTHER RECALLING that, through Resolution XII.2, the Conference of the Parties decided “to undertake a review of the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan at COP14 and to establish the modalities and scope for this review at COP13, taking into account inter alia the outcomes of the discussions of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, the work of IPBES and the coordination needs with regard to the review of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020”, and instructed the Secretariat to facilitate this;
3. RECOGNIZING that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) relevant to the work of the Convention such as SDG 6: “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”, and Target 6.6: “By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes”;
4. NOTING that other SDGs that are relevant to the Convention are: SDG 1 “End poverty in all its forms everywhere”; SDG 2 “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”; SDG 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”; SDG 11 “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”; SDG 13 “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”; SDG 14 “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”; and SDG 15 “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”;
5. RECALLING Decision III/21 adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), on *Relationship of the Convention with the Commission on Sustainable Development and biodiversity-related conventions, other international agreements, institutions*, and the role of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands as lead partner in the implementation of activities related to wetlands under the CBD, and RECOGNIZING that implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 makes an important contribution towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020;
6. RECOGNIZING that the national reports of the Contracting Parties provide the opportunity to report progress and any difficulties on implementation;
7. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION to all Contracting Parties that provided their national reports to the 13th Meeting of the Conference of Contracting Parties (COP13) and to all Contracting Parties that submitted to the Secretariat their quantifiable and time-bound national and regional targets in line with the targets set in the Strategic Plan;

8. TAKING NOTE of the analysis of progress towards the implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 and its contribution to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets based on the information provided in the COP13 National Reports;
9. NOTING the contribution of the Convention to the work of IPBES, and in particular to the regional and global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services; and
10. APPRECIATING the support provided to Contracting Parties to implement the Strategic Plan by the Ramsar Regional Initiatives, intergovernmental organizations, International Organization Partners and non-governmental organizations;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES:

11. URGES Contracting Parties to continuously monitor progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and to communicate progress as well as any difficulties in implementing the Strategic Plan in their national reports and to their regional representatives in the Standing Committee; and REQUESTS the Standing Committee, at its regular meetings, and on the basis of the information provided, to assess progress and any difficulties in implementing the Strategic Plan;
12. RECOGNIZES that several Contracting Parties have established national biodiversity targets and action plans in line with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and URGES such Contracting Parties to harmonize national implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan with implementation of their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) as well as with national plans and reports in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals;
13. ENCOURAGES Parties when updating their NBSAPs, to take into account, as appropriate, the indicators for the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 and the indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals;
14. ENCOURAGES Parties to allocate, from national budgets, financial resources for the implementation of the fourth Strategic Plan of the Convention, for the period 2019-2021 and to report on implementation in the national report to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP14);
15. APPROVES the scope and modalities for the review of the fourth Strategic Plan as contained in Annex 1 of the present Resolution; and
16. REQUESTS the Standing Committee, at its 56th meeting, to establish a Strategic Plan Working Group, with representation from all regions and from the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, to oversee the review of the fourth Strategic Plan, and to report to the Standing Committee as necessary in the preparation and progress of the review, and in accordance with the modalities indicated in Annex 1.

Annex 1

Review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan: Scope and modalities

1. At its 12th meeting (Punta del Este, 2015), through Resolution XII.2, the Conference of the Parties approved the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024, including the Mission of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and a Vision for 2024. It includes 17 Targets, organized under three Strategic Goals and one Operational Goal which supports them.
2. The Strategic Plan foresees that:
A review of the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan at COP14 will be done and the modalities and scope for this review will be established at COP13, taking into account inter alia the outcomes of the discussions of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, the work of IPBES and coordination needs with regards to the review of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.
3. The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 is aligned with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Scope of the Review

4. The fourth Strategic Plan covers nine years, being three triennial periods between meetings of the Conference of the Parties. It finishes in 2024, which is the year when COP15 will take place. However, as the review will be conducted at COP14 (in accordance with Resolution XII.2), it is effectively a mid-term review and will focus on assessing the implementation of the Strategic Plan up to 2021, and on identifying for COP14 any necessary amendments. Any amendments will cover the remaining period, from 2022 to 2024.
5. At the time of the approval of the fourth Strategic Plan, the Conference of the Parties established indicators, which should therefore be used as the basis for determining achievement of the Goals and Targets of the Plan.
6. However, the review should also take into account the suggestions resulting from the expert group meeting from September 2015 and developments in the global environmental agenda.
7. The review process should also provide a basis for the preparation of a fifth Strategic Plan to be considered at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Modality

8. Contracting Parties and the Secretariat are requested to evaluate their efforts in relation to the implementation of the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 and to submit their evaluations to the Standing Committee's Strategic Plan Working Group through their regional representatives on that working group.
9. The Strategic Plan Working Group established by the Standing Committee shall:
 - a) review progress up to 2021 in implementing the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 against the adopted indicators, taking account of:
 - i) input from Contracting Parties;

- ii) the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, its Sustainable Development Goals and Targets;
 - iii) any emerging replacement for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Targets;
 - iv) the refinements to the indicators suggested by the expert group in September 2015; and
 - v) developments in fora of other multilateral environmental agreements, and other relevant fora;
- b) identify any potential refinements to the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan and its targets and indicators to be considered at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
 - c) develop, with the assistance and cooperation of the Secretariat, a proposal for a new strategic plan for the period after 2024 and any associated action plan and indicators to measure progress; and
 - d) regularly report its progress to the Standing Committee.
10. The Standing Committee shall:
- a) establish a time frame for the tasks to be conducted by the Strategic Plan Working Group, monitor its progress and provide guidance as necessary;
 - b) prepare a progress report on implementation of the fourth Strategic Plan, together with any proposed refinements to the Plan, and a proposed framework for a fifth Strategic Plan for the period after 2024, indicating the key elements, for consideration at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.
11. The Secretariat shall contract an appropriate consultant to assist with this process, including work for the Standing Committee and the Strategic Plan Working Group.

Indicative timeline

12. Table 1 below provides an indicative timeline of the key activities to be undertaken for the mid-term review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan. The final timeline is to be determined by the Standing Committee.

Table 1. Indicative timeline of key activities for the mid-term review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024

Date	Activity
COP13-October 2018	Establishment of a working group of the Standing Committee to oversight the review of the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan
November 2018	Virtual Meeting of the Working Group to discuss planning process and strategy
April 2019	Submissions of views from Contracting Parties and stakeholders, in response to a notification, and through on-line forums
SC57 June/July 2019	Assessment of progress
	Approval of National Report Format for COP14
August 2019	Issue of National Report Format for COP14
November 2019	Virtual Meeting of the Working Group to assess progress
May 2020	Inputs from Global Biodiversity Outlook-5 published and the IPBES global and regional assessments
SC58 June/July 2020	Discussion paper for SC58
September 2020	Submission of National Reports for COP14
October/November 2020	Assessment of National Reports for COP14
October 2020	Face-to-face meeting of the Working Group meeting to agree final document to be submitted to SC59
SC59 January 2021	Discussion paper for SC59 and for COP14 consideration
June/July 2021	Draft proposal COP14

Indicative budget

13. Table 2 below contains indicative figures of the budget implications to undertake the review.

Table 2: Indicative budget

Activity	Estimated cost (CHF)
Strategic Plan Working Group meeting in Gland. Travel costs for eight members.	24,000
Consultancy to support Standing Committee and Working Group	20,000
Translation	6,000
Total	50,000