

**Communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness  
(CEPA)**

**Report of the Chair of the CEPA Oversight Panel**

**Actions requested:**

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- a) note the report of the CEPA Oversight Panel; and
- b) note the advice provided by the CEPA Oversight Panel to the Working Group on CEPA implementation

**Introduction**

1. This report from the Chair of the CEPA Oversight Panel covers the activities of the Panel since the last Standing Committee meeting.

**A new approach for advising and supporting CEPA**

2. In accordance with Resolution XII.9 at COP 12, it was agreed that the Working Group on CEPA Implementation would develop a “new approach for advising and supporting CEPA in the Convention”, to be put to COP 13.
3. The Chair of the CEPA Oversight Panel met with the Chair of the Working Group on CEPA Implementation on 30 May 2017 at SC 53, to discuss the roles of the Oversight Panel and the Working Group and the task of developing a new approach for advising on and supporting CEPA in the Convention. It was agreed that the Oversight Panel would provide advice to the Working Group on the future approach to CEPA, and that the Working Group would consider these issues ahead of COP13.

**Development of advice**

4. The Oversight Panel reviewed the issues and met by teleconference on 31 August 2017 to progress their advice. The advice was finalised and provided to the Chair of the Working Group, and also the Chair of the Standing Committee and the Secretary General, on 7 November 2017.
5. The advice includes a number of recommended actions relating to both governance and implementation of CEPA activities. It identifies a number of areas where resources need to be focused and rationalised. A copy is attached as an Information Paper (at Annex 1).

6. The CEPA Oversight Panel recognised the need for a strategic approach to CEPA implementation, to focus limited resources on CEPA activities that will contribute most effectively to achieving the goals of the Ramsar Strategic Plan.
7. The Oversight Panel recommended that the CEPA Working Group:
  - prioritise activities which support engagement and participation of Contracting Parties and other wetland stakeholders, including workshops, training and support for National Focal Points (NFPs) and site managers.
  - support funding for these activities in the COP13 Budget for the following triennium. This could be through further resource mobilisation and partnerships, including through existing Ramsar Regional Initiatives and Ramsar Regional Centres.
8. Specifically, with respect to governance of CEPA issue, the Oversight Panel recommended that the Working Group:
  - consider how best to rationalise arrangements between the CEPA Oversight Panel and CEPA Working Group, to achieve most effective and efficient long-term oversight of CEPA Implementation within the Convention.
  - take forward the issue for full consideration at COP13, and seek a mandate to fully align and integrate CEPA within the objectives of the Ramsar Strategic Plan during the next Triennium. This should include consideration of whether there is an ongoing need for separate oversight and reporting on CEPA.
9. The CEPA Oversight Panel advice will be considered by the Working Group in reporting to COP13 on the future priorities and governance arrangements for CEPA.

## **Annex 1**

### **Advice from CEPA Oversight Panel to Chair of Working Group on CEPA Implementation Future Approach to Ramsar CEPA**

#### **Purpose**

This paper sets out advice from the CEPA Oversight Panel to guide consideration by the Working Group on CEPA Implementation of a “new approach for advising and supporting CEPA in the Convention”, to be put to COP 13 (Resolution XII.9).

#### **Key focus areas**

The CEPA Oversight Panel’s advice will focus on assisting the Working Group in:

- Prioritising the implementation of the Secretariat’s CEPA Action Plan over the current triennium (2016-2018), taking account of the review by the Secretariat of its Action Plan scheduled for December 2017.
- Developing a CEPA change agenda for consideration at COP 13 (October 2018), taking account of the review by the Secretariat (Senior Regional Officers) of National Reports, and including consideration of both the broader CEPA Programme and the Secretariat’s CEPA Action Plan.
- Delivery of CEPA during the balance of the period of the current Ramsar Strategic Plan (2016-2024).

CEPA implementation for the next Strategic Plan (2025-2030) will be considered at COP 14 in 2021.

#### **Need for a new approach**

The CEPA Oversight Panel has recognised the need for a strategic approach to CEPA implementation, to focus limited resources on CEPA activities that will contribute most effectively to achieving the goals of the Ramsar Strategic Plan.

The Oversight Panel recommends that the CEPA Working Group:

- Prioritise activities which support engagement and participation of Contracting Parties and other wetland stakeholders, including workshops, training and support for National Focal Points (NFPs) and site managers.
- Support funding for these activities in the COP13 Budget for the following triennium. This could be through further resource mobilisation and partnerships, including through existing Ramsar Regional Initiatives and Ramsar Regional Centres.

Specifically, with respect to governance of CEPA issue, the Oversight Panel recommends that the Working Group:

- Consider how best to rationalise arrangements between the CEPA Oversight Panel and CEPA Working Group, to achieve most effective and efficient long-term oversight of CEPA Implementation within the Convention.
- The issue should be taken forward by the Working Group for full consideration at COP13, and a mandate sought to fully align and integrate CEPA within the objectives of the Ramsar Strategic Plan during the next Triennium. This should include consideration of whether there is an ongoing need for separate oversight and reporting on CEPA.

## **Approach to advising the Secretariat and Contracting Parties on CEPA**

The Oversight Panel recommends that the CEPA Working Group:

1. consider governance arrangements for advising on CEPA that will assist in messages more effectively reaching sectoral decision-makers (water, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, infrastructure, urban etc). This could involve greater sectoral input to Ramsar and CEPA planning. It is important to recognise the value, experience and resources of IOPs, NGOs, Contracting Parties and business partners (across multiple sectors) in planning, resourcing, developing and implementing CEPA communication messages and products.
2. continue to support the existing close and effective engagement between the Secretariat communication team and the STRP. This will ensure the Convention delivers its messages in a way that is relevant and compelling, and in a form that is useful to wetland managers and decision-makers. Priority should be given to further development of STRP products to support CEPA outcomes of broader community engagement, awareness raising and education, noting the value of these products for NFPs and Ramsar site managers.

## **Approach to supporting CEPA in the Convention**

Given limited resources for CEPA in both the Secretariat and Contracting Parties, the CEPA Working Group should:

3. give priority to CEPA actions, both within the CEPA Programme and the Secretariat's CEPA Action Plan, which will effectively support Contracting Parties and their NFPs, and assist Ramsar site and wetland managers to address key threats and better manage their wetlands. This would include practical tools and guidance for NFPs/site managers and a focus on key messaging, engagement and awareness raising.

Recognising that the Secretariat will be reviewing its CEPA Action Plan in late 2017 and the Secretariat, through the Senior Regional Officers, will be undertaking an analysis of National Reports ahead of the COP to highlight trends and gaps in CEPA implementation, the Oversight Panel recommends that the CEPA Working Group:

4. further refine understanding of gaps in implementation, and priority needs for practical engagement, communications and training/capacity building, in order to target Secretariat activities. It is recognised that needs may be different across Regions/Contracting Parties.
5. taking account of the reviews and analysis, considers the need for a survey of NFPs (perhaps following SC54) to identify useful tools and approaches that would support NFPs in a pragmatic way to implement CEPA outcomes for the Convention.
6. supports continued Secretariat communication with and support for Contracting Parties' NFPs and CEPA NFPs in promoting wise use of wetlands, and use of existing networks and structures (NFPs, Wetland Link International network, RRI) for getting messages out.
7. considers supporting a CEPA face to face meeting at COP13, to enable CEPA NFPs to network and consider CEPA-related DRs.

In prioritising Secretariat CEPA activities, the CEPA Working Group should consider a focus on:

8. messages and tools for Contracting Parties that support the overarching message of wise use, and that will assist decision-making on wetlands involving community engagement and negotiating trade-offs between wetland users, eg the role of wetlands as green infrastructure and the values of wetlands for water supply, water quality, transport, food production and livelihoods, flood regulation, coastal protection, climate regulation, pollution control, fishing and hunting, recreation and tourism.
9. global CEPA activities that promote the Convention eg through Ramsar Secretary General and Contracting Parties contributing wetland input to debate on global policy issues, including the Sustainable Development Goals.
10. using appropriate types of communication – social media to raise public awareness (and potentially lead to public concern and pressure on decision-makers) along with other approaches to engage sectoral decision-makers.
11. building on activity and engagement achieved through World Wetlands Day, and Ramsar Regional Initiatives.
12. providing effective access to Secretariat materials, eg
  - searchable access to information on research and management techniques (both Secretariat and Contracting Party materials)
  - access to a user-friendly RSIS to enable Ramsar site managers to update/upload/download site information and use it for management.
13. examining a variety of funding sources to support CEPA activities – including existing and new partnerships (conservation NGOs, international organisations, sectoral organisations, other MEAs).

#### **Future directions for CEPA Programme**

CEPA is critical to the implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan. Given the fundamental importance of outreach activities to delivery of the Ramsar Convention, and the value of clarifying and simplifying both planning and reporting, the Working Group should consider:

14. limiting the number of and integrating the CEPA Goals and Targets into the Ramsar Strategic Plan, rather than having a separate CEPA Programme.
15. Noting that, ideally, all reporting, including on CEPA, should be aligned with SDGs and Aichi Targets, the Working Group could consider how to better align CEPA reporting with reporting requirements in other international Conventions and initiatives.

CEPA Oversight Panel  
October 2017