

## Review of current and proposed cooperative agreements

### Actions requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- a) approve the utilization of the proposed criteria and process for determining when a formal written agreement is to be used between the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and another body;
- b) provide feedback on the analysis of MOUs and proposed actions;
- c) request that the Secretary General use the proposed criteria and process for any future MOUs and report to the Standing Committee annually as guided by Resolution XII.3 paragraph 42.

### Introduction

1. At its 53rd meeting (May-June 2017), the Standing Committee adopted Decision SC53-03 as follows: *“The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to conduct a review of all current and proposed cooperative agreements (whether Memoranda of Understanding, Memoranda of Cooperation, or similar), taking account of the present document as well as the work previously conducted for SC52, to report to SC54. The Standing Committee further decided that [...] this review should be conducted on the basis of criteria which could include those suggested by Management Working Group members, such as an assessment of costs and benefits of existing and proposed agreements, value added, mechanisms for monitoring results, possible development of an agreement ‘template’ and consideration whether some partnerships could be taken forward effectively without the need for formal written agreements.”*
2. The Secretariat has formalized its collaboration with numerous organizations with cooperative written and signed agreements. These have taken the form of an exchange of signed letters, a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Memorandum of Co-operation (MOC), or a Joint Work Plan (JWP). The Secretariat displays a list of these agreements on its website at <http://www.ramsar.org/about/partnerships>.
3. The scope of the review undertaken has been limited to cooperative agreements as instructed by Decision SC53-03, and does not include grant and funding agreements recording the terms and conditions of a financial contribution.
4. Further, this document proposes criteria that can be used to determine when a formal written agreement is required for cooperative relationships, and the process in which these criteria can be applied.

### **Proposed criteria and process for when a formal agreement should be used**

5. Paragraph 42 of the Ramsar 4th Strategic Plan (2016 – 2024) calls for partnerships that are mostly developed by Contracting Parties. Paragraph 35 specifies the role of the Secretariat. It calls for actions to be carried out by Contracting Parties supported by the Secretariat in collaboration with International Organizational Partners (IOPs) and other international and intergovernmental organizations and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). This guidance has been reflected in the proposed criteria and process for determining which organizations the Secretariat shall enter into cooperative agreements with.
6. The Secretariat has reviewed the criteria suggested by the Management Working Group and has refined the criteria such that they can be effectively applied in determining whether a formal agreement should be utilized with any particular body. The proposed criteria, and a process to determine whether a relationship with an organization meets such criteria, are graphically displayed in a decision tree in Annex 2. The Secretariat proposes that the following questions be used to determine whether a formal partnership should be pursued:
  - a. Does the cooperation support one or more of the four goals identified in the 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan (2016 – 2024) and its targets?
  - b. Is the cooperation linked to an outcome in the Secretariat's work plan?
  - c. Does the cooperation enable implementation of a decision of the Parties?
  - d. Is there added value to the Convention and does the added value exceed costs?
  - e. And, is the proposed cooperation with an established and recognized international organization and does collaboration have the potential for international scale and impact that will enable the work of Contracting Parties?
7. Further, it is proposed that the following conditions should be met for partnerships where a formal agreement is used:
  - a. Activities and responsibilities should be clearly defined;
  - b. There should be mechanisms for monitoring results;
  - c. The signing of a formal agreement raises the visibility of a shared collaboration; and
  - d. The signing of the agreement follows the policies and procedures of IUCN and use the template developed in consultation with the IUCN Office of the Legal Advisor.

### **Review of MOUs and recommended course of action**

8. A summary of the agreements currently in force as well as those that have expired, along with their start and expiration dates are presented in Annex 1. The Secretariat has entered into a total of 55 MOUs. Of these, 30 have expired. Further, the Secretariat reviewed these agreements according to the criteria presented above and has categorized the agreements as follows:
  - 28 meet the criteria
  - 27 do not meet the criteria

9. The Secretariat proposes to maintain and explore renewal of those agreements that meet the proposed criteria and to terminate or not renew those that do not. The Secretariat notes that its analysis of whether an MoU meets or does not meet the criteria is not an assessment of the importance of the institution, but the application of the criteria proposed.
10. The Standing Committee is invited to approve the use of the proposed criteria and process to determine when a formal agreement is to be used. Based on this approval, the Secretariat will take appropriate and required action.

#### **Future MOUs**

11. The Secretariat requests that the Secretary General use the proposed criteria and process for any future MOUs and report to the Standing Committee annually as guided by Resolution XII.3 paragraph 42.

#### **Annexes**

Annex 1: Current and expired agreements

Annex 2: Decision tree for when cooperative agreements should be used

## Annex 1

### Current and expired agreements

Organization	Term	Status	Meets Criteria
<b>Global Multilateral Environmental Agreements</b>			
International Agencies and Organizations and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the achievements of the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets	2011 -2020	Current	Y
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	2011 - 2020	Current	Y
Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions	2011 - Ongoing	Current	Y
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals – CMS	2012 - Ongoing	Current	Y
UN Convention to Combat Desertification	1998 - Ongoing	Current	Y
UNESCO World Heritage Centre	1999 - Ongoing	Current	Y
<b>Global intergovernmental organizations and processes</b>			
Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)	2017 - 2019	Current	Y
UNEP	2017 - Ongoing	Current	Y
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	2016 - 2020	Current	N
UNESCO –IHE Institute for Water Education	2013 - 2018	Current	Y
<b>Regional intergovernmental organizations and processes</b>			
Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP)	2016 - 2018	Current	Y
Lake Chad Basin Commission	2002 - Ongoing	Current	N
The Niger Basin Authority	2002 - Ongoing	Current	N
Carpathian Convention	2006 - Ongoing	Current	Y
<b>International Organization Partners (IOPs)</b>			
IOPs (BirdLife, IUCN, IWMI, Wetlands International, WWF International)	2011 - 2017	(1)	Y
Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT)	2016 - 2019	Current (2)	Y
<b>Other International NGOs and organizations</b>			
Conservation International	2013 - 2018	Current	Y
The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	2012 - 2018	Current	Y
Ducks Unlimited	2012 - Ongoing	Current	N
Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS)	2017 - 2022	Current	Y
International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)	2015 - 2021	Current	Y
Institute for Inland Water Management (RIZA)	2002 - Ongoing	Current	N
Nagao Natural Environmental Programme (NEF)	2016 - 2021	Current	Y

Stetson University College of Law	2016 - 2022	Current	Y
World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA)	2009 - Ongoing	Current	N
<b>Private Sector</b>			
Danone Evian	2017 - 2019	Current	Y

<b>Expired agreements</b>			
ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity	2012 - 2014	Expired	Y
African Center for Parliamentary Affairs	2011 - 2015	Expired	Y
Albertine Rift Conservation Society	2013 - 2017	Expired	N
Barcelona Convention	2006 - 2011	Expired	Y
Coastal America Foundation	2004 -	Expired	N
Cartagena Convention	2005 - 2010	Expired	Y
La Commission International du Basin Congo-Obangui-Sangha	2006 - 2012	Expired	N
Center for International Earth Science Info Network	2000 - 2002	Expired	N
European Environmental Agency	2006 - 2011	Expired	N
Eurosite	2002 - 2004	Expired	N
Global Nature Fund	2004 - 2009	Expired	N
Global Terrestrial Observing System	2006 - 2011	Expired	N
Greek Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate	2009 - 2011	Expired	N
Inter-American Convention for the Protection of Sea Turtles	2012 - 2016	Expired	N
International Association of Impact Assessment	2005 - 2010	Expired	N
International Ocean Institute	2006 - 2011	Expired	N
International Water Management Institute	2006 - 2011	Expired	Y
Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency	2000 - 2002	Expired	N
Organization of American States	2010 - 2016	Expired	N
Society for Ecological Restoration	2012 - 2017	Expired	N
Star Alliance	2013 - 2017	Expired	Y
UNEP - GPA	2006 - 2010	Expired	N
UNEP GRASP (Great Apes Survival Project)	2006 - 2008	Expired	N
UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre	2009 - 2012	Expired	N
UNESCO Man & Biosphere	2005 - 2010	Expired	Y
University Senghor	2017	Expired	N
UNWTO (World Tourism Organization)	2010 - 2012	Expired	Y
World Health Organization	2011 - 2012	Expired	N
Wings over Wetlands	2010 - 2012	Expired	N
World Bank	2010 - 2015	Expired	Y

(1) in the process of renewal

(2) to be included in new IOP MOU

## Annex 2

### Decision tree for when cooperative agreements should be used

