

Report of the Working Group on the Review of the Strategic Plan of the Ramsar Convention

Actions requested:

Standing Committee is invited to:

- i. take note of this first progress report on the work of the Strategic Plan Working Group established at SC56; and to
- ii. take note that the Working Group will meet on 24 June 2019 in Gland and will report on further progress and tasks planned to SC57.

Report on progress and future tasks

1. The Conference of the Contracting Parties at its 13th meeting (COP13) adopted Resolution XIII.5 on the *Review of the fourth Strategic Plan of the Ramsar Convention*. Paragraph 20 of that Resolution:

“REQUESTS the Standing Committee, at its 56th meeting (SC56) to establish a Strategic Plan Working Group to conduct the review of the fourth Strategic Plan; the Working Group will include representation from all regions; the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) will provide advice as appropriate; and other biodiversity-related Conventions (e.g. the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on Migratory Species) will be invited to participate. The Working Group will report on the preparation and progress of the review at each meeting of the Standing Committee, and in accordance with the modalities indicated in Annex 1”.
2. In Decision SC56-08, the Standing Committee agreed that:
 - the membership of the Strategic Plan Working Group comprised the following Contracting Parties: Algeria, Armenia, Australia, Benin, the Dominican Republic, Senegal, South Africa, Switzerland, Uganda and the United States of America; and
 - the Asia region would provide names to the Secretariat at a later date.Subsequently, the Secretariat was informed that Bhutan and Oman would represent the Asia region.
3. The Working Group held a teleconference on 27 February 2019 and decided to:
 - collect further views on the proposed chair for the Group and to elect the chair at the beginning of its first face-to-face meeting on 24 June 2019;
 - finalize a format and template for the Contracting Parties to evaluate their efforts in relation to the implementation of the fourth Strategic Plan explaining their achievements

and challenges experienced, as requested in paragraph 8 of Annex 1 of Resolution XIII.5;
and

- develop terms of reference for a consultant to be contracted by the Secretariat to assist with the review process in accordance with paragraph 11 of Annex 1 of Resolution XIII.5.
4. The Working Group subsequently prepared a “template for Contracting Parties to evaluate their implementation efforts”. The template was sent to all Parties on 11 April 2019. The Secretariat received responses from 26 Parties and will provide these to the selected consultant to review and consider in their analysis and subsequent report.
 5. Based on the terms of reference developed by the Working Group, the Secretariat published a call for tenders for consultancy support with a deadline for responses of 15 June 2019. Based on an analysis of the applications received, the Secretariat will propose the most qualified candidate to then be contracted to assist with the review process between July 2019 and November 2020, by when the Working Group will finalize its report and recommendations to be submitted to SC59 in 2021.
 6. During its first face-to-face meeting on 24 June, the Working Group will:
 - elect its chair;
 - finalize its work plan and a timeframe for the tasks to be accomplished, in accordance with the list in paragraph 9 of Annex 1 of Resolution XIII.5; and
 - endorse the consultant recommended by the Secretariat to be contracted, and the consultant’s specific tasks, deliverables and their timing.
 7. An oral update on the outcomes of the meeting of the Working Group of 24 June, as listed in paragraph 6 above, will be presented to SC57 by its chair.