

THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
59th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Resumed session
Gland, Switzerland, 23-27 May 2022

SC59/2022 Doc.24.14

**Proposed draft Resolution –
The Ramsar Convention’s Scientific and Technical work – The basics**

Submitted by Sweden

Secretariat cover note:

The draft Resolution is related to Resolution XII.5 *New framework for delivery of scientific and technical advice and guidance on the Convention* and document SC59/2022 Doc.26 *Draft Resolution on Future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2023-2025*. It is also linked to the DR SC59/2022 Doc.24.15 *The Ramsar Convention’s Scientific and Technical bodies COP14-COP15* submitted by Sweden.

Action requested:

- i, The Standing Committee is invited to review the attached Draft Resolution and forward it for consideration by the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Introduction

1. The objective of this draft resolution is to improve governance and efficiency of the Convention's Scientific and Technical work (ST work).
2. Sweden is of the opinion that three draft resolutions on Scientific and Technical work with the content divided between them according to a foreseeable lifespan, would be a better than having one resolution covering all ST work. The first one will address the long-lived basics for ST work, the second will address what might be of interest for the COP14-COP15 period only, and the third will address older decision that can be retired. It has not been of interest to split the resolutions according to target group, the target group is homogenous;
3. Sweden believes that this way of having resolutions adapted after lifespan will be more efficient and decreasing the need for consolidation processes. It will decrease the workload and the costs for the Ramsar Secretariat, translators and all kinds of delegates at Convention meetings.
4. This SC-document contains the draft resolution on the Basics for ST work and is supposed to be a long-lived resolution with a content that have not to be re-negotiated each COP.
5. In short, the draft resolution includes...
 - that the STRP is replaced by other new Convention bodies.
 - that the Scientific and Technical Co-ordination Group (STCG) co-ordinates the Convention's ST work. The STCG have members that have been nominated and chosen at the COP. The STCG have three categories of members; representation from all regions that have suggested nominees, theme experts that are selected with a global approach, and CEPA experts.
 - that the Scientific and Technical Working Groups (STWGs), numbers adapted to the content in the workplan, address one or few work tasks and are open-ended.
 - Terms of Reference for the two kinds of ST bodies,
 - establishes a new work cycle allowing for an earlier start for ST work,
 - giving the STCG the more responsibility than the STRP (how to organise the Conventions ST work including changing priorities if necessary, how to allocate funds within their budget, decide upon final lay-out and content of deliveries, do the preliminary selection among nominees for the coming STCG, suggest the work program for the consideration of the COP),
 - ceases the MWGs responsibility to oversee the ST work,
 - less detailed information, being shorter

Financial implications of implementation

6. The new governance for ST work will not cause any additional costs compared with the old STRP. There might even be some benefits.

<i>Paragraph (nr/key part of text)</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Cost (CHF) and benefits</i>
All	All	No additional costs compared with today, there might be benefits if there are fewer physical meetings or if meetings take place in other parts of the world.

Annex 1

Draft Resolution XIV.22 on the Ramsar Convention's Scientific and Technical work – the Basics

1. RECALLING that since many years the Convention have had body for its Scientific and Technical work (ST work), with its *modus operandi* changed a number of times;
2. RECOGNIZING that there may be ways of improving the modus operandi for the Ramsar Convention's Scientific and Technical work;
3. AWARE of that there is a need to strengthen the Convention's ST work, and that this can be done by empowering the ST participants, having a better sharing of workloads, increase the Contracting Parties participation in the ST work and to include other categories of knowledge as well as future users of results in the work;
4. RECOGNIZING that a new governance for the ST work by the Convention is a potential to enhance the effectiveness and benefit the implementation of the Convention even further;
5. RECOGNIZING that decision-making in detail in most cases is best done within the area the decisions concern. An empowered Scientific and Technical Co-ordination Group (STCG) have the best capability to make decisions on how to organise the ST work in detail, take decision within their allocated budget, re-prioritising work tasks if needed, and are trusted to have the good judgement to ask the Secretariat and/or the SC on guidance if needed.
6. REAFFIRMING the critical importance to the Convention in developing and providing scientific and technical guidance, linking wetland science to effective technical communications, and building understanding of the target audiences need of guidance;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

Information on resolutions

7. DECIDES that this resolution supersedes all previous resolutions with their main focus on matters of the STRP; this includes the Management Working Group's responsibility of overseeing the Convention's scientific and technical work that was established in res XII.5 para 19, ALSO DECIDES that all SC-decisions where there might be decisions on the governance of the Convention's work on scientific and Technical issues have been repealed by this resolution;
8. INFORMS that this resolution has a content that is supposed to be long-lived and the all short-lived content for a few coming years about the Convention's ST work is compiled in a resolution valid for the COP14-COP15 period only;
9. STATES that this resolution is to be valid until being part of a consolidation or retirement process or being superseded by a new resolution;

The purpose with the Convention's Scientific and Technical work

10. REAFFIRMS that the purpose of the Convention's ST work is to provide guidance and advice to the Ramsar Contracting Parties, the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee, the Ramsar Secretariat and to others that in their work need information on wetlands, all in order to foster the implementation of the Convention;
11. REAFFIRMS that the two target audience categories for the results of the ST bodies are policymakers for all sectors concerned and practitioners and in particular wetland managers and stakeholders, but also other practitioners from related fields, while users of wetlands may also benefit from it;
12. REAFFIRMS that the Convention's ST work should provide in an efficient, timely and effective manner, global, regional specific scientific and technical advice, guidance and tools to enable these audiences to respond to the opportunities, challenges and emerging issues of wetland conservation and wise use. ALSO REAFFIRMS that this might also be done for national purposes during specific circumstances, for example within the framework of Ramsar Advisory Missions;
13. REAFFIRMS that the Conventions ST work mainly will produce scientific guidance, which provides the basis for technical guidance for policy makers and practitioners or science-based technical guidance, which responds to specific methodological needs of policy-makers and practitioners with each receiving a different type of technical guidance;
14. REAFFIRMS that all ST guidance will be science based and draw on published peer-reviewed research and other scientific sources. It will be delivered through formats including handbooks, manuals, fact sheets, webinars and videos with support of the Secretariat;

The organisation and processes for the Convention's ST work

15. DECIDES that the Standing Committee (SC) is the Convention body that can make larger framework decisions on ST work between the COPs, for example about change of total budget, and the number and themes of STWGs;
16. RECOGNIZES that the STCG have the best capability to make decisions on how to organise the ST work in detail, take decision on how to use their allocated budget, re-prioritising work tasks if needed, decide on the structure and content in their deliveries and are trusted to have the good judgement to ask the Secretariat and/or the SC if guidance is needed, and DECIDES that the STCG have that responsibility as well as other work tasks described in annex 1;
17. DECIDES that the ST work program for each COP-COP period is to have the content;
 - i, Name of work task
 - ii, Info on what STWG that will be responsible for the work task.
 - iii, What year the work task is supposed to be finalized (can be more than three years)
 - iv, Priority
 - v, Target audience
 - vi, Resolution or other source for the to the ST bodies;
18. DECIDES to restructure the Ramsar Scientific and Technical work cycle, following the processes described in annex 1 and presented in annex 3;

19. REQUESTS the Chair of the STCG to make a short report to the COP on activities and results for the Convention's ST work since the last COP, as well as reports for the SC meeting not held at the COP venue;
20. ENCOURAGES the STCG and the STWGs to do other work within the framework for their Terms of Reference as described in Annex 1 part 1 if that is possible;
21. DECIDES to change the name of the STRP Focal Points to ST Focal Points, REAFFIRMS that a ST Focal Point is supposed to act as a liaison between their national wetland practitioners, other Ramsar Focal Points and the ST bodies;
22. ENCOURAGES all involved in ST work to co-operate within and between; MEAs including other Ramsar bodies, different kinds of organisations and individuals;

On resources for the ST work

23. RECOGNIZES the continuing need to ensure the resources for the ST bodies to undertake its work and that the Secretariat has sufficient capacity to support it, and URGES Contracting Parties and others in a position to do so, to participate in the ST work and to assist in securing funding;

Instructions for the Secretariat

24. INSTRUCES the Secretariat to mobilize additional resources for implementation of technical guidance and advice, and by that also supporting Contracting Parties' implementation of the Convention;
25. INSTRUCES the Secretariat to assist with the nomination process as described in Annex 1, part 3, do necessary updates of the draft resolution for the ST bodies the coming COP-COP period in two steps (first to include the suggested composition of the STCG and the suggested work program and later on the update on representatives and experts selected for the STCG), as well as to support the STCG and the STWGs with administrative and other assistance as requested by the bodies, as well as other appropriate work according to Annex 1 part 6;

Information on important co-operation partners

26. RECALLS the traditional and local knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities, as one of the knowledge bases of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel work;
27. INVITES the MEAs and their bodies, IOPS and other organisations, or other international and regional fora , that have the preservation of wetlands high on their agenda or where preserved wetland are of importance for them to success in their work, to consider participating in STWGs and ALSO INVITES them to share and amplify the results of the ST work as appropriate;

Annex 1 Terms of reference for the STCG and the STWGs

Part 1 The work tasks and work methods for STCG

1. The main function of the STCG is to coordinate the Ramsar Convention's Scientific and Technical work (ST work). It include co-ordinating and taking an overall responsibility for the STWGs to deliver results from the work that have been allocated to them, as well as to deliver the results from their continuously on-going work in the COP-COP work cycle as described in this annex;
2. STCG is also to carry out work tasks during a COP-COP period work cycle as required below;
 - i, write and forward to the SC the obligatory draft resolution on the ST bodies for the coming COP-COP period, including;
 - a suggested work program (based on resolutions, draft resolutions, and their own ideas),
 - suggestion for a ST budget for the coming COP-COP period
 - the composition for the STCG,
 - how many STWGs that will be needed and what themes they will address,
 - ii, review the compilation of nominees and suggest the crewing of the STCG and present it for the Contracting Parties in a suitable setting at the COP;
 - iii, write and forward to the SC their own draft resolutions as well as the ones provided by the STWGs, either as a result of missions fulfilled, or on their own initiative;
 - iv, suggest amendments and/or make comment, from a ST work point of view, on draft resolutions for the coming COP. This can be done if asked by the author/-s at early stages and/or after drafts have been submitted to the SC for consideration;
 - v, review scientific and technical materials drafted by Convention bodies, consulting with STWGs and ST Focal Points as required, and submit their input to the main author for the drafting;
 - vi, compile and co-write the information necessary for the Chairs reports to the SC and the COP;
 - vii, if possible due to availability of resources, assist the Ramsar Secretariat with ST advice upon request and on Ramsar Advisory Missions or ask that a suitable STWG does it, if appropriate;
3. The work field of the STCG consist of everything related to Scientific and Technical aspects of the Convention. This includes;
 - i, develop the Convention's ST work,
 - ii, suggest priorities, identifying gaps that need to be filled with measures for ST work,
 - iii, co-operate with or give advice on ST work to other Ramsar bodies, especially when it concerns different existing programs and plans of importance for the Convention,
 - iv, examination, monitoring, follow-up and assessments in the ST field,

v, have the responsibility to do the detailed planning on ST work tasks

vi, having one or more participants that are taking an active part in the work of, or participate as observers in other Ramsar bodies when required.

4. The STCG can, resources permitting, decide upon what STCG or STWG participants that can represent the Convention's ST work during certain events (for example scientific conferences, COP and MOP for other MEAs or General Assemblies for organisations);
5. STWGs can also choose to do complementary work, not requested especially for by the COP, within the frame of their field, but then that works task must be approved by the SC.
6. The STCG will operate as much as possible through electronic means (e-mail, share-point areas and on-line meetings etc), but physical meeting can also take place. It is recommended that at least the newly appointed members present at the COP meet at the COP venue to get better acquainted and have a first brainstorm about the coming years, the results will later on be discussed and additional thoughts might be added at the first formal meeting when everyone is invited. If funding is available, the STCG may apply for funds to meet physically during the triennium. Meetings are not to be held back-to-back with the SC meetings; the ST work need to have their meeting some months in advance of a SC meeting, to be able to deliver their input to the SC meeting on good time;
7. Due to financial limitations, the main working language is English.
8. In addition to the one chairing the meeting (Chair or vice Chair), at least three other members of the STCG must be present at a meeting for the group to be able to make decisions. When making decisions after correspondence, an absent answer is interpreted as accepting the suggested decision.

Part 2 – The work tasks and work methods for STWGs

9. The main task for each STWG is to deliver results from a specific mission that has been requested in resolutions and the STCG has allocated to the STWG, everything within the framework for ST work done by the Convention.
10. STWGs are to ensure that they have the competence and resources needed for their tasks, and if not address their contact person in the STCG who brings the issue to the STCG for consideration on how the STWG can get additional expertise;

Part 3 Composition of and the nomination and selection process for the STCG

Part 3A

Principles for the composition of the STCG

11. The STCG will consist of three kinds of representatives. Firstly, there should be one representative from each Ramsar region that is able to provide nominees. Those representatives will represent the region and should have experience from working with the Ramsar Convention. Secondly, there will be two representatives specialised on CEPA. Thirdly,

there will be maximum six experts that are specialised in different knowledge field (for example marine wetlands, limnic wetlands, peatlands, climate change, forestry). Those fields are chosen for what is needed during the COP-COP period. They do not have to represent Ramsar regions etc and can be nominated by Contracting Parties or IOPs;

12. The STCG suggest one of the future regional representatives to be Chair, an another of the representatives to be vice Chair. They inform the SC on their suggestion. It can be useful if at least one of the regional representatives is also a SC representative.
13. To ensure institutional memory, preserve experience and guarantee progress, it is recommended to invite members of the STCG from the previous COP-COP period to meetings in the beginning of the present one, or ensure that one or two of them are nominated and suggested to become members of the STCG, preferably as chair and vice chair.
14. Finally, it is recommended that one or two representatives from the Secretariat participating ex officio, preferably at least one with responsibility for Scientific and Technical matters.

Part 3B

Procedures for the STCG nomination and crewing process for a coming COP-COP period

15. The STCG suggest what kind of experts they think are the most relevant for the coming COP-COP period and would make a good team that suits the suggested work program. Their suggestion of composition on experts is to be submitted to the Secretariat for inclusion in the for the content relevant draft resolution for the coming COP-COP period.
16. The SC decides on the suggested preliminary composition for the STCG and the relevant draft resolution for the coming COP is updated according to their decision if having amended the suggestion from the STCG.
17. The Secretariat addresses the CPs and IOPs asking for nominations according to the SC decision on the preliminary compositions and compiles the nominations and informs the STCG about the list of nominations.
18. The STCG analyses the list of nominees and compile their suggestion on how the STCG is it be crewed, including a suggestion on who is going to be Chair and vice Chair and which ones that are to be contact person for each STWG. The result is to be presented for the Parties at the COP, in a suitable smaller setting than plenum, the COPS decision gets incorporated in the final version of the decided resolution;
19. If there is a surplus of nominees, these can be invited to take part of the STCG as observers or to be part of one or more of the STWGs.
20. To avoid any conflict of interest, STCG members will not be compensated for their contributions to the STCG. Members preparing substantive work should not be involved in reviewing it. All members should sign a "conflict of interest" declaration when they accept the nomination to the STCG.

Part 3C

Temporary or permanently changes of representatives in the STCG

21. If there are members of the STCG that are to be retired, change work tasks or work places or are on temporary leave they can be replaced by another individual, but that individual has to be able to represent the approximately same qualifications as the representative that they replace. No new nominations will be necessary, the STCG will take the responsibility to find a new representative. The STCG will inform the Secretariat and the appropriate Convention body of the change.

Part 4 Composition of the STWGs

22. The STWGs are open-ended for individuals representing Contracting Parties, IOPs and representatives from other MEAs. The participants are to have one or more of the following experiences in line with competence needed by the STWG; scientific or technical knowledge, be a practitioner and future user of outcome of the STWG's results or being experienced in CEPA. The STWGs can also include researchers they find suitable and invite them by themselves;
23. It is of importance that the open-ended STWGs are crewed in a way that allows the work to proceed properly and that many kinds of experiences and knowledge needed are represented. If such is not the case the Chair for the STWG may take appropriate actions, for example reach out to individuals that may fill gaps, or make the STCG aware of the problem and ask them for action;
24. It is recommended that the STWGs try to achieve gender balance and to have representatives for IOPs, youth and indigenous peoples;
25. In some cases it can also be of interest to engage consultant/-s for a STWG, not just for writing a report or similar, but for actually taking an active place in the STWG and contribute with their special expertise, for example, experts from behavioural economics and psychology if such competences aren't among the participants already taking part in the work;

Part 5 About the individuals participating in ST bodies

26. STCG members will be appointed in their personal capacity for their expertise and experiences, and will not represent any organization or government in STCG, even if some of them have the responsibility to represent their region;
27. It is preferred if STCG members already have the experience of having done ST work in a Conventions body, bringing that experience to the STCG and in the same way it is preferred that the Chair and vice chair of the STCG have the experience of having been part of the STCG earlier;
28. Individuals suggesting the STWG to use scientific articles and reports that can create a perverse picture of the present knowledge situation (for example such that purposely is leaving out certain data sets needed to draw the right conclusion without high-lighting such choices, but instead hide such information in an obscure text hidden somewhere) can be asked to leave the STWG;

29. No one employed by or in daily life representing an organisation that are not complying with the main purpose of the Convention can participate in a STWG;
30. Nominees for STCG will provide a curriculum vitae and a declaration that they are willing to be considered for appointment to the Panel and that they have, where relevant, the required support of their organizations on a voluntary basis to participate In the ST work. They will note whether they will need any financial support to participate in meetings and will provide a summary (maximum 1000 characters) of how their skills and expertise might contribute. They will also prepare information for the compilation of nominated individuals, using the template shown in annex 2;
31. STCG members and STWG participants are to be committed to undertake ST work, and to deliver the work expected on a voluntary basis;
32. STWG participants are welcome to participate for several COP-COP periods, due to that they are open-ended;

Part 6 Responsibilities of the Secretariat

33. The Secretariat's responsibilities include;
 - i) facilitating the ST work, including by organizing and administering meetings and maintaining the ST Workspace;
 - ii) fostering opportunities for collaboration with other conventions, international organizations, including financial organizations, intergovernmental institutions, and national and international NGOs, and facilitating such collaboration as required;
 - iii) facilitating linkages between potential experts within countries, regions and globally, including indigenous peoples and local communities;
 - iv) identifying the needs of potential audiences and thematic priorities in different countries or regions and inform the STCG about the outcome for their consideration;
 - v) co-operate with the STCG helping to keep the Contracting Parties, the Ramsar community, and the public informed of developments related to ST work;
 - vi) co-operate with the STCG helping to ensure all written deliveries from the STRP are clear and readable for the chosen target audience;
 - vii) publishing and disseminating the guidance, materials and products of the STRP, making deliveries easily accessible;
 - viii) monitoring the application of the ST deliveries; and
 - ix) assist in the nomination process for the coming COP-COP period, including revising draft resolutions according to the input from the STCG and the description in this annex and annex 3;

Annex 2 Template for compilation of nominated persons for the STWG and possible participants in STWGs

Nominations for the STCG or having interest in participating in STWG about...

Basic info					Nominated as/to				The nominee's competence						
Nominator; Organisation, Country, Name	"ID" for nominator nominee (country code/ORG + number)	Name (Given name and Family name)	The nominee's work place, Organisation, Country	Gender (M/F/O)	Regional representative for (AF/AS/EU/NA/OC/SA)	Other expert (1/2/3/4/5/6 or CEPA)	Suggested as Chair or Vice Chair (C/N/No)	Nominated for their COP-COP period (1/2/3)	Could be a participant in a suitable STWG (Y/N)	Competence (main wetland types)	Competence (biogeographical part/-s of the world)	Competence (CEPA)	Ramsar experience	Other for the STCG useful experiences/competences	Ramsar languages (E/F/S)

Annex 3 Work cycle for the ST work

Time	COP and SC decisions	STCG work	STWG work
COP "A"	Decision on ST resolution for coming period, including work program and crewing of the STCG.		
End at COP "A"		Present STCG participants meet STWG participants, discuss detailed manning of STWGs and their chairmanship	Present STCWG participants meet with STCG participants, discuss detailed manning of STWGs and their chairmanship
Year one		Participating in STWG work and/or doing ST coordination work	STWG work starts
Year two		Participating in STWG work and/or doing ST coordination work. Starting the process of planning for next COPCOP period (work program and composition of STCG and themes for STWGs, writing potential DRs from the STRP)	STWG work continues, some deliveries of STWG results. Possible input on ST DRs to the STCG
2 months before SC addressing DRs		STCG send their suggested DRs to the Secretariat. Finalise the report to the SC and the COP.	
Until SC addressing DRs		Analyse of new DRs unknown for the STCG. Give input to Secretariat. Compile any suggested changes of the suggested work program to be addressed for the SC.	Some deliveries of STWG results, Possible input on ST DRs to the STCG.
SC addressing DRs	Decision on ST DRs (including work program etc). May result in amendments in work program etc.	Present any suggested changes of the suggested work program to the SC.	
2-3 months after SC addressing DRs		Review of nominations for the STCG. Compiling their suggested crewing of the STCG, including chair and vice chair for the STCG and STWGs.	
Start of COP "B"		Presenting their suggestion for crewing the STCG.	