

THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
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SC59/2022 Doc.24.9

**Proposed draft resolution on
Ramsar Regional Initiatives – the basics**

Submitted by Sweden

Secretariat cover note:

The DR refers to Resolution XIII.9 on Ramsar Regional Initiatives 2019-2021. There are two additional DRs on the topic of Ramsar Regional Initiatives submitted by Sweden as documents SC59/2022 Doc.24.10 and SC59/2022 Doc.24.11. The topic is also addressed in the Draft Resolution on Ramsar Regional Initiatives 2022-2024 annexed to document SC59 Doc.21.1 *Report of the Ramsar Regional Initiatives Working Group on Addressing Resolution XIII.9*. The DR does not address matters of a scientific or technical nature requiring review by the STRP.

Actions requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- i. Review, approve and then forward the attached draft resolution “Ramsar Regional Initiatives – The Basics”.

Introduction*Information for the Standing Committee*

1. Resolution XIII.9 re-established the (open-ended) Ramsar Regional Initiatives Working Group under Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure to draft new operational guidelines for Ramsar Regional Initiatives (RRIs). The results from the working group is presented in document SC59-21.1 and contains a new draft resolution both including the suggested new operational guidelines and a compilation of old decisions to retire;
2. Parts of the SC59-21.1 was written in haste by a few countries and input from other countries was not included.
3. During the SC59 Sweden encouraged the working group to continue their work and try to solve the remaining differences and submit an updated document to the resumed session SC59 in May 2022. Unfortunately, this have not been done, there is no update of the SC59 Doc 21.1 planned. Sweden have instead written alternative draft resolutions that cover the topic;
4. Three draft resolutions with the content divided between them according to a foreseeable lifespan, would probably pbe a better then having one resolution covering all RRI matters in need to be addressed at COP14. One resolution will address the long-lived basics for RRIs, the second will address what might be of interest until the coming COP, and the third will address older decision that can be retired;
5. This way of having resolutions adapted after lifespan will probably 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;
6. This SC-document contains the draft resolution on the Basics for RRI and is supposed to be a long-lived resolution with a content that have not to be re-negotiated each COP;

Financial implications of implementation

Para graph (number/-s, key part of text)	Action, lack of action and other consequences	Cost (CHF) and potential benefits
All paras with instructions for the Secretariat	Secretariat will from now on to take part in the work of single RRIs as an advisory part only. No changes in workload when it comes to the Secretariat’s general work on RRIs, for example compiling info on RRIs for the SC and the COP).	Decreased costs, but no huge saving.

The whole resolution	Having one resolution with the decisions on long-lived conditions for RRI that are not opened up for renegotiation constantly.	A large saving if the Convention stop negotiating the conditions for RRI year after year.
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Annex 1. Draft Resolution XIV.xx

Ramsar Regional Initiatives – the basics

1. RECALLING that Ramsar Regional Initiatives, which include regional centres for training and capacity building and regional networks to facilitate cooperation, are intended as an operational means to provide effective support for improved implementation of the Convention in specific geographic regions, through voluntary international cooperation on wetland-related issues of common concern;
2. ALSO RECALLING that the Conference of the Contracting Parties has recognized the importance of Ramsar Regional Initiatives in promoting the objectives of the Convention;
3. FURTHER RECALLING that at COP13 the Contracting Parties took several decisions on RRIs of long-lived character as well as asking for the Working Groups on RRIs to be re-established so they could draft new Operation Guidelines and submit their recommendations in a draft resolution for the consideration of the Standing Committee;
4. RECOGNIZING the need for keep long-lived decision on RRIs in a separate resolution that is updated only when needed (either by being re-placed by a new one, being updated or being part of a consolidation process), and that short-lived decisions related to RRIs will be better off in separate resolutions, that can be retired quickly. This to minimise the need for updating and consolidation processes;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

Basic information on resolutions and other resolutions related to it

5. STATES that this resolution on RRIs is containing long-lived decisions on the basics for RRIs only. The resolution is valid until it is retired. Decisions that are specific for the time between two COPS (most often a triennium) are found in a separate short-lived resolution and are to be applied as well;
6. INFORMS that the retirement of older resolutions and SC-decision about RRIs is addressed in resolution XIV:xx and that all old resolutions and SC-decision with RRIs as the main focus have been retired;
7. DECIDES to abstain from mentioning RRIs in every resolution with another main focus, but where they might be mentioned as an actor implementing the Conventions, and instead use a terminology that is more general, e.g. “all kinds of global and regional co-operations with interest in wetland preservation”, that make the text in such resolutions more inclusive and the RRI need not keep track on all resolutions they are mentioned in, with the exception for resolutions on *Financial and budgetary matters*;

General information about Ramsar Regional Initiatives

8. REAFFIRMS that that Ramsar Regional Initiatives as stated in the resolution XIII.09 are called Ramsar Regional Initiatives, with the acronym RRI, this not to avoid mix-ups with other kinds of regional initiatives;
9. REAFFIRMS that RRIs are for Contracting Parties and other stakeholders with a common interest in a particular area, region or ecosystem, to protect wetlands into the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands framework, ALSO REAFFIRMS that RRIs supports an improved implementation of the Convention on Wetlands and its resolutions;
10. RECOGNIZES the potentiality of cooperation within the framework of RRI in wetlands ecosystems or watershed shared by Contracting Parties that allows a comprehensive vision of the territory, favoring dialogue, co-ordination and cooperation between the parties involved;
11. STATES that RRIs can be a regional centre or a network, or a mixtures of both, ALSO STATES that RRI can be cooperation networks not having a legal status or be established organisations of their own with their own legal status, FURTHER STATES that RRIs can have different kinds of governance and coordination approaches;

Conditions for the RRIs

12. DECIDES that RRIs are intended as operational means to provide effective support for an improved implementation of the decisions of the Convention, especially tasks mentioned in plans or programmes of the Convention and where needed arranging trainings and capacity-building, as well as doing CEPA activities;
13. DECIDES that RRI should undertake tasks that are part of implementation in their region only;
14. DECIDES that RRIs can speak in their own name only and that RRIs can act only by the expressed mandate of their constituents, and in no instance or circumstance will the RRI act in a way that mistakenly can be considered as a regional office of the Convention or as spokespersons or representatives of the Secretariat of the Convention or of any national authority or organization that may provide them with support or hosting arrangements ;
15. DECIDES that RRIs shall develop terms of reference, which cover their own rules of procedure, structure, governance and membership, including the status of the Convention Secretariat's participation in the RRI as advisory and the responsibility of the participating Contracting Parties, and be consistent with valid decisions of the Convention, the legal framework within the countries the RRI operates and ensure a transparent way of working;
16. DECIDES that RRIs shall be financially accountable and have their own systems for accounting and presenting reports, overseen by their governing body, with the exception of RRIs that are part of one or several of the Contracting Parties accounting and reporting systems at Ministries or Governmental agencies;
17. DECIDES that RRIs take full responsibility of their own administration and activities;
18. DECIDES that RRIs in the beginning of each year are to submit their yearly report to the Secretariat according to the format in Annex 1. The report will be about their activities, progress

and financial summary for the previous year. The report should also include a work programme and budget for the year that just have begun;

19. DECIDES that RRIs must be endorsed by the Conference of the Contracting Parties, or if they are future new ones, they may be intersessionally endorsed by the Standing Committee;
20. DECIDES that all RRI should comply with the decisions in paragraph 12-19 to be formally recognized as an RRI under the Convention and maintain that status;
21. DECIDES that future RRIs are to apply to the Secretariat to become an RRI. The application will include information required by the section on the current year in the yearly report, in annex 1 and information following the template attached in annex 2. The application will be considered by the Standing Committee;
22. DECIDES that young RRIs that have been established for fewer than six years can get start-up financial support if the Convention's budget allows it. Independently on if such funds are available or not, there should be a budget line in each budget for the Convention showing what amount that is available. Request for such funds will be included in the section for the current year in the RRI's yearly report, and the reporting of the funds used will be also take place in the yearly report,
23. DECIDES that the RRI requesting for core funds by Ramsar Regional Initiatives should include a rationale about how the RRI supports Contracting Parties in implementing the Convention and its resolutions and guidance, FURTHER DECIDES that the requests must be provided in English or with an English translation (with informal "google translate" translations, screened by the country's National Focal Point, acceptable), to enable the Subgroup of Finance to make informed decisions in a timely manner, and ALSO DECIDES that the model contract in annex 3, have to be signed by the RRI when receiving funds from the Convention;

Encouragements for the RRIs

24. ENCOURAGES the RRIs to invite regional intergovernmental, international and non-governmental organizations, organizations of indigenous peoples and local communities, and transboundary river and groundwater basin organizations, to participate in or collaborate with RRIs, when suitable and appropriate;
25. ENCOURAGES the RRIs to invite National Focal Points designated by the Parties for scientific and technical matters (STRP Focal Points) and for the Convention's programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA Focal Points), to take an active part in the RRIs' organization, work and projects, when appropriate;
26. ENCOURAGES the RRIs to work in synergy with other projects and programmes of other multilateral environmental agreements, other international co-operations and IOPs of the Convention;
27. ENCOURAGES the RRIs to take the necessary steps to achieve financial sustainability, preferably through financial support from a variety of sources, to establish mechanisms and procedures to ensure their sustainability beyond specific project periods, and try to avoid that the RRI is becoming dependent on a single or major donor only;

28. ENCOURAGES RRIs that receive start-up support from the core budget to consider using part of this support to seek sustainable funding from other sources, particularly during the last years in which they qualify for such support;
29. ENCOURAGES the RRIs to establish their own identity, which specifies their independence, their status and role. This may include having a logo and a website of their own and ALLOWS the RRIs to use their own logo in combination with the Convention logo in accordance with current guidelines on its use.
30. ENCOURAGES the RRIs to inform about the RRI and its activities available on-line, preferably at a website of their own;
31. ENCOURAGES RRIs to contact the Secretariat when in need of advice the Secretariat may provide, or in other situations where contact with the Secretariat may be appropriate;

Recurrent instructions on work tasks on RRIs for the Secretariat

32. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to inform about RRIs at the global level as a mechanism to promote international cooperation and support for the implementation of the objectives of the Convention, to complement the efforts of the Ramsar Administrative Authorities and the National Focal Points at the national level;
33. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to open the call for proposals for new RRIs to be endorsed by the Conference of the Parties or intersessionally by the Standing Committee. The deadline for the answers is to be adapted to the time schedule for the meeting where they are to be addressed including time for the Secretariat to do a first assessment;
34. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to limit their support to future and existing RRIs, to be advisory only. The advice should be focused on how to reinforce the RRIs capacity and effectiveness as well as fund-raising and pros and cons of choice in legal status for the RRI. The Secretariat is not to be involved in the administration of the RRI, the RRIs projects or any day-to-day tasks that are to be run by the RRIs;
35. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to call on the RRIs to submit their yearly report, to assess the content in the reports and compile the outcome in an assessment report and forward it to the SC for consideration;
36. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to prepare a summary assessment of the operations and achievements of the RRIs operating since the last COP for consideration by the Standing Committee and submission to the next COP;
37. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to prepare a resolution with short-lived content for RRIs for the coming "COP-COP" period to each COP.
38. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to publish information provided by the RRIs, including reports on their successes and work programmes and other relevant information on RRIs as appropriate, on the Convention's website;

Recurrent request on work tasks on RRIs for the Standing Committee and its sub-groups

39. REQUESTS the Standing Committee to endorse proposals for new initiatives submitted intersessionally, on the basis of a positive assessment of the compliance with the for a new RRI relevant conditions described in this resolution as well as a providing a reasonable work programme and data listed in Annex 2;
40. REQUESTS that the Standing Committee review the Secretariat's yearly report on assessment of the RRIs and take proper actions for the ones not in line with the conditions in para 12-19. Proper actions are to ask for change and if the RRI gets financial support from the Convention make proper decisions on that and future support, finally the SC may ask the next COP not to endorse failing RRIs as RRIs;
41. REQUESTS that Sub-group on Finance and the Standing Committee makes sure that each Convention core budget submitted to the COP as well as intersessional SC-decisions on the budget include a budget line "Support to Ramsar Regional Initiatives", to show how much start-up support for the RRIs that is allocated;
42. REQUEST that the levels of financial support from the Convention core budget to eligible RRIs will be determined annually by the Standing Committee, based on their most recent annual reports and updated work programmes to be submitted in accordance with the required format and timetable, and informed by the specific recommendations made by the Subgroup on Finance to the Standing Committee;

Recurrent encouragement for Contracting Parties

43. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to establish RRIs in parts of the world where no such exist yet and would be an opportunity to increase implementation of the Convention;
44. ENCOURAGES that Contracting Parties participating in any existing or future RRI endeavour to achieve full compliance with the paragraph 12-19 of the present Resolution, so that RRIs can be endorsed and maintain their status;
45. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to support RRIs, in any way they can and to take the main responsibility, or to delegate that responsibility or part thereof to a suitable actor, to create, manage, develop, supervise, and coordinate the functioning of the RRI and ensure that the RRI's coordinating unit is working properly;
46. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties concerned to identify donors that are willing to provide additional support to the RRI, notably through specific projects and cooperation programmes;
47. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to consider giving financial support to RRIs or their specific activities, either as member of an RRI or as a doner country, as appropriate;

Recurrent invitation to organisations

48. INVITES the Convention's International Organization Partners and other regional or national organisations, to support RRIs in their undertakings, including capacity building and fundraising efforts and to take part in their activities and projects when suitable and appropriate.

Annex I

The form for the RRIs annual report on the past and new year and the explanatory notes

Annual report for the past year XXXX and plan for new year YYYY

Submission deadline: 31 January YYYY (maximum 4 pages)

1. General information

- a. Name of the Ramsar Regional Initiative (RRI):
- b. Have the terms of reference (TORs) or equivalent documents been updated? Yes / No
(If yes, provide the web link to the PDF version for the updated document(s).)
- c. Is the RRI eligible for core funding from the Convention on Wetlands? Yes / No

2. Work and activities undertaken during the past year (XXXX)

Provide a simple summary of the work undertaken by listing in the table below the RRI's activities, the results achieved and a verification:

Activities	Results	Verifiable indicators

If felt useful, you may add narrative text to specify further your achievements, lessons learned, improvement of Ramsar implementation in the region, etc:

3. Financial report for the past year XXXX

Sources of income or support	Income or other kinds of support received	
Kinds of support of financial importance that don't become part of the official RRI budget (donor's) 1. 2. 3.	Kind of support (paid salaries, offices, travels etc).	
Income (donor's and/projects) 1. 2. 3.	Amount	Amount according to current exchange rate
	XXX Name of used currency	XXX CHF
	XXX Name of used currency	XXX CHF
	XXX Name of used currency	XXX CHF
Ramsar Convention core budget (if applicable)	XXX Name of used currency	XXX CHF
Total amount received (in CHF only)		XXX CHF

Budget Items	Planned expenditure	Actual expenditure
1. activity	XXX Name of currency	XXX Name of currency
2. activity	XXX Name of currency	XXX Name of currency
Administration	XXX Name of currency	XXX Name of currency
Total in CHF		

Date	Total unspent and uncommitted balance left to the next year,	Deficit that must be addressed the coming year/-s
31 Dec 20WW	XXX Name of currency	XXX Name of currency
31 Dec 20XX	XXX Name of currency	XXX Name of currency
Result in CHF		

Add narrative text to specify further how a surplus may be used or how a deficit will be addressed:

If having received support from Convention core budget and if felt useful, narrative text may be added on how the funding has been spent or committed and compare this to the plan on which the funding request was based. Explain any significant changes in scope or timetable:

5. Work and activities planned for the current year (20YY)

Provide a summary of the work planned by listing the RRI's activities, the results expected and verifiable indicators:

Activities	Expected results	Verifiable indicators

If felt useful, you may add narrative text to specify the plans and activities further:

6. Budget for year 20YY

Expected sources of income or support	Expected income or kinds of support received	
Kinds of support of financial importance that don't become part of the official RRI budget (donor's) 1. 2. 3.	Kind of support (paid salaries, offices, travels etc).	
Other sources (donor's and/or project name) 1. 2. 3.	Amount XXX Name of currency XXX Name of currency XXX Name of currency	Amount according to roughly average exchange rate XXX CHF XXX CHF XXX CHF
Ramsar core budget (if such have been received)	XXX Name of currency	XXX CHF
Total amount (in CHF only)		XXX CHF

Budget Items	Planned expenditure
1.1 activity	XXX Name of currency
1.2 activity	XXX Name of currency
Administration	XXX Name of currency
Total in CHF	

Annex II

Template for information needed for applying to become a new Ramsar Regional Initiative

1. Name of RRI
2. Contracting Parties who are members of the initiative shall provide a letter of commitment before every COP, indicating their financial contribution to the initiative, as well as designating the official in the Government that will be the focal point for it during the following triennium.
3. Description of expected coordination body and potential host
4. Type of RRI: Regional Centre or Regional network, or a combination – thereof, with a brief description
5. Objectives of the RRI
6. Describe the main objective to be reached with this RRI indicating the geographical area, region and/or ecosystems to be covered
7. Please clearly identify the Goals and Targets of the Convention's Strategic Plan that will be supported through the RRI
8. Please include names of relevant IOPs and other NGOs that would like to participate in the initiative
9. Please name other potentially relevant partners and describe how they have participated in the preparation of the workplan and what role you expect them to assume if the RRI is endorsed
10. Potential sources of funding for the RRI
11. A Workplan and budget for the following three years (CHF/year) – as an attachment
12. Confirm whether you plan to open an independent Bank account for the initiative.

Annex III

Template for “model contract” to disburse allocated Ramsar core budget funds to RRI

Beneficiary address
Regional Initiative coordinating body

Date:

Re: **Ramsar Regional Initiatives YEAR-YEAR**
Ramsar Contract No. XXX

With reference to the Resolution XIV. **xx** which includes this model contract and the RRI resolution for the present COP-COP period or in accordance with Decision SC **xx-xx** of the **xx**th Meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee in MONTH YEAR, the **xx Ramsar Regional Initiative** has been evaluated as fully meeting the conditions for a Ramsar Regional Initiative and is approved as operating within the framework of the Ramsar Convention during the COP **xx**-COP **xx** period.

In order to retain the status of Ramsar Regional Initiative you are required to report to the Secretariat, annually, in the latest format approved and using the present timetable for reporting as decided by the COP or the SC.

This status makes your initiative eligible for funding in any year during the YEAR-YEAR period. Funding decisions are made annually, based on funding requests made by all approved Regional Initiatives, by the Standing Committee. For YEAR your initiative has been allocated funding from the Ramsar core budget of CHF **xx**.

We are pleased to offer the **xx** Ramsar Regional Initiative the following contract for YEAR and CHF **xx** to perform the specific tasks itemized in the funding request received from you by the Secretariat.

The contract will cover a period of **xx** months, starting on **DATE** and terminating upon satisfactory and timely completion of all tasks to be undertaken, but not later than **DATE** unless the contract is otherwise extended or terminated in accordance with normal Swiss contract law. The following terms will apply to the use of the funds allocated under this contract:

1. The sum of **CHF XXX**, representing 60% per cent of the approved sum, will be transferred after receipt by the Ramsar Secretariat of the countersigned copy of this letter, including bank details and an invoice for this amount.
2. A final sum of **CHF XXX**, representing 40% of the approved sum, will be transferred upon acceptance by the Secretariat of an interim progress report. This must be sent to the Secretariat, in the format shown in Annex II, no later than DATE, together with an invoice.
3. Under Swiss Law an **invoice** is required to support each payment in 1 and 2 above. The invoice should state the name of your organization, date, amount, bank name an address, account name/beneficiary, IBAN or account number and SWIFT code.
4. Under the Secretariat’s contractual terms, contract funds and income earned thereon may be expended only for the **purposes** stated in the present letter, and it is understood that these funds will be used for such purposes in accordance with the funding request.
5. Any **funds unused** by the end of the contractual period must be declared in the YEAR final reporting, due to the Secretariat by DATE, and shall be returned to the Secretariat.
6. All the conditions described in the Resolution XIV. **xx** and the resolution on RRI for the present the COP-COP period apply to this contract.

7. The Ramsar Secretariat may include **information** on this contract in its periodic reports and may also refer to it in a press release.
8. This agreement is governed by Swiss law.

All correspondence in connection with this contract should be addressed to SURNAME (XXX@ramsar.org) at the above address.

If you agree to the above, kindly confirm your agreement with the contents of this letter by countersigning and initialling each page of the enclosed duplicate copy and returning the complete document to the Ramsar Secretariat.

We wish you continued success in your endeavours over the coming months and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

NAME
Secretary General

ACCEPTED AND AGREED TO:

I have understood and agree with the terms and conditions set out in the preceding pages.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

PAYMENT SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

Full name of bank and/or branch: _____

Address of bank and/or branch: _____

Account name / beneficiary: _____

Account number - IBAN: _____

SWIFTCODE: _____