

Report of the Management Working Group

Actions requested:

Standing Committee is invited to take note of the work carried out by the Management Working Group since the 59th meeting of the Standing Committee in June 2021.

Background

1. The report of the Management Working Group (MWG) to the 59th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC59) in June 2021 was presented in document SC59 Doc.7 *Report of the meeting of the Management Working Group* of 14 June 2021.

Meetings of the Management Working Group

2. As a follow up to Standing Committee Decisions SC59-04, SC59-05, SC59-06 and SC59-07¹ in the work of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel an online meeting took place on 13 January 2022. The meeting noted good progress made by the STRP in delivering highest priority tasks within its current work plan. The MWG provided guidance to the STRP on continuing its work, pursuing implementation of the additional activities proposed for 2022 and continuing its work on the ad-hoc task on Criterion 6 as well as on development of future priorities, taking into consideration guidance provided by the MWG and with support from the Secretariat, and ensuring tasks are completed by the deadline for submission of documents for the resumed session of SC59 to the Secretariat (23 February 2022). Minutes of the meeting are presented in Annex 1 to this document.
3. An updated report will be presented by the Chair of the Management Working Group to the resumed session of SC59 according to the discussions of its meeting on 23 May.

¹ See <https://www.ramsar.org/document/decisions-of-the-59th-meeting-of-the-standing-committee-21-25-june-2021>

Annex 1

Minutes of the Meeting (by videoconference) of the Management Working Group (MWG), 13 January 2022

Participants:

Management Working Group Members - Contracting Parties: Australia, Iran, Mexico, Sweden, Switzerland, UAE (Chair), Uruguay, USA

Non-Contracting Party Members: STRP Chair, former STRP Chair, IOP representative (WWT)

Secretariat: Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General, Senior Adviser, Director Science and Policy

Background

1. During the current triennium the Management Working Group (MWG) has met four times: on 21 November 2019, 10 June 2020, 2 November 2020 and 14 June 2021, providing oversight and guidance to the Scientific Technical and Review Panel (STRP) and the CEPA Oversight Panel.
2. The meeting on 14 June 2021, *inter alia*, discussed the work of the STRP in relation to highest priority tasks in its work plan, the ad hoc task on the use of criterion 6 in designation of wetlands of international importance, and future priorities of the STRP for the next triennium, based on information presented in [SC59 Doc.25 Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel](#) and [SC59 Doc.26 Draft Resolution on the future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2022-2024](#). Further to this, SC 59 adopted a number of decisions providing guidance to the STRP ([Decision SC59-04, 05, 06 and 07](#)).

Meeting 13 January 2022

3. The Chair welcomed participants to the meeting.
4. The Secretary General explained that the proposed agenda for the meeting was for the MWG to follow up on progress made in the work of the STRP in response to Standing Committee (SC) decisions and to provide guidance to the STRP, focusing on three agenda items: progress made by the STRP in delivering highest priority tasks within its current work plan as well as ad-hoc tasks; additional tasks that the STRP could undertake in the current triennium; and further development of STRP priorities for the coming triennium. She drew attention to documents circulated in advance of the meeting related to each of these agenda items.

Progress made with STRP highest priority and ad-hoc tasks (following up on [Decision SC59-04 and 05](#))

5. The STRP Chair reported that the work of the STRP in relation to highest priority tasks had been completed, and noted the successful launch of the Global Wetlands Outlook Special Edition 2021 on 15 December 2021. He further provided an update on work on the criterion 6 ad hoc task, emphasizing that the draft document shared addresses comments raised at the last MWG meeting, but that work was still ongoing.
6. The Secretariat mentioned that Blue Carbon and Peatland related products (STRP Workplan tasks 2.2 and 5.1) had been shared prior to UNFCCC COP 26 in view of their relevance to negotiations. These products as well as products on agriculture (Task 1.2) are at final stages of production and will be disseminated in all languages of the Convention shortly, with launch plans to be communicated.

7. The Secretariat further noted that while the STRP has addressed guidance of the MWG and SC in relation to the ad hoc task on criterion 6, added clarity may be needed in the recommended way forward, including to ensure that it can be applied in the day-to-day work of the Secretariat to review site designations and updates. The Secretariat will continue to work with and support the STRP on this.
8. MWG took note of progress made in line with SC decision SC59-05. Questions were raised on whether regional or flyway data exist for the Americas, as is the case for some flyways in Asia, Africa and Europe, and whether that could be reflected in the document; and on whether national monitoring systems and gray literature could be used as alternative data sources, bearing in mind that not all population data is published in peer-reviewed journals.
9. The STRP Chair clarified that only two flyways have established systematic review of populations. Use of data from national monitoring systems requires caution because migratory bird populations span boundaries. Data from flyway initiatives are valuable in this regard, and also in the absence of up to date global estimates, but they do not constitute a global population estimate. The STRP will continue to work on this and present its guidance to the resumed session of SC59.

Additional tasks to be undertaken by the STRP in the current triennium ([Decision SC59-06](#))

10. The STRP Chair provided a brief overview of proposed additional tasks, noting that these were in line with the suggestions previously made in the MWG meeting 14 June 2021. Building on task 1.7 in the current work plan, the STRP will prepare Terms of Reference for a comprehensive global assessment of gaps in the Ramsar Site network, to be implemented in the next triennium. A STRP subgroup has been established for this. Further work on blue carbon is led by Dr Siobhan Fennessy, and will include development of guidance on prioritization of coastal blue carbon ecosystem restoration efforts; review of existing data and models on carbon stock and fluxes; and analysis of National Wetland Inventories (NWIs) as tools to support updating of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) accounts and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The STRP would also engage in review of the current and development of the next Strategic Plan, as needed.
11. The Secretariat noted that STRP core funds for 2022 and non-core funds provided for the work of the STRP on blue carbon could be allocated towards these activities, subject to need.
12. MWG members expressed support for the proposed activities. In relation to the gap analysis, suggestions were made to ensure consideration of biogeographical aspects, and to consider identification of sites that will promote or facilitate adaptation to projected (climate) change. In this context it would also be important to encourage Contracting Parties to update RSIS reports in order to enable a better assessment/analysis. In relation to blue carbon, the STRP's work on the recently prepared Briefing Note was commended, and suggestions made for the STRP to also consider work in relation to intertidal mudflats as blue carbon ecosystems, as well as in relation to carbon finance and development of appropriate guidance on this.
13. The STRP Chair took note of the comments, some of which will be better addressed in the context of discussion on STRP priorities for the next triennium.

Further development of STRP priorities for the coming triennium ([Decision SC59-07](#))

14. The STRP Chair mentioned that discussion on future priorities was ongoing, and that a number of revisions and updates had been made to the document shared prior to the MWG. This

included further refinement of activities and potential outputs as well as priority level. He noted that some aspects of the document have not yet been discussed in detail.

15. The Secretariat sought clarification on the structure of the document, with the suggestion that it could present potential priority activities by Thematic Work Areas, and that some modification of Thematic Work Areas may be needed pending further discussion in STRP.
16. MWG members expressed support for the work of the STRP and thanked the Chair for progress made. The use of the full scale of priority ranking was emphasized, noting that while all items on the list are understood to be important, there is a need to prioritize between these in order to establish a realistic work plan. Engagement in the development of the next Strategic Plan needs to be reflected as a future priority for the STRP. It was also noted that priorities for the STRP in the next triennium should where relevant take into consideration the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). Positive feedback was also provided regarding structuring the document by Thematic Work Areas.
17. The STRP Chair confirmed that guidance from the MWG would be taken up in the context of further development of the STRP priorities for the next triennium, and that the STRP was liaising with the Secretariat in relation to this.

Summary of the STRP

18. The MWG provided guidance to the STRP to continue its work with support from the Secretariat in line with Decision SC59-06, as follows:
 - i. pursue implementation of the additional activities proposed for 2022, taking into account the points made by the MWG as described above;
 - ii. continue its work on the ad-hoc task on Criterion 6 as well as on development of future priorities, taking into consideration guidance provided by MWG, and ensuring tasks are completed by the deadline for submission of SC 59.2 documents to the Secretariat (23 February 2022).

Any other business

19. Sweden reminded of the importance that the process of recruiting a new Secretary General is not delayed further. Sweden wanted to see immediately actions on this matter noting that this was asked for since 15 November 2021 without any progress made so far. No one expressed any other opinion.

Closing of the meeting

20. The Secretary General thanked the Chair of the STRP for progress made, recognizing that a lot of high-quality work has been delivered in spite of many challenges posed by the pandemic.
21. The Chair of the STRP thanked members of MWG for the useful guidance provided and the Secretariat for its helpful support to the work of the Panel.
22. The Chair closed the meeting, thanking members of the MWG for their contributions, the STRP for its work and the Secretariat for its support to the STRP.