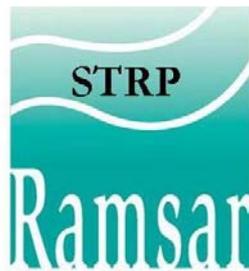


Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
15th meeting of the Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP)
30 March – 3 April 2009, Gland, Switzerland



The Scientific and Technical Review Panel
Convention on Wetlands

Report of the 15th meeting of the Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP)

Gland, 30th March - 3rd April 2009

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Report

Note: This report provides a summary record of the discussions and decisions made during STRP15. The main part of the agenda of this, the first meeting of the STRP during the 2009-2012 cycle, was to develop the approach to delivering each of the Panel's tasks set out in Resolution X.10. These are provided as a set of task pro-formas in the STRP 2009-2012 Work Plan, which was submitted to and approved by the 40th meeting of the Standing Committee in May 2009 in Decision SC40-25 (available from the STRP section of the Ramsar Web site).

Monday, 30 March 2009

Agenda item 1: Welcome & opening comments

1. **Heather MacKay, STRP Chair**, welcomed all participants: appointed members, International Organization Partners (IOPs) members, invited experts and representatives of Observer Organizations; and encouraged the participants to give their full contributions, recalling that STRP meetings are scientific meetings, not political processes, and that all insights and inputs are welcomed; and provided a short explanation about the way STRP15 will work during the week.
2. **Anada Tiega, Secretary General**, welcomed everybody and stressed the importance of linking the Panel's work as much as possible with observer organizations. He thanked the STRP Chair Heather MacKay for having taken up wetlands ecosystems in recent discussions with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on its International Waters focal area.
3. **The STRP Chair** drew participants' attention to the annotated agenda, which contains hyperlinks to key materials so that participants can have direct access to relevant documents as the discussions proceed.
4. **Nick Davidson, Deputy Secretary General**, stressed the importance of the neutral expertise of STRP for the Convention processes. He welcomed the new Scientific and Technical Support Officer Monica Zavagli and introduced the Ramsar Secretariat regional teams. He reported that the following invited experts and Observer organizations could not attend STRP15 and had sent their apologies: Mr Kim Chan-woo (Standing Committee Chair); *Invited experts*: Kassim Kulindwa (Tanzania), Ebenizário Chonguiça (Mozambique), Sang-Don Lee (Rep. of Korea), Andrej Sirin (Russian Federation), Teresita Borges Hernández (Cuba); and *Observer Organizations*: Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty, ISEE,

UNFCCC Secretariat, UNCCD Secretariat, UNESCO-MAB, Secretariat of CMS, and Secretariat of CITES.

Agenda item 2: Introductions

5. All participants introduced themselves indicating their expertise and background. (*Annex V - List of participants*)

Agenda item 3: Adoption of the Agenda

6. Several minor adjustments were proposed to the draft agenda, and it was adopted by consensus.

Agenda item 4: Briefing on STRP *modus operandi* & overview of Convention processes; objectives and outcomes for STRP15

7. **The DSG** presented an overview of the Convention, the current STRP *modus operandi* (Resolution X.9), and the High Priority and other tasks given the Panel in Resolution X.10; thanked Star Alliance “Biosphere Connections” initiative for providing air tickets for some invited experts; and proposed to add the Global Environment Facility’s Scientific & Technical Advisory Panel (GEF-STAP) as an Observer Organization. He also encouraged participants to propose any other another suitable organizations and individual experts who might assist the STRP develop and advance some of its tasks.

Decision STRP15-1: The meeting agreed that GEF-STAP should be invited to STRP as an observer organization and should be added to the list of observers for the 2009-2012 cycle.

8. **Monica Zavagli, Scientific and Technical Support Officer**, provided a demonstration of the web-based STRP Support Service (SuSe) through which the Panel works intersessionally, and she explained the current technical problems and ways to work around these. She also stressed the need to restore some of its functionalities as soon as possible.

Agenda item 5: Establishment of Thematic Work Area (TWA) Working Groups and their core membership

9. **STRP Chair** and **DSG** provided an overview of the ten different Thematic Work Areas (TWAs) that were recognized in Resolution X.10, and recalled that for each there is an appointed STRP member designated to lead the work area, and they noted the need to identify working group members. The TWAs and their leads are as follows:
 - TWA1: Regional networking (Rebecca D’Cruz – Vice-Chair)
 - TWA2: Strategic, emerging & ongoing issues (including general wise use of wetlands) (Heather MacKay – Chair)
 - TWA3: Wetland inventory, assessment, monitoring and reporting (including indicators) (Dave Pritchard)
 - TWA4: Wetlands and human health (Pierre Horwitz)
 - TWA5: Wetlands and climate change (Max Finlayson)
 - TWA6: Wetlands and water resources management (Mike Acreman)

- TWA7: Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) (David Stroud)
- TWA8: Wetland management – restoration, mitigation, compensation (Kevin Erwin)
- TWA9: Wetlands and agriculture (George Lukacs)
- TWA10: CEPA (Christine Prietto)

10. **The DSG** noted that the wording formulation of STRP tasks in Resolution X.10 can be modified by the Panel to best fit task delivery; and that the Panel should pay particular attention to those tasks identified as High Priority Tasks in Resolution X.10 Annex I. He also urged that delivery of products that will go to COP11 should be scheduled in such a way that the draft materials should become available in smaller batches (rather than all at once) so as to facilitate their processing and review by Contracting Parties in Standing Committee and regional COP10 preparatory meetings.
11. Dave Pritchard (TWA3 lead) re-emphasised the recommendation made by Chris Prietto (TWA10 lead) in the previous triennium that each substantive technical document prepared for Contracting Parties at COP11 should be accompanied by short summaries, in the form of user-friendly sets of “key messages for decision makers” and for other target user-groups such as wetland managers.

Action STRP 15-i: Each substantive technical document prepared for COP11 should be accompanied by short summaries, in the form of user-friendly sets of “key messages for decision makers” and for other target user-groups such as wetland managers (translated into the 3 official Convention languages), in order to assist Contracting Parties in their uptake and use of these materials.

Agenda item 6: Background and overview of Resolution X.10 tasks and priorities, and progress in previous triennium

12. Each of the ten Thematic Work Area Leads provided a brief introduction of the work delivered and work carried over from previous triennia, and work proposed for this cycle.

Agenda item 7: Review of available task implementation funds, and funds needed

13. **The DSG and the STRP Chair** informed the meeting that there is a budget allocation from the core STRP budget available for some of the priority tasks, and that the UK has already made a voluntary contribution for extractive industries-related tasks and other parties have expressed interest in supporting STRP work. However, currently available funds will not be sufficient to cover all the High Priority Tasks indicated in Resolution X.10, and Working Groups are encouraged to prioritize their work. The Secretariat will approach potential donors for additional funds.

Agenda item 8: Briefing for TWA Working Groups on outcomes & products needed, and procedures to be followed; room allocations and logistics

14. **DSG and STRP Chair** provided some practicalities for the running of the meeting and explained the use of task “pro-formas” for the task leads to record outcomes of their discussions, and to provide the basis for the draft STRP 2009-2012 work plan. They noted that that draft work plan developed during this meeting would be submitted to the Standing Committee for approval at its 40th meeting in May 2009.

Agenda item 9: TWA Working Groups – parallel sessions on work plan development for task delivery

During parallel sessions, participants split into TWA discussion groups. Discussion outcomes are reflected in the STRP draft work plan 2009-2012.

Evening plenary session: Wetlands and climate change: Briefing and general discussion

15. The evening session provided an overview on the current ongoing work on different aspects wetlands and climate change carried by STRP experts and the Secretariat.
16. In his presentation, **Colin Lloyd (STRP Invited Expert)** offered a detailed overview of the role of wetlands in the global carbon cycle and the different existing methods to assess carbon balance¹. He stressed the need to fill the gap in knowledge in particular for tropical wetlands (mangroves, coral reefs etc).
17. **Josh Bishop (IUCN special economic advisor)** provided an overview of the newly signed partnership between IUCN, Ramsar and the Danone group. He outlined Danone's goal of delivering CO₂ offset through wetland restoration, and their intention to make their Evian water brands carbon neutral by 2011. A panel of experts has been identified and assembled under recommendation of IUCN network, STRP and the Ramsar Secretariat. This panel, which will guide and advise the Danone programme, is composed of an expert on wetland restoration, an expert in mangrove restoration, an expert on carbon assessment in wetlands, a socio-economic valuation expert, and an expert in carbon markets. STRP-linked experts on the panel are **Lucy Emerton, Kevin Erwin** and **Colin Lloyd**. The partnership was described as a great opportunity to recognize the economic values of wetlands and generate financial incentives for maintenance of ecosystem services through carbon offsetting.
18. **Tatiana Minaeva (CC-GAP)** noted that chapter 7 "Wetlands" of the 2006 "IPCC Guidelines for National greenhouse gas inventories", describes carbon offsets related to wetland categories under consideration, and that IMCG (International Mire Conservation Group) provided an important contribution to that report, in terms of the analysis of GHG emission/absorption in relation to wetland restoration with special reference to peatlands.
19. **The DSG** agreed on the need to map what is being done internationally in order to not duplicate work and efforts. A number of other initiatives are in development, and he encouraged participants to keep STRP members and the Panel Experts updated on similar work and information to feed into the present work plan on CO₂ offsets for the Danone initiative.
20. **Roy Gardner** reported the outcomes of a workshop held as part of the IUCN World Conservation Congress Forum in Barcelona, Spain, in October 2008, which provided an opportunity to consider issues and approaches concerning mitigating wetland loss that could inform STRP's work on its task 9.1 (Mitigation and compensation for wetland loss – guidance). (See also DOC. 36 COP10).

¹ Lloyd, C (in prep. 2009) The Role of Wetlands in the Global Carbon Cycle - Draft Ramsar Technical Report.

21. **The DSG** and **Max Finlayson** reported that Ramsar has been invited to participate in the scoping of the fifth IPCC assessment report.
22. **STRP Chair** remarked that STRP should check the scope and timing of its climate change related work in order to ensure that it can provide suitable peer-reviewed wetlands-related information available to match IPCC priorities and questions during the development of its 5th assessment report.

Tuesday, 31 March 2009

Agenda item 9: TWA Working Groups - morning and afternoon sessions

The outcomes of the working group parallel discussions are reflected in the STRP work plan.

Evening session - Wetland inventory, assessment and indicators

23. **Marc Paganini (European Space Agency)** provided a presentation on the development of the GlobWetland-II project and the establishment of the Observatory of Mediterranean Wetlands (OMW) by Station Biologique de la Tour du Valat, linked with the MedWet Initiative. The GlobWetland II project will assist in the implementation of Resolution X.1 (Strategic Plan 2009-2015) objectives for Ramsar Contracting Parties, especially in relation to piloting the development of the Global Wetland Observing System (G-WOS) through the STRP, and is intended to help wetland managers to achieve more efficient wetland conservation, in particular for wetland inventory, mapping, and assessment of wetland trends on a regional basis.
24. On behalf of the STRP, **the DSG** thanked Marc Paganini for the ongoing support of ESA and their significant support for Convention implementation through provision of earth observation tools for wetland management in the GlobWetland-I project. The Secretariat will help Ramsar Administrative Authorities to understand and appreciate the significance of Glob Wetland-II project and encourage their full support for it.
25. The presentation was followed by a general discussion on ways forward for further collaboration with other organization partners in relation to inventory and assessment.

Action STRP15-ii: it was agreed that **STRP Chair** will highlight the GW-II project at SC40 and encourage Ramsar National Focal Points from North Africa to participate fully in the Mediterranean work.

26. **Dave Pritchard** provided a detailed presentation on the ongoing development and application of the STRP's ecological outcome-oriented indicators of Convention effectiveness.
27. **The DSG** noted that these analyses came from two small workshops hosted by UNEP-WCMC in Cambridge, UK, and that the information will feed into the the CBD's 3rd *Global Biodiversity Outlook* (being published in May 2009) and indicator assessment of the 2010 biodiversity target. The initial results of the Ramsar indicator assessments are indicating that

the approach is a very useful exercise that will allow reporting of powerful messages back to Contracting Parties and to the CBD concerning effective convention implementation.

28. **David Coates (CBD Secretariat)** reported that CBD has not undertaken such a detailed exercise before, and that the Ramsar work was setting a good example and is a welcome contribution to the CBD-Ramsar Joint Work Plan.
29. **Anada Tiega, Secretary General** thanked all those partners that provided data for such projects.

Wednesday, 1 April 2009

Agenda item 9: TWA Working Groups - morning session

30. In plenary session, participants undertook a review of TWA2 tasks on strategic, emerging and ongoing issues. The issues raised regarding scope of work and collaboration with partners are reflected in the task pro-formas in the STRP 2009-2012 work plan.
31. In particular, under task 1.2 (ongoing advisory functions), the **STRP Chair** raised the specific issue of the request received by Algeria for advice regarding removal of two Ramsar sites (Oasis de Ouled Said and Lac Tonga) from the Montreux Record. She noted that a recommendation regarding Oasis de Ouled Said had been posted on the STRP Support Service on behalf of the STRP in November 2008, and that this had also been forwarded to the Secretariat for follow-up. There had been a long delay in responding to the request, since very little information was initially provided that would allow the STRP to offer an informed recommendation on the sites. Additional technical reports and information were requested by the STRP, and an IOP representative, **Denis Landenbergue** of WWF, was asked for his views on the sites since he had visited them both personally.
32. For both sites, the available information now indicates that the threats which led to the sites being listed on the Montreux Record appear to have been resolved, and the only aspect still in question was whether Algeria had established long-term monitoring and management plans in order to be able to respond appropriately should these threats arise again in the future. Immediately before STRP15, Algeria had provided further information regarding long-term monitoring and management of the sites in a letter to the Secretariat, which satisfied the last outstanding queries of the STRP on these sites.

Decision STRP15-2: STRP15 acknowledged the efforts of Algeria to resolve the threats to these two sites, and requested the STRP Chair to provide a written recommendation to the Secretariat, on behalf of the STRP, with respect to the Lac Tonga site.

33. The meeting continued with a general discussion of how to best facilitate STRP inputs to queries and activities related to the Montreux Record. The value of Ramsar Advisory Missions (RAMs) was reaffirmed as an important mechanism for supporting Parties on the ground. **Denis Landenbergue** cautioned that it was essential for the RAM request to be supported by the government of the concerned Contracting Party itself.

Action STRP15-iii: The meeting agreed that Dave Pritchard, the STRP Chair and the DSG would draft brief guidance for STRP involvement in processes related to the Montreux Record, to serve in the interim pending the more detailed review of Montreux Record procedures envisaged in TWA3 (see work plan pro-forma for task 4.7).

Agenda item 9: TWA Working Groups - afternoon session

34. During review of TWA2 tasks, the **STRP Chair** raised the issue of the recent problems and limitations with the functioning of the web-based STRP Support Service (SuSe) which are compromising its utility to the Panel and how to best reflect the evolving STRP needs for the 2009-2012 cycle.
35. **The DSG** explained that the current problems are outside direct Secretariat control and that the Secretariat with the current web-site hosts are looking at possible solutions. He suggested that it is now timely to bring the system in-house and to redevelop it. The Secretariat has already taken a step forward by seeking advice for possible web-based discussion forum software. Since the Secretariat still lacks professional Information Technology capacity and skills, it is anticipated that funds will be needed urgently for an IT consultant to redevelop the SuSe during 2009.
36. **STRP Chair** and **DSG** highlighted that for the time being there is an urgent need to restore at least some of SuSe functions such as automatic e-mail alerts (top priority) and creation of new fora. WI should be requested to try to fix some of the current problems as soon as possible.

Decision STRP15-3: The Panel requested a full redevelopment of the STRP Support Service (SuSe) web-system and confirmed that is a high priority to have a fully functional Support Service within this year (2009). This should include redevelopment in proprietary user-friendly software, so as to facilitate updating and maintenance by Secretariat staff. Kevin Erwin, Rebecca D’Cruz and Heather MacKay will assist Monica Zavagli in co-ordinating STRP inputs to the redesign process, looking at the full range of functions which would be needed to enable the panel to work in an effective manner.

Other relevant issues and topics

37. **Anne van Dam (UNESCO-IHE)** presented a draft concept note for the establishment of Ramsar chair in the wise use of wetlands at UNESCO-IHE (*Annex II*). The two main objectives would be to: 1) support the implementation of Goals 1 and 4 of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015, mainly in Strategy 1.6 (Science-based management of wetlands) and Strategy 4.1 (Support for Ramsar’s Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) programme), and 2) enhance the coherence and impact of UNESCO-IHE’s wetland research and educational programmes.

Decision STRP15-4: The STRP endorsed UNESCO-IHE’s “Ramsar wetland wise use Chair” initiative, and asked the STRP Chair to invite Standing Committee to also endorse the initiative at its 40th meeting in May 2009.

38. **The STRP Chair** reported to STRP members on her recent meeting in Portland, USA, with the Association of State Wetland Managers (ASWM) in regard to their project to

develop guidance for wetland site managers to address climate change impacts at their sites (*Annex III*). She suggested that this could be a useful product for Ramsar Parties, and that ASWM was interesting in developing collaboration. The meeting suggested that, as a start, ASWM should be asked to review relevant Ramsar guidance and approaches and consider how these might be integrated into their work to promote alignment.

Action STRP15-iv: The STRP Chair will correspond with ASWM with regard to the above discussion.

39. **The STRP Chair** drew attention to an information note (*Annex IV*) to STRP15 from Dr Harry Biggs, who leads the Skukuza Freshwater Group – so called because its first full meeting was at Skukuza, Kruger National Park, RSA, in 2004. This is an informal network of organizations and people involved in “freshwater” (i.e. inland water), wetland and biodiversity conservation issues. Following its early discussions, some members of group and others now also act as the formally-recognised “Freshwater/Inland Water Task Group” for the IUCN’s World Commission on Protected Areas. The DSG and the STRP Chair represent the Ramsar Convention in this task group. Dr Biggs requested that the meeting discuss possible areas of collaboration between STRP and the task group, including STRP participation in a symposium planned for Australia in September 2009, and provide suggestions to him for follow-up.

Decision STRP15-5: the STRP agreed that Dr Biggs should be invited to serve on the task group for task 8.7 in TWA7. The Chair should correspond with Dr Biggs in this respect.

40. STRP Chair also drew attention to the communications with US-EPA in the previous triennium regarding their research program on wetland ecosystem services. A *draft Research plan* from the group was posted on the STRP Support Service in late 2008 for comment.

Decision STRP15-6: The STRP agreed to add the US-EPA program lead to the task group for task 2.5 (economic sector review); and requested the STRP Chair to continue to facilitate communications with USEPA in relation to their research program, to develop areas of potential collaboration.

Thursday, 2 April 2009

41. **The DSG** welcomed Mr Ochiai (representative of JAXA) to the meeting and thanked JAXA for their continued interest in collaborating and supporting the Convention.

Agenda item 10: Report back from each TWA Working Group on work plan, and agreement on each TWA work plan.

42. Each TWA lead reported back on their discussions in the working groups, and the meeting reviewed the draft pro-formas of all the TWAs. TWA leads and task leads were then requested to revise the pro-formas as necessary, in preparation for review of the consolidated draft work plan on the following day. During plenary discussion two further issues were raised and the following actions agreed.

Action STRP15-v: the STRP requested the CBD Secretariat to provide sufficient advance warning of meetings of the Chairs of Scientific Advisory Bodies of the biodiversity-related

conventions(CSAB), to enable STRP and its Chair to prepare adequately and make substantive contributions to these meetings.

Action STRP15-vi: Monica Zavagli will collate proposed workshops for each of the tasks across all TWAs, in order to compile a master list and schedule of task workshops/meetings for the 2009-2012 cycle and so as to assess if there are time-overlaps in different proposed workshops.

Friday, 3 April 2009

Agenda item 11: Review of consolidated 2009-2012 work plan and budget allocation priorities

43. **Rebecca d’Cruz (Vice-Chair) and Christine Prietto (TWA10 lead)** presented initial graphic maps showing all the TWA tasks and products in order to help the Panel in identifying linkages, both within STRP and to external processes.

Action STRP15-vii: Christine Prietto and Rebecca D’Cruz will consolidate their two diagrams of interlinkages between Panel tasks and external processes, so as to provide a broader overview to help the Panel further develop its work.

44. The Panel discussed budget requirements for all TWAs. Each TWA lead was asked to identify top priority tasks essential to be advanced in 2009 with the available funding as there is currently insufficient funding in the STRP core budget to advance all High Priority tasks defined in Resolution X.10.

Action STRP15-viii: The STRP task budget shortfall will be highlighted by STRP Chair at SC40, and following approval of the STRP Work Plan by SC40, the Secretariat will contact potential donors to encourage further contributions to support the STRP’s work during the 2009-2012 period.

45. **Montserrat Carbonell (Regional network member for the Neotropics)** observed that Africa and Neotropics are currently under-represented on the STRP and urged the STRP to engage them more, identifying funds to facilitate their participation at STRP meetings, and encouraged to keep this in consideration in the next triennium.
46. **The DSG** noted that amongst the STRP Invited experts there was one person from Neotropics that has not replied yet and that it would have been a high priority to bring him to the meeting, and that the STRP Oversight Committee had also appointed a “Member-at-large” from the Neotropics.
47. **The STRP Chair** highlighted the importance of the role of the six STRP regional networker members in connecting with their regions and noted that at SC40 she will emphasise the importance of regional networking and the need for appropriately-qualified and active STRP NFPs to be appointed and supported by their Parties.
48. **The STRP Chair** also noted that there was insufficient time to review TWA2 Tasks 2.15 and 2.16 in Plenary and that the discussion and review of these tasks will continue through SuSe and mid-term workshops in 2010.

Decision STRP15-7: the STRP approved its consolidated draft work plan, which will be rapidly compiled by the Secretariat for submission to the 40th meeting of the Standing Committee for its approval.

Action STRP 15-ix: Each TWA lead will ensure that their TWA work plans are kept up-to-date and “alive” by submitting revisions to the task pro-formas to Monica Zavagli during the 2009-2012 cycle as a means of tracking progress in the development and implementation of the Panel’s tasks.

Agenda item 11 bis: Ramsar Technical Reports (RTRs): overview of the RTR status

(Refer to the table of RTRs in *Annex I* of this report - this table will be subsequently updated to reflect proposed new RTRs for 2009-2012 period, as they are identified)

49. There was extensive discussion regarding issues and options for peer review, editorial and publication processes related to Ramsar Technical Reports and other technical documents prepared through STRP.

Decision STRP15-8: The STRP agreed on four categories of technical review documents (in addition to guidance materials prepared for COP adoption) for STRP products during 2009-2012, as follows:

- 1) publication of an RTR with independent external peer-review;
- 2) publication of an RTR with only internal STRP peer-review;
- 3) publication of papers related to specific STRP tasks in peer-reviewed scientific journals; and
- 4) issuing of scoping reviews and internal briefing notes for internal STRP use on specific tasks and issues, presented for STRP information without additional review.

50. **The STRP Chair** suggested that an honorarium for external peer-reviewers of RTRs should be considered in the STRP budget.

51. **Chris Gordon (invited expert)** noted the importance of ensuring open access to information for Contracting Parties in developing countries, and recalled that some scientific journals do not provide this for peer-reviewed papers.

52. **Montserrat Carbonell** recalled that STRP’s first priority is to serve Contracting Parties, and hence all information should be easily and freely available to all Contracting Parties.

53. **David Stroud (TWA7 lead member)** recalled the need to find resources for translation of RTRs wherever possible.

Action STRP15-x: Regarding scoping reviews and internal briefing notes, STRP members should ensure that the final electronic versions of these are provided to Monica Zavagli to ensure their collation and archival for later reference, and to facilitate easy access by STRP as well as Parties. Copies of all published journal articles based on STRP work, or at least the full reference to these articles, should be provided to Monica Zavagli in order to make STRP and Contracting Parties aware of these additional resources.

Decision STRP15-9: the Panel established a small working group led by the STRP Chair to develop a draft STRP policy for the review, editing and publication of STRP materials, based on discussions during the previous triennium and recommendations provided by Max Finlayson and others. The discussion will be via e-mail and through the STRP Support Service. The STRP Chair and Monica Zavagli will then finalise and issue the editorial, review and publication policies for the STRP.

Agenda item 12: date of venue for of mid-term workshops

Decision STRP15-10: the STRP confirmed that its mid-term workshops will take place from 22-26 February 2010 in Gland, Switzerland.

Agenda item 13: Any other business

54. Concerning a review of the STRP's participation in COP10, the STRP Chair drew attention to comments posted on STRP Support Service after COP10 regarding STRP participation in the COP, and thanked **Rob McInnes (Society of Wetland Scientists)** for taking the initiative to stimulate the SuSe discussion. General discussion on the role of STRP in preparing for COP and supporting Parties during COP identified the following issues concerning COP10 and STRP participation in COP11:

- i. having a significant number of STRP members and invited experts available at COP10 was very helpful, as there was enough capacity to assign at least one STRP member for each complex or potentially contentious technical Resolution, to work with Parties for the duration of the COP;
- ii. the time allowed for discussion of key technical Resolutions was insufficient – at least one more full day should have been available;
- iii. reinstating technical sessions during COP so as to inform Parties on technical issues and resolutions should be considered. The special plenary presentations by STRP experts appeared to have been useful, since they were clearly focused on three of the key Resolutions and provided good background for the Parties to then debate these resolutions;
- iv. the STRP briefing sessions and the IOP supporting events were well attended, and feedback from Parties was positive – it should be planned to include these in the COP11 schedule;
- v. when planning for STRP contributions to COP11, consideration should also be given to facilitating STRP inputs and support for Parties at their regional preparatory meetings; and
- vi. Dedicated office/work space for STRP should be provided at the COP venue, and additional seating for STRP members in the COP plenary hall.

Action STRP15-xi: Christine Prietto will lead the planning of STRP participation in the lead-up to and during COP11, with a small subgroup (STRP Chair, DSG, Monica Zavagli, Rebecca d'Cruz and Rob McInnes) assisting in this planning.

55. **Christine Prietto** then presented a new version of the graphic map, highlighting the connections from STRP's work to wetland site managers. The map will continue to be developed as communication tool.

Agenda item 14. Closing comments, and closure of the meeting

56. **The Secretary General, Anada Tiega**, thanked STRP for its support to the Convention. He also thanked WWF for the assistance provided for the two recently designated Ramsar sites in Sudan and two other ones in Congo. He reiterated that STRP products are useful for site managers as well as for policy makers and that the Panel should aim at improving the connections between science and policy, addressing issues at national and international level. He noted that the core budget is not sufficient to fully fund STRP task implementation due to the present financial situation, but that the Secretariat will do its best to find resources to support the STRP.
57. **STRP Chair** expressed pleasure at the designation of the new Ramsar sites in Sudan and Congo. She expressed appreciation for the Secretary General's willingness to seek funds for STRP work and understood the financial constraints. She also thanked the whole Ramsar Secretariat for their support, and all STRP members, IOP members, invited experts and Observer Organization representatives for their hard work and collaboration in achieving a highly fruitful meeting.
58. **The meeting closed at 15h30.**
59. Following the STRP15 meeting, a discussion was held between several STRP members, and **Mr Osamu Ochiai** of JAXA (Satellite Application and Promotion Center) and Ms **Masami Onoda** of GEO (Group on Earth Observation), to discuss the potential for redeveloping the collaboration between JAXA and STRP on the basis of the capabilities of JAXA's new ALOS2 satellite. JAXA's presence as an observer at STRP was welcomed, and the value of previous collaboration with JAXA was highlighted by several people present. It was noted that there have been several letters exchanged between JAXA and the Ramsar Secretariat in the past regarding collaboration, and that these should be reviewed to see if any additional enabling mechanisms were needed, for example in the form of an MoU. The STRP members agreed that the ALOS2 satellite capabilities had potential to contribute to several areas of STRP work, including scientific guidance and tools for wetland assessment and monitoring. The Secretariat was encouraged to continue dialogue with JAXA in order to develop ideas for collaboration further.

Annex I

STRP15 Information Note

Ramsar Technical Reports currently in preparation

[as at 3 April 2009]

Note: due to Secretariat and author capacity and time constraints, the finalisation of a number of RTRs could not be achieved prior to COP10 as previously planned. STRP15 and its TWA leads need to review progress and agree steps and clear timelines for outstanding RTR finalisation, keeping in mind that a steady flow of final draft RTRs reaching the Secretariat for copy-editing and layout is desirable. An external peer review procedure is being established for RTRs.

Finalization and publication of the other Ramsar Technical Reports will be undertaken as resources and time allow. Publication will be in electronic format (.pdf) and in English only unless additional funds can be found. Some RTRs will be jointly published with CBD Secretariat (in *CBD Technical Series*) so as to ensure wide access by focal points of both Conventions.

Title [2006-2008 task #]	Lead author(s)
Population estimates and 1% thresholds for the application of Criterion 9 for Ramsar site designation [task109]	IUCN-SSC (J.-C. Vié); STRP: David Stroud
Biogeographic regionalisation, and distribution and gaps in Ramsar site designations for wetland types [tasks 104/105]	Lisa Rebelo, Max Finlayson, David Stroud
River basin management critical path application case studies [tasks 81/82/83]	Lucia Scodanibbio/ Heather MacKay
Environmental flow determination and implementation [Task 89]	Bill Rowlston
Determination of environmental water requirements for estuaries, coastal and near-shore wetlands [carry-over from 2003-2005]	Rebecca Tharme/ Janine Adams
Determination of environmental water requirements for rivers [carry-over from 2003-2005]	Rebecca Tharme
An assessment of wetlands and agriculture interactions [Task 150] (joint publication with IWMI)	Max Finlayson
Wetlands and human health	Pierre Horwitz/Max Finlayson et al
The current status of wetland wise use for the wetlands covered by case studies in the original <i>Towards the wise use of wetlands</i> Ramsar publication (1993) [Task 14]	DJenvironmental (Tim Jones/Tim Davis). STRP: Randy Milton
Methods for the vulnerability assessment of wetlands [carry-over from 2003-2005]	Habiba Gitay
Vulnerability assessment framework for hydro-ecological impacts of climate change on wetlands	Mike Acreman
Wetlands, water, biodiversity and climate change [new task] (joint publication with CBD Secretariat)	Secretariat
The role and importance of different wetland types in carbon storage and sequestration	Colin Lloyd
Wetlands, Ramsar sites and sustainable fisheries [carry-over from 2003-2005]	Robin Welcomme
Inventory metadata [carry-over from 2003-2005]	John Lowry
Selecting Ramsar sites: the development of criteria from 1971 to 2008	David Stroud
Wetlands, climate change & restoration	Kevin Erwin
MA Responses	Rebecca D'Cruz

Annex II



Concept note: A Ramsar Chair in “Wise use of Wetlands” at the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education

Background and objectives

UNESCO-IHE was established as the International Institute for Infrastructural Hydraulic and Environmental Engineering (IHE Delft) in 1957 and is located in Delft, The Netherlands. In November 2001, UNESCO’s General Assembly established the existing IHE Delft as the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education. UNESCO-IHE’s mission is to contribute to the education and training of professionals and to build the capacity of knowledge centers and other organizations in the fields of water, environment and infrastructure in developing countries and countries in transition. The institute associates with partners to do research in the context of integrated water resources management and aims at global dissemination and knowledge sharing. UNESCO-IHE has an international network of over 12,000 alumni in more than 120 countries and works with a community of partners, including public and private organizations active in water sectors worldwide and international agencies.

Wetlands feature prominently within UNESCO-IHE’s educational and research activities. In almost all educational programmes, aspects of wetlands receive attention (e.g. in hydrology, ecology, wastewater treatment, management, governance). Examples of typical wetland courses are the “Limnology and Wetland Ecosystems” specialization of the MSc programme in Environmental Science and the online course “Wetland Management”. Research projects on wetlands are implemented in close collaboration with partner institutions in Asia (e.g., in the Mekong river basin), in East Africa (e.g., Lake Victoria wetlands and Rwanda) and in Latin America (e.g., constructed wetlands in Colombia). Emphasis is on applied research which is done in partnership with other stakeholders (e.g., policy makers, local communities, RBO’s)

UNESCO-IHE’s PhD programme is implemented in close collaboration with the Dutch universities, notably Wageningen University and Delft University of Technology. All professors at UNESCO-IHE have a so-called zero-appointment at one of the Dutch universities and PhD students receive a joint degree from UNESCO-IHE and the university.

We are exploring the possibility of establishing a special Chair for “Wise Use of Wetlands”.

Two main objectives are:

- (1) to support the implementation of Goals 1 and 4 of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2014, mainly in Strategy 1.6 (Science-based management of wetlands) and 4.1 (Support for Ramsar’s Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness programme);
- (2) To enhance the coherence and impact of UNESCO-IHE’s wetland research and educational programmes.

The tasks and profile of the professor appointed in this Chair are tentatively outlined below. Funding could be arranged, for example, through a grant by the private sector, possibly linked to the Ramsar Convention (hence the idea of a “Ramsar” Chair in Wise Use of Wetlands).

Tasks / Terms of Reference (tentative²)

- Provide scientific leadership to interdepartmental wetlands group at UNESCO-IHE
- Attract funding for collaborative wetlands research projects
- Supervise 2-3 PhD students (together with UNESCO-IHE staff)
- Support publication of wetlands research results, both in scientific and more policy-practice oriented publications
- Strengthen links between UNESCO-IHE and the Ramsar Convention through support for implementation of Ramsar strategic plan (Goals 1 and 4) and STRP
- Support and develop wetlands research and educational programmes at UNESCO-IHE
- Appointment for a minimum of 0.2 fte for a period of 5 years

Profile/competencies (tentative¹)

- PhD in a suitable field (preference for an ecologist)
- Full professor at a recognized and accredited university and/or able to pass a professorial nomination process in the higher education system of the Netherlands
- Specialization and/or substantive experience, including a record of publications, in the wetland sector
- Ability to take initiative and maintain effective working relationships with people of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds
- Capacity to provide intellectual leadership to guide staff and motivate teams in a multicultural environment
- Experience with international funding and technical assistance organizations and agencies
- Excellent command of written and spoken English. Knowledge of French or Spanish or another official language would be an asset

Budget

Item	Options		
	1	2	3
Salary	125000	125000	250000
Travel	25000	25000	25000
Research	0	160000	480000
Total	150000	310000	755000

Options:

1. 0.2 fte gross salary costs for 5 years + travel
2. 0.2 fte gross salary costs for 5 years + travel + 1 PhD project
3. 0.4 fte gross salary costs for 5 years + travel + 3 PhD projects

Follow up status

- This concept note was discussed by UNESCO-IHE Rectorate and by Ramsar STRP15 and will be presented for discussion by UNESCO-IHE Academic Board in April 2009 and Ramsar SC-40 in May 2009

² After final approval of this proposal by Ramsar SC and UNESCO-IHE Rectorate/Academic Board, a formal search committee would be appointed to formally write terms of reference and a profile for the candidate.

- Investigate options for funding by private sector
- When funding is secured, appoint search committee and advertise

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Annex III

Association of State Wetland Managers (USA) – project on developing guidance for site managers to address climate change impacts at their site

STRP briefing note from STRP Chair

Kevin Erwin and I attended the recent meeting, in Portland, of the US Association of State Wetland Managers, which is an interesting group from Ramsar's point of view as it consists mostly of people involved in wetland management on the ground. While at the meeting, I had a good discussion with Jeanne Christie on a proposal that ASWM has submitted to USEPA for funding. The abstract is copied below. Jeanne also provided a full copy of their proposal, I can send it round if anyone wants to take a closer look. The project has been funded by USEPA and they expect to start working in the second half of 2009.

“Abstract: The project will provide direction on how to monitor and assess changes in wetlands induced by climate change and then how to apply wetland restoration techniques to minimize and offset those changes. States, tribes, and local governments are increasingly aware of the need to manage wetlands for climate change and they recognize this will largely be done in the context of existing programs. The purpose of this project is to identify tools and information available to help them make decisions, about 1) using wetlands monitoring and assessment to measure changes and 2) identifying wetlands restoration techniques and practices that can be applied to mitigate the impacts of climate change. In this context ASWM proposes to work with partners to develop a comprehensive national and international bibliography and other materials about wetlands and climate change and make them available on the internet. In addition it will undertake two pilot projects, one on the west coast and the other on the east coast. The goal of this project is to assemble information about wetlands in one place accessible on the web and organized to be useful to wetland professionals at the state, tribal, and local level. In addition the two pilot studies will show how information already available can be applied to analyze and plan wetland restoration. The Wetlands Conservancy, the Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center and the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources will partner with ASWM to carry out the pilot studies.”

The idea behind the ASWM project is to provide a simple framework for wetland site managers to embark on assessment, planning and implementation of programs related to climate change impacts on their particular site. The framework that could probably be made generic and useful for wetland site managers in many countries, and could be developed with options for data-rich and data-poor situations, as well as for differing capacity.

Questions:

Is this potentially useful and relevant for our site managers and Contracting Parties?

Should we collaborate with ASWM in this, and if so how? Information and feedback only? Ask to review their guidance?

Possible avenue for exploration might be to encourage/facilitate testing at other site(s), including those that are data-poor, in order to “Ramsarise” the ASWM guidance in a next phase of the work. Perhaps this could be picked up in a donor project with a developing country?

Annex IV

Wednesday 1 April: evening plenary session

“Skukuza Freshwater Group” – and IUCN-WCPA Freshwater and protected areas Task Force

Note prepared by Deputy Secretary General from information provided by Harry Biggs (Freshwater/inland water Task Group Chair) & Jamie Pittock

The Skukuza Freshwater Group – so called because it first met at Skukuza, Kruger National Park, RSA, in 2004 is an informal network of organizations and people involved in “freshwater” (i.e. inland water), wetland and biodiversity conservation issues. Following its early discussions, some members of group and others now also act as the formally-recognised “Freshwater/Inland Water Task Group” for the IUCN’s World Commission on Protected Areas. The initial Terms of Reference for this task force are provided in annex 1.

[Note. A number of the organisations involved in the Skukuza Group have what they term “Freshwater” programmes. Whilst this language may work for such organizations internal mechanisms, as far as externalizing the scope of the group, including from MEAs such as Ramsar and CBD, this is taken to include all “inland waters/inland wetlands” and thus includes coverage of all such brackish and saline systems as well as fresh systems]

The first two Skukuza meetings focused on: a) better methods for selecting freshwater habitats for conservation (2004), and b) better conservation methods for conservation of freshwater biodiversity in protected areas (2006).

A third Skukuza meeting is now planned for 7-11 September 2009 in the town of Goolwa, South Australia. This town is on the estuary of the River Murray.

Focus of Skukuza 2009

This Skukuza Group meeting will take the issues discussed in the first two Skukuza meetings a step further and ask how freshwater ecosystems can be better conserved in the face of a changing climate. It is planned to focus on “Management of environmental flows within a changing climate”.

This Murray-Darling Basin (MDB) river system is severely impacted by river regulation, diversions, deteriorating water quality and climate change and so will provide a thought-provoking case of the issues to be discussed at the meeting. This may help learn lessons from MDB to assist in other over-allocated and climate-prone rivers. The meeting will aim to review the conservation status and emerging trends in climate impacts on key river systems globally. It will consider how freshwater conservation methods, such as environmental flows and protected area designations, may need to be adjusted to conserve aquatic ecosystems with climate change. A synthesis will be produced.

Outputs from Skukuza 2009 will provisionally include:

- i) sharing of information between key institutions from different regions of the world;
- ii) A technical report for the Ramsar & CBD contracting parties;
- iii) publishing a peer-reviewed journal special edition documenting the state of play globally and recommended ways forward (see Annex 2);
- iv) providing up to date policy advice into key global projects, in particular, Convention on Biological Diversity COP10 in Japan in October 2010.
- v) releasing a conference statement for the media

The journal paper topics, authors and journal for a special issue will be identified in advance to enable draft papers to be presented at Skukuza 2009 for discussion, refinement and synthesis.

Ramsar participation in Skukuza 2009

It was not possible for either the Ramsar Secretariat or STRP members to participate directly in the previous Skukuza meetings, but dialogue concerning such involvement has been underway over the last year between Skukuza members, STRP Chair and members and both Ramsar and CBD Secretariats.

It is hoped that the STRP Chair, several STRP members involved in water and climate issues, the DSG and CBD Secretariat will participate in Skukuza 2009. This will also provide an opportunity to identify future forms and opportunities for collaboration.

Annex 1

IUCN/WCPA Freshwater and Protected Areas Task Force Terms of Reference As at initiation – October 2007

The Task Force has been established to address a number of urgent issues relating to the conservation of adequate and representative areas of freshwater / inland waters habitats within protected areas so as to contribute to the 2010 global biodiversity target. Key aims are to:

1. Provide clarity with respect to the application of the IUCN definition of a protected area and its categories to freshwater ecosystems and how this contributes to broadscale conservation strategies, the needs of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas, and the achievement of the 2010 biodiversity target.
2. Advise on protected area measures for actions 1.2.4 and 1.2.6, and Goal 1.2 generally, in the Programme of Work on Biological Diversity of Inland Water Ecosystems agreed at CBD CoP7, Malaysia, in February 2004.
3. Ensure that freshwater-focused protected areas (eg. wild or heritage rivers, fisheries reserves, Ramsar sites, etc) are integrated into relevant systems, such as the World Database on Protected Areas.
4. Produce advice on the adequate management of freshwater ecosystems within protected area systems.

5. Advise on measures needed to conserve and restore connectivity necessary for the health of freshwater ecosystems in protected areas.
6. Promote enhanced collaboration between IUCN WCPA and other freshwater protected area practitioners, e.g. IUCN Water and Nature Initiative (WANI) and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.
7. Continually strive towards representative membership (including developing nations) and transparent consultative processes among IUCN members and invited experts.

Annex 2

Key product proposed – journal special edition

Journal

To be decided by lead authors on the basis of advice from Skukuza members. Target audience will be freshwater biodiversity and resource sector managers. The content is likely to include qualitative and policy based material as much as quantitative data, limiting journals willing to publish such papers. Options identified so far, that are yet to be approached, include:

- Marine and freshwater research;
- Water Alternatives;
- New International Water Association journal on water and climate change.

Proposed content: River conservation in an era of climate change

a) Geographic review

- i) Major US river/s. Author/s: TBC
- ii) Amazon and Guiana rivers: Robin Abell et al.?
- iii) Major European river/s. Author/s: TBC. UK Environment Agency? University of Umea?
- iv) Major Chinese river/s. Author/s: TBC. Chinese Academy of Sciences?
- v) Major South African river/s. Author/s: TBC
- vi) Murray Darling river basin. Author/s: Richard Kingsford & Jamie Pittock +?
- vii) Northern Australian rivers. Author/s: Stuart Blanch & Janet Stein?

b) Review of conservation tools

- i) Environmental flows and climate change. Authors TBC? TNC? Jay O'Keefe?
- ii) Freshwater ecosystems, protected areas and climate change. Authors TBC? Robin Abell?
- iii) Free-flowing rivers versus regulated rivers? Jamie Pittock?
- iv) Is anything new required? Environmental water demand management (Pittock?)? Species translocations? Authors TBC?

c) Synthesis paper

Draft points prepared in advance of Skukuza 2009, to be refined at the event. Up to 3 lead author/s to volunteer (Jamie? Richard?). Co-authors to be anyone who contributes text or editing changes and will then be listed alphabetically.

Annex V

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