

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
17th Meeting of the Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP)
25 February-1 March 2013, Gland, Switzerland



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES
CONVENCIÓN SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

**Report of the 17th Meeting
of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)**

25 February to 1 March 2013, Gland, Switzerland

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Report

This report provides a record of the discussions and decisions made during the 17th Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP17). The primary objective of STRP17, the first full meeting of the STRP during the 2013-2015 triennium, was to develop the approach for delivering each of the Panel's tasks set out in [Annex II](#) of Resolution XI.17. These are available in the form of task proformas in the STRP 2013-2015 work plan, submitted to and approved by the 46th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC46), 8 April-12 April 2013, in Decision [SC46-14](#).

Agenda item 1. Welcome and opening comments

1. **Royal C. Gardner (STRP Chair)** welcomed all participants, including appointed members, invited experts, members of International Organisation Partners (IOPs) and representatives of Observer Organisations. On behalf of the Panel, he expressed sincere gratitude and appreciation to Heather MacKay, former STRP Chair. He also expressed the Panel's appreciation to Monica Zavagli, former Scientific and Technical Support Officer, and welcomed the new Scientific and Technical Support Officer, Marcela Bonells. He highlighted the importance of keeping in mind what other international processes and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) are doing to avoid duplication of efforts and resources during this cycle.
2. **Nick Davidson, Ramsar Deputy Secretary General (DSG)** welcomed all participants. He reported that the following participants were unable to attend STRP17 and had sent their apologies: *STRP invited experts*: David Stroud and Ruth Cromie; *STRP member*: Matt Walpole; *Invited Observer Organisations*: CITES Secretariat, UNFCCC Secretariat, GEO-BON and UNESCO. He then introduced and thanked the Secretariat's administrative team: Catherine Loetscher, Valerie Higgins, Mireille Katz and Montserrat Riera for their invaluable help with the logistics of the meeting.

Agenda item 2. Introductions

3. **The STRP Chair** invited all participants to briefly introduce themselves. Short biographies of STRP members and invited experts were provided in DOC. STRP17-04. Observer Organisation representatives were invited to submit similar short biographies.

Agenda item 3. Adoption of the agenda

4. The **STRP Chair** and the **DSG** introduced the agenda (DOC. STRP 17-02), explaining there would be flexibility to make adjustments and changes as needed.

Decision STRP17-1: The Panel adopted the annotated agenda as presented in DOC. STRP 17-02, subject to further modifications.

Agenda item 4. Briefing on the Ramsar Convention and the STRP

4.1 Overview of Convention processes

5. The **DSG** gave a detailed presentation on ‘The Ramsar Convention, its bodies and processes’, providing historical background and clarifying the roles of its different bodies, and particularly the roles, responsibilities and products of the STRP.
6. **Randy Thaman (STRP member)** thanked the DSG for the presentation and noted the importance of having STRP members disseminate Ramsar materials; he wondered whether there was a method to keep track and evaluate the utility of STRP materials. **The DSG** explained that the STRP had earlier conducted a survey on the use and the utility of Ramsar Guidance (available at: http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/strp/Use_utility_Ramsar_guidance_report.pdf) and that a significant proportion of wetland managers were not aware of the availability of STRP-generated materials. He also advised that a further review of processes for preparing and delivering scientific and technical advice would be established during this triennium under the terms of [Resolution XI.16](#).
7. **Hiromi Yamashita (STRP member)** requested further clarification regarding the roles and responsibilities of the different categories of STRP members and participants, particularly with respect to decision-making and contributions to STRP processes. The DSG clarified that whilst everyone is welcome to contribute to STRP processes, only appointed STRP members can make decisions regarding the STRP work plan and tasks.

4.2 STRP *modus operandi*, roles and responsibilities, and draft terms of reference (TOR)

8. The **DSG** briefly introduced key features of the STRP’s [modus operandi for 2013-2015](#), as adjusted by [Resolution XI.18](#), and the main roles and responsibilities of the Panel, noting the importance of clarity about STRP processes. He noted that during the last cycle there had been concerns about the lack of clarity on the precise roles of STRP members. Recognising that STRP members work largely on a *pro bono* basis, he stressed that it is not realistic to ask members to devote substantial time to the Panel’s work.
9. The **DSG** emphasised that the STRP’s main function is to establish and supervise the delivery of work requested of it. Thus, members will: identify individuals/experts within their networks to conduct the work, oversee the processes and review the outputs. He stressed the importance of keeping in mind any relevant work being done by other organisations before engaging in substantial work, to avoid duplication of efforts. He highlighted that before embarking on products for the Conference of the Parties such as Draft Resolutions (DRs), members should, as a first step, in line with the STRP *modus operandi*, issue a Briefing Note (BN) and seek the feedback of Contracting Parties (CPs) to ensure that any DRs would address their needs. The role of working group leads would be to ensure that this process is followed. He mentioned that as a result of the aforementioned concerns and at the request of the STRP Chair, draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for STRP members and participants had been drafted and circulated, as DOC. STRP17-03, for the Panel’s feedback.
10. The **STRP Chair** said that the purpose of the TOR was to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different categories of STRP members and invited members and participants to review them and provide their input, so that the final draft TOR could be presented in a timely fashion at SC46. He stressed the importance of ensuring that Observer Organisations recognise the time and effort that their representatives devote to the STRP’s work. The **DSG** asked whether Pierre Horwitz, STRP member, and Christine Prietto, STRP Vice-chair, could provide their input to this task during the

week. He explained that it would be desirable to also include TOR for the Secretariat's technical staff (e.g., the Scientific and Technical Support Officer) in the future.

11. **Hiromi Yamashita (STRP member)** commented on concerns raised at COP11 regarding [Resolution XI.15](#), 'Agriculture-wetland interactions: rice paddy and pest control'. Some CPs suggested that there seemed to be a lack of agreement between drafters on foreseeable issues stemming from the Resolution. She suggested having a mechanism within the STRP to prevent this type of issue arising in the future, and called for clarity on whether DRs are the highest priority within the STRP work plan. The **DSG** confirmed that there have been concerns about the STRP's work not sufficiently addressing the needs of CPs. He emphasised the importance of having clear TOR and of testing STRP products early on (e.g., through a BN) before bringing them to the attention of the COP.
12. **Dave Pritchard (STRP invited expert)** noted the utility of having the TOR, but stressed the importance of providing further clarity. He welcomed further detail about timelines for producing materials and more clarity regarding the scope and purpose of BNs. The **DSG** explained when BNs may be issued. For instance, BNs may be produced to explain rapidly emerging issues, setting the context for further products and justifying their need. He stressed the need to first test outputs on the ground to ensure the needs of CPs are being addressed, rather than producing BNs on every possible issue. The **DSG** urged the Panel to use their expertise to identify important emerging issues and to bring them to the attention of Parties.
13. **Rob McInnes (Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS) Representative)** suggested that it would be worthwhile for observers to review their respective Memoranda of Cooperation (MOC) or Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with Ramsar to ensure that information is not missing with regards to the TOR and that the TOR do not impose additional commitments not considered in the MOCs/MOUs.
14. **Mike Acreman (STRP invited expert)** pointed out that the TOR did not emphasise the need for the Panel to be proactive (e.g., using members' expertise to identify issues and bring them to the attention of CPs).
15. The **DSG** explained the roles of the STRP National Focal Points (STRP NFPs), as set out in [Annex 1](#) of the STRP *modus operandi* for the 2013-2015 triennium. He invited STRP NFPs in the audience to contribute to the review of the draft TORs.

Decision STRP17-2: The Panel agreed to establish an informal working group to review the Panel's TOR and to address the comments and concerns raised during plenary.

Action STRP17-i: The Panel encouraged STRP NFPs present to participate in the TOR Working Group.

Action STRP17-ii: The STRP Chair asked Observer Organisation representatives to review their organisations' MOCs and MOUs with Ramsar to identify any gaps in the TOR or additional commitments introduced by the TOR not previously considered in the MOCs/MOUs.

4.3 Objectives and outcomes for STRP17

16. The **STRP Chair** outlined the work expected of the Panel during STRP17, explaining that during the week the Panel would be reviewing and further developing the draft task proformas (prepared by the previous STRP and the Secretariat as [COP11 DOC. 21](#)), to be compiled in the draft work plan (2013-2015), containing the Priority Tasks set by [Resolution XI.17](#). He explained that given the short time

between STRP17 and SC46, the Panel would need to address two main issues by the end of the week, so that they could be brought to the attention of the Standing Committee on time: 1) deciding on the adoption of the draft TOR and 2) addressing further modifications to the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) 2012-revision. He asked the Panel to keep in mind the CPs' desire for practical, scientific evidence-based products, as noted in [Resolution XI.16](#), CEPA and intended audiences, as well as the CPs' regional needs. He also urged, in light of funding realities, that the Panel identify for the SC's consideration highest priority tasks which delivery during the triennium they considered essential.

17. The **DSG** mentioned the importance of adopting a draft work plan by the end of the week for submission to SC46, noting that if not provided in time, the STRP work plan would not be approved for another year. He explained that the draft task proformas reflected the task descriptions in [COP11 DOC. 21](#), taking into account the changes made by [Resolution XI.17](#). He urged the Panel to focus on re-editing or updating, as appropriate, the description of each identified 'Top Priority Task'.

4.4 Launch of new STRP Web Portal and Workspace

18. **Marcela Bonells (Ramsar Scientific and Technical Support Officer)** gave a brief presentation and demonstration of the new STRP Platform, scheduled for launch after April 2013. The new system, designed to facilitate the intersessional work of the Panel, includes the 'closed' password-protected STRP Workspace to replace the previous STRP Support Service (SuSe) Portal, and the 'open' Web Portal to give the general public more information about the STRP's activities and products.
19. **Christine Prietto (STRP Vice-chair)** added that the target audience for the new Platform is STRP NFPs and that the Panel hoped they would have the technological capacities to engage with the system. She further stated that the purpose of the Portal and Workspace were two-fold: 1) to maintain communications amongst STRP members and participants and 2) to reach out and engage STRP NFPs.
20. **Dave Pritchard (STRP invited expert)** asked whether members could have access to the old archives under the new Platform and how these would be organised. The **DSG** explained that subscribed members will have access to the archives, but that it would take some time to migrate the files, with priority items to be migrated first.

Agenda item 5. Briefing on the implications for the STRP of, and roles in, the review for 'Ensuring efficient delivery of scientific and technical advice and support to the Convention' (Resolution XI.16)

21. The **DSG** gave a presentation explaining the background to the development and adoption of [Resolution XI. 16](#), the review process to be followed, expected timelines and possible implications for the work of the Panel. He noted that the review would be conducted in parallel with the current work of the STRP, looking at the utility of existing guidance, and the processes through which needs are identified, prioritised and delivered, as well as identifying any gaps in these processes.
22. The **STRP Chair** summarised the following key points regarding the review: 1) those who have been involved with the work of the Panel will probably be interviewed; 2) there may be some financial implications for the STRP; and 3) the review, as a parallel process, should not disrupt the 2013-15 work requested by COP11 of the Panel. He highlighted that the review will look at scientific and technical processes in general, not at the STRP only.
23. **Randy Milton (STRP member)** suggested that the review be conducted by an independent consultant to avoid any bias.

24. **Hiromi Yamashita (STRP member)** asked for clarification about STRP processes and the links between the STRP work plan and the Ramsar Strategic Plan. The **DSG** explained that there is a cross-reference for each task in the STRP work plan to the strategy that it relates to in the Ramsar Strategic Plan. He noted the utility of looking at the strategies to ensure that STRP tasks are clearly supporting their delivery and stated that National Reports of CPs are the primary reporting mechanism on whether such strategies have been achieved.
25. The **STRP Chair** noted the positive aspects of such a review and that it represents an opportunity to improve STRP functions, although at this point its implications for the STRP beyond this triennium are uncertain.
26. **Barry Warner (STRP NFP for Canada)** requested further details about the background leading to [Resolution XI.16](#). The **DSG** explained that there seemed to be differing views about what the role of STRP should be (i.e., on-the-ground implementation support vs. a global advisory role), especially in light of the growth of the Convention and its changing needs in recent years. He wondered whether the role of the Panel should be adjusted as a result, or whether other complementary mechanisms should be developed to support more capacity building and implementation, because it would be unrealistic to expect the current Panel to undertake all these roles. He mentioned that the review could be a good opportunity to define the role of the Panel, and if necessary to identify other mechanisms to fill the gaps. He noted that the Secretariat does not have a capacity-building mechanism other than the work of its Senior Regional Advisers (SRAs) with CPs.
27. **Denis Landenbergue (WWF-International representative)** thought that there should be more clarity about what the STRP does and can do since, for example, delegates at COPs may not know what the STRP does. He recommended having more interactive reports and videos, so that others can understand more visually what the Panel does. The **DSG** invited Denis to share a video made by the WWF on a Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM) in Pakistan as an example of such an approach.
28. **Stanley Liphadzi (STRP member and STRP NFP for South Africa)** mentioned that it would be useful, when conducting the review, to consider having an outsider evaluate other processes, not just those pertaining to the STRP. The **STRP Chair** clarified that the Resolution indeed recommended a broader view into what other MEAs and international processes are doing. The **DSG** stressed that this would not be a review of the STRP itself but of the Convention's scientific and technical processes in general.
29. **Claire Mirande (International Crane Foundation (ICF) representative)** wondered whether there were any tools to translate materials into different languages, or mechanisms to engage the World Wetland Network. The **DSG** explained that this review would look at this issue and its relevance to the CEPA Theme.
30. **Lars Dinesen (STRP member and STRP NFP for Denmark)** welcomed the review, wondering whether STRP members could present their views on it to the Standing Committee, and expressing concern about funds potentially being taken from the STRP's core budget to fund the review. The **DSG** explained that Panel members could transmit such messages. The **STRP Chair** invited participants to transmit to the Standing Committee their suggestions for the review being independent.
31. **Mike Acreman (STRP invited expert)** suggested that the review should look at how other MEAs have evaluated the effectiveness of their processes for delivering scientific and technical advice, to avoid 'reinventing the wheel'. The **DSG** explained that Ramsar's means for delivering its scientific and technical advice and its reporting mechanism are different than those of other MEAs, and reiterated that the review is expected to cover the processes of other MEAs and related bodies.

32. **Guéladio Cissé (STRP member)** mentioned that there is a two-sided issue: 1) lack of uptake of scientific and technical guidance on the ground (not STRP's fault) and 2) the fact that there may be some scientific and technical issues that have not been addressed. He added that many CPs are concerned by practical projects related to STRP products. The **STRP Chair** commented that this review would be a good opportunity for others to learn more about what the STRP does, stressing this is a parallel process for which the STRP does not have the lead. He noted that the Panel will continue to discuss what input it wants to transmit to SC.

Action STRP17-iii: The STRP Chair and the DSG invited STRP members and participants to submit their comments about the [Resolution XI.16](#) review for transmission to the Standing Committee at SC46.

Agenda item 6. Briefing on other relevant issues and topics for the work of STRP

33. The **DSG** gave a brief overview of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and noted that Randy Thaman, STRP member, is also a member of the IPBES Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP). He explained aspects of two STRP tasks which may be appropriate for transmission to IPBES for consideration in the development of its work plan: Task 18 (SoWWS report) and aspects of Task 59a (the economics of wetland ecosystem benefits/services). He also noted, regarding Task 13 on preparing interim guidelines on processes for formulation, approval and transmission of requests from Ramsar to IPBES, that further clarification is currently needed on whether and how IPBES can and will receive such requests from MEAs' subsidiary bodies. The DSG suggested that the Panel keeps this Task under review. He also invited participants to keep an eye on issues relevant to policy-science advice. **Randy Thaman (STRP member)** provided an update on recent IPBES developments.

Action STRP17-iv: The Panel agreed to develop some initial considerations for the formulation of the requested interim guidelines for the transmission of information requests to IPBES.

Agenda item 7. Background and overview of Resolution XI.17 themes, tasks and priorities

34. The **STRP Chair** provided a brief overview of the Panel's themes for the triennium, specific tasks and their priorities, as adopted in [Annex 2](#) to Resolution XI.17, noting that the Lower Priority Task 25b (RIS modifications) would need to be addressed during the week for timely submission of recommendations to SC46. He explained that other 'Lower Priority Themes' and 'Lower Priority Tasks' would be addressed in an ad-hoc basis, looking at work carried out by other organisations on similar areas and seeking collaboration, instead of establishing formal working groups or task groups. He stressed the importance of maximising efficiency of resource use given the Panel's limited funding.

Agenda item 8. Establishment of thematic and task working groups, their leads and their core membership, and agreement on any other processes needed

35. The **STRP Chair** explained that initial review and discussion of tasks under each 2013-2015 theme (and sub-theme) would be addressed in plenary sessions, but that break-out rooms would be available, as needed, for thematic working groups or task groups to work in parallel on task-drafting for the 2013-2015 work plan. He explained how working groups would be established, noting that under its *modus operandi*, the Panel would be expected to set them up to move forward tasks under the different themes and sub-themes; he added that they would be led or co-led by appointed members, and that their membership could include other appointed members, Observer Organisation representatives, STRP NFPs and other invited experts with relevant expertise.

36. Summarising the proposed composition of each working group, the **STRP Chair** explained that membership had been initially established from STRP members who had expressed willingness to participate in, lead or co-lead a working group and from information provided in the STRP nomination forms about members' areas of expertise. Highlighting the provisional nature of these assignments, he invited members to indicate whether they would like to participate as assigned and suggested that new members and participants start by focusing on one working group.
37. The **STRP Vice-chair** proposed that most of the work expected under the CEPA Theme be across all the different thematic working groups, on tasks for which CEPA input is needed. She mentioned that she would propose a different way of progressing the CEPA tasks this triennium. **Ritesh Kumar (STRP member)** appreciated not having a separate working group for CEPA, but stressed the importance of not missing the cross-cutting nature of some of these themes, and the possibility of folding some of these under top priority tasks or working with other organisations.
38. The **STRP Chair** noted the suggestion to establish an additional working group on ecological character, since it had been recognised that there were currently a number of ecological character-related tasks scattered under different themes. The **DSG** provided the rationale for establishing a separate ecological character working group, noting that after feedback from some members and having reviewed the tasks, it was suggested that this could be a more effective way to address this topic.

Decision STRP17-3: The Panel agreed to establish an additional Working Group on Wetland Ecological Character and Change in Ecological Character, along with the creation of a task proforma, and invited David Stroud to participate in the Working Group as an invited expert.

Decision STRP17-4: The Panel established thematic working groups and their STRP member leads/co-leads, as follows:

- Theme 1: Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA): Christine Prietto and Hiromi Yamashita; Secretariat technical focal points: Sandra Hails and Lew Young;
- Theme 2: Strategic, emerging and ongoing issues: Royal Gardner and Randy Milton; Secretariat technical focal points: the DSG, Lew Young and the Secretary General (SG) (to be confirmed);
- Theme 3: Wetlands inventory, assessment, monitoring and reporting: Stephan Flink (Wetlands International – WI), Randy Milton and Lars Dinesen; Secretariat technical focal points: the DSG and Alexia Dufour;
- Theme 4: Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites): Lars Dinesen, Randy Milton and Stephan Flink (WI); Secretariat technical focal points: Lew Young, María Rivera and Alexia Dufour;
- Theme 5: Ramsar, wetlands and other sectors:
 - Sub-theme 5.1: Wetlands and health: Pierre Horwitz and Stanley Liphadzi; Secretariat technical focal point: Tobias Salathé;
 - Sub-theme 5.2: Wetlands and climate change: Cui Lijuan and Guéladio Cissé; Secretariat technical focal point: María Rivera;
 - Sub-theme 5.3: Wetlands and water resource management: Eugenio Barrios (WWF) and Patrick MacQuarrie (IUCN); Secretariat technical focal point: Tobias Salathé;

- Sub-theme 5.4: Wetlands and agriculture: Matthew McCartney and Stanley Liphadzi; Secretariat technical focal point: Paul Ouédraogo;
- Sub-theme 5.5: Wetlands and poverty eradication: Sonali Senaratna (IWMI) and Ritesh Kumar; Secretariat technical focal point: Paul Ouédraogo;
- Sub-theme 5.6: Wetlands and urbanisation: Stanley Liphadzi and Ritesh Kumar; Secretariat technical focal point: Paul Ouédraogo;
- Sub-theme 5.7: Wetlands and tourism (to be determined – not a Top Priority Task); Secretariat technical focal point: María Rivera;
- Sub-theme 5.8: Wetlands and energy (to be determined – not a Top Priority Task); Secretariat technical focal point: Tobias Salathé;
- Theme 6: Wetlands and ecosystem benefits/services: Ritesh Kumar; Secretariat technical focal points: the DSG and Tobias Salathé;
- Theme 7: Wetland ecological character and change in ecological character: Vicky Jones (IOP member, BirdLife International) and Randy Milton; Secretariat technical focal point: the DSG.

39. The **DSG** invited representatives of Observer Organisations who had not yet identified their participation in working groups to do so, and he clarified the composition of each working group.
40. The **DSG** stressed that, in line with the STRP *modus operandi*, the Panel should first evaluate any ongoing relevant work on each theme, sub-theme and task to avoid duplication of efforts, and second focus on means for progressing Top Priority Tasks, before identifying ways to advance any Lower Priority Tasks.

Agenda item 9. Review of available task implementation funds, and funds needed

41. The **DSG** gave a brief presentation outlining the provisional estimates of funds needed to deliver Top Priority Tasks and Lower Priority Tasks and the current status of available funds for STRP task implementation. He noted that under the terms of [Resolution XI.16](#), the Standing Committee at its 46th meeting in April 2013 could determine to re-allocate STRP core budget funds for the delivery of work under that Resolution.

Agenda item 10. Briefing for working groups on outcomes and products needed, and procedures to be followed

42. The **DSG** noted that to facilitate the Panel's work, the Secretariat had prepared standard task proformas for Top Priority Tasks and Lower Priority Tasks under each theme and sub-theme, derived from [COP11 DOC.21](#) and [Annex 2](#) to Resolution XI.17. He explained that for the 2013-2015 triennium the structure of the proformas had been slightly changed to include the task description and rationale up front. He urged members to think about possible experts within their networks who could contribute to the tasks and to note such information in the proformas.
43. The **DSG** provided further clarification about the roles of the different categories of STRP participants, explaining that whilst only appointed STRP members would lead or co-lead a working group and sign off on its work, anyone could participate in the working groups. He then briefly outlined the process for working group members to carry out their work.

44. **Rob McInnes (SWS representative)** provided some comments about the establishment of working groups, noting that participants should be mindful of budget constraints. He then asked whether leads or co-leads who identify the work that needs to be done could also do the work. The **DSG** explained that STRP members should not conduct the work, but should instead consider who else could do it and report to the Secretariat, who, funding permitting, would contract out the work. He stressed, once again, the reviewing role of the Panel and the importance of members not conducting and then peer reviewing their own work, so as to avoid potential conflicts of interest. The **STRP Chair** further clarified that a task lead should not also be contracted to do the work.
45. **Pierre Horwitz (STRP member)** explained that there had been some frustration in the last cycle with the format of the task proformas. He stressed that proformas will inevitably change over time and will not look like the presented formats. The **DSG** invited suggestions on how to improve and reformat the proformas, emphasising they were only an initial step, which could later be turned into a more flexible tool to monitor the STRP's work.
46. The **DSG** clarified the role of 'task forces' described in the draft proformas and suggested changing their title to 'task group' for more clarity.

Decision STRP17-5: The Panel agreed to revisions to the language and structure of the task proforma templates to avoid ambiguities about the different categories of STRP members and participants.

Agenda item 11. Tasks review and development: Theme 1 – Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA)

47. The **STRP Vice-chair (CEPA Working Group lead)** provided a brief overview of this Theme, summarising the Top Priority Tasks and expected outputs for the triennium. She expressed her satisfaction at seeing CEPA in the front end of the agenda, and mentioned the importance of having the STRP produce practical guidance. However, she noted there were constraints about what the Panel could do on the ground. In this context, she talked about the possibility of creating 'training for trainers' guidance and the possible role of the Panel in helping with regional implementation.
48. She then outlined some of the strategies planned for the triennium, including: 1) inviting each working group to keep a brief on CEPA issues (given the cross-cutting nature of the theme), focusing on identifying the target audience and ensuring products are fit for purpose; 2) striving to get feedback from target audiences, through, for example, brief Skype sessions with wetland managers and others (she reminded participants that she would be collecting ideas on product development from working groups); 3) ensuring working groups ask the right questions from the beginning to help them identify their target audience; 4) planning for evaluating and reporting on the delivery of STRP participation at the COP; and 5) reinterpreting outputs into smarter, more versatile products that can reach broader audiences, such as webcasts, videos and interviews.
49. Regarding Task 2, 'Capacity building support for STRP NFPs', it was noted that the Ramsar Regional Centre in Changwon, Republic of Korea, had generously offered to host a workshop for Asian STRP NFPs in late 2013.
50. The **STRP Chair** introduced the idea of having Stetson University College of Law host webcasts in any of the Convention's languages to highlight regional issues and initiatives, as well as the work of the STRP. He noted that this directly related to the Vice-chair's strategy of having new more dynamic products and would also address the need to communicate case studies, which CPs expressed in the pre-COP11 regional meetings.

51. **Max Finlayson (STRP invited expert)** asked about the connection between the Convention's CEPA Oversight Panel and the STRP. The **DSG** explained that it had been initially established to oversee implementation of the CEPA Programme, and that now it had a task to review, consolidate and update as needed guidance on participatory management planning adopted by COP7. He mentioned that there should be a critical look at the latest CEPA Programme to see if connections between the STRP and CEPA could be made clearer. **Sandra Hails (CEPA Programme Officer)** added that there seemed to be a cross-over between CEPA and the STRP and that STRP input could be beneficial to the development of the next CEPA Programme.
52. **Claire Mirande (ICF representative)** said that each working group should have CEPA as an element of its strategy and reminded everyone of the utility of having technical expertise in the Convention and training individuals to continue working with the Convention.
53. **Randy Thaman (STRP member)** mentioned a WWF programme about translating materials into different languages and proposed that each working group thinks about the key messages they want to convey beforehand.
54. **Pierre Horwitz (STRP member)** asked whether the term 'case studies' was being used consistently. **Dave Pritchard (STRP invited expert)** explained that case studies illustrate theory with real-life examples. He pointed to the case studies in the Ramsar Handbooks as useful examples. He then noted there seemed to be some contradiction in CPs' requests for more case studies and less guidance, given that requests for case studies have led to requests for guidance and in turn for real-life illustrations of the application of such guidance (e.g., case studies).
55. The **STRP Vice-chair** stressed the need to unpack products to determine how they can best reach the target audience and mentioned regional meetings as a valuable tool to raise awareness about the convention and STRP products. The **DSG** mentioned that there were many tools out there to achieve this goal. He also mentioned that the CEPA Working Group should take a critical look at the proformas to see how to carry out this work. He highlighted an interactive PowerPoint presentation ('Key Steps for updating Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS)'), prepared by Alexia Dufour, Ramsar Regional Affairs Officer, and the Ramsar Assistant Advisers to help CPs update the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) as a good example of a simple capacity-building tool.
56. **Sandra Hails (CEPA Programme Officer)** stressed the importance of being realistic about what the role of the STRP is and what CEPA does, as well as the limitations as to what they can achieve. Even when demystifying products, there are still national barriers, such as communication inside and outside government agencies.
57. **Lars Dinesen (STRP member)** asked whether there could be face-to-face opportunities, such as bringing Ramsar Site managers to a COP to create a dialogue. **Denis Landenbergue (WWF-International)** added that it would be a good idea to have field trips at these meetings so that delegates could directly learn more about wetlands.
58. **Ian Harrison (Conservation International (CI)/International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) representative)** suggested thinking about alternative tools for outreach. For example, he mentioned that he and colleagues were thinking about creating 'white papers', which could include more dynamic products such as PowerPoint presentations and interviews and to present them at the IUCN World Parks Congress in 2014. He wondered whether there could be a way of combining efforts with Ramsar.
59. **Gretchen Gettel (UNESCO-IHE representative)** added that the point seemed to be to educate managers after they have become managers, but wondered, based on her role at the IHE, whether such

information could be available to educational institutions earlier in the process, as part of their curriculums. **Hiromi Yamashita (STRP member)** added that it could be useful to ask site managers or CPs how they think Ramsar guidance could be improved for their use.

60. **Mike Acreman (STRP invited expert)** suggested using intermediate organisations for outreach, because most of them have already created outreach vehicles, instead of trying to get information straight from the STRP.
61. The **DSG** mentioned that other organisations are producing material relevant to the work of the STRP, citing CITES' online college as an example of engaging and supporting audiences. He asked working groups to identify for each task suitable organisations or individuals to undertake the work.

Agenda item 12. Tasks review and development: Theme 2 – Strategic, Emerging and Ongoing Issues

62. The **STRP Chair (Strategic, Emerging and Ongoing Issues Working Group lead)** invited the four Ramsar Senior Regional Advisers (SRAs), Paul Ouédraogo (Africa), Lew Young (Asia-Oceania), María Rivera (Americas) and Tobias Salathé (Europe), to give brief presentations on regional perspectives on: a) the Top Priority Tasks and b) any new or emerging issues needing the Panel's consideration.
63. **Paul Ouédraogo (Ramsar SRA, Africa)** summarised the needs and top priorities within Africa, highlighting the need for more 'guide to available guidance' tools and case studies for wetland managers and local communities on the following Top Priority Tasks: 1) Task 41: 'implications of, and advice on, climate change for implementation of the Convention'; 2) Task 59: 'economics of wetland ecosystem benefits/services'; 3) Tasks 50 and 51: 'wetlands and poverty eradication' (noting the lack of awareness of the interconnections between functioning ecosystems and people's livelihoods and environmental degradation and poverty); 4) Task 31: "Wetlands and Human Health" for the health sector; and 5) Task 20: 'detecting, reporting, and responding to ecological character'. He noted the following new and recurring issues in Africa: 1) wetlands and urbanisation; 2) impact of mining on wetlands; 3) effects of conflict and insecurity on wetland status; 4) capacity building support for STRP NFPs; 5) indigenous knowledge systems for sustainable management of wetlands; and 6) finance mechanisms and fundraising difficulties.
64. The **DSG** noted that the purpose of these presentations was to highlight the 'top, top' priorities for each region, as well as any new and emerging issues to determine if there is a need for the Panel to pick up on other topics within its 'horizon-scanning agenda'. He noted that whilst STRP members should follow as closely as possible the wording of the Tasks in [Resolution XI.17](#), they should note in the proformas if there is a pressing issue the Panel should be looking at. If so it would be up to the Standing Committee to decide whether or not to approve it as a task. The **Vice-chair** mentioned that an additional point of these presentations was to find out what is going on in the regions, since the SRAs are the conduit for CPs' issues in their regions.
65. **Mike Acreman (STRP invited expert)** asked whether the lack of available information and requests for guidance (as outlined by Paul Ouédraogo) were because of lack of access to it (a communications issue) or because there is truly a lack of guidance. **Paul Ouédraogo (Ramsar SRA, Africa)** stated that the communications issue is a very important one and that the needs being presented were not those of the SRAs but those of the CPs. He explained that the communication issues stems from the fact that Ramsar information and products are not reaching local communities or managers.
66. **Dave Pritchard (STRP invited expert)** wondered whether the issue raised on policy and traditional knowledge is within remit of the STRP, and noted the inconsistencies in some Ramsar documents

- regarding the treatment of traditional knowledge systems (e.g., the Ramsar Strategic Plan treats traditional knowledge as being within the realm of science, but other documents treat it as a separate area). He stated that the Panel should perhaps consider what ‘science’ is at some point. **Randy Thaman (STRP member)** mentioned, with regards to the traditional knowledge issue, that the work of IPBES on the subject could be helpful to Ramsar and that there would be an upcoming workshop in July 2013 on how to synthesise traditional knowledge and science.
67. **Rob McInnes (SWS representative)** noted that whilst many of these issues were not specifically outlined in the tasks, they could be picked up under the mantle of other tasks.
68. **María Rivera (Ramsar SRA, Americas)** outlined the following key issues regarding the STRP in her region: 1) three countries still have not designated STRP NFPs; 2) a number of STRP NFPs are outside the Administrative Authorities (AAs); 3) lack of communication and coordination between the AA and STRP NFPs; 4) lack of active participation on STRP processes by the AA and STRP NFPs; 5) few guidelines being used; 6) and no clear role of what is expected of STRP NFPs. She expressed the hope that during this cycle there would be improvements on engaging STRP NFPs. She noted the following priorities for her region: 1) creation of national wetland policies; 2) Ramsar Site planning and management; 3) establishment or re-establishment of National Ramsar/Wetland Committees; 4) public awareness raising; 5) Ramsar Site designations; 6) restoration of priority wetlands; 7) consolidation of regional initiatives; 8) environmental flows; 9) tools and practical case studies on wetland economic valuation and instruments to measure the value of wetland loss and degradation; 10) capacity building and support for STRP NFPs; and 11) implementation of guidelines on detecting, reporting and responding to changes in ecological character. Finally, she highlighted additional issues, including: Ramsar manuals being too technical and narrowly tailored to developed countries; the need to review the utility of technical guidance; and increase alignment between CEPA and the work of the STRP.
69. **Lew Young (Ramsar SRA, Asia-Oceania)** summarised the following STRP-related issues and needs in his regions: 1) ensuring the STRP is working on the priorities identified by CPs; 2) the STRP needs to better connect and coordinate with the work of other MEAs, IOPs, regional and in-country expertise (e.g., STRP NFPs); 3) the Panel should try to involve CPs in the development and testing of guidance to ensure that it is useful and relevant; 4) guidance should be in an accessible format for CPs and partners. He stressed that there are many regional organisations that can help provide a regional perspective to the STRP’s work. He then summarised the following priorities in the region: 1) CEPA Task 1: ‘Assessing and supporting capacity-building needs of CPs in applying guidance’ (a top priority in both Asia and Oceania); 2) Strategic, emerging and ongoing issues Task 10: ‘Invasive species and wetlands’ (a top priority in Oceania); 3) Wetlands and water resource management Tasks 43 and 44: ‘The role of biodiversity and wetlands in the global water cycle’ and a Ramsar ‘strategy for engaging in the global water debate’ (top priorities in Asia); 4) Wetlands and ecosystem benefits/services Task 59: ‘Economics of wetland ecosystem services/benefits’ (a top priority in Asia and Oceania). He also stated that in Asia, advice concerning the application of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation Plus (REDD+) for forested wetlands was a priority, and that in Oceania online Convention-reporting mechanisms and harmonising MEAs’ information systems (Tasks 14 and 23) at the national level were identified as top priorities.
70. **Tobias Salathé (Ramsar SRA, Europe)** commented, referring back to [Resolution XI.16](#), that some of the STRP members may have been too isolated from the needs of CPs last cycle, but noted that improvements had been made. He summarised the following needs and issues identified in the European Pre-COP11 regional meeting: 1) STRP products should be easily accessible to wetland managers and STRP NFPs and in a user-friendly style, language and translation. Information, especially case studies, should be better disseminated; 2) short BNs should be targeted to specific audiences; 3) the STRP should complete the tasks in hand and not invest in issues with unknown outcomes; 4) two-way linkages between regional initiatives and the STRP should be improved; and 5) face-to-face

meetings of STRP NFPs should continue. He highlighted the following priorities in the region: 1) climate change – should think about packaging and taking advantage of available financing; 2) economics of ecosystem services; and 3) Ramsar Site information and management. He emphasised the importance of communication, urging the Panel to share its vision with other Ramsar constituents and beyond; to collaborate with other organisations, including their work and results in the STRP programme; to undertake common communication and outreach activities; to use regional initiatives' meetings to exchange information on the ongoing work of the Panel; and to progress rapidly with the required work of the STRP review committee ([Resolution XI.16](#)). He hoped for more tangible outcomes this triennium and for increased CEPA products.

71. **Pierre Horwitz (STRP member)** noted this had been one of the most fascinating hours he had spent in STRP processes and that the STRP should make a list of such priorities to determine whether there is consistency with the STRP work. He stated that the Panel cannot deal with the policy or knowledge aspects of such issues and managers' needs at the same time. **Guéladio Cissé (STRP member)** mentioned that CPs' needs seemed to be evolving towards more on-the-ground assistance and that the STRP needed to find ways to address that.
72. **Rob McInnes (SWS representative)** commented that there seems to be a dichotomy in the target audience for STRP products, wondering whether products are intended for wetland managers or for CPs at the national level. He mentioned the initiative in West Africa that he and Paul Ouédraogo, along with UN-HABITAT, are working on to help implement Ramsar Resolutions locally, noting that local or city-specific needs are not necessarily the same as national needs (e.g., what CPs request at COP), and hence a new type of guidance would be needed. The **STRP Chair** said that it would be interesting to see how Ramsar Resolutions can be implemented in cities.
73. The **STRP Chair** proposed working with Stetson University College of Law (with whom the Convention has a MOC) to liaise with some of its partner universities, which have translation programmes, to assist with translation of STRP products.
74. The **DSG** asked whether there were any comments on Regional STRP NFP meetings and thanked Stanley Liphadzi (STRP member) for hosting the successful STRP NFPs workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa (2010). He mentioned the possibility of hosting a regional meeting in Asia through the Ramsar Regional Centre–East Asia, noting that whilst face-to-face meetings are helpful, it is important also to have some mapping out to follow up on actions suggested. **Denis Landenbergue (WWF-International representative)** mentioned the utility of having regional STRP NFP meetings and hoped the experience of the Johannesburg workshop could be replicated. He noted the lack of links between STRP NFPs and NFPs within AAs, pointing out that in some countries there is no communication between them.
75. **Max Finlayson (STRP invited expert)** commented that the information on the needs of CPs from the SRAs' presentation seemed to differ from the information the Panel received at COP11. He added that the way the STRP operates depends largely on who is telling it what to do. He added that the issue of what is science versus what is traditional knowledge has evolved, and that he would like to see the Panel try to bring this issue into its work to expand on the communications issue.
76. **Andrew Rudd (UN-HABITAT representative)** stated that the issues highlighted on the utility of guidance and the differing needs between cities and countries directly relates to UN-HABITAT's ongoing work on wetlands, water and cities. He mentioned that he would like to see more pilot projects in the Ramsar context and that whilst wetlands and urbanisation was a Lower Priority Theme, he would like to see more work undertaken under it.
77. The **DSG** summarised some points from the presentations and discussions including:

- identifying disconnects in STRP processes, which should be fed into the review process under [Resolution XI.16](#);
 - focusing more on national and local capacity-building mechanisms, and producing more case studies, instead of further national guidance, since CPs' needs seem to be shifting in this direction;
 - some of the issues surfacing in the SRAs' presentations seemed not to have been picked up by delegates at the last COP. Thus, there seems to be a disconnect between what local managers and communities need and what national delegates identify as their needs. He noted not having heard previously about disaster risk management as an issue and wondered about looking into it as an emerging issue;
 - getting better intelligence on monetary and non-monetary valuation of wetland ecosystem services, highlighting the launch of the TEEB report on wetlands, which provides a starting point; and
 - considering priorities including: 1) capacity building; 2) climate change; 3) ecological character; and 4) poverty eradication.
78. The **STRP Chair (Strategic, Emerging and Ongoing Issues Working Group lead)** provided a brief description of the Strategic, Emerging and Ongoing Issues Theme and an overview of the different tasks and outputs expected for the triennium.
79. The **DSG** suggested bringing together into one package Task 6 on 'Strategic scientific and technical advice' and Task 9 on 'Sectoral and/or emerging issues for possible future priority work'. In terms of the 'horizon-scanning' role of the Panel, he invited attendees to read a paper entitled, 'A horizon-scanning assessment of current and potential future threats facing migratory shorebirds' noted in the annotated agenda.
80. Concerning Task 10 on 'Invasive species and wetlands', the **DSG** gave a brief overview and history of the Task, explaining that the last time the COP considered the issue of invasive species was at COP8 (2002), where it adopted [Resolution VIII.18](#), 'Invasive species and wetlands'. He further noted that during the 1999-2002 triennium, the Panel, with IUCN as task lead, had prepared a draft guide to available guidance on wetlands and invasive species to be considered for adoption by COP under [Resolution VIII.18](#). However, the document was withdrawn at the Standing Committee prior to the COP because of its references to CBD guidance on the subject, which had led to issues of due process being raised over the adoption of that guidance by the CBD COP. The DSG suggested collaboration with IUCN's specialist group on invasive species and circulated the previous draft paper on 'Guidance on invasive species and wetlands: a guide for Ramsar managers'. The DSG suggested that under Task 10, as a starting point, the STRP should now revisit the draft information paper and consider how it could be updated and best made available to CPs.
81. **David Coates (CBD Secretariat representative)** mentioned that the Panel should make use of existing CBD guidance on invasive species, so as to not reinvent the wheel, but that it should be mindful and sensitive when addressing this issue. He mentioned the expertise of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) on this topic, particularly with regard to fisheries.
82. The **DSG** mentioned the work of the Inter-Agency Task on Invasive Species as another connection the Panel should seek to learn more about to see how it could bear on this task. He recommended that the Strategic, Emerging and Ongoing Issues Working Group takes a look at the draft document prepared earlier by the STRP to see if it is still relevant, and to identify organisations which could contribute to this task.

83. **Reda Fishar (STRP member)** suggested addressing the guide to available guidance on invasive species to the following audiences: 1) local communities, 2) site managers and 3) policymakers.
84. The **DSG** and the **STRP Chair** urged that there should be a task group established on invasive species and wetlands. The Panel proposed the following members: Randy Thaman (lead), Reda Fishar (lead), Devin Bartley (FAO representative), Rob McInnes (SWS representative) and Sandra Hails (Secretariat).

Decision STRP17-6: The STRP established a task group on wetlands and invasive species.

85. **Pierre Horwitz (STRP member)** asked whether the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were captured in the STRP's tasks and stated that Ramsar should take the opportunity to contribute to the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The **DSG** stated that there were Observer Organisation representatives in the room involved in identifying SDGs in relation to water.
86. **David Coates (CBD Secretariat representative)** explained there was engagement, pointing to the Post-2015 Development Agenda consultations on water, noting that he and former Ramsar Secretary General, Anada Tiéga, would be participating in the consultations. He stressed the need for increased discussion on how ecosystems contribute to water management, and called for increased involvement in this area. The **DSG** mentioned that there would be a summit on water and SDGs later in 2013 in Budapest, and asked Patrick MacQuarrie (IUCN) to keep a watching brief on this subject.
87. **Pierre Horwitz (STRP member)** mentioned that it would be sensible to reserve capacity to address reactive or rapidly emerging issues from SDGs before COP12. The **DSG** noted that the Panel would need to look carefully at the timelines and the right process for capturing this issue at the next COP.

Decision STRP17-7: the Panel established an informal group with a watching brief on the SDGs: Pierre Horwitz (STRP member), Ritesh Kumar (STRP member), Patrick MacQuarrie (IUCN), David Coates (CBD Secretariat) and Lew Young (Ramsar SRA, Asia-Oceania).

88. **Guéladio Cissé (STRP member)** asked for further clarification on Task 7, 'Ongoing, ad-hoc, advisory functions', and Ramsar's involvement at the country level. He wondered about the kind of projects needing STRP inputs and the types of inputs required. The **DSG** noted this was a broad Task and that the STRP's role, if requested, was to help advise on the development and assessment phases of projects, but that the Panel's capacity to address such requests was limited. **Guéladio Cissé** asked whether STRP members could obtain information about ongoing RAMs and other projects on the ground. The **DSG** noted that this information would be available through channels such as the STRP portal and regional meetings, and that the Secretariat could provide briefings on what is coming up.
89. **Dave Pritchard (STRP invited expert)** requested more clarity on the type of scientific standards needed and to what extent the STRP's expertise might be applied to the evaluation of projects. He wondered whether there was someone within the Secretariat to help determine where scientific and technical input is required.

Agenda item 13. Task review and development: Theme 4 – Wetlands of International Importance

90. **Alexia Dufour (Ramsar Regional Affairs Officer)** gave a short presentation on the background to, and progress in, redesigning and redeveloping the Ramsar Sites Information Service (RSIS) and database to prepare for handling data from the RIS format 2012 revision by 1 January 2015. She also explained some of the issues with the current RSIS and database, and noted that since the revised RIS format will be available for optional use in 2014 (before it becomes mandatory), for a period the Secretariat will have to be handling the old and revised RIS formats simultaneously.

91. **Vicky Jones (IOP member, BirdLife International)** asked why there was such an overlap in the handling of the old and revised RIS formats. The **DSG** clarified that through COP11 [Resolution XI.8](#) Parties indicated that if they so wished they could start using the new RIS format before it formally comes into force in January 2015. He noted, however, that such an option is not yet possible because the new 'offline' RIS form has to be compatible with the new RSIS database, which is yet to be developed and will not be in the 'flat text' format provided to COP11. It is currently anticipated that the new offline RIS format will be available from around mid-2014.
92. **Dave Pritchard (STRP invited expert)** asked whether there would be specifications for systemic presentation of information in response to the revised RIS format and redeveloped database. Alexia Dufour replied that there will be a training module developed as part of the new system.
93. **Reda Fishar (STRP member)** asked whether the new database would continue to be hosted by WI. **Alexia Dufour (Ramsar Regional Affairs Officer)** explained that the RSIS redevelopment will be subject to an open tendering process and where the new system will be hosted will be consequent on the outcomes of that process.
94. The **DSG** supported the need for providing training for users (e.g., wetland managers, NFPs). **Dave Pritchard (STRP invited expert)** asked whether there would be a help/support desk. **David Stroud (STRP invited expert)**, joining the meeting via Skype, addressed the question, adding that it was a particular area of STRP support to be factored into its work.
95. **Lars Dinesen (STRP member and Wetlands of International Importance Working Group lead)** gave a brief presentation on this Theme, outlining the Top Priority Tasks and Lower Priority Tasks, as well as the expected outputs. He highlighted the importance of addressing during the week Task No. 25 b, 'RIS Guidance – further development', noting that whilst it was a Lower Priority Task, any further modifications to the RIS needed to be agreed to by the Panel during the meeting to be submitted to SC46 for consideration. He explained that [Resolution XI.8](#) requested consideration of inclusion in the RIS of three aspects: 1) recording changes in ecological character; 2) recording Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC); and 3) adding monitoring indicators. **David Stroud (STRP invited expert)** added that conclusions and recommendations on further modifications to the RIS are on pages 6-7 of the briefing note (DOC. STRP 17-06) circulated before the meeting.
96. **Dave Pritchard (STRP invited expert)** mentioned that there was an operative paragraph in [Resolution XI.17](#), albeit not included in the Task's language, requiring the STRP to develop indicators of effectiveness to measure Ramsar Site management. The **DSG** explained that whilst in the Resolution, this text was not included in the Resolution's annex, which lists the STRP tasks for the triennium. He added that the chief purpose of the RIS is Ramsar Site designation and update, and that there were management tools already in place or tools that could be derived from the new RIS format, which would be better suited for describing ecological character or baseline information. He explained that the new RSIS will be modular, which could permit development of further such derived tools. **Christian Perennou (Tour du Valat representative)** mentioned, regarding LAC, that he would advocate for explicitly recording changes.
97. **Cui Lijuan (STRP member)** noted that there are a number of monitoring networks worldwide which have their own indicator systems. She proposed comparing the RIS with those of the networks as a useful tool to learn more about wetland changes. **Lars Dinesen (STRP member)** explained that there was a risk of adding too much detail to the RIS and, as a result, further complexities. Hence, the STRP should refrain from making additional changes until there is more clarity on this Task. **David Stroud (STRP invited expert)** added that whilst there may be issues with derived data, it is better to refrain from making further changes to the RIS-2102 revision format at this stage.

98. **Randy Milton (STRP member and Wetlands of International Importance Working Group lead)** wondered about including updates in the RIS section dealing with ecosystem services to report any changes in ecological character. **Lars Dinesen (STRP member)** noted the importance of sticking to the COP mandate, otherwise the Panel would need to bring such further issues to the COP for approval.
99. The **DSG** noted that Task 29, ‘Consideration of relationships between criteria for internationally important sites for biodiversity’ and Task 30, ‘Ramsar Site criteria and identification of globally significant areas for biodiversity’, were very closely linked and suggested merging them and inviting the IUCN-WCPA/SSC-led initiative on Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) to provide advice on the delineation of Ramsar Sites and Ramsar criteria issues for the STRP’s consideration. He also suggested that **Lars Dinesen** and **David Stroud (STRP invited expert)** participate in the Task. **Vicky Jones (IOP member, Birdlife International)** mentioned BirdLife’s involvement in the KBA initiative and the possibility for further engagement with Ramsar. **Ian Harrison (CI/IUCN representative)** expressed strong interest from the IUCN Freshwater Group in having KBA freshwater indicators integrated with Ramsar processes and mentioned that he would be attending a KBA workshop on criteria and delineation (11-15 March 2013) and would be happy to represent the STRP.

Decision STRP17-8: The Panel agreed to further engage with the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) initiative and BirdLife in relation to site delineation, as well as with IUCN’s Freshwater Programme regarding KBA freshwater indicators.

Agenda item 14. Task review and development: Sub-theme 5.1 – Wetlands and Health

100. **Pierre Horwitz (STRP member, Wetlands and Health Working Group lead)** presented an overview of the Sub-theme and the tasks and outputs expected for this cycle, mentioning the possibility of combining Lower Priority Tasks or addressing High Priority Tasks first, and noting the need to engage the target ‘health sector’ audience. He stressed the need to better define who to target within this very broad audience, and to engage leading organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO).
101. Meeting participants provided suggestions on how to approach High Priority Tasks for this Sub-theme, such as Task 31 on Guidance on ‘Wetlands and human health’ for the health sector, by: having the target audience (e.g., WHO) disseminate and possibly develop the material; working with the WHO to obtain the funds needed to carry out the Task; directing some Ramsar Guidelines to the WHO (as the audience); and identifying key parties and individuals with common interests within the ‘health sector’, instead of targeting such a broad audience.
102. **Tobias Salathé (Ramsar SRA, Europe)** asked, regarding wetland-specific diseases, whether wetland managers have called for any products on this subject and whether the STRP has already produced something. The **DSG** noted that there were already fact sheets in the ‘Ramsar wetland disease manual’, but that the Working Group’s members needed to make these generally available to managers and to request their input on whether there are other diseases that they need or want to know about and how the STRP could help.
103. The **Vice-chair** stated that it would be good to keep a connection with the manual, given the work put into it, and to ensure it is reaching the target audience. However, if there is a distribution problem, then there would be a potential to ask wetland managers and to engage STRP NFPs to pursue the manual’s uptake.

104. **Guéladio Cissé (STRP member and Wetlands and Health Group lead)** identified that two Lower Priority Tasks could be clustered with High Priority Task 31. These are: 1) Task 35, ‘Guidance on health implications of ecosystem services disruption’ intended to show the public health sector (e.g., public schools, public health intuitions, etc.) that wetlands are areas where action needs to be taken and managers engaged; and 2) Task 38, ‘Guidance for wetland managers on human and animal health impact, burden of disease and community health assessments, in wetlands’ which should not only be targeted at managers, but also to other stakeholders. He noted the importance for the health sector to know how to work in the context of wetlands.

Agenda item 15. Task review and development: Sub-theme 5.2 – Wetlands and Climate Change

105. The **STRP Chair** welcomed the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Secretariat’s Representative Mary-Jean Burer**, who briefed the STRP on IPCC work related to wetlands, inviting reviewers from the STRP to contribute to the IPCC Government and Expert Review of the Second Order Draft of the ‘2013 Wetlands Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories’.

Decision STRP17-9: The Panel established an informal group of members to contribute to the IPCC wetlands supplement review, including: Lars Dinesen (STRP member), Max Finlayson (STRP invited expert), Rob McInnes (SWS representative), Andrew Rudd (UN-HABITAT representative), Ake Rosenqvist (Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) representative), Motohiro Hasegawa (Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) representative) and Lisa-Maria Rebelo (International Water Management Institute (IWMI) representative).

106. **Max Finlayson (STRP invited expert)** thanked Mary-Jean Burer (IPCC) for her presentation and provided a short presentation of the Sub-theme, describing its content, providing some background for the tasks (and sub-tasks) and outlining the different outputs. Regarding Task 41, ‘Implications of, and advice on, climate change for Convention implementation’, he noted that COP11 removed all references to REDD+ and noted that is not specified in the actual Task. He invited other working groups to look at the overlaps with this Sub-theme (in terms of changes in ecological character).
107. The **DSG** noted that, if the Panel agreed, the Wetland Ecological Character and Change in Ecological Character Working Group would pick up the Sub-tasks relating to limits of change and reporting on ecological character of wetlands and novel ecosystems.
108. **David Coates (CBD Secretariat representative)** reported that concerning Sub-task iv b on the potential contribution of wetland ecosystems to climate change adaptation and mitigation, there is guidance on ecosystem-based adaptation from the World Bank. He noted that adaptation goes hand in hand with water and water management, which needs to be made clear to other organisations. **Rob McInnes (SWS representative)** noted the potential for the development of guidance, based on the work that UNEP is also doing on ecosystem-based adaptation.
109. The **DSG** reminded the audience of the importance of not reinventing the wheel, noting that there may be relevant information in the IPCC assessments. **Ian Harrison (CI/IUCN)** mentioned in this regard CI’s involvement in a climate adaptation project, focusing on producing freshwater management tools for local communities and on improving fresh water management in light of climate change, as well as on outreach. **Marja-Liisa Tapio Bistrom (FAO representative)** mentioned that FAO has publications on the links between peatlands and climate change.
110. **Max Finlayson (STRP invited expert)** noted that currently there was no formal engagement between the secretariats of the IPCC and the Ramsar Convention, and stressed the need and potential utility of such an engagement. He also stated that Ramsar had missed the opportunity to contribute to

the Fifth IPCC Assessment Report. The **DSG** suggested asking the IPCC to take a forward look at its next phase of work to determine how Ramsar could engage. **Marie-Jean Burer (IPCC)** noted that observer organisations could freely contribute to the development of Assessment Reports.

Agenda item 16. Task review and development: Sub-theme 5.3 –Wetlands and Water Resource Management

111. **Eugenio Barrios (IOP member, WWF, and Wetland and water resource management Working Group lead)** and **Mike Acreman (STRP invited expert)** introduced the Sub-theme, providing a brief overview of the tasks.
112. **David Coates (CBD Secretariat representative)** gave a brief report on Task 43, ‘The role of biodiversity and wetlands in the global water cycle’, ongoing from last triennium, explaining that this Task was initiated jointly by the CBD and Ramsar Secretariats and that it had been substantially delivered, with a summary provided to CBD’s COP11 (2012) as an information paper. The full report was currently being reviewed. **Mike Acreman (STRP invited expert)** explained that the focus of this Task is on the scientific evidence of processes controlling the water cycle and on how to use them to better manage water in the future. He noted they were looking at different frameworks for decision-making and that there could be room for inclusion of the ecosystem approach. He added that they had approached Earthscan about publication of the report and were hoping to be able to publish portions of the report in journals as well. The **DSG** noted the importance of making STRP products generally accessible to CPs and pointed out the need for other derived products, such as BNs, because a published report/book in English, which CPs would have to buy, will not be very accessible.
113. **Matthew McCartney (STRP member)** noted that IWMI is currently doing work on quantifying the impact of different ecosystem services on environmental flows.

Action STRP17-v: Mike Acreman (STRP member) agreed to circulate the draft global water cycle report to participants for their feedback.

114. **Patrick MacQuarrie (IOP member, IUCN, and Wetlands and Water Resource Management Working Group co-lead)** gave a short overview of Task 44 on the review and development of a strategy for engaging in the global water debate, noting that one of the key objectives of the Task should be to raise awareness in the development community that nature provides water. He stressed the need to think like the development community and other sectors to convey this message, instead of thinking like ‘water or biodiversity people’. He summarised ongoing IUCN water projects. The **DSG** noted two aspects related to this Task: 1) CBD COP11 Hyderabad Call for a partnership for ecosystem restoration, and the CBD COP11 request that CBD and Ramsar Secretariats develop a cooperative partnership for ecosystem-based solutions for water resources management; and 2) its relevance to the next Ramsar Strategic Plan (for 2016-2021), which will be discussed at SC46. He suggested focusing such discussions more on water-ecosystems interactions, adding that the Secretariat does so in its draft Vision 40+, which focuses on ecosystems for water issues.

Action STRP17-vi: STRP participants are requested to provide information to Marcela Bonells on organisations doing related work on engagement with the global water debate.

115. **Eugenio Barrios (IOP member, WWF, and Wetlands and Water Resource Management Working Group co-lead)** briefed the meeting participants on Task 45, ‘Environmental water allocation for wetlands – guidance’, mentioning that Mexico had established water allocation standards, changing the way water is managed in the country. The tool, developed by the National Water Commission, identifies areas where water is still available in the country. He noted that the intent is to

replicate the initiative in Latin America and stated that the proposed output would be a BN prepared with the government of Mexico to share their approaches and experiences and considering afterwards whether to develop further guidance. **Lew Young (Ramsar SRA, Asia-Oceania)** suggested, when producing the BN, to contact CPs in Asia and Oceania to share their experiences. **Claire Mirande (ICF representative)** suggested the Zambezi and Mekong rivers as further case studies.

Agenda item 17. Task review and development: Sub-theme 5.4 – Wetlands and Agriculture

116. **Matthew McCartney (STRP member, and Wetlands and Agriculture Working Group lead)** introduced the Sub-theme and described its different Tasks; noting that no additional invited experts had yet been invited to contribute.
117. **Reda Fishar (STRP member)** mentioned, in relation to Top Priority Task 46, ‘Wise use of wetlands in relation to coastal and inland aquaculture’, that there were useful case studies available in Northern Africa and suggested looking at sustainable aquaculture. **Devin Bartley (FAO)** inquired about the possibility of enlarging the scope of this Task to include inland fisheries issues, explaining it would be difficult to look at aquaculture in isolation from inland fisheries. He noted that Ramsar Sites’ inventories on fishes would be very helpful on deciding whether there would be any environmental risks. The **DSG** suggested that an initial BN would be appropriate to present the case for expanding the scope of the work in that direction, and perhaps a second BN looking into coastal fisheries and aquaculture.
118. The **DSG** suggested looking first at the CBD’s work on wetlands and biofuels to inform Task 49 on that subject.
119. **Marja-Liisa Tapio-Bistrom (FAO representative)** noted that the subjects assigned Lower Priority Task status under this Sub-theme have a huge impact on wetlands and hoped that in the future resources can be identified to undertake them. The **DSG** noted that the last Resolution related to this Sub-theme was [Resolution IX.4](#) on Ramsar and Fisheries in 2005. He added that other than rice paddies, these issues are unlikely to be revisited substantively during this triennium, but that it was important to brief Parties on ongoing issues and trends, perhaps through BNs.
120. The **DSG** reiterated that unless an organisation or individual takes the lead on Lower Priority Tasks or a donor comes forward, they would not be taken forward this triennium.
121. Responding to questions about including other irrigated agriculture systems within the scope of Lower Priority Task 47 on the ‘Impacts of agricultural practices on rice paddies as wetland systems’, the **DSG** advised that the STRP could put forward a proposal, but warned that enlarging its scope could complicate delivery of the Task given the variety of irrigated agricultural systems, and the likely different patterns of their impacts.

Agenda item 18. Task review and development: Theme 3 – Wetland Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring and Reporting

122. **Lammert Hilarides (WI representative)** summarised the progress in scoping the Global Wetland Observing System (GWOS) in relation to Task 19 ‘Development and coordination of a GWOS partnership’, providing an overview of the project and explaining that it is in the initial stages. He called for cooperation from participants, and explained that GWOS will not only tap into various data sources, such from GEO-BON, RSIS and GlobWetland I and II, but it would also provide input to several STRP-related outputs, such as CI’s planned Watershed Health Index (WHI) and the SoWWS. The **DSG** explained that the GWOS project had been a Top Priority Task for quite some time, and thanked CI, WI and GEO-BON for championing this Task.

123. **Ian Harrison (CI/IUCN representative)** introduced the WHI project, currently in its initial stages, summarising the project's background and explaining it would be based on the Ocean Health Index model, which looks at reference/baseline conditions of an ecosystem and its expected state in the near future, measured against certain human goals. He added that the WHI would feed into the GWOS and SoWWS projects, whilst helping identify priority regions for actions and contributing to IPBES' mission to provide an interface between science and policy.

Decision STRP17-10: The Panel established an informal reference group to provide feedback to the Watershed Health Index (WHI) project: Pierre Horwitz, Rob McInnes and Randy Milton.

124. **Marc Paganini (European Space Agency (ESA) representative)** provided a general overview of the GlobWetland-II project, designed as a regional pilot GWOS, which builds on GlobWetland-I to demonstrate the utility of Earth Observation applications for wetland monitoring, inventory and assessment purposes. He also mentioned ESA's partnership with MedWet and the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO) in GlobWetland-II, and noted the important contributions of the STRP in helping ESA determine the wetland indicators to be used. He concluded by mentioning upcoming projects, including: extending the project to the north shore of the Mediterranean (through the MWO) and the GlobWetland-III project, which will focus on sub-Saharan Africa - moving from regional to continental GWOS. The **DSG** thanked ESA for its ongoing partnership support to the Convention.
125. **María Rivera (Ramsar SRA, Americas)** stressed the importance of having a future Global Wetland initiative in the Neotropics region. **The DSG**, noting that ESA's focus is on Europe and Africa, suggested discussing this with space agencies active in the region as a first step.
126. **Ake Rosenqvist (JAXA representative)** provided an overview of JAXA's support to Ramsar, including through their Global Mangrove Watch, an international initiative that provides information and maps the status and changes of the world's mangroves annually, which includes mangrove Ramsar Sites. Noting that mangrove maps would be available free of charge within one year after the satellite observations, he listed pilot areas for field validation around the world. He concluded by proposing contributions to the Ramsar GWOS and inviting increased engagement from national and international organisations. **Lew Young (Ramsar SRA, Asia-Oceania)** asked whether it would be possible to validate sites in the different Ramsar regions and whether there was a specific procedure to do so. **Ake Rosenqvist (JAXA representative)** explained that the sites were selected because scientists were working there (not based on particular selection procedures) and noted there were opportunities to validate sites in the different Ramsar regions.
127. The **DSG** described Task 18, 'Reporting on the state of the world's wetlands and their services to people (SoWWS) and the Convention's effectiveness', and outlined the potential content of a SoWWS report. He noted the need to identify a lead to prepare the report and UNEP-WCMC's willingness to help advance this Task through their internship programme.
128. The **DSG**, as a member of its Steering Committee, gave a brief summary of the developments in the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP), a global initiative to advance the delivery of biodiversity indicators in support of the CBD, other MEAs, IPBES and governments (national, regional), and a range of other sectors. He stated that the Partnership needed further information on SoWWS indicators, particularly water indicators, inviting feedback from participants on the development of such indicators.

Agenda item 19. Task review and development: Sub-theme 5.5 – Wetlands and Poverty Eradication

129. **Sonali Senaratna (IOP member, IWMI, and Wetlands and poverty eradication Working Group lead)** introduced the Sub-theme, providing background on the Tasks and summarising expected outputs. She explained that whilst no invited experts had been nominated to participate in this Sub-theme, participants were welcome to join. She noted there appeared to be some duplication between the Top and Lower Priority Tasks: Task 50, ‘Wetlands and poverty eradication – guidance and case studies’, and Task 51, ‘Supplementary guidance to support the [Resolution XI.13](#) poverty eradication framework’. The **DSG** suggested considering repackaging these Tasks to avoid duplication of work and advised the Working Group to collaborate with the CEPA Working Group. He also suggested looking at the CBD’s work on poverty-related indicators, relevant to Task 51.

Agenda item 20. Task review and development: Theme 6 – Wetlands and Ecosystem Benefits/Services

130. **Patrick Ten Brink (Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) representative)** gave a short presentation on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) Water and Wetlands Report (available on: http://www.teebweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/TEEB_WaterWetlands_Report_2013.pdf). The **DSG** explained that the TEEB report on the economics of water and wetlands was launched on World Wetlands Day (2013), noting that Ritesh Kumar (STRP member), Patrick Ten Brink (IEEP representative), David Coates (CBD Secretariat representative) and himself were co-authors of the report, which is intended as a first stage in providing access to available information on wetland values and in identifying gaps in current knowledge.
131. **Patrick Ten Brink (IEEP representative)** summarised the key findings and gaps assessment of the TEEB water and wetlands report, designed to provide previously unavailable information on the value of the natural infrastructure of wetlands and the services they deliver. The report, which concludes that wetland ecosystems are being undervalued even in the ‘wetland community’, highlights the need to integrate wetlands and their valuable services at the heart of water management at the local, national and international levels. **Rob Mc Innes (SWS representative)** asked whether the report’s findings were limited to economic valuation. **Patrick Ten Brink (IEEP representative)** explained that whilst the emphasis was on economic valuation, it recognises also that this is only part of the story and that there are other tools available to help identify non-economic values.
132. **Ritesh Kumar (STRP member, Wetlands and Ecosystem Benefits/Services Working Group lead)** presented an overview of the Wetlands and ecosystem benefits/services Theme, the Tasks and expected outputs, noting that the Tasks needed more clearly aligning. He identified CEPA components and the possibility of testing outputs on the ground. **Pierre Horwitz (STRP member)** expressed interest in handling the ecosystems health component of the work, but wondered whether this would be the right approach. The **DSG** welcomed this approach and invited other working groups with ecosystem services components within their Tasks to relay the information to Ritesh. **Vicky Jones (IOP member, BirdLife International)** mentioned that BirdLife is currently trialling an ecosystem services assessment tool (TESSA) which could be helpful to site managers on the ground.

Decision STRP17-11: The Panel invited Nick Bertrand (UNEP-TEEB representative), Patrick Ten Brink (IEEP representative), Max Finlayson (STRP invited expert) and Dave Pritchard (STRP invited expert) to contribute their expertise to the work of the Wetlands and Ecosystem Benefits/Services Working Group.

Agenda item 21. Task review and development: Theme 7 – Wetland Ecological Character and Change in Ecological Character

133. The **DSG** explained that the reasoning for creating an additional working group on wetland ecological character and change in ecological character and clustering the tasks dealing with this Theme was to avoid duplication of work, since aspects of ecological character work were currently spread across several themes, in Tasks 20, 25 and 41. Following initial discussions he identified the initial membership for the working group as: Vicky Jones (IOP member, Birdlife International, lead); Randy Milton (STRP member, lead), the DSG (Secretariat focal point), Max Finlayson (STRP invited expert); Dave Pritchard (STRP invited expert) and David Stroud (STRP invited expert). He provided suggestions on how to focus and cluster these Tasks in the task proforma.
134. The draft consolidated ecological character task proforma was subsequently circulated for the Panel's consideration.

Agenda item 22. Lower Priority Sub-themes: Wetlands and Urbanisation, Wetlands and Tourism and Wetlands and Energy

135. The **STRP Chair** noted that the three Sub-themes which included only Lower Priority Tasks for 2013-15 would be addressed together and gave a brief description of each of these Sub-themes and their Tasks:
- **Sub-theme 5.6** – Wetlands and Urbanisation;
 - **Sub-theme 5.7** – Wetlands and Tourism; and
 - **Sub-theme 5.8** – Wetlands and Energy.
136. **Rob McInnes (SWS representative)** provided a brief presentation of the wetlands and urbanisation Sub-theme, describing the Working Group's membership and summarising his collaboration with UN-HABITAT on wetlands and urbanisation as a model for progressing Lower Priority Themes and Tasks. The **STRP Chair** noted this was a good example of Lower Priority Themes and Lower Priority Tasks being advanced through alternative means. **Denis Landenbergue (WWF-International representative)** noted the beginning of a project in Tunisia by WWF on Ramsar and urban labour for Working Group members to keep in mind. **Rob McInnes (SWS representative)** noted that whilst this was not an STRP task, it was highly relevant and invited Denis to join the Working Group discussions.
137. Concerning the Wetlands and energy Sub-theme, the **DSG** reminded the Panel that significant work had been initiated in the previous triennium, and that a substantial Ramsar Technical Report on wetlands and energy issues was nearing completion.

Decision STRP17-12: The Panel decided to take no action to progress the Wetlands and energy Sub-theme until the pending Ramsar Technical Report (RTR) had been completed.

Agenda item 23. Working groups – parallel sessions (further development of work plan tasks, as needed)

138. In parallel sessions, participants split into thematic working groups to further develop the task proformas and make adjustments to the task descriptions as needed. The outcomes and adjustments resulting from these discussions are reflected in the draft STRP work plan 2013-2015.

Agenda item 24. Brief review of progress in work plan development and issues arising

139. The **DSG** provided further clarification on the different categories of STRP products, which include: guidance for Parties (COP Draft Resolutions, with or without annexed detailed guidance), COP information papers, Ramsar Technical Reports, Briefing Notes and various other types of products (e.g., newsletters, the STRP web portal and factsheets) and he summarised the peer-review processes currently in place for each category of product.

Agenda item 25. Report back from each working group on work plan, and agreement on each work plan task

140. Each working group lead reported back on their discussions and progress. Meeting participants reviewed the draft task proformas under each theme and sub-theme. Discussion outcomes and adjustments to proformas are reflected in the STRP work plan 2013-2015.

Decision STRP17-13: The Panel agreed to drop the word ‘human’ from the original Sub-theme title ‘Wetlands and Human Health’, since the work under this Sub-theme has broader applicability to wetland health, human health and animal health, as is recognised in [Resolution XI.12](#).

Decision STRP17-14: The Panel approved the draft proformas for the following Themes and Sub-themes, subject to minor adjustments before the end of the week and with the recognition that further work on finalising some proformas would need to be undertaken following STRP17:

- Theme 4: Wetlands of International Importance;
- Sub-theme 5.1: Wetlands and Health;
- Sub-theme 5.2: Wetlands and Climate Change;
- Sub-theme 5.3: Wetlands and Water Resource Management;
- Sub-theme 5.4: Wetlands and Agriculture;
- Sub-theme 5.6: Wetlands and Urbanisation
- Theme 6: Wetlands and Ecosystem Benefits/Services; and
- Theme 7: Wetland Ecological Character and Change in Ecological Character.

Agenda item 25 (continued). Report back from each working group on work plan, and agreement on each work plan task

141. **Motohiro Hasegawa (JICA representative)** gave an overview of JICA, its mission and its MOC with the Ramsar Secretariat, explaining there were several opportunities for STRP’s involvement with the Agency’s work, including projects on the ground. The **DSG** thanked Motohiro and explained the importance of JICA’s work in helping advance the wise use of wetlands, noting that these are precisely the types of programmes and opportunities that can help advance and implement the work of the STRP on the ground.

Action STRP17-vii: Marcela Bonells will circulate a list of opportunities for potential STRP involvement with JICA’s work.

142. **Alexia Dufour (Ramsar Regional Affairs Officer)** gave an overview of the interactive video entitled ‘Four Easy Steps to Update a Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS)’ that she had prepared in collaboration with the Ramsar Regional Assistant Advisers, and the background leading to its development. She thanked all the Regional Assistant Advisers for their input, and in particular former Assistant Adviser for Europe, Kati Wenzel, for developing the idea. She noted that the video was available in the

Convention's YouTube channel and that there could be a possibility to make it available in CD-ROM format at some point in the future.

143. **Guéladio Cissé (STRP member and Wetlands and Climate Change Working Group lead)** reported that Cui Lijuan, STRP member and Wetlands and Climate Change Working Group lead, generously offered to host a small workshop in China, covering local costs, to advance the work under this Sub-theme. Discussion outcomes and adjustments to the proformas of this Working Group are reflected in the STRP work plan 2013-2015.

Agenda item 26. Review of consolidated 2013-2015 work plan and budget allocation priorities

144. The session began with discussion of possible modifications to the RIS-2012 version, the results of which would be presented to the Standing Committee for consideration at SC46, as requested by COP11 in Annex 1 to [Resolution XI.8](#) and as outlined in Task 25b, 'RIS and Guidance – further development'. **Lars Dinesen (STRP member and Wetlands of International Importance Working Group lead)** reported that a revised draft briefing note on the issue (DOC. STRP17-06) would be circulated for participants' comments, so that it could be transmitted to SC46. He noted that it was important to keep in mind that the RIS is specifically for the purpose of designating (and updating designations of) Ramsar Sites, and that it will be possible to develop further tools derived from and consistent with the RIS itself, such as for purposes of management planning, monitoring and reporting changes. He explained that the Working Group's recommendation was to keep the RIS-2012 revision format as adopted at COP11, without further modification.
145. He reminded participants that the Task included three related COP requests:
- i. Regarding the first request, on adding fields for recording change in ecological character, there were two options: 1) to retain the RIS as adopted, or 2) to add additional sub-fields to record changes. The Working Group's recommendation was to retain the RIS as adopted by COP11, because the RIS-2012 revision, along with the new RSIS, would permit Parties to record such changes, and including more information would add complexity to the core purpose of the RIS;
 - ii. On the second request, for adding fields for recording 'Limits of Acceptable Change' (LAC), the Working Group again recommended no changes to the 2012 revision format, explaining that to include such fields in the core RIS format would take the RIS more in the direction of a management planning tool (and away from its fundamental Site designation purpose). Whilst such information would be relevant to site management and possibly national management, it would not be as relevant for global reporting;
 - iii. Regarding the third request to add 'monitoring indicators' fields, the Working Group also recommended no further modifications, since such fields are again more pertinent to Site management planning processes than Site designation.
146. **The DSG** confirmed that the STRP's decision would be transmitted to the Standing Committee by annexing the briefing note to the STRP Chair's report to SC46. He stressed the importance of notifying those CPs who had requested the changes of the STRP recommendation before SC46. He asked the Working Group to identify to the Secretariat any CPs involved in the request, in addition to Australia and New Zealand, and noted that if the Standing Committee did not agree with the Panel's recommendation, it would come back to the STRP for reconsideration, but noted that it could present significant consequences for the timely delivery of the redeveloped RSIS required by [Resolution XI.8](#).

Decision STRP17-15: The Panel approved the Working Group's recommendation to keep the format of the RIS-2012 revision as adopted at COP11, being mindful of the challenges that completion of the 2012-revised version could present for some CPs, the desire to keep complexity to a minimum, and the need to distinguish management planning tools from the primary RIS purpose of designating Ramsar Sites and updating designations.

147. After more working groups had reported back the Panel approved further theme task proformas.

Decision STRP17-16: The Panel approved modifications to the following proformas, subject to minor adjustments before the end of the week, and recognising that further work on finalising some proformas would need to be undertaken following STRP17:

- Theme 1: CEPA;
- Theme 2: Strategic, Emerging and Ongoing Issues (including the task proforma for the Wetlands and invasive species Task (Task 10) incorporating the DSG's recommendation that the invasive species guide to available guidance should address both site level and policy level management);
- Theme 3: Wetland Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring and Reporting (noting that the proforma for preparing a 1st edition of a SoWWS report would include two options: preparation of a full report, resources permitting, or preparation of specific fact-sheets in an incremental fashion, if resources are limited); and
- Sub-theme 5.5: Wetlands and Poverty Eradication.

Action STRP17-viii: Marcela Bonells will compile all task proformas in a single document as the STRP's draft work plan 2013-15, for transmittal to SC46.

Agenda item 26. (continued) Review of consolidated 2013-2015 work plan and budget allocation priorities

148. The Panel discussed budget requirements to undertake the tasks under each theme/sub-theme. STRP members were invited to consider and prioritise a small number of Top Priority Tasks which they regard as essential for delivery this triennium, from amongst the Top Priority Tasks outlined in [Resolution XI.17](#). Because current funding in the STRP core budget is insufficient to advance all Top Priority Tasks, STRP members were invited to look for alternative funding opportunities.

Decision STRP17-17: The Panel recommended that particular attention be paid to the following eight Top Priority Tasks in its work plan, in response to the needs transmitted by CPs and the need for timely delivery of internally-relevant advice (e.g., RSIS redevelopment) and externally-relevant advice (e.g., a global water debate strategy, in relation to the redevelopment of the Ramsar Strategic Plan for COP12 and the Post-2015 Development Agenda Consultation on Water):

- Task 1: Assess and support the capacity-building and knowledge-sharing needs of Contracting Parties in implementing the Ramsar Convention (AAs and wetland managers);
- Task 10: Invasive species and wetlands – guide to available guidance;
- Task 20: Monitoring for change in ecological character – further guidance: standardised terminology concerning Article 3.2 issues;

- Task 25a: Implementation of the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS)–2012 revision (led by Secretariat, with STRP advice);
- Task 41 (iv c): Implications of, and advice on, climate change for Convention implementation: review and advice on relevant decisions adopted by CBD COP11;
- Task 44: Ramsar, water and wetlands: review and development of a strategy for engaging in the global water debate – noting this work would provide input to the preparation of the next Ramsar Strategic Plan for post-2015;
- Task 50: Wetlands and poverty eradication – guidance and case studies; and
- Task 59a: Economics of wetland ecosystem benefits/services.

Note. The 46th meeting of the Standing Committee approved this recommendation for these eight Tasks to be afforded the highest priority for 2013-2015 STRP work, and added a ninth Task to this priority list, in recognition of its need as input to the preparation of the next Ramsar Strategic Plan:

- Task 18: Reporting on the state of the world's wetlands and their services to people, and the Convention's effectiveness.

149. The **STRP Chair** introduced the amendments made to the Panel's draft TOR and proposed to circulate the document for any further modifications at the request of participants. The **DSG**, recommended including in the TOR an annex about peer review processes.

Agenda item 27. Adoption of draft 2013-2015 work plan

Decision STRP17-18: The Panel approved its consolidated draft work plan 2013-2015, to be compiled by the Secretariat for submission through the STRP Chair to the 46th meeting of the Standing Committee.

Agenda item 28. Date and venue of mid-term workshops (and STRP18)

150. The **STRP Chair** noted that given the review role of the STRP, much of its work could be done electronically and encouraged the Panel to carefully consider the utility of holding mid-term workshops, and to think about having individual writing workshops devoted to particular tasks instead. The **DSG** noted that any decision on the venue and date of mid-term workshops would be contingent on approval by the STRP Oversight Committee and on identification of available funds. He explained the deadlines for timely submission to the Standing Committee of scientific and technical Draft Resolutions for COP12 (planned to take place in Uruguay in mid-2015), noting that any mid-term workshops would probably need to be held in February or March 2014, and STRP18 in late 2014 or early 2015, particularly for any materials being drafted for potential COP12 consideration.

Action STRP17-ix: The Scientific and Technical Support Officer will review the task proformas and identify those tasks which have indicated the need for mid-term or writing workshops.

Decision STRP17-19: The Panel agreed to wait until the availability of funds is confirmed before establishing the date and venue of any mid-term STRP workshops.

Agenda item 29. Any other business

151. **Hiromi Yamashita (STRP member)** asked whether STRP members could freely invite STRP NFPs to participate in STRP processes, given that in some countries, like Japan, the STRP is regarded highly in the Convention's hierarchy, and whether it would be possible to have a working group comprised of STRP NFPs. The **DSG** stated that this would be something to consider in a review about how STRP NFPs are picking up STRP materials, with the suggestion that governments may set up a small group of STRP NFPs to feed into the process.
152. The **DSG** and **STRP Chair** confirmed that the informal TOR Working Group would meet after closure of STRP17 to ensure that the TORs address the comments and concerns expressed during the week.

Agenda item 30. Closing comments and closure of the meeting

153. The **SG** thanked all participants for their attendance, recognising their hard work throughout the week on behalf not only of the Secretariat but also CPs and IOPs, who need the expertise of STRP members to understand wetland issues. He illustrated the point by stating that through the Panel's work the Secretariat was able to participate in international processes and that this scientific knowledge was essential to make the Convention relevant. He emphasised the need for scientific and technical knowledge to highlight the links between wetlands and water and to ensure that people understand that Ramsar Sites are protected areas. The **STRP Chair** and the **DSG** thanked participants for their service and in particular thanked the SG, who would be ending his term of office with the Convention later in the year.
154. The **STRP Chair** closed the meeting by thanking the Secretariat's administrative team, regional teams, communications team and scientific and technical staff. He also thanked the IUCN Conservation Centre, the sound technician and the cafeteria staff for their support and cooperation.