

## **The Ramsar Convention and culture: draft Strategic Action Plan 2012-2016**

### **Explanatory Note for the June 2012 consultation version of this draft**

*The accompanying document has been produced in the framework of the Culture Working Group of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and represents some preliminary suggestions for discussion. Many details remain to be added, and the structure may evolve further; but at this early stage the authors wish to seek the view of interested stakeholders so that the next version can benefit from a range of inputs. Comments should be addressed to Dave Pritchard at the email address given on page 19.*

*The concept of a "Strategic Action Plan" aims to encompass both the overall medium-term direction of work on culture under the Convention and the specific action steps which are intended to take this forward. Once this is agreed as a basic framework, the actions will be developed into more detailed separate work programmes for each of the years covered by the Plan. This will include more detail on priorities, costings, timeframes, progress milestones and specific deliverables; so for the time being these aspects are not addressed to any great extent in the present document.*

*Where any specifics are currently included these are largely for indicative purposes, and they represent those matters which are already relatively clearly known and straightforward to include. This is simply a matter of practical convenience, and should not by itself be taken to imply anything about the relative importance or depth of any particular item in the eventual fully-developed Plan.*

*We apologise for the fact that this initial text is available only in English. It is the intention to produce a revised version in all three Ramsar Convention languages in due course.*

*Following the Ramsar Conference of Parties in July (COP11), all comments received will be collated. During August a proposal will be drawn up for seeking the funding required for taking forward the full development of the Plan and the implementation of activities for a first year. This will foresee the re-casting of the document into an overall plan for four years, with a costed and prioritised operational programme of work for its first year (to the end of 2013), described according to a standard Logical Framework. Prioritisation will have different dimensions relating to importance, urgency/time limitation, mandate, magnitude/scope and funding dependence. The process for this will include broad stakeholder engagement in developing the content of the actions, and of course in delivering them in practice.*

*We look forward to all comments and suggestions.*

*Dave Pritchard and Thymio Papayannis*

## Enhancing the integration of culture in the work of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

*Ramsar Culture Working Group project, funded by the MAVA Foundation*

# **The Ramsar Convention and culture:** **DRAFT Strategic Action Plan 2012-2016**



*Painting created by indigenous people of Mesoamerica during Ramsar COP7*



## Contents

1. Introduction
2. The purpose of this Plan
3. A vision for the future of wetlands and culture
4. Objectives
5. Stakeholders
6. Activities
7. Delivery mechanisms
8. Funding
9. Contact information
10. Further reading

Annex 1. Indicative summary of annual work plan

Annex 2. Resolutions on culture adopted by the Ramsar Parties

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The text of the Ramsar Convention noted over 40 years ago that “wetlands constitute a resource of great economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value” (preamble paragraph 3). Although the principle of integrated attention to culture has therefore always been a part of the Convention, and these dimensions of value are all closely intertwined, in practice less attention has tended to be given to the cultural dimension.
- 1.2 Efforts to formalise and more explicitly incorporate cultural aspects in the Convention’s work did not begin in earnest until the late 1990s. Formal expressions of consensus thinking on the subject were adopted by the Contracting Parties in Resolutions VIII.19 on “Guiding principles for taking into account the cultural values of wetlands for the effective management of sites” (2002) and IX.21 on “Taking into account the cultural values of wetlands” (2005) (see Annex 2). This Strategic Action Plan is built on those two Resolutions, and is designed to encourage and support their implementation by all concerned.
- 1.3 The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015 (annexed to Resolution X.1, 2008) also provides a basis for this culture Action Plan. Strategy 1.4 (on Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services) seeks to “increase recognition of and attention in decision-making to the significance of wetlands for reasons of ... cultural heritage ..., by developing and disseminating methodologies to achieve wise use of wetlands”. Key Result Area 1.4.iii is for “the socio-economic and cultural heritage value of wetlands [to be] fully taken into account in wetland wise use and management”, and Key Result Area 4.1.iii is for “all Parties to have established practices that ensure the participation in the development and implementation of wetland management plans of stakeholder groups with cultural or economic links to wetlands or those communities that depend on the wetlands for their livelihoods”.

- 1.4 Draft Resolution XI.3 for COP11 in July 2012 appends an analysis of the contribution of the Ramsar Strategic Plan to the “Aichi Biodiversity Targets” in the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (Convention on Biological Diversity COP Decision X/2, 2010). Only one of the Aichi Targets refers to culture, namely Target 13 which refers to maintenance of the genetic diversity of plants and animals “including culturally valuable species”. Of the 20 Targets this is one of only two which have no corresponding Ramsar Strategic Plan strategy. The wider ambit of wetland wise use in strategy 1.4 however (which includes cultural value, as quoted above) is listed as contributing to eight of the Targets.
- 1.5 Resolution IX.21 requested the Ramsar Secretariat “to establish a multi-disciplinary working group on the cultural values of wetlands, with a balanced geographic representation, under the supervision of Standing Committee, with appropriate input from the STRP, to coordinate the activities described [in the Resolution]”. The Standing Committee at its 36<sup>th</sup> meeting in February 2008 adopted decision 36.3 in which it “confirmed that the work of the Culture Working Group should continue in future, after COP10, in order to help inform the operations of the Parties in implementing the Convention and in helping the STRP to focus on issues that require a cultural perspective and understanding.”
- 1.6 The Culture Working Group has been responsible among other things for the publication in 2008 and subsequent wide dissemination of an extensive Ramsar guidance document on culture and wetlands<sup>1</sup>. The guidance is of crucial assistance to the Parties in implementing their obligation to maintain the ecological character of wetlands, which has become part of the way that the requirement for “wise use” of wetlands is formally interpreted. Since 2005, “ecosystem services” as interpreted by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment have been incorporated into the Ramsar definition of wetland ecological character, and “cultural services”, including their intangible aspects, are included as part of ecosystem services in this context.
- 1.7 A variety of strong mandates therefore exists for action on culture under the Convention, linked to other core aspects of Ramsar implementation. A vehicle for primary ownership of the Strategic Action Plan also exists in the form of the Culture Working Group, operating under the supervision of Standing Committee (and the CWG is to be revitalised, as one action in this Plan). The Plan therefore does not require COP endorsement and it becomes operational upon agreement within the CWG, in consultation with the Secretariat and the Standing Committee. Its practical implementation however will of course be realised mainly through the efforts of Parties and a range of other partners (highlighted later in this Plan), at all levels from global to local.

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<sup>1</sup> Papayannis, T and Pritchard, DE (2008); “Culture and wetlands – a Ramsar guidance document”: Ramsar Convention Culture Working Group, Gland.

## 2. The purpose of this Plan

- 2.1 This Strategic Action Plan on Ramsar and culture is launched as a response to the following opportunities and challenges:

### **Opportunities**

- Interest in culture and wetlands is gathering pace, and the subject is featuring in an increasing number of projects, publications and conferences.
- As described above, the Ramsar authorisation environment and its guidance resources now provide a considerably strengthened springboard for appropriate action.
- Certain key partnerships and collaborations are developing in ways which offer prospects of significantly extending the leverage and relevance of culture-related activities under Ramsar, notably those involving UNESCO, the MAVA Foundation and the Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos (Med-INA).

### **Challenges**

- As interest and activity proliferates, there is a greater need for strategic coherence, coordination (including managed links with other policy sectors and relevant fora), a shared sense of direction, and a common framework against which to evaluate risks and benefits.
- As “external” interest increases, there is a need to service requirements for communication and outreach, interpretation of principles, provision of documented examples, and input to other processes.
- Reflection of the subject at policy and programme levels is still minimal, and efforts are required for advocacy and capacity support.
- The Ramsar Culture Working Group, initially consisting of formally appointed regional representatives, has reduced to a small core of dedicated individuals: it needs to be re-launched as a dynamic network for real engagement, and then serviced more actively from a central coordination point to fulfil this role.

- 2.2 The **purpose** of this Strategic Action Plan therefore is:

To assist Parties and others involved in implementing Ramsar decisions and guidance on culture and wetlands, by providing an agreed framework of priorities, linkages and action opportunities, specifying mechanisms for further support, and facilitating evaluation of progress.

- 2.3 It therefore enables Parties, the Culture Working Group, all collaborators and other stakeholders to work with a validated vision and source of strategic guidance, a roster of project opportunities and fundraising priorities, and a framework against which to assess progress over the next four years. Section 6 outlines the operational activities that will deliver this vision.

### 3. A vision for the future of wetlands and culture

- 3.1 This Plan emerges from some considerable history of adopted commitments to integration of cultural aspects in the conservation and wise use of wetlands under the Ramsar Convention and associated processes. This agenda has been in existence for over 40 years and does not need to be reinvented. Two things however must change, and these two things therefore comprise the vision of what should be visibly different as a result of this Plan by the year 2016.
- (i) Contracting Parties to the Convention and all those who support them will much more readily understand, be motivated towards and be assisted in implementing the existing guidance and policy objectives on culture and wetlands so that the adopted principles become a much more frequent and meaningful reality in everyday practice at national and local level;
  - (ii) The degree of holistic attention given to human cultural values in tandem with attention to natural (wetland) environment values will have been significantly scaled-up in all relevant policy and programme implementation areas, including in wider public awareness.
- 3.2 Existing Ramsar obligations include the maintenance of the ecological character of wetlands, where “ecological character” is defined as including wetland ecosystem services, and “wetland ecosystem services” are defined as including cultural services. More fundamentally, all concern for sustainable development of wetlands begins from a mixture of utilitarian and ethical values that are unavoidably anthropocentric constructs, and thus are firmly situated in a context of human culture. In a sense, therefore, the entire Ramsar agenda is one of culture. The more understanding of this dimension we have, and the more tools we can develop that are appropriate to this context, the better. This Plan sets out the path towards this vision.

### 4. Objectives

- 4.1 The **overall objective** of this Plan is as follows:

*To strengthen the incorporation of cultural aspects in the conservation and wise use of wetlands, as a contribution to a more complete and integrated achievement of the strategic goals of the Ramsar Convention.*

- 4.2 Over the period 2012-16 the Plan has the following **five goals**:

Goal	Targets /indicators	Sources of verification
<p><b>Goal A: Strengthened international policy</b></p> <p>Global and regional policymaking reflects where necessary the best current knowledge and thinking on culture and wetlands, including ways of taking account of cultural values in decision-making, and ways of increasing understanding of the cultural ecosystem services of wetlands</p>	[??]	Convention scientific, technical, policy and guidance documents, and implementation reports; equivalent outputs from other relevant fora,



		including other Conventions
<p><b>Goal B: Better documented values</b></p> <p>Cultural values associated with wetlands are more completely identified, understood and documented at national and site level</p>	[Define eg numbers, proportions, completeness, quality etc of coverage of the issue by the verification sources listed; and trends in this over time]	National wetland inventories; national ecosystem assessments; RISs, site management plans, Party national reports; cultural services indicator reports; specific studies
<p><b>Goal C: More widely shared and applied good practices</b></p> <p>Good practices, experiences and lessons learned in wetland planning and management that integrates cultural aspects are investigated, shared, promoted and applied more widely and successfully, resulting in better outcomes for wetlands and for people</p>	[??] [Need to cover both scope and impact]	Case studies; workshops; project reports; website materials; other publications
<p><b>Goal D: Enhanced partnerships</b></p> <p>Strategic collaborations and partnerships are enhanced, broadening stakeholder engagement and producing efficient synergies of action</p>	[Eg numbers, breadth, regional/subject balance, quality, delivery assurance/review of the instruments and mechanisms suggested]	Joint Work Plans; MoUs; joint initiatives and products; cross-representation in relevant fora
<p><b>Goal E: Effective coordination</b></p> <p>This Plan and relevant associated activities are efficiently coordinated, resourced in ways which do not dilute any other Ramsar programmes, and the results are promoted to wide audiences, building further support for the long term</p>	[??] [Include trends in resourcing and other support]	Management (including financial) records; progress reports; network web-page and newsletters; other outreach materials

## 5. Stakeholders

- 5.1 “Partnerships” and “stakeholder engagement” are identified within Goal D above, but in a sense these things are more all-pervading than that might suggest, since this entire Plan is a partnership venture and as far as possible the intention is for it to be “stakeholder-led”.
- 5.2 This starts from the Ramsar Culture Working Group, which is an open-ended entity that serves Ramsar goals but is not limited to Ramsar people. Activities E8, E9 and E3 in section 6 below refer to the intended revitalisation of this group and its re-launch in a strengthened form as a Ramsar Culture Network (RCN) with broader participation and more specifically programmed activities, centred on this Strategic Action Plan. This therefore will be a key vehicle for widening stakeholder “buy-in” to the goals defined above.

- 5.3 The action table in section 6 currently contains indicative examples of individuals who are named as responsible persons for implementing certain steps (in the column headed “who”). This small and biased sample should not be misinterpreted: it merely provides the starting point by featuring those who have already offered to be cited. As consultations develop this table will progressively present a much more diverse roster of key players; and consultees are urged to help in populating this part of the document as fully as possible. Further details will also be provided in future revisions on the role of different categories of partners and stakeholders in general.

## 6. Activities

- 6.1 The table which begins on the following page summarises actions defined at this stage for delivering each of the five goals. Several of these will be elaborated further in separate individual project plans, and in many cases, the detail of costs and funding sources (where applicable), priorities, responsibilities and timing will also be elaborated further as work progresses.
- 6.2 The list at present is organised primarily according to the Goals. A further categorisation distinguishes (within each Goal) those activities that may be roughly regarded as on-going or “programmatic” activities and those that are more time-bound or “project”-type activities. This is an approximate distinction for presentational purposes within the current table only. As further development of details continues, other finer categorisations may be developed. A key one will relate to priorities, according to the different dimensions of importance, urgency/time limitation, mandate, magnitude/scope and funding dependence. Activities will also be categorised by funding status, and distinctions between “major” and “minor” items. This has not been attempted within the current table in the interests of maintaining clear and brief presentation. Funding dependence will be flagged clearly in the “costs” column once consultee responses have been collated.
- 6.3 Some other categorisations however have been requested at this stage, and so the table contains two further columns. One indicates (in very broad-brush terms) the type of activity concerned according to four categories (some activities may involve more than one of these), namely:
- |                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Management             | (M) |
| Research and analysis  | (R) |
| Communication          | (C) |
| Advice and negotiation | (A) |
- 6.4 The final column in the table, on a very provisional basis at this stage, flags those items which may be considered as key priorities for the first year of implementation of this Plan. This may change in the light of consultations on the present draft. Other methods of assigning priorities will be developed as this work advances.



Activity		Activity type	Costs	Who	When	Priority for first year?
<b>Goal A: Strengthened international policy</b>						
(See activity D.1 below)						
Programmatic	A.1 Identify opportunities in relevant international policy and decision-making fora to make cross-references to Ramsar principles on culture and wetlands (as set out in COP Resolutions and the principal culture guidance document).	R/A	[To add]	[Probably CWG core group]	Ongoing; whenever draft texts and decisions for relevant meetings are drafted and negotiated	✓
Projects	A.2 Identify allies in politics and the media to act as spokespersons or "goodwill ambassadors" for the cause of culture and wetlands.	R/C	[To add]	[To add]	Mainly by an initial exercise among primary consultees in late 2012; but should also be continued opportunistically thereafter	
	[etc]					
	[etc]					
<b>Goal B: Better documented values</b>						
(See activity C.1 below)						
(See activity D.11 below)						
(See activity D.12 below)						
Programmatic	B.1 Incorporate a "cultural values" strand in the activities of the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory, to be reported in future editions of the "Mediterranean Wetland Outlook" status and trends reports.	M	[To add]	Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory, with input from CWG, Med-INA and Medwet	Ongoing, and whenever MWO programmes are refreshed and Outlook publications produced [get details]	✓
Projects	B.2 Analyse, synthesise, report and extract lessons and recommendations from information provided on cultural values in the database of Ramsar Sites Information Sheets	R	[To add]	Task managed by CWG core group, with assistance of Ramsar Secretariat	[To add]	

	B.3 Analyse, synthesise, report and extract lessons and recommendations from information provided on cultural values, including status and trends, in the database of Ramsar Contracting Party national reports to Conferences of the Parties	R	[To add ]	Task managed by CWG core group, with assistance of Ramsar Secretariat	[To add]	
	B.4 Study the values of wetland cultural services in the Mediterranean, focusing on the status and trends of leisure and educational values and the role of visitor centres, and beginning with a pilot study at Sidi Boughaba, Morocco.	R	[To add ]	Project led by Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory, with participation of MedWet and Med-INA	2012-2013	
	B.5 Document cultural values associated with salinas, as part of an inventory project led by the Association of Friends of Inland Salinas, based in Spain.	R	[To add ]	Project led by Katia Hueso Kortekaas, AASI		
	B.6 Research examples of arts and art-related activity which constitutes a cultural expression of wetland values, focusing on Ramsar Sites and relevant World Heritage Sites and Biosphere Reserves.	R	[To add ]	Dave Pritchard to lead on reviving earlier project concept supported by UNESCO and Ramsar		
	<i>[etc]</i>					
	<i>[etc]</i>					
<b>Goal C: More widely shared and applied good practices</b>						
(See activity D.10 below)						
(See activity D.11 below)						
(See activity D.12 below)						
(See activity D.13 below)						

Programmatic	C.1 Provide support to Ramsar Contracting Parties, wetland managers and others in implementing Ramsar Resolutions VIII.19 and IX.21, and the Ramsar Culture Guidance document. Depending on the circumstances this may draw in particular on activities under Goal B above and may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice on the recognition of cultural values relating to wetlands in national legislation and policy;</li> <li>• Support for the inclusion of information on cultural values in Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) for the designation of new Wetlands of International Importance or when updating the RIS of existing Ramsar sites;</li> <li>• Support for the inclusion of cultural aspects in the design and implementation of wetland management plans;</li> <li>• Support for educational and training activities with regard to the cultural values of wetlands;</li> <li>• Advice on methods for assessing and communicating the value of cultural ecosystem services in wetlands;</li> <li>• Support in setting and implementing coherent management objectives for sites of importance under both Ramsar and (eg) World Heritage;</li> <li>• Development of tips on conflict-resolution in relation to cultural values (linked as appropriate to relevant aspects of the Ramsar guidance on local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands);</li> <li>• Development of model clauses and templates for provisions on protection of wetland cultural values for management plans, laws, policies etc;</li> <li>• Advice on documenting and reporting cultural issues in a Ramsar context (eg Ramsar site data; Party national reports, streamlining information management across different MEAs);</li> <li>• Guidance on sources of information, advice, support and funding.</li> </ul>	A	[To add ]	[To add] [Will include support and advice developed through the partnership collaborations described under Goal D below, for example with UNESCO World Heritage Centre]	Ongoing, on request and opportunistic	✓
	C.2 Provide support and advice on wetlands-culture issues for cultural practitioners.	A	[To add ]	[To add] [In particular will feature collaborative input from World Heritage Centre]	Ongoing, on request and opportunistic	✓
Projects	C.3 Undertake an analysis of user needs for support in implementing Ramsar Resolutions VIII.19 and IX.21 (aiming to distinguish real needs and gaps from expressed demand). Use the findings in	R/M	[To add ]	[To add]	[To add]	✓

	targeting other efforts under this Plan, and as appropriate as a baseline for future assessments of progress, in particular concerning those aspects relating to strengthening national capacity.					
	C.4 Investigate scope for producing a simple user's guide to Ramsar guidance on cultural issues, or on the Ramsar Convention as a whole, aimed for example at National Focal Points for the World Heritage Convention, National UNESCO Commissions, custodians of individual World Heritage properties etc.	C/ A	[To add ]	[To add] [In particular will feature collaborative input from World Heritage Centre]	[To add] To include, among others, a delivery date for dissemination at World Heritage Committee meeting in 2016]	
	C.5 Study and promote lessons learned concerning the role of cultural values in wetland restoration, using three case examples in the Mediterranean (Karla Lake, Greece; Larnaca Lagoon, Cyprus; Lake of Tunis; Tunisia).	R/ C	[To add ]	Project led by Med- INA, with MedWet contribution	Project duration 2011-2013	
	C.6 Study the relationship between wetland ecosystem management and delivery of ecosystem services, including cultural services, based on the case examples of the Hula, Israel, and the Camargue, France	R	(Alr ead y sep ara tely fun ded )	PhD research project by Emmanuelle Cohen-Sacham, Israel	To complete in 2012	
	C.7 Map the geographical relationships between traditionally protected "hima" areas in Middle-Eastern countries and important wetland sites, beginning with Lebanon and Jordan, and raise awareness of the role of this traditional practice in protection of these areas.	R	[To add ]	Project [to be?] led by Assad Serhal, Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon, with support from MedWet Secretariat	[To add]	
	C.8 Review the Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) programmes of Ramsar and MedWet to assess relevant content on cultural issues, and make recommendations concerning opportunities and gaps.	R/ C	[To add ]	[To add]	[To add]	
	<i>[etc]</i>					
	<i>[etc]</i>					

<b>Goal D: Enhanced partnerships</b>						
(See activity C.2 above)						
(See activity C.4 above)						
Programmatic	D.1 Share and make mutual contributions to relevant policy and other technical documents between Ramsar and UNESCO, in particular those drafted for decision-making meetings.	A	[To add ]	[To add]	Ongoing; whenever relevant documents are drafted	✓
	D.2 Update and maintain lists of wetland sites having overlapping designations as Ramsar Sites, World Heritage Sites and/or Biosphere Reserves, and present on the respective organisations' websites with enhanced supporting information, eg on extent of overlap. (This links also with awareness-raising activities under Goal C above). Although an on-going programmatic activity, this could begin with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an information note on the status of the different website information sources on this, mentioning any obvious new additions from recently-designated sites;</li> <li>• an expression of intent concerning the way in which this kind of information should be maintained in future;</li> <li>• some proposals for how case study and experience-exchange material might be piloted with one or two examples that would be relatively well-placed ones to try;</li> <li>• comments on other useful associated steps, such as ways of identifying and linking more strongly the primary contacts at site level in authorities with responsibility under the respective Conventions for cultural and ecological matters respectively.</li> </ul>	R/ C/ M	[To add ]	[To add]	Situation summary and statement of intent by autumn 2012; major update exercise by end 2012; then ongoing list and website updating thereafter (with periodic cross-check eg each June and December)	✓
	D.3 Hold an annual Ramsar-UNESCO liaison meeting at which the implementation of this Plan (and the cooperation agreement referred to above) are reviewed.	M	[To add ]	[To add]	Once each year, currently foreseen for Feb or March; but at least electronic liaison in Sept/Oct would also be useful to take account of outcomes of WH Committee in June/July each year	✓
	D.4 Report to relevant global governing bodies of Ramsar and UNESCO, and to regional processes where appropriate, on progress with activities under this plan and on proposals for the future.	M	[To add ]	[To add]	Ongoing, whenever relevant meetings take place/reports are compiled [Calendar for the four years to be constructed]	

	D.5 Further develop the roster of relevant projects and action commitments initiated at the Agadir Symposium on Water and Wetlands in the Mediterranean, February 2012 (= the “Agadir Commitments”, plus the additional suggestions from Workshop 4 at the Symposium).	M	[To add]	To be led by the MedWet Secretariat and the MedWet Culture Network, with input from MedWet/Com members	Initial re-presentation/expansion of roster/Commitments in autumn 2012; then ongoing use and updating thereafter, and reporting on progress to MedWet/Com and other relevant governance fora at least once per year	✓
	D.6 Monitor and follow up as appropriate the implementation of other actions agreed at the Agadir Symposium on Water and Wetlands in the Mediterranean, February 2012.	M	[To add]	[To add]	[To add]	
	D.7 Maintain active liaison with the IUCN Specialist Group on Cultural & Spiritual Values of Protected Areas (CSVPA), including seeking to develop the Group’s tentative plans to broaden its project work beyond sacred sites and spiritual values to culture and conservation more generally.	M/C	[To add]	Dave Pritchard and Thymio Papayannis, working with Rob Wild and Bas Verschuuren (= members of CSVPA), in conjunction with Mark Infield of FFI	Ongoing; and specific effort to revive broader culture agenda by end 2012	
	D.8 Maintain links as appropriate with the work of the Ramsar Scientific & Technical Review Panel	M	[To add]	Dave Pritchard to lead	Ongoing	✓
Projects	D.9 Update and extend the 1999 Ramsar-World Heritage Centre Memorandum of Understanding to add reference to key areas of cooperation on culture and wetlands, including reference to this Strategic Action Plan on Ramsar and Culture. If necessary, draw up and sign a more specific cooperation agreement with World Heritage Centre for joint implementation of relevant aspects of this Plan. Link with/extend from the “Indicative World Heritage and Ramsar Secretariats workplan for mutual cooperation” produced following a meeting of the two Secretariats in February 2012.	M	[To add]	WHC and Ramsar Secretariat, with CWG input. Marc Patry and WH and Claudia Fenerol at Ramsar are the nominated focal points for cooperation generally.	[To add]	
	D.10 Develop demonstration initiatives at a selection of jointly designated sites.	R/C	[To add]	[To add]	[To add]	



	D.11 Publish a short report on shared values and coordinated management approaches in respect of jointly designated sites. Disseminate in various ways, including at international meetings on relevant topics organised by other bodies. (This links also with awareness-raising activities under Goal C above).	C	[To add ]	[To add]	[To add]	
	D.12 Document specific case studies of shared values and coordinated management approaches in respect of jointly designated sites. Disseminate in various ways, including at international meetings on relevant topics organised by other bodies.	C	[To add ]	[To add]	[To add]	✓
	D.13 Convene [a] joint workshop[s] and or side-event[s] in an appropriate context to showcase aspects of the collaboration undertaken under Goal 4 of this Plan.	C/A	[To add ]	[To add]	[To add]	
	D.14 Investigate the scope for giving higher profile to cultural issues in Wetland Link International, the World Wetland Network and the World Wetland Globe Awards	A	[To add ]	Offer made by Chris Rostron, WWT - to be prompted by Ramsar CWG	[To add]	
	D.15 Investigate the scope for collaboration and cross-fertilisation on this Plan with the Sacred Natural Sites and Delos Initiatives, within the framework of IUCN.	A	[To add ]	Thymio Papayannis to lead	[To add]	
	D.16 Investigate and assess systematically the scope and opportunities for cooperation with the other bodies and processes named in paragraph 13 of Resolution VIII.19, and produce recommendations.	M/A	[To add ]	[To add] [ - and Liaise with Claudia Fenerol, Ramsar Secretariat]	[To add]	
	[etc]					
	[etc]					
<b>Goal E: Effective coordination</b>						
(See activity D.3 above)						
<b>Programmatic</b>	E.1 Set up and maintain a website/area of the Ramsar website for the Ramsar Culture Network (RCN), and a suitable method for communicating with the Network.	C	[To add ]	[To add]	Initial establishment of website and newsletter etc process by March 2013, then ongoing/periodic maintenance/circulations etc thereafter	✓

	E.2 Investigate options for setting up and operating a wiki-space, Facebook page, Basecamp site or other interactive web-based forum and document-sharing facility for the Network.	C	[To add ]	[To add]	Review of options by March 2013 then ongoing operation of chosen methods thereafter	
	E.3 Provide servicing for the Network in other ways as required	M/C	[To add ]	[To add]	Ongoing and on request	✓
	E.4 Raise funds, both for ongoing coordination of the implementation of this Action Plan and the coordination of the Network, and for more time-limited specific initiatives.	M	[To add ]	Relationship with MAVA Foundation hopefully to continue; and additional new supporters also to be identified	Ongoing and as required; timeframe in some cases will need to mesh with funder cycles	✓
	E.5 Develop concepts and proposals for projects and other specific initiatives in support of the implementation of this Action Plan.	M	[To add ]	CWG core group	Ongoing and as required; timeframe in some cases will need to mesh with funder cycles	✓
	E.6 Keep the Ramsar Resolutions VIII.19 and IX.21 and the Ramsar Culture Guidance document under review, and develop proposals as necessary for their further updating.	A	[To add ]	CWG core group	Ongoing, using eg conference opportunities as appropriate, and systematic check at least once per year	
	E.7 Monitor and report on the implementation of this Strategic Action Plan, to the Ramsar Standing Committee in the first instance, and to other interested parties as appropriate.	M	[To add ]	CWG core group	[Regular monitoring schedule to be determined; reporting schedule to be determined taking account of SC meeting dates but may alternatively be undertaken intersessionally]	✓
Projects	E.8 Re-launch the Ramsar Culture Working Group as a Ramsar Culture Network (RCN), by re-scoping its membership and terms of reference (based on confirmed interest and commitment), mobilising renewed interest, inviting broader participation, and setting a	M	[To add ]	Thymio Papayannis & Dave Pritchard, with Tobias Salathé as Ramsar	Work to complete by end 2012 for launch of RCN in January 2013	✓

	programme of activity centred on this Action Plan and including external networking. Produce a working document on objectives and <i>modus operandi</i> for the Network.			Secretariat contact point		
	E.9 Set up a small governance structure/steering group for the Ramsar Culture Network. Its functions will include giving leadership and support for implementation of this Strategic Action Plan, and coordination of Network messages/outputs to external processes (global Convention meetings, other working groups etc).	M	[To add ]	Thymio Papayannis & Dave Pritchard to lead, with Tobias Salathé as Ramsar Secretariat contact point	[To add]	✓
	E.10 Hold [a] workshop[s], probably at regional level, eg for experience sharing, action planning and/or as a writing workshop, making use as appropriate of opportunities to schedule these in association/back-to-back with other meetings where relevant individuals/organisations will be present.	M/ C/ A	[To add ]	[To add]	[To add]	✓
	[etc]					
	[etc]					

## 7. Delivery mechanisms

- 7.1 The activities described under Goal E in the table above provide for delivery of this Strategic Action Plan to be coordinated by the Steering Group of a re-launched Ramsar Culture Network, supported by the wider Network itself as appropriate. Much of the delivery will also occur through (and depend upon) the effective operation of partnership arrangements described in the actions under Goal D. Other responsibilities are identified in the relevant column of the table. Funding will be a key determinant of delivery in many cases: this is addressed in section 8 below.
- 7.2 Where known, activity timeframes have been indicated in the relevant column of the table above. These will form the basis for annual work plans to be presented separately. An indicative summary of the position as it is known at the time of the next iteration of this document will be given in the form shown in Annex 1.
- 7.3 Where appropriate, risk assessments, performance indicators and other monitoring and evaluation parameters will be elaborated further too. In the case of any distinct externally-funded projects this will follow the requirements of funders if applicable. Delivery of the Plan as a whole will be monitored by the RCN Steering Group, who will report on this in the first instance to the Ramsar Standing Committee.

## 8. Funding

- 8.1 **Delivery of around 90% of this Plan is dependent on securing external funding**, as well as significant support in kind. Where funding is required for any given action, estimates will be worked up at the next drafting stage for inclusion in the relevant column of the table above. These will be elaborated in further detail and presented in separate budget documentation on a project basis where necessary, and profiled across the five years of the Plan. Budgets will initially be specified for the first year, and given in an indicative form for subsequent years. As the Plan rolls forward, greater budget detail will be developed for each successive year in turn.
- 8.2 A separate plan for fundraising (and for securing in-kind support) will also need to be developed. For certain more or less self-contained projects, support needs will be pursued by specific project-based funding applications. Several proposals may also be grouped in “portfolio” or “roster”-based approaches. In addition to such discrete projects, significant support of a more on-going programmatic nature will also need to be sought. Fundraising is identified as a distinct activity area in the table above, but in practice it will be a cross-cutting element in many other parts of this Plan.

## 9. Contact information

9.1 Contact points for the overall management of this Strategic Action Plan are as follows:

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- (iii) Tobias Salathé  
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## 10. Further reading

*[This section will contain a selected few key references rather than a long bibliography. To include for example the Ramsar Culture Guidance, the Med-INA publication on culture and wetlands in the Mediterranean, the Ramsar-WHC Memorandum of Cooperation, and a link to the Ramsar culture web-pages at [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-activities-culture/main/ramsar/1-63-412\\_4000\\_0](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-activities-culture/main/ramsar/1-63-412_4000_0) (which need updating)]*

## Annex 1

### Indicative summary of annual work plan

(For explanation see section 7 on delivery mechanisms).

*[To be populated later, by shaded bars across the relevant time-period for each activity, where known]*

Activity	2012		2013				2014				2015				2016			
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
A.1																		
A.2																		
B.1																		
B.2																		
B.3																		
B.4																		
B.5																		
B.6																		
C.1																		
C.2																		
C.3																		
C.4																		
C.5																		
[etc]																		

*[Add the remaining activity rows]*



## Annex 2

### Resolutions on culture adopted by the Ramsar Parties

#### Resolution VIII.19

*(adopted by the 8th Conference of the Contracting Parties, Valencia, Spain, 2002)*

#### **Guiding principles for taking into account the cultural values of wetlands for the effective management of sites**

1. ACKNOWLEDGING that the ancient and intimate links of traditional societies to wetlands and water have given rise to important cultural values relevant to wetland conservation and wise use, which have been recognized in the diverse cosmologies of different civilizations and cultures throughout history;
2. FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING that the specific physical features of wetlands have contributed to particular ways of managing traditional activities through structures, procedures, techniques and specially designed artefacts which are of great cultural significance;
3. RECOGNIZING that peoples' relations with wetlands have given rise to aspects of non-material culture, through folklore, music, mythology, oral traditions, customs, traditional knowledge and popular wisdom, and that their reflection can be found in social practices and the traditional forms of social organization for managing wetland resources, and especially water;
4. FURTHER RECOGNIZING that sustainable traditional uses of wetland resources have frequently created cultural landscapes of significant value to wetland conservation and wise use;
5. AWARE that the cultural values of wetlands have been and still are of great importance to societies living in wetlands and their surroundings, and constitute part of their identity; thus their loss may not only contribute to their alienation from wetlands, but also cause significant negative social and ecological impacts;
6. RECOGNIZING that cultural knowledge of wetlands constitutes a collective legacy for today's societies;
7. AWARE that most of the knowledge about practices, and practices themselves, of traditional wetland management in the diverse cultures have contributed to wetland conservation and wise use over millennia, and continue to contribute to it;
8. FURTHER AWARE that in addition to their spiritual dimension of this knowledge and other aspects of past wetland management, such values can be of considerable socio-economic importance, since they can be used as a resource for sustainable tourism and recreational activities and, through them, contribute to an increase of income and quality of life for the inhabitants;
9. CONSCIOUS of the fact that the adequate recognition of and support for cultural heritage, both material and non-material, is an indispensable component in any process for the sustainable use of wetland resources;

10. RECOGNIZING that there are important weaknesses and gaps in the procedures and methods for identifying, valuing and protecting the cultural heritage of wetlands, as well as in defining and implementing policies related to them;
11. NOTING that the profound and rapid social and economic transformations that have taken place during recent decades have increasingly threatened the adequate preservation of the cultural heritage that is typical of wetlands in many parts of the world;
12. RECOGNIZING that there are various multilateral agreements and organizations that work to recognize and protect cultural values and relationships with ecosystems including wetlands;
13. ACKNOWLEDGING that the Ramsar Convention needs to work in cooperation with multilateral and regional agreements and other bodies addressing the need for resolute action to preserve the cultural heritage, including among others:
  - the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris, 1972);
  - the Call of Granada (1975) of the Council of Europe on Rural architecture and its landscape;
  - Recommendation 881 (1979) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on Rural architecture heritage;
  - UNESCO's activities in the promotion of the conservation of cultural heritage;
  - the general principles for conservation proposed by the Vernacular Built Heritage Charter (Jerusalem, 1996), ratified by the XI General Assembly of the International Council of Monuments and Historical Sites (ICOMOS);
  - the various recommendations of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) for the protection, conservation, legal status, economic exploitation, and international protection of folklore;
  - the Convention on Biological Diversity, in particular concerning its Decision VI/10 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on the *Outline of the composite report on the status and trends regarding the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity*, and the plan and timetable for its preparation; and on *Recommendations for the conduct of cultural, environmental and social impact assessment regarding developments proposed to take place on, or which are likely to impact on, sacred sites and on lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by indigenous and local communities*;
  - the European Landscape Convention (Florence, 2000);
  - the Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (International Labour Organisation No. 169, 5 September 1991); and
  - the Permanent Forum of Indigenous People.
14. RECALLING that inter alia the text of the Ramsar Convention already recognizes, in the third paragraph of its preamble, "that wetlands constitute a resource of great economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value, the loss of which would be irreparable" and FURTHER RECALLING that COP7 adopted

Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous peoples' participation in the management of wetlands (Resolution VII.8); and

15. NOTING the background documentation and examples on the cultural aspects of wetlands from around the world presented during Technical Session 5 of this meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

16. TAKES NOTE WITH INTEREST of the list of *Guiding Principles* included in the Annex to this Resolution;
17. REQUESTS that the Ramsar Bureau seek inputs from Contracting Parties, experts and practitioners, and local communities and indigenous peoples from around the world to enhance the information paper on cultural aspects of wetlands (COP8 DOC. 15) and the detailed guidance prepared for consideration by this meeting of the Conference of the Parties, with a view to publishing it as a background document, and to inform COP9 of the progress made;
18. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to consider using the list of *Guiding principles* included in the Annex to this Resolution, but only in relation the conservation and enhancement of the cultural values of wetlands;
19. FURTHER ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, within their national and legal frameworks and available resources and capacity:
  - a) to consider the compilation and assessment of both material and non-material cultural elements related to wetlands and water, in particular when preparing the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) for the designation of new Wetlands of International Importance or when updating the RIS of existing Ramsar sites, taking into account, as appropriate, intellectual property rights, customary law, and the principle of prior informed consent, in accordance with CBD and WIPO rules;
  - b) to promote the appreciation and revitalization, of these cultural values among populations close to wetlands, and in general among the wider public;
  - c) to include relevant aspects of cultural heritage in both the design and implementation of wetland management plans;
  - d) to make efforts to integrate cultural and social impact criteria into environmental assessments, which could include, *inter alia*, issues of particular cultural concern, such as beliefs and religions, customary practices, forms of social organization, systems of natural resources use, including patterns of land use, places of cultural significance, sacred sites and ritual ceremonies, languages, customary lore/law systems, political structures, roles and customs;
  - e) to carry out such efforts with the active participation of indigenous peoples, local communities and other stakeholders, and to consider using the cultural values of wetlands as a tool to strengthen this involvement, particularly in wetland planning and management;

20. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to recognize cultural and heritage values relating to wetlands in their existing heritage protection, legal framework and policies;
21. INVITES Contracting Parties to consider conducting appropriate joint educational and training activities with regard to the cultural values of wetlands, as well as to consider developing pilot projects for testing on a local, regional and national scale with a view to further improving the application and/or integration of the *Guiding Principles* in wetland conservation and wise use;
22. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to establish appropriate consultation mechanisms at regional or national levels, in order to consider how the *Guiding Principles* might be applied in developing and promoting the cultural values of wetlands; and
23. URGES Contracting Parties and the Ramsar Bureau to develop synergies and to avoid duplication of efforts with the relevant multilateral agreements, such as those mentioned in paragraph 13 above.

**Annex: Guiding principles for taking into account the cultural values of wetlands for the effective management of sites**

**General principles**

- (i) 1. This document proposes a number of general principles for identifying, preserving and reinforcing the cultural values of wetlands, which could be supplemented with additional ones at future meetings of the Conference of the Parties as more knowledge and experience are obtained. Some of them may overlap, but this is only natural as cultural values are often related and require an integrative approach.
- (ii) 2. There is a strong link between wetland conservation and benefits to people. In addition, a positive correlation between conservation and the sustainable use of wetlands has been repeatedly demonstrated. Therefore, conservation requires the involvement of indigenous peoples and local communities and cultural values offer excellent opportunities for this.

Guiding principle 1 – To identify the cultural values and relevant associated partners.

Guiding principle 2 - To link the cultural aspects of wetlands with those of water.

Guiding Principle 3 - To safeguard the wetland-related cultural landscapes.

Guiding principle 4 - To learn from traditional approaches.

Guiding principle 5 – To maintain traditional sustainable self-management practices.

Guiding principle 6 – To incorporate cultural aspects in educational and interpretive activities in wetlands.

Guiding principle 7 – To take into account culturally appropriate treatment of gender, age and social role issues.

Guiding principle 8 – To bridge the differences of approach between natural and social sciences.

Guiding principle 9- To mobilise international cooperation in matter of culture issues related to wetlands.

Guiding principle 10 – To encourage research on palaeoenvironmental, palaeontological, anthropological and archaeological aspects of wetlands.

Guiding principle 11 – To safeguard wetland-related traditional production systems.

Guiding principle 12 – To protect historical structures in wetlands or closely associated with them.

Guiding principle 13 – To protect and preserve wetland-related artefacts (mobile material heritage).

Guiding principle 14 – To preserve collective water and land use management systems associated with wetlands.

Guiding principle 15 – To maintain traditional sustainable practices used in and around wetlands, and value the products resulting from these practices.

Guiding principle 16 – To safeguard wetland-related oral traditions.

Guiding principle 17 – To keep traditional knowledge alive.

Guiding principle 18 – To respect wetland-related religious and spiritual beliefs and mythological aspects in the efforts to conserve wetlands.

Guiding principle 19 – To use the arts to promote wetland conservation and interpretation.

Guiding principle 20 – To incorporate cultural aspects, where available, in the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) for the description of Wetlands of International Importance, whilst ensuring the protection of traditional rights and interests.

Guiding principle 21 – To incorporate the cultural aspects of wetlands in management planning.

Guiding principle 22 – To include cultural values in wetland monitoring processes.

Guiding principle 23 – To consider the use of institutional and legal instruments for conservation and protection of cultural values in wetlands.

Guiding principle 24 – To integrate cultural and social criteria into environmental impact assessments.

Guiding principle 25 – To improve wetland-related communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) in the matter of the cultural aspects of wetlands.

Guiding principle 26 – To consider the possibility of using quality labeling of sustainable traditional wetland products in a voluntary and non-discriminatory manner.

Guiding principle 27 – To encourage cross-sectoral cooperation.

### **Resolution IX.21**

*(adopted by the 9th Conference of the Contracting Parties, Kampala, Uganda, 2005)*

#### **Taking into account the cultural values of wetlands**

1. AWARE that wetlands and water resources in all parts of the world have been focal points for people and societies, providing vital services and being places where local communities and indigenous peoples have developed strong cultural connections and sustainable use practices;
2. ALSO AWARE that wetlands are especially important to local communities and indigenous peoples and that these groups must have a decisive voice in matters concerning their cultural heritage;
3. FURTHER AWARE that a great number of Ramsar wetlands hold significant cultural values linked to the ecological functioning of these wetlands.
4. RECALLING that the Ramsar Convention from its beginning has recognized the cultural values of wetlands in its Preamble, as well as recognizing that cultural actions may be determined by ecological processes and *vice versa*;
5. APPRECIATING that the wise use of wetlands, the foundation of the Ramsar Convention, requires taking seriously into account these cultural values as they may assist in strengthening or re-establishing the links between people and wetlands, and giving cultural values greater recognition within the Convention;
6. NOTING Resolution VIII.19 *Guiding principles for taking into account the cultural values of wetlands for the effective management of sites*, adopted by COP8, and the need for its implementation;
7. TAKING ALSO INTO ACCOUNT a) Resolution VII.8 *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous peoples' participation in the management of wetlands*, adopted by COP7, and b) paragraph 30 of Resolution VIII.10 on "additional criteria and guidelines for the identification and designation of Ramsar sites concerning socio-economic and cultural values and functions that are relevant to biological diversity ... which would be applied on each occasion in conjunction with one or more existing criteria for the identification and designation of Ramsar sites";
8. AWARE of the work undertaken by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel during the 2003-2005 triennium concerning the inclusion of the cultural importance of wetlands in Ramsar site designation processes;



9. MINDFUL that the Ramsar Convention needs to work in cooperation with multilateral and regional agreements and other international bodies, within their respective mandates, addressing cultural heritage issues as they relate to wetlands, and NOTING the role of the World Heritage Convention in the protection of cultural heritage; and
10. NOTING the presentations and discussions during the COP9 Technical Session 2 on 'Culture and knowledge in wetland management';

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

11. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to identify and analyze further case studies of wetlands with significant cultural values and make them widely known, thus increasing the knowledge and understanding of the relationship between cultural processes and wetland conservation and wise use;
12. AGREES that in the application of the existing criteria for identifying Wetlands of International Importance, a wetland may also be considered of international importance when, in addition to relevant ecological values, it holds examples of significant cultural values, whether material or non-material, linked to its origin, conservation and/or ecological functioning;
13. FURTHER ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to incorporate cultural values in wetland policies and strategies, as well as in wetland management plans, and to communicate the results, thus contributing to the development of comprehensive and integrated approaches;
14. EMPHASIZES that measures taken with respect to this Resolution in accordance with the Ramsar Convention are consistent with Parties' rights and obligations under other international agreements;
15. IDENTIFIES the following cultural characteristics as relevant in the designation of Ramsar sites:
  - i) sites which provide a model of wetland wise use, demonstrating the application of traditional knowledge and methods of management and use that maintain the ecological character of the wetland;
  - ii) sites which have exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilizations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland;
  - iii) sites where the ecological character of the wetland depends on the interaction with local communities or indigenous peoples;
  - iv) sites where relevant non-material values such as sacred sites are present and their existence is strongly linked with the maintenance of the ecological character of the wetland;
16. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to complete, through a broad participatory process, the work prescribed in paragraph 17 of Resolution VIII.19 concerning the guidance to be provided on cultural values;
17. REQUESTS the Ramsar Secretariat to establish a multi-disciplinary working group on the cultural values of wetlands, with a balanced geographic

representation, under the supervision of Standing Committee, with appropriate input from the STRP, to coordinate the activities described above; and

18. FURTHER REQUESTS the Ramsar Secretariat to analyse the activities carried out to incorporate cultural values in the work of the Convention during the triennium 2006-2008 and the experience gained, and to report to the Standing Committee and to the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP10).

DRAFT