

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar)

5th Joint Work Plan (JWP) 2011 – 2020

Background

The global environment is rapidly changing, and these changes impact on the capacity of ecosystems to deliver the services needed to sustain and improve human well-being. Policy development, planning and management based upon the Ecosystem Approach are essential to promote the continued delivery of ecosystem services. Among these services, water is the most valuable and the wise management of biodiversity and wetlands is thus critical in this context. Furthermore, while climate change is increasingly on the public and political agenda, the importance of the biodiversity and wetlands in moderating global change and its impacts remain under-recognized.

The new Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) was adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), in decision X/2. This Strategic Plan and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets set down a framework for harmonised and concerted action by all stakeholders. Likewise, the third Strategic Plan for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands 2009-2015, adopted by Resolution X.1, lays down the framework for action regarding wetlands consistent with, and supporting, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (as is affirmed in Ramsar COP11 [DR6]).

This 5th CBD-Ramsar Joint Work Plan covers the time-period of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) and operates in the context of the Ramsar Convention's lead implementation role for wetlands for the CBD (through CBD decision III/21) and the CBD-Ramsar Memorandum of Cooperation (1996; renewed 2011).

Goal

The goal of this Joint Work Plan is the conservation, sustainable and wise use of biodiversity especially in wetlands, helping to assure the full achievement of the Vision, Mission and Goals of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and the Mission and Strategies of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015.

Rationale

Recognising that:

- i) that the ongoing collaboration between the two conventions is setting a good example in building synergies between conventions to deliver effectively the objectives of both conventions (CBD Decision X/20; Ramsar Resolutions X.11 and [COP11 DR6]) and that we must build upon this success;
- ii) the Ramsar Convention acts as the lead partner for wetlands in implementing the CBD;

- iii) the two conventions do not have the same composition of Parties but that the objectives and principles of the CBD are embodied in the Ramsar Convention, and *vice-versa*, in a mutually supportive way;
- iv) Article 1.1 of the Ramsar Convention states that “For the purpose of this Convention wetlands are areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres”;
- v) wetlands therefore occur in all biomes and are potentially influenced by all sectors’ activities, and that the appropriate management of land and water, using the Ecosystem Approach of the CBD, is required to achieve the goal of the convention: consequently, the JWP will work through all relevant thematic programmes and cross-cutting issues of the CBD, and support implementation of all relevant Resolutions made under the Ramsar Convention;
- vi) the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) has placed greater and more explicit emphasis on water and water-related ecosystem services, as recognised further including as a key subject relevant to most programmes of work of the CBD and Aichi Biodiversity Targets in CBD decision X/28, and that the Ramsar Convention text emphasises the critical role that wetlands play as suppliers of water, and therefore water has emerged as a key area of mutual interest of both conventions;
- vii) the biological diversity of wetlands is under the most severe threat and that threats are rapidly escalating – particularly through competing human demands for water;
- viii) continued biodiversity loss from wetlands will seriously undermine the delivery of important services provided by these ecosystems and will be a significant constraint to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
- ix) considerable technical knowledge has already been developed by the CBD, Ramsar, and many partners to manage land and water better in order to sustain their benefits for people; and
- x) whilst the further development of technical tools is required in some areas, the key requirements for the achievement of the objectives of this JWP centre on public and political awareness, institutional weaknesses, and capacity-related issues.

Specific activities

The primary responsibility for implementation of this JWP rests with Parties and the Convention bodies. The Secretariats play a supporting and facilitating role.

The following is an indicative list of activities. The flexible and innovative nature of this JWP is designed to lead to other key targeted actions aimed to maximise its contribution to the achievement of the goal of the JWP.

Parties may identify specific national actions, depending on the circumstances of each country. The national focal points of the two conventions should cooperate in a proactive and flexible way to implement this work programme.

In order to ensure the wise use of wetlands as well as the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in all ecosystems, as well as to promote the contribution of biodiversity and wetlands to human well-being, key activities include:

- i) making use of the Ecosystem Approach in planning processes at national, regional and local levels by taking into account the ecosystem goods and services provided by wetlands and other ecosystems;
- ii) developing and implementing National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and National Wetland Policies in a consistent and mutually supportive way;
- iii) identifying and implementing joint activities to promote the integration of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the wise use of wetlands into relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies, including poverty reduction strategies;
- iv) promoting wetlands and biodiversity, and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) and the Strategic Plan of the Ramsar Convention, as solutions to pressing water-related management and development problems at global, regional, national and subnational scales; and
- v) promoting the synergistic implementation of both conventions – including the CBD programme of work on protected areas and the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.

Convention bodies. For the scientific subsidiary bodies of the conventions, with the possible assistance of liaison groups, expert groups, specialist organizations or individual experts, key actions to support this JWP include, *inter alia*:

- i) prioritising key activities to implement both conventions in a mutually supportive manner;
- ii) advising on further harmonisation and consistencies between the CBD Ecosystem Approach and Ramsar “wise use of wetlands”;
- iii) developing tools to measure the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets by elaborating and using relevant wetlands and water-related ecosystem service indicators;
- iv) advising on harmonisation between the Ramsar criteria for the designation of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) and criteria for identification of areas of global significance for biodiversity;
- v) improving representativeness of wetland protected areas, including using Ramsar Sites as catalysts for networks of protected areas within and between countries to conserve wetlands;
- vi) promoting sustainable use of wetland biodiversity and ecosystem services in the framework of wise use;

- vii) supporting complementary and/or harmonised national reporting, including the role of CBD and Ramsar national reports in measuring the implementation of this JWP;
- viii) collaborating to meet the goals of both conventions' strategic plans, to best monitor and assess the respective achievements in the context of biodiversity and wetlands;
- ix) integrating wetland and water considerations into environmental impact assessments and water management and policy;
- x) facilitating data accessibility and interoperability among the Ramsar data and information systems and the CBD Clearing-House Mechanism, including its national nodes;
- xi) identifying strategic opportunities, and formulating plans, for coordinated action on Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA); and
- xii) further identifying and promoting the importance of cultural diversity in understanding and managing biodiversity and wetlands.

The Secretariats will promote or assist implementation of the Joint Work Programme through, *inter alia*:

- i) any activities requested by their governing bodies relevant to the goals and objectives of this JWP, recognising the differing resources available to, and the comparative advantage of, each secretariat; and
- ii) innovative approaches, within available resources, to implement this JWP, focusing in particular on:
 - a) engaging with major groups and partners in the full implementation of the provisions of both conventions as related to priority issues for the conservation, wise use and international cooperation around wetlands;
 - b) awareness raising through strengthened and more effective CEPA activities, including under the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, which target major stakeholders that influence policy and management outcomes for biodiversity, wetlands and water;
 - c) promoting, where necessary, capacity of Parties, including through enhanced cooperation; and
 - d) jointly facilitating preparation and issuing of reports and information materials on matters of common relevance to the conventions.

Reporting

This Joint Work Plan shall be used as the basis for reporting to their respective bodies on activities and progress by each Secretariat in accordance with the needs of their respective governing and/or scientific bodies.

Timeframes

This Joint Work Plan shall be evaluated and revised approaching 2020 in the context of its contribution to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and subsequent strategies identified by the Parties. In the interim, any further relevant actions requested to be undertaken by the governing or scientific bodies of the conventions shall be included under the Joint Work Plan without the need for its formal revision unless specifically required.