



"Partners for Wetlands"

Memorandum of Cooperation between

the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

and

The Ramsar Convention's International Organisation Partners (IOPs)
2011-2017

The Ramsar Convention

Since its inception in 1971, the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) has provided the primary global intergovernmental forum on wetland conservation and wise use issues. Through the Convention's mission statement, the Contracting Parties agree to "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".

The Convention is founded on three pillars of:

- promoting wise use of wetlands,
- developing international cooperation, and
- developing a network of Wetland sites of International Importance.

The conservation and wise management of wetlands through the designation of wetlands for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance, especially the obligation to maintain the ecological character of designated sites, deserves special recognition. This obligation recognizes the importance of wetlands for the maintenance of healthy and productive inland water and coastal systems. In the context of water and wetlands, the Convention on Wetlands thus addresses issues that guide its Contracting Parties on ways to achieve sustainable development.

Within the general obligations set out by the treaty, Contracting Parties, meeting as the Conference of the Parties (COP), review and evaluate progress made in the implementation of the Convention and agree future priorities for action under the Convention's Strategic Plan, the current Strategic Plan (the 3rd) for 2009-2015 having been adopted by Ramsar COP10 in 2008 through Resolution X.1. Opportunities for cooperation and joint activities under this Memorandum of Cooperation are identified within the framework of the Strategic Plan.

The International Organization Partners

The formal status of the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs) was established by the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 1999 (Resolution VII.3). The Conference recognized the important and long-term contribution that four international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) played in the inception of the Ramsar Convention, and continued to play in its implementation. It conferred the status of IOP on these four organizations (BirdLife International,

the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), Wetlands International and WWF International), and established rules for conferring the status on other international organizations (non-governmental or intergovernmental) that meet the criteria set out in Resolution VII.3. Subsequently, through COP9 Resolution IX.16 a fifth organization, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), was recognised as an IOP. Further organizations can seek IOP status subject to the approval of Contracting Parties through a COP decision (Resolution).

As spelled out in the Annex to Resolution VII.3,

“... the status of Partner shall be conferred to international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations taking into account the following characteristics:

1. Have a programme of activities that is global or at least covers many countries in one or more regions of the world.
2. Have a statement of purpose that explicitly, or by clear implication, includes the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.
3. Have a track record of experience in providing support to and/or implementing on-the-ground projects that contribute to wetland conservation and sustainable use.
4. Have demonstrated experience in implementing partnership ventures such as training and education, technical and/or scientific expertise, policy development, and/or evaluation and assessment, particularly where such ventures would bring new and additional benefits to the functioning of the Ramsar partnership.
5. Have a positive reputation for being willing and able to cooperate with national and international bodies, including both governmental and non-governmental ones.
6. Have stated their readiness to actively contribute on a regular basis to the further development of the policies and tools of the Convention on Wetlands and their application on the ground, particularly by assisting Contracting Parties to meet their obligations under the Convention.
7. Are prepared to sign a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Bureau of the Convention, where the partnership agreement should be spelt out fully.”

Purpose

This General Memorandum reaffirms and formalizes the ongoing partnership between the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the IOPs regarding activities agreed upon and relating to conservation and wise use of wetlands and water resources. This Memorandum of Cooperation comes within the scope of continuing cooperation between the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention and its International Organization Partners.

Resolution VII.3 of the Conference of the Parties has established the status of IOP and welcomes the organizations on which this status has been conferred to contribute to the development of policies and technical and scientific tools of the Convention, and to their application.

Partner organizations have the opportunity to contribute at all levels to shaping the development and progress of the Convention together with its Contracting Parties and governing and expert bodies.

The overall objective of the partnership is to add value to the further development and implementation of the Convention and to the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources as a means to contribute to sustainable development.

The partnership will facilitate actions that enhance the maintenance and restoration of wetland ecological character so that they continue to contribute to the maintenance of biological diversity and in climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as to livelihoods and human well-being including human health.

Specific agreed areas of collaboration with each of the IOPs are set out in the Annexes to this General Memorandum.

Partnership Approach and Roles

The Convention shapes governmental policies and programmes and intergovernmental cooperation regarding the conservation and wise use of wetland and water resources. The Secretariat carries out the day to day coordination of the Convention's activities; it provides administrative, technical and scientific support to the Contracting Parties as they implement the Convention. The IOPs are key stakeholders for the Convention, helping to identify ongoing and emerging issues, contributing to the identification of priorities for governmental attention, and facilitating and implementing programmes that address these, working with all relevant sectors.

The Secretariat establishes its programme of work and priorities for collaboration according to the goals and strategies of the Strategic Plan, subject to its capacities. Each IOP develops a specific programme of collaboration according to its own priorities, capacities and programme of work.

The Secretariat and the IOPs will develop the partnership, both bilaterally and multilaterally, in order to bring together complementary capacities and combine resources to achieve mutually agreed outcomes. The IOPs work with the Convention bodies, and where possible with Contracting Parties to support national implementation of the Convention, and also collaborate with each other to further the goals of the partnership.

Instruments and Mechanisms for Collaboration

Specific areas of collaboration will be referred to the Ramsar Strategic Plan and the relevant Strategic Plan of the IOP, making the partnership visible and accountable.

The Secretariat will work to facilitate the bilateral and multilateral collaboration with IOPs including on joint project and resource development, technical exchange, policy and partnership initiatives. This will be achieved *inter alia* through regular liaison and information exchange as well as by arranging partnership meetings (electronically or face-to-face).

IOPs will endeavour to ensure that all relevant programmes of their organizations support the specific objectives and the implementation of the Ramsar Convention. In doing so, attention will be given to maximizing coherence with other relevant Conventions.

The Secretariat and the IOPs will share information on their respective networks and encourage their focal points at all levels to share information and to collaborate, especially regarding the active implementation of the Convention at both national and regional level. IOPs will consult with each other to share information and coordinate activities through their respective networks, with a view to avoiding duplication, providing synergies and increasing their combined capacity.

IOPs are invited to participate in an observer capacity and as advisors in all activities of the Convention, including meetings of the COP, the Standing Committee, the STRP (in which the IOPs are full members), and other regional and sub-regional meetings, and where relevant can be invited to be partners in project development and implementation, as well as in the development of policy and technical/scientific instruments for the application of the Convention.

As appropriate, the Secretariat is invited to engage in relevant fora and advisory bodies established by the IOP's individually or in combination.

The Secretariat will consult with the IOPs if and when other organizations request IOP status.

Benefits

The Convention bodies and its Secretariat will continue to benefit from the active involvement and the expertise of the IOPs, in the development of global policy and technical tools, and in their support for enabling society to take action and facilitating implementation of the Convention in terms of policy and practice.

The IOPs, for their part, will work with the Convention as a vehicle for achieving mutual objectives and benefit from facilitation provided by the Secretariat in terms of technical exchange, partnerships, resource development and recognition. The IOPs can take credit for their valuable contributions to sustainable development through wetland conservation and wise use. They can expect to increase their visibility and their influence with governments and at intergovernmental level, and may, as appropriate, utilize their IOP status and profile such as in developing projects, jointly or individually, for donor funding.

All partners will benefit from the recognition of their respective achievements and the increased visibility and representation internationally and from synergies at all levels.

The extent to which the collaborative programme and the joint conservation activities are implemented will be subject to the availability of resources. However, improved resource development is anticipated to be an outcome of the partnership.

Obligations, Duration, Review and Termination

This Memorandum of Cooperation constitutes an expression of a shared intent. However, each party's actions will be considered to be that party's sole and separate action, for all purposes, and neither party shall claim to be acting on behalf of, or as agent for another party to this Memorandum of Cooperation.

The term for this Memorandum of Cooperation is six years as of the date of signature by the Parties.

The Memorandum will be reviewed mid-term, or more frequently at the request of any party. Any party may withdraw from this Memorandum at any time, subject to six months notice in writing, noting that any such withdrawal from the Memorandum of Cooperation would mean that this organization would no longer comply with requirement No 4.7 of the Annex to Resolution VII.3. Withdrawal of one or more IOP parties from the Memorandum will not prejudice the involvement of the remaining parties.

Done in Gland, on the 19th of May 2011

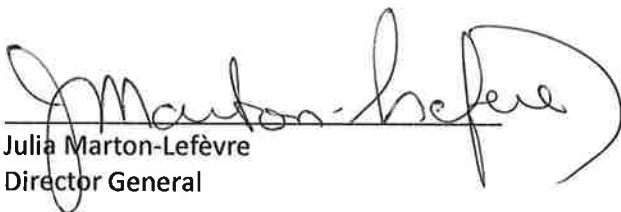
Signed:

For Birdlife International



Marco Lambertini
Chief Executive

For the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources



Julia Marton-Lefèvre
Director General

For IWMI



Deborah Bossio
Theme Leader

For the Ramsar Convention Secretariat



Anada Tiega
Secretary General

For Wetlands International



Jane Madgwick
Chief Executive Officer

For WWF International



Jim Leape
Director General

ANNEXES

Joint Work Plans: specific areas of collaboration between IOPs and the Ramsar Secretariat under this Memorandum of Cooperation, in relation to the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015