

Agenda item 5

**Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel
(STRP)**

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to receive the STRP Chair's report and consider its implications in relation to the future work and priorities of the Panel.

Note by the Ramsar secretariat

- i. This summary report has been prepared by the Chair of the STRP, Max Finlayson, and the Secretariat. The full report and decisions of the 12th meeting of the Panel, held from 1-4 February 2005, are available for reference on the Ramsar Web site and have been circulated to all Parties. This report is a revised and updated version of that made to the Standing Committee's Subgroup on COP9 (DOC. COP9 SG-4) when it met in March 2005.
- ii. A summary of the Panel's progress and anticipated products against each of its priority tasks is provided in Annex 1. Annex 2 provides a list of these anticipated products, grouped into the different types of product and their presentation for COP9 and through other processes.
- iii. The STRP's proposals for the technical Resolutions process for COP9, responding to the approach embodied in Resolution VIII.45, were supported by the Subgroup on COP9 when it met in March 2005, and are covered under Agenda item 7.2 (DOC. SC31-5). Issues and proposals from the STRP concerning proposed amendments to its *modus operandi* in the light of the Panel's experience during this triennium are addressed under Agenda item 9.8 (DOC. SC31-25).

Background

1. Priorities for the work of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) during the 2003-2005 triennium were established by the Standing Committee, based on the list of tasks indicated for the Panel in Resolutions adopted by COP8. The Standing Committee identified six high priority topic areas for the Panel's work and also indicated a high priority for work on agriculture, water and wetlands in response to Resolution VII.34. The 30th meeting of the Standing Committee approved the STRP Work Plan 2003-2005.
2. Notwithstanding this prioritisation, there proved to be a large number of individual tasks for the Panel within these priority areas, and as in previous triennia the Panel has had very limited resources and capacity to undertake such a major programme of work.

3. To undertake its priority work, the Panel established six Working Groups, as well as a crosscutting group on agricultural issues. These Working Groups are:
 1. Inventory and assessment
 2. Wise use
 3. Water resource management
 4. Ramsar site designations
 5. Wetland management planning
 6. Indicators of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention
4. The Panel has been valuably assisted in its work during this triennium by the STRP Support Service, operated for the Convention by Wetlands International. The Service has established an interactive Web site which has facilitated electronic discussion and review of draft materials developed by each STRP Working Group. The future operation of the STRP Support Service is addressed further in DOC. SC31-25 on proposals for the future *modus operandi* of the STRP.
5. To progress their work, each of the six STRP Working Groups met in a mid-term workshop (July 2004), hosted by Wetlands International in Wageningen, The Netherlands, as part of its role in the provision of the STRP Support Service. It should be noted that the funds available from the core STRP budget allocation for these workshops was insufficient to permit the participation by all appointed members of the Panel.

STRP's progress in the main areas of its 2003-2005 Work Plan

6. In spite of its very limited resources, the Panel has made significant progress in a number of key areas for the Convention, and it is now finalizing a considerable number of additional technical and scientific guidelines and other materials designed to fill in gaps in the current 'toolkit' of Wise Use Handbooks (2nd edition, 2004).
7. A table of STRP's progress and anticipated products for each of its high priority tasks is provided in Annex 1, and a summary list of its products for COP9 and other outputs is in Annex 2. A draft COP Resolution (COP9 DR1) for the adoption of the new guidelines prepared by the Panel is provided in DOC. SC31-6.
8. In particular, and in recognition that with this increasingly large suite of guidance available to Parties it becomes harder for users to identify which is the most relevant guidance to apply for particular purposes and at different times, the Panel and its Working Groups have prepared a number of overarching frameworks for different major aspects of Convention implementation. Each of these will show Parties how and when to apply the different more specific guidelines, and will include short summary guidance on each of the relevant more detailed guidelines in the 'toolkit'. Development of these frameworks has also helped the Panel to identify key gaps in the present guidance available to Parties, and which ones the Panel will be recommending to Standing Committee and COP9 should form elements of its work in the next triennium.
9. For COP9 these frameworks will be:
 - i. A Conceptual framework for Ramsar's wise use concept;

- ii. An integrated framework for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring;
 - iii. A framework for Ramsar's water-related guidance; and
 - iv. A revised *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the further development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance*.
10. In addition, as is outlined in DOC. 31-5, the Panel has approved the establishment of a new *Ramsar Technical Report* series of publications to be prepared by the Secretariat, an approach which was welcomed by the Subgroup on COP9 (Decision COP9 SG-3). An outline of the purpose and process for these volumes is provided in Annex 3 to this paper. The Secretariat will publish in this series a number of the more detailed technical guidance, reports and reviews being prepared by the STRP in support of its materials which will go forwards for COP9 consideration. Such papers would for previous COPs have been provided to Parties only as COP Information Papers, and this new approach will have two benefits: a) it will reduce the volume of COP papers which will not be the subject of consideration for adoption, and b) it will make this important material more accessible and for a longer term to Parties and other users and stakeholders. A list of the anticipated *Technical Report* topics from STRP's current work is included in Annex 2.
 11. Some aspects of the STRP's work have led to it preparing proposals for updates and modifications to some existing key Convention guidance and definitions, and the Panel is preparing short Information Papers for COP9 which explain the rationale and thinking behind bringing forward these proposals for COP consideration.
 12. In particular, the Subgroup's attention is drawn to STRP Working Group 2's work responding to tasks requesting the Panel to review, and as necessary update, the Convention's definitions of "wise use" and "ecological character" in the light of other more recent developments and terminologies. The Panel has approved the finalization of proposals to COP9 to amend these definitions in the context of establishing a conceptual framework to assist Parties in their achievement of wetland wise use under Article 3.1 of the Convention. The Subgroup on COP9 approved of the approach presently being taken by the STRP in reviewing the wise use concept and requested the STRP and the Secretariat to finalize the documents for consideration by SC31 (Decision COP9 SG-4).
 13. This guidance, and its supporting Information Paper, is provided in DOC. SC31-7. In undertaking this work, the Panel has recognised the value of the work of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and its development of a conceptual framework for ecosystems and human well-being.
 14. Another significant area of advance in the STRP's work is its preparation of a number of additional guidance papers on matters concerning the inter-relationship between water and wetland ecosystems, chiefly in response to instructions in COP8 Resolutions VIII.1 and VIII.2. Specific guidance prepared for COP9 concerns a) wetlands and groundwater management (DOC. SC31-13); b) supplementary guidance on river basin management (DOC. SC31-11); and c) environmental water requirements (DOC. SC31-12). These will be supported by a number of *Ramsar Technical Reports* (see Annex 2).
 15. In support of this increasingly important area of the Convention's attention, the Panel has prepared a "Framework for Ramsar's water-related guidance". This framework, prepared by Heather Mackay of South Africa's Water Research Commission and Vice-Chair of the STRP, is provided in DOC. SC31-10.

16. A number of the Panel's priority tasks concern reviewing and preparing further guidance for Ramsar site designation, notably in response to Resolution VIII.10, and within the framework of the CBD/Ramsar 3rd Joint Work Plan and related requests from CBD COP7 (Decision VII/4) on its programme of work on inland water biodiversity. STRP's Working Group 2 has prepared a number of amendments and additions to the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the further development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (DOC. SC31-14). This document includes a proposal for a new quantitative Criterion for non-avian wetland-dependent fauna.
17. Concerning existing Criterion 1, the STRP is proposing a minor change in the wording of the Criterion in order to facilitate its application in situations where most wetlands are heavily human-modified, and it is suggesting an elaboration of the guidelines for the application of this Criterion so as to cover the full range of wetland ecosystem services as described by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA). At present the guidelines cover only hydrological services (functions). A COP9 Information Paper setting out the rationale for these proposals is included in DOC. SC31-14.
18. Inventory, assessment and monitoring is recognised by the Convention as key to the implementation of many aspects of wetland conservation and wise use. The Convention has already adopted guidance on several aspects of these topics, but COP8 recognised a number of gaps in this material, for which STRP's Working Group 1 has been developing further guidance. To assist Parties in distinguishing between the many different purposes and types of wetland assessment, an "Integrated Framework for Wetland Inventory, Assessment and Monitoring" (IF-WIAM) has been prepared for COP9 consideration (DOC. SC31-8). This provides short summary guidance on each of the different inventory and assessment tools – both existing Ramsar tools and those additional guidelines being prepared by the Panel, including an explanation of the relationship between environmental impact assessment, strategic environmental assessment, risk assessment, and vulnerability assessment. Annexed to this IF-WIAM will be guidelines for the rapid assessment of inland, coastal and near-shore wetland biodiversity, developed jointly by the CBD and Ramsar Conventions (DOC. SC31-9). The Panel has also recommended that the background report should be published as a *Ramsar Technical Report*. In support of the guidelines on inventory, assessment and monitoring, the Panel is also finalizing additional guidelines on economic valuation of wetlands, on the use of low-cost Geographic Information Systems, and on vulnerability assessment, each of which will be published as a *Ramsar Technical Report*.
19. In addition to its work on preparing guidance on different aspects of assessment tools, the Panel also has a priority task concerning fisheries: "Contribute to assessment of contribution of Ramsar sites and other wetlands to fisheries maintenance, and recommend sustainable management practices". To support this task, IUCN, WWF and the WorldFish Centre have commissioned a report on this issue, and they have assisted in the drafting of a COP9 Resolution on the matter. STRP12 considered a first draft of this Resolution ("The Ramsar Convention and the conservation and sustainable use of fish resources"). The Panel have recommended that, since this is a major emerging issue which has not previously been the subject of substantive attention in the Convention, this draft Resolution should be developed further and considered by the Standing Committee as a stand-alone COP9 DR (see DOC. SC31-17). The Panel has also recommended that the background report should be published as a *Ramsar Technical Report*.

20. COP8 instructed the STRP to develop a set of “indicators of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention”. STRP’s Working Group 6, working closely with the parallel CBD process that is developing indicators for assessing the CBD/WSSD 2010 biodiversity target of significantly reducing the rate of loss of biological diversity, has identified a first tranche of seven ecological “outcome-oriented” indicators for immediate development. These indicators are being designed to complement the largely “process-oriented” indicators in the COP9 National Report Format. Fact-sheets for each of these have been drafted for consideration by the 31st meeting of the Standing Committee (DOC. SC31-15). It should be stressed that the task of going that ‘one step further’ than just assessing status and trends to examine Convention effectiveness has proved a particularly challenging one for the Panel and Working Group 6, and the Working Group considers that some further development of this indicator approach will be required in the next triennium. One issue which will need to be considered by the Standing Committee and COP9 is how to establish and resource a process for the collection, analysis and assessment reporting on these indicators, including as a contribution to assessing the 2010 biodiversity target.
21. Concerning wetland management planning, STRP’s Working Group 5, with the support of WWF, is drafting the requested management planning “field guide” for wetland managers. It is planned that, resources permitting, this will be published by the time of COP9 in the form of a 50-page booklet for field use, with sections and case studies outlining each of the steps embodied in the Convention’s COP8 New Guidelines for wetland management planning. In addition, WWF is currently developing and testing a tool for assessing the effectiveness of management planning at Ramsar sites and other wetlands, similar to that already successfully developed for forest protected areas. It is anticipated that this tool will contribute to assessment of the indicators of effectiveness of the Convention (DOC. SC31-15).
22. The Panel’s agriculture cross-cutting group has provided advice on addressing agricultural issues in the other work of Panel, notably in relation to the preparation of water-related guidelines. In addition, it has developed a scope for the wetland-type specific management guidelines for agricultural wetlands requested by COP8 Resolution VIII.34. The Panel has not progressed these during this triennium, pending resources being found for the precursory review work by International Organization Partners and others requested by Resolution VIII.34. It is anticipated, however, that much of this work can now be delivered through the preparation during 2005-2006 of a report to the Ramsar Convention from the IWMI-led “Comprehensive Assessment for Water and Agriculture” (CA), and through a project being developed by the Dutch government. STRP12 prepared a detailed list of wetland-related questions to guide IWMI in the preparation of the CA report.
23. In its 2003-2005 Work Plan the STRP established a mechanism, responding to Resolution VIII.31, for incorporating communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) into all aspects of its work, as appropriate, through input from the newly re-invigorated Wetlands International CEPA Specialist Group. However, the Panel considers that this mechanism has not worked as well as anticipated, and it has incorporated proposals for strengthening CEPA input in its recommendations for revisions to the STRP *modus operandi* (DOC. SC31-25).

24. STRP12 reviewed the draft Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Ramsar Synthesis Report “Wetlands and Water: Ecosystem Services and Human Well-being”. The Panel endorsed the report, subject to certain amendments and retentions and the inclusion of a one-page “key messages” for decision-makers to head up the report’s Summary for Decision-Makers. Subsequent to this, in March 2005 the MA Board requested significant changes and additions to the report, namely substantial expansion of its Summary for Decision-makers (SDM) from the agreed 7 pages to approximately 20 pages, before being willing to approve it. The report is now going through a set of final revisions, and it is anticipated that it will be published in mid-2005.

Resourcing the Panel’s 2003-2005 work

25. There is no core budget allocation in this triennium for the work of the STRP in preparing its guidelines and other substantive advice. Much of the progress in preparing its guidance reported above has been achieved only through a significant amount of voluntary unpaid work and in-kind support from individual STRP members and observers and their host organizations (notably the Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist (Australia), Water Research Commission (South Africa), International Water Management Institute (Sri Lanka), RIZA (Netherlands), Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (Cuba), Chinese Academy of Forestry (China), UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee, BirdLife International/RSPB, Wetlands International, WWF, IUCN, and The WorldFish Centre). In addition, the drafting of a number of STRP’s major new guidelines has been possible in this triennium through a generous voluntary funding contribution from the government of Sweden which became available in late 2003.
26. However, this has meant that the Panel was not able to start work on many of its substantive guidance documents until some considerable time into the triennium, and was able to progress work only as and when individuals could make time available on a voluntary basis. This has meant that its preparation of guidance destined for COP9 consideration has not progressed as rapidly as anticipated in the Panel’s initial work plan, and most products are only now becoming available in a form appropriate for consideration by the Standing Committee. In some cases, it may be appropriate for the Standing Committee to request further work to finalize guidance documents for COP9, subsequent to its 31st meeting.
27. One consequence of this is that there has been no time and opportunity for consultation on draft documents with STRP National Focal Points (NFPs) and National Administrative Authorities, as was anticipated in the terms of Resolution VIII.45. Increased involvement of STRP NFPs in STRP processes was scheduled to be facilitated during this triennium as part of the work of the STRP Support Service. However, this could not be progressed owing to the reduction in Support Service funding necessary as one of the core budget reductions decided by the 30th meeting of the Standing Committee. Lack of capacity for the better engagement of NFPs remains a major frustration for the Panel.
28. Owing to its lack of capacity and resources, the Panel has not been able to progress a number of tasks in its approved 2003-2005 Work Plan. These include advice on:
- i. delineation and mapping of wetlands;
 - ii. ecological character description;

- iii. further consolidated guidance on the overall process of detecting, reporting and responding to change in ecological character;
 - iv. wetland classification systems;
 - v. analysis and report of the status and trends in the ecological character of sites in the Ramsar List;
 - vi. methods and best practice studies on the wise use of wetlands, including application of the ecosystem approach;
 - vii. river basin management case studies;
 - viii. successes achieved and lessons learnt from demonstrating good practice in water allocation and management for maintaining ecological functions of wetlands;
 - ix. technical background groundwater methodologies papers;
 - x. interpretation of the term 'under-represented type' in the context of available information on the global extent of different wetland types;
 - xi. harmonisation of the layout and information fields of the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) and the core data fields recommended in the Ramsar *Framework for Wetland Inventory*;
 - xii. review of data and information needs, review of the multiple sources of information available on Ramsar Sites; and
 - xiii. advice on the redesign of the Montreux Record questionnaire.
29. The Panel has agreed recommendations for how each of these tasks should be taken forward in its future work, and these are included as actions in COP9 DR2 (DOC. SC31-16).

Future scientific and technical priorities for the STRP and the Convention

30. Although the prioritisation by the Standing Committee of the Panel's work for this triennium has proved helpful, STRP12 recommended that the Panel be more pro-active in the provision of its advice to Standing Committee and COP on future priorities and strategic issues. The Panel has identified a number of future strategic priorities, particularly relating to the development of stronger interaction with other sectors. These and other proposals for future scientific and technical implementation priorities are included in the Annex to the draft COP9 Resolution on these matters (DOC. SC31-16).

Proposals for amendments to the *modus operandi* of the STRP

31. In the light of its experiences and difficulties in attempting to operate under the *modus operandi* adopted by COP8 (Resolution VIII.28), STRP12 undertook an in-depth review of these issues and developed a number of recommendations for amendments to the current *modus operandi* which it considers would make the work of the Panel more efficient and effective.
32. These issues were reported to the Subgroup on COP9 which urged (Decision COP9 SG-6) that the STRP and Secretariat further develop the recommendations on the draft *modus operandi* for SC31, with the inclusion of a mechanism for articulating the priorities and financial implications both before and during COP9. This is provided in DOC. SC31-25.
33. The COP9 Subgroup also requested that a costed program should be included as an annex to the draft technical Resolution on future priorities (COP9 DR2). At the time of writing

this report, the STRP is determining its recommended priorities for the 2006-2008 triennium, and on the basis of these will, with the assistance of the Secretariat, develop the requested costings for consideration by SC31.

Annex 1

STRP 2003-2005 Work Plan priority tasks: Summary of progress and anticipated products for COP9

Working Group 1. Inventory and assessment

STRP tasks 2003-2005 Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].	Anticipated product(s) for COP9	Progress by STRP12 and plans for completion
A. Wetland Inventory		
1.1 Contribute to update of the <i>Global Review of Wetland Resources and Priorities for Wetland Inventory</i> , reporting to COP9 [1.1.5]	None	No progress – deferred pending resourcing of “GRoWI-2”.
1.2 Further review application of remote sensing data, low-cost GIS, and classification systems in wetland inventory, reporting to COP9 [R1.1.i] (Resolution VIII.6)	<i>Ramsar Technical Report</i> issue on guidance for GIS applications for inventory, assessment and monitoring	Near-final draft Report available: WG co-lead (Max Finlayson) to review and provide final draft for STRP peer-review. Classification issues are covered under task 1.3 below.
B. Wetland Assessment		
Further review and, as appropriate, develop guidance and report to COP9, concerning identified gaps and disharmonies in defining and reporting the ecological character of wetlands through inventory, assessment, monitoring and management of Ramsar sites and other wetlands, giving priority to advice and guidance on practical matters on issues that should include:	[see specific tasks below]	
1.3 the Ramsar Classification System for Wetland Type, (bio)geographical	1. <i>Ramsar Technical Report</i> issue on review of wetland classification systems.	1. Draft submitted by consultants Vic and Chris Semeniuk and considered during July 2004 workshop. Will now be further reviewed

<p>regionalization schemes, and their application in defining and reporting the ecological character of wetlands</p>	<p>2. Additional text on biogeographic regionalization schemes to be incorporated into WG4's work on updating <i>Strategic Framework</i>, in Explanatory Notes and guidelines for filling-in RIS.</p>	<p>and edited by WG co-lead and secretariat, before circulation to STRP for peer-review. Proposal endorsed by STRP for next step to be the development and testing of a simple hydrogeomorphic classification, and publish – should be recognized as STRP task for next triennium, which will also benefit from classification outputs, in relation to remote sensing, from the ESA GlobWetland project.</p> <p>2. Review considered by STRP; short text concerning appropriate regionalization scales to be applied etc. to be provided by WG co-lead and secretariat to WG4. Will urge Parties to apply a continental, regional, or supra-national biogeographical scheme rather than a national or subnational one, and an STRP recommendation that a further study be made of appropriate available schemes and advice on this provided to Parties. DSG and Chair agreed to participate in an exercise led by WWF and TNC to draft a marine regionalization and assess its relevance to the Convention's purpose of listing sites of international importance.</p>
<p>1.4 determining the ecological character of Ramsar sites and other wetlands, including techniques for delineating and mapping wetlands and for evaluating their values and functions and goods and services</p>	<p>1. COP9 Information Paper: A proposed scheme for wetland ecological character data categorisation</p> <p>2. delineating and mapping wetlands: None</p> <p>3. <i>Ramsar Technical Report</i> issue on economic valuation methodologies.</p>	<p>1. <i>Ecological character</i>. Working Group 1 (led by Max Finlayson) will develop a scheme of data categorization, in an information paper for COP9, with a recommendation (in COP9 future implementation DR) on what the COP should ask to be done next. This would be taken forward in the next triennium as part of a broader STRP review of the Convention's information needs. The STRP suggested that two levels of data should be sought for describing ecological character: 1) at the Convention level, semi-qualitative data useful for detecting change; and 2) at the site management level, quantitative and more detailed data, as determined by the particular needs of the site. The latter category should be field-tested.</p> <p>2. <i>Delineation & Mapping</i>. Deferred pending completion of advice from ESA GlobWetland project: should be STRP task for 2006-2008.</p> <p>3. <i>Economic valuation</i>. Draft guidelines considered by STRP, will now be finalized by authors, WG co-lead and Ramsar secretariat, then provide final draft for STRP peer-review.</p>

<p>1.5 Incorporation of assessment and management processes and practical methods (including multi-scalar methods for wetland assessment and monitoring) developed by other programmes, including the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), into the series of Ramsar Handbooks for the Wise Use of Wetlands</p>	<p>MA concepts and terms incorporated into STRP guidance on wise use and ecological character (see Working Group 2).</p>	
<p>1.6 Practical methods, including indicators, for monitoring wetlands and for the rapid assessment of wetland biodiversity, including both inland waters and coastal and marine systems</p>	<p>1. Annex to COP9 DR on additional scientific and technical guidance: <i>Summary guidelines for rapid assessment methodologies for inland, coastal and nearshore marine wetlands.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Ramsar Technical Report</i> issue to include full set of detailed supporting tables from CBD materials.</p>	<p>1. Consolidated edition of three CBD separate guidelines documents on inland waters, and coastal and marine systems. Draft to be finalized by Secretariat for approval by STRP and SC.</p> <p>2. <i>Technical Report</i> draft to be developed by Ramsar secretariat with assistance of CBD secretariat, for STRP peer-review.</p>
<p>1.7 incorporation of environmental impact and strategic environmental assessment into wetland risk assessment procedures</p>	<p>Text explaining relationships between environmental impact, strategic environmental, risk and vulnerability assessment, to be included in “IF-WIAM” (see task 1.8).]</p>	<p>Draft text prepared by David Pritchard and Habiba Gitay agreed by STRP12 – some further editing and diagram construction needed for incorporation into “IF-WIAM”.</p>
<p>1.8 Consider consolidation of existing Convention guidance and develop an integrated framework for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring [R1.2.ix] &</p> <p>Harmonization of definitions and terms throughout the suite of Ramsar guidance on inventory, assessment, monitoring and management of the ecological character of wetlands [R1.2.viii] (Resolution VIII.7)</p>	<p>Annex to COP9 DR on additional scientific and technical guidance: <i>Integrated Framework for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring (“IF-WLAM”).</i></p>	<p>Concept for framework, and its structure and contents agreed by STRP12. Text will include short standardized summary descriptions of each category of inventory and assessment approach (including those being prepared by STRP this triennium – vulnerability assessment, GIS usage, rapid assessment etc. - and those e.g. baseline inventory, risk assessment framework already COP approved). Will be drafted (Max Finlayson & Ramsar Secretariat) by 1 April 2005 and circulated to STRP for approval.</p> <p>Harmonisation of definitions and terms is covered in the COP9 output from Working Group 2.</p>
<p>1.9 Contribute to, review, and utilize the work of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment in</p>	<p>Results of finalized MA Ramsar Synthesis Report are expected to be presented to</p>	<p>STRP members and observers have authored key underlying MA chapters, and formed a significant part of the MA Ramsar Synthesis</p>

reporting to COP9 on wetland status and trends [1.2.1]	COP9, and will contain summary assessment of wetland status and trends.	Team; STRP12 endorsed the MA's report to the Ramsar Convention " <i>Water and wetlands ecosystems and human well-being</i> ", subject to certain additions (including a one-page "Key messages for decision-makers"), amendments and retentions.
1.10 Contribute to assessment of contribution of Ramsar sites and other wetlands to fisheries maintenance, and recommend sustainable management practices [1.2.6]	1. COP9 DR for SC31 consideration on Ramsar sites, fisheries and sustainable management 2. Probable <i>Ramsar Technical Report</i> on review of role of Ramsar sites in fisheries and sustainable management. practices	Draft report prepared by consultant funded by IUCN, WWF and the WorldFish Centre. Will be further reviewed by these organizations and Ramsar secretariat, prior to peer-review consideration by STRP. Draft COP9 DR reviewed by STRP12, who have recommended that a revised draft should be submitted to SC31 for COP9 consideration, on those aspects concerning sustainable fisheries management practices. STRP has advised that aspects of the DR concerning Ramsar site designations and application of fish Criteria should be incorporated into the proposed COP9 DR on future scientific and technical implementation priorities, and may include a 2006-2008 STRP task.
1.11 Develop methodologies for vulnerability assessment of wetlands to change in ecological character (incl. to impacts of climate change, alien species invasion and agricultural practices) [1.2.4]	<i>Ramsar Technical Report</i> issue on vulnerability assessment approaches.	Drafted by consultant (Habiba Gitay), and approved by STR12 subject to further revision, then will go for STRP peer-review for <i>Technical Report</i> approval.
C. Monitoring the condition of Ramsar sites, including application of Article 3.2 and Montreux Record		
1.12 Prepare further consolidated guidance on the overall process of detecting, reporting and responding to change in ecological character, including guidelines for determining when such a change is too trivial to require reporting, having regard to the reasons why a given site is important, and the conservation objectives set for it [R11.2.ii] (Resolution VIII.8)	None	Deferred for STRP 2006-2008 task: task will need to be re-assessed in light of completion of <i>inter alia</i> "IF-WIAM"
1.13 Prepare an analysis and report of the	None – but see comments	Deferred, as consistent data sources for Ramsar sites not yet available.

<p>status and trends in the ecological character of sites in the Ramsar List, and set, as far as possible, the status and trends of Ramsar sites within the wider context of the status and trends of marine, coastal and inland wetlands, drawing upon the results of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and other assessment initiatives as appropriate [R11.2.ix] (Resolution VIII.8)</p>		<p>Some status and trends information are likely to be available at COP9: summary information on overall status and trends is provided in MA reports; STRP WG6's proposals for indicators include assessment of status and trends of Ramsar sites, may include some provisional demonstration assessments for COP9 as Information Paper, plus a proposed time-schedule for indicators reporting. Wetlands International's Ramsar Sites Database (RSD) to STRP12 includes proposals for future assessment of Ramsar site status.</p>
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Working Group 2. "Wise Use" concept

<p>STRP tasks 2003-2005 Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].</p>	<p>Anticipated product(s) for COP9</p>	<p>Progress by STRP12 and plans for completion</p>
<p>2.1 Review the Wise use concept, its applicability and consistency with sustainable development objectives [3.1.1]</p>	<p>1. Annex to COP9 DR on additional scientific and technical guidance: <i>A Conceptual framework for the Wise Use of wetlands and the maintenance of their ecological character</i> 2. COP9 Information Paper: Rationale for proposals, as above.</p>	<p>Guidance and Information paper drafted, but requires some further explanatory text around definitions of ecological character and change in ecological character. Working Group will finalize drafts by 1 March. Note: delivery of this task will now include guidance under WG1 tasks 1.8 ii on harmonization of definitions and terms; and ecological character definition aspects of task 1.4.</p>
<p>2.2 Compile advice, methods and best practice studies on wise use of wetlands, including application of the ecosystem approach [3.12]</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Not progressed – requires consultant contract, but funds not available</p>
<p>2.3 Develop new tools to assist Parties with the implementation of the wise use principle [17.1.5]</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Considered to be premature to develop this work during current triennium – in part depends on outcomes of STRP WG6 work on indicators, on review of guidance gaps identified through task 2.1 products above, and on outcomes of Resolution VIII.45 review of utility of STRP guidances.</p>

2.4 contribute to technology transfer initiatives for sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems [R3.1.iv]	None	No requests for contribution received.
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Working Group 3. Water resource management

STRP tasks 2003-2005 Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].	Anticipated product(s) for COP9	Progress by STRP12 and plans for completion
3.0 [new task] Prepare an integrated framework for Ramsar's water-related guidance	Annex to COP9 DR on additional scientific and technical guidance: <i>An integrated framework for Ramsar's water-related guidance</i>	At its July 2004 workshop, Working Group 3 recognised the need for an overarching framework to outline the links between wetlands and water resources management through the hydrological cycle, and to show how and when to use the different aspects of the Convention's water-related already adopted, and to be prepared for COP9, and those identified as gaps requiring future work. A draft has been prepared by co-lead Heather MacKay, and will be finalized for SC31 consideration.
3.1 River basin management: Review case studies compiled through the River Basin Initiative and other sources and prepare additional guidance (as necessary) on integrating wetlands, biodiversity and river basin management [3.4.3]	Annex to COP9 DR on additional scientific and technical guidance: <i>River Basin Management: additional guidance and framework for analysis of case studies</i>	Guidance drafted and approved for finalization for SC31 consideration, to act as assistance in focusing on a 'critical path' approach to elaborate the COP7-adopted guidelines on river basin management. STRP recommends that a task for its 2006-2008 triennium work should be to consider preparing a consolidation text of these two guidances. Case studies not compiled owing to lack of funding – should be undertaken as a 2006-2008 STRP task, applying the critical path approach.
3.2 Dams: Develop guidelines for considering full environmental, social and economic impacts of large dam construction on wetland and river systems, for COP9 [3.4.4]	None	Future proposed case studies on environmental flows will address dam examples, since the two aspects are closely linked. Future STRP work could be the preparation of an annotated bibliography identifying available guidance for considering impacts of dams on wetland and river systems.

<p>3.3 Prepare report on environmental flow methodologies, to assist in management of dam-related impacts, for COP9 [R3.4.v] (Resolution VIII.2)</p>	<p>Annex to COP9 DR on additional scientific and technical guidance: <i>Supplemental guidelines for the determination and implementation of environmental water requirements for wetlands</i></p> <p>Three <i>Ramsar Technical Report</i> issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Review of environmental flow methodologies for rivers; ii) Review of environmental flow methodologies for estuaries and near-shore environments; and ii) Review of environmental flow methodologies for non-riverine inland wetlands. 	<p>Guidance drafted by Rebecca Tharme (IWMI), and approved by STRP12 for finalization for SC consideration. Will supplement the COP8-adopted guidelines on water allocation and management. Three supporting technical methodological reports are in various stages of preparation for the <i>Ramsar Technical Report</i> series, at least two of which should be ready by the time of COP9.</p>
<p>3.4 Water allocation and management: Contribute to report to COP9 on successes achieved and lessons learnt from demonstrating good practice in water allocation and management for maintaining ecological functions of wetlands [R3.4.ix] (Resolution VIII.1)</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Deferred to next triennium, owing to lack of funding.</p>
<p>3.5 Review Resolutions VIII.1 and VIII.2 and prepare further guidance, if required, for COP9 [R3.4.xi] (Resolution VIII.1)</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Effectively covered by new task 3.0 above on integrated framework, and the additional river basin management guidance, which identifies gaps and priorities for additional guidance.</p>
<p>3.6 Groundwater: Review and prepare guidelines, as appropriate, on the role of wetlands in groundwater recharge and storage and of groundwater in maintaining the ecological character of wetlands, and on the impacts of groundwater abstraction on wetlands [Resolution VIII.1]. Prepare guidance, as appropriate, on sustainable use of groundwater to maintain wetland ecosystem functions [3.4.5]</p>	<p>Annex to guidance COP9 DR on additional scientific and technical guidance: <i>Guidelines for the management of groundwater to maintain wetland ecological character</i></p>	<p>Guidelines on the management of groundwater drafted by consultant Mike Acreman and reviewed by STRP12. Two technical background groundwater methodologies papers not progressed owing to lack of funding – should be considered for next triennium.</p>

Working Group 4. Ramsar site designation

Note. WG4's main products for COP9 consideration will be:

1. An Annex to COP9 DR1 on additional scientific and technical guidance (*Revised Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance*), with a set of *Strategic Framework* revisions and updates, including proposals for an additional quantitative Criterion, and amendments to guidelines for several existing Criteria, including addressing the full range of wetland services under Criterion 1, and updates to other aspects of the *Strategic Framework*.
2. A COP9 Information Paper, providing the rationale for the proposed changes to the *Strategic Framework*.

In addition, a *Ramsar Technical Report* is in preparation which will review background information on the Convention's development of quantitative Criteria, and with a supporting first tranche tabulation for the application of proposed new Criterion 9 for non-avian wetland-dependent fauna.

STRP tasks 2003-2005 Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].	Anticipated product(s) for COP9	Progress by STRP12 and plans for completion
4.1 Definition of 'under-representation'. Provide interpretation of the term 'under-represented type' in the context of available information on the global extent of different wetland types and representation of these in the Ramsar List, and investigate methods for defining targets for representation of wetland types in the Ramsar List in the context of the <i>Strategic Framework for the future development of the List (Resolution VII.11)</i> , and report to COP9. [R10.1.iii] (Resolution VIII.11)	None	Not progressed – requires consultant contract (specification is drafted), but funds not available. Recommended as priority STRP task for 2006-2008 triennium.
4.2 RIS development		
4.2 a) Prepare guidance for the clear	Additional text to be included in Explanatory	David Stroud (WG co-lead) to draft and circulate to STRP in context

<p>definition of the ecological character features in the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS), including recommendations for change to the structure and content of the RIS and, as appropriate, further guidance on the application of the Criteria for the identification and designation of Wetlands of International Importance in the <i>Strategic Framework and future development of the Ramsar List</i> (Resolution VII.11) and the additional guidelines for the identification and designation of under-represented wetland types (Resolution VIII.11) in the definition of the ecological character of Ramsar [R10.1.x](Resolution VIII.7)</p>	<p>Notes and Guidelines for filling in RIS – drawing on WG1 ecological character description</p>	<p>of revisions to these Guidelines.</p>
<p>4.2 b) Consider allocating an open field in section of the Ramsar Information Sheet concerning wetland types, to facilitate the process of review of the Ramsar wetland classification system with a view to including additional types [R10.1.xii] (Resolution VIII.13)</p>	<p>(included in 4.2 a) above)</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>4.2 c) Harmonize of the layout and information fields of the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) and the core data fields recommended in the Ramsar <i>Framework for Wetland Inventory</i> [R10.1.xiii] (Resolution VIII.7)</p>	<p>(included in 4.2 a) above)</p>	<p>Not progressed. Should be undertaken in the context of data and information needs review, next triennium (see task 4.6 below).</p>
<p>4.2 d) Investigate the inclusion of a core data field in the Ramsar Information Sheet to allow for the insertion of a precise site boundary description and consider the preparation of guidance about this field for</p>	<p>(included in 4.2 a) above)</p>	<p>As 4.2 c).</p>

inclusion in the accompanying RIS <i>Explanatory Notes and Guidelines</i> [R10.1.xiv] (Resolution VIII.21)		
4.3 Rolling criteria review Keep under review the Ramsar Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance to ensure that these reflect global wetland conservation and wise use priorities [17.1.5]	1. Additional <i>Strategic Framework</i> guidelines text to cover in Criterion 1 full range of wetland services (expanding on current hydrological services guidance) to cover regulating, provisioning, cultural and supporting services, following MA's terminology. 2. New quantitative Criterion 9 for non-avian wetland-dependent fauna, and supporting <i>Strategic Framework</i> guidelines.	Additional guidance drafted, for inclusion <i>Strategic Framework</i> revisions (Annex to COP9 DR on additional guidance).
4.3 a) Criterion 6 guidance	Additional <i>Strategic Framework</i> guidelines for both Criteria 5 and 6.	Additional guidance drafted, for inclusion <i>Strategic Framework</i> revisions (Annex to COP9 DR on additional guidance).
4.3 b) A quantitative criterion for 'aquatic megafauna'	See 4.3 above: 1. New Criterion 9 and supporting <i>Strategic Framework</i> guidelines. 2. <i>Ramsar Technical Report</i> issue with background information on development of quantitative Criteria, and supporting first tranche tabulation for application of "Criterion 9".	New Criterion 9 and guidelines drafted for inclusion <i>Strategic Framework</i> revisions (Annex to COP9 DR on additional guidance). <i>Ramsar Technical Report</i> to be drafted by David Stroud, with input from IUCN-Species Survival Commission.
4.3 c) Expansion of Ramsar criteria to match CBD Annex I	See 4.3 above	In this triennium, addressed through proposal for new Criterion 9, and expansion of guidelines for application of Criterion 1. Consideration of any further expansion of Criteria should be included as a task in STRP's 2006-2008 work plan.
4.4 Cultural and socio-economic criteria Develop, for consideration by COP9, additional Criteria and guidelines for the identification and designation of Ramsar sites concerning their socio-economic and cultural values and functions that are relevant to biological diversity, as listed in Annex 1 of the Convention on Biological	See 4.3 above	Responds to both Resolution VIII.10 (paragraph 30) and CBD COP7 Decision VII/4 request to Ramsar secretariat and STRP in relation to task 4.3 c.

<p>Diversity (CBD), which would be applied on each occasion in conjunction with one or more existing criteria for the identification and designation of Ramsar sites; and include in this work a full analysis of the implications for Contracting Parties of the implementation of such criteria for the management of Ramsar sites, including Contracting Party obligations and responsibilities for maintaining the ecological character of any such sites so selected so as to ensure that the coherent national networks of Ramsar sites fully incorporate all relevant aspects of the biological diversity of wetlands. [R10.1.xi] (Resolution VIII10)</p>		
<p>4.4 a) Development of cultural and socio-economic criteria (both tangible & intangible values) for use with existing criteria, and guidelines for their application NB. Development of this task should also link with and draw upon that of Working Group 2 on wise use guidelines.</p>	See 4.3 above	
<p>4.4 b) Full analysis of implications of these criteria for the management of Ramsar sites</p>	Included in COP9 Information Paper	Assessment of implications undertaken: will be included in COP9 Information Paper on rationale for the proposed changes to the <i>Strategic Framework</i> .
<p>4.4 c) Consolidation of tasks 4.4 a) & 4.4 b)</p>		Covered in COP9 Information Paper
<p>4.5 Mapping standards and guidance Provide further guidance concerning Ramsar site maps on: i) where the additional information called for in paragraphs 14-16 of Annex III to the RIS <i>Explanatory Notes and Guidelines</i> (Resolution VIII.13) would be</p>	Updated guidance in Appendix D of the <i>Strategic Framework</i>	Wetlands International to review and provide revised text, drawing on the current experience of developing digital mapping for Ramsar sites under the ESA “Globwetland” project.

<p>incorporated into the RIS; ii) the value and feasibility of supplying digital mapping (called for in paragraphs 17-22 of Annex III); iii) the compatibility of such data at a global scale; iv) the use of such data by third parties; and v) issues of data licencing, copyright, access and fees. [R10.1.xv] (Resolution VIII.13)</p>		
<p>4.6 Data and information needs review Review the multiple sources of information available on Ramsar Sites, including RISs, the <i>Ramsar Sites Directory</i>, site management plans, and data that might be collected under other international instruments; review the needs for such information, their uses and users; and make recommendations to COP9 as to how the supply and international reporting of information on Ramsar Sites might be better harmonized to give possible efficiency and cost savings. [R10.1.xix] (Resolution VIII.13)</p>	None	<p>Not progressed – – requires consultant contract (specification is drafted), but funds not available. Recommended as priority STRP task for 2006-2008 triennium.</p> <p>Will potentially lead to a major revision for COP10 of Ramsar Information Sheet structure and format, in relation to WG1’s work on guidance for the description of ecological character of wetlands.</p>

Working Group 5. Wetland management

STRP tasks 2003-2005 Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].	Anticipated product(s) for COP9	Progress by STRP12 and plans for completion
5.1 Management planning “Field-guide”	None	Product will be ca.50 page Field Guide on wetland management planning, to be published in electronic and hardcopy in English and

<p>Develop a field guide for the practical application of the guidelines [on management planning] adopted by Resolution VIII.14, recognizing that there may be circumstances that limit the application of the guidelines in full. [R11.1.viii] (Resolution VIII.14)</p>		<p>translated into other languages, if resources permit. Funding for publication will need to be found. The Field Guide should be available at COP9 but will not require endorsement. It will contain eight chapters based on the steps outlined in the management planning guidelines, and each will include text, case studies, and links. The final draft will be circulated to the STRP and others for comment during April 2005, finalized in May, and produced beginning in June. Archana Chatterjee (WWF-India) has taken the lead in the work.</p>
<p>5.2 Zonation guidance Review and prepare further guidance on zonation and monitoring programmes and methodologies for Ramsar sites and other wetlands, including indicators and rapid assessment methodologies and the use of remote sensing [R11.1.xiii]</p>	None	<p>Much of this task is covered within those products being prepared by Working Group 1. Work on further guidance on zonation not progressed owing to lack of resources.</p>
<p>5.3 Montreux Record questionnaire Provide advice on the redesign of the Montreux Record questionnaire</p>	None	<p>Deferred – pending preparation of related Article 3.2 reporting format</p>
<p>5.4 Responding to change in ecological character Prepare further consolidated guidance on the overall process of detecting, reporting and responding to change in ecological character, including guidelines for determining when such a change is too trivial to require reporting, having regard to the reasons why a given site is important, and the conservation objectives set for it [R11.2.ii] (Resolution VIII.8)</p>	None	<p>Deferred – pending completion of working Group 1’s tasks on describing and reporting ecological character.</p>
<p>5.5 San José Record Assist the Bureau to establish the procedures for the creation and maintenance of the “San José Record” [11.1.3]</p>	None	<p>Not progressed, owing to resources not being available for the establishment of the “San José Record”</p>

Working Group 6. Assessing the effectiveness of implementation of the Convention

STRP tasks 2003-2005 Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].	Anticipated product(s) for COP9	Progress by STRP12 and plans for completion
6.1 Assist the work of the Standing Committee in reviewing the process of the preparation, and adoption of Resolutions and Recommendations by COP (Resolution VIII.45)	Advice to the Standing Committee on scientific and technical Resolution preparation, and their presentation to COP	<p>Working Group co-lead has provided input to the work of the Standing Committee's Subgroup on Resolution VIII.45, and WG and STRP Chair has provide advice to the Secretariat on resolutions with a technical content, for the preparation of proposals to SC COP9 Subgroup on the COP9 Resolutions procedures.</p> <p>In addition, the creation of the new <i>Ramsar Technical Report</i> series, endorsed by the STRP, is designed to relieve the pressure on COP of what would otherwise be large and very technical guidance documents provided as annexes to draft Resolutions or as Information Papers.</p>
6.2 Prepare a series of key indicators in relation to the effective implementation of the Strategic Plan in the next triennium, to be used as part of the National report Format [indicators to be adopted by the Standing Committee at its annual meeting in 2004 so that Parties may use them to complement their National Reports to COP9] (Resolution VIII.26)	<p>Annex to COP9 DR on additional scientific and technical guidance: <i>Ecological 'outcome – oriented' indicators for assessing the implementation effectiveness of the Ramsar Convention.</i></p> <p>[Possible COP9 Information Paper providing demonstration examples of provisional indicator assessments.]</p>	<p>Consultant and Working Group is currently drafting fact sheets for priority set of seven indicators selected by STRP12, for STRP review and for SC31 consideration. The COP9 DR Annex will include a fact sheet for each of the indicators, supported by an outline of the proposed process (data acquisition, handling and assessment products) for operating the indicators, periodic reporting on findings, and provision of information to the 2010 biodiversity target assessment process.</p> <p>Some provisional assessment examples for some indicators may be developed as a COP9 Information Paper.</p>

Cross-cutting issue: Agriculture and wetlands

STRP tasks 2003-2005 Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].	Anticipated product(s) for COP9	Progress by STRP12 and plans for completion

<p>Ensure that adequate consideration of agriculture and wetland issues is incorporated into other relevant areas of work that the STRP may be dealing with, including global climate change, groundwater and its interaction with surface water, toxic chemicals and desertification [R3.4.xxii] (Resolution VIII.34)</p>	<p>No separate documents</p>	<p>Agriculture contact points in each Working Group have reviewed STRP draft materials in relation to agriculture issues</p>
<p><i>Additional tasks emerging during triennium</i></p>		
<p>Establish a framework for identifying, documenting and disseminating good agriculture-related practice and policies that demonstrate sustainable use of wetlands for agriculture, and prepare wetland-type specific management guidelines for wetlands impacted by agriculture (Resolution VIII.34).</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Draft framework prepared in July 2004. Further work on this task deferred, pending precursor work requested from IOPs and others concerning analysis of Ramsar sites where agricultural practices are being undertaken, within or in close association with the sites, including identification of types of practices and impacts, and identification of other existing management guidelines pertinent for Ramsar sites/other wetlands affected by agriculture. This work not progressed due to lack of funding.</p> <p>It is anticipated that such initial work will, in part, now be undertaken as an aspect of preparation of a report to Ramsar from the IWMI-led Comprehensive Assessment for Water and Agriculture (CA) due in 2006, and a proposed related Dutch-developed project. STRP12 provided detailed list of questions for the CA on agriculture, water and wetland issues, for secretariat to transmit to IWMI. Several STRP members and observers will contribute as authors of the CA report to Ramsar.</p> <p>Preparation of guidance and case study review etc. should form a priority STRP's Work Plan for 2006-2008. Work should be initiated in 2005, if possible, by IOPs and/or consultants should resources and funding become available. See note 2 below.</p>
<p>Development of water resource management guidelines in dry and sub-</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Preparation of guidance deferred until revision of the CBD programme of work on dry and sub-humid lands is complete (for</p>

humid lands. (CBD/Ramsar 3 rd Joint Work Plan)		COP8 of CBD, 2006). Approach will be discussed further with CBD secretariat.
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Annex 2

STRP 2003-2005: Anticipated products for COP9 and other STRP products

This Annex provides a summary of the form in which the guidances, reviews, reports and other outputs from the Scientific and Technical Review Panel for its 2003-2005 priority work areas and tasks will be made available to Contracting Parties, at COP9 and in other ways.

There are four categories of material from the STRP:

1. New scientific and technical guidelines, to be annexed to COP9 DR1 on “Additional scientific and technical guidance for implementing the Ramsar wise use concept”;
2. COP9 Information papers, providing background and rationale for some of the proposals prepared by the STRP for additions or significant modifications to existing COP-adopted guidance;
3. Draft COP9 Resolutions;
4. *Ramsar Technical Reports*. These will include a number of the longer and more detailed technical reviews, reports and other guidance prepared by the STRP. The reports will be finalized and published when each becomes ready, but with several which support application of the STRP’s scientific and technical guidelines anticipated to be available by the time of COP9.

1. **New scientific and technical guidelines** (Annexes to COP9 DR1)

- a) A Conceptual Framework for the wise use of wetlands and the maintenance of their ecological character (DOC. SC31-7).
- b) An Integrated Framework for wetland inventory assessment and monitoring (IF-WIAM) (DOC. SC31-8), with additional guidelines annexed, as follows:
 - i) *Guidelines for rapid assessment methodologies for inland, coastal and nearshore marine wetlands* (DOC. SC31-9).
- c) An Integrated Framework for Ramsar’s water-related guidance (DOC. SC31-10), with additional guidelines annexed, as follows:
 - i) *River Basin Management: additional guidance and framework for analysis of case studies* (DOC. SC31-11);
 - ii) *Supplemental guidelines for the determination and implementation of environmental water requirements for wetlands* (DOC. SC31-12);
 - iii) *Guidelines for the management of groundwater to maintain wetland ecological character* (DOC. SC31-13).

- d) Revised *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (DOC. SC31-14).
- e) Ecological ‘outcome–oriented’ indicators for assessing the implementation effectiveness of the Ramsar Convention (DOC. SC31-15).

2. COP9 Information papers

- a) Rationale for proposals for *A Conceptual Framework for the wise use of wetlands and the maintenance of their ecological character* (see DOC. SC31-7)
- b) Rationale for the proposed changes to the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (see DOC. SC31-14)
- c) A proposed scheme for wetland ecological character data categorization
- d) [possible] Demonstration examples of provisional indicator assessments for the effectiveness of implementation of the Convention

3. Draft COP9 Resolutions

- a) COP9 DR1 “*Additional scientific and technical guidance for implementing the Ramsar wise use concept*” – with new guidelines annexed;
- b) COP9 DR2 “*Future priorities for the scientific and technical implementation of the Convention*”;
- c) COP9 DR4 “*The Ramsar Convention and the conservation and sustainable use of fish resources*”.

4. Ramsar Technical Reports

- a) Guidance for GIS applications for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring;
- b) Review of wetland classification systems;
- c) A framework and guidelines for valuing wetland services;
- d) Rapid assessment methodologies for inland, coastal and nearshore marine wetlands;
- e) Review of Ramsar sites and fisheries maintenance;
- f) Methodologies for assessing the vulnerability of wetlands to change in their ecological character;
- g) Review of environmental flow methodologies for rivers;

- h) Review of environmental flow methodologies for estuaries and near-shore environments;
and
- i) Review of environmental flow methodologies for non-riverine inland wetlands;
- j) The Convention's development of quantitative Criteria for Ramsar site designation;
- k) A review of Ramsar sites and fisheries management.

Annex 3

Ramsar Technical Report Series

Purpose

To publish electronically technical notes, reviews and reports on wetland ecology, conservation, wise use and management, as an enhanced information support service to Contracting Parties and the wider wetland community in support of implementation of the Ramsar Convention.

In particular, the series will include the technical background reviews and reports prepared by the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) at the request of Contracting Parties which would previously have been made available in most instances only as "Information Papers" for a Conference of the Parties (COP). This is designed to ensure increased and longer-term accessibility of such documents and will also reduce the ever-increasing volumes of paper provided to Contracting Parties at COP, much of which is not the subject of debate or consideration for endorsement by the COP. Other reports not originating from COP requests to the STRP, but which are considered by the STRP to provide information relevant to supporting implementation of the Convention, may be proposed for inclusion in the series.

Process

The series will be moderated by the Chair of the STRP and the Deputy Secretary General of the Convention. The final draft text of each report will be circulated to the STRP as a peer review process and for approval.

Final editing, design and layout will be undertaken by the Ramsar Secretariat.

A style manual will be produced as a guide to authors. Authors submitting draft technical reports should keep any formatting to the absolute minimum needed for clarity. Reports should be fully referenced.

Up to approximately six reports may be produced each year, with an emphasis on issues of current relevance to the Convention, and especially those on which the Convention has requested information and advice. Publication of a report does not imply that the Convention has formally accepted and endorsed the views and information presented by the authors or editors, and this will be made clear in each report.

Reports will be numbered sequentially and each will be assigned an ISBN number.

Each report, in PDF format, will be posted for downloading in a special section of the Ramsar Web site and will be announced through the Web site and the Convention's various listserves.

If funding has been specifically made available, a report may be produced also in hard copy.

Each report will be in English. Wherever funding or other opportunities arises, the report will be produced in two or all three of the working languages of the Convention (English, French and Spanish).

An annual report will be presented to the STRP and Standing Committee.