

Agenda item 8.3

An Integrated Framework for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to consider the draft “Integrated Framework for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring” and approve a process for its finalisation for consideration by COP9 as an Annex to COP9 DR1 “Additional scientific and technical guidance for implementing the Ramsar wise use concept”.

Note by the Ramsar Secretariat

1. At COP8, Ramsar Contracting Parties adopted Resolution VIII.6 *A Ramsar Framework for Wetland Inventory*. This added an important component to the suite of guidelines adopted by the Convention for different aspects of wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring, which have been incorporated into several Ramsar Wise Use Handbooks, notably Handbook 8 Managing wetlands (risk assessment; monitoring protocol), Handbook 10 Wetland inventory (inventory framework), and Handbook 11 Impact assessment (EIA).
2. During the 2003-2005 triennium, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) established its Working Group 1, led by Max Finlayson (Australia) and Lijuan Cui (China), in response to a number of priority tasks established for it on further aspects of wetland inventory and assessment. These include: additional detailed guidance on the application of remote sensing data and low-cost Geographic Information Systems (GIS), on vulnerability assessment to change in ecological character, and on methods for the economic valuation for wetlands, each of which is being prepared for issuing as *Ramsar Technical Reports*; on the relationships between EIA, strategic environmental assessment (SEA), risk assessment and vulnerability assessment; and on rapid assessment methodologies (DOC. SC31-9).
3. In developing its work plan for the 2003-2005 triennium, STRP’s Working Group 1 agreed that, in view of this increasingly large suite of separate guidances on different aspects of inventory, assessment and monitoring, it would be helpful to Parties to prepare an overall framework for these important aspects of Convention implementation, in line with Strategic Plan 2003-2008 Action R1.2.ix: “Consider consolidation of existing Convention guidance and develop an integrated framework for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring”. The purpose and approach of this guidance will be analogous to that prepared by STRP’s Working Group 3 for Ramsar’s water-related guidance (DOC. SC31-10).
4. A draft “Integrated Framework for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring” is being prepared by STRP Chair and co-lead of Working Group 1, Max Finlayson on the basis of the COP8 Information Paper on this topic prepared by the STRP (COP8 DOC. 16). The guidance will include explanations of the relationships between, and purposes of,

the different inventory, assessment and monitoring tools available to the Convention, and it will identify gaps in the present coverage of this guidance.

5. The Secretariat anticipates that a draft of the “Integrated Framework for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring” will be available by the time that the Standing Committee meets for its 31st session.
6. The Standing Committee may wish to comment on and approve the approach embodied in this “Integrated Framework” and may wish to agree a mechanism for its finalization and approval for COP9 consideration, perhaps by electronic circulation of a final draft text.