

Agenda item 13

Development of the Convention's Strategic Plan, 2009-2014

Action requested: The Subgroup on the Strategic Plan is invited to review the available options and report to the Standing Committee under Agenda item 13 on the best way forward.

1. It seems generally agreed that the Ramsar Convention's Strategic Plan developed for the 2002–2008 period was too complex and detailed and could not be used effectively. This led, at the 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP9), to the adoption of a Convention Work Plan for 2006-2008, which has also formed the basis of the National Report Format.
2. At COP9, the Parties agreed five Goals to be achieved through a series of strategies, each with Key Result Areas and Key Performance Measures to assess effectiveness. The Work Plan was also designed to interact with the "outcome-oriented" indicators being developed by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel for assessing the implementation effectiveness of the Ramsar Convention; these, however, have yet to reach full operation. Each strategy is linked numerically to one of the five Goals. In addition to this linkage some strategies and Key Result Areas will, in the end, inevitably satisfy more than one goal. Each goal was also linked back to the relevant article of the Convention.

3. The mission statement from the Strategic Plan adopted in 2002 was not changed – it remains:

The conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.

4. This Convention Work Plan drew on the "three pillars" of the Convention – Wise Use, Wetlands of International Importance, and International Cooperation – as the frame in which the five Goals were set. The top level structure of the plan was thus:

Conservation and wise use of wetlands and water resources

GOAL 1. The wise use of wetlands:

Delivers Articles 3.1, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 of the Convention.

GOAL 2. Wetlands of International Importance:

Delivers Articles 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 2.6, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1 and 4.2 of the Convention.

GOAL 3. International cooperation:

Delivers Article 5 of the Convention.

Managing the Convention

GOAL 4. Implementation capacity:

Delivers Articles 6, 7, and 8 of the Convention.

GOAL 5. To progress towards universal membership of the Convention:

Delivers Articles 2.4 and 9 of the Convention.

5. In summary we can say that the Strategic Plan for 2009-2014 should have the Conventions' mission as its main guide, followed by a series of goals, setting out what the Convention wishes to achieve. How these achievements are put into place is through the strategies, and the effectiveness of the strategies should be measured by indicators or performance measures.
6. The Subgroup should:
 - agree a basic framework for the development of the Strategic Plan;
 - discuss any possible changes to the five Goal structure;
 - agree the mission statement; and
 - decide how complex the Strategic Plan needs to be, or how simple.
7. These decisions will enable the Secretariat, working with the International Organisation Partners and other interested groups, to prepare a basic plan for later submission to the Subgroup for detailed elaboration prior to the 36th meeting of the Standing Committee.