

DOC. SC36/SG Strategic Plan-1

Progress report on the COP10 National Report Form

Action requested: The Standing Committee Subgroup on the Strategic Plan is invited to note the progress in preparations for National Reporting for the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

1. Following review of a draft COP10 National Report Form (NRF) at its 35th meeting, the Standing Committee provided direction to the Secretariat to further prepare and finalise the COP10 NRF (Decisions SC35-21 – SC35-24).
2. Further development of the Form concerned:
 - i) inclusion, in a preamble, of a clear explanation of the purposes for national reporting and the uses to which the COP10 National Reports will be put;
 - ii) inclusion of a ‘free-text’ summary section for reporting national implementation progress;
 - iii) inclusion of a ‘free-text’ section under each Strategy, as an optional section for Parties to provide additional information if they so wish, to cover a) additional information concerning each of the indicators for that strategy, and b) any information concerning other aspects of implementation progress of that strategy;
 - iv) inclusion for each specific indicator of other ‘tick-box’ options beyond a simple Yes/No answer, such as *inter alia* Partially/ in progress/ completed/ not applicable, etc., depending upon the precise formulation of that indicator; and
 - v) ensuring that the wording of each indicator is precise and clear and will yield information useful for assessing and reporting on progress in implementation of the Convention.
3. In Decision SC35-23 the Committee called for the inclusion of a small number of additional CEPA indicators; indicators concerning status of National Wetland Policies (or their equivalents); and (following the advice of the STRP) any additional process-oriented indicators that are deemed essential for assessing the ecological outcomes of the implementation of the Convention, as well as a short section for reporting the availability of national information on the status and trends of the ecological character of wetlands (both specifically for Ramsar sites and for the overall wetland resource).
4. Following SC35, the Secretariat undertook these further revisions and developments of the NRF and circulated the revised format for Standing Committee approval. The final COP10 NRF was issued in the three Convention languages under diplomatic notification to all Parties in October 2007, and it was also made available for download from the Ramsar Website at that time (http://www.ramsar.org/index_cop10_e.htm). Since this work to revise and finalise the COP10 NRF took longer than was anticipated in Decision SC35-24, a later deadline for submission of National Report was agreed with the Standing Committee Chairs, and is now 31 March 2008.

5. Following receipt of National Reports from Parties the Secretariat, in line with established practice, will review and if necessary seek clarifications from the Party concerned on information provided in its Report.
6. Once each National Report has been confirmed as final, its contents will be entered into a database which has been created by the Secretariat in order to facilitate the various global, regional and thematic analyses of Convention implementation for reporting to COP10.
7. Initial responses received from Parties are indicating that this much simplified and clearer format for reporting to COP10 is appreciated, and the Secretariat has already received a COP10 National Report from one Party.
8. As one aspect of UNEP-funded work currently underway by UNEP-WCMC to support streamlining and harmonising the work of biodiversity conventions and their secretariats, a Web-based on-line National Reporting system is being developed for the Convention on Migratory Species and certain of its range state Agreements. The Ramsar Secretariat will keep under review the experiences of CMS and its Agreements in implementing this approach to national reporting, with a view to determining whether such an approach would facilitate national reporting by Ramsart Parties for COP11.