

Framework for comprehensive ecological and economic partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to review and approve the draft Resolution and its annexed policy paper for finalization and consideration by COP10.

1. Through Decision SC36-15 on the 'Future Secretariat structure and staffing', the Standing Committee recognized that the Secretary General's review and proposals for a 2009-2011 staffing and structure are appropriate in a general sense to consider as a realistic vision to deliver the aspirations and development of the Convention. The Standing Committee endorsed this staffing and structure, subject to its amendment with the simplified senior management structure, noting that nothing in this decision relates to issues concerning core budget matters to be considered further by SC37 and COP10 in relation to any core funding allocations for additional posts indicated
2. In the Secretary General's proposals for 2009-2011 staffing and structure, the establishment of a Unit for Partnership Development is a key innovation. The significant expected results of the Ramsar Partnership Development Unit are based on the assumption that collaboration is more effective in achieving the Ramsar mission than efforts carried out by single agencies. The Partnership Development Unit is proposed to define a clear perception of the approach that accounts for the collaborative advantage, as well as a way to measure it to test this assumption and to strengthen the capacity of partnerships to realize the full potential of collaboration.
3. The Ramsar Convention already recognizes that the mechanism that gives collaboration its unique advantage is synergy. For this reason, it is proposed to establish a Partnership Development Unit within the Ramsar Secretariat to enhance and assess partnership synergy through the identification of its likely determinants, in order to address critical policy, evaluation, and management issues related to our collaboration with many partners at national and global levels.
4. The first strategic aim of the proposed Partnership Development Unit would be to strengthen the Secretariat's ability to review and monitor progress on the strategic priorities and targets and to assist in defining a long-term and annual action plan for partnership development with key players, including governments, the Ramsar International Organization Partners, United Nations agencies, other environmental conventions, research institutes, river/lake basin organizations, the business sector, the media, and the civil society at large.
5. The major aim of this draft Resolution is to propose a policy paper for the development of partnerships with relevant corporate and business organizations, in accordance with the

priority given to involving the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands in [Strategy 1.9 of the Strategic Plan 2009-2014]..

6. The policy paper provides direction for the identification and the selection of pertinent partners to achieve greater alignment between the policies and strategies of the selected corporate and business partners and the Ramsar policies and strategies.

Draft Resolution X.00

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1. RECOGNIZING the importance of the ecological and socio-economic values of wetlands and the vital roles of wetland ecosystems in delivering a wide range of critical benefits/services to all human beings;
2. RECALLING that in Resolution VIII.31 on the Convention's CEPA programme, the Parties recognized that wetland issues can increasingly become part of the business of other sectors and not just that of the environment, thereby mainstreaming the conservation and wise use of wetlands into society and government;
3. AWARE of the fact that several business organizations and networks have developed and adopted their own guidelines to seek to share good practices relating to ecosystem management;
4. CONSIDERING the potential that the wise use of wetlands can offer to sustain the economic and social activities of a wide range of public and private stakeholders;
5. RECOGNIZING the vital role of an effective communication between policy makers, decision makers, managers, and various groups of interests, including governments, business leaders and communities in the implementation of the Ramsar Convention; and
6. NOTING that the business sector is under-represented in the Ramsar family and that promoting greater involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands is emphasized [in Strategy 1.9 of the Strategic Plan 2009-2014];

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

7. WELCOMES the policy paper on "Framework for comprehensive ecological and economic partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector" provided in the annex to this Resolution;
8. URGES Contracting Parties, the Secretariat and the Ramsar partners to make good use of it as appropriate, including within the frameworks of existing national and global initiatives and commitments and in the context of sustainable development;

9. URGES Contracting Parties to draw this policy paper to the attention of all relevant stakeholders, including *inter alia* private companies, government ministries, departments and agencies, water and basin management authorities, non-governmental organizations, and civil society at large;
10. SUPPORTS all stakeholders in their efforts for improvement, including the private companies, to take these guidelines into account in relevant decision-making and operational processes and actions;
11. ENCOURAGES the business companies to seek practical ways, in collaboration with the Ramsar Secretariat, to understand the linkages between their activities and wetlands ecosystems, to avoid negative impacts, to mitigate unavoidable effects, and to take advantages of positive linkages; to assess the status of conservation of wetlands, the trends, including the threats and opportunities; and to understand the ecosystem services and products on which they rely and the wetland types that produce those benefits;
12. ENCOURAGES all decision makers, especially business leaders, to develop and adopt policies, strategies and operational approaches for ecosystem management, including wetlands, guided by the desire to avoid, minimize, mitigate and “offset” adverse impacts on wetland ecosystems;
13. SUPPORTS all joint efforts between the Ramsar structures and partners and the business sector in building alliances with scientific and research organizations, with a view to improving understanding of wetland ecosystem services, identifying and scaling up solutions, and sharing their tools and experience;
14. ENCOURAGES governments, donors, international organizations, and the civil society at large, including business companies, NGOs and local communities to join their efforts to stop and reverse the degradation of wetlands so as to sustain the services they provide as a prerequisite for future growth opportunities.
15. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to disseminate widely the policy paper annexed to this Resolution, including through amendment and updating of the Ramsar Toolkit of Wise Use Handbooks, explore new opportunities and pursue new joint initiatives with private companies, and capitalize on existing partnerships.

Annex

Framework for comprehensive ecological and economic partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector

Introduction

1. There is an increasing recognition that the business sector is not only part of environmental problems but can also be part of the solutions. More and more organizations believe that sustainable development can be best achieved by the commitments and interactions of governments and civil society, including local communities, influential individuals, and private companies.

2. The fourth Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) report, *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Opportunities and Challenges for Business and Industry*, highlights ways in which businesses depend upon services provided by ecosystems, how those ecosystem services are changing, and the ramifications for business and industry.
3. The business sector has both positive and negative impacts on all types of wetlands. Wetland conservation and the ecosystem services they provide are important assets for business, while wetland degradation destroys business values and limit future growth opportunities.
4. The existing partnership between the Ramsar Convention and the Danone Group (France) demonstrates the benefits of a well balanced interaction between conservation and consumption of a high-quality water supply system. As a result of the sound wetland ecosystem management made by the Danone Group, its Evian Water Company is making good profits through the success of a long-term vision on watershed protection.
5. Consequently, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands recognizes the important role that the business sector can play in wetland conservation and wise use through effective and sustained partnerships with the Ramsar community. [The Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention have recognized the importance of that by highlighting relationships with the private sector in the Strategic Plan 2009-2014 (Strategy 1.9).]

Background

6. In recognition of the importance of the role the business sector can play in sustainable development and particularly in wetland conservation and wise use, the Ramsar Secretariat signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Danone Group and the Société des Eaux Minérales d'Evian on 27 January 1998. The objective of this MOU is to implement an Action Programme for Water Resource and Water Quality Protection in Wetlands of International Importance.
7. The original MOU was actually a multi-stakeholder arrangement involving not only the Danone Group but also the Société des Eaux Minérales d'Evian, the town of Evian, the Conseil Général (provincial parliament) of Haute Savoie, the Conservatoire de l'Espace Littoral et des Rivages Lacustres, the Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, representing France as a Contracting Party to the Ramsar Convention, and the Minister for Physical Planning and the Environment. A renewed protocol of cooperation with the Danone Group was signed in March 2004.
8. Ten years after the signature of the first MOU, the partnership is still underway with many successful achievements, including Danone's important financial support to the Ramsar Programme on Communication, Education, Participation, and Awareness (CEPA), particularly in underwriting the preparation and organization of materials for World Wetlands Day each year and providing the Evian Special Prize of US\$ 10,000 for each of the winners of the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award. Previous joint projects have included a programme to supply computer equipment to Ramsar Administrative Authorities in the developing world, the Evian Encounters series of Ramsar seminars for environmental leaders from regions around the world, and the creation of a Ramsar Information Centre on the lake shore in Evian, France, among other things.

9. Since 2007, an additional initiative has begun to support field projects with NGOs and local communities as a way to promote sustainable wetland management and draw lessons through the “Ecoles de l’Eau Programme”.
10. The Ramsar Convention is supporting the role played by the Evian Water Company through its working relationships with local stakeholders to protect the watershed that provides the Evian high-quality mineral drinking water.
11. The Ramsar International Organization Partners are also undertaking partnerships with the business sector to seek intensified private sector engagement and to persuade and enable private companies to reduce their negative impacts on the environment and work towards sustainable development.
12. For instance, Wetlands International and the Royal Dutch Shell Company have established a partnership to provide opportunities for Shell and Wetlands International to combine their competencies and learn from each other. The partners aim to leave a positive legacy from these joint activities for wetlands and their peoples, especially in developing countries. As part of this new partnership, Shell will seek to develop new strategies, policies and tools to protect wetland biodiversity and people and to fulfill its sustainable development objectives. Wetlands International will provide the knowledge about wetland areas and their values and advise on how to manage them in a more sustainable way. The cooperation will in general aim to minimize the loss of nature and negative impacts on associated livelihoods.
13. The activities under this partnership will promote the efficient use of wetland services in river basins and along flyways of migratory birds, develop and demonstrate innovative mechanisms to relieve environmental poverty in wetlands and address climate change mitigation and adaptation.
14. IUCN is also developing and encouraging partnerships between the public and private sectors in environmental protection to yield a win-win situation. The partnerships will ensure mutual understanding and collaboration to influence government policies towards the business sector, customer preference, availability of finance and insurance. Exploring new business opportunities through innovation and new technologies could also be the start of a creative partnership to protect the environment and reap benefits.
15. WWF International has entered into an agreement with the Coca-Cola Company to conserve and protect freshwater resources around the world.
16. In the United States of America (USA), concern over historic wetland loss led to a national goal of no net loss (NNL) of wetlands acres and their environmental services. As a result of this regulatory framework, one of the most well-established systems of biodiversity offsets is “Wetland mitigation and conservation banking”. Basically, mitigation banking creates an economic incentive for restoring, creating, enhancing and/or preserving wetlands.
17. Mitigation banks typically involve the consolidation of many small wetland mitigation projects into a larger, potentially more ecologically valuable site. Further, mitigation banks require the up-front compensation prior to affecting a wetland at another site. This ensures the success of the mitigation before unavoidable damage occurs at another site. With

proper implementation and guidelines, mitigation banking has the potential to increase ecological benefits, save money for project applicants, and improve efficiencies in application and permitting processes.

18. Ideally, mitigation banking can best be implemented in the context of watershed planning. Mitigation banks can be designed and located to address specific watershed needs. This could mean enhancing or restoring wetland functions that are in short supply or are of critical importance in a given watershed or drainage basin. Good ecological assessment of watersheds, combined with transportation, infrastructure, and development planning, will allow mitigation banks to be designed and located in areas where they serve the greatest ecological good.
19. However, despite the fact that regulations require both public and private developers to compensate for or mitigate the loss of natural habitats, when adverse impacts are considered unavoidable, the on-site and in-kind requirement often prohibited long-term ecological success. It is often difficult to replace lost habitat services because wetland hydrology is compromised by surrounding development. In addition, because limited agency resources for monitoring and enforcement had to be scattered among many small wetlands credit projects, the quality of the credits is not always assured.
20. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has developed comprehensive guidelines to achieve more sustainable tourism development. The guidelines aim at making tourism and biodiversity more mutually supportive, engaging the private sector and local and indigenous communities, and promoting infrastructures and land use planning based on principles of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Rationale

21. The Contracting Parties of the Ramsar Convention recognize the importance of innovation to respond to a changing world through the development of long-term strategies that can ensure the viability of wetland values contributing to sustainable development. For instance, the increasing role played by globalization and economic growth is sometimes a source of great opportunities, but the current style of economic growth in our world is also harming the environment and widening the gap between rich and poor. Unsustainable business activities and the increasing poverty occurring in various parts of the world are some of the root causes of environmental degradation.
22. Joint activities that promote wetland conservation and wise use are likely to sustain growth, taking account of environmental and social needs.
23. The Ramsar Secretariat is committed to proposing to the Contracting Parties a strong innovative system, in recognition of the vital role innovation plays in the interdependent relationships between environment and development and in meeting the challenges the Convention is increasingly facing.
24. A key element of the proposed innovation is the definition of a policy that clarifies, upholds and endorses an increasing collaboration between the key stakeholders of the Ramsar Convention and the business sector.

25. The world is recognizing the important role and contribution of the business sector in enhancing investment and creating new assets and opportunities for both development and environment. The need to further promote and facilitate cooperation with the private sector is increasingly considered to be a requirement to make the best use of greater business opportunities provided by potential partners that are willing to care for the environment.
26. The commitments of the Contracting Parties to fully implement the Ramsar Convention cannot be fulfilled without taking care of the rights and obligations of a range of stakeholders that have positive and negative impacts on wetlands.
27. One of the lessons learned from the partnership experience between the Ramsar Convention and the Danone Group (France) is the recognition of the potential role that a private company can play in delivering improved environmental outcomes that can be shared by the whole community, as is happening for example in the case of Evian.
28. At national level, the key expectations of partnership development between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and the private sector are:
 - to equally value the assets of wetlands;
 - to reach a common vision about wetlands;
 - to adopt a shared strategy and a common code of conduct;
 - to jointly carry out positive activities;
 - to benefit mutually from the outcomes of joint activities
29. In this regard, the encouraging example from Australia is enlightening. The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts works with the Australian environment business sector, by
 - contributing to a greater understanding of Australia's environment industry capabilities;
 - facilitating solutions to environment protection challenges using Australian environment technologies, products and services;
 - promoting Australian environment industry capabilities domestically and internationally; and identifying and contributing to environment capacity building opportunities in developing countries.
30. As a result, their partnership is delivering improved environmental outcomes that are shared by the whole community, often without direct cost to those who benefit.
31. An effective partnership with a specific industry also enables other businesses and industries to meet the community's expectations for improved environmental outcomes in a way that can improve the competitiveness of the business.
32. In some developed countries, several business organizations have developed their own guidelines and seek to share good practice relating to ecosystem management. This includes the International Council on Mining and Minerals (ICMM) and the International Petroleum Industry Environment Association (IPIECA).

Criteria for identifying a potential private partner with the Ramsar Convention:

33. The expression “ business sector” encompasses private companies, private firms and their foundations, as well as state-owned enterprises.
34. The fundamental criterion is the commitment by the company to strengthen – but in no way undermine – the integrity and reputation of the Ramsar Convention to carry out its mission worldwide in accordance with the decisions of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.
35. The second criterion is the awareness by the business entering in partnership with Ramsar about the mission of the Convention and the recognition of environmental sustainability as one of the key conditions that sustain life and human health.
36. The third criterion is the commitment to innovate and adopt new strategies that include environmental conservation, especially wetland conservation and wise use, in the main concerns of the company.

Underlining principles and validation

37. Taking into consideration the following guiding principles, the Ramsar Contracting Parties encourage the Secretariat to further develop partnerships with the business sector, [in the spirit of Strategy 1.9 of the Strategic Plan 2009-2014], to promote practical synergy between development and environment by bringing up and caring for the ecological values of wetlands as assets for sustainable development.
38. The first key requirement for establishing a partnership with the business sector is to make sure that the partnership with a given company will not compromise the integrity and the character of the Convention.
39. To that end, it is imperative for the Ramsar Secretariat to obtain a good understanding of the company, to assess the appropriateness of possible collaborative efforts, and to understand the possible mutual benefits and possible negative aspects. Care should be taken to assess the potential partner’s activities throughout the world and throughout the breadth of its business strategies, and not only in the immediate area of the proposed relationship, in order to avoid any possible embarrassment to the Convention.
40. The assessment of a partnership initiative shall take into account immediate, short-term, and long-term mutual benefits as well as any potential negative aspects.
41. The possible negative aspects of a partnership initiative shall be carefully assessed, keeping in mind the potential immediate, underlining and root causes of misunderstandings that could damage the integrity of the Convention.
42. All partnership initiatives shall be consistent with the criteria for the identification of potential partners and shall be undertaken in line with the organizational process and measures for effective implementation. Care should be taken to avoid partnerships that require exclusivity and prohibit other partnerships of a similar nature.

43. All signed agreements should be consistent with the rules and disciplines as well as with the decisions of the Contracting Parties of the Ramsar Convention.
44. All initiatives shall primarily encourage the reduction of adverse impacts on wetlands caused by the activities of the private partner and, in due course, eliminate unsustainable use of wetlands.
45. Any suggestion by one of the Ramsar bodies (Ramsar Administrative Authority, Ramsar National Committee, Ramsar Secretariat, Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel, Standing Committee). about a possible partnership with the business sector shall first be discussed within the Ramsar Secretariat.
46. The Ramsar Secretariat is responsible for the preliminary assessment of each and every suggestion that may originate from one of the Ramsar bodies for the development of partnership initiative with the business sector.
47. Following a preliminary assessment of any suggested initiative, the Ramsar Secretariat is responsible for undertaking the necessary consultations in order to seek the approval of the Standing Committee for further development of the new partnership initiative between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector.
48. In each initiative with the business sector, the Ramsar relevant body shall involve all applicable Contracting Parties, including relevant government representatives, to ensure the endorsement of the Ramsar Administrative Authority in order to facilitate a reciprocal relationship with transparency and mutual benefits to both the Ramsar Convention and the private company.
49. The implementation of joint initiatives shall be made in line with pre-established criteria that strengthen institutions to protect the environment and local communities and contribute to sustained economic growth.
50. Technical cooperation and capacity building programmes should be given due consideration.
51. A monitoring and evaluation framework should be part of signed agreements to facilitate periodic assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the partnership and prompt recommendations to improve the outcomes.
52. Private companies that accept partnerships with the Ramsar Convention shall align their efforts with the Ramsar Convention's policies and assist applicable Contracting Parties in pursuing the implementation of the Convention.

Challenges

53. The first challenge is to establish an enabling environment for the Ramsar Convention to identify, learn to trust, and meet with the potential partners.
54. The second challenge is to clearly develop the specific objectives of the partnership and to agree on possible mutual benefits.

55. The third challenge is an effective communication with demonstrated support from the senior officers of the organizations.
56. To meet the above three challenges there is a need to fulfill the following requirements:

Requirements

57. It is necessary to have a clear understanding of the cultures of the organizations and what makes them willing to be committed to engage in wetland conservation and wise use.
58. It is also essential to identify the priorities of the organizations and to evaluate the areas of coherence and potential friction with the Ramsar mission.
59. The willingness of the company to convince its business units and to eliminate potential areas of friction is a vital element to consider as well.
60. The degree of acceptance or resistance has to be clearly understood, not only with regard to the headquarters of the company but also in their operational units, where most of the impacts on wetlands occur.
61. It is necessary to initiate jointly some framework and procedures for measuring the performance against the objectives. Corrective actions will be required during the implementation.
62. Training and capacity building is a continuing requirement.
63. It is also important to reach out to as many employees as possible to maintain the momentum.
64. A careful use of existing tools, schemes and approaches is needed to agree on environmental and socio-economic principles that are appropriate for the involvement of the private sector. For instance, care must be taken to ensure that the partnerships do not result in conservation benefits for the rich at the expense of the poor.

Objectives

- To promote the engagement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
- To promote a better understanding of the values of wetlands and the mission of the Convention in order to minimize barriers and negative conceptual linkages between wetlands and profitable business.
- To build up, nurture and intensify the synergy between the ecological requirements for sustainable development and the socio-economic benefits derived from sound wetland management.

- To promote the use of the Ramsar tools and stimulate wetland management by the private sector as a way to contribute to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- To facilitate dialogue between business and key stakeholders of wetlands, in particular governments and relevant communities, in order to build trust, stimulate and develop concrete partnership activities.
- To support opportunities for regional collaboration and partnership that promote positive achievements and avoid, minimize and rectify negative impacts on wetlands, especially at basin scale.
- To increase local, national and regional investments to promote wetland conservation and wise use.
- To increase economic and social efficiency of wetland restoration and rehabilitation.
- To enhance the role of wetlands in water quality improvement, biodiversity conservation and wise use, climate change mitigation and adaptation, desertification control, poverty reduction, food security schemes, sustainable tourism development, and sustainable energy production.
- To explore new areas and develop appropriate measures for further cooperation between government and the private sector at national level.
- To explore new areas and develop opportunities to enhance ecological/socio-economic integration of wetland values into the national planning of Contracting Parties.
- To identify and apply methodologies for innovative compensation of wetland loss and offsetting negative impacts on biodiversity and climate change.
- To facilitate the necessary understanding of the state of global wetlands, trends and threats in order to support an up-to-date decision context as well as to fully engage Contracting Parties where actions must be taken to promote timely and relevant application of the Convention's assets and resources.
- To eradicate unsustainable methods of wetland exploitation.

Organization process and measures for effective implementation

65. The Ramsar Secretariat endorses the following organizational process and measures to create and sustain momentum:

- Careful identification and legitimate recognition of private companies that are eager to improve their image with regard to environmental sustainability.

- Initial discussion with a limited number of selected private companies that are committed to paying for the positive change required to maintain and enhance wetland values.
- Review and assessment of the company's approach to wetlands, water, biodiversity, climate change, desertification, and the environment in general.
- Improved channels of communication between the Ramsar Convention and selected private operators to drive and raise the environmental awareness of the company's employees.
- Continued dialogue to recognize and progressively eliminate unsustainable methods of exploitation of water resources and biological resources provided by wetland ecosystems.
- Discussing options that can initiate joint activities supporting wetland conservation and wise use, sustainable livelihoods and water quality.
- Reaching an agreement on concrete joint actions with a clear understanding of respective roles and responsibilities between the Ramsar Convention, relevant bodies (groups), and the private company.
- Launching the partnership initiatives through a strong communication and education element to enhance public perception of the applicable wetlands, their genuine values, as well as the associated threats and opportunities.
- Reaching an agreement on criteria for monitoring and evaluation and adopting a framework for pursuing these.
- Implementing the initiative, including the monitoring and evaluation plan.
- Drawing lessons and adjusting the implementation.
- Improving strategies and policies, using lessons learned.
- Promoting good practices by sharing the lessons with governments, other business companies, and conservation organizations, including the Ramsar International Organization Partners (IOPs) and other environmental conventions.
- Assisting the Ramsar Contracting Parties in integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies, especially the Ramsar principles, to reverse the loss of environmental resources, especially wetlands.

Possible types of partnership

66. The Partnership between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector could be in many forms:

- a) Informal provision of information on wetland issues to improve understanding of the trends of wetlands in a given geographic or professional area;
- b) Formal provision of information on positive and negative impacts on wetlands in a given geographic area;
- c) Long-term respective commitment through contractual arrangements to achieve common goals and shared benefits.

Opportunities for partnership development

67. The most significant opportunities to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands in partnership with the business sector are related to water management to improve the quality and availability of water resources, biodiversity, and other ecosystem services provided by wetlands. Specific opportunities include:

- wetlands and fisheries
- wetlands and forestry
- wetlands and food security
- wetlands and human health
- wetlands and poverty reduction
- wetlands and energy/extractive industries
- wetlands and tourism
- wetlands and urban development
- wetlands and protected areas.

Possible arrangements

Ramsar Administrative Authority with a specific company

68. This partnership is particularly appropriate where the activities of a given company involve the use of wetland areas, including access to water, biodiversity, or other wetland resources.
69. This kind of partnership requires a careful assessment of the company's priorities as well as the ability and commitment to avoid, minimize and rectify adverse impacts on wetlands. It is also essential to enforce the existing legislative and regulatory framework. In this case, the partnership is a way of building mutual understanding to avoid unnecessary friction by providing more capacity to the business company to assess environmental risks associated with their operation and mitigating risks to their reputation.
70. This kind of partnership can enhance ethical brand image and increase customer loyalty. If the partnership is effective, it can establish a code of conduct that avoids or at least reduces the regulatory costs associated with noncompliance with environmental legislation.

National Ramsar/Wetland Committee with private companies

71. This kind of partnership is close to the partnership between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and a private company, but it is more difficult to establish because of the various interests of the members of the Committee. It requires a clear agreement about the objectives and a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities within the Committee. A

lead agency has to be established to coordinate the involvement of the members of the committee and to ensure effective communication with the private sector.

Ramsar Secretariat and the business sector

72. The typical example is the partnership between the Ramsar Secretariat and Danone. It provides a framework for mutual understanding and joint activities to generate mutual benefits. However, there were no pre-established criteria for monitoring and evaluation. It is therefore critical to undertake a thorough evaluation of the partnership to formally draw lessons that can be shared with a wide audience, including the Ramsar Administrative Authorities, the Ramsar National Committees, the Ramsar IOPS, other conservation organizations, and other private companies.

Ramsar STRP and business sector

73. This kind of partnership may enhance our understanding of environmental risks associated with the operations of key companies affecting wetlands. For instance, it may be useful for a company or agency to collaborate with the STRP to assess compliance with some major Environmental Impact Assessments that have been carried out to sustain the decision about the execution of some extractive activity. This can help decision makers to keep in mind the need to mitigate adverse impacts. Without a proper enforcement of the recommendations of the EIA, there is no point for having done one. This kind of partnership can influence the way the extractive industries are undertaken by providing the opportunity to work together with the companies to increase their commitments to environmentally sound business that conserve wetland values.
74. **Although the STRP could undertake the scientific work, however, it is essential that the necessary administrative and financial arrangements be made by the Ramsar Secretariat on behalf of the Convention.**

Multi-stakeholder partnerships

75. This kind of partnership could be useful to coordinate the activities of upstream and downstream companies in a specified river/lake basin. It is essential to have the coordination made by the river/lake organization, in consultation with the Ramsar Administrative Authority.
76. Because of the complexity of the organization of the kind of partnership, it is vital to have a thorough stakeholder analysis to take into account upstream and downstream interests. Many river/lake organizations already have a good stakeholder analysis that can be used.
77. There could also be beneficial partnerships among two or more multilateral environmental agreements with the business sector, developed for the purpose of advancing mutual objectives. Such arrangements would be somewhat more complicated to negotiate and monitor but would not be substantially different from a partnership solely between the Ramsar Convention and a business enterprise.

Ramsar IOPs and business sector

78. This kind of partnership is already working. However, the Ramsar Secretariat has so far no involvement in these arrangements despite the fact that the goal is quite often directly related to wetlands. For instance, WWF has a partnership with Coca-Cola Company to conserve and protect freshwater resources around the world.
79. Likewise, Wetlands International and Royal Dutch Shell company have established a five-year partnership to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands by Shell and its affiliates. It will strengthen the capacity of Wetlands International through building in-house business skills and sharing knowledge in the communication, human resources, and finance disciplines. The partnership is in recognition of the disproportionately high global significance of wetland ecosystems in terms of biodiversity, water provision, people's livelihoods, and climate change. Wetlands such as deltas, shallow marine systems, intertidal marshes, rivers, and peatlands are also particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the energy industry's policies and practices.
80. It may be useful to involve the Secretariat as a third partner in new agreements between the IOPs and the private sector dealing with wetland issues.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships to promote the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and biodiversity through intensified collaboration with the tourism industry

81. The technical guidance developed by the Convention on Biological Diversity could be jointly updated and reviewed by CBD and Ramsar to incorporate wetland priority issues and promote sustainable tourism that cares for wetlands and biodiversity. This could be done through the ongoing Joint Work Plan between CBD and Ramsar.

General Exceptions

82. An increasing partnership with the business sector is expected to contribute to a better coherence of policy, legislation and operational plans between or among Contracting Parties, through a tangible synergy engaging the private sector and the Ramsar Convention to support:
 - a) balanced and coherent conservation schemes relating to all types of wetlands with a particular attention to the network of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) and all wetlands that support biodiversity and/or provide water of high quality;
 - b) necessary measures and actions for education and public awareness to improve the protection of human, animal or plant life and health;
 - c) increasing business sector commitment to persuade and enable a growing number of private companies to reduce their negative impacts on wetlands and make a positive contribution to sustainable development; and
 - d) effective measures and communication of the impacts of the business sector on wetlands, water quality, biodiversity and climate change.

Conflict resolution

83. Most conflicts occur because of a difference in mindset, attitudes or values. To settle any conflict arising in the development of partnerships involving the Ramsar Convention, the key attitude to adopt is to focus on building up and not breaking down. This attitude calls for the use of mutual positive power to set aside disagreements and focus on options that seem most workable. It is also important to consider possible outcomes of each option.
84. This attitude encourages taking a positive view of mutual power that enables the Convention and its partners to be most effective and agree on constructive convictions, outlooks, ideas, and actions. The key approach is to build trust and add confidence in working together to identify and take actions that meet shared needs.
85. The following four basic steps are proposed to keep a good attitude to resolve conflict of interests between the Ramsar Convention and its partners:
- understand the problem;
 - identify possible solutions;
 - choose the best solution;
 - try it out.
86. However, when an existing partner or a potential partner refuses to adopt a positive attitude, it is necessary to take the interests of the Convention as the highest priority in dealing with outside parties. In managing different mindsets, attitudes or values, the long-term interests of the Convention are of the highest significance in spite of possible loss of immediate or short-term benefits.
87. It may be useful to use mediation through the services of a neutral party who can take into consideration the interests of all parties in a fair process of consultation.
88. If the conflict remains unresolved following the above steps, the Ramsar Secretariat is responsible for identifying the source of the problem and at least two possible options to put an end to the problem. The pros and cons of each option shall be analyzed to bring clarity to facilitate decision. Such assessment must be conducted in accordance with a transparent approach for addressing potential conflicts of interest. In this regard, it is vital to ensure that any partnership initiative between the Ramsar Convention and the private sector does not result in conservation benefits that are only for the rich at the expense of the poor.
89. The Ramsar Secretariat shall make a proposal to the Standing Committee so as to make an informed decision with careful consideration of the pros and cons, keeping in mind the **fundamental assets and interests of the Convention that cannot be altered or compromised.**

Monitoring and evaluation

90. Monitoring and evaluation should be an integral component of the process involving collaboration between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector. Because of the importance of monitoring and evaluation, all partnership initiatives should include a budget line to provide the necessary resources to carry out the process.

91. Monitoring and evaluation serves to drive accountability and transparency, inform the Ramsar Standing Committee and the Conference of the Contracting Parties about the way initiatives are designed and managed, and provide lessons learned for future partnerships. The monitoring and evaluation will be made in a participatory manner, to build trust across all stakeholder groups, take into account stakeholder knowledge and interests, improve program outcomes, share findings across the Convention stakeholders, and institutionalize the engagement of stakeholders.
92. Since companies interested in collaboration with the Ramsar Convention might be very large, with interests and activities over a large area or throughout the world, care must be taken to monitor and evaluate, not only the ongoing partnership relationship with certain elements within the company, but also unrelated activities of the company elsewhere in the world, in order to avoid potential embarrassment to the Convention through that association.
93. To achieve this oversight, it is suggested to use the traditional nine-step framework on how to design and execute monitoring and evaluation for environmental projects. The framework consists of: 1) Creating a logic model and associated indicators; 2) Validating indicators with stakeholders; 3) Conducting a baseline assessment in order to be able to monitor progress; 4) Setting targets for performance objectives; 5) Collecting data to gauge actual performance; 6) Consulting with stakeholders on performance; 7) Making project adjustments based on data and associated stakeholder feedback; 8) Evaluating project impacts; and 9) Communicating project impacts to stakeholders.
94. This suggested framework should be adapted to reflect the specific needs of each partnership initiative.

Regular assessment and review of partnerships

95. The results of Monitoring and Evaluation will be used to prepare brief reports about Ramsar business partnership agreements to submit to each COP, according to a standard summary format, to allow the CPs to assess the success of each partnership and to decide if it should be renewed for another term. The summary format shall at least provide an assessment in accordance with the following indicators:
 - Level of contribution of the private partner to a better coherence of policy, legislation and operational plans to implement the Convention in a given Contracting Party or between Contracting Parties.
 - Scope of the contribution of the private partner to a balanced and coherent conservation scheme with a particular attention to the network of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) and all wetlands that support biodiversity and/or provide water of high quality.
 - Changes undertaken by the private partner to avoid future negative impacts of their activities on wetlands.
 - Results of actions taken by the private partner to reduce the severity of unavoidable impacts or to compensate for residual unavoidable harm to wetland values, including

supply of clean water, biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation.

- Results of actions undertaken by the private partner to restore wetland values on a previously disturbed wetland ecosystem.
- Number of actions taken and the results of education and public awareness to improve the protection of human, animal or plant life and health.
- Number of actions taken to persuade and enable a growing number of private companies that reduce their negative impacts on wetlands and make a positive contribution to sustainable development.
- Number of actions taken and the targeted audience to communicate and publicize the impacts of the business sector on wetlands, water quality, biodiversity and climate change.

Rules for the use of the Ramsar name and logo by commercial enterprises

96. Only business companies with which formal partnerships that correspond to the above criteria and objectives have been agreed may make direct reference to the Ramsar Convention and use its logo. Other partnerships must not do so, and the Secretariat will have a watchful eye that this condition is fulfilled. Conversely, partners operating under a formal Ramsar partnership should state this in all their relevant communication and outreach activities and include the Ramsar logo in publications and other activities, whenever feasible.
97. On the other hand, the Secretariat encourages non-commercial uses of the Ramsar name and/or logo by wetland site managers, government authorities, non-governmental organizations, the press and other media without prior permission, because it is understood to be in the Convention's interests to expand the awareness of its name and objectives to the widest extent possible, and to make it as easy as possible for people to do so. The sole restriction made upon use of the Ramsar name and logo on the products of non-commercial entities is that the name and/or logo must not be positioned in such a way as to suggest that the Convention or the Secretariat has participated in or endorsed the product. For example, publications about Ramsar sites are free to use the Ramsar logo as long as it is used in such a way as to make it clear that they are not Ramsar publications.