

Agenda item 19

## Update on business partnership activities

**Action requested:** The Standing Committee is invited to note the developments in our partnership activities.

1. In Resolution X.12 (2008), the Conference of the Contracting Parties laid out its Principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector, which the Secretariat has embraced. There is evidence that Contracting Parties have, to a varying degree, also developed their interaction with the business sector. We have reinforced the principles of Resolution X.12 in our discussions with them.
2. The work of the Secretariat and Contracting Parties will no doubt be significantly enhanced following the appointment of the Partnership Coordinator. There continue to be more opportunities for development than the Secretariat currently has resources to support. However, whilst significant new business partnerships have not been forged during the past year, our existing one with Danone has developed considerably, especially in relation to the three-way agreement between Ramsar, IUCN, and Danone under the Fund for Nature Agreement.
3. Under the Danone partnership we continue to have three Memoranda of Understanding:
  - i) **Danone Fund for Water** – The Danone partnership started in 1998, and since 2003 the Fund for Water has become the bedrock of this partnership. This programme has three key objectives and has in recent years provided annual financial support of €250,000, covering, amongst other things, our World Wetland Day materials, our new website, and other communication activities, as well as important support to regional initiative and expert networks.

We are currently renegotiating the agreement for the 2011-2014 period. We hope this will continue to be our foundation agreement with Danone, which will allow us to jointly develop future initiatives and programmes, and we hope Danone will find a way to include in this agreement the funding for a Danone programme officer (currently financed by the Ecoles de protection de l'eau Fund).

- ii) **“Ecoles de protection de l'eau“(Water protection institutes) Fund** – Running from 2008-2011, this is a project-based international programme focusing on the wise use of water resources. It has provided funding totaling €620,000 to date which has supported activities on the ground in Argentina, Nepal, and Thailand and provided funding for a programme officer.

A detailed activities report covering the Danone Fund for Water and the Ecoles de protection de l'eau (Water protection institutes) Fund, compiled annually and shared with Danone, is available (French only) on the Ramsar website.

- iii) **Danone Fund for Nature** – This new agreement, signed at COP10 with Danone and IUCN, has the objectives of capitalizing on the role of wetlands, including mangroves, in carbon capture, supporting programmes to store carbon through wetland restoration, and helping Danone in its desire to obtain carbon-neutrality by 2011. At the leading edge of science and business, this has been a challenging project for all three partners. Ramsar's main role has been to facilitate the development of a wetland carbon measurement and offset methodology which can be used by Danone, but with much broader scientific and strategic application in the wider climate change arena. We hope the results of this work will position Ramsar favourably at the centre of this arena, and we have concluded a number of new MoUs, such as that with the World Bank, to cement our collaborative partnerships in this field.

The technical outputs of the Ramsar-organized 2009 DFN expert workshop will require further development in 2010. It is hoped that this will continue to be under the umbrella of the DFN agreement, although the different objectives of the parties to the agreement, and uncertain 2010 funding, require Ramsar to continue to measure its input accordingly. In 2009, €28,000 was allocated to Ramsar for its DFN activities, with a further €60,000 allocated out of the €250,000 209 Danone Fund for Water.

The Danone activities have certainly kept the Secretariat busy in 2009, with dedicated input from the Danone programme officer and regular input from the Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General, European Regional Advisor, and a number of administrative staff.

4. The Biospheres Connections partnership was launched in May 2007 and brings together the Star Alliance airline network with Ramsar, IUCN, and UNESCO-MAB. The programme benefits Ramsar in two main ways – raising awareness of Ramsar with the public and within airlines and via a €25,000 allocation of air tickets for use by non-Secretariat staff. In 2009 the financial support for 17 delegates/experts contributed significantly to Ramsar activities. For 2010 Star Alliance is planning to feature the Biospheres Connections partnership in its in-house magazine, which will reach all Star Alliance network members, and is hoping to feature the partnership and a number of Ramsar sites in in-flight documentaries.