

Strategic Framework for Ramsar Partnerships

Action requested. The Standing Committee is invited to review the draft text of a 'Framework for Strategic Partnerships', to be finalized for the consideration of the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties. A strategy for partnerships and resource mobilization will be developed on the basis of the framework, and the Standing Committee is also requested to provide advice and guidance on those matters.

Note by the Secretariat

1. Consistent with the guidance provided by the Conference of the Parties, a Partnership Coordinator joined the Ramsar Convention in early 2011. The following document has been prepared as part of a thorough rethinking of the Secretariat's activities in that sphere.
2. The purpose of the Strategic Framework for Partnerships is to provide the strategic context for charting out the Secretariat's future approaches in a consistent and coherent way, ensuring that partnerships and collaborative relationships contribute to and enhance the ultimate mission of the Convention. It is designed to provide the means for enabling partnerships that would help to implement the Strategic Plan and other decisions of the Convention. On the basis of the framework, a strategy will need to be developed for partnerships and resource mobilization work.
3. The Strategic Framework focuses on the engagement of the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Contracting Parties, and other Convention bodies, as appropriate, nongovernmental/civil society organizations, the business sector, and other entities such as multilateral and intergovernmental organizations, as well as the scientific, technical, media and knowledge institutions. The Framework does not include a full overview of all modes of cooperation with other organizations, agencies, funds and programmes, nor does it provide a full account of all coordinated or collaborative relationships under the Convention, for instance, the wide range of informal relations and synergy activities.
4. As part of the celebration of the Convention's 40th anniversary, the Secretariat undertook to discuss what might be the strategic directions for the Convention over the next 40 years. The concept for this activity grew out of the need to set out key priorities and directions for the Partnership Programme. With a new Partnership Coordinator, it was important to set out key directions and priorities for a programme that will effectively serve the needs of Contracting Parties.
5. With the core business of the Ramsar Convention comprising the wise use of all wetlands, the designation of internationally important wetlands, and international cooperation, Ramsar's strategic value internationally lies with the mandate of addressing an ecosystem as a whole and, in particular, the water-related services they provide.

6. In looking further into the core values of the Convention, the link between wetlands and the issue of water security and management emerged as a key strategic focus. This is not to suggest that there should be any change in the Convention's concerns for biological diversity, but such a focus upon water issues was seen as timely because freshwater issues currently occupy a privileged place in international and domestic agendas, and there seems to be a gap in the international regulation of the global water cycle that only the 'Wetlands Convention' is designed to fill.
7. The Standing Committee is requested to review the document and provide comments so that further elaborations can be made and submitted to the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

A. Introduction

8. The Strategic Framework for Partnerships for the Ramsar Convention provides a foundation for the future focus and priorities for engagement with public and private sector organizations, chiefly in order to support increasing the national and international resourcing and capacity for the achievement of the conservation and wise use of wetlands through the implementation of the Strategic Plan (Resolution X.1) and future plans and priorities identified by the Convention bodies. It takes into account the *Principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector* adopted by Resolution X.12 (2008), and it is also intended to promote the implementation of the Changwon Declaration.
9. The current Framework offers a short analysis of the current partnership situation, sets out a vision and operational priorities, presents some guidelines for the implementation and management of all partnerships, and addresses a way forward for resource mobilization. The scope of the Framework covers all partnerships, informal and synergistic relationships entered into by the Secretariat, and on the basis of this, a partnership strategy and resource mobilization strategy will subsequently be developed.
10. Development of this Strategic Framework for Partnerships and for resource mobilization is driven by the need to influence key players and to secure resources for the overall implementation of the Convention. Over the past years, resources have tended to be a universal challenge in multilateral development and environment work. The economic situation in many of Contracting Parties has become difficult, and resources from donor governments for the activities of the Convention have been reduced due to the strain on their own economies and the increased number of international activities and requirements. Thus, finding ways to leverage technical, informational, scientific, human and financial resources is more important now than ever before.
11. Execution of the Strategic Framework can be accomplished through better collaboration between key players and the work of the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, in particular the Partnership Coordinator, and through Contracting Parties and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), as appropriate. All members of the Secretariat have an important role to play in the implementation of the Framework as they will often come into contact with potential partners as well as prospective donors, giving them the opportunity to promote the Convention's work more globally. Additionally, Contracting Parties are key

proponents in the identification of opportunities and as partners or benefactors for the Secretariat to address.

B. Partnerships

12. The implementation of the Ramsar Convention depends upon a broad and diverse set of partnerships and informal collaborative relationships to help take collective actions and carry out the Convention's mission. These relationships involve different kinds of partners ranging from the five International Organization Partners (IOPs) to governments, business and other non-governmental organizations, and intergovernmental organizations. It has been affirmed at past meetings of the Conference of the Parties, and at Standing Committee meetings, that Contracting Parties believe that partnerships are critical for delivering results.
13. Partnerships contribute to the Convention's work through a range of activities and relationships that focus on its implementation, for example, building capacity, mobilizing resources, advocating and ensuring the conservation and wise use of wetlands globally. They enable the Contracting Parties, the Secretariat, the STRP, and Communication, Education, Participation, and Awareness (CEPA) officers frequently to accomplish more than they could on their own.
14. As the Partnership Programme evolves in the coming years, it will be adapted and adjusted according to experience gained, lessons learned, trends, circumstances and successes. Together with partners, tools and strategies can be created to better implement the requirements of the Convention, particularly the Strategic Plan and the Changwon Declaration.

C. Context – Strategic Framework for Partnerships

15. This Strategic Framework for Partnerships is intended to integrate the use of partnerships more fully into the implementation of the Convention and its core values. In addition to setting out a framework for partnerships, it seeks to set the stage for integrating the function of resource mobilization, which is a separate action from partnership development and maintenance, into the strategic priorities and the implementation of the Convention.
16. The aim of partnerships under the Convention is to use the capacity and commitment of key actors in order to secure sustained access to external resources, human, technical, informational, political and/or financial, vitally needed to build capacities in Contracting Parties to promote national action and international cooperation in order to ensure the maintenance and wise use of all vital ecosystem services provided by wetlands.
17. The Secretariat will streamline current partnerships and review and update any agreements already concluded. The list of current partnerships and agreements under the Convention can be found in the Annex, and it can easily be seen that there are a variety of partnerships and agreements serving different needs or purposes. The key question is: Strategically, are these still relevant to the implementation of the Convention, particularly its Strategic Plan and other Resolutions of the Convention?

18. The goal of such partnerships is “to expand the Ramsar Convention community, enhance collective efforts, and contribute to carrying out the Strategic Plan, in order to implement the Convention effectively”.

Definition

19. Partnerships are voluntary and collaborative relationships between different parties from the public and the private sector in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, share the risks, responsibilities, resources and benefits.¹

Situation analysis

20. With the Partnership Coordinator joining the Secretariat, changes to the partnerships work was expected. Over the years, there have been a variety of tools and types of partnerships formed. The first task of the Coordinator was to review the current situation and assess the total view of partnerships in place and to work with the Secretariat staff to identify what are the priorities for partnerships and what types of new partnerships might be most effective in assisting Contracting Parties to implement the Convention. The next step was to assess the strengths and weakness of the programme and to identify recommendations as an integral part of the framework.
21. As part of the situation analysis undertaken by the Partnership Coordinator, an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of existing partnerships was undertaken, and these are discussed in the following section, along with recommendations for actions that can be taken to ensure that the full value of partnerships is realised.
22. It is important to point out that partnerships entered into with the Secretariat have enhanced and leveraged resources and the work of the Convention, the implementation of the Strategic Plan, and the work of the STRP. In addition, having a dedicated coordinator for partnerships will help to resolve many issues noted below and enhance the value added by partnerships and other informal or collaborative relationships; it will also be helpful in developing strategies, guidelines, tools and methodologies and in defining the operational modalities for partnerships.
23. A great strength of the Ramsar Convention programme is its reduced administrative burden from the partnerships. Reduced administrative burden helps to streamline the process for entering into partnerships and provides a more nimble process. At the same time, this can be viewed as a risk without some standardized procedures and agreements which protect the Convention and help to reduce the staff burden in formulating new agreements or formats or in having to use ad hoc operational methods and approaches.
24. **Recommendation:** Develop simple, transparent standardized procedures and agreements for negotiating and establishing partnerships, including a mechanism for communication within the Secretariat and to the Standing Committee.

¹ This definition is based on previous definitions used in Convention Resolutions and the definition of partnerships by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 62/211, 19 December 2007.

25. Another strength is the unique nature of the Convention, its 160 Contracting Parties, and the numerous crosscutting programmes associated with wetlands and the ecosystem services they provide. Another strength is the positive history of working with partners, in particular, the IOPs.
26. **Recommendation:** Lessons learned should be integrated into the strategy for partnerships and resource mobilization to help make partnerships more effective.
27. Partnerships have been created primarily on an ad hoc basis, except in the case of the IOPs. A more coherent use of partnerships will increase their effectiveness in helping to achieve the mission of the Convention and implement its Strategic Plan.
28. **Recommendation:** Streamlining the number of partnerships according to the Strategic Plan and new priorities is needed. Another step is to look for mutual influence between the Convention and its partners. Some agreements may need to be updated or changed and others will be further reviewed and assessed.
29. Without a clear framework for partnerships, there is a potential for conflicting priorities on the use of partnerships at the national, regional and international level.
30. **Recommendation:** Develop a more coherent set of priorities for partnerships and monitor progress and focus on stated priorities.
31. Partnerships often entail transaction costs, primarily staff time, and may need special skills and expertise in drawing up the agreement. These costs are not usually factored into the partnership.
32. **Recommendation:** There is a need to balance administrative and transaction costs with the expected benefits of the partnership. This can help to more effectively implement the programme and derive the expected benefits from the partnership.
33. The IOPs have proven to be an important relationship for the Convention. Monitoring and assessing the partnerships and accessing their potential more fully will serve to enhance the benefits already realised through such cooperation and collaboration.
34. **Recommendation:** An annual IOPs meeting would provide a platform for all partners to discuss work plans more fully, share information, and monitor and assess progress.
35. There is a low degree of monitoring of many of the partnerships, MOUs, MOCs and other collaborative relationships, particularly due to low staff resources. To reduce risk and increase the value and benefits of partnerships, monitoring will need to be enhanced.
36. **Recommendation:** Partnerships that are no longer valuable or have not been formally terminated after the project, task or particular activity has been completed need to be closed to reduce any further administrative burden and strain on staff time. An exit strategy needs to be included in all partnership agreements, whether it be related to time, progress, or some other factor.

37. A strategy for mapping partnerships on the basis of the Strategic Plan does not exist. This will be needed in order to increase the effectiveness of the programme under the Secretariat. Further to the inclusion of the Strategic Plan, the identified priorities for partnerships will need to be woven into the strategy.
38. **Recommendation:** Identify how all current partnerships and other relationships, such as informal forms of collaboration, are linked to the goals of the Strategic Plan. This work could be incorporated into the partnerships and resource mobilization strategy.
39. While some partnership activities have been included in the planning process and Strategic Plan, many have not been integrated into the planning mechanisms and operating procedures of the Convention.
40. **Recommendation:** Develop guidance on the integration of partnerships more fully into the planning mechanisms and operating procedures of the Convention, and ensure that partnerships are taken into consideration in the planning processes within the Secretariat, the Standing Committee, and the Conference of the Parties.
41. The coherence of the approach to partnerships over the past ten years has been minimal. A more systematic and coherent approach will reduce the risk of ineffective activities through the different bodies engaging in the partnerships. As noted above, strategic mapping of partnerships and when and where they can bring the greatest value needs to be carried out.
42. **Recommendation:** Improve the communication and development of organizational modalities for engaging in partnerships, particularly with the business sector (taking into account the *Principles* annexed to Resolution X.12).
43. At present, there are two business partnerships. As highlighted in previous Resolutions of the COP, it is important to identify partners with whom mutual benefits for a Convention priority can be identified. Staffing shortages at the Secretariat have limited its ability to tap the resources that could be provided through partnering with the business (private) sector in general.
44. **Recommendation:** The new Partnership Coordinator should work to identify potential partners from the business sector, cultivate those relationships, and assist with the stewardship of the other partnerships managed in the Secretariat.
45. As previously stated, further analyses are needed of current engagements, development of a strategic engagement plan of action, communication of a common understanding of what partnerships and informal relationships are, which modalities they could take, how they might contribute to positive outcomes for the Convention, and how responses could be undertaken to the opportunities and challenges they present. This would be evaluated more comprehensively against the backdrop of the Strategic Plan and the Ramsar 40+ Vision.

The Way Forward: Mission and Vision

46. **Mission.** The mission of the Convention provides the foundation for all partnership activities. Implementing the Conventions' Strategic Plan and other Resolutions is the fundamental purpose of the partnership programme. The Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world."
47. **Vision.** The Ramsar Secretariat is seizing the opportunities provided by the celebrations of the 40th anniversary in 2011 for increasing the profile of the Convention and the recognition of the importance of wetlands and their benefits to people and nature. It is in this context that the Secretariat undertook an initiative to take stock of implementation progress over the past 40 years, to form a basis for looking forward to the operations and implementation of the Convention over the next 40 years, including for the further establishment of partnerships to support Contracting Parties' implementation capacity. As a result of this process, the Secretariat has formulated the priorities for the partnership programme, and in the process of looking forward 40 years, a vision statement has been outlined.
48. The draft vision statement, as part of the discussions of the Secretariat and the Chair of the STRP as they take stock in achievements and look towards the next 40 years, was suggested to be: "By 2051, the vital services provided to human societies by wetlands [through water] are recognized, maintained, restored and sustainably used by governments (global/national/local), communities, industry, business, agriculture, economic and other sectors". This is a working version arrived at during discussions on the potential future directions of the Secretariat – Vision 40+. The idea for a **40+ Vision** is to provide a roadmap that would help enhance effective implementation of the Strategic Plan 2009-2015, future strategic plans, and the Convention, integrate current trends and events, and take into consideration the current and projected state of the global environment and the social and economic situation. The outcome of the Vision 40+ discussions helped to frame the partnership programme and directions.

Aligning partnerships with the core values, strategic goals, and operational priorities

49. The Secretariat is aligning its partnership work with the Strategic Plan and with the three core values identified through the process noted above as Vision 40+, and the following section describes those three core values.
50. **Core value 1. Wetlands are a key natural infrastructure for ecosystem services.** In relation to this value, the core business relating to the future of the Convention is to ensure that wetlands (continue to) provide water-related (and other) critical ecosystem services.
51. The strategic goal of core value 1 is the need to mainstream the value of wetlands [as natural infrastructures providing critical water-related and other ecosystem services] into national economic, development and environmental policy. Partnerships are an important mechanism for leveraging this work.
52. On the basis of this core value and strategic goal, the operational priority is defined as "raising awareness in strategically selected political/social/business circles of the

value of wetlands as key natural infrastructures providing important water-related (and other) ecosystem services”.

53. This operational priority comprises three main components: a) what is meant by the ‘value’ of wetlands; b) who are the ‘political/media circles’ to whom the efforts will be directed; and c) what shape will this awareness-raising initiative take. Some partnerships have already been formed under the Convention to promote the valuation of wetlands. This is equally true with respect to political bodies or civil society groups. Leveraging efforts through partnerships and collaborative relationships will help to tap special expertise, experience, networks and efforts to raise awareness of the importance and value of wetland ecosystems.
54. The value of wetlands in this Framework can be characterised through the ecosystem services they provide, both water-related (water purification, groundwater recharge, support of food systems, water storage, water distribution) and others (flood regulation, biodiversity support, carbon storage, cultural environment, leisure, other economic services like providing jobs and transportation). Partnerships have the potential to provide additional input and support in the valuation of wetlands. Additionally, further work in this area would provide essential information needed in the context of resource mobilization, particularly when defining the rationale behind the request for resources from prospective partners or donors
55. ***Core value 2. Wetlands are a key component of other sustainable development and environmental programmes and conventions.*** Wetlands, understood as natural infrastructures providing a variety of critical ecosystem services, have an important role in tackling other environmental problems, and they are therefore important to other stakeholders, development programmes and environmental management, health, safety and conservation regimes.
56. The strategic goal for core value 2 is to develop partnerships on the basis of previously identified synergies in order to a) convey the importance of wetlands, b) raise the profile of the Convention in policy circles, and c) gain access to additional resources (particularly through partnerships with the private sector, funds, banks and other facilities and foundations).
57. The operational priority for core value 2 and the strategic goal would be to identify a number of priority areas capable of guiding the selection of potential partners. The following areas were identified as priorities for the partnership programme as defined through the experience and knowledge of the Secretariat:
 - i) wetlands/water and agriculture;
 - ii) wetlands/water and the extractive/energy industry;
 - iii) wetlands/water and climate change mitigation (wetlands as carbon storage devices) and adaptation (water-related services);
 - iv) wetlands/water and social protection (human health and disaster prevention/management);
 - v) wetlands/water and urbanization;
 - vi) wetlands and integrated water management (seeking partnership with the international association of water decision-makers); and

- vii) scientific partnerships (relating to future programmes or panels such as IPBES and/or Global World Observation System – G-WOS).
58. ***Core value 3. Wetlands make concrete and measurable contributions to human societies.*** The strategic goal for this core value is to clarify the link between healthy wetlands and the quantity and the quality of water as well as the distribution of water to various user groups (wetlands-water link).
59. The operational priority under this core value is to develop information and tools to measure the wetland side of the wetlands-water link.
60. Four main initiatives were identified as priorities:
- i) promote The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) Water/Wetlands synthesis, currently under development, which will assist in the valuation of wetlands and better reflect the wetlands-water link;
 - ii) prioritize the development of the G-WOS mechanism by seeking the necessary resources, perhaps through a partnership;
 - iii) advocate for the wetlands-water link in the current efforts towards the establishment of the IPBES; and
 - iv) conduct a study or gather information on a number of regional case studies on the wetlands-water link as a preliminary tool to raise awareness and highlight relevance.
61. Following the collection and collation of available information for a TEEB report on wetlands and water, further work on the economics of wetlands is highly recommended. Again, partnerships could play an important role in meeting the strategic goal and priorities as they link to develop tools, in the context of the partnership priorities stated above, to be able to measure and indicate the benefits of wetlands to human societies.

Summary table of core values

Vision/core values	Vision statement: to ensure, through the work of the Convention Parties and bodies, that vital services provided to human societies by wetlands [through water] are recognized, maintained, restored and sustainably used by governments (global/national/local), communities, industry, business, agriculture, etc.		
	Core value 1	Core value 2	Core value 3
	Wetlands as key natural infrastructure providing ecosystem services	Wetlands as a key component of other environmental regimes	Conservation of wetlands as a concrete and measurable beneficial contribution to human societies

Strategic goals	Mainstreaming the value of wetlands [as natural infrastructures providing essential services] into national economic, development and environmental policy	Developing partnerships on the basis of previously identified synergies in order to a) convey the importance of wetlands, b) raise the profile of the Convention in policy circles, c) gain access to additional resources	Clarifying the link between, on the one hand, healthy wetlands and, on the other, the quantity and the quality of water
Operational priorities	Raise awareness in strategically selected political/media circles of the value of wetlands as key natural infrastructures providing important water-related (and other) ecosystem services. Water-related services identified. Target interlocutors to be identified	Identify a number of priority areas capable of guiding the selection of potential partners. Seven priority areas identified	Develop information and tools to measure the wetlands side of the wetlands-water link. Four priority tools identified

Strategic Context

62. When deciding whether or not to pursue a partnership, there must be an analysis of its value to the Convention; there are direct and indirect benefits from each partnership and a careful review is needed before entering into the agreement. Criteria would be set out within the context of the principles to help guide this process more effectively, taking into account the criteria included in Resolution X.12. For instance, a criterion might be that the partner needs to be actively involved in wetland-related activities and show a willingness to contribute tangibly to the work of Convention. Criteria similar to that for IOPs would need to be produced in the strategy of partnerships and resource mobilization.
63. The added value of partnerships under the Ramsar Convention, including previously crafted texts in Resolutions of the Convention, include:
- expanding the basis for policy dialogue and advocacy;
 - having mutual influence between partners
 - sharing of knowledge and experience;
 - increasing participation in Convention activities;
 - improving coordinated project and programme delivery and management;
 - leveraging scarce resources; and
 - tapping a broader base of knowledge, expertise, experience and capacities.
64. The **Changwon Declaration** is an important mechanism to bring forward further multisectoral integration. One of the strategic purposes of partnerships is to broaden the support for the Convention and its efforts internationally, regionally, and nationally. Bearing in mind the Declaration, it is fundamental that national environmental governance

shift from single sector, demand-driven approaches to an ecosystem-based approach to policy and decision making that affects the wise use of wetlands with other sectors of government, focal points of other MEAs, and civil society in order to ensure that the role and importance of wetlands for their businesses is fully recognized. A primary tool for integrating other sectors of the economy into the work of Convention is through partnerships with the different sectors (and multisectorally in relation to specific topics or themes) and partnerships focused on raising awareness and increasing knowledge of wetlands, their value and management.

Characteristics of a partnership

65. The main characteristics of Ramsar Convention partnerships are summarized in the following bullet points.
- They focus on wetlands and the role of the wetland as a natural infrastructure for providing water services or other key ecosystem services.
 - Partnerships are voluntary between the Secretariat and its bodies and panels. They are developed with a common objective, aim and mission. While there may be individual objectives set out in the partnership, the common objective aim and mission of mutually beneficial actions is an inherent part of the agreement.
 - Partnerships play a role in expanding the basis for mutual cooperation for scientific and advocacy activities and policy dialogue under the Convention or in expanding the resources – human, informational, technical and financial – to support the Convention and its implementation at the local, national, regional and global levels.

Role of Partnerships

66. The role of partnerships under the Ramsar Convention would be for, *inter alia*,
- implementation support;
 - awareness raising and messaging;
 - training and education;
 - advisory;
 - delivery of programme or project results;
 - data, information, technical and/or scientific collaboration or input to Convention;
 - financial input; or
 - promotion of positive changes in behaviours.

Types of Partnerships

67. In streamlining the partnership programme, it is necessary to be selective about what constitutes a partnership under the Convention. In essence, a partnership is a relationship between individuals, groups or organizations characterized by mutual cooperation and accountability. There are many more or less different types of partnerships, including:
- topic or thematic partnerships

- global and multinational governmental or private sector associations
- sector-specific
- multisectoral
- multistakeholder
- public or private sector
- project, action or task specific
- resource related – technical, scientific, informational, human, financial, etc.
- regional, national and communal associations or organizations with a broad reach or particular added value or expertise.

68. Partnership categories under the Framework include the following,

- International Organization Partners (IOPs)
- nongovernmental organizations
- private sector
- public sector
- intergovernmental organizations
- Multilateral Environment Agreements
- scientific and technical bodies and panels
- foundations and organizations with shared vision and/or missions
- financial institutions/facilities, funds
- philanthropists and ultra and high net worth individuals.

69. It is important to observe that in this Framework a partnership is not exclusively a donor/recipient arrangement – partnerships can also be a valuable mechanism for mutual influence and awareness raising, leveraging work and effort on a particular topic or project, providing technical support or information and data for work sharing and financial resources for the project, programme or operation for implementing the Convention. Partnerships help to leverage technical, financial, political informational and human resources, raise awareness, and increase expertise and financial support to implement the Convention.

70. A cornerstone of the Framework is to further the use of partnerships and/or deepen relations with international organizations, nongovernmental organizations and the business (private) sector. This work will greatly augment efforts to raise the profile of the Convention and its work and message. The following section identifies some of the key groups under which partnerships would be sought.

International organizations, nongovernmental organizations, national or local associations or government, and the private sector

71. **International organizations.** Organizations such as UNDP, the World Bank, FAO, UNEP, and UNICEF have programmes that are similar or complement activities under the Ramsar Convention. UN organizations, intergovernmental programmes, funds and institutions with which a broad or renewed partnership could help augment the Convention's mission, include, *inter alia*, the UN Office for Partnerships (UNFIP), UNDP, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNESCO (more comprehensively), UNOPS, the Bretton Woods

Institutions, the United Nations University (UNU), among others. *Delivering as One* (the United Nations Develop Assistance Framework – UNDAF) is an important principle for the United Nations. Involvement in the UN UNDAF process could help to leverage the profile of the Ramsar Convention across the UN and particularly at the country level with the Country Teams and UNDP Resident Coordinator

72. Partnerships relating to the UNDAF network (UN Agencies, funds and programmes) could be particularly important in light of the Convention’s prospective increase of activities in countries on the ground, including Ramsar Advisory Missions. Common services potentially available through UNDAF can also help to expedite certain efforts at the country level.
73. **Non-governmental organizations.** While the focus in the past has been on environmental NGOs, labour, sector oriented, political, and other clusters of NGOs can also be essential partners for the Convention.
74. **National or local associations or governments** active and in an appropriate position to assist in implementing the Convention and promoting and raising awareness of special initiatives are also important candidates for partnerships.
75. **Private sector:** Much has already been written on partnering with the business sector in COP10 documentation and the Changwon Declaration. Partnering with the private sector to work together and support the implementation of the Convention is clearly a major objective of our efforts.

Structure of the partnership

76. Partnership agreements should contain:
 - clearly articulated priorities, actions, timelines and operational modalities;
 - forms of cooperation and commitment;
 - monitoring and reporting plans; and
 - an exit strategy (conditions under which it would no longer be continued).
77. Partnerships and other informal collaborations should:
 - be transparent;
 - ensure equity;
 - have integrity and independence to protect the Convention and its branding;
 - be aligned with policies, strategies, administration and procedures of the Convention and the Secretariat;
 - be cost-effective;
 - focus on delivery of results;
 - conform to rules and procedures;
 - be monitored;
 - have an exit strategy for task, project or specific programme-oriented agreements;

- be discontinued when participation is lacking, progress is not being made, there are violations of the principles, guidelines or core operating procedures of the Convention or the Secretariat, or when it no longer serves the benefit of the Parties; and
- meet the standards of a due diligence evaluation prior to any commitments.

Due diligence

78. The purpose of due diligence is to evaluate the risks and benefits of working with a potential private sector or other partner. Again, the principles for partnerships annexed to Resolution X.12 address particular aspects of the due diligence process for the business sector. The following table of categories and actions provides a basis for what should be covered in the due diligence evaluation.

Due Diligence evaluation²

Corporate image	Social responsibility	Environmental accountability	Financial soundness	Policy compatibility
Public image Pending lawsuits (what type, corruption, human rights violations) Negative media Transparency and equity	CSR policy Labor standards Health and safety Code of conduct	Monitoring Mitigating impact Improving performance	Publically traded Annual reports Audited financials Years in business	Convention policies and standards Foreign affairs sensitivities concerning Contracting Parties

Resource mobilization

79. As part of the Strategic Framework for Partnerships, a section on resource mobilization has been included. Some of the partnerships are expected to have a financial aspect and a framework for accomplishing this is needed, as no such framework currently exists under the Convention.
80. Resource mobilization (and fundraising) should focus on increasing overall financial resources for grant-making, capacity-building, learning lessons, exchange of experiences, and effective communications and outreach. (This includes in-kind contributions.) Obtaining co-financing, both parallel and cost-sharing, for specific projects is equally important – co-financing is an important aspect when working with many donors, funds and facilities, for instance, the GEF.
81. Resource mobilization requires a significant amount of effort for which benefits can be received. It is considered to be a collaborative effort of the Secretariat, Contracting Parties, and other bodies of the Convention. The input by Contracting Parties in

² Web resource, US AID, Due Diligence, Step-by-Step Guide, adapted by Ramsar Convention, http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_partnerships/gda/due_diligence.html.

identifying prospects and sharing information on the funding priorities of different bodies is crucial to the effort. In this context a resource mobilization networking group would serve as a useful mechanism for the Convention and its efforts to secure additional resources, in which the sharing of information, lessons learned, contacts and leads could be exchanged. There has also been good experience of the use of advisory groups or “boards” which can serve to advise on resource mobilization, often with boards that consist of representatives from different sectors and/or donor categories.

Objectives

82. The resource mobilization objectives to be considered in the framework are to:
- increase funding and support for the capacity-building activities and management of wetlands and other activities identified as important for the conservation and wise use of all wetlands;
 - obtain timely and predictable voluntary funding to allow for appropriate planning of Convention activities, projects and programmes, in accordance with the priorities of the Partnership Programme; and
 - secure flexible funding and resources for, *inter alia*: 1) Ramsar missions, 2) Regional Initiatives, 3) the Small Grants Fund (SGF), 4) Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), and other special initiatives and funds.

Resource mobilization actions

83. The Strategic Framework addresses core actions to be taken that will help the Secretariat and Contracting Parties meet their longer-term goals and seek specific support for the implementation of the Strategic Plan and operations. The following ten points form the backbone of any resource mobilization programme.
- 1) Develop a compelling case for support;
 - 2) Raise the profile of the Convention globally;
 - 3) Enhance donor relations and management;
 - 4) Develop a comprehensive prospect development plan;
 - 5) Carry out cultivation activities for new donors and stewardship of past and existing donors;
 - 6) Create gift request strategies for a small set of prospects (bi-annual), as part of a campaign (*Note bene*: The word *gift* in this context means extra-budgetary contributions);
 - 7) Align communication and partnership and resource mobilization strategies so as to ensure that tailored, appealing fundraising materials are developed, with messaging that is consistent, created in an appealing package for donors and written in “donor speak”;
 - 8) Select a small set of high priority or signature initiatives for large-scale resource mobilization;
 - 9) Devise donor meetings or hold prestigious cultivation activities; and
 - 10) Outline the role for partners in fundraising.

84. Due to the importance of the first three points in kicking off resource mobilization efforts, further explanation is provided in this Strategic Framework for Partnerships, as they have a particular link to the overall partnership work programme.

1) The case for support

85. Embedded in the idea of raising the profile of the Convention is the development of a “compelling case for support”. This will need to provide the rationale or context of the situation, with data and statistics to support the context and the need for results to achieve the conservation and wise use of wetlands, and it will need to describe the longer-term impact derived from the implementation of the Convention. The case for support is a critically important element of resource mobilization, as the core of the case elaborates on the rationale behind the need for resources. A present challenge in developing the case for support, however, is the dearth of data on the valuation of the wetlands – the serious lack of recent data on the value of the different wetland types will need to be resolved, because this the data is essential for providing the analysis that many donor prospects will need to understand the value of a wetland ecosystem in a non-scientific or technical manner.

2) Raising the profile

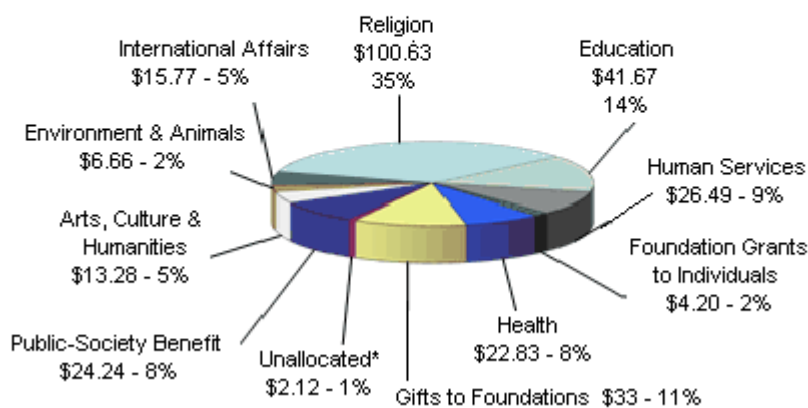
86. A key component of resource mobilization is the marketing and publicising of the profile and brand of the Ramsar Convention at all levels: globally, regionally, nationally and locally. It will be necessary to engage in a more active programme to raise the profile of the Convention in order to get the message of the brand to prospective donors. Raising the public profile also means working to mainstream the vision and mission of the Ramsar Convention into international and national strategic priorities, sector-wide plans and primary focus areas of partners, major foundations and programmes, the World Bank and regional and development banks and agency, funds and facilities.
87. While efforts have been made over past years to raise the profile of the Convention, an active and focused global campaign will need to be undertaken to help drive resource mobilization. Brand identification and knowledge by prospective donors is a key step in resource mobilization.
88. In addition to the expansion of the public profile, raising the political profile will need to be more actively pursued. This would be accomplished through consistent participation and representation in key high level political meetings worldwide and by continued “messaging” and informing of local and national government decision makers and Parliamentarians about the Convention and work of its 160 Contracting Parties. Visibility and branding are vital to resource mobilization. The more donors has heard about the Convention, its mission and activities in a positive light, the more willing they will be to provide support.
89. Some examples of how to raise the political profile include active participation in key UN, business and business association meetings, OECD, World Economic Forum, the Commission for Sustainable Development and the Rio +20 process, and the many other organizations listed in previous Resolutions under the Convention. There is a

comparative advantage of the Convention that has not yet been exploited to its fullest extent: the Ramsar Convention is the only global mechanism that addresses wetlands as an ecosystem and as a provider of water and other services, which no other body or UN agency can claim as its primary focus.

90. Further work with the business sector through the Global Compact, the World Business Council on Sustainable Development, corporate environment or social responsibility initiatives (CSR), and other international economic and business forums will enhance public relations, political, technical, informational and financial support and raise the global awareness of the Convention and its mission. This effort will also help to increase donor awareness in the corporate sector. Such efforts will assist the Secretariat and Contracting Parties in mainstreaming the Ramsar message in a consistent manner into the broader water and sustainable development themes globally.
91. In devising a prospect plan, the idea of who is providing funding in a country has paramount importance. The pie graph below shows the distribution in the USA of philanthropic contributions by category. The amount of contributions from the United States tends to be higher than other countries and more diverse due to a special tax incentive and culture of giving. Such a chart helps to target the most efficient and effective group to cultivate.
92. A tool kit for resource mobilization will be built up over time. It will provide tools and eventually training modules on resource mobilization to be disseminated to Contracting Parties to help build capacities in this area.

Distribution of philanthropic contributions by US, 2010

2010 CONTRIBUTIONS: \$290.89 BILLION BY TYPE OF RECIPIENT ORGANIZATION
 (\$ In billions - All figures are rounded)



Source: *Giving USA, 2010*

3) Cultivation, donor relations, and management

93. *Identification* of the major donors for wetlands, water, health, and other purposes related to priorities at the international and country level is a key aim for the Convention. There can be a myriad of different entry points relative to donor priorities and plans. The Strategic Plan along with the Vision 40+ will guide efforts in organizing, identifying donors, and mapping donor prospects.
94. Water is a key entry point to use since wetlands provide vital services to human societies chiefly through water. While food security, biological diversity, health, drought and flood reduction, agriculture, and climate change are important areas for seeking engagement, water-related services from wetlands forms the nexus.
95. The range of donors approached should extend towards new mechanisms, funds and facilities for financing or co-financing a project or financing a programme directly in the country. Sources range from corporate social responsibility programmes, foundations, regional development banks and funds, special trust funds, charities, low interest development loans and official development assistance directly to a country. Looking for niche resources and niche donors can have more fruitful results than approaching the traditional or well-known sources. A key priority is to identify the entry points and have a compelling case for the support requested.
96. *Donor prospects* are those donors which may have similar objectives, priorities, projects, programmes or specific geographic interests. Prospects for sponsoring activities under the Ramsar Convention include national development agencies, the World Bank Group and regional development banks, corporations and corporate foundations, multilateral agencies, charities, venture capitalists, philanthropists, financial sector, bilateral/multilateral mechanisms. For entry into development assistance, the focus is on sector-wide approaches in water, food security, poverty reduction, drought and flood reduction/disaster reduction, tourism, climate change and more.
97. A key principle in approaching donors is a spirit of transparency, openness and dialogue. Consistent messaging and materials will facilitate the international branding of the Ramsar Convention with the donor and development world. Contacts should be cultivated and regularly nurtured. An important consideration in resource mobilization is that there is common agreement in the investor and fundraising community that it takes 12-24 months to reach a point of trust with investors and donors. The process is compared to the time it takes to make a good friend.
98. The process of identifying prospects must go through the standard process of research, profiling, short-listing and mapping of donors and connecting them to a particular priority programme or project or grant fund. Materials presented to donors should be part of a standard toolkit.

Donor Profiling

The heart of donor profiling is to screen and shortlist prospects, review funding patterns and points of special interest, linking to the objectives and work of the Convention. In addition, a clear understanding is needed of the numerous funding cycles and/or budget cycles of donor prospects and funding trends in order to identify timely opportunities for interaction with the donor. Such work requires a continual assessment and review of donor funding, priorities, action plans, and new directions. Profiling and mapping donor prospects by theme, concept or specific project underlies an effective roadmap for securing needed resources for implementing the Convention.

99. *Donors*, including innovative financial mechanisms and non-traditional donors, are a key target group. Donor fatigue is common amongst the most obvious prospects. While investigating potential niche donors, there are sometimes projects and efforts that can be presented in collaboration with a group of partners, such as with the IOPs.
100. All possible avenues for identifying mechanisms should be sought for support in the implementation of the Convention. This includes creative mechanisms along with traditional grants and direct contributions to an existing or past programme or project under the Convention. Diversification of donors and sources will help offset the current economic downturn and increased tightening of gift giving.
101. Special tools to augment research of potential donors and charity-focused databases help to expedite research and management of some key non-traditional donor prospects and their funding trends. Often identifying other charitable, philanthropic bodies, venture capitalists, and special trusts require specialty searches of primary databases of the Convention and Contracting Parties and other key data servers. Access to special tools for searching donors and databases will enhance the efforts of identifying and profiling donors. Donor research and profiling is a time intensive but necessary aspect of resource mobilization.

Lessons learned

In 2009, many charities in the United States were able to raise awareness and ultimately contributions by implementing new development strategies that include:

- building a more compelling case for giving in light of a more competitive fundraising environment. Charities built strong messages around the consequences of not supporting their cause, such as highlighting the loss of education or art programmes, the closing of a centre, or reductions in services;
- improving communications with donors through quarterly newsletters and regular e-mail announcements;
- partnering with other organizations to raise visibility and gain a broader audience;
- improving efforts to get small annual gifts from members and acknowledging donor gifts within one or two days.
- increasing advocacy work and drawing attention to a need or crisis; and

- shifting priorities from fundraising for specific groups to fundraising for specific problems or needs.

Source: Giving USA, 2010

102. **Donor relations** involve systematic communication (at least quarterly) to keep the name and positive image of the Convention on the *radar screen* of key donors. Maintaining a high confidence level and good will relationship is essential. Transparency and communication with the financial officers and the provision of timely and accurate reports that meet the requirements of donor agreements are all indispensable to maintaining the good will with the donor. Examples of such activities could include personal visits, telephone calls, e-mails, newsletters, summaries of annual achievements, and a systematic outreach to past and potential donors.
103. Donor conferences or meetings are an effective means of bringing potential donors together and presenting the needs of, for example, key programmes or projects or funds. As there is not a tradition of donor meetings under the Convention, there will be a progressive trend beginning with a small group of donors and growing over time
104. **Management of donors.** Currently, profiles of donors and potential donors are written in Microsoft Word and an Excel sheet is used for basic tracking. Over time, a system to electronically manage donors may be warranted in order to automate much of what is being done manually, while at the same time allowing the Secretariat to more rapidly expand the number of donors contacted.
105. A uniform system for reporting, which is acceptable to as many donors as possible, would avoid having a multitude of reporting formats and documents, and this would eventually need to be developed. Reports should reflect the plans – long-term and annual – and provide an overview of the implementation of activities, achievements, and use of funds. Ad hoc actions and reports should be minimized by clarifying reporting in the funding agreement.

Monitoring and Evaluation

106. Monitoring and evaluation processes will be established in order to regularly monitor resource mobilization progress against set targets and goals. Regular assessments of donors allow for updating progress, sharing information, identifying obstacles and discussing plans and targets.

New Mechanisms for Resource Mobilization?

Signature Initiatives

107. The “Ramsar Signature Initiative” concept has been discussed by the Conference of the Contracting Parties and at previous meetings of the Subgroup on Finance. Resolution X.7 (2008) urges that Signature Initiatives be developed in relation to the Small Grants Fund (not as part of it). Further, the Resolution encourages Signature Initiatives to be developed as region-wide projects to address regionally-identified priorities. On the basis of the discussions at the 10th meeting of the COP, Resolution X.7, and further exploration of the

concept, it can be suggested that Signature Initiatives be used as a special tool for resource mobilization. Signature Initiatives can be viewed as the branding of a “special” project or programme which stands out from other projects requiring funding under the Convention. It is something that could be presented to a donor as a priority for a particular region or on the global scale for particularly important initiatives. For instance, a project or work area on the economics and valuation of wetlands would bear fruit for all Parties and thus be a Signature Initiative with a global benefit. Bearing these points in mind, it is important to note that other organizations where a signature, special or flagship initiative has been created have found that it sets the initiative apart from other activities and from other work as “special” campaign.

108. In framing this idea, a limited number of such initiatives can be created as a ‘proof of concept’. One to four initiatives are suggested to be the limit for a triennium. More than this number would dilute the importance and priority of the initiative to prospective donors.
109. The process of selecting the initiatives would be directly tied to priorities. For example, if the Parties in a region agree together on one particular funding need tied to a regional priority, the priority and a description of the rationale, context, action and results, along with a clear budget, would be submitted to the Partnership Coordinator through the Senior Regional Advisor. The second method for determining a Signature Initiative would be through the Secretariat as a whole and linked to a core global action providing benefit for all regions.

Global fund for wetlands and water management

110. With the myriad of NGOs and bodies working to raise funding for environmental causes, including wetlands, a more global and cohesive approach to stemming the loss of wetlands could provide added value to Contracting Parties. Another tool that could provide new revenue would be the development of a Global Wetlands and Water Management Fund or Endowment. Such a fund could be a central repository for donations and gifts towards building wetland management capacities, management and restoration of wetlands in trouble from bilateral donors, private foundations, trusts, charities, private corporations, philanthropists, ‘high net worth individuals’ and ‘ultra high net worth individuals’, IGOs, NGOs, and other private citizens.
111. A Global Fund for Wetlands and Water could be one way to supply more substantive and consistent, sustainable funding to the Convention and the efforts made by Contracting Parties. Setting up the facility could be considered for a specific set of activities, such Ramsar Advisory Missions.

Annex

List of agreements with the Ramsar Secretariat presently in force

Agencies to Support the Achievement of the 2010 Biodiversity Target - see under UNEP
 BirdLife International
 Carpathian Convention
 Commission internationale du Bassin Congo-Oubangui-Sangha (CICOS)

Convention on Biological Diversity
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals – CMS (Bonn Convention)
Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification particularly in Africa (UNCCD)
Convention for the Protection of the Environment and Sustainable Development of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention)- UNEP-MAP
Fonds Danone Evian pour l'eau – Protocole d'Accord 2007-2010
DFN: Fonds Danone pour la Nature (Danone and IUCN : Protocole d'accord « Agir avec la nature pour lutter contre le changement climatique, la perte de biodiversité et la pauvreté »)
Ducks Unlimited
European Environment Agency (27 February 2006)
European Space Agency (ESA) – STRP-ESA agreement on GlobWetland II
FAO-GTOS (Global Terrestrial Observing System) (13 June 2006)
Greece, Ministry of Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works (concerning Secretariat of the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative, for the period 2009-2011)
IOI – International Ocean Institute
IUCN: MoU on Programme Cooperation
IWMI – International Water Management Institute
JAXA – The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency
LakeNet
LCBC – Lake Chad Basin Commission
NBA – Niger Basin Authority
Mémorandum de Collaboration entre l'Office Rwandais de Protection de l'Environnement et la Convention de Ramsar pour l'inventaire et la catégorisation des marais du Rwanda
Organization of American States (OAS)
Panama – The Government of the Republic of Panama (Regional Center in the Western Hemisphere)
Programme d'Action pour la Méditerranée (PAM/MAP – Secrétariat de la Convention de Barcelone) see Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean against Pollution
Society of Wetland Scientists
South Pacific Environment Programme (SPREP)
Star Alliance-IUCN-UNESCO MAB: Biodiversity Connections
Stetson University College of Law
The Nature Conservancy
UNCTAD – BIOTRADE Initiative
UNESCO – World Heritage Centre
UNESCO – Man and the Biosphere/Ramsar Joint Programme of Work
UNEP (under the aegis of) MoC between Agencies to Support the Achievement of the 2010 Biodiversity Target (signed at CBD COP8 in Curitiba, Brazil, 27 March 2006) Also see "Agencies..."
UNEP – GPA (Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities) (17 October 2006)
UNEP/OCHA – Joint UNEP/OCHA Environmental Emergencies Section (17.01.2007)
UNEP-WCMC (World Conservation Monitoring Centre) (4 June 2010)
Wings over Wetlands (WOW – AEWA, Ramsar, BirdLife, Wetlands International) (14 June 2010)
World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) (17 June 2009)
World Bank (16.02.2010)