

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
46th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland, 8th - 12th April 2013

DOC. SC46-15

Report of the STRP Oversight Committee

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to note the report of the STRP Oversight Committee.

Introduction

1. The Oversight Committee for the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) was established by Resolution IX.11 of the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP9), and its role and responsibilities were reaffirmed by COP10 Resolution X.9.
2. The STRP Oversight Committee reports to the Standing Committee and its composition is: the Chair and Vice Chair of the Standing Committee, the Chair and Vice Chair of the STRP, and the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General *ex officio*. The Oversight Committee is chaired by the Chair of Standing Committee.
3. The responsibilities of the STRP Oversight Committee are to:
 - i) appoint the members, Chair and Vice Chair of the STRP;
 - ii) provide intersessional advice, guidance and support to the operations and work of the Panel;
 - iii) keep under review, and advise the Standing Committee on, the operations of the Panel under the revised *modus operandi*; and
 - iv) provide advice to the Secretariat on expenditures under the STRP budget line.

Activities undertaken since COP11

4. The main task for the STRP Oversight Committee since COP11 has been to appoint the Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the STRP for the 2013-2015 triennium.
5. In line with the STRP *modus operandi* adopted by Resolution X.9 and adjusted by Resolution XI.18, in November 2012 the Secretariat issued a call for STRP member and Chair nominations to Ramsar Administrative Authorities, STRP National Focal Points, and all 2006-2008 STRP members and observer organizations. The closing date for nominations was 7 December 2012.
6. A total of 26 administratively complete nominations were received by the Secretariat. Nominations were received for wetland experts from Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and Oceania, but very disappointingly no nominations were received for wetland experts from the Neotropics region.

7. Again, in line with the STRP *modus operandi*, a detailed review of nominations was made by the Secretariat's senior technical staff (Deputy Secretary General, Senior Regional Advisors and CEPA Programme Officer) and the STRP Chair of the last triennium, Dr Heather MacKay.
8. In preparing recommendations for appointments as Panel members, the Secretariat and STRP Chair have taken into account the following considerations under the STRP *modus operandi*:
 - i) that members are appointed as wetland experts in their own right, and not as representatives of any country or organization;
 - ii) that there should be regional balance, and that one member should have CEPA expertise and one member socio-economic science expertise;
 - iii) that there is a need to ensure that, across the membership of the Panel as a whole, there is good expertise for each of the themes of priority work for the Panel for 2013-2015, as approved in Resolution XI.17;
 - iv) that the primary role of the Panel members is to lead scoping of, and then have oversight of, the tasks requested of the Panel (with a focus on the Top Priority tasks in Resolution XI.17), and to ensure appropriate review (including independent peer-review) of any materials prepared through the work of the Panel – rather than undertaking actual preparation of the materials themselves; and
 - v) that recommendations be obtained from the current STRP Chair concerning the reappointment of a proportion of current members, so as to ensure continuity of expertise and working practices; this is particularly important where there is, for example, an aspect of thematic expert work which is continuing from one cycle to the next.
9. Recommendations for appointments were made in December 2012 to the STRP Oversight Committee, and after due consideration, the Committee has made the following appointments for the membership of the STRP for 2013-2015:

Chair

Prof Royal Gardner

Vice-Chair (from appointed members)

Ms Christine Prietto

Members

Dr Gueladio Cissé

Prof Reda Fishar

Dr Stanley Liphadzi

Dr Hiromi Yamashita

Prof Lijuan Cui

Dr Ritesh Kumar

Mr Lars Dinesen

Dr Matt Walpole

Dr Matthew McCartney

Mr Randy Milton

Dr Pierre Horwitz

Ms Christine Prietto

Prof Randy Thaman

IOP members

Wetlands International - Mr Stephan Flink

International Water Management Institute - Dr Sonali Senaratna

IUCN - Dr Patrick MacQuarrie

WWF - Mr Eugenio Barrios

BirdLife International - (to be advised)

Invited experts

Mr David Stroud

Mr Dave Pritchard

Prof Max Finlayson

Dr Mike Acreman

Neotropical expert (to be advised)

10. All of the nominees selected for appointment have accepted their appointments. The STRP *modus operandi* requires that all such nominations and appointments be made of persons for their expertise in their own right, and thus STRP members are not appointed as representatives of their countries, governments or organizations. The STRP Oversight Committee believes that together these appointees will bring a very high level of experience and expertise to the work required of the Panel in the coming three years.
11. Since no member nominations were received for wetland experts from the Neotropics region, the Oversight Committee has requested the Secretariat and STRP to seek to identify a suitably qualified candidate from that region, to be approved for appointment to the Panel as an Invited Expert.
12. In addition, the Oversight Committee has recognized that all nominees have experience and expertise relevant to one or more aspects of the STRP's priority work for 2013-2015, and it has requested the Secretariat to draw this expertise to the attention of the Panel, with a view to inviting unsuccessful nominees to participate in the work of the Panel and any of its thematic working groups through its electronic communications mechanisms, including through the STRP Web portal.
13. The first full meeting of the STRP for the 2013-2015 triennium (STRP17) took place at the Secretariat offices in Gland, Switzerland, from 25 February to 1 March 2013. All but one STRP appointed member were present and all were participating, along with invited experts appointed to the Panel, and a number of representatives of observer organizations recognized by Resolution XI.18. The main focus of STRP17 was to develop the Panel's 2013-2015 Work Plan from the instructions and prioritizations provided by Resolution XI.17 on future scientific and technical priorities for the Convention.
14. The STRP 2013-2015 draft Work Plan prepared by STRP17 is available to the Standing Committee for its consideration and approval at its 46th meeting, as part of DOC. SC46-16.