

Report of the STRP Chair and draft STRP 2013-2015 Work Plan

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to:

- a) note the STRP Chair's report and the STRP Terms of Reference (Annex 1);
- b) endorse the STRP's recommendations concerning the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) – 2012 revision (Annex 2);
- c) approve the draft STRP 2013-2015 Work Plan for finalization (Annex 3 & DOC. SC46-16 Add.1); and
- d) consider possible ways of sourcing funding for implementation of the priority tasks requested by COP11.

Introduction

1. This report from the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel covers STRP activities and progress since the Panel last met at its 16th meeting (STRP16) prior to the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP11). It includes STRP involvement in COP11, highlights from the Panel's 17th meeting (25 February – 1 March 2013), and the draft STRP Work Plan 2013-2015 for the Standing Committee's consideration.
2. Other papers for the 46th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC46) that are relevant to the work of the STRP are DOC. SC46-15 (Report of the STRP Oversight Committee), which covers the appointment of STRP Chairs, Members and invited experts for 2013-2015, and DOC. SC46-14 concerning Resolution XI.16 on *Ensuring efficient delivery of scientific and technical advice and support to the Convention*.

STRP participation and roles in COP11

3. Fourteen STRP Members and invited experts participated in COP11 in Bucharest, Romania. They actively supported Parties in the discussions on several key scientific and technical Resolutions, helped Contracting Parties to prepare revised versions of Draft Resolutions for the plenary's consideration, presented STRP technical briefings, and participated in side events.
4. A meeting with STRP National Focal Points (NFPs) attending the Conference provided a valuable opportunity for the NFPs to meet one another and Members of the STRP. The forty participants exchanged views and recommendations on how to improve communication and support for the preparation and delivery of the Convention's scientific and technical advice.

17th meeting of the STRP

5. The 17th meeting of the STRP took place in the Secretariat/IUCN HQ in Gland, Switzerland, from Monday 25 February to Friday 1 March 2013. The 45 participants included appointed STRP Members, invited experts, representatives from observer organizations, and several STRP NFPs. The Panel welcomed Marcela Bonells, the Secretariat's new Ramsar Scientific and Technical Support Officer, and thanked her predecessor, Monica Zavagli, for her work in supporting the Panel over the last triennium.
6. Ms. Bonells presented the new STRP web portal, which will be launched in April to replace the previous "STRP Support Service" portal. Designed to facilitate the Panel's intersessional work, the new system will include a 'closed' password-protected workspace and an 'open' area to provide more information about STRP activities and products to a wider audience. The Panel expressed its appreciation to Wetlands International for having developed and hosted the STRP Support Service.
7. Whilst welcoming Resolution XI.18 and its adjustments to the STRP's *modus operandi*, the STRP Chair and the Panel identified the need for further clarity on the roles of different categories of persons participating in the work of the Panel, as well as on the different types of STRP products. Accordingly, the Terms of Reference attached as Annex 1 to this report were developed at STRP17 to answer that need – they cover the roles of STRP Members working as the Panel, thematic Working Groups established by the Panel, the Chair and Vice-Chair, appointed Members, Invited Experts, and representatives of Observer Organizations recognized by the COP. (ToRs for STRP National Focal Points have already been adopted by the COP as part of the STRP *modus operandi*.) The purposes of the ToRs is to assist in the orientation of new and returning STRP participants, ensure clarity on different roles and responsibilities in the conduct of the Panel's work, and increase the efficiency and transparency of STRP processes.
8. The Panel discussed Resolution XI.16 and welcomes the opportunity to participate in the broad evaluation and reassessment of the delivery, uptake and implementation of scientific and technical advice and guidance to the Convention.
9. In Annex 1 to Resolution XI.8, the COP requested the STRP "to urgently consider" minor modifications to the RIS adopted at COP11. The Panel has done so, and its consensus recommendation is that no further modifications should be made at this time. A note attached as Annex 2 explains the issues and the reasons for the STRP's recommendation.
10. A programme officer from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) briefed the STRP on IPCC work related to wetlands. She requested reviewers from the STRP for the second-order draft of the 2013 Wetlands Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories. Eight Panel Members, experts, and observers have agreed to do so.

Draft STRP 2013-2015 Work Plan

11. Under the STRP's *modus operandi* (Resolution XI.18), the Standing Committee has the role of approving the Work Plans prepared by the STRP to implement the tasks requested of it by the COP, and that Resolution also lists the tasks (top and lower priorities) requested of

the STRP in 2013-2015. Since STRP17 met only very shortly before the deadline for the Secretariat to transmit SC46 papers to Standing Committee members, the draft STRP Work Plan provided in summary in Annex 3 of this paper and in full as DOC. SC46-16 Add.1 should be regarded as a work in progress. Panel Members are further reviewing the draft plan during March 2013, and the STRP Chair will report at SC46 on any further progress and refinements to the task descriptions in this draft Work Plan prepared by STRP Members.

12. In developing the draft Work Plan, the STRP was mindful of the continuing need to provide practical, scientific evidence-based products. For each task the Panel assessed any relevant work already existing or underway through other processes, so as to avoid duplication of effort, and considered collaborations with ongoing processes of other scientific advisory bodies and/or organizations. All four Secretariat Senior Regional Advisors provided valuable briefing to the Panel on regional priorities.
13. The Panel established Working Groups for each of the ten Themes in Resolution XI.18 Annex 2 to which the COP assigned top priority tasks. It also established a Working Group on Ecological Character and Change in Ecological Character to consolidate closely-related tasks that appeared in several thematic areas of Resolution XI.18 Annex 2. The Working Groups met in parallel sessions during STRP17 to establish the scope, deliverables, and approach to delivery for their tasks.
14. The Panel did not establish Working Groups for thematic areas to which the COP assigned lower priorities, but it did seek to identify alternative methods by which to deliver on those tasks. For example, it is anticipated that further work on wetlands and urbanization will be progressed through the ongoing collaboration between the Convention and UN-HABITAT.
15. The Panel does not anticipate producing a significant body of new scientific and technical guidance for COP12. As identified in the draft Work Plan, it is currently envisaging that COP12 guidance for Parties may be prepared on: climate change – advice on relevant decisions adopted by CBD COP11; strategic steps for mainstreaming the COP11 *Integrated Framework for linking wetland conservation and wise use with poverty eradication* (Resolution XI.13) into international and national policies and programmes for poverty eradication; a conceptual framework for the wise use of wetlands in relation to coastal and inland aquaculture and fisheries; and a plan for streamlining Article 3.2 and Montreux Record reporting.
16. With respect to funding, the Panel notes with concern that the STRP core budget for 2013-2015 has not changed from that in 2012, and that Resolution XI.16 contemplates a further reduction of funds available to the STRP to fund the broad evaluation and reassessment of the delivery, uptake and implementation of scientific and technical advice and guidance to the Convention. In light of the gap between funds needed to advance the STRP Work Plan and the available resources, the STRP has asked the Secretariat, following approval of the Panel's Work Plan by SC46, to contact potential donors to encourage further voluntary contributions which will be needed to support the STRP's work during the triennium.

17. With these challenges in mind, during the 2013-2015 triennium the Panel recommends that particular attention should be paid to the following Top Priority tasks in its Work Plan, in response to needs transmitted by Contracting Parties in different regions and to the need for timely delivery of both internal Convention mechanisms (e.g., RSIS redevelopment) and externally-relevant advice (e.g., a global water debate strategy in relation to the redevelopment for COP12 of the Ramsar Strategic Plan and the current post-2015 water and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) consultation and development process). [*Note.* These tasks are listed in order of task number and not in any further order of priority.]
- Assess and support the capacity-building and knowledge sharing needs of Contracting Parties in implementing the Ramsar Convention (AAs & wetland managers) (2013-15/1)
 - Invasive species and wetlands – guide to available guidance (2013-15/10)
 - Monitoring for change in ecological character – further guidance: standardised terminology concerning Article 3.2 issues (2013-15/20)
 - Implementation of the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) – 2012 revision (2013-15/25) – led by Secretariat, with STRP advice
 - Implications of, and advice on, climate change for Convention implementation: review and advice on relevant decisions adopted by CBD COP11 (2013-15/41, iv. c)
 - Ramsar, water and wetlands: review and development of a strategy for engaging in the global water debate (2013-15/44) – this work would provide input to the preparation of the next Ramsar Strategic Plan for post-2015
 - Wetlands and poverty eradication – guidance and case studies (2013-15/50)
 - Economics of wetland ecosystem benefits/services (2013-15/59)
18. The Panel anticipates the need for a number of its Working Groups to hold mid-term workshops to progress efficiently their Top Priority tasks. In addition, the Panel welcomed the offers from the Ramsar Regional Centre–East Asia (RRC-EA) to host a workshop for Asian STRP National Focal Points in late 2013, and from STRP member Cui Lijuan to host a workshop to progress its climate change work. The Panel recognized the importance of such intersessional workshops in facilitating the provision of advice to STRP NFPs and Contracting Parties on the development of the STRP’s work so as to ensure feedback and to review and test draft guidances.
19. So as to increase its outreach, the Panel considered a number of potential new communications tools in addition to the new STRP web portal, and it is intending to establish a number of “Webcasts”, some of which would be in languages other than English (e.g., in Spanish).

Annex 1

Terms of Reference (TORs) for STRP Members, Invited Experts and Observer Organization Representatives

Note by the Secretariat

1. The STRP's work and operations is directed by its approved *modus operandi* (available at <http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/strp/STRPmod-op-2013-2015.pdf>), most recently adjusted by Resolution XI.18 (2012). The STRP provides proactive and reactive scientific and technical advice to the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee, and the Secretariat.
2. Whilst the STRP *modus operandi* includes Terms of Reference (TORs) for STRP National Focal Points (STRP NFPs) (available from http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-strp/main/ramsar/1-31-111_4000_0_) and outlines the primary roles and responsibilities of the Panel and its Members, the STRP Chair and other participants have identified the need for further clarity on the roles of different categories of persons participating in the work of the Panel, as well as on the types of products that the STRP produces.
3. Accordingly, these TORs have been drafted by the STRP Chair and Ramsar Secretariat and cover the roles of the Panel itself, the thematic Working Groups (WGs) established by the Panel, the Chair and Vice-Chair, the appointed Members, Invited Experts and representatives of COP-recognized Observer Organizations (and other observers invited by the STRP Chair).
4. These TORs also provide general guidance about STRP products, processes and schedules. Their purpose is to assist in the orientation of new and returning STRP participants and to increase the efficiency and transparency of STRP processes. The TORs should be viewed as a living document that will be reviewed and revised in light of experience.
5. At its 17th meeting and afterward, the Panel finalized these TORs so that they may be transmitted to the Standing Committee at its 46th meeting (SC46) in April 2013.

CONTENTS

- I. Acronyms & abbreviations**
- II. Background**
- III. General terms of reference (TOR) for STRP Members as the panel**
- IV. TOR for thematic Working Groups established by the panel**
- V. TOR for the STRP Chairperson**
- VI. TOR for the STRP Vice-Chairperson**
- VII. TOR for appointed Members**
- VIII. TOR for IOP representatives**
- IX. TOR for STRP Invited Experts**
- X. TOR for STRP observer organizations**

I. Acronyms & abbreviations

6. Acronyms and abbreviations used in this document are as follows:

AA	Contracting Party Administrative Authority
CEPA	Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness
COP	Conference of the Contracting Parties
CP	Contracting Party
CSAB	Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies (of biodiversity-related MEAs)
IOP	International Organization Partner
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MOC	Memorandum of Cooperation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFP	National Focal Point
NRC	National Ramsar Committee/National Wetland Committee
SC	Standing Committee
SGF	Ramsar Small Grants Fund
STRP	Scientific and Technical Review Panel
STRP NFP	Scientific and Technical Review Panel National Focal Point
WG	STRP Working Group

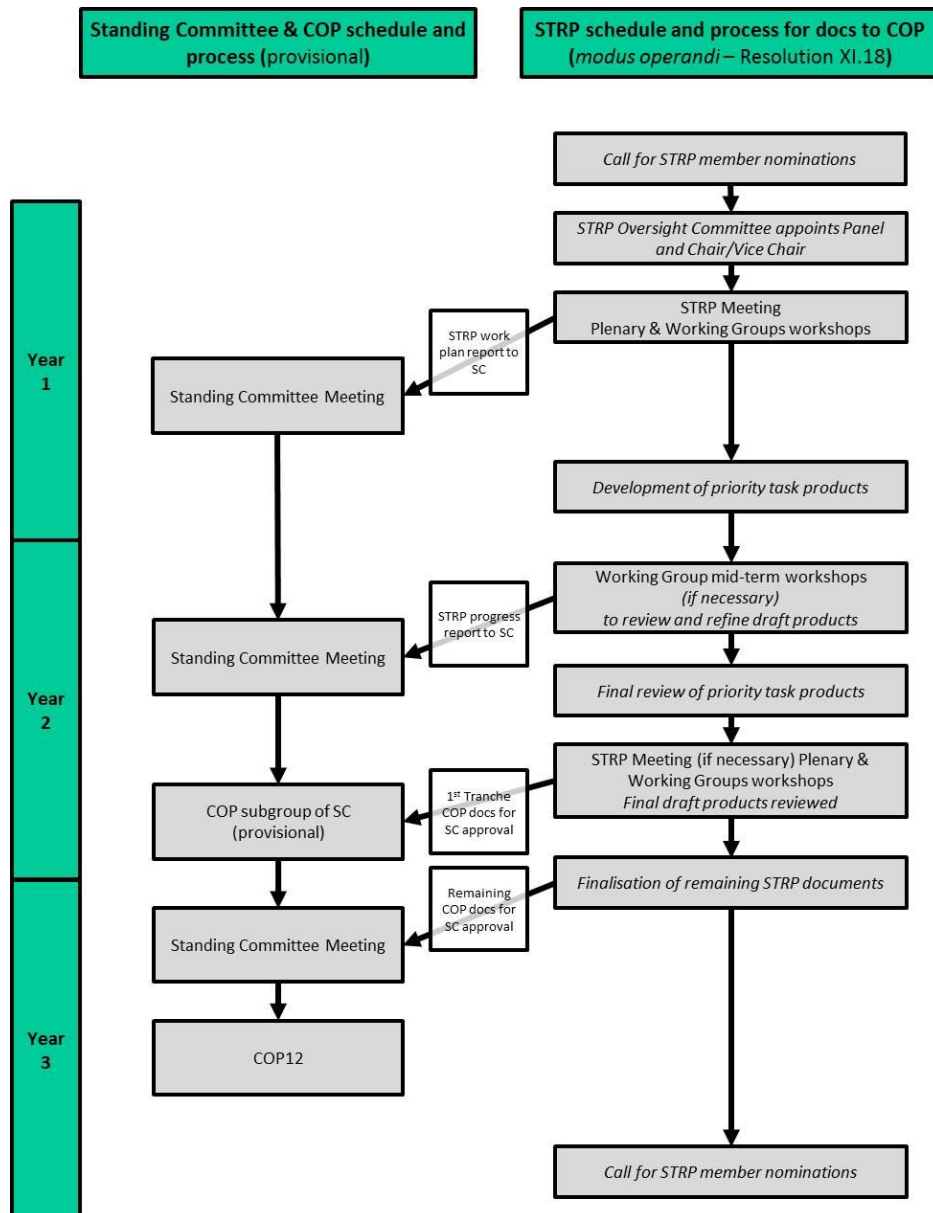
(Note. A fuller list of Ramsar-related acronyms and abbreviations is available on: http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-about-glossary-acronyms/main/ramsar/1-36-56-155_4000_0 .

II. Background

7. The Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Ramsar Convention, established by Resolution 5.5 (1993), is the subsidiary body of the Convention charged with providing scientific and technical guidance to the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP), the Standing Committee, and the Secretariat to support the implementation of the Convention.
8. The STRP's *modus operandi*, Resolution X.9 (2008), as adjusted by Resolution XI.18 (2012), established the composition of the STRP and participants for the 2013-2015 triennium, as follows:
 - i) A Chairperson and 13 Members, including a Vice-Chairperson, appointed for their expertise in their own right on matters relating to wetlands conservation and wise use, including Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA), socio-economic science and natural science;
 - ii) A Member representing each of the five International Organizations Partners (IOPs) of the Convention;
 - iii) Representatives from 34 Invited Observer Organizations, listed in Annex 1 to Resolution XI.18;
 - iv) Invited experts, consultants and organizations on specific topics, as needed; and

- v) A network of STRP National Focal Points (STRP NFPs) to assist the STRP’s work, providing advice on STRP matters and acting as a liaison between the STRP, the Administrative Authorities (AA) and networks of wetland experts within their country.
9. The *modus operandi* guides the STRP’s work for the 2013-2015 triennium. The STRP’s Work Plan for each triennium is developed from the tasks requested of it by Contracting Parties through a Resolution adopted at each COP. For example, for 2013-2015, the Annexes to COP11 Resolution XI.17 contain tasks requested and identified as either a top priority or lower priority. At its first meeting of a triennium the Panel develops its draft Work Plan, which is then transmitted for approval to the Standing Committee. Figure 1 provides a general overview of the STRP schedule for the triennium, as it relates to products developed for COP.

Figure 1. STRP schedule and process for documents related to COP



III. General Terms of Reference (TOR) for STRP Members as the Panel

10. STRP Members working together as the Panel, including through any thematic Working Groups (WGs) established, are expected to:
 - a) before establishing the scope and deliverable for each task, evaluate and assess any relevant work already in existence or underway through other processes and initiatives;
 - b) through the Chair, establish thematic WGs and task-specific task groups, as needed, agree upon their leads/co-leads from amongst the Panel Members, and agree upon other participants in these groups;
 - c) determine the scope, deliverables and approach to delivery for each task assigned to it by the COP as a draft Work Plan to be approved by the Standing Committee, including through thematic scoping workshops as appropriate, and in so doing ensure input from the network of STRP NFPs, Ramsar Regional Initiatives, and other relevant organizations;
 - d) especially (but not exclusively) when considering a new or emerging issue, first prepare and issue to Contracting Parties and others a *Scientific & Technical Briefing Note* or *Review Request note* outlining the issue and its relevance to the future implementation of the Convention, and invite feedback from the Parties before bringing such issues formally through Draft Resolutions for the Parties' consideration;
 - e) working with the STRP NFPs, identify task-based national expert contacts to ensure, first, their participation in specialist work on specific STRP tasks and, secondly, their review of draft documents.
 - f) ensure appropriate peer review of draft materials, including consideration of how best to present the material in order to encourage its effective communication and uptake;
 - g) review (including with STRP NFPs) and approve all scientific and technical materials prior to any transmission of them to Parties, including to the COP, in line with the terms of Resolution VIII.45;
 - h) review, and advise the Standing Committee and COP on, any draft COP Resolutions which have scientific or technical content, in line with the terms of Resolution VIII.45;
 - i) with the Secretariat, seek to identify opportunities and mechanisms for holding intersessional regional or subregional meetings of STRP NFPs, wetland managers and other wetland experts, including through the support of Ramsar Regional Centres; and
 - j) propose a schedule of Panel meetings, to be confirmed by the STRP Oversight Committee, which may include up to two plenary meetings between COPs, one

meeting not later than six months after the previous COP and the other not later than six months before the next COP.

11. Table 1 summarises the current categories of STRP outputs. Note that STRP outputs are flexible and must take into account the best method to engage the target audience. The Chair and the Secretariat are reviewing existing guidance notes on the peer review process and will be preparing a further note for each category of product.

Table 1. STRP outputs/products.

Type of STRP output/product	Review mechanism
ISSUED FOR COP	
Draft Resolutions (DRs) to COP - on scientific and technical issues	SC review Secretariat review STRP review
Guidelines on aspects of Convention implementation - annexed to COP DRs	SC review Secretariat review STRP review
COP Information Papers - supporting scientific and technical DRs	SC review Secretariat review STRP review
ISSUED WHEN FINALISED	
<i>Ramsar Technical Reports (RTRs)</i> - More detailed reviews and methodologies as a contribution to scientific literature and broader wetland conservation objectives	STRP review External peer review
<i>Scientific & Technical Briefing Notes (BNs)</i> - Issue papers, often preceding preparation of guidance for COP	Secretariat review STRP review External peer review as appropriate
STRP Review Request note (to Parties) - Briefing on the approach to an STRP-requested task intended to invite feedback from others (e.g., AAs, STRP NFPs, wetland managers) on approach, focus and content	Secretariat review STRP review
Other types of outputs - Flexible (e.g., web portal for alerting on issues, news stories, etc.; STRP Newsletter; databases and online tools; fact sheets; training/capacity building tools for Parties)	Secretariat review STRP review Other review (as required)

IV. TOR for thematic Working Groups (WGs) established by the Panel

12. The WGs are expected to:
- a) through the appointed lead or co-lead of the WG, and with the advice of the STRP Chair and Vice-Chair and the Secretariat, establish the membership of the thematic WG, which may include *inter alia* other appointed STRP Members, Observer Organization representatives, STRP NFPs with relevant expertise, and other invited experts with relevant expertise;

- b) develop, for agreement by the Panel, the scope and contents of any advice, guideline, review or other output requested by COP within its theme as a high priority for the inter-COP period; identify the mechanism for its delivery (including through a scoping workshop and/or an expert consultancy contract if necessary and resources permitting); and oversee and review the content and progress in the drafting and finalization of such materials;
- c) when appropriate, establish a task group for the delivery of a particular top priority task in the STRP Work Plan; the task group should develop a pro forma that describes the task, its rationale, the target audience, the type of deliverable and the steps for delivering the work;
- d) commission, with the approval of the STRP Chair, through the Secretariat and resources permitting, an expert or experts to lead preparation of each work task identified;
- e) keep under review any opportunities for initiating other (lower priority) tasks within the theme, and develop mechanisms for the delivery of any such tasks as and when capacity permits;
- f) if opportunity or need arises between COPs to initiate new tasks (e.g., on emerging issues), seek through the STRP Chair the advice of the STRP Oversight Committee about establishing appropriate ways and means of developing the work;
- g) work intersessionally largely by electronic means (e-mail, STRP web portal and work space and teleconferences); and
- h) resources permitting, meet in a workshop during the inter-COP period in order to progress work efficiently.

V. TOR for the STRP Chairperson

13. The STRP Chairperson is expected to:

- a) prepare, with the assistance of the Secretariat and Vice-Chair, and approve the agendas STRP meetings, and approve all other papers for those meetings;
- b) chair plenary sessions of STRP meetings and oversee the conduct of all aspects of those meetings;
- c) approve the appointment of leads/co-leads of any thematic WGs established by the Panel;
- d) advise, along with the STRP Vice-Chair and the Secretariat, the leads/co-leads of WGs about the membership composition of such groups (which may include *inter alia* other appointed STRP Members, representatives of STRP observer organizations, STRP National Focal Points with relevant expertise, and other invited experts with relevant expertise);

- e) lead the STRP's thematic work on strategic, emerging and ongoing issues and future priorities, and coordinate the Panel's advice to the next COP concerning high and emerging priorities for the Panel's work in the next triennium;
- f) when needed, create a task group to deliver a specific top priority task in the STRP's Work Plan;
- g) with the Vice-Chair, agree upon the division of responsibilities regarding oversight of the work of any thematic WGs or specific task groups established by the Panel;
- h) with inputs from the Panel and its thematic WGs and the Secretariat, approve the draft STRP Work Plan (for adoption by the Standing Committee);
- i) if there is an opportunity or need to commence new or lower priority tasks between COPs, seek the advice of the STRP Oversight Committee about establishing appropriate ways and means of developing the work;
- j) report to each meeting of the Standing Committee and the COP the progress with the STRP Work Plan and priority tasks, other tasks, and other STRP-related matters, and provide feedback and guidance to the STRP;
- k) resources permitting, represent the STRP at meetings of other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and other processes and initiatives relevant to the STRP's work (e.g., CSAB, IPBES);
- l) represent the Convention's scientific and technical work externally by maintaining relationships with partner organizations and, resources permitting, by participating in scientific fora and other conferences;
- m) recommend to the STRP Oversight Committee, after consultation with current STRP Members, the names of members eligible for reappointment for a subsequent triennium based on their contributions to the STRP's work and the relevance of their expertise to the COP-assigned priority tasks; and
- n) maintain records of the hours devoted to contributing to the work of the Panel, so as to facilitate reporting on such efforts.

VI. TOR for the STRP Vice-Chairperson

14. The STRP Vice-Chairperson is expected to:

- a) assist the Secretariat and STRP Chair in the preparation of agendas and other papers for STRP meetings;
- b) deputise for the STRP Chair in chairing plenary sessions of STRP meetings and overseeing the conduct of all aspects of STRP meetings;
- c) advise, along with the STRP Chair and the Secretariat, the leads/co-leads of WGs about the membership composition of such groups (which may include *inter alia*

other appointed STRP Members, representatives of STRP observer organizations, STRP National Focal Points with relevant expertise, and other invited experts with relevant expertise);

- d) agree with the STRP Chair the division of responsibilities regarding oversight of the work of any thematic WGs or specific task groups established by the Panel;
- e) resources permitting, deputise for the STRP Chair in representing the STRP at meetings of other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and other processes and initiatives relevant to the STRP's work (e.g., CSAB, IPBES);
- f) represent the Convention's scientific and technical work externally, through maintaining relationships with partner organizations and, resources permitting, by participating at scientific fora and other conferences;
- g) when requested, deputise for the STRP Chair in any other of his/her functions; and
- h) maintain records of the hours devoted to contributing to the work of the Panel, so as to facilitate reporting on such effort by the STRP Chair.

VII. TOR for STRP appointed Members

15. The STRP's appointed Members are expected to:

- a) participate in all meetings of the Panel;
- b) lead/co-lead and/or participate in any thematic WGs or task groups established by the Panel to progress its top priority and other tasks in its Work Plan;
- c) contribute, through WGs and task groups, to the scoping of Work Plan tasks and the oversight of implementation and delivery of tasks, working intersessionally largely through electronic means, including the STRP web portal and work space;
- d) assist in identifying an expert or experts to lead, resources permitting, the preparation of each work task identified;
- e) participate in any relevant intersessional workshops established to progress and review specific task delivery;
- f) leverage their own networks of wetland experts nationally and internationally to contribute to the work of the Panel;
- g) with respect to new or emerging issues within the STRP's mandate, participate in outlining the issue and its relevance to the implementation of the Convention, which will be used to invite feedback from Contracting Parties;
- h) participate, when appropriate, in the drafting of Scientific & Technical Briefing Notes; this participation will be on a pro bono basis and the Member will absent himself or herself from the Panel's evaluation of the product;

- i) not be asked to undertake other substantive work in drafting materials (such as Ramsar Technical Reports), but a Member may offer, on a pro bono basis, to draft materials, and in doing so will absent himself or herself from the Panel's evaluation of the product; and
- j) maintain records of the hours devoted to contributing to the work of the Panel (by thematic area), so as to facilitate reporting on such effort by the STRP Chair.

VIII. TOR for STRP IOP representatives

16. STRP's IOP members are expected, in addition to the TOR for all STRP Members (above), to:
- a) consult within their organizations, including with any relevant specialist groups and other networks, on the Work Plan of the STRP, ensuring that their views and expertise are available to the STRP;
 - b) maintain and access their organization's regional and global wetland conservation and wise use expert networks;
 - c) identify and engage input to STRP WGs and task groups from relevant experts from their organization's staff and expert networks; and
 - d) maintain records of the hours devoted to contributing to the work of the Panel (by thematic area), so as to facilitate reporting on such effort by the STRP Chair.

IX. TOR for STRP Invited Experts

17. Experts may be invited to participate in the work of the Panel through their appointment by the STRP Oversight Committee at the start of a triennium.
18. Additional experts may be identified and invited to contribute to specific WGs and/or task groups by those groups, through the STRP Chairperson.
19. Invited experts are expected to:
- a) participate in WGs/task groups relevant to their specific areas of expertise;
 - b) advise the STRP on current thinking, latest scientific understanding, and outstanding issues in their areas of expertise relevant to wetlands;
 - c) when invited by the Panel, and resources permitting, be commissioned to lead the drafting and finalization of STRP products;
 - d) participate, resources permitting, in all meetings of the Panel;
 - e) participate in any scoping workshops or other intersessional workshops called by a WG or task group to which they are contributing;

- f) contribute to intersessional work largely through electronic means, including the STRP web portal and work space; and
- g) maintain records of the hours devoted to contributing to the work of the Panel (by thematic area), so as to facilitate reporting on such effort by the STRP Chair.

X. TOR for STRP Observer Organization representatives

- 20. Observer Organizations recognized by COP Resolutions are invited to participate in the STRP's work. Representatives of Observer Organizations are expected to:
 - a) ensure that the scientific and technical review capacity of their organizations' national, regional and international networks of wetland experts (where applicable) are available to the Panel, and establish mechanisms to identify and engage experts from their networks in the work of the STRP;
 - b) identify to the Panel and its WGs any work relevant to top priority and other tasks already in existence or underway through their processes and initiatives;
 - c) advise the STRP on current thinking, latest scientific understanding and outstanding issues in their areas of expertise relevant to wetlands;
 - d) participate in any relevant WGs and tasks forces established by the Panel;
 - e) help in identifying experts to lead or contribute to, resources permitting, the preparation of each work task identified;
 - f) when invited by the Panel, and resources permitting, be commissioned to lead the drafting of STRP products;
 - g) participate in any scoping workshops or other intersessional workshops called by a WG or task group to which they are contributing;
 - h) serve as their organizations' representative to all such meetings, if possible, for continuity purposes;
 - i) contribute to intersessional work largely through electronic means, including the STRP web portal and work space; and
 - j) maintain records of the hours devoted to contributing to the work of the Panel (by thematic area), so as to facilitate reporting on such effort by the STRP Chair.
- 21. Representatives of other organizations requesting to participate in meetings or intersessional processes of the STRP may do so with the approval of the STRP Chair.

Annex 2

Advice to SC46 concerning the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) – 2012 revision

Note from the Ramsar Secretariat

1. In Resolution XI.8 (2012), paragraph 21 ii), Parties requested the STRP:

to urgently consider scope for minor modifications to the RIS to support monitoring at Ramsar Sites through possible inclusion of subfields related to: change at the site, for example in fields 12a, 12c, and 16 relating to species composition and wetland type; identification of thresholds of change in ecological character; and monitoring indicators.

It is suggested that any minor modifications be provided to the Secretariat to provide to the Standing Committee for final endorsement of remaining minor details enabling them to be incorporated within the final RIS format, agreed by COP11, by January 2015.
2. In order to ensure that the redesign of the Ramsar Sites Information Service (RSIS) and its database can be fully implemented by 1 January 2015 as decided by COP11, it is essential that any such proposals be considered by the Standing Committee before mid-2014.
3. In response to the specific COP11 request, the STRP established a task group under its 2013-2015 work plan theme on Wetlands of International Importance to consider these matters prior to and during its 17th meeting in late February 2013.
4. This note provides the background to, and rationale for, the resulting consensus recommendation approved by the Panel for transmission to the Standing Committee.
5. In summary, the STRP recommends that no further modifications be made to the RIS - 2012 revision format at this time.
6. The Panel notes that the suggested additional RIS fields relate essentially to national scale onward uses of the RIS, rather than Site description at the point of designation or update, and that they would have fewer uses at wider scales, and thus the STRP suggests a way forward for possibly addressing tools for such future onward RIS uses.

Background

7. The Information Sheet (RIS) is the key instrument for describing Ramsar Sites when they are first designated, as well as for subsequently updating the description at intervals of not more than six years. The RIS was first introduced in 1990 (Resolution 4.7) and has been revised periodically since then.
8. Over the past two triennia, a thorough overhaul of the RIS has been undertaken by the STRP, involving extensive consultation and input from many specialists and Contracting Parties. The proposals for change were adopted by COP 11 (Resolution XI.8: [Streamlining](#)

procedures for describing Ramsar Sites at the time of designation and subsequent updates). The new format RIS was adopted as Annex 1: Ramsar Site Information Sheet (RIS) – 2012 revision and the supporting Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands – 2012 revision as Annex 2.

9. Background on the rationale for the restructuring of the RIS was provided to COP11 in COP11 DOC. 22 (Background, rationale and issues for the 2012 revisions proposed for the Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance and Ramsar Site Information Sheet (RIS)).
10. The central elements of the agreed changes are as follows:
 - i) A comprehensive restructuring of the format of the RIS with the following objectives:
 - to better capture in the Ramsar Sites Database all data and information reported by Contracting Parties;
 - to create a format that facilitates on-line data entry as part of a move to modernise data handling procedures associated with Secretariat processes;
 - to facilitate data handling, analysis and dissemination by moving from lengthy textual descriptions to categorical (presence/absence; yes/no) or numerical data and/or information;
 - to better capture information on species status on Ramsar Sites;
 - to better align the logic and format of the RIS with other Ramsar tools for site description, notably Article 3.2 reports and guidance on inventory; and
 - through these changes, to open the potential for data exchange about Ramsar Sites with other international processes.
 - ii) Updating and restructuring the guidance on selection and description of Ramsar Sites contained within the *Strategic Framework*.
 - iii) A mandate for the Secretariat, funding permitting, to redevelop the Ramsar Sites Database and Ramsar Sites Information Service so as to be able to interface with the new format RIS, both in terms of data capture and of subsequent analysis and dissemination.
11. Resolution XI.8, paragraph 21 ii), requested consideration of the scope for the inclusion of three categories of RIS sub-fields, related to:
 - change at the site, for example in fields 12a, 12c, and 16 relating to species composition and wetland type;
 - identification of thresholds of change in ecological character; and
 - monitoring indicators.
12. The Panel's recommended approach to addressing each of these categories is set out below, preceded by general comments on the purpose and uses of the RIS.

Purpose and uses of the Ramsar Information Sheet

13. There are a range of different uses and users of the information reported by Contracting Parties (CPs) in Ramsar Information Sheets.
 - i) The primary rationale is to provide the bodies of the Convention and other interested parties with information as to the reasons why particular sites are of international importance, and to provide wider contexts (regional, global) related to the status of designated Wetlands of International Importance.
 - ii) The descriptive information provided by Parties within an RIS is of potential value for wetland inventory processes, either regionally, nationally or at wider scales.
 - iii) In some countries the RIS is used as a reference document (often having legal status, depending on the implementation model adopted by the Party), including for management purposes.
 - iv) The RIS provides a definitive description of the ecological character of the Ramsar Site at the time of designation, as a key source of baseline information against which to assess future change.
14. Each of these and other potential uses will draw on different subsets of the data and information contained within the RIS.

I. Change at the site, for example in fields 12a, 12c, and 16 relating to species composition and wetland type

Options

15. The options considered by the STRP are to:
 - i) *Retain the current format (whereby change is derived in fields 12a, 12c & 16 in successive RIS records).* This avoids the need to build in further complexity to the form design whilst at the same time allowing change to be fully recorded at the time of any RIS update simply by reporting “new” information on species abundance, etc.; or
 - ii) *Add a “change at update” subfield.* As potentially any of the data items in these fields might be liable to change, effectively this would mean that the field layout doubles in size with a marked increase in complexity of form and database design.

Recommendation

16. Retain current format of RIS fields without further modification.

Justification

17. The new Ramsar Sites Database should have the functionality to extract change over time for each field. Thus the RIS – 2012 revision format should currently be able to deliver

change assessments – as derived information – through routine cycles of update without the further need for modification of the RIS format. First, and most simply, change can be derived by a simple comparison of field values in RIS submitted on different dates (e.g., RIS-Year 1 vs RIS-Year 6).

18. For some fields (6, 17b, 18b, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 30), the RIS – 2012 revision does include a “change at update” subfield. The original logic for these subfields was that they highlighted those subfields where change through time is most likely to be manifested (in contrast, for example, to physical or geographic description). These “change at update” subfields also provide a prompt for anyone updating an RIS as to those features where change since designation is most likely.
19. The issue then is: if there are “change at update” subfields for some features, why not for all fields? Inherently this becomes an issue of complexity in terms of the RIS form and database design. The fields relating to species and wetland types (notably 12a, 12c & 16) are already complex. Multiple items of information are potentially requested for each entry. From a computing/data entry perspective, information on change in these multi-element fields is undoubtedly easier to *derive* from a resubmitted field than to try and capture with subfields. The critical need is to ensure that the information in each of these fields is “date-stamped” to allow such derivation.

II. Identification of thresholds of change in ecological character

20. Limits of change (LAC), or thresholds of change, is a significantly different concept from actual change at a Site and is not currently covered by the RIS format. The request to be able to record “change” in ecological character is thus interpreted as relating to limits of change, rather than change *per se*.
21. Guidance for describing ecological character, including data needs and formats, has most recently been adopted by Parties in Resolution X.15 (2008) which includes a list of related components, processes and services.

Options

22. There appear to be three ways in which this request might be taken forward:
 - i) *Retain the RIS – 2012 revision as adopted by COP11, but prepare “derived” versions, which are available for use essentially for more management planning and/or inventory-related purposes – probably on a “stand-alone” basis.*
 - ii) *Add subfields to relevant RIS fields.* This could be done in a way that recognizes that there is no requirement for Contracting Parties to report this information, but that also acknowledges that it may be useful for Parties to formally record this information as an attribute of their reporting to the Convention.
 - iii) *Retain the RIS as agreed at COP 11 and explore other options for recording limits of acceptable change (LAC).*

Recommendation

23. Retain format of RIS – 2012 revision without modification.

Justification

24. The STRP recognized that the inclusion of an “LAC subfield” would have minimal capacity for RIS analytical reporting.
25. In addition, the inclusion of LAC can be reported in existing optional text fields such as those used in documenting background information of the RIS - 2012 revision and more particularly in management plans for the Site. It is suggested that other options be considered, such as using other modules of the redeveloped Ramsar Sites Information Service to store such information. It is recommended that this approach might be taken forward to COP12 for further consideration.

III. Monitoring indicators

Options

26. Two options were considered, to:
- i) not include subfields for “monitoring indicators” and to retain the format of RIS – 2012 revision without modification; or
 - ii) add further subfields to the RIS for “monitoring indicators”.

Recommendation

27. No additional monitoring indicators subfields in the RIS – 2012 revision are recommended.

Justification

28. It is important to maintain a clear distinction between the RIS and management plans and planning and monitoring processes, and also to avoid further complexity in the RIS format.
29. The primary purpose of the RIS itself is to designate Wetlands of International Importance with subsequent updates. Monitoring indicators relate to management planning and are likely to be significantly site-specific depending on the management objectives established for each Site. The RIS-2012 revision does, however, already have considerable monitoring potential, depending on how it is used (e.g., frequency of update). See also the explanations under I. above.
30. As for II. Above, other options could be considered, such as developing further modules of the redeveloped Ramsar Sites Information Service to store such information.

Annex 3

Draft STRP Work Plan 2013-2015: Summary descriptions of top priority scientific and technical tasks

STRP's 2013-2015 Work Plan themes (from Resolution XI.17) and their foci, are:

Communication, Education, Participation & Awareness (CEPA)

1. The CEPA theme focuses on supporting further development of the roles, functions and contributions of the Ramsar Administrative Authorities in implementing Ramsar guidance in their countries; as far as is practically possible, to ensure that existing expertise and knowledge from the regions is brought into the work produced by the STRP and others; and to work with NFP networks to disseminate Ramsar guidance on the ground and support its uptake and implementation by Contracting Parties.

Strategic, emerging & ongoing issues

2. The STRP has a number of roles to play in fulfilling its responsibilities in its general review and advisory role for the Convention. As well as providing wetland-related information, advice and recommendations in response to *ad hoc* requests by Contracting Parties, the Secretariat and other relevant organizations, the scope of this theme includes the “horizon-scanning” role through which the Panel seeks to keep under review the emerging and more strategic issues of relevance for the Convention which may require action or advice in the near- or medium-term future. Tasks under this theme are overseen by the STRP Chair with assistance from specific task leads as needed.

Wetland inventory, assessment, monitoring & reporting

3. Work under this theme focuses on providing data and tools to meet overall Convention data and information needs, as well as on developing guidance concerning different aspects of assessment of, reporting on, and response to, changes in the ecological character of wetlands.

Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)

4. This theme focuses on supporting Parties in meeting their specific commitments for the designation and management of Ramsar Sites.

Ramsar, wetlands and other sectors

A: Wetlands and health

5. Work under this sub-theme focuses on the interconnections between wetlands and health (human, wetland, and animal health), including considering the positive values of wetlands in contributing to achieving public health objectives, and also providing guidance for managing the potential negative interactions between wetlands and human health. The word ‘human’ from the original theme title of “Wetlands and human health” has been

dropped in recognition of the work's broader applicability to wetland health, human health, and animal health, as is recognized in Resolution XI.12.

B: Wetlands and climate change

6. Work under this sub-theme is significantly crosscutting since the implications of climate change, including both mitigation and adaptation, are critically important in almost all aspects of the wise use of wetlands and must be reflected in most guidance and products prepared by the STRP. The sub-theme also includes tasks related to the provision of wetland-related scientific information for other global, regional and national processes related to policy for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

C: Wetlands and water resource management

7. This theme focuses on the connections between wetlands and water, especially in providing guidance for incorporating wetlands into water resources management and water infrastructure planning and development, in ways that support both the wise use of wetlands and the sustainable management of water resources. From more practical guidance in the last few cycles, the focus here is shifting to strategic engagement with water sector policy development and planning at global, regional and national levels, in order to influence water sector activities towards the wise use of wetlands.

D: Wetlands and agriculture

8. This theme addresses the range of issues related to agriculture and wetlands interactions, recognizing that much food production depends directly or indirectly on wetlands, including as natural water infrastructure, and also that food production continues to be a major driver of loss and deterioration of wetlands through water abstractions for irrigated agriculture, conversion of wetlands to croplands, and the impacts of agrochemicals.

E: Wetlands and poverty eradication

9. This theme recognizes that for many countries poverty eradication is a major policy priority, especially in relation to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Ramsar Convention has long stressed the fact that many people depend directly or indirectly on wetlands and their benefits for their livelihoods and well-being; and that the wise use of wetlands can contribute to poverty eradication.

Note. Three further “**Ramsar, wetlands and other sectors**” sub-themes do not have Top Priority tasks allocated for 2013-2015 and are not included in this summary. It is anticipated, however, that progress can be made on some aspects of these themes through lead work in STRP partner organizations. These sub-themes are:

F: Wetlands and urbanization

G: Wetlands and Tourism

H: Wetlands and energy

Wetlands and ecosystem services/benefits

10. This is a new theme aimed *inter alia* to address the key results under Ramsar's Strategic Plan Strategy 1.4 (cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services). With inclusion of ecosystem services as an integral component of ecological character and the adoption of Millennium Ecosystem Assessment conceptual framework for ecosystems and human well-being as a framework for delivery of wise use (Resolution IX.1 Annex A, 2005), further work is required to harmonize the ecosystem services concept across various response options for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. Additionally, several recent assessments (TEEB - The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity being the most recent and prominent) have highlighted the need to explicitly recognize, value and capture the ecosystem services benefits to address the 'economic invisibility' of ecosystem services in societal policy and decision making. This need has also been expressed in the various STRP guidances, particularly those focused upon cross-sectoral linkages (e.g., on wetlands and health; poverty eradication; extractive industries; agriculture; urban development; avoidance, mitigation and compensation). Recent progress on ecosystem services assessment and valuation indicate several possibilities for augmenting the wise use of wetlands through rationalizing incentive systems and creating partnership opportunities for economic sectors.

Ecological Character and Change in Ecological Character

11. During its 17th meeting, the STRP recognized that the work requested of it concerning wetland ecological character under several themes established by Resolution XI.17 would be better grouped and consolidated under a specific theme for the sake of efficiency.
12. Work under this theme focuses on streamlining and improving the procedures and guidance on issues relating to Article 3.2 of the Convention and the Montreux Record by reference to *A Framework for processes of detecting, reporting and responding to change in wetland ecological character* (Resolution X.16). This thematic work plan consolidates the requests adopted by the Contracting Parties in several COP11 Resolutions along with aspects of 2009-2012 tasks carried forward. This thematic work area is cross-cutting with those on Ecosystems Services, Climate Change, and Water Resource Management.
13. **The estimated cost for the implementation of all Top Priority tasks is: CHF 1,842,000** (revised from estimate of CHF 1,915,000 in Resolution XI.17).

Communications, Education, Participation & Awareness (CEPA)				
Working Group leads: Christine Prietto, Hiromi Yamashita				
Task title	Summary description	Main products/outputs	Lead body/process	Estimated costs, Comments
1. Supporting capacity-building and knowledge-sharing needs of Contracting Parties in implementing the Ramsar Convention				
Assessing capacity-building needs of Contracting Parties in applying Ramsar guidance (2013-15/1)	Identify effective ways of providing training and capacity-building for relevant stakeholders in Contracting Parties to assist with the interpretation and implementation of the Convention, including scientific, technical guidance and other materials that have been adopted by the Convention.	Scoping study	STRP, with Secretariat	CHF 15,000
Capacity-building support for STRP National Focal Points (2013-15/2)	Hold regional workshops for STRP National Focal Points (at least 1 per triennium) in collaboration with Regional Centres, using the STRP NFPs meetings for the Africa region and the European Region in Austria as examples.	Regional Workshop [Asia regional workshop planned for late 2013 (hosted by RRC-EA)]	STRP, with Secretariat, Regional Initiatives	CHF 100,000
2. Expanding the range and utility of tools provided to Contracting Parties to support implementation				

<p>Build a collection of practical learning materials for horizontal knowledge sharing using more dynamic and accessible delivery modes (Additional proposed task: 2013-15/2.2)</p>	<p>Repackage existing guidance/other materials into smaller, more accessible, products using more dynamic mediums that can serve as a <i>second level</i> of Ramsar Guidance. It is also the intention to identify existing products that are already in use that are relevant to Ramsar end users and build links to these either informally or through partnerships.</p>	<p>A collection of practical learning materials, such as videos, webcasts, online forums, and site exchanges, reusing existing STRP substantive guidance where possible, identifying opportunities for horizontal knowledge sharing using more dynamic and accessible delivery modes.</p>	<p>STRP</p>	<p>CHF 50,000</p>
<p>3. Improve STRP communication, efficiency and transparency in providing guidance to Contracting Parties</p>				
<p>STRP communication support: Web platform (2013-15/3a)</p>	<p>Redevelopment of the current web-based “STRP Support Service” work space and enhancement of STRP internal and external communication; The STRP Platform is a web-based tool with a user-friendly interface built around two main components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the STRP Portal - the public interface of the STRP- for open access to news, meeting calendar, finalized reports and Briefing Notes, STRP work plan as well as STRP draft material that requires input from a wider audience; and • the STRP Support Service - a password-protected space for STRP’s internal communications and work that will be directly accessible from the Portal. 	<p>STRP Web-platform</p>	<p>Secretariat, with STRP</p>	<p>Funded; launching in mid-2013</p>
<p>STRP communication support: newsletters (2013-15/3b)</p>	<p>Produce regular STRP newsletters and seek to provide newsletters and key STRP documents in all Convention languages.</p>	<p>Electronic newsletters: in English and, when funds are available, also in the other Convention languages.</p>	<p>Secretariat, with STRP</p>	<p>CHF 15,000 (translations)</p>

Plan for, evaluate and report on the delivery of STRP participation at the COP (2013-15/3c)	Use the COP as an opportunity to engage directly with Contracting Parties as STRP's primary audience	Plan and report	STRP	-
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Strategic, emerging & ongoing issues				
Working Group leads: Royal Gardner; Randy Milton				
Task title	Summary description	Main products/outputs	Lead body/process	Estimated costs, Comments
Scientific & technical advice: strategic, sectoral and/or ongoing issues (2013-15/6&9)	<p>Provide proactive and reactive advice to the Convention on relevant strategic scientific and technical matters, including overall progress with scientific and technical aspects of the implementation of COP Resolutions, trends, sectoral and/or emerging issues, and other priority matters requiring expert review.</p> <p>Maintain and periodically review a rolling list of global and regional sectoral and/or emerging issues which could have implications for the wise use of wetlands; consider and provide appropriate recommendations to Standing Committee and the COP when any of these issues might need to be addressed by the STRP within its programme of scientific and technical work or through other Convention bodies.</p>	Varies, depending on the nature of the request or issue. Can include reports, STRP Briefing Notes, STRP Support Service communications, presentations to meetings or conferences, webcasts, 'horizon-scan' paper.	STRP	CHF 15,000
Ongoing ad hoc advisory functions (2013-15/7)	Provide advice to Secretariat and Parties, including on Ramsar Site designation, article 3.2 issues, Montreux Record, Ramsar Advisory Missions, RSIS, wetland projects, participation in CSAB, and other issues.	Varies, depending on precise nature of request or issue.	STRP	Varies, depending on each request
Review of COP Draft Resolutions submitted by Parties (2013-15/8)	Advise Standing Committee on proposals from Contracting Parties for COP Resolutions with scientific or technical content.	Advice to Standing Committee & COP	STRP	-

Invasive species and wetlands (2013-15/10)	<p>Development a guide to guidance based on available information and issues related to invasive alien species (IAS) in wetlands, for wetland managers, communities and policy-makers.</p> <p>Existing briefing material will be reviewed, updated and repackaged – with an emphasis on summarizing IAS issues in relation to wetlands and identifying appropriate sources of information or guidance on prevention, eradication, control, and management of alien invasive species.</p>	<p>Scientific & Technical Briefing Note</p> <p>Possible follow-up products.</p> <p>After consultations in relation to emerging priorities, possible subsequent products could include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Fact Sheets on IAS of particular concern containing relevant guides for guidance as to their management; and 2) a more detailed information paper (more detailed guide for guidance), targeting mainly wetland managers, which would be developed as a COP12 Information Paper. 	<p>IUCN & its Specialist Groups, incl. Invasive Species SG, with STRP, FAO, WWT, CMS, CBD, Interagency Liaison Group on IAS & others</p>	<p>Briefing Note: CHF 10,000</p> <p>Consultation & follow-up products: CHF 15,000</p>
Engagement with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services (IPBES) (2013-15/13)	<p>On behalf of the Ramsar Convention, maintain active participation in the development and execution of the scientific work programmes of the IPBES, in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support an effective science/policy interface for wetland biodiversity, and • ensure that high-quality scientific information and understanding of wetlands is incorporated into policy-making. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Input to IPBES processes ii) interim guidelines for Ramsar identification and transmission of requests to IPBES (Resolution XI.6) 	<p>STRP Chair (with Secretariat)</p>	<p>Meeting participation costs: CHF 15,000</p> <p>Guidelines preparation: CHF 10,000</p>

Wetland inventory, assessment, monitoring & reporting				
Working Group leads: Stephan Flink, Lars Dinesen, Randy Milton				
Task title	Summary description	Main products/outputs	Lead body/process	Estimated costs, Comments

<p>Reporting on the state of the world's wetlands and their services to people, and the Convention's effectiveness (2013-15/18)</p>	<p>a) Preparation and publication of 1st edition of a periodic <i>State of the World's Wetlands and their services (SoWWS)/Global Wetland Outlook (GWO)</i> reporting.</p> <p>b) further implementation of Resolution VIII.26 (2002) on developing indicators on the results of the Convention's activities, in collaboration with other biodiversity MEAs so as to achieve a coherent approach to indicator development, such that the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Convention may occur at least once in each reporting cycle; and advice on how reporting on these indicators may be incorporated into the National Reports of the Parties.</p>	<p>a) Report issued to COP12 <i>Note</i>. An incremental approach to a SoWWS, of issuing components of as 'SoWWS' factsheets, e.g. for some specific wetland types, may be an initial implementation option.</p> <p>b) effectiveness indicators Scientific & Technical Briefing Note, and summary findings for SoWWS 'factsheets'.</p>	<p>STRP, with GWOS partnership, including task support from UNEP-WCMC</p>	<p>a) CHF 100,000 (or CHF 20,000 for initial factsheets)</p> <p>b) CHF 25,000</p>
<p>Development and coordination of a Global Wetland Observing System (GWOS) partnership (2013-15/19)</p>	<p>Establishment of a Global Wetland Observing System (GWOS) partnership mechanism (and portal), designed to access data and information for and facilitate SoWWS/GWO reporting, as well as serving external users.</p>	<p>GWOS mechanism (potentially an web-portal)</p>	<p>GWOS partnership (WI, CI & GEO-BON), with IOPs/STRP partner organizations, others</p>	<p>CHF20,000 scoping and design</p> <p>CHF 500,000 implementation & maintenance</p>

Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)				
Working Group leads: Lars Dinesen, Randy Milton, Stephan Flink				
Task title	Summary description	Main products/outputs	Lead body/process	Estimated costs, Comments

Implementation of the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) – 2012 revision (2013-15/25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Develop streamlined tools and mechanisms for enhanced and streamlined Ramsar Site designation and data and information management, including redevelopment of the Ramsar Sites Database and on-line submission tools for RIS. [STRP advice] ii) Urgently consider scope for minor modifications to the RIS – 2012 revision to support monitoring at Ramsar Sites through possible inclusion of subfields related to: change at the site, for example in fields 12a, 12c, and 16 relating to species composition and wetland type; identification of thresholds of change in ecological character; and monitoring indicators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) RSIS web-portal and database (and training materials for Parties) ii) Advice paper with recommendations to Standing Committee 46 through the STRP Chair. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Secretariat ii) STRP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. CHF 400,000. Some funds already allocated by Secretariat; more funds may be needed
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Ramsar, wetlands and other sectors

A. Wetlands & health				
Working Group leads: Pierre Horwitz, Stanley Liphadzi				
Task title	Summary description	Main products/outputs	Lead body/process	Estimated costs, Comments
Guidance on “Wetlands and Human Health” for the health sector (2013-15/31)	Prepare guidance on “Wetlands and human health” for the health sector, developed from the 2012 <i>Ramsar Technical Report</i> “Healthy wetlands, healthy people”	To be determined with World Health Organisation (WHO)	WHO to be invited, with STRP	Implementation pending further consultations with WHO

<p>Wetlands and health case studies (2013-15/32) [proposed as additional Top Priority]</p>	<p>Presentation of case studies selected to demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) an evidentiary basis for the causal links between wetland management and improved health outcomes; ii) wetland management is directed towards minimizing the trade-offs between regulating ecosystem services and provisioning ecosystem services; iii) health outcomes are improved for one or each of the following categories: a) water borne diseases; b) vector borne diseases; c) exposure to toxic materials; d) improving access and utilisation for recreation and physical exercise; e) natural disaster event. 	<p>4 or 5 5-minute videos</p>	<p>STRP (with partners to be identified)</p>	<p>CHF 50,000 (CHF 10,000 per video)</p>
<p>Wetland diseases manual – further development (2013-15/33&39) [proposed as additional Top Priority]</p>	<p>A. Further development of <i>Wildlife Diseases Manual</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) promotion and dissemination of the existing manual – essentially some targeted publicity and awareness raising of its availability as a resource; b) examine the feasibility of, and conduct if appropriate, a conversion of parts or all of the manual to a web-based product; c) further enhance its accessibility as a text for training purposes; d) translate existing materials into French and Spanish to enhance outreach. <p>B. Using the views of wetland managers and other relevant stakeholders, expand the content of the <i>Ramsar wetland disease manual: Guidelines for assessment, monitoring and management of animal disease in wetlands</i> in its coverage, to include plant diseases and human diseases associated with wetlands. This will take two forms: a revision to the manual to ensure it deals with both human health and wildlife health; and factsheets on particular human diseases.</p>	<p>Utility assessment (Information paper) Supplement to <i>Wetland Diseases Manual</i> RTR</p>	<p>STRP with Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT), and others</p>	<p>A: 15,000 B: 15,000</p>

B. Wetlands & climate change				
Working Group leads: Cui Lijuan, Guéladio Cissé				
Task title	Summary description	Main products/outputs	Lead body/process	Estimated costs, Comments
Implications of, and advice on, climate change for Convention implementation (2013-15/41)	Continue to prepare advice on the implications of climate change for maintaining the ecological character of wetlands, including <i>inter alia</i> : i) strategies for dealing with the emergence of novel ¹ or hybrid ecosystems as a consequence of climate change; ii) Collate and assess case studies and other information generated in response to Resolution XI.14 paragraph 32; iii) Working with interested Contracting Parties and international organizations, to prepare advice on sustainable management of carbon stocks which enhances wetland biodiversity and the delivery of ecosystem services, thereby contributing to human well-being, with special attention to indigenous peoples and local communities	i): Briefing Note/journal papers ii): Briefing Note/RTR; STRP newsletter & web-portal; 1-2 page factsheets iii): a) Briefing Note/RTR/ or newsletter/ or Ramsar website (Wise Use resources) b) Briefing Note/RTR, then develop 1-2 page factsheets (possibly several combined as Briefing Note)	STRP, with STRP NFPs, Parties & others	i. CHF 8,000 ii. CHF 4,000 iii. CHF 5,000 iv. CHF 15,000

¹ New assemblages of species that have not co-occurred historically, that largely result from direct and indirect human activity, and that occupy new ecological spaces in the world's landscapes and seascapes.

	<p>iv) In conjunction with the Secretariat and Ramsar Regional Initiative Networks and Centres, collaborate with relevant international organizations and conventions, within their respective mandates, to further investigate the potential contribution of wetland ecosystems to climate change mitigation and adaptation through:</p> <p>a) preparing advice on assessing social resilience and vulnerability of wetlands to climate change, to complement the existing advice on assessing the biophysical vulnerability of a wetlands to climate change (Ramsar Technical Report No. 5/CBD Technical Series No. 57);</p> <p>b) preparing advice on ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change for coastal and inland wetlands; and</p> <p>c) reviewing any relevant advice provide by other MEAs, in particular the outcomes of CBD COP-11;</p>	<p>iv):</p> <p>a) Briefing Note</p> <p>b) Briefing Note</p> <p>c) CBD COP11 Decision review for relevance to Ramsar and wetlands (possible COP12 DR); review input to IPCC wetland GHG guidelines & AR5; RTR on wetland-relevant information from recent IPCC reports.</p>		
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C. Wetlands & water resource management				
Working Group leads: Patrick MacQuarrie, Eugenio Barrios				
Task title	Summary description	Main products/outputs	Lead body/process	Estimated costs, Comments
The role of biodiversity and wetlands in the global water cycle (2013-15/43)	Establish an expert group on maintaining the ability of biodiversity to continue to support the water cycle (as requested by CBD COP10 Decision X/28 and approved by SC42), and communicate with Parties so that they can provide scientific inputs through their own experts.	CBD COP11 (2012) Information Paper issued RTR/CBD Technical Series report & derived scientific journal paper Key policy-relevant messages for decision-makers	STRP and CBD Secretariat	Resourced through CBD Secretariat: no additional STRP funds needed

Ramsar, water and wetlands: review and development of a strategy for engaging in the global water debate (2013-15/44)	Develop a strategy for Ramsar to engage fully in the global water debate, focusing on the role of wetlands as natural water infrastructure. This includes specifying aims, mechanisms for engagement, and products needed to support the engagement. [Note. The Secretariat's 2011 development of a draft "Vision 40+" for the Convention contributes to this strategy.]	Ramsar engagement strategy and possible refinements to 2013-2015 work programme (for Parties, Secretariat, and STRP) in the global water debate. Scientific & Technical Briefing Note on Ramsar's position in the water agenda (as a strategic input for the redevelopment of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 onwards)	STRP and Secretariat	CHF 20,000 Connects closely to the redevelopment by Parties of the next Ramsar Strategic Plan for COP12 adoption.
Environmental water allocation for wetlands – guidance (2013-15/45)	Work with Mexico and WWF to share approaches and experiences and to develop further guidance or tools for management and allocation of water for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands.	Scientific & Technical Briefing Note Subsequent RTR (and possible COP12 Draft Resolution)	STRP, Mexico & WWF	CHF 30,000

D. Wetlands & agriculture**Working Group leads:** Matthew McCartney, Stanley Liphadzi

Task title	Summary description	Main products/outputs	Lead body/process	Estimated costs, Comments
Wise use of wetlands in relation to coastal and inland aquaculture guidance (2013-15/46)	Develop guide to guidance for the wise use of wetlands in relation to coastal and inland aquaculture and fisheries. Guide will: i) improve the awareness of the importance of existing inland fisheries in wetlands and relating to the real potential for aquaculture; ii) build on lessons learnt from best practices on sustainable aquaculture; and iii) recognize that global dependence on aquaculture is growing, that wild stocks continue to be depleted, and that meeting the need for seafood is resulting in significant direct (habitat loss, wild harvest of species) and indirect impacts (pollution, contamination) on wetlands.	2x Scientific & Technical Briefing Notes (inland fisheries & aquaculture; coastal aquaculture) RTR: Annotated guide to guidance/conceptual framework Possible DR for COP12 (conceptual framework)	STRP, with FAO, World Fish Centre, WWF and others	Briefing Notes/ conceptual framework: CHF 10,000 Regional workshops (Africa & Asia): CHF 80,000 RTR: CHF 15,000

E. Wetlands & poverty eradication				
Working Group leads: Sonali Seneratna, Ritesh Kumar				
Task title	Summary description	Main products/outputs	Lead body/process	Estimated costs, Comments
Wetlands & poverty eradication – guidance and case studies (2013-15/50)	<p>Further tools and guidance to support the implementation of Resolutions IX.14, X.28 & XI.13, on:</p> <p>i) Advice to Parties and policy makers on strategic steps required to mainstream the <i>Integrated Framework for linking wetland conservation and wise use with poverty eradication</i> into international and national policies and programmes for poverty eradication. Advice to include CEPA as a mechanism that contributes significantly to reduce the risks that can create or deepen poverty.</p> <p>ii) Development of structured ‘guide to available guidelines and tools’ for addressing poverty eradication in relation to wetlands.</p> <p>iii) Case studies and best practices on the application of the Framework for assessing poverty in association with wetlands wise use. This should include (but not be limited to) examples of how wetland degradation affects people’s livelihoods and how maintenance or restoration of the ecological character of wetlands can contribute to poverty alleviation.</p>	<p>i) COP12 DR with annex on strategic steps for mainstreaming wetlands into poverty eradication</p> <p>ii) Guide to available guidelines (COP Information Papers/Briefing Notes): x2, for policy makers and for wetland managers</p> <p>iii) to be determined</p>	STRP (with Parties, IOPs, IHDP, UNDP, FAO, UK-DFID and others)	<p>i) CHF 30,000</p> <p>ii) CHF 15,000</p> <p>iii) CHF 15,000</p>

Wetlands & ecosystem benefits/services				
Working Group lead: Ritesh Kumar				
Task title	Summary description	Main products/outputs	Lead body/process	Estimated costs, Comments

<p>Economics of wetland ecosystem services/benefits (2013-15/59)</p>	<p>Building on the work of TEEB and others (& the 2013 TEEB water and wetland synthesis report):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Conduct a user needs analysis for Ramsar Parties & wetland (site) managers) on tools, knowledge, methodology and data required to support integration of ecosystem service values in planning and decision making; b) Conduct a scoping review of the advancements in ecosystem services description/recognition, valuation, capture to support wise use of wetlands, in particular cross sectoral integration; c) Develop a guide to guidance on best practices for integrating ecosystem services values within the response options for wetland management; including conducting a scoping review of technical aspects of relevance to the Ramsar Convention in the finance, banking, investment, insurance and other economic sectors (former sub-task d). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) & c) user needs assessment (COP Information Paper or Briefing Note); Guide to guidance (possible Briefing Note) b) Briefing Note 	<p>STRP, with IEEP, IOPs, UNECE water convention, UNEP & others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) & c) CHF 40,000 b) CHF 20,000 (midterm workshop & Briefing Note)
<p>TEEB Water & wetlands report – follow-up (2013-15/59 – new subtask)</p>	<p>Building from the TEEB Water & Wetlands report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Develop communication material related to TEEB-Water and Wetlands Report including <i>inter alia</i> use of case study database of Ecosystem Services Partnership; ii) Develop policy guidance (for Admin Authorities, water managers, wetland managers) on taking into account full range of ecosystem services in policy and decision making; and iii) Further update and reanalyse values differentiated by specific wetland type, regions, ecosystem service types, development contexts, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Communication products, including case studies ii) Policy Guidance [possible Draft Resolution for COP12] iii) Scientific & Technical Briefing Note on wetland values 	<p>STRP with IEEP, UNEP-TEEB, IUCN Water programme</p>	<p>CHF 40,000</p>

Ecological character, and change in ecological character of wetlands				
New Theme consolidating related tasks from other Resolution XI.17 Themes				
Working Group lead: Vicky Jones				
Task title	Summary description	Main products/outputs	Lead body/process	Estimated costs, Comments
Ecological Character and Change in Ecological Character - further guidance (2013-15/20, 25 & 41)	Advice and guidance on four aspects of wetland ecological character issues: A. Describing ecological character; B. Monitoring for change in ecological character; C. Reporting change in ecological character; and D. Responding to change in ecological character.	A. Guidance for Parties; training and support modules. Initially, provision of a Scientific & Technical Briefing Note giving web-site references to existing available ecological character conceptual models which may be helpful in the description of wetland ecological character for Ramsar purposes. B, C, and D. Streamlined and improved procedures and guidance for Parties on Article 3.2 and Montreux Record reporting to Standing Committee & COP (possible COP12 DR and annex)	STRP, with Secretariat	A. CHF 20,000 B. CHF 20,000 C. CHF 30,000 D. CHF 5,000 plus Review workshop: CHF 50,000