

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

**Meeting of the Standing Committee Subgroup on COP9
Gland, Switzerland, 7-10 March 2005**

DOC. COP9 SG-12

Agenda item 12

**COP9 consideration of Regional Initiatives under the
Convention (Resolution VIII.30)**

1. One specific issue which will need a COP9 draft Resolution preparing concerns “Regional initiatives for the further implementation of the Convention”, in follow-up to COP8 Resolution VIII.30. This is because the arrangements for the MedWet Coordination Unit, and notably its funding, are confirmed in Resolution VIII.30 only for the current triennium, and such arrangements for the 2006-2008 triennium will need to be considered by COP9 for renewal and/or amendment. In addition to the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet), the secretariat is aware that a number of other regional initiatives under development or starting operations which Parties may wish to bring to COP9 for endorsement and/or consideration for provision of funding from any core budget lines for regional initiatives which may be established by COP9. These include *inter alia* the High Andean Wetland Initiative (see Resolution VIII.39), the Himalayan High Mountain Wetlands Initiative, and several regional training-related initiatives including the Ramsar Panama Centre and the Regional Ramsar Centre for training and research in western and central Asia (see Resolution VIII.41).
2. COP8 adopted Resolution VIII.30: *Regional initiatives for the further implementation of the Convention*. This includes an Annex providing *Guidance for the development of regional initiatives in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands*, and Resolution VIII.30 calls on Contracting Parties to take this guidance into consideration when launching and developing a regional initiative.
3. In Resolution VIII.30, paragraph 9, the Conference of the Contracting Parties “considers appropriate the inclusion of a budget line ‘Support for Regional Initiatives’, when one or more regional initiatives are evaluated by the COP, in accordance with the above *Guidance*, as worthy for financial support from the Convention core budget”. Hence any proposed regional initiative seeking such support will need to provide the COP with sufficient information concerning its operations against each element of the *Guidance*.
4. Therefore, in order that clear advice may be provided by the Standing Committee to COP on any such proposals, it will be important for the Standing Committee and its Subgroups on Finance and COP9 to consider together all such initiatives (including any proposals for the continuation of the MedWet Coordination functions).
5. Furthermore, in line with Resolution VIII.45 and in order to minimize the number of similar draft Resolutions that will go to the COP, the Secretariat considers that it would be most helpful for Parties’ consideration of this matter at COP9 for a single consolidated draft Resolution on regional initiatives to be prepared by the Standing Committee.

6. So as to facilitate this process, the Secretariat recommends that all Parties planning to present any regional initiative proposals for consideration by COP9 be requested to submit information on the initiative in relation to the COP8 *Guidance* prior to the 31st meeting of the Standing Committee (June 2005), so that the Committee may fully consider all such proposals comprehensively.
7. It would assist the Standing Committee and the COP in their work if this procedure was to be followed by all initiatives seeking endorsement under the Convention from the COP, and not just those requesting financial support. However, it will be appropriate for any initiative requesting financial support from the core budget for 2006-2008 also to provide specific budget information. This information will need to be taken into account by the Standing Committee's Subgroup on Finance as part of its preparation of a proposed 2006-2008 budget for COP9 consideration.
8. To assist Parties in submitting proposals to the Standing Committee and COP for regional initiatives, the Secretariat has prepared (Annex I) a pro-forma table of the elements of the Resolution VIII.30 *Guidance*, against which the COP will need to consider proposals. The Secretariat suggests that this should be made available to all Parties that are considering bringing forward a regional initiative for COP9 consideration, with the request that they submit a completed form to the Secretariat by 30 April 2005, so that proposals can be consolidated in a timely manner for consideration by the 31st meeting of the Standing Committee for onward transmittal to COP9.

Annex I

Proposal for consideration by the Ramsar Standing Committee and COP9 for a regional initiative in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands

Explanatory notes. The attached form contains the elements of the *Guidance for the development of regional initiatives in the framework of the convention on Wetlands* (Annexe to Resolution VIII.30)

In the Table below, Contracting Parties are invited to provide a summary of the approach of any regional initiative they are considering proposing for acceptance and/or financial support under the Convention.

The completed form should be sent by 30 April 2005, in electronic format, to the Secretariat (cop9@ramsar.org). All completed proposals will be consolidated for consideration at Standing Committee 31.

Any initiative considering a request to COP9 for financial support through the establishment of core budget lines for the 2006-2008 triennium should also provide the Standing Committee with additional budgetary information indicating the amount sought from core, and the amounts (in Swiss franc (CHF) equivalent) available or pledged from other sources.

Name of proposed regional initiative:

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Countries involved:

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Proposal submitted by (name(s) of Contracting Parties):

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Name, organization and e-mail address of contact person:

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COP8 Resolution VIII.30 <i>Guidance</i>	Proposed regional initiative
AIM	
1. The overall aim of regional initiatives should be to promote the objectives of the Convention in general and to implement the Ramsar Strategic Plan in particular, through regional and subregional cooperation on wetland-related issues of common concern.	
SUBSTANTIVE ELEMENTS	

<p>2. Regional and subregional initiatives should be based on a bottom-up approach. As a matter of priority, the involvement of as many as possible Contracting Parties of the region or subregion(s) covered by the new initiative should be sought from the start.</p>	
<p>3. Each initiative should entail the participation, from the start, not only of the Administrative Authorities responsible for the application of the Convention in the Contracting Parties involved, but also of all other relevant stakeholders with an interest in and directly or indirectly responsible for wetland issues, including the ministries responsible for the environment and water issues, intergovernmental bodies, NGOs, academia, and economic actors.</p>	
<p>4. A regional initiative should base its operation on the development of networks of collaboration established upon clearly defined terms of reference, thus creating an enabling environment for the involvement of all stakeholders at all levels.</p>	
<p>5. At an early stage, a regional initiative should seek collaboration with other intergovernmental or international partners operating in its region, by establishing complementary and non-duplicative activities.</p>	
<p>6. The operation of a regional initiative should be based upon strong scientific and technical backing, provided by relevant institutions which should be recognized as partners in the initiative.</p>	
<p>7. The strategic and operational targets of a regional initiative should be fully aligned with the Strategic Plan of the Convention by means of policy and site technical work and activities.</p>	
FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT	
<p>8. A regional initiative requires both political and financial support from Contracting Parties and other partners from the region. A substantial support from the host country is especially important if a regional office is to be established.</p>	

9. The launching of a regional or subregional initiative should rely upon secured start-up funding for planned activities and projects.	
10. Financial support from the Convention's core budget, should the Conference of the Parties so decide, will be provided for a pre-determined period of time – in principle not more than three years. After such a period, the support should be phased out. A regional initiative should generate its own resources and should become financially self-sufficient in the long term. When deciding financial support from the Convention's core budget, geographically equitable distribution should be taken into account.	
GOVERNANCE	
11. Regional initiatives should establish their own advisory mechanisms , involving all the stakeholders, in order to provide guidance and insight. The Conference of the Parties and the Standing Committee shall receive, through the Ramsar Bureau, reports on their activities and shall oversee their general policies relating to the implementation of the Convention.	
12. Specific arrangements as to the coordination between a regional initiative and the Convention should be worked out by the Ramsar Bureau under the guidance of the Standing Committee, and such arrangements should ultimately be approved by the Conference of the Parties.	

Please send this completed form to the Ramsar Secretariat (cop9@ramsar.org) by e-mail by **30 April 2005**