

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

24th Meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland: 29 November – 2 December 1999

DOC. SC24-19

Agenda item 10.4

Ramsar Bureau Budget 2000, including

- i) Elements of the Convention Work Plan funded from the core budget
- ii) Establishment of a Development Assistance Officer post
- iii) Fundraising for non-funded elements of the Convention Work Plan
- iv) Invoicing of annual contributions for the year 2001
- v) Special request from the Islamic Republic of Iran

Action requested: The Standing Committee is requested to receive the advice of the Subgroup of Finance concerning:

- i) the proposed Bureau Budget for fiscal year 2000;
- ii) the inclusion in the FY 2000 budget of a new post of Development Assistance Officer at the Ramsar Bureau;
- iii) priorities for fundraising for the non-funded elements of the Convention work plan, including the establishment of the Voluntary Fund for the Convention's Outreach Programme; and
- iv) the invoicing of annual contributions for the year 2001.

i) Elements of the Convention Work Plan funded from the core budget

1. Document SC24-3 contains the proposed Ramsar Bureau Work Plan for 2000. The Work Plan indicates that all the activities which are not shadowed could be undertaken by the Bureau with the forecasted resources for fiscal year 2000. Thus the Bureau submits to the consideration of the Standing Committee the following income and expenditure budget for fiscal year 2000.
2. Concerning income, the footnotes provide an explanation on each income line.
3. As far as expenditure is concerned, the following elements should be noted:
 - 3.1 Budget line 1, Staff costs
 - a) Salaries and social charges: includes all salaries and social charges of 15 staff members paid by the core budget. (Three staff members are donor-funded position and one staff member (see next item) is paid by the 10% administrative fee charged to projects administered by the Bureau. The full Ramsar Bureau staff chart can be consulted in document SC24-3.
 - b) Project funded position: Project Administration Officer. It should be noted that if the 10% administration fee does not generate sufficient funds to cover

the cost of this position, the difference is normally supplemented out of the core budget.

- c) Development Assistance Officer: This cost has been separated from the salaries cost under a) above only to show the cost of this proposed **new core budget position**. For more details, see the next section of this document.
- d) Staff hiring and departure costs: Included in this budget line are the costs generated by staff departures (i.e., Bill Phillips and Rebecca D’Cruz) and the cost of hiring replacements and new staff, including interviewing and installation costs.

3.2 Budget line 2, Scientific and technical services

- a) Ramsar Database: The amount in this budget line will be used in full to pay the services of Wetlands International related to the maintenance of the Ramsar Database (of Ramsar sites).
- b) Ramsar Advisory Missions (RAMs): While there is no allocation to this budget line, it has been judged prudent to keep the line in the Ramsar budget to indicate that this is an item of high importance in the work of the Convention. RAMs are sent to the Contracting Parties that request them to provide advice on the remedial actions that could be taken to address the situation on Ramsar sites included in the Montreux Record (of sites where changes in their ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur). The costs of RAMs are charged to a project dedicated to this function. For details, see Project 7002 in document SC24-17.

3.3 Budget line 3, Travel on official business: Includes the travel costs of all staff attending meetings or visiting Contracting Parties. It includes the travel of the proposed new staff position of Development Assistance Officer, for whom travelling should constitute a significant component of his/her work.

3.4 Budget line 4, Purchase and maintenance of equipment, and office supplies (including depreciation): Ramsar buys all computer equipment; depreciation applies to this. All furniture, other equipment, and building -related improvements are provided by IUCN (see next item).

3.5 Budget line 5, Administrative services and operating costs.

- a) IUCN services: includes the per-head payment to IUCN that entails occupancy of the building, computer services (not hardware), personnel services, and financial administration/supervision.
- b) Operating costs: includes all running expenses such as telephone, fax, and photocopies.

3.6 Budget line 6, Communications and reporting

- a) Publications: includes translation and all types of publications.
- b) Newsletter: cost of the Ramsar newsletter produced three or four times a year in the three official languages.
- c) Ramsar Outreach Programme: costs of discrete activities to be undertaken in 2000 to implement the Programme (Resolution VII.9).

3.7 Budget line 7, Standing Committee and other committees

- a) Standing Committee delegate support: costs of participation at the annual Standing Committee meeting of one representative from voting members that require support to do so. The budget line will also be used in case of additional travel of the Chair of the Subgroup on Finance.
- b) STRP members' support: cost of participation at STRP meetings of those members who require support. This budget line will also be used to support additional travel costs by the STRP Chair.
- c) Regional representatives' support: this budget line is at the disposal of Regional Representatives from developing countries and countries in transition who may require assistance to perform their duties as Regional Representatives. At present there are 10 members of the Standing Committee who are eligible to use these funds. Consequently, if the proposed figure of SFR 50,000 is accepted and all 10 indicate their willingness to use their allocation, there will be SFR 5,000 for each one.
- d) Standing Committee Chair fund: no allocation is foreseen to this sub-budget line.

3.8 Budget line 8, Conference of the Parties. No allocation is foreseen in this budget line in 2000.

3.9 Budget line 9, Miscellaneous.

- a) Bad debt provision: allocation to cover a possible non-payment of annual dues during the fiscal year.
- b) Exchange loss: The Ramsar Bureau accounts are kept in Swiss francs. This allocation is to be used if the difference occurs between the rate at which other currencies are entered in the books and the rate used on 31 December when the books are closed.

RAMSAR CONVENTION BUREAU FORECAST OF CORE INCOME FOR 2000 AT 31.08.99 (in Swiss Francs)		
INCOME	COP7 APPROVED Annual Contributions	2000 FORECAST INCOME
2000 Contributions ^[1]	2,328,222	2,328,222
Voluntary contributions - USA ^[2]	761,250	761,250
Swiss income tax rebate (non-Swiss staff) ^[3]		150,000
Interest ^[4]		110,000
10% Projects administration fee ^[5]		
Small Grants Fund		50,000
Wetlands for the Future		25,000
Swiss Grant		12,500
Others		20,000
Project cross charges (staff time) ^[6]		5,000
TOTAL INCOME	3,089,472	3,461,972

- [1] This represents the amount invoiced to Contracting Parties (except the USA), for annual contributions. This amount is entered in the books on an accruals basis. The total amount invoiced to CPs is considered as actual income on invoicing. It should be noted that in 'Forecast Expenditures', under 'Miscellaneous', there is an entry for 'bad debt provision' to cover the possible non-payment of dues during the fiscal year.
- [2] The United States does not consider its contribution to the Ramsar budget as an obligation. An amount of 25% of the annual budget is forecast as an annual voluntary contribution from the USA.
- [3] On the basis of the agreement between IUCN (the legal persona of the Ramsar Bureau) and the Swiss government, the income tax applicable to non-Swiss staff is retained by IUCN as non-earmarked income. The part for Ramsar non-Swiss staff is retained by the Bureau as core budget income.
- [4] It is the Bureau's practice to invest all moneys that are not immediately required in short-term no-risk placements. The interest earned is credited to the corresponding projects or, for non-earmarked funds, to the core budget.
- [5] A ten per cent administration fee is charged to the major projects administered by the Bureau and transferred to the core budget. These funds support the position of "Project Administration Officer" which appears separately under "Staff costs, project funded position".
- [6] A small part of the technical staff's time is charged to projects implemented by the Bureau, and is shown here as core budget income. The amount forecast for 2000 is very small as there is no indication that the Bureau will be implementing significant projects (as was the case in previous years with the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet) project).

Ramsar CORE BUDGET			
Draft Budget for 2000 (costs in Swiss francs)			
	EXPENDITURES	COP7 Approved expenditure	Forecast expenditure
1	STAFF COSTS		
	a) Salaries and social charges	1,984,000	1,781,402
	b) Project funded position		130,570
	c) Development Assistance Officer		170,000
	d) Staff hiring and departure costs		50,000
2	SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SERVICES		
	a) Ramsar Database	135,000	135,000
	b) Ramsar Advisory Missions (RAMs)	0	0
3	TRAVEL ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS (International)	100,000	125,000
4	PURCHASE & MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT/ OFFICE SUPPLIES (including depreciation)	20,000	22,000
5	ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES & OPERATING COSTS		
	a) IUCN Services	427,000	452,000
	b) Operating Costs	124,000	131,000
6	COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTING		
	a) Publications	145,000	145,000
	b) Newsletter	20,000	20,000
	c) Ramsar Outreach Programme	0	60,000
7	STANDING COMMITTEE & OTHER COMMITTEES		
	a) Standing Committee delegate support	40,000	40,000
	b) STRP members' support	40,000	50,000
	c) Regional representatives' support	10,000	50,000
	d) Standing Committee chair fund	0	0
8	CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES		
	a) Cost of the conference	0	0
	b) Conference delegate support	0	0
9	MISCELLANEOUS		
	a) Bad debt provision		90,000
	b) Exchange loss		10,000
	COP7 APPROVED BUDGET	3,045,000	
	TOTAL FORECAST EXPENDITURE IN 2000		3,461,972
	FORECAST INCOME		3,461,972

ii) Establishment of a Development Assistance Officer post

4. As shown in the draft budget for 2000, the Secretary General proposes to create a post of Development Assistance Officer at the Ramsar Bureau, on the basis of the relevant paragraphs of COP7 Resolution VI.28, which read as follows:

13. DECIDES that the contribution of each Contracting Party to this budget shall be in accordance with the scale of assessments for the contribution of Member States to the United Nations budget as approved by the UN General Assembly for 2000 . . . except in the case of Contracting Parties which, in applying the UN scale, would make annual contributions to the Convention Budget of less than SFR 1,000, in which case the annual contribution shall be this amount. The difference between the assessed contribution for these Contracting Parties according to the UN scale and the minimum threshold of SFR 1,000 shall be allocated toward funding the position of a Development Assistance Officer in the Ramsar Bureau . . . ;
14. URGES the Ramsar Bureau, as human and financial resources allow, to endeavour to secure the additional resources needed in order to establish the post of Development Assistance Officer within the secretariat, with the aim of mobilising resources to facilitate implementation of the Convention by developing countries and those with economies in transition.”

5. The proposed Terms of Reference for this post are as follows:

- I. In cooperation with the Secretary General, and when required in consultation with other conventions, to establish and maintain active working relations with multilateral development assistance agencies, in particular: the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility (GEF); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the appropriate Directorates General within the Commission of the European Communities; the regional development banks in Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe; and the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (DAC/OECD) in order to:
- I.a. sensitize these institutions to the need to integrate wetland conservation and wise use issues into their project appraisals, in particular in the areas of land-use planning, water supply and water resources management, watershed and coastal zone planning and management, and protected areas management;
- I.b. stimulate them to devote more significant funding to projects related to wetland conservation and wise use, including the development of national wetland policies;
- I.c. identify technical and scientific expertise, when not available within the Ramsar Bureau and/or the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), which could be put at the disposal of those agencies for project appraisal and evaluation;
- I.d. when they have not yet done so, encourage these institutions to adopt guidelines and/or directives that will ensure that wetland conservation and wise use issues are fully taken into account in their lending or grant-making policies.
- II. In cooperation with the Administrative Authorities of the Convention on Wetlands in OECD countries, to establish active working relations with the bilateral development assistance agencies and the authorities responsible for the multilateral institutions in each of those countries so as to encourage full coherence between the obligations accepted under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the country's bilateral development assistance policy and practice, and voting records in the multilateral institutions;
- III. To work with bilateral development assistance agencies to ensure a more significant flow of funding for wetland conservation and wise use projects that have been developed within the general framework of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands;

- IV. When required, to act as a bridge between, on the one hand, Contracting Parties in developing regions and countries whose economies are undergoing transition and, on the other hand, the multilateral and bilateral development assistance agencies to ensure that the right types of projects are submitted for funding and that they are given the appropriate priority in the process of project appraisal;
- V. To assist the Standing Committee and the Secretary General in relation to fundraising for the Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use (SGF) and other fundraising efforts undertaken by the Ramsar Bureau vis-à-vis Contracting Parties, international organizations, NGOs, and the private sector, particularly in the application of the wise use concept and the Convention's Outreach Programme.

iii. Fundraising for non-funded elements of the Convention Work Plan, including the establishment of the Voluntary Fund for the Convention's Outreach Programme

- 6. As indicated in document SC24-4, which contains the proposed Ramsar Bureau Work Plan for 2000, the Bureau has indicated in that draft those actions requested by COP7 decisions and the Convention Work Plan which cannot be undertaken without additional resources being secured. These actions are highlighted with shaded boxes. It should be noted that in a number of the shaded boxes it has also been indicated that that particular activity will be undertaken if the post of Development Assistance Officer is established (see preceding section).
- 7. The Bureau will be grateful if the Standing Committee could provide guidance on the non-funded activities that should constitute a priority for fundraising. In this sense, it should also be noted that due to limited staff resources and/or expertise at the Bureau, the development of fundraising documents will have to be farmed out to external consultants, either on a paid basis or through secondments from Contracting Parties and/or the International Organization Partners.
- 8. Concerning the implementation of the Outreach Programme 1999-2002, paragraph 18 of COP7 Resolution VII.28 on Financial and budgetary matters reads as follows:

DECIDES to establish a Voluntary Fund for the Convention's Outreach Programme (Resolution VII.9); REQUESTS the Standing Committee to prepare and adopt the Terms of Reference for the Fund at its annual meeting in 1999; and INVITES Contracting Parties, NGOs, foundations, the private sector and other institutions to contribute to the Fund;
- 9. The proposed Terms of Reference for the Fund appear on the next page. It should also be noted that Secretary General is proposing that the excess of SFR 76,839 now existing in the Reserve Fund be used as the start-up sum of the Fund.

Ramsar Voluntary Fund for the Convention's Outreach Programme 1999-2002

Actions to promote communication, education and public awareness to support implementation of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Terms of Reference

1. The Ramsar Voluntary Fund for Outreach Programme 1999-2002 is established pursuant Resolution VII.28 on Financial and budgetary matters adopted by the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Costa Rica, May 1999), which *inter alia*:
 18. DECIDES to establish a Voluntary Fund for the Convention's Outreach Programme (Resolution VII.9); REQUESTS the Standing Committee to prepare and adopt the Terms of Reference for the Fund at its annual meeting in 1999; and INVITES Contracting Parties, NGOs, foundations, the private sector and other institutions to contribute to the Fund.
2. The purpose of this Voluntary Fund is to facilitate the implementation of the Convention's Outreach Programme 1999-2002 as adopted by Ramsar COP7, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
3. Part of the resources in the Fund could be used by the Ramsar Bureau to animate the network of National Focal Points for Wetland Communication, Education and Public Awareness (Wetland CEPA), which Contracting Parties to the Convention have been invited to nominate pursuant to paragraph 14 of the Outreach Programme.
4. The Fund may receive contributions from governments, intergovernmental institutions, national and international non-governmental organizations, foundations, the private sector, and individuals. It may also receive legacies and endowment funds.
5. Donations to the Fund may be non-earmarked, destined to any aspects of the implementation of the Programme, or for specific type of activities and/or projects. When earmarked donations are received, a special subproject within the Fund shall be opened to administer the donation(s) for each particular activity or project.
6. Interest earned by resources contributed to the Fund shall be reverted to it.
7. The Fund shall be administered by the Secretary General of the Convention, following the guidance received from the Standing Committee and the Subgroup on Finance, as appropriate.

iv) Invoicing of annual dues for the year 2001

10. The Ramsar Bureau has been informed by the UN Headquarters that the UN scale of contributions for the year 2001 (upon which the Ramsar dues are calculated) will not be known before December 2000. This is too late for sending the invoices to Contracting Parties for the year 2001.
11. It should be noted that the Bureau faced the same problem in 1998. On that occasion, Contracting Parties were first invoiced on the basis of the 1997 scale and then revised invoices were sent when the new scale was approved by the UN; this created confusion, however, payments were delayed, and the work load of Bureau staff was increased.
12. Consequently, the Bureau would like to seek the agreement of the Standing Committee to proceed as follows for the invoicing of the 2001 dues:
 - a) Contracting Parties will be invoiced at the usual time in the year 2000 (around August) for their dues for the year 2001 **using the year 2000 UN scale;**
 - b) Contracting Parties will be advised that the year 2001 UN scale, when approved by the UN General Assembly, may entail changes in their Ramsar dues. Any such deviations from the invoiced amount will be corrected in the invoices corresponding to the year 2002 (which in turn will be dispatched around August 2001).

v) Special request from the Islamic Republic of Iran

13. In a letter dated 25 April 1999 (copy attached) the Government of Iran requested that its arrears for the years 1992 to 1999 be recalculated on the basis of the UN scale applicable to 1999. According to the 1999 scale, Iran's yearly contribution is SFR 5,648 (as shown in the attached Statement of Unpaid Annual Contributions, Iran's annual contributions were as high as SFR 18,690 in the years 1994 to 1996). If this request is accepted, Iran's arrears will be reduced from SFR 99,689 to SFR 54,514. If the payment of SFR 18,690 received on 30 August 1999 is applied to the new calculation, Iran's arrears for the period 1992-1999 will be SFR 35,824 instead of SFR 80,999.