

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

25th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland: 23- 27 October 2000

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Agenda item 13

Implementation of Resolution VII.8, paragraph 23: clearing house, Bureau focal point and liaison concerning local communities' and indigenous people's participation in wetland management

Action requested: The Standing Committee is requested to comment on this project and to suggest, if possible, other potential sources of funding.

1. The Participatory Management Networking Service (PMNS) is a joint project of IUCN-The World Conservation Union, the Bureau of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), each with a strong tradition of international cooperation and innovation on issues of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The Ramsar Bureau is particularly interested in this initiative as a means to implement the *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands* adopted by Ramsar COP7 in 1999 and now published as Ramsar Handbook No. 5. The PMNS is managed by IUCN's Social Policy Programme.
2. As government agencies and conservation NGOs are increasingly exploring avenues for participatory management of natural resources, there is a strong demand for guidance on the conceptual and methodological aspects required for more effective applications of these approaches.
3. There are several networks and institutions already providing support on participatory methodologies. Most of these resources have been developed in the context of rural and/or sustainable development. However, conservation has special needs that respond not only to the social criteria of participation and equitable sharing of costs and benefits, but also to the ecological criteria of conserving the integrity and diversity of nature and healthy ecosystem functions.
4. Moreover, organizations working on participatory methodologies often have a great deal of information but are lacking short and clear communication skills. The PMNS will close this gap by better organizing the communication flow and by disseminating short and easy-to-read information through existing networks.
5. The PMNS, acting as an **information broker**, will provide targeted information and support capacity building to IUCN's partners, Ramsar Administrative Authorities, WWF and world-wide institutions.

6. PMNS will better link technical assistance demand and supply for participatory management of natural resources. It will particularly focus on **the specific demands that conservation projects have, in terms of increasing ecological sustainability while promoting and enhancing social equity and diversity.**
7. The objectives are:
 - A) to improve the flow of information by linking existing networks and institutions, facilitating a more specialized and selective dissemination of information for different audiences and demands, feeding existing networks with specialised and short easy-to-read materials, information and news;
 - B) to improve links between resources and technical assistance for participatory management of natural resources, according to thematic and ecosystem demands. By identifying gaps in the supply, PMNS could support institutions producing materials, to better focus on certain specific aspects of participatory natural resources management;
 - C) to support regional and national capacity building to apply participatory management approaches, by facilitating a more efficient use of current resources and opportunities; and
 - D) to facilitate the distillation of lessons from the field in order to develop guidelines and policies within the network of partners (Ramsar/CBD, IUCN,WWF).
8. Initial tasks will include developing a Web site that links with major networks, and feeding existing list-servers and networks with specialised and brief easy-to-read inputs, documentation, news on participatory management of natural resources, for partners at regional and national levels. To this end, the main PMNS activities directly related to its objectives will be:
 - A) to improve communication flow;
 - B) to provide tailored services for different users;
 - C) to support the distillation of lessons from the field;
 - D) to support capacity building; and
 - E) to develop partnerships.
9. The first steps in 2000 will be:
 - A) **To organize the global and regional components of PMNS, in IUCN HQ and the IUCN Regional Office for Eastern Africa (EARO)** (they will include in following years the South America and the Meso-America Regional Offices), and to identify the major networks and list-servers that are the PMNS audience at global and regional levels. The PMNS will link with the Working Group on Community Involvement for Forest Management (WG-CIFM), the Collaborative Management Working Group (CMWG), and other relevant networks.
 - B) **To develop the Web Page and other key formats and to publicise the PMNS.** This task will build on existing collaboration with IUCN offices and member organizations, Ramsar and CBD focal points, WWF WG-CIFM, CMWG and

Sustainable Use Initiative (SUI). Since Internet access is limited for some regions, other formats will be explored (print-out, CD-ROMs).

- C) **To organize the information and start flow of information on key topics and ecosystems.** Identification of key thematic and regional clusters of information to focus the service and to organize the flow of information. For example on tropical rainforests, drylands, marine & coastal areas, inland wetlands, on gender & participatory management, promoting sustainable livelihoods, on stakeholders analysis, negotiation and conflict resolution, on tools and training, on lessons distilled, etc.
10. IUCN has been able to start implementing the project thanks to the support of the Canadian Council for Human Resources in the Environment Industry. The PMNS Web page have been started and can be found at www.iucn.org/themes/pmns.
 11. Swedish Sida has indicated an interest in providing some funding for the project and the Ramsar Bureau has submitted a proposal for the years 2000 and 2001. With this funding, the project will hire two junior professionals, one to be based in HQ and one in Nairobi (IUCN-EARO). These funds will allow the team to meet, and to involve relevant partners in IUCN, Ramsar, and WWF. The funds will also provide an operational budget for the PMNS team to start the activities listed in the previous paragraph.
 12. The first regional component of PMNS will be based at IUCN EARO in Nairobi, Kenya, but will operate for both Eastern and Southern Africa (IUCN-ROSA). The PMNS focal point for this region is Edmund Barrow, Forest and Social Policy Program Officer in IUCN-EARO. This regional component will be strongly based on the CIFM networks for Eastern and Southern Africa, on the Collaborative Management Working Groups of the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP), and on the Species Survival Commission's Regional Sustainable Use Specialist Groups for these regions, building on the expertise, experience, documents, and materials developed by these networks, especially the lessons generated by the CIFM workshop this year in Nairobi. The aim is to produce 1000 copies of the first PMNS CD-ROM for Africa.
 13. The further development of the PMNS will be linked at the global and regional levels, to the Gender and Water Clearinghouse, to be implemented by IUCN in partnership with the International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC) and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), as part of the activities of the Gender and Water Alliance to mainstream gender within Integrated Water Management.
 14. While in Gland, interested Standing Committee members and observers may wish to meet Dr. Cristina Espinosa, Global Facilitator of the IUCN Social Policy Programme for further details on this initiative.