

Summary of the Ramsar Strategic Plan Questionnaire

Stakeholders- Global and Regional Multilateral Agreements

A. Global Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- UNESCO World Heritage Convention,
- UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- UNEP/ Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)
- UN Convention Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Water Courses and International Lakes (Water Convention- UNECE)

B. Regional Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

- ICIMOD
- Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles

1. What are the main strengths of the current Strategic Plan 2009-2015?

- In general: The Strategic Plan has a very clear structure that also allows easy understanding for the site-based constituency (site managers) as well as stakeholders from outside the usual Ramsar constituencies. The references to the concerned stakeholders for each strategy and key result area appear to increase the immediate operationality and implementation of the Plan. From UNESCO-WHC perspective: The Goals identified for the implementation and management of the Ramsar Convention clearly indicate similarities and fields of synergies, with Goal 3 on International Cooperation and its Strategy 3.1 being the central issue for continuing efforts to enhance cooperation between the two Conventions and with all MEAs.
- Very clear goals with expected outcomes provide Contracting Parties with a path to follow for implementation of the Convention using the strategies provided in the strategic plan
- Comprehensive. Well thought out based on long experience.
- It has great objectives and ambition.
- The current Ramsar Strategic Plan has a clear structure which comprises of a covering text providing background information such as the history of the convention strategies. This information provides the stakeholders with a clear understanding of where Ramsar Convention had been in the past and in what place it stands now. In other words, before you go forward, you have to look back. The Strategy also identifies who the plan is for and how it should be used, and all of the five goals are clarified by an outcome sought by Ramsar Convention which helps to define Ramsar desired achievement in the future.
The Strategy reflects some features of participatory approach and encourages Parties to establish their own priorities within the Plan's agreed priorities, develop their own work plans for implementation, and consider their own use of resources.

Furthermore, the Strategy emphasizes on the governance to shift from sectoral, demand-driven approaches to an ecosystem-based approach to policy and decision-making that affects the wise use of wetlands and the maintenance of their ecological character and recognizes the important role of wetlands in climate change mitigation and adaptation activities.

- It is the result of an evolution and builds on previous experience (better focussed on 5 goals rather than 21 goals as in 2nd SP). Its strategies and activities are mainly implemented by Parties, and thus they could take into account national circumstances and priorities. Contributes to developing a common understanding and implementation of the Convention and to international coordination of national efforts.
- Focus on implementation and improved understanding of the Convention.

2. What should be the structure of the next Strategic Plan?

- While there should be continuity in the structure of the Strategic Plan, it is recommended that the next Strategic Plan also takes into account the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Furthermore, the implementation of the Strategic Plan would benefit from a concluding overview table that lists the responsibilities for each strategy and key result area by concerned stakeholders for easier reference.
- If the current one suits the Parties needs and it is clear to understand, follow up and implement the structure should be kept the same, it is very important to keep the activities that will lead to obtaining the outcomes for each goal.
- In terms of elements - similar to now. But elevate ecosystem services/sustainable development. These are currently there but alongside other strategies etc. These aspects should be elevated to make them more overarching. The purpose here is to increase relevance of the SP to other stakeholder groups (sustainable development, water security, disaster risk reduction etc.). Make these linkages more obvious and explicit.
- Highlight implementation more prominently. Assessment and addressing of bottlenecks to success.
- 1. The current Strategy is well-structured and the next Strategy could follow the same structure. However, it lacks a clear vision as well as some tangible indicators achievement milestones as the means for measuring the Strategy's performance and success. 2. The Key Result Areas' deadlines for each goal could be in line with Aichi Biodiversity Targets timelines. 3. Regarding the CMS Strategic Plan, at the 10th meeting of the CMS Conference of the Parties (COP10) in Bergen it was decided in Resolution 10.5 to establish a Working Group to draft the new Strategic Plan for Migratory Species (SPMS) for the period 2015-2023. This work is being conducted inter-sessionally and a final draft Strategy will be presented to CMS COP11 in late 2014. Two key recommendations emerged from its discussions: - The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and its Aichi Targets will be used as a framework when developing the CMS Plan. This approach was taken to keep the SPMS consistent with UN General Assembly resolutions on biodiversity; to link migratory species priorities to the relevant Aichi targets; and to provide a logical and effective way for migratory species targets to be integrated into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). - The Working group also agreed that the

SPMS will generate more political attraction and visibility by focusing on migratory species rather than on the Convention itself. This approach shifted the focus from the institution to the issue, thereby broadening relevance and ownership among the CMS family of instruments and beyond.

4. Activities that concern implementation – an essential component of a successful and effective Strategic Plan – will be compiled in the case of CMS in a separate companion volume to support the implementation of the Plan. Throughout the development of the SPMS, relevant implementation elements will be identified for further development in the Companion Volume on Implementation. Perhaps Ramsar Convention could consider this option and develop a shorter high-level strategy for longer term with a separate implementation strategy for shorter periods.

- I find the current structure based on goals, strategies and key results areas useful, although in the current document some the titles of the goals are not always consistent (e.g., wide use of wetlands vs. wide use) a possible improvement could be to add an estimated cost to each strategy. Obviously some strategies have been implemented and would need to be replaced by new strategies.
- Can be a similar structure as for the current plan

3. What should be the scope and focus of the new Strategic Plan?

- As above (point 3): It is recommended that the next Strategic Plan aligns with the Post-2015 Development Agenda.
- As was mentioned in the current plan to provide contracting Parties with tools and mechanisms to fully implement the Convention and empower them to take advantage locally of the partnerships that the Ramsar Convention has created with other International Conventions and local stakeholders to work towards common goals that will build a strong wetland conservation community locally and internationally
- Elevate attention to wetlands ecosystem services and their role in human well-being re. Sustainable development interests. Notably regarding water related ecosystem services (water quality, flood and drought mitigation and coastal zone stabilization/sediment transfer etc.). Key links are with water security (various dimensions) and disaster risk reduction.
- The role of Wetlands in working landscapes. The nexus of Wetlands and Drylands.
- 1. Ramsar ecosystem-based approach requires that the contracting parties engage with a work in close partnership with other MEAs in order to ensure that the role and importance of wetlands to their businesses is fully recognized. On the other hand, Ramsar Convention is one of the few global systems of sites nominated by governments. This can provide other global conventions such as CMS a channel for delivery of site-based measures, since many migratory species depend on wetland habitats for their survival at some point during their life cycle. This has been reflected in Goal 3 (Strategy 3.1 Synergies and partnerships with MEAs and IGOs) of the current Ramsar Strategic Plan. Therefore, it is recommended that the new Ramsar Strategy focuses on the broader issues concerning wetland ecosystems and the benefits/services they provide, particularly in relation to water rather than on wetlands themselves.

2. The current Ramsar strategy only targets direct stakeholders for its implementation, while the CMS Strategic Plan addresses migratory species from a wider perspective and aim at encouraging both parties and non-parties to get involved in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Ramsar Convention might also consider broadening its target audiences in order to be more consistent with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, which is intended to serve everyone who is concerned with biodiversity conservation including wetlands.

3. Ecosystem-based approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation can offer multiple benefits to wetlands conservation and migratory species that rely on these types of habitats.

4. Wetlands -in addition to their intrinsic value- have significant economic value that is seldom captured in markets. The international project on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) recommends that the economic value of biodiversity be factored into decision making and reflected in accounting and reporting systems. It is recommended that the wetlands economic value be incorporated into a global target and forms one of several key actions of the new Strategy.

- The same as for SP3.
- Further promote implementation and compliance with Convention linkages to other global processes such as SDG process and to other organizations/ Conventions.

4. What changes in the current situation or external factors could serve as good opportunities for the preparation of the new Strategic Plan?

- As above (point 3): It is recommended that the next Strategic Plan takes into account the Post-2015 Development Agenda.
- Limited funding for conservation projects at local levels could be a challenge to implement the strategic plan, this is an opportunity to promote alliances and partnerships to find resources that will serve wetlands conservation goals
- Current attention to sustainable development post-2015. Likewise current attention to water security and disaster risk reduction. These are the key opportunities for showcasing the Ramsar SP. I don't see a need for drastic changes in the technical areas of the SP - but much more attention to drafting the SP taking into account the interests of other stakeholder groups. Do an analysis of current high priority topics re sustainable development and a matrix of how wetlands contribute to solving the problems - hence how Ramsar is relevant to other stakeholders.
- SDG Goals/Targets - land degradation neutral world depends on functioning wetlands.
- In 2010, the European Council formally endorsed the EU Biodiversity Strategy and its focus on ecosystems services within, but also beyond, protected areas and its focus on cost-effective restoration of ecosystems to ensure the continued provision of ecosystem services, in particular given the climate change mitigation and adaptation benefits of many ecosystems and the relevance for human wellbeing. The Council encourages member States to integrate the Strategy into their national plans, programmes and/or strategies, highlighting the need to develop and implement a methodology to assess the impact of all relevant EU-funded projects, plans and programmes on biodiversity and ecosystems.
- New scientific findings, including from the Fifth Assessment report of the IPCC.

- Discussions on SDGs.

4.1 For example, to what extent should the new Strategic Plan be aligned with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Targets?

- The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Targets provide the overall framework for biodiversity conservation. The different biodiversity-related MEAs should therefore align their respective strategic plans and objectives to this overall framework. Please also refer to specific decisions taken by the World Heritage Committee in this respect: 34 COM 5D and 37 COM 5A.
- It already is (largely). But the new one should be fully aligned with the SPfB and ABTs - which would probably be largely a matter of labelling/drafting as opposed to major changes in content (since Ramsar leads for CBD on wetlands then defacto the Ramsar SP is aligned with the SPfB etc.). The SPfB and ABTs need to be cross-checked re: Ramsar SP - or start with the SPfB/ABTs and build the Ramsar SP on that - but beware because the ABTs do not comprehensively cover wetlands and there are likely important gaps (which need to be included in the Ramsar SP). The priority should be alignment with the SPfB (decision X/2) - the ABTs are only examples of specific things to be achieved. Take note of the Vision and Mission of the SPfB - align Ramsar SP to those in first instance. Avoid jumping straight into ABTs as the entry point. (Incidentally - I thought Ramsar had already "signed up" to the SPfB as the overarching framework - so to some extent this question is redundant so the issue is how it is aligned - not the extent).
- It should - especially targets 14 and 15 to do with ecosystem services and restoration. Don't forget new UNCCD plan from 2018.
- The Strategic Plan should particularly continue to contribute to the achievement of the 'Aichi Biodiversity Targets' of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. This is also in alignment with CMS attempt to develop a new "Strategic Plan for migratory species 2015-2023" by using the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets as an overall framework when developing the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species. Linking migratory species priorities to the Aichi Targets provides a fast-track method for these issues to be integrated into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), the principal instrument used toward implementation of policies related to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity (including migratory species and their habitats).

4.2. To what extent should the new Strategic Plan invite other sectors, and notably the water management sector, to better value, restore and maintain wetland ecosystems and their services?

- It appears beneficial to strengthen the outreach to a broader range of stakeholders beyond the conservation community and to highlight in particular the benefits of public-private partnerships. To that end, current Strategy 1.4 could be elaborated and given more weight.
- Very strong component to build partnerships for effective conservation that should be kept in the new plan
- Engagement with other sectors (interest groups) should be THE main approach of the new SP. The future of wetlands is influenced by these other groups (not by wetlands specialists) -

engagement is critical and without it the SP will be ineffective. "Invite" other sectors is perhaps wrong wording - "engage" is better. The SP MUST resonate with these other interests - it must offer them something useful (answers to their problems). You get engagement not by "inviting" but by offering something (added value to them of wise use etc.). "Water management sector" needs clearer identification - the key need is to engage "water interests" (which is bigger than the sector) e.g. cities interested in water security, coastal planners etc. Not just "water sector" sensu supply. Target those interested in water security (which is essentially everybody).

- Yes it should - see ELD. Do not forget the agricultural sector - it uses most water.
- Ramsar Convention could stress more on the inter-sectoral and participatory approaches. The Convention could also emphasize on outreach, promotion and uptake of the current and future strategic Plans.
- An enhanced collaboration with the water sectors could be beneficial. some work was also done under UNFCCC on ecosystem (e.g., adaptation, research)
- This is very important, but not only the water sector, also other related sectors such as tourism, agriculture and even industry should learn to better value, restore and maintain ecosystems.

5. Which situations should be avoided in the preparation of the new strategic plan?

- Closed circle discussions within the established community should be avoided in order to take into account outside views (in particular private sector) that can enhance building additional partnerships at an early stage and thereby ensure the success of the subsequent implementation of Strategic Plan.
- Complexity, the plan needs to be kept straight forward with clear outcomes and expected results that Contracting Parties can monitor and evaluate periodically with the agencies implementing the Convention on the ground
- Technocratic approaches. Science/ technology is important but should be in the background underpinning the SP. The SP must be developed/ written with the target audience in mind. START with stakeholder interests and work backwards. DO NOT start with wetlands science etc. and work forwards. Avoid "natural sciences" approaches (within reason) - adopt social (including political and economic) science based approaches (+ communication).
- Duplication in terms of target setting; Sectoral isolation - ensure you put the Wetlands in context.
- It must also be clearly appreciated that the goal of having a Strategy in line with other MEAs' strategy such as Strategic Plans for Biodiversity and CMS Strategy is harmonization and not homogenization. Since, synergy is about adding value to the efforts being made overall, not seeking to achieve less. More important perhaps is to optimize niche specialization where there is a need for it, but to develop improved connectivity overall.
- Identification of too many strategies.

6. How should the outcomes of the new Strategic Plan be measured and its impact evaluated?

- The World Heritage Centre is ready to provide information on the monitoring measures that have been elaborated in the framework of the implementation of the World Heritage

Convention, a number of. Achievable targets with clearly designated responsible institutions should be aligned with the activities and targets of other MEAs in order to ensure synergies.

- Contracting Parties should appoint a team comprised by Focal Points that will design a mechanism to evaluate the implementation and impact of the outcomes of the plan, this task should not be done by external consultant but, rather by the people in charge of local follow up on implementation of the Convention appointed from Contracting Parties with a clear interest in the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan. This is a challenging task to measure if the plan is being effective, and it will require creative mechanisms to do so. The key is not the mechanism but the collaboration among Contracting Parties to find one that works
- Much more attention to ecosystem service related indicators (CBD has same problem). We need much more innovative approaches to ecosystem service monitoring - in other words indicators that link wetlands trends to human well-being. Likewise - regarding process indicators we need more on uptake of wetlands services etc. into sector policies. Pay attention to trying to get info. on trends in wetlands restoration (and the motivations for it - usually because of the need for services e.g. flood regulation). Much more attention to trying to get information on economics etc.
- Number of hectares of Wetland restored. Water quality, cubic metres etc. Quantitative indicators of success. Impact evaluated by improved livelihoods, ecosystem service provision and enhanced biodiversity.
- As mentioned before, measurable indicators and achievement milestones are necessary as the means for measuring the strategy's performance and success, thus, they are recommended to be included in the new Strategy. In addition, the new Strategy should focus on a shift towards result-based management and strengthen the results-oriented monitoring and evaluation function and capacity.
- It seems that the current key result areas could continue being used to measure progress and evaluate the impacts of implementing the strategies.
- Defining clear indicators and measuring them regularly.

7. How can the Ramsar Convention be more effective in engaging other non-Contracting Party stakeholders in the implementation of the Strategic Plan?

- It is recommended to make increased use of the Ramsar web-pages to disseminate regularly updated information and to thereby draw increased attention to the Ramsar Convention's work; this internet presentation should also include links to other key Conventions and partners. WHC will ensure links from its web-pages as well.
- Reaching out to them with specific ideas for collaboration in a specific area of interest to both Ramsar and the non-Contracting Party, this can also be done through the MoUs with other International Organizations.
- Not clear what is meant by "non-contracting party stakeholder". Do you mean non-Parties (= universal membership) or other stakeholders (e.g. other sectors - which is required in both Parties and non-Parties). But my answer is - all of the above. By making wetlands more explicitly relevant to sustainable development - as solutions to pressing development problems. Less

emphasis on "conservation" more on "wetlands as solutions". Re. non-Parties - pay attention to SIDs (which is a major group of non-Parties last time I checked. Get them on board through attention to water security, disaster risk reduction and the role of wetlands etc.). These are key areas of concern in these countries - but they don't see a link with the Ramsar Convention. Be clear about what Ramsar offers in terms of assisting in such areas. De-emphasise Ramsar Sites (PAs) - or rather emphasise their role in terms of human development. And for SIDs - better appreciation (CEPA) that Ramsar covers coastal/marine areas too. It would be good to drop the 6m limit on your definition.

- Private sector - documenting the value. CSOs beyond the environmental/Wetland sector.
- CMS has the following approach for engagement of parties and non-contracting party stakeholders in the development of a strategic plan:
 - Parties representing their regions, as well as CMS partners such as biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and non-governmental organizations are participating through the Working Group on the Strategic Plan.
 - Wide and intensive consultations on drafts of the Strategic Plan are being undertaken to allow for close involvement of all Parties but also of all CMS instruments, other stakeholders and other MEAs.
 - The issue is being raised at all possible occasions, in particular in the margins of relevant planned MEA meetings, for example by Working Group members, individual Parties, the Secretariats in the CMS Family or other interested stakeholders, to engage Parties either individually or through back-to-back meetings.
 - Communication and outreach material on the development of the draft Strategic Plan is provided below, and all Parties and other interested stakeholders are encouraged to participate in this awareness-raising exercise.
 - Expert meetings and/or regional meetings are being held where possible to support the Working Group members when consulting their regions, for example, the 1 November 2013 Regional Consultation Meeting for African National Focal Points of CMS on the development of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023. The more the non-parties are involved in the development of the new strategic plan, the higher is the possibility of their engagement in the Plan's implementation.
- An enhanced communication strategy (e.g., message based strategy). A specific strategy addressing these Parties.
- Invite them to meetings like all others as well as to projects.