

Proposed draft resolution on the future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2026-2028

Submitted by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel

Action requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to review and approve the attached Draft Resolution for consideration at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Introduction

For the 2026-2028 triennium, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) has identified several emerging scientific and technical priorities that require due consideration and action. These priorities include the improved monitoring and reporting of the ecological character of Wetlands of International Importance, advancements in wetland mapping and inventory tools, assessing the impacts of harmful algal blooms and fires, and the next Global Wetland Outlook. The draft resolution also requests the Secretariat to issue future calls for nominations of STRP Members following the annual Meeting of the Standing Committee in the year preceding the meeting of the COP. This would enable the appointment of a new Panel immediately after the COP, allowing more time for the STRP to develop and implement its work plan.

Financial implications of implementation

The activities of the STRP are supported by the core budget. This budget allocation ensures that the STRP can effectively carry out its role in providing scientific and technical guidance to support the implementation of the Convention, covering essential functions, including the preparation of technical reports, guidance documents, and the organization of meetings.

The precise financial requirements for the implementation of the prioritized tasks (Annex 2) will only be fully available after the development of the STRP work plan for the 2026-2028 triennium. However, it should be noted that the resources provided by the core budget were not sufficient to cover the full scope of activities during the 2022-2025 triennium, where approximately 35 per cent of the activities were covered by voluntary financial contributions. Additionally, the STRP was unable to implement all task of the highest priority due to financial and human resource constraints. In this regard, it is expected that additional financial contributions will be needed to enable the STRP to fully deliver the next work plan as well as effectively respond to requests by the Contracting Parties arising from COP and SC meetings.

Draft Resolution XV.xx on future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2026-2028

1. RECALLING Resolution XII.5, which established a new framework for delivering scientific and technical advice and guidance under the Convention and amended the modus operandi of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP);
2. RECALLING paragraph 16 of Resolution XII.5, which outlines the need for any changes to the STRP's organization and processes to be made by Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) decisions, and paragraph 23 of the same Resolution, which emphasizes the need to ensure adequate resources for the STRP to carry out its work effectively;
3. FURTHER RECALLING paragraph 44 of Annex 1 to Resolution XII.5, which requests the STRP, in consultation with the Secretariat and the Standing Committee, to identify the "scientific and technical priorities for the coming triennium, and funding needs, and indicate potentially relevant partner organizations, for the consideration of the Conference of Parties";
4. FURTHER RECALLING paragraph 45 of Annex 1 to Resolution XII.5, which specifies that the scientific and technical priorities should reflect the content of the Strategic Plan of the Convention, previous COP Resolutions, and other key issues identified by regional or global wetland networks;
5. NOTING WITH APPRECIATION the contributions made by STRP members, International Organization Partners, observers, and STRP National Focal Points to the work of the STRP during the past triennium; THANKING Danone, the Government of Finland, the Government of Norway, and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for their generous financial contributions towards various STRP tasks; and ALSO THANKING the Secretariat for its valued support;
6. RECALLING Pre-SC62 Intersessional Decision 04 of the Standing Committee, which approved the work plan of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel for 2023-2025¹;
7. ALSO RECALLING Decision SC63-30 of the Standing Committee, which requested the STRP to undertake a review of the Convention's classification system for wetland type as a high-priority task for the next triennium and to organize a consultation with the Earth observation community for the development of tools supporting wetland inventory, assessment, monitoring, and conservation; and
8. ALSO RECALLING paragraph 23 of Resolution XIII.10 on the *Status of Sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance*, which requested the Secretariat to investigate options and associated costs for working with Earth observation organizations, including the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), for putting Earth observation data and monitoring tools at the disposal of Contracting Parties for national wetland inventory and monitoring changes to Wetlands of International Importance;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

9. WELCOMES the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) products delivered during the 2023-2025 triennium, listed in Annex 1 of the present Resolution; and URGES Contracting Parties, managers of Wetlands of International Importance as well as other wetland managers,

¹ See <https://www.ramsar.org/document/scientific-technical-review-panel-strp-workplan-2023-2025>.

International Organization Partners (IOPs), international and non-governmental organizations, academic and research institutions, and other stakeholders involved in wetland conservation and management to utilize them to their full potential for wetland conservation and wise use;

10. INVITES the Convention's Contracting Parties, IOPs, and other relevant stakeholders to promote and disseminate the STRP products widely, including the *Global Wetland Outlook: Special Edition 2025*;
11. APPROVES the thematic work areas and the prioritized tasks for the STRP for the 2026-2028 triennium listed in Annex 2 of the present Resolution;
12. APPROVES the revised list of bodies and organizations invited to participate as observers in the meetings and processes of the STRP for the 2026-2028 triennium, included in Annex 3 of the present Resolution, and ENCOURAGES their active participation, applying a range of expertise, in the work of the STRP, alongside the STRP Members and STRP National Focal Points;
13. INSTRUCES the STRP to develop its work plan for 2026-2028 and submit it to the Secretariat as soon as possible for approval of the Standing Committee, either intersessionally in advance of, or at its 67th meeting; ENCOURAGES the STRP in so doing to give due consideration to the inclusion of unfinished tasks from the 2023-2025 work plan; and ALSO INSTRUCES the STRP to ensure that the work plan developed is streamlined and achievable within a single triennium, taking into account the traditional and local knowledge and potential contribution of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, where appropriate, and that all outputs of the STRP are designed, in collaboration with the Secretariat, to be user-friendly from the outset and for immediate use by Contracting Parties or other users;
14. REQUESTS the STRP to consider the findings of the consultation with the earth observation community conducted pursuant to decision SC63-30 when developing its workplan for the 2026-2028 triennium;
15. INSTRUCES the Secretariat, in consultation with the STRP, the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and partners in the Earth observation community, to further develop an initiative for knowledge exchange, guidance and technical support for the enhanced application of Earth observation in wetland inventory, assessment, monitoring and conservation, and report on progress to the Standing Committee, including in relation to resource requirements;
16. REQUESTS the Secretariat to issue future calls for nominations of STRP Members following the annual meeting of the Standing Committee in the year preceding the meeting of the COP, enabling the appointment of a new Panel immediately after the COP; and CONFIRMS that this instruction supersedes paragraph 19 of Annex I of Resolution XII.5; and
17. URGES Contracting Parties to provide financial support to ensure the continued effective functioning of the STRP; and INVITES the Secretariat to explore innovative financing mechanisms to support its scientific and technical work, including the possibility of public-private partnerships and collaborations with the philanthropic sector.

Annex 1

List of Scientific and Technical Review Panel outputs produced during 2023-2025

Note: Outputs are listed in order of the task in the STRP work plan.

1. Draft resolution on the application of Criteria 6 and 9 to new and existing Wetlands of International Importance (Task 1.1. (a) and (b): Annex I & II, SC64 Doc.21).
2. Document SC63 Doc.20 *Technical proposal of the STRP on resourcing and implementing Waterbird Population Estimates*² (Task 1.1 (c)), including a draft resolution on the establishment of the Waterbirds Estimates Partnership and the delivery of the 2027 edition of Waterbird Population Estimates (see document SC64 Doc.20).
- [3. Briefing Note No. 14: *Small Wetlands: Their Critical Importance and Strategies for Effective Conservation* (Task 2.2).]
- [4. Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures for wetlands wise use: Guidance on locating, recognizing and effective management of wetlands, including Wetlands of International Importance, as OECMs (Task 4.1)].
5. Briefing paper: *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and how to upscale wetland conservation, restoration and wise use through National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans*³ (Task 5.2).
6. Technical Report No. 12: *Scaling up wetland conservation and restoration to deliver the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: Guidance on including wetlands in National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) to boost biodiversity and halt wetland loss and degradation*⁴ (Task 5.2).
7. Information document SC63 Inf.3 *Submission from the Convention on Wetlands to the 6th meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators on the effective consideration of wetlands in the KMGBF Monitoring Framework*⁵ (Task 5.2).
8. An approach to deliver future Global Wetland Outlooks (Task 5.3: Annex IV, SC64 Doc.18).
9. Technical Scoping Note for the review of legal and policy frameworks for wetland conservation and wise use (Task 5.4: Annex III, SC64 Doc.18).
10. Wetlands and Agriculture: Pathways to Sustainability (Two online lessons on the FAO elearning Academy, based on Policy Brief 6 and Briefing Note 13).

[Additional and finalized STRP outputs may be added during SC64 and COP14.]

² <https://www.ramsar.org/document/sc63-doc20-technical-proposal-strp-resourcing-implementing-waterbird-population-estimates>.

³ <https://www.ramsar.org/document/kunming-montreal-global-biodiversity-framework-upscaling-wetland-conservation-restoration>.

⁴ <https://www.ramsar.org/document/scaling-wetland-conservation-restoration-deliver-kunming-montreal-global-biodiversity>.

⁵ <https://www.ramsar.org/document/sc63-inf3-submission-convention-wetlands-6th-meeting-ad-hoc-technical-expert-group>.

Annex 2

Scientific and Technical Review Panel Thematic Work Areas and prioritized tasks 2026-2028

Further details on the scientific and technical priorities are identified in the report of the Chair of the STRP to the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15).

<i>STRP task</i>	<i>Mandate(s)</i>
TWA 1: Wetlands of International Importance, development of the Site network and application of criteria.	
This work area focuses on providing information to support Contract Parties to designate, manage, and monitor Wetlands of International Importance, in line with the objectives of the Convention on Wetlands. It includes guidance on application of criteria for site designation, and assessment of underrepresented wetland types in the Site network. TWA 1 may also provide guidance on integrating Wetlands of International Importance with broader global biodiversity targets, enhancing their role in achieving international conservation objectives.	
Task 1.1. Scientific and technical support towards effective monitoring and reporting on the ecological character of Wetlands of International Importance in the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS).	SC63 Doc.19 (Para. 19-21 & Annex 2); Report and Decisions of the 63rd Meeting of the Standing Committee.
Task 1.2. Global assessment of gaps in the network of Wetlands of International Importance, and synergies with global climate, biodiversity and sustainable development goals.	Res. XII.5, Annex 1; Res. XIV.14, Annex 2; Res. XIV.6, Para. 38; Continuation from STRP 2023-25 work plan (Pre-SC62 Intersessional Decision 04).
TWA 2: Tools for wetland assessment, mapping and monitoring, and development of inventories.	
This work area aims to improve the tools and methodologies required for wetland assessment, mapping, and monitoring, including for wetland carbon assessments and biodiversity monitoring. TWA 2 will explore innovative techniques, including remote sensing and Earth Observation, for streamlining wetland inventory and reporting. Future actions will focus on ensuring these tools are accessible and adaptable, allowing Contracting Parties to meet their reporting obligations under the Convention and other international frameworks that consider wetlands.	
Task 2.1. Review of the Convention's classification system for wetland type.	SC63 Doc.19 (Para. 16-18 & Annex 1); and Report and Decisions of the 63rd Meeting of the Standing Committee (Decision SC63-30).
Task 2.2. Advancing the development and use of technology for wetland mapping and inventory.	SC63 Doc.19 (Para. 49 (h)); & Report and Decisions of the 63rd Meeting of the Standing Committee (Decision SC63-30).

TWA 3: Direct and climate-change-related pressures on wetlands, their impacts and responses.	
This work area provides scientific and technical guidance on the key pressures on wetlands, including the current and projected impacts of climate change, drawing from the latest international assessments. TWA 3 aims to provide Contracting Parties with information to enable adaptation and resilience-building measures for wetlands, promoting nature-based solutions or ecosystem-based approaches to protect ecosystem services under changing climate conditions and other direct pressures, including agricultural expansion, pollution, and urban development.	
Task 3.1. Assessing the impacts from harmful algal blooms in wetlands.	SC63 Doc.19 (Para. 19-21 and Annex 2).
Task 3.2. Assessing the impact of fires in wetlands.	Doc. SC63.19 (Para. 19-21 and Annex 2).
TWA 4: Wise use, sustainable management and restoration of wetlands in the wider landscape/seascape.	
This work area will support Contracting Parties to implement actions that promote the wise use and sustainable management of wetlands, and restoration. TWA 4 includes assessment of options for transformative change to achieve wetland wise use, in alignment with sustainable development goals, and supporting integration of wetlands into national development strategies. Future activities may include guidance to enhance the role of wetlands in disaster risk reduction, to promote food security and to enable wetland restoration.	
Task 4.1. An assessment of transformative change pathways for wetland conservation and wise use for nature, climate and people.	SC63 Doc.19 (Para. 19-21 and Annex 2); and Vision of 5th Strategic Plan (TBC)
Task 4.2. Strengthening wetland restoration for climate resilience and biodiversity recovery: Building on STRP outputs and global frameworks.	Relevant STRP activities: e.g., Res. XIV.6, Para. 45; Res. XIV.14, Annex 2; Res. XIV.16, Para. 21; and Res. XIV.17, Para. 14.
TWA 5: Cross-cutting issues, supporting functions, and synergies with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).	
This work area will focus on addressing cross-cutting issues that impact wetland conservation, report on the global status of wetlands (Global Wetland Outlook) and provide technical guidance to facilitate synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). TWA 5 will provide information to support Contracting Parties to apply effective approaches for wetland conservation, restoration and wise use, and promote integrated reporting mechanisms with various international frameworks, including the SDGs and KM GBF.	
Task 5.1. Global Wetland Outlook.	SC64 Doc.18
Task 5.2. Improved global reporting on wetlands: synergies in development of indicators and methods for the Convention's 5th Strategic Plan and other global processes.	SC63 Doc.19 (Para. 19-21 and Annex 2); Res. XIII.5; Res. XIV.14, Annex 2; and Res. XIV.6, Para. 24 and 44.
Task 5.3. Review of policy and legal frameworks for wetland conservation and wise use.	SC57 Doc.8; Res. XIV.14., Annex 2; and Continuation from STRP 2023-25 work plan (Pre-SC62 Intersessional Decision 04).

Annex 3

Bodies and organizations invited to participate as observers in the meetings and processes of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel for the 2026-2028 triennium

Observer organizations are defined as global and regional multilateral environmental agreements, global intergovernmental organizations and processes, regional intergovernmental organizations and processes, international organizations and other non-governmental organizations and organizations devoted to wetlands.

They include, but are not restricted to:

- Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF)
- Ducks Unlimited (DU) and Ducks Unlimited Canada
- European Space Agency – ESRIN (ESA-ESRIN)
- Flora and Fauna International (FFI)
- Global Environment Facility (GEF: Secretariat and/or the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel)
- Global Rewilding Alliance
- Global Water Partnership (GWP)
- Greifswald Mire Centre (GMC)
- Group on Earth Observation – Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO-BON)
- Group on Earth Observation – Wetlands Initiative (GEO-Wetlands)
- IHE Delft Institute for Water Education
- The Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- The Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)
- International Crane Foundation (ICF)
- International Mire Conservation Group (IMCG)
- International Peatland Society (IPS)
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)
- Ramsar Regional Centre East Asia
- Scientific and Technical Network of the Mediterranean Wetlands Ramsar Regional Initiative (MedWet)
- Multilateral environmental agreements including the Secretariats and/or representatives of their technical bodies, as follows: Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and related instruments; Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (WHC); and Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes
- Society for Ecological Restoration (SER)
- Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS)
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Tour du Valat Research Institute for the Conservation of Mediterranean Wetlands
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB)
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)
- United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)