

Report and Decisions

Agenda item 1: Opening statements

1. Opening statements were made by:
 - Musonda Mumba, Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands
 - Hugh Robertson, Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)
 - Siobhan Fennessy, Vice-Chair of the STRP
 - Jerker Tamelander, Director, Science and Policy of the Convention Secretariat

Agenda item 2: Adoption of provisional agenda and working programme

2. The STRP Chair referred to the following documents for consideration and approval:
 - STRP27 Doc.2.1 Rev.1, *Provisional agenda*, and
 - STRP27 Doc.2.2 Rev.1, *Working Programme*.

Decision STRP27-01: The provisional agenda and provisional working programme were adopted.

Agenda item 3: Process and expected outcomes for the week

3. The **STRP Chair** presented the process and expected outcomes of the meeting, noting that the main objective of the meeting was to advance the finalization of STRP products in alignment with the timeframes set out in the STRP work plan for the 2023-2025 triennium, and to agree on next steps for communication of outputs under the STRP workplan leading up to the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15).
4. 65 participants attended the meeting in total, including 17 (of 18) appointed STRP members, representatives from STRP observer organizations, IOP representatives, representatives of Contracting Parties, and invited experts. 17 of the meeting participants took part online, including experts involved in high-priority tasks and representatives of Contracting Parties.

Agenda item 4: Updates from the STRP Chair and STRP Vice Chair

5. The **STRP Chair** provided an overview of progress made with high-priority and ad hoc tasks and budget status, preparations made for Earth Observation Day, proposed draft resolutions submitted by the STRP for consideration by the 64th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC64), feedback received from Contracting Parties on the STRP Chairs report during SC63, and preparations for SC64 to be held 20 to 24 January 2024.
6. Speaking **on behalf of the six IOPs**, Ms Chaturangi Wickramaratne of the **International Water Management Institute (IWMI)** explained the role of the IOPs as observers to the STRP and their perspectives on the Panel's work. The IOPs expressed concerns over the alarming rate at which wetlands are disappearing while acknowledging the increasing global attention on wetland loss and degradation. She noted that much progress had been made on a range of STRP tasks and further highlighted that the Panel remains uniquely placed to ensure that science-driven and

well-informed solutions are promoted and considered, such as guidance on the inclusion of wetlands in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

7. The **STRP Chair** noted that the panel's work on the following tasks has been completed:
 - Task 1.1(a). Guidance on the application of Ramsar Criterion 9 for the designation of Wetlands of International Importance, contained in SC64 Doc.21.
 - Task 1.1(b). Guidance to facilitate the application of Criterion 6, contained in SC64 Doc.21.
 - Task 1.1(c). Technical proposal for resourcing and implementation of Waterbird Population Estimate updates, contained in SC63 Doc.20, and SC64 Doc.20.
 - Task 5.2. Guidance to support the global implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (K-MGBF) for wetlands, published as Technical Report 12, and in the submission to AHTEG working on the indicator framework for K-MGBF.
 - Task 5.3. Develop an approach to deliver future Global Wetland Outlooks, contained in SC64 Doc.18. Annex 4.
 - Task 5.4. Review of policy and legal frameworks for wetland conservation and wise use: scoping study, contained in SC64 Doc.18. Annex 3.
8. The **STRP Chair** presented the proposed draft resolutions that had been submitted for consideration by SC64, on the future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2026-2028 (SC64 Doc.19), on the establishment of the Waterbird Estimates Partnership (WEP) and the delivery of the 2027 edition of Waterbird Population Estimates (SC64 Doc.20), and on the application of Criteria 6 and 9 to new and existing Wetlands of International Importance (SC64 Doc.21). The STRP Chair also noted the STRP submission to the Subgroup on Finance relating to the resourcing of the Waterbird Estimates Partnership and WPE2027. He noted that the Panel's recommendations for the Standing Committee are presented in the Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (SC64 Doc.18).
9. The STRP Chair further noted the Panel's ongoing ad hoc tasks, including advice on indicators for the Strategic Plan Working Group, contributions to the work of the CEPA Oversight Panel and the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) for the Wetland City Accreditation scheme, the Advisory Group for assessment of Ukraine Ramsar sites, and the Advisory Group on Wetland Restoration, pursuant to Resolution XIV.6, which requested the Secretariat to assess the progress on wetland restoration.

Agenda item 5: Updates from the Secretariat

10. The **Scientific and Technical Officer** presented the requests from SC63 related to the Panel's work, briefing the attendees on the request to undertake scoping and planning for a review of the classification system of wetland type; the organization of a consultation with the earth observation community (Decision SC63-30), outlining the consultation's objectives and the programme and highlighting the [background note](#) for Earth Observation Day on 6 December 2025; the request to develop the Waterbird Estimates Partnership (WEP) proposal (SC63 Doc.20) further and present it to SC64, including recommendations for resourcing it in consultation with the Subgroup on Finance (Decision SC63-31).
11. The **Director of Science and Policy** provided an overview of other international processes and the relevance of the work of the STRP to these. He noted how the Secretariat has used and disseminated information on STRP products including for a brief on the Convention on Wetlands for the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP16), input to COP16 side events as well as a side event on peatland hotspots

for climate action during the 29th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29).

12. Preparations for Earth Observation Day on 6 December were discussed, including the main points to be raised in panel discussion. Participants noted that the consultation can provide valuable recommendations on further developing EO-based initiatives within the Convention's framework, enhancing Contracting Parties' capacity to implement EO solutions in wetland inventory, monitoring and management, and fostering long-term partnerships with the EO community. It was further noted that, depending on the final outcomes of the consultation, the STRP Chair may introduce amendments to the Proposed draft resolution on the future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2026-2028 (SC64 Doc.19) during SC64, if relevant.
13. The **Scientific and Technical Officer** informed participants that a brown-bag lunch would be held during the course of the meeting, with presentations on the Rights of Wetlands, how this idea is being taken from concept to practice and how it relates to the Convention on Wetlands, **by Matthew Simpson**, 35percent, Cobra Collective and Society of Wetland Scientists, **Chaturangi Wickramaratne**, International Water Management Institute (IWMI), **Dr Ritesh Kumar**, Wetlands International South Asia, and **Prof. Siobhan Fennessy**, STRP Vice-Chair STRP and Kenyon College; and on a forthcoming publication on the critical role of wild animals in shaping wetland ecosystems and the services they provide, by, **Dr. Magnus Sylvén**, Director of Science-Policy-Practice at Global Rewilding Alliance.

Decision STRP27-02: The STRP Chair will provide a verbal update on the main outcomes and recommendations of the consultation to SC64 and the report of the EO consultation will be provided to SC64 as an information document.

Agenda item 6: Updates from Thematic Work Area (TWA) leads – status of priority STRP tasks

14. The **STRP Chair** invited each TWA lead, Mr **Lammert Hilarides** (TWA1), Dr **Laurent Durieux** (TWA2), Prof. **Siobhan Fennessy** and Prof. **Anne van Dam** (TWA3), Dr **Ritesh Kumar** (TWA4) and Dr **Hugh Robertson** and Prof. **Sevandi Jayakody** (TWA5), to present the status of each STRP task as set out in the [STRP workplan 2023-2025](#).
 - i. **TWA1: Wetlands of International Importance, development of the Site network and application of criteria.**

Mr **Lammert Hilarides** noted that tasks 1.1 (a) to (c) under TWA1 had been completed, including the submission of two proposed draft resolutions on the establishment of the Waterbird Estimates Partnership (WEP) and the delivery of the 2027 edition of Waterbird Population Estimates (SC64 Doc.20) and on the application of Criteria 6 and 9 to new and existing Wetlands of International Importance (SC64 Doc.21), as well as the technical proposal of the STRP on resourcing and implementing Waterbird Population Estimates (SC63 Doc.20). Activities during STRP27 would mainly focus on reviewing the draft revised spreadsheet *Population estimates and 1% thresholds for wetland-dependent non-avian animal species, for the application of Criterion 9*, which that was originally published in 2006,¹ to discuss status of listing, listing process, external review and review specification for a standing review of the spreadsheet in the future. Regarding Task 1.2, Mr Hilarides

¹ See <https://www.ramsar.org/document/population-estimates-1-thresholds-wetland-dependent-non-avian-animal-species-application>.

noted that the task had been put on hold and moved to the STRP Priorities 2026-2028 (SC64.18, Annex 1).

ii. **TWA 2: Tools for wetland assessment, mapping and monitoring, and development of inventories.**

The Task 2.1 lead, Prof. **Stephan Glatzel**, noted that a draft technical report on wetland mapping and inventories to catalyze greater use of available methodologies for wetland carbon assessments had been prepared, and that discussion at STRP27 would focus on finalizing the technical report. Task 2.2. lead, **Dr Suelma Ribeiro Silva** reported that the draft policy brief on small wetlands and their importance and strategies for effective conservation had been submitted for discussion at STRP27. Planned activities for STRP27 focused on finalizing the policy brief and discussing and agreeing on a way forward for infographics that would accompany the policy brief.

iii. **TWA 3: Direct and climate-change-related pressures on wetlands, their impacts and responses.**

Prof. **Siobhan Fennessy** noted that detailed outlines had been developed for Task 3.1, covering updated information on the current and projected impacts of climate change on the world's wetlands, and for Task 3.2 (a), covering blue carbon guidance, data and models, including a draft technical report and policy brief for Task 3.2 (b). Prof. **Anne van Dam** noted that a detailed outline had been developed for Task 3.3, including key messages, for the guidelines for maintaining, restoring, or creating ecosystem services of wetlands in agricultural landscapes. Prof. Anne van Dam also mentioned that the FAO elearning Academy had finalized two training modules on "[Wetlands and agriculture: pathways to sustainability](#)", based on STRP work from the preceding triennium. One additional training module will be developed based on Task 3.3 once completed. Planned activities for STRP27 included reviewing and discussing the outlines for Task 3.1, 3.2 (a), and 3.3, provided ahead of STRP27, organizing the final steps of the respective writing process, reviewing results from the consultant group working under Task 3.2 (a/b), including plans for the finalization of the technical report.

iv. **TWA 4: Wise use, sustainable management and restoration of wetlands in the wider landscape/seascape.**

Dr **Ritesh Kumar** reported that a first draft of the Briefing Note on OECMs as an opportunity to promote wetland conservation and wise use prepared under Task 4.1 has been reviewed by the task team members and the IUCN WCPA Specialist Group on OECMs, and that the drafting of a Briefing Note for Task 4.3 on integrating wetland protection, conservation, restoration, sustainable use and management into national sustainable development strategies is underway. The planned activities for STRP27 included finalizing the Briefing Note for Task 4.1 and further developing the draft Briefing Note for Task 4.3, including identifying case studies and agreeing on the next steps for the writing team.

v. **TWA 5: Cross-cutting issues, supporting functions, and synergies with other MEAs.**

Dr **Hugh Robertson** and Prof. **Sevvandi Jayakody** noted that Task 5.1, preparation of a Global Wetland Outlook on the financial costs of wetland loss and degradation and investment required to maintain and restore wetlands is in progress and that the draft consultant report for this task had been shared with the meeting participants leading up to STRP27. It was reported that Task 5.2 had been completed, resulting in a [submission to the AHTEG](#) on wetland-related indicators for the KM-GBF indicator framework, a [briefing paper](#) on KM-GBF and upscaling wetland conservation, restoration and wise use through National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), and a [Technical Report](#) providing

guidance on including wetlands in NBSAPs, including a [webinar](#) for the launch of the technical report. It was further noted that Task 5.3 had been completed and that a proposed approach to deliver future Global Wetland Outlooks (GWO) had been submitted as part of the Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel to SC64 ([SC64 Doc.18, Annex 4](#)). Finally, it was reported that Task 5.4 had also been completed, focusing on the development of a scoping note for the review of legal and policy frameworks for wetland conservation and wise use submitted as part of the Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel to SC64 ([SC64 Doc.18, Annex 3](#)). Planned activities for STRP27 included working group sessions to further develop the outline for the GWO 2025 and identify content from the consultant report to include in the GWO 2025, and discussing the proposed approach for future GWOs (in plenary).

Agenda item 7: Preparations for the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15)

15. The **STRP Chair** introduced the draft resolutions submitted by the STRP to SC64, including the Proposed draft resolution on the future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2026-2028 ([SC64 Doc.19](#)); Draft resolution on the establishment of the Waterbird Estimates Partnership (WEP) and the delivery of the 2027 edition of Waterbird Population Estimates (WPE2027) ([SC64 Doc.20](#)); and Draft resolution on the application of Criteria 6 and 9 to new and existing Wetlands of International Importance ([SC64 Doc.21](#)).
16. The **STRP Chair** presented the [12 draft resolutions](#) submitted by Contracting Parties for consideration by COP15 including eight draft resolutions with scientific and technical aspects for the STRP to review. It was agreed that the STRP Vice-Chair would take the lead in consolidating written feedback from STRP members on the draft resolutions.
17. The **STRP Chair** outlined the steps taken since STRP26 regarding the review of indicators for the 5th Strategic Plan of the Convention on Wetlands. It was noted that the STRP Chair was an invited member of the Strategic Plan Working Group (SPWG) and that the STRP, responding to a request by the co-chairs of the SPWG in October 2024, had provided advice on indicators for Goals 1-3 and associated targets of the draft Strategic Plan. It was agreed that Dr. Geoff Hilton, an STRP member, would take the lead on compiling the Panel's advice regarding indicators for Goal 4 and its targets during the course of STRP27. The preliminary advice of the STRP on indicators for the 5th Strategic Plan has since been submitted as an Information Paper to SC64 for consideration (SC64.Inf.3)

Decision STRP27-03: The STRP Chair, on behalf of the STRP, will provide technical feedback on the draft resolutions during SC64. Following the conclusion of STRP27, the STRP will continue to review and refine its advice on Goals, targets and indicators of the draft 5th Strategic Plan. The STRP will submit a revised information paper to the SPWG before SC64.

Agenda item 8: Review of the Convention on Wetlands Classification System for Wetland Type

18. Following Decision SC63-30, which requested the STRP to undertake scoping and planning for a review of the classification system of wetland type to be implemented as a high-priority task in the 2025-2027 triennium, the **STRP Chair** presented the 2-phase review of the Classification System for Wetland Type ([SC63 Doc.19 Annex 1](#)), further outlining the scoping that would be carried out as part of STRP27. It was agreed that Mr. Lammert Hilarides, an STRP member, would take the lead to set up an STRP task group to develop Terms of Reference to outline the

purpose and proposed approach for the review, considering advice received during STRP26 and SC63.

19. The **Scientific and Technical Officer** presented the initial results from a [crosswalk](#) of the Convention on Wetlands Classification System for Wetland Type and the IUCN [Global Ecosystem Typology](#) (GET) carried out by the DHI Group in 2024. Insights from the DHI crosswalk were outlined, including that the Convention on Wetlands classification system and the IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology (GET) align well in many cases but require additional clarity in transitional zones and in relation to functional overlaps. He highlighted discrepancies in the DHI cross-walk, such as the differentiation between small and large permanent lakes or saltwater marshes, and indicated areas where further refinement or hierarchical frameworks could improve accuracy. He also noted that human-made wetlands, such as aquafarms, rice paddies, and irrigation systems, pose unique challenges as they often blend natural and human-made characteristics. This illustrates some of the challenges inherent to the prospective revision of the Classification System for Wetland Type.

Decision STRP27-04: The STRP task group on the Classification System for Wetland Type will continue to draft Terms of Reference for the review of the classification system as part of the next STRP work plan. The STRP Chair will report to SC64 on progress made during STRP27 regarding the continued planning for the review, including results from the crosswalk.

Agenda item 9: Working group sessions – priority STRP tasks

20. The **STRP Chair** introduced the consultant report: Analysis of economic costs to society from the loss and degradation of wetlands and their ecosystem services, prepared by the Conservation Strategy Fund, as part of the ongoing work on the next Global Wetland Outlook (GWO). The review compiles and summarizes global and regional literature and assessments on the economic costs to society from the loss of wetlands and their ecosystem services. One key objective for STRP27 would be to review the desktop report to be synthesized for the Global Wetland Outlook 2025: Special Edition.
21. Dr **Ritesh Kumar** presented the proposed approach to deliver future Global Wetland Outlooks ([SC64 Doc.18, Annex 4](#)), outlining approaches of other Conventions and MEAs, types of possible products and publication frequency, overall process and phasing, and some proposed topics for future GWOs, to be considered for the STRP 2026-2028 work plan.
22. Below is a brief update on the progress made during the STRP27 working group sessions. This update outlines the next steps across the Thematic Work Areas:
 - a. **Thematic Work Area 1. Wetlands of International Importance, development of the Site network and application of criteria:**
 - Pending approval by SC64, the Secretariat will send a communication to CPs on the guidance for the use of alternative estimates (SC64 Doc.18, Annex 2).
 - If the request for surplus funds is approved by the Subgroup on Finance and the Standing Committee: the Secretariat, in consultation with the STRP, will communicate to CPs the next steps as part of the process of establishing the Waterbirds Estimates Partnership leading up to COP15 (SC64 Doc.18, Annex 5).
 - The TWA lead will support the presentation of the COP15 Draft Resolutions prepared by the STRP at the Convention on Wetlands regional meetings leading up to SC64.

- An information document on the revised spreadsheet *Population estimates and 1% thresholds for wetland-dependent non-avian animal species, for the application of Criterion 9*, containing a listing of available population size estimates of wetland-dependent animal (sub)species, will be prepared for COP15.
 - Continued liaison with the IUCN species group on future updates of the populations estimates spreadsheet, including agreeing on an approach for future minor updates.
- b. **Thematic Work Area 2. Tools for wetland assessment, mapping and monitoring, and development of inventories:**
- The Technical Report prepared under Task 2.1 on Wetland mapping and inventories to catalyze greater use of available methodologies for wetland carbon assessments will be submitted in December 2024. The accompanying Policy Brief is expected to be submitted to the Secretariat for finalization in January 2025.
 - The Policy Brief for Task 2.2: Prepare guidance on inventories and monitoring of small wetlands and their multiple values for biodiversity conservation, especially in landscape management and climate change, will be submitted to the Secretariat for finalization in December 2024, not including the infographics that will be part of the brief.
 - Members of the task group preparing Policy Brief on small wetlands and their importance and strategies for effective conservation may submit a proposal for a side event during COP15.
- c. **Thematic Work Area 3. Direct and climate-change-related pressures on wetlands, their impacts, and responses:**
- The regional summaries being prepared under Task 3.1: Climate change and wetlands – updated information on the current and projected impacts of climate change on the world's wetlands and responses will be reviewed and finalized in January 2025.
 - The database developed under Task 3.2: Blue carbon guidance, data and models, and support for integrating blue carbon in climate change planning frameworks will be made available on the STRP workspace. The final draft Technical Report is expected to be available in late December 2024, with the aim of finalizing the report in January 2025.
 - The case studies under Task 3.3: Agriculture and wetlands: maintaining and restoring the ecological character of wetlands in agricultural settings are being finalized. The first draft version of the Technical Report will be available in late January 2025. The finalization and review of the Technical Report are expected in February 2025.
 - The FAO elearning Academy will prepare a third training module following the finalization of the Technical Report.
 - Findings from Task 3.3. may be relevant for consideration by a future Working Group on RIS Updating, if established.
- d. **Thematic Work Area 4. Wise use, sustainable management, and restoration of wetlands in the wider landscape/seascape:**
- The IUCN WCPA Specialist Group on OECMs is reviewing the final draft of the Briefing Note under Task 4.1: OECMs as an opportunity to promote wetland conservation and wise use. The Briefing Note is expected to be submitted to the Secretariat for finalization in December 2024, and a joint webinar with the IUCN WCPA Specialist Group on OECMs will be organized once published.

- The Briefing Note for Task 4.3: Integrating wetland protection, conservation, restoration, sustainable use and management into national sustainable development strategies is presently being developed, and a first draft will be shared for review in December 2024. As part of the review process, assistance from the Secretariat may be needed to seek comments from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) towards the finalization of the Briefing Note. It is expected that the Briefing Note will be submitted to the Secretariat for finalization in January 2025.
- e. **Thematic Work Area 5. Cross-cutting issues, supporting functions, and synergies with other MEAs:**
- The Global Wetland Outlook (GWO): Special Edition 2025, being prepared under Task 5.1 Financial costs of wetland loss and degradation, and investment required to maintain and restore wetlands (GWO 2025) advanced significantly during STRP27. The section leads continued developing the intended structure of the GWO, including chapter and the intended content to be presented, the approach for preparing the content based on the consultant report and other materials presented in the ToR for the task. Pending the final revisions to the consultant report being prepared, the task team will focus on drafting the main sections of the GWO in January and February 2025, with an expected submission date to the Secretariat being set for late March 2025. A summary for policymakers will also be prepared.
 - It is recommended that the GWO 2025 be launched three weeks before COP15 (exact date and location to be confirmed), and that a side event on the GWO be organized during COP15. A podcast is also expected to be released as part of the launch.
 - The STRP Chair will report back verbally to SC64 on the discussion organized during STRP27 on the proposed approach to deliver future Global Wetland Outlooks (GWOs), as outlined in Annex 4 of the STRP Chairs' reports to the Standing Committee ([SC64 Doc.18](#)).

23. The **Scientific and Technical Officer** outlined the main communication tools for promoting the STRP outputs, including outreach on social media, the STRP communique, and webinars. It was further noted that task leads would also be asked to record promotional videos during the meeting and that inputs would be collected from task leads on their communication plans.

Agenda item 10: Date and venue for STRP28 (in-person) and the next intersessional meeting (online)

24. The **STRP Chair** proposed that the 28th meeting of the STRP (STRP28) would be organized during the second half of 2025, as soon as possible following COP15 and the appointment of the next Panel. The exact date of STRP28 will be decided in consultation with the new Panel members and the Secretariat.
25. The 4th intersessional STRP meeting was proposed to be held on 1 and 2 April 2025, organized mainly to finalize and approve remaining STRP outputs under the 2023-2025 work plan.

Agenda item 11. Any other business

26. Information was shared about the [12th INTECOL Wetlands Conference](#), the 20th Annual Meeting of the Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS) Europe as well as the Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS) Annual Meeting 2024.

27. Information was shared regarding the forthcoming call for nominations of STRP Members following COP15. It was noted that the timely appointment of new STRP Members after the COP is crucial, allowing sufficient time for the STRP to develop and implement its work plan effectively.
28. It was further noted that the Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia ([RRC EA](#)) had expressed a continued interest in collaboration and sharing information with the STRP, particularly for areas of work that intersects with the activities of the Center, such as the assessment of carbon stocks in wetlands.

Agenda item 12: Closing remarks

29. The **Director of Science and Policy** thanked all the meeting participants for their dedication and congratulated the Panel on significant progress made in implementation of the STRP work plan, and acknowledged the non-core contributions towards the work of the Panel provided by UK, Norway and Finland, and by Danone through its partnership with the Convention.
30. The **STRP Chair** and **Vice-Chair** thanked the TWA Leads for leading the working groups and congratulated the attendees on their hard work and the meeting's outcomes, noting that significant progress had been made across all tasks during STRP27.
31. The STRP Chair closed the meeting.