



“Partners for Wetlands”

Memorandum of Cooperation between

The Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and

BirdLife International, and

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, and

Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, and

Wetlands International, and

WWF International, and

International Water Management Institute

Hereafter referred to as

The Ramsar Convention's International Organisation Partners (IOPs), 2018 – 2021

Introduction

This Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and its IOPs is a renewal of the previous Memorandum of Cooperation dated 19 May, 2011 and reflects the desire of the IOPs to continue to collaborate with the Secretariat to support Contracting Parties in the implementation of the Convention. This MOC includes Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) which was approved as a new IOP in Resolution XII.3 and was not included in the previous MOC. Additionally, this MOC includes an Annex that provides greater specificity on the proposed areas of collaboration.

The Ramsar Convention

Since its inception in 1971, the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) has provided the primary global intergovernmental forum on wetland conservation and wise use issues. Through the Convention's mission statement, the Contracting Parties agree to "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".

The Convention is founded on three pillars of:

- promoting wise use of wetlands;
- promoting international cooperation; and,
- developing a network of Wetland sites of International Importance.

The conservation and wise management of wetlands through the designation of wetlands for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance, especially the obligation to maintain the ecological character of designated sites, deserves special recognition. This obligation recognizes the importance of wetlands for the maintenance of healthy and productive inland water and coastal systems. In the context of water and wetlands, the Convention on Wetlands thus addresses issues that guide its Contracting Parties on ways to achieve sustainable development.

Within the general obligations set out by the treaty, Contracting Parties, meeting as the Conference of the Parties (COP), review and evaluate progress made in the implementation of the Convention and agree on future priorities for action under the Convention's Strategic Plan, the current Strategic Plan (the 4th) for 2016- 2024 having been adopted by Ramsar COP12 in 2015 through Resolution XII.2. Opportunities for cooperation and joint activities in accordance with the Convention's mandate and instructions from Contracting Parties are identified within the framework of the Strategic Plan.

The International Organization Partners

The formal status of the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs) was established by the 7th Conference of the Contracting Parties in 1999 (Resolution VII.3). The Conference of the Parties recognized the important and long-term contribution that three international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) (BirdLife International, Wetlands International and WWF) and IUCN played in the inception of the Ramsar Convention, and continued to play in its implementation. It conferred the status of IOP on these four organizations (BirdLife International, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Wetlands International and WWF) and established rules for conferring the status on other international organizations (non-governmental or intergovernmental) that meet the criteria set out in Resolution VII.3 and could support Contracting Parties in the implementation of the Convention. Subsequently, through COP9 Resolution IX.16, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), was recognised, and Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) was equally granted IOP status by Resolution XII.3 at COP12. Further organizations can seek IOP status subject to the approval of Contracting Parties through a COP decision (Resolution).

As spelled out in the Annex to Resolution VII.3,

"... the status of Partner shall be conferred to international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations taking into account the following characteristics:

1. Have a programme of activities that is global or at least covers many countries in one or more regions of the world.
2. Have a statement of purpose that explicitly, or by clear implication, includes the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.
3. Have a track record of experience in providing support to and/or implementing on-the-ground projects that contribute to wetland conservation and sustainable use.
4. Have demonstrated experience in implementing partnership ventures such as training and education, technical and/or scientific expertise, policy development, and/or evaluation and assessment, particularly where such ventures would bring new and additional benefits to the functioning of the Ramsar partnership.
5. Have a positive reputation for being willing and able to cooperate with national and international bodies, including both governmental and non-governmental ones.
6. Have stated their readiness to actively contribute on a regular basis to the further development of the policies and tools of the Convention on Wetlands and their application on the ground, particularly by assisting Contracting Parties to meet their obligations under the Convention.
7. Are prepared to sign a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Secretariat of the Convention, where the partnership agreement should be spelt out fully."

Purpose

This General Memorandum reaffirms and formalizes the ongoing partnership between the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the IOPs regarding activities agreed upon and relating to conservation and wise use of wetlands and water resources. This Memorandum of Cooperation comes within the scope of continuing cooperation between the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention and its International Organization Partners.

Resolution VII.3 of the Conference of the Parties has established the status of IOP and welcomes the organizations on which this status has been conferred to contribute to the development of policies and technical and scientific tools of the Convention, and to their application.

International Organisation Partners have the opportunity to contribute at all levels to shaping the development and progress of the Convention together with its Contracting Parties and governing and expert bodies.

The overall objective of the partnership is to support Contracting Parties in the implementation of the Convention and to the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources as a means to contribute to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Aichi Targets.

The partnership will facilitate actions that enhance the maintenance and restoration of wetland ecological character so that they continue to contribute to the maintenance of biological diversity and in climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as to livelihoods and human well-being including human health.

Specific agreed areas of collaboration with the IOPs are set out in the Annex to this General Memorandum.

Partnership Approach and Roles

The Convention shapes governmental policies and programmes and intergovernmental cooperation regarding the conservation and wise use of wetland and water resources. The Secretariat carries out the day-to-day coordination of the Convention's activities; it provides administrative, technical and scientific support to the Contracting Parties as they implement the Convention. The IOPs are key stakeholders for the Convention, helping to identify ongoing and emerging issues, contributing to the identification of priorities for governmental attention, and facilitating and implementing programmes that address these, working with all relevant sectors.

The Secretariat establishes its programme of work and priorities for collaboration according to the goals and strategies of the Strategic Plan, subject to its capacities and in line with the mandate given by the Contracting Parties. Each IOP develops a specific programme of collaboration according to its own priorities, capacities and programme of work.

The Secretariat and the IOPs will develop the partnership, both bilaterally and multilaterally, in order to bring together complementary capacities and combine resources to achieve mutually agreed outcomes. The IOPs work with the Convention bodies, and where possible with Contracting Parties to support national implementation of the Convention, and also collaborate with each other to further the goals of the partnership.

Instruments and Mechanisms for Collaboration

Specific areas of collaboration will be referred to in the Ramsar Strategic Plan and the relevant Strategic Plans of the IOPs, making the partnership visible and accountable.

The Secretariat will work to facilitate the bilateral and multilateral collaboration with IOPs including on joint project and resource development, technical exchange, policy and partnership initiatives. This will be achieved *inter alia* through regular liaison and information exchange as well as by arranging partnership meetings (electronically or face-to-face). The Secretariat and IOPs will meet annually face-to-face and communicate regularly via electronic communication modalities. The Secretariat and the IOPs will each identify individuals to act as focal points for this collaboration, and will notify each other of any changes to a designated focal point.

IOPs will endeavour to ensure that all relevant programmes of their organizations support the specific objectives and the implementation of the Ramsar Convention. In doing so, attention will be given to maximizing coherence with other relevant Conventions.

The Secretariat and the IOPs will share information on their respective networks and encourage their focal points at all levels to share information and to collaborate, especially regarding the active implementation of the Convention at both national and regional level. IOPs will consult with each other to share information and coordinate activities through their respective networks, with a view to avoiding duplication, providing synergies and increasing their combined capacity.

IOPs are invited to participate in an observer capacity and as advisors in all activities of the Convention, including meetings of the COP, the Standing Committee, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) (in which the IOPs are full members), and other regional and sub-regional meetings, and where relevant can be invited to be partners in project development and implementation, as well as in the development of policy and technical/scientific instruments for the application of the Convention.

As appropriate, the Secretariat may be invited to engage in relevant fora and advisory bodies established by the IOP's individually or in combination.

The Secretariat will consult with the IOPs should other organizations request IOP status.

Benefits

The Convention bodies and its Secretariat will continue to benefit from the active involvement and the expertise of the IOPs, in the development of global policy and technical tools, in their facilitation role to enable society to take action and in their support to Contracting Parties to implement the Convention in terms of policy and practice.

The IOPs, for their part, will work with the Convention as a vehicle for achieving mutual objectives and benefit from facilitation provided by the Secretariat in terms of technical exchange, partnerships, resource development and recognition. The IOPs can take credit for their valuable contributions to sustainable development through wetland conservation and wise use. They can expect to increase their visibility and their influence with governments and at intergovernmental level, and may, as appropriate, utilize their IOP status and profile such as in developing projects, jointly or individually, for donor funding.

All partners will benefit from the recognition of their respective achievements and the increased visibility and representation internationally and from synergies at all levels.

The extent to which the collaborative programme and the joint conservation activities are implemented will be subject to the availability of resources. However, improved resource development is anticipated to be an outcome of the partnership.

Obligations, Duration, Review and Termination

This Memorandum of Cooperation constitutes an expression of a shared intent. However, each party's actions will be considered to be that party's sole and separate action, for all purposes, and neither party shall claim to be acting on behalf of, or as agent for another party to this Memorandum of Cooperation.

The term for this Memorandum of Cooperation is six years as of the date of signature by the Parties.

The Memorandum will be reviewed mid-term, or more frequently at the request of any party. Any party may withdraw from this Memorandum at any time, subject to six months' notice in writing, noting that any such withdrawal from the Memorandum of Cooperation would mean that this organization would no longer comply with requirement No 4.7 of the Annex to Resolution VII.3.

Withdrawal of one or more IOP parties from the Memorandum will not prejudice the involvement of the remaining parties.

Done in Gland, Switzerland on the 23 April 2018

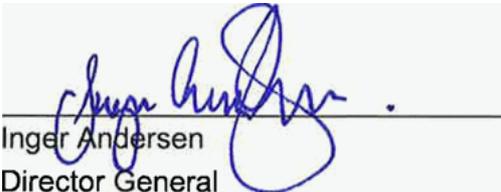
Signed:

For Birdlife International



Patricia Zurita
Chief Executive

For IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources



Inger Andersen
Director General

For IWMI



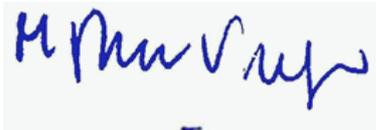
Claudia Sadoff
Director General

For Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT)



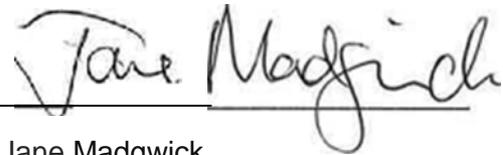
Martin Spray
Chief Executive

For the Ramsar Convention Secretariat



Martha Rojas-Urrego
Secretary General

For Wetlands International



Jane Madgwick
Chief Executive Officer

For WWF International



Marco Lambertini
Director General

Annex- Joint Activities for Collaboration

The following joint activities for collaboration were co-developed and endorsed by the Ramsar Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs) and the Secretariat in a workshop held in Gland, Switzerland, 02 May 2017.

A key driver in these discussions was the ambition for the IOP and Ramsar Secretariat partnership to become a 'whole greater than the sum of its parts'. Significant conversations focused on a strategic examination of how and where IOPs and the Secretariat can work collaboratively to scale-up their collective impact and these five activities offer significant opportunity for further collaboration in support of Contracting Parties in the implementation of the Convention. It offers an opportunity to test a new model for working collaboratively (joint funding, action, playing to respective strengths in a global approach).

It was also stressed that such activities could take place between two or more IOPs.

The joint activities listed do not exclude further forms or focus of potential cooperation and to strengthen and make more strategic on-going collaboration across the world.

This is an indicative framework that the Secretariat and IOPs will work towards operationalising, subject to the availability of resources. This work is expected to be resource intensive, and will demand a collective effort to mobilise new funding streams.

Joint Activity 1:

Working collaboratively to put wetlands on the broader agenda by raising visibility and fostering wide support

The overall objective of this joint activity is to work collaboratively to put wetlands on the broader agenda, with a focus on people and policies, building on the value of nature and a compelling evidence-based narrative to change how nature and wetlands are valued. Specifically, the proposal is to work with a range of other multilateral actors e.g. (UNEP, CBD, etc. to mobilize high-level political will to action. Possible activities could include working towards a possible Summit of Heads of State on nature in 2020, engaging in communication campaigns such as WWF's Connect2Earth, and developing an equivalent of a Stern Report for the 'Value of Nature', which would become a compelling target to mobilize needed action. Investment would be needed to build the wetlands evidence base and iterate the wetlands value case.

Joint Activity 2:

Influence policy through reinforcing common messaging in key policy processes

There is a shared view that greater Secretariat – IOP collaboration would lead to a 'whole that is greater than the sum of its parts'. The intended result is to influence policy through coherent and consistent messaging. To deliver on this, the Secretariat, within the mandate given by Contracting Parties, and IOPs will identify collaborative opportunities and make connections to higher-level issues and agendas. It requires a systematic level of dialogue amongst nominated focal points from the IOPs and Secretariat, who will collectively influence policy and amplify impact.

Joint Activity 3:**Enabling and supporting national action with a coalition to include wetlands into the work on climate change/Nationally Determined Contributions and Sustainable Development Goals**

This joint activity would enable a new model of collaboration, working as an IOP coalition to support national action. It is a proposal for the Secretariat and IOPs to enable national action through supporting Contracting Parties in integrating their wetlands targets/commitments under the Convention in their NDCs and SDG implementation and reporting. Resources would need to be mobilized for this activity.

Joint Activity 4:**Strengthening the designation, conservation and management of Ramsar Sites**

The Secretariat and IOPs will further foster implementation of the Convention through enabling and empowering Contracting Parties to better conserve listed sites, and facilitate wise use of all wetlands, including approaches that integrate Ramsar sites into other planning processes such as resilience and adaptation planning. The activity will include supporting the management of Ramsar sites through management plans and resources or other management effectiveness tools, including indicators based on systematic monitoring of Ramsar sites. Working in coordination to receive and respond to reports of threats at Ramsar sites. Raising funds and implementing joint projects to identify and implement measures to ensure protection of listed sites, and successful Ramsar Advisory Missions. The activity will support Ramsar site designation, including identifying under-represented wetland types identified as Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs). It is understood that the designation of Sites is the responsibility of Contracting Parties.

Joint Activity 5:**Emerging issues and opportunities**

This area of cooperation proposes further IOP partnerships, bilateral or multi-partner activities that respond to emerging issues and opportunities and meet the criteria specified by the Memorandum of Cooperation.

Reflecting bilateral and multi-partner discussion over the previous months and at the workshop, these are issues that resonate differently across IOPs, depending on their specific expertise and experience:

- Concerted efforts for capacity building at national and regional levels
- Work together to deliver key elements of Ramsar's CEPA programme to ensure that the key messages of wise use of wetlands are spread beyond typical partners. Support and promote activities such as citizen science, capacity building with local groups, education and awareness raising programmes both at wetland sites and beyond, and engaging stakeholders and decision-makers.
- Develop wetlands evidence base, targets;
- Partnership with the private sector, including development of guidance for corporates.