

THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

Intersessional Process of the Standing Committee

May 2020

Elements of advice for the GEF concerning the funding to support the objectives and priorities of the Convention, for the eighth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund

Actions requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- Review and endorse the proposed elements of advice for the GEF concerning the funding to support the objectives and priorities of the Convention, for the eighth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund according to CBD Decision XIII/21 and Resolution XIII.7 of the Convention on Wetlands.
- Instruct the Secretariat to transmit the elements of advice to the CBD Secretariat on the above matters for inclusion in documentation prepared for the third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation and the Conference of the Parties to the CBD at its 15th meeting.

Background

1. In decision, CBD XIII/21 the COP invited the governing bodies of the various biodiversity-related conventions to repeat the exercise described in decision CBD XII/30 for the development of strategic guidance for the eighth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund in time for consideration by the COP at its fifteenth meeting. The COP emphasized that the elements of advice need to be (a) in accordance with the mandate of the Global Environment Facility, and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the Council of the Global Environment Facility as per decision III/8, (b) formulated at a strategic level, and (c) formally adopted by the governing bodies of the respective biodiversity-related conventions.
2. At its fourteenth meeting, in CBD decision 14/23, the COP requested the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) at its third meeting to prepare proposals for a four-year outcome-oriented framework of programme priorities for the eighth replenishment period (July 2022 to June 2026) of the GEF Trust Fund, aligned with the draft post-2020 global biodiversity framework, for consideration by the COP at its fifteenth meeting.
3. Resolution XIII.7 of the Convention on Wetlands requests the Secretariat in response to the invitation to the Convention of CBD Decision XII/30, to present to the Standing Committee for its consideration at its 58th meeting elements of advice for the GEF concerning the funding to support the objectives and priorities of the Convention. The advice should be consistent with the mandates of the GEF, for the development of strategic guidance for the eighth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund and CBD Decision XIII/21 and must be in time for consideration by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD at its 15th meeting.

4. Given the schedule of meetings of the CBD and in particular of the meeting of SBI, the Standing Committee cannot consider this matter at its regular 58th meeting and thus needs to address it intersessionally.

Proposed decision on the elements of advice

5. The Standing Committee of the Convention on Wetlands in response to the invitation of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity to the governing bodies of the various biodiversity-related conventions to develop strategic guidance, in accordance with CBD COP Decision XIII/21, for the eighth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Trust Fund, in time for consideration by the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity at its fifteenth meeting, decides on the elements of advice to be submitted to the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity:

Decision: The Standing Committee decides the following elements of advice to be submitted by the Secretariat to the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity:

- a. Recognizes that wetlands are the most threatened of all ecosystems with 87% of the planet's wetlands having been lost, 35% of which between 1970-2015 at a rate three times faster than forests; and 81% of the populations of freshwater species have declined globally, that is a higher percentage than for other species;
- b. Stress the benefits and services wetlands provide to people, including most freshwater for consumption, protection from floods, droughts and other disasters, food and livelihoods for millions of people, and most effective storage of carbon than any other ecosystem.
- c. Notes the relevance of the preparation of the post 2020 global biodiversity framework for the urgent actions needed to conserve wetlands as part of the 2030 sustainable development agenda and the ongoing mid-term review of the Convention's Strategic Plan to ensure alignment with the post 2020 framework; and emphasize the contributions of the Convention on Wetlands to the post 2020 biodiversity framework, especially towards achieving no net loss in the area and integrity of freshwater and marine and coastal ecosystems as well as other goals and targets;
- d. Emphasize the importance of synergy-oriented programmes to conserve and sustainably manage all ecosystems such as forests, wetlands and marine environments (CBD/COP/DEC/XIII/21) and the need to promote synergies among biodiversity-related conventions to achieve integrated approaches, cross linkages and multiple benefits at a larger scale.
- e. Requests the Secretariat with the Standing Committee to develop further inputs relevant to the eighth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund according to the development of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and any adjustments on the Convention on Wetlands Strategic Plan 2016-2024 at its fourteen meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
- f. Invites the CBD to provide guidance to the GEF as part of its Framework of Program Priorities including the following:
 - i. Ensure that the GEF continues to give priority through the GEF-8 to support programs, projects and initiatives that contribute to the implementation of the Convention on Wetlands Strategic Plan 2016-2024 that is aligned with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets,

Sustainable Developments Goals and the four-year framework of programme priorities (2018-2022) of the seventh replenishment of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund;

- ii. Requests the GEF on the Biodiversity Focal Area to continue to support projects that mainstream wetlands and its biodiversity across sectors, landscapes – including inland waters, and seascapes; address direct drivers to protect wetland habitats and species, including through protected areas systems such as the Wetlands of International Importance designated by Contracting Parties under the Convention on Wetlands; and Further develop biodiversity policy and institutional framework, including policy, planning and review, monitoring, spatial planning, incentives, restoration, and strategic establishment of protected areas and other measures;
- iii. Encourage the GEF to continue to address the drivers to protect habitat and species and include under the current priority cluster on addressing direct drivers to protect habitats and species a programme priority to “Reduce pressures on freshwater ecosystems” besides the current one on “Reduce pressure on coral reefs and other vulnerable coastal and marine ecosystems”. This would reflect the level of threat and the multiple benefits derived from wetlands, including freshwater wetlands that are not currently covered in the International Waters portfolio, such as peatlands existing in national territories.
- iv. Invites the GEF to enhance support towards the integration of wetlands in the revision or updating of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and other national development plans, national budgets and priorities;
- v. Request the GEF under the Climate Change Focal Area Strategy to continue supporting projects and programs which address the critical importance of wetlands for climate change mitigation and adaptation and in particular the inclusion of wetlands in Nationally Determined Contributions and in the context of national climate strategies and plans;
- vi. Encourages the GEF under the International Waters Focal Area, to continue the support to project and activities to sustain healthy coastal and marine ecosystems, sustainable fisheries and to enhance regional and national cooperation on shared freshwater surface and groundwater basins;
- vii. Welcomes and encourages further projects on Multifocal Areas Programmes on wetlands, which show the multiple benefits of these ecosystems and cost effectiveness of investments that achieve biodiversity, water, climate and livelihoods objectives, while addressing systematic inclusion of gender equality, which Parties to the Convention are mainstreaming in accordance with Resolution XIII.18
- viii. Encourage the GEF to include Contributions to the Biodiversity related Conventions as part of the Focal Areas of the four-year outcome-oriented framework of programme priorities for the eighth replenishment period (July 2022 to June 2026).