

Proposal for a new memorandum of understanding and update on other agreements

Actions requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- i. consider for approval the proposal for a new memorandum of understanding between the Ramsar Secretariat and the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP);
- ii. take note of the progress in renewing the existing agreements with Danone and other relevant partners;
- iii. take note of the updated Joint Work Plan between the Secretariats of the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) for 2015-2017 drawn up under the MOU between the two Conventions; and
- iv. provide any comments and suggestions to guide the Secretariat in its involvement in the International Partnership for Blue Carbon.

Background

1. Resolution XII.3 (2015) on *Enhancing the languages of the Convention and its visibility and stature, and increasing synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions* instructed the Secretariat to report annually to the Standing Committee on progress in implementing Resolution XI.6 on *Partnership and synergies with Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other institutions*.
2. The Standing Committee through Decision SC52-11 decided that the Management Working Group be asked to review all new memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and other such agreements between the Ramsar Secretariat and other bodies, at its meeting immediately before the Standing Committee meeting at which the agreements were to be submitted for approval.
3. Accordingly, this report presents in Annex 1 the proposal for a new MOU between the Ramsar Secretariat and the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP); describes the progress on the renewal of the MoU with Danone; presents at Annex 2 the updated Joint Work Plan between the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS); and summarizes other partnership activities.

Proposals for new MOUs

4. The proposal for a new MOU between the Ramsar Secretariat and SACEP (see Annex 1) aims to increase international cooperation for the wise use, conservation and management of wetland and their resources to contribute to achievement of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024.
5. As mentioned in Doc. SC53-15 on *implementing Resolution XI.6 on Partnership and synergies with Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other institutions*, the MOU with IPBES has, at the time of preparing documents for SC53, been submitted for the consideration and approval of the Standing Committee and the Management Working Group intersessionally. The Secretariat will present an update on the status of this MOU during SC53.

Progress on the renewal of existing agreements

6. The Partnership Agreement with Danone, first signed in 1998 and since renewed periodically, provides an annual grant of EUR 250,000 which provides essential support to the communication activities of the Convention, and specifically funds the production of information materials for World Wetlands Day, three Evian Special Prizes of USD 10,000 for Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards, and a non-core position at the Secretariat.
7. At a meeting of the Secretariat and Danone teams in Paris, Danone confirmed that it was willing to renew the Partnership Agreement for the period 2017 to 2020, at the same level of funding of 250,000 EUR per year. At the time of writing this paper, drafting of the new Partnership Agreement and the activities to be included was still underway. Another opportunity has been identified regarding the engagement of Ramsar in the implementation of the new phase of the Livelihoods Fund, which funds pilot country initiatives which aim to promote sustainable management and restoration of wetlands and improve community livelihoods while reducing carbon emissions. This opportunity is being followed up by the Secretariat.
8. The Secretariat signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Convention's five International Organization Partners (IOPs) in 2011, to serve until 2017. An MOC was also signed with the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) as the sixth IOP in June 2016. The Secretary General discussed the issue with all the Chief Executive Officers and Directors General of the IOPs as part of her consultation with key partners and stakeholders, and it was agreed to hold a face-to-face meeting with the CEOs/DGs of all the IOPs to identify specific initiatives to be carried out jointly to support the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan. A first preparatory call was organized in which possible areas of action were identified and a process was put in place in preparation for a meeting to be held on 2 May 2017.
9. The Secretariat signed an MOC with the Society of Wetland Scientists in 2011 for six years. The MOC has been revised and will be signed during the annual meeting of the SWS Europe Chapter in May in Faro, Portugal.

Joint Work Plan with CMS

10. At SC51, the Secretariat took note of the comments expressed by Contracting Parties with regards to some of the activities of the Joint Work Plan (JWP) with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and discussed with the CMS Secretariat the need to adjust the Work Plan according to these comments. The two

Secretariats worked on the adjustments of the JWP, and it was approved by SC45 of CMS in November 2016. The JWP is at Annex 2 of this report.

International Partnership for Blue Carbon

11. The Secretary General participated at the Marrakech Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 22) in a side event entitled “Incorporating blue carbon into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement”. The event was co-hosted by Australia for the International Partnership for Blue Carbon and Wetlands International. She also participated in the Partnership’s high-level event with Australia’s Minister for the Environment and Energy, co-hosted by the United Arab Emirates.
12. The Department of the Environment and Energy of the Australian Government has welcomed the Ramsar Convention’s involvement in the Partnership for Blue Carbon, and has extended an invitation to the Secretary General to join. The Partnership would benefit from the expertise and experience of the Convention, in particular on the role of wetlands in building coastal resilience.
13. The Secretariat considers that the involvement in the Partnership is aligned with the priority areas of focus of the Convention in the Strategic Plan and in particular with Targets 1, 11 and 12 of the Strategic Plan, as the aim is to highlight the important role of coastal blue carbon ecosystems – mangroves, tidal marshes and seagrasses – in climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Standing Committee is invited to provide any comments and suggestions to guide the Secretariat in its involvement in this Partnership.

Annex 1

Proposal for a memorandum of understanding between the Ramsar Secretariat and the South Asia Co-Operative Environment Programme (SACEP)



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

THE SECRETARIAT OF THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
(RAMSAR SECRETARIAT), hosted by IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature and
Natural Resources, an association established under Swiss Law and located at Rue Mauverney 28,
1196 Gland, Switzerland

AND

SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
(SACEP)

herein referred to jointly and severally as the "Parties" and "Party", as the context may reasonably indicate or require.

Preamble

The Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, 1971), is the intergovernmental treaty that provides the most important intergovernmental forum and framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

According to the mission statement of the Ramsar Convention, the Contracting Parties commit to 'the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development through the world'.

The Conservation is founded on three pillars: promoting the wise use of wetlands, developing and maintaining a network of Wetlands of International Importance ('Ramsar Sites') and promoting international cooperation on shared wetlands and their flora and fauna.

The day-to-day coordination of the Convention's activities is carried out by a Secretariat (known hereinafter as the 'Ramsar Secretariat'), based at the headquarters of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature in Gland, Switzerland.

The South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (known hereinafter as 'SACEP') is an intergovernmental organization, established in 1982 by the Governments of South Asia. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are the members of SACEP. The main objective of SACEP is to promote and support conservation and management of environment through sustainable development in this region.

The Ramsar Convention and SACEP share similar conservation and management goals and positive cooperation. Being aware of the need to develop close cooperation between Ramsar Secretariat and SACEP in areas of joint interest, and wishing to promote and strengthen such cooperation, the Ramsar Secretariat and SACEP sign this Memorandum of Cooperation, particularly in the areas of capacity building in view of promoting wise use, conservation and management of wetlands in the South Asian Region.

Article 1 **Policy compatibility**

1. The Ramsar Secretariat and SACEP will cooperate to the extent practicable in the preparation of mutually relevant document for each other's major meetings, such as the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention or the Meeting of the SACEP Governing Council and other subsidiary bodies.
2. The Ramsar Secretariat and SACEP will liaise on key issue to promote the compatibility of their respective policy decisions, particularly in relation to other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Article 2 **Institutional Cooperation**

1. The Ramsar Secretariat and SACEP will develop and maintain a collaborative programme for the wise use, conservation and management of wetland and their resources by increasing consultation and cooperation.
2. The Ramsar Secretariat and SACEP will inform their National Focal Points at the regional and national levels of their cooperative activities.
3. In case where the Ramsar Secretariat and SACEP have different National Focal Points, they will seek to promote consultation and cooperation between these Focal Points.
4. For general matters, the focal points for the Ramsar Secretariat and SACEP are respectively the Ramsar Secretary General and SACEP Director General, or their assigned representatives.

Article 3

Joint Activities

1. Common areas for joint conservation activities shall contribute to achievement of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024, the SACEP work programme, South Asian Seas Action Plan and policy decisions of the governing bodies.
2. The Ramsar Secretariat will communicate agreement on common areas within their respective network, and SACEP will endeavor to mobilize the expertise available on wetlands and water resources within its organization in support of these activities.
3. Within the framework of their respective activities, both Parties may agree to design and implement joint cooperation projects, which may take the form of technical meetings, public seminars, thematic projects and products and support actions aimed at particular regions or countries. Such joint activities will be implemented through specific agreements (“Supplemental Agreements”).
4. Such projects shall be designed and implemented in accordance with specific arrangements, to be determined jointly by the relevant organs of both Parties, setting the practical, technical and financial conditions for the participation of the Parties, whose availability shall be duly ensured.
5. The Ramsar Secretariat and SACEP will provide each other with details of their annual work programmes to ensure harmonization of activities at global, regional and National levels.
6. SACEP will promote accession to Ramsar Conservation and seek to promote implementation of the Convention among its member countries.
7. The Ramsar Secretariat and SACEP will endeavor to coordinate their activities in research, training and public awareness.

Article 4

Consultation, Reporting and Further Guidance

1. The Ramsar Secretariat and SACEP shall institute measure to evaluate the progress of implementation of this Memorandum of Corporation. They will report accordingly to their respective governing bodies as well as advisory and consultative bodies and seek further guidance on new areas of cooperation and action.

Article 5

Supplemental Agreements

1. Collaboration activities to be carried out pursuant to any Supplemental Agreement will be:
 - i. Subject to the availability of funds and resources;
 - ii. Approved by the appropriate administrative authorities of each Party; and
 - iii. Undertaken in accordance with the Parties’ respective established policies and procedures.
2. The Parties’ performance of Supplemental Agreements shall be subject to and in accordance with the terms and conditions provided for in each such Supplemental Agreement.

Article 6
Exchange of Experience and Information

1. The Ramsar Secretariat and SACEP will regularly exchange information of mutual interest.
2. The Secretariat shall maintain links between their respective internet sites.

Article 7
Property Rights

1. Neither Party shall have the right to use the other Party's name, logo and/or other trademarks in any medium and for whatever purpose without the other Party's prior written consent in each instance of use.

Article 8
Non-enforceability

1. This MoU is a non-binding statement of the Parties' mutual understanding of their proposed collaboration framework. Therefore, and except for the obligations set forth under article 7 above, this MoU is not intended to create, and does not create, any legally enforceable rights or obligations in respect of either Party, including any obligation on their part to enter into any Supplemental Agreement.

Article 9
Obligation, Review and Termination

1. This Memorandum of Cooperation shall enter into force upon the signature by the duly authorized representatives of both Parties and shall remain in effect indefinitely until and unless terminated by either Party.
2. This Memorandum of Cooperation constitutes an expression of a shared objective and vision. However, each party's actions will be considered to be that party's sole and separate action for all purposes, neither party shall claim to be acting on behalf of, or as agent for the other party.
3. The agreement may be reviewed at the request of either party and may be terminated by either party by giving six month notice in writing. It is understood that any such termination shall have no effect on any Supplemental Agreements then in force between the Parties, and that the performance of such Supplemental Agreements shall be subject to their own terms and conditions.

Agreed for the Ramsar Secretariat
by

Agreed for SACEP by

.....
Secretary General,
The Secretariat for the Convention on Wetlands
(Ramsar Secretariat)

.....
Director General
South Asia Cooperative Environment
Programme (SACEP)

Date:

Date:.....

Annex 2

Joint Work Plan 2015-2017, Secretariats of the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)

This plan identifies a non-exclusive list of activities on which the Ramsar Convention and CMS Secretariats agree to cooperate within the framework of their Memorandum of Cooperation.

1. National policies

Activities	Timeframe
1.1. To support national policy initiatives of Contracting Parties of both Conventions for coordinated implementation of the CMS and Ramsar Conventions, through the dissemination of relevant guidelines and encouraging consultation among relevant national focal points, cross-representation on relevant national implementation committees and working groups, streamlining and harmonization of reporting processes, and adequate reflection of Ramsar <i>and</i> CMS interests in the updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and in initiatives of other relevant biodiversity-related conventions.	2015-2017
1.2. Encourage regular communication between CMS and Ramsar focal points at national level	2015-2017

2. Regional agreements and initiatives

Activities	Timeframe
2.1 To take opportunities for facilitating mutual participation (helping each other's attendance, resources permitting) in relevant meetings under either Convention, including those organized at regional level in the framework of the Ramsar Convention and its Regional Initiatives, those organized under CMS auspices in relation to individual Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding or other instruments, and workshops on technical topics of mutual interest.	2015-2017

3. Management of species populations and wetland ecosystems

Activities	Timeframe
3.1 To support the development of policy and management approaches in Contracting Parties of both Conventions furtherance of the most recent scientific knowledge and best practice thinking concerning ecological networks in relation to migratory species and wetlands.	2015-2017
3.2 To continue to develop joint intelligence, research and response mechanisms in relation to wildlife diseases.	2015-2017
3.3 To explore the scope for synergy in responding to other emergency situations (such as mass die-offs), in follow-up to Ramsar Resolution IX.9 and CMS Resolution 10.2.	2015-2017
3.4 To collaborate in research, management, information and outreach activities related to the sites that are listed by Ramsar and at the same time are included in Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles of the Indian Ocean South East Asian (IOSEA) Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding.	2015-2017

Activities	Timeframe
3.5 To collaborate with Contracting Parties in the implementation of the GEF project on Dugong and Seagrass in the Indian Ocean & Western Pacific (resources permitting).	2015-2017
3.6 Support Contracting Parties according to the Operational Guidelines for Regional Initiatives in the implementation of the Ramsar Strategy for High Andean Wetlands and the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on High Andean Flamingos.	2015-2017
3.7 Support Contracting Parties according to the Operational Guidelines for Regional Initiatives in the implementation of the various regional Ramsar initiatives covering mangroves and coral reef ecosystems, and the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on Migratory Sharks, having a particular focus on the conservation of CMS listed sharks, sawfishes and rays.	2015-2017
3.8 To continue to enhance the identification of overlaps between the interests of migratory species and wetlands of international importance, and to seek appropriate coherence between attention to “critical sites” for migratory pathways and strategic objectives for networks of protected wetlands.	2015-2017
3.9 To undertake specific advisory missions at the request of Contracting Parties on a joint basis in cases where the interests of both Conventions may be involved (resources permitting).	as required

4. Monitoring and assessment

Activities	Timeframe
4.1 Follow up on the implementation of both Convention’s Strategic Plans and assessments of progress towards the global Aichi targets, inter alia through the expert consultative processes established under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and in cooperation with the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre.	2015-2017

5. Global science and policy

Activities	Timeframe
5.1 To consider collaboration, resources permitting, on the production and printing of synthesis products focused on water, wetlands and migratory species interests in respect of the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity, including collaboration on new work by the Ramsar Scientific & Technical Review Panel in this subject area, and follow-up to the reports of the “TEEB” study.	2015-2017
5.2 To disseminate to Contracting Parties of both Conventions COP Resolutions of mutual interest and align and harmonize where possible proposals for COP Resolutions on technical subjects of mutual interest (such as climate change, the energy sector, extractive industries and impact assessment).	2015-2017
5.3 To coordinate participation and joint statements at meetings of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in the context of the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG)	2015-2017
5.4 To publish jointly technical guidance materials of the STRP and CMS Scientific Body of mutual interest where appropriate (and resources permitting) to make available to Contracting Parties of both Conventions.	2015-2017

6. Information, outreach and capacity-building

Activities	Timeframe
6.1 To organize efficient cross-distribution to the two Conventions' constituencies of materials for the promotion of World Wetlands Day and World Migratory Bird Day as well as of CMS species awareness campaigns if they are of any relevance for Ramsar, and to issue mutually supportive public information about each of these Days and campaigns.	2015-2017
6.2 Support (resources permitting) Contracting Parties of both Conventions, including cross-representation on capacity building workshops and investigation of ways and means to support the application of the Flyway Training Kit developed under the GEF project Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) as well as any other outreach materials.	2015-2017
6.3 To consider creative ways of mutually enhancing Secretariat capacity, for example through staff placements, exchange of interns, and reciprocal temporary staff secondments for "pressure point" occasions such as COPs.	2015-2017
6.4 To collaborate in joint activities e.g. the project on the Enhancement of Information and Communication Technologies and Capacity at CITES, CMS and Ramsar.	2015-2017