RAMSAR CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

59th Meeting of the Standing Committee

Gland, Switzerland, 21 – 25 June 2021

**SC59 Com.2**

**Report of the virtual meeting of the Subgroup on Finance, Part II**

**24 June 2021 13:00 – 13:30**

Part II of the report reflects the decisions made during the meeting of the Subgroup on Finance on 24 June 2021 to complete the Subgroup’s recommendations to the Standing Committee for items that had been discussed by the Subgroup on 21 June, but were subject to the relevant Decisions to be taken by the Standing Committee.

**Agenda item 5**: SC59 doc.8.1, action viii.

The Subgroup made no recommendation on the allocation for the Review of Resolutions, as this agenda item was postponed by the Standing Committee.

**Agenda item 8**: SC59 doc.8.1, action xi, item c)

The record of the discussion of this item is in Part I of the report. The Subgroup made no recommendation on the allocation for communications on the Ramsar Conservation Awards, as this agenda item was postponed by the Standing Committee.

It was noted that consideration will be given to Agenda items 5 and 8 should these items be considered by the Standing Committee in the future.

**Agenda item 6**: SC59 doc.8.1, action ix.

The Secretary General highlighted paragraph 39 of document SC59 Doc.8.1, proposing the allocation of savings in the core budget of CHF 90K for the work of the Working Group on the Review of the Strategic Plan. At the time of drafting the present report, a decision had not yet been made by the Standing Committee. For presentation purposes, the core budget for 2021 at Annex 1 to this report shows the allocation of CHF 90K to the budget line “Strategic Plan SP5 (2022 - 2024)” from the budget line “SC58 budget & uncommitted carry forward savings”. Should it not be needed, the 2021 budget will be adjusted with the CHF 90K returned to the savings budget line.

*Recommendation for decision by the Standing Committee:*

***The Subgroup on Finance recommends that the Standing Committee approve the allocation of CHF 90,000 from savings from the 2020 core budget for the work of the Working Group on the Review of the Strategic Plan,*** ***subject to the decision by the Standing Committee to establish a new Working Group or to renew the mandate of this Working Group.***

**Agenda item 2**: SC59 doc.8.1, action v.

Representatives of the Indo-Burma Ramsar Regional Initiative (IBRRI), the Ramsar Regional Initiative for Central Asia (RRI-CA) and the Ramsar Regional Initiative for the Amazon River Basin summarized their activities over the past months and described the proposed uses to which further funds received would potentially be applied. The representative of the Ramsar Regional Initiative for the Senegal River Basin was not available during the discussions on this agenda item.

The Subgroup asked for clarity regarding allowable uses of core budget funds for RRIs, including whether such funds had been used in the past to support COP delegate attendance (which is not what these funds are intended for) as this would create inequities in allocations of funds for delegates’ travel, and expressed concern that such allocations from the Convention’s core budget are not audited, suggesting that any recommendation should refer to paragraph 8.d. of Resolution XIII.9 (“RRIs must be financially accountable”) to support the required financial accountability of RRIs. The group noted that auditing of, or requiring more detailed and certified financial reporting from, those RRIs receiving core funds is appropriate, as with any standard financial reporting that is incorporated as a formal expense in the core budget financial statement. The Chair invited ideas on alternative risk management and adequate governance and reporting measures which might be applied. The Secretary General informed the Subgroup of steps taken to ensure transparency in the reports to Standing Committee summarizing the information contained in the annual reports of RRIs. She clarified that RRIs report on the basis of a template; the Secretariat had originally proposed a revised template to SC58 to increase accountability, and noted that this item had not yet been addressed by Standing Committee.

It was also noted that the presentation of existing reports in Convention languages other than English makes it hard for the Subgroup to evaluate them. Further requirements could also be included in the new RRI operational guidelines currently under development, as well as in future COP finance-related resolutions.

*Recommendation for decision by the Standing Committee:*

***The Subgroup on Finance recommends that the Standing Committee approve the allocation of CHF 25,000 to each of the four eligible RRIs for their activities in 2021 from the core budget line D “Support to Regional Initiatives”, provided that receiving RRIs conform to sub-paragraph 8.d. of Resolution XIII.9.***

***The Subgroup of Finance recommends that the Standing Committee decide that any request for core funds by RRIs should include a rationale about how they support Contracting Parties in implementing the Convention and its Resolutions and guidance, and that requests must be provided in English or with an English translation (with informal “google translate” translations, screened by the country’s national focal point, acceptable), to enable the Subgroup of Finance to make informed decisions in a timely manner.***

The Subgroup also reiterated that RRIs are encouraged to take the necessary steps to achieve financial sustainability to enable their long-term viability, in accordance with Resolution XIII.9 paragraph 25.

Regarding the additional allocation of CHF 10,000 remaining from the 2020 activities requested by the RRIs for the Amazon and Senegal River Basins, the Chair proposed to seek more information by email from the RRIs, with members pointing out the high residuals for the Amazon RRI, in particular. The Amazon RRI provided additional information by email and during the meeting.

*Recommendation for decision by the Standing Committee:*

***The Subgroup on Finance recommends that the Standing Committee approve, pending confirmation that the funds would be spent in alignment with paragraph 8 of Resolution XIII.9, the remaining budgeted allocation of CHF 10,000 from the original proposal in 2020 of CHF 25,000 to two of the four eligible Ramsar Regional Initiatives (RRIs) in the context of Decision SC58-28, for their activities planned in 2020 but delayed to 2021 and for disbursement in 2021, from the 2020 core budget savings, taking into account the current exceptional circumstances of the global pandemic.. The two RRIs are the Ramsar Regional Initiative for the Senegal River Basin (SenegalWet)*** ***and the Ramsar Regional Initiative for the Amazon River Basin, and the allocations are made provided that receiving RRIs conform to sub-paragraph 8.d. of Resolution XIII.9 and other relevant rules and regulations related to reporting on use of core funds.***

**Annex 1 to the Report of the Subgroup on Finance**

**Core Budget 2021**

| **2021 Ramsar Budget  SC59 approved** | **Approved budget (COP13-approved with SC59 authorized adjustments)** | **Authorized use of surplus COP13 XIII.2 (for 2020)** | **Pre-committed 2020 to be spent in 2021** | **SC59 Authorized use of 2020 budget savings** | **Uncommitted savings 2020 carried forward to 2021** | **Total 2021 budget (with uncommitted carry forward)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **CHF ‘000s** | **(A)** | **(B)** | **(C)** | **(D)** | **(E)** | **(F=A+B+C+D+E)** |
| **INCOME** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Parties’ Contributions | 3,779 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3,779 |
| Voluntary contributions | 1,065 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,065 |
| Income Tax | 225 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 225 |
| Other Income (including Interest Income) | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| **TOTAL INCOME** | **5,081** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **5,081** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **EXPENDITURES** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A. Secretariat Senior Management and Governance | **1,051** | **5** | **0** | **0** | **175** | **1,231** |
| Salaries, social costs and other benefits | 1,011 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 151 | 1,162 |
| Travel | 40 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 24 | 69 |
| B. Resource Mobilization and Outreach | **532** | **45** | **164** | **111** | **50** | **902** |
| Salaries, social costs and other benefits | 396 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 45 | 441 |
| CEPA Program | 30 | 0 | 53 | 0 | 0 | 83 |
| Comms, Translations, Publications and Reporting Implementation | 60 | 40 | 79 | 0 | 0 | 179 |
| WWD | 0 | 0 | 20 | 25 | 0 | 45 |
| 50th Anniversary 2021 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Web/IT support and Development | 36 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 40 |
| Web re-development | 0 | 0 | 0 | 86 | 0 | 86 |
| Travel | 10 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 20 |
| C. Regional Advice and Support | **1,316** | **10** | **96** | **0** | **225** | **1,647** |
| Salaries, social costs and other benefits | 1,251 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 200 | 1,451 |
| Travel | 65 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 100 |
| Ramsar Advisory Missions | 0 | 0 | 96 | 0 | 0 | 96 |
| D. Support to Regional Initiatives | **100** | **0** | **97** | **20** | **0** | **217** |
| RI WG Res. XIII.9,p9 para 10 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| Proposal Writing for RRIs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Activity 1: Senegal Basin | 25 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 35 |
| Activity 2: Amazon Basin | 25 | 0 | 76 | 10 | 0 | 111 |
| Activity 3: Central Asia | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25 |
| Activity 4: Indo-Burma | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25 |
| E. Scientific and Technical Services | **774** | **5** | **114** | **90** | **328** | **1,311** |
| Salaries, social costs and other benefits | 621 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 226 | 854 |
| Travel | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 24 |
| Travel STRP Chair | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 12 |
| STRP implementation | 35 | 5 | 35 | 0 | 24 | 99 |
| STRP meetings | 50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 44 | 94 |
| Strategic Plan SP5 (2022 - 2024)\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 90 | 0 | 90 |
| SDG 6.61 (Inventories) | 0 | 0 | 72 | 0 | 0 | 72 |
| Ramsar Sites Information Service (maintenance and development) | 43 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 66 |
| G. Administration/Web | **489** | **11** | **95** | **0** | **16** | **611** |
| Salaries, social costs and other benefits | 334 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 337 |
| Staff hiring and departure costs | 60 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 70 |
| Travel | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Equipment/Office Supplies | 95 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 108 |
| Planning and Capacity building | 0 | 11 | 85 | 0 | 0 | 96 |
| H. Standing Committee Services | **150** | **0** | **17** | **0** | **83** | **250** |
| Standing Committee delegates’ support | 45 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 51 | 96 |
| Standing Committee meetings | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 16 |
| SC translation | 60 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 64 |
| Simultaneous interpretation at SC meetings | 35 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 | 57 |
| Effectiveness Working Group | 0 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| Resolutions review (Res. XIII.4) | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| J. IUCN Administrative Service Charges (max.) | **560** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **560** |
| Administration, Human Resources, Finance & IT services | 560 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 560 |
| K. Miscellaneous - Reserve Fund | **109** | **0** | **129** | **72** | **420** | **730** |
| Staff Provisions | 50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 73 | 123 |
| Provision for outstanding contributions | 0 | 0 | 68 | 72 | 0 | 140 |
| SC58 budget & uncommitted carry forward savings | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 416 | 416 |
| Exchange rate gains / losses | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (94) | (94) |
| Legal Services | 59 | 0 | 61 | 0 | 26 | 145 |
| **TOTAL EXPENDITURES** | **5,081** | **76** | **712** | **293** | **1,297** | **7,459** |
| *\*If the Standing Committee decides it is not needed, the allocation will be returned to the "SC58 budget & uncommitted carry forward savings" budget line* | | | | | | |

**Annex 2 to the Report of the Subgroup on Finance**

**Ramsar Proposed Budget 2022**

| **Ramsar Proposed Budget 2022** | **Budget 2022 for approval by extraordinary COP** | **SC59 authorised use of 2020 budget savings** | **Total Budget 2022** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CHF 000'S** |  |  |  |
| **INCOME** |  |  |  |
| Parties’ Contributions | 3,779 |  | 3,779 |
| Voluntary contributions | 1,065 |  | 1,065 |
| Income Tax | 225 |  | 225 |
| Income Interest | 12 |  | 12 |
| **TOTAL INCOME** | **5,081** |  | **5,081** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **EXPENDITURES** |  |  |  |
| **A. Secretariat Senior Management & Governance** | **1,030** | **5** | **1,035** |
| Salaries, social costs and other benefits | 990 |  | 990 |
| Travel | 40 | 5 | 45 |
| **B. Resource Mobilization and Outreach** | **594** | **45** | **639** |
| Salaries, social costs and other benefits | 438 |  | 438 |
| CEPA Program | 30 |  | 30 |
| Comms, Translations, Publications and Reporting Implementation | 60 | 40 | 100 |
| Web/IT support and Development | 56 |  | 56 |
| Travel | 10 | 5 | 15 |
| **C. Regional Advice and Support** | **1,237** | **10** | **1,247** |
| Salaries, social costs and other benefits | 1,170 |  | 1,170 |
| Travel | 67 | 10 | 77 |
| **D. Support to Regional Initiatives** | **100** | **0** | **100** |
| Regional networks and centers | 100 |  | 100 |
| **E. Science and Policy** | **839** | **5** | **844** |
| Salaries, social costs and other benefits | 651 |  | 651 |
| STRP implementation | 35 | 5 | 40 |
| Travel STRP Chair | 5 |  | 5 |
| STRP meetings | 50 |  | 50 |
| Ramsar Sites Information Service (maintenance and development) | 80 |  | 80 |
| Travel | 18 |  | 18 |
| **G. Administration** | **481** | **11** | **492** |
| Salaries, social costs and other benefits | 337 |  | 337 |
| Staff hiring and departure costs | 49 |  | 49 |
| Secretariat Staff Travel | 0 |  | 0 |
| Equipment/Office Supplies | 95 |  | 95 |
| Planning and Capacity building | 0 | 11 | 11 |
| **H. Standing Committee Services** | **150** | **0** | **150** |
| Standing Committee delegates’ support | 45 |  | 45 |
| Standing Committee meetings | 10 |  | 10 |
| SC translation | 60 |  | 60 |
| Simultaneous interpretation at SC meetings | 35 |  | 35 |
| **I. IUCN Administrative Service Charges (maximum)** | **541** | **0** | **541** |
| Administration, Human Resources, Finance & IT services | 541 |  | 541 |
| **J. Miscellaneous - Reserve Fund** | **109** | **120** | **229** |
| Staff Provisions | 20 |  | 20 |
| Provision for outstanding contributions | 30 | 120 | 150 |
| Legal Services | 59 |  | 59 |
| **TOTAL EXPENDITURES** | **5,081** | **196** | **5,277** |