

## Report of the 22nd Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel

### Agenda item 1: Opening statements

1. Opening statements were made by:
  - Mr David Stroud, Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)
  - Ms Martha Rojas Urrego, Secretary General of the Convention

### Agenda item 2: Approval of provisional agenda and working programme

2. The **STRP Chair** introduced documents [STRP22 Doc.2.1](#), *Provisional agenda*, and STRP22 [Doc.2.2 Rev.1](#), *Revised Working Programme*, which were adopted without modifications.

### Agenda item 3: Brief introduction of participants

3. As this was the first meeting of the triennium, each participant provided a brief introduction.

### Agenda item 4: Briefing on the Ramsar Convention and the STRP

4. The **Secretary General** provided an overview of the Convention and its implementation, including its mission, structure, as well as relevant internal and external processes as context for the work of the STRP. She highlighted international processes of relevance to the STRP, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and inclusion of wetlands in Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement.
5. The **STRP Chair** provided an overview of STRP processes and procedures, including its current composition, *modus operandi*, work cycle and timelines under [Resolution XII.5: New framework for delivery of scientific and technical advice and guidance on the Convention](#), as well as the five thematic work areas for the triennium under [Resolution XIII.8: Future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2019-2021](#). He welcomed feedback on lessons learnt from the 2016-2018 triennium. There was a discussion about the mandate and scope for the tasks under the draft work plan, and the importance of prioritizing from the list of requests in [Resolutions from COP13](#). The **STRP Chair** highlighted the importance of identifying during the meeting the types of audiences and outputs from COP13 requests and noted that the Panel would need to sign a conflict of interest declaration, which was being reviewed by the legal department of IUCN.
6. The **Director of Science and Policy**, Mr Francisco Rilla, explained the role of the Secretariat in supporting the work of the STRP, including ensuring that STRP outputs are tailored to policy makers and practitioners and that they are readable and clear. He also highlighted the main policy global processes of relevance to the Convention: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN Environment, UN Water, UNFCCC, CMS and IPBES. He also highlighted the UN General Assembly's Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030).

7. The **Director of Resources Mobilization and Outreach**, Mr. Jay Aldous, conveyed the key roles of the Secretariat in disseminating the products of the STRP. He highlighted three main responsibilities of the communications team regarding STRP outputs:
- Ensuring outputs are developed for a target audience;
  - Ensuring they are clear and readable; and
  - Publishing and disseminating outputs.

Agenda item 5: Thematic Work Areas (TWAs) and mandate from COP13 Resolutions

8. The **STRP Chair** referred to documents [STRP22 Doc.5.1 Scientific and Technical Review Panel \(STRP\) Literature Survey: 2019 update](#) and [STRP22 Doc.5.2 Task templates for the STRP work plan 2019-2018](#).
9. He noted that a review of requests in COP13 Resolutions with the Thematic Work Areas had been undertaken. He noted that consistent with the mandate of Resolution XIII.8, the Panel would need to consider the areas of the Strategic Plan, which Parties are struggling to implement, as well as unfinished tasks from the 2016-2018 triennium.

Agenda item 6: Process and expected outcomes for the week and establishment of TWA groups

10. The **STRP Chair** explained the methodology for the working groups during the week, stressing the importance of identifying synergies with International Organization Partners (IOPs) and Observer Organizations. He also asked participants to be realistic on what could be delivered during the triennium, to prioritize tasks, and to note whether some of the tasks would require more than one triennium to be accomplished

Agenda item 7: Working groups

11. The discussions of working group sessions are reflected in the [draft STRP work plan 2019-2021](#).

Agenda item 8: Global Wetland Outlook

12. Parallel working group sessions were devoted to discussing any potential updates and/or editions of the Global Wetland Outlook (GWO). These are reflected in the [Report of the Chair of the STRP](#) to the 57th Meeting of the Standing Committee (SC57).
13. The Panel agreed to seek guidance from the Standing Committee about future editions or updates of the GWO, and to make recommendations for possible options in the Report of the Chair of the STRP to SC57.

Agenda item 9: Enhancing the utility and use of STRP outputs

14. The **Director of Resources Mobilization and Outreach** provided an overview of the Secretariat's outreach strategy, as well as the role of the Secretariat in supporting the development and dissemination of STRP outputs. He also shared some communication tips for the Panel while developing its work plan, encouraging it to think about innovative outputs.

15. The **STRP Chair** proposed coming up with new guidelines (and a more streamlined structure). There was a discussion about rethinking STRP outputs.

Agenda item 10: Finalization of draft work plan

16. The **STRP Chair** explained that in line with [Resolution XII.5](#), the draft work plan needed to be sent out for consultation to National Focal Points, Administrative Authorities and STRP National Focal Points for two weeks. The STRP would then address comments and produce a revised draft for SC57.
17. The **STRP Chair** noted that the Ramsar Regional Center for East Asia (RCC-EA) had requested the **STRP Chair** to review a [Practitioners' Guide to the Rapid Assessment of Wetland Ecosystem Services](#). Under the ad-hoc advisory functions of the Panel, the Chair asked volunteers to review the document.

Agenda item 10.1: Consolidation of working group inputs, agreement of priorities and identification of costs

18. The outputs of each working group throughout the week were reported to the plenary for feedback before being consolidated in the draft work plan. These are reflected in the [STRP draft work plan 2019-2021](#).
19. Given the limited time and resources to undertake all of the requests from COP13 Resolutions to the STRP, the **STRP Chair** noted the need to prioritize tasks. In terms of prioritizing, the **STRP Chair** asked groups to think about alignment with Strategic Plan objectives, COP priorities, potential for outreach, addressing pressing conservation needs and involving novel work not significantly overlapping with existing work.
20. Regarding the request to the STRP in [Resolution XII.15](#) to consider developing with interested Contracting Parties terms of reference for the Ramsar Culture Network (RCN), the **STRP Chair** explained that the Panel had reviewed a draft by developed by RCN coordinator, Dave Pritchard, and provided inputs. He asked the Secretariat for feedback on circulating the draft to Contracting Parties. The **Secretary General** noted that the draft needed to come from the STRP itself. The **STRP Chair** explained that the Panel would be taking ownership of the draft.
21. Similarly, regarding a request in the same resolution to the STRP to consider revising the [Guidance: Rapid Cultural Inventories for Wetlands](#), the **Secretary General** clarified that the guidance has not been adopted by Parties and that there are divergent views on the approaches undertaken and on the role of the RCN. The **STRP Chair** noted that no work should be undertaken until after the draft work plan is adopted at SC57.
22. The Work plan was discussed in plenary and the group came to a consensus in terms of task priorities. Tasks were prioritized as highest, medium and lowest priorities. The Panel agreed on the following highest priority tasks:
- i. Global Wetland Outlook 2 – if agreed at SC57;
  - ii. Task 1.2: Compiling and reviewing of positive and negative impacts of agricultural practices on wetlands and providing data on extent of intact, as well as damaged and destroyed wetlands from agricultural land conversion since the 1970s;
  - iii. Task 2.1: Complete draft RTR on Peatland restoration and rewetting methodologies in northern bogs;

- iv. Task 2.2: Elaborating on practical experiences of restoration methods for peatlands not covered by Ramsar guidance;
- v. Task 3.2: Scoping of TORs for guidance on the conservation, wise use and management of sustainable “working coastal habitats” in coordination with the scientific subsidiary bodies of other MEAs under the proposed coastal forum; and
- vi. Task 4.1: Develop guidance on integrating gender issues in the implementation of the Convention; and
- vii. Task 5.1: Desktop study of coastal blue carbon ecosystems in Ramsar Sites (consistent with relevant IPCC guidelines).

Agenda item 10.2: Adoption of the draft work plan
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23. The STRP adopted the draft work plan 2019-2021.

Agenda item 11: Date and venue of the next meeting (STRP23):
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24. The date of the next STRP meeting (STRP23) will be determined at SC57, but it would probably be held in June of 2020, back-to-back with SC58. The **STRP Chair** noted that if the meetings are held back-to-back or with joint sessions, it would be a useful opportunity to engage policy makers in the work of the STRP. He further noted that for the next meeting work should be well underway, and it would opportunity to progress outputs and bring additional expertise to focus on drafting. The **Secretary General** clarified that the Secretariat is looking into logistic options and noted that this would be further discussed and decided at SC57.

Agenda item 12: Any other business
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25. The **Observer Representative for WWT** made a statement on behalf of the IOPs about an open letter regarding the opportunities that may arise from the decade on restoration. The **Secretary General** expressed her gratitude and admiration for IOPs and for all of their support of the Convention.
26. **STRP Member Ritesh Kumar** noted the number of Ramsar Sites missing data from the stark report of the Secretary General at COP13, and mentioned that several parties had expressed value in connecting the scientific advice with management needs. He urged the Panel to consider an outreach role in their individual capacities. The **STRP Chair** explained that more informal advice at the outset could be more helpful, noting the costs and formalities of RAMs and suggested looking into different mechanism to provide quick advice to Parties. He suggested starting a dialogue within the Panel to get ideas on what this may look like. The **Secretary General** highlighted the importance of STRP National Focal Points as an important mechanism to address this issue.
27. The **STRP Chair** expressed the importance of enhancing the participation of STRP National Focal Points in the work of the STRP.
28. **STRP member Hugh Robertson** mentioned that the INTECOL meeting 2020 (to be held in New Zealand) will be having a session on Ramsar and the work of the STRP, and that this could be an opportunity to raise the profile of the Convention and to engage STRP National Focal Points. The **Secretary General** suggested using the STRP workspace to further this discussion and for members to use their networks to bring in partnerships into the work of the STRP.

Agenda item 13: Closing remarks
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29. The **STRP Chair** thanked participants for their enthusiasm and work throughout the week, noting that the Panel would have a challenging work plan to deliver. He thanked the Secretary General for the hospitality and for the work of the Secretariat.
30. The **Secretary General** thanked the Chair and Vice-Chair for a very productive meeting and participants for their hard work, noting that it is in these meeting where the spirit of the Convention comes through. She looked forward to a very promising triennium and thanked the Secretariat for their support. She mentioned that the Secretariat was prioritizing supporting the work of the STRP. She thanked IUCN for its assistance.