



9th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

“Wetlands and water: supporting life, sustaining livelihoods”

Kampala, Uganda, 8-15 November 2005

Resolution IX.11

Revised *modus operandi* of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)

1. RECALLING the establishment by Resolution 5.5 of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), to be made up of members with appropriate scientific and technical knowledge, appointed by the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP), but participating as individuals and not as representatives of their countries of origin;
2. ALSO RECALLING Resolution VI.7 and Resolution VII.2 on this matter, which made successive modifications in the way in which the STRP and its work were organized;
3. FURTHER RECALLING Resolution VIII.28 which established the STRP's *modus operandi* implemented during the 2003-2005 triennium;
4. THANKING members of the STRP and its observer organizations and invited experts for their contributions since COP8, and for their expert advice on numerous scientific and technical issues important for implementation of the Convention, including the new and revised guidelines and reports provided to this meeting of the Conference as the Annexes to Resolution IX.1 and others being prepared as *Ramsar Technical Reports*;
5. ALSO THANKING the Government of Sweden, WWF International, IUCN, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (with funds from the United Nations University) and the WorldFish Centre for their financial contributions in support of the substantive work of the STRP during 2003-2005, and the Water Research Commission (South Africa), International Water Management Institute (IWMI), BirdLife International, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC – UK), the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, and the Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist (eriss - Australia) for their in-kind support to the work of the Panel, as well as Wetlands International staff for their implementation of the STRP Support Service during the 2003-2005 triennium;
6. AWARE that the STRP has reviewed its *modus operandi*, has expressed grave concern about aspects of its operations and its capacity and resourcing to deliver all of its required tasks, and has made a number of proposals for amending its *modus operandi* designed to enhance its capacity and efficiency; and ALSO AWARE that the Standing Committee at its 31st meeting recognized these concerns in relation to the structure and process of the STRP as constraining the Panel in delivering its work in an efficient and timely manner;

7. RE-EMPHASIZING the need to establish a close link between the STRP and the network of scientists and experts in each Contracting Party, so that the Convention may benefit from the array of existing knowledge and experience;
8. AWARE of the core budget allocation (Resolution IX.12) for the support of the STRP for the 2006-2008 triennium, with an immediate priority task being the development and engagement of the network of STRP National Focal Points (NFPs) in all stages of the work of the STRP;
9. RECOGNIZING the importance for the STRP to work in partnership with the scientific and technical bodies of those conventions and programmes with which Memoranda of Cooperation and/or joint work plans are in place, namely the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Migratory Species, the Convention to Combat Desertification, the World Heritage Convention, the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme, and other conventions and agreements;
10. ALSO RECOGNIZING the need for continuing cooperation between the STRP and a number of expert networks, specialist groups and societies which exist, some in association with the official International Organization Partners of the Convention; and
11. FURTHER RECOGNIZING that the immediate and high priorities for the work of the STRP for 2006-2008 are identified in Annex 1 to Resolution IX.2;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

12. REAFFIRMS the critical importance to the Convention of the work and advice of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) in providing reliable guidance to the Conference of the Contracting Parties for the Parties' implementation of the Convention;
13. APPROVES the revised *modus operandi* for the STRP as annexed to this Resolution;
14. ESTABLISHES an STRP Oversight Committee, reporting to the Standing Committee and comprising the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the STRP, and the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General *ex officio*, to deliver the responsibilities set out in the Annex to this Resolution;
15. CONFIRMS that the Standing Committee will continue to have overall responsibility for the work of the STRP, and that the Chair of the STRP will report to each Standing Committee meeting on the Panel's progress with its programme of work and priorities as established by the COP and Standing Committee (Resolution IX.2) for the triennium and advise on any adjustments to its programme it considers necessary and on the emerging issues;
16. ALSO CONFIRMS that the STRP support functions, with an immediate priority on the development and engagement of the network of STRP National Focal Points (NFPs), will be provided during the 2006-2008 triennium from the Ramsar Secretariat;
17. RECOGNIZES the urgent need to ensure both that the Panel is provided with the necessary resources to undertake its work effectively and that the Ramsar Secretariat has

sufficient capacity to support this work, and URGES Contracting Parties and others to contribute to securing continuity of such funding;

18. ALSO RECOGNIZES that a high priority for 2006-2008 is to develop the involvement and capacity of the STRP National Focal Point network to contribute to the work of the Panel, and URGES those Contracting Parties that have not yet done so to appoint a National Focal Point for the STRP, as outlined in Resolution VII.2, so that all Parties may contribute fully to, and be more effectively assisted by, the work of the Panel;
19. REVISES as follows the list of bodies and organizations invited to participate as observers in the meetings of the STRP during the 2006-2008 triennium, and INVITES these bodies and organizations to consider establishing close working cooperative arrangements with the STRP on matters of common interest:
 - the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
 - the Scientific Council of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)
 - the Committee on Science and Technology of the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
 - the Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technical Advice of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
 - the Secretariats of the CBD, CMS, CITES, UNCCD, UNFCCC, the World Heritage Convention (WHC) and UNESCO – Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB)
 - the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
 - the UNEP – World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)
 - The World Health Organization (WHO)
 - the Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS)
 - the International Mire Conservation Group (IMCG)
 - the International Peat Society (IPS)
 - the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA)
 - The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
 - Ducks Unlimited (DU)
 - the Institute for Inland Water Management and Wastewater Treatment (RIZA) (The Netherlands)
 - the Global Water Partnership (GWP)
 - the World Water Council (WWC)
20. FURTHER EMPHASIZES the value of participation by STRP members in meetings of the COP and Standing Committee, and REQUESTS Contracting Parties, the Standing Committee, and the Ramsar Secretariat to seek to secure any additional funding which might be necessary for this purpose; and
21. AFFIRMS that the *modus operandi* annexed to this Resolution replaces that adopted by COP8 Resolution VIII.28.

Annex

Revised *modus operandi* of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)

(Note. See Figure 1 for a graphical summary of the STRP schedule and process for the 2006-2008 triennium)

I. Key objective of the revised STRP *modus operandi*

1. The key objective of this *modus operandi* is to establish ways and means of ensuring that the STRP mechanism delivers the best available scientific and technical advice to the Convention, in the most efficient and cost-effective manner, through the work of widely recognized wetland conservation and wise use experts and networks.

II. Establishment and responsibilities of the STRP Oversight Committee

2. The STRP Oversight Committee will report to the Standing Committee and will be composed of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the STRP, and the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General *ex officio*. The Oversight Committee will be chaired by the Chair of Standing Committee.
3. The responsibilities of the STRP Oversight Committee are to:
 - i) appoint the members, Chair and Vice-Chair of the STRP;
 - ii) provide intersessional advice, guidance and support to the operations and work of the Panel;
 - iii) keep under review, and advise the Standing Committee on, the operations of the Panel under this revised *modus operandi*; and
 - iv) provide advice to the Secretariat on expenditures under the STRP budget line.
4. The Standing Committee continues to have overall responsibility for the work of the STRP, and the Chair of the STRP will report to each Standing Committee meeting on progress with the STRP programme of work and priorities as established by the COP and Standing Committee (Resolution IX.2 Annex 1 for the 2006-2008 triennium).

III. Criteria and characteristics of candidate STRP members

5. Candidates for appointment as members of the STRP must have the following:
 - i) demonstrated capacity for networking with wetland conservation and wise use experts at local, national and international scales¹; and/or

¹ Note that access to such networks is also one of the key purposes of the standing membership on the STRP of the Convention's International Organization Partners (and is a recognized key role for all such IOPs) and the invitation of relevant scientific and technical organizations as observers to the Panel.

- ii) widely recognized experience and expertise in one or more aspects of wetland conservation and wise use, particularly those relevant to the priority work areas and tasks identified by the COP for the forthcoming work of the Panel;
- iii) experience of working with wetland experts at local, regional and national levels, including *inter alia* STRP National Focal Points;
- iv) full access to electronic mail and Web-based communication systems, through which the intersessional work of the Panel will take place;
- v) fluency in understanding, and written and oral communication in, English (which will remain the working language of the Panel); and
- vi) commitment to undertake the work required of the Panel and its Working Groups with the support, where relevant, of the member's organization or institution.

IV. Composition of the Panel

6. One Panel member shall be appointed from each Ramsar region. These members shall have experience with, and access to, networks of wetlands experts (at local, regional and/or international scales). Six further Panel members shall be appointed as wetlands experts with recognized experience and expertise in aspects of wetland conservation and wise use relevant to the thematic work areas of the Panel.
7. For the latter six members (paragraph 6 above), regional balance will be sought, with appointed members based in different Ramsar countries or regions and/or from northern and southern parts of the world. Gender balance will also be sought.
8. One additional member will be appointed with expertise in Communications, Education & Public Awareness (CEPA), with a role to provide input to all stages of the Panel's work on each task from scoping the needs of the identified users to the finalization of outputs, drawing *inter alia* on the Convention's CEPA networks and those of the Convention's International Organisation Partners (IOPs).
9. The anticipated main thematic work areas for which appointments will be made, following approval of Resolution IX.2 are:
 - i) wetland inventory and assessment, including indicators;
 - ii) wise use and ecological character;
 - iii) water resource management;
 - iv) Ramsar site designation and management;
 - v) wetlands and agriculture; and
 - vi) wetlands and human health.
10. In recognition of their ongoing scientific and technical support role for the Convention, each of the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs) will continue to be a member of the Panel. However, so as to ensure continuity of representation throughout STRP processes and meetings during a triennium, each IOP will be requested to nominate its representative on the Panel, and this nomination will be considered and confirmed by

the STRP Oversight Committee as part of their Panel appointment role. Such IOP nominees should be wetland experts and have a role within their IOPs for maintaining and accessing the wetland conservation and wise use expertise of their organization's regional and global networks.

11. The appointed members will lead (or co-lead) the STRP's Working Groups (see below) responsible for delivering the COP-approved tasks on these themes, and will oversee the work of any task forces established within a Working Group to deliver a specific priority task, and should be prepared to undertake such a role.
12. The thematic work areas for which Panel members will be appointed will be reviewed for each triennium and will be approved by the COP. The thematic work areas will depend on the priority themes and tasks identified by the Standing Committee and COP for the STRP in the next triennium, as in Annex 1 to Resolution IX.2 for the 2006-2008 triennium.
13. The schedule of Panel meetings will be confirmed by the STRP Oversight Committee and may be up to two plenary meetings during a triennium, one meeting not later than six months after the previous COP, and the other not later than six months before the next COP.

V. Procedure for identification and appointment of candidates

14. Appointments for each triennium will be made by the STRP Oversight Committee.
15. Nominations of candidates for appointment will be invited from:
 - i) the Convention's national Administrative Authorities;
 - ii) STRP National Focal Points (in consultation with their Administrative Authority);
 - iii) the current Chair and Vice-Chair of the STRP; and
 - iv) current STRP members and observers.
16. Nominations can include existing appointed STRP members, observers, and invited experts if they have a proven track record of expert contribution to the work of the Panel. Appointment of such experts to the Panel will ensure continuity in the Panel's work on ongoing thematic work areas.
17. Nominations are not restricted to people from the same country of origin as the nominator, since it is networking capacity and/or relevant expertise which is being sought, regardless of the nationality or country of current domicile of the expert.
18. The nominator of each candidate will provide the Oversight Committee with a short summary of the expertise and experience of the candidate and the relevance of this to the work of the Panel for the triennium, in the form of a letter of recommendation.
19. Candidates being nominated will provide a declaration that they are willing to be considered for appointment to the Panel, that they have the full support of their organizations or institutions to deliver the work expected of Panel members, including time and availability for meetings, and that they have the necessary English language skills to engage fully in the work of the Panel; they will note whether they will need financial

support to participate in meetings and will provide a brief summary of how they see their skills and expertise contributing to the Panel's work, along with a *curriculum vitae*.

20. On the basis of the nominations received, the Secretariat will prepare an assessment and recommendations for appointments for consideration by the STRP Oversight Committee, which will reach its decisions on appointments through electronic communication and teleconferences as soon as possible after the start of the triennium, in order to permit the Panel to initiate its new programme of work as early as possible.
21. In the event that a vacancy for a member of the Panel arises during the triennium, the STRP Oversight Committee will review other nominees and appoint a replacement member as soon as practicable.

VI. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair of the Panel

22. The STRP Oversight Committee will review the appointments of Panel members and identify from these appointments candidates to invite to act as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Panel during the triennium. The outgoing STRP Chair and Vice-Chair shall excuse themselves from this decision.

VII. STRP observer organizations

23. The work of the Panel will continue to benefit from the involvement and input of other relevant scientific and technical organizations and their networks, invited by the COP as observers to the Panel. Each organization invited by the COP as an observer to the STRP will be requested to nominate its representative on the Panel, in order to ensure continuity of participation. The representative should have the capacity to access his or her organization's national, regional and international network of wetland experts. In order to continue contributing to the efforts to streamline and harmonise the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, invited observers to the STRP will continue to include the chairs of the equivalent scientific and technical subsidiary bodies and relevant staff of the secretariats of other environmental conventions and agreements.

VIII. Establishment and operation of Working Groups and task forces

24. The appointed STRP members will, where appropriate and with the assistance of the Secretariat's STRP support, establish Working Groups at the start of the triennium and will act as their leads or co-leads to develop and progress the tasks requested by the COP. This is a continuation of the STRP mechanism during the 2003-2005 triennium.
25. Membership of any Working Group will be established by its lead or co-leads, with the advice of the STRP Chair and Vice-Chair and the Secretariat. Membership may include *inter alia* other appointed STRP members, representatives of STRP observer organizations, STRP National Focal Points with relevant expertise, and other invited experts with relevant expertise.
26. As part of the Panel's work in its strategic review function on emerging issues and related matters, the person(s) appointed to lead this work will coordinate the Panel's advice to the next COP concerning immediate, high, and emerging priorities for its work in the next triennium, as provided for 2006-2008 in Annex 1 of Resolution IX.2.

27. Concerning the CEPA-related work of the Panel, the role established during the 2003-2005 triennium will continue, whereby in implementation of Resolution VIII.31 CEPA input and advice to the work of the Panel is made by the STRP/Wetlands International CEPA Specialist Group from its national, regional and international network.
28. Each Working Group will develop the scope and contents of any advice, guideline, review or other output requested by COP within its thematic work area as an immediate or high priority for the triennium; will identify the mechanism for its delivery (including through an expert consultancy contract where necessary and resources permitting); and will oversee and review progress in the drafting and finalization of such materials.
29. As soon as possible after their appointment, the Working Group lead or co-leads will establish the initial membership of his or her Working Group and will undertake initial scoping work for undertaking each of the immediate and high priority tasks, for circulation in advance of, and discussion during, the first plenary meeting of the Panel in the triennium.
30. When appropriate, a Working Group can establish a small task force for the delivery of a particular immediate or high priority task in the STRP's programme for the triennium.
31. Each Working Group will keep under review opportunities for initiating other tasks requested of the Panel within its thematic work area (as listed for 2006-2011 in Annex 2 of Resolution IX.2), and will develop mechanisms for the delivery of any such tasks as and when capacity permits. If opportunity arises to initiate new tasks during the triennium, the Chair of the Panel will seek the advice of the STRP Oversight Committee as to establishing appropriate ways and means of developing this work.
32. Each Working Group will work largely electronically (through e-mail, the Web-based STRP support mechanism, and teleconferences) but will, resources permitting, meet in a workshop at least once during the triennium, in order to progress its work efficiently.

IX. Ensuring continuing national and regional applicability in the work of the STRP

33. One key to ensuring full national and regional input to the STRP's work is the activation in the 2006-2008 triennium of the network of STRP National Focal Points (NFPs) appointed by each Contracting Party. The anticipated development of this important network was hindered during the 2003-2005 triennium by a reduction in funds available for the delivery of this aspect of the STRP's work.
34. In particular, for the 2006-2008 triennium, STRP NFPs will:
 - i) be invited to make nominations of candidates for appointment as members of the Panel for the triennium;
 - ii) be requested to identify their thematic areas of wetland conservation and wise use interest and expertise (through a short questionnaire) and, on the basis of that, be considered for membership of relevant STRP Working Groups;

- iii) be invited to join any relevant STRP Working Groups from the onset of the work for the triennium, so as to contribute to the development of the scope of delivery of each task;
 - iv) have full access to the Web-based STRP support mechanism so that they may have input to all stages of the Panel's work, including review of draft materials as they are prepared by the Working Groups and task forces; and
 - v) be invited to contribute to the peer review of reports and other documents being considered for publication in the *Ramsar Technical Report* series.
35. These roles of STRP NFPs are added to those listed in the Terms of Reference approved in Resolution VIII.28.
36. The Secretariat will support the development of the STRP National Focal Point network through identification of the capacity needs of STRP National Focal Points, including seeking ways and means of supporting their development of national networks.
37. A second aspect of ensuring regional input to, and relevance of, the STRP is to have as part of its mandate the task of responding to regional scientific and technical priorities. In doing so the STRP will consult with Contracting Parties through their STRP National Focal Points. The Panel will develop, during the 2006-2008 triennium, mechanisms for the delivery of this aspect of its work, which may include *inter alia* responding to regional scientific and technical priorities identified by Ramsar regional meetings and those identified by regional initiatives operating under the framework of the Convention (Resolution IX.9).

X. Continuity of Panel membership

38. In order to ensure continuity of expertise and working practices, a minimum of one-third of the appointed members of the STRP should be reappointed for a second term, as appropriate.
39. The Chair of STRP, following appropriate consultations with current members, will recommend to the STRP Oversight Committee the names of those members who should be considered for reappointment, on the basis of their contributions to the work of the Panel and the relevance of their areas of expertise to the priority tasks assigned to the Panel by COP.
40. Members being proposed for reappointment must have demonstrated a capability of contributing effectively to the work of the Panel and have confirmed their willingness to be reappointed.

Figure 1. STRP schedule and process for the 2006-2008 triennium

