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**DRAFT**

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EXPERT MEETING ON METHODS AND  
GUIDELINES FOR THE RAPID  
ASSESSMENT OF BIOLOGICAL  
DIVERSITY OF INLAND WATER  
ECOSYSTEMS

Montreal, 2-4 December 2002

*Draft report of the Expert Meeting on Methods and Guidelines for the Rapid Assessment of Biological  
Diversity of Inland Water Ecosystems*

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

*2-4 December 2002 - Montreal, Canada*

**INTRODUCTION**

**A. Background**

1. In its decision IV/4 the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity requested the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to develop a work plan on inland water ecosystems which should include *inter alia* the development and dissemination of regional guidelines for rapid assessment of inland water biological diversity for different types of inland water ecosystems (Annex 1, para 8b). In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties requested that particular attention be given to the development of regional guidelines for rapid assessment for small island States and to pay special attention to early cooperation with the small island States in their development.

2. The members of the expert group were selected by the Executive Secretary in consultation with Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention Bureau from nominations provided by national focal points of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Ramsar Convention in accordance with the *modus operandi* of SBSTTA (Decision IV/16, annex I). The experts were selected on the basis of their expertise in the relevant field, and with due regard to geographical representation, to the special conditions of least developed countries and small island developing States, and to gender.

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## ***B. Attendance***

3. The meeting was attended by government-nominated experts from Antigua and Barbuda, Belgium, Canada, Comoros, Cuba, Ghana, Lithuania, Peru, Poland, Saint Lucia, Slovak Republic, South Africa, a representative of the Ramsar Convention Bureau and representatives of the following United Nations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations: the Global Environment Monitoring System (GEMS) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organizations of the United Nations (FAO), IUCN - The World Conservation, Conservation International The Nature Conservancy and UQAM. A resource person from Conservation International supported the Secretariat. A list of participants is contained in Annex 1.

### **ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING**

4. The Meeting was opened by a representative of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity at 9:30 a.m., on Monday 2 December 2002. In his statement, he welcomed the participants and thanked them for making available their time and expertise to contribute to the implementation of the programme of work on inland waters.

5. A representative of the Executive Secretary of the Ramsar Convention also made an opening statement emphasizing the synergies that have developed between the two conventions and the relevance of the meeting to both convention processes.

### **ITEM 2. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS**

#### ***2.1. Election of officers***

6. At the opening session, participants from Cuba and Canada were selected as Co-chairs of the meeting.

#### ***2.2. Adoption of the agenda***

7. The Expert meeting adopted the following agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda proposed in document UNEP/CBD/EM-RAIW/1/1:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
  - 2.1. Election of Chairperson;
  - 2.2. Adoption of the agenda;
  - 2.3. Organization of work.
3. Regional guidelines for the rapid assessment of biodiversity of inland water ecosystems.
  - 3.1 Brief review of methods for assessing biodiversity of inland water ecosystems;

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- 3.2 Identification of rapid assessment methods;
- 3.3 Development of regional guidelines for the application of rapid assessment methods.
4. Other matters.
5. Adoption of the report.
6. Closure of the meeting.

### **2.3. Organization of work**

8. A member of the Secretariat of the CBD gave a brief presentation outlining the function and structure of the Convention bodies and the objectives of the meeting. The meeting agreed on the proposed organization of work, keeping it flexible to allow for working groups as needs arise.

## **ITEM 3. ISSUES FOR IN-DEPTH CONSIDERATION**

### **3.1 Brief review of methods for assessing biodiversity of inland water ecosystems**

9. The following presentations were made and discussed:

- (a) Nick Davidson, Ramsar Bureau: The Ramsar Convention and wetland assessment;
- (b) Andrew Fraser, UNEP-GEMS: The UNEP-GEMS Programme Office for Freshwater Quality Monitoring and Assessment;
- (c) Jean-Christophe Vié, IUCN: The IUCN Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment Programme;
- (d) Matthias Halwart, FAO: Assessment of availability and use of aquatic biodiversity in a rice-based ecosystem in Kampong Thom Province, Cambodia;
- (e) Rudy Vannevel, Belgium: The Water Framework Directive of the European Commission (WFD);
- (f) Ryszard Kornijów, Poland: Assessing Biodiversity.

These presentations summarized existing methods for assessing inland water biological diversity and highlighted central elements for consideration in the development of guidelines for rapid assessment of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems. They can be found on the website of the Convention.

### **3.2 Identification of rapid assessment methods**

10. LeeAnne Alonso from Conservation International introduced the background document UNEP/CBD/EM-RAIW/1/2. The approach of a decision tree, which provides a choice of options considering available resources and the purpose of the assessment was found particularly useful.

11. The structure and scope of the document were discussed and gaps identified.

### **3.3. Development of regional guidelines for the application of rapid assessment methods**

12. To make progress on the development of regional guidelines, two Working Groups were formed. Working group 1, chaired by Jean-Christophe Vié of IUCN, addressed the introductory section of document UNEP/CBD/EM-

RAIW/1/2 including the purpose and scope, definitions and terms, issues to be considered when planning a rapid assessment, and the conceptual framework for rapid assessment. Working group 2, chaired by Wafa Hosn from UQAM, considered the decision tree and associated methodologies.

13. Representatives of small island States welcomed the guidelines and requested the Secretariat to support their rapid application through the facilitation of appropriate training events. Small island States also raised the need to strengthen taxonomic capacities, address issues of invasive alien species and promote sustainable tourism. Annex 2 summarizes the points that were raised with regard to the early cooperation with the small island States in the development of rapid-assessment methodologies.

#### **ITEM 4. OTHER MATTERS**

14. No other matters were raised.

#### **ITEM 5. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

15. The Expert Group concluded that the revised document on “Guidelines for the rapid assessment of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems” gives advice that is useful to wide range of Parties with different circumstances, including with respect to geographic size, inland water types and institutional capacities. Pending some further editorial changes the document should be presented to the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. It was recognized, however, that the guidelines needed to be tested and that it would be important to gather experience made with their application. The Group also recognized that additional reflections may be required with respect to ecosystem assessments. A shortage of case studies from small island developing States was also noted. The present report was adopted at the plenary meeting, on Wednesday 4 December 2002.

#### **ITEM 6. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

16. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the meeting was closed at 5 p.m. on Wednesday 4 December 2002 by the meeting Co-chair, Ms Teresita Borges Hernández.

*Annex I*

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*Annex II***Issues relating to early cooperation with the small island States in the development of rapid assessment methodologies****Addressing the vulnerability of small island developing States**

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity was requested to collaborate with small island developing States due to their vulnerability and the resultant threats to their biodiversity. The following issues were raised in particular:

**1. *Capacity building and training on rapid assessment;***

Small island developing states requested support to enable them to build capacity on the rapid assessment of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems. A workshop could be facilitated by the Secretariat to train relevant stakeholders on the use of the approaches developed during the Expert meeting. Particular interest was expressed in using rapid assessment methods with respect to:

- a. qualitative and quantitative aspects of water quality;
- b. causes of biodiversity loss and water pollution (e.g. deforestation, pesticide flows, and other industries); and
- c. unsustainable land-uses (e.g. tourism, agriculture, industry).

**2. *Sustainable tourism in vulnerable ecosystems***

Capacity should be built among government officials and other stakeholders on the implementation of the guidelines on sustainable tourism in vulnerable ecosystems developed by the Convention. A workshop should be organized to share relevant experiences and discuss the guidelines applicability in islands ecosystems. With a view to contributing to the 10 year review of the Barbados Programme of Action (2004), the Secretariat was requested to consider developing specific guidance to small island developing States on issues related to sustainable tourism in islands ecosystems.

**3. *Invasive alien species***

The Secretariat should support the efforts of small island developing States in assessing threats to biodiversity from invasive alien species and provide guidance on the implementation of mitigation measures.

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