



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS  
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES  
CONVENCIÓN SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES  
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

## Memorandum of Co-operation

between

**The Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**

and

**The Convention on Biological Diversity**

### Preamble

Since its inception in 1971, the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) has provided the single most important intergovernmental forum on wetland conservation issues. According to the Convention's mission statement, the Contracting Parties agree to *"the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international co-operation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world"*.

The Convention is founded on three pillars of:

- promoting wise use of wetlands,
- developing international co-operation, and
- developing a network of Wetland Sites of International Importance.

The conservation and wise management of wetlands through the designation of wetlands for the Ramsar *List of Wetlands of International Importance*, especially the obligation to maintain the ecological character of designated sites, deserves special recognition. This obligation recognizes the importance of wetlands for the maintenance of healthy and productive inland freshwater and coastal systems. In the context of water and wetlands, the Convention on Wetlands thus addresses issues which guide its Contracting Parties on ways to achieve sustainable development.

Signed by 150 government leaders at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, and now ratified by 188 Parties, the Convention on Biological Diversity is dedicated to promoting sustainable development. Conceived as a practical tool for translating the principles of Agenda 21 into reality, the Convention recognizes that biological diversity is about more than plants, animals and micro organisms and their ecosystems – it is about people and our need for food security, medicines, fresh air and water, shelter, and a clean and healthy environment in which to live. The objectives of the Convention, to be pursued in accordance with its relevant provisions, are the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

In the Mission of the Strategic Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Parties commit themselves to a more effective and coherent implementation of the three objectives of the Convention, to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity has initiated work on seven thematic work programmes, addressing marine and coastal biodiversity, agricultural biodiversity, forest biodiversity, island biodiversity, the biodiversity of inland waters, dry and sub-humid lands and mountain biodiversity. Over and above the thematic

programmes there are a number of other items addressing key cross-cutting issues of relevance to all thematic areas.

Decision III/21 of the COP to the Convention on Biological Diversity establishes the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands as its lead implementation partner on wetlands and therefore for all programmes of work, cross-cutting issues and other activities relevant to wetlands.

The Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Biological Diversity recognize the fundamental role played by wetlands in regulating and providing water, in supporting maintenance of cultural and biological diversity, in ensuring high ecosystem productivity, and in providing services and benefits for people and the planet.

Within the general obligations set out by each Convention, the COPs to each Convention identify priorities for action through their Strategic Plans. These Strategic Plans shall be used as the basis for joint activities. This memorandum of Co-operation also recognises the synergies and linkages we will achieve, with other Conventions and processes.

The Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Biological Diversity share similar conservation and management goals and the positive co-operation between the two instruments, and their Secretariats, to date has been expressed through mutual recognition by our respective governing bodies. Turning to the future, it would be ideal to reinforce existing mechanisms, including any specific joint work plans, and establish new and specific mechanisms for enhancing synergies and partnerships to achieve common goals, whilst avoiding duplication of effort through application of the Strategic Plans of both Conventions.

Therefore, the Secretariats of the Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Biological Diversity agree the following:

#### **Article 1. Mechanisms for Programme Co-operation**

A - The Secretariats of the Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Biological Diversity will develop a collaborative programme for sustainable wetland and water resource conservation and management by increasing current consultation and co-operation between them.

B - For general matters, the Secretariat focal points for the Secretariats of the Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Biological Diversity are respectively the Secretary General and the Executive Secretary, or their assigned delegates. The focal points, or their assigned delegates, may meet from time to time to assess the implementation of this Memorandum, exchange documents and review on-going activities.

D- The Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Biological Diversity both participate in the joint liaison group of biodiversity related conventions, along with the Convention on Migratory Species, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora and the World Heritage Convention. Cooperation between the Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Biological Diversity may be carried out bilaterally, or, where appropriate, in the context of activities agreed by the joint liaison group.

#### **Article 2. Joint Activities**

A - Common areas for joint activities shall be developed through a joint work plan, which shall relate clearly to the Strategic Plan of each convention. The joint work plan is attached in the annex to this Memorandum of Co-operation. The joint work plan will be modified or revised from time to time, as necessary and by mutual consent, without the need

for revision of this Memorandum of Co-operation. The joint work plan shall be submitted to the Conferences of the Parties of each convention for endorsement.

B - The Secretariats of the Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Biological Diversity will consult with their respective Conferences of the Parties with a view to encouraging integration and consistency between National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and National Wetland Policies. Further, the Secretariats will inform their focal points at regional and national levels of their co-operative activities.

C - The Secretariats of the Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Biological Diversity will communicate agreement on common areas with their respective networks, and each Convention will endeavour to mobilise the expertise available on wetlands, water resources and other relevant matters within its organisation in support of these activities.

D - The Secretariats of the Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Biological Diversity will provide each other with details of their annual work programmes to ensure harmonisation of activities at global, regional and country levels.

E - The extent to which the collaborative programme and the joint activities are implemented will be subject to the availability of resources.

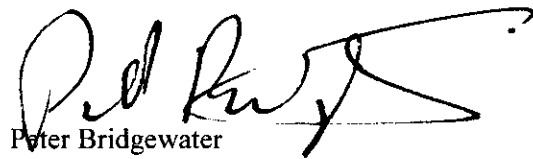
### **Article 3. Obligation, Review and Termination**

A - This Memorandum of Co-operation 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, and neither party shall claim to be acting on behalf of, or as agent for, the other party to this Memorandum of Co-operation.

B - The term for this Memorandum of Co-operation is six years. The agreement may be reviewed at the request of either party (usually annually) and may be terminated by either party subject to six months notice in writing.

This Memorandum of Co-operation supersedes that done at Geneva on the 19<sup>th</sup> January, 1996.

Done at Gland, Switzerland, 10 May 2005.



Peter Bridgewater  
Secretary General  
Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran,  
1971)



Hamdallah Zedan  
Executive Secretary  
Secretariat of the Convention on  
Biological Diversity

