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SYNTHESIS OF THE CONSULTATIONS ON POSSIBLE JOINT ACTIVITIES AMONG THE RIO CONVENTIONS

Note by the Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

1. The fourteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), held from 10–21 May 2010, through recommendations XIV/5 and XIV/11, requested the Executive Secretary to consult Parties in order to explore possibilities of developing a proposal on joint activities between the three Rio conventions, and report on the progress to the Conference of the Parties for its consideration at its tenth meeting.
2. Accordingly, the Executive Secretary, through notifications 2010-119 and 2010-123, invited focal points to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), in collaboration with focal points from the other Rio conventions, to participate in an online survey on possible joint activities between the Rio conventions. Other relevant organizations were also invited to provide views through the biodiversity and climate change list-serves.
3. Based on the responses to the survey, the following document has been prepared to provide information on views concerning the need for enhanced synergies and the prioritization of activities already called for under the Rio convention processes (section 1) and options for the development of a possible joint work programme (section 2).

* UNEP/CBD/COP/10/1.

I. VIEWS ON THE NEED FOR ENHANCED SYNERGIES

Overview of the process

4. Following the request, through notifications 2010-119 and 2010-123, for views to be submitted through an online survey,¹ a total of 81 responses was received² as outlined in table 1 below.

Table 1: Survey Respondents

Category	Number of respondents
Parties	23
Other government agencies (state governments, advisory councils, etc)	10
United Nations	6
Indigenous peoples and local communities	4
Non-governmental organizations	18
Inter-governmental organizations	1
Business	4
University/education	9
Other	6

5. The survey soliciting views is presented in annex I. The results of the survey are presented below in terms of joint activities and a joint work programme, common themes, priority activities, and processes and proposed way forward.

Rationale for joint activities and a joint work programme

6. Overall, the results of the survey soliciting views on possible joint activities and/or a joint work programme between the three Rio conventions indicate strong support for the identification and adoption of joint activities among the Rio conventions as well as the identification and adoption of a joint work programme. In fact, the highest level of importance was assigned to joint activities by 52 per cent of respondents, while a joint work programme was assigned the highest level of importance by 47 per cent of respondents. This is in comparison to less than one percent of respondents assigning joint activities and a joint work programme the lowest level of priority.

7. Respondents also indicated that the further development of these activities and/or joint work programme had to be undertaken in a transparent manner with the full involvement of all three Rio conventions. Respondents also indicated a strong preference for the identification and adoption process to take place over the coming two years, in time for the Rio+20 Earth Summit in 2012.

8. Based on comments received, the proposed objectives for joint activities and/or a joint work programme, include, while respecting the independent mandates of each Convention include:

- (a) Promoting the achievement of the interrelated objectives of the Rio conventions;
 - (b) Maximizing efficiencies with regards to the use of limited resources for implementation;
- and
- (c) Avoiding unnecessary overlap and inconsistencies in international negotiations on common themes.

9. When providing comments on the need for joint activities and a joint work programme, respondents highlighted the interdependence of each Conventions' objectives and the need to ensure that respective mandates are respected and stressed that, to be effective, a joint work programme had to capture efficiencies and cannot increase the burden for either Secretariats or Parties.

¹ The survey is available in annex I.

² The full responses are available at: <http://www.cbd.int/rio/>

10. Respondents also highlighted potential problems of a joint work programme including bureaucratic difficulties with regards to decision-making and differences in the composition of Parties between conventions. With regards to the second point, differences in composition of Parties currently (as of 1 August 2010) are the following:

Andorra: Party to UNCCD; Non-Party to UNFCCC and CBD

Estonia: Party to UNFCCC and CBD; Non-Party to UNCCD

Iraq: Party to UNFCCC and CBD; Non-Party to UNCCD

United States of America: Party to UNCCD and UNFCCC; Non-Party to CBD.

Content: Common themes

11. With regards to themes that cut across the three Rio conventions, respondents highlighted ecosystem-based approaches to mitigation and adaptation and sustainable water management as well as more general issues of environmental governance and financing for implementation. Respondents also indicated that negotiations on a number of relevant themes are ongoing therefore requiring a framework for continuous collaboration.

12. In addition to cross-cutting themes, respondents identified a number of cross-cutting tools and methods for implementation that could be strengthened through joint activities and/or a joint work programme. These include: national planning processes (NBSAPs, NAPAs, NAPs), mainstreaming efforts (within sector strategies and development planning), the adoption of positive incentive measures and information exchange and knowledge management.

Content: Priority activities

13. In addition to the general elements and common themes for joint activities and/or a joint work programme, respondents prioritized those activities which have already been called for under one or more of the Rio convention processes. Of these activities, the highest priorities were assigned to:

(a) Establishing or strengthening national-level operational institutional arrangements for coordination;

(b) Engaging, when relevant, focal points, and through them, other counterparts from other Conventions when preparing for meetings of the Conference of the Parties and Subsidiary Bodies of the Conventions;

(c) Enhancing cooperation among national focal points;

(d) Enhancing cooperation among the scientific Subsidiary Bodies; and

(e) Enhancing cooperation on national-level planning.

14. Additional activities which were identified as being important include joint scientific work and workshops on issues that are relevant to all three Conventions, including reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation), harmonized reporting and disaster management.

15. With regards to priority activities for the Secretariats of the Rio conventions, respondents indicated that the organization of joint thematic workshops and the provision of advice on strengthening links between NBSAPs, NAPAs and NAPs are the highest priority. Ongoing joint work on outreach and awareness-raising is also called for by many respondents.

Processes and proposed ways forward

16. All comments received on the processes and proposed ways forward highlighted the need to ensure transparency and the full participation of all three Rio conventions in the development, adoption and implementation of joint activities and/or a joint work programme. Of the processes proposed in the

SBSTTA document (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/6/Add.2) the strongest support as indicated by the survey respondents is for the establishment of a joint expert group between the three Rio conventions (56 per cent of respondents indicated this is very important) and a joint meeting of the scientific bodies of the three Rio conventions (53 per cent of respondents indicated that this is very important). With regards to coordination among the scientific bodies, a number of respondents emphasized this not only as an important part of the development of joint activities and/or a joint work programme but also of ongoing coordination and collaboration. In this regard, some respondents also raised the issue of coordination between the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

17. There was also strong support (greater than 40 per cent of respondents) for a joint meeting of the Conferences of the Parties and for consideration of joint activities and elements by the Joint Liaison Group (JLG).

18. With regards to the role of the Joint Liaison Group, respondents expressed a variety of opinions. On the one hand, respondents see the Joint Liaison Group as having an important coordinating role throughout the process of developing joint activities and/or a joint work programme assuming that it is given the mandate to do so. On the other hand, respondents see the development of joint activities and/or a joint work programme as a scientific exercise in which the Joint Liaison Group has no comparative advantage. Either way, there was little support expressed for the Joint Liaison Group to have a role during implementation which is largely seen as the responsibility of Parties.

19. With regard to stakeholders to engage in the development and implementation of joint activities and/or a joint work programme, respondents particularly noted the need for the scientific community, civil society, and non-governmental organizations to be involved. A few respondents also mentioned that other relevant United Nations agencies and multi-lateral environmental agreements could have a role to play.

20. Finally, when considering the timing of the development and adoption of joint activities and/or a joint work programme, respondents support the target deadline of the Rio+20 Earth Summit in 2012. When examining other examples of joint work programmes between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Migratory Species (see annex II), it seems that this timeline may be feasible although challenging. In particular, past experience has demonstrated that a bilateral joint work programme can be adopted in as little as one year (e.g. with Ramsar) or as long as four years (e.g. UNCCD). There are, however, no examples of a timeline available for the adoption of a joint work programme involving three processes.

21. With regards to the processes for developing and adopting other CBD joint work programmes, all examples begin with a call for collaboration (already done by the CBD, UNFCCC and UNCCD³) followed by a request to the Executive Secretary to develop a joint work programme, and followed by the adoption/endorsement of the proposed joint work programme by each Conventions' decision-making process. Based on the views from Parties that joint activities and / or a joint work programme between the three Rio Conventions should be developed jointly by all three processes, there may be a need to follow a more elaborate process which may include the involvement of other bodies in the development of the proposed activities and elements. As such, the model for the development of the joint work programme with the UNCCD, which involves a liaison group meeting and a meeting of the first Ad hoc Technical Expert Group on biodiversity and climate change, may be considered as the most relevant.

II. OPTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POSSIBLE JOINT WORK PROGRAMME

22. Based on the views submitted through the online survey, there appears to be significant support for a possible joint work programme between the Rio conventions. 83 per cent of respondents rated the

³ For example: UNCCD COP-8, decision 3/COP.8, CBD COP decision IX/17, UNFCCC decision 13/CP.8.

importance of a joint work programme as a six or higher (on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being most important) – of those respondents who rated the importance of a joint work programme as five or lower, four are Parties.

23. With regards to the process to be followed to develop a joint work programme, based on the need for transparency and full participation, there may be useful lessons to be learned from the development of the joint work programme with the UNCCD (see annex II). It should be noted, however, that the process for the development of the CBD and UNCCD joint work programme took four years. Therefore, in order to meet the Rio+20 Earth Summit in 2012 timeline proposed by many respondents, a number of steps for the development of the possible joint work programme for the three Rio conventions may need to be taken in parallel, as outlined in table 2, below.

Table 2: Possible timeline and process for the development and adoption of a joint work programme

CBD COP	Call for the development of proposals for a joint work programme	October, 2010
UNFCCC COP (or UNFCCC SBSTA)	Call for the development of proposals for a joint work programme	December, 2010 (or June, 2011)
UNCCD COP (or UNCCD CRIC)	Call for the development of proposals for a joint work programme	October, 2011 (or February, 2011)
Joint Liaison Group	Compile information on activities already called for, identify case-studies and lessons learned from other joint work programme initiatives	First quarter, 2011
Joint Expert Group * subject to funding	Define the objective, identify priority activities and elements of a joint work programme, develop a mechanism/framework to facilitate adaptive management of the joint work programme	Second quarter, 2011
Joint Scientific Subsidiary Body * subject to funding	Consider the proposals of the joint expert group, prepare a final proposal or options for consideration by the Conferences of the Parties	Third or fourth quarter, 2011
Extra-ordinary Session – Joint Conference of the Parties * subject to funding	Adopt or endorse the joint work programme	Prior to or during the Rio+20 Earth Summit in 2012

24. With regards to the nature of the joint work programme, there is broad agreement that any joint work programme should be targeted at national level implementation, should result in efficiencies rather than additional work loads, and should respect the independent mandates of each Convention.

25. In terms of form, there are two main proposals, the first focuses on key themes around which joint activities should be developed (e.g. joint workshops, guidance and research on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation). In the case of this form of joint work programme, close attention would be needed to ensure that joint workshops, as well as other activities with resource implications, are not new and additional, but rather are integrated into existing and planned activities. Furthermore, there would need to be a mechanism built into such a joint work programme to address emerging issues.

26. The second proposal for the form of a joint work programme focuses on building an enabling environment for synergies at the national and international levels (e.g. mechanisms for the formulation of common national positions in negotiations on similar topics, joint knowledge management, etc.). It is mentioned, by respondents, that such an approach would be flexible to address emerging issues and would be strongly country-driven, however, it may also have additional resource implications (over the short-term) and would require support from the highest political level in order to be successful.

27. Some respondents also highlighted the importance of involving organizations and agencies in the development and implementation of a joint work programme, including *inter alia*, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the GEF. Of these, only the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is common to all three Rio conventions as a funding mechanism.

*Annex I***ONLINE SURVEY**

1. Please indicate the extent to which you think the identification and adoption of joint activities is important (10) or not important (1) for the implementation of the three Rio conventions.
2. Please indicate the extent to which you think the identification and adoption of a joint work programme is important (10) or not important (1) for the implementation of the three Rio conventions.
3. Please provide any comments to clarify your response to questions 1 and 2.
4. Please indicate whether you think the below processes are important, somewhat important or not important to the process of identifying and/or adopting joint activities or elements of a joint work programme.

Consideration of activities and/or elements by the Joint Liaison Group

The establishment of a joint expert group between the three Rio conventions

Joint meeting of the scientific bodies of the three Rio conventions

Joint meeting of the Conferences of the Parties of the three Rio conventions

5. Please identify any other processes that should be included in the identification and/or adoption of joint activities or elements of a joint work programme.
6. What do you see as the role of the Joint Liaison Group in the development and implementation of joint activities or a joint work programme?
7. Please rate from highest (1) to lowest (6) priority, processes that can support the full and effective engagement of focal points from all three Conventions in the identification and/or adoption of joint activities or a joint work programme.

Establish or strengthen national-level operational institutional arrangements for coordination

Engage, when relevant, focal points, and through them, other counterparts from other conventions when forming a position for negotiations

Make available relevant notifications to other conventions' focal points through the websites of each Convention

Explore options for further cooperation between the three conventions, through joint workshops

Keep staff in other secretariats informed of discussions and decisions on relevant synergistic activities or programmes

Compile lessons learned and case-studies on national mechanisms for coordination among focal points

8. Please identify any other stakeholders who should be engaged in the process of developing joint activities or a joint work programme.

9. Please rate, from highest (1) to lowest (12) priority, the themes for collaboration that could be included as the focus of joint activities or in a joint work programme.

Collaboration among national focal points

Collaboration among the scientific subsidiary bodies to the Conventions

Collaboration among the Convention secretariats

Cooperation in communication, education and public awareness programmes

Cooperation in the development of advice, methodologies and tools

Cooperation on national-level planning

Facilitation of exchange of information and experience, including improving inter-accessibility of available web-based data

Harmonized reporting

Joint capacity-building activities, including training, and local, national and regional workshops

Joint development of case studies on synergies

Joint research and monitoring

Promotion of complementarity among the NBSAPs under the CBD, the NAPs of the UNCCD, and the NAPAs for least developed countries of the UNFCCC

10. Please indicate whether you think the following proposed elements of a possible joint work programme (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/6/Add.2) are important, somewhat important or not important.

Integrated/coordinated national planning linking—climate change, land degradation and biodiversity

Addressing the common drivers of biodiversity loss, climate change and land degradation/desertification

Understanding, monitoring, assessing and reporting on the interlinkages between biodiversity, climate change, land degradation/desertification and sustainable development

Promoting a favourable enabling environment

11. Please indicate whether you think the following proposed activities for a possible joint work programme (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/6/Add.2) are important, somewhat important or not important.

Promote coherence and synergy in national planning for climate change, land degradation, biodiversity, sustainable development and poverty reduction

Maintain or enhance carbon storage and sequestration by halting or reducing the loss and degradation of natural habitats, in particular forests

Maintain or enhance ecosystem resilience through conservation and restoration of degraded landscapes

Build knowledge on the interlinkages between biodiversity, climate change, land degradation/desertification and sustainable development

Monitor and assess status and trends of parameters relevant to the interlinkages between biodiversity, climate change, land degradation/desertification and sustainable development (including developing databases)

Streamline reporting

Enhance communication, education and public awareness

Develop and apply positive incentives

12. Please identify any other priority themes, elements or activities for collaboration that could be included as the focus of joint activities or in a joint work programme.

13. Please rate, from highest (1) to lowest (21) priority, the supporting activities for the Secretariats that could strengthen the implementation joint activities or a joint work programme.

Provide the focal points of all three conventions with up-to-date information on relevant assessments, research programmes and monitoring tools

Involve focal points from the United Nations Forum on Forests and relevant forest related and other conventions in discussions on relevant issues, such as, reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, as well as through afforestation and reforestation

Organize joint thematic workshops (at the international level) with the participation of representatives from the three Rio conventions

Explore the nature and scope of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building with a view to identifying how it might support the achievement of synergies between the three Rio conventions in national implementation

Develop a common pool of experts

Continue the sharing of experiences by secretariat staff in forums such as the CBD Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Technology Transfer and the UNFCCC Expert Group on Technology Transfer or its successor

Analyse the experience gained with the UNFCCC's technology information clearing house (TT:Clear) and the CBD's clearing-house mechanism (CHM), and identifying opportunities for learning from each others experience

Share experience gained on traditional knowledge, early warning systems and benchmarks and indicators

Facilitate access to information provided in reports and communications

Advise on ways and means to strengthen the links between the NAPs, the NBSAPs and the NAPAs

Share reports and reviews of national planning processes, where available, and highlight lessons learned that may be relevant across conventions in order to improve integrated planning

Coordinate requests for scientific advice from external bodies

Provide case studies on interlinkages between climate change mitigation and adaptation activities on the one hand and conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity on the other hand

Identify actions that contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of peatlands and other wetlands and enhance their positive contribution to climate change response activities

Share experiences reported by Parties on communication, education and public awareness events

Produce educational materials bearing in mind cultural circumstances and delivery methods based on the needs of the target audiences

Develop Web-based communication tools including through updating existing tools and publications such as the clearing-house mechanism under the Convention and national biodiversity information systems

Identify technologies of joint interest and relevance at a regional and global scale

Continue the provision by the secretariats, of inputs and views on forest issues and adaptation as requested by the subsidiary bodies of the conventions

Implement a coordinated approach with regard to the proposed GEOSS

Share lessons learned on reporting

14. Please identify any other supporting activities for the Secretariats that could strengthen the implementation of joint activities or of a joint work programme.
15. Please indicate whether UNFCCC and UNCCD focal points were involved in the completion of this survey.
16. Please provide any other views on joint activities or a joint work programme between the three Rio conventions.

Annex II

PROCESSES FOR THE ADOPTION OF JOINT WORK PROGRAMMES

Figure 1. Joint work programme: CBD-UNCCD

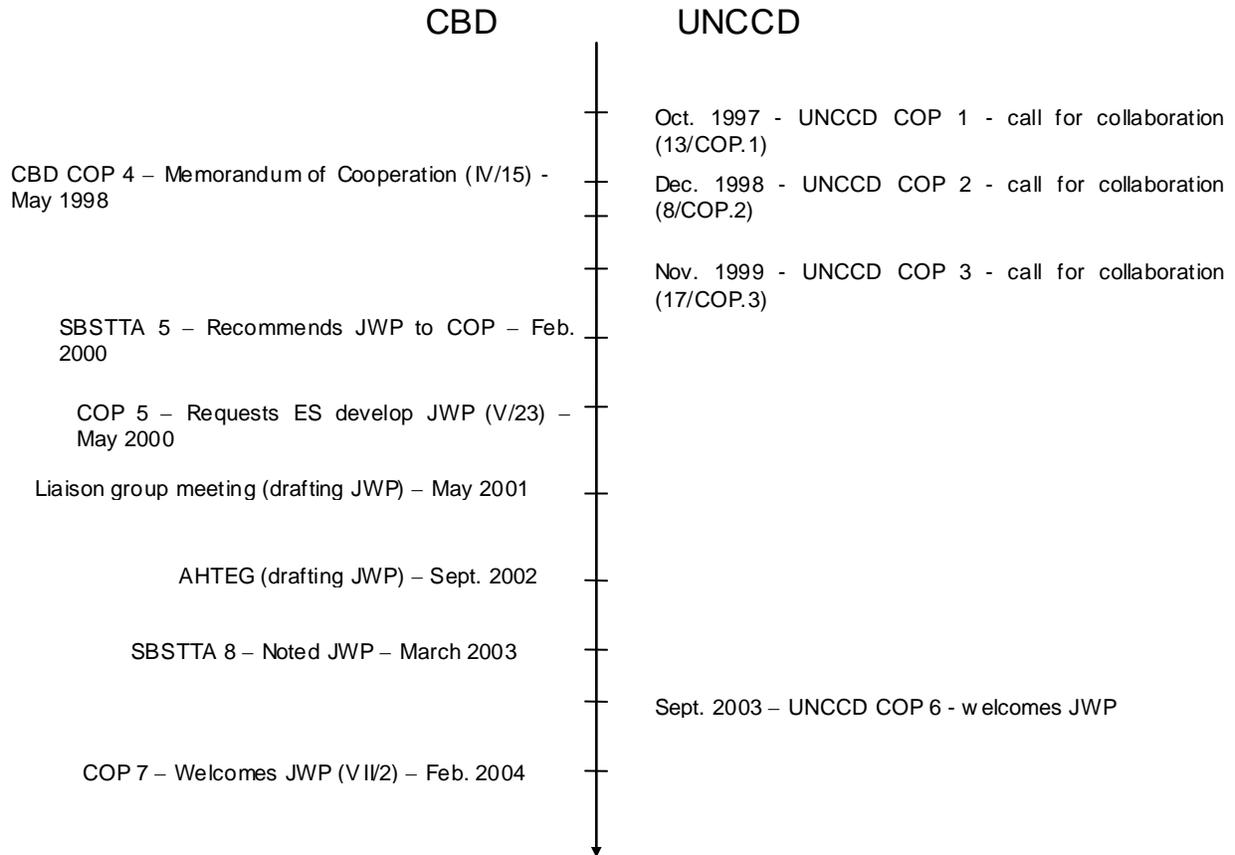


Figure 2. Joint work programme: CBD-CMS

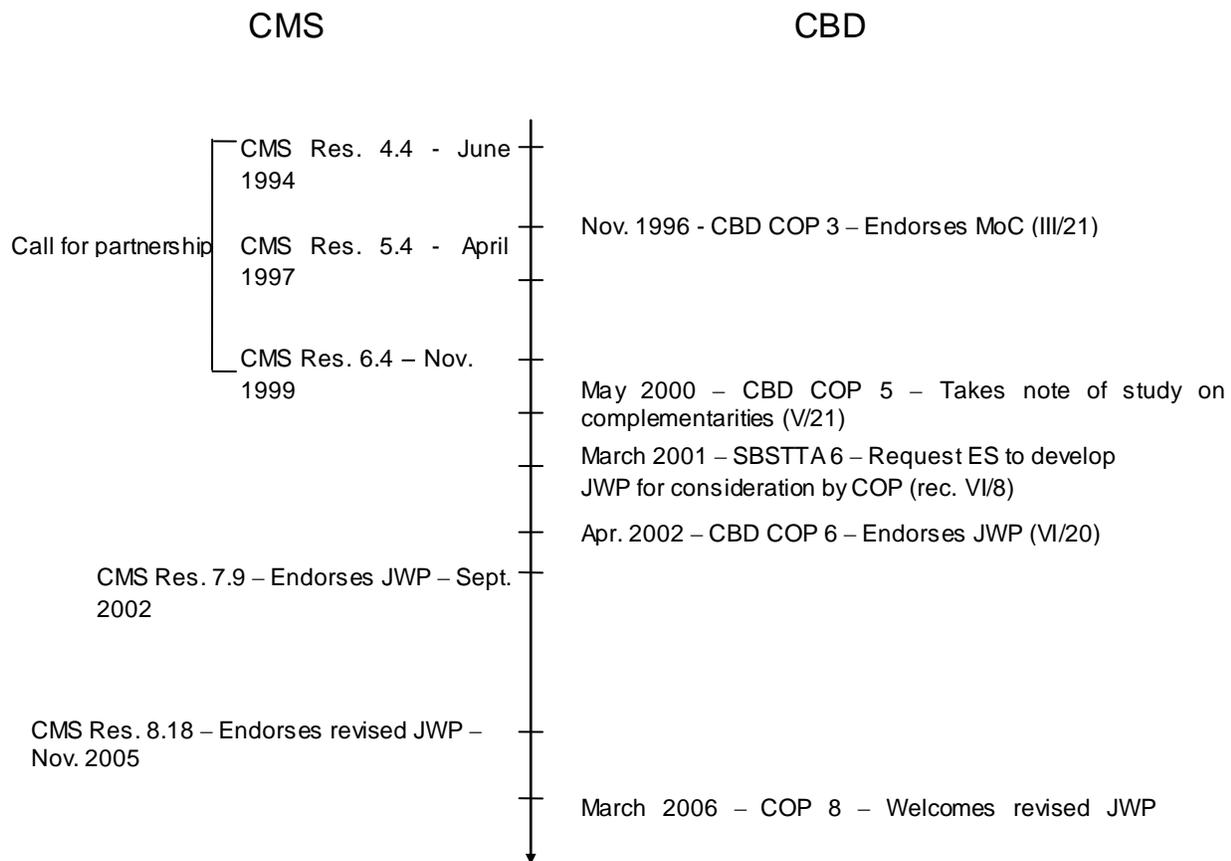


Figure 3. Joint work programme: CBD-Ramsar

