

**"Wetlands: water, life, and culture"**  
**8th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties**  
**to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**  
**Valencia, Spain, 18-26 November 2002**

## **Resolution VIII.23**

### **Incentive measures as tools for achieving the wise use of wetlands**

1. RECALLING:
  - a) Article 3.1 of the Convention, which states that Contracting Parties “shall formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List, and as far as possible the wise use of wetlands in their territory”;
  - b) Resolution 5.6 on *Additional guidance for the implementation of the wise use concept*, which encouraged the removal of perverse incentives, including tax benefits and subsidies, which encourage the destruction of wetlands, and the introduction of positive incentives that are compatible with, and encourage, their wise use and conservation; and
  - c) Resolution VII.15, in which the COP
    - i) called upon Contracting Parties to ensure that incentive measures are taken into consideration when applying Resolution VII.6 concerning the development and implementation of National Wetland Policies and Resolution VII.7 concerning the review of laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands; and
    - ii) requested the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to review existing guidelines and available information on incentive measures and make this available as an Internet-based resource kit and to explore the use of impact assessments as tools for identifying opportunities for implementing incentive measures; and directed the STRP to prepare a report on the design, implementation, monitoring and removal of perverse incentives;
2. ACKNOWLEDGING Decision V/15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which refers to collaboration with the Convention on Wetlands, the second CBD/Ramsar Joint Work Plan, which recognized the role of IUCN–The World Conservation Union in facilitating linkages between CBD and Ramsar work on incentive measures, and recommendation VII/9 of the CBD’s Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), which stressed the need to examine the policies and programmes under different multilateral environmental agreements to ensure that they provide mutually reinforcing incentives;

3. RESTATING the fundamental importance of assessing, revising, and developing incentive measures as tools for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, and the removal of perverse incentives that impede the delivery of such conservation and wise use;
4. AWARE that financing mechanisms, trade, impact assessment and economic valuation are intricately linked with the use and success of incentive measures in achieving the conservation and wise use of wetlands;
5. RECOGNIZING the preparation by IUCN of an Environmental Economics Web Site, which includes information, guidance and case studies on incentives, and the establishment by the STRP and the Center for International Earth Science Information Network, Columbia University, USA (CIESIN) of a Web-based data deposit for further information on incentive measures; and
6. NOTING the establishment of a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ramsar Bureau and the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) and the role of impact assessment as a tool for establishing opportunities for implementing incentive measures;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

7. URGES Contracting Parties to continue to review existing legislation and practices in order to identify and remove perverse incentives such as taxes and subsidies, and to carry out participatory consultative processes to define clear and target-oriented incentive measures which address the underlying causes of wetland loss;
8. FURTHER URGES Contracting Parties to develop supportive legal and policy frameworks for the design and implementation of incentive measures;
9. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to make use of the IUCN and CIESIN Internet-based resource kit (<http://www.biodiversityeconomics.org/assessment/ramsar-503-01.htm>) as a source of information and guidance to assist in their design and implementation of incentive measures for wetland conservation and wise use; and to advise the Ramsar Bureau on the relevance, quality, and accessibility of the information provided on this Web-based resource kit and indicate further needs regarding information on incentive measures;
10. REQUESTS Contracting Parties and others to provide appropriate materials, case studies indicating lessons learned, guidelines, and sources of advice on incentive measures relevant to wetlands to the Ramsar Bureau for incorporation on the Internet-based resource kit;
11. REQUESTS the STRP, in collaboration with IUCN, the subsidiary bodies of other environmental conventions, and other relevant organizations, to continue to identify wetland-related elements of existing guidelines on incentive measures, so as to recognize important gaps where such guidance is failing to meet fully the needs of the Parties, to

investigate possible ways of filling such gaps, and to prepare a report on these matters for COP9;

12. FURTHER REQUESTS the STRP, in collaboration with IUCN, IAIA, other relevant bodies and experts and the Bureau, to investigate the linkages between incentives and related topics including financial mechanisms, trade, impact assessment, and valuation and to report on its findings at COP9; and
13. URGES Contracting Parties and others to provide financial and expert support to the work of the STRP in this area.