

World Coastal Forum Establishment Group Terms of Reference

7 April 2022

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A. CONTEXT

Coastal ecosystems, including wetlands, are of critical importance as nature-based solutions to the climate crisis; they protect coastal communities from sea level rise, they reduce disaster risk in the face of climate change-exacerbated extreme weather events and provide blue carbon storage. They also provide an effective connection between terrestrial and marine ecosystems, and a wide range of other ecosystem services, including fisheries, other natural products, recreation and tourism, and purification of water and air. Finally, they are often integrally linked to the livelihoods and wellbeing of local communities and provide essential economic opportunities for local people.

These ecosystems are also vital to the survival of many migratory species, such as waterbirds, that **ecologically connect** nations and continents. Indeed, as all seas are connected, coasts are the most internationally-shared ecosystems. The challenges and opportunities of managing them sustainably are similar the world over.

Despite their extreme importance, coastal ecosystems, including wetlands, are often **poorly conserved**, in part due to fragmented governance.

In the face of sea level rise and other climate change effects, as well as rapidly declining biodiversity, there has never been a more **urgent need for concerted actions** from governments, business and other stakeholders to conserve these habitats, ensuring that any use of them is sustainable.

In recognition of this, **resolutions/decisions** of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS, 2017), Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (2018), Convention on Biological Diversity (2018) and IUCN (2020) have called for establishment of a multistakeholder global coastal forum that brings together key actors to facilitate the protection, management and restoration of coastal ecosystems, including wetlands.

To help answer this call, a range of **informal consultations and meetings** organised by various international NGOs with governments, conventions and experts has taken place since 2017 to find more effective means of providing science- and evidence-based processes to support and upscale local, national and international conservation efforts for **coastal wetlands and ecologically associated habitats**.

Consequently, at the International Advisory Meeting of World Coastal Forum **on Jan 10, 2022** in Yancheng City, Jiangsu Province with global online participation, hosted by the People's Republic of China's Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and Jiangsu Provincial People's Government, decided, through consensus, to establish a "World Coastal Forum (WCF)"; see [Initiative to Establish the World Coastal Forum, International Advisory Meeting Report](#) (including a list of the initial participating organisations of the WCF Establishment Group) and [summary of Opening Ceremony for the WCF Establishment process and Ministerial Forum](#).

The WCF is urgently needed to help build new synergies to support ongoing efforts and upscale them.

B. OBJECTIVES

The voluntary, informal World Coastal Forum Establishment Group (WCFEG) will function from the launch of the WCF establishment process in January 2022 until the institutional framework and ToR of the WCF are agreed by consensus among participants of the WCFEG.

The main objectives of the WCFEG, are as follows:

1. To adopt this document before its second meeting.
2. To guide the direction, development and establishment of the WCF during transition to a **formal governance structure by 2023**, including through preparation and updating of a roadmap to identify steps and milestones in establishing the WCF.
3. To prepare documents for discussion/adoption at the first formal meeting of the WCF that are produced inter-sessionally by its subgroups (Task Teams), including:
 - **concept note** on the mission and scope of the WCF, making clear what it is and isn't and how it builds on existing relevant organisations, initiatives and processes, focussing on synergies and adding value to these. This would include:
 - **theory of change for the WCF**
 - **terms of reference for the WCF**
 - **institutional framework for the WCF**
 - **modus operandi for the WCF**, and
 - **a programme of work for the WCF** which adds value and is compelling to potential participants, including a prioritised list of activities and an operational budget.
4. To oversee the **consultation** on the above listed documents, building a constituency of consensus and active support for establishment of the forum, including by participating in or convening any necessary meetings to shape and demonstrate the added value of the WCF.

5. To oversee the commissioning and completion of specific initial products that can inform the development and support the future work of the WCF including:
 - a. a **global review of relevant organizations, initiatives, businesses and other stakeholders focused on conservation of coastal ecosystems, including wetlands**, to help define roles and responsibilities of the WCF to deliver added value which will enhance cooperation and collaboration and build a broad-based constituency¹. And to coordinate a targeted “**call to action**” to enlist active support from key stakeholders (political, technical, financial and business) to progress the WCF vision, aims and operation,
 - b. a database for creation and dissemination of **evidence-based guidance** on protection, management and restoration of coastal ecosystems, including wetlands, and
 - c. a **situation analyses on the state of the world’s coastal ecosystems, including wetlands** as a baseline, to be reviewed regularly and ensure monitoring to common standards (of data collection, curation and sharing) to track progress towards conservation objectives using simple indicators.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES

The WCFEG will be collectively responsible for the coordinated planning, implementation and evaluation of following activities:

1. Agree on a **work plan (Annex 1) and budget (Annex 2) for the WCFEG** to prepare for key milestones leading up to the formal launch and establishment of the WCF by 2023.
2. Supervise and coordinate the **implementation** of activities as identified in point 1 above.
3. Establish an **WCF Steering Group (WCFSG)** of up to 12 people to run its operation inter-sessionally.
4. Establish and participate in small **Task Teams** (e.g. 3-5 people), the leads of which are participants of the WCFEG and invited to be part of the WCF Steering Group. The Task Teams would be responsible for developing the key documents as per the work plan ([Annex 1](#)).
5. Guide the work of any **appointed coordinator(s)**.
6. Monitor (any) **financial resources** and accounting to ensure accuracy and reliability of financial reporting as appropriate.
7. Manage and/or directly participate in any **engagement with interested stakeholders**, including from government agencies, academic institutions or the private sector, where needed on behalf of the group.
8. Contribute **funds or in kind capacity** to support the implementation of activities in the interim, especially the promotion of the forum in appropriate fora and events.

¹ This should build on *CBD/SBI/2/INF/20 1 June 2018 Developing a new global initiative ‘Caring For Coasts’ for the restoration of coastal wetland*

D. WORKING METHODS

1. The WCFEG will be responsible for developing its own working methods, with consideration for the need to minimise costs by taking advantage of facilities for virtual meetings and/or opportunities to meet physically in the margins of other fora.
2. The WCFEG will appoint its own **Chair** from among its participants. There is a possibility of appointing up to two Vice-Chairs to support the Chair.
3. The WCFEG will **meet quarterly** ahead of the launch of the WCF, at its first meeting provisionally agreeing the dates of the next two meetings (and more if needed before the formal launch aimed to be in November 2022).
4. The WCFSG and Task Teams **may meet every 2-4 weeks** as required.
5. Participants will contribute their time as a form of in-kind support. Other costs of operating the WCFEG will be met from such sources as the group itself, and other partners.
6. International coordination of the WCFEG is being provided by Eco Foundation Global (EFG) and BirdLife International. Administrative support will be provided by a co-ordinator provided by Eco Foundation Global.
7. Following adoption of this WCFEG TOR document by the WCFEG, Annexes [1, 2 and 3](#) will be finalised in consensus and updated as required.

E. PARTICIPATION

Participation in the WCFEG is guided by the following:

1. The WCFEG will comprise **voluntary contact points** from government agencies including local government, global/regional/flyway intergovernmental/international organisations, relevant international conservation initiatives, international NGOs, business representatives, and invited experts, which can opt to participate as Members, Observers or Advisors.
2. WCFEG participants will largely comprise **persons who have the capacity to work inter-sessionally on the establishment process** between meetings.
3. Any **participant who unavoidably withdraws** from the WCFEG or Task Teams during its term of operation may be replaced at the discretion of the remaining participants acting in consensus.
4. Existing WCFEG participants are invited to **encourage participation of additional Members, Observers and Advisors to the WCFEG and its Task Teams** to ensure that the work plan of the WCFEG is implemented in a timely, consultative and effective manner.

5. New proposed, willing participants of the WCFEG will be confirmed by existing participants, by email at least one week ahead at the next meeting of the WCFEG, having been given at least one week to consider the proposals.

Roles of Members

- Agree with general direction in the [initiative to establish the WCF document](#) as approved on the 10&11 January 2022 Meeting. And be willing to provide necessary capacity to support establishment of the WCF through consensus.
- Participate in quarterly online WCFEG meetings to contribute to the work of the WCFEG itself, including commenting on and approving documents, and guide the work of its Task Teams.
- Constitute a WCFEG Steering Group (WCFEG SG) comprised of a subset of Members of the WCFEG to guide the work of the WCFEG inter-sessionally, including via monthly online meetings, preparation of documents for consideration by the WCFEG and other work.
- Opt, as appropriate, to participate in Task Teams to prepare, draft and review relevant key documents for approval by the WCFEG SG and then the WCFEG.
- Participate/co-organise/collaborate, as appropriate, in events/meetings organised to promote establishment of the WCFEG.

Roles of Observers

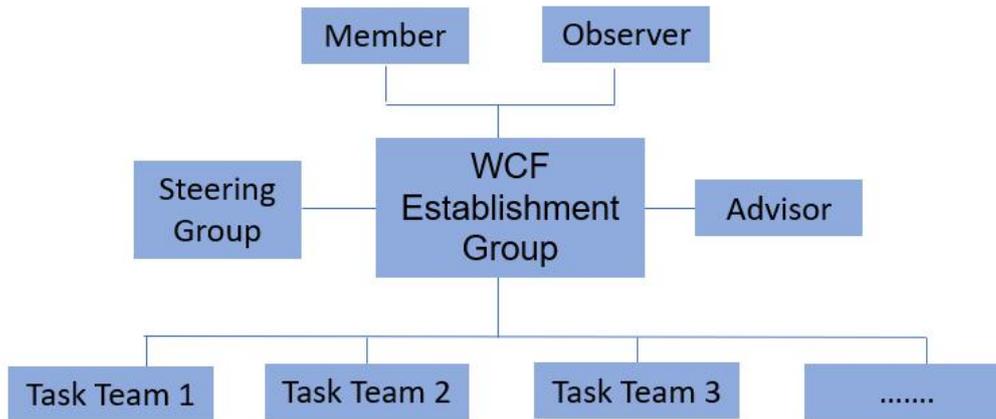
- Participate in quarterly online WCFEG meetings as observers to guide and contribute to the work of the WCFEG.
- Contribute to drafting/review of plans/other key documents within assigned Task Teams and participate in Task Team working calls.
- Participate/co-organise/collaborate, as appropriate, in events/meeting organised to promote establishment of the WCFEG.

Role of Advisors

- Unaffiliated individuals by invitation who wish to offer advice to the WCFEG Chair/Coordinator on achieving objectives of the WCFEG.

Role of Task Teams

- Contribute to drafting/review of plans/other key documents within assigned Task Teams and participate in Task Team working calls.
- Task Team coordinators will be participants in the WCFEG and WCFEG SG, but other Task Teams member do not necessarily need to be involved in the WCFEG.



Organogram for the WCFEG

A list of WCFEG participants (Members, Observers and Advisors) is included in ([Annex 3](#)). This will be updated for future meetings of the EG.

F. LIST OF ANNEXES

1. WCFEG Work Plan (draft of 25 March)
2. WCFEG Budget (to be developed for the WCFEG 2nd meeting on 17 May)
3. WCFEG Participant List -Members, Observers & Advisors (as per EG1 Meeting, 17 February 2022)

ANNEX 1. World Coastal Forum Establishment Group, Draft Work Plan 2022, Version Of 25 March 2022

Proposed Actions	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Proposed leads
1 Operation of WCFEG												
i. Organisation of meetings, preparation of agenda, drafting of minutes and preparation of meeting documents	x			x			x			x		
WCF EG Meetings (proposed dates)	17 th			17 th			17 th					
ii. Finalisation of TOR for the WCFEG	x	x										
2 Operation of WCFEG Steering Group												
i. Organisation of monthly meetings, preparation of agenda, drafting of minutes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
ii. Planning of date, organising logistics for meetings with Group Members												
3 Operation of Task Teams (TTs)												
i. Establish 5 TTs to oversee preparation of documents/projects for the WCFEG & WCF	x	x										
ii. Liaise with TTs to ensure implementation of actions as per agreed timelines:												
• Develop a Concept Note with institutional framework/governance structure for the WCF		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			Institutional Framework TT
• Develop a draft work plan and theory of change for the WCF		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			Institutional Framework TT
• Develop a TOR for the WCF, a modus operandi for them		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			Institutional Framework TT
• Develop a resourcing plan for implementation of activities of the WCFEG and WCF		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			Institutional Framework TT
• Oversee commissioning (and completion by Oct 2022) of a worldwide stakeholder review of other relevant initiatives (to identify areas of cooperation and collaboration and to ensure the WCF will add value to existing organizations and initiatives).				x	x	x	x	x	x			Stakeholder Mapping TT

Proposed Actions	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Proposed leads
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate a targeted “call to action” to enlist active support from key stakeholders (political, technical, financial, business) for the WCF vision, aims and operation. 				x	x	x	x	x	x			Stakeholder Mapping TT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of local stakeholders 				x	x	x	x	x	x			Subnational Engagement TT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a programme of science and evidence-based work plan for the WCFEG and WCF 			x	x	x	x	x	x				Science/evidence-base TT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a WCF Evidence and Guidance Database, potentially also as a mechanism to disseminate existing guidance. 					x	x	x	x	x			Science/evidence-base TT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A situation analyses on the state of the world’s coastal ecosystems, including wetlands 					x	x	x	x	x			Science/evidence-base TT
<p>4 International engagement through key meetings/events to promote WCF, tentatively include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side event at CBD COP15, Kunming, China (new date, to be confirmed) • 45th session of the World Heritage Committee, Kazan, Russian Federation, 19-30 June • 2022 UN Ocean Conference, Lisbon, Portugal, 27Jun-1Jul • WCF side event at BirdLife World Congress, Cambridge, UK, 11-15 Sep • Side event at Meeting of Parties of UNEP African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement, Budapest, Hungary, 26-30 Sept • Side event at UNFCCC COP27, Cairo, Egypt, 17-18 Nov • Ramsar COP14 (21-29 Nov), Wuhan, China - WCFEG Side Event for WCF’s establishment to be formally announced (to be confirmed) • Wadden Sea Ministerial Conference, Wilhelmshaven, Germany, 28 Nov –1 Dec • First Meeting of the WCF , Yancheng, China (tentative) 						x						International Engagement TT
												X

ANNEX 3. Participant List For First Wcfeg Meeting Of 17 February 2022

Institution	Name	Position	Participation in 1 st EG meeting*
1. Ministry of Natural Resources, PRC	Jiang Xiaohong	Vice Dept Head, International Cooperation	Attended
2. National Forestry & Grassland Administration, PRC	Li Yan / He Jinxing	Vice Director, Wetlands Sec / Chief, International Cooperation Sec	Attended
3. Hainan Institute of National Park	Zhang Xinsheng	Chairman of the Board	Attended
4. Environment Cambodia	Chhun Bunlong	Vice Chief office, GIS	Attended
5. CBD Secretariat	Joseph Appiott / Oliver Hillel / Neil Pratt	Programme Management Officer / <i>Programme Officer</i> / Senior Environmental Affairs Officer	
6. CMS Secretariat	Ivan Ramirez / Tilman Carlo Schneider	Head, Avian Species Team / Associate Programme Officer, Avian Species	Attended /
7. Ramsar Secretariat	Jerker Tamelander	Director, Science and Policy	
8. Common Wadden Sea Secretariat	Bernard Baerends / Harald Marencic	Executive Secretary / Deputy Executive Secretary	Represented by Jens Enemark
9. UNESCO WHC	Guy Debonnet / Susanna Kari / Akane Nakamura	Chief / Project Officer / Associate Programme Specialist	
10. East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership Secretariat	Doug Watkins	Chief Executive	Attended

11. Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network	Rob P. Clay	Executive Director	Attended
12. Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Conservation	Ibrahima Gueye	Coordinator	
13. Future Earth Coasts	Prof Tim Smith/ Prof Xiuzhen Li	Co-Chair Future Earth Coasts and University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia / East China Normal University	Represented by Prof Xiuzhen
14. International Union for Conservation of Nature	Tim Badman / Maud Lelievre / Raphael Glemet / Maeve Nightingale	Director / Vice-Chair of the French IUCN Committee / Senior Programme Officer / Senior Programme Officer	Attended /
15. Asian Development Bank	Duncan Lang	Senior Environmental Specialist	Attended
16. BirdLife International	Vinayagan Dharmarajah / Gary Allport / Geoffroy Citegetse	Asia Director / Senior Adviser to the CEO / East Atlantic Flyway Manager	Attended / Attended / Attended
17. International Crane Foundation	Spike Millington	Vice President of International Programs–Asia	Attended
18. ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability	Ingrid Coetzee / Shu Zhu	Director of the African Secretariat / Director of East Asia Secretariat and Chief Representative of China	Attended /
19. Mandai Nature of Singapore	Jessica Lee	Assistant Vice President, Head of Bird Programs and Partnerships	
20. The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	Emily Landis / Lindsey Smart / Chen Jun	Coastal Wetlands Strategy Lead	Represented by Lindsey / Attended / Attended
21. Wetlands International	Ward Hagemeijer	Head Business and Ecosystems	
22. Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust	Tim McGrath / Tomos Avent	Head of Project Development / Head of International Programmes	Attended /

23. University of Cambridge, United Kingdom	William James Sutherland	Professor	Attended
24. University of Queensland, Australia	Richard Fuller	Professor	
25. University of Adelaide, Australia	Micha Jackson	Research Fellow	Attended
26.	Stanley Johnson		Attended
27.	Jens Enemark		Attended
28.	Arthur Hanson		Attended
29.	Mohammed Shobrak	Professor, Taif University, Saudi Arabia	Attended
32. Yancheng Wetland and Natural World Heritage Conservation & Management Center, China	Wu Qijiang	Director	Attended
30. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, United Kingdom	Nicola Crockford	Principal Policy Officer	Attended
31. Eco Foundation Global	Alex Zhang / Taej Mundkur	Secretary General / World Coastal Forum Establishment Group (WCFEG) Interim Coordinator	Attended / Attended