

**Danone/IUCN/Ramsar
Danone Fund for Nature (DFN)**

**Expert workshop:
Achieving carbon offsets through mangroves and other wetlands**

8-11 November 2009
Gland, Switzerland

Background Briefing Paper

Background

In recent years there has been increasing attention, including through processes implemented under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to seeking to reduce or offset greenhouse gas emissions through projects designed to restore ecosystems, or maintain (avoided degradation) existing ecosystems, as carbon stores. Much of this attention has focused to date on forest ecosystems, but there is increasing attention now being given to wetland ecosystems, particularly peatlands.

There is now increasing evidence, including through recent work undertaken by the Ramsar Convention's Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP), some types of wetlands (both inland and coastal wetlands) are also important in the global carbon cycle, including as carbon stores – noting also that a significant proportion of the world's forests are forested wetlands. Such wetland systems include *inter alia* temperate and tropical peatlands, and vegetated intertidal wetlands notably salt marshes and mangroves. It is, however, a particular challenge to fully assess and measure carbon in wetlands since a) for many wetlands much of their carbon is in soils (underground) rather than above ground as for many forests; and b) many wetlands function as 'open' systems with respect to carbon.

In recognition of this important carbon service provided by such wetlands, a number of initiatives are underway or under development to establish and implement mechanisms for achieving carbon offset through carbon markets, including voluntary standards, for wetlands. In October 2008, at the Ramsar Convention's 10th meeting of its Contracting Parties (Changwon, Republic of Korea), a trilateral agreement, the *Danone Fund for Nature (DFN)* was signed between the Ramsar Convention, IUCN, and the private sector Danone Group to develop and implement a mechanism for financing delivery of carbon offsets for the Danone Group through wetland restoration projects that are in line with the principles and practices of the Ramsar Convention.

So as to inform and guide the identification, development and selection of appropriately designed restoration projects under this mechanism the DFN needs:

- a set of guidelines and criteria for project selection, covering wetland restoration good practice, assessment of socio-economic services and values,
- an accurate and innovative measure of carbon balance and storage, and

- an understanding of the conditions for achieving carbon offsets through both existing tools of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Voluntary Carbon Standards (VCS) for different types of wetlands and tools under preparation by for the DFN.

These are currently being prepared by a small Expert Panel appointed through the initiative. The guidance will also provide the framework for the preparation of a call for proposal for new projects under the initiative and help to select these projects for implementation in 2010. The initial focus of attention under the DFN concerns the restoration of mangrove wetlands for carbon storage and offsets.

In relation to this, an initial pilot project on mangrove restoration, in Senegal, and funded from the initiative, is underway aiming to provide an initial test of the initiative's approach and to derive lessons learned for the further development of the initiative and its transfer to further restoration projects, which may also give priority to mangrove restoration.

Workshop purpose and process

The November 2009 Expert Workshop will bring together those directly involved in the implementation of the *Danone Fund for Nature* with a wider group of experts from other organizations working on, and/or with expertise in one or more aspects of mangrove restoration, wetland restoration, carbon measurement (in mangroves and other types of wetland) and carbon offsets and markets, so as to review and advise on the further development of the Danone/IUCN/Ramsar initiative in the context of other related wetland-related carbon storage and offsets initiatives and projects. The outputs will be relevant to not only the further implementation of the DFN but also to the work of other organizations and processes addressing issues of carbon and wetlands.

The expert workshop will be by invitation only (to organizations and individuals), and will be limited to a maximum of 40 participants. Where appropriate, more than one expert from an organization may be invited to participate.

During the expert workshop participants will work in plenary and through break-out working groups to review and deliver workshop outputs.

Workshop objectives and outputs

The overall workshop objectives are, in particular, to:

- A. Review latest knowledge of the role of wetlands in the carbon cycle, good practices in wetland restoration, methods for carbon measurement in different types of wetlands, and current and developing approaches to carbon markets relevant to wetlands;
- B. Identify which types of wetland can be readily restored and over what timeframes, for which types of wetland current carbon measurement methodologies can be readily applied, including in relation to measurements and timeframes required under offset mechanisms;
- C. Describe in the light of A and B the already available results and mechanisms available for elaborating carbon evaluation in mangroves;

- D. Prepare specific advice and a precise roadmap, in the light of A) and B), on addressing any additional results and mechanisms which are needed for achieving offsets through carbon markets from mangrove restoration; and
- E. Review and advise on finalization of the draft guidelines and project selection criteria prepared by the Expert Panel from previous implementation, including the Senegal mangrove restoration project.

The workshop will also look at the potential and conditions for establishing mechanisms for “avoided wetland degradation” (i.e. the equivalent of avoided deforestation under UNFCCC), as an additional opportunity for maintaining existing wetland carbon stores.

Overall outputs from the expert workshop will be:

- a) guidance and advice to the initiative and its Expert Panel on finalizing its guidelines and criteria for future wetland project selection and delivery;
- b) specific guidance on achieving carbon offsets through mangrove restoration; and
- c) a published summary report of the presentations, discussions and conclusions of the workshop.

It is planned that much of the work of the workshop will be undertaken through three parallel working groups. The topic coverage of these working groups, and the specific outputs and products which will be expected from them, are:

Working Group 1: How to establish a large-scale carbon offset certification methodology for mangroves for 2010

Outputs expected:

- State-of-the-art on carbon measurement in mangroves taking into account each component (aerial, soil, aquatic transfer, etc.)
- Roadmap for approval of certification methodology, with available knowledge and knowledge gaps needing filling, compiled for each component
- Action plan for achieving methodology approval for mangroves

Working Group 2: Elaboration of the DFN restoration project guidance documentation for carbon projects

Outputs expected:

- Recommended amendments to guidance documentation
- Compilation of knowledge and process gaps

- Action plan for finalizing validated guidance documentation

Working Group 3: Identification of the main opportunities for conciliating wetland carbon offsets and social development

Outputs expected:

- Compilation of options for carbon capture through wetland restoration or protection, including prioritization of opportunities according to feasibility and cost effectiveness
- Compilation on social and economical services
- Action mapping plan for 'wet carbon' project development

It is anticipated that these outputs will be relevant to not only the further implementation of the *Danone Fund for Nature* but also to the work of other organizations and processes addressing issues of carbon and wetlands.

Dates and venue

The expert workshop will take place from the evening of Sunday 8 November to lunchtime on Wednesday 11 November 2009. Venue: IUCN/Ramsar headquarters offices in Gland, Switzerland.

A detailed programme, briefing and review papers will be circulated to participants prior to the workshop.

Further details and advice on travel to the meeting venue (the nearest airport is Geneva airport) and hotel accommodation will be sent to all participants upon their acceptance of the invitation.

Costs of participation

Participants are requested to cover their own travel and subsistence costs of participation. DFN invitees are requested to indicate whether they will need costs coverage, and will then be advised of funding availability as soon as possible.