

**Preparation of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
(COP15):
Proposal of the Secretariat on the Ramsar Wetland
Conservation Awards**

Action requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- i. decide on the Award categories for the ninth edition of the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards to be presented at COP15;
- ii. note the estimated budget and funding requirements; and
- iii. note the timeline for the Award nomination process.

Background

1. The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards were established at the 6th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP6, Brisbane, 1996) through Resolution VI.18 on *Establishment of the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards*. Three Ramsar Awards were made at Ramsar COP7 (San José, 1999) and each subsequent COP.
2. Since their inception, the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards have been accompanied by the Evian Special Prize of USD 10,000, provided by Danone, and granted to each of the three award recipients. In addition, a non-monetary Merit Award has occasionally been made to recognize a longtime contribution or commitment to the Convention and the wise use of wetlands.
3. From COP7 to COP10, the Award categories recognized contributions in Education, Management, and Wetland Science. From COP11 the award categories were revised to: Award for Wise Use, Award for Innovation, and Award for Young Wetland Champion.
4. In 2022, at COP14, the Conference of the Parties reviewed the award categories and adopted Resolution XIV.9 on *The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards*¹, which introduced three additional categories:
 - i. The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award for Science;
 - ii. The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award for CEPA; and

¹ See <https://www.ramsar.org/document/resolution-xiv9-ramsar-wetland-conservation-awards>.

- iii. The Ramsar Wetland Indigenous Peoples Conservation and Wise Use Award.
5. Paragraph 11 of Resolution XIV.9 requests the Standing Committee to consider and select the award categories for each upcoming cycle of the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards.

Awards categories

6. The forthcoming ninth edition of the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards will mark the first time that the Standing Committee will consider the six award categories as listed in Paragraph 8 of Resolution XIV.9, and decide on which categories to open for nominations. The six award categories are as follows;
 - i. **The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Wise Use Award**, rewarding a person, project, programme, or policy that has made a significant documented contribution to the long-term sustainable use of wetlands, at specific wetland sites (including Wetlands of International Importance) or on a broader scale, and that can be replicated elsewhere.
 - ii. **The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award for Innovation**, rewarding a person, project, programme or policy that has contributed to the conservation and wise use of wetlands through an innovative technique or approach.
 - iii. **The Ramsar Conservation Award for Young Wetland Champions**, rewarding a young person or a group of young people aged between 18 and 30 years that has contributed to the wise use of wetlands, through activities including, but not limited to, awareness raising, campaigning, restoration and other conservation efforts.
 - iv. **The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award for Science**, rewarding a scientist or a group of scientists that contributes to the advancement of sciences in any of their branches important for wetland biodiversity and ecosystem services.
 - v. **The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award for CEPA**, rewarding the best initiative for communication, capacity building, education, participation, and awareness for wetlands, as well for as the results of the activities.
 - vi. **The Ramsar Wetland Indigenous Peoples Conservation and Wise Use Award**, aiming to promote outstanding projects led by or involving Indigenous Peoples, to specifically acknowledge outstanding leadership and transformative projects either led by or involving Indigenous Peoples.
7. The Secretariat supports upholding the tradition of three award categories for the upcoming Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards. This is consistent with past cycles and is within the scope of available resources and capacity, ensuring the effective management and presentation of the Awards. The Secretariat recommends the Standing Committee consider the following categories as eligible for nominations for the next edition of the Awards:
 - **The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award for Young Wetland Champions**
 - **The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award for Science**
 - **The Ramsar Wetland Indigenous Peoples Conservation and Wise Use Award**

Budget and funding requirements

8. The Secretariat estimates that a budget of CHF 40,000, which is comparable to previous costs, will be needed to fund the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards at COP15. This estimated budget comprises accommodation and travel costs for recipients to attend the Awards ceremony at COP15 in Zimbabwe, the associated cost of producing audiovisual materials, and the provision of certificates and trophies presented to all award winners.
9. Danone, under the current partnership agreement with the Secretariat, has granted the equivalent of CHF 30,000 as prize money for three award recipients. Additional non-core funding of CHF 22,000 is available for the Awards ceremony, and the Secretariat is seeking voluntary contributions of CHF 18,000 to make up the difference.

Nomination procedures and selection process

10. The nomination procedures and eligibility criteria governing the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards are included as Annex 1 to Resolution XIV.9. The following provisional timeline is proposed:
 - i. The Secretariat will publish the call for nominations by 15 June 2024, with a deadline to receive nominations by 30 September 2024. The call for nominations will include a link to the online nomination form.
 - ii. The Secretariat will review the nominations and submit a shortlist to the Subgroup on COP15 to review before or during the 64th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC64).
 - iii. The Subgroup on COP15 will recommend Award winners to the Standing Committee, which will make the final decision on the winners during SC64.
 - iv. The Awards will be presented at COP15.