

Progress report on the implementation of the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention

Actions requested

Standing Committee is invited to:

- note the progress of the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention;
- approve the composition of the Independent Advisory Committee, and advise on the best response to the request for involvement by the Global Wastewater Initiative;
- endorse the proposed timeframe for implementation; and
- adopt the proposed MoU between UN-Habitat and Ramsar which is annexed to document SC52-16.

Background

1. Resolution XII.10 *Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention* formalized a framework to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands and regional and international co-operation, as well as to generate sustainable socio-economic benefits for the local populations.
2. Resolution XII.10 states that: *“This accreditation would encourage cities that are close to and depend on wetlands, primarily Wetlands of International Importance, but also other wetlands, to establish a positive relationship with these wetlands through increased participation and awareness and consideration of wetlands in local planning and decision making”*.
3. Paragraph 7 of the Framework for Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention annexed to Resolution XII.10 states that *“a candidate city for the Wetland City accreditation would be approved as an accredited Wetland City by the Independent Advisory Committee, after being proposed by the Contracting Party on whose territory it stands and completing the accreditation procedure described below. Newly accredited cities join the global network of Wetland Cities established by this framework. Accreditation as a Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention is not intended to confer any legal rights or legal obligations on the city or the Contracting Party.”*
4. Resolution XII.10 calls (in paragraphs 13 and 14) for Contracting Parties to submit proposals to the Secretariat for forwarding to the Independent Advisory Committee. According to paragraph 15.b of the annexed Framework, these proposals should be submitted “within one year of the closing of the previous meeting of the Conference of the Parties”. It is noted that this would have required a call for proposals to Parties early in 2016, before the membership of the Independent Advisory Committee could be approved by the 52nd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC52), and the rules for proposals and formats developed. Exceptionally, the Secretariat proposes in the timeframe below that the first round of proposals in this triennium for COP13 are only submitted after the Independent Advisory Committee has first been put in place. The next round of proposals for COP14 would then take place in accordance with paragraph 15.b.

Consideration and timings for the implementation of the Wetland City Accreditation

5. SC51 noted the presentation on process and proposals for a timeframe to implement the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention, and through Decision SC51-18 agreed that the Secretariat could continue its work along the lines indicated in the presentation.¹
6. SC52 is invited to confirm the composition of the Independent Advisory Committee according to the options provided in paragraph 16 of the Framework:

“It is proposed that the composition of the Independent Advisory Committee shall be chosen by the Standing Committee from the following:

- a. A representative of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), who shall act as Chair of the Committee: **Name to be provided**
- b. A representative of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI): **Liz Metcalfe, Professional Officer**
- c. A representative of the Ramsar Convention’s International Organization Partners: **Name to be provided**
- d. A Standing Committee member representative from each of the six Ramsar regions, selected by the regions:
 - Africa: **Tunisia**
 - Asia: **RO Korea**
 - Europe: **Azerbaijan**
 - Latin America and the Caribbean: **Name to be provided**
 - North America: **Name to be provided**
 - Oceania: **Australia**
- e. One representative of the Global Waste Water Initiative (GW²I) of UNEP: **Name to be provided**
- f. One representative of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP): **Name to be provided**
- g. A representative of the Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Oversight Panel of the Ramsar Convention; **Chair of CEPA Oversight Panel**
- h. The Ramsar Secretary General or his/her designated representative: **Ramsar Secretary General**
- i. The Ramsar Senior Advisor for the concerned region (rapporteur); and
- j. The coordinator of the Regional Initiative concerned, if any.”

¹ The presentation is available on the Ramsar web site at http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/presentation_wetland_city_accreditation.pdf.

7. The Steering Committee of the Global Wastewater Initiative (UNEP/GW²I) which met on 3 March 2016 requested that GW²I be involved as a member of the Independent Advisory Committee. GW²I would like to apply its expertise on the assessment of criteria related to “*appropriate standards regarding water quality, sanitation and management in the entire area under the city’s jurisdiction*”. A letter to this effect from the Director of UNEP’s Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI) is included at Annex 1. Standing Committee is invited to consider this request and advise on the appropriate response.
8. The following timeframe is proposed for the implementation of the Wetland City Accreditation:

Year 2016 – 2018

- February 2016: Secretariat develops a draft MoU with UN-Habitat for approval by SC52 and signature; Secretariat develops drafts of the Wetland City Accreditation forms.
- June 2016: SC52 approves the proposed membership of the Independent Advisory Committee from names submitted by the Secretariat.
- December 2016: The Independent Advisory Committee develops the forms for submitting proposals on Wetland Cities, prepares an outline of the process for accreditation, distributes details of the process and sends out the prepared forms to Contracting Parties through the Secretariat.
- January 2017: Secretariat issues a call for applications.
- January-Sept 2017: Secretariat receives applications from Contracting Parties.
- 30 September 2017: Independent Advisory Committee receives all applications.
- December 2017: Independent Advisory Committee reviews the applications and decides whether to accredit proposed cities, prior to submission to SC53².
- January-February 2018: SC53 reviews the report of the Independent Advisory Committee listing those cities approved for accreditation and transmits it to the Conference of the Parties³.
- October 2018: Presentation of newly accredited cities at COP13.

Year 2018 – 2021

- 2019: SC56 to approve the six-year draft review form.
- February-March 2019: The Secretariat issues a call for applications.
- March-September 2019: Secretariat receives applications from Contracting Parties.
- 30 September 2019: Independent Advisory Committee receives all applications.

² As defined at paragraph 15.c of the *Framework for Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention*.

³ Ibid, para.15.d

- December 2019: Independent Advisory Committee reviews the applications and decides whether to accredit proposed cities, prior to submission to SC58.
 - January-February 2021: SC58 reviews the report of the Independent Advisory Committee listing those cities approved for accreditation and transmits it to the Conference of the Parties.
 - June-October 2021: Presentation of new accredited cities at COP14.
9. Based on this, and taking into account ongoing preparatory activities to involve UN-Habitat (see the proposed MoU between UN-Habitat and Ramsar at Annex 4 of SC52-16 *Update on formal agreements and joint work plans of the Ramsar Convention and partners*) and other Independent Advisory Committee members, Tunisia, Korea, ICLEI⁴, WWF, Ramsar Regional Center - East Asia and MedWet with the support of the Ramsar Convention Secretariat have started to draft an accreditation form to be adopted by SC52. A first draft of the form is at http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/wetland_city_accreditation_nomination_form_draft_1.pdf.

⁴ The MoU between ICLEI and Ramsar is at: http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/iclei_mou_2015-2021_signed.pdf.

Annex 1: UNEP/GW²I request to become a member of the Independent Advisory Committee



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برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

联合国环境规划署



Reference: DEPI/GPA/GW²I/bl

22 March, 2016

Dear Mr Rucks,

In May 2013, UNEP launched a multiple stakeholder platform, the Global Wastewater Initiative (GW²I), to promote wastewater as a resource and to prompt coordinated action and encourage new investments in wastewater management. The GW²I intends to bring a paradigm shift to world water politics in order to prevent further pollution and damage, emphasizing that wastewater is a valuable resource for future water security.

The Initiative currently has 48 members comprised of multiple stakeholders, including international organizations, governments, academia, private sector, development banks and non-profit organizations. Our activities involve joint projects in different parts of the world on sanitation and wastewater management, several publications on good practices on wastewater management as well as economic valuation of wastewater, and joint meetings and organizations.

We have recently been informed by Paul Ouedraogo, Ramsar Representative at the GW²I Steering Committee, about the Wetland City Accreditation Framework of the Ramsar Convention to establish a positive relationship between cities and wetlands. In this respect, effective wastewater management is indispensable to achieve good water quality status for wetlands. We, therefore, believe that the activities of the GW²I have a strong connection with respect to the objectives of the Wetland City Accreditation Framework.

We would hereby like to express our willingness to become a member of the Independent Advisory Committee and look forward to a strong collaboration. Let me also use this opportunity to thank Ramsar for its effective contribution to the work of the GW²I.

Yours Sincerely,

Mette L. Wilkie

Director, DEPI

To: Mr Jorge Rucks,
The Chair of Ramsar Standing Committee,
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