

Report of the Management Working Group: Report on the process for recruiting a new Secretary General

Action requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- i. consider the document on the process for recruiting a new Secretary General with its annexes;
and
- ii. decide to submit the draft resolution on the process for recruiting a new Secretary General to 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2025 (Annex 1);
or
- ii. take a decision on the process for recruiting a new Secretary General (Annex 2).

Introduction

1. In November 2022, the Standing Committee entrusted the Management Working Group to develop a draft resolution to guide the process for recruiting a new Secretary General (Decision SC59-40).
2. The Management Working Group met in September 2023 and discussed the task in view of drafting a resolution for the recruitment of a new Secretary General. One country raised concerns on the format of such a draft resolution. If, in the future, a Recruitment Committee were to have difficulties in following such a resolution, the Parties of the Convention would have to adopt an amended or a new resolution at the next Meeting of the Conference of the Parties. This would result in a considerable delay of the recruitment process.
3. A drafting group for the Secretary General recruitment process (China, Gabon, Sweden and Switzerland) was established and drafted a document on the process for recruiting a new Secretary General, for the meeting of the Management Working Group on 18 January 2024.
4. The Management Working Group examined the document of the drafting group for the Secretary General recruitment process and proposes two options:
 - a. a draft resolution for the 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2025 on the process for recruiting a new Secretary General, as asked for in Decision SC59-40 (Annex 1);
 - b. a draft decision for the 63rd session of the Standing Committee on the process for recruiting a new Secretary General, bearing in mind the need for flexibility (Annex 2).

5. The two annexes include a link to a compilation of examples of documents used in the 2022 Secretary General recruitment. These documents are intended to provide context to the Contracting Parties in their deliberations on the annex texts. Similar documents prepared for future recruitment processes will adapt to circumstances as they may change and will be guided by the final text of the approved Resolution or the Standing Committee Decision.
6. The Management Working Group met on 18 January 2024 and recommended that the option of a Standing Committee decision is favoured.

Annex 1

Draft resolution on the process for recruiting a new Secretary General¹

1. ACKNOWLEDGING that the selection of a new Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands is one of the Standing Committee's responsibilities; and
2. RECOGNIZING that the task is to hire the best qualified person for the job, regardless of gender, age, nationality or corresponding Convention regionality;

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3. DECIDES to start the recruitment process as soon as possible after the Chair of the Standing Committee has communicated that the Secretary General is ending his/her employment;
4. DECIDES that the process will take place virtually and using English as its working language, and should be completed such that a decision regarding the candidate recommended by the Recruitment Committee can be made by the Standing Committee at an ordinary or extraordinary meeting, and that thereafter, the final part of the recruitment (terms of contract, etc.) will proceed;
5. DECIDES that the Recruitment Committee is to be formed by up to two Contracting Parties representing each regional group under the Convention, preferably members of the Management Working Group, including the host of the next Conference of the Contracting Parties;
6. DECIDES that the Recruitment Committee will be chaired by the Chair of the Standing Committee, and that the Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee will act as vice-chair for the Recruitment Committee;
7. DECIDES that while the Secretariat is not to be involved in the selection process, it will send a diplomatic note announcing the vacancy and provide the necessary administrative support for the proper functioning of the Recruitment Committee;
8. DECIDES that the recruitment process will be supported by an executive search firm, to be proposed by IUCN Human Resources and selected by the Recruitment Committee;
9. DECIDES to finance the recruitment process including the fees of the executive search firm with adequate funding of the Convention budget, and REQUESTS that the Subgroup on Finance prepare a proposed amendment to the budget and present it to the Standing Committee for its decision;
10. DECIDES that IUCN will be in charge of the recruitment procedure, under the supervision of the Chair of the Standing Committee, while reporting to the Recruitment Committee, with *inter alia* the following tasks:
 - a. to propose the schedule for the recruitment process for approval by the Recruitment Committee;

¹ For examples of documents mentioned in the draft resolution, see <https://www.ramsar.org/document/examples-documents-used-2022-secretary-general-recruitment>.

- b. to coordinate the approval by the Recruitment Committee of the terms of reference for the post of the Secretary General and post the vacancy online via the IUCN website recruitment portal;
 - c. to prepare the confidentiality agreement in respect of the recruitment of the Secretary General for the Recruitment Committee to sign, enabling its members to take part in the closed meetings and receive confidential information;
 - d. to propose the terms of reference for the search firm to the Recruitment Committee, publish a call for proposals from firms, submit three finalists for its selection, and contract the chosen firm; and
 - e. to provide information to the Recruitment Committee on each step of the recruitment as a link with the firm, and follow up on the recruitment schedule until the recruitment is finalized;
11. DECIDES that the Recruitment Committee will make its recommendation for the new Secretary General at the next ordinary or extraordinary meeting of the Standing Committee, for its consideration and decision; and
12. DECIDES that the new Secretary General should commence duty, if at all possible, at such a date so as to provide for a handover period of ten working days.

Annex 2

Standing Committee decision on a process for recruiting a new Secretary General²

The Standing Committee decides that the process for recruiting a new Secretary General will follow the steps below:

- The recruitment process will start as soon as possible after the Chair of the Standing Committee has communicated that the Secretary General is ending his/her employment.
- The process will take place virtually and using English as its working language, and should be completed such that a decision regarding the candidate recommended by the Recruitment Committee can be made by the Standing Committee at an ordinary or extraordinary meeting. Thereafter, the final part of the recruitment (terms of contract, etc.) will proceed.
- The Recruitment Committee is to be formed by up to two Contracting Parties representing each regional group under the Convention, preferably members of the Management Working Group, including the host of the next Conference of the Contracting Parties.
- The Recruitment Committee will be chaired by the Chair of the Standing Committee. The Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee will act as vice-chair for the Recruitment Committee.
- While the Secretariat is not to be involved in the selection process, it will send the diplomatic note announcing the vacancy and provide the necessary administrative support for the proper functioning of the Recruitment Committee.
- The recruitment process will be supported by an executive search firm, to be proposed by IUCN Human Resources and selected by the Recruitment Committee.
- The recruitment process including the fees of the executive search firm will be financed with adequate funding of the Convention budget. The Subgroup on Finance will prepare a proposed amendment to the budget and present it to the Standing Committee for its decision.
- The IUCN will be in charge of the recruitment procedure, under the supervision of the Chair of the Standing Committee, while reporting to the Recruitment Committee, will have, *inter alia*, the following tasks:
 - a. to propose the schedule for the recruitment process for approval by the Recruitment Committee;
 - b. to coordinate the approval by the Recruitment Committee of the terms of reference for the post of the Secretary General and post the vacancy online via the IUCN website recruitment portal;
 - c. Prepare the confidentiality agreement in respect of the recruitment of the Secretary General for the Recruitment Committee to sign, enabling its members to take part in the closed meetings and receive confidential information;

² For examples of documents mentioned in the decision, see <https://www.ramsar.org/document/examples-documents-used-2022-secretary-general-recruitment>.

- d. Propose the terms of reference for the search firm to the Recruitment Committee, publish a call for proposals from firms, submit three finalists for its selection, and contract the chosen firm; and
 - e. Provide information to the Recruitment Committee on each step of the recruitment as a link with the firm and follow-up on the recruitment schedule until the recruitment is finalized.
- The Recruitment Committee will make its recommendation for the new Secretary General at the next ordinary or extraordinary meeting of the Standing Committee, for its consideration and decision.
 - The new Secretary General should commence duty, if at all possible, at such a date so as to provide for a handover period of ten working days.