

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

47th Meeting of the Standing Committee

Gland, Switzerland, 24-28 March 2014

DOC. SC47-06

The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards: categories, criteria and nomination procedures

Actions requested:

- The Standing Committee is asked to approve the proposed new categories, selection criteria and procedures for the COP12 Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards.
- The Standing Committee is invited to note the provisional calendar for the COP11 Ramsar Award process.

Background

1. The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards programme was established at the 6th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP6, 1996) by Resolution VI.18 on *Establishment of the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award*. Three Awards were given for the first time at COP7 in 1999 and at each COP since then. The COP12 Awards will be the sixth edition. The list of Award winners and information on their achievements is on the Ramsar web site at <http://www.ramsar.org/Ramsar-Award/>.
2. The Ramsar Awards programme has been entirely funded by the Danone-Evian Fund for Water and each Award has been accompanied by the Evian Special Prize of USD 10,000. On occasion, non-monetary merit awards in recognition of excellence or achievements have also been given.

The current Award cycle

3. For the past three editions, the Awards have been made in the three categories of Education, Management, and Wetland Science. At its 43rd meeting (SC43), Standing Committee asked the Secretariat "to review the Award processes and documentation for COP12, with clearer guidelines, nomination criteria, and so on". The Secretariat has accordingly reviewed nomination statistics, the eligibility and selection criteria, and the nomination procedure.
4. The number of nominations has fallen, from over 70 valid nominations for the first edition in 1999 and the third edition in 2005 to only 42 nominations for the 2012 edition. The fall in numbers has been especially noticeable in the Wetland Science category.
5. After reviewing other environmental awards and consulting informally with stakeholders through regional teams, the Secretariat is proposing to Standing Committee three new categories to refresh interest in the Ramsar Award and encourage more nominations. Further details and criteria for each criteria are in the Annexed document. The proposed categories are:
 - the Ramsar Wise Use Award;
 - the Ramsar Innovation Award; and

- the Ramsar Young Wetland Champion Award.
8. The eligibility and selection criteria and the nomination procedure have been designed to make the process clearer for applicants and guide the Secretariat's selection process and the selection committee's assessment of nominations.

The Ramsar Award trophy

9. For the past five editions, the Awards were accompanied by a statuette designed by Verena Darmon, who died in 2008 shortly before completing the statues. Her husband was able to complete the production of statues for COP10 and COP11, not without some difficulties. The Secretariat proposes to commission another unique trophy to accompany each of the new Awards.

Budget

10. The Secretariat is currently assuming that DANONE-Evian will renew funding for the COP12 Awards and that their funding will be sufficient for a modest Awards programme in 2015, including:
- three Evian Special Prizes of USD 10,000;
 - travel costs to Uruguay for three individuals;
 - the production of information material, three certificates and trophies; and
 - any expenses related to the ceremony.
- While the awarding of further non-monetary merit awards is not excluded, this budget does not include funds to enable a merit award winner to attend the event.

Schedule

11. The COP12 Subgroup of Standing Committee is again asked to serve as a selection committee for the Ramsar Awards, screening the Secretariat's nominations and recommendations and selecting a winner for each Award, to be approved by the full Standing Committee.
12. The Secretariat will widely distribute a call for nominations, through its own and all its partner organizations' channels.
13. The following provisional calendar for the Ramsar Awards process is proposed:
- The Secretariat will publish a call for nominations by 15 April 2014, with a deadline for nominations of 15 June 2014;
 - The Secretariat will review the nominations, and submit a shortlist with recommendations to the SC48 COP12 Subgroup;
 - The COP12 Subgroup will recommend the Award winners to the full Standing Committee at SC48; Standing Committee will make the final decisions during SC48.
 - The Awards will be presented at COP12.

Annex I

The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards: Categories, Criteria and Procedures

Categories

1. One Ramsar Award shall be awarded for each of the following categories:
 - a) The **Ramsar Wise Use Award**, rewarding a person, project, programme or policy that has made significant documented contributions to the long-term sustainable use of wetlands, either at specific wetlands (including Ramsar Sites) or at a broader scale, which can be replicated elsewhere.
 - b) The **Ramsar Innovation Award**, rewarding a person, project, programme or policy that has contributed to the conservation and wise use of wetlands, through innovative techniques or approaches.
 - c) The **Ramsar Young Wetland Champion Award**, rewarding a young person or a group of young people that has contributed to the wise use of wetlands, through activities including but not limited to awareness raising, campaigning, restoration and other conservation efforts. For the purpose of this Award, people between 18 and 30 years old or groups with members and leader between 18 and 30 years old at the time of the nomination will be considered.

All of these awards are generously supported by the Danone-Evian Fund for Water.

Eligibility

2. Individuals and groups of all nations are invited to nominate individuals or institutions, including government institutions ¹ and non-governmental organizations and community groups, and private companies, of any nation.
3. Nominees must be living at the time of nomination. Awards will not be given posthumously.
4. Self-nominations will not be accepted.
5. Nominations of current members of the Ramsar Standing Committee, members and invited experts of Ramsar's Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and Ramsar Secretariat staff members will not be accepted.

Criteria

6. Criteria applicable to **all three categories of Ramsar Award**:

The selection of nominees and Award winners will be based on the satisfaction of several of the following criteria:

¹ Nominations of government institutions of Ramsar Contracting Parties which have not fully paid their contribution to the Ramsar Convention core budget will not be accepted.

- a) A proven and documented record of achievement and success in one of the three categories;
- b) A direct link between activities and the implementation of the Ramsar Convention, whether locally, nationally, regionally or globally;
- c) The capacity of activities to be replicated, to inspire others or to serve as practical examples for others;
- d) The significance of achievements, regardless of the geographic scale of their impact;
- e) The demonstrable impact of activities on awareness of wetlands and their values and the services they provide; and
- f) The clarity with which the nomination is presented and the activities and achievements described.

7. Criteria applicable to the **Ramsar Wise Use Award**:

The concept of the wise use of wetlands, defined as “the maintenance of their ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development” is at the heart of the Ramsar philosophy. Nominees will be favoured which demonstrate outstanding achievement in meeting one or several of the following criteria:

- a) Demonstrable positive outcomes of sustainable wetland practices;
- b) Demonstrable overall benefits in the area where activities are being implemented;
- c) Demonstrated use of the ecosystem approach within a sustainable development context;
- d) A mission and purpose that relates directly to the conservation of wetlands and the communication of its importance;
- e) Replicability of the approaches and outcomes; and
- f) Reconciliation of sustainable resource use practices with long-term wetland conservation objectives.

8. Criteria applicable to the **Ramsar Innovation Award**:

Nominees will be favoured which demonstrate innovative actions supporting the wise use of wetlands, whether through new techniques or new approaches, which meet one or several of the following criteria:

- a) An innovation, which is truly a new concept rather than a variation of an existing one;
- b) The demonstrable usefulness and impact of the innovation;
- c) Its demonstrable applicability, practicality, and replicability; and
- d) The wide public recognition of the innovation.

9. Criteria applicable to the **Ramsar Young Wetland Champion Award**:

Nominations will be assessed against the following criteria:

- a) Individuals nominated must be between 18 and 30 years old at the time of nomination. The members and leader(s) of nominated groups must be within the same age range. Dates of birth must be provided.
- b) A proven and documented record of achievement in activities or projects on the conservation and wise use of wetlands. These may involve community work, research, awareness raising, restoration work, or any other activity undertaken to benefit wetlands.
- c) The activity or project must clearly refer to the Ramsar Convention.
- d) Projects or activities must be in an advanced implementation stage to be considered.
- e) Requests for study grants will not be considered.

Nomination procedure

10. Nominations must be submitted to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat in English, French or Spanish, using the Ramsar Award form available from the Ramsar Secretariat in Gland, Switzerland, and on the Ramsar web site (<http://www.ramsar.org/Ramsar-Award/>). The nomination must include a summary of up to 250 words describing the achievements of the nominee and the reasons for the nomination.
11. The form must be accompanied by a document of up to 2,500 words, providing the necessary background, explaining how the nomination corresponds to the objectives and criteria of the Award, and providing an assessment of the results achieved.
12. Nominations must be accompanied by letters of recommendation from two independent individuals (not including the nominator) who are not related to the nominee, and do not work in the same organization, who can assess the nominee's contributions and can be contacted by the evaluation panel.
13. The nomination will be assessed on the basis of the nomination form, the additional information provided and the letters of reference.
14. Nominations must be accompanied by at least one high resolution photograph of the nominee (person or team) in electronic form (minimum size of 1920x1080 pixels) with photo credits and permission for use by the Ramsar Secretariat at its discretion, including when announcing the Ramsar Award winners.
15. All winners must be ready to provide at least 20 high-resolution images illustrating their activities and achievements, with captions, photo credits and permission for use by the Ramsar Secretariat at its discretion and by Danone-Evian for Award publicity material in different media.
16. Limited additional information such as images, short videos or links to web resources may also be provided, preferably in electronic form, to illustrate the nomination.
17. The deadline for submitting nominations is 15 June 2014. This date shall be final.
18. Self-nomination and direct approaches to members of the Ramsar Standing Committee (acting as the selection committee) will disqualify any nominee from further consideration.

Selection procedure

19. The Ramsar Secretariat will evaluate the nominations received and submit a shortlist with recommendations to the Ramsar Standing Committee for its consideration. In undertaking this evaluation, the Secretariat may seek the advice of members of the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), the CEPA Oversight Panel or others, as appropriate.
20. The Standing Committee will select the Award winners, and its decision will be final.

Announcement and presentation of Awards

21. The Secretariat will announce the Award winners on the Ramsar Web site as soon as they have all confirmed their acceptance of the Award.

22. The Ramsar Award will be presented during the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, and every effort will be made to ensure the presence of individual Award winners and of a representative of any Award-winning group or institution.

Ramsar merit awards

23. Certain of the above nominations may stand out because of the long-term contribution or commitment of nominees to the conservation and wise use of wetlands and to Ramsar principles, although they may not be selected for one of the three Ramsar Awards.
24. The selection committee may decide to grant a merit award to individuals or institutions that have contributed significantly to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, especially through their lifelong dedication to these aims.
25. Merit awards would be simply rewarded by a certificate. They would not be accompanied by any monetary rewards. If funding were made available, recipients of a merit award might be invited to receive their certificate at the Awards ceremony.

How to obtain a nomination form

The nomination forms for the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award can be downloaded from the Ramsar Web site at <http://www.ramsar.org/Ramsar-Award/>, or obtained electronically or in hard copy from:

The Ramsar Convention Secretariat
Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland
fax: +41 22 999 01 69,
e-mail: award@ramsar.org.

The deadline for receipt of nominations by the Ramsar Secretariat is **15 June 2014**, by e-mail.

Nominations received after this date will not be considered.

Please note that the receipt of nominations will be acknowledged but that no further communication will take place unless further information is requested, or the nominee has been selected to receive an Award.

The Award winners will be announced on the Ramsar Web site.