

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

53rd Meeting of the Standing Committee

Gland, Switzerland, 29 May – 2 June 2017

SC53-16

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

Actions requested:

Standing Committee is invited to:

- i) take note of the progress with the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention, and issues arising regarding organizational matters and implications for the Secretariat;
- ii) designate a chair for the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) for Wetland City accreditation and review its membership;
- iii) provide guidance to the Secretariat on the way forward, including on the Secretariat's proposal to start with a pilot phase to be assessed to inform further work, revised timeline and resource implications for the Secretariat; and
- iv) provide feedback on the nomination form and associated guidance, and on changes needed if a pilot phase is adopted.

Background

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat. Comments have been sought from the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) and the Secretariat will report on comments received at the 53rd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC53). Annexes have been prepared by the IAC.
2. Resolution XII.10 on *Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention* underlined the importance of wetlands in urban and peri-urban environments (recalling Resolution X.27 on *Wetlands and Urbanization*) and approved the establishment of a voluntary Wetland City accreditation system for municipal authorities that demonstrate strong and positive relationships with wetlands (as outlined in the Annex of Resolution XII.10).
3. Resolution XII.10 further established the IAC and proposed that a representative of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) shall act as its Chair. It also specified that any costs for preparing and approving the Wetland City accreditation shall not be borne by the core budget of the Secretariat.
4. Through Decisions SC51-18, SC52-08 and SC52-09, the Standing Committee approved the continuation of the work as presented by the Secretariat and the composition and membership of the IAC, invited the North America and Latin America and the Caribbean regions to appoint

members, and requested continued actions to streamline processes and minimize the impact on Secretariat time and resources.

Progress with the implementation of the Wetland City accreditation

5. Following Decision SC52-08 which approved the composition and membership of the IAC, Honduras has accepted to be the representative of the Latin America and the Caribbean region.
6. On 29 November 2016, the IAC held its first meeting to consider its terms of reference and a proposed draft Wetland City accreditation nomination form. Participants agreed to provide their comments on the two documents by 15 December 2016. Further feedback was provided by UN-Habitat and a revised version was approved by the IAC on 4 April 2017 (see Annex 1). The IAC Chair advised on the need to develop further guidance on how cities and other human settlements should compile the nomination form. This guidance was subsequently issued by the IAC, including the level of detail and types of supporting evidence required (see Annex 2). The IAC also prepared guidance for Ramsar National Focal Points on how to undertake a national review to determine which cities to propose to the IAC, and how to evaluate the compiled nomination forms to ensure that they abide by the criteria (see Annex 3). The IAC also reviewed its terms of reference (see Annex 5).
7. The IAC agreed to produce, by the end of September 2017, guidance on how it will transparently and objectively review the applications and decide whether criteria have been satisfied and a city can be accredited or not. The IAC also agreed to produce by September 2017 guidance on how the six-year review process will be conducted.

Issues arising

8. Since the adoption of Resolution XII.10 and Decisions SC51-18, SC52-08 and SC52-09, there has been new information and changes that require further consideration by the Standing Committee and guidance to the Secretariat on how to proceed. The following are new elements that need to be considered:

Organizational matters

9. The Secretariat communicated directly with UN-Habitat to enquire about the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (which was approved by SC52 through Decision SC52-10) and its engagement in this initiative. UN-Habitat informed the Secretariat that they were not in a position to chair the IAC and that they had no resources allocated to this process. They explained that they had not confirmed their ability to take on this position. UN-Habitat remains very interested to engage and to be part of the IAC, and agreed that they could review applications. Resolution XII.10 provided for UN Habitat to be the Chair of the IAC and it was assumed that it would play a central role in this process. There is thus a need for Contracting Parties to identify a Chair for the IAC.

Implications for the Secretariat

10. The revised role of UN-Habitat has implications for the IAC and the support required for its operation. This could result in increased demands on the Secretariat's time and resources.

11. Also, more detailed consideration of the process has resulted in the identification of risks related to possible increased demands on the Secretariat. This would be contrary to the instruction from Parties in Resolution XII.10 and Decision SC52-09 to ensure that costs are not borne by the core budget of the Secretariat and to minimize the impact on the Secretariat's time and resources. Such risks relate to the support that would be required for the Secretary General to perform her role as a member of the IAC, the unlimited number of proposals that could be received, and the challenges of compiling and analyzing the information provided in the forms by the IAC without Secretariat support. There might also be reputational risks if accredited cities were to be subject to threats without a clear way to address such cases.
12. Furthermore, the Secretary General has reviewed the capacities of the Secretariat to deliver on its core functions, and has identified capacity gaps as presented in her report contained in document SC53-02. Given the need to deliver on such core functions, further consideration is needed from the Standing Committee on the possible implications of the Wetland City accreditation on the Secretariat's capacities.

Issues submitted to Standing Committee for further guidance and decisions

13. Given that UN-Habitat is not in a position to chair the IAC, it is proposed that the Standing Committee identifies a Chair. The Secretariat has approached the sponsors of the Resolution to seek their interest and availability to take on this position, and will report to SC53 on any proposals received.
14. The Secretariat recognizes the potential benefits of the Wetland City accreditation and has endeavoured to deliver on the instructions from Contracting Parties. However, given the above circumstances and possible increased demands on its capacities as well as other risks described above, the Secretariat requires guidance from Parties on how to proceed.
15. The Secretariat proposes as an option for consideration by the Standing Committee to start the implementation of this initiative with a pilot phase which would have a more limited and manageable scope and which could be assessed after a given period of time to enable better understanding of the process and implications for the Secretariat. Options for such a pilot phase could include the following:
 - a. To limit the number of cities proposed for accreditation, for example by defining a limited number per country, a limited total number, or focusing on a region;
 - b. To focus initially on cities that have wetlands designated as Ramsar Sites (Resolution XII.10 refers to cities which are located close to Ramsar Sites and/or other significant wetlands), as this would better link the initiative with core work carried out by the Secretariat. Such an approach could also refer to Article 3.2. and the inclusion in the Montreux Record as part of the selection process. Furthermore, there would be a mechanism to respond to threats and reputational risks with the processes provided by the Convention.
 - c. To start with a programme to develop good practice on the relationship between cities and wetlands, together with UN-Habitat and other actors, that could be profiled and scaled up and moved towards an accreditation scheme once experience is developed in this field and funding identified.

16. The pilot approach proposed in 15.a and 15.b above would require the revision of the nomination form, guidance and Terms of Reference of the IAC, and so the Standing Committee is invited to provide feedback on these.
17. The pilot approach would also require a revised timeline:
 - a. the Secretariat to send the call for submissions by the end of June 2017;
 - b. concerned national Ramsar Administrative Authorities to submit applications by the end of September 2017;
 - c. the IAC to review submissions from October to December 2017;
 - d. SC54 to review the IAC report listing cities approved for accreditation and transmit it to COP13 in April 2018 (SC54 date to be decided by SC53);
 - e. the Secretariat to review pilot phase experience and prepare recommendations to COP13 by June 2018; and
 - f. the Contracting Parties at COP13 in October 2018 to review the IAC report and announce accredited cities, and to review the recommendations on the pilot phase and decide on next steps.
18. Unless the newly appointed Chair of the IAC proposes a mechanism to review, compile and assess the submissions and support the operations of the Committee, the Secretariat could be expected to perform these tasks. This would require specific capacities and budget to be approved by the Standing Committee. For example, it is estimated that options 15.a and 15.b taken together would require the equivalent of one staff member at 100% and an annual travel budget of CHF 15,000.
19. Option 15.c could be started with existing capacities if collaboration could be developed with UN-Habitat and with staff capacity allocated to seek funding jointly with UN-Habitat and other possible partners. A proposal could be developed and submitted to SC54, for launching at COP13.

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Annex 1: Wetland City Accreditation Nomination Form

Instruction for compilers:

- i. Complete all yellow cells taking into account the specific limits on characters.
- ii. Further information on the wise use of wetlands and cities is provided in Resolution XI.11 available at: <http://www.ramsar.org/document/resolution-xi11-principles-for-the-planning-and-management-of-urban-and-peri-urban-wetlands>; and on the Wetland City Accreditation process at: <http://www.ramsar.org/document/resolution-xii10-wetland-city-accreditation-of-the-ramsar-convention>.
- iii. Completed Nomination Forms should be sent by the designated National Focal Point for Ramsar Convention matters in the Administrative Authority to: ramsar@ramsar.org
- iv. Further guidance on how to compile the Nomination Form is available at: <http://www.ramsar.org/>

1. Background information

Notes – Also see Guidance Note for Cities

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1a. Country | <input style="width: 100px; height: 40px;" type="text"/> | |
| 1b. Name of city | <input style="width: 100px; height: 40px;" type="text"/> | <i>An eligible 'city' for the Wetland City Accreditation may be a city or any other type of human settlement according to the definition given by United Nations Centre for Human Settlement</i> |
| 1c. Geographical coordinates of the city | <input style="width: 100px; height: 40px;" type="text"/> | |
| 1d. Administrative and wetland map | <input style="width: 100px; height: 40px;" type="text"/> | <i>Tick box to confirm that a map delineating the administrative boundary of the city and indicating, as far as possible, all wetlands fully or partly situated in its territory or close vicinity, has been provided.</i> |
| 1e. Area of city | <input style="width: 100px; height: 40px;" type="text"/> | <i>Area in hectares within administrative boundary</i> |
| 1f. Approximate area of wetlands within the city boundaries | <input style="width: 100px; height: 40px;" type="text"/> | <i>Indication of the area of wetlands within the administrative boundaries, indicating, as far as possible, whether they are natural or human made</i> |
| 1.g Define the types of wetland present within the city boundaries | <input style="width: 100px; height: 40px;" type="text"/> | <i>Use the Ramsar Classification of wetlands to describe the range of wetland types. See http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-17.pdf (Annex I on Ramsar Classification System for Wetland Type)</i> |

2. Accreditation criteria

Instruction: To be considered for formal accreditation the city must satisfy **ALL** of the following criteria. Please provide all necessary information in the yellow cells. Please note that the word limits will be strictly enforced. In addition, compilers may provide attached files or web-links to specific examples, plans, regulatory instruments, relevant reports, case studies or photographs etc.

Group A: Criteria based on delivering the conservation and wise use of wetlands

A city can be considered for accreditation if it has one or more Ramsar Sites or other significant wetlands fully or partly situated in its territory or in its close vicinity, which provide(s) a range of ecosystems services to the city.

A.1 Name any Ramsar Site that is fully or partly in the city administrative boundaries *Use the official Ramsar Site name and number as described on the Ramsar Information Sheet (available on <https://rsis.ramsar.org/>). If none, state 'None'.*

A.2 Name any other significant wetland that is fully or partly in the city administrative boundaries *Specify its legal conservation status (national or local), if none state None.*

A city can be considered for accreditation if it has adopted measures for conservation of wetlands and their services including biodiversity and hydrological integrity.

A.3. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that **development avoids degrading and destroying wetlands**. Describe the national and/or local **policy, legislative measures** and **regulatory instruments**, urban management plans etc. that are in use by the city to proactively prevent the degradation and loss of wetlands.

(This field is limited to 2500 characters)

A city can be considered for accreditation if it has implemented wetland restoration and/or management measures.

A.4. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it proactively encourages the **restoration or creation of wetlands** as elements of urban, and especially water management infrastructure. Provide specific examples (site and summary of implemented measures) of where wetlands have been created or restored within the city as elements of urban infrastructure, such as to control flooding, cool climate, improve water quality, provide recreation, etc.

(This field is limited to 2500 characters)

A city can be considered for accreditation if it considers the challenges and opportunities of integrated spatial/land-use planning for wetlands under its jurisdiction.

A.5. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it considers the importance of wetlands as elements of **spatial planning and integrated city management** (such as through Integrated River Basin Management, spatial zonation, water resource management, the development of transport infrastructure, agriculture production, fuel supply, poverty alleviation, pollution control, flood risk management, disaster risk reduction, etc.). Describe the measures (policies, procedures, guidance, legislation, etc.) that ensure that the importance of wetlands is considered fully as elements of spatial planning and integrated city management.

(This field is limited to 2500 characters)

A city can be considered for accreditation if it has delivered locally adapted information to raise public awareness about the values of wetlands, and encouraged the wise use of wetlands by stakeholders through, for example, establishing wetland education/information centres.

A.6. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it has adopted the **principles of inclusivity, empowerment, and participation of indigenous and local communities and the civil society** in decision-making and city planning and management. Describe how indigenous and local communities have been engaged and participate in the management of wetland-related issues.

(This field is limited to 2500 characters)

A.7. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it has **raised levels of public awareness about the values of wetlands**, and encouraged the wise use of wetlands by a diverse range of stakeholders and communities through, for example, establishing operational wetland education or information centres, regularly disseminating information on wetlands, establishing and implementing school education programmes, etc.

(This field is limited to 2500 characters)

A.8. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it has proactively promoted events around **World Wetlands Day** (2 February) in order to raise awareness on wetlands and their importance to the city. Describe the types of events that have been delivered to celebrate World Wetlands Day in the city.

(This field is limited to 2500 characters)

A city can be considered for accreditation if it has established a local committee with appropriate knowledge and experience on wetlands and demonstrates representation of and engagement with stakeholders to support the Wetland City Accreditation, both through the submission of the Accreditation Form and the subsequent implementation of proper measures for fulfilling the obligations under the accreditation process.

A.9. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it has **established a local committee** (or similar structure) to support and to further the aims of the Wetland City Accreditation. Such a committee should contain appropriate knowledge and experience on wetlands and should be representative of stakeholders and communities. Describe the committee, its members, mandate and operation.

(This field is limited to 2500 characters)

Group B: Complementary approaches

A city can be considered for accreditation if it has developed and applied appropriate standards regarding water quality, sanitation and management in the entire area under the city's jurisdiction.

B.1. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it has applied **standards on water quality and sanitation, including waste management** facilities which include collection and treatment for solid waste and wastewater (industrial, domestic and stormwater). Describe the standards, policies and regulatory framework which ensures delivery on water quality and sanitation standards

(Each field is limited to 2500 characters)

A city can be considered for accreditation if it recognizes and considers the socio-economic and cultural values, as well as the broader ecosystem services, of wetlands and has established good practices to consider and protect them in decision-making.

B.2. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it **proactively recognises the ecosystem services** that wetlands provide and has integrated these multiple values into decision making. Where appropriate, special attention should be given to describing sustainable agriculture, forestry, fisheries, tourism and the cultural values of wetlands. Describe how the different provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting ecosystem services are recognised and the benefits that they provide to human society are integrated into planning and decision-making. Where possible, illustrate with examples.

(Each field is limited to 1000 characters)

Provisioning services:

Regulating services:

Supporting services:

Cultural services:

B.3. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that there is a **close link between local communities and the wetlands**. Describe how local communities are engaged with the wise use of wetlands and how the communities benefit from the services the wetlands provide.

(This field is limited to 2500 characters)

3. City approval

Instruction: An authorised representative of the city authority making the application needs to check and approve the accreditation form against the guidance provided. In the case of several cities making a joint submission, a representative of each authority needs to check and approve the form, and then send it to the country’s Ramsar Administrative Authority who will formally submit it to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat (ramsar@ramsar.org) If more than three authorities are making the submission please insert further boxes.

Name/Title:

Position:

Address

E-mail

Date: Signature:

Name/Title:

Position:

Address

E-mail

Date: Signature:

Name/Title:

Position:

Address

E-mail

Date: Signature:

4. Endorsement by the Ramsar Administrative Authority

Instruction for the Ramsar Administrative Authority: Please check and endorse each application for City Accreditation in your country, before sending this form to the Ramsar Secretariat at (ramsar@ramsar.org). Please also consult *Wetland City Accreditation Guidance Note for Ramsar Administrative Authority*.

Name of
Administrative
Authority

Name and title of
Designated National
Focal Point for
Ramsar Convention
matters

Date:

Signature of the
Designated National
Focal Point for Ramsar
Convention matters:

Annex 2: Wetland City Accreditation Guidance Note for Cities

Background and context

Resolution XI.II of the Conference of Contracting Parties requested that the Convention explores establishing a wetland city accreditation, which may in turn provide positive branding opportunities for cities that demonstrate strong and positive relationships with wetlands (<http://www.ramsar.org/document/resolution-xi11-principles-for-the-planning-and-management-of-urban-and-peri-urban-wetlands>). As a response, Resolution XII.10 of the Conference of Contracting Parties established the “Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention” (<http://www.ramsar.org/document/resolution-xii10-wetland-city-accreditation-of-the-ramsar-convention>).

The criteria used for the *Wetland City Accreditation* are based on the principles adopted in Resolution XI.11 and the criteria adopted in Resolution XII.10. Additional information can be found in the Briefing Note produced by the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel on ‘Towards the wise use of urban and peri-urban wetlands’ which is available at <http://www.ramsar.org/document/briefing-note-6-towards-the-wise-use-of-urban-and-peri-urban-wetlands>. Wider ranging fact sheets on many aspects of wetlands and the Ramsar Convention can be downloaded from <http://www.ramsar.org/resources/ramsar-fact-sheets>.

General guidance

The *Wetland City Accreditation* Nomination Form must be completed in one of the Convention’s three working languages, namely English, French, or Spanish. The *Wetland City Accreditation* Nomination Form and this accompanying *Guidance Note for Cities* are available in each of the three working languages.

The information provided in the *Wetland City Accreditation* Nomination Form should be clear and succinct, and the total length of a completed *Wetland City Accreditation* Nomination Form should not exceed the specified word limits given for each field.

In the case of a city where the wetlands have been well-studied and well-documented, or which are the subject of special field investigations, far more information may be available than can be accommodated in the *Wetland City Accreditation* Nomination Form. Nominating cities are encouraged not to append additional information, such as taxonomic lists of species’ status, management plans, copies of legal instruments, etc. but to provide succinct but comprehensive summaries in the appropriate fields.

Specific guidance on completing the fields of the Wetland City Accreditation Nomination Form

1. Background information

- 1a. **Country:** The official (short) version of the Contracting Party/country name.
- 1b. **Name of city:** An eligible ‘city’ for the Wetland City Accreditation may be a city or any other type of human settlement according to the definition given by United Nations Centre for

Human Settlement. The term human settlements is an integrative concept that comprises: (a) physical components of shelter and infrastructure; and (b) services to which the physical elements provide support, that is to say, community services such as education, health, culture, welfare, recreation and nutrition. (Source: United Nations (1997) *Glossary of Environment Statistics: Studies in Methods*, Series F, No. 67. Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, Statistics Division. United Nations, New York. 96pp.).

- 1c. **Geographical coordinates:** The geographical coordinates of the *approximate* centre of the city expressed in *degrees and minutes of latitude and longitude* (e.g. in the format: 01°24'S 104°16'E or 010°30'N 084°51'W).
- 1d. **Administrative and wetland map:** Tick the yellow box to confirm that a map has been provided. The most up-to-date available and suitable map of the city and its wetland should be appended to the *Wetland City Accreditation* Nomination Form (in hardcopy and, if possible, also in digital format). At least a hardcopy map is required for the consideration of the City for accreditation. The map must clearly show the administrative boundary of the city, the boundary of any designated Ramsar Site(s) and other wetland areas. If the map has been prepared in digital (GIS) format, please send a GIS file providing geo-referenced site boundary vectors and attribute tables, and please also send a separate image file, showing the site boundaries, in a common image format (TIFF, BMP, JPG, GIF, etc.).
- 1e. **Area of the city:** The total area of the city within the formal administrative boundaries in hectares.
- 1f. **Approximate area of wetlands within the city boundaries:** Indication of the total area of wetlands within the administrative boundaries, indicating, as far as possible, how much is natural and how much is human made. If the areas of discrete wetland units are known, please also indicate each of these together with the names (or labels) used to identify and differentiate these units and show them on the administrative and wetland map.
- 1g. **Wetland types:** In this field list the full range of wetland types occurring within the city. Where possible list them in order of their dominance (by area) starting with the wetland type with the largest area. The Ramsar Classification System for Wetland Type, as approved by Recommendation 4.7 and amended by Resolutions VI.5 and VII.11 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, provides the description of what types of wetland are covered by each of the wetland type codes (see Appendix I). Note that the wetland types are grouped in three major categories: marine-coastal, inland, and human-made wetlands, and that wetland types under two or more of these categories may be present within a Ramsar site, particularly if it is large.

Since some Marine/Coastal wetland types (e.g. Estuarine waters (type *F*) or Intertidal Forested Wetlands (type *I*)) can occur far inland from the coastline, and conversely Inland Wetlands types can occur close to the coastline, please also indicate with additional text in this section the general geographical location of the site relative to the coastline, as either inland or marine/coastal.

When listing the areal dominance of the wetland types, if possible provide the area, although it is recognised that this may be difficult for complex situations with a wide variety of wetland types.

2. Accreditation criteria

Group A: Criteria based on delivering the conservation and wise use of wetlands

- A1. **Name any Ramsar Site that is fully or partly in the city administrative boundaries:** A city can be nominated if there is a Ramsar Site fully or partly situated within its administrative boundaries. Provide the precise name of the designated Ramsar Site in one of the three official languages (English, French or Spanish) of the Convention. Alternative names, including in local language(s), should be given in parenthesis after the precise name. The official Ramsar Site name and number as described on the Ramsar Information Sheet is available on <https://rsis.ramsar.org/>). If none, state 'None'.
- A2. **Name any other significant wetland that is fully or partly in the city administrative boundaries:** A city can be nominated even if there is not a Ramsar Site fully or partly situated within its administrative boundaries but there are other wetlands that are considered to be significant in terms of their contribution to the provision of ecosystem services on which the city depends. Provide the precise name of the wetland (or wetlands) in one of the three official languages (English, French or Spanish) of the Convention. Alternative names, including in local language(s), should be given in parenthesis after the precise name. Indicate whether any wetland within the administrative boundaries has a relevant protected area status (either in addition to or separate from Ramsar Site status), international conservation designations, and, in the case of transboundary wetlands, bilateral or multilateral conservation measures which pertain to all or part of the site. If a reserve has been established, give the date of establishment and size of the protected area. If only a part of the wetland is included within a protected area, the area of wetland habitat that is protected should be noted. If appropriate, use the IUCN protected areas management category to describe the wetland (Appendix II).
- A3. **National and/or local policy, legislative measures and regulatory instruments:** A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that development avoids degrading and destroying wetlands. In order to achieve this, the city needs to have a strong set of legal or policy instruments in place supported by appropriate regulation and enforcement. These could include national, state or city laws, local bye-laws, regulations, policies and plans. Describe the national and/or local policy, legislative measures and regulatory instruments that are in use by the city to proactively prevent the degradation and loss of wetlands. (Please note that field is limited to a maximum of 2500 characters).
- A4. **Restoration and creation of wetlands:** Within a city environment there is considerable evidence that wetlands can play a significant role in enhancing human well-being. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it proactively encourages the restoration or creation of wetlands as elements of urban, and especially water management infrastructure. For instance, the city might have created multi-functional wetlands that can help with managing urban flooding whilst also providing other benefits such as recreation or local climate regulation. Provide specific examples (site and summary of implemented measures) of where wetlands have been created or restored within the city as elements of urban infrastructure, such as to protecting from hazards, cooling climate, improving water quality, or providing opportunities for education, etc. (Please note that field is limited to a maximum of 2500 characters).
- A5. **Spatial planning and integrated city management:** The wise use of wetlands within a city context can be strongly influenced by good planning, stewardship and management, which in

turn can contribute to sustainable social and economic development for current and future generations. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it considers the importance of wetlands within elements of spatial planning and integrated city management (such as through Integrated River Basin Management, spatial zonation, water resource management, the development of transport infrastructure, agriculture production, fuel supply, poverty alleviation, pollution control, flood risk management, disaster risk reduction, etc.). Describe the measures (plans, policies, procedures, guidance, legislation, etc.) that ensure that the importance of wetlands is considered fully within elements of spatial planning and integrated city management. (Please note that field is limited to a maximum of 2500 characters).

- A6. **Principles of inclusivity, empowerment, and participation of indigenous and local communities and the civil society:** The full participation of indigenous and local communities, civil society, municipalities and government sectors in city spatial planning and wetland management decision-making is vital to creating sustainable human settlements. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it has adopted the principles of inclusivity, empowerment, and participation of indigenous and local communities and the civil society in decision-making and city planning and management. Describe how indigenous and local communities have been engaged and participate in the management of wetland-related issues and any formal instruments that may exist to ensure that full and active participatory approaches are pursued. (Please note that field is limited to a maximum of 2500 characters).
- A7. **Raised levels of public awareness about the values of wetlands:** The benefits provided by wetlands and their associated values are often poorly considered in city decision-making. Therefore, these values need to be articulated clearly so that citizens and urban planners can make informed decisions. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it has raised levels of public awareness about the values of wetlands, and encouraged the wise use of wetlands by a diverse range of stakeholders and communities through, for example, establishing operational wetland education or information centres, regularly disseminating information on wetlands, establishing and implementing school education programmes, etc. Describe the types of activities that have been undertaken and also how their impact, in terms of raising awareness and contributing to the wise use of wetlands, has been monitored and assessed. (Please note that field is limited to a maximum of 2500 characters).
- A8. **World Wetlands Day:** World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on 2 February. This day marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. Since 1997, the Ramsar Secretariat has provided outreach materials to help raise public awareness about the importance and value of wetlands. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it has proactively promoted events around World Wetlands Day in order to raise awareness on wetlands and their importance to the city. Describe the types of events that have been delivered to celebrate World Wetlands Day in the city. (Please note that field is limited to a maximum of 2500 characters).
- A9. **Established a local committee:** For the accreditation process to be robust requires knowledge and experience to be drawn from several sectors and stakeholders. The recommended approach is to establish a functional committee comprising appropriate knowledge and experience on wetlands. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it has established a local committee (or similar structure) to support and to further the aims of

the Wetland City Accreditation process. Such a committee should contain appropriate knowledge and experience on wetlands and should be representative of stakeholders and communities. Describe the committee, its participants, mandate and operation. (Please note that field is limited to a maximum of 2500 characters).

Group B: Complementary approaches

- B1. Standards on water quality and sanitation, including waste management:** Many cities face challenges around the management of waste, protecting water quality, sanitation and hygiene. All of these issues will affect people's health and wellbeing. Interventions are often necessary in order to address local conditions and community needs. Many solutions and management measures will require integrated approaches in order to both safeguard human wellbeing but also to ensure the wise use of wetlands. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it has applied standards on water quality (which can include chemical or biological standards) and sanitation, including waste management facilities which include collection and treatment for solid waste and wastewater (industrial, domestic and stormwater). Describe the standards, policies and regulatory framework which ensures delivery on water quality and sanitation standards. (Please note that field is limited to a maximum of 2500 characters).
- B2. Ecosystem services:** Ecosystem services are the benefits that nature provides human society. In the city environment, wetlands and the range of services they provide are essential elements of the supporting structure of urban and peri-urban settlements. Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention are expected to manage all their wetlands, including Ramsar Sites, so as to maintain their ecological character. In order to do this requires the ecological character of a wetland to be described. The Ramsar Convention has defined ecological character as: *"the combination of the ecosystem components, processes and benefits/services that characterise the wetland at a given point in time"*. Therefore the range of ecosystem services that a wetland provides is a key component of its overall ecological character. Ecosystem services are commonly grouped into four main categories: provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting services. Further information on the types of ecosystem services provided by wetlands is expanded in Appendix III.

A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it proactively recognises the ecosystem services that wetlands provide and has integrated these multiple values into decision making. Where appropriate, special attention should be applied to describing sustainable agriculture, forestry, fisheries, tourism and the cultural values of wetlands. Describe how the different provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting ecosystem services are recognised and the benefits that they provide human society are integrated into planning and management decision-making. Where possible, illustrate with examples. Ensure that the consideration of ecosystem services is as comprehensive and inclusive as possible. (Please note that each field is limited to a maximum of 1000 characters per ecosystem service category).

- B3. Linkages between local communities and wetlands:** Urban development and wetland management should adopt the principles of inclusivity, empowerment and participation with local communities. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that there is a close link between local communities and the wetlands. Describe how local communities are engaged with the wise use of wetlands and how the communities benefit from the services the wetlands provide. (Please note that field is limited to a maximum of 2500 characters).

3. City approval

An authorised representative of the city authority making the application needs to check and approve the accreditation form against the guidance provided. It is essential that ALL questions are answered and that appropriate supporting information is provided.

In the case of several cities making a joint submission, a representative of each authority needs to check and approve the form, and then send it to the country's Ramsar Administrative Authority who will formally submit it the completed *Wetland City Accreditation* Nomination Form to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat. If more than three authorities are making the submission please insert further boxes.

Please provide the full name, position, address and contact details of the city authority. The Accreditation Form should be signed and dated prior to submission to the country's Ramsar Administrative Authority.

The head of state or government or the Foreign Office of each Contracting Party designates a national agency to act as the implementing agency, or "Administrative Authority", of the Convention in that country. The Administrative Authority is the focal point for communications with the Ramsar Secretariat and the main agency responsible for the implementation of the treaty. (Unlike many other conventions, Ramsar treats the designated agency as its "national focal point", not any individual within it.) It is expected that the Administrative Authority will consult and cooperate with as many other government agencies and non-governmental institutions as possible in order to ensure the best possible results in achieving the goals of the Ramsar Convention. Each Administrative Authority is expected to designate a National Focal Point to deal with Ramsar Convention Matters. More information on the Ramsar Contracting Parties and the individual contact details within the Administrative Authority is available at <http://www.ramsar.org/country-profiles>.

4. Endorsement by the Ramsar Administrative Authority

Upon receipt of the completed and endorsed Wetland City Accreditation Nomination Form, the designated National Focal Point for Ramsar Convention matters in the Administrative Authority will check the form and, if appropriate, provide formal endorsement. The Nomination Form will then be sent to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and subsequently to the Independent Advisory Committee, established under Resolution XII.10, for review and final decision-making.

Separate guidance is available for the National Focal Point for Ramsar Convention matters in the Administrative Authority in order to undertake the appropriate checking of the completed Accreditation Form.

Appendix I: Ramsar Classification System for Wetland Type

The codes are based upon the Ramsar Classification System for Wetland Type as approved by Recommendation 4.7 and amended by Resolutions VI.5 and VII.11 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties. The categories listed herein are intended to provide only a very broad framework to aid rapid identification of the main wetland habitats represented at each site.

To assist in identification of the correct Wetland Types to list in *Wetland City Accreditation* Nomination Form, the Secretariat has provided below tabulations for Marine/Coastal Wetlands and Inland Wetlands of some of the characteristics of each Wetland Type.

Marine/Coastal Wetlands

- A **Permanent shallow marine waters** in most cases less than six metres deep at low tide; includes sea bays and straits.
- B **Marine subtidal aquatic beds**; includes kelp beds, sea-grass beds, tropical marine meadows.
- C **Coral reefs**.
- D- **Rocky marine shores**; includes rocky offshore islands, sea cliffs.
- E **Sand, shingle or pebble shores**; includes sand bars, spits and sandy islets; includes dune systems and humid dune slacks.
- F **Estuarine waters**; permanent water of estuaries and estuarine systems of deltas.
- G **Intertidal mud, sand or salt flats**.
- H **Intertidal marshes**; includes salt marshes, salt meadows, saltings, raised salt marshes; includes tidal brackish and freshwater marshes.
- I **Intertidal forested wetlands**; includes mangrove swamps, nipah swamps and tidal freshwater swamp forests.
- J **Coastal brackish/saline lagoons**; brackish to saline lagoons with at least one relatively narrow connection to the sea.
- K **Coastal freshwater lagoons**; includes freshwater delta lagoons.
- Zk(a) **Karst and other subterranean hydrological systems**, marine/coastal

Inland Wetlands

- L **Permanent inland deltas**.
- M **Permanent rivers/streams/creeks**; includes waterfalls.
- N **Seasonal/intermittent/irregular rivers/streams/creeks**.
- O **Permanent freshwater lakes** (over 8 ha); includes large oxbow lakes.
- P **Seasonal/intermittent freshwater lakes** (over 8 ha); includes floodplain lakes.
- Q **Permanent saline/brackish/alkaline lakes**.
- R **Seasonal/intermittent saline/brackish/alkaline lakes and flats**.
- Sp **Permanent saline/brackish/alkaline marshes/pools**.
- Ss **Seasonal/intermittent saline/brackish/alkaline marshes/pools**.
- Tp **Permanent freshwater marshes/pools**; ponds (below 8 ha), marshes and swamps on inorganic soils; with emergent vegetation water-logged for at least most of the growing season.
- Ts **Seasonal/intermittent freshwater marshes/pools on inorganic soils**; includes sloughs, potholes, seasonally flooded meadows, sedge marshes.
- U **Non-forested peatlands**; includes shrub or open bogs, swamps, fens.
- Va **Alpine wetlands**; includes alpine meadows, temporary waters from snowmelt.
- Vt **Tundra wetlands**; includes tundra pools, temporary waters from snowmelt.
- W **Shrub-dominated wetlands**; shrub swamps, shrub-dominated freshwater marshes, shrub carr, alder thicket on inorganic soils.

- Xf **Freshwater, tree-dominated wetlands**; includes freshwater swamp forests, seasonally flooded forests, wooded swamps on inorganic soils.
- Xp **Forested peatlands**; peatswamp forests.
- Y **Freshwater springs; oases.**
- Zg **Geothermal wetlands**
- Zk(b) **Karst and other subterranean hydrological systems, inland**

Note: “**floodplain**” is a broad term used to refer to one or more wetland types, which may include examples from the R, Ss, Ts, W, Xf, Xp, or other wetland types. Some examples of floodplain wetlands are seasonally inundated grassland (including natural wet meadows), shrublands, woodlands and forests. Floodplain wetlands are not listed as a specific wetland type herein.

Human-made wetlands

- 1 **Aquaculture** (e.g., fish/shrimp) **ponds**
 - 2 **Ponds**; includes farm ponds, stock ponds, small tanks; (generally below 8 ha).
 - 3 **Irrigated land**; includes irrigation channels and rice fields.
 - 4 **Seasonally flooded agricultural land** (including intensively managed or grazed wet meadow or pasture).
 - 5 **Salt exploitation sites**; salt pans, salines, etc.
 - 6 **Water storage areas**; reservoirs/barrages/dams/impoundments (generally over 8 ha).
 - 7 **Excavations**; gravel/brick/clay pits; borrow pits, mining pools.
 - 8 **Wastewater treatment areas**; sewage farms, settling ponds, oxidation basins, etc.
 - 9 **Canals and drainage channels, ditches.**
- Zk(c) **Karst and other subterranean hydrological systems, human-made**

Tabulations of Wetland Type characteristics

Marine / Coastal Wetlands:

Saline water	Permanent	< 6 m deep	A
		Underwater vegetation	B
		Coral reefs	C
Shores	Rocky	D	
	Sand, shingle or pebble	E	
Saline or brackish water	Intertidal	Flats (mud, sand or salt)	G
		Marshes	H
		Forested	I
	Lagoons	J	
	Estuarine waters	F	
Saline, brackish or fresh water	Subterranean	Zk(a)	
Fresh water	Lagoons	K	

Inland Wetlands:

Fresh water	Flowing water	Permanent	Rivers, streams, creeks	M
			Deltas	L
			Springs, oases	Y
		Seasonal/intermittent	Rivers, streams, creeks	N
	Lakes and pools	Permanent	> 8 ha	O
			< 8 ha	Tp
		Seasonal/intermittent	> 8 ha	P
			< 8 ha	Ts
	Marshes on inorganic soils	Permanent	Herb-dominated	Tp
		Permanent/ Seasonal/intermittent	Shrub-dominated	W
			Tree-dominated	Xf
		Seasonal/intermittent	Herb-dominated	Ts
	Marshes on peat soils	Permanent	Non-forested	U
			Forested	Xp
Marshes on inorganic or peat soils	High altitude (alpine)		Va	
	Tundra		Vt	
Saline, brackish or alkaline water	Lakes	Permanent	Q	
		Seasonal/intermittent	R	
	Marshes & pools	Permanent	Sp	
		Seasonal/intermittent	Ss	
Fresh, saline, brackish or alkaline water	Geothermal		Zg	
	Subterranean		Zk(b)	

Appendix II: IUCN protected area management categories

Category	Definition
Ia Strict Nature Reserve: protected area managed mainly for science	Area of land and/or sea possessing some outstanding or representative ecosystems, geological or physiological features and/or species, available primarily for scientific research and/or environmental monitoring.
Ib Wilderness Area: protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection	Large area of unmodified or slightly modified land, and/or sea, retaining its natural character and influence, without permanent or significant habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural condition.
II National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation	Natural area of land and/or sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations, (b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area and (c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible.
III Natural Monument: protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features	Area containing one, or more, specific natural or natural/cultural feature which is of outstanding or unique value because of its inherent rarity, representative or aesthetic qualities or cultural significance.
IV Habitat/Species Management Area: protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention	Area of land and/or sea subject to active intervention for management purposes so as to ensure the maintenance of habitats and/or to meet the requirements of specific species.
V Protected Landscape/ Seascape: protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation	Area of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area.
VI Managed Resource Protected Area: protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems	Area containing predominantly unmodified natural systems, managed to ensure long term protection and maintenance of biological diversity, while providing at the same time a sustainable flow of natural products and services to meet community needs.

Appendix III: Wetland ecosystem services

The information on wetland ecosystem services is compiled from various sources, including the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Wetland and Water Synthesis (<http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/Synthesis.html>), Ramsar Technical Report (<http://www.ramsar.org/document/ramsar-technical-report-3-valuing-wetlands-guidance-for-valuing-the-benefits-derived-from>) and collaboration between the Ramsar Convention and The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) (<http://www.ramsar.org/document/the-economics-of-ecosystem-and-biodiversity-teeb-for-water-and-wetlands-report>).

	Ecosystem service	Example
Provisioning services	Provision of fresh water	Water used for domestic drinking supply, for irrigation, for livestock, etc.
	Provision of food	Crops, fruit, fish, etc.
	Provision of fibre	Timber for building, wool for clothing, etc.
	Provision of fuel	Fuelwood, peat, etc.
	Provision of genetic resources	Rare breeds used for crop/stock breeding, etc.
	Provision of natural medicines and pharmaceuticals	Plants used as traditional medicines, etc.
	Provision of ornamental resources	Collection of shells, flowers, etc.
	Clay, mineral, aggregate harvesting	Sand and gravel extracted for building use, clay extracted for brick-making, etc.
	Energy harvesting from natural air and water flows	Water wheels driven by flowing water, windmills driven by the wind, etc.
Regulating services	Air quality regulation	Removal of airborne particles from the exhaust of cars, chimneys of industry, dust from agricultural land, etc.
	Local climate regulation	Regulation of the local microclimate, through shading, reducing air temperature, etc.
	Global climate regulation	Regulation of the global climate through control in greenhouse gas emissions, the sequestration of carbon, etc.
	Water regulation	Regulation of flows of surface water during high and low flows, regulation of recharge of groundwater, etc.
	Flood hazard regulation	Regulation and storage of flood water, regulation of intense rainfall events, etc.
	Storm hazard regulation	Regulation of tidal or storm surges, regulation of extreme winds, etc.
	Pest regulation	Control of pest species such as mosquitoes, rats, flies, etc.
	Regulation of human diseases	Presence of species that control the species (vectors) that transmit human diseases such as malaria, West Nile fever, dengue fever, Zika virus, leptospirosis, schistosomiasis, etc.
	Regulation of diseases affecting livestock	Presence of species that control the species (vectors) that transmit diseases to livestock such as leptospirosis, schistosomiasis, duck virus enteritis, highly pathogenic avian influenza, tick-borne diseases, etc.
	Erosion regulation	Regulation of energy environment to reduce risk of erosion, presence of dense vegetation protecting soils, etc.
	Water purification	Cleaning of water, improvement of water quality, deposition of silts, trapping of contaminants and pollutants, etc.
	Pollination	Pollination of plants and crops by pollinators such as bees, butterflies, wasps, etc.

	Salinity regulation	Freshwater in the wetland provides a barrier to saline waters.
	Fire regulation	Providing physical barriers to the spread of fire, maintaining wet conditions to prevent fires spreading, etc.
	Noise and visual buffering	Wetland trees or tall reeds absorbing and buffering the impact of noise.
Cultural services	Cultural heritage	Importance of the wetland for historical or archaeological value, as an example of traditional uses or management practices, as a cultural landscape, etc.
	Recreation and tourism	Importance of the wetland for providing a location for recreation such as fishing, watersports or swimming, or as a tourism destination, etc.
	Aesthetic value	The wetland is overlooked by properties, is part of an of known area of natural beauty, is used as a subject for painters and artists, etc.
	Spiritual and religious value	The wetland holds plays a role in local religious festivals, the wetland is considered as a sacred site, the wetland forms part of a traditional belief system, etc.
	Inspirational value	Presence of local myths or stories relating to the wetland, traditional oral or written histories about the wetland or wetland animals, creation of different art forms associated with the wetland, development of distinct architecture based on the wetland, etc.
	Social relations	Presence of fishing, grazing or cropping communities which have developed within and around the wetland.
	Educational and research	Use of the wetland by local school children for education, site of long-term research and monitoring, site visited by organised educational study tours, etc.
Supporting services	Primary production	Presence of primary producers such as plants, algae, etc.
	Soil formation	Deposition of sediment, accumulation of organic matter, etc.
	Nutrient cycling	Source of nutrients present from inputs from agricultural land, internal cycling of plant material, inputs of nutrients from floodwaters, presence of fauna to recycling nutrients, etc.
	Water recycling	Presence of wetland vegetation and open water result in evapotranspiration and local recycling of water, relatively closed canopies and low exposure to winds retains water in local cycles, sandy or coarse substrates allow exchange with groundwaters, etc.
	Provision of habitat	Presence of locally important habitats and species, presence of species and habitats of conservation concern, etc.

Annex 3: Wetland City Accreditation Guidance Note for Ramsar Administrative Authority

Background and context

Resolution XI.II of the Conference of Contracting Parties requested that the Convention explores establishing a wetland city accreditation, which may in turn provide positive branding opportunities for cities that demonstrate strong and positive relationships with wetlands (<http://www.ramsar.org/document/resolution-xi11-principles-for-the-planning-and-management-of-urban-and-peri-urban-wetlands>). As a response, Resolution XII.10 of the Conference of Contracting Parties established the “Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention” (<http://www.ramsar.org/document/resolution-xii10-wetland-city-accreditation-of-the-ramsar-convention>).

The criteria used for the *Wetland City Accreditation* are based on the principles adopted in Resolution XI.11 and the criteria adopted in Resolution XII.10. Additional information can be found in the Briefing Note produced by the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel on ‘Towards the wise use of urban and peri-urban wetlands’ which is available at <http://www.ramsar.org/document/briefing-note-6-towards-the-wise-use-of-urban-and-peri-urban-wetlands>. Wider ranging fact sheets on many aspects of wetlands and the Ramsar Convention can be downloaded from <http://www.ramsar.org/resources/ramsar-fact-sheets>.

General guidance

The *Wetland City Accreditation* Nomination Form must be completed by a nominating city or human settlement in one of the Convention’s three working languages, namely English, French, or Spanish. To assist the cities with completing the *Wetland City Accreditation* Nomination Form, an accompanying *Guidance Note for Cities* is available in each of the three working languages of the Ramsar Convention.

The information provided in the *Wetland City Accreditation* Nomination Form should be clear and succinct, and the total length of a completed *Wetland City Accreditation* Nomination Form should not exceed the specified word limits given for each field.

In the case of a city where the wetlands have been well-studied and well-documented, or which are the subject of special field investigations, far more information may be available than can be accommodated in the *Wetland City Accreditation* Nomination Form. Nominating cities are encouraged not to append additional information, such as taxonomic lists of species’ status, management plans, copies of legal instruments, etc. but to provide succinct but comprehensive summaries in the appropriate fields.

Specific guidance for Ramsar Administrative Authority

Responsibility of the nominating city

An authorised representative of the city authority making the application needs to check and approve the accreditation form against the guidance provided. It is essential that ALL questions are answered and that appropriate supporting information is provided.

In the case of several cities making a joint submission, a representative of each authority needs to check and approve the form, and then send it to the country's Ramsar Administrative Authority who will formally submit it the completed *Wetland City Accreditation* Nomination Form to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat.

Responsibility of the Ramsar Administrative Authority

Each Contracting Party is encouraged to consider local conditions when implementing the international criteria for the Wetland City accreditation. Any city submitting a completed Nomination Form to the designated National Focal Point for Ramsar Convention matters within the Administrative Authority should be considered to act as a model for the study, demonstration and promotion of the Ramsar Convention's objectives, approaches, principles and resolutions.

Resolution XII.10 provides that any Contracting Party that wishes to participate in the *Wetland City Accreditation* shall undertake a national review to determine which cities to propose for accreditation. It is recommended that, as part of a national review, the Administrative Authority should consider how the individual nominations for *Wetland City Accreditation* will assist the Contracting Party in contributing to *inter alia*:

- a. Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024. Goal 1 – Addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation: Target 1.
- b. Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024. Goal 3 – Wisely using all wetlands: Target 13.
- c. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular the contribution to Goal 6 – Clean water and sanitation; Goal 11- Sustainable cities and communities; Goal 14 – Live below water; and Goal 15 – Life on land. For more information on how the Ramsar Strategic Plan contributes to the delivery of the SDGs see <http://www.ramsar.org/document/how-the-ramsar-strategic-plan-contributes-to-the-sustainable-development-goals-sdgs>.
- d. National targets and plans relating to the wise use of wetlands and in particular to the sustainable development of human settlements.

In the event of an Administrative Authority receiving multiple nominations it must satisfy itself that the any Nomination Form proposed complies fully with the required nomination criteria.

Endorsement by the Ramsar Administrative Authority

Upon receipt and review of the completed *Wetland City Accreditation* Nomination Form, the designated National Focal Point for Ramsar Convention matters in the Administrative Authority will check the form and, where appropriate, provide formal endorsement. If the Nomination Form does fails to comply with the criteria, the National Focal Point should return it to the applicant city with a clear description and explanation of any shortcomings. Cities should be encouraged to reconsider and resubmit. Once the National Focal Point is satisfied that the Nomination Form complies fully to the criteria, the Nomination Form should be sent to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat.

Wetland City Accreditation procedure

A city will be recognized as a Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention by the Conference of the Parties, in accordance with the following procedure, as set out in Resolution XII.10.

The completed and endorsed Nomination Forms will be passed by the Ramsar Secretariat to the Independent Advisory Committee, established under Resolution XII.10, for review and final decision-making. Any proposals from Contracting Parties shall be submitted to the Independent Advisory Committee within one year of the closing of the previous meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

The Independent Advisory Committee shall review the applications and decide whether to accredit proposed cities, and report its decision at least 60 days in advance of the final full meeting of the Standing Committee prior to the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

The Standing Committee shall review the report of the Independent Advisory Committee listing those cities approved for accreditation and transmit it to the Conference of the Parties.

The Secretary General shall provide the Contracting Party with an accreditation certificate, containing the Ramsar Convention logo, for the Wetland City, which is valid for six years.

The status of each accredited Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention can be reviewed by the Independent Advisory Committee upon the relevant Contracting Party's request every six years.

Annex 4: Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention – Call for Applications

1. Resolution XII.10 on *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.
5. The Ramsar Secretariat invite Contracting Parties to submit proposals to the Secretariat for forwarding to the Independent Advisory Committee

Process

Step I: Contracting Parties level

Participants are requested to fill the Accreditation Form and send it to the Head of Ramsar Administrative Authority (Head of AA) to check the content and add an endorsement letter. Head of AA to send proposals to the Ramsar Secretariat by 1st September 2017.

Step II: Ramsar Secretariat level

Secretariat to receive proposals, check the endorsement of the relevant Ramsar National Authorities and forward them to the Independent Advisory Committee by 30th September 2017.

Step III: Independent Advisory Committee level

All short proposals received by the Independent Advisory Committee will be assessed from 1st October to 30 December 2017 based on the criteria defined within the Resolution XII.10.

Resolution XII.10; Annex, Criteria

13. *To be formally accredited, a candidate for the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention must satisfy the national standards used to implement each of the following international criteria:*
 - a. *It has one or more Ramsar Sites or other significant wetlands fully or partly situated in its territory or in its close vicinity, which provide(s) a range of ecosystems services to the city;*
 - b. *It has adopted measures for conservation of wetlands and their services including biodiversity and hydrological integrity;*
 - c. *It has implemented wetland restoration and/or management measures;*
 - d. *It considers the challenges and opportunities of integrated spatial/land-use planning for wetlands under its jurisdiction;*
 - e. *It has delivered locally adapted information to raise public awareness about the values of wetlands, and encouraged the wise use of wetlands by stakeholders through, for example, establishing wetland education/information centres; and*
 - f. *It has established a local Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention committee with appropriate knowledge and experience on wetlands and representation of and engagement with stakeholders to support the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention submission and the implementation of proper measures for fulfilling the obligations under the accreditation.*
14. *Examples for satisfying the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention criteria may include the following approaches:*
 - a. *Appropriate standards regarding water quality, sanitation and management in the entire area under the city's jurisdiction;*
 - b. *Sustainable agricultural, forest, fish, aquaculture, tourism and pastoral production systems contributing to the conservation of the Ramsar Site(s);*
 - c. *Evaluations of the socio-economic and cultural values as well as the ecosystem services of the Ramsar Site(s) and other significant wetlands, and good practices to conserve them; and*
 - d. *Where appropriate, plans for disaster prevention and management which address hazards which relate to the Ramsar Site(s) and other significant wetlands such as accidental pollution or flooding.*

Step IV: Accreditation

The Independent Advisory Committee review the applications and decide whether to accredit proposed cities, and report its decision at least 60 days in advance of the final full meeting of the Standing Committee prior to the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

The Standing Committee review the report of the Independent Advisory Committee listing those cities approved for accreditation and transmit it to the Conference of the Parties;

The Secretary General provides the Contracting Party with an accreditation certificate, containing the Ramsar Convention logo, for the Wetland City, which is valid for six years.

The status of each accredited Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention can be reviewed by the Independent Advisory Committee upon the relevant Contracting Party's request every six years.

Dates and deadlines

June to August 2017

City to send filled form to Head of Ramsar Administrative Authority (Head A.A)

1 October to 30 December 2017

IAC to review all received filled forms and decide whether to accredit proposed cities, and report its decision to Standing Committee

1 September 2017

Head of A.A to forward filled forms to Ramsar Secretariat

May 2018 at Standing Committee 54 (SC54)

SC54 review IAC report listing cities approved for accreditation and transmit it to COP13

30 September 2017

Ramsar Secretariat to forward filled forms to Independent Advisory Committee (IAC)

21 October 2018

Announcement of accredited cities for COP13

December 2018

Web article on the accredited cities published

To be sent to Ramsar Mailbox: ramsar@ramsar.org

Annex 5: Terms of Reference of the Independent Advisory Committee of the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention

1. Resolution XII.10 on *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.

Accreditation procedure

2. Paragraph 15 of the Annex of Resolution XII.10 states that:

“A city will be recognized as a Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention by the Conference of the Parties, in accordance with the following procedure:

- a. Any Contracting Party that wishes to participate in the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention shall undertake a national review to determine which cities to propose to the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) based on the proposed cities’ compliance with the criteria outlined in paragraph 13 of the Annex of Resolution XII.10;
- b. Any proposals from Contracting Parties shall be submitted to the IAC within one year of the closing of the previous meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
- c. The IAC shall review the applications and decide whether to accredit proposed cities, and report its decision at least 60 days in advance of the final full meeting of the Standing Committee prior to the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
- d. The Standing Committee shall review the report of the IAC listing those cities approved for accreditation and transmit it to the Conference of the Parties;
- e. The Secretary General shall provide the Contracting Party with an accreditation certificate, containing the Ramsar Convention logo, for the Wetland City, which is valid for six years; and
- f. The status of each accredited Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention can be reviewed by the Independent Advisory Committee upon the relevant Contracting Party’s request every six years.”

Independent Advisory Committee role and responsibilities

3. The IAC develops its own work plan and procedures for completing accreditation decisions within the timeframe and using the criteria and procedure outlined within paragraphs 13 and 15 of the Annex to Resolution XII.10.
4. The IAC reviews the applications and decides whether to accredit proposed cities, and reports its decision at least 60 days in advance of the final full meeting of the Standing Committee prior to the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

5. The IAC produces the wetland city accreditation nomination form and issues guidance on how cities and other human settlements should compile the form, especially regarding the level of detail required and the types of supporting evidence required.
6. The IAC issues proposed guidance for Ramsar National Focal Points on how they could undertake a national review to determine which cities to propose to the IAC, and evaluates the compiled accreditation forms to ensure that they abide by the criteria.
7. The IAC produces guidance on how it will transparently and objectively review applications and decide whether criteria have been satisfied and a city can be accredited.
8. The IAC reviews the applications and decides whether to accredit proposed cities using the criteria outlined in paragraph 13 of the Annex to Resolution XII.10.
9. The IAC reviews the status of each accredited Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention upon the relevant Contracting Party's request every six years. The IAC produces guidance on how the six-year review process will be conducted.

Responsibilities of the Ramsar Secretariat

10. The specific responsibilities of the Ramsar Secretariat are as follows:
 - a. Submit the nominations received to the IAC for its consideration;
 - b. Assist with the organization of the IAC remote meetings;
 - c. Participate in the IAC, as provided for at sections 16.g and 16.h of the Annex to Resolution XII.10 (the Secretary General or his/her designated representative; and the Ramsar Senior Advisor for the concerned region (rapporteur));
 - d. Submit to the Ramsar Standing Committee the report of the IAC listing those cities approved for accreditation for its review and subsequent transmission to the Conference of the Parties;
 - e. Provide the Contracting Party with an accreditation certificate, containing the Ramsar Convention logo, for the Wetland City;
 - f. Develop a global online network of cities which have obtained the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention.

Work plan and time line

11. IAC to issue the Wetland City accreditation nomination form and issue guidance on how cities and other human settlements should compile the form, by 4 April 2017;
12. IAC to issue proposed guidance for Ramsar National Focal Points on how they are to undertake a national review to determine which cities to propose to the IAC and evaluate the compiled accreditation forms to ensure that they abide by the criteria, by 4 April 2017;

13. Secretariat to submit a progress report on the implementation of the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention to SC53, by 7 April 2017;
14. Secretariat to issue call for applications by 7 June 2017 and receive applications from June to 30 August 2017;
15. IAC to produce guidance on how it will transparently and objectively review applications and decide whether criteria have been satisfied and a city can be accredited, by 30 September 2017;
16. IAC to produce guidance on how the six-year review process will be conducted;
17. Secretariat to check the endorsement of the relevant Ramsar National Authorities and forward applications to the IAC by 30 September 2017;
18. IAC to review the applications and decide whether to accredit proposed cities, and report its decision to SC54;
19. SC54 to review the report of the IAC listing those cities approved for accreditation and transmit it to COP13;
20. Secretary General to provide the Contracting Party with an accreditation certificate, containing the Ramsar Convention logo, for the Wetland City.

Membership of the Independent Advisory Committee

21. The composition of the Independent Advisory Committee, as outlined in paragraph 16 of the Annex to Resolution XII.10, is updated as follows:
 - a. A chair from among the following members: **To be decided by SC53**
 - b. A representative of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat): **To be provided**
 - c. A representative of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI): **Kirsty Robinson, Professional Officer, LAB-Wetlands**
 - d. A representative of the Ramsar Convention's International Organization Partners: **To be provided**
 - e. 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: **Honduras**
 - Oceania: **Australia**
 - f. A representative of the Global Waste Water Initiative (GW²I) of UNEP: **Birguy Lamizana**
 - g. A representative of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP): **Peter Eric Davies**

- h. A representative of the Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Oversight Panel of the Ramsar Convention; **Chair of CEPA Oversight Panel**
- i. The Ramsar Secretary General or his/her designated representative: **Ramsar Secretary General**
- j. The Ramsar Senior Advisor for the concerned region (rapporteur); and
- k. The coordinator of the Regional Initiative concerned, if any.