

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

Actions requested:

Standing Committee is invited to:

- i. review and approve the proposed procedures for the COP13 Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards; and
- ii. note the provisional calendar for the COP13 Ramsar Awards process.

Background

1. The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards programme was established at the 6th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP6, Brisbane, 1996) through Resolution VI.18 on *Establishment of the Ramsar wetland conservation award*. Three Ramsar Awards were made at Ramsar COP7 (San José, 1999) and at each subsequent COP. The COP13 Awards will be the seventh edition. The list of recipients and all information in relation to their Award is available on the Ramsar web site at <http://www.ramsar.org/activity/the-ramsar-awards>.
2. Since its inception, the Ramsar Awards programme has been entirely funded by the Danone-Evian Fund for Water, and the Awards have been accompanied by the Evian Special Prize of USD 10,000 per prize. In addition, non-monetary merit awards have also occasionally been made in recognition of excellence or achievements.

The current Awards cycle

3. Until COP11, the Awards were made in three categories: Education; Management; and Wetland Science. At its 43rd meeting (SC43, 2011), following a steady decrease in the number of nominations, the Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat “to review the Award processes and documentation for COP12, with clearer guidelines, nomination criteria, and so on”.
4. In accordance with this request, the Secretariat reviewed nomination statistics, the eligibility and selection criteria, and the nomination procedure, based on a study of other environmental awards and a consultation supported by the Regional Teams.

5. The findings of the study, including proposed selection criteria, nomination procedures and new Award categories (namely the Ramsar Wise Use Award, the Ramsar Innovation Award, and the Ramsar Young Wetland Champion Award) were presented and approved at SC47 (2014).
6. At COP12 in Uruguay (Punta del Este, 2015), the Awards were made according to the new categories. Three merit awards were also made. The recipients are listed on the Ramsar web site at <http://www.ramsar.org/activities/2015-awards>.
7. The new categories did attract more nominations than the COP10 (2008) and COP11 (2012) Awards. 68 nominations were received, compared with 56 in 2008 and 42 in 2012. The Ramsar Wise Use Award received 37 nominations, the Ramsar Innovation Award received 19, and the Ramsar Young Wetland Champion Award received 12.
8. For the seventh edition of the Ramsar Awards, the categories and nomination procedure approved at SC47 are once again proposed, in order to enhance recognition of the titles and categories.

The Ramsar Award trophy

9. Previously the Awards were accompanied by a statuette or, as was the case for COP12, a painting. The Secretariat proposes for the next edition the production of a trophy for the recipients of each of the three Awards.

Budget

10. The Secretariat estimates a budget of USD 70,000 to fund the COP13 Awards in 2018, for a sensible and modest Awards ceremony including three Evian Special Prizes of USD 10,000, the costs of travel to Dubai and accommodation for three individuals, the associated costs of producing information material, three certificates and trophies, and any expenses related to the ceremony. Funding for the Awards is expected to come from the Partnership Agreement with Danone for the period from 2017 to 2020. The details of the renewed Partnership Agreement, including the grant allocation, were at the time of writing, still being discussed. Danone has not provided funding for any merit awards made in addition to the three main Awards.

Schedule

11. It is proposed that the COP13 Sub-group of the Standing Committee be again asked to serve as a jury for the Ramsar Awards, screening the Secretariat's nominations and recommendations and selecting a winner for each award, to be approved by the Standing Committee.
12. The Secretariat will distribute widely a call for nominations, through its own channels and those of all its partner organizations.
13. The following provisional calendar for the Ramsar Awards process is proposed:
 - The Secretariat will publish the call for nominations by 15 June 2017, with a deadline for nominations of 15 August 2017. The information to be sent with the call for nominations is included as Annex 1; it follows the COP12 model, published on the Ramsar web site at

www.ramsar.org/document/the-ramsar-wetland-conservation-awards-2015-categories-criteria-and-procedures. The call will include a link to the nomination form, which will follow the COP12 model which is also online, at www.ramsar.org/document/application-form-for-the-2015-ramsar-wetland-conservation-awards.

- The Secretariat will review the nominations and submit a shortlist with recommendations to the COP13 Sub-group of SC54.
- The COP13 Sub-group will recommend the winners to the Standing Committee, which will make the final decisions during SC54 (in early 2018).
- The Awards will be presented at COP13.

Annex 1

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 institutions¹ 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 (*address to be added*). 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 August 2017. 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 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, and every effort will be made to ensure the presence of individual Award winners or 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/activity/the-ramsar-awards>, 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 August 2017**, 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.