

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

Actions requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- i. review and approve the proposed procedures for the COP14 Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards; and
- ii. note the indicative calendar for the COP14 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 Awards were made at COP7 (San José, 1999) and at each subsequent COP. The COP14 Awards will be the eighth edition. The list of recipients and all information in relation to their award is available on the Convention website at <http://www.ramsar.org/activity/the-ramsar-awards>.
2. Since its inception, the 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. At present, Danone has not agreed to provide funding for the eighth edition.

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 Wise Use Award, the Innovation Award, and the Young Wetland Champion Award) were presented and approved at SC47 (2014).
6. At COP12 in Uruguay (Punta del Este, 2015) and COP13 in the United Arab Emirates (Dubai 2018) the Awards were made according to the new categories. The recipients are listed on the Convention website at <https://www.ramsar.org/activity/the-ramsar-awards>.
7. For the eighth edition of the Awards, the categories and nomination procedure approved at SC47 are once again proposed, in order to build on existing recognition of the titles and categories.

Budget

8. The Secretariat estimates a budget of USD 50,000 to fund the COP14 Awards in 2021, based on the historic practice of funding travel and accommodation for each winner to the COP, production of awards, and expenses related to the award presentation ceremony.
9. From its inception, funding for the Awards was provided through a partnership agreement with Danone, and it included a cash prize of USD 10,000, the Evian Special Prize, awarded to all recipients in the three categories except the Merit Award.
10. Funding for the 2021 Awards remains to be secured. Alternative plans for presenting the awards to winners may need to be decided by SC59 if funding is not secured.

Schedule

11. Based on past practice, it is proposed that the Sub-group on COP14 of the Standing Committee serve as jury for the awards and, in this role, screen the shortlisted nominations recommended by the Secretariat and propose winners to be approved by the Standing Committee.
12. The following indicative calendar for the Awards process is based on COP14 taking place in November 2021.
 - The Secretariat will publish the call for nominations by **1 September 2020**, with a deadline for nominations of **30 November 2020**. The information to be sent with the call for nominations is included as Annex 1; it follows the COP13 model, published on the Convention website 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 COP13 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 Sub-group on COP14 in advance of SC59. The Sub-group will meet at SC59 and recommend winners for the Standing Committee to approve.
 - The Standing Committee will make the final decisions in a closed session during SC59.
 - The Awards will be presented at COP14.

Annex 1

The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards 2021

The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards were established in 1996 to recognize and honour the achievements of individuals, organizations and governments around the world for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

They will be awarded for the eighth time at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14), which will take place in Wuhan, China in 2021. Information on past editions of the Awards is available on the Convention website: <http://www.ramsar.org/activity/the-ramsar-awards>.

Three Awards will be granted in the following categories:

- a) The Award for Wetland Wise Use;
- b) The Award for Wetland Innovation; and
- c) The Award for Young Wetland Champions.

Nominations will be submitted in one of these categories.

How to obtain a nomination form

The nomination form for the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards can be downloaded from the Convention website at <http://www.ramsar.org/activities/2018-awards>

**The deadline for receipt of nominations by the Secretariat
of the Convention on Wetlands is
30 November 2020**

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 Convention website.

Categories, Criteria and Procedures

Categories

1. **An Award shall be awarded for each of the following categories:**
 - a. **The Award for Wetland Wise Use**, rewarding a person, project, programme or policy that has made a significant documented contribution to the long-term sustainable use of wetlands, either at specific wetlands (including Wetlands of International Importance) or on a broader scale, and which can be replicated elsewhere.
 - b. **The Award for Wetland Innovation**, rewarding a person, project, programme or policy that has contributed to the conservation and wise use of wetlands through an innovative technique or approach.
 - c. **The Award for Young Wetland Champions**, 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.
 - d. **The Merit Award**: the selection committee may decide to grant a Merit Award to nominated individuals or institutions in recognition of their long-term contribution or commitment to the conservation and wise use of wetlands and to principles of the Convention.

Eligibility

2. Individuals and groups of all nations are invited to nominate individuals, institutions (including government institutions and non-governmental organizations and community groups), or private companies, of any nation.
3. Nominees must be alive at the time of nomination. Awards will not be given posthumously.
4. Self-nominations will not be accepted.
5. Individuals, groups or organizations previously involved or currently involved in legal proceedings will not be eligible.
6. Nominations of current members of the Standing Committee, members and invited experts of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and Secretariat staff members will not be accepted.

Criteria

7. **Criteria applicable to all Award categories:**

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

- a. A proven and documented record of achievement and success;

- b. A direct link between activities and the implementation of the Convention for the wise use of wetlands including the network of Wetlands of International Importance, 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.
- g. Requests for study grants will not be considered.

8. Criteria applicable to the Award for Wetland Wise Use:

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 Convention on Wetlands 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.

9. Criteria applicable to the Award for Wetland Innovation:

Nominees will be favoured which demonstrate innovative actions supporting the conservation and 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. Wide recognition of the innovation.

10. Criteria applicable to the Award for Young Wetland Champions:

Nominations will be assessed against the following criteria:

- a. Individuals nominated should be between 18 and 30 years old at the time of nomination. The members and leader(s) of nominated groups should be within the same age range. Dates of birth will be requested.
- 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 should clearly refer to the mission of the Convention on Wetlands.

- d. Projects or activities should be in an advanced implementation stage to be considered.

Nomination procedure

11. Nominations should be submitted to the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands in English, French or Spanish, using the online form (<http://www.ramsar.org/Ramsar-Award/>). The nomination will include a summary of up to 250 words describing the achievements of the nominee and the reasons for the nomination.
12. The form should 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.
13. Nominations should 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.
14. The nomination will be assessed based on the nomination form, the additional information provided and the letters of reference.
15. Nominations should 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 Secretariat at its discretion, including when announcing the Award winners.
16. All winners will be requested to provide images illustrating their activities and achievements, as either photos or video footage and grant the Secretariat permission to use at its discretion for publicity material in different media.
17. 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.
18. **The deadline for submitting nominations is 30 November 2020. This date shall be final.**
19. Self-nominations will not be accepted.
20. Direct approaches to members of the Convention on Wetlands Standing Committee (acting as the selection committee) will disqualify any nominee from further consideration.

Selection procedure

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

Announcement and presentation of Awards

23. The Secretariat will announce the Award winners on the Convention website as soon as they have all confirmed their acceptance of the Award.
24. The Awards will be presented during the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, and every effort will be made to ensure the presence of individual Award winners and of a representative of any Award-winning group or institution.

Ramsar Merit Awards

25. The selection committee may decide to grant a Merit Award to nominated individuals or institutions because of their long-term contribution or commitment to the conservation and wise use of wetlands and to the Convention's principles, although they may not be selected for one of the three other Awards.
26. Recipients of Merit Awards will receive a trophy and certificate.