

## Report of the Co-chairs of the Independent Advisory Committee on Wetland City Accreditation (IAC)

### Actions requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- i. Review the city application review process presented in this report;
- ii. Take note of the list of cities approved by the IAC for accreditation which the IAC will provide during SC59; and
- iii. Approve the recommended process regarding wetland city accreditation in paragraphs 6, 7, 8 and 9.

### City application review process

1. Twenty-five (25) city applications were received and checked by the Secretariat and passed onto the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) on Friday 27 March 2020. The applications were distributed to all IAC Members. Eleven IAC members participated in the evaluation process (See Table 1 below).

*Table 1: IAC members who participated in the review of Ramsar Wetland City Applications during the second cycle*

City Application reviewers	Name/s
SC member representing Africa: Chad	Djadou Moksia
SC member representing Asia: China	Guangchun Lei
SC member representing Europe: Austria	Gert Michael Steiner
SC member representing Oceania: Australia	Jenny Tomkins
Scientific Technical Review Panel (STRP)	Matthew Simpson
CEPA Oversight Panel	Chris Rostron
A representative of Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI)	Ernita van Wyk
Two representatives of the Ramsar Convention's IOPs: WWF	Wenwei Ren Dean Muruven
Continuing IAC member	Denis Landenbergue
Continuing IAC member: Republic of Korea	Joon-woo Seo
The coordinator of the Ramsar Regional Initiative concerned: Ramsar Regional Centre East Asia (RRCEA)	Seung Oh Suh

2. City applications were allocated randomly to IAC members for review. To avoid conflicts of interest, IAC members could not evaluate any application from their home country. Each city was subject to two IAC reviews and both reviewers had to agree on the result for each city. Each IAC member participating in the evaluation process had to assess between four and five applications using the form shown in Annex 1.
3. Comments from the review were subsequently shared with all IAC members for information and discussion.
4. All 25 applications received are qualified for accreditation. The IAC decided to keep the current report non-confidential by not revealing the list of cities the IAC recommends for accreditation; the list of cities selected for accreditation will be provided orally in an open session during SC59 for approval of the Standing Committee.
5. Since preparing the last IAC report to the Standing Committee (June 2021), the IAC held six (6) virtual meetings to advance the IAC commitments to the Ramsar Wetland City Accreditation process. Information about these meetings including agendas and participants can be found in Annex 2.

#### **Recommended process after SC59 up to COP14**

6. The IAC recommends that the Standing Committee instruct the Secretariat to 1) announce the list of newly accredited Wetland Cities via official notification and on its website immediately after the Standing Committee approves the IAC's recommendation for accredited wetland cities, and 2) communicate with the Parties which submitted successful applications in order to invite those cities to COP14 for a certificate awarding ceremony, with no media embargo to be imposed in any process, as opposed to the previous triennium.
7. The IAC also recommends that the Standing Committee request that the Subgroup on COP14 ensure smooth preparation and organization of the certificate awarding ceremony for the newly accredited Wetland Cities as well as effective participation of city representatives, in close cooperation with the IAC.

#### **Recommended award process**

8. The award process should involve the following steps:
  - The Secretariat invites representatives of the accredited cities through their respective NFPs to attend an award ceremony at the COP.
  - The Secretariat prepares Wetland City Accreditation certificates for accredited cities.
  - An authorized representative of the accredited city notifies the Secretariat through their respective NFP of whether they will be attending the award ceremony.
  - The Subgroup on COP schedules an award ceremony during the COP.
  - Secretary General delivers certificates to a representative of each accredited city at the award ceremony.
9. IAC recognizes the role of the host Contracting Party in determining the exact nature of the presentation ceremony but provides the following guidance:
  - The Wetland City Accreditation award ceremony should be held during the Opening Ceremony in the plenary room potentially back-to-back with Ramsar Award Ceremony.

- The ceremony should restrict itself to the awarding of the certificate to the newly accredited cities
- Films and promotional material about cities should not be part of the ceremony but may form part of a separate session, such as a side event or a separate forum, or exhibition stands
- Only one representative from each city should receive the certificate at the award ceremony (no group photograph allowed during the plenary session)
- Wetland City Accreditation Certificates should be framed and at least A3 in size.

## **Annex 1**

### **Review of Nominations for the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention**

#### **Draft Evaluation Form**

##### **Purpose**

This Evaluation Form aims to assist the members of the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) of the Wetland Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention in the review of nominations submitted by Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat. It serves as a tool to facilitate the objective evaluation of nomination forms and to promote sound judgement by the reviewer based on the accreditation criteria. This form will be made available in three (3) languages: English, Spanish and French.

##### **Instructions**

1. Per SC53-16, a city will only be considered for formal accreditation after satisfying all prescribed criteria (Group A: Criteria based on delivering the conservation and wise use of wetlands). To determine compliance, reviewers must look into the form and substance of the nomination forms.
2. Reviewers are tasked to answer questions in the evaluation form, that correspond to the accreditation criteria, by ticking the appropriate box (“Yes” or “No”). An entry is said to comply with a criterion if:
  - a. sufficient information has been provided to clearly describe the main thoughts, and
  - b. supplied information is relevant and supports the criterion.
3. Blank fields found under Group A criteria in the nomination form will automatically disqualify the nomination. Likewise, if an entry does not comply with any criterion under Group A (“No”), the reviewer must discontinue the evaluation procedure and immediately disqualify the nomination. For non-complying entries, reviewers are required to briefly state the reason for such judgement.
4. Group B criteria (Complementary approaches) seek to acquire additional information about the city. Evaluation results under Group B criteria shall not affect the overall evaluation results.
5. Approved nominations will be endorsed by the IAC to the Standing Committee for subsequent submission to the Ramsar Conference of the Contracting Parties.

Application number	
Country	
Name of city	

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

**1. 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**

**NOTE: This item does not require compliance with both sub-items 1.1 and 1.2. Compliance with either item 1.1 or 1.2 is acceptable.**

1.1. Does the city have one or more Ramsar Sites that is/are fully or partly in the city administrative boundaries?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item A.1. Name any Ramsar Site that is fully or partly in the city administrative boundaries)*

1.2. Does the city have other significant wetlands that are fully or partly in the city administrative boundaries?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item A.2. Name any other significant wetland that is fully or partly in the city administrative boundaries)*

**2. It has adopted measures for conservation of wetlands and their services including biodiversity and hydrological integrity**

2.1. Does the city have local policies, legislative measures and regulatory instruments to proactively prevent the degradation and loss of wetlands?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item 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.)*

**3. It has implemented wetland restoration and/or management measures**

3.1. Has the city implemented measures or projects on the restoration and creation of wetlands as elements of urban, and especially water management infrastructure?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item 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.)*

**4. It considers the challenges and opportunities of integrated spatial/land-use planning for wetlands under its jurisdiction**

4.1. Has the city undertaken measures to integrate wetland conservation and wise use in its development and management plans related to river basin management, spatial zonation, water resource management, development of transport infrastructure, agriculture production, fuel supply, poverty alleviation, pollution control, flood risk management, or disaster risk reduction, among others?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item 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.)*

**5. 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**

**NOTE: This item requires compliance with all sub-items 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3. Non-compliance with any of the three (3) items disqualifies the nomination.**

5.1. Was the city able to take action/s to involve and ensure the active participation of indigenous and local communities in city spatial planning and wetland management decision-making processes through formal or informal means?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item 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.)*

5.2. Has the city implemented activities that helped raise the levels of public awareness about the values of wetlands and encouraged the wise use of wetlands by a diverse range of stakeholders and communities (e.g. established operational wetland education or information centres, regularly disseminates information on wetlands, implemented school education programmes, etc.)?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item 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.)*

5.3. Has the city organized activities that support the celebration of World Wetlands Day?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item 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.)*

**6. 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**

6.1. Has the city formed an operational local committee for the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention that has defined composition and functions?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item 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.)*

**Group B: Complementary approaches**

**1. It has developed and applied appropriate standards regarding water quality, sanitation and management in the entire area under the city's jurisdiction**

1.1. Does the city have policies or regulatory frameworks that promote and maintain water quality and sanitation standards?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item 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)*



**2. 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**

2.2. Has the city adopted formal instrument/s or policies that cite the importance of wetland ecosystem services?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: ItemB.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.)*

**3. It can demonstrate that there is a close link between local communities and the wetlands**

3.3. Within the jurisdiction of the city government, do local communities practice the wise use of wetland resources?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: ItemB.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.)*

**Recommendation**

Do you recommend this city for accreditation?

Yes  No

If "No", you may provide more information in the space below to elaborate on your recommendation.

Signature above printed name of evaluator

Date:

## Annex 2

### Virtual meetings of the Independent Advisory Committee (June 2021 – February 2022)

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Independent Advisory Committee meeting

Date: 9 April 2021; Zoom

Chair: Prof. Michael Steiner

Co-chair: Ernita van Wyk (& minutes)

Agenda:

1. Progress on the WCA DR co-proponent process.
2. Progress on the current City accreditation process.
3. Approach to addressing Parties' past concerns re the WCA Scheme / resourcing issue

Present:

IAC member organisation	Participants
SC Europe / Chair	Gert Michael Steiner
ICLEI / Co-chair	Ernita van Wyk
ICLEI team member	Ryan Fisher
Continuing IAC member	Joonwoo Seo
Ramsar Regional Centre: East Asia	Suh Seung Oh
STRP	Matthew Simpson
CEPA Oversight panel	Chris Rostron
Standing Committee member representing Oceania: Australia	Jenny Tomkins
Continuing IAC member	Denis Landenbergue

Apologies: Wenwei Ren

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Independent Advisory Committee meeting

Date: 18 June 2021; Zoom

Chair: Prof. Michael Steiner

Co-chair: Ernita van Wyk (& minutes)

Agenda:

1. Progress on the current city accreditation process
2. SC59 meeting:
  - Implications for the WCA timeline
  - IAC report not in current SC59 agenda: implications
  - DR Annex to the IAC report to the SC59 (resolved)

Present:

IAC member organisation	Participants
SC Europe / Chair	Gert Michael Steiner
ICLEI / Co-chair	Ernita van Wyk
ICLEI team member	Ryan Fisher
Continuing IAC member	Joonwoo Seo
Ramsar Regional Centre: East Asia	Suh Seung Oh
STRP	Matthew Simpson
CEPA Oversight panel	Chris Rostron
Standing Committee member representing: Asia: China	Guangchun Lei

Continuing IAC member	Denis Landenbergue
Ramsar Secretary General representative	Jay Aldous
A representative of the Ramsar Convention's IOPs: WWF	Wenwei Ren

*Apologies: Kathy Eyles (Standing Committee member representing Oceania: Australia)*

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Independent Advisory Committee meeting

Date: 21 July 2021; Zoom

Chair: Prof. Michael Steiner

Co-chair: Ernita van Wyk (& minutes)

Agenda:

1. Feedback from the June 2021 SC meeting and DR discussion
2. Draft letter: validation of accreditation for currently accredited cities
3. RWC pins: DL communicated with Tunisia Focal Point re pins that are ready but could not be couriered to Tunisia

*Present:*

IAC member organisation	Participants
SC Europe / Chair	Gert Michael Steiner
ICLEI / Co-chair	Ernita van Wyk
ICLEI team member	Ryan Fisher
Continuing IAC member	Joonwoo Seo
Ramsar Regional Centre: East Asia	Suh Seung Oh
STRP	Matthew Simpson
CEPA Oversight panel	Chris Rostron
Ramsar Secretary General representative	Zebedee Njisuh
A representative of the Ramsar Convention's IOPs: WWF	Wenwei Ren
Consultant	Rob McInnes

*Apologies: Denis Landenbergue*

### 4<sup>th</sup> Independent Advisory Committee meeting

Date: 27 September 2021, Zoom

Chair: Prof. Michael Steiner

Co-chair: Ernita van Wyk (& minutes)

Agenda:

1. Progress on the development of the draft resolution.

*Present:*

IAC member organisation	Participants
ICLEI / Co-chair	Ernita van Wyk
Standing Committee member representing Oceania: Australia	Kathy Eyles
Continuing IAC member	Joonwoo Seo
Ramsar Regional Centre: East Asia	Suh Seung Oh
STRP	Matthew Simpson
Ramsar Secretary General representative	Zebedee Njisuh
A representative of the Ramsar Convention's IOPs: WWF	Wenwei Ren

Consultant	Rob McInnes
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*Apologies: Michael Steiner, Ryan Fisher, Chris Rostron, Jay Aldous*

### 5<sup>th</sup> Independent Advisory Committee meeting

Date: 3 December 2021; Zoom

Chair: Prof. Michael Steiner

Co-chair: Ernita van Wyk (& minutes)

Agenda:

1. Progress on the development of the draft resolution.

*Present:*

IAC member organisation	Participants
Chair	Michael Steiner
ICLEI / Co-chair	Ernita van Wyk
Ramsar Regional Centre: East Asia	Suh Seung Oh
Continuing IAC member	Joonwoo Seo
Continuing IAC member	Denis Landenberge
Ramsar Regional Centre: East Asia	Suh Seung Oh
CEPA Oversight panel	Chris Rostron
Ramsar Secretary General representative	Jay Aldous
Consultant	Rob McInnes

*Apologies: Matthew Simpson (STRP), Ryan Fisher (ICLEI)*

### 6<sup>th</sup> Independent Advisory Committee meeting

Date: 11 January 2022; Zoom

Chair: Prof. Michael Steiner

Co-chair: Ernita van Wyk (& minutes)

Agenda:

1. Matters for the Ramsar Secretariat
2. Final changes to the DR
3. Draft IAC report to the SC59
4. Discuss process and timeline for developing the operations guidelines (information document)

*Present:*

IAC member organisation	Participants
Chair	Michael Steiner
ICLEI / Co-chair	Ernita van Wyk
Ramsar Regional Centre: East Asia	Suh Seung Oh
Continuing IAC member	Joonwoo Seo
Continuing IAC member	Denis Landenberge
A representative of the Ramsar Convention's IOPs: WWF	Wenwei Ren
CEPA Oversight panel	Chris Rostron
Ramsar Secretary General representative	Jay Aldous
Consultant	Rob McInnes

*Apologies: Matthew Simpson (STRP), Ryan Fisher (ICLEI), Guangchun Lei*