

Draft Resolution on the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards

Submitted by Sweden

Secretariat cover note:

The DR is proposing governance and administrative changes to the Ramsar Wetlands Conservation Awards scheme, including a revision to the *Categories, Eligibility criteria, Award criteria and Procedures* for the Awards. Further, it proposes retirement of Resolution VI.18 *Establishment of the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards* and retirement of parts of other Resolutions relating to the Awards scheme. As the DR proposes shared governance responsibilities of the awards scheme between the COP and the Standing Committee, the Secretariat encourages Parties to ensure that there is clarity on the respective roles and authority of the two bodies. The DR does not address matters of a scientific or technical nature requiring review by the STRP.

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Action requested:

- The Standing Committee is invited to review and approve the attached Draft Resolution for consideration by the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Introduction

Until now it has been the Standing Committee and not the Ramsar COP that have decided most of the content and details about the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards. For governance reasons Sweden believe that it should be better the other way around. That the COP decides on a frame for the Standing Committee to make decisions within, instead of having the Standing Committee deciding every triennium how the Ramsar Award scheme is to be run.

During the triennium 2018-2021 the donor supporting the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards communicated that such sponsorship might not be available in the future. At SC58 (on-line in June 2020) there was also a suggestion about making a new award category by one of the SC representatives, there was also other issues discussed at the meeting even if no decision was made.

At SC58 Sweden pointed out the need for an update, primarily from the financial and governance points of view. Sweden believe that a new resolution on Ramsar Wetland Awards, replacing the old resolution as well as old SC decisions about the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards could be useful, since it allows more flexibility, may use funds better and brings decision making on an overall level to the COP.

Most of the draft resolution includes the same information as the old resolution and the most recent SC-decision on categories and the award process. But the texts have been updated, been moved to more suitable places and language changed in a way to make the resolution more long-lived. Contradictory texts have been changed. Sweden have also investigated the old document on the Ramsar Award picking up useful old texts and incorporated them. Larger changes are described below.

The larger changes are the following;

- The new resolution uses the term Ramsar Wetland Award instead of Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award. That secures a name including both Ramsar and wetland (same structure as agreed for Ramsar Wetland City Accreditation), as well as excluding conservation which may not be in focus for some of the categories and strong nominations.
- The new resolution will include five categories instead of three, and the COP decides upon what and how many categories to use for each award cycle. This decision will be part of the triennium budget.
- The SC is given the possibility to change the COP decision on the number of awards and what categories to use, if the financial situation is much changed during a triennium.
- It is stated that organisations include NGOs, companies, governmental and subnational agencies/authorities. The possibility to award temporarily or permanent co-operations between individuals and/or organisations, is also included. This can especially be of use for local projects, with many involved where it is difficult to choose one only for the award. Co-operation for the wetlands are to be supported and recognised.

- The procedure for announcement and presentation of Awards is changed, as well as the award ceremony.
- There is also a new eligibility criterion disqualifying nominees that have criminal offence connected, either convicted or under investigation) to the work with wetlands the nomination is based upon.
- The new resolution retires the old resolution and several old SC-decisions.

Financial implications of implementation

The draft resolution on Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards will not cause any additional costs compared with the old one for Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards. It is the future decisions of the Standing Committee, deciding about prize sizes and number of categories for awards etc, that will decide if costs are going to be lower or higher than today. The new suggested awards ceremony might even result in lower costs.

| <i>Paragraph (nr/key part of text)</i> | <i>Action</i> | <i>Cost (CHF)</i> |
|--|---------------|--|
| All | All | No additional costs compared with today. |

Draft Resolution XIV.x on the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards

1. NOTING the achievements of the Convention in promoting the conservation and wise use of wetlands, and the many individuals, organizations and governments who have contributed significantly to this achievement;
2. RECALLING Resolution VI.18 on Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards;
3. RECONFIRMING the need of a Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards to recognize and honour such contributions as a means of motivating greater and continued support for the Convention's cause in the future;
4. ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of the financial support from donors that make the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards more attractive by enable prize funds;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

5. DECIDES that the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards, should be presented on the occasion of each ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
6. DECIDES that individuals and groups, of all nations, are invited to submit nominations.
7. DECIDES that any individuals or organisations (including government institutions, sub-national authorities, non-governmental organisations private companies and community groups), as well as permanent or temporally co-operations between individuals and/or organisations of any nation or region, can be nominated, as long as the nominee fulfil the Eligibility criteria and perform well under the Award criteria, as described in annex 1.
8. DECIDES that the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award categories, further described in Annex 1, will be:
 - i) The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Wise Use Award,

- ii) The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Innovation Award,
 - iii) The Ramsar Young Wetland Champions Conservation Award
 - iv) The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Science Award
 - v) The Ramsar Wetland Conservation CEPA Award
9. DECIDES that the Standing Committee may decide upon Ramsar Wetland Conservation Merit Awards for nominees for the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards that do not get another Award. This may be done if a nominee stands out because of a long-term contribution or commitment to the conservation and wise use of wetlands, characterized by excellence or large achievements.
 10. DECIDES that each COP is going to decide upon budget and number of awards and in what categories awards are to be selected for the coming Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award cycle.
 10. REQUESTS the Standing Committee to do the following for each Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award cycle;
 - i) consider if the latest COP decision on award categories and budget are still plausible when it is time to call for nominations, and if not adjust the COP decision in a relevant way.
 - ii) decide on the deadline for the nominations and any other components for getting a relevant timetable for the process.
 - iii) decide about the award recipients in a closed session.
 - iv) make sure that the draft resolution on the coming budget includes information about funds that can be allocated for the Awards, and what categories that are to be chosen for the coming Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award cycle.
 - v) make sure the COP Working Group acts as jury, or replace it with a subset of the Standing Committee if asked to do so by the COP Working Group.
 11. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to do the following for each Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award cycle;
 - i) support the nomination process described in annex 1, so that the Standing Committee in the end can take a decision on the awards, (such as seeking sponsors if needed, announcing the call for nominations, compile data about the nominations, evaluate them and prepare short-lists of possible candidates). If needed, advice can for example be given by members of appropriate Ramsar bodies.
 - ii) secure that information on the nominations and the decision on the award recipients aren't made public prematurely.
 - iii) arrange everything for the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards ceremony.
 - iv) contribute to that the award recipients get attention in different kinds of media.
 12. DECIDES that the Standing Committee's decisions on the awards are final and cannot be appealed against.
 13. DECIDES that the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award recipients shall receive a trophy and a certificate, and if prize funds are allocated in the budget, also a cash reward. ALSO DECIDES that Ramsar Wetland Merit Awards recipients shall receive a trophy and a certificate.
 14. DECIDES that the award ceremony is to be arranged using on-line participation for the recipients combined with national ceremonies ahead of the ceremony at the COP.

15. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to inform about the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award, both when it comes to the possibilities to nominate nominees and what nominees that got the award.
16. DECIDES to retire the resolution and SC-decisions listed retirement in the Annex 2. There are no recommendations including Ramsar Wetland Awards that need to be retired.

Annex 1

Categories, Eligibility criteria, Award criteria and Procedures

Description of the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award categories:

1. The COP and in some cases the SC can decide upon what of the mentioned categories that are to be used in the coming award cycle.
 - i) The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Wise Use Award, 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 wetland sites (including Ramsar Sites) or on a broader scale, and which can be replicated elsewhere. 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.
 - ii) The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Innovation Award, rewarding a person, project, programme or policy that has contributed to the conservation and wise use of wetlands through an innovative technique or approach.
 - iii) The Ramsar Young Wetland Champions Conservation 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.
 - iv) The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Science Award, rewarding a scientist or a group of scientists whose contributions to the advancement of sciences in any of their branches important for wetland biodiversity and ecosystem services.
 - v) The Ramsar Wetland Conservation CEPA Award, rewarding the best initiative for communication, education, participation, and public awareness for wetlands, as well as the results of the activities.

Eligibility criteria

2. Nominees must be alive at the time of nomination. Awards will not be given posthumously.
3. Self-nominations and requests for study grants will not be accepted.
4. 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.
5. Nominations that do not meet the deadline will not be accepted.
6. Direct approaches from the nominator, the nominee or the Contracting Party in which the nominee is active on the matter of Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards to members of the

Ramsar Standing Committee (acting as the selection committee) or attempts to influence their decision on awards recipients will disqualify any nominee from further consideration.

7. Individuals, groups and organisations that have been convicted of or are under investigation of a criminal offence connected to the wetland project/carrier/deed that they have been nominated for will not be eligible. Examples of such offences are having illegal work conditions, doing money laundering or accounting violations, performing projects without necessary permits or having violated conditions in such permits.

Award criteria

8. Independent on Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award category, the selection of Award recipients will be based on the satisfaction of several of the following criteria;
 - i) A proven and documented record of achievement and success in the relevant category;
 - ii) A direct link between activities and the implementation of the Ramsar Convention for the wise use of wetlands including the network of Wetlands of International Importance, whether locally, sub-nationally, nationally, regionally or globally;
 - iii) The capacity of activities to be replicated, to inspire others or to serve as practical examples for others;
 - iv) The significance of achievements, regardless of the geographic scale of their impact;
 - v) The demonstrable impact of activities on awareness of wetlands and their values and the services they provide; and
 - vi) The clarity with which the nomination is presented, and the activities and achievements described.
9. The category for Ramsar Wetland Conservation Wise use Award, will favour nominees which demonstrate outstanding achievement in meeting one or several of the following criteria;
 - i) A proven and documented record of achievement and success in the relevant category;
 - ii) Demonstrable positive outcomes of sustainable wetland practices;
 - iii) Demonstrable overall benefits in the area where activities are being implemented;
 - iv) Demonstrated use of the ecosystem approach within a sustainable development context;
 - v) A mission and purpose that relates directly to the conservation of wetlands;
 - vi) Replicability of the approaches and outcomes; and
 - vii) Reconciliation of sustainable resource use practices with long-term wetland conservation objectives.
10. The category Ramsar Wetland Conservation Innovation Award will favour nominees 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;
 - i) An innovation, which is truly a new concept rather than a variation of an existing one;
 - ii) The demonstrable usefulness and impact of the innovation;
 - iii) Its demonstrable applicability, practicality, and replicability; and
 - iv) Wide recognition of the innovation.
11. The category Ramsar Young Wetland Champions Conservation Award, will favour nominees which demonstrate innovative actions supporting the conservation and wise use of wetlands, whether through new techniques or new approaches, which meet criteria 1 and one or several of the other following criteria:

- i) 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.
- ii) 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.
- iii) The activity or project should clearly refer to the mission of the Ramsar Convention.
- iv) Projects or activities should either have been finalised during the last three years before the nomination or being in an advanced implementation stage to be considered.

Nomination conditions for all nominees and complementary conditions for the award recipients

- 12. Nominations should be submitted to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat in English, French or Spanish, using the Ramsar Wetland Award form available from the Ramsar Secretariat in Gland, Switzerland, and on the Ramsar web site (<http://www.ramsar.org/Ramsar-Award/>).
- 13. The nomination will include a summary of up to 250 words describing the achievements of the nominee and the reasons for the nomination.
- 14. 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.
- 15. 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.
- 16. The nomination will be assessed on the basis of the nomination form, the additional information provided and the letters of reference.
- 17. 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 Ramsar Secretariat at its discretion, including when announcing the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award recipients.
- 18. 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.
- 19. All award recipients will be requested 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 organisations or individuals that have donated prize funds for Award publicity material in different media.

Selection procedure

- 20. 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 Communication, Education, Participation, and Awareness (CEPA) Oversight Panel or others, as appropriate.

21. If the numbers of nominations are low and/or the contributions are weak, the Secretariat may suggest adding older nominations of strong character that wasn't awarded earlier to the short list.
22. The COP Working Group will select the Award recipients from the short-lists and the Standing Committee will decide the Award recipients.

Announcement and presentation of Awards

23. The Secretariat will be in contact with the Awards recipients, letting them know what sponsors that have donated prize funds, and ask if they accept the award and in that case to which persons the link to the award ceremony is to be sent.
24. The Ramsar Wetland Award recipients will be presented during the Conference of the Parties, and award recipients will participate on-line during the award ceremony.
25. Shortly after the presentation of the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award recipients, the Contracting Party where an Award recipient is active arrange an award ceremony for that award recipients, preferably on a site where the award recipients have had projects or could be interested in visiting etc. The award ceremony is filmed.
26. The Secretariat put together a film with parts of all the award ceremonies with films and pictures from the nominations and publish it on the Ramsar Web site and makes it easily available in suitable social media.

Annex 2

Compilation of resolutions and SC-decisions to be retired

1. The table below shows the existing resolutions including information on the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards. There is a description on what part are concerned and what is suggested to happen to them. The resolutions have been found by searching for “awards” in the subset of resolutions among the documents at the Ramsar webpage.

| Resolutions | Paras/parts concerned | Suggested for retirement by this resolution or not |
|--|---|--|
| Resolution VI.18 Establishment of the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards | All | Outdated and to be retired by this resolution. |
| Resolution VII.1 Regional Categorization of countries under the Convention, and composition, roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee, including tasks of Standing Committee members. | Para 20 k, | Will probably be retired by a resolution retiring all resolutions that are obviously outdated. |
| Resolution X.12 Principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector | Para 9 first part (about the appreciation to the Danone Group and the Evian Special Prize). | Need to be addressed during the compilation work on existing resolutions. |
| Resolution XI.19 Adjustments to the terms of Resolution VII.1 on the composition, roles, and responsibilities of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Convention. | Annex 1 Para 19 j | Will probably be retired by a resolution retiring all resolutions that are obviously outdated. |
| Resolution XI.2 Financial and budgetary matters | Annex 1, half of one of the budget lines | Will probably be retired by a resolution retiring all resolutions that are obviously outdated. |
| Resolution XII.4 The responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Ramsar Convention. | Annex 1 Para 19 j | Will probably be retired by a resolution retiring all resolutions that are obviously outdated. |
| Resolution XIII.4 Responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Convention. | Annex 1 Para 19 j | Will probably be retired by a resolution retiring all resolutions that are obviously outdated. |

2. The table below shows the existing SC-decisions including information on the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards. There are also some “decisions” made by the Standing Committee that haven’t been recorded as decisions but are referred to in the report from the SC-meetings. In the table those are either recognised as lacking SC decision ID or hat there is no formal decision made. There is a description on what parts are concerned and what is suggested to happen to them. The SC-decisions have been found by searching for “awards” in the subset of SC-decisions and reports among the documents at the Ramsar webpage.

| SC-decisions about Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards content is generalised and shortened | SC-decision ID and (paras in the SC meeting report) | Retirement by this resolution |
|--|--|--|
| SC-decision on to having a draft resolution for Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards and parts of its content. | SC17.10: (90-92) | Outdated and to be retired. |
| SC-decisions on establishing, asking for reviews, and updating; Terms of Reference for the Award, responsible jury/selection committee, categories, criteria, timelines, and prize sizes including thanks to the donor the Danone Group. | SC19.25: (182, 183) SC20.9: (103-106) SC20.10: (103-106) SC25-16: (135-138) SC30-8: (92) SC35-3 <u>first part</u> : (63) SC36 no formal decision: (16) SC41-9: (76) SC47-03 f: (Item 6 about COP12) SC53-13: (82-85) <i>Doc 13</i> SC58-22: (21, 24-32) Intersessional SC-decision, January-February 2021 | Outdated and to be retired. For SC47-03, only part f), is to be retired by this resolution. For SC35-3, the whole decision can be deleted as the last part is mentioned below. |
| SC-decisions on trying by different means to get more nominees. | SC26-no ID: (288) SC42-11: (74, 76-77, 84) | Outdated and to be retired. |
| SC-decision that previous award recipients should be invited to nominate candidates or to form an alumni club and that their success should be published. | SC35-3 <u>last part</u> : (63) | Outdated and to be retired (that includes both the first and last part, see above). |
| SC-decisions announcing the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award recipients | SC21.3: (88-90) SC31-14: (131) SC37-no ID: SC43-2: (32-33) SC48-no ID: (19-20, 28-29 ,134) SC54-13: (191, 205-208) SC57-16: (Item 21.1 Bis) | Outdated and to be retired. |
| SC-decisions about how to address the Ramsar Wetland Innovation Award in 2018. | SC55-15: (51) SC57-16: (Item 21.1 Bis) | Outdated and to be retired. |