

Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention

Guidance Note for Ramsar Administrative Authority

Triennium 2019-2021

Background and context

Resolution XI.II of the Conference of Contracting Parties requested that the Convention explored 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 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* will 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 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 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 submitted online to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, no later than 15 March 2020.

Wetland City Accreditation procedure

A city will be recognized as an Accredited 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 forwarded by the Ramsar Secretariat to the Independent Advisory Committee, established under Resolution XII.10, for review.

The IAC will review the applications and decide whether to accredit proposed cities, and report its decision at least 60 days in advance of SC59.

The Standing Committee will review the report of the Independent Advisory Committee listing those cities recommended for accreditation and transmit it to COP14.

At COP14, the Secretary General will 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.