

Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention – Call for Applications

1. Resolution XII.10 on *Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention* formalized a framework to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands and regional and international co-operation, as well as to generate sustainable socio-economic benefits for the local populations.
2. Resolution XII.10 states that: “This accreditation would encourage cities that are close to and depend on wetlands, primarily Wetlands of International Importance, but also other wetlands, to establish a positive relationship with these wetlands through increased participation and awareness and consideration of wetlands in local planning and decision making.”
3. Paragraph 7 of the *Framework for Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention* annexed to Resolution XII.10 states that: “a candidate city for the Wetland City accreditation would be approved as an accredited Wetland City by the Independent Advisory Committee, after being proposed by the Contracting Party on whose territory it stands and completing the accreditation procedure described below. Newly accredited cities join the global network of Wetland Cities established by this framework. Accreditation as a Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention is not intended to confer any legal rights or legal obligations on the city or the Contracting Party.”
4. Resolution XII.10 calls (in paragraphs 13 and 14) for Contracting Parties to submit proposals to the Secretariat for forwarding to the Independent Advisory Committee. According to paragraph 15.b of the annexed Framework, these proposals should be submitted “within one year of the closing of the previous meeting of the Conference of the Parties”. It is noted that this would have required a call for proposals to Parties early in 2016, before the membership of the Independent Advisory Committee could be approved by the 52nd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC52), and the rules for proposals and formats developed. Exceptionally, the Secretariat proposes in the timeframe below that the first round of proposals in this triennium for COP13 are only submitted after the Independent Advisory Committee has first been put in place. The next round of proposals for COP14 would then take place in accordance with paragraph 15.b.
5. The Ramsar Secretariat invite Contracting Parties to submit proposals to the Secretariat for forwarding to the Independent Advisory Committee

Process

Step I: Contracting Parties level

Participants (Cities, Human Settlement) are requested to fill the Accreditation Form and send it to the Head of Ramsar Administrative Authority (Head of AA) by 1st October 2017. Head of AA to check the content and add an endorsement letter. Head of AA to send full applications filling each of the 6 criteria to the Ramsar Secretariat by 31st October 2017.

Step II: Ramsar Secretariat level

Secretariat to receive applications, check the endorsement of the relevant Ramsar National Authorities and forward them to the Independent Advisory Committee by 15th November 2017.

Step III: Independent Advisory Committee level

All applications received by the Independent Advisory Committee will be assessed from 15 November 2017 to 31 January 2018 based on the criteria defined within the Resolution XII.10.

Resolution XII.10; Annex, Criteria

13. *To be formally accredited, a candidate for the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention must satisfy the national standards used to implement each of the following international criteria:*
 - a. *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;*
 - b. *It has adopted measures for conservation of wetlands and their services including biodiversity and hydrological integrity;*
 - c. *It has implemented wetland restoration and/or management measures;*
 - d. *It considers the challenges and opportunities of integrated spatial/land-use planning for wetlands under its jurisdiction;*
 - e. *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; and*
 - f. *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.*

14. *Examples for satisfying the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention criteria may include the following approaches:*
 - a. *Appropriate standards regarding water quality, sanitation and management in the entire area under the city's jurisdiction;*
 - b. *Sustainable agricultural, forest, fish, aquaculture, tourism and pastoral production systems contributing to the conservation of the Ramsar Site(s);*
 - c. *Evaluations of the socio-economic and cultural values as well as the ecosystem services of the Ramsar Site(s) and other significant wetlands, and good practices to conserve them; and*
 - d. *Where appropriate, plans for disaster prevention and management which address hazards which relate to the Ramsar Site(s) and other significant wetlands such as accidental pollution or flooding.*

Step IV: Accreditation

The Independent Advisory Committee review the applications and decide whether to accredit proposed cities, and report its decision at least 60 days in advance of the final full meeting of the Standing Committee prior to the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

The Standing Committee review the report of the Independent Advisory Committee listing those cities approved for accreditation and transmit it to the Conference of the Parties;

The Secretary General provides 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.

Dates and deadlines

15th June to 1st October 2017

City to send applications to Head of Ramsar Administrative Authority (Head A.A)

15 November 2017 to 31 January 2018

IAC to review all received applications and decide whether to accredit proposed cities, and report its decision to Standing Committee 54

By 31st October 2017

Head of A.A to forward selected applications to Ramsar Secretariat

28 April 2018 at Standing Committee 54 (SC54)

SC54 review IAC report listing cities approved for accreditation and transmit it to COP13

By 15th November 2017

Ramsar Secretariat to forward applications to Independent Advisory Committee (IAC)

October 2018

Official announcement and celebration of accredited cities at Ramsar COP13 in Dubai, UAE

November 2018

Web article on the accredited cities published

Head of Ramsar Administrative Authority (Head A.A) to send selected applications to Ramsar
Mailbox: ramsar@ramsar.org