

Terms of Reference of the Independent Advisory Committee of the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention

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.

Accreditation procedure

2. Paragraph 15 of the Annex of Resolution XII.10 states that:

“A city will be recognized as a Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention by the Conference of the Parties, in accordance with the following procedure:

- a. Any Contracting Party that wishes to participate in the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention shall undertake a national review to determine which cities to propose to the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) based on the proposed cities’ compliance with the criteria outlined in paragraph 13 of the Annex of Resolution XII.10;
- b. Any proposals from Contracting Parties shall be submitted to the IAC within one year of the closing of the previous meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
- c. The IAC will 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;
- d. The Standing Committee will review the report of the IAC listing those cities approved for accreditation and transmit it to the Conference of the Parties;
- e. 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; and
- f. 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.”

Independent Advisory Committee role and responsibilities

3. The IAC develops its own work plan and procedures for completing accreditation decisions within the timeframe and using the criteria and procedure outlined within paragraphs 13 and 15 of the Annex to Resolution XII.10.
4. The IAC reviews the applications and decides whether to accredit proposed cities, and reports 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.

5. The IAC produces the wetland city accreditation nomination form and issues guidance on how cities and other human settlements should compile the form, especially regarding the level of detail required and the types of supporting evidence required.
6. The IAC issues proposed guidance for Ramsar National Focal Points on how they could undertake a national review to determine which cities to propose to the IAC, and evaluates the compiled accreditation forms to ensure that they abide by the criteria.
7. The IAC produces guidance on how it will transparently and objectively review applications and decide whether criteria have been satisfied and a city can be accredited.
8. The IAC reviews the applications and decides whether to accredit proposed cities using the criteria outlined in paragraph 13 of the Annex to Resolution XII.10.
9. The IAC reviews the status of each accredited Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention upon the relevant Contracting Party's request every six years. The IAC produces guidance on how the six-year review process will be conducted.

Responsibilities of the Ramsar Secretariat

10. The specific responsibilities of the Ramsar Secretariat are as follows:
 - a. Submit the nominations received to the IAC for its consideration;
 - b. Assist with the organization of the IAC remote meetings;
 - c. Participate in the IAC, as provided for at sections 16.g and 16.h of the Annex to Resolution XII.10 (the Secretary General or his/her designated representative; and the Ramsar Senior Advisor for the concerned region (rapporteur));
 - d. Submit to the Ramsar Standing Committee the report of the IAC listing those cities approved for accreditation for its review and subsequent transmission to the Conference of the Parties;
 - e. Provide the Contracting Party with an accreditation certificate, containing the Ramsar Convention logo, for the Wetland City;
 - f. Develop a global online network of cities which have obtained the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention.

Work plan and time line

11. IAC to issue the Wetland City accreditation nomination form and issue guidance on how cities and other human settlements should compile the form, by 4 April 2017;
12. IAC to issue proposed guidance for Ramsar National Focal Points on how they are to undertake a national review to determine which cities to propose to the IAC and evaluate the compiled accreditation forms to ensure that they abide by the criteria, by 4 April 2017;
13. Secretariat to submit a progress report on the implementation of the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention to SC53, by 7 April 2017;

14. Secretariat to issue call for applications by 7 June 2017 and receive applications from June to 30 August 2017;
15. IAC to produce guidance on how it will transparently and objectively review applications and decide whether criteria have been satisfied and a city can be accredited, by 30 September 2017;
16. IAC to produce guidance on how the six-year review process will be conducted;
17. Secretariat to check the endorsement of the relevant Ramsar National Authorities and forward applications to the IAC by 30 September 2017;
18. IAC to review the applications and decide whether to accredit proposed cities, and report its decision to SC54;
19. SC54 to review the report of the IAC listing those cities approved for accreditation and transmit it to COP13;
20. Secretary General to provide the Contracting Party with an accreditation certificate, containing the Ramsar Convention logo, for the Wetland City.

Membership of the Independent Advisory Committee

21. The composition of the Independent Advisory Committee, as outlined in paragraph 16 of the Annex to Resolution XII.10, is updated as follows:
 - a. Chair of IAC: **Tunisia**
 - b. Co-chair of IAC: **Republic of Korea**
 - c. A representative of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat): **Raf Tuts (or his representative)**
 - d. A representative of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI): **Kirsty Robinson, Professional Officer, LAB-Wetlands**
 - e. A representative of the Ramsar Convention's International Organization Partners: **Denis Landenbergue**
 - f. A Standing Committee member representative from each of the six Ramsar regions, selected by the regions:
 - Africa: **Tunisia**
 - Asia: **RO Korea**
 - Europe: **Azerbaijan**
 - Latin America and the Caribbean: **Honduras**
 - Oceania: **Australia**
 - g. A representative of the Global Waste Water Initiative (GW²I) of UNEP: **Birguy Lamizana**
 - h. A representative of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP): **Peter Eric Davies**

- i. A representative of the Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Oversight Panel of the Ramsar Convention; **Chair of CEPA Oversight Panel**
- j. The Ramsar Secretary General or his/her designated representative: **Ramsar Secretary General**
- k. The Ramsar Senior Advisor for the concerned region (rapporteur); and
- l. The coordinator of the Regional Initiative concerned, if any.