THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

64th Meeting of the Standing Committee

Gland, Switzerland, 20-24 January 2025

**SC64 Doc.24**

**Report of the Co-Chairs of the Independent Advisory Committee
on Wetland City Accreditation**

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| **Actions requested:**The Standing Committee is invited to:i. take note of the process of evaluation of applications for new and renewed accreditation presented in this report; andii. take note of the result of the evaluation for new and renewed accreditation, which will be provided by the Independent Advisory Committee during SC64. |

**Background**

1. In accordance with Resolution XIV.10 on *Updating the Wetland City Accreditation of the Convention*, the Secretariat launched, on 1 June 2023, the call for applications to the third edition of the Wetland City Accreditation and at the same time invited cities accredited in the first edition (2018) of the Accreditation to apply to renew their accredited status. The initial deadline for both new and renewed accreditation was 30 November 2023, which was later extended to 29 February 2024 by the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) in consideration of requests from Contracting Parties.

2. A total of 32 applications for new accreditation and 18 applications for renewed accreditation were received by the Secretariat by 29 February 2024 and forwarded to the IAC on 14 March 2024. The applications were distributed to all IAC members.

**Evaluation**

3. Seventeen IAC members participated in the evaluation process (See Annex 1 of the present document). Other than the considerations mentioned in Paragraphs 4 and 5 below, city applications were allocated to IAC members on a random basis. Each new application was evaluated by at least two IAC members to ensure objective evaluation.

4. In order to avoid any potential conflict of interest in the evaluation process, IAC members did not review any applications from a country where they are from or currently residing.

5. Language capacity was also considered for the allocation, as there were two new applications in Spanish, and five new applications and five renewal applications in French, to be evaluated by two Spanish speaking members and three French speaking members. No potential conflicts of interest were identified with this allocation, but the limited capacity of the IAC in French and Spanish could pose a challenge in future.

**Results**

6. The results of each evaluation were shared with all IAC members for the Committee’s decision on which cities would receive new accreditation and which Wetland Cities would have their accreditation renewed.

7. For confidentiality reasons, the decision of the IAC on the result of the evaluation is not included in the current document and will be provided to the plenary of the 64th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC64).

**Next steps**

8. In accordance with Resolution XIV.10, after SC64, the Secretariat will:

i. announce the list of newly accredited and renewed wetland cities;

ii. invite the newly accredited cities, through their respective National Focal Points, to the certificate awarding ceremony at COP15; and

iii. prepare the awarding ceremony, with support from the IAC and the host country.

**Annex 1**

**List of IAC members who participated in the evaluation process**

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| **No.** | **Composition** | **Individual Representatives** |
| 1 | SC member representing Africa: Rwanda | Theogene Ngaboyamahina |
| 2 | SC member representing Asia: China | Xinxin Hu  |
| 3 | SC member representing Asia (alternate): Iran  | Amir Akhlaghi |
| 4 | SC member representing Europe: Czechia  | Libuše Vlasáková |
| 5 | SC member representing Latin America and the Caribbean: Colombia | María Angélica Mejía Pimienta |
| 6 | SC member representing North America: USA | Lauren Kasparek |
| 7 | SC member representing Oceania: Australia | Ariana Magini |
| 8 | Representative of the Convention’s IOPs: WWF | Wenwei Ren |
| 9 | UN-Habitat | Andrew Rudd |
| 10 | Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) | Ingrid Coetzee |
| 11 | Scientific Technical Review Panel (STRP) | Matthew Simpson |
| 12 | CEPA Oversight Panel | Chris Rostron |
| 13 | Any concerned Ramsar Regional Initiatives: RRC-EA | Seung Oh Suh |
| 14 | Technical Advisors | Lyu Cai |
| 15 | Denis Landenbergue |
| 16 | Gert Michael Steiner |
| 17 | Joon-woo Seo |