

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

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; and
- ii. 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

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 Kasperek
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