

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 present report; and
- ii. endorse the allocation of 30 days of Secretariat time during the current triennium to provide the identified administrative services.

1. In the report of the contact group which met at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC57, see *SC57 Report and Decisions*, Annex 5) it was agreed that the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) on Wetland City Accreditation (WCA) would “review implementation progress and financing as required in Resolution XII.10 para 11” at its face-to-face meeting (which took place in Suncheon, Republic of Korea, from 23 to 28 September 2019) and report back to SC58.

Secretariat’s roles and responsibilities

2. The Secretariat successfully fulfilled all tasks approved by Resolution XII.10 on *Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention* and specified in the *Terms of Reference of the Independent Advisory Committee of the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention* (document SC53-16 Annex 5).
3. In addition to the allocated tasks, the Secretariat also successfully prepared and organized the certification ceremony at the 13th Meeting of the Conference of Contracting Parties (COP13), which significantly raised the visibility of the Convention.
4. As requested by SC57, the Secretariat reported to the IAC that the staff time used for the implementation of these tasks over the triennium 2016-2018 was approximately 30 days.
5. In order to continue this successful work, the IAC seeks the endorsement of SC58 of the tasks to be undertaken by the Secretariat, totalling 30 days per triennium, to provide administrative services related to the WCA.

Background information

6. The terms of reference in document SC53-16 identified the following administrative services to be provided by the Secretariat:
 - 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.
7. Document SC57 Doc.26 *Wetland City Accreditation: Guidance for the 2019-2021 triennium* reported on the role of the Secretariat, and identified that it had provided the following administrative services during the 2016-2018 triennium:
- preparation of application forms and guidance for cities and Heads of Administrative Authorities;
 - drafting and publishing of the call for applications;
 - receiving applications, checking their endorsement and forwarding to the IAC, replying to any queries;
 - preparation of accreditation certificates, publishing of a web article and development of a web page for the accredited cities;
 - communication, preparation and holding of the accreditation ceremony; and
 - preparing ongoing reports for Standing Committee and COP, and seeking clarification when needed.
8. All the above tasks were discussed at the IAC meeting on 25-27 September 2019 and have been incorporated into the IAC's terms of reference for the current triennium.
9. The IAC is not requesting additional staff time of the Secretariat over the current triennium to administer the WCA process beyond 30 days as described above.

Resolution text updates

10. Acknowledging the need for improvements to and clarifications in Resolution XII.10, a proposal for a new draft resolution is planned by a group of Contracting Parties involved in the City Accreditation process. Interested Parties are invited to join the group. The IAC will coordinate the development of the new proposed draft resolution.

11. Further acknowledging the feedback from the Scientific and Technical Review Panel on the assessment criteria and the need to improve associated documents such as the nomination form, the guidance notes for cities and Ramsar Administrative Authorities, and the assessment form, the new draft resolution proposal will include revised versions of these documents in the annex.

Renewal of accreditation of Wetland Cities

- Re-evaluation after six years should follow criteria for first-time accreditation.
- An additional questionnaire could be used to gather more detailed information from cities as this could further demonstrate the value of the WCA and be used to support CEPA activities. This could be included in the re-nomination form.
- A reminder should be given by the Secretariat to the Contracting Parties of accredited cities, after three years, at the COP, that they have to prepare for re-accreditation at the end of the next triennium.
- Mayors and National Focal Points attended the Accredited Wetland City annual round table meeting from 23 to 25 October 2019). This forum was used to remind cities that re-accreditation is needed after six years.
- The timeline should be the same as for first-time WCA applications.

Awarding of Wetland City certificates at Ramsar COP

- The IAC acknowledges the role of the host of a Conference of Contracting Parties in determining the exact nature of the WCA presentation ceremony, but provides the following guidance for consideration:
 - o A COP plenary session WCA award event should be for presentation of certificates to accredited cities. Films and promotional material should be separate from this session.
 - o Only one city representative should receive the certificate.
- City presentations including videos should be highlighted at a separate forum, side event or at exhibit stands.
- Wetland City Accreditation certificates should be framed and at least A3 in size.