

## Report of the Co-chairs of the Independent Advisory Committee on Wetland City Accreditation (IAC)

### Actions requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- i. take note of the city applicant review process presented in this report;
- ii. approve the list of cities that the IAC recommends and which will be provided during SC59; and
- iii. also approve the recommended process regarding wetland city accreditation in paragraphs 7 and 8.

### City application review process

1. Twenty-five (25) city applications were received and checked by the Secretariat and passed onto the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) on Friday 27 March 2020. The applications were distributed to all IAC Members. Eleven IAC members participated in the evaluation process (See Table 1 below).

*Table 1: IAC members to review Ramsar Wetland City Applications, second triennium*

| City Application reviewers   | Name/s                     |
|--|----------------------------|
| SC member representing Africa: Chad  | Djadou Moksia              |
| SC member representing: Asia: China  | Guangchun Lei              |
| SC member representing Europe: Austria   | Gert Michael Steiner       |
| SC member representing Oceania: Australia  | Jenny Tomkins              |
| Scientific Technical Review Panel (STRP)   | Matthew Simpson            |
| CEPA Oversight Panel   | Chris Rostron              |
| A representative of Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI)   | Ernita van Wyk             |
| Two representatives of the Ramsar Convention's IOPs: WWF   | Wenwei Ren<br>Dean Muruven |
| Continuing IAC member  | Denis Landenbergue         |
| Continuing IAC member: Republic of Korea   | Joon-woo Seo               |
| The coordinator of the Ramsar Regional Initiative concerned:<br>Ramsar Regional Centre East Asia (RRCEA) | Seung Oh Suh               |

2. City applications were allocated randomly to IAC members for review. However, to avoid conflicts of interest, IAC members could not evaluate any application from their home country. Each city was subject to two IAC reviews and both reviewers had to agree on the result for each

city. Each IAC member participating in the evaluation process had to assess between four and five applications using the form which is shown in Annex 2.

3. Comments from the review were subsequently shared with all IAC members for information and discussion.
4. In order to avoid the confusion that Parties experienced during SC54 due to the confidentiality of the IAC report to SC54, the IAC decided to keep the current report non-confidential by not revealing the names of applicant cities as well as the list of cities the IAC recommends for accreditation; the list of cities selected for accreditation will be provided orally in an open session during SC59 for approval of the Standing Committee. The number of applicants and the names of their countries are included in Table 2 below:

*Table 2. Countries, number of applications, language of applications*

| Country   | Number of cities | Language | Country           | Number of cities | Language |
|-----------|------------------|----------|-------------------|------------------|----------|
| Canada    | 1                | English  | Morocco           | 1                | French   |
| China     | 7                | English  | Republic of Korea | 3                | English  |
| France    | 2                | French   | Rwanda            | 1                | English  |
| Indonesia | 2                | English  | South Africa      | 1                | English  |
| Iran      | 2                | English  | Spain             | 1                | Spanish  |
| Iraq      | 1                | English  | Thailand          | 1                | English  |
| Japan     | 2                | English  |                   |                  |          |

5. As the IAC had only two French-speaking members (Denis Landenbergue and Djadou Moksia) and no Spanish speaking members, it was necessary to translate the applications into English. The IAC would like to acknowledge, with gratitude, the voluntary contribution of Andreas Gruenig, a Swiss peatland specialist, who helped with the translation of the applications, when support from the Secretariat was not available, due to core budget restrictions.
6. Since the start of the evaluation process, the IAC held four virtual meetings to advance the IAC commitments to the Ramsar Wetland City Accreditation process. Information about these meetings including agendas and participants can be found in Annex 1.

#### **Recommended process after SC59 up to COP14**

7. The IAC recommends that the Standing Committee instruct the Secretariat to 1) announce the list of newly accredited Wetland Cities on its website immediately after the Standing Committee approves the IAC's recommendation for accredited wetland cities, and 2) communicate with the Parties which submitted successful applications in order to invite those cities to COP14 for a certificate awarding ceremony, with no media embargo to be imposed in any process, as opposed to the previous triennium.
8. The IAC also recommends that the Standing Committee request that the Subgroup on COP14 ensure smooth preparation and organization of the certificate awarding ceremony for the newly accredited Wetland Cities as well as effective participation of city representatives, in close cooperation with the IAC.

## Annex 1

### Virtual meetings of the Independent Advisory Committee

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Independent Advisory Committee meeting

Date: 7 September 2020; Zoom

Chair: Prof. Michael Steiner

Co-chair: Ernita van Wyk (& minutes)

Agenda:

1. Welcome – 10 minutes
2. Progress update: Round 2 city application reviews – half an hour
3. Draft resolution development – half an hour

Present:

| IAC member organisation  | Participants                                 |
|--|--|
| Standing Committee representative (SC) for Europe: Austria / Chair | Gert Michael Steiner                         |
| ICLEI / Co-chair   | Ernita van Wyk                               |
| Ramsar IOPs: WWF   | Wenwei Ren<br>Dean Muruven                   |
| SC Oceania: Australia  | Jenny Tomkins                                |
| Continuing IAC member  | Joon-woo Seo                                 |
| Ramsar Regional Centre: East Asia                                  | Suh Seung Oh, Norman Ramirez<br>Seung-Bo Kim |
| STRP   | Matthew Simpson                              |
| CEPA Oversight Panel   | Chris Rostron                                |
| Secretariat  | Jay Aldous                                   |

Apologies: Guangchun Lei: SC Asia: China

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Independent Advisory Committee meeting

Date: 7 December 2020; Zoom

Chair: Prof. Michael Steiner

Co-chair: Ernita van Wyk (& minutes)

Agenda:

1. Welcome – 10 minutes
2. Progress update: Round 2 city application reviews – 30 minutes
3. Draft resolution development – 30 minutes

Present:

| IAC member organisation           | Participants                                 |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| SC Europe: Austria / Chair        | Gert Michael Steiner                         |
| ICLEI / Co-chair                  | Ernita van Wyk                               |
| Ramsar IOPs: WWF                  | Wenwei Ren, Dean Muruven                     |
| Continuing IAC member             | Joon-woo Seo                                 |
| Ramsar Regional Centre: East Asia | Suh Seung Oh, Norman Ramirez<br>Seung-Bo Kim |
| STRP                              | Matthew Simpson                              |
| CEPA Oversight Panel              | Chris Rostron                                |

Apologies: Denis Landenbergue

Consultant: Rob McInnes

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Independent Advisory Committee meeting

Date: 26 January 2021, Zoom

Chair: Prof. Michael Steiner

Co-chair: Ernita van Wyk (& minutes)

Agenda:

1. Review of the Draft Resolution docs prepared by consultant: Rob McInnes
2. IAC report/s to the Standing Committee
3. City accreditation: evaluation update

Present:

| IAC member organisation           | Participants                 |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| SC Europe: Austria / Chair        | Gert Michael Steiner         |
| ICLEI / Co-chair                  | Ernita van Wyk               |
| Ramsar IOPs: WWF                  | Wenwei Ren, Dean Muruven     |
| Continuing IAC member             | Joon-woo Seo                 |
| Ramsar Regional Centre: East Asia | Suh Seung Oh, Norman Ramirez |
| STRP                              | Matthew Simpson              |
| CEPA Oversight Panel              | Chris Rostron                |
| SC Oceania: Australia             | Jenny Tomkins                |
| SC Asia: China                    | Guanchuun Lei                |
| Secretariat                       | Jay Aldous                   |

Apologies: Denis Landenbergue

Consultant: Rob McInnes

### 4<sup>th</sup> Independent Advisory Committee meeting

Date: 5 February 2021; Zoom

Chair: Prof. Michael Steiner

Co-chair: Ernita van Wyk (& minutes)

Agenda:

1. City accreditation: evaluation update
2. IAC report to the Standing Committee

Present:

| IAC member organisation           | Participants         |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| SC Europe: Austria / Chair        | Gert Michael Steiner |
| ICLEI / Co-chair                  | Ernita van Wyk       |
| Ramsar IOPs: WWF                  | Wenwei Ren           |
| Continuing IAC member             | Joon-woo Seo         |
| Ramsar Regional Centre: East Asia | Suh Seung Oh         |
| STRP                              | Matthew Simpson      |
| CEPA Oversight Panel              | Chris Rostron        |
| SC Oceania: Australia             | Jenny Tomkins        |
| SC Asia: China                    | Guangchun Lei        |
| Secretariat                       | Jay Aldous           |
| Continuing IAC member             | Denis Landenbergue   |

## **Annex 2**

### **Review of Nominations for the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention**

#### **Draft Evaluation Form**

##### **Purpose**

This Evaluation Form aims to assist the members of the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) of the Wetland Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention in the review of nominations submitted by Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat. It serves as a tool to facilitate the objective evaluation of nomination forms and to promote sound judgement by the reviewer based on the accreditation criteria. This form will be made available in three (3) languages: English, Spanish and French.

##### **Instructions**

1. Per SC53-16, a city will only be considered for formal accreditation after satisfying all prescribed criteria (Group A: Criteria based on delivering the conservation and wise use of wetlands). To determine compliance, reviewers must look into the form and substance of the nomination forms.
2. Reviewers are tasked to answer questions in the evaluation form, that correspond to the accreditation criteria, by ticking the appropriate box (“Yes” or “No”). An entry is said to comply with a criterion if:
  - a. sufficient information has been provided to clearly describe the main thoughts, and
  - b. supplied information is relevant and supports the criterion.
3. Blank fields found under Group A criteria in the nomination form will automatically disqualify the nomination. Likewise, if an entry does not comply with any criterion under Group A (“No”), the reviewer must discontinue the evaluation procedure and immediately disqualify the nomination. For non-complying entries, reviewers are required to briefly state the reason for such judgement.
4. Group B criteria (Complementary approaches) seek to acquire additional information about the city. Evaluation results under Group B criteria shall not affect the overall evaluation results.
5. Approved nominations will be endorsed by the IAC to the Standing Committee for subsequent submission to the Ramsar Conference of the Contracting Parties.

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Application number |  |
| Country            |  |
| Name of city       |  |

**Group A: Criteria based on delivering the conservation and wise use of wetlands**

**1. 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**

**NOTE: This item does not require compliance with both sub-items 1.1 and 1.2. Compliance with either item 1.1 or 1.2 is acceptable.**

1.1. Does the city have one or more Ramsar Sites that is/are fully or partly in the city administrative boundaries?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item A.1. Name any Ramsar Site that is fully or partly in the city administrative boundaries)*

1.2. Does the city have other significant wetlands that are fully or partly in the city administrative boundaries?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item A.2. Name any other significant wetland that is fully or partly in the city administrative boundaries)*

**2. It has adopted measures for conservation of wetlands and their services including biodiversity and hydrological integrity**

2.1. Does the city have local policies, legislative measures and regulatory instruments to proactively prevent the degradation and loss of wetlands?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item A.3. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that development avoids degrading and destroying wetlands. Describe*

*the national and/or local policy, legislative measures and regulatory instruments, urban management plans etc. that are in use by the city to proactively prevent the degradation and loss of wetlands.)*

**3. It has implemented wetland restoration and/or management measures**

3.1. Has the city implemented measures or projects on the restoration and creation of wetlands as elements of urban, and especially water management infrastructure?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item A.4. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it proactively encourages the restoration or creation of wetlands as elements of urban, and especially water management infrastructure. Provide specific examples (site and summary of implemented measures) of where wetlands have been created or restored within the city as elements of urban infrastructure, such as to control flooding, cool climate, improve water quality, provide recreation, etc.)*

**4. It considers the challenges and opportunities of integrated spatial/land-use planning for wetlands under its jurisdiction**

4.1. Has the city undertaken measures to integrate wetland conservation and wise use in its development and management plans related to river basin management, spatial zonation, water resource management, development of transport infrastructure, agriculture production, fuel supply, poverty alleviation, pollution control, flood risk management, or disaster risk reduction, among others?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item A.5. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it considers the importance of wetlands as elements of spatial planning and integrated city management (such as through Integrated River Basin Management, spatial zonation, water resource management, the development of transport infrastructure, agriculture production, fuel supply, poverty alleviation, pollution control, flood risk management, disaster risk reduction, etc.). Describe the measures (policies, procedures, guidance, legislation, etc.) that ensure that the importance of wetlands is considered fully as elements of spatial planning and integrated city management.)*

**5. 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**

**NOTE: This item requires compliance with all sub-items 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3. Non-compliance with any of the three (3) items disqualifies the nomination.**

5.1. Was the city able to take action/s to involve and ensure the active participation of indigenous and local communities in city spatial planning and wetland management decision-making processes through formal or informal means?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item A.6. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it has adopted the principles of inclusivity, empowerment, and participation of indigenous and local communities and the civil society in decision-making and city planning and management. Describe how indigenous and local communities have been engaged and participate in the management of wetland-related issues.)*

5.2. Has the city implemented activities that helped raise the levels of public awareness about the values of wetlands and encouraged the wise use of wetlands by a diverse range of stakeholders and communities (e.g. established operational wetland education or information centres, regularly disseminates information on wetlands, implemented school education programmes, etc.)?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item A.7. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it has raised levels of public awareness about the values of wetlands, and encouraged the wise use of wetlands by a diverse range of stakeholders and communities through, for example, establishing operational wetland education or information centres, regularly disseminating information on wetlands, establishing and implementing school education programmes, etc.)*

5.3. Has the city organized activities that support the celebration of World Wetlands Day?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:



*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item A.8. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it has proactively promoted events around World Wetlands Day (2 February) in order to raise awareness on wetlands and their importance to the city. Describe the types of events that have been delivered to celebrate World Wetlands Day in the city.)*

**6. 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**

6.1. Has the city formed an operational local committee for the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention that has defined composition and functions?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item A.9. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it has established a local committee (or similar structure) to support and to further the aims of the Wetland City Accreditation. Such a committee should contain appropriate knowledge and experience on wetlands and should be representative of stakeholders and communities. Describe the committee, its members, mandate and operation.)*

**Group B: Complementary approaches**

**1. It has developed and applied appropriate standards regarding water quality, sanitation and management in the entire area under the city's jurisdiction**

1.1. Does the city have policies or regulatory frameworks that promote and maintain water quality and sanitation standards?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: Item B.1. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it has applied standards on water quality and sanitation, including waste management facilities which include collection and treatment for solid waste and wastewater (industrial, domestic and stormwater). Describe the standards, policies and regulatory framework which ensures delivery on water quality and sanitation standards)*

**2. It recognizes and considers the socio-economic and cultural values, as well as the broader ecosystem services, of wetlands and has established good practices to consider and protect them in decision-making**

2.2. Has the city adopted formal instrument/s or policies that cite the importance of wetland ecosystem services?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: ItemB.2. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that it proactively recognises the ecosystem services that wetlands provide and has integrated these multiple values into decision making. Where appropriate, special attention should be given to describing sustainable agriculture, forestry, fisheries, tourism and the cultural values of wetlands. Describe how the different provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting ecosystem services are recognised and the benefits that they provide to human society are integrated into planning and decision-making. Where possible, illustrate with examples.)*

**3. It can demonstrate that there is a close link between local communities and the wetlands**

3.3. Within the jurisdiction of the city government, do local communities practice the wise use of wetland resources?

Yes  No

If "No", please briefly state your reason/s in the space provided below:

*(Refers to the Nomination Form: ItemB.3. A city can be considered for accreditation if it can demonstrate that there is a close link between local communities and the wetlands. Describe how local communities are engaged with the wise use of wetlands and how the communities benefit from the services the wetlands provide.)*

**Recommendation**

Do you recommend this city for accreditation?

Yes  No

If "No", you may provide more information in the space below to elaborate on your recommendation.

Signature above printed name of evaluator

Date: