

THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS  
59th Meeting of the Standing Committee  
Gland, Switzerland, 21-25 June 2021

**SC59 Doc.24.8**

## **Draft Resolution on Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention**

*Submitted by Republic of Korea, Tunisia, Austria and People's Republic of China*

*Secretariat cover note:*

The DR refers to earlier Resolutions adopted by Ramsar COPs on the same subject, notably Resolutions X.27, XI.11, XII.10 and XIII.16. The DR does not address matters of a scientific or technical nature requiring review by the STRP.

## Draft Resolution on Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention

### Action requested:

- The Standing Committee is invited to review and approve the attached Draft Resolution for consideration by the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties and to note the Information Paper which provides background information on the Wetland City Accreditation process.

### Financial implications of implementation

Paragraph	Action	Cost (CHF)
16	Secretariat to support the Wetland City Accreditation process (10 days per annum for support staff)	CHF 4,200 per annum

### Draft Resolution

#### Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention

1. RECALLING the commitments made by Contracting Parties under Resolution X.27 on *Wetlands and urbanization* to pay due attention to the importance of their wetlands in urban and peri-urban environments and to take appropriate measures to conserve and protect these wetlands;
2. ALSO RECALLING Resolution XI.11 on *Principles for the planning and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands* and the commitment made by Contracting Parties to continue to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands in urban and peri-urban environments;
3. FURTHER RECALLING Resolution XIII.16 on *Sustainable urbanization, climate change and wetlands* and the desire to prevent activities that may have an adverse impact on urban and peri-urban wetlands;
4. AWARE that the Contracting Parties have approved a voluntary Wetland City accreditation system under Resolution XII.10 on *Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention*;
5. ACKNOWLEDGING that the Contracting Parties at the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties recognized 18 cities (6 from China, 4 from France, 1 from Hungary, 4 from the Republic of Korea, 1 from Madagascar, 1 from Sri Lanka and 1 from Tunisia) that have taken exceptional steps to safeguard their urban wetlands and formally accredited those cities through the voluntary Wetland City accreditation system;
6. NOTING that Contracting Parties through the Wetland City Accreditation system have continued to improve their national standards and protocols for conservation and management of wetlands in cities;
7. ACKNOWLEDGING the Wetland City Network established through a consensus during the Inaugural Roundtable of Wetland City Mayors held on 23-25 October 2019 in Suncheon City, Republic of Korea;
8. NOTING the Report and Decisions of the 57<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee with respect to the Wetland City Accreditation and particularly the success of the venture as a flagship for

the Ramsar Convention and the need to improve operational guidance and procedural matters;

9. RECOGNIZING the need to review implementation progress and financing of the voluntary Wetland City Accreditation system and to enhance the accreditation process;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

10. ENCOURAGES the on-going voluntary accreditation of cities through the Wetland City Accreditation system in order to provide positive branding opportunities for cities that demonstrate strong positive relationships with wetlands;
11. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and INVITES other governments, financial institutions, International Organization Partners and other implementing partners to support the implementation of the Wetland City Accreditation system;
12. WELCOMES the willingness of the Ramsar Regional Centre –East Asia (RRC–EA) to support the Independent Advisory Committee by hosting, administrating and financing regular face to face meetings;
13. WELCOMES the support of the Government of the Republic of Korea and the RRC–EA to host, organize and administer the Inaugural Roundtable of Wetland City Mayors as a centre of the Wetland City Network; and ENCOURAGES voluntary collaboration among the members of this network to further deliver on the wise use of wetlands;
14. INSTRUCES the Independent Advisory Committee to prepare comprehensive operational guidance addressing the issues identified in Annex 1 to this Resolution and to present it to the Standing Committee Meeting for consideration and endorsement;
15. REQUESTS that the Standing Committee allocates core budget funds for the Secretariat for the purpose of administrative support for the implementation of the Wetland City Accreditation process; and CONFIRMS that this updated text and its annex supersede those adopted as Resolution XII.10, which is replaced by the present Resolution;
16. ALSO REQUESTS that the Standing Committee nominates members of the Independent Advisory Committee for the triennium 2021-2024 during its 62<sup>nd</sup> meeting in accordance with the updated Terms of Reference to be included in the new operational guidance;
17. INSTRUCES the Secretariat to support the Wetland City Accreditation process and to continue publishing information regarding the Wetland City Accreditation on the Convention’s website;
18. INSTRUCES the CEPA Oversight Panel to establish and formalise a permanent co-operation with the Wetland City Network and use its potential to disseminate the philosophy of the Ramsar Convention to the people living in these cities.

**Appendix 1.**  
**Consolidated Operational Procedures for Wetland City Accreditation**

**Background**

Since the adoption of Resolution XII.10 on *Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention*, a range of mechanisms and guidance has been developed to support implementation and to provide a formal procedure for city accreditation. Building on the information described in the Annex to Resolution XII.10, materials have been developed *inter alia* for the nomination of candidate cities, evaluation of accreditation submissions, guidance for cities and Ramsar Administrative Authorities and terms of reference for the Independent Advisory Committee. The material developed has facilitated the successful accreditation of 18 cities.

Resolution XII.10 indicated the requirement to review implementation progress of the framework and the voluntary accreditation system at COP13. Whilst a formal review was not undertaken at COP13, and notwithstanding the successful accreditation of cities, the Standing Committee has considered the progress on the Wetland City Accreditation scheme (SC57 Doc.26) and several operational challenges have been highlighted. Informed by input from the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), the Wetland City Accreditation Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) and the Secretariat, the Standing Committee, has expressed concerns regarding *inter alia* a lack of clarity and efficiency in the process, technical challenges within the nomination and evaluation process, the absence of a renewal process beyond 2024 and financial and resourcing implications.

This Appendix sets out the proposed contents of *Consolidated Operational Procedures for Wetland City Accreditation*, highlight gaps in the existing information and process and describes briefly the contents of new information required to be developed in order to build upon and improve the existing protocols.

The procedures will be applicable over future rounds of the Accreditation process, and will also take account of a possible significant increase in nominations, to ensure they are sustainable in the long term.

**Proposed structure**

The *Consolidated Operational Procedures for Wetland City Accreditation* should ensure that all the relevant information is easily accessible, comprehensive and succinct. For instance, the consolidation process could seek to produce a handbook which brings together relevant guidance as adopted by the Parties, supplemented by additional material developed during the 2019-2021 triennium, case studies and other publications in order to illustrate key aspects of the guidance and process.

The structure described in the table below is proposed. The presence of existing guidance or information is highlighted. A brief description is provided where *de novo* information is required.

The existing information described in the column 'Status' below is all accessible at [www.ramsar.org](http://www.ramsar.org), however the information is not consolidated in one location and is distributed across several web pages.

Section	Title	Description of content	Status	Actions required
1	Background to Wetland City Accreditation	Explanation of the need for a Wetland City Accreditation process	Brief text is presented in the preambular paragraphs of Resolutions X.27, XI.11, XII.11. Further information is provided in Briefing Note 6.	Brief synthesis required
2	Overview of the Wetland City Accreditation process	Explanation of the overall process from opening calls for application, nomination, evaluation, notification, award and renewal	Summary is provided in Resolution XII.10.	Brief synthesis required
3	Normalised timeline	Description of the key dates for the process based on the COP triennial cycle	Timeline for the triennium 2019-2021 is provided in Annex 5 of SC57 Report and Decision.	Normalization required
4	Nomination form	Formal nomination form	A Nomination Form is presented in SC53 Doc. 16 and in use. The overall procedure is described in Resolution XII.10.	Improvements to the Nomination Form are needed.
5	Guidance notes for Administrative Authorities (AA)	Guidance for AAs to understand and facilitate the overall accreditation process and in checking completed Nomination Forms	A Guidance Note for Ramsar Administrative Authority is presented in SC53 Doc. 16 and in use.	Improvements to the Guidance Note are needed.
6	Guidance notes for cities	Guidance for cities, their Mayors and officials to understand eligibility and facilitate the overall accreditation process and completing the Nomination Forms	A Guidance Note for Cities is presented in SC53 Doc. 16 and in use.	Improvements to the Guidance Note are needed.
7	Evaluation process	Explanation of the evaluation process	A Draft Evaluation Form exists.	New text and information required
8	Award process	Explanation of what happens when a city is formally accredited, including <i>inter alia</i> notification, attendance at COP, award ceremony, awareness raising and publicity		New text required

<b>Section</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Description of content</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Actions required</b>
9	Renewal process	How cities can apply to renew their accreditation (as accreditation limited to two triennia) and a description of the process – including the evidence required for renewal		New text required
10	Independent Advisory Committee (IAC)	Description of the composition of the IAC, the terms of reference and operational processes	Composition of IAC is described in Resolution XII.10 and SC57 Doc.26; draft terms of reference exist.	Clarification required
11	Monitoring and evaluation process	Description of a monitoring and evaluation process to be undertaken by IAC to assess impacts and outcomes of accreditation (including reports from cities, applications to re-new accreditation, possible short video reports by Mayors and single-page case studies), with a report to SC and COP. To be used for improvement and promotion of the initiative.		New text required