



Wetland City Network Strategic Plan 2022-2028

Background

Resolution XII.10, adopted during the Ramsar Convention's Conference of the Parties in 2015 (COP12), endorsed the establishment of the "Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention". Under this resolution, Contracting Parties recognize "the huge potential of urban areas in terms of education and public awareness related to wetlands conservation" and that the accreditation scheme "can assist cities, Contracting Parties and stakeholders in promoting awareness on the wise use and conservation of wetlands". This accreditation scheme grants cities with branding opportunities and global recognition as model cities that maintain a strong and positive relationship with wetlands.

Since COP13, numerous cities have been formally accredited as Wetland Cities. In support of the accreditation scheme, the Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia (RRC-EA) volunteered to assist in forging a stronger network of Wetland Cities by organizing the first Mayors' Roundtable on 23-25 October 2019 in Suncheon City, Republic of Korea. At this roundtable, the Wetland Cities unanimously agreed to establish the "**Wetland City Network**" and assigned the RRC-EA to serve as Secretariat of the Wetland City Network.

Vision of the Wetland City Network

The vision of the Wetland City Network is that:

Wetland Cities deliver on the wise use of wetlands for the benefit of current and future generations of citizens

Purpose of the Wetland City Network

Wetland Cities provide a huge potential to promote and deliver on the wise use of urban and peri-urban wetlands. The establishment of an effective Wetland City Network contributes to the implementation of the Ramsar Convention through the collective efforts of local governments, local communities and other important stakeholders.

The Wetland City Network serves as a platform that:

- 1) Enables effective communication among Wetland Cities;
- 2) Promotes information exchange on experiences and lessons learned in managing urban and peri-urban wetlands with respect to local policies;
- 3) Facilitates dialogues to develop environmental and socio-economic cooperation among Wetland Cities; and
- 4) Provides access to exchanges of resources among network members.

Strategic Objectives and Targets of the Wetland City Network

Four strategic objectives have been formulated based on the deliberations at the Mayors' Roundtable. A fifth strategic objective has been included to ensure that Wetland Cities continually implement wise use approaches and that wetlands are managed, restored and created for the benefit of current and future generations of citizens.

Objective 1: Communication

The collective knowledge and experience of the Network is greater than any one Wetland City. Strong and effective communication among, and beyond, the Network is essential to ensure that Wetland Cities and their citizens benefit.

- Target 1.1: Representatives of all Wetland Cities attend the annual Mayors' Roundtable meetings,
- Target 1.2: The Wetland City Network Secretariat communicates effectively with the Wetland Cities.
- Target 1.3: Wetland Cities and the Wetland City Network Secretariat seek to promote the Wetland City Network through a variety of media and through co-badging with relevant parties and events.

Objective 2: Knowledge exchange

Different Wetland Cities experience different challenges and develop a variety of wetland management solutions. Across the Network, different policy and practical interventions will be developed and implemented. Knowledge exchange among the Wetland City Network and also with other stakeholders will be essential to strengthen wetland wise use and to deliver on the wider obligations under the Ramsar Convention.

- Target 2.1: Wetland Cities exchange knowledge among the Network through various forms of media and platforms.
- Target 2.2: Wetland Cities exchange knowledge with observer cities aspiring to be accredited under the Ramsar Convention.
- Target 2.3: Wetland Cities actively engage with two-way knowledge sharing with other stakeholders including *inter alia* Ramsar Regional Initiatives, the Ramsar Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs), national and local government and non-governmental organizations, civil society organisations (CSOs), academic institutions, and other interested parties.
- Target 2.4: Wetland Cities seek to engage and share knowledge with other international organisations involved in sustainable cities including *inter alia* the Convention on Biological Diversity, UN-Habitat, UNEP and ICLEI.

Objective 3: Cooperation

The Wetland City Network provides a platform for dialogues to develop environmental and socio-economic cooperation. Cooperation can be between two Wetland Cities or among several Wetland Cities, depending on the objective, and will focus on achieving shared environmental and socio-economic outcomes.

- Target 3.1: Wetland Cities actively cooperate among the Network on demonstrable shared environmental and socio-economic outcomes.

Objective 4: Resourcing

The Wetland City Network and its members will aim to share resources, including human resources, and to mobilize and leverage additional resources within and beyond the Network.

- Target 4.1: Wetland Cities have undertaken sharing of human resources to deliver on wetland wise use.
- Target 4.2: Wetland Cities have worked together to seek and secure additional resources for the implementation of priority programs on wetland wise use.

Objective 5: Implementation

Receiving Wetland City accreditation marks the starting point in a process. Wetland Cities will aspire to continually improve and enhance their wetlands. Wetland Cities will also aim to implement positive practical and policy-related actions that demonstrate an on-going commitment to wise use principles and to securing the inter-generational benefits that wetlands can provide for citizens.

- Target 5.1: Wetland Cities implement measures to improve their wetlands and continue to uphold wetland wise use principles as models of good governance.
- Target 5.2: Wetland Cities proactively develop wetland-related policies that contribute to socially and environmentally sustainable urban and peri-urban wetlands.
- Target 5.3: Wetland Cities ensure the full participation of wetland stakeholders in spatial planning and wetland management.
- Target 5.4: Wetland Cities understand and integrate the multiple values of wetlands into spatial and wetland management planning.
- Target 5.5: Wetland Cities manage, restore and create wetlands to optimise the benefits they provide to citizens.

Reporting and review

The Wetland City Network Strategic Plan covers the period 2022-2028, or the equivalent of two COP cycles. The Wetland Cities are encouraged to report on progress towards the Objectives in advance of the COP. The Wetland City Network Secretariat is encouraged to compile a report for consideration and presentation at the COP.

The Strategic Plan should be reviewed on a two COP-cycle basis to ensure that it is still relevant and appropriate for the delivery against the Vision.