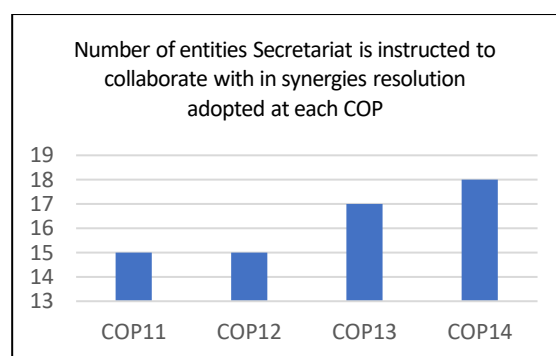
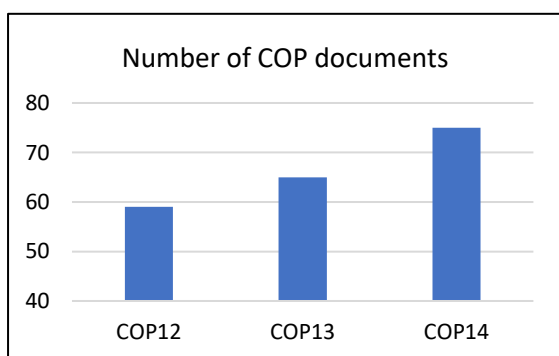
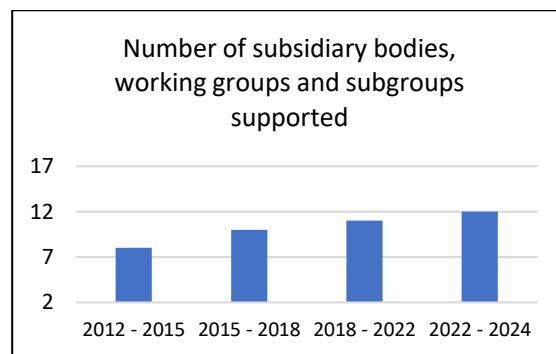
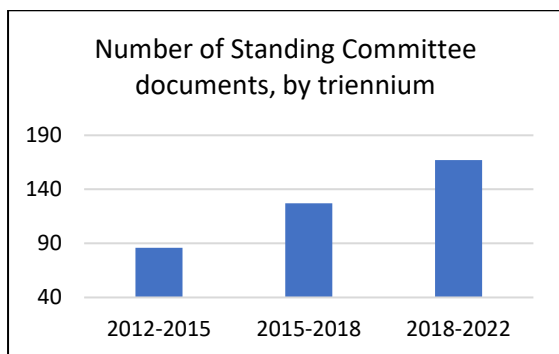
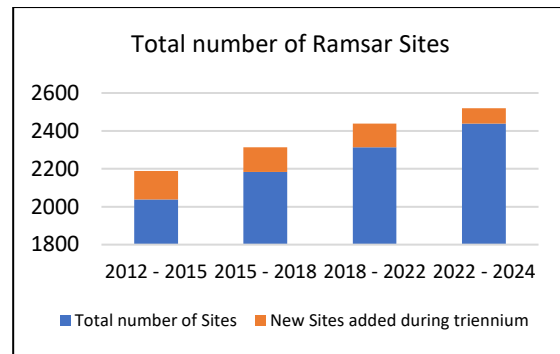
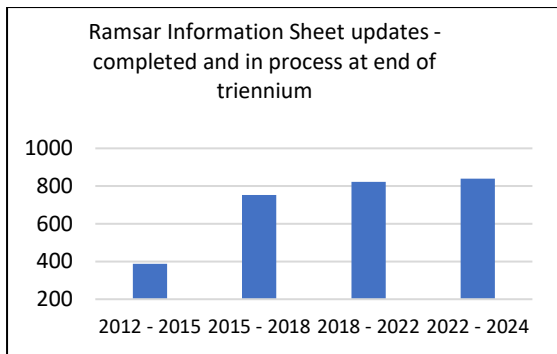


Information document to support the 2026-2028 increase in the Secretariat core budget presented in document SC64 Doc.9.3

1. At the request of the Subgroup on Finance and the Contracting Parties, the Secretariat has prepared this **information document** for Contracting Parties which provides the reasoning for a core budget increase that can be used during internal discussions on the core budget for Convention on Wetlands.
2. The core budget of the Secretariat has remained unchanged at CHF 5,081,000 per year since 2013 despite the growing number of deliverables requested by Contracting Parties and the impact of inflation. Examples of a **growing volume of deliverables** requested by Parties are presented in the graphs below:





The proposed increase in the core budget addresses the following areas:

Strengthening the Secretariat's ability to recruit and retain qualified staff

3. The Working Group on Institutional Strengthening has identified recruitment of staff and reduction of staff turnover as critical institutional challenges. The findings of the Working Group as presented in SC62 Doc.11 included that Secretariat staff compensation is not in alignment with the IUCN compensation framework and therefore is not competitive in comparison to the UN system. A core budget increase will address the lack of competitiveness in staff compensation and will help to:

- provide **equity for Secretariat staff** within the IUCN compensation framework and increase competitiveness with UN organizations; and
- cover for cost-of-labour **adjustments**, performance and promotions in line with the IUCN Human Resources global compensation policies.

Meeting an increasing volume of deliverables and tasks as instructed by Contracting Parties

4. Contracting Parties have expressed a need to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat **to support Contracting Parties** in relation to National Reports (NR), Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) updates, and the utilization of such data provided by Contracting Parties. To meet this need the Secretariat proposes a new Data Analyst / Reporting Officer position that will:

- provide enhanced support to Contracting Parties in relation to reporting (NR and RIS updates) through training and guidance;
- prevent build-up of a backlog of RIS under Secretariat review;
- strengthen reporting on progress in implementation of the Convention based on NR and RIS updates;
- enhance the utility of NR and RIS updates for other applications including work undertaken by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel;
- strengthen support to Contracting Parties in relation to national wetland inventories and reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.6.1; and
- enhance process efficiency to enable the Secretariat to draw on available data for servicing subsidiary bodies and working groups and preparing documentation.

5. Contracting Parties have also requested that the Secretariat strengthen communications through **increasing its outreach and visibility activities** and supporting better implementation of CEPA (communication, capacity building, education, participation and advocacy). To meet this

need, the Secretariat proposes a new Communications Officer position which will contribute to delivering:

- development of content on wetlands and the Convention, increasing frequency and reach of news articles, thought leadership pieces, reports and briefings;
 - CEPA implementation (global and in support of Contracting Parties);
 - media outreach and content placement; and
 - promotion and dissemination of STRP products.
6. As Contracting Parties consider this proposal for a core budget increase, they are encouraged to refer to Annex 2 of document SC64 Doc.9.3. which shows each Party's estimated contribution amount for each of the two budget scenarios. The exact amount will be known after the publication of the new UN scale of contributions for the years 2025-2027 at the beginning of 2025, noting that for some Parties the new contribution amount is lower than it was five or ten years ago.
 7. Contracting Parties with questions on the core budget scenarios for 2026-2028 as presented in SC64 Doc.9.4 are invited to contact the Secretariat Finance Manager, Sladjana Stankovic stankovic@ramsar.org.