



# **Gap Analysis to Undertake, Refine or Complete Wetland Inventories**

**submitted to**

**The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands**

**Submitted by**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of a gap analysis commissioned by the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands (hereafter referred to as the Secretariat) in July 2019 to identify current barriers encountered by Contracting Parties in carrying out or completing National Wetlands Inventories (NWIs). This analysis is also intended to determine what forms of guidance, support and resources Contracting Parties require to undertake, refine or complete an NWI. The report includes a set of recommendations to the Secretariat on how the identified gaps can be best addressed, as well as insights into the design of a toolkit, which is a related output.

The gap analysis was informed by responses to questions 8.1 and 8.6 in the National Reports submitted for COP13 (Ramsar, 2018) including ten late submissions, and 22 responses to an online survey sent to all Contracting Parties in August 2019 by the Secretariat. Additionally, the consultants reviewed publicly available data for the 150 (including ten late submissions) Contracting Parties which submitted a National Report to COP13. This included data such as income levels (World Bank, 2019.a), Fragile State Index (Fund For Peace, 2019) and environmental commitment indicators using as a proxy the progress against Paris Agreement targets (Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and Environment, 2018). Definitions of these indicators are provided in the methods section 2.0 of the main report.

**In total, 150 National Reports (140 National Reports included in the Global Implementation Report and ten late submissions) were submitted, which represents successful progress in terms of reporting** (Ramsar, 2018). These reports indicate that 44% (n=67) of Contracting Parties have completed an NWI. North America (67%, n=2) and Europe (57%, n=24) are the two regions with the highest percentage of Contracting Parties having completed an NWI. In Oceania, 50% (n=3) of Contracting Parties have also completed an NWI, in Latin America and the Caribbean 41% (n=9) and Asia 40%(n=11). Whereas Africa is the region with the lowest percentage of Contracting Parties having completed an NWI with 36% (n=18). A further 27% (n=41) of Contracting Parties report that their NWI is in progress.

**Seventy-four Contracting Parties provided a baseline figure for wetlands extent for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 6.6.1, representing 49% of the 150 National Reports submitted for COP13.** Of these 74 Contracting Parties, 51 indicated an exact figure on wetland extent (being 34% of the 150 Contracting Parties), and 23 (15% of the 150 Contracting Parties) provided an approximate figure.

Based on the online survey in response to the request to provide a self-assessment in terms of Contracting Parties' experience with NWIs, there was a fairly even split between the three possible categories (e.g., "no or limited", "moderate" or "advanced"). Responses show similar progress, regardless of the level of experience determined by a Contracting Party, with around 50% of Contracting Parties having completed an NWI and around 30% of them being in progress across all three groups.

**Based on the online survey, Contracting Parties indicated that they face a combination of financial, technical and governance issues to undertake, complete or update an NWI, with financial and technical support being the most commonly cited areas of support requested.**

**The overall analysis of contextual and economic factors compared with Contracting Parties' progress against the completion of an NWI indicates that Contracting Parties with a higher income tend to have completed an NWI or have an NWI in progress.** Similarly, Contracting Parties that are on track with their environmental commitment, also tend to have completed or are in the process of undertaking an NWI.

### Recommended approach

**It is recommended that the Secretariat focuses on those Contracting Parties which currently have not undertaken an NWI at all or are only in the planning phase, representing 26% (n=39) of**

**the 150 Contracting Parties reporting to COP13.** Those 108 Contracting Parties which have completed or are in progress with an NWI should not be ignored. They can benefit from continued Secretariat guidance and capacity building based on the existing resources and the new toolkit, which is to be developed, partly on the basis of this gap analysis.

**For the 39 Contracting Parties making the least progress to date, a two-pronged approach is proposed, taking into account the results of the gap analysis:**

**Firstly, a short-term approach to supporting the 30 Contracting Parties in the high income, upper-middle income and lower-middle-income<sup>1</sup> country brackets, where conditions are most favourable to completing a maximum number of NWIs within a realistic time-frame of between 12 to 24 months.** For the high-income Contracting Parties,<sup>2</sup> efforts should focus on improving internal lobbying and advocacy for greater political support for NWIs as they already have relatively advanced technical capacity and possibilities for financing. By contrast, upper-middle<sup>3</sup> and lower-middle-income Contracting Parties should receive a combination of technical and financial support, as requested in the online survey. Moreover, the Secretariat should support the strengthening of these Contracting Parties' political commitment to ensure sustainable management of wetland areas.

Additionally, this shorter-term approach should take into account that some of these Contracting Parties have already developed a partial inventory. In these cases, efforts should focus on increasing national coordination and knowledge-sharing between stakeholders to gather and consolidate existing data on wetlands to produce an NWI.

**Secondly, a longer-term approach should be adopted for the nine low-income<sup>4</sup> Contracting Parties that are in more challenging contexts and which will require more substantial capacity building and technical support.** These Contracting Parties are only likely to be able to undertake NWIs in the medium to longer-term future (e.g., from two to five years) with all nine having the highest levels of fragility as measured by the Fragile States Index (for more details see section 2.0 on methods). This long-term approach should initially focus on building capacity and the provision of technical support, as well as governance support to lobby for greater commitment by national governments. As a result, it can be expected that the overall enabling environment will improve over time, allowing for a second phase focussing on support for fundraising for undertaking NWIs. This approach may take between two and five years, depending on the challenges faced by Contracting Parties.

**One francophone and one anglophone working group** should be created across these nine Contracting Parties to enable mutual support, share experiences and to provide cost efficiencies in terms of more in-depth training. By setting common targets and deadlines, Contracting Parties could collaborate and share learning through a process guided by the Secretariat. Peer to peer exchanges can be beneficial to motivate Contracting Parties and encourage mutual support, as well as to provide a cost-effective means of delivering training and other capacity building efforts by the Secretariat. It is further proposed that neighbouring Contracting Parties, which have completed an NWI, are identified to play a **peer-support and mentoring role**. Good candidates for this could include Mali and Kenya.

### **Recommendations for the toolkit**

Based on feedback from the online survey, three major themes emerge as priorities for content to be covered in the new Ramsar toolkit:

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<sup>1</sup> Lower-middle income countries are included because this group demonstrates a relatively high level of completion of NWIs or NWIs in progress (63% of this income bracket).

<sup>2</sup> Australia, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Norway, Oman, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

<sup>3</sup> Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Equatorial Guinea, Grenada, Montenegro, Lebanon and Suriname

<sup>4</sup> Burkina Faso, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, South Sudan and Togo

1. Practical guidance and examples of how to implement an NWI, including a step-by-step process and resources to support each step;
2. Expounding on the importance of an NWI for advocacy in relation to SDG indicator 6.6.1 and political decision-making, including suggestions for building the case for supporting and protecting wetlands; and
3. Earth Observation, other practical tools and specific technical methods for carrying out an NWI.

However, the interests and needs of individual Contracting Parties will vary depending on their level of experience in carrying out NWIs and the country-specific conditions, opportunities and challenges. Based on the responses of the Contracting Parties, it is proposed that the toolkit is developed in a **PDF format**, which was the most commonly requested, and allowing for this document to be worked with as an offline document with embedded links and resources. It is recommended that the Secretariat use the toolkit as a central resource for the development of training materials and events with groups of Contracting Parties, which can now be better identified based on this gap analysis. Trainings could focus on priority topics as identified by the Contracting Parties and be organised in the first instance as online events grouped by language. Following the delivery of online trainings, further support may be offered, including on-site demonstrations, subject to the available funding and capacity of the Secretariat to deliver such events.