Ramsar Sites Information Service
Update and Status

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Ramsar Convention Secretariat
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Overview
Overview
Towards a new system

- COP 11 2012, adoption of a new RIS format and electronic submission
  - COP 11, resolution 8
    - Paragraph 12 “ADOPTS the Ramsar Site Information Sheet (RIS) – 2012 revision as annexed to this Resolution;”
    - Paragraph 15c) “the Ramsar Secretariat to update the Ramsar Sites Database (RSDB) to receive Ramsar Site data and information in the new format, allowing for on-line electronic submission of Ramsar Information Sheets”
    - Paragraph 18 “INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to implement the terms of Resolution VIII.13 (2002) para. 11 regarding upgrading the functionality of the RSDB to allow the on-line electronic submission of RISs by Contracting Parties and, in particular, to ensure that the RSDB captures all data and information provided by Contracting Parties in Ramsar Information Sheets, rather than just a subset of such data and information as at present;”
Overview

Key highlights

- Need to update the Ramsar Site information regularly
  - COP 8, Resolution VIII.13
    - Paragraph 4 *AWARE that in Resolution VI.13 the Contracting Parties resolved to give priority to providing updated maps and completed “Information Sheets on Ramsar Wetlands” (RISs) and to revise the data at least every six years;*

- Use the new system as of January 2015
  - COP 11, Resolution 8
    - Paragraph 15 “AGREES that this RIS – 2012 revision format and its accompanying Strategic Framework – 2012 revision will formally enter into use from January 2015 for designations of new sites, extensions to existing sites and updates on existing sites...”
Overview
RSIS Benefits

- **General**
  - New RIS format is better structured and much more complete
  - Enhanced sections for ecological character and ecosystem services

- **On the public area**
  - Spatial exploration of the wetland sites is possible
  - Filter and export functionality improved
  - Live statistics available

- **Secretariat**
  - Some manual processes will be facilitated by the system eg
    - Generation of reports for the Standing Committee and COPs
    - Generation of the Official List of Sites of International Importance
# Overview

## RSIS Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dec 2012</strong></td>
<td>Definition of specifications, dissemination of Request for Proposal</td>
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<td>Jan 2013</td>
<td>Finalization of cost and additional fundraising</td>
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<td><strong>May 2013</strong></td>
<td>Selection of UNEP-GRID (among 16 bidders)</td>
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<td>Summer 2013</td>
<td>Contract negotiation and signature</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Feb 2014</strong></td>
<td>RSIS version 0.7 released internally for testing</td>
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<td><strong>Aug 2014</strong></td>
<td>Launch of the English version, new designations only accepted through the new system</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 2014</td>
<td>Launch of French and Spanish version</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Jan 2015</strong></td>
<td>RIS updates and new designations are only accepted through the new system</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 2015</td>
<td>Constant improvement and optimization of the system</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 2015</td>
<td>Launch of the Word offline form</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Year 2016</strong></td>
<td>Constant improvements, preparation of Data Completion</td>
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Overview
RSIS Current status

- 2,241 sites covering 215 Mio ha
- 547 sites currently in process of update
- 95 sites in the process of being designated
- 109 sites published through new system
Overview
RSIS time commitment

**Estimated** time needed:

- 3-4h: Country to enter previously collected data into an online RIS
- 4-6h: First review by secretariat
- >6h: Depending on the number of revisions between the country and the secretariat
Work to date
Work to date
Understanding Parties needs

- Intense tests of version 0.9 in Summer 2014 with members from secretariat and selected members of STRP and focal points
- Presentation and training at various Ramsar meetings, among others:
  - Austria, 2014
  - Zimbabwe, 2015
  - Kyrgyzstan – for 5 Central Asian countries, 2015
  - Mongolia, Thailand, ROK, Sri Lanka, 2015
  - Malaysia, RSIS Workshop for Site Managers, 2016
- One-on-One sessions by the assistants at SC, COP and other meetings
- RSIS Help desk at COP12 in Uruguay
  - Every day during the lunch breaks in COP12, staff and Assistants were present to answer specific questions / comments on the new system
Work to date
Understanding Parties needs

- Regularly receiving input from users through rsisadmin@ramsar.org
  - Every request is evaluated and handled by the Regional Teams and IT Officer

- To date Parties have raised 54 issues of which 20 are resolved and 34 are in progress

- Regional Teams and IT Officer monitor the status of each request in a spreadsheet detailing progress
Work to date
Parties & Partners feedback

Feedback focused on 6 areas:

- User interface of the public part
- Graphical / ergonomic suggestions (filters, search, sort)
- User interface of the online form, species list
- Integrity of the structure of the online form
- Offline solution
- The Help system
Work to date
Approach to problem solving

- Problems were investigated and issues resolved
  - Certain issues are solved in-house
  - Remainder go onto a prioritised ‘ticketing system’ for UNEP-GRID to resolve

- Suggestions were evaluated and integrated where useful and possible

- Structural change suggestions discussed in the regional teams
Work to date

Word Offline form

- The Word offline form has been developed and made available to Parties together with guidance on it’s usage
- Positive feedback from users
Work to date
Training

- A written tutorial for RIS compilers has been distributed
- 6 video tutorials in 3 languages produced reflecting key areas of data entry (5 already available on Ramsar YouTube channel)
Work to date
Maps & layers

- Paper maps
  - 388 paper maps have been scanned and uploaded to the RSIS
  - 64 more paper maps are in the process of being adapted so they can be uploaded if adequate
- New layer HydroBASINS added
Work to date

Transboundary focus

- Highlight transboundary site
  - New paragraph with transboundary description available on the public section of the RSIS
Work to date
Catalogue of Life

- Update of Catalogue of life

Scientific names available

- 1,654,380 Plantae (905,933)
- 1,672,413 Fungi (1,095,955)
- 1,774,642 Animalia (1,124,906)

2014: 2,560,313
Feb. 2015: 2,768,368 (+200K)
Feb. 2016: 3,163,407 (+400K)

Total: 8,592,088
Work to date
Interoperability & Synergies

Utilising the new systems’ capabilities in linking with external data sets to promote Ramsar information to the broadest possible audience for example:

- Ramsar Website
  - The section about the sites on the Website is updated in real time using the RSIS web service

- InforMEA
  - Sharing of data about Ramsar Sites with the InforMEA platform (via the Ramsar website)
Work to date
General system developments

- Since COP12, a total of
  - 153 tickets have been created
  - 173 tickets have been resolved (including issues identified pre COP)

- Many of these may not be immediately apparent to regular users but include such key functionalities as:
  - Stability and usability
  - Article 3.2 and post publication management
  - User activity tracking
  - Generation of lists for SC papers
  - And more...
Ongoing developments
Ongoing developments
Development areas

1. Maps: Paper and GIS
2. Alert & summary system
3. Data completion
4. General enhancements
Ongoing developments
Maps: Paper and GIS

- Paper Maps: 91 still not complete of which:
  - 27 missing
  - 64 pending / not adequate
- Regional Teams to work with relevant Parties

- GIS Boundaries: 1,581 missing
- Work with Parties to alert them to missing data and provide them with the relevant training to facilitate easy upload
- Existing data sets from WDPA and Birdlife have been analysed to check their potential for Ramsar use
  - In addition WDPA raised the point that a number of Governments have GIS data but held within a specific ‘Statistics’ department and recommended further exploration
Ongoing developments
Alert & summary system

- 1,308 (>50%) Ramsar Sites are out of date
- RSIS has the functionality to further support the Parties in the update process through compiling summaries of each Countries’ sites detailing the status of each
- Summaries automatically generated and sent to the AA NFP
- Links to appropriate Help materials will also be highlighted

- In addition an ‘Email Alert’ would be generated 6 months before a Site goes out of date and again on the date itself

- A test phase of this system is planned for the African Region in the summer
Ongoing developments
Data completion

- Over 1,600 sites have data gaps in the online form
- Information is not missing but attached as documents rather than inputted into the correct field section
- Automated migration from the old system to the new RSIS did not capture narrative text and annexes
- This information will be manually transferred over the summer
- This is not an update but completing the full data migration from the original RIS
Ongoing developments
General enhancements

- Over 40 tasks are currently ongoing
  - Minor bug fixes, optimization
  - Part of the Parties’ issues
  - Usability enhancements

- They are ‘rolling’, on average 1 issue is created at least every three days
### Budget summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<tr>
<td>Carry forward</td>
<td>57,000</td>
<td>68,877</td>
<td>185,082</td>
<td>119,649</td>
<td>102,167</td>
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<td>Core budget, approved</td>
<td>150,000</td>
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<td>170,000</td>
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<td>Additional Funding</td>
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<td>Expenditures</td>
<td>150,123</td>
<td>159,795</td>
<td>235,433</td>
<td>167,482</td>
<td>71,811</td>
<td>81,236</td>
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<td>Remaining balance</td>
<td>68,877</td>
<td>185,082</td>
<td>119,649</td>
<td>102,167</td>
<td>147,356</td>
<td>66,120</td>
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</table>

- **UNEP – GRID**
  - Good and fruitful collaboration
  - Hosting and long term services remain with GRID, conditions remain the same
Thank you