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REGIONAL AQUACULTURE INFORMATION SYSTEM (RAIS): SYSTEM PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

1. This document describes the activities carried out by the Focal Points (FPs) of the Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA) and staff of the RAIS Regional Centre on the RECOFI Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS) since its official Web launching in March 2009, including the main management issues encountered during this last intersessional period. A brief description of planned activities to enhance and strengthening the system is also provided.

2. The establishment of RAIS was requested by the RECOFI Members as a response to the rapid development of the aquaculture sector in the region. During the third session of the Commission (Doha, Qatar, 9–11 May 2005) the State of Kuwait offered to host the RAIS in the premises of the Public Authority of Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAFR) and allocated extrabudgetary funds to develop the regional information system. The Commission then requested the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department to develop the system.

3. A bilingual (Arabic and English) "RAIS User Manual" was subsequently prepared to facilitate data submission and retrieval by authorized RAIS users. Promotional flyers, press releases, and a "Communication Strategy" document were also made available to the FPs to better promote the information system.

4. Although the RAIS has been designed applying the most up-to-date information technology and conceived to be as much user-friendly as possible the system is yet to be adequately managed and fully utilized in the region as an information sharing tool. RECOFI Members should be more committed in data collection, submission and information sharing for the collective benefit of the region and sustainable and competitive development of the aquaculture sector. The RAIS Regional Centre should play a more active role in encouraging the FPs in data submission and better promoting the information system within and outside the region. The insufficient communication exchange among the RAIS administrators (RAIS Regional Centre staff and FPs) has probably impacted negatively in the visibility of the system among aquaculture stakeholders in the region and beyond. Additional efforts should be made by the RAIS Regional Centre to increase the number of RAIS authorised users which could actively contribute to the continuously updating of the information system.

5. At the recent technical workshop on Spatial Planning for Marine Capture Fisheries and Aquaculture and the Fifth Meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Aquaculture, held in Doha,

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Qatar, from 24 to 28 October 2010, several recommendations were made to better exploit the RAIS as a document repository system to share aquaculture information of relevance for the region. At the Spatial Planning Workshop it was recommended to create dedicated pages to allow GIS applications applied to fisheries and aquaculture to be included in the system and posting in its existing virtual library all the presentations delivered at the workshop.

6. In the occasion of the fifth WGA meeting, the FAO National Aquaculture Sector Overviews (NASO) for the RECOFI countries were updated by the FPs and published in RAIS. Furthermore, the participants agreed to undertake NASO updating every two years, six months prior to the biannual RECOFI session.

7. At the same meeting the FPs presented the status of aquaculture data collection in their respective country indicating that data submission to the RAIS is carried out on a regular basis without any particular problem and through the assistance of the RAIS User Manual and the online data entry modules. It was, however, noted that additional efforts should be done by all FPs and the RAIS Regional Centre to revise aquaculture production statistics in order to ensure consistency with FAO aquaculture statistics.

8. It was also suggested that a larger number of national aquaculture users should be encouraged and authorized to provide information particularly with regards to aquaculture news and events and ongoing projects in the region. This recommendation is an indication that the system may not provide the service intended if only a handful of persons are responsible for feeding the system as clearly indicated in previous WGA meetings. It was agreed that more efforts would have to be carried out by the FPs to increase the number of RAIS authorized users with editing right to enter data into the system.

9. At the same meeting it was noted that the RAIS Regional Centre has yet to provide the full services expected. Poor communication, limited data entry and validation continue to be important issues affecting the performance of the system. For this reason additional training was proposed by the participants of the WGA to be provided to the RAIS Regional Centre staff in March 2011.

10. At the time of the preparation of this information document the Secretariat was in the process of organizing the training session mentioned above (to be held in Kuwait, 14–16 March 2011) to enable the RAIS Regional Centre staff to improve their skills in the daily maintenance of system and to upgrade the Typo3 content management system (CMS) used by RAIS. The main activities that will be undertaken during this training session are the following:

- Upgrading of Typo3 and presentation of the new structure and system administration functions.
- Strengthening the capacities of the RAIS Regional Centre staff in performing their duties with particular emphasis on communication to RAIS authorised users and data entry and validation.
- Reinforcement of the regional communication strategy for a better promotion of the information system to attract new potential authorized users.
- Create new pages for storing spatial analysis documents produced and of interest to the region.
- Posting power point presentations presented during the RECOFI Technical Workshop on Spatial Planning for Marine Capture Fisheries and Aquaculture.
- Revise and checking the correctness of aquaculture production statistics stored in the system.
- Prepare a standard template in collaboration with the Head of the Information Technology Section of the Iranian Fisheries Organization for more sophisticated Web analysis to be presented during future RECOFI-WGA annual meetings and RECOFI session.
- Establish links to national and existing regional aquaculture information systems operating outside the region.

- Posting FAO cultured species fact sheets of interest to the region (e.g. orange spotted grouper, European seabass, githead seabream).
- Additional training for the RAIS Regional Centre staff on the RAIS structure, communication strategy and Web analysis including preparation of a technical glossary including terms and definitions related to Web analysis terminology.

11. During the intersessional period the Secretariat, through the FAO Aquaculture Service (FIRA), has continued to provide technical assistance to RAIS in order to maintain a certain level of control on this as well as other regional aquaculture information systems. This activity is part of a partnership consolidation process between FAO and its Member countries aimed at ensuring an efficient aquaculture information exchanges to better monitor status and trend of aquaculture at the national and regional levels.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

12. The next RECOFI intersessional period should be dedicated to the improvement of the information system and strengthening the information workflow process for the benefit of regional aquaculture development. The follow-up actions that will lead to the full performance of the RAIS are reported hereunder:

- Expansion of the number of RAIS authorized users with editing right to enter data into the system. This should increase the information flow in the Web site and reducing the responsibilities and workload of the FPs and the RAIS Regional Centre staff.
- FPs will continue to be responsible of the overall supervision of national data and information collected from different national sources to feed into the system.
- FPs should continue to timely report any problem or system inconsistency/faults to the RAIS Regional Centre and propose suggestions to further improve and strengthen the system.
- Each RECOFI Member should provide the FPs with an adequate mandate and budget to cover RAIS national duties.
- The RAIS Regional Centre (Kuwait) should continue to stimulate data entry by authorized users and approach private companies wishing to advertise on the RAIS Web site.
- Regional and national communication strategies should be undertaken more actively to promote as much as possible the newly established information system.
- RAIS should be used as a platform to disseminate the main outputs generated by the RECOFI-WGA (e.g. technical workshops, training).

RAIS Web analysis

13. The basic Web analysis report elaborated by the RAIS Regional Centre showed that there is a growing interest in RAIS since the last WGA meeting with a strong geographical coverage from the Arabic speaking countries (Northern Africa countries and Gulf Region). The trend clearly demonstrates the importance to regularly promote the information system along with the timely updating of the information contained in the system in order to attract and retain the maximum number of users.

14. As of 16 October 2010 the total number of visits were 7 908 (Absolute Unique Visitors) from 154 countries. The number of pages viewed were 47 537 with an average time spent on the Web site of 3:09 minutes (see figures below for additional details). The data indicated that the experts database was the most visited. Furthermore, it was noted with satisfaction that numerous and relevant international web sites had established a link to the RAIS home page.

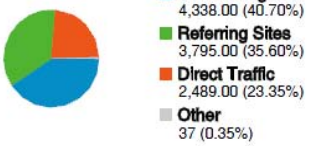
Summary of basic RAIS Web analysis

7,908 people visited this site

- **10,659** Visits
- **7,908** Absolute Unique Visitors
- **47,537** Pageviews
- **4.46** Average Pageviews
- **00:03:09** Time on Site
- **59.63%** Bounce Rate
- **73.99%** New Visits

All traffic sources sent a total of 10,659 visits

- **23.33%** Direct Traffic
- **35.57%** Referring Sites
- **40.66%** Search Engines



Top Traffic Sources

Sources	Visits	% visits
google (organic)	3,962	37.14%
(direct) ((none))	2,494	23.38%
moe.edu.kw (referral)	1,560	14.62%
globefish.org (referral)	289	2.71%
fao.org (referral)	223	2.09%

Keywords	Visits	% visits
regional aquaculture	56	1.29%
www.raisaquaculture.net	50	1.15%
rais	49	1.13%
rais aquaculture	35	0.81%
fao glossary	24	0.55%

Site Usage

Visits	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
10,659	4.46	00:03:09	74.21%	59.63%
% of Site Total: 100.00%	Site Avg: 4.46 (0.00%)	Site Avg: 00:03:09 (0.00%)	Site Avg: 73.99% (0.29%)	Site Avg: 59.63% (0.00%)

Country/Territory	Visits	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
Kuwait	1,863	3.90	00:02:18	81.48%	57.97%
United States	811	4.20	00:02:08	65.10%	62.52%
Nigeria	729	1.32	00:01:18	77.09%	86.69%
Côte d'Ivoire	584	2.04	00:01:49	66.44%	82.19%
South Africa	450	2.51	00:01:59	58.00%	82.22%
Italy	436	6.55	00:04:47	55.73%	39.91%
Egypt	430	3.69	00:02:26	88.84%	62.56%
Bahrain	335	8.61	00:06:17	53.43%	37.91%
United Kingdom	320	4.24	00:02:45	75.31%	56.56%
Saudi Arabia	279	9.50	00:07:08	80.65%	47.67%

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