

## REPORTING FORMAT FOR THE GREAT BUSTARD MOU AND ACTION PLAN

This reporting format is designed to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan associated with the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*). Reporting on the Action Plan's implementation will support exchange of information throughout the range and assist the identification of necessary future actions by the Signatory States. The questions presented here go beyond the scope of information already requested from CMS Contracting Parties for national reports to the CMS Conference of the Parties.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

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| <p><b>Agency or institution responsible for the preparation of this report</b><br/>Ministry of Environment</p>   |
| <p><b>List any other agencies, institutions, or NGOs that have provided input</b><br/>The regional Authority of the South Moravian Region<br/>Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic<br/>Czech Society for Ornithology</p>   |
| <p><b>Reports submitted to date:</b> 9.11.2017</p>   |
| <p><b>Period covered by this report</b> 20.2.2013-9.11.2017</p>  |
| <p><b>Memorandum in effect in country since:</b> 18.2.2008<br/><br/>[Date]</p>   |
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## PART I. GENERAL

This questionnaire follows the structure and numbering of the Action Plan annexed to the Memorandum of Understanding to make it easier to read the relevant action points before the form is filled in. In some cases, however, sub-actions were not listed separately for the sake of simplicity and to avoid duplications. They should however be taken into consideration when answering the questions.

### **0. National work programme**

Is there a national work programme or action plan already in place in your country for the Great Bustard pursuant to Paragraph 4(g) of the Memorandum of Understanding?

**Yes**       No

### **1. Habitat protection**

#### **1.1 Designation of protected areas.**

To what extent are the display, breeding, stop-over and wintering sites covered by protected areas?

| Designation of protected areas under national law   | Classification of Special Protection Areas according to the requirements of Art.4.1 of the EC Birds Directive   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fully (>75%)<br><input type="checkbox"/> High (50-75%)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Medium (10-49%)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Low (<10%)<br><input checked="" type="radio"/> None<br><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <sup>1</sup> | <input type="checkbox"/> Fully (>75%)<br><input type="checkbox"/> High (50-75%)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Medium (10-49%)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Low (<10%)<br><input type="checkbox"/> None<br><input checked="" type="radio"/> <b>Not applicable<sup>1</sup></b> |

What measures were taken to ensure the adequate protection of the species and its habitat at these sites?

There is no protected area.

Where are the remaining gaps? We do not have any breeding population of GB recently, only irregular occurrence of individual birds or small flocks since 1990s.

Are currently unoccupied, but potential breeding habitats identified in your country?

**Yes**       No       Not applicable<sup>2</sup>

If yes, please explain how these areas are protected or managed to enable the re-establishment of Great Bustard.

We identified sites, where GBs used to breed and wintered regularly or occasionally, The most important are included in the map of areas with national importance for this species, where some basic measures should be respected during land planning and all later activities. We are relatively successful in protecting these areas from significant changes of landscape appearance, which could bring fragmentation of potential habitats (new wind power stations, communications, electrical lines,

<sup>1</sup> The species occurs only irregularly, no regular stop-over or wintering sites identified.

<sup>2</sup> Countries *outside* of the historic (beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> Century) breeding range of the species.

forest stands, large buildings) or worsen quality of habitats (irrigation).

In the most important areas, where GBs bred and wintered in the past (two areas), we try to obtain agricultural grounds and change the type of their using. Recently, 75ha former military airport (since 1990s) and together 115 ha of ploughed land (since 2014) form core areas with habitats suitable for GBs.

### **1.2 Measures taken to ensure the maintenance of Great Bustard habitats outside of protected areas.**

Please describe what measures have been taken to maintain land-use practices beneficial for Great Bustard outside of protected areas (e.g., set-aside and extensification schemes, cultivation of alfalfa and oilseed rape for winter, maintenance of rotational grazing, etc.).

See 1.1

To what extent do these measures, combined with site protection, cover the national population?

- Fully (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- Not at all

• **Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**

Are recently (over the last 20 years) abandoned Great Bustard breeding habitats mapped in your country?

- **Yes**
- No
- Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

What habitat management measures have been taken to encourage the return of Great Bustard?

A plan for land purchase (free transfer of state land office) to the state organization Nature Conservation Agency of Czech republic) has been undertaken since 2011. The land cadastral area lies in the historical breeding and lek area including wintering habitats. This area (115 ha) has been managed according to requirements of Great Bastards since 2014. In the future, it would be desirable to extend the territory to other land, but the possibilities are already severely restricted.

If there were any measures taken, please provide information on their impact.

All areas managed in accordance with GB's requirements have high biological quality. Since 2014, when 115 ha of agricultural grounds have been used less intensively and with planting cultures suitable for GBs, there were 3 occurrences of bustards there (in 2000-2013 GBs were observed 4x in the same region).

### **1.3 Measures taken to avoid fragmentation of Great Bustard habitats.**

Are new projects potentially causing fragmentation of the species' habitat (such as construction of highways and railways, irrigation, planting of shelterbelts, afforestation, power lines, etc.) subject to environmental impact assessment in your country?

- **Yes**
- No
- Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

Is there any aspect of the existing legislation on impact assessment that limits its effective application to prevent fragmentation of Great Bustard habitats?  Yes • **No**  Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

If yes, please provide details.

Have there been any such projects implemented in any Great Bustard habitat in your country since signing this Memorandum of Understanding?  Yes • **No**  Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

Please, give details and describe the outcome of impact monitoring if available.

## **2. Prevention of hunting, disturbance and other threats**

### **2.1 Hunting.**

Is Great Bustard afforded strict legal protection in your country? • **Yes**  No

Please, give details of any hunting restrictions imposed for the benefit of Great Bustard including those on timing of hunting and game management activities.

The Great Bustards is not listed as a game species according to hunting law and shall not be hunted.

Please, indicate to what extent these measures ensure the protection of the national Great Bustard population? The national population is covered by restrictions on hunting to prevent hunting-related disturbance:

- Fully (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- Not at all
- **Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**

### **2.2 Prevention of disturbance.**

What measures have been taken to prevent disturbance of Great Bustard in your country, including both breeding birds and single individuals or small flocks on migration?

The Great Bustard as a specially protected species is protected from harmful intervention during all life stages, particularly from disturbance, killing, catching and keeping. But it is difficult to limited all disturbing activities like moto-sports, flight of helicopters, paragliding, kitting etc. in the situation of just occasional occurrence of species.

Please, indicate to what extent these measures have ensured the protection of the national population.

The national population is covered by restrictions on other activities causing disturbance:

- Fully (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- Not at all
- **Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**

### **2.3.1 Prevention of predation.**

What is the significance of predation to Great Bustard in your country?  
Not relevant.

What are the main predator species?  
Not relevant.

What measures have been taken to control predators in areas where Great Bustard occurs regularly?

Not relevant.

How effective were these measures?

- Effective (predation reduced by more than 50%)
- Partially effective (predation reduced by 10–49%)
- Less effective (predation reduced by less than 10%)

• **Not applicable**<sup>1</sup>

### **2.3.2 Adoption of measures for power lines.**

What is the significance of collision with power lines in your country?

There are some electrical lines between the former traditional GBs localities in CZ and the nearest used locality in Austria, as well as inside them.

What proactive and corrective measures have been taken to reduce the mortality caused by existing power lines in your country?

Recently, the danger 110 kV power line along south border of the most important former breeding area of GBs in CZ should be renovated, nature protection authorities ask for adequate marking of wires.

What is the size of the populations affected by these corrective measures?

Not relevant

How effective were these measures?

- Effective (collision with power lines reduced by more than 50%)
- Partially effective (collision with power lines reduced by 10–49%)
- Ineffective (collision with power lines reduced by less than 10%)

• **Not applicable**<sup>1</sup>

### **2.3.3 Compensatory measures.**

What is the size (in hectares) of Great Bustard habitat lost or degraded for any reasons since the Memorandum of Understanding entered into effect (1 June 2001)?

The degradation of Great Bustard's habitat took place in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century; the situation recently has been stable.

What is the size of the populations affected?

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Were these habitat losses compensated?       Yes     Partially     No    • **Not applicable**<sup>1</sup>

If yes, please explain how.

Were these measures effective?       Yes     Partially     No    • **Not applicable**<sup>1</sup>

Please, give details on the effectiveness or explain why they were not effective if that is the case.

## **3. Possession and trade**

Is collection of Great Bustard eggs or chicks, the possession of and trade in the birds and their eggs prohibited in your country?  **Yes**  **No**

How are these restrictions enforced? What are the remaining shortcomings, if any?

Collection, possession of and trade with the specially protected birds and their eggs is prohibited according to the Act. n. 144/1992 Coll. for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection.

Please indicate if any exemption is granted or not all of these activities are prohibited.

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#### **4. Recovery measures**

##### **4.1 Captive breeding\* in emergency situations.**

Is captive breeding playing any role in Great Bustard conservation in your country?  **Yes**  **No**

Please, describe the measures, staff and facilities involved and how these operations comply with the IUCN criteria on reintroductions.

##### **4.2 Reintroduction.**

Have there been any measures taken to reintroduce the species in your country?  **Yes**  **No**

If yes, please describe the progress. If there was any feasibility study carried out, please summarize its conclusions.

##### **4.3 Monitoring of the success of release programmes.**

Are captive reared birds released in your country?  **Yes**  **No**

If yes, please summarize the experience with release programmes in your country. What is the survival rate of released birds? What is the breeding performance of released birds?

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What is the overall assessment of release programmes based on the survival of released birds one year after release?

- Effective (the survival is about the same as of the wild ones)
- Partially effective (the survival rate is lower than 75% of the wild birds)
- Ineffective (the survival is less than 25% of wild birds)

**Not applicable<sup>3</sup>**

#### **5. Cross-border conservation measure**

Has your country undertaken any cross-border conservation measures with neighbouring countries?

**Yes**  **No**  **Not applicable<sup>4</sup>**

Please, give details of your country's collaboration with neighbouring countries on national surveys, research, monitoring and conservation activities for Great Bustard. Especially, list any measures taken to harmonise legal instruments protecting Great Bustard and its habitats, as well as funding you

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\* In effect, "captive breeding" should be read as "captive rearing" according to current practices.

<sup>3</sup> No release is taking place in the country.

<sup>4</sup> For countries which do not have any transboundary population.

have provided to Great Bustard for particular conservation actions in other Range States.

The Czech Republic cooperates especially with Austria and Slovakia in exchanging information of movements of birds and experience on habitat management.

## **6. Monitoring and research**

### **6.1.1 Monitoring of population size and population trends.**

Are the breeding, migratory or wintering Great Bustard populations monitored in your country?

• **Yes**       No

We collect all information on GBs occurrence and try to verify it, systematical monitoring is only carried out in two most important areas, but is focused widely on all bird species due to absence of GBs in CZ. Monitoring is ensured by Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic and Czech Society for Ornithology.

What proportion of the national population is monitored?

- All (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- None

• **Not applicable**<sup>1</sup>

What is the size and trend in the national population?<sup>5</sup>

Breeding/resident population

No. of adult males: \_\_\_\_\_  
No. of females: \_\_\_\_\_  
No. immature males: \_\_\_\_\_

Trend:  Declined by \_\_\_% over the last 10 years  
 Stable  
 Increased by \_\_\_% over the last 10 years

Non-breeding population (on passage, wintering)

No. of adult males: \_\_\_\_\_  
No. of females: \_\_\_\_\_  
No. immature males: \_\_\_\_\_

Trend:  Declined by \_\_\_% over the last 10 years  
 Stable  
 Increased by \_\_\_% over the last 10 years

For countries where the species occurs only occasionally, please give the details of known observations within the reporting period:

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<sup>5</sup> Only for countries where the species occurs regularly.

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 2014 | 1 bird from 15 <sup>th</sup> March to 6 <sup>th</sup> April in 2 areas, 1 bird in other area on 5 <sup>th</sup> April |
| 2015 | 1 bird at newly established GB field  |
| 2016 | 6 birds occasionally observed outside traditional area  |
| 2017 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> April (2 birds) and 29 <sup>th</sup> September (3 birds) in the most important former breeding area   |

**6.1.2 Monitoring of the effects of habitat management.**

Is the effect of habitat conservation measures monitored in your country?

Yes   • Partially    No    Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

Please, provide a list of on-going and completed studies with references if results are already published.

Monitoring is focused on the area, where habitats suitable for GBS (former military airport, newly established GBs fields) are concentrated.

What can be learned from these studies?

Results have not been published, but it is obvious, GBs fields have high biodiversity and are generally useful from nature protection point of view. For example they form suitable habitats for other rare or declining birds in CZ - Saker Falcon, Imperial Eagle, Montagu´s Harrier, Grey Partridge, Lapwing etc.

What are the remaining gaps and what measures will your country do to address these gaps?

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**6.2.1 Comparative ecological studies.**

Have there been any comparative studies carried out on the population dynamics, habitat requirements, effects of habitat changes and causes of decline in your country in collaboration with other Range States?

Yes    No   • **Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**

Please, provide a list of on-going and completed studies with references if results are already published.

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What can be learned from these studies?

-

What are the remaining gaps where the Memorandum of Understanding could assist?

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**6.2.2 Studies on mortality factors.**

Are the causes of Great Bustard mortality understood in your country?

Yes    Partially    No   • **Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**

Please, provide a list of on-going and completed studies with references if results are already published.

What can be learned from these studies?

-

What are the remaining gaps and what measures will your country do to address these gaps?

-

### **6.2.3 Investigation of factors limiting breeding success.**

Are the factors limiting breeding success in core populations understood in your country?

Yes  Partially  No • **Not applicable**<sup>6</sup>

Please, provide a list of on-going and completed studies with references if results are already published

-

What can be learned from these studies?

-

What are the remaining gaps and what measures are you going to take to address these gaps?

-

### **6.2.4 Studies on migration.**

Were there any studies on migration routes and wintering places carried out in your country?

Yes  Partially  No • **Not applicable**<sup>1</sup>

Where are the key sites and what is the size of the population they support?

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Do you have any knowledge about the origin of these birds supported by ringing or other marking methods?

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What are the remaining gaps and what measures will your country do to address these gaps?

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## **7. Training of staff working in conservation bodies**

Is there any mechanism in place in your country to share information on biological characteristics and living requirements of Great Bustard, legal matters, census techniques and management practices to personnel working regularly with the species?  Yes  No • **Not applicable**<sup>1</sup>

If yes, please describe it.

-

Have personnel dealing with Great Bustard participated in any exchange programme in other Range States?  Yes  No • **Not applicable**<sup>1</sup>

If yes, please give details on number of staff involved, country visited and how the lessons were applied in your country.

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<sup>6</sup> Only for breeding countries.

## **8. Increasing awareness of the need to protect Great Bustards and their habitat**

What measures have been taken to increase the awareness about the protection needs of the species and its habitat in your country since signing the Memorandum of Understanding?

Do farmers, shepherds, political decision makers and local and regional authorities support Great Bustard conservation?  Yes • **Partially**  No

Under Project EHP-CZ02-OV-1-026-2015 entitled "Measures to Stop Loss of Biodiversity at National and Regional Levels", which was supported by the EEA Funds were part of the partial activities devoted to Great Bustard. Coordinator of this project was Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic and Czech Society for Ornithology was cooperated. There was held monitoring of selected sites of possible occurrence of Great Bustard, a meeting of representatives of regional farmers and environmentalists, hunters and municipal representatives in Great Bustard protection were involvemented too. There was held a seminar, which summarized the history of the occurrence Great Bustard, the existing possibilities of protection of Great Bustard and protection of its environment through subsidies and other financial instruments in the Božice village. The seminar was also attended by a representative of the neighboring Austrian zoologist Rainer Raab, who spoke about the successful support of a Great Bustards in Austria. In addition, a Great Bustard rescue program was prepared and this document will be approved ther by the Ministry of the Environment in the following year.

What are the remaining gaps or problems and how are you going to address them?

The interested parties are already aware of the importance of protecting biodiversity and hence of the Great Bustard protection. However, in the framework of agricultural subsidy titles, it is necessary to promote appropriate special agricultural measures to support Great Bustard occurrence.

## **9. Economic measures**

Have there been any initiatives taken to develop economic activities that are in line with the conservation requirements of Great Bustard in your country?  Yes • **Partially**  No  Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

In the case of breeding or important occurrence, we can compensate economic loss resulted from protecting measures to farmers (for example in the case of a long-term occurrence in winter).

What percentage of the population is covered in total by these measures?

- All (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- None

### **• Not applicable**

How effective were these measures?

- Effective (more than 50% of the targeted area is managed according to the species' needs)
- Partially effective (10–49% of the targeted area is managed according to the species' needs)
- Ineffective (less than 10% according to the species' needs)

### **• Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**

## **10. Threats**

Please, fill in the table below on main threats to the species in your country. Use the threat scores categories below to quantify their significance at national level. Please, provide an explanation on what basis you have assigned the threat score and preferably provide reference. Add additional lines, if necessary.

GBs are extinct as the breeding species in CZ. In the past, habitat loss and disturbance were the most importance factors, It is the same now.

### **Threat scores:**

Critical: a factor causing or likely to cause **very rapid declines** (>30% over 10 years).

High: a factor causing or likely to cause **rapid declines** (20-30% over 10 years).

Medium: a factor causing or likely to cause relatively **slow, but significant, declines** (10-20% over 10 years).

Low: a factor causing or likely to cause **fluctuations**.

Local: a factor causing local declines but likely to cause **negligible declines at population level**.

Unknown: a factor that is likely to affect the species but it is unknown to what extent.

| <b>Threat name</b>        | <b>Threat score</b> | <b>Explanation and reference</b> |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Habitat loss              |                     |                                  |
| Losses of eggs and chicks |                     |                                  |
| Predation                 |                     |                                  |
| Collision with powerlines |                     |                                  |
| Human disturbance         |                     |                                  |
| Pesticides                |                     |                                  |
| Illegal hunting           |                     |                                  |
| Others (specify)          |                     |                                  |

## **PART II. COUNTRY-SPECIFIC ACTIONS**

**Please report on the implementation of the country-specific actions listed for your country in Part II of the Action Plan and provide information if that is not already covered by your answers under Part I. Please describe not only the measures taken but also their impact on Great Bustard or its habitat in the context of the objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding and the Action Plan. Where you have already answered on country-specific actions in Part I, please only add a reference to the relevant answer here.**

Under Project EHP-CZ02-OV-1-026-2015 entitled "Measures to Stop Loss of Biodiversity at National and Regional Levels", which was supported by the EEA Funds was part of the partial activities devoted to Great Bustard. Coordinator of this project was Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic and and Czech Society for Ornithology was cooperated. There was organized monitoring of selected sites of possible occurrence of Great Bustard, new map of the Great Bustards fields was made. There was organised meeting of representatives of regional farmers, environmentalists, hunters and municipal representatives in Great Bustard protection too. This meeting summarized the history of the occurrence Great Bustard, the existing possibilities of protection of Great Bustard and protection of its environment through subsidies and other financial instruments in the Božice village. The seminar was also attended by a representative of the neighboring Austrian zoologist Rainer

Raab, who spoke about the successful support of a drop in Austria. In addition, a Great Bustard rescue program was prepared and this document will be approved by the Ministry of the Environment in the following year.

There is currently no special support for Great Bustards in the Czech Republic under the grant support. Under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural development (programming season 2014-2020) there are measures called biobelts, which are partially usable for support of Great Bustards occurrence and discussion with Ministry of agriculture about other appropriate measures for Great Bustards and similar species for the next programming period is ongoing. In the next years Great Bustard rescue program (action plan) should be approved and the goals should be progressively fulfilled. Other cooperation with the all stakeholders is assumed.