

## 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>List any other agencies, institutions, or NGOs that have provided input</b>          Ukrainian Society for the Protection of Birds, BirdLife – Ukraine (USPB), Interecocentre</p>
<p><b>Reports submitted to date:</b>          First: (Period covered) until 2004          Second: 01.01.2004–31.12.2007          Third: 1.01.2008–31.12.2012</p>
<p><b>Period covered by this report</b>          (day) (month) (year) to (day) (month) (year):          1.01.2013–31.12.2017</p>
<p><b>Memorandum in effect in country since:</b>          [Date: dd / mm / yy]:          17/04/2002</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%) <input type="checkbox"/> High (50-75%) <input type="checkbox"/> Medium (10-49%) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low (<10%) <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully (>75%) <input type="checkbox"/> High (50-75%) <input type="checkbox"/> Medium (10-49%) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low (<10%) <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <sup>1</sup>

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

*The Great Bustard is listed in the Red Data Book of Ukraine. Third edition of the Red Data Book of Ukraine was published in 2009. According to the Ukrainian legislation, the Red Data Book listed species should be protected throughout its range regardless the conservation status of the territory.*

*- National Nature Park "Charivna havan" (Magic harbor), Landscape Recreation Park "Donuzlav" were established in December 2009 and 2012 accordingly in the western part of AR Crimea and Osovinskiy Landscape Sanctuary of local importance was established in December 2011 in the eastern part of AR Crimea.*

*There were plans to expand the territory of existed Regional Landscape Park "Karlarsky" and upgrade its protection status to National Nature Park and create Ornithological Sanctuary of state importance "Lost world of birds". However, those plans have been suspended since 2014 due to Crimea annexation by the Russian Federation.*

*There is ongoing work on establishment of the Emerald sites network in Ukraine under the Bern Convention on the Protection of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats and according to the Resolutions No.4, 5, 6 (1998) and 8 (2012) of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention. The Great Bustard is covered by the Resolution No. 6 listing the species requiring specific habitat conservation measures. In 2016 the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention had officially adopted 271 Emerald sites for Ukraine. Among them the following Emerald sites which*

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

are important for the Great Bustard were identified: UA0000020 Luhanskyi Nature Reserve; UA0000027 Azovo-Syvaskyi National Nature Park; UA0000034 Gomiilshanski Lisy National Nature Park; UA0000065 Meotyda; UA0000092 Pryazovskiy National Nature Park; UA0000108 Dzharylhatskyi National Nature Park; UA0000129 Karalarskyi Regional Landscape Park; UA0000130 Charivna Havan National Nature Park; UA0000137 Tarutynskiy Steppe; UA0000140 Tuzlovski Lymany National Nature Park; UA0000195 Vedmezhanka; UA0000201 Ak-Monaiskyi Steppe; UA0000218 Nahorny Kriazh.

Where are the remaining gaps?

General places are on Kerch and Tarhankut peninsulas (AR Crimea), near bay of Syvash (AR Crimea and Kherson oblast'), Pryazovs'ka elevation (Zaporizhzhia oblast'). The wintering places are southeast Kherson oblast', southwest Zaporizhzhia oblast', Kerch and Tarkhankut peninsulas.

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.

*These areas are not protected and managed. The Great Bustard habitats in the AR Crimea are now out of control of Ukraine because of occupation of AR Crimea by the Russian Federation.*

## 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.).

*The USPB rented for long term two steppe sites in AR Crimea, which is important for the Great Bustard breeding (120 ha for 20 years on the Tarkhankut peninsula and 65 ha for 49 years on the Kerch peninsula). USPB Local Conservation Groups in AR Crimea care about key breeding and wintering sites in AR Crimea. Local Farmers are encouraged to use ecologically friendly agricultural practices. However, the planned activities on those territories have been terminated due to the Russian Federation's occupation of Crimea*

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?

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

*It was planned a restoration of degraded steppe areas in Crimea through seed banks establishing and planting however this activity was suspended because of mentioned above change in political status of Crimea.*

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

*Results are subject to resolving the Crimea crisis*

### **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

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.

*In Crimea during 2014–2016 a gas transmission pipeline and a power line from Kerch to Simferopol have been constructed. These facilities crossed breeding and seasonal stopover sites of the Great Bustard. No information, however, is available on an impact of those facilities on the Great Bustard habitats and if the species needs had been taken into account during EIA.*

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.

*Monitoring of Crimean population of the Great Bustard is currently not feasible*

## **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.

*Since the Great Bustard is listed in the Red Data Book of Ukraine no hunting is allowed for that species.*

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>

Hunting on the Great Bustard is legally prohibited; however, there are cases of poaching

### **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?

*Measures are not effective enough*

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?

*Predation is the significant factor for the Great Bustard in Ukraine.*

What are the main predator species?

*Great Bustard's clutches of eggs and hatches are destroyed by Corvidae and Corvus corax in particular as well as stray dogs. In winter White-tailed (sea) Eagle (Haliaeetus albicilla) occurs near large flocks of the Great Bustard.*

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

*Established network of volunteers, that inform to the USPB about the facts of predation (eggs, chicks)  
Local hunters regulate the number of stray dogs.*

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 bird mortality cases due to collisions with power lines in areas of frequent occurrences of the Great Bustard under conditions of poor visibility (rain, fog, and strong wind) and disturbance.*

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

*Staff-members of the Azov-Black Sea Ornithological Station and Department of Zoology of Tavricheskiy National University after V.I. Vernadskiy based on the results of power line study conducted in Sivash (Western Crimea) and Kerch straight in 2013–2014 had developed recommendations to set up bird protection devices (in spring 2014 these recommendations were submitted to "Krymenergo"). Since 2014 it was planned to continue studies of power lines around the protected areas in Crimea. However, those plans were suspended.*

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

*Bird protection devices had not been set up and power lines studies were stopped due to Crimea occupation*

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)?

*No data available*

What is the size of the populations affected?

*No data available*

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  
No

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

*Enforcement is not sufficient. According to some information there are cases of illegal taking of eggs and chicks from the wild Great Bustards to be further traded (changed for other species) for the purposes of keeping in private zoos. There is a fine established for illegal taking of the Great Bustard from the wild. According to the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1030 of 07.11.2012 the fine is 20,000 UAH.*

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

*If an owner of the Great Bustard specimen has all the documents that prove a legal origin of that specimen it is allowed to keep it in captivity.*

### **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.

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

*Currently there are no activities on breeding of the Great Bustard in captivity.*

#### **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.

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

### **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

What proportion of the national population is monitored?

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

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

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

Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

*Mostly wintering birds are monitored*

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

Breeding/resident population

No. of adult males: around -?

No. of females: around -?

No. immature males: no data

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

*No studies have been conducted during 2013–2017. The numbers of birds is supposed to be reduced.*

Non-breeding population (on passage, wintering)

No. of adult males: around 1500-2000

No. of females: around 1500-2000

No. immature males: no data

Trend:  Declined by 70-80% 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:

### **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.

*There were no studies during 2013–2017.*

What can be learned from these studies?

*Not applicable*

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

*Studies in the south of Ukraine are necessary.*

### **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?

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

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

*Regular studies in the south of Ukraine are necessary. An assessment of the Great Bustard population status, threats and conservation needs in the occupied Crimea is required.*

### **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.

*Andryushchenko Y.A., Kucherenko V.N., Popenko V.M. Results of monitoring the death of birds from contacts with overhead power lines in Crimea in 2013-2014 / Branta: Collection of works of the Azov-Black Sea Ornithological Station. Issue 17.- Melitopol: Branta, 2014.- P.104-132. (in Russian, summary in English)*

What can be learned from these studies?

*There are mortality cases of the Great Bustard in Crimea because of power line collisions.*

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

*Study of the Great Bustard mortality caused by power lines is needed in the south of Ukraine, including Crimea. Further development of bird protective measures is required.*

### **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

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What can be learned from these studies?

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

It is necessary:

1. Habitat management in the Great Bustard nesting areas;
2. To prevent illegal taking of eggs and chicks and;
3. Regulate predators numbers;
4. Create protected areas to protect the species wintering areas especially in the south of Kherson oblast and Kerch peninsula;
5. Take measures to prevent poaching.

### **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>

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

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

*Migration stopover sites of the species are known along the northern coastline of the Sea of Azov, however, time for stopover and numbers of birds in such places are not studied.*

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

*Information on migration are confirmed by Melitopol Ornithological Station's data and data from questionnaires and satellite tracking of birds marked by German scientists in Saratov oblast' in the Russian Federation.*

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

*It is necessary to study migrations including by methods of satellite telemetry.*

## **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.

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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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## **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?

*The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Red Data Book of Ukraine had been published in 2009 where the Great Bustard is listed. This information is publically available in the Environmental database that can be found at <https://goo.gl/N3A69T>. There are also other Ukrainian internet resources that include open data for the Great Bustard, e.g. <http://redbook-ua.org/item/otis-tarda-linnaeus/>, <http://redbook.land.kiev.ua/444.html>.*

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

*Based on the information from the previous report, there were farmers and societies of hunters who may supported Great Bustard conservation in the AR Crimea, however to provide an update on that is currently not possible.*

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

*Enhancement of relevant public awareness company is needed.*

## **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>

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.

### **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.

Threat name	Threat score	Explanation and reference
Habitat loss	High	Own studies
More severe winters - more prolonged periods with a virtually continuous and deep snow cover	Local	Own observations and data of questionnaire
Drying up bottoms of large depressions (inaccessible to poachers) induced by the long-term decrease of the groundwater level on the south Kherson oblast' and on Kerch peninsula	High	Own observations and data of questionnaire
Losses of eggs and chicks	High	Own observations and data of questionnaire
Predation	High	Own observations
Collision with power lines	Medium	Own observations and data of questionnaire
Human disturbance	High	Own studies
Pesticides	Local	Own observations
Deratization - mass poisoning due to the negligent pest control of crops, when birds eat the poison-treated grains scattered over the soil surface (instead of placing them into the holes of rodents)	Medium	Own observations and data of questionnaire
Illegal hunting	Critical	Data of questionnaire
Others (specify) Burn of steppe on breeding period	Low	Own observations
Militarization - since 2014, the birds have been scared away because of the militarization of the Crimea and adjacent areas Kherson oblast' (in the past, these land were infrequently visited by humans).	Critical	Own observations and data of questionnaire

## 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.**

*According to Decree No 1030 of 07.11.2012 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On level of compensations for illegal taking, killing or damage of animal and plant species listed in the Red Data Book of Ukraine as well as for destruction or deterioration of their habitats" the fine for illegal taking, killing or damage of Great Bustard individuals or destruction of their habitats had been lifted from 1000 up to 20,000 UAH.*

*Some country-specific actions have been described above in 1.1, 1.2, 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 3, 6.1.1, 6.2.2, 6.2.3, 6.2.4, 8, 10.*

The following country-specific actions for the Great Bustard are proposed

1. *Establishment of protected areas for wintering birds in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia oblasts*
2. *Restoration of conditions in steppe protected areas necessary for nesting and wintering of steppe bird species including the Great Bustard: thinned and low sward (moderate grazing and mowing); accessible watering places (water bodies with reed free banks), absence of shrubbery (prevention of steppe bushing)*
3. *International control for the Great Bustard nesting population and wintering in Crimea and in Kerch peninsula in particular*
4. *Study of power line impact on the Great Bustard in wintering places in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia oblasts, along the construction of gas transmission pipeline and power line from Kerch to Simferopol in 2014–2016*
5. *Enforcement of poaching control in the key wintering sites of the Great Bustard in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia oblasts and Kerch peninsula.*
6. *Permanent monitoring of the Great Bustard wintering and study of nesting sites to clarify the current numbers, distribution and negative factors including by means of satellite telemetry.*