



**CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS4/Doc.4

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
CONCERNING CONSERVATION,  
RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE  
OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE**

Original: English

FOURTH MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE  
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING  
CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE  
USE OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE

Russian Federation, Online, 28 – 29 September 2021

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT**

*(Prepared by the CMS Secretariat)*

**Summary:**

This document describes the activities, meetings and projects organized by the CMS Secretariat since the last Meeting of Signatories to the Saiga MOU (MOS3) in 2015.

**Action requested:**

- Take note of the report
- Review the list of National Contact Points and provide an update, where necessary.

## REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

### Background

1. The Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga* spp.) (Saiga MOU) is the only international agreement dedicated to the Saiga Antelope that covers its entire range and that was signed by all of the Saiga Range States. The agreement was concluded under the auspices of CMS and the CMS Secretariat acts as the Secretariat of the MOU (Saiga MOU, Paragraph 10). Secretariat's functions include: to act as the Depositary of the MOU; to convene regular meetings hosted by and organized in collaboration with one of the undersigned Range States or any cooperating organizations; to determine in consultation with Signatories the format of the national report. In addition to these responsibilities, the Secretariat facilitates the implementation of the MOU and the associated Medium-Term International Work Programme (MTIWP), by, for example, funding research and technical publications to inform decision makers, when resources become available.

### Status of Signatures

2. To date, the Saiga MOU has five Signatory States - Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. All current *Saiga* spp. Range States are Signatories to the MOU.
3. In addition to the Signatory States, nine governmental and international non-governmental organizations actively working on Saiga conservation issues have signed the MOU as Cooperating Organizations. These are: Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK), Fauna & Flora International (FFI), Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), International Council for Game & Wildlife Conservation (CIC), Naturschutzbund Deutschland -Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU), Saiga Conservation Alliance (SCA), Species Survival Commission of IUCN, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) International. Two organizations, the SCA and ACBK have additionally signed an agreement with the CMS Secretariat, according to which they currently provide technical coordination of the MOU's implementation, as was agreed by MOS2 (See the document titled "Technical coordination of the Saiga MOU", UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS4/Doc.8).

### Meetings under the Saiga MOU

4. In April 2019, the CMS Secretariat organized the joint CMS-CITES Technical Workshop under the Saiga MOU in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) This workshop took place at the International Academy for Nature Conservation (INA) on the Isle of Vilm, Germany and was substantively and logistically supported by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) with funding from the German Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU).
5. Participants reviewed progress in implementing the Saiga MOU and the associated Medium-Term International Work Programme 2016-2020; exchanged information on developments with regard to Saiga conservation and governance throughout the range and beyond; and developed a new draft Medium-Term International Work Programme (MTIWP) for 2021-2025 for adoption by the Fourth Meeting of the Signatories to the MOU (MOS4). MOS4 was originally scheduled to take place in September 2020 in the Russian Federation but had to be postponed due to travel restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic to now take place online.

6. In 2021 the CMS Secretariat was tasked with the organization of the Fourth Meeting of Signatories to the Saiga MOU, hosted by and in cooperation with the Russian Federation. The Secretariat's responsibilities in this regard included: preparation of the invitations and registration of the participants, preparation of the meeting documents, maintenance of the CMS website relating to the Meeting, the preparation of the Meeting Report and the provision of the software for holding the Meeting, including technical support.

### **Other meetings of relevance to the Saiga MOU**

7. Apart from the Saiga MOU, Saiga antelope is included in the CMS's Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI) and its Programme of Work (POW). It was established by CMS Parties in 2014 by the Eleventh Meeting of the CMS Conference of the Parties (COP11) in order to streamline efforts in conserving large migratory mammals of Central Asia and revised in 2020 by CMS COP13 through [Resolution 11.24 Rev.COP13](#). The initiative includes 15 species of large mammals, including the Saiga Antelope and 14 Range States. It addresses species-specific issues, where no separate instrument for a species exists as well as cross-cutting issues including barriers to migration, poaching, disease and overgrazing that affect all or many CAMI species. While CAMI POW refers to the MTIWP as the programme specifically developed for Saiga, it additionally contains measures agreed by CMS Parties that benefit Saiga and other CAMI species and their habitat. CAMI POW 2021-2026 can be accessed [here](#).
8. The meeting 'Midterm Review of the Central Asian Mammals Initiative' took place on 16-19 April 2018 at the International Academy for Nature Conservation (INA) on the Isle of Vilm, Germany. It was jointly organized by the CMS Secretariat and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) with funding from the German Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). The meeting report can be accessed [here](#). The most relevant outcome for the Saiga MOU is the recommendation of the meeting to conduct the study of transboundary conservation priorities for CAMI species, including Saiga, which was commissioned by CMS (see "Projects commissioned by the Secretariat").
9. The [Second Meeting of Range States of the Central Asian Mammals Initiative](#) took place on 25-28 September 2019 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia as part of the Mongolian Wildlife Week. The main objective of the meeting was to develop and agree on the new Programme of Work for the initiative, which was adopted by CMS Parties as Resolution 11.24 (Rev.COP13), as set out in paragraph 4 above.

### **Projects commissioned by the Secretariat**

10. The CMS Secretariat commissioned the development and production of the [Central Asian Mammals Migration and Linear Infrastructure Atlas](#) with the financial support of the Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), Germany and the Federal Office of the Environment FOEN, Switzerland. The atlas published in 2019 addresses Objective 1.3.1 to "make species- and landscape-specific knowledge available" and Objective 1.3.3 to "promote the knowledge and application of technical solutions" to reduce barriers to migration of the CAMI POW 2014-2020. It reveals the hot spots, where anthropogenic linear structures collide in particular with populations of large and wide-ranging animals, including Saiga. Making the public aware of such issues is a first step to help the search for and putting in place of better solutions. Next steps will be the integration of the needs of these animals in the planning phase for such structures or even the complete removal of barriers, where possible.

11. In line with the recommendation of CMS Parties made at the Meeting “Midterm Evaluation of the Central Asian Mammals Initiative” in 2018, made possible with funding from the Government of Switzerland, the CMS Secretariat commissioned the study titled “[Mapping Transboundary Hotspots for the Central Asian Mammals Initiative](#)” aiming at i) identifying key trans-boundary areas of importance for the conservation of CAMI-species, including Saiga; ii) developing recommendations for progressing transboundary cooperation and effective conservation of those areas and their wildlife populations; and iii) preparing information on those areas and populations to guide decision-makers in strengthening trans-boundary cooperation. The Study was updated in 2021 with funding from the Government of Switzerland and the German Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU).
  
12. In pursuit of Measure 3.10 of the draft Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope (2021-2025), which was developed and endorsed by the participants in the CMS-CITES Technical Workshop as set out in Paragraph 4 above, the CMS Secretariat commissioned the study “[The Sustainable use of Saiga Antelopes: Perspectives and Prospects.](#)” The purpose of the study is to provide a foundation for exploring the potential of sustainable use of the Saiga Antelope, and to define the pre-conditions, which need to be fulfilled to ensure that such use would indeed be sustainable in practice. The study was produced by the SCA and ACBK with contributions from other experts and Saiga MOU Signatory States. This work was financed by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation with funding from the German Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU).
  
13. With the help of voluntary contributions of CMS Signatories, Germany and Switzerland, the CMS Secretariat has also supported financially the following activities of the two Saiga MOU’s cooperating organizations, i.e. the SCA and ACBK:

Project Dates	Implementing organization	Objectives	Mandate	Outcome
June - October 2016	SCA	Preparation, translation, and distribution of the emergency response protocol in cases of disease outbreaks in Kazakhstan’s Saiga; small grant programme of the SCA	Saiga MTIWP 2016 - 2020, Objectives 1.1 and 1.2	<a href="#">Standard Operating Procedures for detecting and reacting to incidents of health risks for and die-offs in Saiga antelopes in Kazakhstan</a> ; three public outreach projects to raise awareness of Saiga: in Kazakhstan and Russia
October-December 2016	ACBK	Make the publication “Guidelines for Addressing the Impact of Linear Infrastructure on Large Migratory Mammals in Central Asia” available in Russian, disseminate and present the publication in Kazakhstan	CAMI POW 2014-2020, Objective 1.3, also partially Saiga MTIWP 2016-2020, 6.2	„ <a href="#">Руководство по решению проблем, связанных с воздействием объектов линейной инфраструктуры на состояние популяций крупных млекопитающих Центральной Азии</a> “

Project Dates	Implementing organization	Objectives	Mandate	Outcome
April - June 2018	SCA	Saiga Resource Center Website technical maintenance; production of the 23 Issue of Saiga News	Saiga MTIWP 2016 - 2020 5.2-5.4; 1.4, 6.7	Saiga resource Center Website reprogrammed in Drupal 8; Saiga News Issue 23
November 2018 - June 2019	ACBK	Investigate and describe new patterns of illegal wildlife trade, including Saiga in Central Asia	CAMI POW 2014 - 2020: 1.1.2, 1.1.5, 1.1.6	Report for discussion by CMS and CITES Secretariats (final report still pending due to the covid-disease of the author and his family)

### List of Designated National Contact Points

14. Paragraph 5 of Saiga MOU invites Signatories to designate a competent authority as a contact point for all matters relating to the MOU's implementation and to communicate the name and address of the authority and appointed person to the Secretariat. The Secretariat has updated the List of Designated National Contact Points, based on the information received from the Signatories. This document is uploaded as an Information Document (UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS4/Inf.7) on the [MOS4 page](#) of the CMS website.