

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

<p>Agency or institution responsible for the preparation of this report Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic</p>
<p>List any other agencies, institutions, or NGOs that have provided input The regional Authority of the South Moravian Region Nature conservation Agency of the Czech Republic Czech society for Ornithology</p>
<p>Reports submitted to date: 30.08.2023</p>
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<p>Memorandum in effect in country since: 18.02.2008</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 type="checkbox"/> Low (<10%) <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully (>75%) <input type="checkbox"/> High (50-75%) <input type="checkbox"/> Medium (10-49%) <input type="checkbox"/> Low (<10%) <input type="checkbox"/> None <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable¹

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

Not applicable.

Where are the remaining gaps?

It is difficult to protect any area just as historical or potential habitat without recent presence of Great Bustards.

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

Yes No Not applicable²

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

These areas are no protected.

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.).

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

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

There are some areas of suitable habitats in the most important traditional breeding locality with ensured suitable type of usage. It is especially the former military airport (c. 75 ha), where grass growth is maintained. About 120 ha of agricultural land possessed by state is managed in accordance with demands of GB (alfa-alfa, rape, winter wheat and set-aside fields are present). All the locality, as well as other traditional breeding sites (4 localities together) are protected from new afforestation or irrigation plans or building unsuitable objects like wind power stations, electrical lines, communications etc.

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

x Not applicable¹

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

- Yes No **x Not applicable¹**

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

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

Occasional occurrence of GB.

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? **x Yes** No Not applicable¹

Is there any aspect of the existing legislation on impact assessment that limits its effective application to prevent fragmentation of Great Bustard habitats? Yes **x No** Not applicable¹

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 **x No** Not applicable¹

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? **x 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.

No hunting activities are limited in GB's localities.

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

x Not applicable¹

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. Recently, number of low flights of military helicopters above GB's areas increased. Kitting, which was performed in the core area of the most important former breeding site of GB in last years, was finished.

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

x Not applicable¹

2.3.1 Prevention of predation.

What is the significance of predation to Great Bustard in your country?

What are the main predator species?

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

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%)

x Not applicable¹

2.3.2 Adoption of measures for power lines.

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

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

During reconstruction of a 110 kV electrical line going through the most important former breeding site of GB, wires will be marked as a measure against bird collisions.

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

Not applicable.

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%)

x Not applicable¹

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)?

About 12 ha of suitable habitats were forested with aim to ensure connectivity of natural habitats in the agricultural landscape. In another area, several windbreaks fragmented suitable habitats.

What is the size of the populations affected?

Were these habitat losses compensated? Yes Partially No **x Not applicable¹**

If yes, please explain how.

Several hectares of ploughed land were grassed.

Were these measures effective? Yes Partially No **x Not applicable¹**

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? **x Yes** No

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

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

4. Recovery measures

4.1 Captive breeding* in emergency situations.

Is captive breeding playing any role in Great Bustard conservation in your country? Yes **x 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 **x 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.

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

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?

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 applicable³

5. Cross-border conservation measure

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

Yes No Not applicable⁴

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.

The Czech Republic cooperates with Austria 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

What proportion of the national population is monitored?

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

Not applicable¹

³ No release is taking place in the country.

⁴ For countries which do not have any transboundary population.

What is the size and trend in the national population?⁵

Breeding/resident population

Non-breeding population (on passage, wintering)

No. of adult males: _____

No. of adult males: _____

No. of females: _____

No. of females: _____

No. immature males: _____

No. immature males: _____

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

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:

2018 - 0 ind.

2019/2020 - 1-3 ind., 1 of them from 11th August 2019 to 14th February 2020

2021 - 1 ind. in February, 1 ind. in July

2022 - 0 ind.

2023 - 1 ind. in July, 4 ind. in August

6.1.2 Monitoring of the effects of habitat management.

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

Yes Partially No **x Not applicable¹**

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?

6.2.1 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 **x Not applicable¹**

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 where the Memorandum of Understanding could assist?

6.2.2 Studies on mortality factors.

⁵ Only for countries where the species occurs regularly.

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

Yes Partially No **Not applicable**¹

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**⁶

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**¹

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

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

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

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**¹

If yes, please describe it.

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

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

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?

⁶ Only for breeding countries.

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

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

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 applicable¹

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 applicable¹**

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.

With climate change, former GB's areas in the Czech Republic suffer from drought and wind. Due to this fact the pressure for new irrigation structures and windbreaks strengthens.

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	See previous replies
Losses of eggs and chicks	Unknown	There are no data to evaluate
Predation	Unknown	There are no data to evaluate
Collision with powerlines	Unknown	There are no data to evaluate
Human disturbance	High	See previous replies
Pesticides	High	See previous replies
Illegal hunting	Unknown	There are no data to evaluate
Others (specify): system of agricultural management (large-scale and intensive agriculture, unsuitable crops)	High	See previous replies

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.

Due to irregular occurrence of Great Bustards in the Czech Republic it is very difficult to find any financial support for required measures. Some local farmers would change they agriculture schemes according to the Great Bustard needs, but this change has to bring them financial benefit. Recently, farmers have especially produced cereals, maize and sunflower and their farming is very intensive. Each demand for any change should be followed by offer of compensations of financial losses and these compensations are very expensive. No national or international funds support regular management measures.

We tried, a special agro-environmental scheme for improvement of the GB's habitats was approved in the Czech Republic in a new period. But it was not successful.