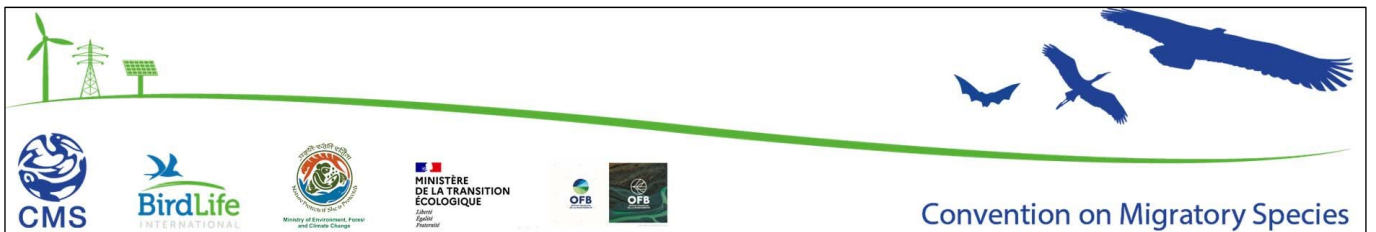


6th Meeting of the CMS Multi-Stakeholder Energy Task Force

9-10 February 2022, online

ETF6/Summary Meeting Report

SUMMARY MEETING REPORT



The Government of India, through the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change were recognized as Champion Plus for their generous support and commitment towards Making energy safe for wildlife for the period 2020-2023. The operations of the Energy Task Force have been funded with the contribution granted by India under the Migratory Species Champion Programme.



SUMMARY OF THE 6TH MEETING OF THE ENERGY TASK FORCE

Introductions

The 6th Meeting of the CMS Energy Task Force was held online from 9-10 February 2022. It was attended by almost 70 participants, including representatives from national governments, the private sector, international financial institutions (IFIs), the Secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements, and civil society organizations.

The meeting provided an opportunity to introduce four new members to the ETF (Greece, Spain, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CDB), the Secretariat of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP)) and eight new observer NGOs (Groupe de Recherche pour la Protection des Oiseaux au Maroc, Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society, Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon, South African Bat Assessment Association, EuroNatur, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), SAVEBrasil, and the American Bird Conservancy).

Review of ETF Workplan Implementation

Objectives of the meeting were to share updates on the current implementation of the ETF Workplan 2021-2024; understand how related renewable-energy coalitions interact with the work of the ETF and agree on thematic and sub-regional priorities; promote and share new technical and operational guidance on the planning and deployment of renewable energy; and strengthen industry and cross sectoral cooperation within and outside the ETF.

The review of implementation of the ETF Workplan highlighted 2021 achievements including profiling the ETF at international events, and publication of case studies and guidance; outstanding deliverables, most of which required additional funding and cooperation among ETF members; and prioritisation of the Work Plan implementation for 2022/2023. Initial comments from participants regarding gaps in the Workplan touched upon the need for: baseline data requirements and guidance for post-construction monitoring to ensure existing projects were still “green”; sharing of new technologies and their operation (e.g., cameras, artificial intelligence); and a framework to measure the efficiency of conservation and mitigation activities.

The ETF and its role amongst other global initiatives

Regarding the international position of the ETF, its establishment under an international convention (CMS) and its strong and diverse membership was identified as a key strength. There was a need to increase the profile of the ETF within the sector and strengthen representation from outside Europe. Members were encouraged to share information about other similar fora/platforms in different regions. WREN and CLEANaction seemed to have similar remits. There was enough cross-over between the identified coalitions and the ETF to ensure efforts were complementary and not in competition. Regional coalitions including electricity companies were mentioned such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Awareness on the impacts of power lines on migratory species, such as birds and bats, was still lacking in several regions and needed to be increased.

Research, Innovation and Engagement Priorities

ETF working groups presented on their recent activities and recommendations for future plans. The Technical Working Group (TWG) recommended to promote more research and knowledge-sharing in emerging markets outside of Europe and North America, especially in high-biodiversity regions; to develop several key outputs including a survey of relevant stakeholders to better understand key issues, regions and obstacles associated with reconciling energy infrastructure and migratory wildlife; and to develop a stakeholder exercise to understand the communities involved

Activities of the Powerline WG focused on promoting mainstreaming migratory species conservation into powerline industry decision-making through stakeholder mapping and an engagement plan; monitoring implementation and impediments through a survey with the ETF network and stakeholders; stimulating communication and information exchange through a database/shared calendar to identify key events and opportunities; stimulating research through data sharing with the ETF network.

Great potential for cooperation between the ETF and the *Electrocution Discussion Group* of the [Saker Falcon Task Force](#) under the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU) was identified.

Participants were encouraged to give inputs to the [Information Resources](#) document, and to participate in the TWG and PWG.

Workshop Sessions

Breakout workshop sessions during the meeting were held on three main topics and identified needs and recommended actions. Key points included:

a) TECHNICAL GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES:

- Sensitivity mapping and flyway scales guidance;
- Cumulative impact assessment guidance;
- Standardised strategy for EIAs;
- Open data standardisation guidelines and/or a data repository for ETF members, and adaptive management guidelines.

b) ETF PRIORITIES FOR 2022 (INCL. GEOGRAPHY, OUTPUTS, ADDITIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGIES AND SPECIES):

- Addressing synergies on biodiversity, climate change and energy;
- Developing communication tools;
- the need for open data;
- Cumulative impacts and sensitivity mapping in the context of development of renewables; need for a technical science-based approach on cumulative impacts;
- Delivery of ETF regional workshops, linked with the mobilisation of CMS Parties to strengthen regional coordination;
- Strengthening connections between WGs;
- Increasing engagement with IFIs, including improving engagement with senior staff at governments and IFIs to ensure ETF messages were taken up (focus group).
- Guidance for regulation at the government level for granting energy developments linked to the legal framework of CMS;
- Building trust between NGOs and governments; and

c) Ensuring ETF Guidance reaches financial institutions and maximizing industry collaboration

The meeting highlighted the importance of improving engagement and coordination between the ETF and IFIs through identifying engagement principles or a strategy and through activities such as:

- Continuing to identify relevant stakeholders in energy and financial sectors;
- Engaging industry and investors to build partnerships and establish pilot initiatives with industry and investors; and
- Developing tailored guidance notes for the private sector and IFIs.

From IFIs' perspective:

Concerns raised were:

- Lack of adequate government planning, incl. regulations for granting and monitoring renewable energy (where windfarms were sited or a power purchase agreement already in place)
- Lack of enforcement, when lender exited a deal;
- Lack of baseline data, particularly for bats;
- Ensuring implementation of mitigation measures; lack of on-the-ground capacity;
- Low demands from governments on EIA requirements for some renewable developments being considered as "green," and perception of the promotion of the sector as "green" energy; monitoring needed to ensure developments were not having significant detrimental impacts on biodiversity
- Short timelines for review and assessment; exceptions granted;
- Lack of suitable collision risk models; and
- Challenges in influencing cumulative impacts.

What the ETF could do to increase value:

- Providing a roster of experts available per region;
- Increasing visibility of these issues at senior levels of IFIs;
- Increasing efforts on sensitivity mapping and providing spatial planning and sensitivity information before land was allocated to development; ensuring uptake of guidance by ministries promoting such projects;
- Agreeing on a definition of mitigation measures; and
- Agreeing minimum standards for EIA discourse when a project was deemed a Category A Project.

From Non-IFI perspective:

Key barriers and challenges when engaging with investors:

- Building trust and transparency between civil society and industry;
- Lack of sufficient knowledge and understanding of how energy finance works and how IFIs operate, and the linkages between biodiversity, climate change and renewables;
- need for communication materials in different languages;
- Limited accessibility of information on project inceptions and EIA reports;
- insufficient opportunities for those who could contribute data in time;
- IFIs need to ensure uphold of standards, particularly in emerging markets and not be influenced by politics;
- Challenges in identifying funding institutions and their representatives; and
- Lack of a homogenous approach of developers on rules, guidelines and EIAs; more consistency was needed in approaches of environment departments (both authorities and investors).

What value the ETF could bring:

- Promoting transparency sharing of reports and data on existing wind farms;
- Enabling access to IFIs; expand IFIs participation in ETF and map the energy/investment landscape;

- Developing opportunities to engage with processes between developers and financial institutions; providing roster of experts; IFIs promoting linkages to developers;
- Creating common terminology and definitions languages in publications and speaking, both in different languages but also across sectors;
- Developing universal guidelines for developers to harmonise the differences between projects in different countries and regions;
- ETF being promoted as a Best Practice reference for guidance and resources for energy projects;
- Inclusion of the ETF goals into initiatives considered for Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria for business;
- Working with financiers on defining a “green investment/green bond”;
- Identifying and making available technical inputs for promoting renewables in areas which were already developed;
- Helping members understand how energy finance works and how IFIs operate including helping the environmental specialists within IFIs to spread the message internally; and
- Finding ways for the investment community to contribute to a global funding pot to cover issues with data collation and management.

Presentations from Members and Guest Speakers:

1. **IRENA:** Renewable Energy Market Analysis for Africa, and IRENA-FAO Renewable Energy for Agri-food Systems report, and activities in the context of the World Energy Transitions Outlook (WETO); activities on empirical knowledgebase, capacity building, technical assistance, partnerships with private sector, bioenergy, end-of-life of solar PV and batteries, clean cooking, adaptation were highlighted.
2. **RSPB:** Major threats to a migratory raptor vary geographically along the eastern Mediterranean flyway: mapping of electrocution and collision rates in 13 countries, finding widespread electrocution risk because of the poor design of distribution power poles in many countries; and ‘bird-safe’ suspended poles still not being used widely enough.
3. **Nottingham Trent University, BTO, RSPB, RGI:** Better utilisation and transparency of bird data collected by powerline companies: found that standard protocols which paralleled the wind sector were largely lacking for power lines; lack of data/databases for transmission system operators (TSOs), and confidentiality of data were key barriers. Recommendations along a three-step approach included:
 - Develop guidance around field methods, data to be collected for EIAs, and studies of impact and mitigation effectiveness;
 - Sharing of meta-data/bibliographies of studies of powerline impacts/mitigation effectiveness;
 - A scoping study of the structure of data and info that already being collected and shared.
4. **Bird Portal project of RGI:** reluctance to share data as main obstacle; cultural change and trust needed. Recommendations were:
 - developing relationships within the TSOs to gain internal ‘buy-in;’
 - keeping communication to clear, targeted action, aiming for least effort and cost;
 - using citizen science;
 - integrating data with an existing database;
 - using data to dispel sensationalism; and to leverage action in a positive way.

“Zero-by-40” Initiative of the Mohamed Bin Zayed Raptor Conservation Fund: The concept aimed for a global partnership to end bird electrocutions by 2040, with a focus on raptors, through nature-positive investments in the powerline industry.

Participants raised the problem of development banks working with countries’ potentially lower local standards when working towards replacing existing powerline poles with bird-friendly systems. While some guidance materials were under way, an ETF sub-group on construction standards was considered to ensure strong, consistent standards around the world.

Election of ETF Chair and Vice-chair

Mr Michel Perret was confirmed as Chair and Ms Lori Anna Conzo as Vice-chair of the ETF for the next term.