



## CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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RANGE STATE MEETING ON THE  
IMPLEMENTATION AND REVISION OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLAN  
FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE ARGALI (*Ovis ammon*)  
Almaty, Kazakhstan, 12-13 September 2024

### REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

1. The International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Argali (SSAP) for 2014-2024 was prepared in 2012-2014 with financial support from the European Union, and the assistance of GIZ. The development of the SSAP included two workshops on the Isle of Vilm, Germany (22-26 March 2012) and in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, (2-4 December 2012) with the final draft being discussed at the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Scientific Council of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) in Bonn, Germany (1-3 July 2014). The SSAP was presented at the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP11) in Quito, Ecuador, 4-9 November 2014 as Agenda Item 23.3.3 and adopted by Resolution 11.24 on the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI).
2. The Argali SSAP covers the populations of eleven Range States<sup>1</sup>: AFGHANISTAN, China, INDIA, KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN, MONGOLIA, Nepal, PAKISTAN, the Russian Federation, TAJIKISTAN, and UZBEKISTAN.
3. A revision of the SSAP, as per *Action 4.1.9. Review and adapt or revise the action plan at regular intervals*, should have taken place in 2019, however, it was not possible due to funding limitations. This Range State meeting on the Implementation and Revision of the Argali SSAP in Almaty, Kazakhstan, 12-13 September 2024 is organized by the CMS Secretariat and hosted by the Forestry and Wildlife Committee (FWC) of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Kazakhstan with financial support from the Central Asian Mammals and Climate Adaptation (CAMCA) project funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the Government of Germany.
4. In pursuance of Action 4.1.3, the CMS Secretariat has established a webpage for Argali with access to the SSAP and it is presented in the frame of CAMI. Species Focal Points have been appointed based on Terms of Reference developed at the workshops, but no active Argali working group evolved and exchange remained at an informal level and through the IUCN SSC Caprinae Specialist Group and its newsletter.
5. Document *UNEP/CMS/ARG/RS1/Doc.3. Overview Report* for this meeting outlines the conservation status of the species and progress achieved towards the implementation of the Argali SSAP 2014-2024. During the reporting period the conservation status of Argali in terms of population size and distribution range apparently remained stable or improved with the total population size likely in the range of 100,000 animals or even higher.

<sup>1</sup> CMS Parties in capital letters.

## **Argali and the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI)**

6. Argali is a species covered by CAMI; the Second CAMI Range State Meeting took place in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in September 2019. The meeting developed a comprehensive Programme of Work (POW) 2021-2026 for 15 CMS-listed mammals covered by the Initiative and reviewed Resolution 11.24, which was subsequently adopted at COP13 in Gandhinagar, India in February 2020 along with the POW in its annex.
7. CAMI was designed to provide a common strategic framework for action at the international level to conserve migratory mammals and their habitat in the wider Central Asian region. It aims at bringing together and harmonizing implementation of existing CMS instruments and mandates as well as initiatives undertaken by other stakeholders. All Argali Range States are also Range States of CAMI.
8. The following activities were included for Argali in the CAMI Programme of Work 2021-2026, under point 9:
  - 9.1 Implement the CMS International Single-Species Action Plan for the Conservation of Argali.
  - 9.2 Evaluate the implementation and achievements of the Action Plan and identify obstacles towards its implementation.
  - 9.3 Revise and update the Action Plan and address identified obstacles.
  - 9.4 Assess the feasibility of reintroducing Argali in previous parts of its range, in particular in the Dauria Special Protected Area.
  - 9.5 Carry out a thorough genetic analysis to clarify the taxonomy of Argali and to understand connectivity between Argali (sub-)populations and assess genetic diversity within populations (see Action 3.1.10 of the Action Plan).
9. CMS Decision 14.167 (d) adopted at COP14 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan in February 2024, commissioned the revision of the CAMI POW with the aim of streamlining its actions to focus on cross-cutting activities that benefit multiple species and to reflect updated CMS mandates relevant to the region. Therefore, the CMS Secretariat suggests following a different approach for the development of the Argali Action Plan for 2024-2032 than the SSAP for 2014-2024. Cross-cutting activities concerning not only Argali, but also other CAMI species shall be included in the next CAMI POW for 2026-2032, whereas the Argali Action Plan will focus on activities of special relevance for specific conservation units of Argali.
10. This will also allow full integration of the Argali into the cooperative framework provided by CAMI, which means that:
  - a) meetings to assess the conservation status of the Argali and develop conservation actions for the species will be conducted within the framework of CAMI;
  - b) meetings and reporting requirements as well as reviews of implementation of the Argali Action Plan will be fully aligned with CAMI Range State meeting cycles;
  - c) Range States are requested to enhance their cooperation on Argali using the CAMI framework and processes.

11. In line with Resolution 14.16 on Ecological Connectivity and a recommendation arising from the Midterm Review Meeting of CAMI on Vilm Island, Germany, 16-19 April 2018, the CMS Secretariat commissioned a study 'Mapping Transboundary Conservation Hotspots for the Central Asian Mammals Initiative' (updated 18 June 2023) (UNEP/CMS/ARG/RS1/Inf.2). The report contains key transboundary conservation areas for the Argali and relevant recommendations for strengthening transboundary cooperation, which were integrated into the draft Argali Action Plan.
12. Furthermore, in order to implement mandates of the CAMI POW 2021-2026 in relation to community engagement and sustainable use, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) commissioned the study 'Potential for Community-based Wildlife Management of CAMI Species' for the CMS Secretariat (UNEP/CMS/ARG/RS1/Inf.3). Argali is one of the focal species of this report and its recommendations were integrated in the draft Action Plan.

### **Range States Reports and Overview Report**

13. In order to implement *Activities 4.1.5 on identifying a suitable mechanism for the coordination and revision of the Action Plan implementation activities* and *4.1.7 on submitting Range State monitoring data* of SSAP, the CMS Secretariat developed a Range State reporting format to monitor its implementation.
14. The Range States have been asked to provide Range State reports for this meeting. As of 10 August 2024, Nepal, Pakistan and Uzbekistan have submitted their reports. The reports have been made available within the documentation for the Meeting as documents UNEP/CMS/ARG/RS1/Inf.4, UNEP/CMS/ARG/RS1/Inf.5 and UNEP/CMS/ARG/RS1/Inf.6 respectively.
15. However, the current format of the Range State reports might not provide straightforward assessment of the implementation of planned measures and achievement of the new Argali Action Plan results. Therefore, the Secretariat requests to be provided a mandate to elaborate a new reporting format that will be consistent with the structure and content of the Argali Action Plan (to be discussed under Item 10 of the Provisional Agenda).

### **List of National Contact Points**

16. In line with paragraph 7 above, the Secretariat proposes that focal points for Argali to be identical with the focal points for CAMI, i.e. the CMS National Focal Points, with Stefan Michel as the CAMI Species Focal Point for Argali.

### **Action requested**

17. The Range States are requested to:
  - a) take note of this report;
  - b) decide on the future review and implementation of the Argali Action Plan and its relationship with CAMI as proposed by the Secretariat.