



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/COP14/Inf. Doc.30.2.1.1

30 July 2023

Original: English

14th MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 12 - 17 February 2024
Agenda Item 30.2.1.1

INITIATIVES ON CONNECTIVITY

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

This document provides a preliminary list of existing initiatives related to ecological connectivity in which CMS might engage.

This document should be read in conjunction with Document UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.30.2.1.1 *Ecological Connectivity-Policy Aspects* and specifically its section on “Supporting implementation of Resolution 12.26 (Rev.COP13) *Improving ways of addressing connectivity in the conservation of migratory species*” which provides an overview of a variety of initiatives of relevance in which CMS has taken part or is doing so.

The revision reflects amendments proposed by the Sessional Committee during its sixth meeting.

INITIATIVES ON CONNECTIVITY

Convention on Biological Diversity

1. Most of the connectivity-related work undertaken in relation to the CBD has advanced in the context of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. This work is described in documents UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.30.2.1.1 *Ecological Connectivity – Policy Aspects*, UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.30.2.1.2 *Ecological Connectivity - Technical Aspects* and UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.17 *CMS Contribution to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*.
2. The CBD has also facilitated a process for countries to identify and describe Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs), the selection criteria for which include “special importance for life history stages of species”. Based on this, EBSAs may be expected to make an important contribution to connectivity for marine migratory animals, including in the context of the recently-concluded Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

OSPAR and HELCOM Commissions

3. OSPAR and HELCOM have been highlighted previously as offering useful perspectives on ecological network coherence assessment methods, and the Annex to Resolution 12.7 (Rev.COP13) on Ecological networks included in its recommended “useful areas for further work”, seeking opportunities to pursue collaboration and synergy with them regarding further development of network coherence assessment methodologies to take account of migration and migratory species.

Ramsar Convention

3. Ramsar’s concerns include both the coherence of designated site networks and the conservation of wetland-related migratory species, and there are several existing axes of collaboration with CMS and the CMS Family. There is a particular opportunity for Ramsar to contribute to connectivity thinking (and connectivity restoration) in relation to hydrological connectivity at the river basin/ water catchment scale, connectivity of coastal zones, and coordinated management of transboundary water systems. The Convention is developing a 5th Strategic Plan to succeed the 4th which ends in 2024; and it could be useful for CMS to engage with this process to seek a good reflection in it of connectivity issues.

UNECE Water Convention and UN Watercourses Convention

4. These two Conventions, now both global in scope, address respectively the protection and use of transboundary watercourses and international lakes, and the law of non-navigational uses of international watercourses. As such they are relevant to connectivity considerations involving transboundary waters, and there may be opportunities to explore cooperation with CMS in this context.

Bern Convention

5. Similarly to OSPAR and HELCOM, mentioned above, the Bern Convention has developed a detailed methodology for assessing the sufficiency of its ecological network (the Emerald Network), and can offer perspectives on this to the CMS context. The Convention is also currently developing a Strategic Plan with links to the Global Biodiversity Framework, including its provisions on connectivity, and there is therefore a

shared interest with CMS in the development and operation of appropriate indicators (and perhaps also harmonised reporting) on these provisions.

UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

6. CMS Resolution 12.26 (Rev.COP13) refers to the initiative launched by the UN General Assembly to pursue the idea, first formally raised at the Rio Conference in 2012, to develop an international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. After nearly two decades of negotiation the text was finally agreed in March 2023, and the agreement will enter into force 120 days after the 60th instrument of ratification, approval, acceptance or accession is deposited. The text makes one reference to establishing a “comprehensive system of area-based management tools, with ecologically representative and well-connected networks of marine protected areas”, and it includes “ecological connectivity” in the list of indicative criteria for identification of areas.

UN General Assembly

7. In 2021 the UNGA adopted Resolution 75/271 on “Transboundary cooperation as a key factor for biodiversity conservation, restoration and sustainable use”. It may be worth looking into what potential follow-up there may be at GA level to maintain oversight of the impact of the Resolution, which urges UN Member States to increase international cooperation to improve connectivity of transboundary habitats, avoid their fragmentation, and maintain connectivity between ecosystems.

UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

8. CMS Resolution 12.26 (Rev.COP13) refers to UNEP’s “Global Connectivity Conservation Project” as a process which should be informed about the Resolution’s content on connectivity. The project was launched in 2015, with the aim of creating a Global Connectivity Conservation Strategy to be presented to the UN General Assembly, and to “provide policy and legislative tools and resources to national governments, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders”. CMS in 2016 publicised the first step being taken towards this, namely the compilation by UNEP-WCMC of a global database of connectivity conservation initiatives. No resulting database or strategy appears to be accessible, but this issue should be pursued to clarify its current status.
9. In addition therefore to the existing (and expected future) collaboration at global level, there may be options to interact with these (or any other new) specific strands of CCSG work; or indeed to consider proposing particular initiatives for promoting migratory species connectivity issues in this context.

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

10. An interesting initiative is a GEF-funded project to design national “blueprints” for delivering a “30 x 30” protected/conserved area objective in each country (linked to Target 3 in the Global Biodiversity Framework). Initial specifications for this project have not yet covered ways in which connectivity should feature in the “blueprints” that are envisaged – but it would be a major missed opportunity if connectivity was not addressed, so there is a key need here to work with WWF on ensuring that the scope is framed appropriately to include this. Collaboration on delivery of this aspect of the project could also be considered.

European Space Agency

11. CMS COP Resolution 12.7 (Rev.COP13) urges CMS National Focal Points and Scientific Councillors to “work closely with relevant organisations such as the European Space Agency and its Focal Points to support new technology developments such as the ICARUS experiment to track the movement and fate of migratory animals globally”. Cooperation in relation to ICARUS may now in fact take place mainly with the Max Planck Institute, and in the context of work described elsewhere in this document in response to COP Decision 13.114 (a).

DinAlpCONNECT project

12. This two-year project on the “transboundary ecological connectivity of the Alps and Dinaric Mountains”, funded by Interreg, aimed to enhance capacity for transnational tackling of environmental vulnerability, fragmentation and safeguarding of ecosystem services in the Dinaric Mountains, connecting them with the Alps, improving ecological connectivity in general and enabling long term protection of biodiversity in the face of climate change. It expects to produce a strategy for ecological connectivity, for adoption by policy makers. The project itself was due to end formally in 2022, but following up and applying its results, including the policy strategy, could be an opportunity for collaboration with CMS.

Cambridge Conservation Forum (CCF)

13. The CCF brings together over 70 national and international conservation organisations, including NGOs, government agencies, university departments and consultancies. The Forum has a number of sub-groups, including a Connectivity Conservation Working Group, led by Marcelo Lima who is the UK and Brazil Lead for the IUCN CCSG (see above). The group has so far organised some webinar and knowledge-sharing activities, but the scope for specific collaboration with CMS (and possible influence on some of the key member organisations) may be worth exploring.

Conservation Investment Strategies

14. Since 2011, migratory bird conservation in the Americas has been increasingly organized through conservation strategic frameworks (or investment strategies), which place local action within a flyway context and facilitate collaboration at the population scale. Each investment strategy assembles and synthesizes current knowledge to create a comprehensive (and full annual cycle) approach for addressing the conservation needs of migratory birds within the relevant flyway. Increasingly these efforts are aligned with existing national and regional conservation frameworks through the development of national migratory bird conservation plans and strategies, linked to obligations under multilateral environmental agreements.

Cities With Nature (CWN)

15. Cities With Nature is a partnership initiative involving ICLEI, UNEP, IUCN, WWF and others, that provides a platform for cities and their partners to work with shared commitment to action for sustainability in the urban environment. CWN, and its sister platform Regions With Nature (RWN), have been recognised by the CBD as the platform for cities and regions to monitor and report on implementation of NBSAPs and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. There are opportunities for attention to connectivity in the urban environment to be strengthened through this.

Room to Roam Initiative

16. With its science-based approach, 'Room to Roam' is an IFAW initiative that seeks to connect and secure habitats and create safe passages for elephants and other wildlife to move freely within their home ranges in East and Southern Africa. 'Room to Roam' aims to maintain resilient and stable [elephant] populations by safeguarding a matrix of connected habitats to aid dispersal and enable populations to resist and recover from disturbance such as poaching and climate change. IFAW is building partnerships with communities, traditional leaders, governments, private sector actors and other NGOs in a long-term plan to reconnect critical landscapes and help wildlife flourish.

Right of passage: national elephant corridors project (India)

Great Eastern Ranges (Australia)

Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (US and Canada)