

## **Implementation of the CMS Information Management Plan**

*Prepared by UNEP-WCMC for discussion under Agenda Item 8*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Resolution 6.5 of the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Annex 1) established the priority actions to be carried out to implement the Information Management Plan, including a review of Party reports and the development of revised reporting guidelines and/or pro forma reports.

As mentioned in Part I of document CMS/StC.23/Doc.11, the CMS Secretariat commissioned the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to conduct a synthesis of annual reports to the CMS and related agreements. This synthesis has brought together a wealth of information on the activities, knowledge, strengths and needs of the Parties to the CMS and related Agreements. Similarly, as indicated in Part II of the same document, commissioned by, UNEP-WCMC has also conducted a review of the content and format of national reports and drafted a new reporting format, in close collaboration with the CMS Secretariat.

These actions set the basis for the harmonisation of reporting within the CMS and in relation to other conventions and agreements. The new reporting format also sets an important precedent in relation to the facilitation of modular reporting, and the exchange of information across Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), therefore facilitating both the process of reporting itself as well as the management of the information.

### **FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Following discussions between the CMS Secretariat and UNEP-WCMC regarding subsequent actions for the implementation of CMS Information Management Plan, it was considered more effective, where possible, to group a number of the actions outlined in Resolution 6.5 into wider 'Activities' for their execution. The simultaneous implementation of several actions is expected to facilitate the practical consideration of linkages between them, and lessen the costs of their implementation.

This document provides a description of these Activities or cluster of actions, for consideration by the Standing Committee. The document includes the overall objective of each Activity and an outline of the facilities to be gained from them after their implementation. The project is expected to be undertaken in 2002, and the results presented as a major contribution to COP7.

### **ACTIVITY 1: DEVELOP DATABASE OF CMS REPORTS AND PROJECTS**

**Objective:** Following from the Synthesis of National Reports to CMS and Agreements (see Action 1, Res. 6.5), develop an electronic database containing Party Reports, Syntheses of Party Reports, Project Reports (linked as appropriate to Parties and/or species), and Party data (including focal points for the Convention and relevant Agreements, dates of accession, reservations, adoption of amendments, etc).

**Main facilities/functions to be gained from the Activity:**

Once a database with the information produced from the synthesis of annual reports has been created, and taking into account the modules defined in the new reporting format, a number of functions (e.g. queries) are possible, which would allow, for instance:

- Individual Project Monitoring: Follow-up the evolution a project through time.
- Monitoring of in-country implementation: Pool together the actions implemented for a taxon under the CMS and related Agreements.
- Regional Monitoring: Pool together, for analysis, the actions implemented by countries in a region or migratory route to protect a taxon.
- Multi-Party Species Data: Pool together, for analysis, the information reported for a species protected by CMS and associated Agreements
- Assistance to Parties with their reporting obligations: Once the new reporting format is approved, the resulting facility will also enable the preliminary preparation of annual reports to assist Parties with their reporting obligations. That is, previous to submission, Parties could receive a customised reporting format containing the information that is 'known' in the system about the species in their countries, and the projects known to be in progress in the country, etc. In this way, the Party could concentrate on activities such as: (a) amending the 'known' information; (b) adding to the known information; (c) providing updates on the progress made with ongoing projects; (d) reporting on new projects, etc.
- Access to information: the resulting system should be able to deliver information through the Internet or CD-ROM.

**Action(s) from Res. 6.5 addressed:** 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 18

## **ACTIVITY 2: INTEGRATE CMS SPECIES DATA TO CMS REPORTS DATABASE**

**Background:** Species information facilities like GROMS and the UNEP-WCMC Species Information Services provide a significant amount of information about the species protected by the CMS and related Agreements. Moreover, UNEP-WCMC has been recently developing links with an increasing number of specialist partners, to facilitate access to the information produced by them through the UNEP-WCMC species information hub.

Basic information maintained at UNEP-WCMC about species regulated by various MEAs includes, among other things:

- a) Synonymy: Different MEAs and specialist agencies use different names for the same species. Recognising and registering these differences makes it possible to link data produced by the various organisations.
- b) Distribution Range and literature references: Basic qualifiers are also provided whenever possible characterising national populations (e.g. breeding, vagrant, uncertain presence, etc). These data are linked, whenever possible, to the supporting literature sources in order to facilitate access to reports qualifying the condition of the population(s) at a national/regional level.

Other fields of information available at the central hub include: protection provided (e.g. listing) by different MEAs, trend in Redlist status, common names etc.

UNEP-WCMC has also developed, with considerable support from the CMS, a prototype to present spatial data on the Internet (which currently concentrates on marine turtle nesting sites in the Indian Ocean region). The Centre is developing this facility to enable the mapping and analysis over the internet of data sets owned and maintained by national and/or international partners, against data sets maintained at UNEP-WCMC (e.g. protected areas database, atlas of coral reefs, etc).

**Objective:** Link the Database of CMS Reports and Projects (Objective 1, above) directly to CMS species information in GROMS and in UNEP-WCMC, and to data accessible through the UNEP-WCMC species information hub. As links with relevant national and international partners are developed, gain access to the information generated by specialist expert agencies, and to mapping and analysis facilities combining data from specialist national and international agencies in combination with data-sets maintained by UNEP-WCMC.

**Main facilities/functions to be gained from the Activity:**

- Access to multi-agency species information: Access, from the CMS Database of Reports and Projects, to information about a given taxon available within or through UNEP-WCMC.
- Updated and documented range state list: Access to a range state list updated regularly.
- Access to the knowledge generated under different names: Access to the knowledge generated by other agencies and/or Conventions/Agreements for a species under synonym names as this is linked through UNEP-WCMC.

**Action(s) from Res. 6.5 addressed:** 3, 4, 7, 9, 11, 16, 19

**ACTIVITY 3: ESTABLISH A MECHANISM FOR EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES AND INFORMATION**

**Background:** Ready access to the knowledge accumulated, and the possibility of exchanging knowledge among parties is fundamental to the implementation of the CMS and related Agreements. A considerable amount of knowledge has been generated through the implementation of the CMS and related agreements, which is gathered and analysed, for instance, in the form of thematic reviews (on a particular topic or taxon), technical reports, etc. This information exists thus far only in the form of word processor documents. Similarly, a considerable amount of knowledge is generated by other MEAs over species/topics of common interest with the CMS.

**Objective:** Develop and implement a mechanism for the exchange of experiences and documentation between the Convention & Agreement Secretariats and the Parties, comprising an Electronic Library of documents, and an electronic distribution list for the exchange of information for the Convention. Subsequently, establish a distribution list and/or a subordinate electronic library for one priority area to be selected according to the demand/preferences – e.g. as defined by the users of the central mechanism. Documents in the library are to be indexed, so that they can be accessed directly through the CMS Database of Reports and Projects in relation to specific reports, species, projects, themes and/or Party information. As other MEAs also make available their ‘grey’ literature (i.e. literature not in the public domain), initiatives like this benefit from and contribute to a wider pool of knowledge.

**Main facilities/functions to be gained from the Activity:**

- An Electronic Library of documents directly accessible through the Internet or via CD-ROM
- An Electronic distribution list for the exchange of information among Parties
- Access to species specific, country specific, or theme specific documents stored in the Electronic Library through the Database of CMS Reports and Projects.
- General and/or thematic electronic discussion lists to facilitate and organise the exchange of information and documents. These discussion fora may include themes and/or species of common interest to other MEAs and thus be used to facilitate exchange of information across MEAs

**Action(s) from Res. 6.5 addressed:** 6, 7, 8, 10, 15, 18

#### **ACTIVITY 4: CONDUCT A GENERAL REVIEW OF CONCERTED ACTION SPECIES.**

**Background:** Resolution 6.1 endorsed the list of species for which concerted actions are to be taken to implement the provisions of the Convention. The Conference of the Parties further resolved that review reports were to be prepared for these species during the 2001-2002 biennium to facilitate the review of results by the Conference of the Parties at its next meeting.

**Objective:** To prepare review reports for all Concerted Action Species, including an overall review of the conservation status of the species, information about concerted actions implemented during the biennium and, when available, an overview of the conservation status of the species in each Range State.

##### **Main facilities/functions to be gained from the Activity:**

- Review reports for all concerted action species, to serve as information baseline for the assessment of results by the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting. The review will also provide the initial baseline for the definition of the tools to facilitate a regular process for the review of the appendices (see Activity 5, below).

**Action(s) addressed:** 7, 10, 15 in Res. 6.5 and Point 1 Res. 6.1

#### **ACTIVITY 5: DEVELOP INFORMATION TOOLS TO FACILITATE REVIEW OF THE APPENDICES**

**Background:** Collection of information from literature is an activity often undertaken for the same taxon by different Parties. Also, in the course of its normal operation, UNEP-WCMC collects information for a number of different MEAs and/or Parties. Having a common 'receptacle' would enable the accumulation and organisation of information, and fragments of information, gathered by all during the periods between reviews of the CMS Appendices. This would in turn facilitate the review process itself, and allow the identification of gaps in knowledge which might require further research.

**Objective:** Using the review reports for Concerted Action species as a model (Activity 4), create electronic Fact Sheets (or Report Cards) where information can be accumulated and organised for Appendix I and Appendix II species, and thus act as working documents to facilitate the establishment of a regular process for reviewing the appendices based on available information on migratory species and the threats to them.

##### **Main facilities/functions to be gained from the Activity:**

- Electronic Fact Sheets for Appendix I and Appendix II species, to enable participants in the review process to collect and organise information. The sheets will be available for consultation, and linked to other relevant documents for the species in question through the CMS Electronic Library (Activity 3) and through the Database of CMS Species and Reports (Activity 1). They will act as a draft baseline documents to facilitate the assessment activities by CMS authorities.

Regular review of the information in these sheets should enable the identification of, for instance: (a) Appendix I species that need to be designated for concerted action; (b) Species that need to be added to Appendix I; (c) Gaps in knowledge about a taxon; (d) Appendix II species which merit development of Agreements as a priority; (e) Species that should be included in Appendix II (e.g. from the assessment of information available from species listed by other MEAs).

**Action(s) from Res. 6.5 addressed:** 7, 10, 15