



Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia

Distribution: General
UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG3/Doc.7

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RAPTOR CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

Prepared by Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU

Introduction

1. The overall aim of the Raptors MOU¹ is to ensure that all populations of African-Eurasian migratory birds of prey (including owls) are maintained in, or returned to, Favourable Conservation Status within the meaning of Article 1(c) of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)². The Action Plan³ at Annex 3 of the Raptors MOU contains an Implementation Framework (Table 2) which establishes priority activities to be undertaken by Signatories to deliver the overall aim outlined above.
2. From the outset, it was envisaged that this Action Plan would be translated into National or Regional Strategies, or equivalent documents, and that Signatories would prepare and submit these to the Coordinating Unit within two years of signing the Raptors MOU (Paragraph 12). Also, Paragraph 14 of the MOU anticipates that ... 'The first session of the Meeting of the Signatories will be convened as soon as possible after at least three quarters of those that are Signatories at the time this Memorandum of Understanding becomes effective have submitted their strategies or equivalent measures'. There were 28 Signatories to the Raptors MOU when it came into effect on 1 November 2008.
3. In an effort to assist Signatories to meet this critically important obligation, and to encourage a level of standardization of approach, the Coordinating Unit published detailed 'Guidelines for Preparing National or Regional Raptor Conservation and Management Strategies'⁴ in June 2012.
4. The Coordinating Unit does not anticipate there to be a '*one-size fits all*' mechanism to support Signatories in achieving this ambitious goal but that there are a number of options that we can consider to assist Signatories in doing so. Examples include deploying resources to: a) Support Signatories in hosting National or Regional Strategic Planning Workshops; b) Mobilize members of the Technical Advisory Group or other experts to review and comment upon draft documents; and, c) Invite key individuals to attend National Strategic Planning Workshops in another Signatory state to gain knowledge and experience to utilize on their return home.
5. It is implicit in the text of the MOU that translation of the Action Plan into National or Regional Strategies, or equivalent documents, is a fundamental and critical step to ensuring effective implementation of the Raptors MOU. However, by early 2018, more than nine years after the Raptors

¹ <http://cms.int/raptors/en/page/agreement-text>

² <http://cms.int/en/convention-text>

³ http://cms.int/raptors/sites/default/files/basic_page_documents/raptors-mou_annex3_action-plan_e.pdf

⁴ <https://www.cms.int/raptors/en/publication/guidelines-preparing-national-or-regional-raptor-conservation-and-management-strategies>

MOU had come into effect, the Coordinating Unit had not received any National or Regional Strategies from Signatories.

6. Accordingly, in February 2018, the Coordinating Unit wrote to Signatories and proposed that the third Meeting of Signatories (MOS) be postponed and for Signatories to use the interim period to make a concerted effort, actively supported by the Coordinating Unit, to develop their National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategies.

7. Signatories almost unanimously supported this proposal. Ten countries reported that they had already begun developing a National Raptor Conservation Strategy, or were actively contributing at a regional level. The Coordinating Unit became aware of at least four Signatories aiming to finalise their National Strategies by the end of the year. In summary, some excellent progress in strategic planning has been made by many Signatories. However, most respondents considered the target, suggested by the Coordinating Unit, for National or Regional Strategies covering 75% of the current 59 Signatories to be in place by the end of December 2019 to be over-ambitious.

Support to Signatories

8. In light of this valuable information and guidance received from Signatories, the Coordinating Unit wrote to Signatories again in August 2018 seeking details of the most cost-effective ways in which the Coordinating Unit could assist Signatories to develop their National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategies. It is important to stress that the overall responsibility for this task properly lies with Signatories and that an evidence-based, inclusive approach is recommended to engender strong stakeholder engagement and ownership of the process. The Coordinating Unit believes this formula offers the best chance of promoting widespread and effective implementation of the proposed conservation actions in the years ahead.

9. In developing their strategic approach, Signatories are encouraged to review the information provided in the Guidelines for Preparing National or Regional Raptor Conservation and Management Strategies. Another potentially useful resource is the IUCN's Guidelines for Species Conservation Planning⁵. Although this latter document does not focus specifically on national approaches, much of the information and advice included is relevant to the development of a conservation strategy for any species.

10. In addition, many Signatories have already contributed to the development of the Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP)⁶ and the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP)⁷. These two documents provide examples of international conservation strategies, which should help Signatories to identify key threats, objectives and conservation actions that are relevant at national or regional levels.

11. The Coordinating Unit has set aside some financial resources to support Signatories to develop their National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategies. To identify specific needs and to assist in allocating these modest resources, the Coordinating Unit prepared an 'Application for Support' form (Annex 1 to this document) for Signatories to complete and return by 30 September 2018. The form was circulated to Signatories as an attachment to the August 2018 message. It sought details about the level of planning and preparation already carried out, and outlined potential ways in which the Coordinating Unit could support the strategic development process. Subsequently, the Coordinating Unit applied a merit-based approach to evaluate all of the Applications for Support received from Signatories.

⁵ <https://www.iucn.org/content/guidelines-species-conservation-planning-version-10>

⁶ <https://cms.int/raptors/en/publication/multi-species-action-plan-protect-african-eurasian-vultures-vulture-msap>

⁷ <https://cms.int/raptors/en/publication/saker-falcon-global-action-plan-sakergap>

12. Eleven Signatories responded to the above call by submitting Applications for Support. All respondent countries had taken certain steps to develop their strategies, including establishing a small team/committee (or identified representatives) to support the process, and were anticipating at least one regional/national/local meeting or workshop to be held during the process. All but one of the countries (91%) had taken a decision on the type of Raptor Conservation Strategy to be developed but only four (36%) had identified resources, including financial, to support the strategic development process.

13. Regarding the options offered by the Coordinating Unit to assist with the development of Raptor Conservation Strategies, all countries deemed financial support helpful in contributing to hosting a national or regional meeting/workshop. All except one country (91%) would welcome a technical review of their draft Raptor Conservation Strategy, submitted to the Coordinating Unit. Other preferred options were:

- Technical review of a draft Project Plan to develop the strategy, submitted to the Coordinating Unit – welcomed by eight countries (73%);
- Technical guidance and review of key documents submitted to the Coordinating Unit during the process – welcomed by eight countries (73%);
- Technical advisor to attend/facilitate certain aspects of a national or regional meeting/workshop – welcomed by seven countries (64%);
- Financial support to sponsor attendance at a strategy development meeting/workshop hosted by another Signatory – welcomed by seven countries (64%); and,
- Online planning telecom with the lead individual/author and/or steering team/committee – welcomed by six countries (55%).

Role of TAG

14. Paragraph 1, of the Terms of Reference⁸ (TOR) for TAG, states that the purpose of the TAG is to serve and assist the Signatories in the effective implementation of the Raptors MOU, including the Action Plan. Paragraph 4 of the TOR, defines one of the main tasks of TAG to be to provide expert advice, information and make recommendations on the implementation of the Raptors MOU as requested. And paragraph 3 of the TOR, states that the Coordinating Unit serves to receive and transmit requests from the Signatories for advice from the TAG. Accordingly, the Coordinating Unit invites TAG members to review the options listed above to assist Signatories with the development of Raptors Conservation Strategies, including to consider where individual TAG members may be able to assist in this work.

Action requested

TAG is requested to review the options outlined to assist Signatories with the development of their Raptor Conservation Strategies, and to identify specific activities where support can be offered.

⁸ <https://www.cms.int/raptors/en/document/terms-reference-technical-advisory-group-cms-raptors-mou>

Annex 1:**Application for Support**

To develop a National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy to implement the CMS Raptors MoU

Signatories interested in applying for assistance from the Coordinating Unit should complete this form and return it to cmsoffice.ae@cms.int by **30 September 2018**. Please note that financial contributions will be capped at USD 10,000 to ensure that the limited funds available can be used to support the maximum number of Signatories.

Name and affiliation of applicant:

E-mail address:

1. What steps have you already taken to develop the strategy? *(Please tick all boxes that apply and, where appropriate, complete the supplementary questions)*

- A decision has been taken on the type of Raptor Conservation Strategy to be developed.
Regional (area covered): _____ National (name of country): _____
- A lead agency and/or an individual has been selected who will be responsible for overseeing development of the strategy.
Name: _____ Job title and organisation: _____
- A lead author(s) and/or key contributors/editors have been identified to draft the strategy.
Name: _____ Number of contributors/editors: _____
- A small team or committee has been established (or representatives identified) to support the process.
Number of people: _____ Number of departments/organisations represented: _____
- Some resources, including financial, are already identified to support the strategic development process.
Lead agency: _____ Resources (including funding amount) identified: _____
- An outline timetable to develop the strategy has been established.
Start date: _____ Planned completion date: _____
- The process to consult, finalise and secure formal official approval of the strategy has been agreed.
Level of official approval to be sought: _____
- The species covered by the Raptors MoU that occur within the region/country have been identified.
- A review of the Raptors MoU Action Plan has been undertaken to aid scoping out the task.
- An outline threat analysis has been carried out to scope out key problems that are known or anticipated.
- An initial list has been compiled of key stakeholders or groups who will need to be consulted and engaged.
- At least one regional/national/local meeting or workshop is anticipated to be held during the process.
Type of gathering(s): _____ Number anticipated: _____

2. Which of these options offered by the Coordinating Unit would assist with the development of your Raptor Conservation Strategy? *(Please tick all boxes that apply and, where appropriate, complete the supplementary questions)*

- Online planning telecom with the lead individual/author and/or steering team/committee.
- Technical review of a draft Project Plan to develop the strategy, submitted to the Coordinating Unit.
- Financial support to contribute to hosting a national or regional meeting/workshop.
Type of gathering(s):
Number of participants:
Funds sought (USD):
- Technical advisor to attend/facilitate certain aspects of a national or regional meeting/workshop.
- Financial support to sponsor attendance at a strategy development meeting/workshop hosted by another Signatory.
- Technical guidance and review of key documents submitted to the Coordinating Unit during the process.
- Technical review of the draft Raptor Conservation Strategy, submitted to the Coordinating Unit.
- Other specific support needed to develop the Raptor Conservation Strategy.
Please specify:

3. Are you already collaborating with another Signatory to develop your Raptor Conservation Strategy, or planning to do so?

- Yes. Please provide details:

*Thank you for your time. Please return the completed form to cmsoffice.ae@cms.int by **30 September 2018**.*