



Range States Meeting on the Institutional Framework and next steps for the Central Asian Flyway

New Delhi, India, 02 – 04 May 2023

UNEP/CMS/CAF4/Outcome 3

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE CENTRAL ASIAN FLYWAY INITIATIVE UNDER CMS

Background and purpose

This initiative is established in line with the mandate provided by the Resolution adopted at COP14 entitled Central Asian Flyway Initiative to assist the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and its associated instruments, relevant MEAs and Conventions to improve the conservation status of threatened migratory birds in the Central Asian Flyway (CAF).

Goal

To maintain and/or enhance the conservation, protection, restoration and sustainable management of all migratory bird species occurring in the CAF, and their habitats.

Role

To facilitate concerted efforts and procedures to achieve this goal in the CAF region, in close cooperation with the other CMS and non-CMS instruments and partnerships.

Scope

The initiative will be regional covering all states of the Central Asian Flyway as follows: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Georgia, India, Iran, Islamic Republic of, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom (Chagos Islands), Uzbekistan, Yemen.

The initiative will cover migratory bird taxa as identified by CMS along the CAF, with a specific focus on threatened species, sub-species and populations currently not addressed.

Remit

The initiative will:

- a) identify, develop and implement a Programme of Work (POW) that includes internationally agreed conservation strategies for globally threatened migratory bird species and threatened populations of migratory birds of the CAF, listed under the different frameworks and instruments;
- b) ensure that the POW is aligned with existing plans of the other relevant instruments and avoid duplication;
- c) take measures that allow and secure ecological connectivity of populations;

- d) identify research gaps and priorities in the conservation of migratory birds for the CAF;
- e) promote innovative approaches that deliver sustainable benefits to the local communities as well as migratory birds and their habitats;
- f) develop the capacity of Range States, stakeholders and local communities to conserve and manage, as well as monitor, populations of the migratory bird species and their habitats;
- g) increase capacity-building of Range States;
- h) assist in resource mobilization for priority actions including cooperation with international financial institutions and public and/or private organizations;
- i) improve citizen science, education, and awareness on the need of conservation of migratory birds and their habitats in the CAF; and
- j) enhance and facilitate communication and information sharing between the CAF Range States;
- k) Promote and facilitate implementation of relevant decisions and plans adopted in the framework of MEAs or other frameworks, as well as partnerships, especially the CMS, the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU), the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane (*Grus leucogeranus*) and the Action Plan for Migratory Landbirds in the African-Eurasian Region, East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP), Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna/Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative (CAFF/AMBI) and Bilateral Migratory Bird Agreements.

Membership

The membership of the initiative will be comprised of representatives of relevant government institutions in the field of environment, species management, and research institutions in the Parties to the participating MEAs in the CAF Region.

It will also involve representatives from the Secretariats of the participating MEAs and frameworks.

In addition, the following representatives will be invited to contribute to the initiative:

- Representatives of Parties and non-Parties elsewhere in the CAF and beyond that wish to support the work of the initiative;
- Representatives of the CMS Scientific Council, AEWA Technical Committee, the Raptors MOU Technical Advisory Group, regional CMS Task Forces on Illegal Taking of Migratory Birds, the Saker Falcon Task Force, the multi-stakeholder Energy Task Force, the CMS Preventing Poisoning Working Group, the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group, the Flyways Working Group, the EAAFP Technical Committee, and other groups with relevant experience;
- Academic institutions, NGOs and other stakeholders, as appropriate
- Representatives from relevant Bilateral Migratory Bird Agreements and relevant IUCN specialist groups; and
- Relevant independent experts on migratory bird ecology and policy.

Governance

The initiative will elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair from amongst its members.

A steering group may be established to advise the CAF Secretariat/Coordinating Unit, between meetings, composed of representatives of CMS Parties, CAF Range States, other MEAs, international organizations and international NGOs.

Decision making will be done by seeking consensus, as much as possible, among the group.

The initiative will operate by seeking consensus, as much as possible among the group and in accordance with a *modus operandi* which shall be developed once the membership is convened.

Operation

A Secretariat/Coordinating Unit will be established and hosted by the Government of India in coordination with the CMS Secretariat to fulfil the following functions:

- defining, implementing and monitoring of the CAF Programme of Work, in cooperation with all CAF members.
- coordinating the update of the CAF Action Plan;
- organizing the meetings of the initiative and preparing the background documents;
- maintaining and moderating the initiative's communication platform (website, online workspace);
- facilitating implementation of decisions of the initiative;
- facilitating fundraising and resource mobilization; and
- facilitating engagement with stakeholders within and beyond the membership.

Meetings of the initiative will be convened at appropriate intervals, as considered necessary and funding permitting. Between meetings business will be conducted electronically through an online workspace, which will provide the primary mode of communication.

In collaboration with Parties and relevant international organizations and subject to the availability of funds, the initiative will organize regional workshops in priority areas to assist in the development of appropriate local or regional solutions.