

**Fifth Meeting of the Signatories
of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and
Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard
(*Otis tarda*)**

Bratislava, Slovakia, 18 – 21 September 2023

UNEP/CMS/GB/MTIWP 2023-2028

**MEDIUM-TERM INTERNATIONAL WORK PROGRAMME
ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE MIDDLE-EUROPEAN
POPULATION OF THE GREAT BUSTARD
(2023-2028)**

Medium-Term International Work Programme 2023-2028

Expected Result	Action	Measures to be taken	Priority	Time table	Lead Country and collaborators
<p>1.1 Average annual adult survival rate is above 90% in each population</p>	<p>1.1.1 Reduce collision with powerlines through avoiding key areas for Great Bustard, through marking and, if necessary, even through removal of existing dangerous sections of powerlines</p>	<p>Systematic data collection on collisions</p> <p>Approaching energy suppliers</p> <p>Organizing joint projects with energy suppliers</p> <p>Planning process to consider Great Bustard conservation needs when necessary</p> <p>Providing information on effectiveness of particular bird flight diverters</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>National Authorities in collaboration with electric companies</p>
	<p>1.1.2 Prevent the occurrence of catastrophic winter mortality events through supporting the production of oil-seed rape and alfalfa at suitable undisturbed locations far from existing powerlines within the traditional wintering areas and establish capacity to clear snow from fields in emergency situations</p>	<p>Prepare an information network for circumstances when the breeding populations in Central Europe migrate included in the Guidelines on Successful Wintering</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Applicable to: all Range States</p>

Expected Result	Action	Measures to be taken	Priority	Time table	Lead Country and collaborators
	<p>1.1.3 Maintain hunting ban in all Range States and maintain efforts to stop poaching where it still occurs, taking into account guidelines on predator control, connect to IKB work and platforms-guidance under CMS</p>	<p>Update legislation accordingly where necessary</p> <p>Enforcement of existing legislation by anti-poaching measures</p> <p>Promote collaboration with hunting associations</p>	High	Ongoing	National authorities
	<p>1.1.4 Prevent collision with wind turbines in key sites and flyways for Great Bustard</p> <p>Include tagging data to inform precise results</p> <p>Connect actions to the Energy Task Force and existing guidance</p>	<p>Data collection on collision through intensive monitoring</p> <p>Adequate planning of wind farms in Great Bustard habitats and flyways</p>	Medium	Ongoing	Applicable to: all Range States
<p>1.2 Average productivity exceeds 0.25 fledged chicks per adult female in each population as of start of October</p>	<p>1.2.1 Identify and apply adequate compulsory restrictions at breeding sites on agricultural practices that significantly reduce the breeding success of the species, such as mowing of alfalfa or grass according to the local breeding phenology of the species, and provide compensation to farmers</p>	<p>Prepare habitat management plans and/or detailed restrictions on farming and hunting for the breeding habitats of the species where agri-environmental provisions have not been applied yet</p>	High	Ongoing	Applicable to: all breeding Range States

Expected Result	Action	Measures to be taken	Priority	Time table	Lead Country and collaborators
	Implement guidelines on agri-environmental schemes	Find financing for compensating the restrictions to farmers			
	1.2.2 Apply nest-safeguarding and egg-rescue measures where necessary and appropriate	<p>Liaise with farmers associations and farmers directly in order to prevent disturbance and damage to breeding birds</p> <p>Organize study visits to Range States where nest-safeguarding and other conservation measures related to the breeding success of the birds (including the methods of detecting breeding females, timing and location of monitoring, methods of in situ protection, etc.) are in practice in order to share experiences</p>	Medium	Ongoing	Applicable to: all breeding Range States

Expected Result	Action	Measures to be taken	Priority	Time table	Lead Country and collaborators
		Organize international action to rescue eggs and chicks from emergencies, where necessary and feasible and transport them to the Rescue Centre in Dévaványa, Hungary	Low Medium for Non-EU due to import regulations	Ongoing	Austria, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia
		Safeguarding of nests and rescue eggs, not only in small populations	High	Ongoing	Applicable to All Range States
	1.2.3 Restrict/Control grazing on key breeding areas where trampling significantly reduces the breeding success	Implement the Guidelines on agri-environmental schemes	High	Ongoing	Applicable to: all breeding Range States
	1.2.4 Support extensification of agricultural practices in areas inhabited by Great Bustards, including the promotion of set-aside schemes and organic farming	Lobbying of policy makers Focusing also on small populations or satellite populations	High	Ongoing	Applicable to: all breeding Range States

Expected Result	Action	Measures to be taken	Priority	Time table	Lead Country and collaborators
	1.2.5 Monitor impact of predators on breeding success and apply predator control measures if necessary	Implement the Guidelines on Predator Control Strategies on Great Bustard habitat, including the methodology on monitoring the potential impacts of the predators (cameras etc.).	High	Ongoing	Applicable to: all breeding Range States
	1.2.6 Create enclosures in the breeding areas of populations if the main reason of breeding failure is predation	<p>Predation monitoring</p> <p>Finalize and implement the Guidelines on Predator Control Strategies on Great Bustard habitats</p> <p>Monitoring of breeding success recommended</p>	Locally high	Ongoing	Applicable to: all breeding Range States
	1.2.7 Reduce human disturbance by restricting access to display and breeding grounds as necessary	<p>Evaluate the impact of disturbance</p> <p>Implementation of regulations in conservation areas</p> <p>Guiding systems for the public, including observation towers</p>	Medium	Ongoing	Applicable to: all breeding Range States

Expected Result	Action	Measures to be taken	Priority	Time table	Lead Country and collaborators
		Implementation of CMS Resolution 12.23 on Sustainable Tourism and Migratory Species			
1.3 Extent of suitable habitat maintained across the present and recent range of the species	1.3.1 Designate all sites holding populations of Great Bustards as Special Protection Areas in the EU Member States or under national legislation in non-EU countries	Expert’s visits to small populations to evaluate the situation and to propose actions locally implemented Evaluate the habitats and produce a proposal for SPA designation or enlargement	High	Ongoing	Applicable to: Czech Republic, Germany, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Ukraine
	1.3.2 Introduce, or continue where they already exist, agri-environmental schemes or similar incentive measures to promote farming techniques compatible with the species’ requirements and monitor the effectiveness of such measures	Liaise with farmers associations and with authorities responsible for agriculture to promote such schemes Adapt the management according to new developments in agricultural practices and techniques for example mowing machines	High	Ongoing	Applicable to: all Range States

Expected Result	Action	Measures to be taken	Priority	Time table	Lead Country and collaborators
		<p>Incorporate new management into the regulations for the farmers</p> <p>CMS Secretariat to liaise with European Commission regarding the negotiations on Common Agricultural Policy (via CMS Focal Point of EU)</p> <p>Utilizing the Great Bustard as an umbrella species for biodiversity in farmlands and as an indicator species</p>			
	<p>1.3.3 Ensure that all land use change and infrastructure (e.g. power lines, afforestation, irrigation, wind energy, solar power panels , roads and railways and other projects including enlargement of cities, settlements, orchards, vinyards and related agricultural changes) which can negatively affect the Great Bustard's habitat do not take place.</p>	<p>Include Great Bustards and their habitats, including flyways, into planning processes and environmental impact assessments</p> <p>Produce precise habitat and flyways maps and models informing about most suitable areas for Great</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Applicable to: all Range States</p>

Expected Result	Action	Measures to be taken	Priority	Time table	Lead Country and collaborators
		<p>Bustard</p> <p>Raise awareness to decision makers on the results of GPS tracking</p>			
<p>1.4 Knowledge gaps filled</p>	<p>1.4.1 Identify all areas for Great Bustard across its European range</p>	<p>Systematic monitoring including GPS tracking, and elaboration of a detailed distribution map showing all areas regularly used</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Applicable to: All Range States</p>
		<p>Modeling of suitable habitats for the species</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>2028</p>	
	<p>1.4.2 Monitor the size, sex and age composition and productivity of each population, based on standardized counts in winter, spring and autumn</p>	<p>Approaching all available stakeholder groups and capacities that are able to monitor</p> <p>Organize coordinated counts nationally and between neighboring countries where common populations exist: Austria-Hungary-</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Applicable to: all Range States and transboundary populations</p>

Expected Result	Action	Measures to be taken	Priority	Time table	Lead Country and collaborators
		Slovakia; Hungary-Serbia- Romania -Ukraine-Russian Federation			
		Investigate the limiting parameters for population stability and/or growth to better understand key factors making conservation projects successful	High	Ongoing	Applicable to: all Range States
	1.4.3 Monitor and improve the effectiveness of captive breeding, and rearing and release programmes	Implement the Guidelines for Monitoring of Population Parameters of Great Bustard and Effects of Management Measures on the monitoring the survival rate and breeding success of released birds	Low	Ongoing	Applicable to: Hungary, Germany

Expected Result	Action	Measures to be taken	Priority	Time table	Lead Country and collaborators
	1.4.4 Carry out comparative ecological studies on the population dynamics and the genetic structure of populations, on habitat requirements and on the effects of habitat changes and infrastructure on the populations	<p>Conduct ecological studies regarding the movement of individuals between leks or breeding centres, respectively (telemetry, re-sightings etc.)</p> <p>Extend the genetic studies to museum specimens or extinct populations to identify suitable populations for re-introduction</p>	Medium	Ongoing	Applicable to: all Range States
		<p>Study the impact of new developments (energy crops, wind farms, irrigation, photovoltaic/solar parks) on populations</p>	High	Ongoing	Applicable to: all Range States
		<p>Identify space use of non-migrating populations during the year to further understand habitat requirements and promote Great Bustard-friendly management</p>	Medium	2028	Applicable to: all Range States

Expected Result	Action	Measures to be taken	Priority	Time table	Lead Country and collaborators
		Identify the most effective high (and medium) voltage power line markings	High	Ongoing	Lead: Austria; Applicable to: all Range States
	1.4.5 Expand studies to improve the understanding of survival and mortality factors, and promote telemetry studies thereof	Further investigate mortality factors including power line collision, agricultural practices, wind turbine collision etc.	High	Ongoing	Applicable to: all Range States
	1.4.6 Investigate the factors influencing breeding success and survival, and study key parameters, such as habitat availability and choice, home range and dispersal patterns to explain the difference in breeding success between the different populations Dedicate attention to the insect biomass as necessary food supply in the breeding area	Investigate the causes of increases in predator populations and means to prevent it Dedicate attention to the insect biomass availability for breeding Include long-term monitoring in existing or forthcoming key parameter programs and improve the food situation by appropriate measures if needed. Continue GPS satellite	High	Ongoing	Applicable to: all breeding Range States

Expected Result	Action	Measures to be taken	Priority	Time table	Lead Country and collaborators
		tracking data collection and analysis of habitat use and survival of breeding females			
		Study the effects of weather variations on breeding success and survival	Medium		
	1.4.7 Analyze regular and irregular migratory movements, and seasonal movements of birds, promote telemetry and other marking methods thereof to better understand the meta-population structure	Improve marking systems techniques to and application of these techniques	Medium	Ongoing	Applicable to: all Range States
1.4.8 Study the impact of climatic change on the productivity and survival of the Great Bustard and on its habitat. If necessary, develop habitat management techniques for mitigating the impacts of climate change	Improve monitoring by additional indicators for the impacts of climate change	High	Ongoing	Applicable to: all Range States	

Expected Result	Action	Measures to be taken	Priority	Time table	Lead Country and collaborators
	<p>1.4.9 Investigate diseases as a risk factor for the Great Bustard. Consider infectious, metabolic and other diseases and the possibility of a spill-over from other species.</p>	<p>Systematic collection of dead individuals and post-mortem findings by veterinarians following a systematic protocol</p> <p>Liaise with competent persons to investigate the detrimental diseases relevant to Great Bustards and identify potential pathways and precautionary measures to be applied</p> <p>Increase awareness regarding potential impacts of avian influenza on Great Bustards</p> <p>Sampling from Great Bustard carcasses on avian influenza</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Applicable to: all Range States</p>
<p>2.1 Effective habitat management and restoration methods available to assist re-establishment of Great Bustard populations</p>	<p>2.1.1 Improve habitat for Great Bustard in formerly occupied sites, where feasible</p>	<p>Review historical records and elaborate a detailed distribution map on the most suitable areas and potential sites of Great</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>2026</p>	<p>Applicable to: all Range States</p>

Expected Result	Action	Measures to be taken	Priority	Time table	Lead Country and collaborators
		Bustard habitats within its range, considering the reasons of extinctions			
		Use monitor and telemetry data to better understand the Central-European metapopulation. Identify possible source/sink dynamics to improve future decision making for conservation measures	Medium	Ongoing	Applicable to: all Range States
	2.1.2 Develop feasibility studies and management plans to restore transboundary populations and expanding the habitats in these regions	Prepare transboundary projects for the restoration of the previously occupied and potential habitats for the shared Great Bustard populations. Promote the implementation of the CMS Guidelines on Re-introduction and Reinforcement of Great Bustards	Medium	2028	Applicable to: Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Serbia, Slovakia, Austria, Poland

Expected Result	Action	Measures to be taken	Priority	Time table	Lead Country and collaborators
	2.1.3 Promote reintroduction and reinforcement projects on the basis of adequate research and feasibility studies and the respective IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations	Promote implementation of the CMS Guidelines on Re-introduction and Reinforcement of Great Bustards	Locally High	Ongoing	Applicable to: all Range States
	2.1.4 Harmonize national restoration plans for the Great Bustard under the EU Nature Restoration Law	Exchange draft plans among MOU Range States in the EU Organize an (online) workshop for EU Range States Harmonize habitat management plans among Range States	High	2026	Applicable to: all MOU Range States in the EU, and Spain and Portugal
2.2 Public awareness raised	2.2.1 Promote eco-tourism and bird watching in Great Bustard areas, under the appropriate regulatory framework to improve economic viability of Great Bustard areas	Carry out awareness activities for the Great Bustard as a flagship species for biodiversity conservation and elaborate education tools and/or modules for both adult and child target audience. Monitor the impact of eco-tourism	Medium	Ongoing	Applicable to: all Range States

Expected Result	Action	Measures to be taken	Priority	Time table	Lead Country and collaborators
	2.2.2 Promote Great Bustard conservation among stakeholders (e.g. authorities, land owners, farmers and hunters)	Produce leaflets, and organize meetings and campaigns, and social media work	High	Ongoing	Applicable to: all Range States
	2.2.3 Use the Great Bustard as flagship species throughout education in raising the profile of nature conservation	Carry out awareness activities for the Great Bustard as a flagship species for biodiversity conservation and elaborate education tools and/or modules for both adult and child target audience.	Medium	Ongoing	Applicable to: all Range States