


**Convention on the
Conservation of Migratory
Species of Wild Animals**

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INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS:
CO-LOCATION OF AGREEMENT SECRETARIATS

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Background

1. At its fourth meeting (Nairobi, June 1994), the Conference of the Parties adopted Resolution 4.4, inviting Parties to European Agreements under CMS to consolidate secretariat functions in a special Agreements unit co-located with the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species, in order to improve collaboration in the implementation of Agreements and to promote cost-effectiveness in their administrative services and support.
2. After having been administered on a provisional basis by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, the secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds became, in July 2000, the first to be integrated in a new CMS "Agreements Unit", under the overall administration of UNEP. The Meetings of Parties to two other European Agreements -- namely the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas and the Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe¹ -- which then were already co-located in Bonn under the administration of the German Government -- decided to consolidate their respective secretariat functions with UNEP/CMS on 1 January 2001.
3. The aims of co-location are to make more efficient use of collective resources and to take advantage of economies of scale, enhance exchange of information, promote policy coherence and minimize duplication of effort, without compromising the independence of each secretariat in substantive matters. In this paper, the Secretariat assesses the experience of co-location over the past two years, from the functional, substantive and administrative standpoints, and identifies opportunities for further improvement.
4. While focussing primarily on the institutional arrangements in place in Bonn, the paper touches briefly on broader aspects of integration within the CMS family. In that regard, it is worth mentioning that an excellent working relationship has developed between the CMS Secretariat and the secretariat of ACCOBAMS, which was established in Monaco on an interim basis and subsequently confirmed by its Meeting of Parties in February 2002.

¹ New title, as of 2002: Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats

FUNCTIONAL ASPECTS

5. Among the benefits of close proximity of secretariats are the opportunities for them to organize joint meetings in Bonn and to participate in events of mutual interest. Considerable cost savings can be realized, the most obvious being for shared meeting facilities and conference service staff, as well as for the travel and accommodation of delegates and observers. The co-location of secretariats and the personnel who service these meetings favours this undertaking. Further benefits accrue to the host government, which is able to organise joint meetings more efficiently by maintaining the same basic infrastructure.

6. In addition to the cost-efficiency realised by both the Convention and the Agreements in relation to sponsorship of delegates, there are other less obvious benefits of a joint approach to meeting organization. For instance, in the case of COP7/MOP2, the CMS Secretariat conducted on behalf of both secretariats virtually all of the time-consuming negotiations of the Host Agreement with the German Government, and of the arrangements with common service providers, allowing AEWA to focus on other activities.

7. Notwithstanding these apparent advantages, there are some fundamental limitations to the practice of back-to-back meetings, irrespective of the venue, Bonn or elsewhere. The most basic of these is the divergence in the subject matter of the respective meetings and hence, the composition of the national delegations sent to them. Specialist meetings may require the participation of different representatives to cover the particular subject matter, thereby reducing potential cost-savings. Longer meetings increase the workload of the Government agencies hosting them, and can place stress on the secretariat support services which might have to rely, simultaneously, on the same equipment and translation services.

Promotional activities

8. During the period under review, the recruitment of new Parties has been undertaken in a coordinated manner. CMS officers routinely explain the purpose of the relevant CMS Agreements and provide written materials on them when giving briefings in non-Party countries; similarly Agreement officers describe the role of the parent Convention and how their Agreement relates to it. In addition, CMS has been represented at numerous meetings by the Agreement secretariats in order to rationalise work and expenditures, and at other events where the CMS Secretariat would not otherwise have been in a position to attend on account of other commitments.

9. The Agreement secretariats and the CMS Secretariat have all developed information materials, including web sites, pertaining to their particular or more general spheres of interest. Linkages to the Agreements figure prominently in all CMS presentational material, notably its web site, a periodic news bulletin, a mobile exhibit and various PowerPoint presentations, which are also at the disposal of the Agreement secretariats. The work carried out in the framework of the Global Register of Migratory Species (GROMS) is also intended to benefit the Agreements, including the development of their web sites. Reciprocally, the Agreements acknowledge their CMS heritage, to varying degrees, in their public information materials. Other techniques could be explored to enhance a common corporate identity that would reinforce the notion that the various Agreements represent the basic tools through which CMS is implemented.

10. At the time of writing, a common exhibit of the CMS and Agreement secretariats was being developed with full participation of all secretariats. When completed, the exhibit emphasise the institutional linkages under the CMS umbrella.

Other

11. There are a number of less tangible functional benefits to co-location that arise in routine operations. These include convenience for external visitors to meet with more than one secretariat during a single mission; flexibility, in case of urgent need, to temporarily exchange equipment and

staff between secretariats (eg. to assist with large mailings, help at meetings and cover basic functions during absences); derivation of economies of scale in common procurement actions; equitable remuneration and working conditions; etc.

Opportunities

12. In terms of overall functionality, there may be scope for further cooperation that would generate benefits for CMS and Agreements alike. This might potentially include joint capacity-building initiatives, targeted public awareness-raising, and mobilisation of resources. The periodicity of future meetings should be examined with a view to identifying opportunities to rationalize the dense meeting calendar. Though the CMS Secretariat's limited capacity, regrettably, has often not enabled it to participate in meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Agreements, the substantive and political value of such cross-representation cannot be overstated.

13. In general, a more strategic vision for further collaboration, taking into account lessons learned in the past two years could be developed in order to marshal limited resources -- human and financial -- to realize the full benefits of co-location and, more generally, CMS integration. This process calls for a continual dialogue among the partners -- the secretariats, the respective Meetings of Parties and COP, the subsidiary bodies and, above all, the Governments that may well be Parties to several CMS instruments. Synergies among CMS and the Europe-based Agreements and the various organizations, institutions, programmes and MEAs located in Europe, having a particular focus on European topics, would be strengthened if the CMS Secretariat had a regional officer to intensify coordination and communication with the relevant bodies.

SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS

14. Although the co-located Agreements concluded under CMS auspices are self-standing international legal instruments, they are also the primary means of implementing the goals of the parent Convention. In 1999, the CMS COP adopted a five-year Strategic Plan (2000-2005), while in the same year the AEWA MOP adopted its "International Implementation Priorities" for 2000-2004. In 2000, the ASCOBANS MOP adopted a triennial work plan for 2001-2003, while EUROBATS adopted a Management Plan with an action plan for 2000-2003. (Elsewhere, ACCOBAMS has defined its international priorities for 2002-2006, and the Wadden Sea Seal Agreement has a management plan covering the same period.)

15. Though not a direct result of co-location *per se*, CMS and AEWA, together, have been collaborating with Wetlands International in the development of the Central Asian-Indian Flyway initiative, which was the subject of a preliminary meeting organized in Uzbekistan in August 2001. Having many interests in common, the CMS and AEWA secretariats are also striving to develop joint work programmes with the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and with Wetlands International.

16. More recently, CMS' examination of the possibility of developing Agreements on bats in regions other than Europe has benefitted from consultations with the EUROBATS secretariat. Through its contacts with bat conservation organizations in other parts of the world, the Agreement secretariat has created an awareness of the potential application of CMS to other areas where regional agreements might be beneficial.

17. More generally, there has been a constructive sharing of information and expertise within the CMS family. The then interim secretariat to ACCOBAMS, though not formally integrated in the UNEP/CMS structure, drew heavily on the experience of CMS, AEWA and ASCOBANS in the organization of its first Meeting of Parties and in the preparation of the associated documentation. In a similar way, the Meetings of Parties to AEWA and other Agreements have made use of the model developed and refined by CMS over the years and have adapted it accordingly to suit their particular needs.

Opportunities

18. The fact that the same Governments are represented in many of the subsidiary bodies of the Agreements and CMS – and, indeed, in some cases the individual representatives are the same – should provide ample scope for sharing experiences and best practices among instruments. There may be scope for even more substantive collaboration between the parent Convention and the Agreements, for example, with respect to thematic issues of global concern where the Agreements could make important contributions to topics which CMS is dealing with more generally. The increasing attention being given to incidental capture of marine life in fisheries is one such example.

19. The development or further elaboration of memoranda of understanding between CMS and other MEAs, meant to foster closer programmatic linkages, should take into account the vital role of the Agreements in the implementation of CMS. For example, ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS are expected to be partners in the further definition of the collaboration outlined in the existing MoU between CMS and the International Whaling Commission. The implementation of the CMS-CBD Joint Work Programme, concluded in 2002, also requires substantial input from the Agreements.

20. As described elsewhere, notably in document UNEP/CMS/Conf. 7.6, the CMS Secretariat has been working intensively to implement the Information Management Plan adopted by COP6 (Resolution 6.5). Among other things, the Plan provides for a new reporting system that aims to simplify the provision of information, as well as subsequent synthesis and analysis. This approach is the first in a series of steps leading to a modular reporting system that will provide comprehensive information on species covered by CMS through the parent Convention and its related Agreements, with minimal duplication. Since almost all Parties to the CMS Agreements whose secretariats are co-located in Bonn are also members of the parent Convention, opportunities exist to ensure that the future evolution of national reporting methodologies are fully compatible. Co-location may also facilitate a common approach to the future use of the Global Register on Migratory Species, under discussion at COP7.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS

21. CMS is the local provider of administrative and financial services to the Agreements co-located in Bonn, supplementing the core services offered by UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi (UNON). At the request of the CMS Secretariat, UNEP is providing an Administrative/Fund Management officer financed from its overhead charges and is partially covering the costs of a Finance Assistant, both of whom have been servicing the co-located Agreement secretariats. A catalogue of the wide range of administrative and financial services made available to the Agreement secretariats is attached as Annex 1. Additionally, the Agreement secretariats benefit from CMS representation in the common United Nations administration of the premises in Bonn (the so-called “Haus Carstanjen”); in relations with the German authorities, including the time-consuming negotiations of the Headquarters Agreement; and in matters related to the future relocation of all UN agencies from the Haus Carstanjen to a new premises near to the former German parliament.

22. Each Agreement is a separate entity, with its own diversified work programme and priorities, impacting on the planning for, and delivery of, administrative and technical support in a cost-effective manner. From an administrative standpoint, the rationale for co-location is to enhance efficient use of finances and expertise, as well as sharing of information. While some of the benefits of co-location have been realised, there have also been painful experiences in the process of integration. There were bottlenecks in service delivery in the “CMS-Agreements-UNON chain” which resulted in delays in implementation. The expectations of the Agreement secretariats that the new arrangement would free them of most of their administrative tasks went beyond the possibilities of the small administrative unit in Bonn. The unit’s resources have been, and remain, insufficient to meet the increased administrative demands brought on by three new offices, including a half-dozen new staff, while dealing simultaneously with an ever expanding CMS programme of activity. Compounding these difficulties, none of the three Agreements co-located with CMS had any United Nations experience and, as such, needed to learn new systems and administrative procedures.

23. The lessons learned have resulted in several new initiatives that are already being implemented, aimed at enhancing coordination and collaboration. In the second quarter of 2002, UNEP headquarters seconded another Finance Assistant for three months to install a new integrated administrative service package, putting CMS in the forefront of other outposted offices in this regard, and to help with other immediate administrative tasks.

24. Disappointingly, the longstanding request to CMS Parties to sponsor a Junior Professional Officer to assist in project management and other essential administrative tasks remains unfulfilled. As a stop-gap measure, the CMS Secretariat has sought to secure some short-term administrative support in 2002 through internships. However, beyond streamlining administrative practices to further improve efficiency, it is clear that a permanent solution must be found to address the chronic understaffing problem in the administrative unit.

Opportunities

25. The present institutional structure of CMS and its associated Agreements, under which each Agreement is governed by an independent Meeting of Parties, is responsible for a separate programme of work, and adopts a separate budget poses challenges of administrative efficiency when each entity necessarily has to receive specialised attention. Over the much longer term, once the membership in CMS is more comprehensive, to the extent that it includes virtually all Parties to CMS Agreements, it might be possible to contemplate a more integrated framework that would obviate the need for completely separate institutional structures for each Agreement. The future prospect for such rationalisation may be seen in the context of international environmental governance initiatives on a global scale.

26. For the foreseeable future, though, the current situation is unlikely to change and it will be necessary to explore other more immediate avenues for improving efficiency. These could include, *inter alia*: taking full advantage of ongoing improvements to the administrative and financial systems so that time-consuming procedures are streamlined; maximizing opportunities for the secretariats to secure economies of scale through common procurement of goods and services; and revisiting the possibility for Parties to CMS and Agreements to pay contributions in a single subscription, rather than several smaller ones.

Conclusion

27. Overall, the experience of physical co-location has been a positive one, though not without difficulties encountered along the way. Still relatively young, there is considerable potential for the working relationship to evolve to take full advantage of the synergies within the CMS family. The existence of a Europe-based Agreement secretariat not co-located in Bonn and not administered by UNEP -- namely the ACCOBAMS secretariat in Monaco -- provides a useful comparison or "experimental control". Though not benefiting as much from the exchange of information and routine interaction that accompanies physical co-location, the ACCOBAMS secretariat has nonetheless made a visible effort to be part of the CMS family. The flow of information, in those special circumstances, poses unique challenges that, in the course of being addressed, might also benefit the offices co-located in Bonn.

Action requested:

The Conference of the Parties is invited to note the present report; to examine how best to address a number of the shortcomings identified therein, in particular the need to strengthen the administrative unit to enable it to better serve the needs of the secretariats of CMS and Agreements; and to consider other means to promote more synergy between CMS and its related Agreements and other European-based institutions, which might be facilitated by a regional officer in the CMS Secretariat charged with enhancing interagency coordination.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY CMS TO AEWA/ASCOBANS/EUROBATS

		<u>Tasks</u>
FINANCE		
Payroll	Processing and payment of salaries and entitlements.	Prepare payment vouchers for salaries of all fixed-term staff members. Issue instructions to the bank to transfer funds to the staff members' bank account. Reflect adjustments of payments when the PA is issued. Contributions are remitted to the Pension Fund as appropriate. Processing and payment of salaries and entitlements, including salary advices and reporting; journal vouchers; monthly payment orders; account reconciliation; Pension Fund and Medical insurance premiums and reporting; preparation of United States Tax statements and salary attestations.
General Payments	All payments related to day-to-day operation of the office.	Process the payment vouchers and issue instructions to the bank after receipt payment request. Vouch all the details related to the payment for validity of the details and to avoid any double payments. Processing of travel claims (appointment/transfers/separations); payment vouchers; imprest account processing and replenishment; Travel advance payments; advance payment against MOUs.
Accounts	General accounting and finance functions related to all the office business events..	Daily processing of all transactions in the system. Record sub-allotments/revisions. Review the expenditures incurred against the budget allocation for all the projects and use such statistics to prepare budget revisions and quarterly for submission to UNON/BFMS in consultation with the Agreement Secretariats. Reconciliation of imprest accounts. Provide support and advice on all issues related to finance. Follow-up financial reports for externally executed projects for onward transmission to UNON/BFMS. Maintenance of accounts; accounting transactions processing (allotments, obligations, expenditures); monthly accounting reports; inter-office vouchers; administering trust funds; contributions recording and preparation of financial statements "provide advice on this matter upon request"
Treasury	Finance functions related to handling of funds to support the day- to-day running of the office and funds from the donors.	Request for replenishment of the imprest cash or adjustment of Monthly standing order of replenishments. Issuance of receipts and sending copies back to the sender. Deposit contributions and invest funds as appropriate. Replies to queries on contributions and treasury issues. Queries to BFMS on contributions received but not reflected in the statements. Advice and support on all treasury issues. Issue bank instructions for disbursement of funds from the bank. Preparation of Bank reconciliation statements. Payments/issuance of receipts; investments; deposit creation/approval; and monthly reports, donor reports.
BUDGET		
	Issuance of allotment advices against the programme support account	In consultation with UNON/BFMS make the statements of the status of the program support account.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY CMS TO AEWA/ASCOBANS/EUROBATS

		<u>Tasks</u>
MEDICAL INSURANCE		
	Membership registration; claims processing; life insurance	Issue the necessary PA and forward registration to the Medical and Life Insurance Companies. Review the medical forms to make sure that the necessary details are provided. Support and advice the S/Ms on the medical insurance and claims.
GENERAL SERVICES		
Travel	Laissez-passer; family and other certificates; ID Protocol Cards (German Foreign Office) for staff members and family members; Registration of private vehicles (German Foreign Office)	Review all applications to make sure that all the details are provided and to avoid any delays in processing. Submit application to UNON for Laissez-passer. Follow-up any delayed processing of the Laissez-passer or any urgent requests. Submit application forms to German Foreign Office for ID protocol Cards + Registration of Vehicles
Procurement	Committee on Contracts	Invitation for bids and quotations, Compiling a case file for consideration by the Committee. Reviewing all the bids and providing the necessary financial statistics for use by the committee. Submit case involving procurement over USD150,000 and making follow-up of such cases with the relevant officers involved. Ensure that the procurements are made within the existing rules and regulations.
	Local Property Survey Board	Prepare and review detailed list of the disposals. Make the necessary requests and Coordinate the approval of disposal of property with the LPSB. Ensure that disposals are done within the existing rules and regulations. Process disposal of equipment after approval of the LPSB.
Purchase	Purchase of Goods and Services	Review all requests for purchases and issue requests for quotations. Review all quotations and make the necessary report for the choice of the vendor. Issue the purchase orders to the vendors. Maintain database of the vendors for future purchases. Review the goods received against the requirements. Make the necessary payments to the vendors. Ensure that the rules and regulations on the purchases of goods and services are applied in all circumstances. Process requests for reimbursement of VAT/sales tax from the Government
Inventory	Bi-annual and Annual Inventory of Non-Expendable Equipment	Conduct annual and bi-annual inventory of non-expendable equipment in June and December. Maintain the inventory database. Make sure that the necessary depreciation is applied to the inventory items. Submit inventory listings to UNON. Assign inventory codes/numbers to all the items.
Pouch	Sorting and dispatching in-coming and out-going diplomatic items	Sorting and dispatching in-coming and out-going documents. Make sure that the Trans-shipment items are sent on the first available pouch after receipt. Follow-up any cases of lost or destroyed pouch. Advice and support to all issues related to pouch.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY CMS TO AEW/ASCOBANS/EUROBATS

		<u>Tasks</u>
Regular Mail	Sorting and dispatching in-coming and out-going items	Sorting and dispatching in-coming and out-going documents daily basis. Follow-up any queries related to regular mail.
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE		
JAB/JDC/Compensation claims	Services in support of review of appeals and claims by appropriate bodies.	Ensure that the necessary rules and regulations are applied in support of review of appeals and claims by appropriate bodies. Follow-up any pending cases.
IMIS		
	Status of Allotment reports to facilitate monitoring of financial performance and for the use in the budget revisions	Provide the status of allotment reports including all the transactions that are processed through the imprest reports and outside the imprest reports by UNON/BFMS. Review the status of allotment reports received from UNON and compare the reports with the existing finance records. Provide advice and explanations related to status of allotment reports. Issue any request for adjustments to UNON/BFMS.
IABS		
	Run and maintain the system in processing the day to day work.	Daily tracking of all transactions related to all Agreements. This includes all the obligations raised and payments made. Ensure compliance with the new UNON obligations and imprest procedures. Production of all the necessary financial documents from the system. Production of obligation reports and monthly imprest reports for reporting to UNON. IABS being an online system will be used to produce status of project financial performance for all transactions done in-house. Liase with UNON/SSU for any adjustments required in the system.
HRMS		
Recruitment of GS, P on fixed term contracts (regular + limited duration)	Process recruitment at duty station and coordinate recruitment at UNON.	Review all requests for recruitment to ensure adherence to procedures. Review all the applications from the candidates and make the necessary matrices. Make the necessary arrangements for the interviews and conduct the interviews of the candidates. Ensure that the necessary rules and regulations are applied in the recruitments of GS and P staff members.
Recruitment of Consultants	Process recruitment at duty station and coordinate recruitment with UNON where appropriate.	Review all requests for recruitments to ensure adherence to procedures. Review all the applications from the candidates and make the necessary matrices. Make the necessary arrangements for the interviews and conduct the interviews of the candidates.
Recruitment of Individual Contractors	Process recruitment at duty station and coordinate recruitment with UNON where appropriate.	"
Recruitment of Interns	Process recruitment at duty station and coordinate recruitment with UNON where appropriate.	"
Payment of assignment grants	Process assignment grant on initial appointment.	Process assignment grant on initial appointment upon confirmation from HRMS/UNON that medical clearance was received and offer accepted. Make all the follow-up arrangements in case of staff members difficulties on initial appointment.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY CMS TO AEWA/ASCOBANS/EUROBATS

		<u>Tasks</u>
Salary Advance upon appointment	Process salary advance on initial appointment.	Process salary advance on initial appointment upon confirmation from HRMS/UNON that medical clearance was received and offer accepted. Issue letters of introduction to the relevant authorities in cases of need.
Travel upon recruitment	Travel arrangements on initial appointment.	Process travel arrangements on initial appointment and on confirmation that the medical clearance was received and offer accepted. Issue letters of introduction to facilitate the travel of the staff member and the dependants.
Education Grant Travel	Process education grant travel upon confirmation from HRMS/UNON that entitlement exists	Ensure that education grant is paid when due. Make the necessary follow-up with UNON on behalf of staff members in cases where the education grant is not paid to the staff members.
Home Leave Travel	Process home leave travel upon confirmation from HRMS/UNON that entitlement exists	Make the necessary arrangements to ensure that staff members get their entitlements when due. Support, advice and follow-up in cases where the staff members don't receive their entitlements in time.
Leave	Leave plans and the time and attendance reports for all staff.	Maintain and update weekly leave plans and the time and attendance reports for all staff