

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON
ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY**

The Seventh Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC7) held in September 2024, decided to re-establish a Working Group on Ecological Connectivity under the Scientific Council, with the aim of enhancing the scientific understanding of connectivity issues, providing advice on these in relation to migratory species. The ScC-SC8 (December 2025) amended paragraph 5. Duration.

1. Background

Connectivity is a key word of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the only global legal instrument devoted to the conservation of migratory animals.

Recently, increasing attention and importance are being given to the role that connectivity plays in nature conservation, and in the face of both the ongoing biodiversity crisis and escalating climate-driven ecological catastrophes, the role it plays in the protection and retention of ecological integrity. The need to maintain and enhance ecological connectivity has been recognized by many international processes, such as the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, which adopted Resolution 75/271 Nature knows no borders: transboundary cooperation – a key factor for biodiversity conservation, restoration and sustainable use, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The Fourteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CMS (COP14) adopted Resolution 14.16 Ecological Connectivity and Decisions 14.194 -14.196 on ecological connectivity.

2. Purpose

The primary objective of the Working Group is to support the delivery of relevant tasks contained in the Programme of Work of the Sessional Committee (POW).

In addition, the Working Group will support the implementation of relevant Resolutions and Decisions directed to the Scientific Council.

The Working Group will support the implementation of connectivity-related goals and targets of the Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2024-2032, including their contribution to connectivity-related goals and targets to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the further development of its monitoring framework.

The Working Group will provide a platform to discuss and exchange information and scientific findings on ecological connectivity-related matters also with a view to further developing the CMS Thematic Webpage on Connectivity.

A workplan detailing specific activities will be developed for each intersessional period.

3. Membership

- A. Membership of the Working Group can include both members of the Scientific Council and observers.
- B. The Working Group strives to maintain a balance of gender, regional representation and taxonomic categories of expertise.
- C. If and when needed, experts external to the Working Group and interested in contributing to the objectives of the Working Group may occasionally be invited to join meetings or to support specific tasks.

4. Organization of work

The Working Group will be chaired by the COP-Appointed Councilor for Connectivity. If the Chair has to leave her/his position, a new Chair will be appointed from among the remaining Sessional Committee / Scientific Council members of the Working Group.

The Working Group will mainly operate electronically by communicating via email and possibly making use of a dedicated workspace or virtual meetings. In-person meetings may be held in the margins of Sessional Committee meetings.

The Chair of the Working Group will report on progress to the Sessional Committee.

The CMS Secretariat will support and facilitate the coordination of the activities and the organization of meetings of the Working Group.

5. Duration

The Working Group will remain in place until the Sessional Committee decides its work is completed, or an alternative arrangement is made.