



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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SECOND MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING
CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE
USE OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*)
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 7-10 September 2010
Agenda Item 10.3

MOU COORDINATION

(Note prepared by the CMS Secretariat)

1. The CMS Secretariat acts as the Secretariat to the great majority of the 18 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) developed under CMS auspices. With the exception of three MoUs (Marine Turtles of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia, Dugongs, African Eurasian Birds of Prey), for which secretariat functions are undertaken by out-posted CMS offices in Bangkok and Abu Dhabi, secretariat services to MoUs are provided by the CMS Secretariat headquarters in Bonn, at no cost to the MoU signatories. The CMS Secretariat acts as Secretariat for the Saiga Antelope MoU pursuant to MoU paragraph 11.
2. As the number of MoUs has grown, the CMS Secretariat has increasingly sought to partner with collaborating organisations to support it in organising Range State meetings and provide technically-oriented documentation and advice. In contrast to today, in previous times this had been typically funded from the appropriate dedicated meeting budget line under past CMS regular budgets.
3. Furthermore, in order to better ensure that the MoUs and their accompanying action plans are effectively implemented, the CMS Secretariat has been developing the theory and practice of outsourced “MoU coordinators” with many of the same collaborating partner organisations. This is in line with CMS Conference of the Parties Resolutions 7.7, 8.5 and 9.2, which encourage the Secretariat to continue exploring partnerships with interested organisations specialised in the conservation and management of migratory species for the provision of coordination services for selected MoUs.
4. Outsourced “MoU coordinators” act in a purely technical capacity. The CMS Secretariat maintains official contact with the Range States and other relevant institutions. Coordinators, at least in part, are foreseen to catalyze project development and funding under an MoU’s action plan, support the preparation of regular meetings of the Range States, and undertake range-wide communication efforts to raise awareness and share information.
5. To date coordinators have been established for the Siberian Crane, Great Bustard, Aquatic Warbler and West African Elephant MoUs, as outlined in the following sections. The Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator was the first to be established and has been funded by the International Crane Foundation (ICF) and CMS. Funding has been available until June 2010. CMS and ICF are currently fundraising with a view to securing financial resources to extend the arrangement.

6. BirdLife International has provided coordination functions for the Great Bustard MoU with funding from the Austrian Government between 2005 until 2008. An offer of the Ministry of Environment of Hungary to provide in-kind assistance for the coordination of the MoU is currently under consideration.

7. Coordination functions for the Aquatic Warbler MoU were established in collaboration with BirdLife International and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). The BirdLife Belarus Partner APB hosts the coordinator in collaboration with the Government of Belarus. At its own initiative, RSPB secured funding from the Michael Otto Foundation in Germany for the triennium 2004-2006. The same position has been co-funded by CMS and RSPB between 2007 and March 2010. At present, the staff member is still employed courtesy of RSPB's agreement to continue funding 50% of the costs of this position. The other 50% is currently not covered.

8. Coordination functions of the West African Elephant MoU have been provided by IUCN/SSC/African Elephant Specialist Group between 2006 and 2008 under a Letter of Agreement between CMS and IUCN. The arrangement has been discontinued after 2008 because of lack of funding. Fund-raising is currently being undertaken with a view to re-establishing coordination functions.

9. The experience of MoU coordination summarized above illustrates that, where it has been possible to establish them, coordination mechanisms have generally significantly contributed to the implementation of MoUs and their associated Action Plans. Outsourcing the coordination of MoUs has however not been without difficulties. It has been particularly challenging to ensure the continuity of funding. MoU coordination has been financially supported on a case-by-case basis by voluntary contributions from MoU Range States or other donors, as well as savings on the regular CMS budget. The absence of a dedicated MoU budget line in the CMS budget makes long-term planning difficult. This situation is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

10. Arrangements that have shown the greatest degree of stability have been those involving non-governmental organizations partially covering the costs of personnel involved in coordination functions either through their own core budget or dedicated fundraising. The association of MoU coordination functions with relevant large scale conservation projects has also allowed taking advantage of significant financial and technical resources over relatively extended periods of time.

11. At the First Meeting of the Signatories to the Saiga MoU (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 2006), the possibility of outsourcing several aspects of MoU coordination to a collaborating organization was discussed. The meeting took note of this possibility and invited the Secretariat to explore potential opportunities. Attempts of the UNEP/CMS Secretariat to raise funds to support coordination functions have been unsuccessful so far.

12. In the view of the Secretariat, despite the difficulties in maintaining MoU coordination, the establishment of such a mechanism remains a successful initiative overall. The Secretariat would therefore recommend continuing to explore opportunities to establish coordinating arrangements within the context of the Saiga MoU. If the MoU Signatories accept the concept of a coordinator it would be appropriate to appeal to Saiga Range States, other countries, interested organisations and other donors to consider making a financial or in-kind contribution.

13. The attributes that an organisation providing MoU coordination is envisaged to have include *inter alia*: (1) a long term interest in the particular species; (2) a demonstrated commitment towards the MoU; (3) a regional presence or influence, including good relations with Range States and national level NGOs in the agreement area; (4) a demonstrated ability to fundraise and successfully implement projects; and (5) the ability to make financial or in-kind contributions towards the coordinator's position. The organisation could be intergovernmental, governmental or non-governmental.

14. Generic Terms of Reference, which could be used by collaborating organizations as a reference to determine their interest in proposing themselves for coordination functions, are attached to this note as Annex 1.

Action requested:

The Signatories, and as appropriate other meeting participants, are invited to:

- (a) Consider MoU coordination for the Saiga MoU and determine what options are most desirable for the MoU's effective implementation and which the Secretariat should therefore pursue.
- (b) Consider the financial aspects of MoU coordination and provide guidance on possible options for financing and other support, including appealing for additional voluntary in-kind and financial contributions.
- (c) Consider to host and/or fund MoU coordination.

Generic Terms of Reference for the Coordination of CMS Memorandums of Understanding on the conservation of species

FUNCTIONS (depending on availability of resources)

1. The main functions of an organization providing MoU coordination services are:

Secretariat services

- a) Assist UNEP/CMS in providing the secretariat services assigned to it under the MoU, in particular:
 - i. Convene and service Meetings of the Signatories;
 - ii. Provide secretariat services to committees or working groups established under the MoU;

Coordination of activities

Implementation and associated projects

- b) Guide and facilitate collaborative efforts for the implementation of the MoU through the Signatory States, sub-regional bodies, intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organisations, other UNEP secretariats and other interested parties;
- c) Support the development of relevant national and international [species] conservation-related projects;
- d) Formulate and give effect to proposals to improve the implementation of the MoU;

Funding

- e) Identify and negotiate potential external funding from Governments, environmental and development aid agencies, foundations and other sources;
- f) Review project proposals and facilitate contact between relevant institutions and the donor community;

Support in the development and implementation of national strategies

- g) Help to develop national strategies in countries and to coordinate them with other countries' national strategies;

- h) Provide assistance, including helping strengthen capacity, to implement existing national conservation strategies and action plans as and when requested and required;
- i) Support the development of local capacity by identifying capacity needs and assisting those involved to seek resources;

Collaboration with other organizations

- j) Catalyse and support the development by other organisations of project activities that serve to further the aims of the MoU.

Reporting

- k) Monitor the implementation of the MoU and distribute the information regularly to all MoU stakeholders;
- l) Prepare reports on the work of the MoU secretariat as provided in this Agreement;
- m) Assist Range States in preparing regular national reports on progress regarding the implementation of the MoU and Action Plan;

Exchange of information

- n) Facilitate the rapid exchange of scientific, technical and legal information necessary to coordinate conservation measures between the National Contact Points, and in particular develop a mechanism for the efficient sharing of [species] monitoring data;
- o) Ensure the appropriate compilation and distribution of information materials prepared by Governments and other organisations, in order to maximize the benefits of experience-sharing;
- p) Maintain the MoU webpage, if available;

Promotion of the MoU/Strategy

- q) Promote the MoU and the Strategy regionally and internationally;
- r) Represent the MoU at international, regional and national meetings in order to promote its objectives in wider fora;
- s) Undertake public awareness-raising through the media, both regionally and internationally;
- t) Provide content for the Convention's webpage on the MoU/Strategy (summarizing important meetings or activities supporting the MoU's/Strategy's implementation, etc.).