

8th Meeting of the CMS Energy Task Force

16-17 September 2025, Online

ETF8/Doc.2

JOINT REPORT OF CMS SECRETARIAT AND ETF COORDINATOR ON ACTIVITIES OF THE ETF



Introduction

1. This document provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the CMS Secretariat and the Coordinator of the Energy Task Force (ETF) since the Seventh Meeting of the ETF (ETF7), held in Madrid, Spain on 24 – 26 April 2024.

Membership of the Energy Task Force

2. As of September 2025, 20 CMS Contracting Parties are Members of the ETF, with representatives from the environment, energy and development-related ministries and authorities. In addition, the membership comprises three international development government agencies, the secretariats of seven multilateral environmental agreements, and a further 14 international organizations and institutions, including intergovernmental organizations and networks, development banks and non-governmental organizations. A further 27 national and international organizations and associations are Observers of the ETF. The full list can be found here: <https://www.cms.int/en/taskforce/energy-taskforce>.

Institutional update

3. The Avian Species Team of the CMS Secretariat is the secretariat lead for ETF matters. Based on a project cooperation agreement with the CMS Secretariat, BirdLife International is the implementing partner providing the coordination of the ETF.
4. The ETF has been promoting linkages with the CMS Parties and other relevant UN agencies and international organizations and institutions such as the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and related gatherings including the 29th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC (COP29), and side events organized at the 2025 Bonn Climate Conference (62nd session of the Subsidiary Bodies). It has also continued supporting the implementation of the contractual arrangement with BirdLife International for the coordination of the ETF, made possible thanks to the voluntary contributions from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India, from the French Office for Biodiversity (OFB) and Ministry of Ecological Transition of France, from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN) Germany, from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) Australia, from the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITECO) of Spain and the European Commission.

Highlights

5. Events

Organized by ETF:

- a) **CMS ETF, BirdLife International and Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI)** organized a webinar on '[Bird's eye View – Ornithology for a nature-friendly energy transition](#)' in June 2024.
- b) **CMS ETF and BirdLife International** organized a webinar with the UNFCCC Paris Committee on Capacity-building (PCCB) Network on '[Energy Transition for Synergistic Climate-Nature Policy and Implementation](#)' in April 2025. Speakers include ETF members from the Government of Brazil, Convention on Biological

Diversity, and Asian Development Bank, as well as representatives of Iberdrola, Malawi and Burkina Faso.

- c) **CMS ETF** organized a well-attended multistakeholder dialogue on '[Nature Positive Energy Transition – Diving Synergies from Policy to Implementation](#)' during UNFCCC SB62 in June 2025, with fruitful discussions among governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-state actors.
- d) At the time of this report, various events were being organized where the ETF will be showcased in the remaining of 2025, including the Conference on Wind and Wildlife 2025, World Coastal Forum, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress, the [East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership](#) 12th Meeting of Partners ([MOP12](#)), and the UNFCCC COP30.

Organized by ETF members:

- a) ETF members participated in and presented at various key events, including but not limited to **CBD COP16, UNFCCC COP29, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) Assembly 2025**
- b) **CleanAction – IRENA** webinar on Renewable Energy Project Siting and Nature (<https://www.irena.org/Events/2024/Oct/Renewable-Energy-Project-Siting-and-Nature>) in October 2024. Speakers included ETF members Tris Allinson (BirdLife International) and Ute Collier (IRENA)
- c) **Wingspan 2024 – Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI)** organized the first edition of [Wingspan Conference](#) in Brussels, Belgium, within the framework of the SafeLines4Birds, LIFE EUOKITE and LIFE Great Bustards projects, which had participation from various ETF members like RGI, IUCN, BirdLife International, Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS), etc.
- d) **CMS AEWA** webinar on 'Predation Management and Renewable Energy Infrastructure – Issues for Black – Tailed Godwit and Eurasian Curlew (<https://www.facebook.com/unep.aewa/posts/-happening-next-week-webinar-on-black-tailed-godwit-and-urasian-curlewthe-black/1376429940364620/>)' in November 2024. Manoswini Sarkar (BirdLife International) spoke on 'Mitigating the Impacts of RE Development through Multistakeholder Engagement (ETF)'.
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- e) **Nature Action Dialogues** by UNEP WCMC in Cambridge in March 2025 – Session on Nature Positive by BirdLife International
- f) **IUCN** Webinar on Renewable industry's role in achieving nature goals (<https://iucn.org/story/202502/iucn-webinars-will-present-new-guidance-renewable-industrys-role-achieving-nature>) in March 2025. Speakers included Tris Allinson (BirdLife International)
- g) The World Wildlife Fund-Pakistan hosted the First Workshop on the Development of a Multi-species Action Plan for Bustards (BustardMsAP). This meeting was attended by CMS Secretariat, the Government of Hungary, the IUCN SSC Bustard Specialist Group and the Endangered Wildlife Trust (South Africa).
- h) **International Finance Corporation (IFC) and BirdLife South Africa events:** The IFC, together with BirdLife Africa and the Endangered Wildlife Trust, hosted a two-day technical workshop in Cape Town to help develop and inform guidance on turbine shutdown on demand and species-specific offsets for birds. A total of 150 attendants participated, with 40% coming from the South African wind developer community.

- i) **GREPOM/BirdLife Morocco Webinar:** GREPOM/BirdLife Morocco and RGI held an online workshop on 30 May 2024, bringing together key Moroccan stakeholders to share knowledge on the status of bird electrocution in Morocco, technical solutions for mitigation, sensitivity mapping, and examples of successful collaborations between conservation organizations and power grid operators.

6. Publications by ETF members (non-exhaustive)

BirdLife International

- a) [Tracking data highlight the importance of human-induced mortality for large migratory birds at a flyway scale](#)

EUROBATS

- a) [Toward solving the global green–green dilemma between wind energy production and bat conservation](#)

Bat Conservation International

- a) [North American Society for Bat Research \(NASBR\) Statement on Wind Energy Impacts on Bat Populations](#)
- b) [Ultrasonic Acoustic Deterrents May Increase the Fatalities of Bats at Wind Facilities](#)

IUCN

- [Spatial planning for wind and solar developments and associated infrastructure,](#)
- a) [Opportunities for enhancing biodiversity at wind and solar energy developments](#)
- b) [Biodiversity and responsible sourcing for wind and solar developments](#)

BirdLife Europe and Central Asia

- a) [A Renewable Energy That Renews Nature: BirdLife Europe’s recommendations on how to align the EU’s renewable energy expansion with biodiversity goals](#)
- b) [Making Nature Count in Offshore Wind Auctions: The Use of Non-Price Criteria to support Bird Conservation](#)
- c) [Letter to European Commissioner](#)

Renewable Grids Initiative

- a) [Best Guide Practice on Integrated Vegetation Management \(IVM\) in Europe](#)
- b) [Avian-Power Line Collision: Overview of Risk Factors and Effectiveness of Mitigation Measures](#)

Offshore Coalition for Energy and Nature

- a) [Avoidance and Minimisation of Environmental Impacts from Offshore Wind and Grid Infrastructure](#)
- b) [Achieving nature- and people-friendly offshore wind and grids: A call to address outstanding challenges](#)
- c) [Infographic: Avoiding and Minimising Environmental Impacts From Offshore Wind and Grid Infrastructure](#)
- d) [Nature Inclusive Design: Options for Offshore Wind Farms and Grid Infrastructure](#)
- e) [Natuur & Milieu Summary Paper: Conditions for nature friendly and circular decommissioning](#)
- f) [Natuur & Milieu Summary Paper: Towards sustainable decommissioning – The importance of lifespan extension and standardisation](#)

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

- a) [Ambitious onshore renewable energy deployment does not exacerbate future UK land-use challenges](#)

BirdLife South Africa

- a) [Shutdown on Demand for the mitigation of bird collision risk at onshore wind farms in South Africa](#)
- b) [Summary of Bird Monitoring Reports from Operational Wind Energy Facilities in South Africa](#)
- c) [Blade Patterning Guidelines](#)

7. Projects

- a) The Government of Australia, via its Department of Climate Change, Energy and the Environment (DCCEEW), provided in 2025 a voluntary contribution aimed to support some of the strategic priorities of the ETF. Through the Renewable Environmental Research Initiative (RERI), it aims to address critical information gaps relating to the regulation of renewable energy developments under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Planning Act 1999 (The EPBC Act). Under this, through a contractual arrangement with BirdLife International, two projects have been commissioned: a) **'Review of international environmental regulatory frameworks for onshore wind energy for consideration in the Australian context'**, and b) **'Update of the National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife to include specific guidance around marine mammals'**.
- b) **Rollout of AVISTEP in four new countries:** BirdLife International has launched [AVISTEP](#) (Avian Sensitivity Tool for Energy Planning) in four new countries: Egypt, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Uzbekistan, with more country mapping under development. As these countries experience rapidly expanding energy infrastructure, AVISTEP provides a critical tool to ensure that this growth doesn't come at the expense of populations of potentially sensitive bird species. Already in use in India, Nepal, Thailand and Vietnam since 2022, this open-access tool helps developers and regulators identify areas where renewable energy infrastructure could impact birds. Equipped with this information, they can then ensure that facilities are developed in the most appropriate locations. Further, in Egypt, an awareness campaign about AVISTEP was organized, along with an educational workshop announcing the official launch of the tool in Egypt.
- c) **SEO/BirdLife in Spain:** SEO/BirdLife has developed detailed maps to guide responsible renewable energy planning in Spain (including the Canary Islands). These maps highlight sensitive bird habitats and key conservation areas like IBAs, Biosphere Reserves, and Natura 2000 sites. Tailored for wind and solar projects, they support stakeholders in the energy sector—especially public authorities—in updating planning tools, identifying Renewable Acceleration Areas under REDIII, and informing Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs). The resulting maps and additional information on responsible renewable energy development are accessible online and available for download [here](#).
- d) **China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation (CBCGDF):** Since September 2021, CBCGDF and the State Grid Public Welfare Foundation have led the "Migratory Bird Lifeline" project to protect rare birds near power transmission lines. Key species include the Oriental White Stork (*Ciconia boyciana*) and the Crested Ibis (*Nipponia nippon*). The project maps bird distribution, analyzes patterns linked to avian activity, and promotes awareness through education and training. It builds a collaborative alliance across six pillars: multi-party networking,

scientific research, technological innovation, policy advocacy, patrol and rescue, and puBirdLife Internationalc education—advancing the shared mission of safeguarding both birds and power lines.

8. **Newsletter:** Since ETF7, three newsletters have been published: [July 2024](#), [December 2024](#) and [July 2025](#).

Working group updates

9. At [ETF7](#), several members and observers of the ETF volunteered to create working groups and several others volunteered to join. These included:
- a. Guidance on creation of a mortality database, under the Technical Working Group, chaired by Mr. Tris Allinson (BirdLife International)
 - b. Private Sector Engagement, chaired by Ms. Alicia De La Cruz-Novoy (US International Development Finance Corporation – DFC)
 - c. Marine species, supported by Ms. Jenny Rennel (Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas – ASCOBANS)
 - d. Mitigating impacts on bats, chaired by Ms. Winifred Frick (Bat Conservation International)
 - e. Future Programme of Work, chaired by Ms. Manoswini Sarkar (BirdLife International)

Each of the Working Groups agreed on Terms of Reference for their respective groups in their preliminary meetings. The updates from the Working Groups are as follows:

a. **Guidance on creation of a mortality database**

This working group was created under the Technical Working Group and is being led by Mr. Alinson (BirdLife International). Workshops were convened to examine the purpose and design of a potential global database of post-construction fatality monitoring data from energy infrastructure projects. Key questions included whether such a database should be a simple repository or incorporate analytical tools, which taxa and infrastructure types should be covered, what sources of data should be included, what similar initiatives already exist, and who could host and fund the effort.

There was consensus that a global database would be highly beneficial for understanding impacts, identifying mortality hotspots, and generating solutions such as sensitivity maps. With data collection increasingly mandated by lenders and carried out by developers and grid operators, the TWG emphasized the importance of maximizing its use. However, it was recognized that some developers remain reluctant to share data, and the ETF could play a valuable role in promoting openness and transparency. The database should be flexible enough to accommodate a range of data types, from systematic surveys to ad hoc citizen science records, and ideally linked to analytical tools rather than acting solely as a static repository. Despite wide agreement on the value of such a resource, there was limited appetite among ETF members to host or fund it.

Two relevant initiatives were identified: the [American Wind Wildlife Information Center \(AWWIC\)](#) and [RISKY](#), a European platform that aligns closely with TWG priorities. RISKY integrates and mobilizes open-access wildlife mortality data, develops analytical and predictive tools, and fosters transparency through collaboration with researchers, industry, and citizen scientists. The TWG believes that ETF endorsement of RISKY could be mutually

beneficial, helping secure its long-term sustainability while ensuring that global data on energy infrastructure impacts is effectively harnessed to protect migratory species. This will be reviewed at ETF8 (see [ETF8/Doc.6](#)).

b. Private Sector Engagement

The Private Sector Engagement working group is chaired by Ms. De La Cruz-Novey (US DFC). The working group is developing a strategic approach to engage renewable energy companies in mitigating biodiversity risks. Energy developers, manufacturers, grid and plant operators, and maintenance firms are key partners in addressing the climate–biodiversity nexus and protecting migratory species.

The group has drafted a Private Sector Engagement Strategy to introduce the ETF and CMS to industry stakeholders. Guided by the UNEP Strategy for Private Sector Engagement, it defines engagement scope, prioritization criteria, and a two-phase implementation plan — starting with a pilot and expanding outreach. The Strategy will be reviewed at ETF8 (see [ETF8/Doc.3](#)), with current efforts already involving several industry coalitions and plans for broader collaboration.

c. Marine Species

The Marine Species working group is being led by Ms. Rennel (CMS and ASCOBANS Secretariat). To date, two meetings have been held. Given limited capacity and expertise among existing ETF members and observers, calls for potential new members to join this group were sent, and currently, a process of nominating organizations as observers to the ETF is ongoing and the working group aims to identify the chair soon.

d. Mitigating impacts on bats

The mitigating impacts on bats working group is being led by Ms. Frick (Bat Conservation International). The working group has advanced a motion to the IUCN recognizing the conservation challenge of bat fatalities at wind energy facilities and promoting viable solutions. Submitted in January 2025 with broad co-sponsorship, the motion was accepted without revision and will be voted on at the IUCN World Conservation Congress this fall. If adopted, it will raise global awareness and reinforce the issue as a conservation priority. The report from the working group can be found in [ETF8/Doc.4](#).

e. Future Programme of Work

The Future Programme of Work working group is being chaired by Ms. Sarkar (BirdLife International), to develop the ETF Workplan for 2025–2032. In December 2024, members met to discuss the strategic approach. Two options were considered: creating a new theory of change or maintaining the current workplan structure. The group agreed to retain the existing structure. Mr. Mark Carey (Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Australia) volunteered to serve as Vice-Chair of the group.

Over the subsequent months, the group developed the draft for the new workplan, drawing from various sources such as the [ETF Work Plan 2021 - 2024](#), [CMS COP14 Decisions](#) (directed to the ETF), [CMS Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2024 - 2032](#), [ETF7 Workplan Progress](#), [Priorities identified during ETF7](#), [Recommended research priorities from the Technical Work Group](#) and priorities identified from a survey undertaken in 2024. In February 2025, a meeting was convened with the working group again to gather their feedback on the workplan draft.

Following no substantial changes, two workshops were held in March 2025 with the entire ETF membership to gather their inputs on the draft. Some valuable feedback was received from both ETF Members and Observers in both workshops. The draft was then kept open for an additional two weeks to receive further comments. Additionally, internal consultations were conducted with relevant BirdLife staff, and dedicated meetings with ETF members, like RGI, was held to discuss how they could contribute to specific activities in the new workplan over the coming years. The updated Workplan 2025-2032 will be discussed at ETF8 (see [ETF8/Doc.7](#))

Funding updates

10. The ETF continues to deliver on its workplan made possible thanks to the voluntary contributions from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India, from the French Office for Biodiversity (OFB) and Ministry of Ecological Transition of France, from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN) Germany, from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) Australia, from the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITECO) of Spain and the European Commission. The CMS Secretariat and BirdLife International are also currently preparing a new European Union funding proposal under the Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) programme.
11. The ETF launched the **Small Grants Fund** at ETF7, to provide grants to ETF members and observers to support and promote the implementation of the goals of the ETF Workplan.

Bat Conservation International was awarded the first grant to assess, document, and inform global perspectives on how wind energy impacts migratory bats. The objective was to compile information to produce two fact sheets for the ETF website, which will be available in multiple languages:

- a) The factsheet “The Ecology and Conservation of Migratory Bats Fact Sheet” focuses on migratory bat ecology, which differs from other migratory mammals in terms of population dynamics, behavior, phenology, conservation concerns, and ease of monitoring. These factors also vary for bats, taxonomically and geographically, and understanding the differences is crucial for accurate guidance about how to best protect them.
- b) A second fact sheet, entitled “Bats and Wind Energy Development Fact Sheet” describes the impact of wind energy development on bats, addressing the types of bats most at risk, the history of understanding this threat and attempts to mitigate it, the current status of research on how to reduce risk to bats, and ongoing challenges to avoiding bat fatalities at wind farms. This fact sheet incorporated input from our virtual workshops, allowing to report globally relevant and up-to-date information.

These fact sheets have been prepared and ready for circulation and will be available soon. For the remaining time duration of the project for the rest of 2025, the focus will be on finalizing translations of the fact sheets, planning a webinar on mitigating renewable energy on bats, and continuing meetings of the Bat Mitigation Working Group. The Working Group aims to incorporate regional experts who contributed to the virtual workshop into webinar planning. The progress report from the Small Grant Fund can be found in [ETF8/Doc.5](#).

Discussion Questions

- 1) Given the priorities outlined by each of the ETF Working Groups, are there any specific requests to the ETF membership that need plenary discussion?
- 2) Are there any concrete recommendations from ETF and its Working Groups that could be written as draft Decisions at COP15?
- 3) Given the ETF's growing, how can we strengthen coordination and ensure all members' expertise and regional perspectives are effectively utilized?
- 4) With several active working groups (e.g. bats, private sector, mortality database, future programme of work), what mechanisms can we put in place to ensure synergies between them and avoid duplication, while also maintaining momentum for those with limited capacity (e.g. marine species)?
- 5) Considering the reliance on voluntary contributions and the new EU funding proposal under development, what strategies can ETF adopt to diversify and stabilize funding to ensure continuity of coordination, research, and member-driven initiatives?