



**Joint Meeting of the Bern Convention Network of Special Focal Points on Eradication of Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds and the CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean**

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**DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE MID-TERM ASSESSMENT OF ROME STRATEGIC PLAN**

*(Prepared by the CMS and Bern Convention Secretariats)*

*(As at 24 April 2025)*

Summary:

The Rome Strategic Plan 2020-2030 arrives at the mid-point of its implementation in 2025. This paper introduces the provisions in the Rome Strategic Plan regarding assessments and discusses options for conducting the mid-term assessment.



The European Union was recognized as Champion Plus for their generous support and commitment towards addressing Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean for the period 2015 - 2028.



## DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE MID-TERM ASSESSMENT OF ROME STRATEGIC PLAN

### 1. Introduction to the Rome Strategic Plan

The [Rome Strategic Plan 2020-2030: Eradicating Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade in Wild Birds in Europe and the Mediterranean region](#) is the strategic framework for the work of the CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT) and the Bern Convention Special Focal Points (SFPs) on Eradication of Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds, from 2020-2030.

The Rome Strategic Plan (RSP) was developed during a Joint Meeting of the Bern Convention SFPs and CMS MIKT in May 2019 in Rome, and was adopted by the Bern Convention during the 39<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee in December 2019, and by MIKT members during online consultation the first half of 2020.

The MIKT members have also adopted an ambitious work programme for the period 2021-2025, through online consultation following the MIKT meeting in June 2021. The Programme of Work is fully aligned with the RSP.

The overarching long-term goal of the Rome Strategic Plan is the eradication of IKB within the geographic scope of the Bern Convention and MIKT. The goal of the Rome Strategic Plan for 2030 is a 50% reduction of the scale and scope of IKB compared to a 2020 baseline.

The Rome Strategic Plan is structured around one process-oriented objective and five result-oriented objectives, which are:

Process Oriented objective: National IKB Action Plans

Result Oriented Objectives:

- No. 1: To understand **the scope, scale and motivations** behind illegal killing, taking and trade of birds;
- No. 2: To establish an **active prevention** of the illegal killing, taking and trade of birds;
- No. 3: To ensure that the illegal killing of birds is addressed **effectively and efficiently in national legislation**;
- No. 4: To ensure that **effective and efficient enforcement** of relevant legislation is undertaken;
- No. 5: To ensure **effective and efficient justice** for IKB-related offences.

### 2. Why conduct a mid-term assessment?

The RSP arrives in 2025 at the mid-point of its implementation and, according to the timetable presented in 'Section 5.4 Assessments', this is when the mid-term assessment is foreseen to assess progress towards the Goal of the RSP and to establish whether a refocusing or strengthening of efforts is required in order to meet the target by 2030.

To that end, understanding the state of play is essential, for accurately identifying the actions necessary to advance the implementation of the Rome Strategic Plan. Given that the main goal of the RSP is the 50% reduction in the scope and scale of IKB, setting a baseline and establishing monitoring methods are crucial for determining progress. Additionally, determining limiting factors that are preventing or stalling progress seems important.

The results of a mid-term assessment can highlight crucial objectives and/or actions necessary for the remaining period.

### 3. Introduction to Rome Strategic Plan provisions for the mid-term assessment

RSP 'Section 5.4 Assessments' foresees the regular assessment of progress towards the RSP Goal of reducing the scale and scope of IKB by 50% by 2030, against a 2020 baseline. It foresees two methods, firstly through using the Scoreboard, and secondly through using other methods, such as national reporting, independent research, and other methods.

#### The Scoreboard

As is stated in Section '5.4 Assessments' of the RSP<sup>1</sup>: *"The strategic ten-year policy horizon of the Rome Strategic Plan, from 2020 to 2030, is punctuated with a strong element of self-assessment and sharing of information, to be performed periodically within the Plan timeframe, using the process already in place for the IKB Scoreboard. The Scoreboard had a first assessment in 2018, and will have periodic assessments in 2020, 2023, 2026 and 2029. [...] Using a periodic assessment timeline that relates each objective to both short- and long-term outcomes will allow countries to use the assessment results to refine the actions as needed."*

The [Scoreboard to Assess the Progress in Combating Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Wild Birds](#) (hereinafter referred to as the Scoreboard) is a voluntary self-assessment tool jointly developed by the CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT) and the Bern Convention.

The document was first discussed at a joint meeting of the CMS MIKT and the Bern Convention Network of SFPs in Malta on 22-23 June 2017 and was adopted as an Annex to CMS Resolution 11.16 (Rev. COP14) on the Prevention of IKB during the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP12) to CMS, in Manila in October 2017, and in the 37<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bern Convention Standing Committee in December 2017.

The Scoreboard is intended as a framework for national governments to provide an objective, fact-based, national self-assessment of the status of IKB at the national level. It also aims to enable national governments to measure their progress in implementing their commitments related to this area. The Scoreboard was developed in English but has been also produced in French and Spanish to facilitate the use by the different countries within the area range of the CMS MIKT and the Bern Convention.

The Scoreboard is divided into five areas, each area comprises several indicators and a total of 28 indicators. The five areas are the following:

- A. National monitoring of IKB (data management of scope and scale of IKB) – Questions A1-A4 (four indicators);
- B. Comprehensiveness of national legislation – Questions B5-B13 (nine indicators);
- C. Enforcement response: preparedness of law enforcement bodies and coordination of national institutions – Questions C14-C19 (six indicators);
- D. Prosecution and sentencing (effectiveness of judicial procedures) – Questions D20-D23 (four indicators);
- E. Prevention (other instruments used to address IKB) – Questions E24-E28 (five indicators).

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<sup>1</sup> The Rome Strategic Plan (Section 5.4, page 8) <https://rm.coe.int/tpvs-2019-03rev-draft-romestrategicplan-ikb-rev-06-12/168099315b>

## Scoreboard and Rome Strategic Plan

The Scoreboard was developed in 2017, i.e. before the development and adoption of the RSP. The goals, objectives and indicators of the RSP, developed and adopted in 2019, are very similar to the Scoreboard but not identical. Additionally, there are some new milestones and targets in the RSP that were not in the original Scoreboard. Because of the similarities between the two, the Scoreboard was able to remain as the main instrument for self-assessment and reporting of progress on combating IKB, even after the adoption of the RSP. However, in order to improve the Contracting Parties' self-assessment of the progress made in the implementation of the RSP, in 2022, additional narrative text to support the Scoreboard submissions was adopted by MIKT members at the Joint Meeting of the Bern Convention and MIKT in Valencia in June 2022, and subsequently by the Bern Convention Standing Committee at its 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting in December 2022.

The [additional narrative text](#) to support the Scoreboard submissions aimed to encourage countries to report on important milestones and objectives, which are clearly defined in the RSP but would not be reported through the Scoreboard, unless a specific question was formulated about them. Such questions related to the adoption or not of a Baseline against which to compare progress in implementing the RSP; the adoption or not of a methodology for monitoring IKB; the provision and/or availability of funding for combating IKB; the existence of databases with information on prosecutions, and other relevant actions and milestones.

The additional narrative text also sought to provide information that could help toward the assessment of the RSP, suggested in RSP 'Section 5.4 Assessments':

*"To ensure the success of the Rome Strategic Plan and progress toward achieving its goal such assessments may include the following elements:*

*i. Assessing the empirical measures of success through the outcomes identified by the indicators for each objective. The indicators for each of the actions of the Rome Strategic Plan establish a logical framework matrix that forms the overall composite index, allowing measuring of progress against the 2020 baseline.*

The first Scoreboard exercise took place in 2018, the second in 2020 and the third in 2023. The 2023 exercise is relevant to the mid-term assessment of the RSP. The next Scoreboard exercise will take place in 2026, and is expected to report on the period 2023-2025, i.e. it will be clearly very important for the mid-term assessment of the RSP but will arrive too late for that.

## Observations from 2023 Scoreboard analysis

As discussed above, the RSP foresees using the Scoreboard results, as well as specific enquiries about progress towards the RSP indicators, in order to assess progress on the implementation of the RSP. As can be seen from the analysis of the submissions to the 2023 Scoreboard ([UNEP/CMS/MIKT6/Doc.8.1 Scoreboard 2023 Updated Analysis](#)) some progress has been made but the need for continuing action is still apparent.

The RSP's goal is a reduction of IKB scale and scope by 50% by 2030. That is a numerical goal which implies that the countries would produce numerical estimates for assessing the progress in reducing the scale and scope. That is why the RSP puts significant emphasis on establishing a baseline and on agreeing a methodology for assessing IKB.

The 2023 Scoreboard data analysis shows that, by 2023, only six countries of the 25 that replied to the Scoreboard had established a baseline, and only four had adopted a methodology for monitoring IKB. Furthermore, of the 25 countries responding in 2023, four report a decreasing trend in IKB, six report a stable trend, and worryingly, four report an

increase and eleven report that the trend in IKB is still unclear. The trend reported in Scoreboard 2023 relates to the period since the previous Scoreboard, i.e. 2020.

Monitoring IKB is notoriously difficult because it is an illegal activity. BirdLife International attempted to monitor IKB and to estimate the number of birds illegally killed, trapped, taken or traded in the Mediterranean in 2016<sup>2</sup>, and they estimated that as many as 25 million birds could be getting killed, taken or traded annually. Similarly, BirdLife International repeated the same exercise for Europe and the Caucasus region in 2017<sup>3</sup>, estimating that 0.4–2.1 million birds per year may be illegally killed, trapped, taken or traded annually in that region.

These numeric results were met with surprise, opposition or action by different countries. It is one of the reasons why the RSP put emphasis on countries defining and clarifying the scale and scope of IKB for their country. However, if this is not done at the country level, then the only available analyses remain the Brochet *et al.* (2016) and Brochet *et al.* (2017) papers, which are also outdated by 2025.

Based on the currently available data, it would be very difficult to assess progress against the RSP Goal.

Additionally, it is notable that of the 54 countries invited to submit the Scoreboard, only 25 submitted a response in 2023, and 39 have submitted the Scoreboard at least once. The lack of reporting from important countries for IKB, hampers the ability to draw conclusions. Consequently, significant gaps remain in recording progress and understanding the scale and scope of IKB. A full list of countries which reported in Scoreboard 2023 can be found in Annex 1 of the Scoreboard 2023 Updated Analysis ([UNEP/CMS/MIKT6/Doc.8.1 Scoreboard 2023 Updated Analysis](#)).

#### Other methods of assessment

Additionally, RSP 'Section 5.4 Assessments' foresees that

*"To ensure the success of the Rome Strategic Plan and progress toward achieving its goal such assessments may include the following elements:*

*i. [...]*

*ii. Assessments will be informed by national reporting to the Conventions, independent research and the periodic Scoreboard information as responded by countries, including other relevant information."*

Point ii, as outlined in the RSP, is generic and open for members to agree on how to get the data and resources.

#### **4. Options for conducting a mid-term assessment and resources available:**

The CMS Secretariat could make some resources available to aid the mid-term assessment of the RSP, over the period late 2025-mid/ late-2026. Below are some options to be considered as to how to proceed in this mid-term assessment.

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<sup>2</sup> Brochet et al (2016) Preliminary assessment of the scope and scale of illegal killing and taking of birds in the Mediterranean, Bird Conservation International, **26**: 1-28pp. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/bird-conservation-international/article/preliminary-assessment-of-the-scope-and-scale-of-illegal-killing-and-taking-of-birds-in-the-mediterranean/34A06A94874DB94BE2BBACC4F96C3B5F>

<sup>3</sup> Brochet et al (2017) Illegal killing and taking of birds in Europe outside the Mediterranean: assessing the scope and scale of a complex issue, Bird Conservation International, **29**: 10-40pp. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/bird-conservation-international/article/illegal-killing-and-taking-of-birds-in-europe-outside-the-mediterranean-assessing-the-scope-and-scale-of-a-complex-issue/DE4D06F3BD4273B94FD3C9621C615A0A>

- a. Engage a consultant/academic institution to conduct a survey of members of MIKT and Bern Convention asking them to report progress against the RSP actions, milestones and indicators, including to try and estimate levels of IKB across the geographic area of the RSP, similar to the Brochet (2016) and Brochet (2017) papers.
- b. Engage a consultant, who will use existing data available from Scoreboard 2023 (Scoreboard 2026 will be available end of 2026, which will be too late for conducting a mid-term assessment) and conduct interviews with or send questionnaires to countries which did not respond to Scoreboard 2023. Additionally, support countries which have submitted the Scoreboard in 2023 but have not submitted a baseline, or methodology or trend data to estimate the scale, scope and trend in their country.
- c. Adopt an NGO assessment as an independent assessment of state on play.

## **5. Recommended action**

The CMS MIKT Members and the Bern Convention Network of SFPs are recommended to:

- a) Review this document, as appropriate.
- b) Discuss the options presented and formulate any other options;
- c) Decide on the way forward in conducting a mid-term assessment of the RSP and formulating recommendations for the way forward;
- d) If an option requiring the hiring of a consultant is favoured, formulate the necessary elements for the Terms of Reference for a consultant to best support the mid-term progress assessment and formulating recommendations for the way forward.