



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

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**INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY SPECIES: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. On 12 October 1999, the Secretariat circulated the complete text of a draft Information Management Plan for the Convention on Migratory Species (document UNEP/CMS/Conf. 6.7), prepared under contract to CMS by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC).
2. The Secretariat indicated at that time that an Executive Summary would be prepared to facilitate review of the document, and that further work would be done to complete the table that summarises the main actions suggested in the Information Management Plan. The Executive Summary and summary table are attached hereto.
3. It is suggested that the Conference of the Parties form a working group to examine more thoroughly the Draft Information Management Plan, including a detailed consideration of the suggested actions, the indicative priorities, resource needs and implementation capacities. The results of this examination would then feed into the deliberations on the Strategic Plan for CMS (document UNEP/CMS/Conf. 6.12).

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Draft Information Management Plan for the Convention on Migratory Species

Executive Summary

1. Effective and efficient conservation action requires information on which to base planning and decision making. In implementing the Convention and related Agreements, the CMS and Agreement secretariats, Scientific Council, Standing Committee and all Contracting Parties use information to identify and plan actions that need to be taken, to monitor the effects of those actions, and to report on the consequences in various fora.

2. If information is collected and managed in a consistent and co-ordinated manner, this ensures that:

- information collected can be used for more than one purpose
- information is only requested from Parties when necessary
- information is not requested from Parties when it is readily available elsewhere
- information from various sources is combined
- information collection and management is more cost-effective
- decisions are taken with appropriate and adequate information

3. CMS is one of a number of international treaties and programmes relating to biodiversity, all of which have information needs and reporting requirements. If information is collected and managed in a consistent and co-ordinated manner across all these treaties and programmes, then it becomes even more useful and potentially also reduces the reporting burden on Contracting Parties.

4. In 1994, a strategy for the future development of the Convention was adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its Fourth Meeting which implies a number of priority actions relevant to development of an information management plan. At around the same time, the secretariats of the biodiversity-related treaties recognised that they had an obligation to be as efficient and responsive as possible in managing and using information, and, with this in mind, initiated steps to increase harmonization and reduce duplication of effort in information management and reporting.

5. A draft proposal on development of an information management plan for the Convention was submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its Fifth Meeting in April 1997 (attachment to UNEP/CMS/Conf.5.7.1) and discussed under Agenda Item 10a *Harmonisation of the reporting system under CMS and related Agreements*. Funds for development of the information management plan were also approved, and in late 1998 the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) was asked to implement the project in collaboration with the Secretariat.

6. The following activities formed part of the project, each activity involving review of written material and discussion with representatives of the CMS Secretariat and the secretariats of various Agreements:

- review of information needs
- review of current information sources
- review of the relationship to other biodiversity-related treaties
- assessment of information dissemination requirements
- review of information management needs and capabilities
- preparation of the information management plan

7. Following discussion with the CMS Secretariat, the scope of the project was restricted to the Convention itself, to the two legally binding Agreements established under Article IV(3) and Article IV(4) which are already in force in December 1998 (ASCOBANS and EUROBATS), and the two legally binding Agreements established under Article IV(3) and Article IV(4) which are expected to come into force during 1999 (AEWA and ACCOBAMS).

8. The preliminary sections of the report review the Convention (**Section 2**), the text of all four Agreements (**Section 3**), all of the resolutions and recommendations of relevant conferences and meetings, and other official documents, and uses this review as the basis for identifying information needs at Secretariat and Contracting Party level. These information needs are identified in a series of tables, and provide the basis for the rest of the report.

9. The following section (**Section 4**) identifies six key types of information management role that are implied by the needs of the Convention and Agreements, and then goes on to discuss the opportunities for increased collaboration between the CMS Secretariat and the Agreement Secretariats on information collection and management. The six key types of information management role are:

- list management
- compilation, assessment and associated data management
- increasing access to available information
- building an information service from component parts
- linking information from multiple sources
- sharing experience

10. This is followed by a review of information sources (**Section 5**), which tries to assess of how the information needs identified are currently being addressed, and the adequacy of these mechanisms. In particular it looks at the range of reports currently being provided by including Party reports to both the Convention and Agreements, species reports (covering both recommended amendments of the appendices and “concerted action” species reports) and project reports.

11. There is a wide range of other potential sources of relevant information, and these sources are briefly under eight groupings, as increased collaboration with these sources would lead to significant improvement in the amount of information on migratory species available (**Section 6**). The types of sources discussed are:

- international convention secretariats
- regional conventions and Agreements
- international NGOs specialising in particular groups of species
- international NGOs specialising in particular habitat types
- international expert networks
- specialist information management organisations
- collaboration between information providers
- projects managed by internationally active organisations

12. Given the importance attached to collaboration with other international convention secretariats in trying to harmonise information management and reporting processes, the results of a feasibility study on the five global biodiversity-related treaties is summarised, and the potential role of CMS in helping to implement this work discussed (**Section 7**). This includes development of a harmonised information source on conventions and their activities and reports, streamlining of Party reporting processes, and development of a shared “lessons learnt” network.

13. The users of information and the means by which they receive that information are also reviewed (**Section 8**). There are six categories of user identified: Secretariat, Scientific Council, Standing Committee and COP, Parties, Scientists and other researchers, and “others”. The main dissemination mechanisms are: conference documents and other information papers, other literature (including project reports) and the Internet.

14. Finally, there is a review of information management needs and capabilities (**Section 9**) which addresses the issue of the information management techniques necessary for managing and disseminating the information required. This particularly addresses development of integrated databases, development of web-based information services, and the need to review databases and services provided by Parties. A key issue is that it is not necessary for the Secretariat itself to have the experience in house where they can work in partnership with other organisations that already have that experience.

15. The information management plan that has resulted (**Section 10**) is intended to provide impetus for improvement in the collection, management and use of the information necessary for effective implementation of CMS and its associated Agreements. Its implementation will lead to:

- more cost-efficient information management
- significant increase in available information to support biodiversity conservation
- improved linkages between secretariats
- improved linkages between secretariats and other major international programmes
- reduced pressure on Parties through more efficient sharing of information
- increase in information available to Parties

16. The information management plan provides clear guidance on the steps that need to be taken to improve the collection, management and use of the information necessary for effective implementation of CMS and its associated Agreements.

17. A draft of the information management plan was made available to the Standing Committee meeting in January 1999 (CMS/StC.19/Inf.9.2), and they were asked to provide review comments to the Secretariat. In August 1999, WCMC were informed that no review comments had been received, and were asked to complete the document for the Meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

18. The version of the information management plan made available to the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of Parties does not yet take full account of either the draft *CMS Strategic Plan* for 2000-2005 (UNEP/CMS/Conf. 6.12) or the *Guidelines on harmonisation of Agreements* (UNEP/CMS/Conf.5.10 and UNEP/CMS/Conf. 6.10), both of which will be discussed at the Sixth Meeting of the COP. It is anticipated that the information management plan will be completed following the Conference of Parties, and future implementation of the plan based on the priorities identified by the COP.