



4th SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES
15 – 19 September 2008, Antananarivo, Madagascar

“Flyway Conservation at Work – Review of the Past, Vision for the Future”

OVERVIEW ON THE STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AEWA COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Introduction

At its third session, which took place from 23-27 October 2005 in Senegal, the Meeting of the Parties adopted the Communication Strategy for AEWA under Resolution 3.10. As laid down in this Resolution the Meeting of the Parties:

1. *Adopts* the Communication Strategy, contained in Annex 1 to this Resolution as an instrument to effectively address the conservation of waterbirds on the flyway level;
2. *Instructs* the AEWA Secretariat to implement the Communication Strategy and to develop it taking into account resources available, to review its effectiveness on a regular basis and to report on its implementation to the meetings of the Standing Committee and to the 4th Meeting of the Parties;
3. *Further instructs* the Secretariat to undertake specific efforts to obtain additional resources for the implementation of the Communication Strategy;
4. *Urges* Contracting Parties, donors and private sector sponsors to provide supplementary financial support to enable the Secretariat to realize all identified activities of the Strategy;
5. *Invites* all Parties, Range States and other stakeholders along the African-Eurasian Flyway to support the implementation of the Communication Strategy at the global, regional, national or local levels, as appropriate, with the expertise, networks, skills and resources at their disposal;
6. *Encourages* all Contracting Parties to host AEWA Exchange Centres for their region, as stipulated in the Communication Strategy;
7. *Further encourages* all representatives of Contracting Parties and partner organisations to envisage functioning as ambassadors to AEWA in order to help the Secretariat with the recruitment of new Parties to AEWA.

The operational paragraph of Resolution 3.10 makes clear that implementation of the Communication Strategy is a shared responsibility, particularly of the Contracting Parties and the Agreement Secretariat.

The Parties expressed their great appreciation for the support given by the Government of the United Kingdom for the development of the Communication Strategy, for the support of the German Government, which is providing a Junior Professional Officer to strengthen the capacity within the Secretariat to implement the Strategy, and for the support of the Government of Luxembourg to enable the Secretariat to produce new outreach materials.

This report will inform you about the progress made by the Agreement Secretariat in the implementation of the Communication Strategy since MOP3. The AEWA Communication Action Plan 2006-2008, which is attached to the Communications Strategy as Annex 1, will be used as a basis to report back on progress made.

As already mentioned the implementation of the Communication Strategy is a shared responsibility. The Secretariat would therefore welcome any information from Contracting Parties and partner organisations

regarding their activities conducted towards implementing the AEWA Communication Strategy. Further input from Parties would enable us to gain a clearer picture of the current status of progress made towards the implementation of the Communications Strategy.

Action requested from the Meeting of the Parties

The Meeting of the Parties is requested to review progress made regarding the implementation of the Communication Strategy and if applicable give some guidance for improvement.

Communication Capacity

Before starting to report back on the progress made on the implementation of the Communication Strategy it would be favourable to consider how the Communication Strategy refers to the capacity for communication, which will determine the extent to which the Communication Strategy can be implemented. Capacity can be assessed in terms of human resources, technical expertise and financial resources.

To start with the latter: with the new set up of the AEWA budget 2006-2008 the implementation of the Communication Strategy is fully dependent on voluntary contributions of Contracting Parties or organisations. Since MOP3 very little funds have come in to support the implementation of the Strategy. Regarding the human resources it should be noted that the Junior Professional Officer provided by the government of Germany is working 20 percent of his time for the CMS Family; 50 percent of his time is allocated to the Wings over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project, which means that currently he is only able to invest 30 percent of his available time towards the implementation of the AEWA Communication Strategy. Although the implementation of the Strategy is his responsibility all other AEWA Staff members are also involved, albeit for probably only a few hours a week. By the end of 2006 the post of Information Assistant (part-time) as agreed by MOP3 was filled. Since the Junior Professional Officer entered on duty, the technical expertise and capacity related to communication within the Secretariat was given a boost. It is hoped that in coming years the level of technical expertise will continue to increase.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways project, which began in mid 2006, also contributes towards the implementation of the AEWA Communication Strategy. The unique flyway-scale project has not only helped to increase awareness on AEWA and topics relating to Flyway Conservation on different levels in many parts of the African-Eurasian region, it has also helped strengthen partnerships and increase cooperation between many of AEWA's "partners in flyway conservation" identified in the AEWA Communication Strategy. In addition to bringing together many stakeholders by providing a common platform to cooperate effectively towards the common goal of waterbird conservation along the African-Eurasian flyways, the WOW Project is also producing a number of information, communication and capacity building tools directly linked to AEWA, such as the "Training Kit on the flyway approach to the conservation and wise use of waterbirds and wetlands" (objective 3) and the Critical Sites Network (CSN) Tool. In addition, many of the publicity materials developed in the context of the WOW Project (website, brochures, posters, display etc.) also help to raise awareness on AEWA and topics relating to flyway conservation in Africa and Eurasia.

Internal Communication

Objective 1: to stimulate and increase the effective internal communication and exchange among the formal governing bodies of the Agreement

Objective 1 focuses on *the internal communication processes* among the formal bodies of AEWA and provides guidance on how the functioning of the Agreement's formal decision-making bodies could be improved, by improving communication and exchange between them.

The activities foreseen under this heading in the Communication Strategy are to:

- 1.1 Increase interactivity of meetings
- 1.2 Increase interactivity in-between meetings
- 1.3 Evaluate regional representation in AEWA formal bodies

As already indicated, due to a lack of resources both in financial and human terms, progress made regarding the implementation of this part of the Communication Strategy has been limited, with the exception of activity 1.2., as reported below.

Activity 1.2 Interactivity in-between meetings

The Secretariat has undertaken the first steps to establish designated web pages for the AEWA Technical and Standing Committees on its public website. In this section, members of both Committees will be introduced;

the background and contact information of each member will be made available as well as information regarding regional representation. Steps have also been undertaken to report back on meetings on the website; reporting will include information on decisions taken and on future meetings.

A new web-based interactive working space for the Technical Committee is under development, which will allow online discussion and better archiving of TC-related work. A first draft of this new website was presented to the 8th Meeting of the Technical Committee in March 2008 and will become operational with the onset of the TC work in the next quadriennium. Furthermore a face-to-face coordination meeting between the Executive Secretary, the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee and the Chair of the Technical Committee took place in the margin of the 4th and 5th meetings of the Standing Committee in 2006 and 2008 respectively.

External Communication

Objective 2: to strengthen and/or develop mechanisms for effective external communication & cooperation between and among the AEWA stakeholders and the AEWA Secretariat.

Objective 2 focuses on the *external communication processes* among AEWA Contracting Parties, Range States and other Stakeholders, as well between them and the AEWA Secretariat. It calls upon these stakeholders to increasingly play the role of partners, intermediaries and ambassadors in AEWA communication and to facilitate more regional cooperation and exchange among them.

The activities foreseen under this heading in the Communication Strategy are:

- 2.1 Regional Meetings (West Africa and East Africa)
- 2.2 Exchange centres for AEWA
- 2.3 Engaging ambassadors to encourage further Range States to become Contracting Parties, focussing on Russia, the Baltic States, Central Asia and Africa in 2006.

Although funds have generally been scarce for the implementation of this objective, some funds have recently come in, which have enabled the Secretariat to conduct a first-ever regional workshop/meeting for AEWA focal points from African countries (Activity 2.1). The two day negotiation training for anglophone countries in Africa directly preceded the 4th Meeting of the Parties and was carried out in close cooperation with the UNEP Division of Environmental Conventions and Law (UNEP/DELIC). It is hoped that more funds will be able to be secured in future, so that similar capacity building workshops can be offered to focal points in other AEWA regions (francophone Africa, Middle East, Central Asia).

In addition, a number of regional, species-oriented and WOW Project-related meetings have also taken place since MOP3, which are indirectly supporting the implementation of Activity 2.1. Even though these meetings have not been organised directly by the Secretariat, meetings related to both the development of AEWA Single Species Action Plans (SSAPs) and regional meetings taking place at the four WOW Regional Centres have had clear regional dimensions and have also helped to facilitate exchange and cooperation on waterbird conservation between stakeholders in neighbouring countries within several AEWA regions.

Even though the four Regional Centres established in the context of the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) (located in Dakar, Almaty & Moscow, Nairobi and Amman) cannot be considered as fully institutionalized and sustainable “AEWA Exchange Centres” (Activity 2.2), they have functioned as regional hubs for the exchange of information and capacity building on AEWA over the course of the project.

Regarding activity 2.3 we are pleased to be able to report that OMPO has taken up the role as Ambassador and is promoting the Agreement particularly in the Baltic States, Russia, Malta and Morocco. Also BirdLife International, CIC and Wetlands International are promoting the Agreement whenever appropriate. The Wetlands International Office in Dakar and the BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat in Kenya has supported us in the past and continues to do so. The Executive Secretary has contacts with these NGOs on a regular basis to inform them about the recruitment of Parties and to encourage them to continue with their support. Until her recent move to Canada, our regional representative within the TC from Central Asia acted

as our ‘ambassador’ in that region. It should be mentioned here that there is no budget available to cover travel and subsistence costs related to ambassadorship.

Capacity Building

Objective 3: to build regional capacity for communication

Objective 3 focuses on the need to build regional capacity for communication, by enhancing the ability of contracting parties, and others, to implement AEWA communication activities in the regions. The objective is to strengthen capacity for communication among contracting parties through regional and national Training of Trainer (ToT) programmes and to strengthen the role of the Secretariat as facilitator and “spider in the web of waterbird conservation” within the AEWA region.

The activities foreseen under this heading in the Communication Strategy are the:

- 3.1 Training of Trainers at the regional level focussing in 2006 on West Africa and East Africa
- 3.2 Provision of follow-up on ToT at the national level

So far no activities have been undertaken by the Secretariat to implement these two activities due to a lack of resources. However, it should be noted that the capacity building component of the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project covers activities closely related to Objective 3. For example, the WOW Partnership is developing a “Training Kit on the flyway approach to the conservation and wise use of waterbirds and wetlands” which could be used in any future regional and national Training of Trainer programmes related to AEWA. The new Flyway Training Kit will function as a guide/manual to “the flyway approach to conservation and wise use” and will be composed of three main modules 1. Understanding the Flyway Approach 2. Applying the Flyway Approach to Conservation and 3. Communicating the Flyway Approach. Although funding is still needed to implement the actual ToT workshops in the different regions, the toolkit and the capacity building network established through the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW), will provide an excellent basis and resource for any future ToT activity being carried out to meet Objective 3 of the AEWA Communication Strategy.

As indicated in the Communication Strategy, the Secretariat will work closely with the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project to try to secure funds and implement both regional and national ToT trainings, in order to address both activities 3.1 and 3.2 in the coming years.

Awareness Raising

Objective 4: to increase knowledge and awareness of AEWA, its added value and its objectives

Objective 4 of the AEWA Communication Strategy specifically focuses on the role communication can play to increase knowledge and awareness of AEWA. It identifies a number of concrete communication activities and tools, which the Secretariat and other stakeholders can use to promote the added value of - and the achieved successes of AEWA more strongly.

The activities foreseen under this heading in the Communication Strategy are:

- 4.1. To improve and maintain the AEWA Website
- 4.2. The regular publication of the AEWA Newsletter
- 4.3. To initiate and provide the infrastructure for e-discussion
- 4.4. To develop guidelines for accession
- 4.5. To develop a set of resource materials for awareness-raising at national level

As previously mentioned, the Secretariat's overall communication capacity depends on the available human and financial resources and technical expertise. Most of the activities listed under Objective 4 have been successfully addressed by the Secretariat since MOP3 using the available human resources and limited funds earmarked for communication activities, which have been received through voluntary contributions. Progress regarding each of the activities will be reported in more detail below.

Activity 4.1: Improve and maintain the AEWA Website

The restructuring of the official AEWA Website in 2005 and its regular maintenance since then has significantly improved the overall attractiveness and usability of the website in comparison with the previous AEWA website. The AEWA website is being regularly up-dated and news on current activities and projects are regularly featured. It should be noted, that the maintenance of the website is a true team effort involving several AEWA staff members and its overall management is the responsibility of the Junior Professional Officer.

It is expected that with the implementation of the Wings over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways project some features of the AEWA website will be improved further e.g. through the availability of the Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool. Furthermore the AEWA Secretariat has actively participated in the UNEP 'Knowledge Management Project for MEAs' which has developed a web portal providing direct access to MEA strategic documents and relevant decisions. The project has also developed the initial infrastructure for an online system for national reporting to AEWA and other participating MEAs, of which an advanced version will be presented at MOP4.

Overall collaboration with the Internet Unit at UNEP/DCPI has also been improved since the Junior Professional Officer has entered on duty and it is expected that AEWA and other UNEP administered MEAs will be able to benefit from and participate in the implementation of a UNEP-wide Web Content Management System in the coming years. While this project will require substantial input from the Secretariat initially, it will significantly improve the back-end technology and management of the AEWA website in the long term.

List of other AEWA related websites & online resources:

In addition to maintaining the official AEWA Website, the Secretariat has also been involved in the development and maintenance of a number of other AEWA related websites and online resources since MOP3. A brief description of each can be found below:

Interactive Work Space for the AEWA Technical Committee (tcworkspace.aewa.info)

As already mentioned above, this new web-based interactive working space for the Technical Committee will allow online discussion and better archiving of TC-related work. It will become operational with the start of the TC work in the next triennium (quadriennium) and will be maintained by the AEWA Technical Officer in cooperation with the Information Unit of the Secretariat.

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) Website (www.worldmigratorybirdday.org)

A stand-alone website has been developed by the Information Unit of the AEWA Secretariat for each of the annual World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) campaigns since the launch in 2006. The WMBD website is the central communication tool used to promote the global initiative and includes an online registration and archiving feature for WMBD events celebrated around the world each year. The website is customized to reflect the chosen theme for the respective year. (2006: Migratory birds need our support now; 2007: Migratory birds in a changing climate; 2008: Migratory birds – Ambassadors for Biodiversity).

Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) Project Website (www.wingsoverwetlands.org)

The Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) Project Website was developed and is being maintained by the AEWA Junior Professional Officer in his function as Communication Officer for the WOW Project. The website gives visitors a good overview of the project and includes news, contacts and dedicated pages on all WOW Demonstration Sites and the different project components. The website is being hosted by Wetlands International and will become a gateway to the Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool portal once finalized.

Avian Influenza, Wildlife and the Environment Web (AIWEb) (www.aiweb.info)

AIWEb provides a public platform for information exchange and communication on current and emerging topics related to avian influenza (AI) and migratory birds. AIWEb was developed for the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds following the AI seminar held at UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, 10-11 April 2006 by UNEP/DCPI in close cooperation with the AEWA Information Officer. The site is now being maintained for the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds on behalf of UNEP/CMS by Rebecca Lee from the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT).

Activity 4.2: Regular publication of the AEWA Newsletter

Since MOP3 a HTML E-Newsletter has been sent out to over 2500 entries in our database on a regular basis. The E-Newsletter is produced entirely in-house by the Secretariat and provides a summary of AEWA related news and events. A total of 18 E-Newsletters have been sent out since the availability of the tool in 2006 (a new issue every two months). The Secretariat receives new subscriptions through the website and has also received positive feedback from readers on the resource.

A special edition of the Newsletter on the outcome of MOP3 was published in 2006. Furthermore since MOP3 we have published a further issue of the regular Newsletter. The Secretariat would like to encourage Contracting Parties, Range States and Organisations to provide us with information which could be included in the Newsletter. The regular Newsletter is a tool for the dissemination of information from all of those involved in the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the AEWA region.

Activity 4.3: Initiate and provide the infrastructure for e-discussion

One of the tasks of the Information Assistant was to improve the current address database and to establish an email distribution list. This has meanwhile taken place and is of great importance due to the fact that this list is used for distribution of the regular E-Newsletter and to inform addressees about any changes on the website.

No progress was able to be made regarding the establishment of an e-discussion forum due to lack of resources.

Activity 4.4: Develop guidelines for accession

These guidelines for accession were drafted in 2004. By the end of that year the Secretariat was in the position, due to the generous support of the government of Luxembourg, to translate and print these guidelines, which were originally only available in English, into Russian, Arabic and French. Since then the guidelines for accession have been distributed to countries that are in the process of acceding to AEWA on a regular basis.

Activity 4.5: Develop a set of resource materials for awareness-raising at the national level.

Work is ongoing to develop an AEWA Toolkit. Many of the materials to be included in this toolkit are now available (DVD on AEWA, Flyway Posters and several AEWA Publications) and should be combined with some of the flyway training materials being developed in the context of the Wings Over Wetlands Project. It is expected that after MOP4 the Information Unit within the Agreement Secretariat will start putting the toolkit together in the form of an interactive CD Rom and will also prepare a distribution strategy for the resource, which includes making it available on the AEWA website.

“How you could help” Fundraising Kit

Following MOP3 the Secretariat produced a special “How you could help” fundraising brochure focussing on the International Implementation Priorities (IIPs) 2006-2008. The publication was used by the Executive Secretary and others to approach potential donors and to raise funds for implementation of the IIPs.

AEWA Reader

A Reader on AEWA; which aims to increase the understanding of AEWA and its underlying concepts was compiled some years ago. So far we did not have the capacity to finalise it. Meanwhile some of the information included in it, is out of date and therefore the text has to be reviewed. It is expected that this can be done in the coming months and that this Reader can be published in early 2009.

10th Anniversary Calendar

By the end of 2005 the 10th Anniversary Calendar was published. For this Calendar Mr Yves Fagniat provided us with pictures of his watercolour paintings free of charge. The paintings were used for the AEWA exhibition at the Museum Koenig in Bonn, Germany; which was opened by the former Minister of Environment and Nuclear Safety of Germany Mr. Jürgen Trittin on 4 July 2005 to mark the 10th Anniversary of AEWA.

DVD on AEWA

One of the activities, albeit not mentioned in the Communication Strategy; is the development of a DVD on AEWA. At MOP3 the second part of the AEWA DVD, developed by a consortium of Fiction Film and Musch & Tinbergen, was presented. Although the idea is to shoot a large amount of footage in coming years to be used for the purpose of promoting the Agreement, the lack of sufficient resources is hampering the implementation of this idea. Therefore it is hoped that the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project; of which the development of a DVD on AEWA is an integral part, will provide some opportunities to continue work on further developing this DVD in future.

WMBD Materials (Website, Posters, Postcards, DVD, Calendar, Trailer)

In addition to the dedicated website for World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) mentioned above, the Secretariat has also produced a number of other WMBD related information materials, including posters, postcards and a special calendar featuring the 12 nominees of the 2007 WMBD Painting Competition. In addition, a small grant was made available by AEWA to support the development of a DVD of the main launching event of the World Migratory Bird Day in 2006 and a short WMBD trailer was produced for WMBD in 2008. WMBD materials were widely distributed and also made available on the WMBD website and used to promote WMBD in presentations and at WMBD related events.

AEWA Exhibition Stands

The AEWA Secretariat has developed a new 2m x 2m and 2m x 80cm display for use at public events and presentations. In addition the AEWA Information Unit has contributed to the development of the AEWA panels of the new CMS Family and UN in Bonn Exhibitions.

New AEWA Flyway Posters

Two new AEWA Flyway Posters have been developed together with UNEP-WCMC; for the Sociable Lapwing and the Madagascar Pond Heron. Both posters will be handed out to participants at MOP4.

Climate Change Publication

As part of the implementation of Resolution 3.17 a report on the effects of climate change on migratory waterbirds within the Agreement area was commissioned to the British Trust for Ornithology. This comprehensive report is now presented in a succinct popular version, which was printed as a small booklet for MOP4.

“Benefits of joining AEWA” Leaflet

A special leaflet highlighting the benefits of joining AEWA is currently under development. It is expected that this publication will be ready shortly after MOP4 and that it will be used by the Secretariat and other stakeholders to try to convince more AEWA Range States to join the Agreement.

Other activities linked to awareness raising

World Migratory Bird Day

The AEWA Secretariat took the initiative to launch the World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) on 9 April 2006 in Kenya. This idea came up during a meeting the Executive Secretary and the Junior Professional Officer had in November 2005 with Mrs. Kuki Gallmann. The latter is well known for her novels such as ‘I dreamed of Africa’ and ‘African nights’ and showed great interest in this idea. As founder of the Great Rift valley Trust she offered her support to organise a cultural and artistic event called WINGS to mark the first World Migratory Bird Day. The launch was a great success in terms of high level participation, media coverage but also regarding outreach to the general public. For World Migratory Bird Day 2006, 68

registered activities in 46 countries took place around the world. The Secretariat managed to organise the launch of WMBD in less than four months, as well as establishing the special WMBD website (www.worldmigratorybirdday.org) and raising the necessary co-funding for the WINGS event. The Secretariat is very grateful for the financial support to WMBD given by Vogelbescherming Nederland (BirdLife Partner –The Netherlands) and the Dutch Embassy in Kenya. Since its launch in 2006, WMBD was celebrated annually during the second weekend of May. In 2007 celebrations took place in 61 countries with over 140 different events and in 2008 the numbers have again increased, which clearly shows that WMBD is growing in popularity. Meanwhile contact has been established with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service which have been organising the International Migratory Bird Day since 1993 in the western hemisphere (primarily Canada and the USA). The launch of WMBD has attracted their interest and particularly the enormous outreach WMBD has achieved in the past three years with very limited resources in place.

Although WMBD is a common activity of CMS and AEWA most of the substantial work connected to the organisation of WMBD is carried out by the AEWA Team.

The AEWA Secretariat plans to continue to organise WMBD for the next few years but is already looking for possibilities to find a long-term solution for the establishment of a self-supporting WMBD Secretariat. The idea is that this Secretariat will be steered by a consortium consisting of Birdlife International, USFWS, CMS and AEWA.

Public Events

The AEWA Secretariat participated in the following events:

- Vogelfestival (Birdfair) in Lelystad, The Netherlands (26-27 August 2006)
- 100 Jahre staatlicher Naturschutz - 28. Deutscher Naturschutztag 2006 in Bonn, Germany (1 June 2006)
- Initiative Toleranz in Bonn, Germany (annually)
- UN Day¹ in Bonn, Germany (annually)
- Open day² UN in Bonn, Germany (2007)
- CBD COP9, Germany (19-30 May 2008)

During these public events we informed visitors to our stand about our work. It was noted that the general public is not well aware of the fact that the United Nations is also involved in the conservation of migratory species. Over one thousand of our flyway posters and hundreds of AEWA publications / stickers / pins/ calendars and brochures were handed out to interested visitors at these events.

¹ The establishment of the UN is annually celebrated in Bonn with information stands of different UN organisations at the market place in the centre of Bonn.

² After the move of the UN to the new Premises an open day was organised for the general public to visit the new Premises.