

18th MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
14-16 March 2023, Bonn, Germany

**DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE ON A GUIDANCE ON METHODS AND TOOLS
FOR WATERBIRD HARVEST DATA COLLECTION**

1. Project title

Development of guidance on methods and tools for harvest data collection for waterbird populations in the AEWA Region

2. Background

AEWA recognises hunting as a legitimate form of use of migratory waterbirds and in Article III.2.(b) of the AEWA text, it is clearly stated that Parties shall:

‘ensure that any use of migratory waterbirds is based on an assessment of the best available knowledge of their ecology and is sustainable for the species as well as for the ecological systems that support them’

Within the AEWA Action Plan (Annex 3 to the Agreement) section 4 is relevant to this task, with paragraph 4.1.3 having particular relevance:

‘Parties shall cooperate with a view to developing a reliable and harmonised system for the collection of harvest data in order to assess the annual harvest of populations listed in Table 1. They shall provide the Agreement secretariat with estimates of the total annual take for each population, when available.’

According to the AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027 (Target 2.1), harvest levels should be monitored and readily available at flyway level to support sustainable harvest of all prioritised quarry species. A series of actions are required to achieve this target including establishing and/or maintaining adequate systems for making realistic estimates of all forms of waterbird harvesting including illegal taking at national level. By MOP9, Parties should provide waterbird harvest data as part of their National Reports, and the Technical Committee and Secretariat should work to establish informed estimates of harvest.

This review is part of a suite of tasks mandated to the Technical Committee to provide an assessment of the status quo with waterbird harvesting methods, scale, management, sustainability, and best practice. The outputs of these tasks will also provide a foundation for the continued enhancement of sustainable waterbird harvest management going forwards, for example through the provision of best practice guidance and tools for assessing and reporting national waterbird harvests. The other tasks are:

- A review of the nature and extent of waterbird harvest and its socio-economic importance in the AEWA Region;
- Undertaking a Rapid Assessment of Sustainability of Harvest of AEWA Waterbird Populations.

3. Duties of the contractor

The purpose of the task is to provide guidance on robust methods and tools to systematically collect harvest data on waterbird species in AEWA Range States, taking into account national legal, institutional, human-resource and technological capacities. Further, provide recommendations on setting up an international data coordination, analysis and reporting facility.

The contractor shall develop a set of guidelines on methods, tools and recommendations for harvest data collection for waterbird populations in the AEWA Region.

The task is composed of the following modules:

1. Produce a comparative assessment of different harvest survey methods outlining their relative costs, complexity and confidence estimates, and potential biases by drawing on real case studies worldwide as well as emerging analytical techniques.
2. Review of existing data:
 - Review existing national harvest data collection methods and systems in the AEWA region, including or the taking of waterbirds under exemptions / derogations, and identify data gaps in terms of availability, quality, reporting rates (including uptake of reporting scheme by hunters), estimation of unretrieved bag (including crippling) and geographic coverage;
 - Review existing data on monitoring illegal take of waterbirds, or indicators used as proxies in absence of data on illegal take (e.g. number of criminal cases, admissions of waterbirds to wildlife rescue centers). For this deliverable, linkages should be sought with work under the Joint Bern Convention/CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT);
3. Identify case studies demonstrating good practice in harvest collection systems, including a description of the process from collection of data in the field to verification of data and final estimates of harvest. Case studies from outside the Agreement area may also be given as examples;
4. Produce a practical tool kit for setting up robust harvest collection systems, including suggested data fields to include, online reporting opportunities, transparent assessment and reporting of certainty, data storage, verification, analytical and dissemination tools, tailored to national legal, institutional, human-resource and technological capacities. The tool kit also should include advice on why and how to survey and assess unretrieved bag (including crippling);
5. Produce guidance on assessment and improvement of hunters' species identification skills. This deliverable should reflect on case studies and innovative approaches to address needs in harvest data collection;
6. Identify opportunities to collect important demographic data on waterbirds (e.g. wing surveys) or supplementary information on harvest practices/methods (e.g. timing of the hunting bag during the season, hunting effort), or avian health /disease.
7. Provide recommendations on how to communicate the need for robust harvest data collection, what feedback is preferred by those submitting harvest data, and what incentives are useful to promote good reporting of harvest data, and acceptance of reporting by hunters and others involved in harvest activities.
8. Provide recommendations on how to establish internationally coordinated data collection, verification, analysis and reporting facility; including an evaluation of what resources are needed for capacity-building in Range States. This deliverable should describe the structure needed for such a reporting facility, and how to ensure alignment with current legal reporting requirements.

Format and structure of the guidelines:

Module 1:

- Outline of each potential harvest estimate method including
 - Required minimum sample sizes/proportion of hunters to be sampled
 - Guidance on data verification
 - Guidance on appropriate analytical or statistical methods
 - Estimates of relative costs required to establish and operate a national harvest data collection scheme
 - Benefits and limitations (including associated biases) of each method
 - Assessment of relative robustness of each method
 - A description of why and how to survey unretrieved bag (including crippling).

Module 2:

- Overview table of harvest data collection systems in the Agreement area (this should be based on information from Parties (AEWA national focal points. When other information sources are used, these should be clearly referenced).
- A review on the effectiveness of these harvest data collection methods and systems, highlighting geographic gaps in availability and gaps in effective uptake and use
- A description of the rationale for assessing scale of illegal take and review of data sources and knowledge gaps on illegal take of waterbirds
 - Include reference to information from activities related to CMS- MIKT on waterbirds
 - Review information on hotspots of illegal activities with relevance to waterbirds

Module 3:

- Minimum of 4 case studies of best practice

Module 4:

- Toolkit addressing the elements listed in the description of deliverables

Modules 5, 6, 7, 8:

- A set of recommendations and guidance on:
 - Hunters ID skills and their assessment
 - Collection of demographic data
 - How to communicate on the need for harvest data
 - How to establish an internationally coordinated data collection/ verification/ analysis/ reporting facility

The key target audiences are:

- For **module 4 (Tool kit)** AEWA National Focal Points and other decision-makers (within and outwith government) responsible for wildlife management.
- For **module 5 (hunters' species identification skills)** user groups (*e.g.* representatives of hunting organisations or local communities involved in waterbird harvest), but also national enforcement authorities dealing with environment / wildlife management.
- For **module 7 (recommendations on how to communicate on the need for harvest data)** AEWA National Focal Points and other decision-makers (within and outwith government) responsible for wildlife management, and user groups.
- For **module 8 (recommendations on how to establish internationally coordinated data collection)**, AEWA secretariat, AEWA National Focal Points, and others within governments responsible for sustainable development.

The final products should be translated into French as part of the final delivery of the project.

The working language for the task will be English, but the contractor(s) should have good command of French. Competence in other official languages of the Agreement (Arabic, Russian) would be desirable.

Note: for the purpose of this task the term ‘**harvest**’ refers to **recreational, commercial, and subsistence use** of waterbirds including eggs, accepting that there may be some overlap between these types of harvest. However, data collection should also cover any taking of waterbirds under exemption from the legal provisions for harvest (e.g. to prevent serious damage to crops), and data on illegal killing of waterbirds.

Key sources of information:

- Madsen, J., Bunnefeld, N., Nagy, S., Griffin, C., Defos du Rau, P., Mondain-Monval, J.Y., Hearn, R., Czajkowski, A., Grauer, A., Merkel, F.R., Williams, J.H., Alhainen, M., Guillemain, M., Middleton, A., Christensen, T.K. & Noe, O. 2015. Guidelines on Sustainable Harvest of Migratory Waterbirds. AEWA Conservation Guidelines No. 5, AEWA Technical Series No. 62. Bonn, Germany. https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/publication/ts62_cg5_sustainable_harvest_guidelines_0.pdf

4. Management of the project

In order to benefit from the wide geographic and other experience of members, observers and other experts of AEWA’s Technical Committee (TC), the work will be steered by a Project Advisory Group established by the TC (although ultimately project management is the responsibility of the AEWA Secretariat).

This Advisory Group will be available to guide the contractors at any time through the project’s duration – including establishing relations with other stakeholders as necessary and appropriate, and in providing peer review of both draft and final products as specified above.

Timelines should allow for time to convene at least four meetings of the Project Advisory Group indicatively timed, after project commencement, as follows:

1. After [3] months with the purpose of producing an assessment of harvest survey methods, the collection of existing data, and case-studies for Modules 1, 2 and 3;
2. After [5] months with the purpose of reviewing the planned content and format of reports for Modules 4, 5, 6,7, and 8;
3. After [8] months to review the draft toolkit, guidance and recommendations for Modules 4, 5, 6,7, and 8;
4. After [12] months to review the draft final documents and summary reports for all modules;

Other meetings may be convened at either the request of the contractor, the Project Advisory Group or the Secretariat.

The contractor shall be responsible for circulation of the agenda and papers for these meetings as well as taking minutes drafts of which will be circulated within a month of each meeting.

Contacts with AEWA National Focal points will be facilitated by the AEWA Secretariat, as required.

5. Duration of the project

The work will be conducted over a one-year period. A final report shall be delivered by 28 February 2025.