

**1st MEETING of the COMMITTEE for CAPTIVE BREEDING,
REINTRODUCTION and SUPPLEMENTATION of LESSER WHITE-
FRONTED GEESE in FENNOSCANDIA**
7 - 8 May 2008, Bonn, Germany

MEETING REPORT



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Welcome and introductions

Bert Lenten opened the meeting by welcoming the representatives from all four countries and the genetics expert from Finland. He announced that the German colleague from the Agency for Nature Conservation would join the meeting later that day and that the German NGO 'Aktion Zwerggans (AZ)' would provide three short updates on their activities during a side session directly after the first meeting day.

Continuous discussions over past decennia on the approaches to improve the conservation status of Lesser White-fronted Geese in Fennoscandia led to negotiations between the countries present in January 2007. The negotiations resulted in a first agreement between the countries on the conservation of LWfG population in Fennoscandia. The AEWa Secretariat is now following up the negotiations with the establishment of (1) a Committee focusing on reintroduction, captive breeding and supplementation activities in Fennoscandia (also called 'Recap Committee') and (2) a Working Group dealing with the implementation of the Single Species Action Plan for the LWfG in the AEWa Area. This meeting could therefore be the start of a new era for the Lesser White-fronted Goose conservation.

The draft Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) for the species has been revised to incorporate changes according to the 2007 negotiation agreements. This third and final draft was announced to be sent out to all 22 identified Range States directly following this meeting. Comments on the draft would be requested by 4 July 2008.

The **German** delegate cordially welcomed the participants and encouraged all participants to contribute to a fruitful meeting.

Approval of Meeting Objectives (Document LwfG Recap 1.2)

The document 'introduction' and the meeting objectives were introduced by the Secretariat.

Sweden was concerned about its ability to approve the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure in their current form. Sweden furthermore noted that the document LWfG Recap 1.6 "Extract from the latest draft of the LWfG Single Species Action Plan" was received too late to enable an in-depth review.

Germany suggested a rewording in the introduction document to reflect that the LWfG reintroduction project was proposed by the NGO Aktion Zwerggans (page 2/line 3) and that this was not a state-driven project. Germany also suggested including a footnote about its observer status.

<p>The Committee agreed to the proposed membership of 3 members (Finland, Norway, Sweden) and 1 observer (Germany) with an option to periodically review the membership. The meeting appointed Bert Lenten of the AEWa Secretariat to chair this first meeting. The introduction document and meeting objectives were approved taking note of Sweden's concerns.</p>
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Approval of Agenda & Preliminary Work Programme (Doc LWfG Recap 1.3)

The Secretariat introduced the latest changes to the work programme: (1) inclusion of the NGO side event on day one and (2) move of the comments by the Finnish genetics expert and associated discussions of the Pedall *et al.* manuscript to day two. (3) The approval of the revised Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure, according to participants' comments from day one, was added to the agenda for day two.

The agenda & preliminary work programme was adopted by the meeting.

Introduction of draft Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure

The **Secretariat** introduced the draft Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure. The objectives of the Committee ToR were formulated to address the relevant aspects outlined in the SSAP, while the principles referred to the results from the AEWa negotiation mission in January 2007. Comments on the text were invited page by page. Upon request, the Secretariat informed Sweden of the minor changes between the versions of 7 and 21 April.

Sweden noted that during the negotiations in 2007 Sweden had expressed a different vision for the Committee than was now reflected in the ToR. Accordingly, Sweden requested that the report of this meeting would reflect the different views of the members on the function and mandate of this Committee.

The Chair confirmed that different views of participants would be reflected in the report of the meeting. All proposed changes have furthermore been incorporated in the final version 'LWfG Recap 1.4 rev2' and 'LWfG Recap 1.5 rev2' as attached in Annex 2 of this report.

Review of Terms of Reference (ToR) (Doc LWfG Recap 1.4)

Description and Role of the Committee (Paragraph 1 and 2, Page 1)

In **Sweden's** view the Committee should have no steering character and therefore no authority to make enforceable decisions. The two documents provided however seemed more binding. In Sweden's view, the Committee should be restricted to scientifically-based discussions and function as a 'scientific reference group'. The guiding document for its work should be the LWfG SSAP¹, if necessary accompanied by advisory guidelines for its implementation. The Committee should be open to different views and it should allow those views to be reflected throughout the Committee's meetings and work. Consequently, Sweden would like to see that all consensus-based and decision-making references for action are taken out of the document, for example, 'agreed' should be replaced by the wording 'exchange of information' to reflect that not all actions may be agreed and consensus-based.

Norway was concerned that the changes proposed by Sweden would make the Committee vague and too open to encourage meaningful action. For Norway the 'natural' starting point for this Committee was to focus on the conservation of the wild population. The reasons were that Norway could not pass any instructions upon Sweden regarding their ongoing national breeding activities, but also that it would need time to look at the genetic issues and to examine the feasibilities of introducing new birds and/or of implementing a joint programme. Norway hoped that the documents presented would be finalised so that they can provide guidance for the future work of the Committee. In the interest of developing this new cooperation (and the Committee as its mechanism), there was a need for everyone involved to make compromises. The Committee's operational term should be defined and agreed so that the two documents can be applied to it, and a date could be set for their next revision.

The CMS Scientific Council's recommendations could provide appropriate agreed guidance for this Committee so that further guidelines might not be necessary.

Norway agreed that it is important to regularly exchange information and country updates. Furthermore it would be necessary to establish a co-financing mechanism and keep the international focus through pooled resources to engage e.g. foreign ministries and programmes, and in order to achieve this, the group would need to agree on certain activities.

¹ The "International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose, *Anser erythropus* (Western Palearctic Population) is an internationally agreed, legally non-binding framework for action to protect the population of this threatened species from further decline.

Specifically referring to the text, Norway suggested 'future agreed action' since there were no joint or agreed actions to date.

The Chair recommended that the Committee should at least aim at reaching 'agreement' on some of the operational activities. The aim of this coordinated group should be to reach consensus and this should be adequately reflected in the document.

Germany suggested the wording: '...platform for exchange of information and coordination and, if possible, to reach agreement on existing and forthcoming actions'

In paragraph 2, **Sweden** requested to delete the wording 'agreed'. This was acceptable to **Norway** and confirmed by **the Secretariat**.

General: the Committee agreed that it should strive towards agreement and consensus-finding during its regular information exchanges.
Paragraph 1/1: participants agreed that the Committee's role as 'a platform for agreed action' would be replaced by 'a platform for exchange of information and for coordination and, if possible, future agreed action between Range States [...]'.
Paragraph 2/1: 'the role of the Committee is to provide practical guidance in the form of recommendations on the issues of captive breeding, [...]' was agreed by the meeting.

Definition of 'Fennoscandian population' (Paragraph 3, Page 1)

Sweden requested clarification on the definition of "Fennoscandian population". Noting that Sweden's conservation target for the population was not reintroduction but supplementation, the Swedish population should be seen as a supplemented population breeding in Sweden. It therefore would be part of the wild Fennoscandian population. The given definition implies that conservation efforts only refer to the population breeding in Norway. This should be amended to ensure conservation efforts for both populations on the western migration route.

The Secretariat explained that the wording of 'free-flying' for the supplemented Swedish population was in accordance with the report of the AEWA negotiation mission. The report made a distinction between 'the wild Fennoscandian population', 'the Swedish free-flying stock' and 'the Swedish captive breeding stocks'. If this should be changed it would need a new agreement within this group.

Finland noted that the sentence was interpreted too narrowly by Sweden, and that Sweden's activities were already included in the sentence. Supplementation would be considered as a viable option to rescue the Fennoscandian population - so the sentence was fine as it was.

Paragraph 3/1: the chair concluded that a footnote would explain that, for the purpose of this Committee, the wild Fennoscandian population includes the wild Fennoscandian population and the Swedish free-flying population (of captive origin).

Composition of the Committee, Germany's observer status (Paragraph 4, Page 1)

Germany confirmed its suggestion to sit on the Committee as an observer during an initial phase, thereby giving an emphasis on the breeding Range States to the Fennoscandian population. Germany welcomed that this observer status, and if applicable the status of other Range States to the population, would be reviewed after a first phase of Committee activities and in case the situation changes due to introduction activities.

Paragraph 4/1: Germany's observer status was agreed and a footnote would explain that the status is subject to review.

Overall goal and objectives (Paragraph 1, Page 2)

The Secretariat explained that the objectives closely link with the thematically related results from the SSAP [so-called 'results area 4'] and suggested including a reference to previous releases in objective 1.

Sweden noted that it could not provide comments on the outlined objectives before having completed the review of the draft SSAP document.

Paragraph 1/2: the objectives of the ToR were approved (until further notice of urgent change) and a reference to past releases was added for objective 1 ('No introgression of DNA from other goose species into the wild population occurs as a result of past and further releases').

Principles (Paragraph 2 a-g, Page 2 and 3)

- Pragmatic advice

Sweden reiterated concerns over the wordings of 'agreed advice'; 'New measures shall be introduced *only after consensus* by the Committee' which would limit the Committee to finding consensus; and 'if necessary, agreed recommendations *must* be modified or withdrawn over time' which would bear a danger of forcing the work of the member states into a certain direction. Access to information should be encouraged, but could not be ensured by the participating countries (i.e. '*must* have access').

Norway stated its disagreement with the scope of changes and modifications suggested by Sweden, and the direction to structure the cooperation in a much more open way than it was originally foreseen. Norway had aimed for a closer cooperation with Sweden across all the relevant fields – and especially including the financial aspects of this cooperation. The meaning of the paragraph could be re-written to leave Sweden more flexibility and fewer obligations, but the focus should be maintained on what *should* be done.

Paragraph 2a-c/2: the meeting agreed that the Committee would provide an exchange mechanism. Accordingly, 'the Committee should provide pragmatic advice on [...]' was kept and 'clear and agreed' was deleted. The reference of 'new measures shall be introduced only after consensus [...]' was also deleted.

- Openness & transparency

Sweden saw no need to mention that 'consequences of recommendations must be monitored'. Without an obligation towards decision-making, the monitoring burden would make it even harder to reach voluntarily agreed recommendations.

The Secretariat pointed out that the sentence only included the possibility of agreed recommendations. In the case that recommendations were made by the Committee, it could only be beneficial to monitor whether they had been taken into account and, if necessary, to allow for their withdrawal or modification.

Norway agreed that the principles of monitoring and adaptability should be kept.

Paragraph 2d/2: the meeting agreed that the sentence would keep the reference to monitoring and 'to allow, if necessary, recommendations to be modified or withdrawn over time'.

- Data and information sharing

Finland inquired about what kind of agreements could be made between scientists and government on the sharing of data and information *if no funding was involved* to oblige scientists to hand out their information. Finland also noted that legal aspects of binding

agreements on the sharing of data between individual scientists or between scientists and governments should be explored.

The Secretariat explained that the paragraph provides a call for voluntary information while there could not be any binding request for data from scientists. It should however be conveyed that all experts involved should *strive* to share as much data as possible in the interest of transparency and early conservation guidance.

Norway agreed and suggested that the paragraph could emphasize the *intent* to share data with the Committee only for information purposes and not for commercial use or publishing. In principle all countries should wish to share information as quickly as possible whenever there are results and reports available, and that the Committee would function as a ‘clearing house mechanism’.

Sweden suggested the wording ‘the Committee strives to have access to the relevant information [...]’

Germany suggested the wording ‘interested parties should facilitate the access to the relevant information [...]’

Paragraph 2f/2: the meeting agreed on changes towards ‘the interested parties should facilitate access to information from the respective experts’, to ‘strive to function as a clearing house mechanism’. It would also refer to population ‘decline’ instead of ‘depletion’ in paragraph 2g/2.

Scope (Paragraph 3 a-i, Pages 3 and 4)

- Focus on breeding programmes

Sweden prioritised the biggest problem for the population to be the rate of population decline and therefore stressed that only working on the breeding could not assure species recovery. Breeding programmes should thus not be the only strategy applied.

The Chair confirmed that the focus of AEWA’s work was indeed the conservation of the species along its flyways; it is not governing over breeding programmes.

Norway inquired about the difference between a LWfG Range State and the geographic delineation for the AEWA agreement area. The paragraph should reflect what the term range state means for AEWA and link it to the scope of the SSAP.

The Secretariat clarified that any recommendations by this Committee on the reintroduction and captive breeding issue should concern only the four participating states, the direct reference to all range states should be deleted to avoid potential confusion. Adequate information and guidance could be conveyed to the International Working Group to assure a coherent implementation of the SSAP. Overall the SSAP identifies and addresses 22 Range States to the Palaearctic population of LWfG, i.e. including some states which are not parties to AEWA but inside of the agreement area.

Germany suggested that the definition of ‘range state’ in paragraph (a) should be turned into ‘advice by the breeding range states of the Fennoscandian population [...] with support from other range states’.

Sweden stated that the Committee reference of ‘prescriptive body’ and that guidance on issues ‘jointly’ considered necessary should be deleted.

Paragraph 3 a-b/3: the meeting agreed on ‘breeding range states and ‘support from other range states’ and on the rewording of the contribution to the SSAP.

Paragraph 3c/4: the meeting agreed to take out ‘prescriptive’ and ‘jointly’.

- Reference to the CMS Council recommendations

Sweden reiterated the critical importance for this Committee to use the scientific codes of conduct and to assure full working transparency – which had been one of the main outcomes from the 2007 negotiations.

Sweden criticised the recommendations passed by the CMS Scientific Council in 2005 for being non-transparent and advised to delete the reference from the document. For the CMS Scientific Council meeting Robert Lacy was asked to give his opinion on the issue as an independent genetic expert. Despite the late receipt of the expert opinion, the process of discussing this information had lacked transparency which again hindered Sweden in its contribution during the meeting. Additionally, Sweden had noticed in 2005 that the recommendations did not only focus on the scientific issues but also on the political issues in this recommendation. In following discussions Sweden explained that the CMS Scientific Council’s recommendation to remove the birds released in Sweden was already outdated. The validity of the recommendation was therefore not agreeable to them.

Norway pointed out that one needed to understand the work and functionalities of the CMS Scientific Council. The members of the Council were scientists, including representatives from Sweden and Norway, and there were a number of observers. The Council was indeed an independent unit and as such should be seen as being impartial. Norway was well prepared for the mentioned meeting in 2005 and actively took part in the debates. Norway cautioned that it would not go down well with the CMS Scientific Council to claim their non-transparency. Being a member to the Council, Sweden has had every chance to closely follow that meeting. The Council has made its statement and all those present at the meeting have supported the recommendation so it was adopted without objections.

The Secretariat noted that it was aware of Sweden’s comments which were expressed *post factum* of the respective meeting (in response to the draft SSAP which reflected those recommendations). Apparently the scientists at the meeting felt that the recommendations were not politically compromised. It clarified that Lacy’s statement was distributed straight away at the meeting despite its late arrival, that everyone had equal access to the documents, and that no other criticism of the process had been received. Equal chances to object and affect the results at the meeting have been given.

Finland suggested keeping the reference to CMS Scientific Council recommendation with regard to those parts which are still valid and which have therefore not been taken up again during the country negotiations. The CMS Scientific Council recommendation was thus not completely outdated.

The Chair confirmed that the negotiation meetings in 2007 agreed on a defined and limited number of issues, and that the scope of the CMS Scientific Council recommendation would be broader. He confirmed that Sweden’s criticism would be included in the report, and that the text should refer to the negotiation agreement (primary reference) and the CMS Scientific Council recommendation (outstanding issues).

Paragraph 3d/4: the meeting agreed to include as the primary reference the negotiation agreement found in January 2007, taking into account that the agreement deviated slightly from the 2005 CMS Scientific Council recommendation; the reference to the Council’s recommendation would be kept while noting that it has been ‘partly amended by the agreement reached by the countries in 2007’. Sweden’s objections towards this inclusion would be reflected in the minutes.

Responsibilities and tasks of the Committee (Paragraph 4 a-d, Pages 4 and 5)

Sweden suggested that captive breeding should only form ‘part of’ a strategy for securing the long-term survival of the population. Second, activities should not only focus on the building of a captive breeding stock in Norway but also in other countries. Sweden inquired if Norway or Sweden should keep the breeding stock in the future. Third, Sweden commented that the new captive breeding programme should only use birds of the remnant wild population in Norway (i.e. not in Russia). Lastly, reference should be made only to the Swedish free-flying population, while deleting ‘of introduced birds’.

The Secretariat clarified that according to the 2007 negotiations, Norway may consider to establish another captive breeding stock; the reference to Norway should therefore be kept. The second text reference concerns the Swedish captive breeding stock already in place: here the reference to Russian birds could be taken out while keeping the reference exclusively based on wild birds.

Norway added that reference to the ‘remnant wild population in Norway’ does not exclude the use of Russian birds given that there is a certain level of mixing in the populations (See Ruokonen’s findings). Norway will attempt to cooperate with Sweden on this issue.

The Chair agreed by noting that Norway does not intend to introduce birds from Russia, and suggested that the issue would be followed up bilaterally between Norway and Sweden.

Norway cautioned the group about the references to the ‘long-term existence of the Committee’ and about the associated financing role. The preservation of the LWFG in Europe should remain the focus of all Committee efforts.

The Chair agreed to delete the reference to the Committee’s longer-term plans. He stressed that the funding for servicing this Committee came entirely from the Norwegian Government in 2008, and that in future it was expected that other countries would also provide their support.

Paragraph 4a-d/4: the meeting agreed that Norway and Sweden would bilaterally discuss the issue of their respective captive breeding programmes. The references to Norwegian birds and of ‘introduced’ to the Swedish population were deleted. The reference to the Committee’s long-term plans was deleted.

Modus Operandi (Paragraph 6, Page 6)

The Secretariat advised that the drafting and advanced posting of the document Rules of Procedure and Terms of Reference has resulted in some overlap between the otherwise complementing documents.

The meeting agreed to the suggestion by the Secretariat to double-check the potential overlap and to delete respective parts from the section.

The meeting formally approved the Terms of Reference document with all comments previously included.

Review of the Rules of Procedure (RoP) (Doc LWfG Recap 1.5.1)

Rule 2 and 3, Membership, Expert Representation (Page 1 and 2)

Germany suggested the delegations to be ‘from government and/or one thematic expert’, and that ‘each member of the Committee can invite national thematic experts’.

The Secretariat clarified that the 2007 negotiations outlined that the group would be composed of governmental representatives accompanied by invited experts, and that the number of government representatives was the decision of each government. It was asked if observers should be invited for specific inputs to the meeting.

Sweden wished to extend the invitations of observers also by recommendation of one of the Committee members (i.e. ‘the Committee can invite’), while **Germany** suggested the ‘chair invites on behalf of the Committee’

RoP Rule 2 & 3: Each government must be represented at the Committee’s meeting; there is a possibility to bring additional experts in. In the interest of coordination consistency, observer invitations should be sent by the Chair on behalf of the Committee, and the capacity in which the observer is invited should be defined.

Rule 4, Role of the Committee Chair

Sweden encouraged the AEWa Secretariat to provide chairmanship for the Committee during its full term. A less favourable alternative for Sweden was a rotating system of chairmanship, e.g. the host country of the respective meeting would provide the chair.

Norway supported the Swedish proposal of AEWa Secretariat chairmanship and asked if the associated work load was acceptable to the AEWa Secretariat. Otherwise it could be distributed, e.g. by re-nomination of the Chair at each meeting.

The Chair noted that this first meeting, should clarify the chairmanship for future meetings. The additional work load of chairing meetings was generally acceptable to AEWa. The Secretariat as an independent entity could be more easily acceptable to all countries to provide the chair. To accommodate flexibility, he suggested that the chairmanship ‘could be reviewed at any time in the future’.

- Emergency situations

Sweden suggested deleting the paragraph on emerging situations (Rule 4.7) because it was unclear what potential emergencies there might be for an advisory Committee.

Finland stated that during an emergency situation such as an oil spill, birds would need to be taken into captivity to minimise the risk of increased mortalities. Coordinated action between countries could thereby be guaranteed.

Sweden responded that in such cases all decisions should be taken by the respective country and not by the Committee.

The Chair explained that emergency actions were covered under the AEWa Agreement text which entitled the Secretariat to convene emergency meetings.

RoP Rule 4: the text on convening of a meeting in case of emergencies was deleted.

Rule 6, Frequency of meetings, reporting matters

Norway wished the Committee to meet more frequently than just once every two years. Norway's national action plan would benefit from Committee advice for its rapid implementation. Norway suggested the next meeting to take place in November this year to follow up on the first Committee meeting as soon as possible. Norway furthermore noted the financial challenge of holding meetings back to back with the International Working Group meetings.

The Secretariat explained that the two year intervals marked the minimum frequency and that ad hoc meetings held back to back with the International LWfG Working Group could supplement these discussions. More frequent meetings were acceptable, while taking note of the increased workload for the Secretariat and the risk that other related tasks might need to be compromised.

Sweden agreed with Norway and suggested that email communications could also be used to lower the associated costs and time.

The Chair noted the call from delegations for more frequent meetings. He pointed at the busy summer/autumn months for the Secretariat and recommended early 2009 as a potential date. The first meeting of the bigger Working Group was planned for the first half of 2009 after the adoption of the SSAP in September.

RoP Rule 6: The meeting welcomed the invitation by Norway to hold the next meeting in Trondheim in November 2008 and agreed the Committee to decide at the end of each meeting upon the date and venue for the next meeting. The meeting agreed that back-to-back meetings with the International working Group would only be held if *overall* costs could be saved.

Rules 6 and 7, Voting

Sweden requested to delete the quorum reference and that Rules 7.2 and 7.3 on voting processes, while reiterating that Sweden was not in a position to agree on any binding decision-making power of the group. 'Strives to reach agreement' was suggested as a compromise.

The Secretariat confirmed that Sweden had objected to the steering role of the Committee before, and that the role of the Committee had remained undefined during the 2007 negotiations.

Norway underlined that it would be wise to have the consensus principle reflected in the text as a justification for the Committee's existence. Every effort should be made to reach agreements. Norway would be supportive of a voting mechanism, but in the current context voting would no longer make sense. Norway's aim at this meeting was to finalise the ToR in order to move into actual activities, and despite a certain disappointment would therefore follow the conditions set by Sweden.

The Chair confirmed that the Committee should seek agreement on all matters of substance, and that consensus should be the ultimate aim while acknowledging that it might not always be feasible.

RoP Rule 7: The meeting agreed that the Committee would be of advisory nature while it should actively seek agreement on all matters of substance with consensus as the driving objective. Voting references were deleted throughout the document.

Rule 8, Information Sharing

The Secretariat noted that external experts could also be invited in their personal capacity.

Rule 11, Entering into force, amendments

Sweden requested that the word 'legal' should be deleted.

The Secretariat noted that any decision for termination should involve more than one member of the Committee.

RoP Rule 11: The meeting agreed to delete 'legal and operational basis' and to add termination on the request 'of at least 2 members of the Committee'

The meeting formally approved the Rules of Procedure document with all comments previously included.

Activity Update Norway (Øystein Storkersen)

Norway confirmed ratification of AEWA in due course to become a full voting party to the Agreement by September 2008. Norway's presentation would focus on new initiatives rather than the EU-LIFE project. An updated presentation for distribution would be provided after the meeting.

Presentation: 'LWfG work in Norway'

- The Norwegian National Action Plan has been finalised and 600,000 € have been allocated for its implementation. Norway will, in future, engage personnel for its implementation in close collaboration with the government.
- Future work by Norway should include addressing the threats to LWfG in the wintering areas and focus on a strengthened science base. Monitoring activities in the Norwegian breeding areas were ongoing, although no satellite programmes have been implemented this year. Norway had a good breeding season in 2007, probably as a result of appropriate action on the breeding grounds. The overall population decline was however expected to continue.
- For the wintering grounds, a new charter on hunting has been accepted by the Bern Convention. Norway reported to spend an average 40,000 € in bilateral aid for Russia, e.g. for the establishment of new protected areas in Siberia. The future focus should include a look at how existing sites are managed, monitoring hunting incidents, and building new alliances.
- On the breeding grounds, Norway reported to focus on increasing the breeding success through new and efficient protected areas, active predator control and similar measures.
- Norway stated that it was keen to collaborate with AEWA on the jointly prioritised issues, and that a suitable financing mechanism should be found to complement Norway's contribution

Discussion

It was clarified that the breeding population in 2007 comprised 33 adults arriving in the breeding area and 33 offspring leaving it in the fall (i.e. after potential breeding losses). This would exclude non-breeders who had already left in the summer, thus representing a minimum estimate. [Successful breeders would rather take the direct route to the south and stay in the breeding area until they had moulted. LWfG without chicks / failed breeders were

more likely to fly to northern Russia to moult before they migrate.] The exact number of successful breeders was hard to define.

Norway's Action Plan was available only in Norwegian to date, while a summary was available in English. Norway suggested that the Action Plan could be fully translated and put upon the AEWA website. It was based on the drafted International SSAP.

A discussion on potential project support from the GEF led to the conclusion that the GEF funding was no quick solution. Experiences with the CMS Siberian Crane and AEWA WOW projects showed a number of challenges in getting the projects underway and adequately co-financed. Additionally, the GEF's redefined strategic focus was more favourable (as a tendency) towards cross-cutting development issues.

Norway and the Secretariat agreed to liaise on possible translation and web-posting of the Norwegian Action Plan. Norway would provide the updated presentation to the participants.

Activity Update Sweden (Peter Örn)

Presentation: 'Activity Update Sweden'

- Sweden reported to currently build a new and updated breeding facility on Sweden's west coast (and partly financed by the SEPA). The facility should be well equipped and improved for responsible management, it was planned to be ready by 2010. In the meantime, equipment for the existing facility would be improved.
- A total of 24 wild LWfG had been imported from Russia over past years (6 birds in April 2006; 8 birds in February 2007; 10 birds in December 2007). Since early 2008, negotiations were underway to import another group of birds from Russia by autumn 2008. Sweden confirmed that importing efforts would continue until a sufficiently large breeding stock was established.^{2&3}
- Sweden reported that the National Action Plan for LWfG was currently produced and should be circulated this summer for publishing in autumn 2008. It was confirmed to be in line with the International SSAP.
- The feasibility study for the refinement of the free-flying flock has been started and was at the level of negotiations with potential contractors (i.e. scientists for the genetic analysis⁴) at the time of the 1st Recap Committee meeting. Sweden expected that the study would be ready between autumn 2008 and early spring 2009.
- Sweden compiled LWfG sightings for the period 1960-2008 for publishing by late 2008. In parallel, a species inventory for Lapland 2006-8 was conducted.

Discussion

The exact origin of the birds imported from Russia was inquired but could not be confirmed. Sweden suggested to request and to provide the information as soon as possible. Sweden confirmed that imported birds had been caught in spring and would stem from different clutches. There was no offspring from these imported birds in captivity yet. Sweden

² After the meeting (September 2008), the origin of "most of" the Russian birds was given as "Northern part of Ural, in the region of Komi". Further details were not made available by SEPA at that time.

³ After the meeting SEPA confirmed that the captive birds of wild origin had been genetically tested to determine their sex and to determine the degree of direct genetic relationship between individual birds for breeding purposes. The responsible management capacity would be Nordens Ark in Sweden.

⁴ After the meeting (September 2008) the feasibility study was confirmed to be conducted by Rickard Ottvall, University of Lund, during autumn 2008 for finalization before the end of the year. Contact person at SEPA is Per Sjögren Gulve.

confirmed to re-check and inform the group of any breeding attempts. The breeding facility was financed by the Swedish government, but it was not clear which agency funded the facility.

The group noted that it would be important to monitor closely which individual bird would breed with which other birds. The responsible person for the genetic management of the Russian birds was Professor Michael Wink from Germany. The responsible entity for the management in captivity was not known to Sweden. Clarification and further detail would be forthcoming from Sweden.

Regarding the feasibility study, negotiations with contractors have started and a group of experts has been identified. However, no draft documents have been confirmed to be available yet. Sweden confirmed to share these with the group as soon as they become available.

Sweden would inquire and confirm the exact origin of the imported birds from Russia, and would inform about the status of the feasibility study (e.g. draft terms of reference, contracting documents, interim results). Sweden would furthermore provide information on the financing agency for the breeding facility and on the responsible entity for the management in captivity.

Activity Update Finland (Matti Osara)

Presentation: 'LWfG Goose Update 6.5.08'

- Finland introduced the organisation 'Friends of the LWfG' as a group running captive breeding facilities and reintroduction activities in Finnish Lapland (associated to Barnacle geese as introductions to new flyways). He reported on the disputed release of birds in 2004 and subsequent involvement up to the highest ministerial level. A report has been produced that clarifies the ministries' related policies and activities, including a confirmation of the ban on LWfG releases since 1998, despite the recent findings by Prof. Wink which strongly defended the release of captive birds. Finland summarised that this has been a difficult and highly expensive process.
- Finland has established a National Conservation Act for LWfG which confirms the objectives of the SSAP. The National Action Plan has been finalised by the EU-LIFE project and was available in Finnish. An update within 5 years was envisaged. These policies would continue to be followed by Finland and guarantee that the SSAP would automatically be verified
- The status of almost all the former breeding sites of LWfG in Finland was protected (including a management plan), or at least planned to be fully protected by 2010.
- Finland's activities include predator control, tourism management, hunting closures, cooperation with farmers. Hunting statistics in the breeding areas would need further improvement, e.g. by banning all hunting when LWfG were present in north Lapland. The Action Plan included detailed actions for the case that breeding LWfG would be found again in Finland
- Captive breeding and reintroduction ranged among one of many actions to be addressed, but Finland does not see a need for reintroduction in the near future. Continued research would be critically needed, together with the need to acquire the associated funds.

Discussion

Finland explained that the 'Friends of LWfG' were a small group of circa 20 active members and that the Finnish cooperation with Russia was exclusively managed by the Ministry

through the EU LIFE project. Joint Finnish-Russian research in a crucial area for Fennoscandian birds was considered, despite the experience that the Russian-Finnish cooperation had suffered through the reintroduction issues.

The website of the EU-LIFE project included translated sections of the Finnish National Action Plan (www.piskula.net) and was continuously updated. The official project period was 2005-2009, but the work of the EU-LIFE project could hopefully be continued after 2009 with the help of partner countries or the EU.

The Secretariat will provide printed copies of all the available presentations to the participants during the course of the meeting.

Activity Update Germany (Oliver Schall)

Presentation

- Germany reported on its perspective and first priority which was to assure the genetic purity of the captive LWfG selected for release before formal endorsement of any project. Germany saw its contribution in the role of mediator with the German NGO initiative and not of a party (now reflected in the observer status).
- The biggest need was seen to clarify the scientific basis and evidence. The reason why there was no official scientific view from Germany to date was understaffing at the 'Federal Agency for Nature Conservation'. However, a first literature review undertaken confirmed that LWfG regularly occurred in the Lower Rhine area in a transboundary ecological zone close to the Dutch border. Accordingly, LWfG had been recorded in an area close to the border with the Netherlands before the Swedish reintroductions in the 1990s (references: study by Mildenerger in Sovon Atlas of birds in the Netherlands).
- Financially: the German state has not contributed money to the 'Aktion Zwerggans' pilot project despite two applications made to BMU and the 'Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt'. Germany's response was that support should not be considered without a supportive recommendation from this Committee. Currently, the NGOs main sponsor is the 'Allianz' Insurance Group.
- Politically: there are split conceptions of the pilot project within Germany between groups of NGOs, and a reflection of their discussions can also be found at the state agencies. BMU organised meetings with 'Aktion Zwerggans' in the past and convened the need for an international consensus and Committee guidance before project endorsement. Additional evidence was requested to assure genetic purity which Germany considers as the basis for all further decisions.

Discussion

Participants recommended that it would be helpful if an official paper outlined the evidence on the former flyway crossing the Lower Rhine area. Johann Mooij was mentioned as the reference person, and it was explained that findings of the review had been presented during a meeting in Xanten in 2007. It would be welcomed if the proceedings from this meeting were available and peer-reviewed with the necessary scrutiny so that they can provide sufficient level of evidence. It was understood that individual LWfG had been flying to the area together with other flocks, but seemed not possible to assure whether these individuals originated from the Fennoscandian population (or e.g. from Russia).

Comments on the manuscript by Pedall *et al.*

The Chair explained that the paper by Pedall *et al.* has not been published yet but was scheduled to appear in the journal 'Die Vogelwarte' as part of a special edition covering the proceedings of the Xanten Meeting. It appeared not to be a journal which was usually peer-reviewed by an independent research consortium.

Participants commented that it would be preferential for this debate if the paper was finalised and reviewed for inclusion in a high-impact science paper such as e.g. 'Conservation Genetics'. The group was unclear whether the paper had been reviewed by outside genetic experts in the publishing process, but if such reviews had been done it would benefit the discussion if they were available to the group.

Presentation by the genetics expert on the manuscript of Pedall *et al.* (version from 4.4.08) (Minna Ruokonen)

Finland concluded in its review that the study must have some methodological problems. It was also noted that the results had not been presented by the authors on the previous evening's side event.

To review the findings of the manuscript, 75 captive LWfG were studied using two different genetic markers. It revealed that no common mitochondrial DNA had been found between the captive birds and the wild Russian birds and that there was no obvious explanation for this. The study by Pedall *et al.* using microsatellite markers found 8% hybridisation in the German captive stock while the proportion of hybrids in the Swedish captive stocks was only 4% (also using microsatellite markers), suggesting that the hybridisation problem is more severe in the German LWfG in captivity. It was concluded that the data might be deficient or that problems could have occurred with e.g. the PCR amplification. Further detail is given in the two Finnish review papers.

Finland's scientific recommendation was that other primers should be used to address the methodological issues. The Pedall *et al.* data should be excluded from the discussion until the issues have been clarified and, if possible, until the published study has been examined by an independent expert.

Overall Discussion

It was noted that the data presented by Michael Wink the previous evening was new to the Committee. The data had implied that the birds in eastern German breeding stations were closer related to wild Russian birds (probably because of the German history), and that there were more genetic differences to the Fennoscandian captive birds which had shown clear signs of hybridisation. Contrary to this, Finland's analysis of mtDNA from captive bred birds of German origin showed that the birds are different from the Russian wild birds (analysis based on information previously provided by Prof. Wink). The group noted that two different questions were discussed - 1. Are there signs of hybridisation in the German breeding stock? 2. Are there similarities between the German captive birds and the Russian wild birds? Two different methods (microsatellites and mtDNA) were applied in the Pedall *et al.* study, but the results of the two methods were not interlinked according to the manuscript.

A paper on the level of mixing between the Russian and Fennoscandian populations could provide further clarification, but it appeared that there is significant natural pairing of Russian males with Fennoscandian females. This speaks in favour of using Russian birds for supplementation of the Fennoscandian population.

Country by country, the group noted their concerns about starting any new reintroduction activities already in 2008 because it could not be assured that birds are genetically pure. Participants' written comments on the manuscript by Pedall *et al.* implied that none of the countries could agree to its findings without objections. An endorsement of the current manuscript was furthermore difficult because it remained unconfirmed whether the new work provided by Wink *et al.* would be included before publishing. New data could not be evaluated by each of the countries on a rolling basis, but should be captured by an independent genetic evaluation. In consequence, it would not be advisable to endorse the use of captive birds without full scientific evidence of genetic purity.

The meeting concluded in the following that it would confirm its previous recommendation of not using the current birds in captivity before an independent evaluation is carried out and its results are presented. The additional costs incurred in such an evaluation needed to be estimated on the basis of study scope and requirements, and it would also need time to find and engage an independent expert whose name will not be communicated. If new data becomes available and has been captured in the results of that review the Committee could reconsider its recommendation.

It was discussed whether in the future it would be feasible to use Norwegian rather than Russian birds for supplementation in the context of an intensified Fennoscandian cooperation. Sweden intended to continue its supplementation activities with birds of Russian wild origin, and declared a clear willingness to cooperate on captive breeding and release issues with Norway. A minimum of interference in the Norwegian breeding population should meanwhile be assured. The Committee also confirmed that its activities would focus on the free-flying birds.

The question was raised whether the flyway of the free-flying Swedish population and the planned flyway of the AZ pilot project have a potential to merge. In this case, supplementation would only make sense after a refinement of the Swedish population, and the feasibility for such a refinement should be assessed first.

The impact of an awareness raising project and increased media attention such as the AZ project was discussed. There could be a good impact for increased conservation activity, but again it makes clear that it must be done in the right way, otherwise media attention on the failure of the project would be highly counter-productive.

The meeting agreed on the following 2 recommendations:

1. Based on the current level of information, the Committee cannot endorse a recommendation to use the current captive birds in Germany for reintroduction activities. More reliable information and solid evidence will be needed for the group of countries to endorse reintroduction activities such as those presented by the German NGO.
2. An independent evaluation should be carried out that should include, but not be limited to, the final published report by Pedall *et al.* The Secretariat shall arrange for the evaluation, taking into account the time, financing and Committee guidance needed.

Result Area 4' of the draft Single Species Action Plan (LWfG Recap 1.6)

The extract from the SSAP was introduced and participants' comments were invited on any major issues or aspects which might endanger the swift adoption of the SSAP. It was explained that this session was an opportunity for the group to flag issues for clarification before the official consultation with all 22 range states.

Paragraph 7/12 of the document stated that 'implementation of the pilot experimental project of the NGO 'Aktion Zwerggans' will be postponed by 3 years'⁵ and that 'it will be subject to consideration' by this Committee. The postponement period was furthermore related to the availability of birds with genetically approved composition. At the time it was thought that three years might be a feasible timeframe, but breeding attempts of the 24 birds imported from Russia suggested otherwise. The meeting subsequently agreed that it would be more appropriate not to stick to a fixed 3-year timeframe, but to use 'as soon as possible' instead.

The meeting agreed on a replacement of the three year postponement period with 'as soon as sufficient birds of proven genetic purity are available'⁶ in a footnote. It would also mention that an endorsement for use of any captive bred birds depended on the outcomes of an independent genetic evaluation in addition to this. Participants offered to send any further comments by email as part of the official country response due by 4 July.

Group discussion on Committee Activities

The Secretariat introduced the brainstorming session which aimed at capturing ideas on the Committee's priority tasks for the first phase of its work (until the 2nd Recap Committee meeting). All suggestions were discussed and clustered into a sequence of prioritised action points, as outlined below.

Priority: Commission an Independent Scientific Review on LWfG Genetics

1. Commission an independent scientific review of existing genetic publications. The review should include the Pedall *et al.* manuscript within a review of the "bigger picture" of the relevant literature. The extent of the review will be determined by the type of advice expected by the Committee.
2. Compile an overview and reference list of methods and indicators used for genetic scientific assessments.

Action1: Kirsten Martin (AEWA) elaborates the draft ToR based on input (e.g. desired gist, outcomes) from the Committee, and circulates the ToR for Committee approval.
Action2: Minna Ruokonen (Finland) provides a short methodological overview on genetic assessments for the next Committee meeting.

Guidance on the Development & Management of Reintroduction Programmes

3. Draw guidance from lessons learned around the world on the use and impact of captive-bred birds, as well as on the challenges and potential to supplement wild populations.

⁵ The three year period started when the agreement entered into effect (6 Nov 2007).

⁶ After the meeting (September 2008) Germany suggested to add "from the Russian wild population" as additional criteria for the origin of birds with proven genetic purity.

4. Assessment and identification of “Best Practice” guidance on how to manage captive populations [possibly supported by IUCN?].
5. Assessment and identification of “Best Practice” of different reintroduction actions, and of guidance on their development.
6. Carry out a ‘genetic review’ of wild birds from Russia and Norway, to examine the costs, risks and benefits of mixing the Russian and Fennoscandian wild birds/ estimate their suitability and/ or the potential effect of their use in captive breeding. An expert review of the literature might help to approach this issue and discuss the theories, while otherwise it is difficult to address. A common purpose of this review should be confirmed by all participants and will be addressed in the context of commissioning the study.
7. Carry out a review and/ or feasibility study for the refinement of the Swedish population. The study is ready to start and due to confirmation by the Swedish Authorities at the time of the meeting.
8. Feasibility study: Literature research for a feasibility study on the use of wild birds from Norway. Such a feasibility study should aim to include guidance on the “threshold” when taking Norwegian birds into captivity is necessary, and also define the “minimum viable population” when reintroduction activities are necessary.
9. Practical cooperation in captive breeding programmes, and cooperative satellite studies of birds in the wild.

Action3: Bert Lenten (AEWA) inquires whether an experienced institution can provide a relevant guideline and reports back at the next Committee meeting.

Action4: Bert Lenten (AEWA) contacts WAZA and/or EAZA regarding this and reports back at the next Committee meeting.

Action5: Norway, Sweden, Finland and Germany submit their plans and intentions for breeding and introduction programmes to the AEWA Secretariat for a more detailed discussion at the next Committee meeting (as the basis for developing guidelines and/or recommendations).

Action6: Experts from Nordic countries should try to address this as far as possible, and contact is Minna Ruokonen so she can report back at the next Committee meeting.

Action7: Peter Örn (Sweden) reports back on most recent information and results of the Swedish feasibility studies at the next Committee meeting. As soon as the report from this study is available he makes it available to the Committee.

Action8: Norway provides a review and Øystein Storkersen reports back in 2009.

Action9: Norway and Sweden report on suggestions and progress made on this point at the next Committee meeting.

Advice to Range States and the International LWFG Working Group

10. Identification of issues from the Int’l Single Species Action Plan that require international cooperation
11. Establish an authoritative instrument to stop environmentally harmful actions for LWfG at a national level. Support could be provided, for example, through related amendments of the AEWA Action Plan.
12. Identify the most critical issues to LWfG conservation at a national scale; develop a mechanism for annual progress reporting [thereby allowing the group to function as a corrective instrument].

13. Carry out an independent scientific review with the aim of ranking the identified threats to LWfG by their priority.

14. Prepare a strategy that addresses hunting as the most imminent threat, and develop a proposal for action to protect Eastern Flyway stepping sites for consideration by the Int'l Working Group.

15. Provide coordinated input to the Int'l Working Group focused at improving the situation for LWfG in: Kazakhstan, Russia, and Greece.

16. Develop a 'PR Strategy' to raise coordinated awareness of LWfG and challenges to its conservation.

Action 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15: Bert Lenten (AEWA) convenes the points 13 to 15 the LWfG Int'l Working Group at their first meeting and asks for feedback from the respective states.
Action 16: Kirsten Martin (AEWA) provides a drafted strategy (incl. rough cost estimates) for discussion at the next Committee meeting. Oliver Schall (Germany) double-checks his offer that the BMU printers could be used for colour-printing of posters and flyers.

Fundraising

17. Map the funding mechanisms in Nordic countries.

Action: Kirsten Martin (AEWA) contacts the Committee members for their specific suggestions regarding funding and fundraising opportunities.

Next Steps

The Chair thanked Norway for funding the post of coordinator and called upon other countries to considering an adequate co-financing scheme. Finland announced a contribution of 10,000 € to the LWfG coordination effort. The Chair thanked Finland for this good signal and announced that a list of proposed activities would be produced for the consideration of additional funding contributions.

The most cost-effective way for SSAP implementation was discussed, i.e. whether a big group meeting, one-to-one country discussions, or combining the Int'l Working Group with a meeting of the Bern Convention would be most effective. To kick-start the SSAP implementation and gain the necessary momentum with the crucial eastern range states, a Working Group meeting was considered relevant.

The meeting agreed that a list of funding suggestions would be produced on the basis of the activities list, including estimates for implementation and coordination costs.
The Committee agreed that it would keep exploring cost-effective ways to convene a meeting of LWfG range states, noting that the implementation of the SSAP will need continued funding for coordination and face-to-face activities. The Secretariat would liaise with the countries involved.

Norway announced that the next Recap Committee could be convened in November 2008 in Trondheim, and that a suitable date would be found in liaison with the Secretariat. A side session at the upcoming 4th Meeting of the Parties in September could also be organised upon country initiative.

A meeting of the International LWfG Working Group was envisaged for early 2009 and would depend on available funding and on the adoption of the SSAP in September.

Meeting Summary and Conclusion

The Chair summarised that the objectives set forth for the meeting have been met and that a number of tangible outputs have been produced. An approved framework for operation was now in place with the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure documents. A priority list with timelines and responsibilities has also been developed. He confirmed that the documents would be finalised and circulated as soon as possible for follow up on the respective activities.

This first meeting has agreed on two important recommendations. First, the current level of information was considered insufficient for an endorsement of the use of the current captive birds in Germany. More reliable information and solid evidence was needed before carrying out further reintroduction or supplementation activities. And secondly, the Committee should commission an independent study to evaluate, amongst others, the final published paper by Pedall *et al.*

The Chair thanked the participants for their excellent inputs and contributions during good discussions and an overall productive meeting. He appreciated the valuable information exchanges between the countries present and acknowledged the opportunity to listen to the plans and objectives of 'Aktion Zwerggans'. Finland's announcement to contribute 10,000 € to the LWfG coordination effort was timely and appreciated; he also thanked Norway for the generous support to coordinate this effort.

In his outlook the Chair noted that more meetings will be needed in the future to build on this new collaboration and thanked Norway for the invitation to host the next Committee meeting in November.

Overview of Decisions and Recommendations

A. The Committee passed the following two recommendations at its first meeting:

1. Based on the current level of information, the Committee cannot endorse a recommendation to use the current captive birds in Germany for reintroduction activities. More reliable information and solid evidence will be needed for the group of countries to endorse reintroduction activities such as those presented by the German NGO.
2. An independent evaluation should be carried out that should include, but not be limited to, the final published paper by Pedall *et al.* The Secretariat shall arrange for the evaluation, taking into account the time, financing and Committee guidance needed.

B. Clustered by thematic area, the Committee agreed on the following points:

Membership & Participation

- The Committee reviewed the membership to be comprised of the breeding range states to the Fennoscandian population (Finland, Norway, and Sweden). The meeting agreed that Germany would be an observer to the Committee for the time being and that the status is subject to review (e.g., ToR Paragraph 3 a-b/3, ToR Paragraph 4/1)
- Governments from each country should be represented at Committee meetings; they are free to bring additional experts as part of their delegation.
- Additional experts should be invited by the Chair on behalf of the Committee; the capacity in which the observer is invited should be defined.

Facilitation

- The meeting objectives were approved and the meeting agenda was adopted.

- In reviewing the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Committee, different views of participants would be reflected in the meeting report. Changes undertaken during the discussions of the documents are furthermore reflected in printed paper for adoption (distributed on meeting day two). The final documents are added in Annex 2 of this report.
- The chair may convene a meeting [...] in case of an emergency was deleted (RoP Rule 4)
- The meeting agreed that a list of funding suggestions would be produced on the basis of the activities list, including estimates for implementation and coordination costs.
- The Committee agreed that it would keep exploring cost-effective ways to convene a meeting of LWfG range states, noting that the implementation of the SSAP will need continued funding for coordination and face-to-face activities. The Secretariat would liaise with the countries involved.

Reference documents & Term

- The primary reference for the Committee would be the report from the 2007 negotiation agreement, taking into account that the agreement deviates slightly from the 2005 CMS Science Council recommendation. The reference to the CMS recommendation should be kept while noting that it has been partly amended by the above mentioned agreement (ToR Paragraph 3d/4)
- The meeting formally approved the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure with all comments previously included (see Annex 2 of this report).
- The meeting agreed to delete the 'legal and operational basis' of the documents, while that termination could be at the request 'of at least 2 members of the Committee' (RoP Rule 11)
- The reference to the Committee's long-term existence was deleted for the chair and facilitators (ToR Paragraph 4a-d/4)

Role & Objectives

- The meeting agreed that the Committee would be of advisory nature while it should actively seek agreement on all matters of substance with consensus as the driving objective. Voting processes would be deleted throughout the document.
- The Committee's role would be 'a platform for exchange of information and for coordination and, if possible, future agreed action between Range States [...]' (ToR Paragraph 1/1).
- The role of the Committee was furthermore to provide practical guidance in the form of recommendations on the issues of captive breeding (ToR Paragraph 2/1).
- The Committee will provide an exchange mechanism and 'should provide pragmatic advice'. (ToR Paragraph 2a-c/2)
- The objectives of the ToR were approved and a reference to past releases was added for objective 1 (ToR Paragraph 1/2)
- The meeting agreed to keep the reference to monitoring and 'to allow, if necessary, recommendations to be modified or withdrawn over time' (ToR Paragraph 2d/2).
- The meeting agreed that 'the interested parties should facilitate access to information from the respective experts', to 'strive to function as a clearing house mechanism' (ToR Paragraph 2f/2)

Definition of populations

- For the purpose of this Committee, the wild Fennoscandian population was defined to include the wild Fennoscandian population and the Swedish free-flying population of captive origin (ToR Paragraph 3/1)
- References to Norwegian birds and of 'introduced' to the Swedish population were deleted (ToR Paragraph 4a-d/4)

- Reference was made to prevent the further ‘decline’ in the Fennoscandian population (ToR Paragraph 2g/2).

Next Meeting

- The meeting welcomed the invitation by Norway to hold the next meeting in Trondheim in November 2008. (Norway would liaise with the Secretariat on a suitable date.)
- The Committee agreed that it would decide at the end of each meeting upon the date and venue for the next session (RoP Rule 6)

Captive Breeding Programmes

- Norway and Sweden agreed to continue with bilateral conversations about their plans for national captive breeding programmes (ToR Paragraph 4a-d/4)

Country Updates

- Norway offered to liaise with the Secretariat for translation of the Norwegian National Action Plan.
- Sweden would inquire and confirm the exact origin of the imported birds from Russia, and would inform about the status of the feasibility study (e.g. draft terms of reference, contracting documents, interim results). Sweden would furthermore provide information on the financing agency for the breeding facility and on the responsible entity for the management in captivity.

SSAP Extract

- The meeting agreed on a replacement of the three year postponement period with ‘as soon as sufficient birds of proven genetic purity are available’ in a footnote. It would also mention that an endorsement furthermore depended on the outcomes of an independent genetic evaluation.
- Participants offered to send any further comments by email as part of the official country response due by 4 July.

C. The results of the group discussion on Committee tasks and activities were:

Item	What	Who	When*
1	Commission an independent scientific review of existing genetic publications.	Kirsten, Committee	a.s.a.p.
2	Compile and overview and reference list of methods and indicators used for genetic scientific assessments	Minna	October ‘08
3	Search institution for guidance/ lessons learned on the use and release impact of captive-bred birds	Chair	November ‘08
4	Contact WAZA/EAZA for ‘best practice’ guidance on managing captive bird populations	Chair	November ‘08
5	Send plans and intentions for national breeding and introduction programmes to AEWAA	Matti, Oliver, Øystein, Peter	October ‘08
7	Literature support for a ‘genetic review’ of suitability of wild birds (RU, NO) for captive breeding	Minna, Nordic country experts	November ‘08
8	Literature research for a feasibility study on the use of wild birds from	Øystein	1 st meeting in ‘09

	Norway		
9	Suggestions on practical cooperation for captive breeding, satellite tracking	Øystein, Peter	November '09
10 11 12 13 14 15	Issues requiring int'l cooperation; Amendment to AEWA Action Plan; Identifying critical national issues; Review for priority ranking of threats Proposal for E -flyway stepping sites; Conservation advice for Kz, Ru, Gr;	Chair	1 st meeting of Int'l LWfG Working Group
16	PR strategy	Kirsten, Committee	October '08
17	Feasibility study for refinement of the Swedish population	Peter	October '08 (sooner if possible)
18	Map the funding mechanisms in Nordic countries	Kirsten, Committee	October '08

ANNEX 1: Meeting Participants

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ANNEX 2a: APPROVED TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Rationale

The Committee for Captive Breeding, Reintroduction and Supplementation of Lesser White-fronted Geese in Fennoscandia (hereinafter called the Committee) is a thematic sub-group of the International Working Group for the Lesser White-fronted Goose, *Anser erythropus*. It is a platform for exchange of information and for coordination, and, if possible, future agreed action between the Range States to the Fennoscandian population of the Lesser White-fronted Goose. It guides the future activities on captive breeding and release into the wild of the species in Fennoscandia, while taking full account of the development of the remaining wild Fennoscandian population. The Committee has been established in response to an agreement reached in January 2007 (AEWA, 2007).

2. Role

The Committee's role is to provide technical advice and practical guidance in form of recommendations on the issues of captive breeding, reintroduction and supplementation of Lesser White-fronted Geese (LWfG) to the countries represented, thereby ensuring close cooperation between the countries on this issue.

The Committee carries out assigned technical tasks, elaborates and actively shares its findings and recommendations, and regularly reports on its progress and activities to the International LWfG Working Group. The Committee actively contributes to the implementation of the LWfG International Single Species Action Plan and ensures consistency in the coordination and the implementation of conservation actions for the Fennoscandian population⁷.

3. Composition

The Committee comprises representatives of the Range States to the Fennoscandian LWfG population and includes Finland, Norway, Sweden, and representatives from Germany as observers⁸. Governmental representatives are invited to bring their national experts to the consultations and meetings of the Committee. The Secretariat of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) facilitates the Committee and convenes its meetings on behalf of the participating countries.

4. Overall Goal and Objectives

The overall goal of the Committee is to conserve and restore the wild Fennoscandian population of Lesser White-fronted Geese to a favourable conservation status.

In accordance with the objectives of "Results Area 4" of the LWfG International Single Species Action Plan, the Committee's objectives are:

1. No introgression of DNA from other goose species into the wild population occurs as a result of past and further releases.
2. Alien DNA introgression from birds released in the past is minimised.
3. The members to the Committee, supported by thematic expert advice and coordination between countries, are effectively guiding the implementation in Fennoscandia of 'Result Area 4' of the International Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose.

⁷ For these Terms of Reference, 'Fennoscandian population' refers to the wild Fennoscandian population and the Swedish free-flying stock of introduced birds.

⁸ Germany's observer status is considered temporarily by the members and will be re-evaluated to join the group as full member at a later stage

5. Principles

In carrying out these Terms of Reference, the Committee for Captive Breeding, Reintroduction and Supplementation of LWfG in Fennoscandia [and the represented institutions] will be guided by the following principles:

- (a) The states represented in the Committee have an important role to play with regard to the conservation of the wild LWfG population in Fennoscandia. The same holds true of other Range States for this population. To assure a favourable conservation status of Fennoscandian LWfG throughout their life cycle, the Committee should give pragmatic advice on issues relevant to all states to which the wild population applies.
- (b) The main priority for conservation action and recommendations by the Committee is oriented towards the wild populations breeding in Fennoscandia and Russia, according to an agreement found in January 2007 (AEWA, 2007).
- (c) All efforts must be made to ensure that captive breeding and release activities are environmentally risk-averse, particularly concerning the risk from introgression and accidental influx of alien DNA into the wild population. The Committee shall thoroughly examine and closely monitor any other measure which might have the potential of putting the wild population at risk before its application.
- (d) Recommendations by the Committee shall be made with openness and transparency; the same applies to examinations leading to the establishment of recommendations carried out by or on behalf of the Committee. Based on the recommendations of the Committee, the activities and their environmental impact should be monitored to allow, if necessary, recommendations to be modified or withdrawn over time. Any work of the Committee should follow the codes of transparency and accountability, so they can be subject to scientific scrutiny at any time.
- (e) The recommendations and guidance regarding captive breeding, reintroduction and supplementation provided by the Committee shall strive to:
 - (i) Involve best local, national and international expertise
 - (ii) Be derived from best scientifically-recognised methods, data and information available
 - (iii) Where necessary take account of additional information from impartial, independent studies (e.g. external reviews or feasibility studies)⁹
 - (iv) Be developed and conveyed in a transparent manner
- (f) To this end the Committee strives to function as a clearing house mechanism for the relevant information and data from the stakeholders for its reviews, evaluations and recommendations. Accordingly, the stakeholders should facilitate access to relevant data and information from the respective experts. The property rights of those involved in the collection of data shall be respected to allow an early information disclosure to the Committee and their earliest-possible evaluation. Any raw data will be for information purposes only and shall not be published or otherwise used by the group.
- (g) The work of the Committee should follow the principle of the ‘precautionary approach’¹⁰ towards the common objectives of preventing further hybridisation and spreading of alien genes to minimise the impact on wild LWfG populations to prevent further decline of the Fennoscandian population.

⁹ If recommendations to be made have important implications for conservation, recreational use and/or industry, they should be based on a full scientific review of both data quality and analysis that can be independently verified.

¹⁰ Definition: “A response to uncertainty in the face of risks to health or the environment. In general, it involves acting to avoid serious or irreversible potential harm, despite lack of scientific certainty as to the likelihood, magnitude, or causation of that harm.” (IUCN, 2005)

6. Scope

- (a) The Committee provides the opportunity for coordination, cooperation and concerted advice by the Breeding Range States to the Fennoscandian LWfG population on the given issues, with direct support from recognised experts from science, other Range States, civil society or other sectors. It builds upon the agreement found between participating states during a negotiation mission by AEWA in January 2007 (AEWA, 2007).
- (b) The Committee is an active advisory body. As a sub-set to the LWfG International Working Group, the Committee's recommendations on captive breeding, reintroduction and supplementation shall contribute to the implementation of the International Single Species Action Plan for the Western Palaearctic population of the Lesser White-fronted Goose, *Anser erythropus*.
- (c) The Committee will provide the guidance considered necessary by the members of the Committee for the effective conservation of the Fennoscandian LWfG population, on a proactive and continuously constructive basis. Within the scope of this mandate, the Committee will be free to seek any additional information from its invited experts. The Committee also responds to specific requests for guidance on relevant issues within its mandate and as considered appropriate by the Chair.
- (d) Any guidance and conclusions should make clear reference to the agreement found between states in January 2007 (AEWA, 2007). Reference should furthermore be made, where appropriate, to the recommendations from the Report of the Scientific Council of the Convention of Migratory Species (CMS, 2005) on issues that have not been subsequently updated and amended by the agreement from the AEWA negotiation mission (AEWA, 2007).
- (e) National and local initiatives, specific activities and institutions shall be informed by the Committee of its most recent findings, and advised that they are expected to follow its conclusions and recommendations.
- (f) The Committee's substantive focus shall initially be the approval of the relevant sections of the revised LWfG International Single Species Action Plan (to be adopted in September 2008), followed by practical guidance to their implementation.
- (g) The Committee's geographic focus shall be on the range of the Fennoscandian population.
- (h) Where considered necessary and deemed relevant for the successful completion of its tasks, the Committee shall seek information from thematic experts in related fields and/or establish dialogues with other advisory groups.
- (i) The Committee will, in its first inception meeting, develop a vision, verify the objectives of its work and agree on a listing of priority activities and tasks to be turned into preliminary work plans. Overall, successive work plans will help assure the establishment of joint and proactive recommendations on the issue of LWfG captive breeding, reintroduction and supplementation in Fennoscandia. This and other upcoming developments may warrant appropriate amendments to the Terms of Reference set forth here.

7. Responsibilities and Tasks of the Committee

- (a) Review and make recommendations on the long-term future of all captive breeding programmes in the represented countries, including existing programmes as well as potential new programmes:

- (i) Assess and evaluate captive breeding as part of a strategy for securing the long-term survival of the Fennoscandian LWfG population in the wild through reintroduction, while ensuring that any future releases of captive-bred birds involve only individuals reared from wild-caught stock unless the group recommends otherwise by consensus;
 - (ii) Assess the feasibility, guide and monitor the building up of a captive breeding stock of birds, using birds from the remnant wild LWfG populations in Norway (action depending on: the outcomes of a feasibility study, logistic considerations, and agreement with the measures recommended by the LWfG International Single Species Action Plan);
 - (iii) Guide and monitor the establishment and implementation of the Swedish captive breeding programme exclusively based on wild birds;
- (b) Receive, provide and review all available relevant information related to the Swedish free-flying population of LWfG, in a timely and well-documented manner, and recommend plans for population refinement, supplementation or alternative conservation measures as appropriate:
- (i) Assess whether the existing studies and proposals take account of the best available scientific knowledge; identify information gaps and sources of uncertainty for the implementation of certain conservation measures;
 - (ii) If necessary, seek and secure any additional information that this may require, if necessary through independent review and evaluation;
 - (iii) Assess the feasibility of a population refinement¹¹ (i.e. selective capture & removal of apparent hybrids) from the established free-flying population from Sweden;
 - (iv) Elaborate and agree on a concrete plan of actions to implement or guide the population refinement, or other conservation measures as applicable and agreed;
 - (v) Monitor and regularly report on the removal of apparent hybrid LWfG from the Swedish introduced stock;
- (c) Proactively provide advice on conservation and policy implications of applying certain measures, while interpreting existing knowledge and information gaps in a manner that reflects precaution:
- (i) Assess whether studies, assessments and proposed mitigation plans are adequate to ensure that the proposed activities will not have adverse impacts on the wild Fennoscandian LWfG population;
 - (ii) Provide coordinated recommendations and advice on captive breeding, reintroduction and supplementation of the species to the LWfG International Working Group. Committee advice should focus on the implementation of the relevant section of the International Single Species Action Plan for the Palaearctic Population of the LWfG;
 - (iii) As a group, advise respective states and initiatives on adequate timeframes and principles for implementation of new reintroduction projects and initiatives;

¹¹ Based on available information, latest credible estimates of the ratio of DNA introgression into the wild population, and based on the findings of a new feasibility study for refinement of the Swedish reintroduced flock.

- (d) Actively contribute to the sustainable functioning and financing of the Committee.

8. Role and Responsibilities of the Chair and Facilitator

- (a) Act as the impartial convener of the Committee, thereby providing an important platform for exchange of information and for collaboration, and, if possible, future agreed action on the aspects of captive breeding, reintroduction and supplementation of LWfG in Fennoscandia;
- (b) Facilitate consensus-building and the formulation of recommendations between the Committee members concerning the development of appropriate conservation measures;
- (c) Effectively link the relevant stakeholders between meetings of the Committee;
- (d) Provide secretariat support e.g. through establishment, negotiation and management of consultations on behalf of the Committee, in accordance with these Terms of Reference and the Committee's Rules of Procedure;
- (e) Make available relevant reports and materials used and produced by the Committee via an appropriate information platform (e.g. website) for the Range States to which the LWfG International Single Species Action Plan applies;
- (f) Actively contribute to the sustainable functioning of the Committee to ensure the long-term protection of the species in Fennoscandia.

9. Funding

- (a) In 2008, funding for the establishment and coordination of the Committee will come mainly from a grant provided by the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management to the AEWA Secretariat.
- (b) Each participating country is asked to contribute to the sustainable financing of the Committee's activities. A suitable mechanism for the long-term financing of the Committee as of 2009 will be subject to the group's discussion as of its first meeting.
- (c) Each participant is required to cover own costs of travel and subsistence for meetings of the Committee, or be sponsored by his/her respective institution or government.
- (d) The AEWA Secretariat can efficiently fulfil extra duties only if a supplementary budget for such activities is available.

10. Term

It is foreseen that the Committee shall operate for an initial period of 5 years following its first meeting in May 2008. The term is extendable as considered necessary and useful, subject to agreement with the AEWA Secretariat and the participating governments.

11. Reference

AEWA 2007. Final report from the Lesser White-fronted Goose negotiation mission in January 2007. AEWA Secretariat, Bonn. Unpublished report.

ANNEX 2b: APPROVED RULES OF PROCEDURE

Rule 1: General Functions

The Committee for Captive Breeding, Reintroduction and Supplementation of Lesser White-fronted Geese in Fennoscandia (hereinafter referred to as the Committee), has been established in response to an agreement by Finland, Norway, Sweden and Germany (AEWA, 2007).

The Committee provides technical advice and elaborates coordinated recommendations by the Range States to the Fennoscandian population of the Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*, or LWfG), on the breeding and introduction of birds into the wild. As a thematic sub-group to the International LWfG Working Group, the Committee carries out assigned technical tasks, actively shares its findings and recommendations, and regularly reports on its progress and activities to the International LWfG Working Group. Thereby, the Committee actively contributes to the implementation of the LWfG International Single Species Action Plan and ensures consistency in the coordination and the implementation of conservation actions for the Fennoscandian population¹².

Rule 2: Membership and Representation

1. The Committee consists of at least one member from the governments of Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Germany as an observer¹³. Members of the Committee can invite national thematic experts as part of their delegation. Unless agreed differently between Committee members and approved by the Chair each delegation shall not exceed a maximum of four participating members.
2. Each participating delegation shall nominate a head of delegation as the principle country focal point to the Committee, who shall be a representative of her/his government. A nominated alternate member, also from government, may take over the function of head in his/her absence.
3. Governments may consult thematic experts from science, civil society or other sectors for issues relevant to this Committee and nominate these experts to attend meetings of the Committee as part of their delegation, and in close consultation with their head of delegation also present at the meeting.
4. The AEWA Secretariat shall represent the Agreement at meetings of the Committee (see Rule 5).
5. If a head of delegation or his alternate is exchanged by his government, the Chair shall be informed about the replacement within no more than 1 month of transition.

Rule 3: Admission of Independent Experts and Observers to Committee Consultations and Meetings

1. One independent expert from each specialised thematic field such e.g. genetics may be invited by the Chair, either on the Chair's initiative or on recommendation of the Committee members, to contribute topic-specific expertise to a particular meeting or question of the Committee. The independent experts shall be attending the meetings of the Committee as observers.

¹² For these Rules of Procedure, 'Fennoscandian population' refers to the wild Fennoscandian population and the Swedish free-flying stock of introduced birds.

¹³ Germany's observer status is considered temporary by the members and will be re-evaluated at a later stage.

2. The Chair on behalf of the Committee may invite observers from other Range States to the LWfG, i.e. from the Fennoscandian, the Western main or Eastern main populations of LWfG, to attend any particular meeting of the Committee. The capacity in which the observer is invited shall be clearly defined.

Rule 4: Committee Chair

1. The AEWA Secretariat shall, according to its role as meeting facilitator and convener of the Committee (see Rule 5), chair the first meeting of the Committee. At subsequent meetings, the AEWA Secretariat is taking the role of chairing the Committee, while noting that the terms of office for the chair could be reviewed at any time during future meetings.

2. The Chair shall assume his/her function upon election by consensus of the Committee at or directly after the first Committee meeting.

3. Similarly to the election of the Chair, a Vice-Chair shall be elected by consensus to replace the Chair in his absence so that a continuous workflow is assured.

4. The Chair shall actively preside at meetings of the Committee; approve the preliminary agenda and meeting documents prepared by the Committee members, the AEWA Secretariat, and independent experts. The Chair shall guide, and continuously focus, the discussions of the group towards the establishment of major recommendations and best possible outputs. Within this central role it is of utmost importance that the Chair acts objectively and impartially.

5. Between meetings of the Committee the Chair will liaise with the members and the AEWA Secretariat to assure continuity in the information flow and task accomplishment.

6. The Chair may allow exceptions to the composition of Committee and invite additional experts to attend a particular meeting (see Rule 3) if doing so is essential for the competent performance of the Committee.

8. The Chair may represent the Committee as required within the strict limits of the Committee mandate (e.g. to present the Committee's findings at the meetings of the International Working Group; Rule 10).

9. The Chair shall furthermore carry out other functions as may be entrusted to him/her by consensus of the Committee.

Rule 5: Coordination, Facilitation

1. The Committee is coordinated by the Secretariat of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA). The AEWA Secretariat also convenes and facilitates the meetings of the Committee and assists the Chair with the implementation of his duties (see Rules 4 and 5). Between meetings, coordination includes the linking of Committee members and facilitation of information exchange. According to this role, the AEWA Secretariat has a mandate to act objectively and impartially.

2. As a member of the Committee, the AEWA Secretariat will furthermore represent the Agreement but will not exercise any voting rights.

Rule 6: Meetings

1. The Committee shall meet on a regular basis once or twice every year. The Committee shall decide at the end of each meeting on the date and location of the next session. If possible and if costs can be saved like this, it is desirable to hold meetings of this Committee in

conjunction with the meetings of the Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group.

2. The Chair may convene a meeting on ad hoc basis when important issues are to be resolved that may otherwise hinder or postpone an effective implementation of the LWfG Single Species Action Plan or if emergency has arisen that requires the adoption of immediate measures (see Rule 4).

3. Meetings of the Committee will be hosted by the AEWA Secretariat in Bonn or at the home institution of individual Committee members upon their invitation and subject to adequate financing (see Rule 5).

4. The dates, venue and agenda for meetings will be set forth and made available together with other meeting documents by the facilitators (AEWA Secretariat) and through the AEWA website. Notice of meetings shall be sent out at least 30 days in advance of the respective meeting Documents shall be made available to all members of the Committee at least 10 working days in advance of the meeting.

5. Participants are required to cover their own costs of travel and subsistence for meetings of the Committee, or be sponsored by her/his respective institution, partner institution or government.

Rule 7: Recommendations and Decision-Making

1. The members of the Committee shall make every effort to reach agreement on all matters of substance by consensus (i.e. agreement on joint positions and recommendations).

2. Agreed recommendations and formulated advice by the Committee shall be summarised in a report from each meeting (see also Rule 10); the report shall be made available to all Committee members for their approval within 2 weeks of circulation and passed on to members of the International Working Group for the LWfG following the Committee's approval.

3. It is expected that approval of any report by the Committee will be by consensus among the participating delegations. In case of objections, any of the Committee members will have the right to provide a written dissent that will be included in the respective report as an authored annex.

4. The Committee may establish *ad hoc* discussion groups that operate by email or an equivalent alternative communication platform in order to accomplish specific tasks. The Committee shall define the composition and major tasks of each discussion group which is due to report to the Committee on progress on a regular basis. These Rules shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the work of the discussion groups.

Rule 8: Information Sharing

1. All discussions, examinations, and conservation recommendations of the Committee shall be made with openness, transparency and accountability, so that they can be subject to scientific scrutiny at any time. The same applies for external examinations done for consideration by or on behalf of the Committee.

2. Based on the recommendations of the Committee, the activities and their environmental impact should be monitored to allow, if necessary, recommendations to be modified or withdrawn over time.

3. The Committee strives to function as a clearing house mechanism for the relevant information and data from the stakeholders for its reviews, evaluations and recommendations. Accordingly, the stakeholders should facilitate access to relevant data and information from the respective experts in order to enable the Committee to make appropriate recommendations and reviews while striving towards transparency.
4. Recommendations by the Committee shall be made with openness and transparency; the same applies to examinations leading to the establishment of recommendations carried out by or on behalf of the Committee. Any work of the Committee should follow the codes of transparency and accountability, so they can be subject to scientific scrutiny at any time.
5. The intellectual property rights, rights to first publication and of confidentiality towards those involved in the collection of data shall be respected by all means to allow an early information disclosure to the Committee, with the aim of assuring the earliest-possible conservation action considered necessary by the Committee. Accordingly, members of the Committee may be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement outlining that signatories are obliged not to disclose information designated as confidential and to respect the rights of first publication.
6. Supplementary agreements on the sharing of data and information between individual scientists, parties, or between scientists and government, should be communicated to the Committee for their information and in the interest of coordination transparency.

Rule 9: Communication

1. All members of a government delegation are attending the Committee's meetings entirely at the request of their delegation and as such will be perceived to speak on their behalf. External observers and independent thematic experts (Rule 3) are attending the meeting on behalf of their respective institutions or in their personal capacity, due to their specific expertise. The AEW Secretariat shall indicate if speaking on behalf other than the roles outlined in Rule 5.
2. Country delegations will inform and advise national and local initiatives in their respective countries of the outcomes of the Committee meetings; they ensure transparency and regular information exchange to and from the Committee; and endeavour compliance of conservation activities with the recommendations set by the Committee within the margins of their respective legal frameworks.
3. The working language for the Committee is English. All documents for the consideration of the Committee should be provided in English. No translation services can be provided by the facilitators (AEW Secretariat).
4. The Chair of the Committee, supported by the facilitators (AEW Secretariat), shall communicate the outcomes and findings of each Committee meeting as well as important intersessional developments to the International LWfG Working Group, so that an effective implementation of the Single Species Action Plan can be assured (see Rule 4).
5. The AEW Secretariat shall establish a dialogue with other advisory groups as deemed necessary and relevant by the Chair and the Committee (see Rule 5).

Rule 10: Reporting

1. Each country delegation shall report at each Committee meeting on LWfG conservation, captive breeding and reintroduction, and closely related activities in their country (such as, e.g., project activities, monitoring results, policy decisions, science findings). In case a

delegation will not attend a meeting a report shall be submitted in written form no later than one week prior to the meeting.

2. The Chair and Agreement Secretariat shall elaborate within one month of meeting conclusion a written report on the Committee's activities and submit it to the members of the Committee (for their approval within 2 weeks, see Rule 7), followed by a submission to the members of the International LWfG Working Group. It shall focus on agreed recommendations and formulated advice by the Committee.

3. Between meetings, all Committee members and observers shall keep the group informed of new developments within their countries and/or domain of expertise related to LWfG conservation.

4. The Committee shall receive reports from other committees and working groups established under the Agreement as necessary (see Rule 5).

Rule 11: Entering into Force, Amendments, Termination

1. These Rules shall enter into force immediately after their adoption by the Committee at its 1st meeting.

2. The Rules may be amended by the Committee as required, in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement, the Terms of Reference for the Committee, and major consensus decisions relevant to these Rules.

3. The Committee shall be dissolved on the written request of at least two members of the Committee.