



FOURTH MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE
CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS (AEWA)
12-13 MAY 2003, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Article X paragraph h of the Agreement, the Secretariat shall prepare on an annual basis and for each ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties, reports on the work of the Secretariat and on the implementation of the Agreement. Members of the Technical Committee have noted that the Secretariat submitted also for each TC meeting a written report on its activities since the previous TC meeting.

As decided by MOP2 the Technical Committee shall concentrate on providing technical and scientific advice. The Standing Committee will cover administrative, financial, governance and policy issues. The latter was established at MOP2 and will meet for the first time in the second half of 2003.

The current report will describe the main activities since the 3rd Meeting of the TC in Arusha, Tanzania (May, 2002). There is an issue that should be raised regarding the procedure of reporting to both subsidiary bodies.

PROPOSAL OF THE SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat proposes to continue reporting on its activities to the TC as well as to the Standing Committee. In the view of the Secretariat the contents of these reports could be more or less the same. However, during the introduction of the report at the TC meetings particular attention will be given to issues relevant for the TC. Of course TC members are allowed to raise questions on any other issue mentioned in that specific report. A common report will secure that the TC as well as the StC are informed on all ongoing activities of the Secretariat. For each meeting the report will be updated as much as possible, thus the reports could be slightly different depending on the period between the last TC and the following StC meeting.

OVERVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AEWAS SECRETARIAT

INTRODUCTION

Besides the day to day work consisting of responding mail, maintenance of the AEWAS network, dealing with administrative and financial matters, the Secretariat spent in the period of May 2002 till April 2003 most of its time on preparation and finalisation of the second session of the Meeting of the Parties, which took place from 25-27 September 2002, in Bonn, Germany.

This report is divided in four parts:

1. General Matters: these include administrative/ financial, personnel, future premises, meetings, etc;
2. Information Management: this include Newsletter, Website, etc
3. Cooperation with other organisations
4. Technical and/ or Scientific Matters: this includes projects that are contracted out by the Secretariat and/ or project carried out by others in which the Secretariat is strongly involved.

The day-to-day work is left out of this report.

1. GENERAL MATTERS

Future Premises for the Agreement Secretariat

The City of Bonn used to be the capital of the West Germany. After reunification of the East and West, Berlin became the new capital city of the Federal Republic of Germany. Over the years most of the Ministries moved from Bonn to Berlin. To fill up the gap after the move of the Government to Berlin the City of Bonn invested a lot of time and energy, and continues to do it, in order to attract companies and organisations to establish their offices in Bonn. Also a number of UN agencies have been approached to reconsider moving their offices to Bonn. Currently, the following UN organisations have their Secretariats in Bonn: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Development Programme-United Nations Volunteers (UNV), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation-International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNEVOC), World Health Organisation-European Centre for Environment and Health (WHO-ECEH), United Nations Information Centre (UNIC Bonn), UNICEF, International Labour Organisation (ILO), UNEP/ CMS, UNEP/ ASCOBANS, UNEP/ EUROBATS and UNEP/ AEWAS Secretariats. Due to lack of office space these organisations are scattered all over Bonn.

The city of Bonn is eager to become a UN city. Therefore it was decided to establish a UN campus, consisting of two large office buildings close to each other just next to the International Conference Centre 'Bundeshaus'. In addition the Federal Government of the Republic of Germany, the region of Nord-Rhein-Westfalen and the city of Bonn decided to allocate funds to build a new Conference Centre that could accommodate large meetings of 5,000-10,000 participants.

In due course the two office buildings adjacent to the Bundeshaus will be offered to the UN agencies as future premises. A special task force with UN representatives has been created to make clear what the requirements are regarding number of offices needed per agency, special equipment for meetings rooms, security issue, etc. The Executive Secretary of UNEP/ ASCOBANS represents the UNEP Secretariats. At a regular basis CMS and the co-located Agreements Secretariats discuss the input of the meetings of the task force. One of the issues that has been discussed is the number of offices needed for AEWAS at medium-term.

Agreement's Unit

Again, in 2002 and beginning of 2003 quite time was spent discussing the responsibilities of the CMS and the Agreements Secretariats co-located in the Agreements Unit. A good example is the authorizations of signing travel and leave requests. Until August 2002 the Executive Secretaries of each Agreement were authorized to sign its own travel and leave request. On request of the Administrative and Fund Management Officer of CMS, UNON reviewed this and informed the Executive Secretaries that in accordance with the UN rules and regulations nobody should sign any financial obligations related to him and/ or to any person related to him. The AEWAS Secretariat fully agreed to apply these rules and regulations regarding travel

requests to avoid any problems in the future. The only problem was that the Executive Secretary of CMS received the mandate to sign the financial obligations e.g. travel requests of the Executive Secretary of AEWA. In accordance with the Terms of Reference for secretariat arrangements annexed to Resolution 1.1 paragraph 3: “*Staff members of the Agreements Unit will function independently and will report to their respective Agreements*”. Concerns raised by the Agreement Secretariat to UNON and the Executive Secretary of CMS were that authorizing the Executive Secretary of CMS and/ or his deputy to sign the travel requests a conflict of interest might occur in case CMS would not be in favor if the AEWA Secretariat wished to participate in certain meetings. At such an occasion the Secretariat is no longer in the position to operate independently from CMS. A similar discussion is ongoing on the leave request issue.

Wherever possible the AEWA Secretariat played an active role in trying to solve common problems. Good examples of this are proposals for sharing the cost of:

- common stationary;
- paper for our Agreement’s Unit copy machine;
- maintenance of the Agreement’s Unit copy machine,
- common exhibition.

Administrative/ Financial Matters

On regular basis meetings with CMS and the Agreements co-located in the Agreements’ Unit take place. One of the common points we discuss during these meetings is the support given by the Administrative Unit of CMS to the Agreements. This Unit consist of one Administrative and Fund Management Officer (AFMO), one Financial Assistant and two temporary Financial Assistants. The cost of the AFMO is fully covered by OTL¹ and the cost of the Financial Assistant is covered 50 % by OTL. CMS is covering the costs of the two temporary Assistants.

Over the last few years the Agreement Secretariat has made clear that the performance of the Admin Unit needs improvement. Since the beginning of 2002 the Admin Unit is working with new software, which gives direct access to information on the current situation regarding our budget. In the view of the Secretariat this has already proven to be a very useful tool with which decisions can be taken for further financial commitments.

To implement the new software system a temporary Financial Assistant was recruited by CMS. By the end of 2002 also a very experienced Financial Assistant from UNON was recruited on temporary basis for the CMS Sahelo-Saherian Antelope project. However, it turned out that due to an unforeseen delay the start of the project had to be postponed. Meanwhile the Financial Assistant of UNON supported the Admin Unit regarding finalising ‘End of the Year account’, contracting out work, etc.

Although regarding the day-to-day work the improvements are remarkable not all problems have been solved. One of these problems is that CMS would like to see that the costs for the additional staff would be shared with EUROBATS, ASCOBANS and AEWA. The AEWA Secretariat is willing to take this in consideration under the conditions that an external expert, who should also provide some advice for future staffing of the Admin Unit, would evaluate functioning of the current Admin Unit. As interim solution such a proposal could be submitted to the Standing Committee. For the long term, approval of the Meeting of the Parties is needed particularly due to financial implications of additional staff to the AEWA budget.

Recruitment of the Assistant and temporary staff

On 17 October 2002 the contract with the previous temporary Assistant expired and was not renewed. Instead it was decided to recruit a new temporary Assistant who should take care of formatting and printing of the MOP2 Proceedings, the Action Plan 2003-2005, etc. Ms. Marie-Therese Kämper was selected for this post and entered on duty on 7 January 2003. Her contract will expire on 6 of July 2003. In accordance with the UN Rules and Regulations individuals for office works could be contracted for a maximum period of 6 months within a total period of 1 year. Contact has been made with UNON to extend the contract for a longer period, particularly because many activities are scheduled to take place at the second half of 2003.

¹ OTL stands for Overhead Trust Fund Ledger, which is the 13 % that is deducted by UNEP from e.g. the AEWA Budget.

Preparation and Finalization of MOP2

The AEWA Secretariat was extremely busy making the necessary arrangements for MOP2, which took place from 25-27 September 2002 in Bonn, Germany. Besides logistical arrangements also a lot of time and energy were spent on the substantial preparation of documents to be submitted to MOP. Luckily most of the documents were ready for discussion at the 3rd Meeting of the TC. The TC reviewed all the documents and draft Resolutions and amended them whenever necessary. Due to this input the final discussion during MOP2 went smoothly, as did the MOP as a whole. As part of a great team consisting of representatives of the Host Government, MKI travel agency, UNON staff, local staff, the AEWA Staff was in the position to run MOP2 smoothly. Tribute goes to this team and in particular to Ms. Mirna Maya who had the responsibility of coordinating all activities outside the plenary room, which is an incredible task. Inside the meetings room the Chairman of the MOP, the Chairman of the working group on Technical Matters and the Chairman of the working group on Financial and Administrative Matters played an important role in conducting these meetings. This was done on an excellent way. Looking back on MOP2 the Secretariat is pleased that everything went so smoothly due to input of all dedicated persons mentioned-above.

After the closing ceremony of MOP2 the meeting was over for the delegates. This is certainly not the case for the AEWA Secretariat. From September to December all financial obligations regarding MOP2 were settled. Besides this, we started with compiling the Proceedings, the Action Plan 2003-2005, the International Implementation Plan 2003-2007, the Conservation Guidelines, etc. Finalization of these documents is still going on.

TC meetings

Directly after the 3rd Meeting of the TC steps were taken for the preparation of the next TC meeting in Uzbekistan 2003. Agreement was reached on some logistical arrangements including the venue. The substantial preparations started at the beginning of 2003.

More or less at the same time the UK started with the preparations for TC5 in Edinburgh. This meeting is being organised back to back with the Global Flyway Conference. On a regular basis there is contact between our counterparts and the Secretariat on some logistical arrangements.

Dark-bellied Brent Goose Working group.

In the margins of the COP7 of CMS, the second meeting of the Dark-bellied Brent Goose Working group took place. During this meeting all comments received from the Range States for this International Species Action Plan were discussed and whenever necessary the text of the Action Plan was amended.

On the request of the ORNIS Committee the Secretariat presented the 4th draft of the Action Plan.

2. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Communication Strategy

One of the most important tools of raising awareness on the Agreement is exchange of information. For this we currently have the AEWA Newsletter, AEWA Brochure and the AEWA Website. What is missing is a communication strategy. By the end of 2002 funds have been received from the UK to develop a communication strategy for the Agreement as listed as priority in the International Implementation Priorities 2003-2007. Meanwhile the Secretariat has identified some consultants with long standing experience with Multilateral Environmental Agreements. In due course this work will be contracted out. The following paragraph will provide some more information on existing activities on exchange of information.

Newsletters

At the first workshop on Non-toxic shot it was decided that information on this issue should be distributed widely. The idea behind this is to raise more awareness on the problems linked to the use of lead shot. The Secretariat decided to publish a special Newsletter on this issue and contracted Ms Nienke Beintema. With some guidance at the beginning it turned out that she possessed the necessary skills to interview people, to write articles and to compile a first draft. The quality of the first draft was very good, which meant that just limited time was needed from the Secretariat to review and amend the text. Most of the time was spent on the layout of the Newsletter that was contracted out to a printer.

The first special issue of the AEWA Newsletter was published just before MOP2. The feedback received on this issue shows that it has been highly appreciated. Many extra copies have been ordered from all over the world. It has been noted that in some countries the Newsletter is used to start the discussion on banning out the use of Lead shot for hunting in wetlands.

In March 2003 the second special issue of the AEWA Newsletter was published. Ms. Nienke Beintema also compiled this Newsletter. It reports on the outcome of MOP2. Although some feedback has been received, it is too early to evaluate if the contents provided are useful information to the readers.

A regular issue of the Newsletter was published just before MOP2. Unfortunately due to lack of capacity it was not possible to publish a second issue. For 2003 presumably it would only be feasible to publish one issue.

Website

As of beginning of February Mr. Kim Liffers has been contracted as a Webmaster to work for the AEWA Secretariat one day per week. His tasks are to update the information of the Agreements' website, to rearrange the existing information and to add, where necessary, some additional information e.g. AEWA Event Calendar, list of International Species Action Plans, etc. Particularly rearranging the existing information in a way that it becomes more accessible for the users it is something that requires a lot of input from the Secretariat.

DVD/ AEWA Film

In 1999 a representative of Fiction Film visited the Interim Secretariat, at that time still based in the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management & Fisheries of the Netherlands. From that moment onwards the Secretariat planned to develop a film on AEWA as a tool to raise awareness on the importance of AEWA for the conservation of Migratory Waterbirds in the African-Eurasian Flyway. Using a small grant received from the Netherlands early 2000 a consortium of Fiction Film and Musch & Tinbergen Production drafted a scenario including cost estimates. Studying the latter it became clear that the development of such a film is extremely expensive and would cost roundabout US \$ 250,000. The feasibility to find the necessary funds was quite low. Meanwhile new techniques e.g. DVD came into the market, which provided us with more possibilities to tailor the film for any meeting AEWA want to attend. To clarify a bit, DVD gives us the possibility to rearrange the footages whenever we wish to do so and to burn a new DVD or CD-rom. It also gives us the possibility to break the project in smaller pieces.

In March 2003 agreement was reached with the Government of Germany that their voluntary contributions to AEWA for 2003 could be used to develop the first DVD. In due course the work will be contracted out and it is scheduled that the DVD will be available just before the Global Flyway Conference in Edinburgh in 2004. Furthermore the production of the film has been integrated in the AEWA GEF project. This will leverage up to a maximum of 50 % of the total costs as indicated above.

3. COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Joint Workprogramme with Ramsar Bureau

For some year CMS drafted a Joint Work Programme (JWP) between the RAMSAR bureau and CMS. Although both organisations were in favour of the JWP, it has never been finalized because the people involved from CMS as well as from the RAMSAR Bureau left office.

AEWA is fully complementary to the RAMSAR Convention, however there is also some overlap. To avoid any duplication or to enhance each other activities there is a need to synchronize our work plans. Therefore the AEWA Secretariat, in close cooperation with CMS, updated the existing draft JWP incorporating specific AEWA issues.

In 2002 the final draft was submitted as information document to MOP2, COP7 CMS and COP8 Ramsar. It is expected that in due course the three parties involved could sign the final version of the Joint Work Programme and that the implementation could start.

Joint Work programme with Wetlands International

Similar to the JWP with Ramsar, it has also been recognized that AEWA should be involved in a joint work programme between Wetlands International and CMS. A first draft of this JWP was made by Wetlands International and circulated in 2002. The AEWA Secretariat has given its input to this programme and agreement was reached between the parties involved early 2003. In March 2003 the programme was signed during a small formal ceremony in the margins of the farewell reception of the Deputy-Executive Secretary of CMS.

Joint Work programme with UNCCD

CMS initiated to identify possibilities of future cooperation between CMS and UNCCD. More or less from the beginning onwards the AEWA Secretariat has been involved in this. The Secretariat participated in a number of meetings and provided comments on drafts of the Memorandum of Understanding between CMS and UNCCD and Joint Work programme. The discussion is still going on and one of the questions is if AEWA should be on a similar way involved as in the JWP with Ramsar and Wetlands International.

OMPO

An official visit was paid together with Mr Herby Kalchreuter (CIC representative in the TC) to the OMPO Headquarters in Paris. During this meeting we tried to identify issues of common interest and possibilities for future cooperation.

4. PROJECTS

African-Eurasian Flyway GEF project

The African-Eurasian Flyway GEF project is still in the Project Development Phase. It had been scheduled to submit the full size project brief to the GEF Council early 2003. Unfortunately, new problems occurred which delayed the submission of the project proposal again. The AEWA Secretariat has contact with Wetlands International, as executing agency, on a regular basis. The Secretariat as well as the TC is represented in the Steering Committee of this project. Being aware that Wetlands International does its utmost to solve part of these problems, it is hoped that by the end of this year the project could be submitted to GEF. Probably implementation of the full size project could start early 2004.

International Implementation Priorities 2004-2007²

The AEWA Secretariat plays an active role in the implementation of the International Implementation Priorities. One of the tasks of the Secretariat is to seek and whenever possible to secure necessary funds to implement some of the projects. The total amount of voluntary contribution received in 2002 till March 2003 is roundabout US \$ 240,000 donated by France, Germany, Switzerland, The Netherlands and the UK. These contributions are earmarked for the following projects:

- IIP 2003-2007
 - project 1 : Meeting of the Dark-bellied Brent Goose Working group;
 - project 2 : Development of a species Action Plan for the Ferruginous Duck;
 - project 10: Organisation of a Non-toxic workshop In Italy;
 - project 17: Publishing of the Wader Atlas;
 - project 20: Coordination of waterbird ringing schemes, particularly in Africa;
 - project 31: Drafting of a communication strategy.
- Development of information materials;
- Development of DVD;
- Publication of the results of the African Waterbird Census 1991-2001.

A detailed description on the current situation regarding implementation of all IIP 2003-2007 projects could be found in document TC4.8

² MOP2 adopted the International Implementation Priorities 2004-2007 (IIP 2004-2007). Until then the IIP 2000-2004 was in force; part of the project mentioned-above originated from IIP 2000-2004 and part from the new IIP.