

*Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds*

**Capacity for implementing the Agreement –**

**identifying next priorities at the international level**

**Strengthening capacity – a strategic objective**

The five objectives in the AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027 include (as No.5) an “enabling objective”, as follows: “*To secure and strengthen the knowledge, capacity, recognition, awareness and resources required for the Agreement to achieve its conservation objectives*”.

Target 5.3 in the Plan foresees that “*Initiatives are in place to address at least two-thirds of the priority capacity gaps restricting implementation of AEWA*”. Many of these capacity gaps, and actions to address them, lie at national and sub-national levels of implementation. There is however also a need for action on this at the *international* level; in part to address those issues that are inherently transboundary or multilateral in character, and in part to respond to the fact, as noted in the Plan, that capacity for implementation varies widely across the Agreement Area (implying therefore that it should be more consistent, with weak areas being assisted to become stronger).

Action 5.3 (a) in the Plan focuses on this aspect. It specifies: “*By MOP8, identify and prioritise gaps at international level in capacity for the implementation of the Agreement, taking account of regional specificities, as well as consideration of possible joint action with other MEAs and the potential for site-based twinning arrangements (or similar exchange mechanisms)*”.

The short survey questionnaire provided here is concerned specifically with this Action 5.3 (a). You are invited to respond to the five questions, and to offer any additional comments you may wish, thinking specifically about the international level.

⮚ Please return your response to jeannine.dicken@un.org **by 10 December 2021**.

The eventual results will be interpreted in conjunction with other strands of work which have been looking at gaps in knowledge and the utility of AEWA guidelines.

**What do we mean by capacity?**

Capacity is an “umbrella” term that encompasses human, scientific, technological, organisational and institutional capabilities. All of these are relevant to the successful implementation of AEWA. The Strategic Plan refers to strengthening “institutional, technical and resource capacity”, and while “resources” can be a similarly all-embracing term, the specific question of *financial* resources is *outside* the scope of the present exercise, and it is being addressed in a separate strand of work.

**What provisions exist at present?**

This survey is designed to synthesise expert opinions about **gaps** and **action priorities**. It is *not* a study of what is already working well. Capacity is already supported by an array of guidance manuals and communication and outreach materials produced in the framework of AEWA itself and (for all CMS Agreements) by the Convention on Migratory Species. AEWA also supports its Parties through ongoing advice from the Technical Committee, case-specific advice through the Implementation Review Procedure, and an online video as part of the Introductory Course on the Implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements hosted by the Center for Governance and Sustainability at the University of Massachusetts (Boston) and the UN Environment Programme.

Most significantly perhaps, AEWA’s flagship African Initiative recognises that inadequate capacity in developing countries and countries with economies in transition puts them at a continued disadvantage and prevents them from reaping the environmental, social and economic benefits offered by full compliance with Agreements such as AEWA. The African Initiative has provided a range of training opportunities on issues tailored to the needs of the Agreement (including “training of trainers”); and preparatory meetings convened in advance of AEWA MOPs have also helped to strengthen the participation of African Parties in the process.

The questionnaire below invites your views on any of these existing provisions that may be a priority for future improvement or gap-filling; BUT you are also encouraged to suggest anything that is *currently missing* from (international) efforts to strengthen capacity, and which could be important to address in future.

**THE SURVEY**

Please answer the following questions as far as you are able.

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| **About you** |
|  **1 a.** Name:

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 **1 b.** Responding on behalf of: (*For example: Contracting Party government, Non-Party Range State government, partner or collaborating organisation, Standing Committee member, Technical Committee member, individual. Please identify both the category and the specific country/organisation where applicable*).

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 **1 c.** Contact details:

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| **Perceived current weaknesses in international capacity** |
|  **2 a.** In your opinion, what currently are the areas in which *capacity is weakest* (at international level) for helping to implement AEWA? (Excluding funding). Please choose a maximum of three of the following, and number them in order of importance (1 = most important):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Awareness and general understanding about migratory waterbirds and their conservation needs…………………………………………………………………….
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| * Awareness and general understanding about the Agreement…………………….
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| * Interpretation and application of AEWA provisions and obligations………………
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| * Availability of scientific data (specify what kind, in question 2 b)………….…………….
 |  |
| * Scientific understanding about waterbirds and the threats that affect them……..
 |  |
| * Specific skills or knowledge for implementing action (specify what kind, in question 2 b - eg policy, habitat management, monitoring etc)………………..…………..………….
 |  |
| * Mechanisms / processes for cooperative action……………………………..……..
 |  |
| * Mechanisms / processes for sharing knowledge or data……………..……………
 |  |
| * Available sources of occasional expert advice on specific problems………………………………………………..……………………………….
 |  |
| * Mechanisms / processes for monitoring and reporting on implementation….…..
 |  |
| * Continuity of involvement by the people and institutions responsible for implementation………………………………………………………………………….
 |  |
| * Development of initiatives and resourcing of transboundary action………………
 |  |
| * Other(s) (please specify):
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 **2 b.** Please explain more specifically the problem(s) you have identified in relation to each of the items you selected in answer to 2(a).

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 **2 c.** In what way(s) is/are the problem(s) you identified in 2(a) affecting the implementation of the Agreement?

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| **Options for strengthening international capacity** |
|  **3 a.** Which of the following areas of international capacity strengthening support do you think are *the most important to develop further* in the period to 2027, to address the weaknesses you identified in answer to question 2 above? Please choose a maximum of three of the following, and number them in order of importance (1 = most important):

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| --- | --- |
| * Guidance manuals, technical tools and standards…………………..……………..
 |  |
| * Making information available in relevant languages………………………………..
 |  |
| * Physical (in-person) training events or courses……………………………………..
 |  |
| * On-line interactive training resources………………………………………………...
 |  |
| * Implementation Review Procedures or equivalent “advisory mission” types of support………………………………………………………………………………...…
 |  |
| * Pre-MOP preparatory meetings……………………………………………………….
 |  |
| * Transboundary cooperation arrangements………………………………………….
 |  |
| * Mutual exchange schemes, including site twinning initiatives, personnel exchange placements, etc……………………………………………………………..
 |  |
| * Scientific project collaborations on research or monitoring………………………..
 |  |
| * Online workspaces / information exchange platforms……………………………...
 |  |
| * Other mechanisms / processes for sharing knowledge or data…………………...
 |  |
| * Initiatives seeking efficient synergistic implementation of biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)…………………………………….
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| * Joint/coordinated communication, awareness and outreach campaigns……………………………………………………………………………….
 |  |
| * Other(s) (please specify):
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 **3 b.** What main opportunities can you identify for *improving* the items you chose in answer to question 3(a)?

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 **4.** In your opinion, how should AEWA capacity strengthening efforts be most efficiently *targeted* to areas of greatest need?

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|  **5.** Do you have any other suggestions for improving capacity at international level (in the short or longer term) for the effective implementation of AEWA?

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⮚ Please return your response to jeannine.dicken@un.org **by 10 December 2021**.

*THANK YOU!!*