

21st MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
28-30 April 2026, Virtual Meeting Format

**TERMS OF REFERENCE ON A GUIDANCE ON
ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT¹**

1. Project title

AEWA Guidelines on Adaptive Management

2. Background

Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) has been widely promoted in the context of the implementation of AEWA for achieving management and conservation objectives for huntable species. However, the understanding of the protocols and practices of AHM is uneven, and so the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA has requested the AEWA Technical Committee:

to prepare, working with AEWA's European Goose Management Platform, the European Commission's Task Force on the Recovery of Birds and other appropriate treaties or agreements, simple guidance on adaptive harvest management, drawing on legislation, principles and theory from existing models and scientific literature, and submit it to the Standing Committee for potential endorsement as interim guidance ahead of possible adoption at MOP9 (Resolution 8.8, 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties, September 2022).

Further, the general principles of adaptive management beyond its application to harvest management are embraced in virtually all AEWA and many European Commission (EC) planning documents. Yet a survey of those documents suggests a variety of decision-making processes, some of which bear little resemblance to a genuine adaptive-management process. Thus, there is a need to better describe the application of adaptive management for situations other than regulating offtake (e.g., habitat conservation), by establishing guiding principles and appropriate approaches to development and implementation.

3. Duties of the contractor

Using relevant scientific and social literature, personal experiences, and in consultation with the AEWA Technical Committee, the contractor shall prepare a document that contains the following items:

1. A definition and description of the principles of adaptive management as based on the seminal literature, including the necessary components and the processes for decision-making and learning. This should also include assessment of the context, including the relevant legislative framework, a description of when adaptive management is the appropriate decision-making tool and what other forms of informed

¹ As approved by the 18th meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee (TC18), 14-16 March 2023. Relevant for task 2.4 of the TC Work Plan 2026-2028.

decision-making may be needed. At a minimum, the consultant shall provide relevant published references to these other forms of decision analyses, which ideally provide examples from natural resource management and conservation.

2. An explanation of the components of adaptive management (i.e., problem framing, stakeholder engagement, objectives, management alternatives, system models, and monitoring), along with various approaches for establishing them. This should also include a description of effective governance processes for developing, implementing, and evaluating adaptive management programs as well as providing perspectives on human and economic resource requirements (scale-dependent) in the different phases of an adaptive management program. This description will focus on participatory engagement to achieve consensus-based processes, social learning, shared responsibilities, and ownership, recognising that appropriate forms of governance will be context-specific.
3. Regarding adaptive harvest management (AHM), a description of the principles of sustainable harvesting and the minimum information needs for the sustainable regulation of harvests. Key components of an AHM process (e.g., management objectives, models, monitoring) will be described, as will guidelines about how they can be constructed. Principles for setting population targets in relation to biological and societal (e.g. conservation status) factors, as well as legal requirements and obligations, will be included.
4. Case studies, either real or hypothetical, for the adaptive management of offtake, habitat (including reserve design), disturbance, and for species recovery. There should be a minimum of one case study for each of these topics, and they should represent a range of differing taxa, political and capacity situations, and spatial and temporal scales.

4. Duration of the project

A draft document for review by the AEWA Technical Committee 9 months after the start of the contract, and a final product 12 months after the start of the contract.