

Action Plan, paragraph 4.3.12). When answering this question please also consider question 56 in chapter 6 - Research and monitoring.

No

If appropriate, please provide further details.

> Although no official restrictions have been introduced, the Advising Interparliamentary Council of the Benelux has requested the governments to promote the use of ecological and degradable alternatives in sport fishing practice and to sensitize all actors involved in sport fishing for the problems and harmful consequences of lead weights.

You have attached the following documents to this answer.

[Benelux 10 juli 2014 alternatieven lood.pdf](#)

39. Does your country have legislation in place, which provides for Strategic Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Assessment (SEA/EIA) of activities potentially negatively affecting natural habitats or wildlife? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 4.3.1)

Yes and being implemented

Does this legislation apply to the entire country or only to particular states/provinces thereof?

Entire country

Please provide details

> Each region has its own legislation, based on European Directives.

Do the SEA/EIA processes consider waterbirds and habitats on which they depend?

Yes

Please provide details

> European directive 2001/42/CE of 27 June 2001 ensures that plans and programmes likely to have significant effects on the environment are made subject to an environmental assessment, prior to their approval or authorisation. Consultation with the public is a key feature of environmental assessment procedures.

FLANDERS: Decree concerning general provisions relating to environmental policy Decree of 5 April 1995 concerning general provisions relating to environmental policy and the Government of Flanders Decree of 10/12/2004 provide the procedure and a list of activities for which an Environmental Impact Report has to be written.

According to art. 36ter of the Decree for Nature Conservation, for every activity, plan or program that needs to be licenced and that might have a negative impact on a SPA, there has to be made an appropriate assessment.

Federal level: Belgian marine territory: royal Decrees (in pursuance of the MMM law of 20/01/1999): the RD of 09/09/2003 establishing the rules related to the environmental impact assessment and the royal decree of the 07/09/2003 establishing the procedures for granting permits and authorisations for some activities in the marine spaces.

WALLONIA: Environmental assessments of plans and programs are under the Walloon environmental code. This directive has been transposed in the BCR in the order of 18 March 2004.

Brussels Region: Ordonnance du 1er mars 2012 relative à la conservation de la nature, Titre II, Chapitre 5 'Evaluation appropriée des incidences des plans et projets sur les sites protégés et critères de décision', which covers the appropriate impact assessment of plans and projects on Natura 2000 sites and natural and forest reserves + art. 85 appropriate impact assessment on derogations of article 47 §2 and of article 48.'

Do the SEA/EIA processes include public participation?

Yes

Please provide details

> The European Union has established a mix of mandatory and discretionary procedures to assess environmental impacts. European Union Directive on Environmental Impact Assessments (known as the EIA Directive) has been codified in Directive 2011/92/EU of 13 December 2011. Under the EU directive, an EIA must provide certain information to comply. This Directive has been transposed in Regional policy, and is applied through the environmental and the urbanistic permit procedures.

Assessment of the plans and projects in relation to NATURA 2000 sites is provision of the European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), in particular its article 6(3) and 6(4). The aim of these articles is to reveal negative impacts of plans and projects to coherence of NATURA 2000 network through appropriate assessment (AA) of their possible effects on integrity of the NATURA 2000 sites and in particular in regards to their effect on species and habitats that are sites target features. If impacts are detected such plans and projects have to be either avoided or amended, or if imperative reasons of overriding public interest are proved compensatory measures in favour of NATURA 2000 have to be taken to ensure overall coherence of the NATURA 2000 network.

FLANDERS, WALLONIA: EIA are required under the Environmental code or regional decree (environment and urban permits required).

BRUSSELS: Transposed in the order of 1st March 2012, this principle of the directive has been extended in the Brussels Capital Region to the nature and forest reserves.

FLANDERS: The procedure for the Environmental Impact Report includes public consultation. The request for a licence that might have an influence on a SPA is published for public consultation together with the appropriate assessment.

FEDERAL:

Belgian marine territory: royal Decrees of 09/09/2003 establishing the rules related to the environmental impact assessment and of the 07/09/2003 establishing the procedures for granting permits and authorizations for some activities in the marine spaces clearly specify in which cases a public consultation has to be organized.

40. In the last three years, has your country used SEA/EIA for all relevant projects, including energy sector projects such as renewable energy developments and power lines installation, to assess the impact of proposed projects on migratory waterbird species listed on Table 1 and/or habitats/sites on which they depend? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 4.3.1, Resolution 5.11 and Resolution 5.16)

Yes, all proposed projects

Please provide information on the outstanding cases

> FLANDERS: Projects from the list in the Government of Flanders Decree of 10/12/2004 were subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment following the procedure described in the Decree of 5 April 1995 concerning general provisions relating to environmental policy. This list includes power lines installation and the installation of hydropower facilities and the procedure requires to include the assessment of possible effects on biodiversity, fauna and flora. Plans or programmes that relate to energy, amongst others, and that form the framework for permits for projects from the above mentioned list and plans or programmes for which it could not be demonstrated that it will not have significant environmental impacts were subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

An appropriate assessment has been made for every activity, plan or program that needed to be licenced and that could have had a negative impact on a special protection area, according to art. 36ter of the Decree for Nature Conservation.

WALLONIA: The environmental code lists the projects subject to EIA, part V, chapitre II « Système d'évaluation des incidences des plans et programmes sur l'environnement » and chapitre III « Système d'évaluation des incidences de projets sur l'environnement ».

In Wallonia the decision of the wallon government of 04/07/2002 concerns the environmental impact assesment. This decision gives a list of acts and projects which require an environmental impact assessment and fixes the minimal information that these studies must include. This list includes power lines installation and the installation of hydropower facilities and the procedure requires to include the assesment of possible effects on biodiversity, fauna and flora.

An appropriate assessment has to be made for every plan or program that needs a licence and that could have had a negative impact on a special protection area (Natura 2000 site), according to art. 28, §1er of the Nature Conservation Law of 12/07/1973.

All the birds species except the game species are protected in Wallonia. The Nature Conservation Law forbids to deteriorate or to destroy the habitats of the protected species and to deliberately capture, disturb or kill individuals. It is possible to get a derogation for allowing one or several of these actions. This derogation can be delivered only if it is established that the derogation won't have a detrimental impact on the species conservation status. Therefore an environmental impact assesment of the project on the potentially impacted species needs to be realised.

Where an SEA/EIA has identified a likelihood of significant negative impacts on migratory waterbirds, have steps been taken to avoid these impacts, including avoidance of protected areas and other sites of importance for migratory waterbirds?

Yes

Please describe the measures put in place

> Where the powerline is crossing the area with importance for waterbirds, it was put underground.

Field for additional information (optional)

> Under EU legislation it is mandatory to avoid significant negative impact.

41. Has your country used the AEWA Guidelines on how to avoid, minimize or mitigate impact of infrastructural developments and related disturbance affecting waterbirds?

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the **Ctrl button** on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

No

Please explain the reasons. What other guidance has been used instead?

> FLANDERS: The Flemish Government has published own methodological guidance documents, e.g. on EIA for thermic power plants (2009) and infrastructure (above ground power lines, 2007; underground tubes, 2007; railways, 2007, roads, 2007).

42. Please report on the implementation of Resolution 5.11 on Power Lines and Migratory Waterbirds.

42.1. Are relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, scientific bodies, nongovernmental organisations and the energy sector, being regularly consulted in order to monitor jointly the impacts of power lines on waterbirds and to agree on a common policy of action?

Yes

Please provide details

> Elia, the manager of the high-voltage electricity transmission system in Belgium, has required the nature ngos Aves, Natuurpunt and Vogelbescherming Vlaanderen as well as the Flemish Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO) to produce a report "Reducing bird mortality caused by high- and very-high-voltage power lines in Belgium" and map the 'black lines' on the power line network. The report with national sensitivity map was published in 2012. All available data from bird monitoring projects were put together to build this map. Bird species were classified according to their specific collision risk. According to the local abundance of each species, a "Bird Collision Risk" score has been calculated for each line section. Most of the dangerous power lines are located in areas where major concentrations of waterbirds occur. Elia will use the sensitivity map to adjust the network by placing markers or "diverters" on the lines with high risk in order to try to reduce the number of collision fatalities drastically. For the power lines with the highest risk on the sensitivity map, mitigation measures are progressively applied. The results of the gradual applied mitigation measures is also monitored and evaluated.

42.2. Has a baseline of waterbird distribution, population sizes, migrations and movements (including those between breeding, resting and feeding areas) been established as early as possible in the planning of any power line project, over a period of at least five years, and with particular emphasis on those species known to be vulnerable to electrocution or collision?

Yes

Please provide details

> FLANDERS: Methodology is described in the guidelines for EIA for above ground power lines (Richtlijnenboek Bovengrondse Hoogspanningsleidingen; Dienst MER; oktober 2007; 62pag.). Basis is the setting up of a population-ecological modelling and population structure for the baseline situation which then should be compared with the situation after the establishment of the power line. In Flanders a bird-collision risk atlas has been made where waterbird concentrations and seasonal/dayle movements are visualised. This atlas can be consulted any time on <https://geo.inbo.be/windturbines/> in order that early on in every project one can evaluate the possible impact/risks at a given site. WALLONIA: SEA and EIA are applicable for power lines and is supposed to take this information into account.

42.3 If such studies, as described in the question above, have identified any risks, has every effort been made to ensure these are avoided?

Yes

Please provide details.

> In the single relevant case, the powerline went underground on the passing through the sensitive area.

42.4. Have the location, route and direction of new power lines been designated on the basis of national zoning maps?

Yes

Please provide details

> Location of power lines must be integrated in national zoning maps and the system of land use planning. This process must always be accompanied by a SEA at the level of the spatial planning and EIA for the concrete project.

42.5. Has, wherever possible, the construction of power lines along major migration flyways and in habitats of conservation importance* been avoided, where such construction is likely to have significant effects on waterbirds?

* such as Special Protection Areas under the EU Birds Directive, Important Bird Areas, protected areas, Ramsar sites, the West/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Crane and other waterbirds and other critical sites as identified by the Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool for the African-Eurasian region.

Not applicable

Please explain the reasons.

> The situation of new construction of powerlines has not occurred in the reporting period.

42.6. Are bird-safe designs in the construction of new power infrastructure, including measures designed to reduce electrocution and collisions being used in your country?

Yes

Please provide details

> Balls and 'curls' on the power lines are and will be installed on the most sensitive stretches of high-voltage power lines.

42.7. Have those sections of existing power lines that are causing relatively high levels of waterbird injury and/or mortality due to electrocution and/or collision been identified?

Yes

Please provide details

> This is an ongoing process. Based on the monitoring of bird mortality due to high- and very-high-voltage power lines in Belgium, a sensitivity map was prepared, indicating those sections that are causing relatively high levels of (water)bird injury and/or mortality due to electrocution and/or collision. The report with national sensitivity map was published in 2012 (see web link). Elia, the manager of the high-voltage electricity transmission system in Belgium, will use the sensitivity map to adjust the network by placing markers or "diverters" on the most dangerous lines in order to try to reduce the number of collision fatalities drastically. For the power lines with the highest risk on the sensitivity map, in 2014 a field study was performed to determine the actual risk, so that Elia can prioritize mitigation measures further. The results of the gradual applied mitigation measures will also be monitored and evaluated on a project level during the coming years.

42.8. Where sections of existing power lines have been identified to cause relatively high levels of waterbird injury and/or mortality due to electrocution and/or collision, have they been modified as a matter of priority?

Partially

Please provide details.

> The modification process is ongoing. First the trajectories with the highest risks are modified, others follow step by step.

42.9. Is there in your country regular monitoring and evaluation of the impact of power lines on waterbird populations at the national scale?

Partial

Please provide details.

> Through the citizen-science portal www.waarnemingen.be / www.observations.be, it is possible to report power line victims. Where a lot of victims are reported, a more detailed assessment of the risk can be performed.

42.10. Is there in your country regular monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of mitigation measures put in place to minimise the impact of power lines on waterbird populations?

Partial

Please provide details.

> Before and after modification of some powerlines, the impact of the modification is assessed.

42.11. Have the measures contained in Resolution 5.11. been included in your country's National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and relevant legislation?

No

Please explain the reasons. What are the constraints preventing implementation of this activity?

> Strategic Environmental Assessment for power lines is already covered by legislation in force. No budget could be allocated for monitoring specifically related to power lines. Other aspects of Resolution 5.11 are covered by the Elia project (see 37.5).

43. Has your country used the AEWA Guidelines on how to avoid or mitigate impact of electricity power grids on migratory birds in the African-Eurasian region?

No

Please explain the reasons. What other guidance has been used instead?

> FLANDERS: The Flemish Government has published own methodological guidance documents on EIA for above ground power lines, 2007 and underground tubes, 2007.

44. Please report on the implementation of Resolution 5.16 on Renewable Energy and Migratory Waterbirds.

44.1. Has a national sensitivity and zoning mapping to avoid overlap of renewable energy developments with areas of importance for migratory waterbirds been developed in your country?

Yes

Please provide details

> FLANDERS: The Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO) has produced an update report of the bird sensitivity map in 2015. The instrument includes information and recommendations concerning the possible effects of planned wind turbines on birds and bats in Flanders. The instrument makes clear what essential steps have to be undertaken for new projects and plans of wind farms, and where the necessary information can be found to proceed these steps. The sensitivity map has several component maps, and can be consulted in a geographical web application on the INBO website.

WALLONIA: the impacts of Wind mills and Wind mill farms are included in EIA;

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: impacts of windmills and windmill farms are included in the EIA

44.2. Have any international environmental guidelines, recommendations and criteria been followed in your country for impact assessment of renewable energy developments and the utilization of renewable energy sources?

Yes

Please describe which guidelines, recommendations and criteria have been followed.

> FLANDERS: The risk atlas that was already made for Birds (to evaluate windfarm risks), has been enlarged in order to also cover bat collision risks. For this the Eurobats-guidelines provided a major input.

44.3. Is post-construction monitoring being undertaken of the renewable energy installations and associated infrastructure in your country?

Yes

Please share information and lessons learnt from the post-construction monitoring.

> BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: an update of the environmental effects of windfarms was made in the 'Monitoring Report 2016' (<https://www.naturalsciences.be/en/news/item/6688>)

WALLONIA: the impacts of Wind mills and Wind mill farms are included in EIA;

Has adverse effect on migratory waterbirds and their habitats been identified?

No

44.4. Where damage cannot be avoided or mitigated, has compensation for damages to biodiversity been provided?

Yes

Please provide details

> For some planned wind farms, compensation of meadow and farmland bird habitat was introduced, because of an estimated local-scale disturbance effect from the turbines.

44.5. Please indicate whether any of the following measures have been put in place to reduce the potential negative impact of terrestrial and marine windfarms on migratory waterbirds:

Operate wind farms in ways that minimise bird mortality, for example by introducing shortterm shutdowns during peak migration and minimising lighting in wind farms.

Not applicable

Please explain the reasons

> Windfarms are placed outside migration corridors, so that there is no need for operational shutdowns.

Dismantling of wind turbines in existing installations, should waterbird mortality have an effect on the population status of a species and other mitigation measures have proved insufficient.

Not applicable

Please explain the reasons

> No situations have been detected that would require dismantling or greater operational changes. Throughout the building permit process, places with big risks are avoided.

Focusing research efforts on alleviating the negative effects on waterbirds from wind farms, such as the mapping of the main migration corridors and migration crossings for waterbirds also allowing the optimising of wind farm layouts.

Yes

Please provide details

> FLANDERS: The areas with important waterbird concentrations, migration corridors and crossings have been mapped and are available as a risk atlas via a web application (<https://geo.inbo.be/windturbines/>)

44.6. Have any specific measures been put in place to assess, identify and reduce potential negative impacts of biofuel production on migratory waterbirds and their habitats?

No

Please explain the reasons. What are the constraints preventing implementation of this activity?

> Priority is given to a general approach on the impact of biofuel production on biodiversity. This has been included in the National Biodiversity Strategy: 'Belgium will defend a position aiming at the compulsory inclusion of new environmental criteria within the framework of the revision of Renewable Energy Directive 2009/28/EC. Incentives should be restricted to the promotion of biofuels produced from feedstock that do not create an additional demand for land and do not compete with other uses like food, materials, biodiversity.'

44.7. Have the measures contained in Resolution 5.11. been included in your country's National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and relevant legislation?

Yes

Please provide details

> National Biodiversity Strategy 2006-2016: 4c.8 Ensure that the production of plants for renewable energy does not negatively impact on biodiversity

46. Is by-catch of waterbirds in fishing gear taking place in your country? (Resolution 3.8)

No Information

Field for additional information (optional)

> The European Commission has developed an Action Plan for reducing incidental catches of seabirds in fishing gears.

47. Has your country undertaken steps towards the adoption/application of measures to reduce the incidental catch of seabirds and combat Illegal Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing practices in the Agreement Area? (Resolution 3.8)

Yes

Field for additional information (optional)

> The European Commission has developed an Action Plan for reducing incidental catches of seabirds in fishing gears.

Pressures and Responses

6. Research and Monitoring

49. Does your country have waterbird monitoring schemes for the AEWA species in place? (Strategic Plan 2009-2017, Objective 3, Target 3.2)

Yes

Covering the breeding period

Guidance: Including pre- and post-breeding sites of concentration, such as moulting sites close to breeding areas

Fully

Guidance: Coverage is full when all waterbird species are covered by monitoring schemes that yield statistically robust estimates of breeding population size and trend at least once in every triennium.

Please provide details.

> FLANDERS: rare breeding birds and colony-breeders are followed up on a yearly basis through the project Bijzondere Broedvogels. More numerous and frequent breeders are monitored in the project Algemene Broedvogels through statistically based plots scattered over the region which are followed up every 3 years.

Covering the passage period

Fully

Guidance: Coverage is full when all internationally and nationally important sites for passage birds are comprehensively covered at least monthly in the passage period.

Please provide details.

> FLANDERS: all sites with important concentrations of waterbirds are monitored through mid-monthly waterbird counts (15 october - 15 march). Passing birds outside this period are not fully covered, but counts are then performed at the most important stop-over sites.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: monitoring of seabirds is included in the monitoring program established under the EU-Marine Strategy (MSFD)

Covering the non-breeding/wintering period

Fully

Guidance: Coverage is full when all internationally and nationally important non-breeding/wintering sites are covered at least by one comprehensive annual count.

Please provide details.

> FLANDERS: all sites with important concentrations of waterbirds are monitored through mid-monthly waterbird counts (15 october - 15 march).

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: monitoring of seabirds is included in the monitoring program established under the EU-Marine Strategy (MSFD)

Field for additional information (optional)

> Information on species conservation status is available on the wallon internet site on biodiversity.

<http://biodiversite.wallonie.be/fr/accueil.html?IDC=6>

Besides this, information on Natura 2000 birds species conservation status is available through the Natura 2000 website. The Environmental Outlook for Wallonia gives trends for birds species which are monitored on a regular basis and the results are available through the dashboard of the Walloon environment.

50. Has your country supported, technically or financially, other Parties or Range States in designing appropriate monitoring schemes and developing their capacity to collect reliable waterbird population data? (Resolution 5.2)

No

Please explain the reasons

> No opportunity arose to set up such kind of support. Through the European Goose Management Platform however Flanders contributed financially to the datacenter to collect and process distribution data.

51. Has your country used the AEWA Guidelines for a waterbird monitoring protocol?

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the **Ctrl button** on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

No

Please explain the reasons. What guidance has been used instead?

> Monitoring programs were existing at the time the guidelines were established. It is possible to use the Guidelines in future monitoring protocols.

FLANDERS: Waterbird monitoring has been organised since 1967 in the framework of the 'International Waterbird Census', coordinated by Wetlands International, to which monitoring schemes are optimised.

BELGIUM (federal): Since 1992 regular counts of seabirds are done from ships following standardized methods on an ad hoc basis, for research projects and in the framework of WinMon, a monitoring program to assess the impact of windmills that started in 2005.

Since 1997 monitoring of nesting gulls and terns is organized in the framework of ecological quality objectives of OSPAR. The monitoring of seabirds is included in the monitoring program established under the EU-Marine Strategy (MSFD) since 2014.

WALLONIA: Trends in common birds numbers in Wallonia: through the environment dashboard in Wallonia, 75 species of birds are monitored. Though only representing 43% of the breeding species found in Wallonia, they account for 96% of the total bird population.

52. Have any research programmes been established in your country in the last 5 years to address waterbird conservation priorities in accordance with the AEWA strategies and plans? (AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017, Objective 3, Target 3.3)

No

Please explain the reasons.

> FLANDERS, WALLONIA and BRUSSELS: Research projects have primarily been planned and established in the framework of Natura2000 and species protection programmes. Some of this research is in the benefit of waterbirds but there is no specific research programme targeted to waterbirds.

53. List (or provide links to lists) of research related to waterbirds and their conservation that has been undertaken or results published in the past triennium (Strategic Plan 2009-2017, Objective 3, Target 3.5)

> FLANDERS: The Institute of Nature and Forest Research shares the outcomes of their research in several publications.

The results of wintering waterbird censuses are published in 'Vogelnieuws', a magazine published by the Institute of Nature and Forest research to also provide feedback to the volunteers who are engaged in the mid-monthly waterbird counts.

More specific research outputs are published in scientific reports, most of which are available as pdf through <https://pureportal.inbo.be/portal/nl/publications/search.html?ordering=researchOutputOrderByPublicationYear&descending=true>

Also more information about running projects concerning waterbirds can be found on the site of the institute: <https://www.inbo.be/nl/thema/soorten-biotopen-fauna/vogels/watervogels>

54. Has your government provided over the past triennium funds and/or logistical support for the International Waterbird Census at international or national level? (Strategic Plan 2009-2017, Objective 3, Target 3.1)

Yes

Nationally

Yes

Please provide details

> FLANDERS: the Institute of Nature and Forest research is coordinating a network of professionals and skilled volunteers in order to have a good coverage of breeding rare waterbirds and wintering waterbirds.

Internationally

No

Please explain the reasons

> Nu budget available.

55. Has your country donated funds to the African-Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring Partnership Fund in the past triennium (Resolution 6.3)?

No

56. Has the impact of lead fishing weights on waterbirds been investigated in your country? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 4.3.12). When answering this question please also consider

question 38 in chapter 5 - Management of human activities.

No

Are there plans to investigate the impact of lead fishing weights on waterbirds in your country?

No

Please provide reason(s)

> no priority

Pressures and Responses

7. Education and Information

7.1. Communication, Education and Public Awareness

57. Has your country developed and implemented programmes for raising awareness and understanding on waterbird conservation and about AEWA specifically? (Strategic Plan 2009-2017, Objective 4, Target 4.3 and AEWA Action Plan, paragraphs 6.1-6.4, Resolution 3.10, Resolution 5.5)

Yes, being implemented

Please describe the awareness programmes which have been developed. Please upload any relevant sample materials which have been developed and add contact details of a contact person for each programme.

> FLANDERS: The Agency for Nature and Forests participates in several nature visitor centers nearby important wetlands. Contact: Marie-Laure Vanwanseele, anb@vlaanderen.be
Nature conservation NGO's also pay attention to raising public awareness about nature conservation in general, including waterbirds and wetland ecosystems. Contact: e.g. largest Nature NGO Natuurpunt, director Chris Steenwegen, chris.steenwegen@natuurpunt.be. Naturalists' associations are in some cases financed by the Flemish government in view to organize public awareness and education activities

WALLONIA: The Nature and Forest Department organises CEPA activities (Philippe.vanasbroek@spw.wallonie.be);

- Naturalists' associations are financed in view to organize public awareness and education activities. Nature protection organizations such as the WWF, the 'Ligue Royale pour la Protection des Oiseaux' (LRBPO, protection.oiseaux@birdprotection.be), Natagora (info@natagora.be), "Ardenne et Gaume" (secretariat@ardenne-et-gaume.be), 'Les Cercles des Naturalistes de Belgique', 'Jeunes et Nature' and 'Forêt Wallonne' all have educational activities oriented towards nature conservation.

- Public education and awareness is one of the missions of Natural parks (info@fpnw.be)

BRUSSELS REGION: Naturalists' associations are financed in view to organize public awareness and education activities. Nature protection organizations such as the 'Ligue Royale pour la Protection des Oiseaux' (LRBPO, director Corentin Rousseau, corentin.rousseau@birdprotection.be), Natagora/Aves (director Philippe Funcken, philippe.funcken@natagora.be), Natuurpunt (director Chris Steenwegen, chris.steenwegen@natuurpunt.be), and many others all have educational activities oriented towards nature conservation. Public education and awareness is one of the missions of Brussels Environment, the regional administration for energy and environment.

• Federal level: Belgian marine territory:

- A national campaign was launched in April 2005 in order to create a social basis for the different "values" of the sea.

- In 2012 a brochure has been published on the natural values of the sea to raise public awareness.

Contact: Federal Public Service (FPS) Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, marien.milieu.marin@environment.belgium.be

Does the programme specifically focus on AEWA and the provisions of its Action Plan?

No

58. Has a National AEWA Focal Point for Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) been nominated by your country? (Resolution 5.5)

No

Please explain the reasons

> CEPA is followed up by the National Focal Point, who informs the Regional Focal Points.

59. Have measures been taken by your country to implement the provisions related to "Education and Information" in the AEWA Action Plan over the last triennium? (AEWA Action Plan, Paragraphs 6.1-6.4)

Yes

Please indicate which measures have been taken:

a. National training programmes have been arranged for personnel responsible for implementing AEWA

No

Please explain the reasons

> No budget could be allocated for specific training programmes in the framework of AEWA. People involved in the awareness programmes are either trained professionals or volunteers that can follow various training

programmes in their NGOs or through knowledge sharing institutions such as Natuurinvest (affiliate of the Flemish Agency for Nature and Forests). Those training programmes are usually situated in a broader biodiversity framework.

b. Training programmes and materials have been developed in cooperation with other Parties and/or the Agreement Secretariat

No

Please explain the reasons

> Training programmes and materials related to waterbirds usually are part of a broader nature training, developed by nature NGOs or government administrations. For programmes and materials in Dutch, the language is an extra barrier for co-developing such materials.

c. AEWA related information and training resources have been exchanged with other Parties and/or shared with the Agreement Secretariat

No

Please explain the reasons

> No dedicated AEWA related information and training resources were produced. Information and training resources related to waterbirds usually are part of broader nature information and training resources, developed by nature NGOs or government administrations. For information and resources in Dutch, the language is an extra barrier for exchanging these.

d. Specific public awareness campaigns for the conservation of populations listed in Table 1 have been conducted

Yes

How can the effectiveness of the measures be rated?

Other

> Not evaluated

Please provide details

> FLANDERS: In the framework of Natura2000 (Birds directive), public awareness for the conservation of populations of relevant waterbird species has been addressed by the website www.natura2000.vlaanderen.be. On the website www.ecopedia.be detailed ecological information of, amongst others, relevant waterbirds is available.

60. Have World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) activities been carried out in your country during this reporting cycle? (Resolution 5.5)

Yes

Please describe the activity/activities briefly and upload any sample materials, links or photos available related to the activity/event.

> FLANDERS: In 2017 an event was held at the Zwin, an intertidal wetland (with visitors centre) at the coast where large numbers of waterbirds stop over.

61. Has your country provided funding and/or other support, as appropriate (e.g. expertise, network, skills and resources) towards the implementation of the AEWA Communication Strategy? Please consider both national and international funding and different types of support provided. (Strategic Plan 2009- 2017, Objective 4, Target 4.1 and Resolution 3.10, Resolution 5.5)

No

Please explain the reasons

> No budget available.

62. In Resolution 3.10 the Meeting of the Parties encouraged Contracting Parties to host AEWA Exchange Centres for their respective regions. Has your country considered/shown interest in hosting a Regional AEWA Exchange Centre? (Strategic Plan 2009-2017, Objective 3, Target 2 and Resolution 3.10)

Not considered yet

Please provide details on the answer given above

> No staff available to work this out.

63. Training for CEPA (Communication, Education and Public Awareness) at national level is supposed to be conducted by staff who have been trained in the framework of an AEWA Training of Trainers programme. Have staff who were trained as part of a Training of Trainers workshop conducted national CEPA training in your country in the past triennium? (Strategic Plan 2009-2017, Objective 4, Target 4.2)

No

Please explain the reasons

> FLANDERS: No staff was trained.

Pressures and Responses

8. Implementation

64. Has your country approached non-contracting party range states to encourage them to accede to the Agreement? (Resolution 3.10)

Report only on activities over the past triennium

No

Please explain the reasons

> No opportunity arose to approach non-contracting parties on this issue.

65. Has your country supported/developed international co-operation projects for the implementation of the Agreement, according to the priorities outlined in the AEWA International Implementation Tasks (IIT) for the current triennium? (Resolution 6.13).

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the **Ctrl** button on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

Yes

Please list the IIT projects (**see the full roster here**) to which grants have been provided or for which initiatives have been undertaken and briefly provide any relevant information

> FLANDERS: a budget was granted for the implementation of the International Management Plan for the Pinkfooted Goose. Also a budget was granted to develop the datacenter of the European Goose Management Platform (EGMP) under which new International Management Plans for other goose species are developed.

66. Does your country have in place a national coordination mechanism for implementation of AEWA, possibly linking to national coordination mechanisms for other biodiversity Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)? (Strategic Plan 2009-2017, Objective 5, Target 5.7)

Yes, it is operational on a regular basis

Please provide details

> The Coordination Committee for International Environmental Policy (CCIEP) Working group on Nature ensures that Belgium brings well-argued opinions on environmental policy to the international scene. These coordinated standpoints require a preceding debate both at technical and political level. Representatives from all Régions and the federal for all international or european nature related agreements (CMS (and its daughter agreements), CITES, Ramsar, CBD, ...) and other stakeholders are represented.

<http://www.sante.belgique.be/eportal/Environment/Inspectionandenvironmentalrigh/international/CCPIE/10972455?ie2Term=CCIM&ie2section=83&&fodnlang=en>

67. Has your country concluded, or considered concluding, twinning schemes between sites with other countries, the sites of which share common migratory waterbirds or conservation issues? (Resolution 5.20)

Yes

Please provide details on each twinning arrangement

> FLANDERS: Twinning of sites near the Zwin Tidal Area: nature restoration and recreation/ecotourism. The Hedwige-Prosper project across the Dutch/Belgian border in the Scheldt Estuary: restoring waterbird habitat. Collaboration with the Netherlands and Germany in the tri-country Park: broad collaboration including landscape management.

68. Are those officers in your country's government responsible for AEWA implementation co-ordinated and engaged with national processes to implement and to assess delivery of the CBD Strategic Plan 2011 - 2020 including the Aichi targets?

Yes

Please provide details

> The Coordination Committee for International Environmental Issues / Nature takes this into account

69. Are the AEWA priorities incorporated into your county's National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan (NBSAP) and other strategic planning processes (Resolution 6.3)?

69.1 NBSAP

Yes

69.2 Other strategic planning processes

Yes

Please name the other strategic planning processes

> FLANDERS: Indirectly the AEWA-priorities are incorporated through agreements with other administrations and organisations (agriculture, water management, traffic, economy, land management, ...) in the wider frame of the realisation of the Natura2000 goals from the SPA's of the EU Birds Directive. Where applicable these other sectors commit to support the conservation goals throughout their own projects/processes or at least not to jeopardize them.

70. Please report any activity undertaken to promote with the development agency of your country or other appropriate governmental body the relevance of AEWA implementation in the context of SDG-delivery and to stress the need to better integrate actions for waterbird and wetland conservation within relevant development projects (Resolution 6.15).

AEWA relevance for SDG implementation WAS promoted

71. How would your country suggest promoting further links between the biodiversity MEAs to which your country is a Contracting Party, so as to make your work more efficient and effective?

> By the harmonization of the reporting formats, harmonized cooperation between these conventions and agreements, use of "indicators": 'blinkers', which give signals and indications of situations and trends. Indicators could show how well which goals of the Agreement are being reached in a rather easy way, would allow a high degree of standardization in the reporting process. Sets of indicators have been developed at EU-level (in the framework of the EU Biodiversity Strategy) and in the framework of the new Strategy for Migratory Species under CMS. Those sets could form a basis for specific indicators for the AEWA Action Plan.

72. Has your country donated funds to the AEWA Small Grants Fund over the past triennium? (Strategic Plan 2009-2017, Objective 5, Target 5.4)

No

Please explain the reasons

> There was no budget available.

73. Has your country donated other funding or provided in-kind support to activities coordinated by the Secretariat?

Yes

Please provide details, including amount of funds donated

> Contribution to the implementation of the international adaptive harvest management plan for the pinkfooted goose (30.000€) and for the establishment of the datacentre for the European Goose Management Platform (25.000€).

74. Please report on the implementation of Resolution 6.21 on Resource mobilisation for the implementation of AEWA.

74.1 Did your country's government provide in the last triennium financial and/or in-kind resources to support national activities which are intended to achieve the objectives of this Agreement, particularly those in line with the AEWA Strategic Plan including the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa, and in accordance with your national plans, priorities and programmes?

Yes

Please describe the resources provided

> Land owners are encouraged to establish nature reserves, restore nature (including waterbird habitat) and

74.2 Does your country's government have unpaid dues to the AEWA Trust Fund (annual assessed contributions to the Agreement's budget as approved by each session of the Meeting of the Parties)?

No

74.3 Has your country's government provided funding to support developing countries, in particular least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, to meet their obligations under AEWA, and the implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2012-2017? Under this question please report for support

provided outside of formal and established intergovernmental cooperation. For the latter, please refer to the next question 74.4.

No

74.4 Does your country's government participate in any South-South, North-South or triangular cooperation to enhance financial and technical support for the successful implementation of AEWA activities?

No

74.5 Does your country's government use innovative financing mechanisms for implementing the AEWA Strategic Plan such as a (national) Migratory Waterbirds Fund?

No

74.6 Does the implementation of AEWA in your country benefit from synergies between biodiversity-related conventions at national level, amongst others, through information sharing on potential funding opportunities and sharing of financial resources such as the Desertification Fund, Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund, and the Global Environmental Facility?

No

Pressures and Responses

9. Climate Change

75. Please outline relevant climate change research, assessments and/or adaptation measures that are relevant to migratory waterbirds and which have been undertaken or planned in your country. (Resolution 5.13)

a. Research and studies of climate change impacts on waterbirds

No relevant activities

Please explain the reasons

> FLANDERS: Main focus in climate research lies on effects on nature management and fire prevention. Some projects focus on vegetation or ecosystems as a whole, but not specific on direct effects on waterbirds or wetlands. An impact assessment of climate change on the vegetation level has been carried out (Van der Aa et al. (2015). Effecten van klimaatverandering op natuur en bos. Rapporten van het Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek 2015 (INBO.R.2015.9952476). Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek, Brussel.).

There are 2 projects that have started which focus on river-ecosystems, which may be relevant: The project FutureFloodplains, carried out by different scientific partners, focuses on the modelling of changing ecosystem services of floodplains (including biodiversity), by considering different mid- and long-term scenarios of socio-ecological changes (including climate change). The research output is meant to help decision making in order to sustainably manage these floodplains. The project started in 2017 and will run uptill 2021.

The Life project Sparc (www.natuurenbos.be/sparc) studies climate change effects along the Scheldt river and focuses on enhanced flood safety by restoring flooding areas that are designed as wetlands with high nature values.

b. Assessment of the potential vulnerability to climate change of key habitats used by waterbird species (including those outside protected area networks) (Please note that the question asks about habitats, rather than sites. Question 27 in Section 4, sub-section 4.2 investigates vulnerability of sites to climate change)

Planned

Please provide details

> FLANDERS: A strategy has been developed on how to adapt climate change effects in nature and forest management, starting with a sensitivity screening of different landscape types (DEMEY et al. (2015). Klimaatadaptatie in natuur- en bosbeheer. Universiteit Gent).

You have attached the following documents to this answer.

[20150324_Nota_Klimaatadaptatie_FINAAL.pdf](#) - Ghent University report on climate adaptation (Dutch)

[BIJLAGE - Discussienota_workshops.pdf](#) - Discussion document on workshops related to the Ghent University climate adaptation report (Dutch)

c. Assessment of the potential vulnerability of waterbird species to climate change.

No relevant activities

Please explain the reasons

> Assessment of the potential vulnerability of waterbirds to climate change is not a priority in climate change impact assessment. The focus has been given in the first place to an ecosystem approach in general. Through impacts on vegetation, water quantity and quality, it can be relevant for waterbirds though.

d. Review of relevant national conservation policies relevant to waterbirds and climate change.

Undertaken

Please provide references or weblinks to any such work so as to facilitate their use as potential case-studies to assist other Contracting Parties

> The National Biodiversity Strategy has been reviewed. This is relevant to waterbirds and to climate change, although its scope is much broader.

e. National Action Plan for helping waterbirds adapt to climate change (as a separate implementation process or as part of a larger national framework for biodiversity adaptation to climate change. Please note that Question 28 in Section 4, sub-section 4.2 investigates national measures for increasing resilience of the ecological network for waterbirds to climate change).

No relevant activities

Please explain the reasons

> Climate Policy planning considers the impact on nature/environment in general, without specific focus on waterbirds.

f. Other undertaken or planned relevant activities.

No

76. Has your country used the AEWA Guidelines on measures needed to help waterbirds to adapt to climate change?

No

Please explain the reasons. What other guidance has been used instead?

> FLANDERS, WALLONIA, BRUSSELS: The Climate Action plan is a conceptual plan. At this stage it is not relevant to use specific guidelines for waterbirds. With the implementation at specific sites the local biodiversity (including waterbirds) will be taken into account.

Pressures and Responses

10. Avian Influenza

77. What issues have proved challenging in responding nationally to the spread of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in the last triennium and what further guidance or information would be useful in this respect?

77.1 List challenges

> FLANDERS: The main challenge is the organization of the surveillance in wild birds in order to submit for a laboratory analysis a sufficient number of carcasses of wild birds. The notification of such suspicions in wildlife is done by:

- professional wild life “workers”(e.g. ornithologists and employees of the regional nature authorities)
- the general public through the use of a nationwide telephone number, free of charge, via which the public can notify suspicious cases of mortality in wild Birds

Moreover, the surveillance is expanded to birds that die in wild birds refuge centers.

Optionally you can provide additional information on section 10. Avian Influenza

> WALLONIA: administrations and scientific institutes collaborate to collect and analyse the dead birds found.

11. Confirmation

Confirmation of information verification and approval for submission

Please confirm:

In addition a scanned copy of an official letter from the relevant state institution, approving the report for submission, can be attached.

I declare that the information provided in the Report on the implementation of AEWA for the period 2015-2017 has been verified and the report has been approved for submission by the appropriate state institution in the country.

Date of submission

> 02/07/2018