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**16<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE**  
*4-6 May 2021, Virtual Conference Format*

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**REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT**

**Introduction**

This report covers the work of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat for the period between November 2019 and March 2021.

Since March 2020, the work of the Secretariat and related meetings have been heavily impacted by the COVID pandemic. Just as the Secretariat has made a shift to telecommuting mode, the meetings have been reshaped to a virtual mode. The Secretariat has been able to adapt very rapidly to the new conditions and was able to deliver its work in an efficient and effective manner as shown in this report.

The report is divided into six sections:

1. Organisation and Staffing of the Secretariat;
2. General Management, which includes recruitment of Parties and cooperation with other organisations;
3. Communication, Information Management and Outreach;
4. Science, Implementation and Compliance;
5. Capacity-building.

Activities reported in detail in other documents for the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the StC are only mentioned briefly here, with a reference to the relevant substantive document containing more information.

The day-to-day work of the Agreement Secretariat, which includes responding to incoming correspondence, maintaining an extensive network of contacts, internal meetings with CMS, UNEP and/or UN Heads of Agencies etc. are not specifically mentioned in this report.

**1. Organisation and Staffing of the Secretariat**

1.1 Organisation of the Secretariat

The Secretariat is organised into four units which cover four broad areas of work (as described in Annex 1 – Organisational Structure and Annex II - Staff Composition of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat). The individual staff members and units work closely as a team, interacting with each other daily on cross-cutting issues; It should be noted that the AEWA Communication Unit is part of the joint Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Unit (IMCA) co-funded by AEWA and CMS. In order to support the IMCA Team, the CMS Secretariat provided a part-time P4 from April to December 2020 to coordinate the team.

Without the extension of the part-time positions through voluntary contributions, the availability of staff funded entirely through voluntary contributions and the support of interns, the Secretariat would not have been in a position to deliver all services requested.

In 2019 and 2020, the Secretariat applied for a UNEP Junior Professional Officer (JPO) position to support the work of the Technical Committee. Unfortunately, in both years the applications were unsuccessful. We have

applied again in 2021 as this position is key in stepping up the Secretariat's facilitative role for the work of the Technical Committee.

## 1.2 Staffing situation

As of 31 March 2020, the Secretariat comprises ten staff members: six Professional Staff members (P staff), four General Staff members (G staff) and, in addition, one consultant. One P3 position has been vacant since 11 March 2021 and should be filled in on a temporary basis within the next weeks, the recruitment process being in the final stage. The core budget covers 7.3 full-time equivalent positions (FTEs), while voluntary contributions and savings have allowed the addition of 3.3 full-time equivalent positions and the consultant.

### Staff funded by the core budget

There have been no major changes to the team during the period covered by the report. The positions of the African Initiative Coordinator (P-2) and the Programme Assistant (G-5) were partly funded (50 per cent) through the AEWA core budget 2019-2021. The Secretariat was able to maintain the P-2 position at 100 per cent and the G-5 position at 80 per cent in 2019 and 2020, thanks to voluntary contributions received from Germany, the United Kingdom, Luxemburg, Switzerland and the European Commission. The Secretariat expects to be able to maintain both positions at this level until the end of the current triennium but will need to secure additional and preferably more sustainable funding beyond this period.

### Staff fully dependent on voluntary contributions (Fixed-term project posts)

#### Programme Officer (P-3) for Species Conservation (Single Species Action Plan Support and the coordination of implementation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose International Single Species Action Plan)

The job description of the Associate Programme Officer (P2) for Single Species Action Plan Support and the coordination of implementation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose International Single Species Action Plan has been reviewed and upgraded to a P3 position, following Resolution 7.12 paragraph 21. The Secretariat is grateful to the Norwegian Environment Agency for its support of this important position. After a competitive process of selection, Ms Nina Mikander has been promoted as of 1 October 2020 but soon afterwards she resigned, effective 11 March 2021, and moved to another job outside of the UN system. A recruitment process is well-advanced, and the position should be filled on a temporary basis within the next weeks.

#### Associate Programme Officer (P-2) and Programme Management Assistant (G-5) for the AEWA European Goose Management Platform

Currently, the AEWA European Goose Management Platform (EGMP) is managed at the Secretariat level by one full-time P2 project post and the assistance is being provided through a consultancy until July 2021. The P2 position is financially secured until December 2021.

## **2. General Management**

### 2.1. 25<sup>th</sup> AEWA Anniversary

Due to the COVID pandemic, the Secretariat was, unfortunately, not able to organise a ceremony with the Dutch Government, our depositary, to celebrate the signature of the Treaty in The Hague on 16 June 1995. We created a special webpage for this event <https://www.unep-awa.org/en/awa-25th-anniversary> which displays the statements of many stakeholders and a history of the negotiations leading to the treaty.

To mark the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Agreement, the Programme Officer for Species Conservation developed a video in collaboration with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology which showcases the importance of critical sites for migratory waterbirds across the African-Eurasian flyway, emphasising the urgent need for the protection of these sites. Prepared with input from various stakeholders throughout the flyway and highlighting AEWA priority species such as the Lesser White-fronted Goose, Sociable Lapwing, Lesser Flamingo etc. The video titled "[A Call for Cooperation: Saving the Places Migratory Birds Call Home](#)" was launched on the date of the

anniversary in both English and French. The video can be made available in other languages subject to availability of funds and the animations produced by Cornell can be made available for further use by AEWA partners via the Secretariat. The video marks the first such collaboration between Cornell and the CMS Family.

## 2.2. Recruitment of Parties

Since StC15, two new Contracting Parties have acceded to AEWA (the Republic of Armenia on 1 July 2020 and Turkmenistan on 1 January 2021) bringing the total number of Parties to 82, 38 in Africa and 44 in Eurasia.

Efforts to recruit additional Parties in Africa, Europe and Central Asia, including Bosnia & Herzegovina, Cameroon, Greece, the Russian Federation and Zambia are continuing together with the promotion of the Agreement in the Arabian Peninsula and in the Portuguese-speaking African Range States.

In 2019, the English, French and Arabic versions of the Agreement text have been updated by the Secretariat and the Depositary, as well as the Russian version in May 2020. The Portuguese version of the Agreement text has also been updated to the benefit of the Portuguese-speaking Range States.

## 2.3. The AEWA Technical Committee

The 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee (TC) took place from 25 to 29 January 2021 in a virtual conference format. The meeting was chaired by Dr Ruth Cromie and well attended.

## 2.4. AEWA Institutional Development

Following a mandate given by the StC in July 2018, the AEWA Secretariat in collaboration with the CMS Secretariat, attended a meeting of the CAF Range States in Lonavala, Maharashtra on 18-19 November 2019 convened by the Indian Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to discuss the way forward to institutionalise the Central Asian Flyway Action Plan.

This matter was then discussed at the CMS COP13 and the results were incorporated in Resolution 12.11 rev COP13 [https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/cms\\_cop13\\_res.12.11\\_rev.cop13\\_e.pdf](https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/cms_cop13_res.12.11_rev.cop13_e.pdf) which says:

*Para 8. Welcomes the further efforts by the Government of India to continue the collaborative process, in close consultation with the CAF Range States and with the CMS and AEWA Secretariats, to develop under the CMS an institutional framework, with the Secretariat provided by the CMS Secretariat along with a coordinating office hosted by the Government of India, to support the implementation of increased conservation action for migratory birds and their habitats in the CAF, as well as to support this initiative with resources, in coordination with the existing CMS avian-related instruments;*

*Para 9. Further welcomes the commitment by the Government of India to provide resources for this process including the establishment of the institutional framework, and the provision of a coordinating liaison office in India, under the umbrella of the CMS Secretariat in Bonn.*

## 2.5. African Initiative

Details are provided in the report on the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative including the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027, document AEWA StC 16.6

## 2.6. Fundraising activities

Please refer to document AEWA StC 16.31 Report of the Secretariat on Finance and Administrative Issues.

## 2.7. Preparation of MOP8

The MOP8 is scheduled to take place from 5-9 October 2021 in Budapest at the kind invitation of the government of Hungary. The venue is located in the compound of the international exhibition “One with Nature” and the last day of the MOP coincides with the second peak day of the World Migratory Bird Day. Hotel rooms have been blocked by the Host until mid-May.

The Secretariat is finalising the Host Government Agreement with the host country.

The deadline for submitting proposals for amendments of the Agreement is the 8 May 2021, for posting the new budget scenarios 7 July 2021 and for all other documents 6 August 2021.

The 2021 AEWA budget has allocated 79,962 EUR for the organisation of MOP8 and 35,000 EUR for interpretation. The fundraising campaign to complement this budget, in particular the sponsored delegates, will begin mid-May. Only eligible Parties with no more than three years of arrears by 1 July 2021 will be sponsored.

On 4 October 2021 afternoon, the Secretariat will organise a special event back to back to the MOP on sustainable use, highlighting the implementation of adaptive harvest management programmes under the umbrella of the European Goose Management Platform (EGMP) and the socio-economic importance of the waterbirds in Africa through the results of the RESSOURCE project (please see 2.8 for information on this project lead by FAO). This event will be open to all public and will contribute to increase the profile of AEWA.

The host country proposes to the AEWA Secretariat a stand at the Exhibition to present the Agreement and its actions. Pending the space allocated, this presentation could be extended to the CMS Family.

In case the COVID crisis will not allow a physical meeting, the Standing Committee will have to make a decision mid-July. For the options, please see document AEWA StC 16.8.

Funding permitted, a PreMOP8 for the African Parties is scheduled early July in a virtual conference format.

## 2.8. Cooperation with UNEP and Other Organisations

### UNEP and CMS

The collaboration between UNEP headquarters and the AEWA Secretariat is illustrated by our participation at the UNEP on-line course on MEA implementation for African countries. The African coordinator participated in an interview on AEWA implementation in November 2020, in view of preparing the modules for the online training on MEAs. She also participated in one of the live online sessions to respond to questions from participants on MEA implementation.

As representatives of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, the Executive Secretary and the Head of SICU have attended the CMS COP13, 17-22 February 2020, Gandhinagar, India, while two other staff members from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat have supported the CMS team. Ms Nina Mikander co-facilitated the Working Group on avian issues and Marie-Therese Kämper helped with the logistical issues to the great satisfaction of the CMS Executive Secretary.

The COVID pandemic highlighted very quickly the link between human health, wildlife health and global environment. In order to fight against wrong assumptions and negative actions leading to bat eradication, the CMS Family including AEWA has worked on a document “Facts about bats and COVID 19” published in April 2020 and sent to Parties through a CMS/AEWA/Eurobats notification. For AEWA, it is the notification 2020.002. <https://www.unep-awea.org/en/news/2020002-facts-about-bats-and-covid-19>

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) published a report in July 2020: ‘Preventing the Next Pandemic – Zoonotic diseases and how to break the chain of transmission’. Contributing authors include CMS Executive Secretary, Amy Fraenkel and CMS Scientific Adviser, Marco Barbieri, while Sergey Dereliev, Head of the AEWA SICU, and Dr Suren Gazaryan of EUROBATs served as reviewers. For more information, please follow the link and/or download the full report at:

<https://www.cms.int/en/news/unep-report-%E2%80%93-preventing-next-pandemic>

CMS and its Family set the course for developing their contributions to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework which presents the opportunity to raise the visibility of migratory wildlife and promote its conservation. The CMS Standing Committee held in Bonn, 23-24 October 2018, endorsed the establishment of a Working Group (WG) on the development of CMS Family contributions to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The AEWA Secretariat is a member of this WG. For more information, please see document AEWA/StC 16.28 “Opportunities for AEWA to Support the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework”.

On programmatic synergies, items such as the illegal killing of birds, lead poisoning and the energy sector are led by CMS. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is involved in all relevant task forces.

As a member of the CMS Multi-stakeholder Energy Task Force, the Secretariat participated in the fifth meeting (virtual) on 30 November – 1 December 2020. For more information please see:

<https://www.cms.int/en/meeting/fourth-meeting-energy-task-force>

As a member of the CMS Renewable Energy Task Force, the AEWA Executive Secretary chaired a side event organised by the CMS task Force and BirdLife International in the margins of the CMS COP13 on 20 February 2020: “Connected Energy Solutions for a Connected World: Rapidly Reconciling Renewable Energy Investment with Biodiversity Conservation”.

On 2 December 2020, the Secretariat also participated in two webinar sessions led by the CMS Energy Task Force on the importance of reconciling renewable energy developments with the conservation of migratory species. The AEWA Secretariat participated actively in the first webinar to explain the role of the task force. A total of 250 participants registered, and this experience shows clearly the power of using webinars to disseminate information and discuss issues with participants.

<https://vimeo.com/492004020/c17decaf74>

### Ramsar Convention

Cooperation with the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention has focused mainly on African topics and communications and awareness-raising linked to both the 50th Anniversary celebration of Ramsar over the course of 2021. The Secretariat will use the anniversary year to show the important links between wetlands and waterbirds and contribute to the Ramsar anniversary campaign through social media engagement and an official statement.

The Secretariat worked closely with the Ramsar Secretariat and other stakeholders to organise a joint AEWA Implementation Review Process (IRP)/Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM) for the Sebkhet Sejoumi Ramsar Site and Critical Site for three migratory waterbird populations covered under AEWA - Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), Northern Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) and Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) but faces threats from urban development activities. The joint IRP/RAM was approved, and the case opened by the AEWA Standing Committee in January 2020. It was scheduled to take place at the end of 2020 but had to be postponed due to the COVID-related travel restrictions. The Secretariat also worked closely with the Ramsar Secretariat to organise a joint IRP/RAM in relation to a power line construction at Lake Elmenteita in Kenya, also a Ramsar Site and Critical Site for a number of wintering and breeding waterbird populations covered under AEWA. Further details are provided under section 4.3 of this report.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will participate in the 59<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Convention’s Standing Committee (SC59) which should take place in Gland, Switzerland, from 21-25 June 2021.

The Ramsar Secretariat is also a partner of the RESSOURCE project (see below) and both Secretariats collaborate in the framework of this project.

### BirdLife International

The Secretariat participated as a panellist in a webinar organised by BirdLife International for the second peak of World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) on 8 October 2020: “Birds connect people along the East Atlantic Flyway”.

<https://www.unep-awa.org/en/news/east-atlantic-flyway-webinar-held-mark-world-migratory-bird-day>

The Secretariat is also cooperating closely with BirdLife International to coordinate plans for World Migratory Bird Day 2021 (see further information below in the section on communication).

### FAO and RESSOURCE Project

The project entitled RESSOURCE is the acronym for the French equivalent of "*Strengthening expertise in sub-Saharan Africa on birds and their rational use for communities and their environment*". The ecosystems at the core of the project are based on the Senegal River Valley, the Inner Niger Delta, Lake Chad and parts of the River Nile. These are areas upon which almost one billion people depend for agriculture, rearing of livestock, fishing and hunting, and which are equally of critical importance to millions of waterbirds.

The project will attempt to evaluate the sustainability of exploiting the resources represented by waterbirds thanks to its integrated approach which aims to: (i) assess the resources in terms of the numbers, distribution and socio-economic importance, especially for rural communities (ii) preserve its habitats and (iii) propose conservation measures at community level. This project led by FAO and supported by the Fonds français pour l'environnement mondial (FFEM) involves not only the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat but also other key partners such as: ONCFS, CIRAD, OMPO, Wetlands International, BirdLife International and the Ramsar Convention.

The Executive Secretary attended on-line the fourth Steering Committee meeting of the RESSOURCE project from 2-4 June 2020, where the results of the programme of work were discussed between all partners. This Steering Committee should have been hosted by the AEWA Secretariat in Bonn but due to the travel restrictions because of the COVID pandemic, the AEWA Secretariat renewed its invitation for 2021.

The project is described in this leaflet: <http://www.fao.org/3/ca8998en/ca8998en.pdf>

For further information, please see the newsletter including an interview of the AEWA ES:

<http://www.fao.org/3/ca9945en/ca9945en.pdf>

and the last issue of the newsletter (June-December 2020): <http://www.fao.org/3/cb2999en/cb2999en.pdf>

For 2021, one of the main products to be delivered by the RESSOURCE Project is a MOOC (Massive On-Line Open Course) on waterbird identification and monitoring and the integrated management of sub-Saharan wetlands in order to increase the network of observers and to ensure the future of the monitoring and management.

### Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna

The Secretariat continued to contribute to the implementation of the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative (AMBI), established under the Arctic Council's biodiversity-related working group CAFF (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna). The Secretariat serves on the Steering Group for the African-Eurasian Flyway and attended the Arctic Seabirds Experts Meeting from 26-29 March 2019 in Iceland.

## **3. Communication, Information Management and Outreach**

### 3.1. Joint CMS/AEWA Communications Unit

For the presentation of the Joint Communication, Information Management and Awareness-Raising (IMCA) Unit, the staffing and the time allocation by Secretariats, please see document AEWA StC 16.30.

Below is a summary of the main communication and information management related activities carried out by the IMCA Unit for AEWA between November 2019 and March 2021.

#### Information Management

The IMCA Unit technically manages and maintains all external websites and online tools of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. This includes the management of the official AEWA website, the AEWA Technical Committee Workspace and a number of AEWA Single Species Action Plan Working Group websites. In addition, the IMCA Unit has supported the development of the EGMP website and workspace. In 2021-2022, the websites will be migrated and operated through a completely new version of Drupal. This migration will be supervised by the IMCA team for the official website and TC Workspace.

The IMCA Unit is in charge of the technical management of the Online Meeting Registration System and Contacts Database, all of which are used by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. The website analytics in place of the official AEWA website show 49,443 unique users and 157,270 pages views in the period from November 2019 to February/March 2021. There was a visible peak in website traffic on 16 June 2020, which marked the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of AEWA with 492 unique users (compared with an average of ca. 150) visiting the website over the course of one day.

### Online National Reporting

The IMCA Unit worked closely with the AEWA SICU and UNEP-WCMC to help set up AEWA's MOP8 National Report in the Online Reporting System (ORS) launched in July 2020.

The IMCA Team also helped create the online reporting template for AEWA's National Reporting on the Population Status of AEWA-listed (native) and Non-Native Species of Waterbirds (launched in June 2019) as well as the online template for reporting on the implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa to MOP8, which was launched in December 2020.

### Website News Production

The published stories report on current AEWA activities such as meetings, major events and publications and aim to keep the wider AEWA network informed of the activities of the Secretariat and other AEWA stakeholders. The articles are usually drafted by the responsible officers at the Secretariat and then prepared for web publishing by the IMCA Unit. A total of 35 website news articles and an Op-Ed were featured on the AEWA website between November 2019 and March 2021. For a full overview of news articles published on the AEWA website, please visit the following link: <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news>.

### Social Media Highlights

The IMCA Unit manages the AEWA Twitter and Facebook social media channels. The channels are being used mainly to promote unique AEWA content published on the AEWA website and/or selected AEWA relevant content from major partners and active members of the wider AEWA community. Over the course of the reporting period (November 2019 – March 2021) the number of AEWA Facebook page followers grew to 2,119 in March 2021, while the number of Twitter followers grew to a total of 2,081.

### Campaigns and Events

The IMCA Unit is charged with managing the public outreach and awareness-raising activities of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. The primary outreach campaign for AEWA (and CMS) being led by the IMCA Unit continues to be World Migratory Bird Day.

The theme of World Migratory Bird Day 2020 was "Birds Connect our World". The two peak days of WMBD celebrations in 2020 took place on 9 May and 10 October. For 2021, the theme chosen by the three partners is "Sing, Fly, Soar – Like a Bird!" and is an opportunity to touch people's connection to birds wherever they are on the planet. The theme will allow people to express their appreciation for birds in multiple ways and focus on the phenomena of bird song and bird flight as a vehicle to foster interest and to stimulate a global celebration of birds. As global ambassadors of nature, migratory birds do not only connect different places along the flyways, they are also re-connecting people to nature across the planet, reminding them of the importance of working together, across borders, to protect the environment.

The peak days of World Migratory Bird Day 2021 will fall on 8 May 2021 and 9 October 2021 (World Migratory Bird Day is always celebrated on the second Saturday in May and October) and all AEWA Parties and Stakeholders are encouraged to join the global celebration on or around these peak days. As the October peak day will also coincide with the last day of AEWA MOP8, the Secretariat is planning a web-based event which will bring together actors from across the main political flyway systems of the world.

For further details, please see the dedicated webpage: <https://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/>

To mark the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of AEWA, the IMCA Unit created a dedicated webpage for the Anniversary in June 2020, which brought together some of the history and highlights of the past 25 years of international waterbird conservation under AEWA. The dedicated webpage also features a number of anniversary statements by people that have helped shape and guide the work of the treaty to date. For further details please visit: <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/aewa-25th-anniversary>

## 4. Science, Implementation and Compliance

### 4.1. AEWa International Species Action and Management Plans and AEWa International Species Working Groups

An overview on the current status of the establishment and coordination of AEWa International Species Expert and Working Groups is provided in document AEWa/StC 16.14 “Draft Summary of the Current Status of Single Species Action and Management Plan Production and Coordination with Recommendations to MOP for Extension, Revision or Retirement”. During this triennium the development of one new AEWa International Species Action Plan has been facilitated by the AEWa Secretariat for the Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*). The Secretariat continued to provide the coordination for the European Goose Management Platform (see 4.2) as well as for the AEWa Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group. In addition, the Secretariat facilitated a number of meetings of the established inter-governmental AEWa International Species Working Groups as well as organised other meetings and supported activities such as fundraising efforts aimed at implementing the various AEWa International Species Action and Management Plans adopted for priority populations under the Agreement.

#### - *AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group*

The coordination of the AEWa Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group (*Anser erythropus*) continues to be facilitated by the AEWa Programme Officer for Species Conservation based at the UNEP/AEWa Secretariat. The Secretariat is grateful to the Government of Norway which has renewed its financial support for 2020-2022. A new Officer will be recruited as Ms Nina Mikander left her position on 11 March 2021.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the International Working Group took place from 11-13 November 2019 in Bucharest hosted by the Romanian Ministry of Environment and organised together with the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds in the framework of the EU LIFE Red-breasted Goose project. All meeting documents are available on the AEWa [website](#).

The EU LIFE project “Providing a climate-resilient network of critical sites for the Lesser White-fronted Goose in Europe” was approved for funding by the European Commission in November 2020 and will run until August 2025. The lead partner is the Lithuanian Ornithological Society and the AEWa Secretariat is a project partner and co-beneficiary. For more details, see <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/new-lesser-white-fronted-goose-flyway-project-approved-under-eu-life>

#### - *AEWA Red-breasted Goose International Working Group*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the AEWa Red-breasted Goose International Working Group (*Branta ruficollis*) took place back-to-back with the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AEWa Lesser White-fronted Goose IWG from 13-15 November 2019 in Bucharest hosted by the Romanian Ministry of Environment and organised together with the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds in the framework of the EU LIFE Red-breasted Goose project. All meeting documents are available on the AEWa [website](#).

#### - *AEWA Black-tailed Godwit International Working Group*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Regional Meeting of the Eastern European breeding Range States under the AEWa Black-tailed Godwit International Working Group was organised remotely by the UNEP/AEWa Secretariat and Sovon on 25 August 2020. Meeting documents are available on the AEWa [website](#).

#### - *AEWA Eurasian Curlew International Working Group*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Regional Meeting of the Breeding Range States under the AEWa Eurasian Curlew International Working Group was organised remotely by the UNEP/AEWa Secretariat and the RSPB on 10 November 2020. Meeting documents are available on the AEWa [website](#).

#### - *AEWA White-winged Flufftail International Working Group*

The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the International Working Group was held in Dullstroom, South Africa from 5-7 November 2019 with the main goal of discussing and agreeing its implementation plan for 2020-2022. The meeting took place close to the Middelpunt Wetland which was recently discovered to be a breeding site for this elusive species; previously the only known breeding site was Berga Wetland in Ethiopia. Meeting documents are available on the [AEWA website](#).



- *AEWA European Seaduck International Working Group*

The first Meeting of the AEWA European Seaduck International Working Group, took place as an online meeting from 9-10 December 2020, hosted by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation. The Working Group is tasked with coordinating the implementation of the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans for the Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) and the Velvet Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*). Meeting documents are available on the AEWA [website](#).

- *AEWA Benguela Coastal Seabirds International Working Group*

The 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the AEWA Benguela Coastal Seabirds International Working Group took place online from 3-4 March 2021. The meeting was organised by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in collaboration with BirdLife South Africa with funding provided by the Government of the United Kingdom through its Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The participants agreed on critical conservation activities to be implemented as a matter of priority.

In the framework of the IMSAP for the Conservation of Benguela Current Upwelling System Coastal Seabirds, the Benguela Current Forage Fish Workshop was facilitated online by the Secretariat from 2-4 November 2020 hosted by the South African Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF). The workshop was organised in collaboration with the Benguela Current Convention (BCC) and BirdLife South Africa (BLSA) with funding provided by the Government of the United Kingdom through Defra. Meeting documents including the adopted recommendations are available on the AEWA [website](#).

Other meetings:

- *Action-planning for the Common Eider (Somateria mollissima)*

Range states as well as international conservation and hunting organisations met online from 15-17 September 2020 to develop an AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the conservation of the AEWA-listed migratory populations of the Common Eider. Funding for the action-planning process as well as the development of foreseen Adaptive Harvest Management Programme is kindly being provided by the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry as well as the Regional Government of Åland. Please look at the document AEWA/StC 16.11 Draft International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*).

As per the process agreed by the Range States at the action-planning workshop the Secretariat has convened a time-bound temporary Technical Group to work on the development of the Adaptive Harvest Management Programme. The Group is being coordinated by the Finnish Wildlife Agency.

#### 4.2. European Goose Management Platform (EGMP)

The EGMP has 15 participating Range States, 14 national governments and the European Commission: Belarus, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, the EU, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. Spain is participating in the Greylag Goose implementation process through data provision. Ireland is involved in the implementation of the Barnacle Goose ISSMP (East Greenland/Scotland & Ireland Population). Poland has designated a national expert to participate in the Taiga Bean Goose Task Force. Spain, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland and Russia officially remain non-participating Range States of the EGMP.

The coordination of the AEWA European Goose Management Platform (EGMP) continues to be facilitated by the EGMP Coordinator based at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in close collaboration with Aarhus University, functioning as the EGMP Data Centre. Under the coordination of the EGMP Data Centre, the International Modelling Consortium, consisting of an international partnership of scientific institutions, collaborates on the development of population models. Funding towards the functioning of the EGMP, including the staffing costs as well as the implementation of projects has been jointly provided by the EGMP Range States.

The EGMP Modelling Consortium has met regularly through online meetings, to discuss the development of the population models for the Barnacle, Greylag, Pink-footed and Taiga Bean Geese and the preparations for the annual EGM IWG meeting.

Originally scheduled to take place in Helsinki, the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AEWA European Goose Management International Working Group (EGM IWG5) went ahead for the first time in an online conference format from 15-18 June 2020. The meeting was chaired by Ms Camilla Uldal from Denmark, who was succeeded as Chair for the next two years by Mr Danny Heptinstall representing the UK. Among other decisions, the Range States agreed on the process and next steps for the finalisation of the Barnacle Goose and Greylag Goose Adaptive Flyway Management Programmes (AFMPs) which are envisaged to be ready for adoption in June 2021 (EGM IWG).

The report of EGM IWG5 can be found on the [EGMP website](#).

With three new Task Forces established at EGM IWG5, there are now six Task Forces operating under the EGMP:

- Pink-footed Goose Task Force
- Taiga Bean Goose Task Force
- Agriculture Task Force
- Barnacle Goose Task Force for Russia/Germany & Netherlands Population
- Barnacle Goose Task Force for E. Greenland/Scotland & Ireland and Svalbard/South-West Scotland Populations
- Greylag Goose Task Force for NW/SW European Population

The EGMP Task Forces convened regular online meetings throughout the triennium. The development of annual workplans, as part of the AFMPs for each Task Force and the national workplans has initiated, as well as coordinated action to collect data and establish monitoring protocols.

The Greylag Goose Task Force and the Barnacle Goose Task Force had a joint virtual meeting to coordinate crosscutting actions among the Task Forces.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, the Finnish government (host) and the Chair of the EGM IWG, have agreed to convene the EGM IWG6 meeting in an online conference format in the week of 21-24 June 2021. A joint meeting of the EGMP Task Forces is foreseen to take place in the week prior to the EGM IWG6.

#### 4.3. Implementation Review Process

For the first time a case under the AEWA Implementation Review Process (IRP) has been closed following the announcement that the United Kingdom has removed the Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) from the list of huntable species.

Since StC15 there were another four new IRP cases opened:

- Kenya, powerline construction at Lake Elmenteita;
- Tunisia, urban development at Sebkhet Sejoumi;
- Portugal, airport development at Tagus estuary; and
- Germany, conservation of the Bewick's Swan in Schleswig-Holstein.

#### 4.4. Lead shot being phased out in the EU

In 2016, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) initiated a process of compiling a report and draft regulation requested by the European Commission, in order to implement the AEWA provisions to phase out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands. In 2020, until the final adoption of the regulation, the Secretariat has been actively communicating on the lead issue in wetlands using in particular social media, as well as participating in a video produced by the WWT (<https://vimeo.com/472273518/84e1c9a357>) and published op-ed on our website ("It is Time to Let Go of Lead" <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/it-time-let-go-lead>) and on the website of Open Access Government (<https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/lead-out-of-the-environment/89098/>). The new regulation was adopted in December 2020 and enters into force in 2021. Once implemented, the EU and its

Member States – representing 30 per cent of the current Contracting Parties to the Agreement - will be in full compliance with their AEWA legal obligations with respect to banning the use of lead gunshot for hunting in wetlands..

To know more about this new European legislation, please follow the link: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/comitology-register/screen/documents/064660/6/consult?lang=en>

The Secretariat and the Technical Committee Chair have participated as observers to the ECHA Risk Assessment Committee and Socio-economic Assessment Committee meetings on 9 March 2021 and 16 March 2021 respectively to review the dossier on the phase out of lead ammunition in terrestrial habitats and fishing sinkers.

#### 4.5. Climate resilient site network project

The project “Climate resilient site network in the African-Eurasian flyway” launched at MOP6 in November 2015 is funded by the International Climate Initiative of the German Government and coordinated by Wetlands International. The Secretariat is involved as a co-funder and contributor. The project has been developed on the basis of the AEWA climate change agenda and mandates from the MOP. It involves some site assessments, two pilot projects in Mali and Ethiopia, production of guidelines and training of practitioners in African Parties. The project is currently operating under a no-cost extension aiming at achieving all of its objectives and has to be concluded this year.

### **5. Capacity-Building**

Capacity-building activities for the period mainly focused on the African region but some other activities have already been mentioned above.

In the framework of the UNEP on-line course on MEAs implementation for African countries, the African coordinator has delivered a presentation on AEWA on 18 November 2020.

A video entitled “Waterbird Monitoring in Africa: The Chad Experience”, was released in 2019 by the Technical Support Unit (TSU) to the AEWA African Initiative. The video was developed with the support of the RESSOURCE project. To see it please follow the link: <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/new-film-waterbird-monitoring-africa-chad-experience>

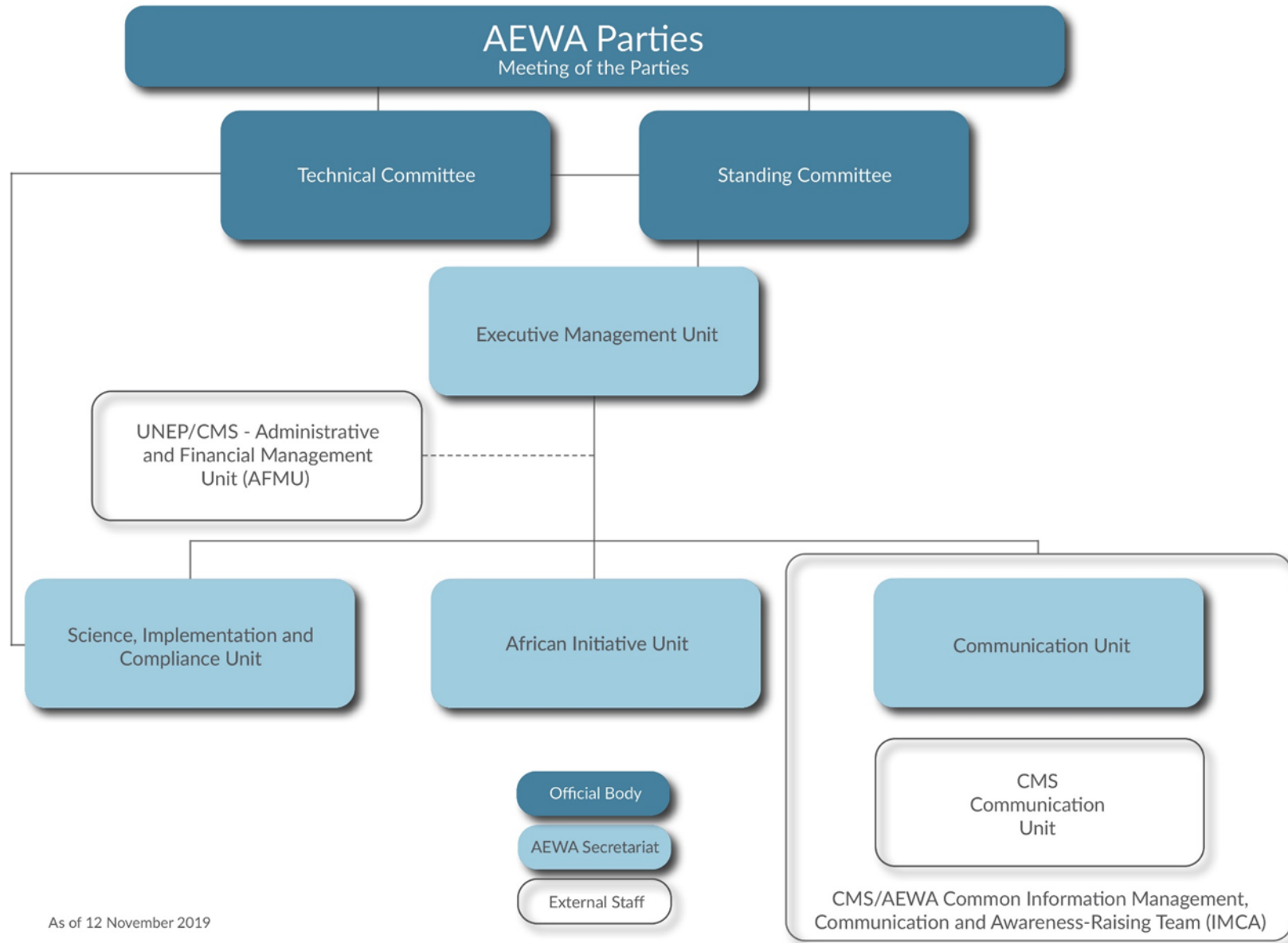
A number of web stories were published on the results of projects funded by the *AEWA Small Grants Fund*:

- AEWA SGF Contributes to Increased Capacity for Conservation of Rift Valley Lakes in Kenya <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/aewa-sgf-contributes-increased-capacity-conservation-rift-valley-lakes-kenya>
- Capacity for Waterbird Monitoring Reinforced in Mauritania <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/capacity-waterbird-monitoring-reinforced-mauritania>
- Capacity Building in Nigeria through the AEWA Small Grants Fund <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/capacity-building-nigeria-through-aewa-small-grants-fund>
- Successful Conclusion of Capacity Building Project in Côte d’Ivoire <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/successful-conclusion-capacity-building-project-cote-divoire>
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The AEWA Small Grants Fund (SGF) has so far benefited some 20 governmental and non-governmental organisations in 17 African countries by funding a wide range of conservation projects promoting AEWA implementation in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The AEWA Small Grants Fund operations are unfortunately currently suspended due to a lack of funding, but it still remains a good tool for capacity-building and we hope partners and Parties will support the SGF again in the near future.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Center for Conservation Media with the support of AEWA released a new ten-minute film called “A Call for Cooperation: Saving the Places Migratory Birds Call Home”. This great video showcases the importance and beauty of a number of critical sites for migratory waterbirds found across the African-Eurasian Flyway and can be seen by the general public. See also section 2.1 above.

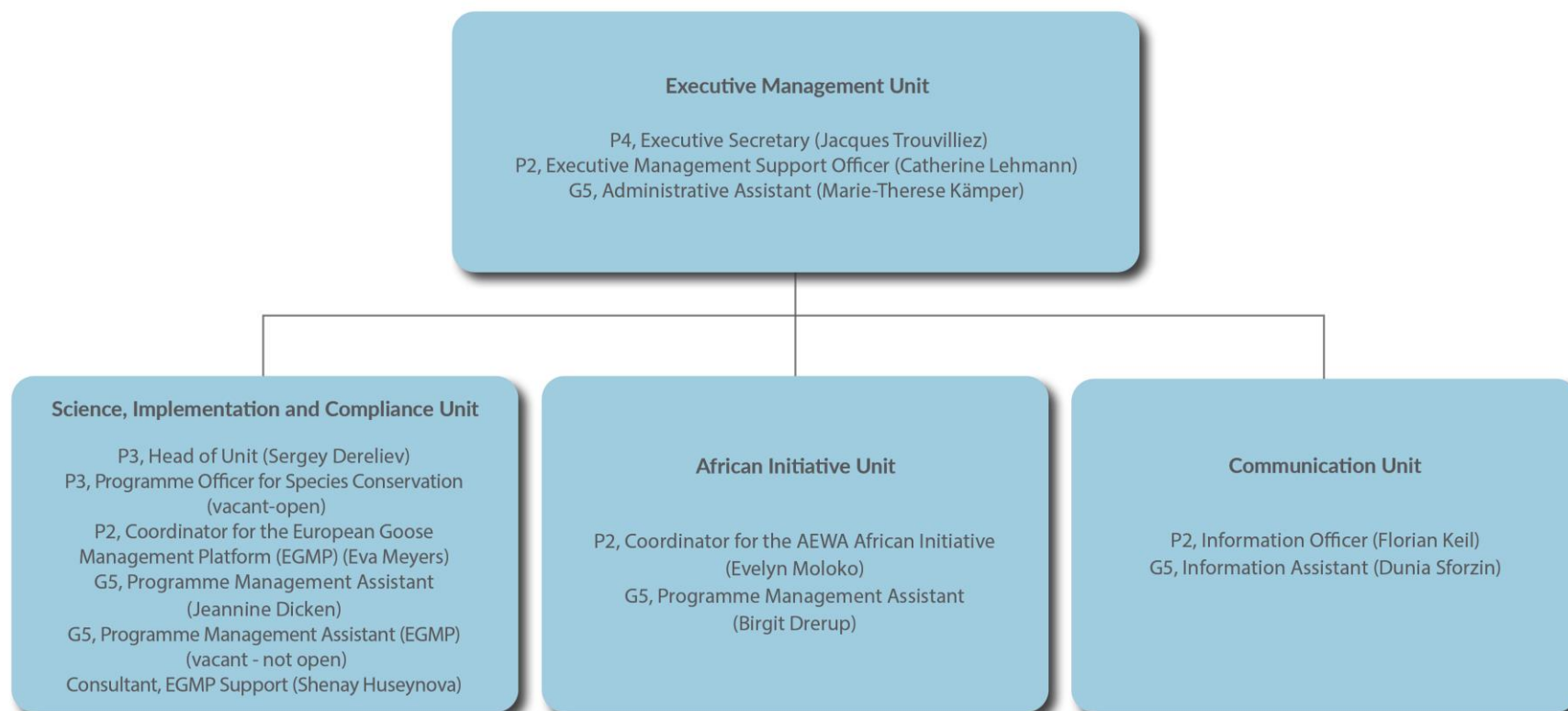
**ANNEX I – UNEP/AEWA Secretariat Organisational structure**



## ANNEX II – UNEP/AEWA Secretariat Staff Composition



### UNEP/AEWA Secretariat: Staff Composition



P = Professional Staff Category  
G = General Staff Category

As of 16 March 2021