



13th MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
14 – 17 March 2016, Israel

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

INTRODUCTION

The present report covers the work of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat for the period between March 2015 and January 2016.

This report is divided into five sections:

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

Activities reported in detail in other TC13 documents 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 mail, maintaining the Secretariat's extensive network of contacts, internal meetings with CMS, UNEP and/or UN Head of Agencies etc. are not specifically mentioned in this report.

1. STAFFING AND ORGANISATION OF THE SECRETARIAT

Staffing Changes

Regular Staff

The two major changes since TC12 relate to the up-grading of the three G4 positions to G5 as decided by MOP6 and to the African Initiative Unit.

The position of the Associate Programme Officer (Coordinator of the African Initiative) was filled on 4 May 2015 after a long recruitment process. As instructed by Resolution 5.21, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat secured a voluntary contribution from the Federal Office for the Environment in Switzerland to supplement the 50% approved for this position in the core budget, to a full-time position until December 2015. The Secretariat is grateful to the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) for this generous three-year commitment. MOP6 decided to maintain the funding for 50% and the Secretariat will have to seek for voluntary contributions or projects to fund the other 50% in order to retain the level of staff time dedicated to the promotion of the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative and the Plan of Action for Africa 2012-2018.

The position of Programme Assistant for the African Initiative has been generously funded for three years (until December 2015) by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB). MOP6 decided to establish 50% of this position in the core budget and the Secretariat will have to seek for voluntary contributions or projects to fund another 30% in order to maintain the same level of staff time dedicated to supporting the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative and the Plan of Action for Africa 2012-2018.

Temporary Staff

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat contracted a part-time Programme Assistant to support the logistical preparation of MOP6 and the compilation of the MOP6 proceedings from 1 July 2014 until 31 March 2016.

Interns

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat participates in the CMS Family Internship Programme. In the framework of this programme, five interns have supported the work of the Secretariat during the period under consideration.

Organisation of the Secretariat

The organisation of the Secretariat presented below (as at 1 January 2016) takes MOP6 decisions into account.

The individual staff members and units work closely as a team, interacting with each other on cross-cutting issues on a daily basis; they are divided into four major areas of work (as described in Annex I – Organisational Structure and Annex II - Staff Composition of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat).

Each staff member has an annual work plan, which is revised mid-term and approved by his/her supervisor. All the work plans are examined by the Executive Secretary in order to increase the synergies between the units and avoid duplication of efforts. The Secretariat nonetheless faces a number of challenges in the delivery of its mandate and is rather stretched. This is due to the ever-increasing extent of services to be delivered: without the extension of the part-time positions funded by voluntary contributions and the support of interns, the Secretariat would not have been in a position to deliver the requested services by the Parties.

The core budget covers 6.75 full-time equivalent positions (FTEs), while voluntary contributions and savings have allowed the addition of 3.25 full-time equivalent positions in 2015. The Secretariat currently comprises 11 staff members (see Annex II), 6 Professional Staff (P-Staff) and 5 General Staff (G-Staff).

The four units within the Secretariat are:

Executive Management Unit - composed of one P4, one P2, one G5 and 0.3 temporary G4

The Executive Secretary is responsible for the overall management, policy development, liaison with Parties, depositary government, host country, the Standing Committee, the CMS Family, UNEP and other biodiversity-related MEAs and the recruitment of new Parties.

The other staff members of this unit assist the Executive Secretary with the management of human and financial resources, in close collaboration with the UNEP/CMS Administration and Financial Management Unit (AFMU), fundraising, office logistics (such as IT-related issues and procurement), planning of missions, logistical preparation of Meetings of the Parties and Meetings of the Standing Committee, drafting and control of meeting documents, and legal affairs in liaison with UNEP and with the depositary.

Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit - composed of one P3, one voluntary-contribution-funded P2 and one G4 (0.75 covered by the core budget and 0.25 covered by savings)

This unit directly supports the Technical Committee and organises its meetings and facilitates its work, including through the moderation of the online TC Workspace.

The unit leads on most of the implementation-related tasks: management and support of the International Species Working Groups and International Species Experts Groups which coordinate the implementation of AEWA Action and Management Plans, development and management of implementation related projects (see below section 4), production or supervision of various documents including amendments of the annexes of the Agreement, mandatory reports (such as Conservation Status Report), Species Action and Management Plans and Conservation Guidelines.

The Unit also manages the operations of the *Implementation Review Process* (IRP) as well as the document workflow for the meetings of the governing bodies (MOP, StC and TC) and deals with the report writing for the Meetings of the TC and StC.

The unit provides the overall supervision of the AEWA Small Grants Fund (SGF) but due to financial constraints, the Parties decided not to allocate core budget funding to the SGF for the triennium 2016-2018.

It also coordinates the development of strategic and operative documents, such as the AEWA Strategic Plan, including facilitation of the monitoring of progress made in its implementation. Support to the national reporting process is provided through development and revision of national reporting formats and facilitation of analysis of submitted national reports.

Furthermore, the unit regularly organises a wide range of meetings and workshops related to various implementation tasks and also produces the AEWA Technical Series and selected Popular Series issues for publishing.

African Initiative Unit - currently composed of one P2 (0.50 core-budget funded, 0.50 funded by voluntary financial contributions) and one G4 (0.50 core-budget-funded and 0.30 dependent on voluntary financial contributions)

The main task of this unit, in close collaboration with the Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit, is to promote the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative, including the Plan of Action for Africa. This involves the organisation of a wide range of AEWA meetings in the African region (such as the African Pre-MOP meetings, capacity-building workshops including Training of Trainers workshops on flyway conservation and training workshops on the roles and responsibilities of National Focal Points, as well as workshops promoting accession to the Agreement), the management and administration of the AEWA Small Grants Fund (SGF) in the African region.

The African Initiative Unit also provides support with fundraising for activities in the African region, provides advisory services to the AEWA National Focal Points and other stakeholders in Africa, as well as playing a major role in the recruitment of new Parties in Africa.

Communication Unit - composed of one P2 and one G4 (0.5 covered by the core budget and 0.35 covered by savings in 2016)

Since January 2014, this unit has become part of a pilot Common Information Management, Communication, and Awareness-raising Team, allowing some specialisation among the staff in the areas of communications, website and information management (including management of various shared tools such as the official AEWA and CMS websites, the TC Workspace, the online national reporting system and coordination of the national reporting process), as well as press, design and editorial services, special events and social media support to both Secretariats. The common unit is responsible for the organisation of the annual World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) campaign.

The Parties have agreed through [Resolution 6.22](#) to continue and refine this pilot common AEWA/CMS unit. The Secretariat is developing a proposal to be submitted to the Standing Committee detailing implementation arrangements.

2. GENERAL MANAGEMENT

Recruitment of Parties

Since TC12, Mauritania became a Contracting Party as of 1 May 2015 and Belarus will become a Contracting Party as of 1 April 2016, bringing the total number of Parties to 76.

Meetings of the AEWA Standing Committee

Two meetings of the Standing Committee were held since March 2015.

The 10th Meeting of the Standing Committee was held in Kampala, Uganda on 8-10 July 2015, at the kind invitation of the Ministry for Environment, Tourism and Antiquities. Information about the meeting is available at: <http://www.unep-awa.org/en/meeting/10th-meeting-awa-standing-committee>

The 11th Meeting of the Standing Committee was held back-to-back with MOP6 on 14 November 2015. Uganda and France were elected Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee respectively.

Strategic Cooperation with other Organisations

Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)

The AMBI (Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative) programme of work for all flyways was adopted at the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting on 29 April 2015. The three priority issues within the African-Eurasian Flyway to which AMBI is expected to contribute are: the conservation of the Bijagós Archipelago in Guinea-Bissau as the second most important African site for Arctic breeding migratory waders; the potential loss of important breeding habitat on the Icelandic lowland breeding grounds and the illegal harvest of Lesser White-fronted Geese.

A first AMBI implementation meeting focusing on the African-Eurasian and East-Asian Australasian Flyways will be held on the 5-7 April 2016 in the Netherlands.

Fundraising

A total amount of 883,180 € has been pledged in the form of voluntary financial contributions since January 2015 (802,580 € in 2015 and 80,600 € in January and February 2016).

These voluntary contributions were earmarked for the coordination and implementation of the International Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose, the coordination of the African Initiative, the organisation of MOP6 and the production of various documents and deliverables for MOP6, the organisation of World Migratory Bird Day, the support of the International Waterbird Census in Africa, the establishment of a European Goose Management Platform, the development of the AEWA Strategic Plan for 2019-2027 and species action planning for the White-headed Duck and the Dalmatian Pelican.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat would like to express its appreciation for the financial support received towards the implementation of the Agreement since 2015. It should, at the same time, be noted that this level of support is still far below the amount estimated as necessary to implement the Agreement at a satisfactory level. Fundraising has become increasingly difficult over recent years due to the ongoing global financial crisis.

MOP6

With no host country, MOP6 was held on the UN Campus in Bonn, making use of the available conference facilities.

To highlight the overall goal of AEWA, i.e. to implement flyway conservation by facilitating collaboration and cooperation between stakeholders along these flyways, both nationally and internationally, the slogan chosen for the MOP6 was: *Making Flyway Conservation Happen*.

Thanks to voluntary contributions received from the Governments of Germany, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Norway and Luxembourg, the Secretariat was in a position to cover all costs incurred for the logistical preparation of the meeting and the costs connected to funding the participation of sponsored delegates.

Details concerning this meeting of the Parties can be found on the MOP6 webpage: <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/meeting/6th-meeting-parties-aewa>

Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of AEWA

The year 2015 marked 20 years since the conclusion of the Agreement. The Secretariat undertook various activities to commemorate this 20th Anniversary, among which:

20th Anniversary Website Features

The Secretariat developed a rolling “*people behind the scenes*” feature of more than 20 individual featured items. These were published throughout the year 2015 to highlight the work and dedication of the many

government officials, NGO representatives, experts, consultants and stakeholders as well as project staff whose support underpins the Agreement. The features can be found at: <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/page/20th-anniversary-aewa-people-behind-scenes>

Coffee-Table Book

On the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of AEWA, the Secretariat produced a coffee-table book illustrated with high quality pictures of 20 AEWA species. This production has been generously funded by The Netherlands, the depositary country of the Agreement and Germany, the host country of the Secretariat. This 184-page publication contains 122 images contributed by 56 photographers and texts written by additional 17 authors.

3. COMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

With the agreement from the Chairs of the CMS and AEWA Standing Committees, on 27 January 2014, the Executive Secretary of CMS, in close cooperation with the then Acting AEWA Executive Secretary, established a *Common Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Team* (IMCA) as a pilot initiative to demonstrate the benefits of shared services between CMS and AEWA.

AEWA's Information Officer (P2) and Information Assistant (G4) were instructed to be part of the new Joint IMCA team as of 27 January 2014 through an inter-office memorandum, which also appointed AEWA's Information Officer as Coordinator of the new team.

In 2015, the team focused mainly on the development of the new communication strategies both for AEWA and CMS, and the IMCA-related preparation of the AEWA MOP6 and World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) 2015. WMBD was celebrated on 9-10 May 2015 under the central theme *Energy – make it bird-friendly!* It aimed to highlight and promote the guidelines developed by CMS and AEWA on both renewable energy and power lines.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, in collaboration with UNEP/CMS Secretariat, prepared a report on the experiences and lessons learned from the pilot in common services in the area of Communications, Information Management and Awareness-raising for AEWA MOP6 between the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats. The report covered the period Jan 2014 – October 2015 and was presented to AEWA Parties at AEWA MOP6 ([AEWA/MOP 6.10/Rev.1](#)).

Through [Resolution 6.22](#), MOP6 agreed to continue and refine the pilot team under the supervision of the Standing Committee.

Parties adopted a new AEWA Communication Strategy through Resolution 6.10 as an instrument to guide communication efforts in the support of implementation of the Agreement. The development of the new communication strategy was made possible through funding from the Government of Germany.

Overview of AEWA Publications and Websites (March 2015 – January 2016)

The different units within the Secretariat produce the materials to be published or disseminated through different communication channels. The IMCA is responsible for the final stage of production of these documents.

Information Materials

- Logo design for the AEWA International Working Group for the Slaty Egret
- Species banners for the Slaty Egret, Pink-footed Goose, Grey Crowned Crane and Shoebill
- Logo stickers for the AEWA International Working Groups of the Slaty Egret, White-winged Flufftail, Pink-footed Goose, Madagascar Pond-heron, Lesser Flamingo, Black-tailed Godwit, Lesser White-fronted Goose, Northern Bald Ibis, Red-breasted Goose, Sociable Lapwing, Grey Crowned Crane and Shoebill
- World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) information materials for the annual Campaign 2015

- African Initiative Flyer (new version)
- AEWA MOP6 information material (Poster Banners, Videos, Presentations, Logo)
- AEWA Migratory Species Champions fact sheets and folders
- AEWA Wild & Precious Exhibition

Websites:

- Dedicated **World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) Website** for the annual campaigns 2015 and 2016
- **AEWA MOP6 Newsroom** – A special website for the presentation of AEWA MOP6-related content was developed and maintained in-house by the IMCA team. The website aggregated news items and other multi-media content, videos as well as social media feeds relevant to AEWA MOP6.

Social Media

Facebook accounts for AEWA as well as World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) have been set up and are regularly maintained. Especially the WMBD Facebook Account is heavily used and helps to promote the campaign, particularly in the peak-months leading up to the WMBD weekend. Twitter, Youtube and Flickr accounts for WMBD have also been established and are being used to help support the annual campaign.

4. SCIENCE, IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE

Following MOP5, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has been working on the implementation and development of AEWA International Single Species Action and Management Plans (ISSAPs and ISSMPs). Criteria for prioritising AEWA Populations for Action and Management Planning and for the retirement of ISSAPs have been adopted through Resolution 6.8 (see appendix 2 of [Resolution 6.8](#) and Document [AEWA/MOP6.33](#)).

Six ISSAPs have been adopted by MOP6 through resolution 6.8:

- a) Grey Crowned-crane *Balearica regulorum* (document [AEWA/MOP 6.25 Rev.1](#)),
- b) Taiga Bean Goose *Anser f. fabalis* (document [AEWA/MOP 6.26 Rev. 1](#)),
- c) Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* (document [AEWA/MOP 6.27](#)),
- d) Eurasian Curlew *Numenius a. arquata*, *N. a. orientalis* and *N. a. suschkini* (document [AEWA/MOP 6.28 Rev. 1](#)),
- e) Shoebill *Balaeniceps rex* (document [AEWA/MOP 6.29](#)),
- f) Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* (revision of the 2005 ISSAP) (document [AEWA/MOP 6.32](#)).

In addition, MOP6 adopted the first AEWA Multi-Species Action Plan, for Benguela Upwelling System Coastal Seabirds (African Penguin *Spheniscus demersus*, Cape Gannet *Morus capensis*, Crowned Cormorant *Phalacrocorax coronatus*, Cape Cormorant *Phalacrocorax capensis*, Bank Cormorant *Phalacrocorax neglectus*, African Oystercatcher *Haematopus moquini*, Damara Tern *Sternula balaenarum*, Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*, Great Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii*, (cf. document [AEWA/MOP 6.30](#)).

The Secretariat is involved as a co-funder and contributor to a project sponsored by the European Commission on action planning for European species (EuroSAP project). The project is coordinated by BirdLife International and will run from 2015 to 2018. ISSAPs for three priority AEWA species will be developed (Dalmatian Pelican and Velvet Scoter) or revised (White-headed Duck), at flyway level, and, in addition, the project will produce an EU multi-species action plan for grassland-breeding waders. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will be directly involved in the production of the three ISSAPs mentioned above. Action planning workshops are scheduled to take place September-November 2016.

As mandated by MOP6 and with the start-up financial support of Norway, the Secretariat has initiated the establishment of a European Goose Management Platform. A concept and funding proposal was elaborated for the initial 3-year phase in of the Platform, which for the start will cover populations of four goose species – Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*), Taiga Bean Goose (*Anser fabalis fabalis*), Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*) and Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*). A kick-off meeting of the initial 20 Range States will be hosted by France on 11-12 May 2016. The first meeting of the Platform is foreseen for December 2016.

Limited progress was made on the opened Implementation Review Process (IRP) cases in the Syrian Arab Republic, Montenegro and Bulgaria, either due to an increasingly difficult political situation or lack of response from the relevant authorities. On the fourth ongoing IRP case, related to large-scale afforestation of lowland wader breeding habitat in Iceland, a joint AEWA and Bern Convention on-the-spot-assessment mission will take place on 23-27 May 2016, in order to support Iceland in dealing with this issue.

The 6th Edition of the *Report on the Conservation Status of Migratory Waterbirds in the Agreement Area* was presented for consideration by MOP6 (document [AEWA/MOP 6.14](#)). The Secretariat was obliged to postpone the *Report on the Site Network for Waterbirds in the Agreement Area* due to lack of funding. The production of a *Review of the Implementation of AEWA International Single Species Action and Management Plans* has been undertaken internally together with the network of AEWA International Species Group coordinators. A limited update of the *Review of the Status of Non-native Species of Waterbirds* was produced on the basis of the National Reports submitted to MOP6, thanks to a voluntary contribution by Switzerland.

A review and guidelines on the impact of renewable energy developments on migratory species were commissioned as a joint CMS/AEWA project, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and BirdLife International. The report and subsequent guidelines cover all migratory species and all renewable energy sources. Both the report and guidelines were presented and adopted at MOP6 (documents AEWA/MOP6.37 and AEWA/MOP6.38; Resolution 6.11).

A new project on climate change adaptation, coordinated by Wetlands International, was approved by the major funder (International Climate Initiative of the German Government) and the Secretariat will be involved as a co-funder and contributor. The project is entitled “*Climate resilient site network in the African-Eurasian flyway*” and its concept evolved on the basis of the AEWA climate change agenda and mandates from the MOP and it will involve some site assessments, two pilot projects in Mali and Ethiopia, production of guidelines and training of practitioners in African Parties. The project will run until the end of 2019 and it was launched in Bonn during MOP6 in November 2015. A workshop for Sharing of Experiences and the first Steering Committee will take place in Kenya, 20-25 March 2016.

The Secretariat is also a member of the *CMS Scientific Council Working Group on Bird Poisoning*. The Secretariat has, in particular, been leading on the issue of lead poisoning. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, in close collaboration with the UNEP/CMS Secretariat and the Raptors MoU Coordination Unit, was also involved in the organisation and running of a Southern African sub-regional workshop on preventing poisoning of migratory birds. This workshop was kindly hosted by the Government of the Republic of South Africa and took place in Cape Town on 24 August 2015, back to back with the African Preparatory meeting for the AEWA MOP6.

It brought together AEWA, CMS and Raptors MoU National Focal Points, as well as Agricultural Ministry Representatives and other experts from 10 Southern African countries (Angola, Botswana, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe), and will result in a sub-regional Action Plan on the implementation of recommendations from the CMS guidelines to prevent the risk of poisoning to migratory birds.

In addition, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has been involved in the Bern Convention process on the illegal killing of birds.

In this context, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat put forward the idea to establish an inter-governmental task force to eradicate illegal killing, trapping and unsustainable use of birds in the Pan-Mediterranean region. The first meeting of the Task Force is tentatively scheduled to take place in Egypt in June/July 2016.

Coordination and Implementation of the International Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose

The coordination of the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group continues to be facilitated by the AEWA Associate Programme Officer for Single Species Action Plan Support based at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

A revision of the AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose was scheduled to be adopted at MOP6 in November 2015, which would have included an extensive update of the Action Plan framework. However, due to differences in the positions of various Range States which could not be bridged, the Standing Committee decided that the draft revised document would not be submitted to MOP6 for approval.

The 3rd Meeting of the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group is scheduled to take place on 12-14 April 2016 in Trondheim, Norway.

The AEWA African Initiative

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has promoted the implementation of the Agreement in the African region, particularly with regard to Resolution 5.9 on the implementation of the African Initiative and the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa (2012-2017). Details can be found in the report on the implementation of the African Initiative, adopted by MOP6 (document [AEWA/MOP 6.11](#)). Together with the Strategic Plan, it should be noted that the validity of the Plan of Action for Africa was extended until 2018 through Resolution 6.14.

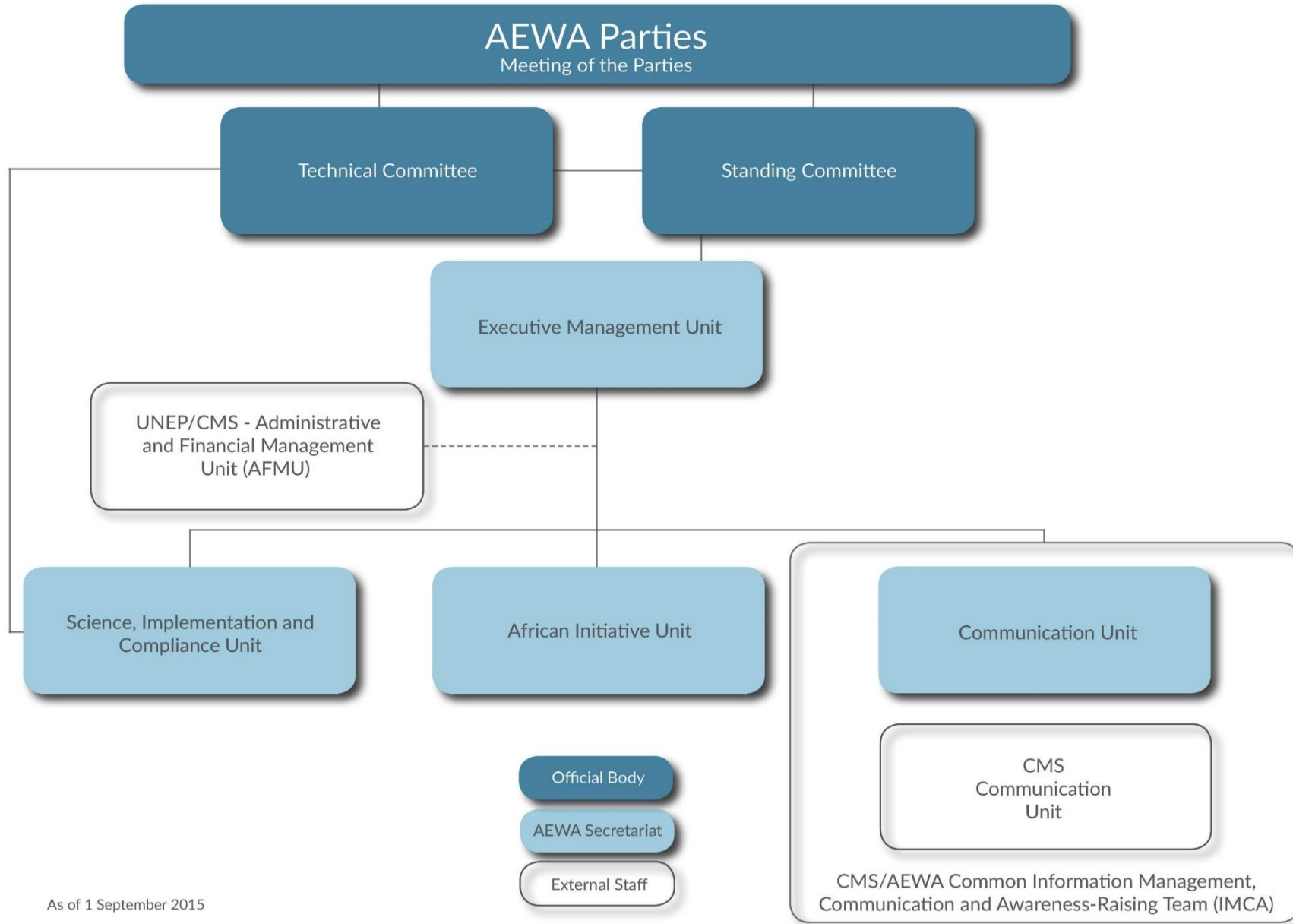
5. CAPACITY BUILDING

As follow-up on Complementary Target 5.1 of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat organised an African preparatory meeting for the 6th Session of the AEWA Meeting of Parties (Pre-MOP6). The AEWA African Pre-MOP6 Meeting, kindly hosted by the Government of South Africa from 25-27 August 2015, brought together AEWA National Focal Points or their representatives from 32 out of the 35 African Contracting Parties.

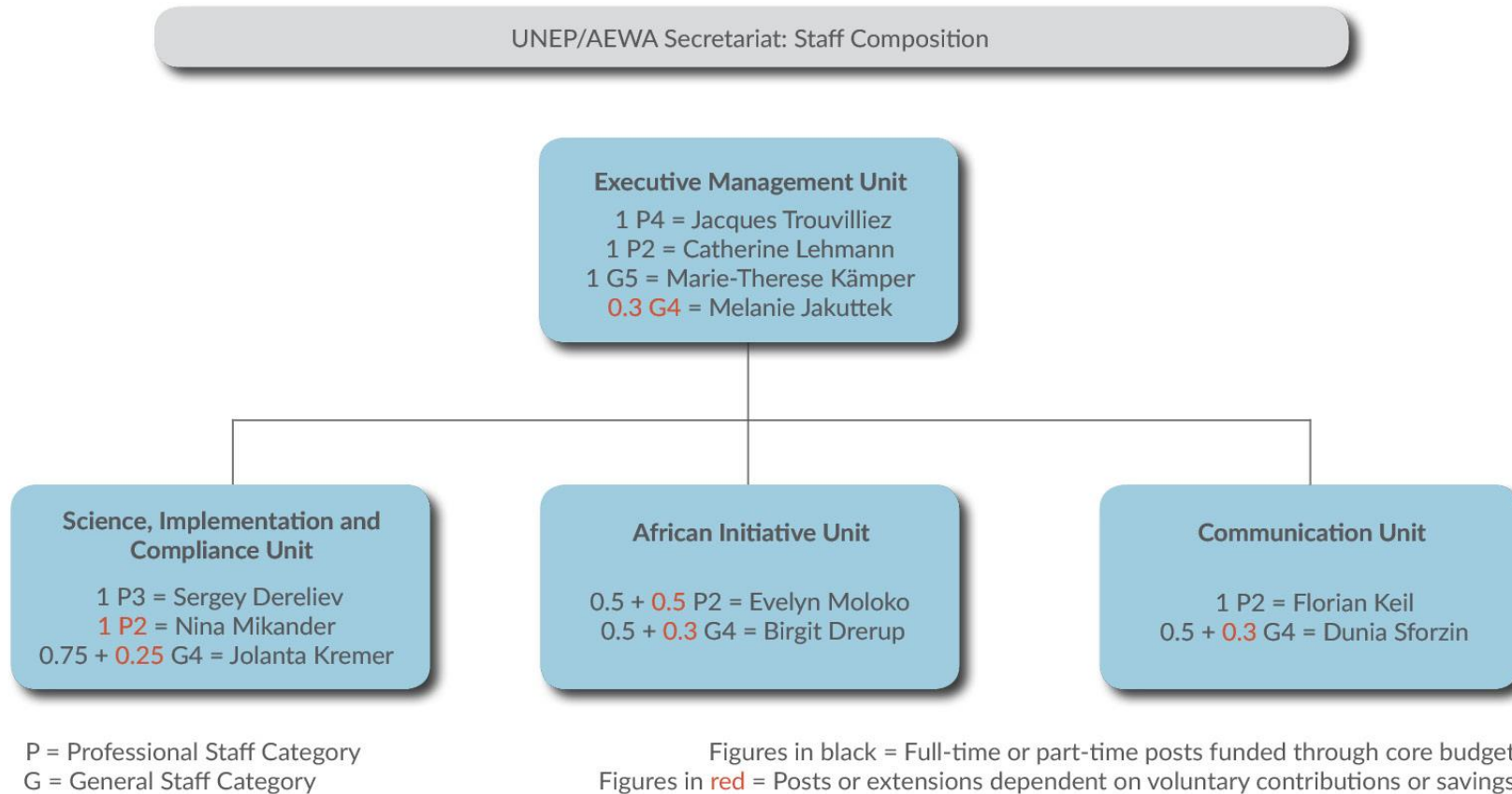
The meeting provided an important opportunity for National Focal Points to deliberate on key issues of relevance for the region, which were addressed by the AEWA MOP6. It also enabled them to negotiate common regional positions which were presented and defended at MOP6. Further details on the AEWA African Pre-MOP6 meeting can be found in document [AEWA/MOP 6.11](#). The AEWA African Pre-MOP6 meeting took place back to back with a joint CMS/AEWA/Raptors MoU workshop for the Southern African sub-region regarding the implementation of [CMS Resolution 11.15](#) on preventing poisoning of migratory birds. The organisation of both the Pre-MOP6 meeting and workshop was made possible thanks to funding secured in the framework of the joint AEWA/CMS capacity-building project supported by the European Commission as well as co-funding from the Government of the Republic of South Africa.

In partnership with EuroNatur, a Germany-based NGO which will be providing financial and logistical support, a training workshop will be organised for the National Administrative and Technical Focal Points of the AEWA Parties from the Adriatic flyway (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). The event was originally scheduled to take place on 5-9 October 2015, but was postponed and is now being planned for new dates in the first half of 2016. In addition, if accepted by the Parties, EuroNatur will offer part-time staffing to support the National Focal Points in each of the above-mentioned countries in coordinating the implementation of the Agreement.

ANNEX I – UNEP/AEWA Secretariat: Organisational Structure



ANNEX II – UNEP/AEWA Secretariat: Staff Composition



As of 1 January 2016