Enhancing Conservation of the Critical Network of Sites Required
by Migratory Waterbirds on the African-Eurasian Flyways

wings over wetlands
The UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project

WEBSITE CONCEPT
PROPOSAL FOR:

A CENTRAL FLYWAY PARTNERSHIP WEBSITE

WWW.FLYWAYCONSERVATION.ORG

Prepared
by
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For discussion at the
WOW Steering Committee Meeting
10 March 2010, Wakkerstroom, South Africa

GEF UNEP WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL BirdLife INTERNATIONAL AEWA B/N UNOPS Ramsar UNEP WCMC

www.wingsoverwetlands.org

BACKGROUND

A series of options for the future of the WOW website (www.wingsoverwetlands.org) were presented to the WOW Steering Committee Tele-conference and at the Post-WOW Project Brainstorming Meeting held in Bonn, Germany, 10-11 November 2009. The options were summarized in the discussion paper "How to feature WOW flyway resources on the Web post-project" (see Annex 1).

Meeting participants were in favor of making the transition to www.flywayconservation.org where all flyway-scale tools developed under WOW could be made centrally available, while the current WOW website would remain as a static archive documenting the implementation of the GEF-funded project (option A under #8 in Annex 1.).

Meeting participants noted that the limiting factor as to how to approach the development and maintenance of such a website would be the availability of resources and that a funding proposal would eventually be needed to be shared with potential donors.

As a first step, the request was made for a concept outlining the vision for a Flyway Partnership website which could reside at www.flywayconservation.org and which includes additional background information and some ideas as to how this website will be used and maintained in the future.

The following website concept proposal for the development of a "Central Flyway Partnership Website" was developed by Florian Keil (WOW Communications Officer) in the context of the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project at the request of the WOW Steering Committee held in November 2009. It was submitted to the WOW Steering Committee for review and possible endorsement on: **10 March 2010.**

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DRAFT CONCEPT
PROPOSAL FOR A CENTRAL FLYWAY PARTNERSHIP WEBSITE

VISION

A website or web portal acting as a central, well structured and visually striking access point to current resources, tools and information relating to flyway conservation. It should act as a gateway to the main flyway tools developed under the WOW project (CSN Tool, Flyway Training Kit and potentially other related materials & tools) and be a central source for current flyway conservation related news, activities, resources and projects from all the partners.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

The website should address the following needs:

The WOW project is in its final year of implementation during which both the Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool and the Flyway Training Kit will become available. Both of these WOW products will likely continue to be highly relevant and interesting resources for a number of stakeholders for many years beyond the life of the project and should be made widely and easily accessible from a central location on the Web.

All WOW Partners have an interest in making sure that the achievements of and main products resulting from the project are highly visible, easily understood and clearly acknowledged as being a result of the successful cooperation and efforts of all partners under WOW.

Both the CSN Tool and Flyway Training Kit should come across as being highly relevant today and in the future and not as deliverables of a project that has come to an end. They should be presented as resources upon which one can still build, i.e. packaged in a way that would also convince potential donors that these are resources worth investing in today and in the future (both in terms of trainings using the Flyway Training Kit and further development of the CSN Tool functionalities and scope).

The website should also function as the website of the (post) WOW Flyway Partnership – both as its future "public face" on the Web and as an online tool where all future flyway activities of the partners can be presented, shared and coordinated.

The current WOW website (www.wingsoverwetlands.org)

WOW Partners have expressed the wish to keep the existing website (www.wingsoverwetlands.org) to document project implementation and as an archive for project documents and materials produced during the life of the project. While the current website is a mirror of the full complexity of the WOW project with detailed information on all of its components and news - reflecting the projects successful implementation – it will not adequately address the needs listed above for the following reasons:

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- The website was designed to showcase the project and is ultimately a project website. It was developed according to the project design and needs, with the project document acting as the blueprint for much of the structure, functionality and content of the website.
- The website contains information on the entire project and is in many ways too comprehensive and contains too much detailed information which will not be of much relevance beyond the life of the project (except for the purpose of documenting project implementation & to show the full scope of the project)
- It will function well as an archive to the WOW project, but not as an active gateway leading visitors to the key flyway resources which will still be highly relevant after the project.

Re-designing the existing website to fit the needs outlined above would be a very difficult and time consuming exercise and would ultimately mean having to give up allot of the existing content, which would mean loosing the "archival-quality" of the website. It would also entail having to re-organize and re-design the entire structure and content of the website so that it would fit the needs of the post project reality. Such a revamp of the existing website would likely be more complicated, resource and time consuming than developing a new website from scratch.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

The proposed solution to addressing the needs listed above would be to develop a new website or web portal, which A.) contains central access points to the flyway conservation resources (CSN Tool & Flyway Training Kit), B.) highlights the main achievements of the WOW project in a condensed way (potentially through a final illustrative report in PDF format), C.) includes a prominent link to the existing website (acting as the full archive to project implementation) and D.) includes a few additional features which will further the work of the Flyway Partnership (flyway projects/activities & contacts database, flyway news and some general background pages on flyway conservation and current activities).

WEBSITE BRANDING

The website should be designed using the WOW House Style Guide to show continuity with the WOW project on the one hand, but should also visually signal the evolution / up-grade character of the website from a project website to an active partnership website (being more future oriented). Please see the sample screen design (Annex II) for a first idea, which could be refined and used as a blueprint for the development of the actual website.

PROPOSED STRUCTURE

The main element of this website would be a very elegantly designed and carefully planned start page with links to the flyway tools and a small number of sub-pages for relevant background information. Additional elements found on the start page could be a window for latest flyway news, an area for current flyway projects/activities (taken from the database) and a number of text only navigation elements (contact / about us / partners) leading to a selected number of sub-pages.

I. CENTRAL START PAGE (including its main elements)

This page is the first and main page of the website and should give visitors a clear first impression of what the site is about. It should also provide clear orientation to the visitor, with centrally positioned and nicely designed access points to all the main flyway resources. The main visual element should be an image banner (flash) which would showcase a number of high-impact and highly relevant "image/text combinations" (related to flyway conservation, WOW, CSN Tool, Flyway Training) which visually and emotionally introduce the visitor to the site.

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In addition, the <u>start page</u> should include:

Short Description Text
A very short (max 40-60 words!) descriptive text introducing the visitor to the site. The text should be easy to read and extremely focuses in the sense that it gives visitors a very quick and good sense of where they are and what the site is about.

Flyway News Element
The "Flyway News Element" basically features the top current 4-6 flyway conservation related news items from the partners as text links to the actual flyway news item on the partner website. The news should be RSS compatible and all partners should be able to submit their flyway related news from their official/institutional websites automatically to the website using RSS or other syndication method. A "more" button/link featured on the bottom of this element will lead to a full Flyway News Page, similar to the one already is use in the context of the WOW Project (see: www.wingsoverwetlands.org/flywaynews)

Flyway Project Element
The "Flyway Project Element" basically features a latest flyway project currently being implemented by at least one of the partners. It consists of a small image/icon and title element which changes with each new project being featured and links to a pre-defined page or external project website for more information on the given project. In the future, this element should be linked to an underlying projects database (see below) and be automatically generated.

User/Member Registration Element
A login / registration feature should be accessible from the start page in a less prominent place. The registrations should be linked to an underlying contacts database. The idea is to have people register for news/updates initially in order to continue to build up a contact database for people interested in the topic of flyway conservation, but to then expand on this feature in the future and use the username & password protected area for additional Intranet-type functions.

II. ADDITIONAL PAGES NEEDED:

While the start page will be the main and most prominent page of the website, there might be a need for a limited number of additional pages containing some more background information and resources. Additional background pages might be useful for:

- **Flyway Partnership** – explaining what it is, overview of the partners and a link to the partnership agreement. It could also contain information on how to become a partner.
- **Flyway Conservation** – background page giving the visitor a concise, well-written introduction to the topic (explaining what it is) with a select number of links to some carefully selected resources/literature (for example from "Waterbirds Around the World").
- **CSN Tool** – page giving some background on the CSN Tool, possibly including a training manual and FAQs. The actual CSN Tool should also be accessible from this page in a prominent way (button / graphic).
- **Flyway Training** – page on the Flyway Training Programme giving a concise introduction on the Flyway Training Kit and how it can/is being used. This page should also include some central contacts for trainers and access to the full Flyway Training Kit.
- **Flyway News** – page for the expanded view of all flyway related news (with image, title and main text field & link to each related flyway conservation news item) put together automatically via a planned & agreed syndication processes from all the partner websites.
- **Flyway Projects** – Overview page of all flyway related projects submitted to the underlying database by the partners.
- **Related Links / Contact Us / Copyright & Impressum etc**

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DATABASE & INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

The main data-driven features of the website would be the flyway projects, flyway news and contacts element. While both the flyway news and contacts database are rather straight forward, the flyway projects database would need to be accessible and editable over the web by several different users. Some work will also have to go into the design of this feature, including defining the information submitted by each partner on a given project. For example, it would be useful to have one field for the "description text" and link to be publicly featured in the "Flyway Project Element" on the start page (see above).

IMPLEMENTATION

WEBSITE CONSTRUCTION

The approach to the development of the website depends on the availability of funds and the partners ability to actually get funding for this proposal from potential donors. Irrespective of the funds which may or may not become available, I would strongly encourage the partnership to ask one of the partners to take the lead in the fundraising and development of the website on behalf of the partnership and to also take the lead in developing it with a professional & experienced web development company or agency. Once a tender (developed on the basis of the agreed concept) has been made and funding secured, the development of the website should be coordinated and closely monitored by someone entrusted by the partnership.

The development process should reflect the partnership principle, meaning that all major concepts, designs and all website content is shared with and agreed by all partners before it is finalized in the actual design. In addition, it should be understood that all content (both new texts and images) would most likely have to be provided to the website development company by the partners and/or the central coordinator.

WEBSITE MAINTENANCE

The main idea of this website is really to keep the maintenance of it to an absolute minimum. However, once the time-consuming content, design and web development processes are finalized, the actual running of the site depends on the level of activity of the partnership and on the timeliness & quality of the initial content & concept provided by the partners. However, I would still strongly recommend that a dedicated person (on 20 hours / month) along with a team of focal points from each of the partner organization will be made responsible for the maintenance of the site in the long-run.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTING

Although one would have to first tender on the basis of this concept, a very rough initial estimate would be:

- **Web Development Costs:** 10 – 15,000 Euro (paid to the web development company at delivery)
- **Development Coordination Costs:** Estimated at 160 hours (full time for one month – potentially provided by one of the partners)
- **Maintenance Costs:** 20 Hours / Month – could be outsourced or handed over to one of the partners.
- **Web Space:** 20-40 Euro/ Month depending on the space and server needed.
- **Domain Name:** 20 Euro / Year – for a single domain registration.

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ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

W3C Standard & Accessibility: The website code should be W3C-standard HTML and CSS and adhere to the standard Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. In addition, pages should be designed to display well on all major browsers and all common monitor resolutions (also at 800 x 600) and should load easily & quickly even on low-bandwidth internet connections (for example on a 28.8 Kbps or 56 Kbps Dialup).

Site Statistics: Basic website statistics should be kept for all pages and the chosen web development company should provide a tool with which the full statistics for the site can be accessed and viewed by all partners. In addition, Google Analytics could be used on selected pages.

Web Hosting: The website could be initially hosted by one of the partners (on an existing server) or placed on a commercial server for an estimated 20-50 Euro/Month.

Domain Name: The domain name / central web address for the website is still to be decided by the partnership. However, the following domain names have been temporarily registered by the WOW Communication Officer at the request of the WOW Project Coordination Unit (PCU): www.flywayconservation.org and www.wingsoverwetlands.org

Domain Email: The email address depends on the chosen domain, but for the general email I would recommend "contact@" or "info@" combinations.

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ANNEX 1: SC Discussion Paper: How to feature WOW flyway resources on the Web post-project

Background

1. The WOW Website (www.wingsoverwetlands.org) launched in April 2008 has become the "public face" of the WOW project on the World Wide Web. The website has received significant attention worldwide with close to 10,000 unique visits from over 150 countries.

2. The website was originally developed and is being maintained entirely in-house by the WOW Communication Officer (CO) and the Project Coordination Unit (PCU). Although the website's design and branding is uniquely WOW, the website is physically hosted by Wetlands International and is a sub-site of the main Wetlands International corporate website.

3. The website includes over 100 static pages containing information on all project components and ongoing activities and two actively maintained news areas. A "latest news" section (www.wingsoverwetlands.org/latestnews) on specifically project related news and updates and a "flyway news" section (www.wingsoverwetlands.org/flywaynews) which is featuring general waterbird & wetland conservation news from across the African-Eurasian Flyways from the WOW partnership.

4. Annex "E" of the Project Document indicates that the CSN Tool should be hosted on the AEWA web-site, while the maintenance of actual portal software is to be done by UNEP-WCMC. The data upkeep will be the responsibility of the main database custodians (WI, BLI, Ramsar Convention Secretariat and WCMC). The Flyway Training Kit is also a core output of the WOW project, though the Project Document is not clear on how this resource will be made accessible post-project.

5. A website domain has been preliminarily reserved (www.flywayconservation.org) by the WOW CO, which could potentially act as a central access point for flyway conservation resources and information created by the WOW Project (and potentially other relevant initiatives). A web page could be created under this domain to specifically feature the flyway conservation resources developed by WOW for the African-Eurasian Flyways.

Main Issues

6. After the current GEF-funded WOW project, no staff time will be available for the regular maintenance of the WOW website and as such, it will quickly become outdated. The question is what to do with the existing WOW website post-project, and whether or not there are elements or sections of the website (i.e.: publications, demo project pages, or flyway news) that should be maintained after the life of the project and by whom.

7. Currently, both the CSN Tool and Flyway Training Kit are accessible on sub-pages of the WOW website. The question is how to feature these two main outputs on the Web after the project so that they are made easily and widely accessible.

Possible Solutions

8. With regards to the current WOW website, the Steering Committee should decide whether to A) keep the website as a static archive (that will no longer be maintained, but will serve as a reminder of project implementation); B) remove the WOW website entirely from the Web, or; C) to continue to maintain the existing website as part of the new partnership agreement currently. Options A and C have different cost and staff time implications.

9. With respect to the future presentation of the main outputs of the project (CSN Tool, Flyway Training Kit and other relevant publications) the Steering Committee should decide whether A) to simply make them accessible through the AEWA website (ref. original Project Document) B) to separately make them available on each WOW Partner website, C) to continue to feature these resource on the existing WOW Website (provided it will be maintained post project) or D) create a central one-stop shop to access the CSN Tool, Flyway Training Kit and other flyway information resources under the domain www.flywayconservation.org (ref. 5 above). All these options have different cost and staff time implications.

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ANNEX 2: Sample Screen Design

Start page for www.flywayconservation.org

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