



**4<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES**  
15 – 19 September 2008, Antananarivo, Madagascar

*“Flyway Conservation at Work – Review of the Past, Vision for the Future”*

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## **REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT**

### **Introduction**

In accordance with Article VIII, Paragraph (h) of the Agreement, the Secretariat shall prepare, on an annual basis and for each ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties, reports on the work of the Secretariat and on the implementation of the Agreement. Intersessionally the Secretariat has also submitted a common report on its activities to the Standing Committee as well as to the Technical Committee.

This report is divided into four sections:

1. General management; which includes policy/ administrative/ financial and human resources issues as well as cooperation with other organisations;
2. Information management;
3. Implementation and compliance;
4. Project development.

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

The current report covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2006 to 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2008.

### **1. General Management**

#### **New Premises for the Agreement Secretariat**

In June 2006 the CMS Family was reunited by the move to the new UN Premises in Bonn. After nearly two years of separation we are now all located in the same building, the so-called ‘Langer Eugen’. The AEWA Secretariat is located on the 19<sup>th</sup> floor and the rest of the CMS Family has its offices on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> floors of this building.

On 11<sup>th</sup> July the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the German Chancellor Angela Merkel inaugurated the new UN Campus. This new complex unites the offices of sixteen UN organizations specialized in the areas of environment and development. In the near future it will also include the new United Nations Climate Change Secretariat building as well as a World Conference Centre.

In his speech the Secretary-General praised the support of the German Government and great hospitality for the United Nations, which “has long been at the centre of Germany’s foreign policy” and “has made Bonn one of the Organization’s most attractive and rewarding duty stations”.

The AEWA Information Officer (JPO) was closely involved in the preparations for the visit of Mr. Kofi Annan, on behalf of the CMS Family in Bonn. During his tour of the building, the Secretary-General visited

the 19<sup>th</sup> floor (AEWA), where he had a quick look at the building's largest meeting room and one of the AEWA offices.

### **Development of Strategic Plan**

In accordance with Resolution 3.9., the Standing Committee was instructed to prepare a Strategic Plan for the Agreement in close cooperation with the Technical Committee. The Secretariat contracted a consultant to draft this Strategic Plan and the process was kicked off via a brainstorming session during the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee in 2006. The Strategic Plan was drafted in close consultation with the AEWA Secretariat. Early 2007 a workshop was held at the UN premises in Bonn to review and discuss the first draft of the Strategic Plan with TC Working Group 5. During this workshop the proposed new national report format was compared and aligned with the Strategic Plan. Based on the outcomes of this workshop the draft Strategic Plan was amended and submitted to the Standing Committee and approved for submission to the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Parties for formal adoption.

### **New Developments**

Some developments are taking place within the AEWA region, which are of great interest for the future of the Agreement:

CMS launched the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) Action Plan on 14 January 2008. CAF covers 30 Range States, 16 of which are located within the AEWA Agreement Area. Also half of the populations listed in this Action Plan are already covered by AEWA. *There will be a need to look into a cooperation scheme with CAF to avoid duplication of efforts and also to avoid competition between the two instruments, potentially leading to confusion among AEWA-CAF Range States.*

The second issue of interest is the development of a Memorandum of Understanding for the conservation of African-Eurasian migratory raptors and owls. In 2007 the first meeting took place to discuss and adopt the Action Plan to be linked to this MoU. Later this year the second meeting will take place to conclude the MoU. All 118 AEWA Range States are also Range States to this MoU, which stretches to the coast of China and encompasses many more countries. *Again, there is a need to look into how AEWA could cooperate with this MoU and how competition between the two instruments could be avoided.*

Several Range States have indicated that the growing number of instruments to conserve migratory birds will not lead to a substantial increase of funds to implement these treaties. In practice this is more likely to lead to a situation whereby the same amount of funds currently available will have to be shared amongst a growing number of specialized bird Agreements/MoUs.

### **Fundraising**

At the last Meeting of Parties it was decided to more or less flesh out all activities from the core budget. Besides its decision that the core budget should only be covered by the annual contribution, MOP3 also decided to establish two additional pillars, namely one dealing with activities and the other one with travel costs of funded delegates. The Secretariat noted that raising funds for meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Agreement poses additional and persisting challenges. Due to the fact that no funds could be secured for the 5<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee meeting in 2007 the decision had to be taken to postpone that meeting to mid-2008. *It is questionable if meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Agreement should depend on voluntary contributions and the Secretariat will raise this point at the MOP4.*

Since MOP3 a total amount of EUR 808,593 has been received in the form of voluntary contributions. Approximately EUR 129,000 was allocated to activities of the CMS-led Avian Influenza Task Force. The remaining funds were earmarked for International Implementation Priority projects and for meetings of the Technical and/ or Standing Committee.

As agreed by the Contracting Parties at MOP2 as well as at MOP3, the Secretariat was allowed to set aside the first annual contribution of new Parties to cover the costs for ongoing activities and the launching of new initiatives. In 2006 and 2007 a total amount of €264,000 was received from new Parties. For 2008 the estimated total amount will be approximately €150,000. The Standing Committee agreed to allocate these funds for *inter alia*: the drafting of international reviews, in financial support to the GEF flyway project, the development, coordination and implementation of International Single Species Action Plans, consultancies including surveys, implementation of the Communication Strategy, and organisation of MOP4. The funds received through this mechanism were effectively used and have been proven to be crucial for the successful implementation of the Agreement.

The amount needed to fully implement the International Implementation Priorities (IIP) 2006 – 2008 totals €5.2 million. Based on this figure, the Secretariat was only able to secure approximately 10 percent of the total amount needed. As indicated earlier, one of the main reasons that Contracting Parties were not in a position to fully support the implementation of the Agreement is the economic recess they are confronted with. This has led to severe cuttings in their budgets which has an (in)direct impact on the level of support they could provide to the AEWA Secretariat.

The Secretariat is very grateful for the financial support received since MOP3. It should however be noted that the level of support is significantly lower than initially estimated. The latter has a negative impact especially on the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project. WOW currently requires an additional 1 million Euros in funding for full project implementation. When drafting the WOW project proposal in 2003-2004, it was foreseen that AEWA would be in the position to contribute an amount of USD 1.3 million to this project over a period of 5 years. This amount was based on the assumptions that (1) an amount of USD 150,000 is available for the implementation of IIPs per year, (2) additional contributions in cash of USD 50,000 are secured per year, and (3) the remaining USD 300,000 are provided “in kind” through technical support and allocated staff time at the Secretariat. Due to the losses caused by the US-Dollar exchange rate it was decided at the start of the project to reduce the duration of the project from 5 to 4 years. This means that AEWA as a main contributor to the WOW project is faced with a highly challenging timeframe for fundraising in addition to our existing responsibilities within this project. *The question is how to manage to get the missing funds in place while avoiding unnecessary delays in the implementation of the project.* During the last WOW Steering Committee Meeting (January 2008), Wetlands International proposed to contract a consultant to draft a fundraising strategy, which could be used to approach some of the possible donors. The Steering Committee agrees that *the partners involved in this project should combine their efforts to ensure that the missing funds will come in as soon as possible.*

In addition to the need for fundraising for IIP 2006 – 2008 and the WOW project, as a matter of priority, we also had to fundraise an amount of EUR 200,000 for the organisation of MOP4 in Madagascar. These fundraising activities have taken quite some staff time, particularly that of the Executive Secretary and with regard to MOP4.

In view of the magnitude and diversity of financial needs, as well as the urgency of acquisition, fundraising-related support would be welcomed and is highly encouraged.

## **Recruitment of Staff**

### **Fixed-term staff**

The Meeting of the Parties adopted at its third session Decision 3.1 to urge UNEP to finalise the recruitment process for the upgraded post of Executive Secretary. At the beginning of 2006 the recruitment procedure took place and it was decided to re-appoint Mr. Bert Lenten as of 1 May 2006. Thus a lengthy procedure, lasting more than 3 years, was able to be finalised.

In Resolution 3.14 the Contracting Parties agreed to establish the post of an Information Assistant and the post of a Secretary/ Team Assistant as of 1 of July 2006, both on a part-time basis. As of 1 December 2006 Ms. Dunia Sforzin (German/Italian) joined the team as Information Assistant. One month later Ms. Jolanta Kremer (British) entered on duty as Team Assistant.

## Junior Professional Officer (JPO)

Shortly before MOP3, our Junior Professional Officer for Information Management, Mr. Florian Keil (German) entered on duty. This JPO post is provided free of charge by the Government of Germany and the Secretariat is very grateful for this support. Taking into account that a fixed term post is foreseen in the Budget 2006-2008 (as approved by MOP3) as of 1 of October 2008, the Government of Germany made the exception of agreeing to extend the JPO to a third year. During MOP4 the Secretariat will provide information regarding the recruitment process, which should, by then be more or less finalised.

For the years to come the AEWa Secretariat will re-apply for JPOs and in particular for a 'Flyway Officer for Africa'. All Contracting Parties and Range States are urged to consider providing a JPO for that purpose; this would be highly appreciated.

## Temporary staff

The workload of the Agreement Secretariat is increasing due to the fact that AEWa is becoming more and more well-known and has taken up a number of activities. Up until the end of 2006 we worked with consultants, who, in line with UN Rules and Regulations, are allowed to work for the Secretariat for a maximum of 6 months in any period of one year. In practice this means that we could only contract the same person again after a break of six months, which, in turn, means that as soon as a person becomes familiar with AEWa his or her contract expires and we have to invest again in the next consultant. Needless to say, this is not a very productive situation. The problem, which has been described in the past, was discussed with UNEP-DEC, who advised us to go for so-called "temporary assignments". These are appointments for a maximum of 12 months, with the possibility of extension for a further period of 12 months. Based on this information and in close consultation with the Executive Secretary of CMS and the Chair of the Standing Committee, it was decided to create a temporary assignment for the post of an Associate Programme Officer (L-2). Ms. Catherine Lehmann was recruited and entered on duty on 3 October 2006. Meanwhile the Standing Committee agreed to extend her contract to the end of 2008. Her main tasks are/have been to draft a number of international reviews, to support the work of the AEWa Information Unit and last but not least to organise the logistical arrangements for MOP4. Furthermore Ms. Lehmann has been the driving force in the development of several project proposals including the 'WetCap Project'.

The following consultants have worked for AEWa in 2005/2006:

Name	Nationality	Main tasks carried out in the period <sup>1</sup>
Ms. Nienke Beintema	Dutch	Drafting of AEWa Articles/MOP3 Newsletter (part-time/ June-Dec. '05)
Ms. Sophie Hansen	German/ French	Logistical arrangements for MOP3 (full-time/ Sept.-Oct/ '05) Drafting Guideline on aquatic weeds (Part-time/ June-July '06)
Ms. Catherine Lehmann	German/ French	Logistical preparation of MOP3 and Information Management (Part-time until July 2005 afterward full-time/ Jan.-Dec. '05) AEWA publications (full-time/ July-September '06)
Ms. Muriel Mannert	German	Logistical preparations for Avian Influenza Seminar (full-time/ Feb.-March '06)
Mr. Ricardas Patiejunas	Lithuanian	Support with financial tasks (part-time/ Feb.-Oct. '06)
Ms. Ayhan Polat	German/ Turkish	Logistical arrangement for MOP3 (part-time/ April '05 – April '06)

## Interns

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<sup>1</sup> Besides these main tasks all temporary staff supported the Secretariat in its daily work.

In close cooperation with Mr. Henning Lilge (CMS Administrative Assistant and Coordinator for the Interns Programme) the following interns have supported the work of the AEWA Secretariat:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Main tasks carried out in the period<sup>2</sup></b>
Ms. Sophie Caruana	French	To assist with administrative issues ( 6 Nov. – 15 Dec. '06)
Mr. Andreas Steger	German	To assist with the finalisation of the Conservation Guidelines on National Legislation (1 Dec. '06 – 16 Feb. '07)
Ms. Carolin Bongert	German	To assist with drafting TC documents (8 Jan. – 13 April '07)
Ms Zohra Hamidi	Afghan	To assist with the preparations for WMBD 2007 (8 Jan. – 21 March '07)
Mr. Johannes Müller	German	To assist with the preparation of international reviews (March-August '07)
Ms. Pilar Cossio	Peruvian/ Australian	To assist with information-related work and preparations for WMBD 2008 (1 Oct. – 21 Dec. '07)
Ms. Arpine Jenderedjian	Armenian	To assist with revising the Guidelines on mitigating the impact of aquatic weeds on waterbird habitats (17 Oct. '07 – 31 Jan. '08)
Ms. Samar Gholmié	German	To assist with the preparations for WMBD 2008 ( 7 Jan. – April '08)
Mr. Johannes Schramm	German	To assist with the development of the TC Forum and WMBD 2008 website ( 15 Jan. – 15 April '08)
Mr. Mackenzie Masaki	Kenyan	To assist with drafting a leaflet on the Great Rift Valley (11 Jan. – 1 March '08)
Ms. Nickoletta Kolumburda	German	To assist with the preparations for WMBD 2008 ( 7 Jan. – April '08)
Ms. Lea Koeder	German	To assist with the preparations for WMBD 2008 and organisation of side event/ exhibition during CBD COP. (4 April – 15 June 2008)
Ms. Svetlana Otto	Russian	To assist with synthesising and analysing the National Reports for MOP4 (1 July – 1 Sept. '08)
Ms. Mareike Gröwe	German	To assist with secretarial work (5 Aug. – 31 Oct. '08)

### **Recruitment of Parties**

During the discussion regarding the Communication Strategy it became clear that the view of several Contracting Parties and organisations is that the Secretariat should pay less attention to the recruitment of Parties and more to the implementation of the Agreement. The Secretariat has taken note of this and has therefore put a stronger focus on the implementation of the Agreement. In the day-to-day situation it had been noted that many Range States lack information to start the process of becoming a Party to the Agreement. The Secretariat has provided these countries with adequate and timely responses and encouragement. In 2006 six countries have joined, followed by one in 2007 and three in 2008. Taking these figures into account there might be scope for re-focussing our efforts on Party recruitment. However, the Secretariat has been informed by a number of countries that they have started the process of joining the Agreement and it is hoped that in the months to come some of them will finalise their internal procedures and will be able to join. Besides the Secretariat, the organisation 'Oiseaux migrateurs du paléarctique' (OMPO) as well as Wetlands International and the wider WOW project team have played a role in winning new Range States to join AEWA, for which we are very grateful.

### **Cooperation with other Organisations**

In early 2008 a Memorandum of Cooperation was concluded between OMPO and the AEWA Secretariat. This MoC formalises a strong existing cooperation with a long-standing tradition. In addition to the active

<sup>2</sup> Besides these main tasks all temporary staff supported the Secretariat in its work.

role OMPO has been playing as an observer to the AEWA Technical Committee for the last 6 years, it has also continuously supported the recruitment of Parties to AEWA and enhanced the implementation of AEWA through its scientific and monitoring programmes on migratory birds in the Baltic States, Ukraine, Belarus, the Russian Federation as well as Western Africa.

A second MoC between the CAFF (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna) and the AEWA Secretariat is under preparation. Particularly the work of the so-called CBird working group (Circumpolar Seabird Group) is of interest for AEWA. It is foreseen that this MoC could be concluded by the end of 2008/ early 2009.

## **2. Information Management**

Since the arrival of the Information Officer (JPO) in late 2005 and of the Information Assistant one year later, substantial progress has been made regarding the overall information management of the Secretariat.

However, Information Management is not only restricted to these two officers, but has in fact grown to involve all Secretariat staff. Each staff member has a specific role in this respect and - through this collective effort - Information Management within the Secretariat has evolved into a team effort.

Before reporting on the main activities it might be good to explain the somewhat complicated task and time division of the Information Officer post. The latter is available for 30 percent of his time only for the coordination of the information management within the AEWA Secretariat. In addition to his work for AEWA, 50 percent of his time is earmarked for his role as Communication Officer for the Wings Over Wetlands project and the remaining 20 percent to support the CMS Family in communication and information management work.

Hence, the time that the Information Officer can actually spend on purely AEWA Secretariat issues is very limited and in reality not sufficient to deal with the wide spectrum of information management properly. To compensate for this it was decided to divide some of the tasks among other team members.

### **Newsletter/ E-news**

The Electronic Newsletter, recommended in the Communication Strategy, has been sent out at regular two-monthly intervals. The aim of the AEWA E-Newsletter is to provide readers with a regular and short digest of selective news coming from the AEWA Secretariat. Currently the E-Newsletter is sent out to over 2,000 people and new subscribers are joining via an online registration system on a weekly basis. The E-Newsletter has evolved into one of the main communication tools available to the Secretariat and its production always involves the entire Secretariat team.

Unfortunately, due to lack of capacity, the Secretariat was not able to publish the regular AEWA Newsletter as often as planned. The 11<sup>th</sup> AEWA Newsletter was, however published in January 2008 and the Secretariat now has both the capacity and tools in place for a regular production of this print resource.

### **Websites**

**AEWA website( [www.unep-awa.org](http://www.unep-awa.org))**

Since MOP3 good progress has been made in regularly updating the AEWA website. Currently, particularly the news section is being updated on a weekly basis and the usage statistics show that the AEWA news page is one of the most visited resources on the AEWA website. In addition, some changes have been made to make some hidden resources, like the AEWA Conservation Guidelines, more accessible to visitors. Furthermore, a new interactive and password-protected area for members of the Technical Committee is

under preparation. This new “TC communication platform” currently under development is meant to facilitate and enhance the exchange of information between TC members.

### **World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) website ([www.worldmigratorybirdday.org](http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org))**

The centre of the annual WMBD campaign is the WMBD website. Since 2006, the AEWA Secretariat has taken the lead in developing this online resource. Each year a small team of interns, working under the supervision of the AEWA Information Officer, help to develop and customize the WMBD website to fit the annually selected theme.

### **AIWEb - website ([www.aiweb.info](http://www.aiweb.info))**

In 2006 a designated website for the International Task Force on Avian Influenza was designed and developed by the AEWA Information Officer in close collaboration with the Internet Division at UNEP/DCPI. Currently the website is maintained by CMS, while some limited support is provided by the Information Officer to help maintain it.

### **Wings Over Wetlands website ([www.wingsoverwetlands.org](http://www.wingsoverwetlands.org))**

In his capacity as Communication Officer for the Wings over Wetlands Project, the AEWA Information Officer has also been assigned with the development of a standalone website for the WOW project, which should reflect that WOW is not the responsibility of one of the Partners alone but a real Partnership project. The design proposal made by the AEWA Information Officer was accepted and earlier this year the WOW website was launched. .

### **AFRING website ([www.afring.org](http://www.afring.org))**

The AEWA Information Officer has been given the task of setting up a designated website for AFRING. The website will be developed and hosted by AEWA and regularly maintained by Mr Doug Harebottle at the (ADU). The AFRING project is being sponsored by the EC.

### **Posters**

In 2006, 2007 and 2008 customized World Migratory Bird Day posters were designed and printed by the Secretariat. A poster on the Sociable Lapwing and one on the Madagascar Pond Heron are ready to be launched and distributed at MOP4.

### **Pros and cons brochure**

A brochure to explain the pros and cons of joining AEWA has been drafted. Currently the text is being internally laid out and will be printed in the foreseeable future.

### **World Migratory Bird Day 2006, 2007 and 2008**

After the launch of World Migratory Bird Day in 2006 the event has quickly gained international momentum and acceptance. In 2007, a total of 107 events took place in 58 countries. The drawing competition held in 2007 was also a great success. In total 157 drawings were received from which twelve finalists were chosen, and subsequently three winners, who each received an award. WMBD 2008 was celebrated on 10-11 May and the theme is: ‘*Migratory Birds - Ambassadors for Biodiversity*’. WMBD is a common CMS-AEWA activity; however AEWA has the lead in the development of the WMBD website and the overall coordination of its outreach activities. In 2008 a total of 59 countries participated with over 130 different events.

### **Book on the Black-tailed Godwit**

To commemorate the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of AEWA in 2010 a special book on the Black-tailed Godwit will be launched. In 2006 we agreed on a collaboration with Mr. Yves Fagniard, a watercolour painter from Belgium, who will provide his paintings free of charge while AEWA will provide the text. The target group for this book, which aims to raise awareness about AEWA but also on the threats the Black-tailed Godwit is facing, will be the general public.

## Technical Series

Nr: Title:

- 14 International Single Species Action Plan for the Maccoa Duck (*Oxyura maccoa*)
- 13 Report on the Conservation Status of Migratory Waterbirds in the Agreement Area
- 12 Guideline on the avoidance of introduction of non-native Waterbird species
- 11 International Single Species Action Plan for the Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*)
- 10 International Single Species Action Plan for the Northern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*)
- 9 International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Corncrake (*Crex crex*)
- 8 International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*)
- 7 International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*)

The International Single Species Action Plans mentioned under Technical Series No. 7, 8 and 9 are common CMS/AEWA Action Plans.

## Other publications

- Brochure 'How you could support the implementation of AEWA' (In English and French)
- Proceedings MOP3 (in hardcopy and CD-Rom format) (In English and French)
- Special Newsletter on the outcomes of MOP3 (In English and French)
- Leaflet 'Avian Influenza and Wild Birds' (In English/ French/ Spanish/ Arabic and Russian)
- Special Newsletter on Non-toxic Shot (In Russian)

## Development of online National Reporting System and Knowledge Management Portal

With the financial support of Norway, UNEP contracted UNEP-WCMC to work on strengthening the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions through the strategic use of information/knowledge management among UNEP administered MEAs. One of the expected outcomes will be a portal which will provide easy access to strategic documents of all participating MEAs and focal point information for e.g. CBD, CMS, Ramsar and/ or AEWA in a specific country. Also we expect that the portal will make it possible to inquire which resolution/ decision under which MEA has been taken in relation to a specific issue (e.g. invasive species). In addition to the portal, it was also agreed that online reporting systems would be developed for some of the MEAs. The AEWA Secretariat has been involved in this project from the very beginning and was able to convince UNEP that the project proposal would also include the development of an online system for National Reports for CMS and AEWA. The AEWA Secretariat has been working very closely with UNEP-WCMC, which is responsible for implementing the project for UNEP. The development of this system is well underway and the final draft will be presented to MOP4 and, if adopted, could be used for future reporting.

## 3. Implementation and Compliance

Contracting Parties are responsible and involved in the implementation of and compliance with the provision laid down in the Agreement. Their National Reports will provide the necessary information to enable an assessment on progress made in this respect. However, the Agreement Secretariat is partly responsible and also involved in the implementation and/ or compliance of the Agreement. Hereafter you will find information on the role of the Secretariat in this respect.

### **International Implementation Priorities 2006 – 2008**

In document MOP 4.17 you will find detailed information on the current status of the implementation of the IIP 2006 – 2008. As already mentioned above, a total amount of €5.2 million would be needed for the full implementation of AEWA's IIP 2006-2008. So far approximately only 10 percent has been secured. Nevertheless taking into account the limited means available, good progress has been made in the implementation of the IIPs. From the 36 listed IIP projects the Secretariat contracted out 8 projects which have been implemented or are currently being implemented. Fifteen additional projects are directly linked to the WOW project and some of these projects are currently being implemented by WOW. This means that if we manage to secure the last missing €1 million for the WOW project all these 15 IIP projects planned to be implemented by WOW could be actually realized. These 15 IIP projects together with the 8 IIP projects already contracted out by the Secretariat would make a total of 23 implemented projects, which corresponds to 64 percent of the IIP. To date funds could not be secured for the remaining 13 projects.

### **African-Eurasian Flyway GEF project/ WOW project**

In early 2006 the United Nations Office for Project Support (UNOPS), being the executing agency, started the recruitment process for the staff for the Project Coordination Unit (PCU). The latter is based at the office of Wetlands International in Wageningen, the Netherlands. In July 2006 two staff members for this PCU entered on duty and started to work on the implementation of this full-size GEF project. The official name of the project changed from UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian GEF Flyways Project to *Wings Over Wetlands* (WOW). Since establishment of the PCU very good progress has been made in the implementation of the WOW project. However as indicated earlier we are facing financial problems in the sense that not all funds are in place to fully implement this project. Moreover due to the loss of the purchase power of the US Dollar the duration of the project was reduced from 5 years to 4 years.

The AEWA Secretariat is strongly involved in this project, as our Information Officer is spending 50 percent of his time as Communication Officer for this project and the Executive Secretary is also a member of the Steering Committee. So far the Steering Committee has met twice. It is a challenge to secure the funds needed to cover the current gap and by doing that to ensure that the whole project will be implemented. As mentioned above, excellent progress has been made in the implementation of the project and the first results will be presented at MOP4. Particularly of interest for all Governments is the Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool, which will make it possible to directly access the major wetlands and waterbird databases and will provide information about which site is used by which species or which species occurs at a specific site. This information will be of extreme importance to policy and decision makers. .

### **Lesser White-fronted Goose**

In early 2007 the Secretariat decided to visit Finland, Sweden, Norway and Germany in order to discuss the problems with the finalisation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose Single Species Action Plan arising from disagreement over the re-introduction of the species in Fennoscandia. It was clear that without reaching a consensus on this issue no progress could be made in finalising the International Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose. Meanwhile preliminary consensus has been reached, which needs to be closely monitored and strengthened. For 2008 Norway decided to allocate funds for contracting a staff member who would work at the AEWA Secretariat and coordinate the implementation of this Action Plan. As of February 2008, Ms. Kirsten Martin (German) entered on duty as Coordinator. Meanwhile the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Committee on Captive breeding and supplementation of Lesser White-fronted Geese in

Fennoscandia took place on 7-8 May 2008 in Bonn, Germany. It is hoped that during MOP4 consensus will be reached and the Action Plan will be adopted by the Meeting.

### **Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds**

AEWA is one of the founding members of the Task Force on Avian Influenza (AI) and Wild Birds. This Task Force was established after the outbreak of AI in west Siberia in July 2005. The Task Force is led by CMS and the AEWA Secretariat is closely involved in it. Our Information Officer has helped to produce both the Nairobi Seminar CD-ROM & AIWeb – the designated website for the international Task Force. This website is currently being maintained by CMS.

A seminar was organized by CMS, AEWA and UNEP on Avian Influenza, Wild Birds and the Environment, which was linked to the launch of the first World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) and took place at the Headquarters of UNEP in Nairobi, Kenya on 10-11 April 2006. The AEWA team took a leading role in the logistical and financial arrangements for this seminar. CMS took the lead in substantial preparations for this Seminar with support of AEWA.

Furthermore, the Technical Officer and the Executive Secretary are involved in providing substantial input to the discussions taking place within the Task Force and regarding the drafting of information material by the Coordinator of the Task Force.

The AEWA Secretariat participated in the Avian Influenza and Wildlife Workshop ‘Practical Lessons Learned’, which took place from 26-27 June 2007 in Aviemore, Scotland. After this workshop the AEWA Information Officer produced a resource-D containing the report of the meeting and all workshop presentations.

### **Advisory missions**

It is a fact that migratory waterbirds face serious threats at many of the habitats they frequent. Most of these threats are caused by human activities. Since MOP3 we have been confronted with developments regarding wind farms, soda ash extraction and bio-fuels. In 2007 the Secretariat was approached by the Secretariat of the Bern Convention as well as by the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention with the request to participate in advisory missions to Bulgaria and Tanzania respectively. It is for the first time ever that the AEWA Secretariat has participated in this type of mission and this is an indication of our standing amongst other MEAs and, that our specific role in conflicts such as these, which are of common interest, is appreciated.

#### **Lake Natron in Tanzania**

The Secretariat, in close cooperation with CMS, played an active role in the discussion of the plans of the Government of Tanzania, under a joint venture with TATA, to develop a soda ash extraction facility near Lake Natron. The Secretariat participated in the Ramsar Advisory Mission, also on behalf of CMS, to discuss the possible negative effect that these developments might have on the breeding colony of the Lesser Flamingo with stakeholders involved. Lake Natron is the only breeding site for the Lesser Flamingo in East Africa.

#### **Windfarm developments in Bulgaria**

Plans for several wind farms to be erected along the Black Sea coast within the so-called Via Pontica migration route are currently under development. These coincide with one of the major migratory routes for many species of migratory birds. In 2005 the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention decided to open a file regarding these developments. At its meeting in 2006 the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention discussed this issue again and decided to send an appraisal mission to assess the possible impact these future wind farms might have on migratory birds. The Bern Convention Secretariat invited the AEWA Secretariat to participate in this mission. It was agreed that AEWA would also represent CMS during this visit. Based on

the discussions we had with all stakeholders the independent expert Prof. Eckhart Kuijken from Belgium drafted a report which was tabled at the last Bern Convention Standing Committee meeting in 2007.

## **Tana Delta in Kenya**

A new problem is emerging in the Tana River Delta in Kenya. The plan is to use 20,000 hectares of wetlands located along this delta for the sugar cane plantation. The sugar cane will be used for the production of bio-fuels. The Secretariat is following these developments and is endeavouring to collect more information about the exact plans.

## **International reviews**

In accordance with paragraph 7.4 of the AEWA Action Plan the Agreement Secretariat, in coordination with the Technical Committee and the Parties, shall prepare a series of international reviews necessary for the implementation of this Action Plan including:

- a) reports on the status and trends of populations;
- b) gaps in information from surveys;
- c) the networks of sites used by each population, including reviews of the protection status of each site as well as the management measures taken in each case;
- d) pertinent hunting and trade legislation in each country relating to the species listed in Annex 2 to this Agreement;
- e) the stage of preparation and implementation of single species action plans;
- f) re-establishment projects; and
- g) the status of introduced non-native waterbird species and hybrids thereof.

Apart from these reviews the Meeting of the Parties requested to review the experiences of those countries that have phased out, or are endeavouring to phase, the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands and to review the use of non-toxic shot for waterbird hunting at its second and third sessions through adoption of Resolutions 2.2 and 3.11.

The Secretariat accomplished the reviews linked to Resolutions 2.2 and 3.11 and also the ones mentioned under d) on pertinent hunting and trade legislation. The Programme Officer, with support of an intern, invested a lot of time on collecting the required information from Parties and organisations, primarily by means of questionnaires. The review on hunting and trade legislation as well as the review on the use of non-toxic shot for waterbird hunting have been submitted to the TC for comments and were discussed at the TC8 and StC5 meetings. The review on experiences made in countries that have phased out or are endeavouring to phase out the use of lead shot is in its final stage of preparation and will be circulated for consultation intersessionally.

Although the Action Plan states in paragraph 7.5 that the Agreement Secretariat shall endeavour to ensure that the reviews mentioned in paragraph 7.4 are updated at intervals of not more than three years, we noted that this might not be supported by the Contracting Parties. It is clear that the preparation of such reviews can only take place with the input of the Parties. However, the compilation of all these reviews within the same period of time leads to numerous questionnaires which all have to be filled out by Contracting Parties, and often one and the same focal point within a Ministry. In order to avoid such a concentration of additional workload imposed on the Contracting Parties, the Secretariat proposes amending the Action Plan to avoid the Parties having to provide updated information on all mentioned reviews every three years; this constitutes a frequency for which there is no real need.

From the list above a, e, f and g have been contracted out. In the same way as the Secretariat, these contractors also encountered problems in receiving information from the Contracting Parties.

The reviews mentioned under b and c are part of the WOW project and will be available in 2010. All other reviews are ready and will be submitted to MOP4.

Through these reviews a wealth of information has become available, which could be used to further improve the implementation of the Agreement. Nearly all these reviews have led to draft Resolutions which are submitted to MOP4 for adoption.

### **Workshop to promote sustainable hunting**

The AEWA Secretariat participated in the first and second workshop, which was organised in the framework of the BirdLife's LIFE project on Sustainable Hunting of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean Third Countries and which was co-funded by the AEWA Secretariat. These workshops, which took place in Tunisia (2006) and Jordan (2007), provided a good opportunity to raise awareness on AEWA and in particular on phasing out the use of leadshot for waterbird hunting in wetlands.

## **4. Project Development**

Since the Programme Officer has entered on duty, the AEWA Secretariat has more capacity to work on concrete project proposals which would support the implementation of the Agreement. Particularly foundations and agencies focusing on bilateral and multilateral development cooperation (e.g. national development cooperation agencies in Europe) will be contacted by AEWA with proposals for medium to large-scale projects. Currently, the Secretariat is collecting information about respective funding requirements and considers aspects such as the necessary terminology for project conceptualisation. We at the AEWA Secretariat are still in a learning phase with regard to closely connecting our projects to the objectives of sustainable development and/ or poverty alleviation.

In 2007 initial contacts were made with Developing Cooperation Agencies within Europe. So far only one very positive response was received from the Spanish Developing Cooperation Agency "Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID)". This response has led to the development of the following project, under the name of WetCap.

### **WetCap**

After receiving a promising response from AECID steps have been taken to meet and discuss the possibilities of future cooperation. This discussion has led to the development of a project proposal called 'WetCap', which focuses on the North African countries (Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia). The project proposal has a primary focus on capacity building and awareness-raising activities in implementation of the relevant MEAs, not least AEWA and is closely linked to the WOW project. It is expected that during MOP4 a representative of the Spanish Government and the Executive Secretary of AEWA will sign a contract that will release the funds for the first year of this project amounting to € 400,000. A similar amount might become available in year 2 and 3. The total costs of the project are estimated to be approximately EUR 1.6 million.

### **Great Rift Valley**

In 2007 a scientific workshop took place in Nairobi to discuss the possible nomination of the entire Great Rift Valley (GRV) as a World Heritage Site. The full extent of the Great Rift Valley is just over 7,000 kilometers; it is lauded as the cradle of mankind and has the distinction of representing an extremely rich reserve of natural and cultural sites. Being the longest rift on earth it is a phenomenon of great importance not only to its inhabitants but also to humanity as a whole. It crosses over 20 different countries namely: South Africa, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Yemen, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, Palestine and Jordan through to Syria. In each of these countries the Great Rift Valley is of great significance to economy and an integral part of its culture. The

GRV is also one of the major routes for migratory birds. The latter is the reason why we decided to participate in this workshop. It was decided to establish a Steering Committee in which the AEWA Secretariat will also participate as advisor. We, for our part, promised to draft a brochure on the GRV and a draft Resolution to be tabled at the biodiversity-related Conventions starting with the AEWA MOP4. The text for the brochure has been drafted and was sent out for comments to some participants of the Nairobi meeting. The AEWA Secretariat has made contact with individual Contracting Parties and UNEP/ GEF and is confident that some funds could be provided for the long-term conservation of the GRV.