



6th SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

9-14 November 2015, Bonn, Germany

“Making flyway conservation happen”

DRAFT COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Compiled by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat

Introduction

AEWA Resolution 5.5 on the “Implementation and Revision of the Communication Strategy” adopted by the 5th Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP5) instructs the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat to carry out a full revision of the AEWA Communication Strategy for adoption at the 6th Meeting of the Parties (MOP6) scheduled to take place 9-14 November 2015 in Bonn, Germany. [[AEWA MOP Resolution 5.5 refers](#)]

The revision process triggered by AEWA Resolution 5.5 has been an opportunity to update the Agreement’s existing Communication Strategy adopted by the 3rd Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP3) in 2005 and to develop a new Communication Strategy to support the implementation of AEWA.

The new draft AEWA Communication Strategy being presented to AEWA Parties for possible adoption at MOP6, will help to define and guide the Agreement’s future approach to strategic communication based on key messages for portraying its work and niche and how these fit into the bigger picture of global biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. It also establishes objectives, approaches, tools and principles which are aligned to those of its parent convention, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

Pilot in Joint Communication Services

As of 27 January 2014, a Common Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Team (IMCA) consisting of staff from both the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWASecretariats has been established as a pilot to demonstrate how communication, information management and outreach services could be effectively shared between the two Secretariats.

The pilot was established by the Executive Secretary of CMS with the agreement of the Acting Executive Secretary of AEWA and the Chairs of both the CMS and AEWA Standing Committees. With the agreement of the Acting Executive Secretary of AEWA, AEWA’s Information Officer was appointed Coordinator of the new IMCA Team.

The establishment of the pilot is a culmination of a process which was initiated through the Future Shape process at the 10th Conference of the Parties to CMS and follows requests made by the 9th meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee, the 41st meeting of the CMS Standing Committee and the 11th Conference of the Parties to CMS. [[CMS COP Resolution 10.9](#), [41st CMS Standing Committee Report](#), [CMS COP Resolution 11.8](#)]

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has prepared a report on the pilot for consideration by the 10th Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee [[AEWA StC10.7](#)] and an updated version of this document entitled “Report on the CMS/AEWA Common Information Management, Communication and Awareness-Raising Team” is being presented for consideration by the MOP6 [[AEWA MOP6.10](#)].

Strategically Aligned Communication Strategies for CMS and AEWA

In June 2014, the Executive Secretary of CMS and the newly appointed Executive Secretary of AEWA recommended to use the opportunity represented by both the pilot and the revision process to embark on a process of developing **strategically aligned communication strategies for both CMS and AEWA** which also could be an advantage in branding the CMS Family. It was decided that the process of developing the communication strategies would be carried out by an independent external consultant and build on all mandates given to the Secretariats by their Parties for communication, information management and outreach activities. It was agreed that the costs associated with the development of the strategies would be shared between the two Secretariats according to an agreed formula based on their total budgets.

Independent Consultant

Terms of Reference for a “Consultant for Communication Strategy Development and Related Tasks” were prepared by the Coordinator of the Joint Communications Team and advertised on the CMS and AEWA websites with a deadline of 15 August 2014. Applications were then carefully reviewed by a panel consisting of staff from both Secretariats and the most suitable candidate was identified and selected.

The independent consultant was supervised by the Executive Secretaries of CMS and AEWA and the Coordinator of the Joint Communications Team on a day-to-day basis and began developing the communication strategies for CMS and AEWA following the requirements stipulated in the advertised Terms of Reference.

Development Process

The consultant developed the strategies using a participatory approach, in accordance with relevant mandates and in close collaboration with the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats. As part of the development process the consultant conducted several interviews with key stakeholders and partners. The development process for the AEWA Communication Strategy included a number of key steps, which included the review of draft strategies by AEWA’s formal bodies.

Review & Input by the AEWA Technical Committee

An initial summary of the approach being taken by the consultant in developing the strategically aligned communication strategies for CMS and AEWA as well as a summary of initial results of the desktop review were presented to the 12th Meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee (TC12), which took place 3-6 March 2015 in Bonn, Germany. In addition, a draft resolution on the adoption of the new communication strategy for consideration by Parties at AEWA MOP6 was prepared by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in close cooperation with the consultant and the Chair of the Technical Committee. During TC12 meeting, the consultant gave a presentation on the subject of the communication strategy and supported the AEWA Information Officer in facilitating an inter-active brainstorming session and an active discussion at TC12 on the topic of the future AEWA Communication Strategy.

First Draft Presented to the AEWA Standing Committee

The consultant continued her work on the development of the AEWA communication strategy following TC12. In the process, she was guided by both the AEWA Executive Secretary and Coordinator of the Joint Communications Team, who had several face-to-face meetings with her throughout the process.

As a result, a first draft AEWA Communication Strategy was presented to the 10th Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee (8-10 July 2015 in Kampala, Uganda), which reviewed the existing draft at the meeting and recommended that a revised draft would be prepared by the Consultant and circulated by the Secretariat for review by the Standing Committee by the middle of August 2015.

Revised Draft Requested by the Standing Committee (August 2015)

A revised version of the strategy was subsequently prepared by the Consultant and circulated to the AEWA Standing Committee by the Secretariat on 18 August 2015. In addition, the Secretariat also shared this version on the AEWA Technical Committee Workspace. As a result, several comments were received from Members of the AEWA Standing Committee via email and the Secretariat worked with the Consultant to address the latest comments in the version for submission to AEWA MOP6.

Communication Strategy Presentation and Discussion at the AEWA Pre-MOP

The key elements of the new AEWA Communication Strategy were presented by the Executive Secretary of AEWA and subsequently discussed by participants during the AEWA Pre-MOP which took place 25 – 27 August 2015 in Cape Town, South Africa. A summary of this discussion was made available to the consultant for consideration and incorporation in the new AEWA Communication Strategy.

Final Version for Consideration by MOP6

On 3 September 2015, the Secretariat received a final version of the AEWA Communication Strategy as delivered to the Secretariat by the Consultant. This draft was carefully reviewed and further improved by the Coordinator of the Joint Communications Team and AEWA's Executive Secretary and subsequently finalized for presentation to MOP6.

Annexed to this document is the proposed new communication strategy for AEWA being presented to AEWA Parties at MOP6 in November 2015, while the global CMS communication strategy is being presented to the 44th Meeting of the CMS Standing Committee in October 2015.

Actions Requested from the Meeting of the Parties

Annex I includes the draft of the new AEWA Communication Strategy. A **draft resolution** on the adoption of the new Communication Strategy which has been reviewed by both the AEWA Technical Committee and the AEWA Standing Committee is also being presented for possible adoption by AEWA Parties to MOP6 [Document UNEP/AEWA/MOP6/DR10].

The Meeting of the Parties is requested to:

1. Review and adopt the new AEWA Communication Strategy contained in Annex I;
2. Review and adopt the draft resolution [Document UNEP/AEWA/MOP6/DR10].

AEWA COMMUNICATION STRATEGY



Communication Strategy for
the African-Eurasian Migratory
Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)



Communication Strategy for the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)

The following Communication Strategy outlines AEWA's future approach to strategic communication based on key messages for portraying its work and niche and how these fit into the bigger picture of global biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. It also establishes objectives, approaches and principles which are aligned to those of its parent convention, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

The Communication Strategy is intended as a guiding document for all of AEWA's main communication actors or 'stakeholders', which include the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the CMS Family, member countries or Parties, their national representatives, as well as partners including observers or representatives of various sectors with an interest in waterbird conservation and management.

The overall aim of the strategy is to guide the communication work of all the relevant players with the goal of supporting the implementation of the Agreement as well as further improving the recognition of AEWA as the international authority on migratory waterbird conservation across the African-Eurasian Flyway.

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Foreword

The annual migration of waterbirds, such as cranes, storks and geese, is a source of inspiration for people all around the world. The sight and sound of the birds suddenly appearing evokes emotions, their trans-boundary, often inter-continental journeys fascinate and amaze us.

Migratory waterbirds – in their innumerable forms – are an important part of global biodiversity. They have tremendous environmental and ecological value and they provide economic, social, cultural and recreational benefits to millions of people living along their migration routes, known as ‘Flyways’.

Migratory waterbirds are considered a valuable resource for many people, providing us with various cultural (birdwatching, hunting, etc.) and provisioning (meat, feathers, eggs, etc.) services. As an important part of biodiversity, migratory waterbirds play essential roles in the wetlands and aquatic ecosystems through which they pass - as predators, pest control, seed dispersers, fertilizers, and nutrient recyclers. They provide supporting, habitat and regulating services, and act as biological indicators of the health of the environments upon which we depend.

It is precisely the recognition of this ever-growing, universal value of migratory waterbirds and the desire of countries to work together to conserve them, - collectively and for the future generations of humankind - , that has led to the creation of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA).

1. What is AEWA?

Conserving migratory waterbirds and their habitats across the African-Eurasian Flyway.

The Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) was created in 1995 to protect hundreds of different species of migratory waterbirds, by finding ways to address the threats they face. Migration exposes waterbirds to a number of threats across their migratory range, or ‘Flyway’, making them particularly vulnerable to endangerment or extinction. They are also heavily dependent on an intact network of critical sites, consisting of a wide range of different habitats they need to survive.

As a specialized inter-governmental treaty, AEWA is an instrument that countries have put in place to try to effectively conserve and manage migratory waterbirds as well as their habitats across the African-Eurasian Flyway - the geographic area of the African-Eurasian waterbird migration system.

In twenty years since its creation, AEWA has grown to become the leading international authority on migratory waterbird conservation across the African-Eurasian Flyway and is considered one of the most effective flyway-scale conservation tools in the world. The agreement area spans over three-fifths of the world’s countries, (known as ‘Range States’), the countries which share the range of the migratory waterbirds protected under AEWA, a large majority of which have become ‘Parties’ to the Agreement.¹ It is also the largest regional Agreement concluded under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and is one of the Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

2. Communications Supporting AEWA's Objectives

Communication efforts support a number of AEWA objectives - such as to support implementation of the treaty, to increase public awareness of migratory waterbird conservation issues, and to reinforce AEWA's reputation amongst decision-makers as the leading, neutral and credible UN authority for migratory waterbird conservation in the African-Eurasian region. AEWA's strategic communication efforts will thus focus on working closely with key players on priority topics in order to:

- **Highlight the Achievements and Effectiveness of AEWA** - as the leading international authority on migratory waterbird conservation across the African-Eurasian Flyway - by consistently communicating AEWA's vision, mission and niche and by showcasing successful conservation efforts underway to implement the Agreement;
- **Convey Reasons Why Waterbirds Matter** - including the different values attached to migratory waterbirds, their significance for biological diversity, role in ecosystem services, and relevance for sustainable development - to generate interest in and attention to migratory waterbird conservation, and to increase the level of priority given to waterbird conservation on the political agenda (both nationally and internationally);
- **Demonstrate 'How Flyway Conservation Works' and the Effectiveness of AEWA, as an Instrument for Conserving Migratory Waterbirds along the African-Eurasian Flyway** - by raising awareness on the successful examples of international, flyway-scale cooperation and conservation actions which are taking place in the framework of AEWA. From the collective decisions made by countries and their actions to implement them, to the adoption of international guidelines, the capacity building underway in the framework of the AEWA African Initiative, to the creation and successful implementation of action and management plans for a number of AEWA species;
- **Draw Attention to Threats to Waterbirds** - such as illegal killing, unsustainable harvest or hunting, poisoning, habitat loss due to pollution or barriers, and climate change - by outlining steps that can be taken to address the threats and ensure that any use is sustainable, thus helping to reverse behaviours and trends leading to migratory waterbirds becoming endangered.

It is expected that with time, strategic communication efforts - emphasizing achievements made, the importance of conserving migratory waterbirds and their habitats, and ways to address threats faced - will also help AEWA to achieve its overarching objectives to:

- **Win new Parties and reinforce the commitments made by existing Parties and donors;**
- **Engage partners and mobilize resources for migratory waterbird conservation;**
- **Avoid the extinction and further decline of migratory waterbird species and their habitats in the African-Eurasian Flyway.**

3. **AEWA's Vision and Mission - Relevance to Sustainable Development and Biodiversity**

The flyway-scale conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats has an impact on a number of international policy areas, especially those relevant to sustainable development and biodiversity. For development to be sustainable, it must consider the needs of people, as well as the environments in which they live - of which wild animals, including migratory waterbirds, are an integral part. Together with the CMS Family and the other biodiversity-related MEAs, AEWA contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by helping to balance the conservation and sustainable use of migratory waterbirds - as well as the protection of their flyway habitats, by recognizing the different values attached to waterbirds and the livelihoods they support.

AEWA helps to curb the loss of biodiversity by encouraging waterbird conservation and wide recognition of the ecosystem services migratory waterbirds provide. In recognition of this, AEWA Parties have committed themselves to achieving a number of targets on biodiversity conservation - together with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and many other partners - as part of their Strategic Plans, an increasing number of which are based on the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.²

The communication work of AEWA and of the CMS Family is essential to achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Target on public awareness of the values of biodiversity (Target 1) - of which migratory, wild animals and especially migratory birds play a key communication role as they are one of the most generally recognizable forms of the Earth's biological diversity. To achieve this first biodiversity target and the primary goal of the Strategic Plans to raise public awareness, which also refers to positive support and engagement at political levels, AEWA's shared communication vision is:

Living in harmony with nature – where migratory waterbirds and their habitats (along with all biodiversity) are valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, thereby contributing to global sustainability.

AEWA and the CMS Family play a crucial role in preventing the extinction of known threatened migratory animals (in AEWA's case migratory waterbirds) and improving the conservation status of those most in decline (Aichi Biodiversity Target 12), as well as conserving the habitats through which wild animals migrate (Target 11). For communication purposes, AEWA's shared mission is to:

Avoid the extinction and further endangerment of migratory waterbirds, and ensure the ecological integrity, connectivity and resilience of their migration systems along the African-Eurasian Flyway.

4. **Defining AEWA's Niche**

By defining and emphasizing AEWA's niche and building its reputation - **as the leading international authority on waterbird conservation across the African-Eurasian Flyway** attention is drawn to AEWA's achievements and potential for protecting migratory waterbirds and their habitats.

Legally Binding, Specialized Agreement under CMS: Whereas CMS has a global reach covering avian, terrestrial and aquatic species of migratory animals - AEWA is more focused and specialized in conserving all species of migratory waterbirds, from the most endangered to the most common species which are harvested. Specifically, AEWA is dedicated to the conservation of all categories of waterbirds that migrate across the African-Eurasian Flyway. Like the Convention, AEWA is a MEA in accordance with intergovernmental treaty law, and is legally binding.

UN Treaty for Migratory Waterbirds: AEWA is the only inter-governmental treaty organization or MEA established under the United Nations (UN) system (as part of the UNEP and CMS Family), dedicated exclusively to the international, flyway-scale conservation of migratory waterbirds as well as their natural habitats. The Agreement helps to elevate the policy relevance of migratory waterbirds and habitat conservation both nationally and internationally within and even beyond the Agreement Area. It is an innovative and effective tool for protecting migratory waterbirds, and it complements other global agreements and conventions, especially those working on issues related to biodiversity and habitat conservation - including the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention.

Connecting Continents and Countries – “Making Flyway Conservation Happen!”: A clear niche of AEWA is its ability to get countries and the wider international conservation community to work together effectively to conserve migratory waterbirds across the African-Eurasian Flyway. The cooperation is based on the recognition by AEWA Parties that the investment in one particular country is often not sufficient to ensure the future survival of these travellers and that international cooperation is essential to address the numerous threats migratory waterbirds face along their migration routes, which often span multiple countries and continents. The threats they face during their recurrent migrations are often the same global threats and pressures affecting a wide range of species as well as people. Effective international protection entails conserving the wetland and other habitats and ecosystems waterbirds depend on along their regular Flyways.

Balancing Waterbird Conservation and Consumption/Sustainable Use: Parties to AEWA recognize that migratory waterbirds are valuable - to people and to the Earth - for different reasons. For example, waterbirds are a source of food and income and provide us with many services including cultural, recreational or scientific enrichment. They are also a shared resource and indicators of the biological and genetic diversity of our Earth, providing ecological services in the wetland habitats and coastal ecosystems along their Flyways. By respecting these various values, the Agreement helps to find mutually beneficial solutions for maintaining healthy populations of endangered migratory waterbirds, while ensuring that any use is sustainable and does not jeopardize their long-term survival.

5. Key Players (Community of Actors)

As an inter-governmental treaty established to foster international cooperation amongst countries and other interest groups, AEWA brings together a community of actors that are all dedicated to the conservation and management of migratory waterbirds across the Agreement area. These actors include a number of key players – which are often involved as strategic partners in communication but can also be target audiences for communication activities.

Key Players:

The main communication actors are:

- **Countries** (Especially Parties)
- **The Secretariat**
- **AEWA's Bodies:** Technical Committee, Standing Committee and Meeting of the Parties
- **UNEP, CMS and other UN Agencies and related Conventions**
- **Non-Governmental Organizations** (NGOs) and other partners
- **Donors** (both government and private sector)

AEWA's Parties are represented by appointed National Focal Points (NFPs) in the related ministries in their countries, but important national communication actors are also the designated National CEPA Focal Points as well as other ministries and conservation organizations in the countries. The Secretariat, as a communication actor has a key facilitation role in bringing the different key players together and to provide the tools and international guidance which is needed to support the overall communication efforts. In addition, donors (government, private sector and others), UNEP and other UN Agencies, international and national NGOs and related Conventions play a key role.

It is important to note, that all of the above key actors might act as executors of communication activities and take the role of strategic partner, advocate, or even intermediary - while depending on the context, they can also be target groups for communication efforts.

Target Groups:

AEWA's most common target audience groups include the governments and in particular the **decision-makers of both Parties and non-member Range States**. In addition, the press and media are an important tool for reaching a wider audience, and the 'general public' in fulfilments of AEWA's mandates.

However, the **target audiences must be narrowed down and specified depending on the topic, context and specific communication campaign being planned** - for example, to include children and youth, people living in or around wetlands, waterbird consumers such as the hunting community, the tourism or energy sector, or developers – always depending on the context and goals of the communication efforts.

6. Strategic Communication Approach

AEWA will work closely with CMS and relevant key players to shift future communication work towards a more strategic approach to communication, through:

- **Branding as Part of the CMS Family (and UNEP), Guided by Mandate** - to improve their effectiveness, AEWA's communication efforts will be aligned with the overall branding for the Convention and CMS Family, as part of UNEP, to build and further strengthen a common identity around priority species, themes and topics. These priorities should be guided by the overall mandate established by the Convention and Agreement texts, and the decisions and resolutions adopted by Parties.
- **Developing a Culture of Communication** on various organizational levels - within AEWA and across the entire CMS Family - around shared objectives. This culture is supported by planning and coordination to improve communication processes, building momentum through

partnerships and advocacy, and evaluating the impact and effectiveness of communication efforts being conducted.

In accordance with the global CMS communication strategy, an emphasis is placed on:

- **Thematic Campaigning Approach** – to facilitate planning and communications campaigning according to the topics, issues and species prioritized together with the Convention Family and in line with the overall CMS Family branding efforts;
- **Strategic Partnerships** - by working in cooperation with key players to more strategically address shared objectives, while linking joint efforts to AEWA and the CMS Family. This might include identifying relevant influencers (advocates, ambassadors, spokespersons);
- **Timing and Special Events** - efforts timed to complement the AEWA and CMS Family processes at peak-times of global and media attention - especially around main conference (COPs), meetings (MOPs) and other events, taking into consideration the events of other key organizations to take advantage of heightened media attention and to facilitate partnership building.

7. Communication Principles

AEWA's communication work is guided by the same communication principles described in detail in the global CMS Communication Strategy, these include:³

- **Neutrality** (as an international treaty)
- **Scientific Base** - Status Reports
- **Migratory Animals / Flagship Species Focus**
- **Content is Key** (story-telling, targeted messages and information, imagery and visuals)
- **Packaging for Audiences** (cultural, geographic, social-economic, generational differences, etc.)
- **Languages** (English and French as much as possible, others where appropriate)
- **Evaluation and Monitoring**

8. Tools and Channels

AEWA's primary communication tools and channels are similar to those used by CMS and are described in detail in the global CMS Communication Strategy, they include:

- **Website as Centre**
- **Key Outputs** (Conservation Status Reports, Resolutions, and Guidance)
- **Press and Media**
- **Audio-Visual and Digital**
- **Social Media**
- **Special Events and Campaigns** (World Migratory Bird Day and other UN Observances and related campaigns)
- **Communication, Education & Public Awareness** (CEPA)
- **Fundraising Strategy** (to support national and international communication efforts)

9. Communication Planning

In accordance with the strategic communication approach, principles and tools outlined in this strategy and in the global CMS communication strategy, targeted communication plans, preferably around specific issues and topics, should be developed.

While AEWA's communication actors should be ready to communicate and react to emerging issues such as avian influenza, oil spills and other catastrophic events affecting migratory waterbirds in a quick and effective way (crisis communication), general emphasis should be placed on advanced planning and better targeting of communication efforts. This includes the involvement of key players and communication partners in both the development and execution of future communication plans.

Targeted communication plans should be prepared by all key communication actors and should be regularly updated and shared with the Secretariat. The Secretariat will, as capacity allows, also play an active role in facilitating and supporting the process of developing such plans for thematic, issue-based campaigns in future.

In principle, all future AEWA communication plans should:

- Be guided by this Communication Strategy;
- Cover a one to three-year period to complement the Agreement process;
- Narrow down a small number of priority issues or topics (especially that effect various species or are cross-cutting);
- Specify the expected outcomes and results as well as the required outputs, tools and actions;
- Specify estimated costs over the full life-cycle of the plan (including planning, evaluation and follow-up of communication efforts);
- Outline available resources, and resource requirements supplemented by a targeted fundraising strategy, where necessary;
- Be developed in partnership, specifying main partners, roles and responsibilities.

List of Acronyms

AEWA	African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement
CP	Contracting Party
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CMS	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Migratory Animals
COP	Conference of the Parties
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MOP	Meeting of the Parties
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NFP	National Focal Point
Parties	Member Countries of the Convention and Family
Ramsar	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMPS	Strategic Plan for Migratory Species
STC	Standing Committee
TC	Technical Committee
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

Annex

Extended version of the **Communication Principles** and **Tools and Channels** section from the Global CMS Communication Strategy. (To be added once available)

¹ As of August 2015, AEWA covers 119 Range States (out of 193 countries, or 62% of the world's countries), of which 75 have become member or contracting Parties (63%).

² Compare to the 'Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023' (SPMS) of the Convention on Migratory Species (UNEP/CMS), and the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009 - 2017. CBD members have recognized CMS as the lead partner in the conservation and sustainable use of species of wild animals, over their entire migratory range (CBD COP Decision X/20).

³ The full description of both the "Communication Principles" and "Tools and Channels" from the Global CMS Communication Strategy will be added as an annex to this document as soon as they have been finalized by the UNEP/CMS Secretariat.