



AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF
AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS

24th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
4 July 2024, Virtual Meeting

REPORT OF THE 24th MEETING OF THE AEWA STANDING COMMITTEE

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Summary of StC24 Decisions

AGENDA ITEM		DECISION
Agenda item 2	Admission of Observers	All observers present were admitted to the meeting.
Agenda item 3	Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme	The agenda was adopted as presented in document AEWA/StC 24.2 Rev.2.
Agenda item 4	Adoption of the Report of the 23 rd Meeting of the Standing Committee	The Report of the 23 rd Meeting of the Standing Committee was adopted as presented in document AEWA/StC 24.4.
Agenda item 7a	9 th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA	MOP9 will take place in Gaborone, Botswana in October 2025.
Agenda item 7b	National Reporting	The format as presented in document AEWA/StC 24.7 was approved for further use
Agenda item 7c	MOP9 Rules of Procedure	To ensure quorum at future MOPs as well as proper representation from all regions covered by the Agreement, the funding policy will be softened and the relevant paragraph in the next Resolution on Financial and Administrative Matters will be amended accordingly. Wording will be provided by StC members by the end of the autumn 2024.
Agenda item 8	Outputs of the Technical Committee Work Plan 2023-2025	The proposed changes of delineations as presented in document AEWA/StC24.9 Rev.1 were approved for further use. The Technical Committee's proposal on how to approach the assessment of some of the Strategic Plan indicators will be reviewed and approved by the Standing Committee intersessionally in writing.
Agenda item 9a	Report on the Joint CMS/AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness Raising (IMCA) Unit	Mr Trouvilliez and Ms Fraenkel will revise the institutional arrangement on the IMCA unit. The focus will be on deliverables and prioritising mechanisms. The revised institutional arrangement shall be approved by the AEWA Standing Committee.
Agenda item 9b	30 th Anniversary of AEWA	Mr Trouvilliez will coordinate with the IMCA unit which products can be initiated easily with no or little funding. Mr Trouvilliez will discuss with Mr Nkape, Botswana's National Focal Point, what can be realised in the margins of MOP9.
Agenda item 10a	Execution of the 2023 and 2024 budgets	The contributions of the three new Parties since MOP8 will be used against salary expenditures.
Agenda item 10b	Administrative and personnel matters	A temporary P-3 for AFMU will be recruited but another source of funding than the AEWA core budget should be found. The StC will provide a support letter for a 4-month extension of the current Executive Secretary.
Agenda item 11	Small Grants Fund	Mr Mackown and Mr Warmelink will draft a recommendation to be submitted to MOP9 to consider maintaining the Small Grants Fund

		with a radically altered functional and financial process.
Agenda item 12	Implementation Review Process (IRP)	An ad-hoc working will be convened to discuss the issues in connection with the IRP cases and its process in more detail and to decide what to present at the next Standing Committee meeting for its consideration.
Agenda item 13	Date and Venue of the 24 th Meeting of the Standing Committee	The Executive Secretary will liaise with the StC Chair on having an additional interim StC meeting in November 2024. At that meeting there will be a decision on when to convene the next meeting for reviewing and approving MOP9 documents.

Agenda item 1. Opening of the Meeting

1. The Standing Committee Chair, United Kingdom, and representative of Europe and Central Asia, Mr Simon Mackown, opened the 24th Meeting of the Standing Committee (StC) by warmly welcoming all participants. He was looking forward to a productive meeting.
2. Mr Jacques Trouvilliez, AEWA Executive Secretary, also welcomed all participants and noted that he would report orally on Secretariat issues and submit a written report after the meeting.

Agenda item 2. Admission of Observers

3. Mr Mackown welcomed the observers (see Annex I) without further discussion and in the absence of comments from the StC members present.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>All observers present were admitted to the meeting.</i>
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Agenda item 3. Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme

3. Referring to document AEWA/StC 24.2 Rev.2., *Provisional Agenda*, Mr Mackown noted that agenda item 12, Implementation Review Process (IRP), was usually a closed session. However, since some of the principles of the IRP were going to be discussed it would not have to be a closed session. He thought it would be good to hear some views from Parties.
4. Mr Mackown informed everyone that Ms Amy Fraenkel, CMS Executive Secretary, would be joining the meeting after the lunch break to discuss the issues around IMCA, which he thought were going to be quite challenging to resolve, but was also pleased to see the collaborative approach.
5. Mr Mackown furthermore pointed out that there had recently been concerns from Parties and Observers regarding the lateness of publication of meeting documents. For the next meeting documents should be uploaded timely, since some of the documents required sign off and StC members and other participants needed time to work through those.
6. With that the agenda was adopted.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The agenda and work programme were adopted as presented in document</i>
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Agenda item 4. Adoption of the Report of the 23rd Meeting of the Standing Committee

7. In the absence of comments, the report was adopted.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Report of the 23rd Meeting of the Standing Committee was adopted as presented in document AEWA/StC 24.4.</i>
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Agenda item 5. Reports by

a. Standing Committee Members and Party Observers

8. Before going into this agenda item Mr Mackown pointed out that it was quite a challenge as a regional representative to commission input from other Parties on key updates. The response rate was always very low.

9. Mr Mackown thought that many of the items listed on the reporting template were not relevant to the StC. Some Parties did not report on substance and what was being done in their country. Furthermore, he struggled to decide what to report back to the StC and wondered whether other StC members were experiencing the same and whether they thought there was space to potentially reform or streamline the process.

10. Mr Nick Warmelink, representing the Depository, echoed what Mr Mackown described and agreed that there needed to be some form of revision of the process including possibly a revision of the existing guidelines.

11. Ms Humbu Mafumo, Vice-chair of the StC and representative of the Eastern and Southern Africa region, confirmed that she had been having the same experience and agreed to what Mr Warmelink and Mr Mackown had suggested regarding a revision of the process.

12. Mr Mackown proposed he would with other StC members kick off a draft of how the guidelines could be updated with a focus on what should be reported by the Parties. He added that it might also be useful to have some guidelines for the regional representatives complementing the one for Parties.

13. Moving on to the actual regional reports, Mr Mackown started by reporting on the Europe and Central Asia region. One key issue that was reported on was led shot. Belgium had reported on a legislation about restricting led shot within or near wetlands. The UK reported on currently going through a UK version of the European REACH process, which looked at the complete ban on sale and use of led shot.

14. Another issue that featured quite strongly was avian influenza (AI). The Netherlands reported on a new programme to create an early monitoring system for AI in wild birds. The UK and RSPB initiated some research looking at monitoring impacts of AI and what conservation interventions might be needed to reduce the risk of AI.

15. Ms Mafumo then reported on the Eastern and Southern Africa Region. Only five Parties responded to her request to submit an update on the implementation of AEWA.

16. Highlighting a few key issues, she said that Botswana reported on having hosted the meeting of the Slaty Egret International Working Group in September 2023. Furthermore, Botswana has established the National Wildlife Poison Prevention Working Group.

17. Kenya has reported on their work to finalize the Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Grey-crowned Crane. South Africa had been working on developing a national AEWA implementation plan which has now been finalized and was awaiting approval.

18. For further information and details on the regional reports please visit the [StC24 webpage](#), where the regional reports are available.

19. No further reports were given by Party Observers.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Mr Mackown will kick off a written process with other members of the StC to agree on a first draft of a set of reporting guidelines for Parties as well as for regional representatives ahead of the next StC meeting.</i>
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b. Technical Committee

20. Mr Mohammed Shobrak, the Chair of the Technical Committee (TC) gave a presentation regarding the TC.

21. He started by giving a brief overview on the recent changes in the TC composition. There were two new regional representatives. First, Mr Mohammed Shobrak, representative of the Southwestern Asia region and elected as new TC Chair and, second, Mr Doug Harebottle, representative of the Southern Africa region, replacing Ms Melissa Lewis, who had recently joined the AEWA Secretariat as the new Species Officer. Furthermore, Ms Alexandra Kalandarishvili replaced Ms Iben Hove Sorensen as the CIC representative. He also informed everyone about the sad passing of Mr Richard Hearn, who was the IUCN/WWT representative.

22. Mr Shobrak continued by updating all participants on the recent TC meeting in March 2024 by giving a brief overview of the key agenda items, one of which was the review of the TC’s workplan implementation and advancing of several tasks.

23. Moving forward the TC would proceed to work on tasks with intersessional engagement via the TC workspace and ad-hoc working groups. TC20 would take place from 24-28 February 2025 in person with a host yet to be confirmed.

24. Finally, Mr Shobrak emphasised that the Secretariat’s capacity to support the TC’s work was limited and would benefit from a dedicated Junior Professional Officer. He requested Parties members of the JPO program to consider allocating a JPO to AEWA.

c. Depositary

25. Referring to document AEWA/StC24.5 *Report of the Depositary*, Mr Warmelink gave a brief update by informing everyone that there had been no new accessions since the last meeting of the StC in June 2023. He furthermore noted that the Czech Republic withdrew their reservation regarding the amendments to the Annexes 2 and 3 to Table 1 to the Agreement due to the impossibility to accomplish the procedure of internal approval. Finally, Mr Warmelink reported that one correction regarding the listing of two species had been published.

d. Secretariat

26. Mr Trouvilliez once again apologised for not having finalised the Report of the Secretariat on time for the meeting and said that this was mainly due to the burden of current administrative issues.

27. Mr Trouvilliez gave a brief overview on the organisation and staffing of the Secretariat and was happy to welcome Ms Melissa Lewis as the new Species Officer as well as Mr Bruno Pereira Leles as the new EGMP Coordinator. He added that there was currently some thinking around restructuring the AEWA organigramme which included expanding Mr Dereliev's portfolio, Head of Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit.

28. Regarding the cooperation with other organisations Mr Trouvilliez mentioned amongst other things that he had met twice with the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention. They agreed that Ramsar and the AEWA Secretariat should work on a joint programme regarding the African-Eurasian flyway.

29. Mr Trouvilliez continued by thanking Ms Lewis for her efforts to reconvene some International Working Groups, which had been paused. In addition, new MoUs would be signed with all working group coordinators.

30. Mr Trouvilliez was pleased to report that the 9th Meeting of the European Goose Management International Working Group (EGM IWG9) that took place in June 2024 in Norway was a success.

e. UNEP

31. Mr Trouvilliez gave a brief report on UNEP by mentioning that UNEP was currently strengthening its links with MEAs. There was a meeting with representatives of UNEP and the MEAs in the margins of UNEA in Nairobi. Ms Amy Fraenkel, CMS Executive Secretary, represented the entire CMS family. The aim of the meeting was to make the colleagues in Nairobi better understand how MEAs were working with Parties and how they were linked to UNEP.

32. Furthermore, Mr Trouvilliez highlighted that UNEP had an annual programme for internal audits. An internal audit for the CMS family was launched right after the CMS COP in March.

33. Mr Trouvilliez thanked the AEWA team, for quickly providing the requested documents to the auditors for their review. He was pleased to inform everyone, that the draft report included no recommendations for the AEWA Secretariat. The report would be made publicly available in August 2024.

f. Other Observers

34. Ms Eva Fejes, Hungary, reported that Hungary had a very severe case of HPAI breakout last autumn concerning the Common Crane (*Grus grus*). Over 20 thousand birds died. However, after that, no more cases were recorded.

35. No further reports were given from other observers.

Agenda item 6. Recruitment of Parties

36. At the previous StC meeting there was an agreement to focus on recruiting Parties from Central Asia and the Arabic Peninsula, following Saudi Arabia's accession in July 2023.

37. Therefore, in advance of the CMS COP in Uzbekistan, Mr Dereliev and Mr Trouvilliez travelled to Kazakhstan to meet with the Vice-Minister of Environment. They had some promising discussions, the Minister explaining that Kazakhstan was very interested in acceding to AEWA.

38. Furthermore, following a meeting in Saudi Arabia, Mr Dereliev and Mr Trouvilliez travelled to Oman that hosts Bar Al Hikman, one of the most important wetlands along the flyway. There they met with several officials, also having had some promising conversations around Oman's accession to AEWA.

39. In the margins of the CMS COP Mr Dereliev and Mr Trouvilliez met with several other non-Party Range States, such as Malta, Austria and South Sudan, with the aim to discuss the accession to AEWA.

Agenda item 7. 9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA

a. Date and Venue

40. Mr Trouvilliez was pleased to report that the Secretariat had received confirmation from Botswana to host MOP9 in Gaborone in October 2025.

41. If the StC approved the offer from the Government of Botswana, the Secretariat would begin with logistical arrangements and would travel to Gaborone on a planning mission this autumn. The StC's approval would furthermore allow the Secretariat to start its fundraising work.

42. The offer was accepted by the StC.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>MOP9 will take place in Gaborone, Botswana in October 2025.</i>
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b. National Reporting

43. Upon introducing this agenda item, Mr Dereliev reminded the Parties present about the reporting cycle in the current triennium.

44. There were four reporting modules, one of which applied to African Parties only. The first module on harvestable species had already been submitted to the Parties and non-Party Range States. Another module on harvest data collection with a deadline of 31 December 2024 would be launched soon. The third module is on the Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA) with a deadline of February 2025 also to be launched soon. The final module is on national reporting with a deadline of 30 April 2025. A fifth module on reporting on population status may be added at a later stage. This would then be relevant for the next triennium.

45. In relation to this, a training workshop on AEWA National Reporting for National Respondents in African Anglophone AEWA Parties will be organised by the AEWA Secretariat and would probably take place in November 2024 in Bonn, Germany.

46. Referring to document AEWA/StC 24.7 *Draft Revised Format for National Reports on the Implementation of AEWA 2021-2024*, Mr Dereliev explained that the proposed format would be used for submission of national reports to MOP9. The initial version had been adopted by MOP8.

47. There was, however, a need for further adjustment following the decisions of the MOP to reflect some of the reporting requirements coming from several resolutions. That template was approved at the previous StC meeting in June 2023.

48. Nevertheless, there had been a few pending items, such as the chapter on avian influenza as well as some items related to the Strategic Plan assessment and monitoring.

49. The Standing Committee was now requested to review the complete set of proposed amendments to the format for National Reports to MOP9 (period 2021-2024) as proposed by the Technical Committee and approve it for further use by the Secretariat in launching the MOP9 national reporting cycle in the course of 2024.

50. The format was approved by the StC for further use.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The format as presented in document AEWA/StC 24.7 was approved for further use</i>
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c. MOP9 Rules of Procedure

51. Introducing document AEWA/StC 24.8 *Concept Note on the MOP Quorum and Rules of Procedure*, Mr Trouvilliez explained that the main issue here was regarding how the MOP Quorum could be reached.

52. The concept note recalled the rules of procedure regarding the MOP, one of them being that 50% of the Contracting Parties needed to be present at each MOP to take decisions.

53. Mr Trouvilliez explained that the quorum at MOP8 was almost not reached due to various reasons. The funding requests from at least five Contracting Parties were rejected due to the AEWA funding policy not to support Contracting Parties in arrears of more than three years. Some Parties were not able to present their original accreditation letter. The latter could easily be resolved, by reminding Parties that it was mandatory to present an original accreditation letter at the MOP.

54. To ensure quorum at future MOPs as well as proper representation from all regions covered by the Agreement it could be considered to soften the funding policy and to amend the relevant paragraph in the next Resolution on Financial and Administrative Matters accordingly. The paragraph would include the following:

[...] the funding requests of countries with payments in arrears of more than three years will be considered by the Secretariat in close consultation with the Standing Committee on a case-by-case basis and may be responded positively, funding permitting, if the delay in payment arises from exceptional and unavoidable circumstances. The exceptional and unavoidable circumstances shall be communicated in context of the funding request.

55. Instead, Parties may decide on another measure with respect to Parties in arrears, e.g. the suspension from the right of voting. This way Parties could still be present with valid credentials, even if not counting in case of voting.

56. Other ideas to ensure maximum participation and reaching the quorum at a MOP could be to introduce a quorum of less than 50%, to introduce hybrid meetings or to organise future MOPs in Bonn only. These options were, however, not advisable by the AEWA Secretariat, since they all had various disadvantages.

57. While it was decided, following some extensive discussions, to soften the funding policy to ensure quorum at future MOPs, the proposed text needed to be further refined including a very clear guidance on eligibility criteria. In addition, it should be considered that there were Parties that had never paid their mandatory contributions, nor had they ever attended a MOP but, nevertheless, had an impact on quorum and whether this could be changed.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>To ensure quorum at future MOPs as well as proper representation from all regions covered by the Agreement, the funding policy will be softened and the relevant paragraph in the next Resolution on Financial and Administrative Matters will be amended accordingly. Wording will be provided by StC members by the end of the autumn 2024.</i>
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Agenda item 8. Outputs of the Technical Committee Work Plan 2023-2025

58. Introducing document AEWA/StC 24.9 Rev.1 *Recommendations for the Delineation of Selected Populations Listed on Table 1 of AEWA Annex 3*, Mr Dereliev reminded the StC that it had agreed on changes to delineations of seven populations at its previous meeting.

59. One pending task was for the TC to review a more extensive list of populations for potential changes. The TC had reviewed 33 populations with proposed potential changes to the delineations at TC19 in March 2023. For six of the populations pro-formas had been prepared, which the StC was now requested to review.

60. The proposed changes of delineations were approved for further use.

61. Mr Dereliev added that the TC had been working on a proposal on how to approach the assessment of some of the Strategic Plan indicators for the StC’s review and approval. He suggested submitting that to the StC intersessionally

62. Mr Mackown thought the most sensible approach would be to approve the proposal intersessionally in writing.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The proposed changes of delineations as presented in document AEWA/StC24.9 Rev.1 were approved for further use. The Technical Committee’s proposal on how to approach the assessment of some of the Strategic Plan indicators will be reviewed and approved by the Standing Committee intersessionally in writing.</i>
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Agenda item 9. Communications

a. Report on the Joint CMS/AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness Raising (IMCA) Unit

63. Mr Trouvilliez introduced document AEWA/StC24.10 *Report on the Joint CMS/AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness-Raising Unit*, by briefly summarising it. He described the current composition of the unit and explained how the time and task monitoring tool worked. He went into more detail specifically regarding the IMCA time balance between the CMS and AEWA Secretariats, noting that there was a significant imbalance of 61% time dedicated to CMS activities versus only 39% time dedicated to AEWA activities in 2023. Considering the staff

contributions of CMS and AEWA for 2014-2023, a difference to the optimum balance of ca. 161,123 EUR existed.

64. The two Executive Secretaries were now working together to submit to the StC a revised institutional arrangement by December 2024. They thought it was more important to focus on projects and activities and the programme of work rather than only on the financial aspect.

65. Ms Fraenkel believed that the work of the IMCA Unit was vital for both Secretariats and acknowledged the work the team had been delivering. She pointed out that she had been working on further strengthening the Unit's capacity.

66. Ms Fraenkel went on to remind everyone present that the joint unit had initially started as a pilot. She believed the joint unit made sense and should continue. However, how the unit was operating and means with which the success was measured, including the time tracking tool, needed to be rethought. She noted that the time tracking tool was useful to a point, but at the same time thought it was very unusual to use such a tool within the UN. It focused on quantity and not efficiency, outputs or quality.

67. Another element was that the value of synergies was not captured. Ms Fraenkel highlighted that the first ever Migratory Species Report was launched at the most recent CMS COP, which was fully paid out of CMS.

68. Ms Fraenkel suggested to move towards a results-based management approach, which was in sync with directives received by the UN Secretary General. A detailed agreed workplan would be put in place with specific deliverables for AEWA and CMS which could always be revisited.

69. Mr Mackown gave the floor to Mr Warmelink, who voiced some concerns regarding how the unit was structured and how it was functioning. First, there were some long standing vacant positions that could create pressure on the current team and Mr Warmelink wondered whether it could deliver on the mandates that resulted from the last AEWA MOP.

70. Second, looking at the numbers, it seemed that contributions paid by the Netherlands and other Parties were also used for CMS tasks and activities which was not desirable.

71. Mr Mackown offered to Ms Fraenkel a letter of support from the AEWA StC to strengthen the IMCA unit's capacity should she want to propose that to the CMS StC.

72. He saw the value in focusing more on products and making sure both CMS and AEWA products were being adequately prioritised. There needed to be an agreement that set that out very clearly.

73. Mr Mackown echoed what Mr Warmelink said in that he also had concerns about the deficit especially looking at it from a Party's perspective. He emphasised that funds were given to AEWA for AEWA activities and not for CMS activities. If he were to discuss the issue with his finance colleagues, they would have a severe problem with it. He, therefore, wanted to better understand what the resolution to the problem would be. He thought there needed to be a financial audit, since the lack of clarity made him, representing the UK as a Party, feel uncomfortable.

74. Finally, he wondered if it would be possible to create a single unit and proportionally pay the costs of running it.

75. Ms Fraenkel did not agree with focusing so much on the issue of the deficit, since, as she had mentioned before, many of the aspects, such as CMS funding the Migratory Species Report, were not

reflected through the time tracking tool. There needed to be a full picture before concluding that there was a deficit, and she did not believe it was an issue of where Party’s funds were going.

76. Mr Mackown intervened by pointing out that products were funded by additional voluntary contributions whereby staff time came from core funding. So, there was a natural division between the two. In addition, he thought that it indeed entirely was an issue of where Party’s funds were going.

77. Following further extensive discussions, the conclusion was that Mr Trouvilliez together with Ms Fraenkel would revise the institutional arrangement on the IMCA unit, to be agreed to by the AEWA StC, with a focus on deliverables and prioritising mechanisms.

<i>Decisions</i>	<i>Mr Trouvilliez and Ms Fraenkel will revise the institutional arrangement on the IMCA unit. The focus will be on deliverables and prioritising mechanisms. The revised institutional arrangement shall be approved by the AEWA Standing Committee.</i>
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b. 30th Anniversary of AEWA

78. Mr Trouvilliez introduced document AEWA/StC 24.11 *Concept Note on the 30th Anniversary of AEWA*, emphasising that the 30th Anniversary of AEWA in 2025 was an excellent opportunity to showcase its added value.

79. Following Mr Trouvilliez’ introduction there were some deliberations on the various ideas set out in the concept note on how AEWA’s anniversary could be celebrated, such as a central anniversary event in the margins of MOP9 and several ideas for special products to mark the anniversary.

80. In conclusion and as a first step, Mr Trouvilliez agreed to coordinate with the IMCA unit which of the suggested products could be initiated easily with no or little funding.

81. Furthermore, Mr Trouvilliez would discuss with Mr Nkape, Botswana’s National Focal Point, what could be realised in the margins of MOP9.

<i>Decisions</i>	<i>Mr Trouvilliez will coordinate with the IMCA unit which products can be initiated easily with no or little funding. Mr Trouvilliez will discuss with Mr Nkape, Botswana’s National Focal Point, what can be realised in the margins of MOP9.</i>
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Agenda item 10. Financial and Administrative Matters

a. Execution of the 2023 and 2024 budgets

82. Referring to document AEWA/StC 24.12 *Report of the Secretariat on Finance and Administrative Issues*, Mr Trouvilliez gave a brief overview of AEWA’s income and expenditures in 2023.

83. Since the adoption of the budget, the Governments of Cameroon, Greece and Saudi Arabia joined the Agreement, which added to the assessed contributions approved by MOP8.

84. The Secretariat suggested using the new contributions against over-expenditures within the core budget, which were caused by higher salary scales introduced between 2022 and 2023.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The contributions of the three new Parties since MOP8 will be used against salary expenditures.</i>
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b. Administrative and personnel matters

85. Mr Trouvilliez explained that that the Head of AFMU had been on extended sick leave, which, unfortunately, resulted in many delayed processes. A temporary P-3 position should be recruited to pick up the pending work. The cost for AEWA could be as high as 40-50.000 EUR. The AEWA’s core fund can’t support this cost which will increase the deficit on the Salary cost Budget Lines. Another way of funding should be explored. Mr Trouvilliez requested the StC’s approval to proceed with that recruitment.

86. In addition, a new Executive Secretary needed to be recruited, since Mr Trouvilliez was going to retire in July 2025. That being said, with the support of the StC, there was a possibility for an extension so that Mr Trouvilliez could still attend MOP9 in October 2025, which was essential. Mr Trouvilliez added that the grade (P-4 or P-5) at which the new Executive Secretary would be recruited was still under discussion while keeping in mind the budget constraints.

87. The StC agreed to both the recruitment of a temporary P-3 for AFMU as well as to providing a support letter for a 4-month extension of the current Executive Secretary.

<i>Decisions</i>	<i>A temporary P-3 for AFMU will be recruited but another source of funding than the AEWA core budget should be found. The StC Chair will provide a support letter for a 4-month extension of the current Executive Secretary.</i>
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c. Status of AEWA contribution payments

88. Mr Trouvilliez explained that AEWA’s webpage on the status of contributions was updated every week giving a transparent overview on which Parties have paid their contributions and which Parties were in arrears.

89. Mr Trouvilliez highlighted the fact that unpaid pledges in 2023 and 2024 meanwhile amounted to almost 1 million EUR and should not increase further.

90. Mr Mackown urged any Parties in arrears that were present at the meeting to initiate conversations with their governments or ministries about what the options were for paying their contributions.

d. Voluntary funding

91. In addition to the annual contributions paid by Parties towards the AEWA core budget, the Secretariat also received voluntary contributions from different Governments that were earmarked for certain activities. However, the voluntary contributions had been less than in the past, due to Parties facing more and more financial constraints.

92. Mr Trouvilliez thanked the donors for their contributions, especially the Governments of Croatia, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK.

Agenda item 11. Small Grants Fund (SGF)

93. Mr Mackown introduced this agenda item referring to and summarising document AEWA/StC 24.13 *AEWA Small Grants Fund: Analysis and Options*.

94. The aim of the fund was to provide a source of financial support for the promotion and implementation of the Agreement in developing countries and countries in transition.

95. Since 2015, there had been no new contributions to the fund meaning that it was no longer functioning, and no projects had been funded to support the Agreement. At its 23rd meeting the Standing Committee agreed to gather information from Parties on the fund, with a view to developing options for reform that could be considered at MOP9.

96. In his capacity as StC Chair, Mr Mackown together with Mr Warmelink wrote to Parties and non-governmental organisations to seek their views on the operations of the Small Grants Fund.

97. Upon analysing the responses, Mr Mackown outlined several options on how to proceed with the fund in the above-mentioned document.

98. Following some discussions, the recommended option to maintain the Fund with a radically altered functional and financial process was agreed to. A database of costed, high-level project concept notes would be posted on the AEWA website. Possible donors could then select projects, based on a high-level summary, they wish to fund and then enter bi-lateral discussion with the recipient to work out the details and agree on final project scope, deadlines, contract etc.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Mr Mackown and Mr Warmelink will draft a recommendation to be submitted to MOP9 to consider maintaining the Small Grants Fund with a radically altered functional and financial process.</i>
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Agenda item 12. Implementation Review Process (IRP)

99. Mr Dereliev explained that a discussion on the IRP had started within the TC regarding how to handle the process in future with a view to staffing limitations in the AEWA Secretariat. Its involvement had been somewhat diminished over the last few years.

100. Mr Dereliev continued by giving a brief update on one of the current open IRP cases with respect to the development of an airport in Estoril, Portugal. There had been a governmental decision to move the airport to another location, which was, however, still close to Estoril. This had been welcomed by some NGOs as well as by the petitioner, who had submitted the case to the StC.

101. The question now was how to proceed with the case, since circumstances through the moving of the airport had changed. Mr Dereliev proposed to gather more information from the government and from some of the organisations involved and submit to the StC for consideration.

102. With regards to the IRP case file in Portugal, Mr Mackown thought that they should be seeking to close the case while making sure the issues were not being replicated in the new location.

103. Mr Mackown further thought that the current process of having closed sessions on the IRP cases during StC meetings was not putting enough pressure on Parties to comply with their obligations. There needed to be a more transparent and more public process.

104. Ms Nicola Crockford, representing BirdLife International, agreed to Mr Mackown’s remark to making the IRP process more public.

105. Following further deliberations, Mr Mackown proposed having document on the IRP and its issues for the StC’s review at its next meeting.

106. Mr Dereliev suggested convening an ad-hoc working group together with the Secretariat to discuss the issues in a smaller setting and to decide what to present at the next StC meeting.

107. Everyone agreed to Mr Dereliev’s suggestion.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>An ad-hoc working will be convened to discuss the issues in connection with the IRP cases and its process in more detail and to decide what to present at the next Standing Committee meeting for its consideration.</i>
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Agenda item 13. Date and Venue of the 24th Meeting of the Standing Committee

108. Mr Trouvilliez said that the next StC meeting would probably have to take place in Spring 2025 emphasising that there were going to be many documents for the StC to review and approve.

109. Mr Mackown wondered if it made sense to have two more meetings before MOP9, one being specifically for reviewing MOP9 documents.

110. Mr Trouvilliez proposed liaising with Mr Mackown offline should he, moving forward, see a benefit in convening a shorter interim meeting for example in November 2024. Topics such as progress on MOP9 preparations could be discussed at that meeting and some of the draft documents could possibly already be looked at.

111. Mr Dereliev added that some documents may be delayed and that the StC would therefore have to review another set of documents possibly in July 2025. Whether that was going to be done in another meeting or by correspondence should be considered.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Executive Secretary will liaise with the StC Chair on having an additional interim StC meeting in November 2024. At that meeting there will be a decision on when to convene the next meeting for reviewing and approving MOP9 documents.</i>
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Agenda item 14. Any Other Business

112. Nothing was raised under this agenda item.

Agenda item 15. Closure of the Meeting

113. Mr Mackown thanked everyone for the very productive discussions on some difficult issues. He also thanked those who volunteered for the tasks that had come out of some of the discussions. Finally, he appreciated the AEWA Secretariat for its continued hard work.

114. Mr Trouvilliez reiterated what Mr Mackown said and was very pleased with the large attendance of the meeting.

115. With that the Chair declared the meeting closed.



24th AEWA Standing Committee Meeting Bonn (Germany), 4 July 2024



Final list of participants

Chair of the AEWA Standing Committee / Président du Comité permanent de l'AEWA

Region of Europe and Central Asia (1)

Mr Simon Mackown

Head of Species Recovery
Defra, National Biodiversity
Defra

Deanery Road
BS1 5EH Bristol
United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni

Tel: +44 7793201149

E-mail: simon.mackown@defra.gov.uk

Regional Representative of the AEWA Standing Committee / Représentant régional du
Comité permanent de l'AEWA

Region of Eastern and Southern Africa

Ms Humbulani Mafumo

Deputy Director
Biodiversity and Conservation
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
473 Steve Biko Street
0083 Pretoria

South Africa / Afrique du Sud

Tel: +27 824856499

E-mail: HMAfumo@dffe.gov.za

Region of Europe and Central Asia (2)

Dr Volodymyr Domashlinets

Senior Expert

National Center for the GHG Emission Inventory

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine

Mytropyta Vasylya Lypkivskogo str., 35

03110 Kyiv

Ukraine / Ukraine

Tel: +380 442063127

E-mail: vdomashlinets@yahoo.com

Depository / Dépositaire

Mr Nick Warmelink

Policy Officer International species protection Directorate-

General for Nature, Fisheries and Rural Affairs Ministry for

Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

20401 / Bezuidenhoutseweg 73

2500 EK The Hague

Netherlands / Pays-Bas

Tel: +31 629636059

E-mail: n.g.warmelink@minlnv.nl

Contracting Party (Observer) / Partie contractante (observateur)

Botswana

Mr Kenosi Nkape

Principal Wildlife Officer, AEWA NFP

Department of Wildlife and National Park

Ministry of Environment

P.O. BOX 151

TLOKWENG Gaborone

Botswana / Botswana

Tel: +267 3996585

E-mail: knkape@gmail.com

Congo - Brazzaville

Dr Saint Fédriche Ndzai

Point Focal, Responsable de la Communication, de l'Education et de la Sensibilisation du Public

Direction de la Faune et des Aires Protégées

Ministère de l'Economie Forestière

158 rue Abolo Ouenzé

2087 Brazzaville

Congo - Brazzaville / Congo-Brazzaville

E-mail: saintfedriche@gmail.com

Côte d'Ivoire

Mr Kouassi Félix Ouassa

Chargé d'études

Direction de la Faune et des Ressources Cynégétiques

Ministère des Eaux et Forêts

BP V 178

Abidjan

Côte d'Ivoire / Côte d'Ivoire

Tel: +225 749464650

E-mail: edouassafelix@gmail.com

Estonia

Ms Mariliis Paal

Adviser

Biodiversity Conservation Department

Ministry of Climate of Estonia

Suur-Ameerika 1

10122 Tallinn

Estonia / Estonie

Tel: 6262875

E-mail: mariliis.paal@kliimaministeerium.ee

Georgia

Mr Tornike Zautashvili
Chief Specialist
Biodiversity and Forestry Department
Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture
34 Marshal Archil Gelovani Ave,
0144 Tbilisi
Georgia / Géorgie
Tel: +995 579031401
E-mail: Tornike.zautashvili@mepa.gov.ge

Germany

Ms Berit Gewert
Scientific officer
International Species Conservation, Wildlife Trade - Federal Ministry for the
Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection
BMUV
Robert-Schuman-Platz 3
53175 Bonn
Germany / Allemagne
E-mail: berit.gewert@bmu.bund.de

Greece

Ms Anastasia Stergiou
Policy Officer
Section for Wildlife & Game Management / Directorate for Forest Management
Ministry of Environment and Energy
End of Alkmanos str.
11528 Athens
Greece / Grèce
Tel: +30 2105240194
E-mail: a.stergiou@prv.ypeka.gr

Hungary

Ms Éva Fejes
Biodiversity expert
Biodiversity and Gene Conservation Department
Ministry of Agriculture
Kossuth tér 11.
1055 Budapest
Hungary / Hongrie
Tel: +36 17952771
E-mail: eva.fejes@am.gov.hu

Italy

Ms Silvia Giardina
Officer
General Directorate for biodiversity and sea protection (TBM)
Ministry of the environment and energy security
Via Cristoforo Colombo 44
00154 Roma
Italy / Italie
E-mail: giardina.silvia@mase.gov.it

Kenya

Mr Paul Gacheru Macharia
CEPA Focal Point
Species and Sites Program
Nature Kenya
44486
00100 Nairobi
Kenya / Kenya
Tel: +254 203537568
E-mail: species@naturekenya.org

Mr Solomon Kyalo
Head, MEAs Implementation
Directorate of Biodiversity Research & Planning
Kenya Wildlife Service
P.O Box 40241-00100
00100 Nairobi
Kenya / Kenya
Tel: (+254) 72 27 222 14
E-mail: cites@kws.go.ke

Ms Cindy Mwangi
Senior Wildlife Officer
State Department for Wildlife
Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife
30277-00100,
00100 Nairobi
Kenya / Kenya
E-mail: cindymcbess@gmail.com

Ms Anastacia Mwaura
Senior Wildlife Officer
MEAs
Kenya Wildlife Service
40241
00100 Nairobi
Kenya / Kenya
Tel: +254726610508
E-mail: amwaura@kws.go.ke

Libya

Mr Ali Berbash
Head of Protected Area Section
Natural Conservation Department
Ministry of Environment
Janzour
218 Tripoli
Libya / Libye
Tel: 0922820880
E-mail: Aberbash83@yahoo.com

Mauritius

Mr Ashvin Rye Dooky
Ag. Scientific Officer
National Parks and Conservation Service/ Freshwater Biodiversity and Wetland
Conservation
Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security
80835 Reduit
Mauritius / Maurice
Tel: +230 4644053
E-mail: ashvindooky@gmail.com

Morocco

Ms Latifa Sikli

Veterinarian Service of Conservation Wild Flora and Fauna
High Commission for Water and Forests and the Combat against Desertification
(HCEFLCD)

3, Rue Haroun Errachid, Agdal

Rabat

Morocco / Maroc

Tel: +212 677 692 035

E-mail: laty.sk@gmail.com

Sudan

Ms Nafisa Ali

Director of Foreign Trade Department
Department of International Cooperation
Wildlife Protection Forces

P.O.Box 33311

11111 Port Sudan

Sudan / Soudan

Tel: +249 124731150

E-mail: nofanof@yahoo.com

Mr Anwar Jawed

Director

International Cooperation General Administration
Wildlife Conservation Forces, Red Sea Administration

P.O.Box 33311

11111 Portsudan

Sudan / Soudan

Tel: +249 912681674

E-mail: anwar71.ah@gmail.com

Ms Shimaa Mohsin

Police Major

Director of International Conventions Circulate
Wildlife Conservation Forces

P.O.Box 33311- Hai El Matar

11111 Port Sudan

Sudan / Soudan

Tel: +249 117142155

E-mail: wildlife_sudan33@yahoo.com

Uganda

Mr Stephen Fred Okiror
Ag Principal Wildlife Officer
Wildlife Conservation Department
Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities
MTWA Plot 6, Nakasero Rd, Rwenzori Towers, 2nd Floor Po box
4241 Kampala
Uganda / Ouganda
Tel: +256 772931963
E-mail: sfokiror@gmail.com

Zimbabwe

Mr Dickson Chitupa
International Conventions Manager
International Conservation
Parks and Wildlife Management Authority
24505 SPRINGVALE
242 Harare
Zimbabwe / Zimbabwe
Tel: +263 242772572050
E-mail: dchitupa@gmail.com

Ms Nothando Rosslyn Moyo
TFCA Coordinator
International Conservation Affairs
Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority
Corner Borrowdale Rd and Sandringham Drive, P.O.Box CY 140 Causeway
04 Harare
Zimbabwe / Zimbabwe
Tel: +263 774015513
E-mail: nrmoyo@zimparks.org.zw

Chair of the AEWA Technical Committee / Président du Comité Technique de l'AEWA

Prof Mohammed Shobrak
Consultant
Prince Saud Al Faisal Wildlife Research Center
National Center for Wildlife
Abi Mudafar Al Baqdadi
7933 Al Zomurrud Dist. Jeddah 23822 Saudi
Arabia / Arabie saoudite
Tel: +966505721001
E-mail: shobrak@saudibirds.org

Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands

Mr Zebedee Njisuh
Senior Adviser
Africa Unit
Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands
Rue De Mouvney 28
1196 Gland
Switzerland / Suisse
E-mail: njisuh@ramsar.org

National Governmental Organisation / Organisations gouvernementales nationales

National Governmental Organisation

Mr Mohammad Asghari Tabari
Expert
Conservation & Management of Wildlife, General Directorate, Ornithology Unit
Department of Environment
Hemmat Highway - Pardisan Eco-park
1463914111 Tehran
Iran / Iran
Tel: +98 21 42781918
E-mail: mohammad_tabari@hotmail.com

International Non-Governmental Organisation / Organisation internationale non-gouvernementale

BirdLife International & RSPB

Ms Nicola Crockford
Principal Policy Officer
RSPB
BirdLife International
The Lodge
SG19 2DL Sandy
United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni
Tel: +44 7718116994
E-mail: nicola.crockford@rspb.org.uk

FACE - European Federation for Hunting and Conservation

Mr Alexander Griffin

Senior Conservation Manager

Conservation team

FACE - European Federation for Hunting and Conservation

Avenue de la Joyeuse Entrée, 1-5

1040 Brussels

Belgium / Belgique

Tel: +32 2 4161619

E-mail: cy.griffin@face.eu

Wetlands International

Dr Szabolcs Nagy

Biodiversity Manager

Europe

Wetlands International

Horapark 9

6717LZ Ede

Netherlands / Pays-Bas

E-mail: szabolcs.nagy@wetlands.org

UN Environment Programme / Programme pour l'environnement ONU

UN Environment Programme

Mr Yannik Friedli

Associate Programme Management Officer

Law Division

UN Environment Programme

United Nations Avenue, Gigiri Nairobi

00100 Nairobi

Kenya / Kenya

E-mail: yannik.friedli@un.org

UNEP/CMS Secretariat

Ms Amy Fraenkel
Executive Secretary Executive Office
UNEP/CMS Secretariat
UN Campus, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany / Allemagne
Tel: +49 228 815 2402
E-mail: amy.fraenkel@un.org

UNEP/AEWA Secretariat

Mr Sergey Dereliev
Programme Management Officer
Head of Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit (SICU)
UNEP/AEWA Secretariat
UN Campus, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany / Allemagne
Tel: +49 228 815 2415
E-mail: sergey.dereliev@un.org

Ms Jeannine Dicken
Programme Management Assistant
SICU Unit
UNEP/AEWA Secretariat
UN Campus, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany / Allemagne
Tel: +49 228 815 2455
E-mail: jeannine.dicken@un.org

Ms Marie-Therese Kämper
Administrative Assistant
Executive Management Unit
UNEP/AEWA Secretariat
UN Campus, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany / Allemagne
Tel: +49 228 815 2455
E-mail: marie-therese.kaemper@un.org

Ms Catherine Lehmann
Programme Management Officer
Executive Management Unit
UNEP/AEWA Secretariat
UN Campus, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
France / France
Tel: +49 228 815 2453
E-mail: catherine.lehmann@un.org

Mr Bruno Leles
Coordinator for the EGMP
SICU Unit
UNEP/AEWA Secretariat
UN Campus, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany / Allemagne
Tel: +49 228 815 2457
E-mail: bruno.leles@un.org

Dr Melissa Lewis
Species Officer
Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit (SICU)
UNEP/AEWA Secretariat
UN Campus, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany / Allemagne
Tel: +49 228 815 2452
E-mail: melissa.lewis@un.org

Ms Evelyn Moloko
Coordinator for the AEWA African Initiative
African Initiative Unit
UNEP/AEWA Secretariat
UN Campus, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany / Allemagne
Tel: +49 228 815 2479
E-mail: evelyn.moloko@un.org

Dr Jacques Trouvilliez
Executive Secretary
Executive Management Unit
UNEP/AEWA Secretariat
UN Campus, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany / Allemagne
Tel: +49 228 815 2413
E-mail: jacques.trouvilliez@un.org