



AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF  
AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS

**8<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES**  
26–30 September 2022, Budapest, Hungary

*“Strengthening Flyway Conservation in a Changing World”*

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**DRAFT REPORT OF THE 8<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES (MOP8)  
TO THE AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRD AGREEMENT (AEWA),  
26–30 SEPTEMBER 2022, BUDAPEST, HUNGARY**

**DRAFT REPORT OF WORKING GROUP 2  
– FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

1. The Working Group met from 16:30 to 18:05 on 27 September. It was chaired by the United Kingdom, represented by Mr Simon Mackown, with Uganda serving as Vice-Chair, and was supported by the Executive Secretary and the Administrative Officer of the Administrative and Fund Management Unit – UNEP/CMS Family.
2. At the invitation of the **Chair**, Parties confirmed that the Working Group would meet in open session, with the attendance of observers.
3. The **Chair** proposed that this first session be limited to initial statements and indications of Parties’ positions relating to the range of budget scenarios contained in Document AEWA/MOP 8.39 Corr. 1 *Draft Budget Proposal for 2023 – 2025*. He noted that these scenarios had already been introduced in plenary by the Executive Secretary.
4. The **Chair** observed that the Secretariat was already under significant pressure and it would not be sustainable for the Secretariat to deliver the conservation outcomes Parties wished to see during the next triennium without increased resources. The demands on the Secretariat and Technical Committee were high and there currently seemed to be a disconnect between ambitions on one hand and the reality of what could be delivered on the other. He recalled that MOP7 had decided to move towards application of the UN scale of assessment with effect from MOP8 and hoped that the Working Group could abide by the commitments made at MOP7 and avoid reopening discussion of that issue. He opened the floor to comments.
5. The **United Kingdom** indicated its support for a minimum of Scenario 3, and probably somewhere between Scenarios 3 & 4.
6. **Germany** recalled its long-standing support for AEWA and fully understood the difficult position AEWA was in. Germany was nevertheless operating under budgetary constraints and, although there would be a possibility to support an increased budget, this would not necessarily be according to any of the scenarios presented, but rather a combination of items from various scenarios. It would be helpful, as at past MOPs, to have a baseline scenario that provided for continuation of the work of the Secretariat along present lines, plus the inflation increase agreed at MOP7, so Parties knew the starting position. To this could be added specific priorities agreed by Parties, on the basis of negotiation, that they wished to support. A priority for Germany would be to find the resources, through savings if possible, for the position of Species Officer at the Secretariat.

7. The **Executive Secretary** confirmed that it was not necessary for Parties to select any of the four specific scenarios presented in the document. The Working Group could request the preparation of alternative scenarios, and the Secretariat would ensure that the corresponding recalculations were made available.

8. **Switzerland** firmly believed that the Secretariat was currently understaffed and would be able to support Scenario 4 but was also open to an alternative mix. Switzerland's priority was to avoid a situation where a significant amount of Secretariat time had to be devoted to securing resources for positions that were not yet fully funded.

9. **France** requested additional information concerning the impact of exchange rate fluctuations during the past four years, and also asked for clarification regarding AEWA's application of the UN scale of assessment. A budgetary priority for France would be to secure funding for the full translation of MOP documentation, as foreseen under the Rules of Procedure.

10. The **Executive Secretary** explained that the current UN scale of assessment 2022-2024 had been applied using the criteria mentioned in the document. With regard to document translation, he noted that it was much easier to secure additional voluntary contributions for items such as translation, than for staff costs.

11. **Finland** expressed concern about the capacity of the Secretariat and stated that its top priority was to secure an improvement in that situation. Finland could support an overall increase to a level around Scenario 3, but not with the exact items currently included in that scenario. As for Germany, funding the position of Species Officer was a clear priority for Finland.

12. **Uganda** (Vice-Chair) thanked Parties that had already contributed generously to efforts for the conservation of migratory waterbirds. The statements made so far showed clearly that there was still good will among Parties to continue supporting the cause in spite of difficult economic times. The capacity of Parties in Africa to contribute financially was quite limited, yet their active participation in implementing the Agreement was critical. There seemed to be a pointer roughly towards the level of Scenario 3, which the African region deeply appreciated, but there were also indications that the specifics contained in that scenario should be adapted. There was a need to discuss and find a workable position. It seemed that Scenario 1 could not deliver the change that the Agreement deserved and so might be considered for withdrawal. The emphasis should be on a forward-looking proposition.

13. **Norway** thanked the Secretariat for its hard work and efforts in implementing the Agreement. Scenario 1 was untenable and Scenario 2 was considered to be a minimum. In terms of priorities, Norway viewed increased Secretariat capacity as important, but there was room for flexibility.

14. **Italy** thanked the Secretariat for presenting the four scenarios and indicated willingness to consider limited increases over Scenario 1, but these should be related exclusively to specific activities. Italy therefore suggested beginning negotiations on the basis of Scenario 1, gradually adding the priorities identified by Parties.

15. The **Chair** recalled that Scenario 1 represented a real-terms cut, so adding activities to Scenario 1 would only move the budget towards parity with the current situation. AEWA might not progress far under such a situation. Nevertheless, there seemed to be an appetite in the room for establishing a baseline budget to which specific items could be added.

16. **The Netherlands** saw the need for an increase to support the work of the Secretariat and agreed that discussions should proceed from a given baseline. However, that baseline should probably be

Scenario 2, or AEWA would go backwards. The Netherlands could consider supporting an increase around the level of Scenario 3.

17. The **Executive Secretary** summarised impacts on the work of the Secretariat under the proposed Scenario 1. These included a two-thirds reduction in travel budget, a significant cut to internet services, and a reduction in the translation budget. Budget lines for MOP9 and for TC meetings would be set at zero. Whilst the Agreement could function with virtual meetings of the StC, the nature of the issues addressed by the TC meant that one or two in-person meetings were required within each triennium.

18. **Sweden** supported the intervention of The Netherlands and welcomed the additional information provided by the Executive Secretary concerning the implications of Scenario 1. Sweden favoured starting with a Scenario 2 baseline, with the possibility to go up to Scenario 3, and cautioned that Parties should avoid micro-managing the Secretariat.

19. **Denmark** saw a need to acknowledge the workload and under-funding of the Secretariat. This meant that Scenario 3 should be the baseline option. Denmark was open to discussing Scenario 2 but fully supported Scenario 4. Parties had to consider their past decisions; resources were required for implementation – otherwise they were on paper only.

20. **South Africa** supported a fully functioning Secretariat but was uncomfortable with supporting Scenario 4 in its entirety. Parties should focus on how best their priorities could be covered; for South Africa these would include full funding of the African Coordinator position.

21. **Belgium** considered that the core budget should cover the core work. Upgrades of the P staff in the Secretariat had already been discussed at MOP7. If UNEP recommended that such upgrades were required to comply with UN rules, Belgium could support the upgrades.

22. **France** was concerned by one of the budgetary principles outlined by the Executive Secretary during plenary, namely that no Party's annual contribution should decrease. It was hard to see how this could be the case. France favoured a baseline of Scenario 1 or Scenario 1+ (including only an adjustment for inflation).

23. In response to questions from France and Germany, the **Executive Secretary** provided additional information on how cost of living adjustments had been applied to the budgeted scenarios for each year of the coming triennium. He recalled that during discussions at MOP7, it had been decided to set a 'no decreased contributions' criterion and to use resulting savings to avoid overly steep increases for Parties.

24. The **Czech Republic** indicated general support for the positions expressed by Switzerland, Finland, Sweden and The Netherlands, and noted the gap between the budget and the level of Parties' ambition. The Czech Republic therefore supported a budgetary increase, up to a level around Scenario 3.

25. The **Chair** felt that there was some confusion around what appeared to be additional staff costs under Scenario 2. Rather than choosing to increase P staff salaries, P staff had been held at the same level as previous years, with the increase instead allocated to more junior part-time staff. The overall salary costs hadn't changed, it was simply a question of precisely where resources for staff time had been allocated.

26. **France** observed that even under Scenario 1 there would be an increase in its contributions.

27. The **Executive Secretary**, referring to document AEWA/MOP 8.39 Corr. 1 annex 1, noted that the contributions for France were the same for MOP7 and for MOP8 proposed Scenario 1.
28. The **Chair** recalled that this was a consequence of the decision taken by MOP7 to move towards applying the UN scale of assessment. The latter was based on ability to pay and could therefore mean an increase for some Parties under all budget scenarios.
29. The **Executive Secretary** provided clarification on how the UN scale had been applied in the context of AEWA, in conformity with the decision taken at MOP7, and committed to providing additional information in response to the specific concerns raised by France. He recalled that African Parties had committed to a EUR 2,000 minimum threshold for national contributions as an important sign of solidarity with the aims of the Agreement.
30. **Germany** suggested that it would be helpful to work on a common absolute baseline, representing basic legal requirements, a 2% per annum increment, plus a minimum required amount for organisation of MOP9. Parties' 'wish list' of priorities could then be added to this baseline. Germany further suggested a non-linear increase over the course of the triennium, such as that decided at MOP7, through which the overall increase for 2018-2021 was allocated at 30%, 33% and 37% across the triennium.
31. The **Executive Secretary** undertook to prepare a series of new budget scenarios in time for the Working Group to consider on 28 September. These would show clearly the costs to each Party of (a) the baseline components suggested by Germany, (b) the additional costs that would be incurred by inclusion of a P3 Species Officer, (c) the additional costs that would be incurred by inclusion of a P2 Species Officer and (d) the additional costs for inclusion of a full-time African Coordinator. The revised scenarios would not include the positions of Compliance Officer and TC Support Officer provided for in current Scenario 4.
32. The **United Kingdom** considered that the baseline should build in recognition by MOP7 that AEWA Secretariat staff were being underpaid according to the rules of UNEP. It was not right to expect people to work above their grade but not be paid accordingly for a further three years.
33. The **Executive Secretary** noted that current budget Scenario 3 proposed an upgrade of all P staff. This could perhaps be done in two steps.
34. **France** indicated its readiness to begin the discussion on the basis of current Scenario 2. The priorities for France were fully funding the African Coordinator position and translation of documents.
35. **Germany** understood that there was a good argument to be made for upgrading P positions in line with UNEP rules, but there was also a need to understand that this could impede opportunities to create new positions. Germany preferred a baseline that treated the upgrading as an add-on, noting that AEWA needed to be considered in the context of the wider CMS Family.
36. The **European Commission** requested clarification as to why some proposed new positions were graded at P2 and others at P3.
37. The **Executive Secretary** confirmed that this had been done on the advice of UNEP, following an initial assessment of the degree of autonomy and senior external contacts anticipated for each position.
38. The **Chair** concluded the current session of the Working Group, thanking Parties for a really constructive discussion. There had been a need for a set of initial scenarios to enable Parties to see

the implications of various options and to assist negotiations. However, it was now possible to develop amended scenarios reflecting concerns and priorities expressed. The Secretariat would prepare these for the Working Group to consider during its session on 28 September, beginning at 09:00.