



AEWA SMALL GRANTS FUND

FOR THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS AND THEIR HABITATS

Last updated December 2015

GUIDELINES FOR THE OPERATION OF THE AEWA SMALL GRANTS FUND

I. Introduction

The AEWA Small Grants Fund was established by the 1st Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) in 1999 through Resolution 1.7. At its second Session (2002), the Meeting of the Parties reiterated its conviction that a Small Grants Fund could become an extremely useful tool to facilitate the implementation of the Agreement (Resolution 2.9).

At the 4th Session of the Meeting of the Parties, in 2008, the Parties adopted the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017 through Resolution 4.7 and have since extended its validity to 2018, through Resolution 6.14 at their 6th Session in 2015. Under its Objective 5, the Strategic Plan aims at activating the Small Grants Fund and disbursing at least € 100,000 annually to developing countries for implementation of AEWA. Contracting Parties were moreover requested through Resolution 4.7 to provide financial resources for the successful and efficient operation of the Small Grants Fund, which is not fully covered by the AEWA core budget so far.

The "AEWA Plan of Action for Africa - A guide to the implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017 in the African Region" was adopted by the 5th Session of the Meeting of Parties in 2012 through Resolution 5.9, and extended to 2018 by the AEWA Resolution 6.14. It requests the continued allocation of at least € 20,000 per year in the AEWA core budget for SGF projects in Africa. It also encourages Contracting Parties to provide voluntary contributions of at least € 30,000 per year for SGF projects in Africa.

II. Eligibility

Only Contracting Parties which are developing countries or countries with economies in transition are eligible for funding (cf. Resolution 2.9). Developing countries and countries with economies in transition, which are non-Party Range States may also apply to the Fund for assistance to allow them to prepare for accession to AEWA. However, priority will be given to Contracting Parties to AEWA. Countries, which are Contracting Parties to the Agreement are not eligible as a general rule if they have payments of contributions to the AEWA Trust Fund in arrears of more than three years. Countries are also not eligible if a project from an earlier project cycle is pending in the same country. A list of countries which are, in principle, eligible for receiving assistance under the Small Grants Fund is made available with each call for proposals. The list of eligible countries might, however, be restricted under the terms of individual calls for project proposals, depending on the requirements set by the respective funding body.

III. Forms of Assistance Available under the Small Grants Fund

1. The proposed activities should:

- a) clearly contribute to the implementation of the Agreement and its Strategic Plan and the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa (in the case of project proposals to be implemented in Africa); and/or
- b) respond to emergencies affecting a population of AEWA species and/or sites used by AEWA species.

The AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2018 is available on the AEWA website at <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/documents/strategic-plan>

The AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2012–2018 is available on the AEWA website at http://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/basic_page_documents/aewa_poa_for_africa_final.pdf.

2. AEWA Range States which are not yet Party to the Agreement can apply for financial assistance enabling preparatory work in order to progress towards the accession to the Agreement.

IV. Administration and Allocation of Funds

1. The Small Grants Fund is administered by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

2. The Fund is mainly financed through voluntary contributions; thus a regular allocation of funds cannot be guaranteed.

3. The cycle for submission of project proposals depends on the funding accrued for this purpose; thus, depending on the funds available, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will invite the National AEWA Focal Points of eligible countries to submit project proposals to the Small Grants Fund on an annual basis, indicating the deadline for submission, the maximum duration of the projects, the maximum amount granted to each project and any other restrictions or criteria set under the call.

4. The award for any single project will depend on the available funds and will be defined under the individual calls for project proposals, but should not exceed € 25,000 in case of assistance provided to Contracting Parties and € 15,000 in case of preparatory assistance provided to non-Party Range States.

V. Application Procedure

1. Formulation of project proposals

a) All project proposals must be submitted using the Grant Application Form, made available with each call for proposals. The Grant Application Form must be endorsed by the AEWA National Focal Point in the country or the recognized AEWA Contact Person in the case of eligible countries that are not yet Contracting Parties. An official Endorsement Form is provided with each call for proposals.

The list of AEWA National Focal Points can be downloaded at: <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/node/1999>

b) Projects should, in general, be implemented in a time-frame not exceeding 24 months. The maximum duration might, however, vary under the individual call for project proposals, depending on the budget available and the restrictions set by the respective sources of funds.

c) Countries are unlikely to gain support for more than one project under the same call for project proposals. Thus, the AEWA National Focal Points or Contact Persons shall make a pre-selection of potential projects and to only submit the one considered to be the top priority for advancing the implementation of the Agreement and its Strategic Plan in the respective country, to the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

2. Submission of project proposals

Project proposals can be submitted by any national governmental agency or any national or international non-governmental organisation concerned with the conservation of migratory waterbirds and/or their habitats in the respective eligible country.

All projects must be endorsed by the AEWA National Focal Point or AEWA Contact Person in the respective eligible country.

a) Project proposals relating to the implementation of AEWA and its Strategic Plan or the Plan of Action for Africa

Formal submission of proposals must be made by the deadline indicated in the call for project proposals.

b) Project proposals relating to emergency assistance

Project proposals relating to emergency assistance may be submitted at any time. Provided that funds are available, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will undertake a technical and feasibility analysis and, upon inter-sessional consultation with the Technical and Standing Committee members, will take a decision within a maximum of three months after receiving the request.

c) Project proposals relating to preparatory assistance

Eligible countries that are not yet Contracting Parties to the Agreement may, by the deadline indicated in the call for proposals, apply for a grant from the Small Grants Fund to support activities necessary for completing their accession, e.g. preparatory workshops. Higher priority will, however, be given to proposals from Contracting Parties.

In addition, priority will be given to project proposals which:

- are international in geographical scale, involving two or more AEWA Range States;
- include cross-sectoral cooperation, involving collaboration between national or international governmental or non-governmental organisation/institutions;
- demonstrate principles of sustainable development, and where appropriate poverty alleviation (taking into consideration the livelihood aspects);
- are likely to lead to institutional or other capacity development (and/or development of expertise) in the respective eligible country;
- focus on activities which generate background information and/or knowledge necessary for advancing the implementation of AEWA in the eligible country (e.g. activities which involve species and site inventories) as opposed to focusing on activities which include routine responsibilities of the AEWA Contracting Parties (e.g. activities which involve site management or species monitoring).

3. Evaluation and approval of project proposals

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will make a technical and feasibility assessment of all project proposals which are eligible for evaluation. During this process, the Secretariat may invite views, as appropriate, from the members of the Technical Committee. The Secretariat will submit its recommendations for funding to the Standing Committee members who will be requested to approve the allocation of funding to the pre-selected projects. The pre-selection of projects out of the pool of eligible projects will primarily be based on their relevance to AEWA conservation priorities. Secondly the Secretariat will endeavour to reach a balanced geographical coverage within the overall area of eligible countries. In the case that the Standing Committee does not approve one or more of the pre-selected projects by consensus, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will submit additional proposals from the pool of eligible project proposals evaluated in the same cycle to the Standing Committee for its approval. Should there be no further eligible project proposals in the pool, then

the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will transfer the unused funds to the next SGF cycle. Further information on the application procedure is available from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat (aewa.secretariat@unep-aewa.org).

VI. Transfer of Funds and Submission of Progress Report and Final Report

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat prepares a funding agreement with the respective organisation or agency receiving the project funding. This funding agreement will be based on a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) agreement template. Upon signature of the funding agreement by both parties, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will disburse an initial payment.

Each recipient organisation or agency is required to provide a mid-term Progress Report on the implementation of the funded project not later than midway into the implementation of the project after receipt of the initial payment, taking into consideration the duration of the project activities (e.g. 12 months for projects with a duration of up to 24 months). A Final Report must be submitted not later than three months after completion of the project activities. The deadlines for submission of both reports will be specified in the funding agreement. Both Progress and Final Reports must be submitted with the endorsement of the AEWA National Focal Point. Both Progress and Final Reports must include a statement of expenditure for the funds provided and copies of any materials produced under the project, for example photos, videos and reports of project activities.

The progress and final reports should also include feedback on problems faced with the implementation of the project, lessons learnt from the project implementation and recommendations thereof for future related activities.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will review the progress and final reports and may invite views, as appropriate, from the members of the Technical Committee (particularly for projects with high technical content or complexity).

The second and third instalments will be paid upon approval of the Progress Report and Final Report respectively.

VII. Terms of Funding Agreement to be concluded with Organisations or Agencies Receiving Assistance

The funding agreement to be concluded between the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the organisation or agency that will be granted financial assistance, will specify the following, among others:

- the extent and purpose of the financial assistance granted;
- the obligations of the recipient organisation or agency towards the implementation of the project;
- the obligation of the recipient to display the AEWA logo on all correspondence or material printed in connection with meetings or activities financed under the project (such as invitations, announcements, agendas, reports, etc.) and to refer to the activity as being sponsored by AEWA;
- the obligation of the recipient to reimburse to the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat any portion of cash advance remaining unspent or uncommitted on completion of the project activities specified in the funding agreement, within one month of presentation of the expenditures report.

VIII. Reporting to Donors

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat provides donors with summary reports of project results prepared on the basis of the Final Reports received from the grant beneficiaries.