



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals



SECOND MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE MIDDLE-EUROPEAN POPULATION OF THE GREAT BUSTARD (*Otis tarda*)

*Feodosia, Crimea, Ukraine
11-12 November 2008*

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Agenda Item 7.3

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEDIUM TERM INTERNATIONAL WORK PROGRAMME

(Prepared by BirdLife International on behalf of the CMS Secretariat)

1. At the First Meeting of the Signatories on 17-18 September 2004 in Illmitz, Austria, the Signatory States have adopted a Medium Term International Work Programme to organise their joint efforts.
2. Several Range States have volunteered to take the lead on certain tasks. In addition, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management of Austria (Lebensministerium) has offered financial support to the co-ordination of the implementation of the Medium Term International Work Programme. Subsequently, it has provided a contract to the European Division of BirdLife International (Stichting BirdLife Europe) to facilitate this process. The contract has outlined the following key outputs based on the Medium Term International Work Programme:
 - a. Proceedings of the 1st Expert Meeting published;
 - b. Joint research programme elaborated by the experts appointed by the Range States;
 - c. 2nd Expert Meeting organized;
 - d. Multi-country projects developed;
 - e. Recently unoccupied areas to be protected for the recovery of the transboundary Pannonic subpopulation are identified;
 - f. Coordinated surveys carried out in the transboundary region of Hungary, Serbia and Romania;
 - g. Surveys along the Lower Danube in Romania and Bulgaria carried out during the display season;
 - h. Internet-based reporting system for sighting of Great Bustard is set up with information about marking methods applied in different countries;
 - i. Technical Advisory Panel for reintroduction set up;
 - j. Guidelines developed for monitoring Great Bustard populations;
 - k. A best practice guide on mitigating impacts of infrastructure development and afforestation is published;
 - l. Guidelines on capturing and handling Great Bustard for research are published;
 - m. Setting up an international Great Bustard Conservation Team; and
 - n. Compiling an up-to-date bibliography on Great Bustards.

3. An overview of the status of the implementation of the Medium Term International Work Programme is provided in the Annex.

Action requested:

The Meeting is invited to:

- a. Review the implementation of the MTIWP;
- b. Discuss arrangements for implementation of measures not completed yet; and
- c. Discuss and agree on any amendments of the MTIWP as deemed appropriate.

Objective	Priority	Measures to be taken	Time-table	Lead	Collaborators	Status (2008.11.)
1.1. Synchronised counts are co-ordinated across the borders [Action 6.1.1]	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical experts appointed by the Range States agree on the dates of synchronised counts annually by 1 April. 	2005-ong	SK	All Range States	Slovakia has already approached the RSs. Counts are coordinated between AT, CZ, HU & SK.
1.2. Comparative studies on habitat requirements, effects of habitat changes (including infrastructure such as powerlines and windfarms) and causes of decline in different range states are available [Action 6.2.1]	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical experts appointed by the Range States to agree and elaborate on a joint research programme. 	2005		All Range States	A technical workshop was held in Mosonmagyaróvár on 11-12 November 2006.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement joint research programme. 	2006-ong		Scientific institutes, NGOs, protected area authorities	Not implemented yet due to lack of resources. Agreement on funding the implementation is needed.
1.3. Experience in habitat management shared between Range States and results used when revising agro-environmental schemes for the new EU rural development programme period (2007-13) [Actions 6.1.2 and 6.2.3]	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proceedings of the 2004 Expert Meeting published. 	2005	AT,HU	CMS Secretariat	Presentations from the 2004 Expert Meeting published in Vol. 112 of Aquila, the journal of the Hungarian Ornithological Institute.
1.4. Effectiveness of different predator control strategies monitored and experience shared amongst experts [Actions 6.2.2 and 6.2.3]	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proceedings of the 2004 Expert Meeting published. 	2005	AT,HU	CMS Secretariat	Research carried out in DE & HU. Results from DE published in Aquila 112. However, comparative studies are still to be implemented.
1.5. Effectiveness of captive management programmes in different countries assessed and lessons are shared	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proceedings of the 2004 Expert Meeting published. 	2005	AT,HU	CMS Secretariat	Research carried out in DE, HU and, outside of the agreement area, in the UK. Results from DE published in Aquila 112.
1.6. Key personnel and staff have opportunity to exchange experience [Action 7]	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd Expert Meeting organised. 	2007		Scientific institutions, NGOs, protected area management authorities	2nd Expert meeting to be held prior to the 2nd MoU meeting. (Additionally, a Bustard Symposium was organised by the SPEA, SEO, LPO and RSPB in Lisbon in 2005. The proceedings of that meeting will be distributed at this meeting).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3rd Expert Meeting organised. 	2010			

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1.7. Information on the ecology and conservation of Great Bustard effectively managed and shared within the conservation and research communities [MoU Para. 7]		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Web-based information management system for the MoU with inter alia a register of on-going and completed projects and their outcomes, research reports and other relevant information (see also 2.5 below) 			All Range States	Bibliography of published and unpublished literature is maintained by Rainer Raab and accessible at http://www.grosstrappe.at/indexe.html . The Otistarda Online website offers the opportunity to store documents and provides links to all on-going Great Busatrd Projects with website.
1.8. Biological targets for favourable conservation status identified		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify population targets based on population viability analysis A large scale study on the distribution of actual and potential of habitats across the range To restore connectivity between fragmented populations 				Demographic PVA for the Pannonic population has been prepared by Szabolcs Nagy. Further work is needed to define Favourable Conservation Status based on the results of the habitat suitability analysis. Modelling potential distribution under current and future climatic conditions has been modelled by Patrick Osborne.
1.9. Joint projects carried out Range States		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore funding opportunities for multi-country projects 				Coordinated LIFE projects implemented in Austria, Slovakia and Hungary. Joint INTERREG project has been submitted by Hungary and Serbia. The Pannonische Gesellschaft für Grosstrappenschütz has supported a project in Serbia.
2.1. All Range States provide the same level of strict legal protection [MoU Para. 4(1) and Actions 1.1.1 and 2]		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the status of Great Bustard Range States and identify existing gaps at future Meetings of the Parties. 	2007&2010		All Range States	Done as part of the Overview Report.
2.2. Connectivity of the Pannonic subpopulation increased and the breeding population in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic recovered [Action 5 and MoU Para. 4]	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify recently unoccupied areas to be protected from adverse development in order to increase connectivity. 	2007	AT	CZ, HU, SK	Done.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify threats imposed by infrastructure (e.g. powerlines, windfarms, roads, buildings) in these areas and apply technical solutions 				The Austrian LIFE project has addressed this in relation to powerlines.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach multilateral agreement on the site network. 	2008			Delineation of the site network, including recently unoccupied areas, is still to be done.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop plans to improve habitat quality at occupied and recently. 	2009			Still to be done.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop funding applications. 	2009			

Objective	Priority	Measures to be taken	Time-table	Lead	Collaborators	Status (2008.11.)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce appropriate legal measures and financial incentives to protect these habitats and improve habitat quality there. 	2010			
2.3. Status and feasibility of restoring the transboundary populations between Hungary, Romania and Serbia-Montenegro is determined [Action 5 and MoU Para. 4]	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out co-ordinated Great Bustard surveys in the border zone between the three countries and along the border in the vicinity of Salonta, especially in the post-breeding and wintering period. 	2006–2007	RO	HU, RO, SM	Surveys carried out in 2006 indicated that the species still occurs near to Salonta close to the Hungarian border in RO. Information on the status of transboundary populations have been reviewed at the Mokrin meeting. Status of the species near to Timisoara still to be confirmed.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a feasibility study on expanding the habitat in these transboundary regions. 	2008			
2.4. Status of Great Bustard along the border between Bulgaria and Romania is clarified [Action 5 and MoU Para. 4]	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out survey in both countries along the lower section of the Danube River in particular in Dobrudja during the display season. 	2006–2008		BG, RO	Field and questionnaire survey covering the period of 2000–2007 has resulted in 16 records from Bulgaria of which 3 was from the breeding season. 2 of these from the Danube Plain, one from Dobrudja.
2.5. Wintering Great Bustard populations are adequately protected	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up an Internet-based reporting system on sightings of Great Bustard in winter to facilitate collection and sharing of information. 	2005	BirdLife International	All Range States	A web-based reporting system, Otis Tarda Online (http://www.tuzok.mme.hu/), has been created and maintained by MME/BirdLife Hungary,
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify other countries about use of colour ring or wing tags and make information about these marking schemes available on the Internet. [Action 6.2.4] 	2005	SK	AT, (BG), CZ, DE, HU, SK, (RO),	No information is available.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand radio tracking of Great Bustard, building on existing Spanish and German experience. [Action 6.2.4] 	2006-ong		DE, AT, HU	Radio tracking is still implemented only DE on large scale. Ad hoc use in HU. AT is planning to apply this technique in the coming years.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that wintering Great Bustards are protected from any disturbance. [MoU Para. 4(6) and Action 2.2] 	2005		All Range States	HR has started an awareness raising campaign.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up an international inventory of key sites for Great Bustard during migration and winter. [Action 1.1] 	2008	HU	All Range States	

Objective	Priority	Measures to be taken	Time-table	Lead	Collaborators	Status (2008.11.)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess potential causes of mortality (e.g. power lines, wind farms, hunting) at sites where Great Bustard occur regularly on migration or in winter and take appropriate measures to remove these threats. [Action 2.3.2] 	2010		All Range States	
2.6. Reintroduction and restocking programmes are coordinated to ensure the maximum conservation benefits for both the donor and recipient populations	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a Technical Advisory Panel of international experts to coordinate reintroduction and restocking projects 	2005	(IUCN)	All Range States	A proposal submitted for adoption to the 2nd Meeting of the Signatories.
3.1. Monitoring results from different countries are comparable [Action 6.1.1]	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop guidelines for monitoring Great Bustard populations. 	2005		All, mainly breeding countries	An outline of the guidelines submitted for discussion to the 2nd Meeting of the Signatories.
3.2. Restoration of Great Bustard populations is based on best practices [MoU Para. 4 and Action 4]	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop guidelines on restoration of Great Bustard populations covering the issues of habitat management and restoration, as well as, predator control, captive rearing and release. 	2009	DE	All Range States	
3.3. All Range States can apply appropriate strategies to secure successful wintering of Great Bustard [MoU Para. 4(6)]	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop guidelines on species and habitat conservation measures to be implemented at places where wintering of Great Bustards occur based on recommendations of the 1st and 2nd Expert Meetings. 	2008		All Range States	
3.4. Risk of collision with power lines and loss of habitat due to infrastructure development and forestry measures is reduced [Actions 1.3, 2.3.2 and 2.3.3]	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing experience in mitigating the impact of infrastructure development (e.g. powerlines and windfarms) as well as afforestation, and publish a best practice guide. 	2007	AT11	All Range States	An outline of the guidelines submitted for discussion to the 2nd Meeting of the Signatories.
3.5. Potential negative impacts of radio-tracking on wild birds reduced		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop guidelines on capturing and handling birds for research (e.g. radio tracking) 				A draft guidelines submitted for adoption to the 2nd Meeting of the Signatories.