



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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Agenda Item 15.1

ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2006-2014

Summary:

This document presents the key findings of an independent consultant's review of the implementation of existing Strategic Plan (the CMS Updated Strategic Plan 2006–2014).

Under the supervision of the Strategic Plan Working Group, the consultant reviewed the existing Plan, the experiences of stakeholders and implementation evidence, and distilled lessons and recommendations for the future Plan (the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023).

Recommendations included such things as maintaining a small number of objectives, re-thinking the best approach to achieving synergies in strategic planning between CMS and its daughter instruments, and promoting the future Plan in a more prominent way.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2006-2014

(Prepared by the UNEP/CMS Secretariat)

Introduction

1. The 2006-2011 version of the CMS Strategic Plan provided for an “end-of-term review” of implementation, *inter alia*, as an input for the development of the subsequent Plan. The CMS Updated Strategic Plan 2006–2014¹ explains that this did not occur in 2011 because the end-date was rolled forward to 2014. This review has been realized by the commissioning of an independent consultant’s report, which is summarized in this document.

2. Other documents prepared by the Secretariat for the 11th Meeting of the CMS Conference of the Parties (COP11) inform Parties of activities undertaken, coordinated or supported by the CMS Secretariat that implement the Strategic Plan 2006-2014, particularly during the triennium 2012-2014.

The Review of Strategic Plan Implementation

3. In Resolution 10.5, the CMS Parties established a Strategic Plan Working Group to develop the future Plan. Under the Working Group’s supervision, the independent consultant reviewed the existing Plan, the experiences of stakeholders and implementation evidence, and distilled lessons and recommendations for the future Plan. The review report entitled ‘*Stage 1 Report: Review of the CMS Strategic Plan 2006-2014*’ (2012) is summarized in this document. The full report is available on the CMS Strategic Plan Working Group webpage².

4. In the review, the consultant undertook email consultation of stakeholders and experts, including Strategic Plan Working Group members, all CMS National Focal Points, staff of the Secretariat and of the Secretariats of CMS daughter instruments, Secretariats of other biodiversity-related conventions, and a list of other individuals and partner organizations, including intergovernmental bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Over 400 people were contacted. Although fewer than 5 per cent of consultees returned written responses, the respondents reflected the range of stakeholders and geographical regions, and overall the review had a richness of inputs. Close coordination was maintained with Wild Migration, which in parallel was undertaking a review of NGO perspectives on the CMS³ and draft findings were shared between the two.

5. The consultant’s review was not a systematic log of implementation activities nor a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of CMS (which would have many successes to report), nor was it a review of progress in migratory species conservation over the years. The review was focused on the more specific matter of the Strategic Plan. However, its results allude to the difficulty in evaluating the aforementioned aspects. The emphasis was on investigating what has worked well and less well.

¹ The existing Strategic Plan, as adopted by COP10, can be found at <http://www.cms.int/en/document/cms-strategic-plan-2015%E2%80%932023>.

² <http://www.cms.int/en/meeting/first-meeting-strategic-plan-working-group>.

³ This culminated in the report: Prideaux, M., (2013) *A Natural Affiliation: Developing the Role of NGOs in the Convention on Migratory Species Family*, Wild Migration, Australia.

Key Findings of the Review

6. The key findings of the review are summarized below.
7. The Plan’s small number of objectives allows CMS priorities to be grasped “in one glance”, and has allowed the Plan to be truly strategic at this level. The text is readable and informative. However, there are gaps in relation to external context, prioritization and implementation responsibilities.
8. When asked, most stakeholders that responded reported making little or no use of the Strategic Plan. This was partly due to its low profile. A few Parties and other stakeholders reported that the Plan’s objectives were helping to guide their work to some extent, or had the potential to do so. Others felt that it failed to rise above “mechanics” and thus was not genuinely strategic, and/or failed to express sufficiently clear and measurable intended results.
9. Apart from the Plan, a variety of other plans, programmes and strategies have been in use for directing relevant fields of action under the Convention at operational levels.
10. The monitoring and evaluation regime associated with the Plan was seen by some as weak, making assessment of progress difficult. Examination of Parties’ national reports and a range of other sources showed that almost none of this material was organized in a way that would readily allow it to be related to Plan objectives and targets, and therefore did not give any systematic or consistent intelligence about the performance, achievement or conservation impact of the Plan.
11. Although the Future Shape reports say little about the role of the Strategic Plan, they have provided an independent cross-check of the strengths and weaknesses of CMS structures and operations under the framework of the 2006-2014 Plan, and this was taken into account in the review.
12. The review concluded with a summary of the main lessons learned and recommendations made for drafting the future Plan, and these were carefully considered by the Strategic Plan Working Group in the development of the draft Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023. Some examples of lessons and recommendations are given below:

Lessons from the review	Recommendations for the next Plan
Vision, mission and purpose material is somewhat diffused within the text.	Identify vision, mission and purpose statements clearly at the front.
Some potential users of the Plan have not been clear that it was relevant to them.	Include clear statements about the Plan’s intended users.
The Plan is ambiguous (and users have been unclear) as to whether it is a plan just for the “parent Convention” or for the whole “CMS Family” (i.e. including CMS Agreements/MoUs).	Re-cast the Plan as a plan for migratory species conservation, not just for CMS; thus designing it to be relevant to all stakeholders in the issue, including CMS daughter instruments.
With one exception (AEWA), daughter instruments have not considered it useful to act on the Plan’s encouragement for them all to develop linked plans; yet “family cohesion” is reported by some to need improvement.	Re-think the best approach to strategic planning synergy between CMS and its daughter instruments, and the role of the CMS Plan in promoting family cohesion.

Lessons from the review	Recommendations for the next Plan
Many of the objectives and targets do not express the intended level or standard of results, and are not measurable: this has not only hampered performance assessment but has also weakened the attention given to implementation.	Design objectives and targets to be more measurable and specific as to intended results.
The Plan's small number of objectives allows the Convention's priorities to be conceptually grasped "in one glance", and has allowed the Plan to be truly strategic at this level.	Keep the number of objectives small again.
The low visibility of the Plan has resulted in its having low political profile and reduced impact, as well as unclear expectations about its role.	Publish and promote the Plan in a prominent way, with clear explanations of its purpose/importance and good signposting on the CMS website.

Future Plan Review

13. Looking forward, the Secretariat anticipates reporting to the 12th Meeting of the CMS Conference of Parties on progress made in implementing the new Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023, the final draft of which is presented in document UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.15.2.

Action requested:

The Conference of the Parties is invited to:

- Take note of the report of the Secretariat.