

SECOND RANGE STATE MEETING OF THE CMS CENTRAL ASIAN MAMMALS INITIATIVE (CAMI)

25 - 28 September 2019, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

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REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

Summary:

This document reports on progress to implement Resolution 11.24 *The Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI)* and its associated Programme of Work (2014-2020). It briefly discusses lessons learnt as well as the benefits and opportunities of CAMI since its inception in 2014.

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Background

1. The Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI) acts as a framework to facilitate the implementation of the various CMS instruments and mandates targeting large mammals in the wider Central Asian region. The overall goal of the initiative is to improve the conservation status of large migratory mammals and their habitats in the region by strengthening coordination and cross-border cooperation and addressing major threats.
2. CAMI and its associated Programme of Work (POW) was adopted by CMS Parties at the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP11) in Quito, Ecuador (Resolution 11.24 on the Central Asian Mammals Initiative) in 2014. The POW provides the roadmap for action on 15 target mammal species¹ in 14 Range States, namely Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. COP11 also established a part-time position for the coordination of CAMI in the CMS Secretariat and the post was filled in March 2017.

Activities since 2014

3. Since November 2014, the CMS Secretariat has implemented or initiated the implementation of 26 out of 42 activities of the POW that are addressed to the CMS Secretariat. Six meetings, eight outreach events and six sponsored projects have been realized, addressing different topics of the POW, and focusing on: reducing barriers to migration and negative impacts from linear infrastructure; strategic planning and review of implementation; awareness raising; and transboundary cooperation. The implementation of activities is explained in more detail below.

Meetings

4. In August 2015, together with the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), the associated International Academy for Nature Conservation of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN/INA) and the Mongolian office of the German Development Cooperation Agency (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit - GIZ), the CMS Secretariat organized the workshop "Implementing Wildlife-Friendly Measures in Infrastructure Planning and Design in Mongolia". The meeting was attended by over 60 participants from different institutions working on infrastructure development and wildlife conservation in Mongolia. At this meeting, the Ulaanbaatar Action Plan on Wildlife-friendly Infrastructure was discussed and adopted. The plan outlines how to modify existing transportation infrastructure in Mongolia and how best to develop new projects to ensure that wildlife can pass freely and is available [here](#).

¹ Bukhara/Yarkand Deer *Cervus elaphus yarkandensis*, Wild Camel *Camelus bactrianus*, Wild Yak *Bos grunniens*, Snow Leopard *Uncia uncia*, Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus*, Przewalski's Horse *Equus caballus przewalskii*, Saiga Antelopes *Saiga spp.*, Argali *Ovis ammon*, Mongolian Gazelle *Procapra gutturosa*, Goitered Gazelle *Gazella subgutturosa*, Kulan *Equus hemionus*, Kiang *Equus kiang*, Chiru *Pantholops hodgsonii*, Tibetan Gazelle *Procapra picticaudata*, Chinkara *Gazella bennettii*. (the last three not listed under CMS)

5. In October 2015, also supported by the BMU, the CMS Secretariat organized the Third Meeting of Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga spp.*). The key outcome of the meeting was the adoption of the Medium-Term International Work Programme (MTIWP), which is a detailed set of measures to be implemented in the period 2016-2020 to facilitate the recovery of the saiga populations after the catastrophic die-off of May 2015.
6. In August 2016, the CMS Secretariat organized the first CAMI expert workshop, attended by the CAMI Species Focal Points, Range States and NGOs at the International Academy for Nature Conservation (INA) on the Isle of Vilm, Germany, supported by the BMU and the Swiss Federal Office for Environment (FOEN) in cooperation with the BfN to focus activities for the implementation of CAMI. The aim of the meeting was to identify priorities for the implementation of the POW and the possibilities of raising funds for these actions. Key outcomes included a set of ten small-scale project proposals to implement several priority actions of the POW of which three project concepts were selected for funding from the Swiss Government (described below under “projects”).
7. In April 2017, together with the BfN/INA and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the CMS Secretariat organized an international workshop on the Isle of Vilm, Germany, to develop a CAMI Migration and Linear Infrastructure Atlas for the Central Asian region. The underlying data for the Atlas, which provides information on species distribution and linear infrastructure, were developed by WCS and subsequently reviewed and validated by scientists and experts from the region during the workshop. The Atlas highlights problem areas, where linear infrastructure obstructs the migration of Central Asian mammals and provides a useful resource to inform decision-makers in the region. The Atlas was published in September 2019 and is available [here](#).
8. In April 2018, the CAMI mid-term review meeting, attended by six Range States and a number of experts and NGP representatives, was organized by the CMS Secretariat in cooperation with the BfN/INA through funding from the BMU on the Isle of Vilm, Germany, to review the implementation of the POW thus far and to discuss challenges and strategy for further action. The meeting participants produced an overview of the implementation of the CAMI POW, agreed on a format to update the conservation status of all CAMI species and agreed on steps to prepare for CMS COP13. Reinforcing transboundary cooperation among all Range States to ensure a coordinated management of the species and to enable cross-border migration of animals was highlighted as key to fulfil the objectives of CAMI.
9. In April 2019, the CMS Secretariat in cooperation with BfN/INA and with funding from the BMU organized a Joint CMS-CITES Technical Workshop under the MOU Concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga spp.*) on the Isle of Vilm. The workshop reviewed progress on the implementation of the Saiga MOU and its MTIWP 2016-2020 and developed the new MTIWP for 2020-2025 in advance of the fourth Meeting of the Signatories to the MOU (MOS4) scheduled to be held in 2020 in the Russian Federation.

Projects

10. The following projects have been initiated by the CMS Secretariat via Small-scale Funding Agreements to support implementation of CAMI:
11. In November 2016 the “Guidelines for Addressing the Impact of Linear Infrastructure on Large Migratory Mammals in Central Asia” (adopted by COP11) were made available by the CMS Secretariat in Russian. The Guidelines had been developed with the financial support of the European Union through the GIZ. In cooperation with the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK), the CMS Secretariat reviewed the Russian translation of the Guidelines and supported their distribution and presentation to decision-makers in Kazakhstan through ACBK.
12. In response to a die-off of Mongolian Gazelles in 2016 due to an exceptionally harsh winter and the inability of the animals to cross the fenced trans-Mongolian railway in search for fodder, a proposal to remove or redesign the fence to allow Mongolian Gazelles and other animals to cross, was developed and selected for funding at the above-mentioned CAMI expert workshop in 2016. The project was successfully implemented in 2018 and 2019 by the Mongolian Gazelle Conservation Society with the financial support of the Swiss Government and in cooperation with the Senckenberg Biodiversity and Climate Research Center. The fence was redesigned and removed at selected places and cameras installed to monitor effectiveness.
13. With support from the Government of Switzerland, the Wild Camel Protection Foundation (WCPF) received small-scale funding support in 2018 to conduct a first study of the wild camel population near the Mongolian-Chinese Border in Mongolia. The project was recommended as a priority during the above-mentioned CAMI workshop in 2016 and will be an important step in developing a monitoring approach for Wild Camels in the Gobi shared by Mongolia and China. The project included a field study using camera-trapping and patrol-based monitoring to assess the Wild Camel population on the Mongolian side near the Mongolian-Chinese border and the impact of the border fence. The results serve as a basis for developing a transboundary monitoring programme and further coordination of activities.
14. Another project that was recommended at the 2016 workshop was financed in 2018 with a contribution from the Government of Switzerland. The ACBK received a small grant to analyse illegal wildlife trade patterns in Central Asia to strengthen cross-border information exchange in Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and China). The project aims at improving the understanding and raising awareness of new patterns of illegal trade in the region. It will identify the main problems in detecting illegal wildlife trade and key gaps in the legislation of the various countries that prevent effective prosecution. It will also develop recommendations for enhanced cross-border coordination of actions against illegal trade.

Outreach activities

15. The CAMI website was launched in 2016. A Russian translation of the website is in progress with most of the relevant information already available. A regular CAMI newsletter is being sent out bi-annually informing Range States and other stakeholders about the status of implementation as well as planned activities. The first issue was sent out in 2015.
16. The CMS Secretariat participated in several international meetings organized by other institutions to raise awareness about CAMI and its work, contribute to developing policy and management guidelines and share experience.

17. In September 2015, during the conference on “Regional Practices on Sustainable Use in Hunting Territories and Protection of Wildlife” in Ashgabad, Turkmenistan, a set of recommendations for wildlife management in Turkmenistan, including mechanisms for regional cooperation, was developed with input from CMS. The meeting was organized by the GIZ within the EU Forest and Biodiversity Governance Including Environmental Monitoring (FLERMONECA) project.
18. In February of 2016, as a participant in the international workshop on Vilm, Germany, about “Nature Conservation in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia” organized by the BfN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU), the CMS Secretariat shared its experience in wildlife conservation in the region. CAMI was presented as an important regional initiative for the wider Central Asian region that brings together governments and other stakeholders to agree on and realize coordinated actions for the conservation for endangered migratory mammals.
19. In April 2016, the CMS Secretariat arranged the participation of ACBK to present CAMI in Minex Central Asia 2016, which took place in Astana, Kazakhstan. This forum was one of the largest regional events of the mining industry, bringing together government regulators, private companies, financiers and associated service companies from 23 countries. The purpose of participating was to raise awareness of the impact of mining and related transportation infrastructure on Central Asian mammals and to inform participants about possible mitigation measures.
20. In July 2016, the CMS Secretariat participated in an expert discussion on the implementation of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programme (GSLEP), organized by NABU in Berlin, Germany. The meeting discussed important synergies between CMS and GSLEP and ways to strengthen future cooperation and support for implementation.
21. In September 2016, a side event on community-based wildlife management in Africa and Central Asia was held at the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC). The event showcased community engagement in conservation as a way of reducing poaching in selected countries across Africa and Central Asia. Rules of engagement for developing community-based conservancies, developed with participation of local community representatives were discussed. The CMS Secretariat demonstrated the compatibility of activities agreed under CAMI with these rules.
22. In November 2016, the CMS Secretariat took part in the international round table on “Sustainable Use and Conservation of Wildlife in Tajikistan”. The event was organized by the GIZ to discuss successes and challenges and strengthen Tajikistan’s efforts in implementing the international framework for conservation and sustainable use of wildlife including the country’s obligations under CMS and CITES. The main outcome was the adoption of a Resolution to guide national decision makers.
23. In January 2017, the CMS Secretariat attended the Snow Leopard Landscape Management Planning Stocktaking Workshop and the GSLEP 2nd Standing Committee in Kathmandu, Nepal. To ensure the transboundary management of Snow Leopards, 12 Range States in Asia discussed ways to conserve at least 20 Snow Leopard landscapes by 2020. The CMS Secretariat emphasized the importance of climate change in Snow Leopard conservation and reported the progress of the mapping and planning work within the CAMI Migration and Linear Infrastructure Atlas (see para 7 above).

24. In September 2018, the CMS Secretariat participated in a Central Asia Regional meeting of the IUCN CEESP/SSC Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group (SULi) which took place in Supara Chunkurchak, Kyrgyzstan. The meeting entitled "Achieving conservation goals through community benefits and empowerment" discussed how Community-based Wildlife Management (CBWM) could contribute to environmental and social objectives, the challenges it faced and recommendations for action to support it.

Fundraising activities

25. The CMS Secretariat contributed to a grant application submitted in 2017 by the United Nations Environment Programme Vienna Office to enhance the conservation of flagship migratory mammal species of Central Asia (e.g. Argali Sheep, Snow Leopard, Goitered Gazelle) through climate-informed management and decision-making. CMS is an implementing partner of this four-year project. The project was submitted for funding to the International Climate Initiative.
26. In 2019 IUCN launched its Save Our Species (SOS) Central Asia Programme which aims at supporting CAMI through targeted priority conservation actions in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Running until 2020, SOS Central Asia focuses on Goitered Gazelles and Snow Leopards and will identify and support conservation projects aimed at helping protect these species while supporting local communities through community engagement, the generation of alternative livelihood options, capacity-building, public awareness raising, and similar supporting activities.
27. A joint Programme of Work (2016-2018) was signed by the CMS Secretariat and BfN/INA and a number of workshops jointly planned and conducted. A follow-up work programme for 2020-2023 is currently being developed and additional funding requested from the BMU for a series of six workshops to be held 2020-2023 to support the implementation of CAMI.

Discussion and Analysis

28. A great number of activities have taken place over the course of the last five years since CAMI was established. After its adoption at COP11, the work under the Initiative has gained further momentum and was able to deliver on numerous actions outlined in the POW. This positive dynamic is due to several important factors:
 - a) Having at least a part-time post dedicated to the coordination of CAMI in the CMS Secretariat is vital to ensure stability and reliable follow-up as well as a long-term perspective with regard to fundraising and planning of actions. However, given the number of species and countries covered as well as the many activities going on, the workload is too heavy for a part time post and the COP is therefore requested to increase the time of the post to 80 per cent;
 - b) Long-standing cooperation with the BfN/INA, Isle of Vilm, continues to be a major success factor enabling the operation of CAMI. The financial, technical and logistical support provided by the BfN has proved invaluable and enabled the CMS Secretariat to conduct meetings and to initiate projects.

- c) The generous financial and political support of the Governments of Germany and Switzerland, without which it would not have been possible to realize the activities outlined above;
- d) An active network of governments, scientists and NGOs in which information can be exchanged, funds raised and collaboration enhanced.

Recommended Actions

29. The Meeting is recommended to:

- a) Take note of the document.