



**CONVENTION ON  
MIGRATORY  
SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.29.3/Rev.2

20 October 2023

Original: English

14<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 12 – 17 February 2024  
Agenda Item 29.3

**CENTRAL ASIAN MAMMALS INITIATIVE (CAMI)**

*(Prepared by the Secretariat)*

Summary:

This document reports on progress to implement Resolution 11.24 (Rev. COP13) and proposes new Decisions for adoption.

The document was revised to reflect the removal of Annex 2 from this document and the respective adjustment of the Summary box.

## CENTRAL ASIAN MAMMALS INITIATIVE (CAMI)

### Background

1. The Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI) was established at the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP11) in 2014 (Resolution 11.24). 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, while addressing major threats.
2. CAMI includes a comprehensive Programme of Work (POW), which is being updated regularly. The POW was revised by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of Range States to the Initiative held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, in 2019. CMS COP13 subsequently adopted the revised POW 2021-2026 as an Annex to Resolution 11.24 (Rev.COP13), and endorsed CAMI as an integrative approach, building on a regional programme that identifies synergies based on common geography, interests and species, to enhance cooperation and coordination at the local, regional and international level, to minimize institutional overlap and to improve implementation of CMS and its instruments. The POW provides concrete conservation actions for the 15 CAMI-listed species<sup>1</sup> that occur in 14 Range States.<sup>2</sup>

### Implementation of the CAMI Programme of Work since 2020

3. Since February 2020, the CMS Secretariat has organized six meetings, prepared or initiated four studies and raised funds for the implementation of two projects under the International Climate Initiative of the German Government (IKI) as part of efforts to implement the CAMI POW. The activities of the Secretariat are explained in more detail below. All the activities described below were implemented as part of the Agreement between the CMS Secretariat and the International Nature Academy (INA) of the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), with funding from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) – with the exception of two IKI projects, the Consultative Meeting on Saiga Antelope and two studies: ‘Transboundary Conservation Hotspots for the Central Asian Mammals Initiative’ and a report on the Asiatic Cheetah. The funding sources for these activities is indicated in the text below.

### Meetings

4. The Secretariat and BfN jointly conducted an online workshop from 20-22 October 2020, bringing together experts and Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation and Restoration of the Bukhara Deer (Bukhara Deer MOU).
5. This meeting took place online due to the COVID-19 pandemic and was conducted as an expert workshop rather than as a Meeting of Signatories to the Bukhara Deer MOU because a number of government representatives were unable to attend. The participants discussed and endorsed the Programme of Work for the Bukhara Deer

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<sup>1</sup> CAMI species: Argali (*Ovis ammon*), Asiatic Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*), Asiatic Wild Ass (*Equus hemionus*), Bukhara Deer (*Cervus elaphus yarkandensis*), Gobi Bear (*Ursus arctos isabellinus*), Goitered Gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*), Kiang (*Equus kiang*), Mongolian Gazelle (*Procapra gutturosa*), Persian Leopard (*Panthera pardus saxicolor*), Przewalski's Horse (*Equus ferus przewalskii*), Saiga Antelope (*Saiga spp.*), Snow Leopard (*Uncia uncia*), Urial (*Ovis vignei*), Wild Camel (*Camelus bactrianus*), Wild Yak (*Bos grunniens*).

<sup>2</sup> CAMI Range States: Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

2021-2026, the overview report on the MOU implementation and a new reporting format for the MOU. WWF Russia was commissioned to prepare the documents for the meeting. The Secretariat facilitated the review of [the documents](#) and their adoption by the Signatory States via postal procedures.

6. The 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (Saiga MOU) was organized by the CMS Secretariat, in cooperation with the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology. The meeting was held online from 28-29 September 2021. The Saiga Conservation Alliance (SCA) was commissioned to prepare the overview report on the MOU implementation. Saiga MOS4 adopted the [Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope 2021-2025](#) (MTIWP) and the report on [Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope: Perspectives and Prospects](#), commissioned by BfN INA for the CMS Secretariat and authored by a group of experts under the lead of the SCA. All meeting outcomes can be accessed [here](#).
7. In line with Decision 13.131 of COP13, a multi-stakeholder Intersessional Working Group (IWG) was established by the CMS Scientific Council to address the impact of infrastructure on migratory species and their habitats. In relation to the CAMI POW, the IWG recommended updating and promoting the implementation of the [Central Asian Mammals Migration and Linear Infrastructure Atlas](#) and [the Guidelines for Addressing the Impact of Linear Infrastructure on Large Migratory Mammals in Central Asia](#). The outcomes of the meeting are reflected in Document UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.30.3.1.
8. The 1<sup>st</sup> Range States Meeting for the Persian Leopard was held in Tbilisi, Georgia, from 20-22 September 2022, with logistical support from the Caucasus Nature Fund. The meeting reviewed and endorsed [the Range-wide Strategy for the Conservation of the Persian Leopard](#), which the IUCN Cat Specialist Group had been commissioned to prepare. The meeting documents can be accessed [here](#). The following Range States were officially represented: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan (online). The Islamic Republic of Iran and Armenia participated online for one of the three days of the meeting due to challenging situations in their countries at the time. The Strategy is contained in [UNEP/CMS/PL-RS1/Outcome](#).
9. In response to a request from the Government of Kazakhstan, and in line with the MTIWP for the Saiga MOU (2021-2025), the CMS Secretariat organized the Consultative Meeting, 'Identifying solutions to human-wildlife conflict involving Saiga Antelopes in Kazakhstan', in cooperation with the Forestry and Wildlife Committee of Kazakhstan, the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan and UNDP Kazakhstan. The meeting was funded by the Government of Germany and UNDP Kazakhstan. The meeting, which took place in Astana, Kazakhstan from 25-27 May 2023, aimed to develop a strategy for the conservation and management of Saiga Antelopes in Kazakhstan, with a particular focus on alleviating the human-wildlife conflict resulting from Saiga herds entering agricultural areas.
10. The 1<sup>st</sup> [Range States Meeting for the Asiatic Wild Ass](#) will take place on the Isle of Vilm, Germany, from 26 June - 1 July 2023 and aims to develop an international action plan for the conservation of the species. On the last day of the meeting, the participants will discuss how to advance transboundary conservation of the Asiatic Wild Ass and other migratory species in its habitat.

#### *Studies*

11. In 2019, the CMS Secretariat published the study, '[Transboundary Conservation Hotspots for the Central Asian Mammals Initiative](#)', prepared with funding from the

Government of Switzerland, and endorsed by the [2<sup>nd</sup> Range States Meeting of CAMI](#). In 2021, the CMS Secretariat commissioned an extension of the study with funding from BMUV and the Government of Switzerland to include the species added to the Initiative by COP13 (Gobi Bear, Persian Leopard and Urial) as well as additional CAMI Range States, which had not been included in the first version of the study due to financial constraints. The updated study identified 39 transboundary areas between 14 CAMI Range States. The study is currently being reviewed by the Secretariat and will be shared with Range States for comment, prior to being published.

12. In October 2022, a study entitled 'Potential for Community-based Wildlife Management of CAMI Species' was commissioned by the Secretariat jointly with the BfN INA. The study explores the feasibility of applying community-based wildlife management approaches in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, with the aim of improving the long-term conservation of Saiga Antelope, Argali Sheep, Snow Leopard and Bukhara Deer. The study is being reviewed by the Secretariat and will be shared with Range States for comment, prior to being published.
13. At the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council (July 2021, online), an Intersessional Working Group on the Asiatic Cheetah was established, in line with activity 8.1 of the [CAMI POW](#) (8.1: *To support and contribute to an analysis of knowledge gaps based on scientific evidence, specifically: c) Provide robust evidence and information to stakeholders, particularly regarding status, distribution and threat*). The Working Group was mandated to consider options for the recovery of the Asiatic and North-East African Cheetah, as set out in its Terms of Reference ([UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Outcome 7](#)), and report to the Sessional Committee at its 6<sup>th</sup> meeting on its findings to inform a Decision by COP14.
14. As per the Terms of Reference, a *Report on the Situation of the Cheetah in Iran (Acinonyx jubatus venaticus)* and a *Report on the Situation of the Cheetah in the Horn of Africa (Acinonyx jubatus soemmeringii)* were prepared by the IUCN Cat Specialist Group, with funding from the Government of the UK. The *Report on the Situation of the Cheetah in Iran* has not been published and the Working Group meeting could not be held. However, in order to advance the process, the *Report on the Situation of the Cheetah in the Horn of Africa (Acinonyx jubatus soemmeringii)* was provided to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Range States of the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative (ACI) for review (CITES-CMS/ACI2/Doc.3, Annex 1) and as basis for discussion of illegal trade in *A. j. soemmeringii* as required in the ACI POW and CITES COP19 Decisions.

### Projects

15. The implementation of the Central Asian Mammals and Climate Adaptation project, funded by the IKI and led by the UNEP office in Vienna, started in January 2021 and will be completed in 2025. The project aims to increase the resilience of mountain mammals and local communities to climate change and other related threats. The project covers three countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) and its target species include the CMS-listed Argali, Bukhara Deer and Snow Leopard, in addition to other large mammals not listed under CMS. The creation of an online infrastructure atlas planned within this project can benefit multiple species across 8 of the 14 CAMI Range States, if used by decision makers to plan infrastructure projects that take migratory species into consideration. The CMS Secretariat has one of the leading roles in the project, aiming, inter alia, to provide guidance on the interlinkages between habitat connectivity and resilience of migratory species to climate change, and to facilitate policy uptake of the project results at the regional level.

16. The CMS Secretariat also joined an IKI grant application submitted in March 2021 under the lead of the IUCN Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (IUCN ECARO), aiming to enhance the One Health approach in the conservation of wildlife, including for CAMI-listed species in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In 2022, the consortium was granted the opportunity to develop a full proposal, which is currently under review. If the application is successful, the project will address the CAMI POW actions on, inter alia, reducing barriers to migration, addressing wildlife diseases, and reviewing legislation that affects CMS-listed species, including mammals and birds.

#### Discussion and analysis

17. As set out above, a range of activities could be implemented during the intersessional period between COP13 and COP14. This positive result is due to several important factors: a) the long-standing cooperation with the German BfN/INA, which provides invaluable financial, technical and logistical support; b) the financial and political support of the Governments of Germany and Switzerland; c) an active network of Range State Governments, scientists, other UN organizations and NGOs in which information can be exchanged, funds raised and collaboration enhanced.
18. Despite the support received, some key activities of the POW for which the Secretariat was responsible and for which no project funding could be identified were not implemented. Time and funding were too short to implement the activities covering the entire CAMI region and more CAMI species, to analyse implementation of the POW, and to engage in more comprehensive fundraising efforts to address implementation gaps. As the number of species covered by CAMI increases, strategic planning to streamline implementation, focusing on cross-cutting issues that benefit multiple species, is necessary, thereby ensuring that CAMI remains a platform that addresses several species and issues at the same time rather than breaking into small components that address individual species.
19. While excellent policy guidance and technical tools have been created under CAMI by regional and international experts, their application in Range States remains a challenge. CAMI Range States and the CMS Secretariat need to develop a strategy for the uptake of such guidance by relevant actors.
20. The Decisions proposed in the Annex of this document cover all these activities – which still remain relevant.

#### Recommended actions

21. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to adopt the draft Decisions as contained in the Annex of this document.

**DRAFT DECISIONS**

**CENTRAL ASIAN MAMMALS INITIATIVE**

***Directed to Parties***

14.AA Parties that are CAMI Range States are requested to:

- a) review the reports, 'Transboundary Conservation Hotspots for the Central Asian Mammals Initiative' and 'Potential for Community-based Wildlife Management of CAMI Species', to be shared by the Secretariat;
- b) enhance transboundary cooperation in hotspot areas, as identified by the study, 'Transboundary Conservation Hotspots for the Central Asian Mammals Initiative';
- c) consider adding species newly listed on CMS to CAMI, if they share similar threats and habitats with existing CAMI species and, if needed, propose respective modifications to the current CAMI POW for consideration by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of CAMI Range States;
- d) revise, for adoption by COP15, the CAMI POW for the period 2027-2033, with the aim of streamlining its actions to focus on cross-cutting activities that benefit multiple species and to reflect updated CMS mandates relevant to the region, ensuring that emerging threats such as climate change are understood and included;
- e) develop, in cooperation with the CMS Secretariat, and implement a strategy or other actions to promote the use of the various products developed under CAMI in relevant organizations, entities and processes.

***Directed to the Secretariat***

14.BB The Secretariat shall:

- a) support Parties in implementing Decision 14.AA;
- b) subject to the availability of external resources, translate the studies, 'Transboundary Conservation Hotspots for the Central Asian Mammals Initiative' and 'Potential for Community-based Wildlife Management of CAMI Species', into Russian to facilitate their review and endorsement by the concerned Range State Parties;
- c) share both studies with the Range State Parties for comment, integrate their feedback and submit them to the next CAMI Range State Meeting and the CMS Standing Committee for approval;
- d) report to the Conference of the Parties at its 15<sup>th</sup> meeting on the progress in implementing this Decision.

***Directed to the Standing Committee***

14.CC The Standing Committee shall:

- a) Review and approve the studies mentioned in Decision 14.BB and make recommendations to Parties on next steps to use these Studies.