

**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

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FIRST MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING
CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE
USE OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*)
Almaty, Kazakhstan, 25-26 September 2006
Agenda Item 8.2

MOU COORDINATION

(Note prepared by the Secretariat)

1. Paragraph 5 of the MoU raises the issue of MoU coordination. It states that for “general co-ordination and realization of the Action Plan, the possibility of establishing an intergovernmental commission for conservation, restoration and sustainable use of the Saiga antelope and its habitat shall be considered.” Action point 3.3.1 makes a similar statement.
2. It is generally accepted that the CMS Secretariat acts as the secretariat to MoUs developed under CMS auspices. This has historically been at no cost to the MoU signatories, the exception being the Indian Ocean-South-east Asia Marine Turtles MoU where voluntary contributions from the signatories fund an out-posted secretariat. The CMS Secretariat acts as Secretariat for the Saiga Antelope MoU pursuant to MoU paragraph 11.
3. As the number of MoUs has grown, the CMS Secretariat has increasingly sought to partner with collaborating organisations to support it in organising MoU meetings and to provide technically oriented documentation and advice.
4. In addition, in order to provide a more solid basis for MoUs and their accompanying action plans to be effectively implemented, the CMS Secretariat has been developing the theory and practice of outsourced “MoU coordinators” with many of the same collaborating partner organisations. This is in response to CMS Conference of the Parties Resolutions 7.7 and 8.5, which encouraged the Secretariat to continue exploring partnerships with interested organisations specialised in the conservation and management of migratory species for the provision of coordination services for selected MoUs.
5. To date coordinators have been established for the Siberian Crane, Great Bustard and Aquatic Warbler MoUs. The Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator was the first to be established and has been funded by the International Crane Foundation and CMS. Funding is available until 2009.
6. BirdLife International is providing coordination functions for the Great Bustard MoU with funding from the Austrian Government. Funding is available until the end of 2007.

7. Interim coordination functions for the Aquatic Warbler MoU were established for 3 years in collaboration with BirdLife International and the BirdLife United Kingdom Partner Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). At its own initiative, RSPB secured funding from the Michael Otto Foundation in Germany. The BirdLife Belarus Partner APB hosts the coordinator in collaboration with the Government of Belarus. At present the coordinator is provided at no cost to the Convention though this will change in 2007 with Birdlife and CMS splitting the costs for a 2-year period.

8. MoU coordinators, at least in part, are foreseen to offer technical advice to Range States in their project development under an MoU's action plan, to support the CMS Secretariat in the preparation of regular meetings of the Range States, and to undertake range-wide communication efforts to raise awareness and share information.

9. The attributes that would make a collaborating organisation potentially attractive to act as an MoU coordinator include *inter alia*: (1) a long term interest in the particular species; (2) a demonstrated commitment towards the MoU; (3) a regional presence or influence, including good relations with Range States and national level NGOs in the agreement area; (4) a demonstrated ability to fundraise and successfully implement projects; and (5) the ability to make financial or in-kind contributions towards the coordinator's position. The organisation could be intergovernmental, governmental or non-governmental.

10. A coordinator would operate in a purely technical capacity. The CMS Secretariat would maintain official contact with the Range States, the relevant CMS institutions and would remain ultimately responsible for the MoU's oversight. The coordinator would be tasked to work in a balanced way across the Saiga Antelope's migratory range to the extent possible and within the confines of available financial resources. Ultimate responsibility for implementing the MoU and Action Plan would remain with the MoU Signatories.

11. Funding and in-kind contributions will be a key consideration for establishing a coordination mechanism for the Saiga MoU as there is no dedicated budget line in the CMS regular budget.

12. CMS COP resolution 8.5 encouraged Parties, non-Parties and organisations to work closely with the CMS Secretariat in the coming triennium and to generously contribute financial and in-kind resources beyond whatever funds may be provided in the core CMS budget to support coordination mechanisms for instruments such as the Saiga Antelope MoU. The Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties adopted the CMS budget for the triennium 2006-2008 with a very modest amount dedicated to Agreement development and servicing under budget line 2260. This is in contrast to past CMS budgets.

13. The present triennium's budget was agreed on the understanding that voluntary contributions would be provided to help support the implementation of the Convention in lieu of larger assessed contributions on the Parties. The CMS Secretariat will hold its first ever donors meeting on 27 September 2006. In its list of project proposals it has included an urgent request for US\$25,000 to support the MoU's coordination for at least 2 years.

14. If the MoU Signatories accept the concept of a coordinator it would be appropriate to appeal to Saiga Range States, other countries, interested organisations and others to consider making a financial or in-kind contribution.

Action requested:

The Signatories, and as appropriate other meeting participants, are invited to:

- Consider the MoU coordination issue generally and determine what options are most desirable for the MoU's effective implementation and which the Secretariat should therefore pursue.
- Consider the financial aspects of the coordination issue and provide any guidance on possible options for financing and other support, including appealing for additional voluntary in-kind and financial contributions.
- Consider offering to host and/or fund a MoU coordination mechanism.