



# Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

Secretariat provided by the United Nations Environment Programme



## 40th Meeting of the Standing Committee

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### UPDATE ON INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

*(Prepared by the UNEP/CMS Secretariat)*

#### Introduction

1. Integration of scientific and technical information requires ensuring consistency and best practice in the compilation of information, developing information management tools, increasing access to information on migratory species already being collected by Secretariats and possessing the ability to analyze the data collected. For the CMS Family, integration is required not only across the CMS Family but also between biodiversity-related conventions, particularly on current data on various trends that impact on migratory species, for example information on ecosystem status, climate change and sea and land based pollution. Integration has become more essential with the need to meet the 2010 biodiversity targets and as a result of biodiversity indicators developed by the Convention on Biological Diversity.

2. **Objective 1 of the Strategic Plan (Resolution 10.5)** is to “ensure that the conservation and management of migratory species are based on the best available information”. This includes the collection and management of relevant data on the status of species and species groups, the threats they face and the measures taken to respond to these threats.

3. **Resolution 10.7** recognizes the need to modernize and streamline the Convention’s information sharing capacity. As CMS grows and cooperation with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and conservation organizations continues to increase, so should the method of sharing information among these groups. It is essential for the conservation of biodiversity that information can be easily shared among the environmental community. In order to make effective and positive decisions, up-to-date information must be readily available and accessible. The CMS Secretariat aims at providing its Parties with the same kind of information.

4. The harmonization and interoperability of information management systems within the CMS Family is one of the actions mandated by **Resolution 10.9 (Annex 1, Activity 9)**. A special working group consisting of representatives from AEWA, ASCOBANS, CMS and EUROBATS was established for the current website and database project. This group meets regularly to discuss the needs and to steer the process.

#### Web-based database and new CMS Family website

5. The Secretariat has contracted a software company for web development to implement a web-based database that allows the storage, structuring and retrieval of different types of information which the Secretariat handles and provides to Parties and partners. This includes data on species, countries, projects, contacts, reports, publications, meetings, documents and threats.

6. Initially, this database will be for the internal use of the Secretariats involved as well as for

integration with InforMEA. At a later stage, when the new CMS Family website is implemented and linked to this database, all stakeholders will benefit from the new way of storing and retrieving data.

7. The new set-up will be an improvement in collecting, structuring, sharing and delivering information related to the Convention and to those CMS instruments that will participate in this. It will enable advanced searches combining different search criteria and thus make it easier to retrieve information on specific topics. The new database will also allow CMS and those agreements that are part of the project to fully participate in InforMEA.

8. InforMEA is an online information portal for Multilateral Environmental Agreements which harvests data from the websites of these agreements, such as resolutions, meeting dates, contacts, and country information. It aims to be a “one stop shop” for information about all biodiversity-related conventions. The main benefit of InforMEA is that relevant information is taken from each MEA website automatically. CMS as well as other biodiversity conventions will post content on their respective websites, which will feed into the information available on the portal, enabling users to compare documents from different conventions quickly and easily. Provided the adequate technological set-up is in place, information is updated by the MEAs themselves without any additional workload. The current CMS website set-up does not allow for automated harvesting of CMS information though, and the current database project aims at remedying this shortcoming. CMS Parties will benefit from this technological improvement because it will become easier to search and find documents across several MEAs.

9. The implementation of the web-based database project has become possible due to generous financial support of the government of Germany. Additional funding will be required for the next steps including the design of a completely new CMS Family website as is foreseen under the Future Shape process.

### **New online workspace for the CMS Scientific Council (see also Doc 11.3)**

10. The Secretariat contracted a consultant to update the already existing AEWA Technical Committee workspace and to program duplicates for the CMS Scientific Council, the EUROBATS and ASCOBANS Advisory Committees. The consultant started in June 2012 with the due completion date for the project four months later.

11. The online workspace of the CMS Scientific Council is a web-based, password-protected communication space and working area, which has been specifically designed for the needs of the Scientific Council and its working groups. The new workspace is structured according to the working groups and ongoing policy processes of the Scientific Council.

12. Features include a dedicated space for each working group in the Working Area, a separate Discussion Area where members can create forum topics on issues not covered by the working groups and the Resource Area that enables quick and easy access to related CMS documents. Members will be able to work on draft documents together, share comments and latest research, and propose new policy avenues. The workspace is envisaged to become the primary tool for the Scientific Council to review draft Resolutions, draft guidelines and other documents. It will also serve as an archive of the activities and communication of the Scientific Council.

13. Following the positive experience of AEWA, the workspace will be administered by the CMS Secretariat. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Scientific Council, as well as the Chairs of individual working groups, will have particular responsibility to facilitate the work of the Scientific Council.

14. The online workspace was initially developed for the AEWA Technical Committee in 2008. The revised version was implemented in 2012 and is now used by the scientific bodies of CMS and three Agreements under the Convention, namely AEWA, ASCOBANS and EUROBATS.

15. The improvement and further development of the online workspaces was made possible through a generous contribution by Switzerland. Depending on financial resources, online workspaces of a similar format can now be relatively quickly set up for other CMS instruments or other working groups that might be interested in this tool.

**Action requested:**

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- a. Take note of and comment on the web-based database;
- b. Take note of and comment on the online workspace;
- c. Provide any comments to guide the Secretariat further in its implementation of Information Management activities in this inter-sessional period.