



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

Secretariat provided by the United Nations Environment Programme



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UPDATE ON NATIONAL REPORTING

(Prepared by the UNEP/CMS Secretariat)

Introduction

1. The availability of strategically relevant information continues to be a key challenge, with which CMS and its instruments have constantly been confronted throughout its existence. This is reflected in the first of the four objectives of the Strategic Plan of the Convention of Migratory Species for 2011-2014, “to ensure that the conservation and management of migratory species is based on the best available information”.
2. To this end, the Secretariat of the CMS is requested to obtain, from any appropriate source, reports and other information, which will further the objectives and reinforce the implementation of the Convention. It should then also arrange for the appropriate dissemination of this information. National Reports on the implementation of the Convention are structured according to the current Strategic Plan and seek information on each Party's success in progressing the activities and their respective actions called for in that Plan.
3. **Resolution 10.9 on the Future Structure and Strategies of the CMS and CMS Family, Annex 1, Activity 9** calls for the “harmonization and interoperability of information management and reporting systems where appropriate and applicable for the CMS Family.” This includes reducing duplication of reporting, properly analyzing and comparing data, and improving its collection, storage and management. Measures to this end would also reduce effort and time spent on collecting and reporting information across the CMS Family.
4. Activity 9 further stipulates the utilization of existing data collection and management systems external to CMS (for example by UNEP-WCMC). It also encourages building upon current practices of harmonization of data reporting and the development of current systems and harmonizing reporting formats.
5. **Resolution 9.4 on the Future of National Reports** requests the Secretariat to advance harmonization of reporting with other international biodiversity agreements through the development of common reporting modules, via the framework of the Biodiversity Liaison Group and in consultation with UNEP-WCMC. The resolution further requests the Secretariats and Parties of CMS Agreements to collaborate in the implementation and harmonization of online reporting implementation.

The CMS Family Online Reporting System (ORS)

6. Online reporting provides user-friendly, public access to reliable and current information on migratory species across the CMS Family, and will streamline reporting obligations of Parties in order to better assess the status of implementation of the Convention and related agreements.

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7. The CMS Family has developed an Online Reporting System (ORS) which streamlines the reporting process, makes it more efficient for the Parties and also provides the basis for easier analysis of datasets. The CMS Family ORS was developed by UNEP-WCMC in close collaboration and under the guidance of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. AEWA launched its first online national reporting process using the ORS in October 2011 for the MOP5 national reports. Anticipating the potential future use of the system by CMS and its instruments for online national reporting, the ORS was already designed as the CMS Family Online Reporting System. The ORS was also successfully presented at Ramsar COP11 in July 2012 and CBD COP11 in October 2012.

8. CMS proposes to adopt the ORS for COP11 in 2014 for its reporting needs. The national reporting form has been updated with the changes of COP10, with newly listed species and new resolutions to follow up on now listed in the form.

9. The ORS is a state-of-the-art electronic platform for online reporting which allows for the submission of national reports via a highly customizable, web-based interface. It was implemented as one of the components of the Norwegian-funded UNEP Knowledge Management among Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) project and is a reporting tool especially customized to the needs of MEAs and their online national reporting processes.

10. The ORS allows for the creation of highly customized questionnaires with numerous question types. These include dependencies, flexible re-ordering of questions and sophisticated looping questions and filtering options. On the respondent side, the system allows for delegation of entire sections or even individual questions to designated national respondents. An MEA Focal Point can assign a section or a specific question of a given national report to those national experts most suitable to answer the selected part of the report. After collection the input from the national experts, the Focal Point then submits the entire report to the Secretariat.

11. The conversion to an online format led to an improved reporting process. It facilitated the provision of information updates as well as the analysis, accessibility and exchange of the data in a clear and standardized manner.

12. Online Reporting allows:

- a) To improve information quality, consistency and transparency;
- b) To improve efficiency of information management for the Secretariats, Parties and the wider public;
- c) To reduce costs of information systems development for Secretariats (shared costs) and reporting costs for Parties;
- d) To improve linkages and sharing of information with international MEAs, environmental monitoring agencies, major data custodians, and regional treaties and the wider public.

Maintenance

13. The hosting on the servers of UNEP-WCMC, the basic maintenance and the support services related to operating the ORS system will generate costs for the Secretariat. Contractual arrangements with UNEP-WCMC to formalize these hosting, support and maintenance arrangements are currently being negotiated. This contract is to cover the hosting, maintenance and support requirements of the participating CMS Family treaties and the expected expansion of the use of this tool to further treaties under CMS in the future. These basic maintenance costs will need to be provided for in the CMS budget. Improvements and refinement of the system's functionalities

will have to be covered by additional voluntary contributions.

Analytical Tool

14. It is planned to commission the development of an Analytical Tool to complement the ORS and allow for instantaneous and automated analysis of the national reporting data. Just as the ORS itself, the ORS analysis component should also be designed in a flexible way, allowing Secretariats of different MEAs to easily design customized analysis features for their national reporting data submitted through the ORS.

15. The CMS Secretariat will need to secure funds for the development of the Analytical Tool. However, as other CMS Family treaties and other MEAs might be adopting the ORS for online national reporting, the associated development costs and fundraising efforts should be shared with the other participating entities as well as with UNEP-WCMC. An initial estimate for the development of the Analytical Tool including documentation, translation and user training amounts to approximately € 200,000.

Action requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- a. Take note and comment on the updated reporting form. A PDF version of the form with newly listed species and new resolutions to follow up on is available online for reference: http://www.cms.int/documents/national_reports/index_by_cop.htm;
- b. Endorse the use of the online reporting system for the COP11 reporting cycle;
- c. Take note of the maintenance cost implications as well as costs for further development of the analytical tool and consider contributing to those costs.