



**First Meeting of the Signatory States of the Memorandum of
Understanding on the Conservation and Management of the Middle-
European Population of the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*)**

*National Park Neusiedler See-Seewinkel, Burgenland, Illmitz, Austria
17-18 September 2004*

CMS/GB.1/8
Agenda item 9.2

FUTURE MOU COORDINATION

(Note prepared by the Secretariat)

1. It is generally accepted that the CMS Secretariat acts as the secretariat to MoU developed under CMS auspices at no cost to the MoU signatories, the exception being the Indian Ocean-South-east Asia Marine Turtles MoU. The CMS Secretariat acts as Secretariat for the Great Bustard MoU pursuant to MoU paragraph 1(e).
2. As the number of MoU has grown, the CMS Secretariat has increasingly sought to partner with collaborating organisations to support it in organising Range State meetings and provide technically-oriented documentation. This has been typically funded from the appropriate meeting budget line under the CMS regular budget. For the preparation of the Great Bustard MoU meeting CMS partnered with BirdLife International under contract.
3. Furthermore, in order to better ensure that the MoU and accompanying action plans are 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 line with CMS COP7 Resolution 7.7 that encouraged “the Secretariat to continue exploring partnerships with interested organisations specialised in the conservation and management of migratory species for the provision of secretariat services for selected MoU” (Paragraph 1(c)). Coordinators, at least in part, are foreseen to catalyze project development and funding under an MoU’s action plan, support the preparation of regular meetings of the Range States, and undertake range-wide communication efforts to raise awareness and share information.
4. There are some attributes that would make a potential collaborating organisation attractive for being invited to act as MoU coordinator. Some of the attributes considered by the CMS Secretariat have included *inter alia*: (1) a long term interest in the particular species; (2) demonstrated commitment towards the MoU; (3) a regional presence, including good relations with Signatory 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 governmental or non-governmental.

5. The Signatory States are invited to consider the desirability of an outsourced coordinator for the Great Bustard MoU, taking into consideration the attributes above. If the concept is found to be desirable, the Signatory States may also wish to ask the Secretariat to explore the options further and approach suitable organisations and discuss the concept.

6. Funding for a coordinator is an important outstanding issue however. To date coordinators have been established for the Siberian Crane MoU and the Aquatic Warbler MoU. The latter has been established for 3 years in collaboration with BirdLife International and the BirdLife United Kingdom Partner Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). 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.

7. The only coordinator funded thus far by the Convention directly has been that for the Siberian Crane MoU. This activity has been funded to date under CMS budget line 2253 (Implementation Measures), which has been supported by drawing down the CMS Trust Fund surplus. Without external funding any future coordinator positions would need to be supported by the Convention from a similar budget line. However, considering the Trust Fund's current status, and trends in CMS expenditure, it is unlikely that the Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) will be able to draw on Trust Fund surpluses in the future and one of the issues that will be before the COP is the extent to which implementation measure costs will be internalised into the CMS regular budget. Therefore the Signatory States may wish to consider what additional options there may be to fund a coordinator including governmental voluntary contributions and private sources.

Action requested:

The Signatory States, and as appropriate other participants in the meeting, are invited to:

- Consider the MoU Coordinator issue generally and determine whether this is a desirable option that the Secretariat should pursue.
- Consider the financial aspects of the issue and provide any guidance on possible options.