



# CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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## A NATURAL AFFILIATION:

### Developing the Role of NGOs in the CMS Family

As a response to discussions held in the margins of 10<sup>th</sup> Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Conference of the Parties (CoP), Wild Migration has recently completed an international Review - *A Natural Affiliation: Developing the Role of NGOs in the CMS Family*<sup>1</sup>, to explore Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) relationships with the CMS Family<sup>1</sup>, including perspectives on CMS as a mechanism, CMS's influence and implementation<sup>2</sup> and NGO contributions to this influence and implementation.

The full Review, *A Natural Affiliation*, is available online at:

[http://www.wildmigration.org/ANaturalAffiliation/ANaturalAffiliation\\_SPWG.pdf](http://www.wildmigration.org/ANaturalAffiliation/ANaturalAffiliation_SPWG.pdf)

#### Key messages:

The key findings of the Review are that NGOs are committed to the CMS Family and would be prepared to input more if the right dynamic was created. This would require:

- greater commitment from Governments to implement the agreed conservation priorities;
- clearer and more consistent respect for NGO contribution to implementation; and
- clearer and longer-term articulation of what NGOs can do to support implementation (respecting that they will not simply give money to a central pool).

NGOs believe that more can be done to increase the CMS Family's influence in other MEAs and international processes and that greater consistency of positions across the CMS Family (including through Governments) as well as stronger, coordinated, CMS Family representation within other MEAs would help.

NGOs think that tightening reporting requirements for CMS Family Parties and Signatories is needed and that developing an evaluation process that draws information from the whole CMS Family and formally includes NGO contributions is important. NGOs feel that it is time to explore the creation of a peer review or compliance mechanism for CMS, believing that without this, Governments will not take their commitment to CMS seriously.

1 The term CMS Family refers to the parent convention and its formal bodies as well as all Agreements, Memorandum of Understanding and their formal bodies, and any Action Plans developed with voluntary association, as outlined in the CMS Family Guide

2 Implementation means 'the process by which intent gets translated into action'. It includes the myriad of events and activities that occur in response to a public policy directive that have the intent of accomplishing that directive.

NGOs, especially those with established research programmes, are interested in engaging in work that is directly relevant to CMS and CMS agreements. However, this requires CMS to identify priority activities that scientific institutes and researchers are able to draw upon for setting their priorities and seeking funding. Similarly, if short, medium and long term policy priorities were set and NGOs were invited into the planning process for how to take issues forward, it would increase the NGO buy-in and contribution to CMS and CMS processes.

### **Recommendations relating to CMS's science agenda**

A series of NGO Recommendations have also been developed. These can be found on pages 34-36 of the Review.

A number of these Recommendations relate specifically to CMS's science agenda. These are:

1. Ensuring that there is a balance of profile between species and habitats activities so that CMS can be appropriately acknowledged as an implementing agent of biodiversity policy
2. Strengthening the CMS agenda to influence and contribute to key components of the CBD and CITES plans so they adequately reflect CMS priorities and needs; by focusing on facilitating deliverables that increase levels of on-ground implementation, especially in making better use of CMS's trans-boundary/inter-governmental negotiation abilities. CMS agreements can make use of regional 'edges' that have great conservation impact.
3. Making better use of taskforces or technical expert panels, and ensuring the progress and contributions of these taskforces and panels is fully understood [by the whole CMS Family, including CMS Parties].
4. Codifying [additional] key advisory roles in the Scientific Council [to fully cover the issues and topics that the Scientific Council must cover] and inviting [appropriately skilled and expert] NGOs to fill these roles.
5. Assessing extent to which CMS:
  - a. agreement activities are meeting CMS objectives and targets and identifying gaps for specific species or issues, that can be promoted to the NGO research or policy community for support;
  - b. is addressing habitat conservation for listed species including the development and management of wildlife corridors, particularly transnational corridors; and
  - c. policy is being reflected in other key MEAs and identify gaps that can be promoted to the NGO research or policy community for support.
6. Developing a series of priority activities that draw upon these three assessments [and promoting these activities as opportunities to the research community to formally deliver over appropriate time frames, i.e. 1-3 years or 3-6 years].
7. Establishing processes and a culture of more frequent interactions with technical or scientific experts on research progress, perhaps by creating more frequent interaction of technical experts and scientists to maintain contact and keep workflow moving - through the Scientific Council Workspace as well as CMS facilitated web conferencing. This would mean that the big face-to-face meetings are more efficiently used.

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