



15th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
11 – 13 December 2019, Bristol, United Kingdom

REPORT OF THE UNEP/AEWA SECRETARIAT

INTRODUCTION

The present report covers the work of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat for the period between 15 December 2018 - after MOP7 - and 30 October 2019.

The report is divided into five sections:

1. Organization of the Secretariat;
2. General Management, which includes recruitment of Parties and cooperation with other organizations;
3. Communication, Information Management and Outreach;
4. Science, Implementation and Compliance;
5. Capacity-Building.

Activities reported in detail in other StC15 documents are only mentioned briefly here, with a reference to the relevant substantive document containing more information. Finance and administrative issues are reported in a special document (AEWA/StC 15.8).

The day-to-day work of the Agreement Secretariat, which includes responding to incoming mail, maintaining the Secretariat's extensive network of contacts, internal meetings with the UNEP/CMS Secretariat, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and/or UN Heads of Agencies etc. are not specifically mentioned in this report.

1. ORGANIZATION OF THE SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat is organized into four units which cover four broad areas of work (as described in Annex 1 – Organizational Structure and Annex II - Staff Composition of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat). The titles of the different posts have been updated to better reflect the work done and the Secretariat is currently working on updating all job descriptions.

In 2019 the AEWA Secretariat applied for a Junior Professional Officer (UNEP JPO Programme) to support the work of the Technical Committee but unfortunately no country offered a JPO to the AEWA Secretariat. The Secretariat will renew its proposal in 2020.

Without the extension of the part-time positions through voluntary contributions, the availability of staff funded entirely through voluntary contributions and the support of interns, the Secretariat would not have been in a position to deliver all services requested.

2. GENERAL MANAGEMENT

2.1. Recruitment of Parties

Since MOP7, three new Contracting Parties have acceded to AEWA (The Central African Republic on 1 January 2019, the Republic of Serbia on 1 March 2019 and the Republic of Malawi on 1 September 2019), bringing the total number of Parties to 80.

In addition, significant progress has been made in the accession process of a number of African non-Party Range States. The Agreement Text has also been updated into Portuguese for the benefit of the Portuguese-speaking Range States; the Secretariat and the Depositary have moreover updated the English, French and Arabic Agreement texts in 2019.

The Secretariat has been regularly communicating with Saudi Arabia on the accession process, which will hopefully be concluded soon.

Efforts to recruit additional Parties in Europe and Central Asia, including Bosnia & Herzegovina, Greece, Russia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan are also ongoing. The last four countries have been visited in October 2019 by the Secretariat to present to the national authorities the benefit of joining AEWA. Foreign missions of AEWA Contracting Parties were also visited to introduce the Agreement and seek support in recruiting the Range States as Parties.

In addition, after an electronic consultation in August, the StC members agreed on the Terms of reference for the National Focal points which are published on the AEWA Website (<https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/page/national-focal-points>).

2.2. Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee

The 14th Meeting of the Standing Committee was held in Durban, South Africa on 8 December 2018, back to back with MOP7, with the aim of electing the Chair (United Kingdom) and the Vice-Chair (South Africa) of the Committee. Hungary as host of MOP8 has joined the Standing Committee for the triennium.

The StC14 meeting report is available at:

https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/document/aewa_stc14_meeting_report_0.pdf

2.3. Meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee

The 15th Meeting of the Technical Committee was held in Bonn, Germany, 9 - 11 April 2019. The meeting was convened with the aim to review and approve the programme of work of the TC and set up the working groups.

The TC15 meeting report is available at:

https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/document/aewa_tc15_report.pdf

2.4. Cooperation with UN Environment and Other Organizations

UN Environment and CMS Family

On 23 August 2019, the CMS Family (CMS, EUROBATS and AEWA) met the newly appointed UNEP Executive Director to discuss how to increase the programmatic cooperation and cooperation with UNEP.

On programmatic synergies, some items such as the illegal killing of birds, lead poisoning or the energy sector are now led by CMS following COP decisions broadening the mandate on these issues under the Convention. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is, however, still involved in all relevant Task Forces.

As a member of the CMS Multi-stakeholder Task Force, the Secretariat participated in the fourth meeting on 19 - 20 September 2019 in Paris. For more information please see:

<https://www.cms.int/en/meeting/fourth-meeting-energy-task-force>

As a member of the CMS Illegal Killing Task Force, the Secretariat participated in the third MIKT meeting on 8 - 10 May 2019 in Roma. For more information please see:

https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/cms_mikt3_meeting-report_0.pdf

On 16 - 17 March 2019, the Secretariat also participated in a meeting of the CMS African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Action Plan AEMLAP (Peterborough, UK), concentrating on habitat conservation and land-use issues. AEMLAP complements the conservation agenda within the African-Eurasian region, with AEWA focusing on sites and habitats and the CMS Raptors MoU on migratory bottlenecks. This allows for better integration of conservation work into agriculture, energy and other areas of development.

The Secretariat attended the 12th Expert Group on the Birds and Habitats Directives (NADEG) meeting, 22-23 May 2019, Brussels, to report on the EGMP process.

Ramsar Convention

The cooperation with the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention has mainly focused on African topics.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, in cooperation with the Ramsar Secretariat and the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, has organized an AEWA training-of-trainers workshop on flyway conservation for francophone countries in West and Central Africa, in Cotonou, Benin, 6-10 May 2019 with funding secured by the AEWA Secretariat from the European Commission.

The Ramsar Secretariat is also a partner of the RESSOURCE project (see below) and both Secretariats cooperate in the framework of this project.

International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC)

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat attended the 66th General Assembly of the CIC on 1 - 4 May 2019 in Windhoek, Namibia. The meeting was held in the framework of an international conference hosted by the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism: Crossroads - Leading the Way for Wildlife Conservation. On this occasion, the Executive Secretary participated in special events on migratory birds and presented the concept of adaptive management for migratory waterbirds. These meetings were also a good opportunity to present AEWA to the Minister in charge of the Environment as Namibia is not a Party. CIC is also a partner of the World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) campaign.

FAO and FFEM and the RESSOURCE Project

"RESSOURCE" is the acronym for the French equivalent of "Strengthening expertise in Sub-Saharan Africa on birds and their rational use for communities and their environment". The ecosystems at the core of this project are based on the Senegal River Valley, the Inner Niger Delta, Lake Chad and parts of the River Nile. These are areas upon which almost one billion people depend for agriculture, rearing of livestock, fishing and hunting, and which are equally of critical importance to millions of waterbirds.

The project aims to evaluate the sustainability of exploiting the resources represented by waterbirds thanks to its integrated approach which includes: (i) assessing the resources in terms of the numbers, distribution and socio-economic importance, especially for rural communities (ii) preserving habitats and (iii) proposing conservation measures at community level.

For further information, please see:

<http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/conserving-waterbirds-africa%E2%80%99s-sahelo-saharan-region>

The Executive Secretary attended the third Steering Committee meeting of the RESSOURCE project at the FAO Headquarters on 12 - 13 June 2019, where the results of the programme of work were discussed between all partners. The next Steering Committee will be hosted by the AEWA Secretariat in Bonn, June 2020.

Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative

The Secretariat continued to contribute to the implementation of the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative (AMBI), established under the Arctic Council's biodiversity-related working group CAFF (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna). The Secretariat serves on the Steering Group for the African-Eurasian flyway and attended the Arctic Seabirds Experts Meeting on 26 - 29 March 2019 in Iceland.

Other Flyways:

East Asian-Australasian Flyway

Mr Sergey Dereliev, Head of the Science, Implementation and Compliance unit at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has been nominated as a member of the Technical Committee of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) in March 2018. This exchange with the partnership in the East Asian-Australasian flyway will allow for a closer cooperation and coordination between the two instruments. The Chair of the EAAFP Technical Committee and the Head of the Science Unit participated as an observer to the 15th AEWA TC meeting, April 2019, while Mr. Dereliev attended the online meetings of the EAAFP Technical Committee in April and August 2019.

Central Asian Flyway

At StC13, on 5th July 2018, the StC members decided that the Secretariat should invest a certain, measured amount of staff time and provide guidance to the Indian Government on bringing a proposal to AEW AMOP8 in 2021 for amendment of AEWA Annexes in order to incorporate the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) and its Action Plan. The Secretariat attended a meeting on the Indian National CAF Action Plan in November 2018, New Delhi to discuss the issue. In January 2019 a coasted roadmap leading to MOP8 in 2021 was sent to the Indian Government. The way forward will be discussed at the CAF Range Countries meeting convened by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, 19 - 20 November 2019. This meeting is organized in parallel with the “International Conference on Wetland and Migratory Waterbirds of the Asian Flyways” organized by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) on 18 - 22 November 2019 in Lonavala, Maharashtra (<https://cwamwaf.in/conference/>). The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat as well as the UNEP/CMS Secretariat have been invited to participate in the two events.

2.5. Fundraising

Please refer to document AEWA/StC 15.8 Report of the Secretariat on Finance and Administrative Issues.

2.6. MOP7 proceedings and Preparation of MOP8

The MOP7 proceedings have been published on the website and as hardcopies in English and French. The Secretariat is grateful to the BMUB (Germany) for having printed them. For the English version please follow the link:

https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/document/PROCEEDINGS%20MOP7_FINAL_with%20BMUB%20logo_24_Sep%202019.pdf

The participants to MOP7 expressed their gratitude to the Government of Hungary for having generously offered to host the 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP8). This MOP is organized in the framework of the international exhibition “One with Nature” in Budapest, 25 September – 14 October 2021. The MOP8 is scheduled for mid-October (to be confirmed). The Secretariat and the Hungarian authorities are working on the Host Government Agreement.

2.7. The AEWA African Initiative

For a report on the African Initiative, please see document AEWA StC 15.11.

3. COMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

3.1. Communication Activities

The main achievements related to AEWA of the Joint CMS + AEWA Information Management, Communications and Awareness Raising (IMCA) Unit in the period since AEWA MOP7 have been 1.) the successful organization of the World Migratory Bird Day 2019 campaign (now with two peak days in May and October which generated over 700 events in 70 countries) 2.) the support the Unit has given towards key areas related to the work of the SICU Unit, such as supporting the work of the EGMP (design support for publications including layout of EGMP Secretariat report, Fact Sheets, EGMP website and workspace), the set-up and management of the online reporting for the AEWA Populations Status Review as well as 3.) the ongoing day-to-day management of the official AEWA website and social media channels. A summary of the IMCA Unit Time and Task tracking (Toggl) results and overall CMS – AEWA balance for the period January - October 2019 can be found below.

3.2. Joint CMS/AEWA Unit

Through Resolution 6.22, the Meeting of the Parties requested the UNEP/AEWA and UNEP/CMS Secretariats to develop a proposal detailing implementation arrangements for the joint CMS/AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Unit (IMCA Unit) including staff time and budget sharing ratios. The four recommendations made by the StC to the MOP7 have been accepted and we present below the results of the analysis for the first 10 months of the current year.

According to the latest Toggl Time & Task Tracking figures for the period January - October 2019, the overall ratio of time allocation of work carried out by the Joint Communications Unit is 31 % AEWA (at 141 days) and 69% CMS (330 days) - with the Joint Activities factored in at a 1/3 AEWA and 2/3 CMS ratio.

Between January and October 2019, the Joint Communications Unit has worked over 1132 hrs (or 141 days) on purely AEWA related tasks (with peaks in the months of March and April) and 2167 hrs (or 270 days) on activities listed under joint CMS and AEWA activities (with World Migratory Bird Day and General Office Communication and Administration listed as the main items).

The largest amount of time has gone into supporting the following AEWA activities, which are listed as projects in the Time & Task Tracking system: Support to the EGMP (24 days), National Reporting including the Population Status Review (14 days), Website Content Management & News Production (13 days), Core support to SICU (12 days), Administration (11 days) and Social Media Management (10 days). The other projects consuming between 4 - 8 days each include Personal Desktop Publishing Work, Development & Training, Internal Meetings, Support to the African Initiative, External Meetings and Contact Database management.

It should be noted that the above figures reflect actual working hours as recorded in Toggl by the team members that have actively been contributing to the work of the Joint Unit in the period January - October 2019. It does not include the missing IMCA team staff capacity that has resulted from a vacant CMS G4 80 % Position as well as tasks performed by a staff member that do not relate to the core work of the Unit, such as report writing.

While some of the missing time has been compensated by CMS through a temporary consultant for World Migratory Bird Day and by increasing the AEWA G5 Information Assistant Position to 100% (whereby 20% is covered by CMS), the team has in reality been operating with a reduced capacity (60 % Part Time G4 Position) in the months of August - October 2019, which alone would amount to 39.6 deficit days which should have been provided by CMS. An overall assessment of the actual number of days provided to the Unit by both CMS and AEWA will be made at the end of 2019.

Finally, it should also be noted that there is a legacy deficit from the years 2017 and 2018 which remains at 47.5 days owed by CMS to AEWA. CMS and AEWA Management are aware of this deficit and the one relating to the reduction in staff capacity and will work collaboratively to address this deficit through an exchange of staff/ service or through financial compensation in the future.

4. SCIENCE, IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE

4.1. Sustainable harvest

The Secretariat attended a meeting of the national hunting associations from the north-west European countries convened by the Danish Hunters Association (DHA) on 8 - 9 May 2019 in Billund, Denmark in order to discuss the contribution of the hunting community to the sustainable harvest and management of migratory waterbird populations. The Secretariat, together with representatives of Wetlands International and Aarhus University, set the scene for the discussions between the representatives of the hunting associations and outlined the main avenues through which the hunting community can make a contribution. The meeting resulted in the establishment of an informal network coordinated by DHA aiming at increasing the contribution of hunting community to the sustainable harvest and management.

4.2. AEWA International Species Action and Management Plans and AEWA International Species Working Groups

Five International Species Action and Management Plans were adopted at MOP7 and one retired bringing the total of Action and Management Plans to 29 including the Multi-Species Action Plan for Benguela Upwelling System Coastal Seabirds.

An overview on the current status of the establishment and coordination of AEWA International Species Expert and Working Groups is provided in the MOP 7.21 document “Summary of the Current Status of Single Species Action Plan and Species Management Plan Production”.

AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*) International Working Group

The coordination of the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group continues to be facilitated by the AEWA Associate Programme Officer for Single Species Action Plan Support based at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. The Secretariat is grateful to the Government of Norway which has renewed its financial support for 2020-2022.

The 4th Meeting of the International Working Group took place on the 11 - 13 of November 2019 in Bucharest, Romania hosted by the Romanian Ministry of Environment and organized together with the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds in the framework of the EU LIFE Red-breasted Goose project.

AEWA Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*) International Working Group

The 2nd Meeting of the International Working Group took place on the 13 - 15 of November 2019 in Bucharest, Romania hosted by the Romanian Ministry of Environment and organized together with the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds in the framework of the EU LIFE Red-breasted Goose project.

AEWA Grey Crowned-crane (*Balearica regulorum*) International Working Group

The first meeting of the IWG was held in Entebbe, Uganda, 24 - 26 July 2019. A concrete implementation plan until 2022 was elaborated and adopted.

AEWA Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) International Working Group

In the framework of the AEWA Eurasian Curlew International Working Group, the north and west European Range States present during a meeting hosted by the French Ministry for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition, Paris, 18 September 2019, agreed to launch the development of an Adaptive Harvest Management Programme.

AEWA White-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi*) International Working Group

The 3rd meeting of the International Working Group will be taking place in Dullstroom, South Africa on 5 - 7 November 2019 with the main goal to discuss and agree on its implementation plan for 2020-2022.

4.3. AEWA European Goose Management Platform

The EGMP has 15 participating Range States, 14 national governments and the European Commission: Belarus, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, EU, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Ukraine and United Kingdom.

The coordination of the AEWA European Goose Management Platform (EGMP) continues to be facilitated by the EGMP Coordinator based at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in close collaboration with Aarhus University, functioning as the EGMP Data Centre. Under the coordination of the EGMP Data Centre, the International Modelling Consortium, consisting of an international partnership of scientific institutions, collaborates on the development of population models.

The EGMP Secretariat and the Data Centre organised an internal one-day workshop in Rønne, Denmark on 20 March 2019, back-to-back with the International Modelling Consortium meeting in order to plan the development of the Adaptive Flyway Management Programmes (AFMPs) outlined in the Barnacle Goose and Greylag Goose International Single Species Management Plans (ISSMPs).

The 4th Meeting of the AEWA European Goose Management International Working Group (EGM IWG4) took place on 18 - 20 June 2019 in Perth, Scotland, the United Kingdom, at the kind invitation of Scottish Natural Heritage. The annual meeting was preceded by a day of face-to-face meetings of the various Task

Forces established under the EGMP. The EGM IWG received updates and decided on the next steps in the implementation of the International Single Species Action and Management Plans under the remit of the EGMP. Moreover, the EGM IWG discussed and agreed on options for the next steps towards the implementation phase of the ISSMPs for the Barnacle Goose and for the NW/SW European population of the Greylag Goose, including the development of Adaptive Flyway Management Programmes (AFMPs) and setting up Favourable Reference Values (FRVs).

Following EGM IWG4, a Barnacle Goose Range State Meeting on the development of an Adaptive Flyway Management Programme took place on the 1st of October in Reykjavík, Iceland and was kindly hosted by the Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources. Important steps towards establishing population-specific Adaptive Flyway Management Programmes for the East Greenland/Scotland & Ireland Population and the Svalbard/South-west Scotland Population of the Barnacle Goose were agreed upon.

The 5th Meeting of the EGM IWG (EGM IWG5) is scheduled to take place on 16 - 18 June 2020, in Helsinki, Finland, back to back with the 3rd face-to-face meeting of the EGMP Task Forces (15 June 2020).

Funding towards the functioning the EGMP, including the staffing costs as well as the implementation of projects has been jointly provided by the EGMP Range States.

4.4. Implementation Review Process

In September 2019 the Standing Committee opened an IRP inquiry with the French Government over information about the hunting of the Curlew.

4.5. Climate Resilient Site Network Project

The project “Climate resilient site network in the African-Eurasian flyway” launched at MOP6 in November 2015 is funded by the International Climate Initiative of the German Government and coordinated by Wetlands International. The project is entitled, and its concept developed on the basis of the AEWA climate change agenda and mandates from the MOP. It involves some site assessments, two pilot projects in Mali and Ethiopia, production of guidelines and training of practitioners in African Parties. After MOP7 the AEWA Secretariat took part in the online meeting of the project Steering Committee in May 2019 and has been involved in the preparations for the two training workshops to take place in 2020.

4.6. Lead shot phase out in the EU

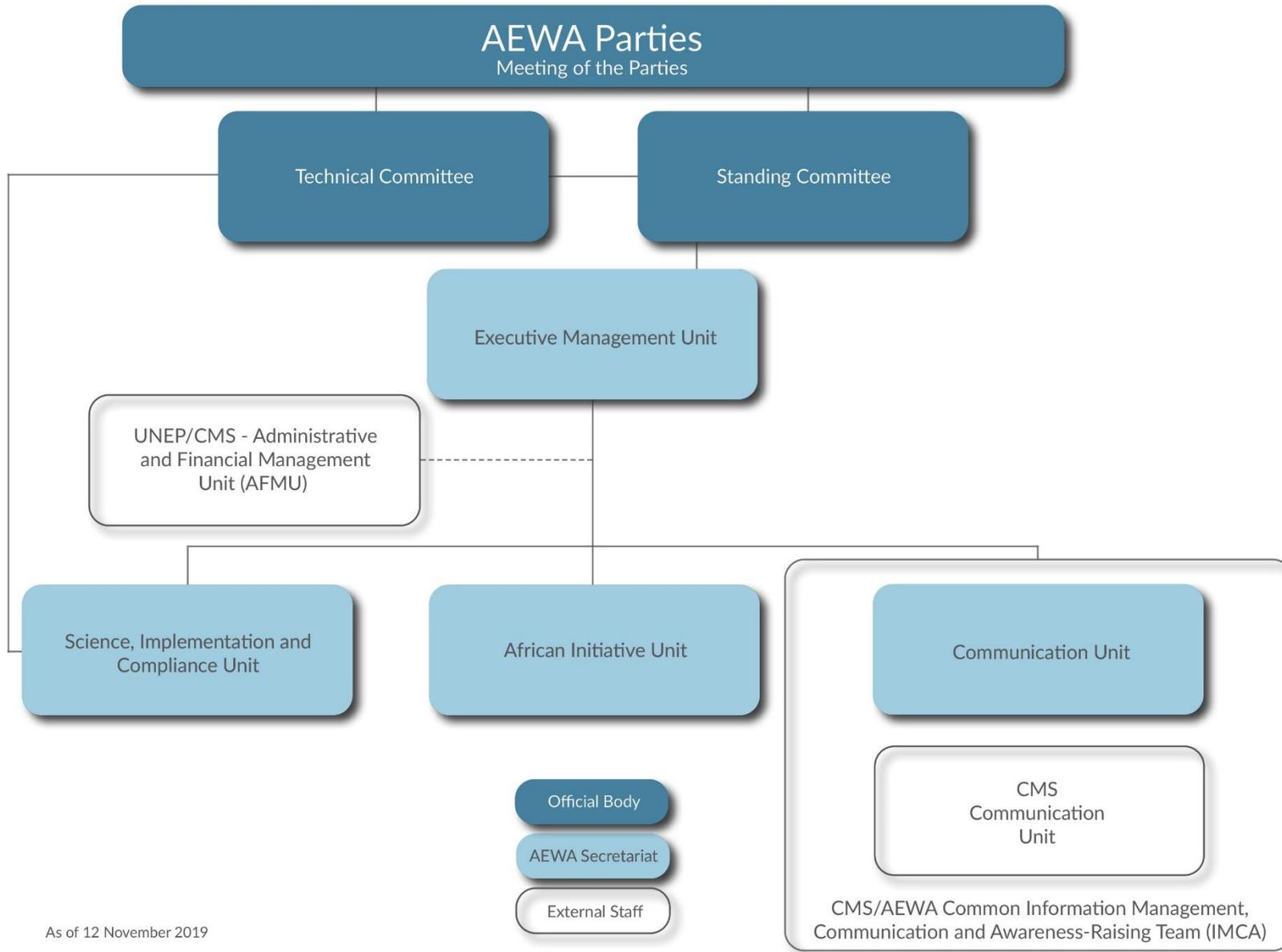
The European Commission (EC), in a letter dated 16 July 2019 to the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) has requested the agency to prepare a proposal addressing the risk to wildlife and humans from lead in all ammunition (shot and bullets). Lead in fishing weights are also included in the request.

5. CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity Building activities for the period mainly focused on the African region.

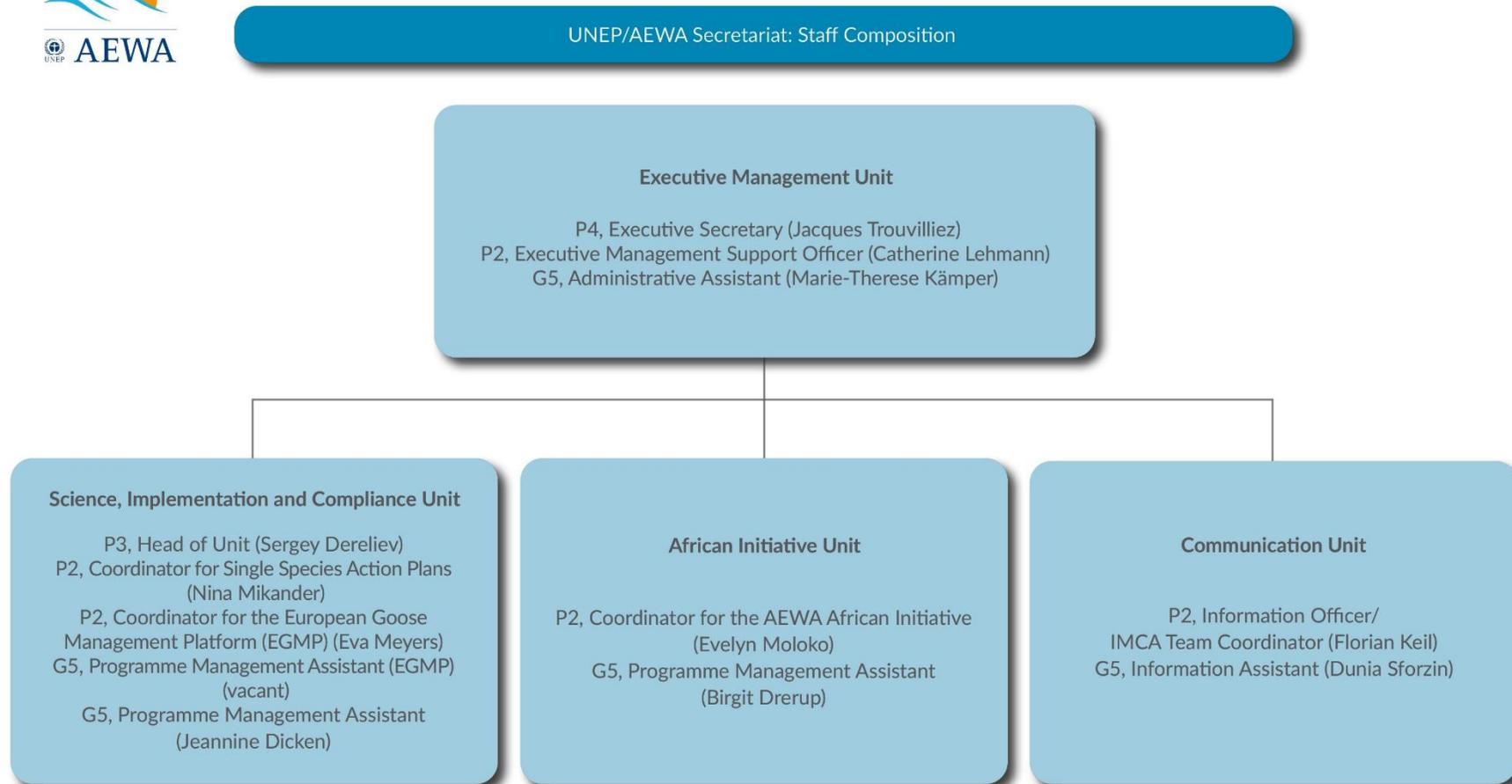
The major activity to be reported as already mentioned above is the organization in collaboration with the Ramsar Secretariat and the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative of a training-of-trainers workshop on flyway conservation for francophone West and Central Africa, in Cotonou, Benin, 6 - 10 May 2019 with funding secured by AEWA from the European Commission.

ANNEX I – Organizational Structure of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat



As of 12 November 2019

ANNEX II - Staff Composition of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat



P = Professional Staff Category
G = General Staff Category

As of 12 November 2019