

Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU)



REVIEW OF THE RAPTORS MOU ACTION PLAN



Dave Pritchard
April 2020

Compiled by

Dave Pritchard

Acknowledgements

The Coordinating Unit of the CMS Raptors MOU wishes to record a debt of gratitude to the following generous contributors of financial and in-kind support. The Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi on behalf of the Government of the United Arab Emirates has provided core funding for the Coordinating Unit since its establishment in 2009. In addition, financial support for the compilation of this Action Plan review was received from the Federal Office for the Environment of the Government of Switzerland. The following are also warmly thanked for contributing valuable inputs to this document: The Chair, Vice Chair and members of the Technical Advisory Group to the CMS Raptors MOU; representatives of Signatories and Range States of the Raptors MOU, NGOs, other specialist organisations and stakeholders who provided information, including responses to the questionnaire survey in 2019.

Geographical Scope

131 Range States in the African-Eurasian region.

Species Scope

The Action Plan of the CMS Raptors MOU currently covers 93 species of birds of prey and owls (Pandionidae 1 species, Accipitridae 65 species, Falconidae 15 species, and Strigidae 12 species) which occur in 131 Range States in Africa, Europe and Asia.

Publication Date

April 2020

Recommended Citation

Pritchard, D. E. 2020. Review of the CMS Raptors MOU Action Plan. Coordinating Unit of the CMS Raptors MOU, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Disclaimer

Opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of CMS. The designation of geographical entities does not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of CMS concerning the legal status of any country, territory or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Links to resources outside this document are provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only and should not be construed as an endorsement or approval by CMS of information provided through other sites and computer systems.

Layout

Dave Pritchard, Anne Thieme, Sofi Hinchliffe

Photo Credits

Angel Sanchez, Bearded Vulture (front cover)
Shutterstock/Henk Bogaard, Northern Goshawk (p. 70)

Contents

Summary	3
1. Introduction.....	5
2. Sources of information for the review	6
3. Institutional development of the MOU	16
4. Growth in taxonomic coverage of the MOU	17
5. National and regional raptor conservation strategies	18
6. Overall most positive advances.....	23
7. Overall greatest difficulties	25
8. Overall views on immediate next priorities	26
9. Action Plan Activity 1: Improvement of legal protection.....	28
10. Action Plan Activity 2: Protect and/or manage important sites and flyways.....	31
11. Action Plan Activity 3: Habitat conservation and sustainable management	33
12. Action Plan Activity 4: Raise awareness of problems faced by birds of prey and measures needed to conserve them	35
13. Action Plan Activity 5: Monitor bird of prey populations, carry out conservation research and take remedial measures	38
14. Action Plan Activity 6: Supporting measures	43
15. Saker Falcon Global Action Plan	47
16. Vulture Multi-species Action Plan.....	51
17. Points for a future update and amendment of the Action Plan.....	55

Summary

S.1 Annex 3 to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (the “Raptors MOU”) contains an Action Plan giving expanded detail on the implementation steps to be taken. According to its Section 8, a “full review” was due to take place in 2013 and a revised version of the Plan was to be prepared. That timeframe was not met, but the review ultimately took place in 2019, and its findings are presented in this report, along with some reflections on the MOU itself. A revised version of the Action Plan based on these findings is proposed in a separate document.

S.2 The MOU provides for regular progress reporting by Signatories. To date, however, no system for this has been put in place. Information on experiences of implementation has been gathered instead at various times by *ad hoc* questionnaire surveys, including an extensive one conducted during 2019 specifically for the purpose of this review, which was distributed to Range States and other stakeholders who make a significant contribution to implementation as well as the Signatories themselves. Other consultations and data analyses have also informed the review.

S.3 Since the adoption of the MOU in 2008, its foundations have strengthened, with a steady increase in the number of Signatories towards the present total of 61 (although around half of the total 131 eligible Range States have yet to sign), the establishment of a small Coordinating Unit in the CMS Secretariat office in Abu Dhabi, and the formation of an expert Technical Advisory Group. With evolving scientific knowledge, the list of species covered (Annex 1) has been extended, work has been undertaken towards filling gaps in the indicative list of important sites (Action Plan Table 2) and consideration is being given to a possible eastward expansion of the MOU’s geographic scope.

S.4 At the same time, one of the MOU’s central provisions has shown very poor progress to date, namely the development by Signatories of national raptor conservation strategies or equivalent documents, which were conceived as a springboard for much of the activity envisaged by the Action Plan. The convening of the third Meeting of Signatories (MOS3) has been delayed until there is more to report on these strategies. A detailed update on this situation is provided here.

S.5 Respondents to the 2019 survey were asked their overall opinion about the most positive advances and greatest difficulties experienced with implementation of the Action Plan. Matters of increased knowledge, awareness and research effort were the most frequently cited types of positive advance. Strategic efforts relating to legislation, action planning and habitat protection also featured prominently. Positive species conservation outcomes were mentioned by a smaller number of respondents; but progress with reducing threats and pressures appears to be being made in many places.

S.6 Perhaps unsurprisingly, inadequate financial resources and capacity were the most frequently cited difficulties. The high frequency of answers that cited particular continuing threats and pressures was perhaps also expected. Political factors and problems with engaging other sectors were also noted, along with issues concerning awareness, coordination and cooperation. A further question about priorities for future action drew a high proportion of answers focused on reacting to immediate problems (such as individual threats, communications, site management); but fewer that cited strategic, long-term priorities (such as legislation, strategies and capacity).

S.7 Individual sections of the review then analyse in turn and report findings on the six different categories of action defined in the Action Plan, with its associated list of 34 activities. These cover improvement of legal protection; protection/management of sites and flyways; habitat conservation; awareness raising; research/monitoring; and other “supporting measures”. Special additional sections of the review also examine the successful development and operation of two main subsidiary planning initiatives: the global Single Species Action Plan for the Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug*, and the Multi-species Action Plan for African-Eurasian Vultures.

S.8 The MOU and the Action Plan together set out a complex matrix of implementation objectives and expectations for Signatories to address, including twelve objectives in paragraph 8 of the MOU, three objectives in section 2 of the Action Plan, nine objectives in section 4 of the Plan, a separate objective in the MOU for the development of raptor conservation strategies, and 34 activities in the Action Plan to be addressed through these strategies. There is some correspondence between these different lists but also a degree of problematic mis-match; and one conclusion of the review is that it would be possible to rationalise this scheme under a single set of headings (a suggestion for this is provided).

S.9 The final section distils the implications from the review's findings for possible updates and adjustments to the content of the Action Plan; and it notes at the same time some points which have emerged concerning the MOU itself and the other annexes. These various suggestions (which include some that have arisen from the work of the Raptors MOU Technical Advisory Group) could be the basis for proposals to be put to Signatories for consideration and possible adoption at MOS3. (An illustrative draft of a revised Action Plan is contained in a separate document). In summary, the points being suggested are as follows:

- (i) Adding reference to "*Accipitriformes*" in the definition of the taxonomic scope of the MOU, and making consequential amendments to the subdivisions of the list of species in Annex 1.
- (ii) Deleting Brown Boobook *Ninox scutulata* from Annex 1 and replacing it with Northern Boobook *Ninox japonica*.
- (iii) Making a small number of changes to the species status categorisations in Table 1 of the Action Plan.
- (iv) Possibly extending the geographic scope of the MOU into areas of South and Southeast Asia (under separate consideration).
- (v) Adding any species that need adding to Annex 1 as a consequence of any extension of the geographic scope of the MOU.
- (vi) Revising/expanding the list of sites in Table 3 of the Action Plan, based on work done by BirdLife International and the Raptors MOU Technical Advisory Group.
- (vii) Rationalising the structure of the objectives, actions, activities and priorities in the Action Plan to give better internal coherence, coherence with the MOU and some simplification.
- (viii) Attempting to make targets more measurable.
- (ix) Updating the priorities and timeframes that are assigned to the list of activities in Table 2 of the Action Plan.
- (x) Addressing an activity gap in relation to matters of policy.
- (xi) Giving more explicit attention to objectives relating to capacity strengthening.
- (xii) Clarifying/refining the interpretation of several other issues, e.g. legislation on energy infrastructure, the relationship between protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), and objectives relating to habitat restoration.
- (xiii) Correcting various typographical errors/updates as listed in the present report in relation to both the MOU and the Action Plan (and separately examining the French texts, both to check that translations of the particular items identified here will pose no new ambiguities, and to identify any typographical or other items that may be specific to the French version).

1. Introduction

1.1 Annex 3 to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (the “Raptors MOU”) contains an Action Plan, giving expanded detail on the implementation steps to be taken to achieve the objectives of the MOU, and specifically to ensure that all populations of African-Eurasian migratory birds of prey (including owls) are maintained in, or returned to, a favourable conservation status.

1.2 The Action Plan came into effect on the same date as the MOU (1 November 2008). According to Section 8 of the Plan it was then to remain initially in effect for a period of seven years; and at least two years before the expiry of that period (i.e. by November 2013) a “full review” of the Plan was to be undertaken, and a revised version of it prepared for approval by the Signatories to the MOU.

1.3 In the event, it did not prove possible to achieve this timeframe. The second meeting of Signatories in October 2015 (MOS2) assigned the review task to the newly-formalised Technical Advisory Group (TAG); and in 2019, thanks to generous funding support from Switzerland and the engagement of a consultant, the work was eventually able to progress, resulting in the present report.

1.4 Implementation is already reviewed in various ways at meetings of the MOS and TAG, in regional and species-specific activity contexts, and in the meetings of the Conference of Parties to the “parent” Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the Sessional Committee of its Scientific Council. The present review is not intended to be an examination of the raptor conservation outcomes achieved under these frameworks, but rather to be a reflection on the functioning of the mechanisms themselves that have been established under the MOU. Although the Terms of Reference of the consultancy defined this specifically in terms of the Action Plan (the MOU’s Annex 3), in a number of respects it has been more logical to consider the question in relation to the framework as a whole (i.e. including the MOU itself and its other Annexes, as well as the Action Plan *per se*).

1.5 This objective resolves itself into two parts. The **first**, as the title suggests, is to examine what has been done to date by the Signatories and other stakeholders who are contributing to the implementation of the Action Plan, to assess the extent of the progress made and to identify any particular lessons emerging; all of which can feed back through “adaptive management” into future implementation. The **second** is to capture conclusions and other ideas that will form the basis for a suggested revision/update of the Action Plan (as foreseen by its Section 8, mentioned above), to put to Signatories as proposals for possible adoption at MOS3.

1.6 The MOU and the Action Plan themselves help to define the scope of what should be examined in such a review. Under paragraphs 16 and 17 of the MOU, the Signatories expect the Coordinating Unit (CU) to prepare an “overview of progress in implementation of the Action Plan” before each MOS. “Implementation”, in principle (including implementation of the MOU itself), concerns:

- **Twelve actions** that Signatories will endeavour to undertake under paragraph 8 of the MOU, in furtherance of the measures described in paragraph 7 of the MOU;
- **Three objectives** defined in section 2 of the Action Plan, and **nine “priority actions”** defined in Section 4 of the Plan for achieving these objectives;
- The preparation by Signatories of “strategies or equivalent documents” under paragraph 12 of the MOU, which, according to section 5 of the Action Plan, will address the **34 “principal activities”** which Signatories ought to undertake, as listed in six sections of Table 2 of the Action Plan (although two of those concern the preparation of strategies or equivalent documents, thus effectively repeating paragraph 12 of the MOU).

1.7 There is therefore a fairly complex “matrix” of implementation expectations that any review should in principle try to cover.

2. Sources of information for the review

2.1 In addition to the “one-time” review contemplated by section 8 of the Action Plan, paragraph 15 of the MOU also provides for regular progress reporting by Signatories – specifically on the national or regional raptor conservation strategies (or equivalent documents) defined in paragraph 12 of the MOU, although as mentioned above these are expected to cover a broad range of implementation activities.

2.2 The strategies or equivalent documents were meant to be produced within two years of the MOU coming into effect. More than ten years later however this has still not happened; so a systematic process of regular national reporting has not yet begun. MOU paragraph 15 provided for the MOS at its first meeting (MOS1 in 2012) to adopt a format for the reports: because of the slow progress in adopting strategies this too has not yet happened, but the task of developing a reporting format was subsequently assigned to the TAG and it is now being undertaken by a separate strand of consultancy work in 2020. The consequence of all this for the purpose of the present report is that the foreseen national reports (and CU overviews) have not after all been available as a basis for the “section 8 review”.

2.3 A further provision in the MOU is in paragraph 18, which provides that Signatories that are also Parties to the CMS will, in their national reports to meetings of the CMS COP, make specific reference to activities undertaken in relation to the Raptors MOU. Only one MOU Signatory is not currently a Party to the CMS, so all the others are covered by this provision. The raw data from the 89 CMS Party national reports that were received in time for the Secretariat’s analysis before COP12 in 2017¹, and the 79 that were received in time for the equivalent analysis for COP13 in 2020², have been examined for the present review in this respect; but for the most part, the very few specific references to implementation of the Raptors MOU relate to basic information about signature of the MOU, participation in meetings, and the existence (generally without details) of some relevant initiatives on e.g. poisoning, illegal killing and communications. Thus far, therefore, this is not regarded as a significant extra source of information, and all the facts reported through the CMS process are likely to be more fully documented in the other sources mentioned here.

2.4 Notwithstanding all the above, several other interim, *ad hoc* or topic-specific processes have taken place which have generated a significant body of information of value for the review.

2.5 Prior to MOS1 in 2012, a short on-line questionnaire was issued to Signatories, including seven questions about national implementation (loosely related, in part, to the six activity clusters in Table 2 of the Action Plan). These are shown in the box below.

¹ For a 75-page distillation of this, see CMS Secretariat (2017). Analysis of national reports. Document UNEP/CMS/COP12/Inf.30 for the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Manila, Philippines, 23-28 October 2017.

² For a 40-page distillation of this, see UNEP-WCMC (2019). Analysis of CMS reports to COP13. Document UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.20.1 for the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Gandhinagar, India, 15-22 February 2020.

Questions circulated prior to MOS1 (2012)

1. Are birds of prey species fully protected from all forms of unlawful killing (including poisoning, shooting, persecution), and unsustainable exploitation in your country?
2. Have important raptor sites (e.g. where Category 1 species breed) and migration bottlenecks been identified, protected and managed for their benefit in your country?
3. Have important raptor habitats been identified and are being managed sustainably in your country?
4. Have any species protection or management programmes (including artificial nest schemes, sustainable harvest or reintroductions) been carried out in your country? Please summarise completed and planned activities.
5. Have any co-ordinated raptor monitoring and research programmes been carried out in your country to establish population trends, impacts of threats on raptors and to identify measures for their conservation and sustainable management? Please summarise completed and planned activities.
6. Have any awareness-raising activities been carried out about birds of prey, the threats that they face, and the measures that need to be taken to conserve them in your country? Please summarise completed and planned activities.
7. Additional comments concerning the implementation of the Raptors MoU in your country. Please use this space to highlight any major raptor conservation successes or concerns. Please list any specific needs for support to assist effective implementation in your country.

2.6 Twelve Signatories submitted responses (Congo, Denmark, France, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Madagascar, Monaco, Pakistan, Romania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom)³, and a supplementary document was provided by Pakistan. The responses were reproduced in full in a MOS document⁴, but no overview or synthesis was compiled. Although the raw data has been examined as part of the present review, the detail of it has not been brought into this report, because in large part it is regarded as having been superseded by subsequent reports and analyses.

2.7 At the time of the publication of the Guidelines on preparing national or regional raptor conservation strategies or equivalent documents envisaged by paragraph 12 of the MOU (June 2012)⁵, all Signatories were also contacted and asked about the status of their preparation of these strategies. Sixteen responses were received (Angola, Congo, the European Union, France, Germany, Guinea, Hungary, Madagascar, Mongolia, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Senegal, Slovakia, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom). These were reproduced in full in a MOS document, which also gave a short synthesis⁶. The detail of this information has mostly not been brought into this report (section 5 of which deals with the strategies issue), because it has been superseded by subsequent updates.

2.8 Prior to MOS2 in 2015, a longer online questionnaire was issued, this time including 25 questions which were more closely related to the to the six activity clusters in Table 2 of the Action Plan. These are shown in the box below.

³ Note that throughout this document, country names are given in commonly used forms for narratives of this kind, meaning that in some cases a short form may be used, or one that is not necessarily a formally recognised title for territories in dispute. Any such forms used here are for descriptive convenience only, and they do not represent any formal position on nomenclature or on international recognition on the part of the author, the Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit or any associated entity of the United Nations or its agencies.

⁴ Raptors MOU Interim Coordinating Unit (2012a). National reporting by Signatories. Document CMS/Raptors/MoS1/Doc.12.2 (and 4 annexes) for the 1st Meeting of Signatories, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 9-11 December 2012.

⁵ Kovács A and Williams NP (2012). Guidelines for preparing National or Regional Raptor Conservation and Management Strategies. CMS Technical Series. Abu-Dhabi, UAE.

⁶ Raptors MOU Interim Coordinating Unit (2012b). National and regional strategies. Document CMS/Raptors/MoS1/Doc.12.1 (and 1 annex) for the 1st Meeting of Signatories, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 9-11 December 2012.

Questions circulated prior to MOS2 (2015)

Action Plan: Activity 1 - Implementation of legal protection

1. Are all 76 species of migratory birds of prey listed in the Raptors MoU granted full legal protection from killing and taking from the wild in your country?
2. Is there legislation in place which bans the use of exposed poison baits for predator control?
3. Is there legislation in place that requires all new electricity power lines to be 'bird friendly' in design and construction, and thereby minimise the risks of electrocution and collision?

Action Plan: Activity 2 - Protect and/or manage important sites and flyways

4. Are all the sites listed for your country in Table 3 of the Raptors MoU designated as protected areas or are they appropriately managed taking into account the conservation requirements of migratory birds of prey?
5. Are Regulations in place to ensure that Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are obligatory for project proposals that may impact upon sites important for migratory birds of prey?
6. Have any Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) been carried out in the last 5 years relating to major infrastructure developments within major flyways to identify key risk areas?

Action Plan: Activity 3 - Habitat conservation and sustainable management

7. Have any inventories been carried out to identify natural vegetation cover in former habitats (especially grasslands) in the range of globally threatened species listed in Category 1 of the Raptors MoU?
8. Have existing electricity power lines been surveyed to identify those that pose the greatest risk to migratory birds of prey?
9. Has a network of feeding stations been established and maintained for vultures and other scavenging birds of prey?
10. Is the conservation of migratory birds of prey integrated within the policies of sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, industry, tourism, energy, chemicals and pesticides?

Action Plan: Activity 4 – Raise awareness of problems faced by birds of prey and measures needed to conserve them

11. Have any public awareness programmes been developed and implemented to promote the importance of birds of prey and their conservation needs, including at bottleneck sites?
12. Have any awareness programmes been developed and implemented amongst other government departments to inform decision makers of the status, threats and conservation needs of migratory birds of prey?
13. Have any educational programmes and teaching resources been developed and implemented to inform children and students of the status, threats and conservation needs of migratory birds of prey?
14. Have any national training workshops been organised to improve skills in the monitoring of birds of prey?

Action Plan: Activity 5 – Monitoring bird of prey populations, carry out conservation research and take remedial measures

15. Have any systematic and coordinated monitoring programs been established for breeding populations, reproductive success and migration counts (spring and autumn) of birds of prey?
16. Have any guidelines or protocols been prepared and published concerning systematic or coordinated monitoring programmes for migratory birds of prey?
17. Have any assessments been made of the impacts of habitat loss on breeding, passage and wintering populations of migratory birds of prey, and measures identified to maintain their Favourable Conservation Status?
18. Have any assessments been made of the impacts of the use of toxic chemicals, including heavy metals (e.g. lead in shot and ammunition) on breeding, passage and wintering populations of migratory birds of prey, and measures identified to maintain their Favourable Conservation Status?
19. Have any programmes been established to monitor the impacts of power lines and wind farms on breeding, passage and wintering populations of migratory birds of prey, and measures identified to maintain their Favourable Conservation Status?
20. Have any reintroduction or restocking projects been investigated and implemented involving migratory birds of prey in accordance with IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations?
21. Have any captive breeding programmes been established involving any species of migratory birds of prey?

22. Are any species of migratory bird of prey legally harvested in your country?
 23. Are there any disease surveillance programmes in place in your country involving species of migratory birds of prey?

Action Plan: Activity 6 – Supporting measures

24. Is a National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy being planned or in preparation to implement the aspects of the Action Plan of the Raptors MoU relevant to your country?
 25. Have any Single or Multi-species National Action Plans been published or are in preparation for any species of migratory bird of prey?

2.9 On this occasion seventeen Signatories submitted responses (Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Iran, Madagascar, Mali, Netherlands, Niger, Pakistan, South Africa, Switzerland, Syria and the United Kingdom). The responses were again reproduced in full in a MOS document⁷, and this time a synthesis (compiled by the Coordinating Unit) was also provided. The information from that synthesis has been brought into sections 9 – 14 of the present review report below.

2.10 In a separate communication also before MOS2 (in August 2015), Signatories were asked a further three questions (plus some consequential sub-questions) specifically concerning the preparation of raptor conservation strategies or equivalent documents. These questions are shown in the box below.

Questions on national/regional raptor conservation strategies, circulated prior to MOS2 (2015)

1. Have you already begun preparing your National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy in the context of the Raptors MoU?
 - If the answer is 'yes', what stage has the process reached?
 - If 'no', what are the main challenges causing the delay?
2. Do you require any specific support or assistance to develop your Strategy?
 - If yes, please specify your needs.
3. Are you planning to finalise and submit your National or Regional Strategy to the Coordinating Unit in advance of MoS2 in October 2015?

2.11 Seven Signatories returned responses to this (Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Madagascar, Niger and Norway). Their responses were reproduced in full in a MOS document, which also gave a short synthesis⁸. The information from this has been brought into section 5 of the present report below.

2.12 Again in February 2018 Signatories were asked about progress in preparing strategies. The three questions (and consequentials) that were circulated are shown in the box below. Responses were received from fourteen Signatories (Côte d'Ivoire, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Lebanon, Madagascar, Monaco, Morocco, Netherlands, Pakistan, Sweden, Switzerland and Syria): these were summarised in an update email sent out by the Coordinating Unit in August 2018, and that information has been brought into section 5 of the present report below.

⁷ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015a). National reporting. Document UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/10 (and 3 annexes) for the 2nd Meeting of Signatories, Trondheim, Norway, 5-8 October 2015.

⁸ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015b). National or regional raptor conservation strategies. Document UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/9 (and 1 annex) for the 2nd Meeting of Signatories, Trondheim, Norway, 5-8 October 2015.

Questions on national/regional raptor conservation strategies circulated in February 2018

1. Has your country begun developing a National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy?
 - If yes, by which date do you anticipate submitting the completed document to the Coordinating Unit?
2. Do you believe that it is realistic to aim to have 75% of Signatories covered by a National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy by 31 December 2019?
 - Do you anticipate that your country will be able to meet this deadline?
3. Do you have any comments or ideas to assist in promoting development of National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategies?

2.13 In August 2018 a further 21 questions (in three clusters) on the subject of strategies were circulated, with a particular emphasis on asking about what kind of support (if any) was required by individual Signatories to make further progress. The questions are shown in the box below.

Questions on national/regional raptor conservation strategies (and support needs), circulated in August 2018

1. What steps have you already taken to develop the strategy? (Please tick all boxes that apply and, where appropriate, complete the supplementary questions)
 - A decision has been taken on the type of Raptor Conservation Strategy to be developed.
Regional (area covered): _____ National (name of country): _____
 - A lead agency and/or an individual has been selected who will be responsible for overseeing development of the strategy.
Name: _____ Job title and organisation: _____
 - A lead author(s) and/or key contributors/editors have been identified to draft the strategy.
Name: _____ Number of contributors/editors: _____
 - A small team or committee has been established (or representatives identified) to support the process.
Number of people: _____ Number of departments/organisations represented: _____
 - Some resources, including financial, are already identified to support the strategic development process.
 - Lead agency: _____ Resources (including funding amount) identified: _____
 - An outline timetable to develop the strategy has been established.
Start date: _____ Planned completion date: _____
 - The process to consult, finalise and secure formal official approval of the strategy has been agreed.
Level of official approval to be sought: _____
 - The species covered by the Raptors MoU that occur within the region/country have been identified.
 - A review of the Raptors MoU Action Plan has been undertaken to aid scoping out the task.
 - An outline threat analysis has been carried out to scope out key problems that are known or anticipated.
 - An initial list has been compiled of key stakeholders or groups who will need to be consulted and engaged.
 - At least one regional/national/local meeting or workshop is anticipated to be held during the process.
Type of gathering(s): _____ Number anticipated: _____
2. Which of these options offered by the Coordinating Unit would assist with the development of your Raptor Conservation Strategy? (Please tick all boxes that apply and, where appropriate, complete the supplementary questions)
 - Online planning telecom with the lead individual/author and/or steering team/committee.
 - Technical review of a draft Project Plan to develop the strategy, submitted to the Coordinating Unit.
 - Financial support to contribute to hosting a national or regional meeting/workshop.
Type of gathering(s): _____ Number of participants: _____
Funds sought (USD): _____
 - Technical advisor to attend/facilitate certain aspects of a national or regional meeting/workshop.

- Financial support to sponsor attendance at a strategy development meeting/workshop hosted by another Signatory.
- Technical guidance and review of key documents submitted to the Coordinating Unit during the process.
- Technical review of the draft Raptor Conservation Strategy, submitted to the Coordinating Unit.
- Other specific support needed to develop the Raptor Conservation Strategy.

Please specify:

3. Are you already collaborating with another Signatory to develop your Raptor Conservation Strategy, or planning to do so?
 - If yes, please provide details.

2.14 Responses were received from eleven Signatories (Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Madagascar, Mongolia, Morocco, Niger, Pakistan, Senegal, Syria, Tunisia), and a summary of these (principally concerning the support needs identified) was provided in a document for the 3rd meeting of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG3) in December 2018⁹. The information has been brought into section 5 of the present report below.

2.15 The review has also been informed by scrutiny of other relevant documents for the two meetings of the MOS and three meetings of the TAG held to date¹⁰, in-person consultations at the 3rd TAG meeting (December 2018), meetings and teleconferences with the Coordination Unit and a variety of other consultations. In addition, the special plans and management/coordination mechanisms evolved under the MOU specifically for vultures¹¹ and for the Saker Falcon¹² now have extensive implementation information-generating processes of their own - these have also been taken fully into account, and they are discussed separately in the sections of this report (15 and 16) dedicated to those two issues.

2.16 Finally, for a specific update dedicated to the purpose of the present review, the Coordinating Unit proposed a further questionnaire survey of Signatories, other Range States, Collaborating Partners and other stakeholders, to take place in late 2018 or early 2019. Initial discussions about the scope of this considered an option of a streamlined small number of questions on selected priority issues, aimed at stimulating rapid responses in a short timeframe, so that (*inter alia*) the opportunity might be taken for early indications (at least to some extent) to feature in discussions at the December TAG3 meeting.

2.17 In the event, however, it was felt more profitable to attempt a more comprehensive enquiry, covering all the key elements of the Action Plan. The TAG3 discussions contributed to the eventual decision to adopt this approach, and to model it substantially on the 25-question survey conducted prior to MOS2, as described above. Although this extended initially expected timeframes and required both responses and analysis to be more extensive, this approach has had the benefit (in addition to fuller issue coverage) of offering comparability between the two time periods, and familiarity with the process among many of the respondents.

⁹ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2018a). Raptor conservation strategies. Document UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG3/Doc.7 for the 3rd Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group, Sempach, Switzerland, 12-14 December 2018.

¹⁰ An example is Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015c). Conservation initiatives under the Raptors MOU. Document UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/8 for the 2nd Meeting of Signatories, Trondheim, Norway, 5-8 October 2015. This includes an account of activities concerning species action plans, the Saker Falcon, Egyptian Vulture, Sooty Falcon, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Amur Falcon, poisoning, power grids, illegal killing, the African Raptor Data Bank and online functionality for the Raptors MoU of the BirdLife Data Zone.

¹¹ Botha AJ, Andevski J, Bowden CGR, Gudka M, Safford RJ, Tavares J and Williams NP (2017). Multi-species Action Plan to conserve African-Eurasian Vultures. CMS Raptors MOU Technical Publication No. 5; CMS Technical Series No. 35. Coordinating Unit of the CMS Raptors MOU, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

¹² Kovács A, Williams NP and Galbraith CA (2014). Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* Global Action Plan (SakerGAP), including a management and monitoring system, to conserve the species. Raptors MOU Technical Publication No. 2; CMS Technical Series No. 31. Coordinating Unit of the CMS Raptors MOU, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

2.18 There are, however, some adjustments that have been seen as necessary for the present purpose. Questions in the 2015 survey that referred to a specific time-period have been updated, and those asked in 2019 about issues such as the preparation of national/regional strategies, or about the status of sites in Table 3 of the Action Plan, have taken account of the fact that the position on those issues has evolved in some respects since MOS2. The questions are shown in the box below.

2.19 The 2019 survey also included three further enhancements over the one in 2015. The first was to allow simple “yes” or “no” answers to be amplified by a short summary explanation (in the case of “no”, to explain why not/not yet). The second was to allow “partly” and “don’t know” responses, where applicable. Thirdly, the MOS2 questionnaire did not ask about overarching perceptions of opportunities, challenges and support needs, which it was deemed important to try to address with the new survey. Three “overview” questions were therefore added to the 2019 questionnaire, asking about (i) the most successful aspects of implementation, (ii) the greatest difficulties and (iii) the main priorities for the future, in the country or area of operation concerned. This mirrors the approach taken to a section entitled “High-level summary of key messages” which is included in the revised format used for Party National Reports to CMS COPs¹³, modelled in turn on an equivalent used by Parties to the Ramsar Convention.

Questions circulated for the present review, June 2019

Overview

- O.1** What have been the most positive advances to date in implementing the MOU and/or Action Plan in your country (or for international organisations: in your field of operation)? (Describe up to five advances).
- O.2** What have been the greatest difficulties to date in implementing the MOU and/or Action Plan in your country (or for international organisations: in your field of operation)? (Describe up to three difficulties, and be as specific as you can).
- O.3** Which particular elements of MOU/Action Plan implementation have you committed to making the top priority for your own work in the next two years?

Action Plan Activity 1 – Implementation¹⁴ of legal protection

- 1.1** Are all 93 species of migratory birds of prey (present in your country) listed in Annex I of the Raptors MOU granted full legal protection from killing and taking from the wild?
- If “yes”, please indicate the statute(s) concerned, and summarise the provision.
 - If “no” or “only partly”, please state why all species are not (yet) covered.
 - (If not known, tick here)
- 1.2** Is there legislation in place which bans the use of exposed poison baits for predator control?
- If “yes”, please indicate the statute(s) concerned, and summarise the provision.
 - If “no”, please state why not.
 - (If not known, tick here)
- 1.3** Is there legislation in place that requires all new electricity power lines to be 'bird safe' in design and construction, thereby minimising the risks of electrocution and collision?
- If “yes”, please indicate the statute(s) concerned, and summarise the provision.
 - If “no”, please state why not.
 - (If not known, tick here)

¹³ See <https://www.cms.int/en/documents/national-reports> .

¹⁴ This was a slight misprint in the questionnaire – in the Action Plan itself, Activity 1 refers instead to “improvement” of legal protection.

Action Plan Activity 2 - Protect and/or manage important sites and flyways

- 2.1** Are all the sites listed for your country in Table 3 of the Annex 3 (Action Plan) of the Raptors MOU designated as protected areas, or are they otherwise appropriately managed taking into account the conservation requirements of migratory birds of prey?
- If “yes”, please give a brief summary.
 - If “no” or “only partly”, please state why all sites are not covered in this way.
 - (If not known, tick here)
- 2.2** Are Regulations in place to ensure that Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are obligatory for project proposals that may impact upon sites important for migratory birds of prey?
- If “yes”, please indicate the statute(s) concerned, and summarise the provision.
 - If “no”, please state why not.
 - (If not known, tick here)
- 2.3** Have any Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) been carried out in the period 2016 – 2019 relating to major infrastructure developments within important flyways for migratory birds of prey to identify key risk areas?
- If “yes”, please give a brief summary.
 - If “no”, please state why not.
 - (If not known, tick here)

Action Plan Activity 3 - Habitat conservation and sustainable management

- 3.1** Have any inventories been carried out to identify natural vegetation cover in former habitats (especially grasslands) in the range of globally threatened species listed in Category 1 of Annex 3 (Action Plan) of the Raptors MOU?
- If “yes”, please give a brief summary.
 - If “no”, please state why not.
 - (If not known, tick here)
- 3.2** Have existing electricity power lines been surveyed to identify those that pose the greatest risk to migratory birds of prey?
- If “yes”, please give a brief summary.
 - If “no”, please state why not.
 - (If not known, tick here)
- 3.3** Has a network of feeding stations been established and maintained for vultures and/or other scavenging birds of prey?
- If “yes”, please give a brief summary.
 - If “no”, please state why not.
 - (If not known, tick here)
- 3.4** Is the conservation of migratory birds of prey integrated within the policies of sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, industry, tourism, energy, chemicals and pesticides?
- If “yes” or “partly”, please give a brief summary.
 - If “no”, please state why not.
 - (If not known, tick here)

Action Plan Activity 4 - Raise awareness of problems faced by birds of prey and measures needed to conserve them

- 4.1** Have any public awareness programmes been implemented during the period 2016-2019 to promote the importance of birds of prey and their conservation needs, including at bottleneck sites?
- If “yes”, please give a brief summary.
 - If “no”, please state why not.
 - (If not known, tick here)
- 4.2** Have any awareness programmes been implemented during the period 2016-2019 among government departments (other than the department that has lead responsibility for the Raptors MOU) to inform decision makers of the status, threats and conservation needs of migratory birds of prey?
- If “yes”, please give a brief summary.
 - If “no”, please state why not.
 - (If not known, tick here)

4.3 Have any education programmes and teaching resources been implemented during the period 2016 – 2019 to inform children and students of the status, threats and conservation needs of migratory birds of prey?

- If “yes”, please give a brief summary.
- If “no”, please state why not.
- (If not known, tick here)

4.4 Have any national (or other level) training workshops been undertaken during the period 2016-2019 to improve skills in the monitoring of birds of prey?

- If “yes”, please give a brief summary.
- If “no”, please state why not.
- (If not known, tick here)

Action Plan Activity 5 - Monitor bird of prey populations, carry out conservation research and take remedial measures

5.1 Have any systematic and coordinated monitoring programmes been established for breeding populations, reproductive success and migration counts (spring and autumn) of birds of prey?

- If “yes”, please give a brief summary.
- If “no”, please state why not.
- (If not known, tick here)

5.2 Have any guidelines or protocols been published concerning systematic or coordinated monitoring programmes for migratory birds of prey?

- If “yes”, please give the source reference(s) and a brief summary.
- If “no”, please state why not.
- (If not known, tick here)

5.3 Have any assessments been made of the impacts of habitat loss on breeding, passage or wintering populations of migratory birds of prey, and measures identified to maintain their Favourable Conservation Status?

- If “yes”, please give a brief summary.
- If “no”, please state why not.
- (If not known, tick here)

5.4 Have any assessments been made of the impacts of the use of toxic chemicals, including heavy metals (e.g. lead in shot and ammunition) on breeding, passage or wintering populations of migratory birds of prey, and measures identified to maintain their Favourable Conservation Status?

- If “yes”, please give a brief summary.
- If “no”, please state why not.
- (If not known, tick here)

5.5 Have any programmes been established to monitor the impacts of power lines and wind farms on breeding, passage or wintering populations of migratory birds of prey, and measures identified to maintain their Favourable Conservation Status?

- If “yes”, please give a brief summary.
- If “no”, please state why not.
- (If not known, tick here)

5.6 Have any reintroduction or restocking projects been implemented involving migratory birds of prey in accordance with the IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations?

- If “yes”, please give a brief summary.
- If “no”, please state why not.
- (If not known, tick here)

5.7 Have any captive breeding programmes been established involving any species of migratory birds of prey?

- If “yes”, please give a brief summary.
- If “no”, please state why not.
- (If not known, tick here)

5.8 Are any species of migratory bird of prey legally harvested in your country?

- If “yes”, please provide details of the species involved and the numbers (of each) taken annually.
- (If not known, tick here)

- 5.9** Are there any disease surveillance programmes in place in your country involving species of migratory birds of prey?
- If “yes”, please give a brief summary.
 - If “no”, please state why not.
 - (If not known, tick here)

Action Plan Activity 6 - Supporting measures

- 6.1** Does a national and/or regional Raptor Conservation Strategy or equivalent document exist in relation to your country?
- Yes
 - In preparation
 - No

If “yes” or “in preparation”, please state the title and scope of the strategy or equivalent document, and summarise the current status of its implementation or preparation (as appropriate).

Title: ...

Scope: ...

Summary of status: ...

- 6.2** Have any National Single or Multi-species Action Plans been published for any species of migratory bird of prey in your country?
- If “yes” or “in preparation”, please list the species involved and the status of each Plan.
 - If “no”, please state why not.
 - (If not known, tick here)

2.20 The questionnaire was sent in June 2019 to a list of National Contact Points for Signatories and Co-operating Partners to the Raptors MOU, contacts in non-Signatory Range States, and other stakeholders involved in implementing any aspects of the MOU and its Action Plan. The initial response deadline of the end of July was extended to the end of August, and several responses were received later still, during the autumn. By delaying the analysis, however, it has been possible to take all of them into account, and none has been excluded.

2.21 In all, 79 responses were received. Four of these were from a multi-country perspective, and the others covered a total of 58 different Range States. Although the survey included a question about the identity and role of the respondent, answers to this were often not sufficiently clear to show whether the response was being made officially on behalf of a national government or in some other capacity. For this reason, and the fact that several countries were the subject of multiple responses, any numerical information in the overview presented in sections 5-14 below, unless stated otherwise, is a reflection of relative numbers of *respondents* only, and should not be read as a depiction of relative numbers of *implementing countries*, in an official sense. Although implementation *expectations* obviously differ between Signatories, non-Signatory Range States and other stakeholders, those different perspectives are for the most part amalgamated in the analysis that follows: this is therefore not intended to be a surrogate for a formal “national reporting” analysis.

2.22 A total of 79 responses to 28 (sometimes multi-part) questions produced well over 2,200 answers, many of which were long narratives. All respondents are warmly thanked for the time and effort they devoted to this. The result is a hugely rich dataset, which should have many uses beyond the present extremely short summary of it.

3. Institutional development of the MOU

3.1 A total of 28 Signatories signed the MOU immediately on its finalisation in October 2008, bringing it into formal effect the following month. Subsequently the number of Signatories has gradually increased over the years, to a total at the time of writing (April 2020) of 61. (This figure includes the European Union as an individual Signatory in addition to EU Member States). The cumulative trend is shown in the figure below. While obviously a very positive signal, the current figure still represents less than half of the Range States covered within the geographic scope of the MOU and eligible to sign¹⁵; so there is still some way to go before more complete participation is approached.

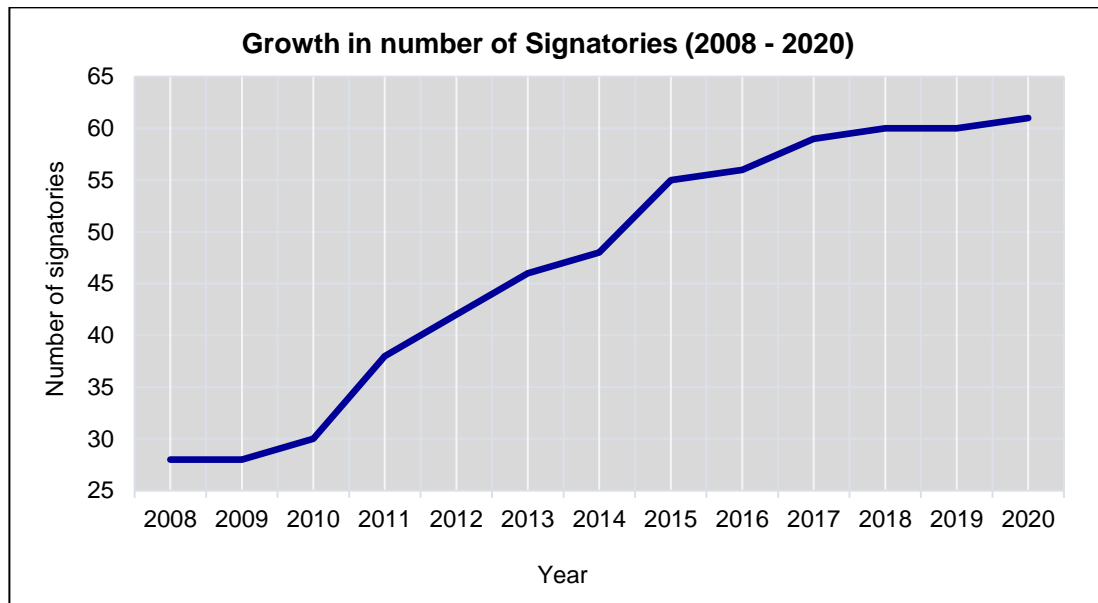


Figure 3.1: Growth in number of Signatories to the Raptors MOU

3.2 Paragraph 27 of the MOU provides that intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations may associate themselves with the MOU by signing it as “co-operating partners”. To date, five such organisations have done this¹⁶, and the picture here too is one of gradually growing interest over time (two of the five signed in 2008, one in 2011 and two in 2017).

3.3 Capacity for coordination of the MOU was provided by an Interim Coordinating Unit from August 2009 until MOS1 in December 2012, when it became formally constituted as a Coordinating Unit, based in the CMS Secretariat satellite office in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The Unit is staffed by one Programme Officer and one Associate Programme Officer, with support from a shared Finance & Administration Assistant. From time to time it may benefit also from the services of an intern, and (when funding allows) from the engagement of part-time consultants on specific tasks.

3.4 The MOU is a legally non-binding agreement within the CMS framework, and as such it has no mandatory scheme of financial commitment from Signatories. One function of the Coordinating

¹⁵ Based on the MOU annex showing the geographic scope of the MOU (Annex 2, as amended in 2015), the website cites this scope as embracing 131 African/Eurasian Range States plus the European Union, with overseas territories *not* being counted separately. To express the current participation level as a percentage of the figure of 131, the total of 61 cited in the text above would need to be adjusted to 60, to subtract the EU. On this basis it will be seen that 54% of the Range States have not yet signed the MOU.

¹⁶ The five are: the CMS Secretariat; BirdLife International; the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey; the Vulture Specialist Group of IUCN’s Species Survival Commission; and The Peregrine Fund.

Unit (CU) therefore is to undertake fundraising to support implementation activities by and within the Range States. MOS1 confirmed that a principal means of funding would be by *ad hoc* voluntary contributions, and it agreed a process for the CU to develop a suite of costed project proposals for circulation annually to Signatories and others, in order to seek offers of support. Funding however remains a challenge.

3.5 MOS2 duly encouraged Signatories, Range States, partners and stakeholders again to work collaboratively to mobilise resources, including by voluntary financial and in-kind contributions such as technical support, to support key initiatives designed to implement the MOU and its Action Plan. It then went further, by agreeing a proposed indication of the specific voluntary contributions that could be requested regularly from Signatories, based on the standard UN Scale of Assessment¹⁷. Approaches such as these have still not been enough to meet implementation needs, and further measures are likely to be required.

3.6 From its establishment in 2009, the CMS Office in Abu Dhabi has been funded through the generosity of Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD), on behalf of the Government of the United Arab Emirates. A specific donor agreement with the CMS to host the Office by extension applied to the Interim Coordination Unit of the Raptors MOU and was signed in October 2009 for a three-year period. It has since been extended several times, currently running up to 2023. This support has been critical to the viability of the MOU thus far. In mid-March 2020, CMS Office – Abu Dhabi moved to new offices in Abu Dhabi provided by EAD.

3.7 Another key institutional development has been the establishment of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), initially by a decision of MOS1 on an interim basis, and then following the nomination and selection process defined at that time, the Group was eventually formally constituted by a decision of MOS2. The TAG is composed with a balance of regional perspectives and categories of expertise, and has an agreed Work Plan of tasks. Its Terms of Reference provide that it “should operate through electronic means whenever possible”, but that “where the need arises, and finances permit”, face-to-face meetings should be convened” - to date such meetings (including in the “interim” phase) have taken place on three occasions (in 2014, 2015 and 2018).

4. Growth in taxonomic coverage of the MOU

4.1 When it was finalised in 2008, the MOU (in its Annex 1) listed the 76 species of birds of prey to which it applied, being those deemed at the time to fulfil the definition (in paragraph 1(a)) as the species of *Falconiformes* and *Strigiformes* which occur in Africa and Eurasia and which include populations that are migratory.

4.2 This list had been based on information compiled by the TAG, led by BirdLife International. BirdLife subsequently, in this context and in its role as IUCN’s Red List authority for birds, had reviewed the list in the light of newer information, particularly regarding the migration habits of many species that were now considered to be eligible for inclusion given the definition and interpretations of the concept of migration as espoused by the CMS. In addition, two species were proposed for addition and three species were proposed for deletion as a result of changes in taxonomic classification.

¹⁷ The proposal is in Annex 2 of Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015d). Current Financial Status and Future Funding. Document UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/17/Rev.1 for the 2nd Meeting of Signatories, Trondheim, Norway, 5-8 October 2015.

4.3 The changes proposed were agreed by MOS2¹⁸, and they had the net effect (76+18+2-3) of extending the list in Annex 1 from 76 species to 93. The 18 “real” additions (i.e. excluding the taxonomic corrections) included twelve vultures, four eagles, one falcon and an owl. The MOU therefore now covers 65 species of *Accipitridae*, 15 species of *Falconidae*, 12 species of *Strigidae* and one species of *Pandionidae*.

4.4 The continuing evolution of scientific understanding of raptor biology, any further changes in international taxonomic norms, and any change in the geographic scope of the MOU (see section 17 below) may potentially be cause for further expansion in the species coverage of the MOU in future; and the TAG has a role in keeping this issue under review¹⁹.

5. National and regional raptor conservation strategies

5.1 It was envisaged from the start that the raptor conservation strategies (or equivalent documents) defined in paragraph 12 of the MOU would be a vehicle for the MOU’s Action Plan to be translated by each Signatory into its own national or regional context. (The “or equivalent documents” qualification is an important amplification of the concept, and it helps particularly in situations where “strategy” may be a politically loaded term or where it is prone to preconceptions. Throughout the present document, unless otherwise stated, any reference to “strategies” is intended to include “equivalent documents” in the sense intended by paragraph 12).

5.2 According to paragraph 12, the strategies were to be prepared within two years of the MOU coming into effect (i.e. by November 2010), and according to paragraph 14, the first Meeting of Signatories was to be held as soon as possible after three quarters of the original 28 Signatories had submitted their strategies to the (then interim) Coordinating Unit, or otherwise (funds permitting) three years after the MOU’s coming into effect. In the event, as no strategies had by then appeared, the MOS took place under this latter provision (in 2012).

5.3 In an effort to assist Signatories with this work, and to encourage some consistency in the approach, in June 2012 the ICU published a guidance document on the preparation of strategies²⁰. This emphasised the critical importance of strategic planning for articulating shared goals and building collaborative implementation efforts, and it provided a suggested template and advice in nine chapters covering contextual analysis, biological assessments, conservation approach, actions, constraints, a timeframe and resourcing.

Status at MOS1 (2012)

5.4 At the same time as the Guidelines were published, the ICU wrote to all Signatories seeking an update on the state of preparations of their strategies. Sixteen responses were received, and these were compiled in a document presented to MOS1²¹. No completed strategies had been submitted to the ICU, despite the passing of the relevant deadline for most of the Signatories.

¹⁸ Details are contained in Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015e). Proposals for amendments to the Raptors MOU and/or its annexes: list of African-Eurasian migratory birds of prey (Annex 1). Document UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/13/Rev.1 for the 2nd Meeting of Signatories, Trondheim, Norway, 5-8 October 2015.

¹⁹ The third meeting of the TAG in December 2018 considered some possible amendments, and concluded by agreeing that the Coordinating Unit on behalf of the TAG would propose to Signatories at MOS3 (a) that the newly-recognised Order Accipitriformes be added to the MOU text and its Annexes, and (b) that Brown Boobook (*Ninox scutulata*) should be replaced in Annex 1 by Northern Boobook (*Ninox japonica*). Neither of these proposals, however, would increase the number of species covered by the MOU.

²⁰ Kovács A and Williams NP (2012). Guidelines for Preparing National or Regional Raptor Conservation and Management Strategies. CMS Technical Series. Abu-Dhabi, UAE.

²¹ Raptors MOU Interim Coordinating Unit (2012b), *op cit*.

5.5 Madagascar indicated that it had completed and submitted a strategy (referring to an Action Plan covering two species, the Eleonora's Falcon and Sooty Falcon); and Chad provided an update at the MOS itself²² to say that it had done likewise, but in its case it was referring only to submission of a project proposal for doing so. France, Guinea, Norway, Mongolia, Slovakia, the United Arab Emirates and (subsequently at the MOS itself) South Africa reported that they each had work underway to develop their strategies, although during the MOS, France indicated that participation in the EU regional effort (see below) would make a national document unnecessary. Congo, Guinea, Mongolia and Senegal requested technical and/or financial assistance in order to be able to proceed.

5.6 The European Commission stated that, in consultation with the Member States of the European Union, it was intending to develop a regional strategy covering the EU. The Netherlands and the United Kingdom confirmed that they would be contributing to this. (The strategy has subsequently been published²³). Hungary considered that its existing extensive work on Single Species Action Plans in particular (some of this in the context of the Bern Convention and some in the context of the EU) satisfied the requirements of the MOU, and hence in its case a separate strategy was not required. Angola, Germany and Pakistan advised that their intention was to incorporate measures for raptor conservation into their wider National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

5.7 At MOS1, Signatories were invited to comment on what they perceived to be the main reasons for the limited progress thus far with strategy development, and on how the challenges they identified might be addressed. While some of them unsurprisingly referred to financial and capacity constraints, others cited the inherent complexity of the process and its links with other related processes, the time taken to build meaningful stakeholder engagement, and in some cases the added consideration of federal or devolved government structures. The meeting noted that support could come from allowing a longer timeframe for development, promotion of common standards, synergy with NBSAPs, exchange of learning as experience grows, and dedicated capacity-building activities.

Status at MOS2 (2015)

5.8 As noted in section 2 above, Signatories were canvassed again for information about the preparation of strategies in advance of MOS2 in 2015. Seven Signatories responded²⁴, and some others included relevant comments in their responses to the "supporting measures" section of the separate questionnaire also circulated prior to MOS2, concerning implementation of the Action Plan as a whole²⁵.

5.9 Chad (in response to the wider questionnaire) reported that development of its national strategy was already underway (no further information received subsequently). Finland reported that while it had no overall national raptor conservation strategy as such, species-specific responsibilities for monitoring and conservation of certain nationally Red-Listed species had been assigned to various organisations. Single Species Action Plans were being implemented for Golden Eagle (plan dating from 1993) and White-tailed Sea-eagle (plan dating from 1994). No support or assistance was requested. France reported that it was contributing to the development of the EU regional strategy, and that the need for any separate national strategy would be considered once the EU document had been finalised. It also made no request for support or assistance.

²² Raptors MOU Interim Coordinating Unit (2013). Report of the first Meeting of Signatories of the Raptors MOU, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 9-11 December 2012. UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MoS1/Report.

²³ European Commission (2019). The EU's Strategic Approach to Raptor Conservation. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

²⁴ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015b), *op cit*.

²⁵ See Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015a), *op cit*.

5.10 Germany referred to its general national strategy for biodiversity adopted in 2007, which covered all biodiversity including birds of prey; and mentioned that implementation in the country of EU nature conservation legislation (specifically the Wild Birds Directive) also made a contribution. No support or assistance was requested. Reference was also made to progress being made through NGO initiatives at regional level for species including Eagle Owl, Peregrine Falcon and White-tailed Sea-eagle, and a project dating from 2015 co-funded with the NGO the Committee Against Bird Slaughter which was addressing illegal killing and trapping of raptors.

5.11 Hungary indicated that a national Raptor Conservation Council was already providing a platform for coordination among relevant organisations, and there were national Species Conservation Coordinators for Imperial Eagle, Saker Falcon, Red-footed Falcon, Barn Owl, White-tailed Eagle, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Black Kite, Red Kite, Montagu's Harrier, Peregrine Falcon and Eagle Owl, with the first four of these also being covered by individual species conservation plans. No support or assistance was requested. Hungary further reported that it was contributing to the development of the EU strategy, and (like France) it would consider the need for any separate national strategy once the EU document was finalised. In response to the wider questionnaire, Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK also expressed the same position.

5.12 Madagascar referred to its Action Plan for the conservation of Eleonora's Falcon and Sooty Falcon, and reported that plans were in development for establishing multi-stakeholder National Committee for the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey, which would have the task of developing a national raptor conservation strategy. Funds were requested to support the National Committee and for consultancy work on drafting the strategy. Mali (in response to the wider questionnaire) also reported that it was actively planning a national strategy (no further information received subsequently). Niger reported that lack of resources and capacity had prevented its development of a strategy thus far, and it requested funding for drafting one and for convening a workshop to validate it.

5.13 Norway reported the commissioning in 2014 of a comprehensive national status assessment of raptors, which had been carried out by BirdLife Norway. This would contribute to a national strategy which it was intended to develop for publication in 2016. No support or assistance was requested. Finally, South Africa and Switzerland (both in response to the wider questionnaire) reported that they were not currently planning to develop a strategy, and Pakistan suggested that its imminent NBSAP would include coverage of raptor conservation issues.

5.14 Following discussion of the varying types of challenge involved and the overall much slower rate of progress than had been expected, MOS2 agreed to a revised timeframe for submission of strategies, extending the original November 2010 deadline to the end of December 2016²⁶. Several Signatories had requested copies of existing strategies to assist with the preparation of their own. Clearly none were yet available for this, but the Coordinating Unit confirmed that it was ready to circulate the first completed ones as soon as it received them, in line with the obligation contained in paragraph 16 of the MOU.

Status in mid-2018

5.15 The next request to Signatories for an update on progress was issued in early 2018, and it produced fourteen responses (Côte d'Ivoire, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Lebanon, Madagascar, Monaco, Morocco, Netherlands, Pakistan, Sweden, Switzerland and Syria). An additional response was received from one of the four "Co-operating Partners" (the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey, IAF).

²⁶ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015f). Report of the second Meeting of Signatories of the Raptors MOU, Trondheim, Norway, 5-8 October 2015. UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MoS2/Report.

5.16 Ten of the responding countries reported that they had either begun to develop a national raptor conservation strategy or that they were actively contributing at a regional level, and four of the strategies concerned were expected to be completed by the end of the year. Draft documents had been sent to the Coordinating Unit for comment from Switzerland and the European Union (the latter strategy covering all 28 Member States of the EU). Despite this accelerated progress, most respondents considered the target that had been suggested by the CU (of 75% of Signatories completing their strategies by the end of 2019) to be over-ambitious²⁷.

5.17 The CU had also taken the opportunity to offer assistance where required, in the form of technical advice and modest financial contributions (subject to availability of funds) to promote and support the hosting of national or regional strategic planning workshops. It noted at the same time that ownership of the process had to lie with stakeholders, and it was the responsibility of the Signatories themselves to drive it. Although the needs of individual countries will vary, internationally-applicable resources such as the 2012 Guidelines for preparing raptor conservation strategies²⁸ and IUCN's Guidelines for Species Conservation Planning²⁹ were available to help, and the approach taken to the SakerGAP and Vulture MsAP (see sections 15-16 below) could also be informative. This was followed up by the circulation of an application form for CU support, to be returned before the end of September 2018 by those requesting support.

5.18 Given that a key purpose of the Meeting of Signatories is to review progress with implementation of the MOU and Action Plan, and that the national or regional raptor conservation strategies are a primary mechanism for advancing this implementation, the Coordinating Unit proposed that the third MOS (which ordinarily might have been expected to take place in late 2018) should be postponed until more substantial progress had been made with strategy development. There had in any event not yet at that stage (February 2018) been any offers to host or fund MOS3. There was widespread support for this proposal, on the understanding that the intervening period would be used for redoubling efforts to finalise the strategies.

Status at TAG3 (December 2018)

5.19 As a follow-up to the February enquiry, Signatories in August 2018 were asked a series of further questions on the subject of strategies, with a particular emphasis on specifying their perceived needs (if any) for support, and including the application form mentioned above. Eleven Signatories returned completed application forms. As reported to the Technical Advisory Group at its 3rd meeting in December 2018³⁰, all of these had taken initial steps to develop their strategies, including the establishment of small teams or committees to facilitate the process, and were anticipating at least one meeting or workshop to be held at a relevant scale to take matters forward. All except one had taken a decision as to the type of strategy to be developed, but only four had identified resources, financial or otherwise, to support the process.

5.20 Prompted by some options suggested in the CU communication, the following were the forms of support most favoured by the responding countries:

- Financial support for a national or regional meeting/workshop: cited by all 11 countries.
- Technical review of a draft of the strategy, via the Coordinating Unit: cited by 10 countries.
- Technical review of a draft project plan for development of the strategy: cited by 8 countries.
- Technical guidance and review of other key documents: cited by 8 countries.

²⁷ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2018a), *op cit*.

²⁸ Kovács and Williams (2012), *op cit*.

²⁹ IUCN – SSC Species Conservation Planning Sub-Committee (2017). Guidelines for Species Conservation Planning. Version 1.0. IUCN, Gland.

³⁰ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2018a), *op cit*.

- Assistance from a technical advisor attending/facilitating aspects of a national or regional meeting/workshop: cited by 7 countries.
- Financial support for attending a strategy development meeting/workshop in another country: cited by 7 countries.
- A planning teleconference with relevant individuals: cited by 6 countries.

5.21 At the TAG meeting itself it was reported that the Czech Republic had just completed its national strategy (in addition to being covered by the draft regional one for the EU); and there remained only the matter of translating it from the Czech language before it would be submitted to the CU (not yet received, at the time of writing). It was confirmed also that Norway and the UAE had each begun the process of strategy development.

5.22 The meeting devoted one agenda item to a discussion of Switzerland's experience of developing its national strategy³¹ - although this was one example where that particular term (see above) was not favoured, and "Strategic guidelines and management priorities" had been used as the title for their document instead. The priority activities it identified were designed to align with the country's existing biodiversity strategy, and the focus had been on practical implementation methods and allocating responsibilities, rather than on aspirational "wish lists". While the quality of the Swiss example was admired, the TAG also recognised that not every country had the scientific data or organisational capacity to approach this in the same way, and noted that the Swiss identification of internationally important sites took a different approach from the one designed to feed into Table 3 of the Action Plan. At the same time, the open availability of the document and a planned presentation at MOS3 were regarded as good opportunities for motivating other countries to develop their own equivalents³².

Status at December 2019

5.23 The MOU Action Plan review questionnaire issued in June 2019 asked Signatories once again (and other stakeholders) for a summary update concerning the status of preparation or implementation (as appropriate) of national and/or regional raptor conservation strategies or equivalent documents. Of the 71 responses given to this question, over half (39) indicated that in their country no strategy or equivalent existed, with eight others saying the position was unknown.

5.24 Cases where strategies were reported to be in existence included the Swiss document mentioned above, and a National Strategy for Raptor and Owl Conservation in the Czech Republic (2020-2030), prepared in accordance with the CMS Guidelines referred to in section 2 above. Several respondents (from Croatia, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden and the European Commission) referred to the imminent completion of a "Strategic Approach to Raptor Conservation" for the European Union, covering all migratory and non-migratory raptors (including owls) that occur regularly in the EU. Responses from Lebanon, Morocco, Norway and Pakistan referred to preparatory work being underway in those countries, without giving further details. (No equivalent information was provided from the United Arab Emirates, although the information from the TAG3 meeting mentioned above suggests that they were in the same position).

5.25 Five other responses mentioned action plans or similar documents focusing on individual raptor species or particular raptor groups. These concerned National Species Action Plans for Red Kite in Luxembourg and for Sooty Falcon and Eleonora's Falcon in Madagascar, a Conservation

³¹ Herzog S (2019). Raptor and owl conservation in Switzerland – strategic guidelines and management priorities. Report of the Swiss Focal Point of the Raptors MoU under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS). Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, in conjunction with the Swiss Ornithological Institute.

³² Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2020). Report of the third meeting of the Technical Advisory Group to the Raptors MOU, 12-14 December 2018, Sempach, Switzerland.

Framework for Hen Harriers in the United Kingdom, and national Multi-Species Action Plans for Vultures in Bangladesh and (being prepared) in Greece.

5.26 Strategies of a broader nature that include some relevance for raptors were reported from eight countries. Responses from Egypt, France, Sudan and UAE referred to general biodiversity or wildlife plans, and others included a bird conservation strategy in Bangladesh, a management plan for National Parks and Ramsar Sites in Gabon, a strategy for the prevention of illegal killing and poisoning of wild animals in the Czech Republic, and (in preparation) a national strategy for migratory species in Slovakia.

5.27 By the end of 2019, the Coordinating Unit had been formally provided with finalised copies of the Swiss strategic guidelines and management priorities document referred to above; national action plans for eight species in France (Bearded Vulture, Cinereous Vulture, Griffon Vulture, Egyptian Vulture, Bonelli's Eagle, Red Kite, Lesser Kestrel and Osprey); a national Species Action Plan for Red Kite in Luxembourg; and a Species Action Plan for Ospreys in Europe and the Mediterranean Region produced under the auspices of the Bern Convention.

6. Overall most positive advances

6.1 The MOU Action Plan review questionnaire issued in June 2019 asked all recipients (Signatory States, other Range State governments, NGOs, researchers and other stakeholders)³³ to identify up to five of the most positive advances that there had been to date in implementing the MOU and/or Action Plan in the country concerned (or for international organisations, in their field of operation).

6.2 Information from non-Signatory countries has been included because in some such cases it is still possible that the prospect of becoming a Signatory has been an influence on relevant raptor conservation activity, and/or that examples, standards, advice or collaboration with other countries, framed or stimulated by the MOU, have been an influence on activities in the non-Signatory country. In some cases it may also be that a country is participating in an initiative evolved under the auspices of the Raptors MOU (for example the Vultures Multi-species Action Plan) without necessarily being a Signatory to the MOU itself. Instances of this kind can therefore still count among the "positive advances" referred to here.

6.3 A total of 73 responses was received to this question; some describing more than the suggested five items. Five respondents reported that there were no significant positive advances to record, at least at present. Among the others, the advances described have been grouped according to the crude categories listed in the table below. (These categories were not provided in the questionnaire – they have been applied subsequently for the purpose of this summary analysis, based on the responses received). Note also that the categories are not mutually exclusive, since a given issue may have elements that are relevant to two or more of them. The total number of references is therefore not the same as the total number of responses (and it does not equate to countries); and the absolute numbers are less important than the relative frequency of references to the issues concerned. (These same points about the categorisation tables apply to all the other analyses presented in sections 7-14 below).

6.4 In many cases the advances that were cited were not necessarily being attributed to the MOU/Action Plan as their cause, and some responses made clear that other drivers were responsible instead (for example NBSAPs, or the Nature Directives in the European Union). The

³³ Respondents' affiliations were not always clear, and in some cases a response covered more than one role of the person concerned; so it has not been possible to stratify the results according to type of respondent. Doing so could be misleading in any case, because the questionnaire asked about implementation in the country, and did not ask respondents to distinguish whether they were reporting on their own activities or reporting on the activities of others.

results here should therefore be read primarily as relating to advances towards the achievement of the *objectives* of the MOU/Action Plan, without those advances necessarily always being attributable to the MOU/Action Plan itself.

Table 6.1: Overall most positive advances reported by consultees in relation to the Action Plan

Category of advance	Number of respondents citing “most positive advances” in each category
Research, survey, monitoring, increased knowledge	29
Public awareness, education, capacity building, engagement	23
Conservation strategies, Species Action Plans, Recovery Plans or equivalent	16
Measures to address particular threats and pressures	16
Site/habitat protection/restoration	16
Legal protection/ strengthened legislation	15
Unspecified or multi-dimensional raptor conservation project activities	10
Targeted land management or species protection measures	9
Captive breeding/translocation/species reintroduction projects	9
Enforcement of laws	9
International cooperation/coordination	5
Positive political intentions/support	4
Improved species conservation status (<i>this should presumably also be a feature of the reintroduction projects listed above</i>)	4
Mainstreaming in other sectors (<i>examples included forestry; agriculture; energy; hunting; waste management</i>)	3
Resource mobilization	2
Miscellaneous policy or institutional issues	1
Other general unspecified references to implementation	1

6.5 Matters of increased knowledge, awareness and research effort are clearly the most frequent types of positive advance being noted by respondents. Strategic efforts relating to legislation, action planning, and habitat protection also feature prominently, and there were several references to significant raptor conservation projects with multiple components. Positive species conservation outcomes were mentioned by a smaller number of respondents; but progress with reducing threats and pressures, at least, appears to be being made in many places.

6.6 One response which took a perspective across the whole of the Action Plan area from the time of its initial adoption was from BirdLife International. Their strategic choice of most positive advances in this context referred to the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (see section 15 below), for successfully drawing together stakeholders on a sensitive subject; to the Vultures Multi-species Action Plan (section 16 below) for raising the profile of vulture declines and providing a framework for international collaboration; to the role of the MOU’s Technical Advisory Group (TAG) in securing recognition for raptors in CMS Appendix I; to the role of Table 3 of the Action Plan in promoting site networks for raptors; and to ongoing efforts in many places to address issues of raptor poisoning.

7. Overall greatest difficulties

7.1 The 2019 review questionnaire asked all recipients to describe up to three of the greatest difficulties experienced to date in implementing the MOU and/or Action Plan in the country to which their response related (or for international organisations, in their field of operation).

7.2 A total of 69 responses was received to this question. Five of these indicated that there were no significant difficulties to report, either because there was insufficient information or because there was insufficient experience thus far of implementing activities specifically related to the Action Plan (meaning in some cases, notably EU countries, that the issues were addressed by other existing systems). Among the remainder, the difficulties described have been grouped according to the crude categories listed in the table below.

Table 7.1: Overall greatest difficulties reported by consultees concerning implementation of the Action Plan

Category of difficulty	Number of respondents citing “greatest difficulties” in each category
Insufficient financial resources	26
Insufficient professional or institutional skills/experience/knowledge/other capacity	24
Impacts of/threats from particular threats and pressures	16
Difficulties in (or inadequate) engagement with/influence on other sectors	9
Insufficient political will	8
Insufficient (public/decision-maker) awareness, and inadequate communications activity	7
Inadequate coordination and cooperation, internally and/or internationally	7
Weaknesses in protection/management of habitats and sites	7
Difficulties in/inadequate enforcement	6
War/security/political instability situations	6
Bureaucratic or political complexities	4
Logistical constraints	4
Lack of equipment, training tools or other materials	4
Weaknesses in legislation	2
Lack of particular needed plans or strategies	2
Insufficient engagement with community stakeholders	1

7.3 Perhaps unsurprisingly, issues concerning inadequate financial resources and capacity were by far the most frequently cited difficulties. Interestingly however, scientific knowledge is included in the latter category, yet it was at the same time also part of the category that featured most frequently in answers to question O.1 concerning the most positive advances made (see section 6 above).

7.4 The high frequency of answers that cited particular threats and pressures as the greatest difficulties is perhaps also to be expected. The prominence of political factors and problems experienced with engaging other sectors is noteworthy, as is the prominence of issues concerning awareness, coordination and cooperation, since in the case of these latter three it may be possible to imagine courses of remedial action that would in principle be comparatively easy to take.

8. Overall views on immediate next priorities

8.1 The 2019 review questionnaire asked all recipients to identify which particular elements of the MOU/Action Plan implementation they had committed to making the top priority for their own work in the coming two years.

8.2 A total of 65 responses was received to this question. Only a few followed the request to relate their answers to particular elements of the Action Plan, with most instead characterising their chosen issues in their own way. Consequently it has not been possible to compare the results with the scheme of priorities suggested in Table 2 of the Action Plan for the 34 activities listed there (but see the further detail on each activity cluster given in sections 9-14 below). The responses have been grouped according to the crude categories listed in the table below.

Table 8.1: Overall highest priority commitments for the next two years

Category of priority commitment	Number of respondents citing priorities in each category
Address specific threats <i>[Those mentioned = poisoning, shooting, persecution, unsustainable exploitation/take, illegal trade, electrocution, collisions, food scarcity]</i>	24
Research, assessment and/or monitoring; increased knowledge	22
Communication, awareness, engagement, including across sectors	20
Maintain or improve quality of site/ habitat protection/ planning/ management	17
Develop/implement species action plans or equivalent	11
Improve legislation, policy or governance	8
Strengthen capacity	8
Species protection, recovery or management measures	8
Develop/implement national strategies or equivalent	7
Enforce legislation/regulations	4
International cooperation	3

8.3 The most frequently cited individual priorities tended to be what might be thought of as “proximate” actions responding to immediate problems; with more strategic, long-term priorities (such as legislation, strategies, capacity etc.) being mentioned less often (although the latter show greater prominence if combined together in the way that the Action Plan itself does). While respondents generally did not relate their answers specifically to the topics in the Action Plan, a comparison of the table above with Table 2 in the Plan would put the six activity clusters there into the following rough order of priority:

- *Action Plan Activity 5* - “Monitor bird of prey populations, carry out conservation research and take remedial measures”. (“Take remedial measures” embraces the category of responses relating to “addressing specific threats”, while Activity 5 also includes the research & monitoring category - these categories being respectively the first and second highest scoring categories in the table above).
- *Action Plan Activity 6* - “Supporting measures”. (This activity includes strategies, action plans and international cooperation, and thus corresponds to three separate categories in the table above, cited in a total of 21 responses and hence on this basis ranking third after addressing threats and research & monitoring).
- *Action Plan Activity 4* - “Raise awareness of problems faced by birds of prey and measures needed to conserve them”. (In the Action Plan there is some element of capacity strengthening combined into this activity cluster, and if responses relating to capacity in the table above were added in, this activity would rank second, with 28 instances. The responses themselves however cited capacity issues in a broader sense than the specific item mentioned in the Action Plan, so combining the two categories in that way is not justified).

- *Action Plan Activities 2 and 3* - “Protect and/or manage important sites and flyways” and “Habitat conservation and sustainable management”. (Respondents citing issues relating to these activities often described site and habitat measures in an undivided way).
- *Action Plan Activity 1* - “Improvement of legal protection”. (In the Action Plan this includes “application of legal protection”, so it corresponds to two categories in the table above, namely those relating to strengthening and enforcement of legislation).

8.4 It would appear that respondents have given emphasis to two matters that are not very prominent in the Action Plan itself, namely actions to improve *policy* and actions to strengthen *capacity*. This finding is discussed further in section 17 below.

8.5 Some degree of concordance might be expected between the answers to the question about the greatest implementation difficulties being experienced (section 7 above) and the answers about future priorities. This may not be completely the case of course, since future priorities can relate to the seizing of promising opportunities, rather than only being a response to present challenges. Nonetheless, a comparison is instructive.

8.6 Capacity issues were cited as the second most important difficulty, and the “knowledge” part of the capacity category, at least, scored highly in responses to the priorities question too. Actions to address particular threats also came high in both lists. Engagement with other sectors was a frequently cited difficulty, and this is included as one aspect of the “engagement” category in the priorities analysis, and “engagement” in this more general sense featured among the most frequently cited priorities.

8.7 Actions to protect and manage sites and habitats featured prominently in the responses on priorities, but less so in the responses on difficulties. This may be one example where priority is being given to tractable opportunities rather than necessarily because the issue concerned is the greatest problem. The starkest mis-match relates to issues of funding/resource mobilisation, which ranked highest in the identification of difficulties, but was only mentioned (in an incidental way, as part of other priorities) by two of the respondents to the question about priorities.

8.8 An equivalent question formed part of the questionnaire for Party National Reports to COP13 of CMS, and hence a comparison can also be made with the synthesis of results from those reports³⁴. Some concordance between the two might be expected, but any differences (between top priorities for raptor conservation and top priorities for the conservation of migratory species as a whole) could be useful to note.

8.9 There are in fact several marked similarities. Priorities concerning research, knowledge, communication and awareness featured in the top three categories in both sets of results. Priorities concerning site and habitat protection featured as the fourth top category in both sets. Capacity issues were given a middle ranking in both lists.

8.10 Three main differences are also apparent. Addressing specific threats was ranked significantly higher in the Raptors MOU responses than in the CMS ones; while international cooperation was ranked significantly lower. As with the comparison between Raptors MOU respondents’ future priorities and the same respondents’ “greatest difficulties”, CMS Party respondents gave high priority to issues of resource mobilisation, whereas this did not feature meaningfully at all in the Raptors MOU responses on priorities. The reasons for these differences are not clear.

³⁴ UNEP-WCMC (2019). *Op cit.*

9. Action Plan Activity 1: Improvement of legal protection

9.1 Activity 1 of the Action Plan (Table 2) on “Improvement of legal protection” includes the following:

- 1.1 Update CMS Appendix I to include all Category 1 species.
- 1.2 Review relevant legislation and take steps where possible to make sure that it protects all birds of prey from all forms of a) deliberate killing, b) deliberate disturbance at nest sites and communal roost sites (particularly in wintering grounds) where this is considered detrimental to the conservation of the species; and c) egg-collection and taking from the wild. Unless this is authorised by the competent body and only where the action is sustainable and not detrimental to the conservation status of the species concerned.
- 1.3 Review relevant legislation and take steps where possible to ban the use of exposed poison baits for predator control and those chemicals where they have been shown to cause significant avian mortalities.
- 1.4 Review relevant legislation and take steps where possible to make sure that it requires all new power lines to be designed to avoid bird of prey electrocution.
- 1.5 Strengthen the application of legal protection, and reporting of persecution, for birds of prey by ensuring appropriate penalties, training law enforcement authorities, and raising public awareness to boost surveillance and reporting of illegal activities.
- 1.6 Identify gaps in existing MEAs where bird of prey protection and conservation can be improved and draw these to the attention of the relevant Secretariat and other Parties.

9.2 In responding to the pre-MOS2 implementation survey in 2015, France, Hungary, The Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland and Syria reported that Activity 1 had been fully implemented in those countries.

9.3 Fourteen of the 17 Signatories who responded to the relevant question reported that all 76 species (then) listed in the Raptors MOU were granted full legal protection from killing and taking from the wild in their countries. The three countries which had not so far implemented full legal protection were Chad, Congo (Brazzaville) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Chad noted that national legislation was in preparation. Congo (Brazzaville) specified that 19 of the 76 species covered by the MOU occur in the country but only one species (Lesser Kestrel) was fully legally protected. The Democratic Republic of the Congo noted that only species belonging to the family *Strigidae* (True Owls) was protected, but that work was underway to update the list of protected species³⁵.

9.4 Concerning the existence of legislation banning the use of exposed poison baits for predator control, 13 of the 17 Signatories responding to this question reported a positive situation. Among the four Signatories which had not yet implemented such legislation (Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Democratic Republic of the Congo and Madagascar), Chad noted that there was general national legislation in place but none that was specifically focused on protecting birds of prey. Congo (Brazzaville) reported that the use of poison baits was not common in the country, while Madagascar noted that relevant legislation was being considered.

9.5 Regarding legal requirements for “bird safe” power line designs, eight out of 16 Signatories reported that relevant laws existed in their countries. Niger reported that power lines in the country do not generally pose a risk to birds. Pakistan indicated that it was using the CMS Guidelines on power grids but as yet did not have legislation to back this. Finland and the UK both reported that guidelines were widely available in those countries and that they tended to be followed.

³⁵ The source for all the MOS2 synthesis information reported in this way in sections 9-14 here, unless otherwise stated, is: Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015a), *op cit*.

9.6 The 2019 review questionnaire then asked all recipients to confirm **whether all of the species of migratory birds of prey present in the country concerned that are among the (now) 93 species listed in Annex I of the Raptors MOU are granted full legal protection from killing and taking from the wild.** A total of 75 responses was received to this question. Four of these responded that the position was not known, but in the case of one of them (from an NGO), the government of the country concerned provided a positive response. (There would of course in principle be ways of objectively verifying the position on this issue for any given country, by independent analysis of relevant statutes). Among those answering “no”, two were from NGOs or researchers in relation to countries where the government response was “yes” or “partly” (and has been counted as such for the purposes of this analysis); while all the others, apart from one, concerned non-Signatories (Gabon, Mauritius and Uzbekistan), the exception (i.e. the one Signatory) being Yemen.

9.7 Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Egypt, Sudan and Zimbabwe were counted as answering “partly” – either because that was the answer the respondents from those countries gave, or because their “yes” answer was deemed in fact to be a “partly” answer, because in one case protection applies only in protected areas (Burundi), and in another case it seemingly applies only to taking and not to killing (Sudan). It is possible that the answer from Egypt (not from the government there) mis-read the question and answered “partly” only because not all 93 Annex I species occur in the country. The same situation appears even more likely for the response from Ireland, and consequently Ireland has been counted among the “yes” answers instead.

9.8 A total of 57 respondents answered “yes” (or were deemed to have done so, in the case of Ireland as explained above). This corresponds to 45 countries (both Signatories and non-Signatories) plus the European Commission making a response collectively for the European Union. The countries confirming that their legislation offers full legal protection to Annex I raptor species are: Afghanistan, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Romania, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Togo, United Arab Emirates and United Kingdom.

9.9 Two respondents pointed out that protected status in law does not necessarily mean that the protection is actually applied or enforced in practice; which links to the identification of enforcement problems as one of the key implementation difficulties identified by consultees in section 7 above. Several others noted that some laws allow derogations from protected status in certain circumstances, for example to protect human health or for certain limited traditional uses (e.g. falconry in Hungary and Serbia).

9.10 The 2019 review questionnaire also asked recipients **whether, in the country concerned, there was legislation in place which bans the use of exposed poison baits for predator control.** A total of 73 responses was received to this question; six of which indicated that the situation was not known, and ten (relating to a mix of Signatory and Non-Signatory countries) answered “no”, namely: Afghanistan, Cabo Verde, Egypt, France, Mauritius, Nigeria, Palestine (noting however that new legislation was in preparation), Syria, Togo and Yemen. (An NGO response from Lebanon also answered “no”, but the government response differed, and Lebanon has therefore been included in the “yes” total below).

9.11 The remaining 57 respondents, equating to 46 countries (a mix of Signatories and Non-Signatories), plus the European Commission responding for the EU, confirmed that use of exposed poison baits for predator control was prohibited in their countries (or in one case, Burundi, seemingly only in protected areas). Several respondents pointed to illegal use of poisons remaining a problem despite these legal provisions; one mentioned exceptions for use of poisons for preserving human health and other reasons; and some others mentioned potential secondary risks

from legal use of rodenticides (in respect of which the UK referred to the existence of a national Code of Practice for responsible use).

9.12 The questionnaire further asked **whether, in the country concerned, there was legislation in place which requires all new electricity power lines to be “bird safe” in design and construction, to minimise the risks of electrocution and collision.** A total of 72 responses was received to this question; seven of which indicated that the situation was not known. The question appears to have caused some confusion, being read in a variety of different ways and even producing internal contradictions within a few individual responses.

9.13 Half of the respondents (36) said that no such legislation was in place, in a few cases (Mauritius, Monaco, Niger and Nigeria) saying that this was because the issue was not regarded as a problem in the country. Five respondents, all in the Middle East (Jordan, Palestine, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Yemen) indicated that such legislation was being considered or might be considered in future.

9.14 Among those that answered “yes”, however, at least seven relied only on the existence of Environmental Impact Assessment or equivalent provisions (and an eighth on the existence of a strategy), which can potentially (depending on the case) lead to mitigation measures as a condition of consents, but by definition cannot automatically require “bird safe” design and construction in the terms of the question³⁶. These must therefore also be deemed to have answered “no” (making the “no” total 44, or 61% of those responding). This confusion is further illustrated by the fact that some other respondents took the opposite approach and cited the existence of EIA provisions while returning a “no” answer, and the fact that the European Commission answered “yes” for the European Union while some of the Union’s individual Member States answered “no”.

9.15 There were three instances of situations that could be regarded as “partly yes”, involving a partial provision for some aspects of electrocution risk (Switzerland) and provisions restricted to protected areas (Croatia) or areas within an ecological network (Spain). Just seven other respondents (10% of the total) appeared to indicate (though without always providing details) that legislation of the kind envisaged by the question did exist; namely those relating to the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Serbia, Slovakia, the Netherlands and Uzbekistan. A number of respondents in other countries pointed to the existence of voluntary initiatives or guidance on the subject, and some mentioned a trend towards more frequent undergrounding of cables (not necessarily for nature conservation reasons, but having nature conservation benefits nonetheless).

³⁶ The question reflects activity 1.4 in Table 2 of the Action Plan, which reads “Review relevant legislation and take steps where possible to make sure that it requires all new power lines to be designed to avoid bird of prey electrocution”.

10. Action Plan Activity 2: Protect and/or manage important sites and flyways

10.1 Activity 2 of the Action Plan (Table 2) on “Protect and/or manage important sites and flyways” includes the following:

- 2.1 Designate nationally and internationally important sites (including those listed in Table 3) as protected areas with management plans or as appropriately managed sites taking bird of prey conservation requirements into account.
- 2.2 Undertake EIAs in accordance with the CBD guidelines (CBD Decision VI/7A and any subsequent amendments) and CMS Resolution 7.2 on Impact Assessment and Migratory Species for any projects potentially adversely impacting sites listed in Table 3 and any other sites holding significant populations of Category 1 and 2 species.
- 2.3 Conduct risk analysis at important sites (including those listed in Table 3) to identify and address actual or potential causes of significant incidental mortality from human causes (including fire, laying poisons, pesticide use, power lines, wind turbines).
- 2.4 Conduct Strategic Environmental Assessments of planned significant infrastructure developments within major flyways to identify key risk areas.

10.2 In responding to the pre-MOS2 implementation survey in 2015, seven of the 14 Signatories who responded to the relevant question reported that all sites listed for their countries in Table 3 of the Action Plan were designated as protected areas or were otherwise appropriately managed in the terms of activity 2.1. Ten Signatories (Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Democratic Republic of the Congo, Hungary, Iran, Madagascar, Mali, Pakistan, South Africa and the UK) noted however that no sites in their countries were (so far) in the list, yet national protection/management systems were in place nonetheless. Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Niger, Netherlands, Syria and the UK also reported having conservation measures in place at various sites.

10.3 Concerning Environmental Impact Assessment, 16 of the 17 Signatories responding to this question reported that national regulations requiring mandatory EIAs that were applicable to projects potentially impacting bird of prey were in place. France and Switzerland noted that their EIA requirements were subject to the size of the project, and minor projects could often be excluded. Chad reported that steps to establish EIA regulations were in preparation. Five out of 16 countries (Finland, Mali, Madagascar, Niger and South Africa) also reported that relevant Strategic Environmental Assessments had been carried out in the preceding five years.

10.4 The 2019 review questionnaire asked all recipients to confirm **whether all sites listed for their countries (where relevant) in Table 3 of the Action Plan were designated as protected areas or were otherwise appropriately managed in the terms of activity 2.1 in the Action Plan.** The list in Table 3 includes both MOU Signatory countries and non-Signatory Range States. It has at present however only partial coverage, and is acknowledged to be a work in progress, with steps already well advanced towards its considerable expansion in future (see section 17 below).

10.5 A total of 71 responses was received to the question; but with only 36 countries listed in Table 3, inevitably a proportion of these indicated that the question was not relevant to them for that reason (21 in number, plus a further four who answered “not known” but whose countries do not feature in the table). Among the remainder, responses (in some cases more than one per country) related to 20 (56%) of the countries listed in the table.

10.6 Clearly some confusion was caused, because a further ten responses related to countries that do not appear in the list, and yet these answered “yes” to the question or otherwise gave details of their site protection situation. Further ambiguity resulted from some answers given as “no” meaning in fact “not applicable”, others meaning “sites are listed for the country but none of them is protected/appropriately managed” and others meaning “no, not *all* of the sites are

protected/appropriately managed” (a situation which some others reported instead as “partly”). Some interpretation of the responses has therefore been necessary for this analysis.

10.7 The situation “sites are listed for the country but none of them is protected/appropriately managed” was reported for only one country (Greece, just one site listed in the table). Responses indicating (or interpreted to be indicating) that activity 2.1 was “partly” achieved were received in relation to eleven countries (Denmark, Egypt, Italy, Jordan, Madagascar, Palestine, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom (for Gibraltar) and Yemen); where this meant either that partial protection/appropriate management was in place for all of the country’s listed sites, or that full protection/appropriate management was in place for some sites and not for others.

10.8 Fully positive responses were received in relation to eight countries (Bulgaria, Finland, France, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Spain and Syria), representing just 22% of the 36 countries to which the question is relevant. (The two responses received in relation to Lebanon were presented as “partly yes”, but the accompanying details showed that this was in relation to the strict protection component of the question, whereas the situation they described in relation to the “appropriate management” part of the question was deemed by this analysis, for consistency with the approach taken by others, to qualify these responses as being a full “yes”).

10.9 The 2019 review questionnaire next asked recipients **whether regulations were in place in their country to ensure that Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are obligatory for project proposals that may impact upon sites important for migratory birds of prey**. A total of 73 responses was received to this question. Some had taken it very literally in terms of impact upon sites important for migratory birds of prey being a criterion for automatically mandatory EIA, and/or whether there were sites specifically designated for birds of prey, and/or legislation specifically relating to EIAs for birds of prey. Others interpreted the question in a more generic sense, and answered “yes” if the basic possibility for securing EIAs in relevant circumstances was provided for. Not enough detail was given in most responses to show which of these approaches had been taken, so for analysis purposes “yes” and “no” answers have for the most part been taken at face value (although this may mean not comparing like with like) and have been classified accordingly. In one case a “no” answer was classified as a “deemed yes” based on consideration of further details; and in two cases where multiple responses gave opposite answers for the same country, a best judgement was made as to the appropriate categorisation to use.

10.10 Apart from a few cases of uncertainty, nearly all responses (relating to a total of 50 countries) confirmed that relevant EIA regulations were in place in the countries concerned. It seems clear that this covers a spectrum of different situations in terms of the scope and application of these provisions. Only Bangladesh, Mauritius and Sudan appeared to be genuinely lacking relevant statutes.

10.11 The 2019 review questionnaire then asked recipients **whether any Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) had been carried out in the period 2016-2019 relating to major infrastructure developments within important flyways for migratory birds of prey**. A total of 72 responses was received to this question. The answer was “no” (or was deemed for this analysis to be “no”, e.g. where reference was made simply to the existence of an enabling provision rather than to the carrying out of any actual assessments in the period) in the case of responses relating to 30 countries. In the case of twelve other countries the position was reported as not known.

10.12 The remaining responses referred to instances of SEAs being carried out in a total of 14 countries, namely: Bosnia and Herzegovina (several instances, unspecified); Bulgaria (for a motorway development); Croatia (several instances, including for electricity transmission infrastructure); Egypt (for wind farms); Gabon (for an airport development and a port expansion); Italy (for electricity transmission infrastructure); Kenya (for wind energy developments); Lebanon (for renewable energy developments); Luxembourg (for sectoral and municipal plans); Morocco

(several instances, unspecified); Niger (no details provided); Norway (for wind energy developments); Romania (for major infrastructure developments, unspecified); and Sweden (for 123 local spatial planning maps associated with bottleneck sites for migrating birds).

11. Action Plan Activity 3: Habitat conservation and sustainable management

11.1 Activity 3 of the Action Plan (Table 2) on “Habitat conservation and sustainable management” includes the following:

- 3.1 Survey, maintain and restore natural vegetation cover in former habitats (especially grasslands) in the range of globally threatened species.
- 3.2 Where feasible, take necessary actions to ensure that existing power lines that pose the greatest risk to birds of prey are modified to avoid bird of prey electrocution.
- 3.3 Endeavour to facilitate feeding opportunities for necrophagous birds of prey as far as it is possible taking into account sanitary considerations.
- 3.4 Taking into account the needs of bird of prey conservation in sectors and related policies such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, industries, tourism, energy, chemicals and pesticides.

11.2 In responding to the pre-MOS2 implementation survey in 2015, two of the 16 Signatories who responded to the relevant question (Hungary and Mali) reported that they had prepared inventories of grasslands in support of the Action Plan’s “Category 1” species. Mali noted that 30% of its former grassland habitat was managed sustainably.

11.3 Four of the 16 Signatories who responded to the question about the status of existing electricity power lines (Finland, France, Hungary and South Africa) confirmed that surveys had been undertaken to analyse this issue. Modifications had been made to the highest-risk power lines to mitigate against bird of prey electrocutions in South Africa, France, and (on a case-by-case basis) in Finland. Hungary reported that its highest risk power lines had been identified and modifications were being carried out, but that high-risk power lines with no retrofitting remained numerous and these were therefore a continuing threat. The UK noted that the problem was not relevant in the country because the UK does not host populations of the soaring raptor species that would be vulnerable to the threats concerned. Switzerland reported that no surveys had been undertaken, but that local initiatives existed in some areas, involving cooperation between statutory bodies and NGOs.

11.4 Five of the 16 Signatories who responded to the question about feeding stations for vultures and other necrophagous birds indicated that they had established such stations. Finland referred to feeding stations for Golden Eagles and White-tailed Sea-eagles; France had established more than 100 stations, Hungary approximately eight, Pakistan two, and South Africa 146. The UK noted that it did not host any vulture populations but that feeding of White-tailed Sea-eagles, Red Kites and Hen Harriers took place.

11.5 In eight out of 16 responding Signatories (Finland, Hungary, Madagascar, Mali, the Netherlands, Syria, Switzerland and the UK), the conservation of birds of prey was reported to be integrated in sectors and related policies in line with Action Plan activity 3.4. Hungary reported that efforts were made to integrate raptor conservation in every sector but that further work to implement this needed to be done. In Madagascar and the UK, the sectors relating to agriculture, forestry and tourism were said to take raptor conservation into account; Syria said the same for its energy sector and Mali likewise for fisheries. Pakistan noted that its general national conservation strategy applied across sectors.

11.6 In relation to activity 3.1, the 2019 review questionnaire asked recipients **whether any inventories had been carried out to identify natural vegetation cover in former habitats**

(especially grasslands) in the range of globally threatened species listed in Category 1 of Annex 3 of the Action Plan. A total of 74 responses was received to this question. A majority replied in the negative (in some cases because the country concerned does not have regularly occurring species in Category 1); but the question was clearly interpreted in a variety of ways (some taking it more literally/precisely than others), and hence numerical analysis of the responses/naming of countries is not particularly meaningful.

11.7 Most of those answering “yes” were referring to the existence of generic habitat surveys, often for protected areas, without these being specifically related to raptors. Almost none addressed the element concerning “former habitats”; with two possible exceptions (insufficient detail provided to be certain) being Serbia (for Eastern Imperial Eagle, Red-footed Falcon and Saker Falcon in the north of the country) and South Africa (for Black Harrier, and in planning for other species). A response from Germany pointed out that restoration of “natural” vegetation would not always necessarily benefit the priority raptor species, e.g. where former natural cover was forest but the species concerned favoured open habitats instead.

11.8 In relation to activity 3.2, the 2019 review questionnaire asked recipients **whether existing electricity power lines had been surveyed to identify those that pose the greatest risk to migratory birds of prey.** A total of 74 responses was received to this question. Four of these indicated that the situation was unknown, and just eight countries were the subject of “yes” answers (Belgium, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, France, Hungary, Norway, Romania and Sudan). In the case of 17 other countries however the responses were (or were deemed to be, based on the details provided) “partly yes” (those relating to Afghanistan, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Greece, Mongolia, Morocco, Italy, Jordan, Oman, Serbia, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Syria, United Kingdom and Uzbekistan). In some countries the lack of a survey was said to be because powerline risks were not a problem. Future surveys were anticipated to take place in Austria, Bangladesh, Cyprus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro (possibly), Morocco, Pakistan, Switzerland and Uzbekistan.

11.9 In relation to activity 3.3, the 2019 review questionnaire asked recipients **whether, in their country or area, a network of feeding stations had been established and maintained for vultures and/or other scavenging birds of prey.** A total of 73 responses was received to this question. Four of these indicated that the situation was unknown, and responses relating to a further 32 countries said that feeding station networks had not been established, although five suggested a possibility of this happening in future, namely those relating to Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina (one site), Germany, Oman and Yemen.

11.10 Some respondents interpreted the reference to “network” more strictly than others, with situations involving just one or a few sites, or a temporary project, being classed as a “no” answer by some and a “yes” answer by others. A generous approach has been taken to this in the analysis presented here. The question was considered inapplicable in some countries which are not important for scavenging birds of prey or where relevant species do not suffer from a shortage of food. In a few cases, restrictions or even prohibitions on such provisioning (for veterinary reasons) were mentioned (e.g. Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland). Concerns were also mentioned (in relation to Switzerland) that regular feeding sites can actually have a negative effect on the natural movements of Bearded Vultures.

11.11 Otherwise the existence of feeding stations for birds of prey was reported for 20 countries (Greece, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Hungary, Italy, Morocco, Norway, Pakistan, Serbia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe). In three cases this was for species other than scavengers (Golden Eagles and White-tailed Eagles in Sweden, to increase winter survival, though employed less often now because of veterinary restrictions; Hen Harriers in the UK, both to divert predation away from grouse and to support particularly vulnerable breeding females; and Imperial Eagles at two sites in Slovakia). In two cases the provisioning was for public viewing or “photography tourism” reasons

rather than for conservation purposes (Red Kites in the UK, and unspecified birds of prey in Norway).

11.12 In relation to activity 3.4, the 2019 review questionnaire asked recipients **whether, in their country or area, conservation of migratory birds of prey was integrated within the policies of other sectors**. A total of 73 responses was received to this question. These revealed a wide range of subjective perspectives and divergent understandings of what constitutes “integration” (including some cases of two respondents giving opposing responses for the same country); and so they needed careful interpretation. (Action Plan activity 3.4 refers only to “taking into account” - but “integration” could reasonably be read as implying a deeper “embedding” or “mainstreaming” objective).

11.13 The situation reported for around 24 countries could be regarded as “no” in terms of the question, while responses in respect of six countries indicated that the situation for those was unknown. Instances of “yes” responses included situations where conservation of migratory birds of prey was simply included in “policy” *per se*, meaning that biodiversity policies and e.g. NBSAPs were regarded as sufficient, rather than considering *non-biodiversity* sectors in the way that activity 3.4 really intends. Some simply cited restrictions in protected areas, or provisions for Environmental Impact Assessment. A number of others cited partial instances of cooperation with farming or forestry interests, and the modest relevance of measures such as agri-environment schemes, notably in the European Union.

11.14 Given the subjectivity and variability in interpreting the question, it would not be suitable in this instance to name the countries in any particular category – but among the 24 or so countries for which some basis for a “yes” response was evidenced (an equal number to those classified as “no”), the “other sectors” mentioned included forestry (six mentions), tourism (six mentions), energy (five), agriculture (four), chemicals (four), fisheries, hunting, water management and spatial planning (one each). Some of the interesting mechanisms that were cited included the creation of “environmental cells” within other sectors to coordinate the environmental policies of those sectors (Madagascar); and a forum for the heads of all relevant authorities (United Arab Emirates).

12. Action Plan Activity 4: Raise awareness of problems faced by birds of prey and measures needed to conserve them

12.1 Activity 4 of the Action Plan (Table 2) on “Raise awareness of problems faced by birds of prey and measures needed to conserve them” includes the following:

- 4.1 Develop a programme of public awareness, using electronic and print media to publicise the migrations undertaken by birds of prey, their current status, the threats to them and actions, including review of superstitions about them, that can be taken to conserve them.
- 4.2 Develop an awareness programme within forestry, agriculture, fisheries, energy, industry, transport and other relevant sectors to inform decision makers of the current status of birds of prey, the threats to them and the spectral actions that can be taken to conserve them.
- 4.3 Develop a school educational programme and teaching resources to inform school children of the migrations undertaken by birds of prey, their current status, the threats to them and actions that can be taken to conserve them.
- 4.4 Establish information notices and provide leaflets at bottleneck sites informing people of their importance for birds of prey and the measures that they can take to conserve them.
- 4.5 Organise sub-regional and national training workshops to improve skills in the monitoring of birds of prey.
- 4.6 Educate and raise awareness of local communities to the importance of birds of prey, and the need to monitor and protect them.

12.2 In responding to the pre-MOS2 implementation survey in 2015, nine of the 15 Signatories who responded to the relevant question reported that they had established public awareness programmes on birds of prey. Congo (Brazzaville), the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and The Netherlands had not yet established such programmes, and Pakistan had not done so either, specifically on raptors, although it had more general programmes covering birds as a whole.

12.3 Five of the 17 Signatories who responded to the question about awareness among other sectors (Chad, Finland, Iran, Syria and the UK) reported that they had undertaken programmes involving other government departments. Seven out of 17 Signatories had developed relevant education programmes and teaching resources.

12.4 Four of the 16 Signatories who responded to the question about national training workshops reported that they had organised such workshops. Pakistan had run workshops on illegal wildlife trade in a general sense rather than specifically on raptor issues; while Madagascar noted that training workshops were a priority for the future, although this was dependent on securing funding.

12.5 The 2019 review questionnaire asked recipients **whether any public awareness programmes been implemented during the period 2016–2019 to promote the importance of birds of prey and their conservation needs, including at bottleneck sites**. A total of 75 responses was received to this question. It was read in different ways according to how strictly the respondents interpreted the specific focus on birds of prey and the reference to bottleneck sites, with some cases where opposing answers were given for the same country, and three where the position was reported as unknown. Among the 17 countries for which a negative response was given, two were cited as places where relevant awareness programmes were planned for the future (Czech Republic and Norway).

12.6 Otherwise positive responses were given in relation to 33 countries, with two of these mentioning bottleneck sites explicitly (Palestine and Romania) but such sites potentially being covered in some of the others too. A wide variety of types of relevant awareness programmes was reported, many of them led by NGOs, but some also by government bodies, or even the private sector (Croatia). Several were focused on particular problems (such as illegal killing or electrocution risks), and some targeted specific audiences (such as hunters or enforcement agencies). Campaigns, articles, books, television programmes, schools activities, conferences, phone apps, websites, exhibitions and competitions were among the approaches mentioned. Use of International Vulture Awareness Day and/or World Migratory Bird Day was referred to in seven cases; and some respondents also cited “bird of the year” initiatives.

12.7 The 2019 review questionnaire asked all recipients **whether any awareness programmes had been implemented during the period 2016–2019 among government departments (other than the department that has lead responsibility for the Raptors MOU) to inform decision makers of the status, threats and conservation needs of migratory birds of prey**. A total of 71 responses was received to this question. It seems to have caused some confusion, with several respondents answering “yes” but citing only awareness activities directed at the general public rather than decision-makers, others giving contradictory responses for the same country, a few giving answers that did not seem to relate to awareness at all, and four saying that the situation in their country was unknown.

12.8 Potentially more robust positive answers were given in relation to 20 countries (Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Egypt, France, Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Palestine, Romania, Slovakia, Switzerland, UK (for Scotland) and Zimbabwe); plus the European Commission in respect of an EU-wide brochure on wildlife crime. Sectoral departments mentioned (by some of these) included agriculture, fisheries, forestry, energy, tourism, environmental risk, economic development, civil aviation, law enforcement/armed forces and local government.

12.9 The 2019 review questionnaire then asked recipients **whether any education programmes and teaching resources had been implemented during the period 2016–2019 to inform children and students of the status, threats and conservation needs of migratory birds of prey**. A total of 74 responses was received to this question; some interpreting it strictly in relation to programmes/resources specifically about raptors, and others saying “yes” if there was a programme on birds in general that could be regarded as relevant to raptors. A few referred to information initiatives targeting the general public which were considered to be reaching children as part of that. The position in six countries was reported to be unknown, and negative responses were given in relation to 19 others, although in four of those (Czech Republic, Morocco, Syria and Yemen) relevant activities were reported to be planned for the future.

12.10 Positive responses were received from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Denmark, Egypt (in that case for training rather than education), France, Gabon, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Kenya, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Nigeria, Palestine, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan, Zimbabwe, and the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey. Reported instances included activities in the field, in museums and on websites as well as in the classroom; and both Bulgaria and Croatia cited courses in universities.

12.11 Finally, the 2019 review questionnaire asked recipients **whether any national (or other level) training workshops had been undertaken during the period 2016–2019 to improve skills in the monitoring of birds of prey**. A total of 73 responses was received to this question. Some interpreted it more specifically in relation to birds of prey and monitoring *per se* than others, in several cases leading to opposing answers coming from the same country. A degree of judgement has therefore been exercised for this analysis in categorising answers as “yes” or “no”; and no particular weight has been put on whether the training approach in a given case was specifically by “workshops” or by some other method.

12.12 Positive answers (on this basis) were received in relation to 33 countries (Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Egypt, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Ireland, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Palestine, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and Zimbabwe). In some cases the training related to particular species or particular threats/impacts; in other cases it was more general. The situation was reported to be unknown in two countries, and negative responses were received in relation to a further 21, for two of which (Cyprus and Czech Republic) relevant training was reported to be planned for the future.

13. Action Plan Activity 5: Monitor bird of prey populations, carry out conservation research and take remedial measures

13.1 Activity 5 of the Action Plan (Table 2) on “Monitor bird of prey populations, carry out conservation research and take remedial measures” includes the following:

- 5.1 Establish flyway-scale monitoring networks comprising a representative range of sites where systematic and coordinated monitoring of breeding populations, reproductive success and migration numbers (spring and autumn) can be undertaken.
- 5.2 Design and undertake a coordinated monitoring programme and develop monitoring protocols based on the monitoring network established under 5.1.
- 5.3 Assess and then address the impacts of habitat loss on breeding, passage and wintering populations of birds of prey, and identify required measures to maintain Favourable Conservation Status.
- 5.4 Assess and then address the impacts of the use of toxic chemicals, including heavy metals (for example lead in shot pellets), on breeding, passage and wintering populations of birds of prey, and their survival, identify and then implement appropriate measures to assist in achieving and maintaining Favourable Conservation Status.
- 5.5 Monitor power line and wind farm impacts on birds of prey, including through analysis of existing data such as ringing data.
- 5.6 Undertake research into the desirability of reintroducing birds of prey, and implement appropriate conservation programmes (including those involving captive breeding), where this is shown to improve their conservation status in the wild, and where these are in accord with IUCN guidelines.
- 5.7 Seek to promote appropriate programmes of captive breeding so as to alleviate the pressure of wild harvests on populations of birds of prey.
- 5.8 Assess the scale of harvests so as to evaluate the implications for the populations concerned.
- 5.9 Undertake relevant surveillance for diseases which may pose a threat to birds of prey populations, so as to inform conservation and management responses.
- 5.10 Initiate collaborative research into the effects of climate change on birds of prey and their habitats, and implement appropriate adaptation measures.

13.2 In responding to the pre-MOS2 implementation survey in 2015, nine of the 16 Signatories who responded to the relevant question (Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Madagascar, The Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland and the UK) reported that they had established monitoring programmes for breeding populations, reproductive success and migration counts of birds of prey; and the same countries had also published guidelines or protocols on systematic or coordinated monitoring programmes.

13.3 Five of the 15 Signatories who responded to the question about assessing the impacts of habitat loss (Finland, France, Madagascar, The Netherlands and the UK) reported that they had undertaken such assessments, and had identified measures for maintaining the favourable conservation status of the raptor species affected. The assessments were to be forwarded to the Coordinating Unit for reference. Four out of 16 Signatories reported having undertaken assessments of toxic chemical impacts, including lead, and several others were planning to do so. Six out of 16 Signatories (Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, South Africa and the UK) had programmes for monitoring the impacts of power lines and wind farms on raptors and identifying relevant conservation measures, with the UK noting that in its case the risk was assessed to be low.

13.4 Reintroduction or restocking projects following the IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and involving migratory birds of prey had been implemented in three out of 16 Signatory countries who responded to the question on this. These concerned Red Kites and White-tailed Sea-eagles in the UK, Griffon, Bearded and Cinereous Vultures in France and Bearded Vultures in Switzerland.

13.5 Seven out of 16 Signatories reported the establishment of captive raptor breeding programmes. In Hungary this involved 2-3 pairs of Saker Falcon; in Iran there were projects being

implemented by private collections; France, Pakistan and Switzerland were running programmes involving vultures; South Africa was planning a project for Bearded Vultures (subsequently implemented); and the UK reported widespread captive breeding of falcons and other raptor species.

13.6 Fifteen of the 17 Signatories reporting on harvesting of migratory birds of prey reported that this did not take place legally in their country. France reported Black Kites and Common Buzzards being taken as part of safety measures at airports. Mali stated that all species were taken, including falcons in particular.

13.7 Disease surveillance programmes involving raptors were reported to be in place in nine of the 17 countries that responded to the question on this. Iran, Mali and Niger were addressing avian influenza, Madagascar was addressing both avian influenza and West Nile Virus, and the other Signatories with relevant programmes were Denmark, France, Hungary, Switzerland and the UK.

13.8 The Work Plan for the Raptors MOU Technical Advisory Group includes as item 5.13 a task to “Develop further appropriate mechanisms for the sharing of data on raptors for the better implementation of the MoU’s objectives”³⁷. Although the TAG3 meeting in December 2018 included a presentation on the European Raptor Monitoring Facility³⁸, no specific actions on task 5.13 have been agreed within the TAG thus far. The position among Signatories on Action Plan activity 5 as summarised in the present review however provides an updated basis for considering options for the most appropriate way forward with this task.

13.9 The 2019 review questionnaire asked recipients **whether, in their country or area, any systematic and coordinated monitoring programmes had been established for breeding populations, reproductive success and migration counts (spring and autumn) of birds of prey**. A total of 76 responses was received to this question. Respondents interpreted “systematic” and “programmes” in a variety of ways, sometimes very loosely; but affirmative answers were received in relation to 33 countries (Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Palestine, Cape Verde, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and Zimbabwe). The programmes cited varied from those addressing just one or a few species/sites to some that were more comprehensive. The European Commission cited the requirement in the EU Birds Directive (Article 12) for six-yearly reports on the status and trends of birds, but only four of the responses relating to relevant Member States mentioned this. In all, 25 countries were the subject of responses indicating “no” or “not known”.

13.10 The 2019 review questionnaire also asked recipients **whether any guidelines or protocols had been published concerning systematic or coordinated monitoring programmes for migratory birds of prey**. A total of 71 responses was received to this question. In the case of five countries covered by these the situation was not known, and guidelines or protocols were reported to be absent (or deemed for this analysis to be absent) from a further 36. (Answers deemed to be “no” included some given as “yes” but where this referred only to guidelines on subjects other than monitoring, or to the existence of monitoring activities but not to published guidelines or protocols). Truer “yes” answers (sometimes for guidelines relating specifically to raptors, sometimes for birds more generally) were given in relation to Austria, Bulgaria, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Hungary, Italy, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Zimbabwe, and by the European Commission for the European Union. Eleven of these provided references or links to sources (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, France,

³⁷ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2018b). Review of the TAG workplan 2016-2020. Document UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG3/Doc.4 for the 3rd Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group, Sempach, Switzerland, 12-14 December 2018.

³⁸ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (in prep), *op cit*.

Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the European Commission). Plans to publish guidelines in future were also mentioned in relation to the Czech Republic and Madagascar.

13.11 The 2019 review questionnaire then asked recipients **whether any assessments had been made of the impacts of habitat loss on breeding, passage or wintering populations of migratory birds of prey, and whether measures had been identified to maintain their Favourable Conservation Status**. A total of 72 responses was received to this question. For 34 countries (some being the subject of two or more responses) the answer was “no” or “not known”; but for a majority of the others the position is also doubtful, since references were made in responses relating to these to issues such as species population status reporting, (predictive) project EIAs, habitat surveys or IBA monitoring, but not the particular assessments and measures described in the question.

13.12 Examples of apparently clearer affirmative indications were those given in relation to Belgium (Red Kite); Hungary (impact on Saker Falcons of habitat loss associated with wind farms); The Netherlands (Hen Harrier, and to some extent a few other species); Norway (generic answer); Romania (generic answer); Slovakia (Lesser Spotted Eagle, and possibly some other species), Switzerland (particularly for Little Owl); United Arab Emirates (generic answer); and the United Kingdom (Hen Harrier and Merlin in Northern Ireland, and forestry impacts in Scotland). Measures for maintaining Favourable Conservation Status (the second part of the question) were mentioned or implied in the responses relating to Hungary and the UK in particular.

13.13 The 2019 review questionnaire next asked recipients **whether any assessments had been made of the impacts of the use of toxic chemicals, including heavy metals (e.g. lead in shot and ammunition) on breeding, passage or wintering populations of migratory birds of prey; and whether measures had been identified to maintain their Favourable Conservation Status**. A total of 74 responses was received to this question. Some responses mentioned the recording of toxicological information in dead birds; but for the purposes of this analysis, this on its own was not regarded as an “assessment of impact” in the sense intended by the question. Negative (or deemed negative) responses were received in relation to 30 countries (a majority of those covered), and the situation was reported as “unknown” in relation to a further seven.

13.14 Among the remaining (affirmative) responses was a reference to a single study (concluded in 2018) focusing on vultures and covering seven countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia (FYR) and Serbia. (A national study on birds in general was also reported for Serbia). Other countries (14) where relevant assessments were reported included Bangladesh, Cape Verde, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom. Reference was also made to an intended future assessment in the Czech Republic.

13.15 Poisoning by lead ammunition featured prominently among those responses that gave specific details; but other chemicals, including veterinary drugs and pesticides, were also mentioned. Responses relating to France, Ireland, United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom highlighted on-going monitoring rather than just one-off assessments. In terms of the second part of the question concerning measures for maintaining Favourable Conservation Status, the few references to this mostly cited bans on lead, or enforcement activity.

13.16 The 2019 review questionnaire asked recipients **whether any programmes had been established to monitor the impacts of power lines and wind farms on breeding, passage or wintering populations of migratory birds of prey, and whether measures had been identified to maintain their Favourable Conservation Status**. A total of 71 responses was received to this question. These were not straightforward to analyse, as respondents’ interpretation of the question varied between those who considered it to relate only to strategic/multi-location programmes, those who included instances of single-site post-project monitoring being a condition of construction

consents, and a few who said “yes” but related this only to predictive EIAs rather than assessment of actual impacts. In a few countries this issue was reported as not relevant, and in four the situation was unknown.

13.17 The apparently more strategically “programmatic” positive responses related to a total of 21 countries, but given the inexact picture on this, they are not named here. Nearly all of the instances where any details were provided related to wind farms rather than power lines. Where measures to maintain Favourable Conservation Status were mentioned (a minority of cases) these generally related to mitigation efforts such as “shut down on demand” protocols for wind turbines.

13.18 The 2019 review questionnaire further asked recipients **whether any reintroduction or restocking projects had been implemented involving migratory birds of prey, in accordance with the IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations**. A total of 75 responses was received to this question. Among those answering “no”, many suggested that the issue was not relevant or not necessary in the countries concerned. For six countries the situation was recorded as unknown. The remaining positive responses (only two of which mentioned following the IUCN Guidelines) were in relation to the following 13 countries:

Austria	Bearded Vulture, Ural Owl
Bulgaria	Griffon Vulture, Cinereous Vulture, Egyptian Vulture, Lesser Kestrel, Saker Falcon
Cyprus	Griffon Vulture
Czech Republic	Golden Eagle – in the past
France	Cinereous Vulture, Bearded Vulture, Osprey, Kestrel
Germany	Peregrine - in the past, Eagle Owl - in the past, Greater Spotted Eagle
Ireland	Red Kite
Italy	Egyptian Vulture
Spain	Osprey, Bearded Vulture, Cinereous Vulture, Lesser Kestrel, Spanish Imperial Eagle
Sweden	Peregrine
Switzerland	Bearded Vulture, Osprey
United Arab Emirates	Saker Falcon, other unspecified species
United Kingdom	Red Kite, Osprey, Golden Eagle, White-tailed Sea Eagle

13.19 The 2019 review questionnaire then asked recipients **whether any captive breeding programmes had been established involving any species of migratory birds of prey in their country or area**. A total of 73 responses was received to this question. Several of those answering “no” indicated that there was no conservation need for such programmes in their country, including at least one instance where there were reintroduction programmes which had sufficient wild-origin sources of birds not to need captive breeding. Answers in the affirmative were in relation to the following 15 countries:

Austria	(By implication, Bearded Vulture and Ural Owl)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Falcons, but mostly for commercial reasons, not conservation
Bulgaria	Unspecified vultures
Burkina Faso	Unspecified
France	Bearded Vulture
India	Unspecified vultures
Iran	Unspecified falcons
Italy	Egyptian Vulture
Pakistan	Unspecified vultures
South Africa	Bearded Vulture, White-backed Vulture, Cape Vulture
Spain	Lesser Kestrel, Bearded Vulture, Spanish Imperial Eagle; plus Peregrine Falcon, Goshawk and Sparrowhawk for falconry
Sweden	Peregrine Falcon

Switzerland	Bearded Vulture
Togo	Unspecified
United Arab Emirates	Unspecified falcons, and possibly other species
International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC)	Peregrine Falcon, country/ies not specified

13.20 The 2019 review questionnaire also asked recipients **whether any species of migratory birds of prey are legally harvested in the country or area concerned**. Activity 5.8 in the Action Plan foresees assessments of the scale of any harvesting so as to evaluate the implications for the populations concerned; but the first stage in doing this is to establish where it may be taking place (or where it is at least legally allowed to take place). Among the 63 responses received to this question, the situation was reported to be unknown in relation to eight countries, but among the remainder, only ten countries were cited as places where harvesting took place or could take place - and for some of these, an indication of (small) scale was in fact already given. They were as follows:

Bosnia and Herzegovina	Potentially, due to internally unharmonised hunting laws
Burkina Faso	No details
France	Sparrow hawk and Goshawk, very small numbers under strict controls
Gabon	For regulated research only
Luxembourg	Legally possible under exception provisions, but not done in practice to date
Niger	No details
Serbia	Goshawk
Slovakia	Legally possible, under one statute at least, for Common Buzzard, Rough-legged Buzzard and Goshawk; but generally not done in practice
United Kingdom	Very small numbers under strict controls, for falconry
Zimbabwe	Falcons such as such as Peregrine and Lanner Falcon for falconry, but none taken in recent years

13.21 Finally, the 2019 review questionnaire asked recipients **whether any disease surveillance programmes involving species of migratory birds of prey were in place** in the countries they were reporting on. A total of 69 responses was received to this question. Those answering “no” did so in relation to 17 of the countries, and for a further 15 the situation was unknown. The remainder cited or implied a variety of situations, ranging from occasional examination of individual dead specimens or responses triggered by disease outbreaks, to a few apparent examples where more routine, strategic and proactive surveillance regimes were in place. With a number of the “yes” answers it was not possible to determine which of these situations applied, so in this analysis they have all been combined. In most cases the regime concerned covered birds in general and was not specific to birds of prey. The 25 countries for which either an “active” or “passive” type of positive response was given on this basis were: Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Croatia, Denmark, France, Gabon, Germany, Iran, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Morocco, Netherlands, Niger, Norway, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and Zimbabwe.

14. Action Plan Activity 6: Supporting measures

14.1 Activity 6 of the Action Plan (Table 2) on “Supporting measures” includes the following:

- 6.1 Prepare National, Regional or Sub-Regional strategies, or equivalent documents, for birds of prey (taking into account the need for collaborative trans-boundary measures with adjacent Signatory States).
- 6.2 Prepare single species, or, if more appropriate, multispecies, action plans for all globally threatened species, taking account of existing international plans and where necessary extending them to cover the entire African-Eurasian range of each species.
- 6.3 Update Tables 1 and 3 according to new information emerging from the monitoring programme.
- 6.4 Encourage Signatories to improve international cooperation through organising conferences, seminars and workshops concerning monitoring, scientific research and conservation activities.

14.2 Activity 6.1 on **national, regional or sub-regional raptor conservation strategies and equivalent documents**, although itemised in this way as just one action within the list of 34 included in Table 2 of the Action Plan, is also in its own right a specific individual provision in paragraph 12 of the MOU; and according to section 5 of the Action Plan these strategies or equivalent documents should address the whole scheme of activities in Table 2. For that reason this subject has been treated separately (and more extensively) in section 5 of the present report above, rather than here.

14.3 MOU paragraph 12 however at the same time indicates that, as an example, one form of the “equivalent documents” it refers to could be Single Species Action Plans (SSAPs). Activity 6.2 in Table 2 therefore (which also refers to Multi-species Action Plans, or MsAPs) could similarly be regarded as a part of the repeated expression of paragraph 12 of the MOU. For convenience however, discussion of activity 6.2 is presented in the present section of this report, while the special cases of the SSAP for the Saker Falcon and the MsAP for vulture species are each treated in separate additional sections (15 and 16 respectively) below, because they are the most developed instances of such plans to date.

14.4 Supported by a small grant from the CMS Office - Abu Dhabi in 2010-2011, and a further small grant in 2012 under the revived CMS Small Grants Programme (SGP), a project began at that time to develop an international Single Species Action Plan for the Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*. This was led by the Coordinating Unit and included exchanges of personnel between Madagascar and Oman, which constitute the southern and northern extremes of the species’ migration respectively³⁹. In 2013 a consultant was recruited to work with the CU to establish a Sooty Falcon Working Group, in order to promote collaboration between the key Range States of the species. The first draft of the SSAP was developed in 2014 and circulated to the Working Group in 2015⁴⁰, and tentative plans were made for a workshop to take place in Madagascar in 2016 to develop the plan further⁴¹. At the time of writing it remains in development⁴², and in the meantime in Madagascar itself at national level the species is covered in an MsAP that addresses both Sooty and Eleonora’s Falcons⁴³.

14.5 Apart from the vulture species covered by the Vulture MsAP, and the Saker Falcon and Sooty Falcon as discussed above, other species of migratory raptors covered by the MOU which currently have (or in the recent past have had) a Species Action Plan in place (whether this is led

³⁹ Raptors MOU Interim Coordinating Unit (2013), *op cit*.

⁴⁰ Gallo-Orsi *et al.* (2014). Draft International Single Species Action Plan for the Sooty Falcon. Unpublished.

⁴¹ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015c), *op cit*.

⁴² BirdLife International (2018a). Species action planning for the most threatened migratory birds of prey. UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG3/Doc.4.2a for the 3rd Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group, Sempach, Switzerland, 12-14 December 2018. Prepared in consultation with the Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit.

⁴³ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015a), *op cit*.

by government authorities or by NGOs and others) include the following (concentrating here primarily on those species listed in Category 1 of Table 1 of the Action Plan, being the ones with the most threatened status)⁴⁴:

- Lappet-faced Vulture, international plan for Africa
- Cape Vulture, Namibia
- Cape Vulture, South Africa
- Bearded Vulture, South Africa
- Bearded Vulture, France (2010-2020)
- Bearded Vulture, European Union
- Cinereous Vulture, France
- Cinereous Vulture, European Union (2018-2028)
- Egyptian Vulture, France
- Egyptian Vulture, Iran
- Egyptian Vulture, flyway plan for the Balkan and Central Asian Populations
- Vultures (multi-species), India
- Vultures (multi-species), Nepal (2014-2019)
- South Asian *Gyps* vultures (multi-species)
- Golden Eagle, UK
- Greater Spotted Eagle, European Union
- Spanish Imperial Eagle, European Union
- Eastern Imperial Eagle, European Union
- Eastern Imperial Eagle, South Caucasus
- Hen Harrier, UK
- Pallid Harrier, Europe (CoE)
- Red Kite, Denmark
- Red Kite, Switzerland
- Red Kite, France
- Red Kite, European Union
- Osprey, France (recovery plan 2008-2012)
- Northern Goshawk (Corsican-Sardinian subspecies), France
- Common Kestrel, Switzerland
- Lesser Kestrel, France (2010-2014)
- Red-footed Falcon, Hungary
- Red-footed Falcon, European Union
- Eurasian Scops Owl, Switzerland
- Short-eared Owl, Hungary

14.6 The work plan of the Technical Advisory Group includes a task to identify the most threatened species (Action Plan Table 1, Category 1) which are not currently covered by an international Species Action Plan and which would benefit from the development of such a plan. An analysis undertaken by BirdLife International for the 3rd meeting of the TAG in December 2018⁴⁵ highlighted Beaudouin's Snake-eagle and Tawny Eagle as species without either a plan or many proposed conservation actions; while Black Harrier, Pallas's Fish-eagle, Steller's Sea-eagle and Steppe Eagle had a number of conservation actions listed but appeared to be lacking any formal international Action Plan. Some other species had international Action Plans which were relatively

⁴⁴ This information is mostly derived from a combination of Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015a) *op cit* and BirdLife International (2018a) *op cit*. It concentrates on the species listed in Category 1 of Table 1 of the Action Plan, which are defined as those classified as Globally threatened and Near Threatened according to the most recent IUCN Red List and listed as such in the BirdLife International World Bird Database.

⁴⁵ BirdLife International (2018a), *op cit*.

old and due for review, including those for Red-footed Falcon, Pallid Harrier, Spanish Imperial Eagle and Eastern Imperial Eagle.

14.7 Given that several eagle species are implicated in this way, the question has arisen as to whether a Multi-species Action Plan for eagles would be an appropriate way forward, in a similar way to the MsAP developed for vultures. The two situations are however rather different, in that there is less commonality among the eagles (in terms of threats and solutions) than among the vultures covered by the Vulture MsAP. Joint action plans for species at regional level have therefore been suggested as an alternative approach⁴⁶.

14.8 The TAG meeting concluded that the priority species for international Species Action Plans were Black Harrier, Steppe Eagle, Tawny Eagle (following collection of more data), Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, Pallas's Fish Eagle and Steller's Sea Eagle. In the case of Steppe Eagle, a proposal for a Global Species Action Plan was anticipated from the Russian Raptor Research and Conservation Network⁴⁷.

14.9 The TAG has also noted that while an international Species Action Plan can be a useful vehicle to stimulate and coordinate measures on the ground for alleviating the threats to a species, it is only a tool to guide conservation actions, and effectiveness of such plans in practice varies considerably. It may therefore be appropriate at some future stage for the TAG to undertake some investigation of this delivery effectiveness question.

14.10 In relation to **Species Action Plans at national level**, the Action Plan review questionnaire issued to Signatories and other stakeholders in the summer of 2019 afforded a further update on the situation at that level, by asking all recipients whether any national Single or Multi-species Action Plans had been developed for any species of migratory birds of prey in the countries concerned. A total of 72 responses was received to this question. Answers in the negative were received in relation to 29 countries, a few of which however mentioned other initiatives such as local projects or plans for non-migratory species, or deemed national plans to be unnecessary, for example where an international plan exists. The situation in relation to five countries was reported to be unknown.

14.11 Among the remainder, the existence or the on-going development of plans was reported in relation to 22 countries, as follows:

Austria	Eastern Imperial Eagle
Bangladesh	Unspecified vultures, multi-species
Belgium	Marsh Harrier, Montagu's Harrier; and in preparation for Hen Harrier
Croatia	Griffon Vulture and Golden Eagle, both in preparation
Czech Republic	Saker Falcon – awaiting formal approval
Denmark	Montagu's Harrier and unspecified eagles
France	Red Kite, Griffon Vulture, Egyptian Vulture, Bearded Vulture, Bonelli's Eagle, - and in preparation for Cinereous Vulture, Lesser Kestrel, Osprey, White-tailed Eagle
Greece	Lesser Kestrel, Egyptian Vulture; and multi-species plan in preparation for Griffon, Cinereous and Bearded Vultures
Iran	Egyptian Vulture, Saker Falcon – both seemingly in preparation
Ireland	Threat response plan for Hen Harrier
Italy	Lanner Falcon, Eleonora's Falcon, Egyptian Vulture, Lesser Kestrel
Luxembourg	Red Kite
Morocco	Eleonora's Falcon; and in preparation for unspecified vultures
Myanmar	Multi-species, unspecified

⁴⁶ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (in prep), *op cit*.

⁴⁷ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (in prep), *op cit*.

Norway	Multi-species plan covering Kestrel, Gyrfalcon, Osprey, White-tailed Eagle, Hen Harrier, Golden Eagle, Snowy Owl, Short-Eared Owl, Honey Buzzard, Northern Goshawk, Great Grey Owl, Marsh Harrier, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin
Romania	Lesser Spotted Eagle
Slovakia	Red-footed Falcon; and (previously?) Eastern Imperial Eagle, Golden Eagle, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Saker Falcon, Peregrine Falcon
Spain	Spanish Imperial Eagle, Bearded Vulture
Sweden	Montagu's Harrier; and formerly (both plans now expired) Peregrine Falcon and Golden Eagle
United Arab Emirates	Osprey
United Kingdom	Hen Harrier, White-tailed Eagle, Red Kite
Zimbabwe	Multi-species plan for White-backed, White-headed, Lappet-faced, Cape, Hooded and Palm-nut Vultures

14.12 In addition, the response from the European Commission, although not referring to national-level plans as such, mentioned Single Species Action Plans at the European Union level that have been recommended for implementation by Member States since 2018, in relation to Cinereous Vulture, the Western Palearctic population of Bearded Vulture, the Balkan and Central Asian Populations of Egyptian Vulture, and the Macaronesian Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus granti*).

14.13 Turning to Action Plan activity 6.3 in Table 2 ("**Update Tables 1 and 3** according to new information emerging from the monitoring programme"), Table 1 was updated at the Second Meeting of Signatories in 2015, in three respects. First, a number of amendments concerning taxonomy and nomenclature were made to Annex 1 of the MOU itself (the overall list of African-Eurasian migratory birds of prey), and so Table 1 in the Action Plan was also amended by MOS2 to follow suit. Secondly, Annex 1 was extended to include 18 additional species (11 of them vultures) in light of new information about their migration habits which rendered them eligible on the basis of the definitions of "migratory" used by CMS and the MOU, and so Table 1 in the Action Plan was amended to follow suit.

14.14 Thirdly, the allocation of the listed species across the three threat level categories in Table 1 had been reviewed in the light of new information from the 2015 European Red List of Birds and changes to the Global Red List that were imminently due to be published. Based on recommendations from the TAG in this respect, MOS2 agreed a number of amendments to the categorisations⁴⁸.

14.15 Proposals for amendments to Table 3 of the Action Plan (the "Provisional list of Important Bird Areas that are currently known to be important congregatory bird of prey sites in Africa and Eurasia") were also discussed at MOS2, but were not finalised there. Further work has subsequently been done on this issue, and it is discussed in section 17 below.

14.16 No specific question has been put to stakeholders to elicit information about activity 6.4 in the Action Plan table (on **conferences, seminars and workshops**), although such things have undoubtedly taken place. The wording of the activity specifically envisages the conferences etc being organised by Signatories, but there have also been others, organised by or in conjunction with international organisations, including (as referenced in the present report) the "Global Summit for the Flyways" in Abu Dhabi in April 2018, which included special sessions on raptor topics; annual meetings of the Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction (SAVE) consortium; conferences of the Raptor Research Foundation; and a European Vulture Conference in Portugal in October 2019.

⁴⁸ Details of all the amendments made by MOS2 to Annex 1 of the MOU and Table 1 of the Action Plan can be found in Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015e), *op cit*. The MOS agreed to adopt the changes despite the fact that the formal proposal documents had not been circulated within the timeframes stipulated in the Rules of Procedure for the MOS, on the basis that this would be regarded as a "one-off exception" which did not constitute a precedent.

15. Saker Falcon Global Action Plan

15.1 The Saker Falcon Global Action Plan is an example of the Single Species Action Plans that are contemplated by Activity 6.2 in Table 2 of the Action Plan as discussed in section 14 above, but it merits individual treatment here, given the significant degree of dedicated effort that has been devoted to it in the framework of the CMS and the MOU.

15.2 The Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* is classified by IUCN as “Endangered” and is listed in Category 1 of Table 1 in the Action Plan. Populations have suffered rapid declines caused by habitat degradation, electrocution on powerline poles and unsustainable trapping for falconry purposes. CMS COP10 in 2011 added the species to Appendix I of the Convention (excluding the population in Mongolia) and established a Task Force under the auspices of the Raptors MOU to develop a coordinated Global Action Plan, including a management and monitoring system, to conserve the species⁴⁹. The Appendix listing was regarded as a significant achievement at the time, given the controversy that had surrounded an earlier attempt to achieve it at COP9 in 2008. A key part of the solution was the recognition of a need to incorporate sustainable use for falconry purposes into the long term conservation and management of the species⁵⁰.

15.3 The Saker Falcon Task Force was duly established in early 2012, and undertook a large volume of work on researching knowledge about the species, including population dynamics, legislation, policy and sustainable use issues. Funding support was provided by the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, the Saudi Wildlife Authority and the European Union; and since international trade was a significant issue for the species, the CITES Secretariat also took an active part in the work, including help with leveraging funds⁵¹. A first draft of the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP) was published in August 2013, and following extensive stakeholder consultations, Task Force meetings and a special workshop, the final version was published in 2014 and was adopted in November that year by CMS COP11⁵². It was also endorsed by the Signatories to the Raptors MOU at MOS2 in 2015. In addition to the CMS official languages, the GAP has been translated into Arabic and Russian; and it has a ten-year timeframe.

15.4 COP11 decided to give the Saker Falcon Task Force a mandate to continue working under the auspices of the Raptors MoU Coordinating Unit, *inter alia* for active promotion of SakerGAP implementation and for the further development and implementation of an adaptive management and monitoring framework. It was noted also that the GAP was a high quality text which offered a good model for future Single Species Action Plans, though of course the real test of this will be how it is used.

15.5 Already at the outset a first flagship implementation project had been defined, to develop a multilingual online information portal for engaging stakeholders within a Saker Falcon Network. The aim of the portal was to raise awareness and build trust by linking falconers, trappers, falcon hospitals, conservationists and researchers in an information-exchange network which would help with the estimation of sustainable harvest levels, encourage husbandry best practice and create a

⁴⁹ Convention on Migratory Species (2011). Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug*. Resolution 10.28 adopted by the 10th meeting of the Conference of Parties, Bergen, Norway, 20-25 November 2011.

⁵⁰ See Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015c), *op cit*.

⁵¹ CMS Secretariat (2014). Proceedings of the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Quito, Ecuador, 4-9 November 2014. UNEP/CMS/COP11/Report.

⁵² Convention on Migratory Species (2014). Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* Global Action Plan (SakerGAP). Resolution 11.18 adopted by the 11th meeting of the Conference of Parties, Quito, Ecuador, 4-9 November 2014. (Following minor updating amendments at COP12 in October 2017, this now exists as “Resolution 11.18 (Rev.COP12)”). The Action Plan itself was document UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.23.1.5.2 for COP11, and was then published separately as Kovács A, Williams NP and Galbraith CA (2014). Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* Global Action Plan (SakerGAP) including a management and monitoring system to conserve the species. Raptors MOU Technical Publication No. 2; CMS Technical Series No. 31. Coordinating Unit of the CMS Raptors MOU, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

data management system for monitoring trade in Saker Falcons. The majority of the funding for the project was provided by the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF), which is a Co-operating Partner in the Raptors MoU. The portal became operational in April 2015.

15.6 By the time of the Global Summit for the Flyways in Abu Dhabi in April 2018, where a special session was convened to review progress with implementation of the SakerGAP⁵³, five flagship projects had got underway. The first of these was the online information and networking portal mentioned above, which had been completed as *www.sakernet.org* and was available in four languages (Arabic, Farsi, Pashto and Russian)⁵⁴. It had already been visited 7,000 times by the end of 2017⁵⁵.

15.7 The second flagship project concerned the engagement of a target number of ten falcon hospitals and ten trappers within a Saker Falcon Network. At the time of the Summit, and linked through the portal, eight falcon hospitals had expressed interest in future cooperation with a scheme to monitor wild Saker Falcon populations and trade in the species through mark-recapture methods. Through the IUCN Thematic Group on Sustainable Use and Management of Ecosystems, falconers and trappers in the main Saker Falcon breeding areas in Asia had been invited to complete an online survey, and responses were received from 32 individual falcon trappers and nine falcon hospitals/clinics. This engagement came mainly from places where relevant national clubs were well-organised and were positive about the purpose of the enquiry, but there was less response from the end-users of traded falcons, due reportedly to concerns about how the information might be used. Although development and trial of a system for trade and ecological monitoring of Saker Falcon populations had been planned (as “Sakernet 2”), funding had not been secured for this within the window of availability for key participants.

15.8 The third flagship project concerned the deployment of a target number of 100 satellite tracking tags on Saker Falcons. In 2016-17, a consortium of institutions including the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF) and Ecotone Telemetry had co-funded a Saker Falcon satellite tracking project in the Russian Federation and Mongolia, these being two of the four most important Range States for breeding populations of the bird. Combined with other efforts, between 2014 and the time of the CMS Scientific Council Sessional Committee meeting shortly after the Flyways Summit, at least 79 birds had been tracked with tags in Austria, Bulgaria, China, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Mongolia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine; and interpretation of the data was expected to shed useful light on their movements (no further information is available on this at the time of writing).

15.9 The fourth project was to erect a target number of 1,000 artificial nest platforms, to increase the breeding population and/or productivity in areas where a shortage of optimal nest sites for Sakers is a limiting factor. Some progress on this was reported by the Emirates Falconers' Club, concerning the erection of some 200 closed box design artificial nests on the Qinghai Tibetan Plateau as part of pilot research by the Institute of Zoology in Beijing and other partners. In addition, a project led by International Wildlife Consultants UK Ltd created a breeding population in Mongolia through the deployment of artificial nests, and this succeeded in producing around 2,500 Saker

⁵³ BirdLife International (2018b). A Summit for the Flyways. Declaration and outcomes of the summit held on 23-26 April 2018, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

⁵⁴ Described in detail in Kenward RE, Sielicki J, AlRashidi MM, Namini RP, Yousafzai KK, and Casey NM (2017). Developing the flagship project for a Saker Falcon portal and network – final report. UNEP-CMS Office, Abu Dhabi.

⁵⁵ In addition to the report of the Summit, the information summarised here concerning the flagship projects also draws on (i) Saker Falcon Task Force (2018). Report from the Saker Falcon Task Force on the implementation of the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP). Document UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC3/Doc.7.1.1 for the 3rd Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC3), Bonn, Germany, 29 May – 1 June 2018; and (ii) Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2018c). Report on implementation of the SakerGAP. Document UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG3/Doc.3.3 for the 3rd Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group, Sempach, Switzerland, 12-14 December 2018.

Falcon fledglings in 2014. Artificial nest platforms have also been constructed in Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine, but not yet in Kazakhstan, which was also identified as a priority area for this.

15.10 The fifth project was to install or retro-fit a target number of one million “bird-safe” electricity transmission poles by 2024, and to ensure that new and fully reconstructed electric line sections (particularly medium-voltage lines) are safe for birds in target areas from 2017 onwards. The IAF was able to report progress being made on this too, in Bulgaria, China, Hungary, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Serbia and Slovakia. Work by the Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia and the Emirates Falconers’ Club, on a 50km-long sample site in Mongolia, found that Saker Falcons constituted around 75% of powerline-related bird deaths before modification of poles was carried out, and that after modification mortality was reduced by an estimated 85%. The IAF has promoted “bird-safe” pole substitution widely through publications, conference contributions and a website, and has established a European Foundation for Falconry and Conservation whose first task is to undertake the retro-fitting of one of the highest-priority powerlines in Morocco. MME (BirdLife Hungary) hosted an international conference in Hungary in November 2016 on power grid threats to birds.

15.11 The special session on the SakerGAP at the Flyways Summit also gave time for discussions on engaging national governments, enhancing co-ordination between Range States and across the flyway, sustainable use, research and monitoring. Outputs from all the various session discussions were captured for incorporation into a detailed Implementation Plan (see below).

15.12 Overall, the Summit discussion reaffirmed the value of the GAP and in particular the transparent, inclusive, consensus-building and holistic multi-level approach it had taken. Progress on the flagship projects was seen as encouraging, but the need was noted at the same time for implementation to be scaled up and extended into priority Range States, especially to address the key threat of electrocution. For the effective long-term conservation of the species, it was seen as essential to move from the current unregulated illegal taking of Saker Falcons to a situation which ensures that any taking of birds from the wild is regulated in a transparent manner and is in line with the SakerGAP goal to re-establish a healthy, self-sustaining wild population throughout its range, including by adopting the safeguards established in the Plan. In addition to an enhanced level of resource mobilisation involving Range States and stakeholders, full implementation of the GAP was also acknowledged to require the development of a governance framework.

15.13 The Summit also provided the occasion for the announcement of the endowment by the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi of USD 20 million for the Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Raptor Conservation Foundation, with initial seed funding of USD 1 million to combat the threat of electrocution of falcons and other birds of prey on powerline poles; which offers a significant boost to efforts on this issue. As of this writing, the Foundation is identifying its funding priorities and mode of operation.

15.14 The SakerGAP identified the need to recruit a coordinator to drive its implementation. Securing funds and concluding the necessary administrative arrangements for this took some considerable time, but a formal recruitment process began early in 2016 and was eventually concluded in November 2017 with the appointment of two part-time consultants in the roles of SakerGAP Coordinator and Saker Falcon Task Force Specialist Technical Advisor, respectively. These individuals, together with the Chair of the Task Force and the staff of the Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit, formed a Steering Group to guide progress and support the work of the Task Force. The two consultancy contracts ended in November 2018, meaning that the Steering Group has been operating at significantly reduced capacity since then.

15.15 In December 2017 a short questionnaire was circulated to all 85 Range States of the Saker Falcon, Task Force members and other stakeholders, to gather information about progress with SakerGAP implementation and future intentions. Some 40 responses were received from 26 of the

Range States and from a Cooperating Partner to the MOU. Excellent progress was reported on the five flagship projects identified in the GAP, and generally good levels of activity covering almost all aspects of Saker Falcon conservation, albeit with some gaps in coverage⁵⁶. Responses to a question about future challenges identified 74 different items needing attention: most of these fell within the ambit of the work to be done by the Task Force, thus underlining the importance of its role.

15.16 Informed by the questionnaire survey, in March 2018 the SakerGAP Coordinator drafted a Summary Implementation Plan for 2018-2020, designed to operationalise the core actions outlined in the GAP, and to guide and track progress in their delivery. The Plan incorporates the flagship projects together with components of an Adaptive Management Framework and a Framework for Action, and it is intended to be a dynamic working document that can be updated regularly. Alongside the summary document, a more comprehensive Implementation Plan has also been developed. This includes details of all actions applicable to the Range States, other partners and stakeholders, together with allocated commitments and timescales⁵⁷. It remains a draft at present, due to expiry of the contracts with the two key consultants⁵⁸.

15.17 The coordination structure suggested for the SakerGAP envisages the establishment of four Regional Implementation Groups (Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East & North Africa) to ensure coverage across the whole range of the species. Mobilisation of resources to establish this structure, as well as to enable specific projects and other activities identified in the Implementation Plan, remains a principal challenge for the realisation of the GAP overall. The existing sources already mentioned above are making a major contribution, but more is required. A further effort has been made by BSPB (BirdLife Bulgaria) which led on the submission in June 2018 of a bid for EUR 2.5 million of EU LIFE funding for Saker Falcon conservation in Eastern Europe (subsequently re-submitted)⁵⁹.

15.18 Responses to the questionnaire survey on implementation of the Raptors MOU Action Plan in 2019 included several references to Saker Falcon conservation activities among the “most positive advances to date in implementing the MOU and/or Action Plan” cited by respondents; including reintroduction and release programmes for the species in Bulgaria and by the United Arab Emirates in Kazakhstan, and provision of artificial nest structures in Romania and Serbia. National Saker Falcon Action Plans were also mentioned in relation to Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Iran and Uzbekistan.

⁵⁶ Saker Falcon Task Force (2018), *op cit*.

⁵⁷ The draft plan can be found on the MOU website as Annex 2 to Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2018c), *op cit*.

⁵⁸ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2019a). Report from the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU on the Saker Falcon Task Force and the implementation of the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP). Document UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC4/Inf.6 for the for the 4th Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC4), Bonn, Germany, 12–15 November 2019.

⁵⁹ CMS Secretariat (2018a). Implementation of the Programme of Work 2018-2020. Document UNEP/CMS/StC48/Doc.14 for the 48th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the CMS, Bonn, Germany, 23–24 October 2018. (Includes a section on the status and achievements of the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan).

16. Vulture Multi-species Action Plan

16.1 The Vulture Multi-species Action Plan (Vulture MsAP) is one of the most significant items of implementation activity that has progressed under the auspices of the Raptors MOU Action Plan to date. Despite being a sub-item of Activity 6.2 in Table 2 of the Action Plan therefore, on the same basis as the SakerGAP discussion presented in the preceding section of this review above, it is given its own dedicated section here. That said, however, running in parallel with the present Action Plan review was a separate consultancy task devoted to the development of a Strategic Implementation Plan for the Vulture MsAP (supported by funding from Switzerland), which gives the subject (including the progress made so far) more detailed attention. The present section therefore constitutes only a very brief summary of the situation⁶⁰; and for more detail, the reader is referred to the Vulture MsAP Strategic Implementation Plan itself⁶¹.

16.2 At CMS COP11 in 2014, the Parties adopted Resolution 11.14 on a Programme of Work on Migratory Birds and Flyways. The Resolution included a mandate to develop a Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP), under the auspices of the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU. At the Raptors MOU's MOS2 in 2015, all species of Old World vultures (except the Palm-nut Vulture) were recognised as fulfilling the CMS definition of "migratory" and were accordingly added to Annex I of the MOU. At the same time the MOS tasked the MOU's Technical Advisory Group (TAG) with facilitating the development of a Vulture MsAP to encompass all 15 species of Old World vultures that are obligate scavengers.

16.3 In February 2016, following consultation with the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Vulture Specialist Group, BirdLife International, the Vulture Conservation Foundation and other specialists, the MOU Coordinating Unit published a proposal for developing the Vulture MsAP, with the overall aim of rapidly halting current population declines in the 15 species concerned, reversing recent population trends to bring the conservation status of each species back to a favourable level, and providing conservation management guidelines applicable to all Range States covered by the Vulture MsAP.

16.4 In response to a call for nominations for a Vulture Working Group and for funding support, nearly 60 nominations were received for the Working Group and Switzerland generously offered financial support (to supplement that provided by Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi on behalf of the Government of the UAE through the Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit) for developing the Vulture MsAP.

⁶⁰ The information here draws principally on correspondence and teleconference discussions with the Vulture MsAP Coordination Team and the following sources:

- (i) Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2018d). Report on implementation of the Vulture MsAP. Document UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG3/Doc.3.4 for the 3rd Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group, Sempach, Switzerland, 12-14 December 2018.
- (ii) CMS Secretariat (2018a), *op cit.* (Includes a section on the implementation of the COP12 Resolution and Decisions on the conservation of African-Eurasian vultures).
- (iii) CMS Secretariat (2018b). Report from the Secretariat on the implementation of the COP12 Resolution and Decisions on the conservation of African-Eurasian vultures. Document UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC3/Doc.7.1.2 for the 3rd Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC3), Bonn, Germany, 29 May – 1 June 2018.
- (iv) BirdLife International (2018b), *op cit.*
- (v) Pritchard DE (2018). Vulture MsAP – developing the Strategic Implementation Plan. Discussion document circulated to the Vulture MsAP Coordination Team, December 2018, and presentation given to the 3rd Meeting of the Raptors MOU Technical Advisory Group, Sempach, Switzerland, 12-14 December 2018.
- (vi) Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2019b). Report from the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU on the implementation of COP12 Resolution and Decisions on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Vultures. Document UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC4/Inf.7 for the for the 4th Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC4), Bonn, Germany, 12–15 November 2019.

⁶¹ Pritchard DE (2019). Multi-species Action Plan to conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP) Strategic Implementation Plan 2020 - 2023 (Incorporating a report on implementation to date). Published by Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit.

16.5 The subsequent development of the Vulture MsAP was overseen by the Coordinating Unit in partnership with BirdLife International, the Vulture Conservation Foundation and the IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group, supported by members of the Vulture Working Group, its Vulture Steering Group and in particular the Overarching Coordinator and three Regional Coordinators covering Africa, Asia (excluding Central Asia) and Europe (including Central Asia).

16.6 To help with the elaboration of the regional components of the Plan, four regional workshops (with further support from the host countries concerned in each case) were held in late 2016 - early 2017, covering respectively Africa, Europe & Central Asia; Asia and the Middle East. A first consolidated draft of the Vulture MsAP, incorporating the four regional components, was published in mid-February 2017. It was circulated for review to 50 specialists in advance of a fifth “overarching” workshop in Spain, which reviewed and refined the draft. There then followed a phase of public consultation which produced just under 60 responses, leading to a further revision of the text which was then tabled for consideration by the 2nd meeting of the CMS Scientific Council Sessional Committee in July 2017.

16.7 Following its endorsement by the Sessional Committee, the Vulture MsAP (covering the 12-year period 2017-2029) was formally adopted by the CMS Parties at COP12 in October 2017⁶². Covering all 15 species of Old World vultures that are obligate scavengers, its overall aim, over the period 2017-2029, is to halt and reverse the current serious population declines in these species, and to support Range States with appropriate conservation management actions. After describing the policy context and the biology of the species, the Plan reviews all known threats to vultures at regional and species levels, and the drivers behind these threats are considered. To address the threats, 12 objectives are listed, followed by a Framework of Actions that sets out 124 activities to be implemented as a response to the challenges.

16.8 Various key stakeholders are identified in the Vulture MsAP, along with their roles in achieving the 12 objectives; as well as information on barriers and policy opportunities for effecting wide-scale changes. An overview of international conventions, agreements and policies is included, together with a list of other plans and related initiatives addressing relevant species and/or threats, so as to give guidance on existing structures and possible synergies that may help to support the implementation of the Vulture MsAP. The proposed structure, approach and resources required to implement the Plan are described, and the monitoring, evaluation and review processes to be followed are set out. Key components of desired communication and fundraising plans are also described.

16.9 The Vulture MsAP contains a framework for coordination, which proposes a functional structure for facilitating implementation of the Plan. This includes the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MoU (to have overall responsibility for guidance and oversight); an Overarching Coordinator (for oversight of day-to-day actions); Regional Coordinators (to promote and assist regional implementation); a Vulture Working Group (to facilitate communications with Range States); a Vulture Steering Group (with responsibility for progressing specific tasks); Regional Vulture Committees (to promote and facilitate communication within regions); National Vulture Task Forces (focused on the particular species in the country concerned); and the general public is also identified as a component of the structure, in respect of broad awareness-raising efforts and support.

16.10 Two of the related plans mentioned above were developed concurrently with the development of the Vulture MsAP and were consulted extensively with regard to the two species

⁶² Convention on Migratory Species (2017). Conservation of African-Eurasian Vultures. Resolution 12.10 adopted by the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Manila, Philippines, 23-28 October 2017. Unusually, although this Resolution adopted the MsAP, the Plan itself was not annexed to the Resolution nor was the source document referenced; but it had been tabled at the COP as Annex 3 to Document UNEP/CMS/COP12/Doc.24.1.4, and it has since been published as Botha *et al.* (2017), *op cit.*

concerned. They are a *Flyway Action Plan for the Conservation of the Balkan and Central Asian Populations of the Egyptian Vulture* and a *Flyway Action Plan for the Conservation of the Cinereous Vulture*. In addition, a *Blueprint for the Recovery of Asia's Critically Endangered Gyps Vultures* was developed by the Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction (SAVE) consortium. It is annually updated by SAVE members and provides clear guidance in terms of regional vulture conservation priorities, which are reflected in the Vulture MsAP. All three of these documents are included as Annexes to the Vulture MsAP.

16.11 Resolution 12.10 requested the CMS Secretariat, through the Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit, to facilitate continuation of the Vulture Working Group and its associated structures (Vulture Steering Group and proposed Regional Implementation Committees) and the team of coordinators, and to continue to encourage stakeholder engagement *inter alia* through regional meetings. Funding still needs to be found for this, and in particular for maintaining the team of coordinators.

16.12 In the interim, the Endangered Wildlife Trust (South Africa), the Vulture Conservation Foundation (Switzerland) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (UK), the organisations which hosted the three original coordinators, have agreed to continue to support these roles but with much reduced capacity. In addition the Saudi Wildlife Authority has offered to cover the Middle East region. These coordinators, together with other representatives of BirdLife International, RSPB, VCF and the Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit, form a "Coordination Team" for the Vulture MsAP.

16.13 In February 2018, the Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit sent a questionnaire to all 128 Range States covered by the Vulture MsAP, members of the Vulture Working Group, other stakeholders and interested parties, asking about activities completed within the preceding 12 months and any that were planned for the coming three years. Almost 100 respondents, covering 56 Range States (plus some with an international perspective), provided information for some or all of the 35 information fields in the questionnaire. These data have been analysed as part of the parallel consultancy mentioned above, and the results are in the new Vulture MsAP Strategic Implementation Plan (see further below).

16.14 The Global Summit for the Flyways in April 2018, mentioned already in section 15 above, devoted a full day to discussion of the Vulture MsAP. The Summit reaffirmed the importance of the Vulture MsAP and underlined the need for resources for coordination and for a wider "community of implementers" bringing together all stakeholders. It also highlighted some particular priority action themes in support of a "landscape approach" to threat reduction.

16.15 The Summit saw a particularly urgent need to put in place rapid response mechanisms for communities and governments to tackle jointly the threat of poison baits, and safety testing for veterinary pharmaceuticals to reduce this proven risk. "Vulture Safe Zones" were proving to be crucial in South Asia, and similar landscape approaches, adapted as appropriate, held great potential for application in other regions, particularly Africa. Successful recovery programmes in Europe (where vultures are generally increasing and recolonising former ranges), and some important progress with tackling threats in South Asia, demonstrated that effective conservation action for vultures is possible, and that there are many socio-economic benefits associated with healthy vulture populations.

16.16 As a component of an EU LIFE project (led by BirdLife Bulgaria) on the conservation of the Egyptian Vulture along its Eastern flyway, the Vulture Conservation Foundation organised a European Vulture Conference in Albufeira, Portugal in October 2019, with financial support from the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU. One plenary session was dedicated to promoting implementation of the Vulture MsAP, and it included progress reports from the four acting Regional Coordinators.

16.17 The Vulture MsAP identifies eleven “flagship projects” (expanding on earlier ideas for four such projects) to support the future implementation of key parts of the Plan. These have been incorporated into the Strategic Implementation Plan, and they are seen *inter alia* as offering a basis for seeking funding support. The project titles are as follows

1. Developing rapid response systems to stop vulture poisoning.
2. Combatting the trade in threatened vultures and their parts for belief-based use.
3. Conservation of the Egyptian Vulture along the Western and Eastern Flyways.
4. Converting the Vulture MsAP into an interactive online tool.
5. Evaluating the Total Economic Value of Old World Vultures and determining their role in sustainable futures.
6. Creating a Vulture MsAP communications toolkit.
7. Guidance on developing national (or regional) Vulture Conservation Strategies.
8. Safety testing veterinary non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) on vultures.
9. Establishing an international framework for coordination.
10. Sensitivity mapping of energy infrastructure.
11. Guidance on establishing Vulture Safe Zones.

16.18 A vast range of other projects and activities is underway among partners and stakeholders in the different regions and is already contributing to implementation of the Vulture MsAP, while numerous other proposals are being developed on a continuing basis. The Strategic Implementation Plan includes an overview of this picture, as part of its key sections which cover the following:

- Overview of existing implementation activity.
- Inventory of key future projects and initiatives.
- Mapping of support and capacity needs, priorities and opportunities.
- The coordination issue.
- Gap analysis.
- Delivery mechanisms.

16.19 The analysis of existing implementation activity shows a clear tendency, thus far, for activities in the “research and monitoring” category to be dominant. Activities relating to poisoning, energy infrastructure and food supply issues are also prominent. Information on belief-based use, sentinel poisoning, lead ammunition, habitat protection/management, disturbance and persecution was reported less frequently.

16.20 For 48 of the 124 activities listed in the Vulture MsAP (39%), no existing or planned activities were recorded in the data provided. The analysis of gaps and future needs shows some differences between regions, with (for example) capacity/awareness and assistance with field-based activities being particularly needed in Africa, and policy/legal issues being emphasised more strongly in Europe. It would be desirable to evolve this line of enquiry further: (a) to investigate in more depth the specific nature of the needs perceived in each case; and (b) to begin to relate the picture of ‘demand’ to opportunities for ‘supply’, in a kind of ‘support matrix’ which could be maintained on an on-going basis in future.

16.21 Of the actions identified in the Vulture MsAP as “essential” or “critical” priorities, less has been reported so far on those that involve government-level actions for legislation, policy, regulation than those involving field or community-based action.

16.22 Some other important gaps in implementation are apparent, and need urgent attention. One is the need for a full functioning framework to coordinate the Vulture MsAP’s implementation internationally, and to ensure that this is maintained on a solid footing over the life of the Plan. As time goes on, the lack of sufficient coordination capacity may become an increasingly limiting factor

on what can be achieved, given the strategic scale of the agenda at stake. Linked to this is the need to develop and implement a strategy for securing the funding and other resources needed for implementing the Plan.

16.23 An effective monitoring & evaluation regime for the Plan is also currently lacking, and this becomes an increasing deficiency as time goes on. It will be vital in future for the overall implementation of the Plan to be monitored in some way, for completed/successful activities to be registered as such, for outcomes to be evaluated and lessons learnt to be captured (and fed back into on-going work). This suggests a need not only for an agreed assessment mechanism but also a more systematically organised set of activity-reporting processes than are operating at present.

16.24 Ultimately the intention is that the Vulture MsAP Strategic Implementation Plan (referred to earlier above) should not be a static document, but instead a more dynamic kind of living resource, which will serve as a platform for guiding effort, advertising opportunities, triggering connections, relating specific progress steps to strategically-agreed objectives, helping with subsequent evaluation of success, and generally boosting awareness and practical support for vulture conservation. Governments, relevant agencies, organisations and others are encouraged to use it to identify and strengthen the contributions they can each make to linked actions, synergies, and mobilisation of the necessary resources and support.

17. Points for a future update and amendment of the Action Plan

17.1 The present review provides an opportunity to consolidate all the thinking that may have been done to date on potentially desirable updates and amendments to the content of the Action Plan, and also to review the Plan's content afresh with this question in mind, informed *inter alia* by the lessons being learnt from implementation experience thus far, as discussed in the preceding sections above.

17.2 As mentioned earlier, the text of the Action Plan itself (section 8) has always contemplated that the review process would lead to the generation of a revised version to be offered to the MOU Signatories for approval at a future MOS. Paragraph 15 of the MOU further provides for the first Meeting of Signatories (MOS1) to adopt a procedure for amendment of the Annexes (and according to paragraph 22 the Signatories may also amend the MOU itself, by consensus, at any session of the MOS).

17.3 MOS1 duly considered and adopted a procedure for amendments, applicable both to the MOU and its Annexes⁶³. This provides *inter alia* that proposals for amendment may only be made by one or more Signatories to the MOU; proposals should be submitted to the Coordinating Unit at least 150 days before the MOS at which they are to be considered; within 14 days of receipt the Coordinating Unit will circulate any such proposals to all Signatories (and to the Technical Advisory Group when the amendment involves technical matters); comments can be made up to 60 days before the MOS, and these too will be circulated.

17.4 MOS1 also gave some tasks to the (then) interim TAG which were expected to have potential implications for future amendment of the Annexes, including reviewing the list of species in Annex 1 (and their allocation to the defined conservation status categories), reviewing the geographical coverage of the MOU in Annex 2, reviewing the list of sites in Table 3 of Annex 3 (the Action Plan), and making recommendations on the issue of raptor taxonomy and nomenclature in

⁶³ The proposal was contained in Raptors MOU Interim Coordinating Unit (2012c). Procedures for amending the MOU text and its Annexes. Document CMS/Raptors/MoS1/Doc.13.3 for the 1st Meeting of Signatories, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 9-11 December 2012. The eventually adopted procedure appears in Rule 16 of the Rules of Procedure for Meetings of Signatories to the Raptors MOU, appended as Annex IV to the meeting report (Raptors MOU Interim Coordinating Unit 2013, *op cit*).

relation to species listings within the MOU, having regard to CMS COP Resolutions on these subjects and the desirability of harmonised approaches across MEAs⁶⁴.

Taxonomy and nomenclature

17.5 The Parties to CMS, in COP Resolution 10.13 (2011), recognised the advantages of harmonising the nomenclature for birds used across the CMS Family and other MEAs, and adopted the common English names used by BirdLife International. In Resolution 11.19 at COP11 (2014) the Parties subsequently decided that a (then) newly-published checklist of the non-passerine birds of the world⁶⁵ would be the guiding source reference for taxonomy and nomenclature of these species, and the Raptors MOU Signatories at MOS2 confirmed that the same approach should be followed for the MOU⁶⁶.

17.6 This had the consequence for the MOU of requiring the removal of *Milvus lineatus* from Annex 1 as it was no longer recognised as a separate species from *M. migrans*; *Spizaetus nipalensis* needed to be listed instead as *Nisaetus nipalensis* and *Nyctea scandiaca* needed to be listed as *Bubo scandiacus*. The splitting of *Buteo buteo* resulted in the creation of one non-migrant species, as did the splitting of the Mountain and Forest Buzzard (*Buteo oreophilus* and *B. trizonatus*). *Falco peregrinus* (the Peregrine Falcon) had subsumed *Falco pelegrinoides* (the Barbary Falcon) which had previously been listed separately. The upshot of this was the need to add two species and delete three species from Annex 1; and these changes were duly made at MOS2⁶⁷ as described in section 4 above.

17.7 A further consequence of the CMS decision, which was *not* addressed by MOS2, concerned the establishment (in the adopted taxonomic source reference) of an additional order of raptors, the *Accipitriformes*. Under the taxonomy adopted when the Raptors MOU was first concluded, most species of birds of prey listed in Annex 1 were categorised in the Order *Falconiformes*. Many of them now however fall in the new Order⁶⁸. Accordingly the TAG agreed at its 3rd meeting in December 2018 to propose the following amendments to the MOU:

- i. In Section 1 (Scope and Definitions) of the MOU, in 1(a), after “migratory populations of”, to insert the word “*Accipitriformes*”; so that the new text will read “‘Birds of Prey’ means migratory populations of *Accipitriformes*, *Falconiformes* and *Strigiformes* species occurring in Africa and Eurasia, listed in Annex 1 of this Memorandum of Understanding”.
- ii. In Annex 1 (List of African-Eurasian Migratory Birds of Prey), to reflect the amendment made in (i) above by reformatting the list to categorise the species according to the (now) three taxonomic Orders⁶⁹.

17.8 No further changes in taxonomy or nomenclature have been considered by the TAG as necessitating any further proposals at present for changes to Annex 1 on this basis⁷⁰.

⁶⁴ Priorities for the Interim TAG until the 2nd Meeting of Signatories - Annex V to Raptors MOU Interim Coordinating Unit (2013), *op cit*.

⁶⁵ Del Hoyo J and Collar NJ (2014). Handbook of the Birds of the World, and BirdLife International Illustrated Checklist of the Birds of the World. Volume 1: Non-passerines. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.

⁶⁶ Resolution 11.19 has since been superseded by Resolution 12.27 from COP12 in 2017, but the provision concerning the source reference for non-passerine birds has been repeated in the latter Resolution, and the provision thus remains unchanged.

⁶⁷ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015f), *op cit*.

⁶⁸ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2018e). Technical amendments to the text of the Raptors MOU. Document UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG3/Doc.4.1d for the 3rd Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group, Sempach, Switzerland, 12-14 December 2018.

⁶⁹ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (in prep), *op cit*.

⁷⁰ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2018f). Amendments to the list of species on Annex 1 to the Raptors MOU. Document UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG3/Doc.4.1a for the 3rd Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group, Sempach, Switzerland, 12-14 December 2018.

The lists of species

17.9 Section 4 above has described the expansion of taxonomic coverage of the MOU. Apart from the change in numbers caused by taxonomic corrections as described above (adding two and subtracting three, giving a net reduction of one), 18 further species were added at MOS2 as a result of developments in knowledge, particularly regarding migratory behaviour.

17.10 Some other changes were made to the MOU's species lists at MOS2, to cater for the different issue of updated information about conservation status, particularly in the release of the 2015 version of the European Red List of Birds and a revised version of the Global Red List that was due to be published later the same year. This related to the allocation of species among the three conservation status categories in Table 1 of the Action Plan. Several changes between the categories were approved by the MOS, following recommendations made by the TAG, which in turn were based on an analysis by BirdLife International (as the Red List authority for birds)⁷¹.

17.11 Subsequently the TAG, working via its online workspace, has assessed a number of potential candidate species for adding to Annex 1 on the basis of information about their migratory movements. Only one species, the Northern Boobook *Ninox japonica* has been deemed to qualify for addition on this basis⁷². At its 3rd meeting in December 2018 the TAG agreed to recommend that the MOS should accept the addition of the Northern Boobook to Annex 1⁷³, and that the Brown Boobook *Ninox scutulata* should be removed. In effect this is a reclassification, since the former *N. scutulata* has been split into what are now four species, and the one named *N. japonica* is the only one that is migratory (There is thus no change in the total number of species on the Annex). A proposal from Israel to add the Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata* was also considered, but the information on its potential migratory status was deemed by the TAG to be insufficient to justify proceeding with the proposal at this stage.

17.12 Since MOS2, the TAG has also taken account of the most recent IUCN Red List assessments in relation to any possible implications for further amendments that may need making to the conservation status categorisations in Table 1 in the Action Plan. Seven such changes have been proposed, as follows:

- Great Grey Owl: move from Category 3 to Category 2.
- Snowy Owl: move from Category 2 to Category 1.
- Brown Snake-eagle: move from Category 3 to Category 2.
- Tawny Eagle move from Category 2 to Category 1.
- Levant Sparrowhawk: move from Category 3 to Category 2.
- Forest Buzzard: move from Category 3 to Category 1.
- Gyrfalcon: move from Category 3 to Category 2.

17.13 Finally, any change in the geographic scope of the MOU (see below) may potentially be cause for further expansion in the species coverage of the MOU in future, and hence if proposals are put to MOS3 in this regard, they should ideally be accompanied by reasoned proposals for the addition of any relevant species that should logically be added to Annex 1 at the same time.

⁷¹ The proposal is referred to in Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015e) *op cit*, and the outcome is recorded in Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015f), *op cit*, Annex VI of which reproduces the resulting revised Table 1. (Neither the proposal document nor the report of the meeting however itemises the actual changes that were made).

⁷² Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2018f), *op cit*. (Annexes to this document give more detail of the available scientific information relating to the proposals for both the Northern Boobook and the Bonelli's Eagle).

⁷³ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (in prep), *op cit*.

Geographic scope

17.14 At the 2nd Meeting of Signatories to the Raptors MOU in 2015, it was noted that subsequent to the adoption of the MOU, South Sudan had become independent and was now a member of the United Nations. It therefore needed to be added to the MOU's Range States. The MOS duly agreed to adopt the necessary amendment to Annex 2 of the MOU, which contains the map of the area included within the MOU and the list of (now 131) Range States.

17.15 The 3rd TAG meeting in December 2018 considered a number of factors which potentially give rise to a need to make further amendments to Annex 2⁷⁴. The first of these is the fact that new research, including the use of technologies such as satellite tracking, has provided more detailed information about the behaviour and movements of many of the species listed in Annex 1 of the MoU. Robust scientific evidence now exists for example to show the regular movements of Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis* and Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* into countries outside those currently covered by the MOU.

17.16 Among the additions of species to Annex 1 that were made at MOS2 are 11 species of Old World vultures, whose known distributions include nine countries that are not currently considered Range States of the MOU (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, North Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea and Thailand). Consideration should therefore be given to whether Annex 2 might need to be extended to include these countries. Moreover, a number of stakeholders in the Multi-species Action Plan for vultures (see section 16 above) are based in East and Southeast Asian countries and have recently been questioning why their states are excluded from the scope of the MOU.

17.17 More generally, a recent global scientific review of the status of birds of prey has specifically highlighted South and Southeast Asia as the region of the world which hosts the highest raptor diversity, while also being the area in which the most threatened and declining species of raptors tend to be found⁷⁵.

17.18 The TAG was therefore asked to consider the potential merits of extending the geographic scope of the MOU for these or any other reasons, and at the same time to suggest a way of defining criteria for deciding on the addition of any individual country to the list in Annex 2. The TAG3 meeting conducted an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with any possible extension, and concluded by agreeing that the Coordinating Unit should contract BirdLife International to undertake further consideration of the issue, before assessing the interest of the Signatory States and approaching the prospective additional Range States⁷⁶.

List of sites

17.19 Table 3 of the Action Plan contains a "Provisional list of Important Bird Areas that are currently known to be important congregatory bird of prey sites in Africa and Eurasia", describing it also as an "indicative list" which should be treated as a "minimum list" of internationally important areas. Prior to MOS2, BirdLife International (under contract to the MOU Coordinating Unit) carried out a review of this list, taking account particularly of factors such as the considerable progress that had been made in the identification of Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) since the original

⁷⁴ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2018g). Amendments to the geographical scope of the Raptors MOU. Document UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG3/Doc.4.1c for the 3rd Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group, Sempach, Switzerland, 12-14 December 2018.

⁷⁵ McClure CJW, Westrip JRS, Johnson JA, Schulwitz SE, Virani MZ, Davies R, Symes A, Wheatley H, Thorstrom R, Amar A, Buij R, Jones VR, Williams NP, Buechley ER, and Butchart SHM (2018). State of the world's raptors: distributions, threats, and conservation recommendations. *Biol. Cons.* 227: 390–402.

⁷⁶ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (in prep), *op cit*.

Table 3 had been drafted in 2008, and the advances made in the European Union with the identification and designation of Special Protection Areas under the EU Wild Birds Directive.

17.20 MOS2 was provided with a proposal for a revised list, which had been previously circulated as a draft for comments⁷⁷. The MOS however considered that the consultation period had been too short for full consideration to be given to the detail, and requested that it be brought back for further consideration at MOS3, following further work by the TAG to include (*inter alia*) consideration of any implications flowing from the amendments made at MOS2 to the Action Plan's Annexes. It further advised that in the meantime, the proposed amended list of sites could be used immediately by Signatories in the preparation of National or Regional Strategies or equivalent documents⁷⁸.

17.21 The TAG3 meeting in December 2018 was provided with a proposed revision of Table 3, which had been checked against the updated Annex 2 (geographic scope) of the MOU and had incorporated the identification of IBAs and SPAs for the 18 species that had been added to Annex 1 at MOS2⁷⁹. It also took account of some deletions requested by the EU on the basis of "non-significant" occurrences of relevant species at the sites (SPAs) concerned, and noted that updated information on the Swiss component of the list was due to be provided by Switzerland following work it had undertaken recently on a national raptor conservation strategy. The meeting endorsed the process for amending the list of sites, which would include consultations with Signatories prior to a consolidated list being proposed for formal adoption at MOS3⁸⁰. Switzerland was also to be invited to provide a paper for the MOS on their work.

Structural issues

17.22 The overall aim of the MOU is expressed in its paragraph 5 as the Signatories aiming "to take co-ordinated measures to achieve and maintain the favourable conservation status of birds of prey throughout their range and to reverse their decline when and where appropriate", and in paragraph 7 as "to conserve birds of prey and their habitat".

17.23 The overall objectives of the Action Plan are expressed in its section 2 as "(a) to halt and reverse the population declines of globally threatened (Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable) and Near Threatened birds of prey and alleviate threats to them such that they are no longer globally threatened or Near Threatened; (b) to halt and reverse the population declines of other birds of prey with an Unfavourable Conservation Status within Africa and Eurasia and alleviate threats to them in order to return their populations to Favourable Conservation Status; and (c) to anticipate, reduce and avoid potential and new threats to all bird of prey species, especially to prevent the populations of any species undergoing long-term decline".

17.24 Reference has been made in section 1 above to the complex matrix of implementation objectives and expectations contained in subsequent sections of the MOU and Action Plan; including 12 objectives in paragraph 8 of the MOU, three objectives in section 2 of the Action Plan, nine objectives in section 4 of the Plan, a separate objective in the MOU for the development of raptor conservation strategies, and 34 activities in the Action Plan to be addressed through these strategies.

⁷⁷ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015g). Proposals for amendments to the Raptors MOU and/or its annexes: provisional list of Important Bird Areas that are currently known to be important congregatory bird of prey sites in Africa and Eurasia (Table 3 of Annex 3). Document UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/15/Rev.1 for the 2nd Meeting of Signatories, Trondheim, Norway, 5-8 October 2015.

⁷⁸ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2015f), *op cit*.

⁷⁹ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (2018h). Amendments to the list of sites important for migratory raptors. Document UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG3/Doc.4.1b Rev.1 for the 3rd Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group, Sempach, Switzerland, 12-14 December 2018.

⁸⁰ Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit (in prep), *op cit*.

17.25 The topics addressed by the 34 activities in Table 2 of the Action Plan are grouped under the following six headings (these have been used in shaping the structure of much of the present report above):

- Improvement of legal protection.
- Protect and/or manage important sites and flyways.
- Habitat conservation and sustainable management.
- Raise awareness of problems faced by birds of prey and measures needed to conserve them.
- Monitor bird of prey populations, carry out conservation research and take remedial measures.
- Supporting measures.

17.26 The topics addressed by the list of nine priority actions in section 4 of the Plan, on the other hand, could be summarised as:

- Legal protection of species against killing and unsustainable exploitation.
- Assessing and minimising the impact of relevant threats and pressures (other than illegal killing/direct exploitation).
- Conserving and managing habitats and sites.
- Action/integration across sectors.
- Awareness raising.
- Research and monitoring.
- Capacity building.

17.27 The topics addressed by the list of 12 measures in paragraph 8 of the MOU are different again, and these could be summarised as:

- Conserving and managing habitats and sites.
- Assessing and minimising the impact of relevant threats and pressures.
- Cooperation in emergencies.
- Sustainable use.
- Species recovery programmes.
- Preventing the introduction of non-native species.
- Research and monitoring.
- Training.
- Awareness raising.
- Information exchange.
- Other cooperation.

17.28 It can be seen that there is some correspondence between these different lists but also a degree of mis-match. This is compounded at the more detailed level of the individual activities concerned. Some of the problems that are apparent with this include:

- (i) There is rarely a direct correspondence between the individual items in the different lists, some items in one list find no corresponding item in the other lists, while others find partial links in several overlapping items, although there is no consistency as to which list has the more broken down or alternatively the more aggregated version of the item(s) in the other list(s).
- (ii) Where clearer correspondences exist, the sequence of the items concerned is nevertheless not the same in each list (note the non-sequential numbering in the boxes below).
- (iii) The same issues are often framed differently between the lists in terms of whether they are seen as a matter of (for example) legislation, research or awareness/capacity.

- (iv) There is no consistency (and little clarity) across the lists as to whether the primary organising principle is considered to be (a) by ecological focus (species/habitats/sites), (b) by types of threat/pressure or (c) by fields of action (legislation, policy, education, etc).
- (v) There is an illogicality in the inclusion of activities 6.1 and 6.2 in Table 2, in that the preparation of strategies/preparation of action plans are listed there as two of the activities that are supposed to be delivered through the preparation of the strategies themselves.
- (vi) The inclusion of activities 1.1 and 6.3 in Table 2 (updating site and species lists in the Action Plan and in the CMS Appendices) may not be fully suitable: the possible need for specific updates could conceivably be flagged in such strategies/documents, but progressing the updates themselves is likely to be beyond their scope.

17.29 The boxes below illustrate the way in which individual issues are distributed at present across the different parts of this scheme.

<p>MOU paragraph 8 (measures)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Identify important habitats, significant routes and congregatory sites for birds of prey occurring within [the Signatories'] territory and encourage their protection, and/or appropriate management, assessment, rehabilitation and/or restoration. (b) Coordinate [...] efforts to ensure that a network of suitable habitats is maintained or, where appropriate, established <i>inter alia</i> where such habitats extend over the territory of more than one Signatory. (c) Investigate problems that are posed or are likely to be posed by human activities or from other causes and [...] endeavour to implement remedial and preventative measures, including <i>inter alia</i> habitat rehabilitation and habitat restoration, and compensatory measures for loss of habitat.
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “priority actions” (Section 4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (c) Conserving bird of prey habitats by encouraging an Ecosystem Approach to sustainable development and sectoral land use practices, as envisaged in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Ecosystem Approach (CBD V/6 and VII/11). (d) Protecting and/or appropriately managing important sites: especially where Category 1 species breed, and all migration bottlenecks (known important sites are listed in Table 3).
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “principal activities” to be addressed in the national/regional strategies or equivalent documents envisaged in paragraph 12 of the MoU (Table 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Designate nationally and internationally important sites (including those listed in Table 3) as protected areas with management plans or as appropriately managed sites taking bird of prey conservation requirements into account. 2.2 Undertake EIAs in accordance with the CBD guidelines (CBD Decision VI/7A and any subsequent amendments) and CMS Resolution 7.2 on Impact Assessment and Migratory Species for any projects potentially adversely impacting sites listed in Table 3 and any other sites holding significant populations of Category 1 and 2 species. 2.3 Conduct risk analysis at important sites (including those listed in Table 3) to identify and address actual or potential causes of significant incidental mortality from human causes (including fire, laying poisons, pesticide use, power lines, wind turbines). 3.1 Survey, maintain and restore natural vegetation cover in former habitats (especially grasslands) in the range of globally threatened species.

<p>MOU paragraph 8 (measures)</p> <p>(d) Cooperate in emergency situations requiring concerted international action, in developing appropriate emergency procedures to improve the conservation of bird of prey populations and in preparing guidelines to assist individual Signatories in addressing such situations.</p>
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “priority actions” (Section 4)</p> <p>[None]</p>
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “principal activities” to be addressed in the national/regional strategies or equivalent documents envisaged in paragraph 12 of the MoU (Table 2)</p> <p>5.9 Undertake relevant surveillance for diseases which may pose a threat to birds of prey populations, so as to inform conservation and management responses.</p>
<p>MOU paragraph 8 (measures)</p> <p>(e) Ensure that any utilisation of birds of prey is based on an assessment using the best available knowledge of their ecology and is sustainable for the species as well as for the ecological systems that support them.</p>
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “priority actions” (Section 4)</p> <p>[None]</p>
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “principal activities” to be addressed in the national/regional strategies or equivalent documents envisaged in paragraph 12 of the MoU (Table 2)</p> <p>5.8. Assess the scale of harvests so as to evaluate the implications for the populations concerned.</p>
<p>MOU paragraph 8 (measures)</p> <p>(f) Take appropriate measures for the recovery of bird populations and re-introduction of birds of prey native to [each Signatory’s] territory provided that such actions will contribute to their conservation.</p>
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “priority actions” (Section 4)</p> <p>[None specifically, although some of the actions may make a contribution]</p>
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “principal activities” to be addressed in the national/regional strategies or equivalent documents envisaged in paragraph 12 of the MoU (Table 2)</p> <p>3.3 Endeavour to facilitate feeding opportunities for necrophagous birds of prey as far as it is possible taking into account sanitary considerations.</p> <p>5.6. Undertake research into the desirability of reintroducing birds of prey, and implement appropriate conservation programmes (including those involving captive breeding), where this is shown to improve their conservation status in the wild, and where these are in accord with IUCN guidelines.</p> <p>5.7. Seek to promote appropriate programmes of captive breeding so as to alleviate the pressure of wild harvests on populations of birds of prey.</p> <p>[NB other listed activities will also contribute].</p>
<p>MOU paragraph 8 (measures)</p> <p>(g) Take appropriate measures to prevent the introduction into [each Signatory’s] territory of non-native birds of prey, including hybrids where this would have an adverse effect on the conservation of native biodiversity.</p>
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “priority actions” (Section 4)</p> <p>[None]</p>
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “principal activities” to be addressed in the national/regional strategies or equivalent documents envisaged in paragraph 12 of the MoU (Table 2)</p> <p>[None]</p>

MOU paragraph 8 (measures)

- (h) Encourage research into the biology and ecology of birds of prey, including the harmonization of research and monitoring methods and, where appropriate, the establishment of joint or cooperative research and monitoring programmes.

Corresponding Action Plan “priority actions” (Section 4)

- (g) Assessing and monitoring of populations throughout the Range States to establish reliable population trends; conducting research to establish the impacts of threats on them and the measures that are needed to alleviate them; and, sharing information between Signatories and other Range States.
- (h) Conducting research on species ecology and migratory behaviour, including analysing available data in order to describe flyway boundaries and migratory patterns, and routes, at the level of species’ populations.

Corresponding Action Plan “principal activities” to be addressed in the national/regional strategies or equivalent documents envisaged in paragraph 12 of the MoU (Table 2)

- 5.1 Establish flyway-scale monitoring networks comprising a representative range of sites where systematic and coordinated monitoring of breeding populations, reproductive success and migration numbers (spring and autumn) can be undertaken.
- 5.2 Design and undertake a coordinated monitoring programme and develop monitoring protocols based on the monitoring network established under 5.1.
- [See also 5.3-5.10, which include research and monitoring, but on threats and remedies rather than on biology and ecology].

MOU paragraph 8 (measures)

- (i) Assess training requirements to implement conservation actions and, in cooperation with others where possible, develop appropriate priority training programmes.

Corresponding Action Plan “priority actions” (Section 4)

- (i) Building capacity for conservation actions (in relevant institutions and local communities) by developing knowledge and monitoring of birds of prey.
[It is arguable as to whether this belongs strictly under “training”, or instead under more general objectives for awareness-raising – see MOU 8(j) below].

Corresponding Action Plan “principal activities” to be addressed in the national/regional strategies or equivalent documents envisaged in paragraph 12 of the MoU (Table 2)

- 4.5 Organise sub-regional and national training workshops to improve skills in the monitoring of birds of prey.
[It is arguable as to whether this belongs under the activity section (4) on “awareness”, where it is at present, or better perhaps under the section (5) on “monitoring & research” instead].
[NB training also appears in activity 1.5 – see “legal protection” box below].

MOU paragraph 8 (measures)

- (j) Develop and maintain programmes to raise awareness and understanding of conservation issues relating to birds of prey and their habitat as well as of the objectives and provisions of this Memorandum of Understanding.

Corresponding Action Plan “priority actions” (Section 4)

- (f) Raising awareness about birds of prey, their current plight and the threats that they face, and the measures that need to be taken to conserve them.

Corresponding Action Plan “principal activities” to be addressed in the national/regional strategies or equivalent documents envisaged in paragraph 12 of the MoU (Table 2)

- 4.1 Develop a programme of public awareness, using electronic and print media to publicise the migrations undertaken by birds of prey, their current status, the threats to them and actions, including review of superstitions about them, that can be taken to conserve them.

- 4.2 Develop an awareness programme within forestry, agriculture, fisheries, energy, industry, transport and other relevant sectors to inform decision makers of the current status of birds of prey, the threats to them and the spectral [sic] actions that can be taken to conserve them.
- 4.3 Develop a school educational programme and teaching resources to inform school children of the migrations undertaken by birds of prey, their current status, the threats to them and actions that can be taken to conserve them.
- 4.4 Establish information notices and provide leaflets at bottleneck sites informing people of their importance for birds of prey and the measures that they can take to conserve them.
- 4.6 Educate and raise awareness of local communities to the importance of birds of prey, and the need to monitor and protect them.
- [NB awareness-raising also appears in activity 1.5 – see “legal protection” box below].

MOU paragraph 8 (measures)

- (k)** Exchange information and the results from research, monitoring, conservation and education programmes.

Corresponding Action Plan “priority actions” (Section 4)

[None specifically]

Corresponding Action Plan “principal activities” to be addressed in the national/regional strategies or equivalent documents envisaged in paragraph 12 of the MoU (Table 2)

[None specifically, but see 1.1 and 6.3 in “Updating site and species lists” box below].

MOU paragraph 8 (measures)

- (l)** Cooperate with a view to assisting each other to implement this Memorandum of Understanding, particularly in the areas of research and monitoring.

Corresponding Action Plan “priority actions” (Section 4)

[None]

Corresponding Action Plan “principal activities” to be addressed in the national/regional strategies or equivalent documents envisaged in paragraph 12 of the MoU (Table 2)

- 6.4 Encourage Signatories to improve international cooperation through organising conferences, seminars and workshops concerning monitoring, scientific research and conservation activities.

(No equivalent in MOU para 8)

Legal protection of species against killing and unsustainable exploitation.

Corresponding Action Plan “priority actions” (Section 4)

- (a)** Protecting all species from unlawful killing, including poisoning, shooting, persecution, and unsustainable exploitation.

Corresponding Action Plan “principal activities” to be addressed in the national/regional strategies or equivalent documents envisaged in paragraph 12 of the MoU (Table 2)

- 1.2. Review relevant legislation and take steps where possible to make sure that it protects all birds of prey from all forms of a) deliberate killing, b) deliberate disturbance at nest sites and communal roost sites (particularly in wintering grounds) where this is considered detrimental to the conservation of the species; and c) egg-collection and taking from the wild. Unless this is authorised by the competent body and only where the action is sustainable and not detrimental to the conservation status of the species concerned.
- 1.3 Review relevant legislation and take steps where possible to ban the use of exposed poison baits for predator control and those chemicals where they have been shown to cause significant avian mortalities.
- 1.5 Strengthen the application of legal protection, and reporting of persecution, for birds of prey by ensuring appropriate penalties, training law enforcement authorities, and raising public awareness to boost surveillance and reporting of illegal activities.

<p>(No separate equivalent in MOU para 8*)</p> <p>Assessing and minimising the impact of relevant threats and pressures (other than illegal killing/direct exploitation).</p> <p>*Note however that “investigate problems that are posed or are likely to be posed by human activities or from other causes and [...] endeavour to implement remedial and preventative measures” is included as part of 8(c) in the “site and habitat conservation” section above.</p>
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “priority actions” (Section 4)</p> <p>(b) Promoting, as far as possible, high environmental standards, including through Environmental Impact Assessments, in the planning and construction of structures to minimise their impact on species, particularly by collision and electrocution, and seeking to minimise the impact of existing structures where it becomes evident that they constitute a negative impact for the species concerned.</p>
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “principal activities” to be addressed in the national/regional strategies or equivalent documents envisaged in paragraph 12 of the MoU (Table 2)</p> <p>1.4 Review relevant legislation and take steps where possible to make sure that it requires all new power lines to be designed to avoid bird of prey electrocution.</p> <p>2.4 Conduct Strategic Environmental Assessments of planned significant infrastructure developments within major flyways to identify key risk areas.</p> <p>3.2 Where feasible, take necessary actions to ensure that existing power lines that pose the greatest risk to birds of prey are modified to avoid bird of prey electrocution.</p> <p>5.3 Assess and then address the impacts of habitat loss on breeding, passage and wintering populations of birds of prey, and identify required measures to maintain Favourable Conservation Status.</p> <p>5.4 Assess and then address the impacts of the use of toxic chemicals, including heavy metals (for example lead in shot pellets), on breeding, passage and wintering populations of birds of prey, and their survival, identify and then implement appropriate measures to assist in achieving and maintaining Favourable Conservation Status.</p> <p>5.5 Monitor power line and wind farm impacts on birds of prey, including through analysis of existing data such as ringing data.</p> <p>5.10 Initiate collaborative research into the effects of climate change on birds of prey and their habitats, and implement appropriate adaptation measures.</p>
<p>(No equivalent in MOU para 8)</p> <p>Action/integration across sectors.</p>
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “priority actions” (Section 4)</p> <p>(e) Taking into account the needs of bird of prey conservation in sectors and related policies such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, industries, tourism, energy, chemicals and pesticides.</p>
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “principal activities” to be addressed in the national/regional strategies or equivalent documents envisaged in paragraph 12 of the MoU (Table 2)</p> <p>1.6 Identify gaps in existing MEAs where bird of prey protection and conservation can be improved and draw these to the attention of the relevant Secretariat and other Parties.</p> <p>3.4 Taking into account the needs of bird of prey conservation in sectors and related policies such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, industries, tourism, energy, chemicals and pesticides.</p> <p>[See also 4.2 in MOU 8(j) above].</p>
<p>(No equivalent in MOU para 8)</p> <p>Updating site and species lists.</p>
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “priority actions” (Section 4)</p> <p>[None]</p>
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “principal activities” to be addressed in the national/regional strategies or equivalent documents envisaged in paragraph 12 of the MoU (Table 2)</p> <p>1.1 Update CMS Appendix I to include all Category 1 species.</p> <p>6.3 Update Tables 1 and 3 according to new information emerging from the monitoring programme.</p>

<p>MOU paragraph 12</p> <p>Within two years of this Memorandum of Understanding becoming effective, Signatories will aim to prepare and submit to the Interim Coordinating Unit where appropriate a national or regional (e.g. EU) strategy or equivalent documents (e.g. Single Species Action Plans) for category 1 and, where appropriate, category 2 species in Table 1 in the Action Plan.</p>
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “priority actions” (Section 4)</p> <p>[None]</p>
<p>Corresponding Action Plan “principal activities” to be addressed in the national/regional strategies or equivalent documents envisaged in paragraph 12 of the MoU (Table 2)</p> <p>6.1 Prepare National, Regional or Sub-Regional strategies, or equivalent documents, for birds of prey (taking into account the need for collaborative trans-boundary measures with adjacent Signatory States).</p> <p>6.2 Prepare single species, or, if more appropriate, multispecies, action plans for all globally threatened species, taking account of existing international plans and where necessary extending them to cover the entire African-Eurasian range of each species.</p>

17.30 It would be possible to conceive of a rationalisation of this picture to help in addressing the problems outlined in paragraph 17.28 above. The overall scheme could for example all be reorganised under a single set of headings, such as the following:

- Action plans and strategies.
- Legal protection of species against killing and unsustainable exploitation.
- Species population management and recovery programmes.
- Conservation and management of habitats and sites.
- Assessing and responding to threats and pressures.
- Action/integration across sectors.
- Research, monitoring and information management.
- Awareness raising.
- Capacity building.
- International cooperation.

17.31 The headings suggested above as the basis of a possible reorganisation may work better than simply trying to group everything according to the 12 measures in paragraph 8 of the MOU, since those measures serve somewhat less well as a defining categorisation of relevant action areas. The linkages between any eventual restructured scheme of actions and those 12 measures would however need to be clearly mapped out (which the Action Plan at present does not do). A possible proposal for what a fairly comprehensive revision of the Action Plan might look like, based on the foregoing analysis, has been set out in a separate document⁸¹.

Other issues

17.32. Table 2 includes a column in which “targets” are given for each of the listed activities. Section 5.5 of the Plan explains that “the Coordinating Unit will monitor the progress and efficacy of this Action Plan according to the performance targets for certain activities given in Table 2”. Except in two cases out of the 34 however these targets are not quantified. The two concerned are 2.1 “All important sites have conservation measures in place” (“all” is a quantifiable result) and 3.1 “at least 30% of former grassland habitats having natural vegetation cover and under sustainable management”. It could be worthwhile to revise the other targets to make the specified outcomes more measurable in a similar way.

⁸¹ Pritchard DE (2020). Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia – Revision of the MOU and Action Plan (Explanatory Note and four Addenda). Consultant report to the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU.

17.33 Table 2 also includes columns in which a “priority level” and a “timescale” are stated for each of the listed activities. For the suggested revision of the Action Plan referred to above, it would be worth undertaking a systematic review of the entries for these two columns against each of the listed activities, either to reconfirm or to revise (in light of any changed circumstances since they were first agreed) the priorities and timescales that have been assigned. The concept of timescales specified in relation to the date of signature by new Signatories may in itself now be a less useful basis for this scheme, and an alternative basis for the timescales could potentially be considered. Examination of these issues would ideally need to be a consultative exercise, with input from those who are close to the specific context of the individual activities concerned.

17.34 It is notable that while Table 2 includes activities relating to legislation, to international cooperation and to activities “on the ground”, the field of *policy* (which sits somewhere between these levels) is not explicitly addressed. Reference is made to “awareness” being promoted among other sectors, but not to any embedding or mainstreaming of relevant objectives in those sectors in a policy sense. Actions to improve policy were cited by a number of respondents to the 2019 questionnaire survey as a high priority for the future: its absence from the scheme in Table 2 seems anomalous, and some additions to address this could be worth considering.

17.35 Actions to strengthen *capacity* were also cited by a number of respondents to the 2019 questionnaire survey as a high priority for the future. Capacity strengthening only really features explicitly in Table 2 in one item in the activity cluster 4, namely 4.5: “Organise sub-regional and national training workshops to improve skills in the monitoring of birds of prey”; although the expected result for 4.6 (“Educate and raise awareness of local communities to the importance of birds of prey, and the need to monitor and protect them”) is said to be “Training Programmes established”. The issue is probably implicit in some of the activities specified in relation to awareness-raising; but it may be worth referring to capacity more explicitly and in a broader sense than this. Ideas have been suggested for provision of further guidance, practical tools, model examples (e.g. of legislation) and information about supportive groups and task forces etc that could be promoted on web-pages as ways of giving additional support.

17.36 Activity 1.4 in Table 2 appeared to lead to some divided views among respondents to the 2019 survey. It reads “Review relevant legislation and take steps where possible to make sure that it requires all new power lines to be designed to avoid bird of prey electrocution”. Some consultees appeared to accept this at face value, but an appreciable number of others implied by their answers that it could be sufficient for legislation to require an assessment of potential impacts, and provision for mitigation measures where negative impacts were predicted, rather than requiring by law at the outset that all power lines be made “bird safe” for raptors, irrespective of any case-specific assessment of risk.

17.37 Activity 2.1 is “Designate nationally and internationally important sites (including those listed in Table 3) as protected areas with management plans or as appropriately managed sites taking bird of prey conservation requirements into account”. This formulation is consistent with a general international trend towards greater equalising of the status of “protected areas” and “other effective area-based conservation measures” (OECMs), in referring to both together in a unified way. The 2019 review survey results suggested however that some consultees are keen to maintain a clear distinction between the two concepts (e.g. for assessment and reporting purposes, and various datasets for designated site networks etc are also no doubt distinct from data relating to “other measures”). This could perhaps be a topic for guidance on what is included in each concept, and on different ways of handling information about the subject.

17.38 Activity 3.1, “Survey, maintain and restore natural vegetation cover in former habitats (especially grasslands) in the range of globally threatened species”, has proved challenging to monitor. Knowledge about “former habitats” and interpretation of the concept both have uncertainties, and the activity itself may not always be appropriate where it does not necessarily work in the best interests of the species concerned (e.g. where “natural vegetation” is less of a

priority than a particular carefully managed ecosystem mosaic, or where species requirements have evolved in light of environmental changes, including climate change). It may be worth considering a modification of this activity, so that it would relate instead to defining particular (present-day) ecological requirements of particular species, and making relevant habitat interventions accordingly (including restoration where appropriate).

17.39 A number of small errors or ambiguities in the text of the Action Plan could usefully be corrected at the same time as any other updates or amendments are made as a result of the present review. Errors in the MOU itself and its other Annexes could usefully also be noted, at least for reference. Those which have come to attention so far (in the English version; the French will need checking separately) include the following:

- In paragraph 5.1, “signatories” should read “Signatories”, for consistency with the way this is written in the rest of the text.
- In paragraph 6, “is also Contracting Party” should read “is also a Contracting Party”.
- In paragraph 7, reference to “the Secretariat” should presumably (in line with the sense of paragraph 15 of the MOU) read instead “the Coordinating Unit”.
- In footnote 3c in Table 1 and activities 5.1, 5.2 and 6.2 in Table 2, “Birdlife International” should be written “BirdLife International”, for consistency with the other references to “BirdLife International” in the text and with the organisation’s own house style.
- In activity 4.2 in Table 2, “spectral actions” should presumably read “sectoral actions” (or conceivably “special actions”).
- In the MOU, in the first preambular paragraph, “Convention” should be spelt with an upper case initial “C”, for consistency with usage in other parts of the text.
- In the MOU, in the eighth preambular paragraph, a space after the hyphen should be deleted, for consistency with usage in other parts of the text.
- In the MOU, in paragraph 1(e) it seems that the cross-reference to “paragraph 23” should read instead “paragraph 26”.
- In the MOU, in paragraph 2 it seems that the full stop before the first bracket should be deleted.
- In the MOU, in paragraph 3, there is some ambiguity but it seems probable that the word “its” is intended to refer to the Convention rather than the MOU, and hence the reference to the MOS should instead be a reference to the CMS COP. The MOU MOS has not adopted Resolutions, and their adoption is not provided for in the Rules of Procedure. Moreover the “unless” clause in the paragraph (referring to the MOU itself) would not logically follow a provision for the MOS to vary interpretations; thus further suggesting that it is potential variation by the CMS COP instead that is envisaged.
- In the MOU, in paragraph 10 “Coordinating unit” where it is first mentioned (in the third line) should be written “Coordinating Unit”, for consistency with references to this in other parts of the text.
- In the MOU, in paragraph 13 the reference to “Chairman” might helpfully now be converted to a gender-neutral term.
- In the MOU, also in paragraph 13, reference to the Secretariat (of the CMS) seems applicable only to MOS1. Thereafter (unless rules of procedure can for some reason only ever be proposed by the Depositary) this function should presumably rest with the Coordinating Unit, and an amendment would need making to reflect this.
- In the MOU, in paragraph 16, two references to “sessions” seem to need slight adjustment, for clarity/accuracy.
- In the MOU, in paragraph 17, “report” in the third line should probably read “reports” (referring both to national reports in the plural and to the plural combination of a single international report together with multiple national reports).
- In the MOU, in paragraph 18 “report” should probably read “reports” (referring both to plural Signatories and to plural reports, over time, from each Signatory).

- In the MOU, in paragraph 19, “non-governmental” should be hyphenated, for consistency with usage in other parts of the text.
- In the MOU, in paragraph 23 “on its territory” would probably be better written “in its territory”, for consistency with usage elsewhere in the text.
- In the MOU, in paragraph 26 “Africa-Eurasian” should read “African-Eurasian” (as it is written elsewhere in the text).
- In the MOU, also in paragraph 26, it seems anomalous for the reference to regional economic integration organisations to be applicable to any such organisations anywhere in the world, rather than to those in (or with Member States in) the African-Eurasian region. This may however not be sufficiently problematic to warrant a change.
- In the MOU, in paragraph 31 “language” should read “languages”.
- In Annex 2, the reference to “Swaziland” should now be changed to “Eswatini”, and the reference to “The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” should now be changed to “Republic of North Macedonia”.

Summary of potential amendments to be considered for proposing to MOS3

17.40 Based on the discussion above, the potential amendments to the Action Plan and/or to the MOU which could be considered for proposing to Signatories for possible adoption at MOS3 can be summarised as follows:

- (i) Adding reference to “*Accipitriformes*” in the definition of the taxonomic scope of the MOU, and making consequential amendments to the subdivisions of the species list in Annex 1.
- (ii) Deleting Brown Boobook from Annex 1 and replacing with Northern Boobook.
- (iii) Making a small number of changes to the species status categorisations in Table 1 of the Action Plan.
- (iv) Possibly extending the geographic scope of the MOU into areas of South and Southeast Asia (under separate consideration).
- (v) Adding any species that need adding to Annex 1 as a consequence of any extension of the geographic scope of the MOU.
- (vi) Revising/expanding the list of sites in Table 3, based on work done by BirdLife/TAG.
- (vii) Rationalising the structure of the objectives, actions, activities and priorities in the Action Plan to give better internal coherence, coherence with the MOU and some simplification.
- (viii) Attempting to make targets more measurable.
- (ix) Updating the priorities and timeframes that are assigned to the list of activities in Table 2 of the Action Plan.
- (x) Addressing an activity gap in relation to matters of policy.
- (xi) Giving more explicit attention to objectives relating to capacity strengthening.
- (xii) Clarifying/refining the interpretation of several other issues, e.g. legislation on power lines, the relationship between protected areas and OECMs, and objectives relating to habitat restoration.
- (xiii) Correcting various typographical errors/updates etc as listed in the present report in relation to both the MOU and the Action Plan (and separately examining the French texts of the MOU and the Action Plan, both to check that translations of the particular items identified here will pose no new ambiguities, and to identify any typographical or other items that may be specific to the French text).



Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU)

Coordinating Unit of the CMS Raptors MOU

Convention on Migratory Species Office – Abu Dhabi
United Nations Environment Programme
c/o Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi
P.O. Box 45553
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Email: cmsoffice.ae@cms.int

Website: www.cms.int/raptors