



Conservation Collaboration

Strengthening the relationship between CMS
and its NGO Partners when the
world needs us most

Disclaimer:

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***Conservation* Collaboration**

Strengthening the relationship between CMS
and its NGO Partners when the
world needs us most

**Margi Prideaux
Donna Mulvenna**

November 2019



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Executive Summary

Biodiversity is declining faster than at any time in human history, and this loss threatens all of humanity. The landmark Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment released earlier in 2019 spoke with clarity about where the world stands in relation to key international commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and the Paris Agreement on climate change. Despite our pledges nature, across most of the globe, has been significantly altered—ecosystems and biodiversity are in rapid decline.

Yet, the IPBES Global Assessment also offers hope—nature can be conserved and restored if we embrace transformative change, including innovative governance approaches.

This is not a time for the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and its Non-Governmental Organisation Partners (Partner NGOs) to walk separate paths. Many of the interventions and leverage points identified by IPBES require close collaboration

between and within sectors. ***The world needs us to work more closely together.***

Civil society has long underpinned the conservation work of CMS and, despite the difficulties we all face, the dedication of CMS Partners continues to grow. To date, Partner NGO involvement has remained one of trusted friend to the convention, but there is argument that the friendship could deepen through a ‘collaborative governance’ model, if the right dynamic is established.

The IPBES Global Assessment challenges us to think bravely; to think differently. Exploring options for the evolution of the relationship between civil society, in particular Partner NGOs, and the convention has been the work of the Civil Society Project.

The Civil Society Project began during the Tenth CMS Conference of the Parties (CoP) through the *Civil Society Dialogue*, a review that followed that discussion, and the subsequent intent of Resolution 11.11 adopted during CoP11, which culminated in agreement to investigate how to take the relationship between civil society and CMS further. Several recommendations from the first civil society review, *A Natural Affiliation*, have since become norms in the way the convention progresses its business, and it appears to be time to progress the work further.

In the margins of the Third Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC3) several Partner NGOs discussed the next iteration of the Civil Society Project and established a Steering Group to take this work forward. The resulting review, *Conservation Collaboration: Strengthening the relationship between CMS and its NGO Partners when the world needs us most*, and its recommendations are therefore the second, substantial step in a discussion which will continue within the NGO community as well as between NGOs, Governments, and Secretariats of the CMS Family on the road towards increasing ‘collaborative governance’.

This review strengthens the argument for Partner NGOs to be formally welcomed as valuable collaborators. Because most NGOs foster a solid relationship between supporters, the media and the general community, they can also be effective messengers about conservation progress as well as conservation concerns. The diplomacy work of the Partner NGOs is coordinated, effective and

consistent and several organisations represent a longer history of direct experience with CMS and other MEAs, and a deeper technical knowledge about the issues being discussed than some government agencies. Their knowledge and skills are an asset to the work of the convention.

Partner NGOs have historically demonstrated a considerable commitment to the CMS Family, and this review reveals how Partner NGOs perceive their relationship with CMS. It also asserts the comparative importance they attribute to CMS against other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and to CMS within the post-2020 biodiversity framework and dialogue. For the first time, the information presented quantifies, at a basic level, the combined financial commitment of Partner NGOs equating to more than US\$20 million/year. Finally, a series of recommendations are proposed for formal consideration by CMS Parties.

The information contained in this review has been collected through an interview and questionnaire process, based on twenty-seven questions, during a six-week period from June 2019. The participating Partner NGOs represent a spectrum of policy positions ranging from individual or population level animal welfare through to sustainable or wise use, but the review intentionally remains policy-neutral, avoiding leaning in one policy direction or the other. The participants represent substantial expertise and value to CMS, including scientific and technical expertise, funding expertise and other resources, and deep experience in policy work and field projects that deliver on CMS priorities. They are bridge-builders, working across the world with significant reach in Africa, Asia, South America, and Oceania, often conducting high-level international outreach and strengthening dialogue with stakeholders around CMS. Some have experience in large scale event planning and programme management.

They all understand that MEAs are where agendas are set and dedicate considerable time and attention to influencing the direction of these agendas, including within CMS. Most believe the work of CMS is crucial to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the post-2020 framework.

The perception of CMS standing has significantly increased for those interviewed compared to the views gathered five years ago, yet Partner NGO work of relevance to CMS, representing a commitment of more than US\$20 million/year of funds, is not necessarily directed into the CMS Family in a visible sense; even though most Partner NGOs direct significant organisational focus to delivering on CMS-related objectives.

There is a sentiment of frustration expressed by some Partners about the slow rate of progress towards adopting a system where their organisations can contribute more systematically, consistently, and visibly to the work of CMS.

Several Partners feel their work within CMS would benefit from CMS establishing a formal Partnership with an NGO able to legitimately bring forward an Indigenous, Traditional, and Local Communities (ITLC) focus to CMS while also bringing greater visibility to Land Defenders within the CMS agenda.

Partners accept responsibility to step up and take a more formal role, provided a system is created to allow them to represent themselves and their work with formal standing.

At a time when CMS Parties confront major challenges for CMS funding, and when domestic budgets for environment issues are stretched, CMS' Partner NGOs offer the potential for significant support if current processes are expanded to better include them. These offers were made apparent in the recommendations of the first review, *A Natural Affiliation*, and are reaffirmed in this review. Adopting a system where at least Partner NGOs can contribute centrally to the work of CMS, requires a new dynamic that includes them as equal participants in active dialogue, a process of trust building (mutual transparency and accountability), and the development of shared commitments and understanding; it requires a transition to collaborative governance.

Honouring the directions of Resolution 11.11 adopted during CoP11, and now captured in Resolution 11.10 (Rev CoP12), a series of principles, suggestions, and recommendations are proposed for adoption.

Principles to facilitate Civil Society Organisation (CSO-) and NGO-facilitated work to be formally and consistently reported and considered across the CMS Family.

1. Acknowledge Partner NGO contributions as formal inputs against the strategic plan and fully incorporate their work into the reporting and forward planning of the CMS agenda.
2. Transition to long-term planning to facilitate genuine collaborative governance, inviting Partner NGOs to take forward key pieces of CoP-directed work over three- and six-year periods.
3. Commit to developing shared work programmes between Partner NGOs and the Secretariat, supported by regular implementation discussions to track work delivery.
4. Fully utilise the potential of task forces, as well as technical or expert working groups and panels in the Scientific Council, by accepting Partner NGOs nominees in key advisory and facilitation roles in the Scientific Council, and providing an opportunity for Partner NGOs to partly or fully fund key roles.
5. Overcome institutionalised dis-engagement by introducing accountability and reporting against CoP-adopted action plans and global programmes of work.
6. Commit to conducting a systematic CMS Family wide assessment of existing gaps in the CMS programme, which can be formally supported by Partner NGOs.

Models for further CSO and NGO involvement in CMS processes.

1. Review and implement a structure with similar intent to Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (RAMSAR) and their International Organisation Partners (IOPs), conferring an additional participation status to Partner NGOs.
2. Pursue a specific target for connectivity and CMS, replicating the model of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) wildlife trafficking Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) that also links to civil society contribution.

Recommendations to facilitate Partner NGOs to formally provide implementation and capacity-building expertise to the CMS Family.

1. Formalise the acceptance of NGO Partnership with the Convention through Resolution.
2. Attribute formal standing to Partner NGO work that is delivered against agreed work programmes and instigate formal reporting of that work with the same standing as Party reporting.
3. Streamline all reporting (Party, Agreement and Partner) to enable an assessment of implementation progress across the whole CMS Family within regular (ie six-yearly) State of the CMS Environment Reports.
4. Broaden the new Review Mechanism to evaluate implementation progress of Parties and Partner NGOs.
5. Open all intersessional meetings to Partner NGOs especially those held under the auspices of the convention and/or those conducted with convention resources.
6. Engage Partner NGOs to represent the CoP-approved CMS agenda when the CMS Secretariat is not able to fully participate in meetings of CITES, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Congress.
7. Establish a regular circular of Partner NGO expertise and availability to support national implementation and Ministry capacity-building of CMS Parties, including Partner NGO contact details to facilitate direct communications between Parties and Partner NGOs.
8. Strategically establish formal Partnerships with relevant NGOs to bring an ITLC focus to the work of CMS and provide greater visibility and support to Land Defenders through CMS.
9. Establish additional capacity within the Secretariat focused on increasing CMS' relevance to the donor community, drawing on CoP-approved priorities and Partner work plans that respond to those priorities, profiling proposed Partner work as legitimate CMS activities to donors.
10. Establish a foundation CMS budget dedicated as a cofunding contribution to match donor funding of CMS activities.
11. Establish a CoP-funded Partner NGO focal point, either within

- the Secretariat or as a roll filled by a Partner NGO through an election process, to increase coordination between Partner NGOs, provide support to the Secretariat to focus on donor community relevance, coordinate regular Partner NGO/Secretariat coordination meetings, and collate and distribute NGO materials as required.
12. Reduce climate emissions related to CMS planning and governance work by investment in remote/video conferencing technology enabling Parties, Agreements, Partner NGOs, and non-Party range states partial or full remote access to all CMS and CMS agreement full and intersessional meetings.

These recommendations, unmistakably put from a Partner NGO perspective, are an important indicator of the pulse of the Partner NGO community concerning the CMS Family. They reflect the depth of consideration Partners give to the CMS agenda and the shared hope for greater and more meaningful collaboration in the future.

Margi Prideaux and Donna Mulvenna
November 2019



Ch1



Introduction

We know that biodiversity—the diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems—is declining faster than at any time in human history. We also know that most of nature’s contributions to people are not fully replaceable, and some are irreplaceable. Nature plays a critical role in providing food and feed, energy, medicines and genetic resources and a variety of materials fundamental for people’s physical well-being and for maintaining culture.

Often described as the ‘IPCC for Biodiversity’, IPBES is the global science-policy forum tasked with providing the best available evidence to all decision-makers for people and nature. Their landmark Global Assessment^[1] released earlier in 2019 spoke with clarity about where the world stands in relation to key international goals, including the SDGs, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Building upon earlier IPBES assessment reports, including the Land Degradation and Restoration Assessment and the Regional Assessment Reports for Africa, the Americas, Asia-Pacific and Europe and Central Asia, the Global Assessment examines causes

and rate of biodiversity and ecosystem change of all land-based ecosystems (except Antarctica), inland water and the open oceans, evaluating changes over the past 50 years. The news is not good.

Exploring the impacts of trade and other global processes on biodiversity and ecosystem services and ranking the relative impacts of climate change, invasive species, pollution, sea and land use change and a range of other challenges to nature, the IPBES Global Assessment emphasises what we all instinctively know—nature across most of the planet has now been significantly altered by multiple human drivers, with the great majority of indicators of ecosystems and biodiversity showing rapid decline. Human actions threaten more species with global extinction, now more than ever before. Biological communities are becoming more similar to each other in both managed and unmanaged systems, within and across regions. Human-induced changes are creating conditions for fast biological evolution—so rapid that its effects can be seen in only a few years or even more quickly. The consequences create uncertainty about the sustainability of species, ecosystem functions, and the delivery of nature's contributions to people.^[1]

Nature underpins quality of life by providing basic life support for humanity, as well as material goods and spiritual inspiration. Most of nature's contributions to people are co-produced by biophysical processes and ecological interactions with anthropogenic assets such as knowledge, infrastructure, financial capital, technology and the institutions that mediate them. Yet, there is unequal access to nature's contributions and unequal impact of nature's contributions on different social groups, and increases in the production of some of nature's contributions cause declines in others, which also affects people differently. These changes fall harder on some regions and peoples than on others. Global trends in the capacity of nature to sustain human life from 1970 to the present, clearly show a decline for most of the IPBES analysed categories.^[1] This is sobering news.

However, the IPBES Global Assessment highlights that nature can be conserved and restored, while other global societal goals are simultaneously met by society adopting concerted efforts that foster transformative change. This transformative change is facilitated by innovative governance approaches.^[1]

This is not a time for CMS and its Partner NGOs to walk separate

paths. The world needs us to work more closely together. The first steps to this transformative approach is the focus of this review.

During the 11th and 12th CoP, the CMS Parties made an encouraging decision; they *resolved* there was value in investigating a closer relationship with their NGO community and what that closer relationship might entail. Through Resolution 11.11, they asked NGO Partners (among others) to elaborate and report to the 13th CoP on:

- *Mechanisms* that will promote CSO- and NGO-facilitated work to be formally and consistently reported across the CMS Family, and to be considered by the Parties and governing bodies of agreements within the CMS Family;
- *Models* for further CSO and NGO involvement in CMS processes; and
- *Modalities* for further strategic engagement with CSOs and NGOs to provide implementation and capacity-building expertise.^[91]

Taking up their invitation, this review, *Conservation Collaboration: Strengthening the relationship between CMS and its NGO Partners when the world needs us most*, represents both important foundational information and a series of recommendations designed to address the three areas outlined in Resolution 11.11 now captured in Resolution 11.10 (Rev CoP12).

This work is built on the groundwork published in 2014, *A Natural Affiliation: Developing the Role of NGOs in the Convention on Migratory Species Family*,^[90] which represented the first step towards building mutual understanding between NGOs, the CMS Family Parties and Signatories, and the Secretariats who act on their behalf. *A Natural Affiliation* sought to capture the perspective of the NGO community about the CMS Family, develop insight into how the CMS Family Secretariats view NGO contributions, as well as provide useful reflections from other Inter-Governmental Organisations (IGOs) and important Quasi Non-Governmental Organisations (Q-NGOs) such as the IUCN.

Many of the collected statements represented sentiments often spoken, but rarely written, and publishing them served as an articulation of accepted views and understanding so all parties could

collectively draw a line from which to move forward. Five years later, it is appropriate to reflect on the progress made, and give greater attention to the direction of Resolution 11.11.

Historically, NGOs have demonstrated considerable commitment towards the CMS Family, however the continuity of this commitment is constantly weighed against commitments to other MEAs. This weighing exercise is a dynamic one, based on the *perceived* progress of each MEA, and on the *relationship* the NGO has with the MEA, its governing body, the Parties, and the Secretariat.

The NGOs working in close alignment with CMS understand their involvement has a cycle; that their participation is essential prior and during CMS processes to raise the profile of species issues (threats, species conservation status, linkages to other MEAs, the impacts of other decisions, etc), and needed to influence discussions and accords. They recognise they will be expected to provide on-ground implementation support—all-be-it informally and often without recognition—which they prepare for by developing close working relationships with governments while also seeking funding to facilitate work before, during and after meetings. How smooth and progressive they find this relationship is one measure they use to plan their ongoing involvement. The other hinges on their assessment of how much conservation progress is made between meetings; how much of the accord has been implemented.

This process of assessment is a wise one. Assessing implementation should be the core obligation of all involved in CMS. The very purpose of the convention is to safeguard species and their habitat against the onslaught of factors threatening their survival. However, despite the progress of resolution and establishing agreements, the IPBES Global Assessment clearly demonstrates we are all good at talking, but not as good at doing. Implementation is poor in CMS and many other MEAs.

This review is designed to look more closely at one aspect that may improve implementation progress; how integrated NGOs feel they are within the CMS agenda and how smooth and progressive they find their relationship with the mother convention. The NGOs with the closest and most committed relationship—a Partnership Agreement—are the focus group. It is these NGOs that have declared, by signing a Partnership Agreement, their intent to work closely with CMS towards the implementation of the CMS work programme.

All these NGOs draw from a solid foundation of NGO diplomacy.

Some have existed for more than a century. Others have been formed more recently. All have been part of the evolution in NGO diplomacy of these past fifty years, where the sector has become more coordinated, effective and consistent. They invest in building knowledge, skilled capacity, and public awareness across time, and through coordinated efforts have become increasingly more effective and consistent in their approach.

Partner NGOs already view their services and expertise as a resource that should be drawn heavily upon by CMS, however developing a structured process that corresponds to the current era and facilitates deeper NGO involvement has, to date, eluded everyone.

Clearly, NGO involvement with actual implementation depends on many factors, not least the political dynamic of a region or issue, as well as the working relationships between the NGO and governments specific to a circumstance or region. Simultaneously, government budgets allocated to environmental issues are stretched. MEAs are a lower order political priority in government budget rounds with contributions to MEAs meagre in comparison to other international efforts such as trade, aid, or humanitarian services. Many Parties lack even basic implementation budgets and essential workforce. For their part, most MEA Secretariats can barely maintain administration tasks and often lack capacity to substantially progress implementation. CMS is certainly among these.

A *Natural Affiliation* proposed a new form of ‘collaborative governance’ to extend governmental resources, develop new solutions, and increase implementation. That review found NGOs would readily engage, at a deeper and more committed level, if the right dynamic was created. In effect, NGOs could provide more expertise and resources if the process was expanded to better include them.^[90] This new review brings forward similar findings. There is a sense of good will and commitment, but also a need to lift the bar higher, to do better if we can, and to deepen the involvement of the NGO community so our resources can be well directed.

Deepening the relationship between NGO Partners and CMS, by embracing logical principles and taking careful institutional steps is presented as a series of recommendations (Chapter 7) for formal consideration.



Ch 2



Adversaries, Bystanders, or Something More

While building a closer relationship between the NGO community and CMS may appear straightforward to many, there are some who remain concerned about agendas and control. It is worth discussing, briefly, whether NGOs involved in the CMS agenda are indeed adversaries or collaborators.

With the emergence of global communication technologies, global civil society (of which NGOs are a professionalised component) has emerged as a well-established transnational domain in which people engage with and support ideas, objectives and goals surrounding issues of mutual interest.^[102] It is a self-organising system that collects expertise and, like its domestic counterpart, supports activities that shape widespread behaviour and influences how public policy issues are addressed.^[5, 33, 34] As with all aspects of human affairs, civil society can be a force for good or evil, just as politics can be similarly

weighed. Civil society is not a new phenomenon, having its roots in the 17th and 18th centuries; however, its global nature has notably increased in recent decades in parallel with the international political process that has also been evolving.^[35, 36] Today, domestic policies are increasingly affected by international actions and inseparable from democracy at global level.

Just as it is not possible to characterise all governments with one depiction, it is important to recognise a wide breadth of style and focus across the NGO community. Although, the many professionalised NGOs operating within the international political environment sphere all acknowledge the need to work within the constraints of the system, to increase trust and build important relationships, adhere to norms, codes of conduct and forms of governance that are mutually understood. These professionalised organisations have consciously nested themselves within the regimes in which they work.^[20, 21, 39] Some NGOs deliberately operate within and engage with established global policy networks which include governments, IGOs, and individual experts on a range of issues. Other NGOs maintain a focus on raising public awareness on specific issues.^[6, 17] Many employ skilled negotiators and diplomats who understand the pulse and process of international policy; much of this diplomacy being focused on leveraging trans-boundary or borderless information. In this way, professionalised NGOs represent a distinct and definable subset of global civil society; bound to protocols and the culture of the international diplomatic community and are willing participants in traditional vertical governance structures.

Indeed, NGO involvement has represented a serious proportion of international conservation discussions since the 1960s. The Stockholm Conference (United Nations Conference on the Human Environment) in 1972 reported the attendance of over 400 representatives from inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations. In 1992, during the first Earth Summit (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development), significant NGO influence emerged when an international awareness campaign was marshalled ahead of the conference in aid of setting an agenda for discussion. Around 2,400 NGO representatives attended the Summit. Another 17,000 representatives took part in the parallel NGO 'Global Forum'.^[3-7] Five years later, NGOs acted as the driving force in the development of key MEAs including the CMS in 1979, and again in

1985 when NGOs were in the room during the first CMS CoP.

Since those early days, healthy discussion has continued regarding the role of NGOs in conservation efforts,^[6, 8-15] and sometimes the ‘contested ground’ between the civic and the sovereign.^[16-22] Mostly this contention has been focused in other sectors, but it must be acknowledged that, for a number of years, there were concerns about NGOs pressuring governments, through funding, in some developing regions; unfairly influencing the directions of domestic conservation policies. As always, the complicated interdependence between institutional contexts and political action^[29, 32] is linked to financial resources. These concerns about undue pressure are largely resolved now.

While we need to remain vigilant about good governance, these relationships can only be improved through the collaborative governance proposed by the Partners. Partner NGOs offer a flexibility that could be utilised to great advantage by governments which include: NGO capacity to operate across national boundaries, cultures and language; drawing connections between national policies in ways often difficult or undiplomatic for government officials; and dedicating time and focus on the detail of specific issues between and during meetings in ways that government delegations, especially those which are small and under-resourced, struggle to match.^[17, 35, 40] Moreover, the Partners can buffer transitions in governmental staff and government leaders. Conversely their organisational structures also enable rapid and dynamic action when situations require it. Because most NGOs foster a solid relationship between supporters, the media and the general community, they often hold a high level of public trust, making them able messengers about conservation progress as well as conservation concerns. While NGOs, including the Partners, will always seek to hold processes accountable to the delivery of agreed policy, they do not need to be cast as adversaries.

Continuing the contested ground discussion within CMS serves little benefit and now threatens to hinder what could be a deeper more collaborative relationship from forming; one that responds to the well-recognised complexity, pervasiveness, and mutual interdependence of environmental problems.^[16, 21, 28-31] With appropriate transparency and involvement, NGOs can be constructive collaborators.



Ch 3

A photograph of two dolphins leaping from the water, creating a splash. The dolphins are grey and white, and the water is blue. The image is partially obscured by a white curved shape on the left side.

Transitioning to Collaborative Governance

Like most MEAs, CMS has operated through a system of conventional vertical governance. This is a top down arrangement, where policy deliberation and governance are empowered in the meeting of governments, with recommendations and support material provided by a support system of a Secretariat Scientific Council, and at times civil society actors. Lower rung participants may be instrumental in the upper level's decision making process, but it is the empowered in the meeting of governments that ultimately make the decisions and dictate the terms of that decision. In contrast, horizontal governance invites broader participation into the decision making circle. It replaces hierarchical leadership with collaboration, coordination, shared responsibility for decisions and outcomes, and a willingness to work through consensus.

There is often a perceived muddiness in governance arrangements that seeks to tie horizontal efforts with more conventional vertical

arrangements. There are challenges in measuring performance and developing mutual trust.^[50, 51] Yet, social policy literature foresees a future where governments and their agencies continue in an essential leadership and strategic function, *but in collaboration* with NGOs as the delegated implementers; delivering both democratic and focused, tangible outcomes.^[40, 48, 52] This represents a hybrid of the two forms; a more participatory form of ‘collaborative governance’ where some decisions remain vertical, and others operate horizontally.

Successful collaborative governance stresses the need for an institutional framework to be intentionally built to facilitate a complex mix of policy, discourse, negotiation and arbitration. It must take into account variables such as prior history of conflict or cooperation, the incentives for stakeholders to participate, power and resources imbalances, leadership, and institutional design.^[48, 53-55]

There is reason to pursue this route; collaborative governance arrangements can and do extend governmental resources, develop new solutions, and enable decisions that go beyond compliance.^[50, 56] A broad range of resources and discretionary authorities held by a variety of government and non-government stakeholders can be applied to specific problems. While coordination is achieved by the commitment of all participants to act in accordance with an agreed, always evolving plan devised and periodically revised by all those involved.^[28]

In reality, successful collaborative governance is not such a leap from the current system. Already, most governmental departments responsible for environmental issues operate in a situation of devolution—either to their counterpart departments of justice for legal representation, resource management for threat mitigation relating to resource extraction (be it mining, fisheries or agriculture), or through contracts with outside organisations for on-ground works. Typically, comparatively little policy implementation is carried out by environment department staff.^[56, 57]

NGOs as collaborators are already being trialled in the field of development and human welfare. NGOs across this community have become involved participants, welcomed at the decision making table and valued as implementors, ‘extension agents’, or partners in ‘service delivery’.^[14, 34, 41, 102] Yet, NGOs focused on wildlife remain confined in the vertical governance structure, restricted to their place as involved outsiders or bystanders.^[6, 17, 25, 36, 42]

It is time to reconsider this, especially for the CMS Partner NGOs. The diplomacy work of these organisations is coordinated, effective and consistent and several organisations represent a longer history of direct experience with CMS and other MEAs, and a deeper technical knowledge about the issues being discussed than some government agencies. As with their professionalised NGO counterparts in other sectors, their skilled capacity has been painstakingly built over time. They are a valuable, and under-utilised resource at a time when CMS is resource poor. The CMS Family is already accustomed to utilising the services of NGOs for specific activities, but currently these services are recruited on an ad hoc basis. As yet, there has been no systematic CMS Family wide consideration of existing gaps in the CMS programme that might be more formally supported by the NGO community.

The major challenges in CMS funding continue to plague the convention's progress, and the opportunity to grow is severely limited by relying solely on the stretched domestic budgets of the Parties. Meanwhile, CMS NGOs have offered significant support if current processes are expanded to better include them. These offers were made apparent in the recommendations of *A Natural Affiliation* and are reaffirmed by the Partner NGOs in this review.

The governance structure of the convention should be strong enough to accommodate dynamic and robust debate. The notion of contested ground is a remnant of the past, best left in the past. If there are conflicts in the present, we need to recognise them for what they are—conflicts about positions and issues, not conflicts about power. Adopting a system where at least Partner NGOs can contribute more systematically and consistently to the work of CMS requires a new dynamic that includes them as equal participants in active dialogue, a process of trust building (mutual transparency and accountability), and the development of shared commitments and understanding.^[42, 54, 58-61] They have to move from their role as outsiders to having a seat at the table.

Partner NGOs have all demonstrated, through time, their commitment to the convention and its work. They are not adversaries. They are core collaborators. Embracing their commitment would be fruitful and wise.



Ch4



We've Been Here Since the Beginning

It is worth reflecting briefly on the history of NGO involvement in CMS, because we've been here since the beginning.

In 1974, the German Government was mandated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to prepare an appropriate draft text of what would become CMS. The German Government enlisted NGO legal experts from within IUCN's Environmental Law Centre and after consultation with potential Parties, the Law Centre released a text which formed the basis of negotiation. The final version was signed in June 1979, in Bonn, and CMS was born.^[63]

The preamble to the convention recognises that *'States are and must be the protectors of the migratory species of wild animals that live within or pass through their national jurisdictional boundaries'*^[64] and Article VII, 9 allows that:

'Any agency or body technically qualified in protection, conservation and management of migratory species, in the

following categories, which has informed the Secretariat of its desire to be represented at meetings of the Conference of the Parties by observers, shall be admitted unless at least one-third of the Parties present object:

- a) international agencies or bodies, either governmental or non-governmental, and national governmental agencies and bodies; and
- b) national non-governmental agencies or bodies which have been approved for this purpose by the State in which they are located.'

Once admitted, these observers have the right to participate but not to vote.^[64]

The first few CMS CoPs focused attention on establishing the convention's work programme, but by 1994, the CMS CoP had adopted Recommendation 4.6: *The Role of non-Governmental Organizations in the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals* which recognised that 'non-governmental organizations can represent influential movements in society and that - through their expertise - they can play an active role in the conservation of migratory species of wild animals'.^[65] During CoP4 Parties also encouraged 'Specialised non-governmental organisations ... to play a more active role in the Convention, particularly by providing scientific advice, assisting in promotional activities and implementing projects for migratory species'.^[66]

Subsequent CoPs maintained this level of recognition. In 1997, Resolution 5.4: *Strategy for the Future Development of the Convention* encouraged 'non-governmental organisations to target their project work, inter alia, towards the implementation of CMS and Agreements'^[67] and once again specialised non-governmental organisations were '... encouraged to play a more active role in the Convention, particularly by providing scientific advice, assisting in promotional activities and implementing projects for migratory species.'

During CMS CoP6, in 1999, NGOs were recognised through the Djerba Declaration annexed to Recommendation 6.3: *Further Action for Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes*.^[68] Resolution 6.7: *Institutional Arrangements: Scientific Council* invited six IGOs and four NGOs to participate as observers in the meetings of the Scientific Council and to 'consider establishing close working cooperative arrangements

on matters of common interest'^[69] and Resolution 6.4: *Strategic Plan for the Convention on Migratory Species*^[70] mentioned the need for increasing attention '... to coordinat[e] action, creating synergies and avoiding duplication among the respective treaty bodies and other concerned partners within the non-governmental community.' Partner NGOs appear overtly in the Annex to Resolution 6.5: *Information Management Plan and National Reporting*.^[71]

In 2002, during CMS CoP7, the Secretariat was urged to progress '... partnerships with interested organisations specialised in the conservation and management of migratory species for the provision of secretariat services for selected MoUs' in Resolution 7.7: *Implementation of Existing Agreements*.^[72]

In 2005, during CMS CoP8, NGOs were encouraged to share information on relevant studies on the Addis Ababa principles and guidelines in Resolution 8.1: *Sustainable Use*.^[73] NGOs were also recognised in several information documents developed by the CMS Secretariat, and in Resolution 8.5: *Implementation of Existing Agreements and Development of Future Agreements*^[74] where, once again, the Secretariat was encouraged to continue 'exploring partnerships with interested organisations specialised in the conservation and management of migratory species for the provision of developmental support and coordination services for selected MoUs'. Resolution 8.5 also asked NGOs to provide appropriate assistance towards the conclusion and subsequent implementation of the Dugong Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). NGOs featured in the support document annexed to Resolution 8.2: *CMS Strategic Plan 2006–2011* and Resolution 8.8: *Outreach and Communications* ^[75, 76] and NGOs were acknowledged as playing an important role in the cooperative conservation of migratory raptors and owls in the African-Eurasian Region, and their involvement was encouraged in the development of the migratory sharks agreement.^[77, 78] During CoP8, the Secretariat also signed a number of Partnership Agreements with NGOs in a public signing ceremony, signalling that the relationship between CMS and the NGO community was being treated seriously.

In 2008, during CMS CoP9, Resolution 9.2: *Priorities for CMS Agreements* and Resolution 9.5: *Outreach and Communication Issues* both recognised the ongoing support of a number of NGOs and Resolution 9.2 repeated the request to the Secretariat to

explore ‘partnerships with interested organisations specialised in the conservation and management of migratory species for the provision of developmental support and coordination services for MoUs concluded under CMS auspices’.^[79, 80] The impetus increased in Resolution 9.6: *Cooperation with Other Bodies* ^[81] that began with the statement:

Acknowledging the importance of cooperation and synergies with other bodies, including MEAs, other inter-governmental bodies and non-governmental organisations, as well as the private sector;

Recognising the instrumental role of partner organisations in the development and implementation of CMS and its related initiatives and outreach campaigns, including the negotiation of the Convention itself;

Appreciating the value of such partnerships in reaching a wider audience and raising public awareness of the Convention and the importance of conserving migratory species on a global scale;

In the operative section, Parties:

1. Express[ed] gratitude to the many partner organisations who have assisted in promoting CMS and its mandate, for example, by facilitating the negotiation and implementation of species agreements under the Convention;

4. Further encourage[d] the Secretariat to continue to foster such partnerships in order to further the effective delivery of conservation action and awareness-raising, subject to available human and financial resources;

5. Recognise[d] that preferred instruments for such cooperation are renewable joint work plans with agreed and attainable targets included in clear timetables, drawn up by CMS and partner bodies and the necessity to report on progress and to assess effectiveness of results regularly;

13. Request[ed] the CMS Secretariat and partners to develop additional processes to streamline and coordinate their relationship, such as:

(i) Agreed work programmes between CMS and partner organisations that align closely with the CMS Strategic Plan and that are regularly reviewed; and

(ii) Joint or consolidated reporting of partner contributions (monetary, in-kind and professional) to CMS for formal

submission into CMS processes;

14. Request[ed] CMS partner organisations to promote and publicise the benefits to them, to CMS and to conservation arising from effective collaboration;

Resolution 9.13: *Intersessional Process Regarding the Future Shape of CMS* also recognised the growing relationship between CMS and NGOs.^[82]

In 2011, during CMS CoP10, Resolution 10.2: *Modus Operandi for Conservation Emergencies* requested that the Secretariat identify United Nations (UN) agencies, IGOs, NGOs, industry and other relevant agencies that may be able to respond to emergencies affecting migratory species and their habitats, and to include NGOs in an emergency response group.^[83] Ongoing NGO support was acknowledged in Resolution 10.3: *The Role of Ecological Networks in the Conservation of Migratory Species* ^[84], Resolution 10.7: *Outreach and Communication Issues* ^[85] and Resolution 10.10: *Guidance on Global Flyway Conservation and Options for Policy Arrangements*.^[86] NGO support was sought in Resolution 10.22: *Wildlife Disease and Migratory Species* ^[87] and in Resolution 10.15: *Global Programme of Work for Cetaceans* ^[27] and interest in increasing NGO contributions to the work of the convention was further acknowledged in Resolution 10.9: *Future Structure and Strategies of the CMS and CMS Family*, Resolution 10.21: *Synergies and Partnerships* and in the Annexes to Resolution 10.5: *CMS Strategic Plan 2015–2023*.^[62, 88, 89]

All the while, NGOs continued to work as closely as they could with CMS, bringing forward a significant proportion of the work, while remaining viewed as interested outsiders, with no standing.

In the margins of the 10th CMS CoP, Wild Migration (then the Migratory Wildlife Network) and Friends of CMS commenced work on what is now The Civil Society Project, by convening a *Civil Society Dialogue* to begin a process of discussion among civil society (defined for that meeting as including NGOs, independent wildlife scientists and policy specialists) about their involvement in the CMS agenda. Apparent to those participating in the *Dialogue* was that NGO commitments to the CMS Family had grown significantly since the early days of the convention, but were not well understood by CMS Parties, and that NGOs could act as more effective contributors if facilitated to do so.^[26, 90] These views revolved around some key themes:

1. increasing CMS implementation;
2. coordination and reporting;
3. using NGO technical expertise; and
4. increasing CMS's global influence.

Following the *Civil Society Dialogue*, a review of NGOs perspectives about their involvement with CMS was conducted. An early findings report served as an initial contribution to the CMS Strategic Plan 2015–2023 Working Group process.^[27] The final document, *A Natural Affiliation*, was provided to CMS CoP11 for more detailed consideration. The review captured the views and perspectives of ninety-three NGOs, half participating through direct interviews (written and verbal) and half through an online survey that focused more specifically on the relationships NGOs have with individual CMS agreements.^[90]

A Natural Affiliation identified one area where NGO involvement in the CMS agenda has been valued—the various ongoing and ad hoc advisory groups—which has served as an important avenue for close and effective cooperation between the CMS Family Secretariats and experts within the NGO community. Typically, these advisory groups have been structured with less rigid process, allowing full NGO participation equality at table. While there exists a number of examples that could be equally drawn upon, the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds is a useful illustration in demonstrating how a trusting relationship that pre-existed between the CMS and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) Secretariats and key NGOs allowed this Scientific Task Force to form a swift, energetic and joint response to a critical and emergent issue. Through the Scientific Task Force, the CMS Family, NGO scientists and other experts successfully challenged a misguided public assumption that migratory birds were the primary vectors of avian flu. This mistaken thesis initially had huge public traction because it was backed by powerful commercial and public interests who did not wish to accept that farming and trading methods were the main cause of generating and spreading the deadly new flu strain. Because of CMS Family leadership, the Scientific Task Force gained credibility, and the argument was won as a cooperative effort. This example illustrates the vast potential of closer involvement if the right trust dynamic can be institutionally created.^[90]

In response to *A Natural Affiliation*, during CoP11, the Government of Ghana sponsored Resolution 11.11 that sought input from Parties

and NGOs about how best to enhance the relationship between the CMS Family and civil society, including:

‘Mechanisms that will promote CSO- and NGO-facilitated work to be formally and consistently reported across the CMS Family, and to be considered by the Parties and governing bodies of agreements within the CMS Family;

Models for further CSO and NGO involvement in CMS processes; and

Modalities for further strategic engagement with CSOs and NGOs to provide implementation and capacity-building expertise.’^[91]

This invitation to bring forward input and recommendations was reflected in the Resolution consolidation process that took place during CMS CoP12 and was moved to Resolution 11.10 (Rev CoP12): *Synergies and Partnerships* (Annex B).

Meanwhile, during CoP12, NGO involvement was sought in more than a dozen of the new issue-based Resolutions, including the ability to submit information when an implementation matter arose through Resolution 12.9: *Establishment of a Review Mechanism and a National Legislation Programme*.

There is a healthy and progressive history of acknowledgement of NGOs within CMS, yet this strong and positive signal (especially for legal scholars) has not translated into more direct and systematic involvement, nor are NGO contributions being considered more routinely. As with many matters, when put into practice, the relationship between CMS and the NGO community is more complicated than what is formally articulated through CMS CoP decisions. NGOs still find their relationship with the CMS Family to be ad hoc and with significant key discussions closed to them. They remain firmly placed as interested observers.



Ch 5



Recommendations from A Natural Affiliation, Learning from Ramsar

The *A Natural Affiliation* review process (Annex A) developed a series of recommendations as a first step towards a discussion between NGOs and the governments and Secretariats of the CMS Family.

Built on the contribution of more than one hundred people, the recommendations focused on several themes, with actions suggested to:

1. Gain traction for the CMS agenda, increasing respect and recognition of CMS's global authority and leadership in conservation and management of migratory species;
2. Increase implementation, including a legally enforceable compliance regime;
3. Make the most of the unique CMS architecture, including

high-level policy discussions as well as detailed and region-specific species actions plans, and activities coordinated through agreements; and

4. Make better use of NGOs to provide specific types of implementation activity (scientific, technical, practical, local, popular, capacity-related, etc) especially where priority taxonomic or geographical gaps are identified, or capacity-building is needed in developing regions.

Several recommendations have already been implemented in the five years since the *A Natural Affiliation* was published, including increasing strategic cohesiveness across the CMS Family that has been achieved through the *Strategic Plan for Migratory Species (2015-2023)*. Remaining recommendations include:

1. Developing a CMS budget that provides core funding for pursuing implementation strategies and promoting activities in the field and on-ground that are designed to increase CMS's policy relevance;
2. Investing in effective and regular remote/video conferencing access to CMS and CMS agreement meetings to increase participation, reduce CMS budget pressure, and most importantly CO₂ emissions;
3. Providing consistent political advocacy by CMS attending key MEA meetings with a strong, visible agenda, influencing the CBD and CITES plans, to ensure they adequately reflect CMS priorities and needs. Where viable, establishing strategic engagement with Partner NGOs to act as informal surrogates for regional representation on broader CMS issues;
4. Codifying Partner NGO contributions as formal inputs against the *Strategic Plan*, building this work more fully into the progression of the CMS agenda, and regularly reviewing the Partner NGO agreements to ensure reciprocal benefit is maintained;
5. Making better use of task forces or technical expert panels, codifying key advisory roles in the Scientific Council, and inviting Partner NGOs to fill these roles;
6. Developing mechanisms for Partner NGOs to formally and consistently report on their work or their activities, while streamlining the reporting of CMS and CMS agreements into

- one system and developing an evaluation process that draws information from the whole CMS Family, including Partner NGO contributions; and
7. Creating a formalised CoP-funded Partner NGO focal point, to facilitate better utilisation of the close cooperation that exists between many international and national NGOs, and greater NGO and local conservation organisation participation.

Five years ago, NGOs noted that implementing these suggestions would require the creation of a new culture; where efforts made by NGOs became as relevant and respected as Government contributions are. It also required that the work of NGOs was attributed formal standing.

This culture has some precedence already. Ramsar has recognised a small group of NGOs as International Organisation Partners (IOPs) since 1999, conferring an additional participation status to these organisations (BirdLife International, Wetlands International, IUCN, World Wide Fund for Nature, and the International Water Management Institute, and Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust).^[91, 92] There is strong agreement that the IOP relationship is important, and that both the Secretariat and the IOPs have a responsibility to maintain the relationship, with the implicit expectation that progress will be reported upon.^[91-94] IOPs play an active role by contributing directly to discussions and meetings, and are permitted as observers in all activities including regional and sub-regional meetings. It goes further. The IOPs often act as facilitators between governments, donors, foundations and other bodies and they can, upon request from the Ramsar Secretariat, intervene on its behalf at specific meetings where/when the Ramsar Secretariat can't be directly represented. Crucially, the IOPs provide formal advice and recommendations on Ramsar processes such as the Montreux Record, and participate as panel members in the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP); an important body for progressing policy implementation and developing advisory work for the Parties, including the role and operation of the Montreux Record.^[95,96]

Ramsar also stands alone amongst the MEAs for the commendable focus on the development of communication, education, participation and awareness programmes (CEPAs) aimed at capacity-building and increasing community participation in on-ground wetland conservation. Ramsar Administrative Authorities are the key

implementers of the national CEPA Programmes. National Focal Points are tasked to work with the country's CEPA Focal Points, NGOs, and other CSOs and wetland visitor centres. This work is often directed through National Ramsar Committees which actively involve wetland conservation NGOs and CSOs in the development of national and local CEPA action plans. They also liaise with the Ramsar Regional Centres and the Ramsar Secretariat.^[97] This national layer of Ramsar work ensures that NGO expertise and advice is regularly harnessed and *valued*.

Ramsar's recognition and involvement of the IOPs is progressive and very important, and its strategic focus and involvement of local NGOs and CSOs is crucial. While NGOs working around CMS cited very strong connections with many of the CMS agreements (in particular AEWA, Bukhara Deer, IOSEA, and Raptors),^[90] there is a stronger sense among Ramsar NGOs of ongoing collaboration between their work, that of their governments, and the Ramsar Secretariat, than exists between NGOs and the CMS mother convention processes that are often perceived as silent between meetings.^[90,92]

Indeed, NGOs emphasised through the *A Natural Affiliation* review that they would welcome a more structured and systematic long-term approach to joint planning (and evaluation) so that they could contribute to CMS implementation.^[90]





Ch 6



Civil Society Project Findings

Five years on from the first review process, a new Civil Society Project questionnaire was developed, targeting the Partner NGOs specifically.

CMS has nineteen formal Partner NGOs:

- Alliance for Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA)
- BirdLife International/Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Born Free Foundation
- China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation (CBCGDF)
- Conseil International de la Chasse et de la Conservation du Gibier (CIC)
- Environment for the Americas (EFTA)
- Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS)
- Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF)
- Global Nature Fund (GNF)

Humane Society International (HSI)
 Humane Society International – Australia (HSI AU)
 International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)
 OceanCare
 Wetlands International
 Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC)
 Wild Migration
 Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
 World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA)
 World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

The *Civil Society Project* questionnaire consisted of twenty-seven questions (see Annex C) designed to tap Partner NGOs perspectives about their combined commitment to CMS and their relationship with the CMS Family. Perceptions were gathered across three categories: the relative NGO focus on the CMS agenda; the scale of NGO work relevant to CMS including CMS-related work by NGO diplomats/delegates; and the importance of the CMS Partnership. Perceptions were also collected about CMS' relevance to the SDGs and the post-2020 dialogue. Given the breadth of policy focus among the Partner NGOs, the process intentionally steered away from policy specifics and focused entirely on institutional process where common agreement could more easily be found.

During a nine-week period from June 20, 2019, twelve of the nineteen Partner NGOs participated in the project through the questionnaire. Ten organisations completed the questionnaire via telephone interview. Two completed a written questionnaire.

Summary of findings

All participating Partners have substantial expertise and values to offer CMS, including scientific and technical expertise, funding expertise and other resources. They have deep experience in policy work and field projects that deliver on CMS priorities. They are bridge-builders, working across the world with significant reach in Africa, Asia, South America, and Oceania, often conducting high-level international outreach and strengthening dialogue with stakeholders around CMS. Some have experience in large scale event planning and programme management.

The majority of Partner NGOs believe the work of CMS to be crucial to SDGs and the post-2020 framework. They understand that MEAs are where agendas are set and dedicate considerable time and attention to influencing the direction of those agendas.

A number of Partner NGOs continue to give priority to CITES above CMS and its agreements, even though CMS standing has significantly increased from five years ago. This increased standing is reflected in the large financial investment Partners make surrounding their CMS-related work. Taking a conservative estimate, across the nineteen Partners, likely investments exceed US\$1 million each/year representing a combined commitment of US\$19 million/year of funds which are not necessarily directed into the CMS Family.

Using the same conservative estimate to measure the value of staff time applied across CMS projects, US\$100,000/year is applied for each of the nineteen Partners. Together this amounts to US\$1.9 million/year.

Marginally above one-third of NGO Partners grant significant priority—between fifty to seventy-five percent—of their organisation's time to delivering on CMS-related objectives and working with the CMS agreements. Ten percent of Partners grant a major focus—between seventy-five and one hundred percent—in organisational time. The remaining partners focus organisational time on an as needs basis, and in the realm of ten to fifty percent.

It is estimated around eighty professional diplomatic level staff attend international meetings where CMS could be more directly represented. When spread across all nineteen Partners, this monetary investment is equivalent to US\$166,440/year.

Combined, these figures amount to more than US\$21 million each year. While this is not to suggest these funds are immediately available for CMS to draw upon or redistribute, it does serve to illustrate the significant focus and potential for the CMS Family. It is also worth noting that these funds represent comparatively small portions of their organisation's focus for many of the Partners. When compared to the 2015-2017 CMS budget of €7.5 million with another €4 million secured in voluntary contributions, and the forward budget adopted for the three years 2018-2020 at slightly over €8 million, the Partner NGO sum is substantial.

Despite this significant financial commitment from Partner NGOs,

there is a level of frustration expressed by several about the slow rate of progress towards adopting a system where their organisations can contribute more systematically and consistently to the work of CMS. Most Partners accept responsibility to step up and take a more formal role, provided a system is created to allow them to report in their own right and to operate with formal standing.

Expertise and values brought to CMS by the Partner NGOs

As found in this review, the majority of Partner NGOs have a long working history with CMS in which they provide valuable services including on-ground conservation programmes and core scientific research. They employ a wide range of strategies including political outreach, legal and policy work, field projects, and research tailored to region and country priorities. Some run large scale global programmes, often in partnership with other organisations. Some provide vital political outreach in countries and regions where CMS has no presence, actively bringing together government officials and other stakeholders from key ministries, while building broader public awareness about the need for international cooperation for migratory species conservation.

The review found that while Partner NGOs historically focus on aquatic-, avian- or terrestrial-specific conservation projects, over time this focus has expanded for many NGOs who now also prioritise environmental threats, including pollution, bycatch, captivity, and climate change. All Partners give considerable attention to habitat conservation in one form or another.

Partners prioritise CMS-listed aquatic, avian and terrestrial species with varying degrees of focus. Overall, aquatic and avian species have the most focus followed by terrestrial species conservation, although many of the Partners work across the taxa.

All Partner NGOs express a high-level of commitment to delivering on CMS priorities by working through CMS' agreements.

Almost half of the Partner NGOs have more than two hundred staff including consultants and professional volunteers. Almost one-fifth of Partners retain a staff between one to two hundred staff.

Of interest is that one-quarter of all Partner NGOs allocate seventy-five to one hundred percent of their organisational focus to

aquatic or avian species conservation that directly or tangibly relate to CMS and its agreements.

Partner focus on CMS compared to other MEAs

Close to one-third of Partner NGOs give CMS and its agreements their primary focus amongst MEAs. This represents a significantly higher focus and commitment than was found five years previously and reported in *A Natural Affiliation*. The remaining Partners continue to place CITES above CMS and its agreements, but the importance of CMS has significantly lifted from five years ago as well.

Many Partner NGOs also invest time and attention to CBD, General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and its Congress, International Whaling Commission (IWC), United Nations Environment Programme/The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEP/UNEA), and World Heritage Convention (WHC). A few Partners also focus on The Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP), Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS), Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention (IAC), Inter-American-Tropical-Tuna-Commission (IATTC), and the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW). This reach into allied MEAs represents a significant opportunity for CMS, should these organisations be empowered to advocate more formally for CMS in certain circumstances.

Quantifying the Partner NGO commitment to CMS objectives

This review differs from the *A Natural Affiliation* review because it has aimed to quantify both the time and monetary commitment dedicated by Partner NGOs to CMS agenda-related projects and policy work, even if this work is not conducted expressly for CMS.

Almost half of all Partner NGOs allocate significant and major focus to delivering work that is related to CMS objectives. These organisations allocate more than half of their organisation's time, and a small subset of this group dedicate all their organisation's time in this direction. When this work is contributed to CMS, it is

usually through the initiative of the NGO. Rarely is it planned with the Secretariat or Parties, even if such planning has been sought by the NGO. With better integration the contribution of Partners could be a powerful resource to be drawn upon.

Most of the Partner NGOs are committed to both Mother convention and Daughter agreements of CMS. A few partners direct their commitment to either Mother convention or Daughter agreements exclusively.

Projects

The review began by loosely quantifying the investment in projects that relate to CMS-listed species or CMS policy areas that have been defined by Resolutions, even if these projects are not conducted expressly for CMS. These projects represent financial commitment to on-ground work, but do not include the staff time involved in monitoring or managing these.

Half of the Partner NGOs undertake between fifty to two hundred of these types of projects per year. Of this group, a small subset (one-fifth) undertake over two hundred projects per year. These projects consist of on-ground conservation projects, field research, or capacity-building of communities, government agencies, and others.

A few estimate their organisation's financial investment in these types of projects to be more than US\$100 million/year, while almost half of the participating Partner NGOs estimate their organisation's monetary investment in these projects to be greater than US\$1 million/year. Even taking a conservative assessment of US\$1 million/year for all nineteen Partners, this represents US\$19 million/year of project work that is being conducted, but not necessarily directed into the CMS Family.

These projects are embedded in organisational programmes that have built over time, and it would be wrong to characterise this funding as freely available. However, were CMS to prepare for long-term planning and genuine collaborative governance, over the course of a decade a significant shift to projects that formally feed directly and transparently into the CMS agenda could be possible. Even as it stands, were this extensive and important work to be formally recognised and reported into the CMS processes, CMS would have a much greater understanding of the progress of the convention.

In order to loosely quantify the monetary value of staff, consultant,

and volunteer time dedicated to these projects, the review sought to streamline the information provided as time into full-time equivalent (FTE) data applied at a day rate of US\$300/day. Because of the broad nature of the projects, the amount of staff time applied to project oversight and representation differs greatly. Some organisations allocate more than two hundred FTE positions, and one had more than two thousand positions, but not all full-time, whereas others maintained only a few FTE positions that relate to the projects they provided data about. Three Partner NGOs found this question too difficult to provide data on. Placing the one organisation with two thousand staff outside of the data calculation, across the remaining eight that answered this question, there is an average of fifty-five FTE staff, consultants, and volunteers dedicated to these projects, representing a monetary value of US\$165,375/year. Reflecting the same basic estimate process used above, if a conservative assessment of US\$100,000/year is applied for all nineteen Partners, this represents US\$1.9 million/year that is being dedicated, but not necessarily directed into the CMS Family.

Work of NGO diplomats/delegates

Partner NGOs also dedicate significant additional resources to attending international meetings with either a CMS focus or where matters relevant to the CMS agenda are being represented. Many also attend regional or national meetings with Government officials progressing work of similar relevance. The professional time and investment in this work also warrants consideration.

The number of meetings attended each year varies between two and eighteen, with most falling between two and six meetings/year. The days involved in attending these meetings is averaged at six days/meeting. The number of staff involved ranges between two to six attending each meeting. Again, applying the conservative estimate process used above, and excluding the cost of travel to and from these meetings, with four professional staff attending an average of four meetings/year, for a duration of six days, at a day rate of US\$365/day this amounts to a monetary investment of US\$8,760 per Partner. When equated to all nineteen Partners this represents a monetary investment of US\$166,440/year. It also equates to a professional workforce of eighty people, attending dozens of meetings each year, where CMS could be more directly represented.

CMS, the SDGs, and the post-2020 dialogue

Given the currently international focus dedicated to the post-2020 dialogue the review also sought to capture Partner NGO perspectives about CMS's relevance to the current SDGs.

Over half of the Partner NGOs see CMS work as of critical importance to existing SDG's, especially Goals 14 and 15, because the CMS agenda can only be partially met by other agreements and conventions. Almost half of the Partners said CMS and its work is very important because of the focus CMS brings to addressing climate change (Goal 13), the future protection of species, enhancing global partnerships and promoting and sharing knowledge and expertise. The remainder of the Partners consider CMS work to be important and relevant to many of the SDG targets. Many Partners lamented the lack of a specific target for connectivity and CMS, as exists for CITES and wildlife trafficking, which makes traction for the CMS agenda more difficult to generate.

It was also noted by several Partner NGOs that some organisations benefit, where they have technical expertise and operational capacity, by consciously relating their work towards the SDGs, especially when approaching governments or funders with new ideas. However, the absence of significant hard resources or labour make the existing process less worthwhile for many Partners who believe more organisations would volunteer their services if not over-burdened. In turn, this could result in tangible progress towards the SDGs.

When asked about the voluntary commitments to the SDG, a number of Partner NGOs felt these were important, offering indications of broader intent, and as something visible for supporters and donors. Many felt that mapping these commitments against the SDGs is of equally high importance, as is cross-commitments of donor governments useful, and the need for good structure and reporting. However, it was not clear to everyone if this mapping of non-governmental commitments would be done at some stage. Nonetheless, over half of the Partner NGOs rate voluntary commitments to the SDG of value because it: identifies priorities and provides focus; highlights ways to work together; provides engagement between groups; and streamlines, prioritises and measures commitments, which in the case of at least one organisation led to participation and co-chairing at UN meetings where the

organisation's research, views and expertise were sought. Others rate voluntary commitments of low value preferring mandatory commitments, especially for governments and expressed concern that commitment doesn't appear to be applied across the SDGs.

The Partner NGOs were also asked to reflect on the importance of CMS to the post-2020 dialogue. Most of the participating Partners believe that CMS should play a key role in the development of targets relating to connectivity in the post-2020 dialogue and ensure CMS' policy areas are well represented above general MEA work. Although beyond the scope of this review, many organisations expressed a wish for different organisations and conventions to 'own' specific targets—conversely, CMS should 'own' several of the targets related to biodiversity. However, this 'ownership' needs to be delivered upon, with good engagement, solid reporting, and a dynamic attention to implementation.

Almost one-third of Partner NGOs focus significant priority (between half and three quarters of their organisation's time and resources) on the post-2020 framework in some way. This might not mean all staff time is directed at this, but that the organisation's work is being collectively *tilted* in this direction.

It was broadly felt that the post-2020 targets cannot be achieved without consideration of trans-boundary conservation of species and their habitats, and without management of issues that threaten that conservation. The focus of CMS on migratory species is an important element to consider in the dialogue to ensure that the positive actions in one area are not offset by negatives in another.

It was also noted by a few Partners that the post-2020 targets must give far greater recognition to the rights and conservation potential of ITLC, and that CMS could wisely take steps to link its connectivity message to the work of these communities.

More than half of Partner NGOs say the level of CMS engagement with the post-2020 framework is 'too little', given the importance of the process for setting the conservation agenda of the coming decades, but this reflection is tempered by the knowledge that too much responsibility for this engagement is falling to the CMS Secretariat, rather than a cohesive position being taken forward by CMS Parties.

The Importance of the CMS Partnership

As was investigated during the first review process, this latest review once again explores the perceived importance of the CMS Partnership to the Partner NGOs.

The existing Partnership between each of the Partner organisations and CMS has been attributed significant favour and is held in higher regard than five years ago. However, the perceived value of these Partnerships still requires further work. Most Partner NGOs believe the value of the Partnership could be increased, significantly in some cases, with more attention paid (by both Parties) to making it work well.

Almost all Partner NGOs emphasise the need for better communication across the CMS Family and governing bodies. A few Partners feel a responsibility to increase their communications with the CMS Secretariat and into CMS processes. A number of Partners feel more can be done to better highlight and communicate their work and suggest better collaboration could be facilitated by providing tools such as a user-friendly, online platform accessible to Partners to log contributions.

Almost all participating Partners believe that increased budget for the Secretariat is needed to improve dialogue between the Secretariat and Partners and to improve follow up processes after governmental meetings (CMS and other MEAs).

Several organisations believe their expertise and resources are poorly used, including their availability for input into technical papers, and outreach in non-Party range states. Several believe their work may be more highly valued, but poor communication means they have little idea of the real perception. Two Partner NGOs have expressly offered expert support to Parties and the Secretariat; expertise that has never been called upon. One Partner believes that, in the occasional cases they are consulted, their input is not given due credit, and the expertise they offer is not respected nor drawn upon. Several Partners feel their brief association with CMS makes it too early to tell whether their work is being well recognised.

Some Partner NGOs report that their organisation's work is sometimes included in CMS Parties national reports, whereas slightly under half say their organisation's work is not proactively included.

Almost half believe the CMS Parties have a fair knowledge of the scope of their organisation's work. The rest feel that CMS Parties has

some peripheral idea of the areas they work on, but that it is not a complete picture. A few Partner NGOs believe it is their responsibility to self-promote and would welcome reciprocal promotion through the CMS processes.

The Secretariat's awareness of the scope of Partner NGOs work is seen to be slightly higher than the CMS Parties. But, for at least one-quarter of the Partners, this awareness is entirely due to their own proactive communication efforts (i.e. travelling to meet regularly with the Secretariat etc), and this awareness is restricted to one or two individuals within the Secretariat. There is not necessarily an institutional understanding of the work they do. Some Partners feel the Secretariat has almost no knowledge of their organisation's work, especially when compared to other Secretariats for e.g. GFCM. Many Partners note the Partnership agreement would benefit from greater structure, including regular telephone meetings and a shared workplan, enabling more streamlined and natural communications.

A few Partners feel their work has significantly greater influence in other MEA processes. In some circumstances this is due to the length of their partnership with other forums, or the type of forum and how it relates to their organisation. Several organisations also feel other forums better communicate and/or value their organisation's work.

All Partner NGOs believe more steps can be taken to ensure greater recognition of their organisation's work. Half say that they need more tools to profile themselves, for instance: a user-friendly, meaningful reporting system that would enable greater recognition of their field work, formal presentation of their policy work at meetings, and more opportunity for events that could involve them as equal participants, to profile their work and facilitate policy discussions.

NGO Partner Reporting

One of the important recommendations that came forward in both the *Civil Society Dialogue* in 2011 and *A Natural Affiliation* in 2014, was the introduction of formalised reporting of NGO work. This has remained an active discussion within the Civil Society Project since. To further the discussion, all Partner NGOs were expressly asked, through the questionnaire:

If your organisation could simply report on your work, in your own right and with formal standing, would you welcome this opportunity?

Almost all Partner NGOs say they would welcome the establishment of a regular opportunity to report on their work in their own right, instead of through the Secretariat or a Party. That the reporting would have formal standing was key. They seek well-structured process, embedded into the work of the convention, with monitoring to ensure information is current and accessible to the Parties. Several partners also expressed the need to streamline all reporting (Party, Agreement and Partner) to enable an assessment of implementation progress across the whole CMS Family within regular (ie six-yearly) State of the CMS Environment Reports.

Others expressed that, were formalised reporting from Partner NGOs adopted, the new Review Mechanism should broaden to evaluate implementation progress of Parties and Partner NGOs alike.

Two other processes, The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), may serve as models to consider. The ECOSOC quadrennial report represents a useful institutional standard, although given the generalities encompassed by ECOSOC the information gathered is too lean to be useful for CMS purposes. What is valuable is the official requirement for quadrennial reports to be submitted by all accredited organisations, and for the detail of these reports to be formally considered by a subcommittee of Parties. The regularity and the institutionalised respect given to these reports is an important prototype to replicate. Partner reports ahead of ACCOBAMS Meeting of the Parties (MOPs) are another example warranting consideration. Again, these are too lean, but they are given respect by the Parties. Where both examples fail, however, is folding those reports into an assessment of institutional progress.

A number of Partner NGOs recall the opportunity given during CoP9 (2008) for their work to be briefly presented to the CoP, by the NGO, in the first session of the CoP meeting, and believe this is a useful institutional practice that could be resurrected for Partners as an accompaniment to formal reporting.

Some Partner NGOs express concern that formal reporting may be difficult for large NGOs to manage, given the expanse of their work, without delivering tangible benefits to their organisation. However, they understand why other NGOs might value this opportunity. There may be value in exploring a system of reporting that allows Partners

to report on work that is part of a formalised Partnership workplan, levelling the playing field for all participants and ensuring work, that is agreed as in common between CMS and the Partner, is truthfully reflected and considered.

One Partner NGO voiced concern that, in their experience, the value of their work is usually down-graded or undermined when not reported through the Secretariat or Government. If there was to be a formalised Partner reporting system, it would need to be given due respect and standing.

A few Partner NGOs lack a long enough association with CMS to comment on whether Partner reporting would be of value.

Increasing the relative value of the CMS Partnership

While NGO Partnerships are valued, the Partner NGOs offer some constructive criticism for increasing the relative value of the Partnerships.

Developing the relationship between CMS Parties and Partner NGOs

Some Partner NGOs voice difficulty in approaching government departments who often resist, ignore and undervalue the documentation being presented to them, even when it represents work that aligns with agreed commitments made by Parties within Resolutions. Too frequently, it seems, Parties let work progress fall onto the shoulders of the Scientific Council to develop implementation for work. Partners would like to see a greater welcome from CMS Parties of the Partner work that progresses priorities adopted by CoP.

It is important to note that many Partner NGOs are prepared to work with Focal Points in environment Ministries to build capacity about CMS and to support these Ministries to connect to other agencies across government (foreign affairs, trade, industry). An important suggestion that addresses this need is for the Secretariat to develop and circulate a document profiling Partner NGOs expertise, and areas where Partners offer support in the coming triennium. Contact details for the Partner Focal Point could be provided to facilitate direct communications between the Party and the Partner. While all approaches will take time and planning, this could be a fruitful way to increase the value of the relationship.

Another important way that CMS Parties might develop the relationship with Partner NGOs is to host regular, national mid-term meetings with Partners and other NGOs to strategize work delivery towards the next CMS CoP. Typically, meetings that do take place focus on government officials presenting broad information about what they already plan and seek NGO input about those plans. This suggestion proposes to involve Partners more deeply into the planning and delivery process.

As articulated in Chapter five, it might be appropriate for the Parties to formally consider the formalisation of Partner NGOs through Resolution, as is the case with Ramsar IOPs.

Increasing the structure for Partnerships

Almost all Partner NGOs believe there is a need for increased communications between the Secretariat and Partners. For some, they feel the responsibility to initiate this rests with the Partners, whereas others feel the Secretariat should be more responsive to communication. For several Partners, requests to schedule regular telephone meetings to discuss and plan progress against a work plan have gone unanswered, over several years.

Many Partners note there is currently no shared work programme for their Partnership, the development of which would be welcome, especially if it was a document that was tracked and valued by both parties. Developing this document would present the opportunity to explore areas of joint work focus that might not be apparent to either party in isolation.

Establishing a role within the Secretariat, or facilitating and funding a role to be performed by a Partner NGO (perhaps by Partner NGO election and confirmation through the CMS CoP) to coordinate discussions between Partners and the Secretariat, to support Partner reporting and the Secretariat compilation of that reporting, and profiling the ongoing work of Partners to CMS Parties is worth considering.

Acknowledging the importance of non-Party range state focus

Several Partner NGOs focus some or all of their Partnership work in non-Party range states, building the capacity of government officials towards CMS accession, and increasing awareness of ways non-Party range states can participate in the CMS agenda.

Developing mechanisms for this work to be coordinated among Partners and Parties, and for it to be transparently reported to CMS Parties, is very important. Whether reporting occurs through the proposed Partner NGO or through the proposed Partner NGO coordination role, both are important lines of work that should be respected.

Overcoming institutionalised dis-engagement

Several Partners feel there is an institutionalised dis-engagement with species action plans and global programmes of work once they have been adopted by the CoP. Similarly, many of the CMS agreements are created and then languish with no funding or attention for years without follow up. Their traction seems to require someone in the Secretariat tasked with their implementation, usually tied to a voluntary contribution, and even then, the resource applied is almost always terminally low. This is a slow and unacceptable method of progressing work that is deemed important enough to have generated an action plan or an agreement.

A number of Partner NGOs, as well as those NGOs formally represented in the previous review process, *A Natural Affiliation*, urge involvement of NGO Partners in early planning for action plans and agreement implementation to ensure agreed forward work is scheduled to be progressed by someone: a Government agency, a Partner, the Secretariat if sufficient resources are allocated, or another organisation with the capability and willingness to do so. For the Partners, following through with this work could be built into shared and communicated workplans with the Secretariat.

Recognising that UNEP's *Guidelines on Compliance with and Enforcement of Multilateral Environmental Agreements*,^[98-100] has identified strengthening of compliance with MEAs as a key issue, and welcoming the adoption of Resolution 12.9: *Establishment of a Review Mechanism and a National Legislation Programme* and the development of a new review mechanism to facilitate compliance with the obligations set out in Articles III.4, III.5, III.7, and VI.2 of the Convention,^[101] several Partners express the need to also introduce accountability and reporting similar to that practiced by CITES. This is especially pertinent for issues addressing Appendix I species. The value of such accountability would be twofold. CMS, which is a treaty

that is equally binding to CITES but is often dismissed as ‘soft law’ simply because the practice of compliance has not been progressed, would raise its relative standing within government ministries. This would add institutional support to CMS Focal Points. In turn, CMS discussions would have more rigour applied to them by all concerned. This would mean the Resolutions and Decisions adopted at CoP would have greater attention paid to their negotiation and adoption, and a greater likelihood of being followed through between meetings.

Increasing implementation discussions

The CoP meeting itself is not the ideal place to bring forward new information. A great deal of effort must be dedicated to producing documentation and lobbying between and with the Parties to develop a baseline understanding of the issue to a level that facilitates a Resolution and Decision to be passed.

Partner NGOs would welcome increased opportunities to participate in informal discussions that are structured to involve as many participants as is needed, *between CoPs*. While organising meetings within the margins of other meetings is one route to be considered, additional face-to-face meetings will draw heavily on the CMS budgets, and increase the travel-related climate emissions associated with our collective work. A few Partners voice strong advocacy for CMS investing in professional video meeting software, suggesting that informal discussions be held as partially or fully remote meetings. This in itself requires a culture change. It would be necessary to schedule meetings in shorter blocks, spread over several days. And, it would be crucial to provide space and technology to enable dynamic discussions to take place. However, to reduce climate emissions related to CMS planning and governance, moving in this direction is a responsibility we should all embrace.

Access all areas

Several Partners voice concern about the new trend to close some intersessional meetings to NGO observers. Partner NGOs access to governance and scientific meetings across the CMS Family has developed over time because of the care and attention paid to participation norms and rules; procedures that are adhered to and respected by the Partners. While Partners respect that meetings

between governments might choose to be confidential, when such meetings are held under the auspices of the convention, and especially when they are conducted with convention resources, this is seen as a retrograde step, and the Partners urge the adoption of openness and transparency as a principle of all meetings.

Another area suggested for further consideration is to allow Partner NGOs to nominate for and hold formal roles within the Scientific Council. With the restructure of the Scientific Council to meet as a smaller Sessional Committee and following the Third Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council, new rules of procedure were adopted that restrict the Chairing of Working Groups to Party- and CoP-appointed Councillors. This places a new and significant burden on fewer Appointed Counsellors. Meanwhile, the Partners are aware of ongoing discussions about rationalising the number of Appointed Counsellor roles, without, it seems decreasing the workload. Nor is the agenda shrinking through the CoP Resolutions and Decisions. Welcoming new capacity into the Scientific Council through appropriately screened and Party-appointed Partners positions, seems a logical step. It might be that Partner NGOs can also be given the opportunity to partly or fully fund such roles.

Increasing CMS' relevance to the donor community

There is a need to identify ways that better articulate and advocate for the environment and connectivity to increase the CMS agenda's global traction and especially its relevance to the donor community.

To facilitate this, it would be helpful to know what Partner NGOs have planned and partially funded as well as the work the CMS Secretariat is itself tasked to do between CoPs, with an assessment of budget required for all this work.

Having this information collated into a donor-orientated document would serve a twofold purpose. The CMS agenda would gain much greater prominence, and be seen in a structured, already partially funded programme of work, and would also assist Partner NGOs in pursuing the needed gap funding because the work they propose would be recognised as a tangible part of the CMS delivery. Partners also voice the importance for CMS to begin to fully participate at the IUCN Congress, through side events, resolutions, exhibits and booths, both to profile the work being done, address funding requirements,

and to influence the wider recognition of CMS' relevance across the IUCN congress dialogue. Right now, CMS is a side-player that lacks visibility to the wider donor community.

Increasing CMS' relevance to Indigenous, Traditional, and Local Communities

Several Partners recommend that far greater attention should be given to the recognition of the rights and conservation potential of ITLC, and that they sometimes find themselves advocating as a proxy for this sector, when it isn't the core expertise of their organisation.

The current work of CMS is often *European* in its culture and drawing in key ITLC organisations as Partners would be a significant benefit to the CMS Family.

As is clearly outlined in the IPBES Global Assessment, recognising the knowledge, innovations, practices, institutions and values of indigenous and traditional peoples, and local communities, and ensuring their inclusion and participation in environmental governance, often enhances their quality of life and the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of nature, which is relevant to broader society. Governance, including customary institutions and management systems and co-management regimes that involve these peoples and communities, can be an effective way to safeguard nature by incorporating locally attuned management systems and indigenous and local knowledge.^[1]

There is a justice layer to this focus as well. Responding to the growing threats to individuals and communities defending their environmental and land rights in many parts of the world, in August 2019 the UNEP and the UN Human Rights Office signed a cooperation agreement on protecting environmental and human rights of Land Defenders. CMS should emulate this important stance. Protecting Land Defenders is a responsibility CMS also shares.





Ch 7



Recommendations

Conscious of the transformative change in governance called for in the IPBES Global Assessment, and honouring the directions of Resolution 11.11 adopted during CoP11, and now captured in Resolution 11.10 (Rev CoP12), a series of principles, suggestions, and recommendations have been developed. They are drawn from the findings of this review and reflect the commitment of Partner NGOs to work more closely with CMS, if facilitated to do so.

Principles to facilitate CSO- and NGO-facilitated work to be formally and consistently reported and considered across the CMS Family.

1. Acknowledge Partner NGO contributions as formal inputs against the strategic plan and fully incorporate their work into the reporting and forward planning of the CMS agenda.
2. Transition to long-term planning to facilitate genuine collaborative governance, inviting Partner NGOs to take forward key pieces of CoP-directed work over three- and six-

- year periods.
3. Commit to developing shared work programmes between Partner NGOs and the Secretariat, supported by regular implementation discussions to track work delivery.
 4. Fully utilise the potential of task forces, as well as technical or expert working groups and panels in the Scientific Council, by accepting Partner NGOs nominees in key advisory and facilitation roles in the Scientific Council, and providing an opportunity for Partner NGOs to partly or fully fund key roles.
 5. Overcome institutionalised dis-engagement by introducing accountability and reporting against CoP-adopted action plans and global programmes of work.
 6. Commit to conducting a systematic CMS Family wide assessment of existing gaps in the CMS programme, which can be formally supported by Partner NGOs.

Models for further CSO and NGO involvement in CMS processes.

1. Review and implement a structure with similar intent to Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (RAMSAR) and their International Organisation Partners (IOPs), conferring an additional participation status to Partner NGOs.
2. Pursue a specific target for connectivity and CMS, replicating the model of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) wildlife trafficking Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) that also links to civil society contribution.

Recommendations to facilitate Partner NGOs to formally provide implementation and capacity-building expertise to the CMS Family.

1. Formalise the acceptance of NGO Partnership with the Convention through Resolution.
2. Attribute formal standing to Partner NGO work that is delivered against agreed work programmes and instigate formal reporting of that work with the same standing as Party reporting.
3. Streamline all reporting (Party, Agreement and Partner) to

enable an assessment of implementation progress across the whole CMS Family within regular (ie six-yearly) State of the CMS Environment Reports.

4. Broaden the new Review Mechanism to evaluate implementation progress of Parties and Partner NGOs.
5. Open all intersessional meetings to Partner NGOs especially those held under the auspices of the convention and/or those conducted with convention resources.
6. Engage Partner NGOs to represent the CoP-approved CMS agenda when the CMS Secretariat is not able to fully participate in meetings of CITES, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Congress.
7. Establish a regular circular of Partner NGO expertise and availability to support national implementation and Ministry capacity-building of CMS Parties, including Partner NGO contact details to facilitate direct communications between Parties and Partner NGOs.
8. Strategically establish formal Partnerships with relevant NGOs to bring an ITLC focus to the work of CMS and provide greater visibility and support to Land Defenders through CMS.
9. Establish additional capacity within the Secretariat focused on increasing CMS' relevance to the donor community, drawing on CoP-approved priorities and Partner work plans that respond to those priorities, profiling proposed Partner work as legitimate CMS activities to donors.
10. Establish a foundation CMS budget dedicated as a cofunding contribution to match donor funding of CMS activities.
11. Establish a CoP-funded Partner NGO focal point, either within the Secretariat or as a roll filled by a Partner NGO through an election process, to increase coordination between Partner NGOs, provide support to the Secretariat to focus on donor community relevance, coordinate regular Partner NGO/ Secretariat coordination meetings, and collate and distribute NGO materials as required.
12. Reduce climate emissions related to CMS planning and governance work by investment in remote/video conferencing technology enabling Parties, Agreements, Partner NGOs, and non-Party range states partial or full remote access to all CMS

and CMS agreement full and intersessional meetings.

These recommendations, unmistakably put from a Partner NGO perspective, are both useful for their own sake as well as an important indicator of the pulse of the Partner NGO community concerning the CMS Family.

This review has demonstrated the considerable financial and time commitment being directed by Partner NGOs to CMS-related work. All the CMS Partner NGOs draw from a solid foundation of NGO diplomacy and many of these wildlife NGO diplomats hold a rich and long history of direct experience with CMS that could be used for greater benefit.

Exploring how to draw this significant civil society capacity into a space that more directly contributes to CMS seems wise and prudent. However, it requires a culture change within CMS. There is precedent to follow, and an already long and trusting relationship between CMS and its NGO Partners to build upon. This review and the recommendations it proposes reflect that relationship, the depth of consideration Partners give to the CMS agenda, and the shared hope for greater and more meaningful collaboration in the future.

While the rate of biodiversity loss is alarming, the IPBES Global Assessment offers hope—nature can be conserved and restored if we embrace transformative change, including innovative governance approaches.

**This is not a time for CMS and its Partner NGOs to walk
separate paths.**

The world needs us to work more closely together.





Terminology and Acronyms

Notes on terminology

Agreement in the context of this review covers both legally binding CMS Agreements and CMS Memorandum of Understanding. The single word is used to both convey the similar conservation intent of the two different mechanisms, and for ease of reading.

Civil Society in the context of this review takes its definition from Anheier (2004) to be *‘the sphere of institutions, organisations and individuals located between the family, the state and the market in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests’*.

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

The term CMS agenda refers to all policy, law and science decisions taken by the CMS Family, including activities to deliver those decisions

The term implementation includes the myriad of events and activities that occur in response to a public policy directive that have the intent of accomplishing that directive. Implementation follows in the footsteps of Victor, Raustiala, and Skolnikoff (1998) as *‘the process by which intent gets translated into action’*.

Conservation is used as a policy-neutral term throughout, out of respect for the range of Partner NGOs who have contributed to this review. The NGOs represent a spectrum of policy positions ranging from individual or population level animal welfare through to sustainable or wise use. This review does not intend to traverse into this territory, or to lean in one policy direction or the other.

Acronyms

ACCOBAMS	Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area
AEWA	African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement
AIDCP	Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCSBT	Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
CEPA	Capacity-building, Education, Participation and Awareness
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
CoP	Conference of the Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DOALOS	Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
IAC	Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention
IATTC	Inter-American-Tropical-Tuna-Commission
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organisations
IOP I	International Organisation Partners
IOSEA	Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-east Asia
ITLC	Indigenous, traditional, and local communities
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
IWC	International Whaling Commission
MEA	Multilateral Environment Agreement
NBSAPs	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
Partner NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisation Partners to CMS
Q-NGO	Quasi Non-Governmental Organisations
Ramsar	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance

SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPAW	Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
STRP	Scientific and Technical Review Panel
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
	WHC World Heritage Convention
WHO	World Health Organization

Methodology and Oversight

This review, *Conservation Collaboration*, has been produced with funding from Wild Migration and OceanCare, and with generous in-kind support provided by the Civil Society Project Steering Group members and their organisations including the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), BirdLife International, OceanCare, Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Secretariat, and Wild Migration. The Steering Group has been intentionally composed of members that broadly work across the CMS taxa as well as representing the civil society at large.

The report has sought to quantify the combined commitment of the Partner NGOs to CMS and the status of the relationship between the CMS Family and Civil Society, highlighting specifically:

1. the value of NGO Partner work to delivering on the objectives of CMS; and
2. the importance of CMS and migratory species conservation to the NGO Partners within the post-2020 biodiversity framework and dialogue.

This work has reflected on the findings of the earlier report, *Natural Affiliation*. From this combined basis, recommendations have been developed on the mechanisms, models and modalities identified in Resolution 11.11 (now contained within Res 11.10 (Rev CoP.12)).

Twelve NGOs with formal CMS Partnership Agreements in place participated in a structured verbal or written interview in which a questionnaire, designed under the guidance of the Civil Society Project Steering Group, was completed. All interviews were conducted during a six-week period from June 20, 2019. The methodology combined ten interviews conducted via telephone conference with interview notes recorded in writing. Two NGO Partners unavailable for telephone conference completed the written questionnaire. All collected data was returned to each organisation for their confirmation and permission for use of data. All answers have been anonymised to ensure no identity of specific organisations are apparent.

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Annexes

Annex A: Recommendations and contributors from A Natural Affiliation

1. Gaining Traction for the CMS Agenda

NGO Recommendations to gain better traction for the CMS agenda include:

- 1.1. CMS representatives attending key meetings with a strong, visible agenda and providing consistent political advocacy into other MEAs and international processes. This also includes ensuring that CMS's relevance in emergent discussions is profiled, such as the economics of biodiversity or high sea marine biodiversity to ensure CMS remains relevant.
- 1.2. Hosting regular, high-level, CMS Family ministerial meetings to help profile the CMS agenda within government departments, to increase intra-governmental coordination and to increase the relevance of the CMS agenda for non-Parties such as China, Japan, Russia, Brazil and the United States of America.
- 1.3. Developing a CMS budget that provides core funding to pursue implementation strategies, including the implementation of CMS agreements.
- 1.4. Providing education and support of government officials in key regions to understand the CMS agenda and increase implementation, possibly by providing similar training to CITES Parties or the recent UNEP Division of Environmental Law and Conventions/UNEP Regional Office for Africa/ UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre training for Francophone Africa identifying indicators and integrating CMS and CITES objectives into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).
- 1.5. Promoting activities in the field and on the ground that

are designed to increase CMS's relevance, including investing in greater awareness and engagement across stakeholders, beyond those who attend meetings.

1.6. Ensuring that there is a balance of profile between species and habitats activities so that CMS can be appropriately acknowledged as an implementing agent of biodiversity policy.

1.7. Securing CMS's North American presence and considering a Brussels based CMS presence.

2. Increasing Implementation

NGO Recommendations to increase implementation include:

2.1. Exploring the creation of a peer review mechanism, such as a committee to enable concerns about poor implementation, or about activities that are in direct conflict or contradiction with the decisions taken to be formally discussed, while retaining a focus on consensus rather than conflict.

2.2. Streamlining reporting of CMS and CMS agreements into one system.

2.3. Developing an evaluation process that draws information from the whole CMS Family and also formally includes NGO contributions.

2.4. Building the culture of evaluation of government obligations to strengthen CMS. A first step of this might be tightening progress-reporting requirements for CMS Family Parties and Signatories.

3. Making the Most of the Unique CMS Architecture

NGO Recommendations to make better use of the CMS architecture include:

3.1. Strengthening the CMS agenda to influence and contribute to key components of the CBD and CITES plans so they adequately reflect CMS priorities and needs; by focusing on facilitating deliverables that increase levels of on-ground implementation, especially in making better use of CMS's trans-boundary/inter-governmental negotiation abilities. CMS agreements can make use of regional 'edges' that have great conservation impact.

3.2. Increasing strategic cohesiveness across the CMS Family, where the agreements' priorities and outcomes are milestones

within the Convention's overall strategy.

3.3. Consolidating the reporting of CMS Family activities to highlight the importance of the CMS architecture.

3.4. Coordinating reporting with other MEAs to improve efficiency. Advocating shared national committees for more integrated delivery and reporting, noting that this will require greater collaboration between the MEAs and their plans.

3.5. Making better use of task forces or technical expert panels, and ensuring the progress and contributions of these task forces and panels is fully understood.

3.6. Investing in more strategic presentation of the website, ensuring greater access to information, and better use of mapping technologies.

3.7. Investing in greater remote access to CMS and CMS agreement meetings to increase broader participation of CMS agreements, governments and NGOs, through video conferencing.

4. Better Involvement of NGOs

NGO Recommendations to more strategically involve NGOs include:

4.1. Convening a regular NGO forum to discuss:

- a. priority areas and invite or solicit NGO formal contributions;
- b. progress on CMS Family implementation;
- c. profile of the CMS agenda in other MEAs; and
- d. education of the NGO community about the CMS agenda and CMS processes.

4.2. Developing a dialogue to foster strong and lasting relationships between governments and NGOs towards implementing conservation priorities decided by CMS.

4.3. Developing a mechanism to enable NGO-facilitated work to be formally and consistently reported across the CMS Family. This would provide a more accurate picture of CMS progress.

4.4. Codifying key advisory roles in the Scientific Council and inviting NGOs to fill these roles.

4.5. Exploring formalised models for NGO involvement in CMS processes such as Ramsar's 'International Organisation Partners'.

4.6. Creating a formalised NGO orientated role to act as a focal point for NGOs to assist them to understand the CoP process, what the Resolutions mean, how the political flow of the convention works and how best they can access and become involved in the process.

4.7. Making processes, meetings and information more routinely accessible to a wider group of NGOs through better use of web and communication technologies (i.e. cloud sharing, online information management systems). In particular, making meetings more routinely accessible through video conferencing.

4.8. Considering strategic engagement with the CMS agreement Partners to act as an informal surrogate for regional representation on broader CMS issues.

4.9. Considering strategic engagement with local NGOs to provide capacity-building expertise in key regions.

4.10. Allowing national NGOs the same access to the CMS process as international NGOs, by reconsidering the constraints detailed in CMS Article VII, 9.

4.11. Utilising the close link and cooperation between many international and national NGOs to facilitate intermediate partners to “translate” CMS priorities into national action.

4.12. Utilising NGO legal and policy expertise in the development of discussion documents and strategies, to strengthen CMS’s policy and law work.

4.13. Reviewing the NGO Partner agreements to ensure there is a reciprocal benefit established through a work programme between each NGO and the CMS Secretariat and that this programme progress is reported to CMS Parties.

5. Developing Priority Activities

NGO Recommendations to develop priority activities include:

5.1. Assessing extent to which CMS:

- a. agreement activities are meeting CMS objectives and targets and identify gaps for specific species or issues, that can be promoted to the NGO research or policy community for support;
- b. is addressing habitat conservation for listed species,

including the development and management of wildlife corridors, particularly transnational corridors; and
 c. policy is being reflected in other key MEAs and identify gaps that can be promoted to the NGO research or policy community for support.

5.2. Developing a series of priority activities that draw upon these three assessments (5.1. a, b and c above).

5.3. Plan for agreements or action plans to be developed for each of the listed species so that appropriate conservation focus and detail can be maintained where it is needed.

5.4. Establish processes and culture of more frequent interactions with technical or scientific experts on research progress, perhaps by creating more frequent interaction of technical experts and scientists to maintain contact and keep workflow moving through the Scientific Council Workspace as well as CMS facilitated web conferencing. This would mean that the big face-to-face meetings are more efficiently used.

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As well as an additional 37+ anonymous contributions

Annex B: Resolution 11.10 (Rev COP12) Synergies and Partnerships

Adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 12th Meeting (Manila, October 2017)

Recalling Resolution 7.9 on “Cooperation with Other Bodies and Processes”, Resolution 8.11 on “Cooperation with other Conventions”, Resolution 9.6 on “Cooperation with Other Bodies” and Resolution 10.21 on “Synergies and Partnerships”, as well as Resolution 10.25 on “Enhancing Engagement with the Global Environment Facility”,

Acknowledging the importance of cooperation and synergies with other bodies, including multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and non-governmental organizations, as well as the private sector,

Recognizing the instrumental role of partner organizations in the development and implementation of CMS and its related initiatives and outreach campaigns, including the negotiation of the Convention itself,

Appreciating the value of such partnerships in reaching a wider audience and raising public awareness of the Convention and the importance of conserving migratory species on a global scale,

Noting with appreciation all the individuals and organizations that contributed to the achievements of the Year of the Turtle (2006), Year of the Dolphin (2007/8), Year of the Gorilla (2009) and Year of the Bat (2011/12),

Expressing its gratitude to the many partner organizations that have assisted in promoting CMS and its mandate, for example, by facilitating the negotiation and implementation of species agreements under the Convention,

Welcoming the report on Synergies and Partnerships (UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.21.1), prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme/CMS Secretariat, and the progress made in enhancing cooperation, coordination, synergies as well as partnerships with biodiversity-related Conventions and other relevant institutions,

Welcoming also the Manila Declaration on Sustainable Development and Migratory Species (UNEP/CMS/Resolution 12.3) which aims to promote the interlinkages between sustainable development and the conservation of wildlife with a special focus on migratory species and the Sustainable Development Goals,

Further taking note of the results of the United Nations Environment Programme project on improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies,

Welcoming the decisions taken by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) on cooperation, coordination and synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions,

Welcoming also the continuing and important cooperation among the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions including through Memoranda of Understanding between the CMS Secretariat and the Secretariats of the International Whaling Commission, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Ramsar Convention, the Bern Convention and CITES,

Further welcoming the Memoranda of Understanding with [Wild Migration] and the Environmental Law Centre of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN),

Aware of the ongoing discussions with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the formalization of a Memorandum of Cooperation, and appreciating the important efforts made by CMS to enhance relationships with organizations that have different mandates or goals, such as FAO, which provides multidisciplinary solutions aimed at currently achieving food security, biodiversity conservation, and wildlife and ecosystem health,

Recognizing the importance of ongoing cooperation among secretariats of biodiversity-related conventions through the

Biodiversity Liaison Group to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 in order to reach the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (Decision X/2 of CBD) and noting the establishment of an informal advisory group on synergies to provide advice on prioritization and implementation of actions (Decision XIII/24 of CBD),

Highlighting the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 as a strategic framework for synergies and partnerships with other MEAs, organizations and stakeholders, which will provide an important contribution to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and support achievement of the SDGs,

Further recognizing the outcome of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, The Future We Want, which recognizes the significant contributions to sustainable development made by the MEAs and encouraging the Parties to MEAs to consider further measures to promote policy coherence at all relevant levels, improve efficiency, reduce unnecessary overlap and duplication, and enhance cooperation and coordination amongst MEAs, and

Convinced of the significant potential of increasing cooperation, coordination and synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions to enhance coherent national level implementation of each of the conventions,

Recalling Resolution 11.11, which invited the Secretariat, Parties, other Governments, civil society organizations (CSO) and non-governmental organization (NGO) Partners to review options for furthering the relationship between the CMS Family and civil society, and

Recognizing the recommendations for strengthening the relationship between the CMS Family and civil society submitted to the Conference of Parties,

The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

1. Stresses the importance of supporting the objectives of biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements to improve national collaboration, communication and

coordination with relevant organizations and processes;

2. Requests the Executive Secretary to inform biodiversity-related agreements, including through the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements and other relevant partners about the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 and pursue further activities related to synergies and partnerships within that framework;

3. Requests the Secretariat to continue developing effective and practical cooperation with relevant stakeholders, including other biodiversity instruments and international organizations;

4. Also requests the Secretariat to identify potential strategic partners and engage with them when developing campaigns and other outreach activities and encourages all relevant stakeholders to contribute to these initiatives;

5. Encourages the implementation of the recommendations responding to a request of Parties set out in Resolution 11.11 aimed at enhancing the relationship between the CMS Family and Civil Society both at international and national levels;

6. Further encourages the CMS Secretariat, Parties, other Governments, CSO and Partner NGOs to elaborate and report to the Conference of the Parties mechanisms, models and modalities to enhancing the relationship between the CMS Family and Civil Society, as outlined in Resolution 11.11, including:

- Mechanisms that will facilitate CSO-and NGO-facilitated work to be formally and consistently reported across the CMS Family and to be considered by the Parties and CMS Family agreement governing bodies;
- Models for further CSO and NGO involvement in CMS processes; and
- Modalities for further strategic engagement with CSOs and NGOs to provide implementation and capacity-building expertise;

7. Further requests the Secretariat to facilitate non-formalized collaborations with partners such as the FAO, that can help to extend the multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary scope of approaches to collaboration;
8. Further requests the Secretariat to pursue strengthened partnerships with the private sector in accordance with the CMS Code of Conduct;
9. Further requests the Secretariat, its daughter Agreements within the mandates given by their Parties/Signatories and the Scientific Council to enhance their engagement with expert committees and processes initiated by partners, as appropriate;
10. Welcomes the joint work plan between the secretariats of the CMS and CITES and further requests the Secretariat to prepare proposals to strengthen cooperation, coordination and synergies, with other biodiversity-related conventions, including through joint work plans with clear targets and timetables aligned with the CMS strategic plan, for consideration at future meetings of the Conference of the Parties;
11. Requests the Secretariat to take action to strengthen implementation of CMS through the processes on the revision of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), including through cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme and its Regional Offices;
12. Also requests the Secretariat and invites the Secretariats of other conventions to continue liaising with the United Nations Environment Programme and its regional offices and make best use of their role in assisting the implementation of the biodiversity-related MEAs;
13. Further requests the Secretariat and invites the Secretariats of CBD and of other relevant MEAs to consider and advise on ways and means of more coherently addressing the conservation and sustainable use of animal species in CBD processes, including in relation to the implementation by biodiversity-related conventions of the Strategic Plan

for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Targets; and further requests the Secretariat to report on progress to the Scientific Council and each meeting of the COP;

14. Further requests the Secretariat to enhance cooperation through the Biodiversity Liaison Group and the biodiversity indicators partnership to improve a global set of biodiversity indicators;

15. Further requests the Secretariat to strengthen cooperation, coordination and synergies with the Ramsar Convention to pursue the most effective actions for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their wetland habitats;

16. Welcomes the Gangwon Declaration adopted on the occasion of the Twelfth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity which welcomes the importance given to biodiversity in the outcome document of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and calls for the further integration and mainstreaming of biodiversity in the post-2015 development agenda, and requests the Secretariat to continue to engage with the process on the implementation of the SDGs in cooperation with the Biodiversity Liaison Group;

17. Invites the members of the Biodiversity Liaison Group to strengthen cooperation and coordination with a view to increasing synergies among their respective explorations and developments of online reporting systems as a means to increase synergies on national reporting under the biodiversity-related conventions;

18. Also invites the members of the Biodiversity Liaison Group to consider ways and means to increase cooperation on their outreach and communication strategies;

19. Further invites the Biodiversity Liaison Group to take into due consideration the need to optimize monitoring efforts and improve effectiveness through the use of coherent monitoring frameworks and indicator systems;

20. Requests the Secretariat as far as possible to avoid duplication of work on the same issues among MEAs

dedicated to nature protection issues, and invites the Biodiversity Liaison Group to address at its future meetings options for enhanced cooperation with regard to work on cross-cutting issues, such as climate change, bushmeat and invasive alien species, including through exploring the possibility of identifying lead MEAs in a manner consistent with their mandates, governance arrangements and agreed programmes;

21. Requests the Secretariat to continue to report to the Standing Committee on progress made including on results of joint activities as discussed and agreed in the Biodiversity Liaison Group;

22. Recognizes that adequate resources are required to allow partnerships to be developed, and such resources could be provided in part through voluntary contributions from Parties and requests Parties to ensure that adequate resources are provided to the Secretariat to allow partnerships to be developed and strengthened;

23. Urges Parties to establish close collaboration at the national level between the focal point of the CMS and the focal points of other relevant conventions in order for Governments to develop coherent and synergistic approaches across the conventions and increase effectiveness of national efforts, for example by developing national biodiversity working groups to coordinate the work of focal points of relevant MEAs and other stakeholders *inter alia* through relevant measures in NBSAPs, harmonized national reporting and adoption of coherent national positions in respect of each MEA;

24. Also urges Parties to facilitate cooperation among international organizations, and to promote the integration of biodiversity concerns related to migratory species into all relevant sectors by coordinating their national positions among the various conventions and other international fora in which they are involved;

25. Encourages Parties and other Governments and

organizations to make use of the webbased tools, such as InforMEA, when developing and implementing mutually supportive activities among CMS Agreements and biodiversity-related conventions so as to improve coherence in their implementation;

26. Urges partner organizations to continue to promote and publicize the benefits to them, to CMS and to conservation arising from effective collaboration; and

27. Repeals Resolution 7.9, Resolution 8.11, Resolution 9.6, and Resolution 10.21.

Annex C: Contributors to Conservation Collaboration and the Project Questionnaire

The following Partner NGO contributors each participated in this stage of the Civil Society Project.

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 Mathew Collis, INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR ANIMAL WELFARE
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 Mark Simmonds, HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL
 Alexia Wellbelove, HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

All twelve were asked a standard set of questions.

Your Organisation’s Focus on the CMS Agenda

1. What do you see as your organisation’s main expertise area/s? What values do you believe your organisation brings to CMS?
2. What percentage of the CMS-listed species is a focus or priority for your organisation?
3. What is the depth of this focus? What percentage of organisation time is dedicated to delivering work aligned with the objectives of CMS, including the CMS agreements?
4. Which areas of CMS and/or CMS agreement/s is your organisation most involved with?
5. What emphasis does your organization place on CMS and its agreements compared to other Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) and what other MEAs does your organization actively engage with?

CMS, the SDGs and the Post-2020 Framework

1. How important is CMS and CMS work to the existing SDGs, and why?
2. It is possible for organisations to make voluntary commitments to the SDG. Do you think this process has value? Do you have a sense about how it will influence the future?

3. How important is CMS and CMS work to the post-2020 dialogue, and why?
4. What is the approximate percentage of your programme and staff time that are focused on the post-2020 framework?
5. Is CMS's engagement with the post-2020 framework enough, too little, too much?

Projects relevant to CMS

1. On average, how many on-ground projects does your organisation undertake each year that are of relevance to CMS?
2. What is the monetary value of these projects?
3. How much staff and consultant time has been involved?

CMS-Related Work of Your NGO Diplomats/Delegates

1. How many (and which) meetings have your staff or consultants attended, where CMS areas were articulated or represented?
2. How much staff and consultant time has been involved?

Importance of the CMS Partnership

1. Do you feel your value and contributions are well recognised or are there areas of your organisation's Partnership that you believe are under-utilised by CMS and CMS processes?
2. In what ways could the relative value of your CMS Partnership be increased?
3. Do you have ideas about how the value of your work, your progress and your findings can be better communicated across the CMS Family and the governing bodies?
4. Do CMS Parties proactively include your work in their national reports, or do you need to chase them?
5. Do you believe that CMS Parties know the scope of work your organisation does?
6. Do you believe the Secretariat knows the scope of work your organisation does?
7. Are there steps that could be taken so that your work has greater recognition?
8. Do you have experience with other process where your input, expertise, and work have greater influence?
9. If your organisation could simply report on your work, in your own right and with formal standing, would you welcome this opportunity?

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