

TENTH MEETING OF PARTNERS TO THE PARTNERSHIP FOR EAST ASIAN – AUSTRALASIAN FLYWAY
Changjiang, P.R. China, 10-14 December 2018



Document 5

Report from the Chair of the Management Committee

Submitted by the Management Committee

Introduction

1. The establishment of a Management Committee (MC) for the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) to provide guidance to the Secretariat was agreed at the 3rd Meeting of the Partners (MoP9, Incheon, 2008). The Terms of Reference for the Committee was adopted at MoP5 (Siem Reap 2010, Agenda item 6.4) and revised at MoP9 (Singapore 2017, Decision MoP9/D6).
2. The general function of the MC is to provide general policy, operational and financial direction to the Secretariat concerning the implementation and the expansion of the Partnership.
3. MoP9 elected a new MC to oversee Partnership matters during the biennium until MoP10 with the USA as its Chair and Singapore as Vice-Chair. The present composition of the MC reflects that as mandated by Decision MoP9/D6, outlined below:

Chair of the Partnership:	United States of America
Vice-Chair of the Partnership:	Singapore
Host Government Partner:	Republic of Korea
Intergovernmental Partner (1):	Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
Government Partner (1):	Mongolia
Non-government Partners (2):	Australasian Wader Studies Group Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust

4. At the invitation of the Chair, any person or representative of any Partner, or other country or organization, may participate in meetings of the Committee as an observer without the right to vote.
5. In the present report, only the main issues the MC has dealt with are highlighted, from mid-January 2017 (the close of the MoP9) to the end of September 2018.

Summary of the main items considered, and the decisions taken

6. The MC met eight times through holding conference calls from February 2017 to September 2018:
 - 4 July 2017

- 15 September 2017
- 20 November 2017
- 16 January 2018
- 8 February 2018
- 11 April 2018
- 12 July 2018
- 7 September 2018

7. The following provides a summary of the main issues dealt with by the MC at each of its meetings, and the decisions taken. The Secretariat is looking into ways to make the minutes from the meetings available on a secure part of the EAAFP website for Partners only.

Meeting 4 July 2017

8. On the topic of the application from the DPR Korea to join the EAAFP, the MC agreed to have further consultations and hoped that approval can be confirmed before the end of August.
9. The MC went on to discuss the various staff changes in the Secretariat:
 - *Chief Executive*: The MC agreed to form a small selection committee from MC members, as well as a representative outside the Partnership to provide an independent perspective. The current CE has drafted the job description as well as conditions of service and a draft timeline. He will also assist the selection committee in administrative tasks, including suggested selection criteria. It is proposed the new CE would be in place by early October.
 - *Fundraising Manager*: It was recommended to delay appointment until the new CE is in place and that the new CE and the Management Committee and Finance Sub-Committees may discuss a different approach to recruitment.
 - *Programme Officer*: the current Officer has valuable institutional memory but will leave for a M.Sc. course in autumn. The MC discussed whether recruitment should wait for the new CE in case he/she would like to review the Secretariat staffing pattern and/or revise the position description.
 - *Finance Officer*: The present Officer, seconded from Incheon City Government (ICG) has been re-posted back to ICG as of 3 July without the prospect of a replacement, due to human resource shortages at ICG. According to the Hosting MOU with MOEK, it stipulates that ICG would second three positions to the Secretariat - Finance Officer, Administrative Officer and Deputy Chief, with the first two positions having been combined since 2012. The current CE has drafted a letter to the Mayor of Incheon requesting a solution to this problem, given the critical role of the Finance Officer. In the meantime, the Deputy Chief would assume Finance Officer duties. If it is not possible to second someone, one option would be to hire a permanent Finance Officer although this would require additional funding not foreseen in the budget and workplan for 2017-18 approved at MoP9. This approach may avoid future uncertainties with secondment and MOEK will discuss this with the CE.
10. The MC heard that Beijing Forestry University (BFU) had offered to support the science function of the Secretariat by establishing a Science Unit with funding from a private donation, initially for four

years. Preliminary discussion had already taken place between the Secretariat and BFU but these need to be further elaborated. It was hoped that an MOU can be prepared by September.

11. Revised guidance and selection criteria for the Technical Sub-Committee have been prepared and the only issue was the relationship between the TC and the Working Groups and Task Forces which can be discussed prior to formal recognition of the TC at MoP10. Progress on the TC will be shared with Partners.
12. The Strategic Planning Task Force reported that they were a little behind schedule due to recent constraints on time. Also, they had only received three responses to the questionnaire that had been sent out to the 16 TF members and recommended that the questionnaire be sent out again, and encouraging members to respond. They also recommended the Chair to update Partners on progress with the Voluntary Fee-based Contribution System and request responses from those who have not yet responded.

Meeting 15 September 2017

13. The MC agreed the criteria and suggested scoring for the applications for the position of Chief Executive.

Meeting 20 November 2017

14. After conducting the necessary interviews, the selection committee submitted their recommendation for the new CE position to the MC. The next step would be for a small group from the MC to finalize the contract which would be offered to the successful applicant.
15. The Strategic Planning Task Force reported that they were very close to finalizing their work on the Plan. Discussion followed on the value of having a Task Force Workshop.
16. The Secretariat had received communications from a number of Partners who were interested in hosting MoP 10 and follow up was now needed with them to determine future actions. The goal would be to finalize the location of MoP 10 by the year's end.
17. An update was provided on the Technical Sub-Committee. The deadline for nominations had passed and the current CE will report back to the MC on the final number of applications which was believed to be around 10.
18. Concerning the application by the DPR Korea to join the Partnership, it was suggested that the current CE would work with MC member to find a way forward.
19. The Program Officer and Fund Raising Manager positions were filled and the incumbents were introduced to the MC.. The MC will also provide an update to Partners on the new CE position once the hiring process had been completed.

Meeting 16 January 2018

8. The Chair officially announced the new Chief Executive (CE) who was willing to engage in the work of the Secretariat until his official start. The outgoing CE said that he was continuing to closely engage with staff members for ongoing projects/activities and that the Secretariat was functioning well under the Deputy Chief, especially in developing a 2018 budget and workplan based on 2017 activities and new developments, such as the Science Unit. It was agreed that the outgoing CE would send an announcement about the new CE to all Partners.
9. The MC heard that there had been positive progress in the discussion regarding the application by the DPR Korea to join the Partnership, and the Chair will announce the new Partner once the discussions have concluded.
10. The outgoing CE gave an update on progress with the establishment of Science Unit (SU) which will be based at Beijing Forestry University. The SU will be an integral part of the Secretariat and take over the role of the previous EAAFP Science Officer. They will work to support, and not duplicate the work of the Partners. The SU will be China's contribution to the EAAFP under the voluntary fee contribution system and funding has been secured for the coming 5 years. The TOR and workplan of the SU has been received for review by the Secretariat and Partners. The reporting system of the SU will be discussed further.
11. There was discussion about the host country for MoP10, with both Australia and China being possibilities. The MC decided to first approach China with a possible date for MoP10 being after the Spring Festival, maybe in March 2019. The new CE would approach China about their interest.
12. A good spread of nominations for membership of the new Technical Sub-Committee (TC) has been received and further nominations are expected. There was a question about the role of the MC relative to the TC and the Finance Sub-Committee (FC), and the Secretariat agreed to review the MoP9 documents to get clarification. The MC agreed to discuss further about the management of the TC.

Meeting 8 February 2018

13. The Chair of the Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) provided a summary on progress with the development of the draft Strategic Plan, including the option of the developing the Strategic Plan as a 10 year plan versus the current 5 year plan. In October 2017, the SPTF had sent the draft 5-year Strategic Plan for comments to Partners in October 2017 with a reminder in January 2018 but there was not much feedback. Thus, the SPTF will circulate the draft again and arrange a face-to-face meeting of the SPTF member during the first week of May in Singapore. The SPTF aims to finalize the draft by Oct 2018.
14. The current Communication Officer, Ms. Tomoko Ichikawa, had indicated that she will not renew her contract and so the Secretariat will immediately prepare a vacancy announcement to be disseminated on the EAAFP website and other channels. The MC expressed their appreciation of the efforts that Ms. Ichikawa had made for the Secretariat and the Partnership.

15. The Chair will send a reply to China accepting their official invitation to host MoP10. The Secretariat will continue to communicate with China to get more details about the organization of the MoP.
16. Beijing Forestry University (BFU) had provided the draft Terms of Reference and workplan for the proposed Science Unit and the Secretariat will first circulate these documents to MC before circulation to the Partners for comments to ensure that the work of the SU will complement and support the work of the Partners. A signing ceremony to establish the SU between BFU and the Secretariat has been proposed for after the Spring Festival.
17. The MC heard that the DPR Korea had just become a Contracting Party to the Ramsar Convention and had designated their first two Ramsar Sites. The DPRK Ministry of Land and Environment Protection was also cooperating with international organizations to hold a workshop and to raise awareness about wetlands and migratory waterbirds in the country. The members of the MC will continue their discussions on the application by the DPRK to become a Partner of the EAAFP.
18. To date, nine nominations had been received for the interim Technical Sub-Committee and the MC agreed to instruct the interim TC to start work as soon as possible and to present their recommendations at MoP 10. The Secretariat will finalize the nominations and call for a virtual meeting of the TC.
19. The MC agreed that after review, the minutes from their meetings will be posted in a password protected section of the EAAFP. (*Post meeting note:* The Secretariat found that the current website cannot support such a password protected section and will investigate further about how it can be done).

Meeting 11 April 2018

20. The Secretariat and China had been in discussion about the date and venue of MoP10 and both were aware about the limited time before MoP10 and the Rules of Procedure which required that the Secretariat announces the date and venue at least 12 months prior to the MoP. The MC agreed that we could proceed with providing a shorter notice to Partners because of the circumstances. The MC also expressed concern about the limited time to prepare necessary documents for the meeting which will affect not only the Secretariat but also the Partners. Cooperation and understanding of the Partners will be needed. The MC agreed that MoP10 will be six days in length with one day of pre-meeting for WGs and TFs and five plenary days. After a visit to Beijing in April by the CE and Programme Officer, China confirmed that MoP10 will be hosted on Hainan Island from 9-14 December.
21. The Secretariat has circulated the workplan, MOU and TOR of the SU to MC members. The members requested to share all the documents to other Partners for review.
22. The Secretariat received 11 applicants for the Communication Officer position after sending out the vacancy announcement for three weeks and then extending the deadline for a further two weeks.

Six candidates were interviewed but none were suitable. The MC concluded that the Secretariat should continue to contact Partners for another few weeks to identify suitable candidates.

23. As there were no objection heard to the DPR Korea becoming a member of the Partnership, the MC accepted their application as of 11 April 2018. An announcement for this was made and circulated through the newsletter. The Secretariat also held a press conference to publicise the news.

Meeting 12 July 2018

24. The CE gave an update of the work of the Secretariat, including discussions with the Ministry of Environment (RO Korea) and Incheon Metropolitan City on renewing the new MOU for hosting the Secretariat from 2019 to 2023.
25. The MC discussed the organization of MoP10, including:
- Hearing an update from the Secretariat about ongoing discussions with the Chinese State Forestry and Grassland Administration and Beijing Forestry on the budget and detailed plans for the event, such as the room rate for the accommodation at the venue;
 - Approving the format of Partner Reports and Workplans which the Secretariat will reformat to the online Survey Monkey platform before sending it out to Partners;
 - Deciding that there will only be one pre-meeting day on 9 December for Working Groups and Task Forces considering the budget issues and the meeting of AMBI beforehand. The plenary will also end at 5pm to allow WGs and TFs to hold their own meetings if they wished. The Secretariat will share the time schedule for the pre-meeting day after consultation with the WGs and TFs;
 - Agreeing that it would be important for Partners to comment on the paper for MoP10 before they are uploaded on the EAAF website three months before the meeting. Prof. Nick Davidson had agreed to be the interim chair of Technical Sub-Committee and that the members of the Technical Sub-Committee agreed to help review the MoP10 papers.
26. The Strategic Planning Task Force gave an update of their meeting in Singapore (13-15 June) which was attended by 24 participants and produced positive interactions and productive discussions. The SPTF will now prepare another document on how the Strategic Plan will be implemented.
27. The Secretariat explained the problems with the website crashing recently and that some of the translated pages have not yet been loaded by the website hosting company (Melbourne IT) in Australia. In fact, the Secretariat is facing a number of problems with Melbourne IT and as a result, the Secretariat will find another IT company to host the website server. Finding a solution to the IT issues are critical to the Partnership, and so the Secretariat has included supporting the maintenance of the website into the new hosting agreement and the hiring of an IT Officer.
28. The Secretariat reported that Ms. Vivian Fu had signed a contract to be the new Communication Officer and that an official announcement will be made on the EAAFP website, social media and other channels.
29. The Secretariat reported that the Finance Sub-Committee had recommended the setting up of a 'reserve fund' for the Partnership to the MC which can be used in emergencies. Other non-

organizations set up similar funds which are valued at 5 -10% of their annual budget. The MC told the Secretariat to consult and get comments from the Incheon Metropolitan City government since most of the Secretariat budget comes from them.

Meeting 7 September 2018

30. The Strategic Planning Task Force reported that they have been busy incorporating comments provided by Partners and are now developing a report template for MoP10. The MC highlighted the importance of engaging Partners at MoP10 to collect further feedback on the Plan. This will be done by holding workshop style discussions on the SP each day after the plenary, and the results of these discussions reported back in plenary the following morning. It was also suggested that during MoP10, Partners, WGs, and TFs should identify the parts of the SP that they will implement as a priority in the coming two years before MoP11, and that these priorities would be used by each of the Partners, WGs and TFs to develop their own work plan for the next two years.
31. There was discussion on a revised organizational structure for the EAAFP in view of the new Technical Sub-Committee and the proposed Science Unit. The Secretariat will collect comments from MC members on this new structure and to present it as a Draft Decision at MoP10.
32. The MC discussed the organization of MoP10, including:
 - Hearing updates from the Secretariat about a), the number of registrations and Reports on Implementation that have been received b), the small financial support that the Secretariat will provide to representatives from Working Groups and Task Forces, c) the organization of the MoP10 webpage on the EAAFP website d), a site visit by the Secretariat and AMBI to the venue in late September and e), the number of papers received from Partners, WG and TF for discussion at MoP10 that will be uploaded onto the MoP10 webpage;
 - Approval of the draft programme;
 - The possible Chair and Vice-Chair for MoP10.
33. In response to a request from Australia, the Secretariat prepared a template for MC members to approve for future MC, FC and TC meeting documents.

Conclusions and acknowledgements

34. As Chair of the Management Committee I would like to thank all the members of the Committee for their strong support during the course of the past two years. Their active commitment and their constructive attitude to the work of the Partnership have contributed significantly to the progress of its tasks.
35. I wish the new Management Committee and all the Partners success in implementing the Partnership and the new Strategic Plan 2019-2028.

Pete Probasco
Chair of the Management Committee 2017-2018