

Regional Action Plan

For Moving Towards
Responsible Hunting &
the Conservation of
Migratory Birds in the
Southern and Eastern
Mediterranean Region
(2008-2013)



September 2007

Regional Action Plan

**For Moving Towards responsible Hunting
& the Conservation of Migratory Birds in
the southern and eastern Mediterranean
Region (2008-2013)**

Facilitated by

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Project Partners



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RAP Compilation

This document is a direct output from the "Building Capacity for Sustainable Hunting of Migratory Birds in Mediterranean Third Countries" (LIFE 04 TCY/INT/000054) supported by the European Union's LIFE Third Countries financial instrument and the AEWa Secretariat. This document was compiled by the Sustainable Hunting Project Regional Coordinator using the input from participants in the Project Final Workshop and from previous regional consultations.

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NOTE: The term "sustainable hunting" as used in this document refers to "responsible hunting in accordance with best practices for conservation and sustainable use".

About the Regional Action Plan

Overall Purpose

This five-year Regional Action Plan (RAP) for moving towards responsible hunting & conservation of migratory birds in the southern and eastern Mediterranean region¹ is intended to build on and complement the achievements of the EU LIFE funded “Sustainable Hunting Project”², and consequently supplement the programmes and actions that are being undertaken by various international agreement (including the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), Ramsar, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and Convention in Trade in Endangered Species(CITES)), development agencies and international NGOs to promote regional and national cooperation and conservation action.

The overall purpose of the RAP is to form the basis for future activities relating to responsible hunting of migratory birds for the BirdLife Partnership, national governments and key stakeholders in the southern and eastern Mediterranean region for the following 5 years (2008-2013).

RAP Development

This RAP has been prepared by the Sustainable Hunting Project through a constructive dialogue with the participants in the Project Final Regional Workshop (*Workshop for the preparation of a regional action plan for moving toward sustainable hunting of migratory birds in Mediterranean Third Countries (MTC)*) which held between the 19th and 21st of August 2007 in Amman, Jordan). The workshop participants included delegates from national authorities, conservation NGOs, hunters associations and other stakeholders who are involved in hunting management and bird conservation in the project region. Annex 1 provides list of names and contacts of the participants in the RAP workshop.

In addition to the input from the final Project workshop, the RAP also draws upon other Project materials including the Synthesis Reports, and Guidelines on Sustainable Hunting, as well as the experiences of the Project staff and national partners during the life of the Project and the findings, and outcomes from the national and regional consultations held during the period between November 2005 and August 2007.

Efforts were put in place to ensure RAP consistency with country National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs), EU Species Action Plans,

¹ The project region described here includes Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and Syria.

² LIFE 04 TCY/INT/000054 “Building capacity for sustainable hunting of migratory birds in Mediterranean Third Countries” implemented by BirdLife International, Association les Amis des Oiseaux, and Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon

the AEWA agreement and Bonn Convention, Mediterranean Action Plan and EU Environmental Action Plan.

Geographical Scope of Application

This RAP identifies key needs, and recommends priority actions, in the Mediterranean countries in North Africa and the Middle East, namely; Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia. Other countries located within the flyways crossing the RAP geographic scope are also encourage to take part and implement the RAP at their national and regional domains.

Milestones in the Production of the RAP

- Sustainable Hunting Project Workshop launch (Tunisia, 22nd of November 2004)
- First North African countries sub-regional meeting on sustainable Hunting of Migratory Birds in MTCs (Tunisia, August 2006)
- First AEWA/BirdLife Regional Workshop on sustainable Hunting of Migratory Birds in MTCs (Tunisia, September 2006)
- Finalization and release of the Project regional documents,: the Regional Guidelines for Sustainable Hunting of Migratory Birds, the Code of Best Practice, and five regional synthesis reports on five different themes specific to hunting of migratory birds in the MTC region (October 2006)
- Finalization and release of two additional synthesis reports; one on international conventions/agreements related to hunting of migratory birds, and one on the use of lead shots in hunting migratory birds in the MTC region (May 2007)
- Second AEWA/BirdLife Regional Workshop on Sustainable Hunting of Migratory Birds in MTCs (Jordan, May 2007)
- Regional Workshop for the preparation of Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Hunting (Jordan, August 2007)

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List of Abbreviations

AAO	Association "Les Amis des Oiseaux" - Association "Friends of the Birds" (BLI Partner and Project Focal Point in Tunisia)
AEWA	African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (International Project Partner)
Code	Code of Practice for Responsible Hunting of Migratory Birds in MTC Countries
EU	European Union
Guidelines	Guidelines for moving Towards Sustainable Hunting of Migratory Birds in MTC countries" and their associated "Code of Practice for Responsible Hunting of Migratory Birds in MTC Countries
IBAs	Important Bird Areas
MTC	Mediterranean Third Countries
MOP	Meetings of Parties
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
PAOC	Pan African Ornithological Congress
RAP	Regional Action Plan for Moving Towards Responsible Hunting & the Conservation of Migratory Birds in the southern and eastern Mediterranean Region (2008-2013)
RSCN	Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SHP	Sustainable Hunting Project
SPNL	Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon
SRs	Regional Synthesis Reports on Migratory Birds Hunting in MTC Countries

1. INTRODUCTION

Project Background

The Sustainable Hunting Project (2004-2007) was established to tackle the complex underlying issues leading to unsustainable and often indiscriminate hunting practices. The project goal was *"to strengthen the management of bird hunting in selected North African and Middle Eastern countries of the Mediterranean region to reduce excessive, indiscriminate and illegal hunting of migratory birds, promote more sustainable hunting practices and enhance the compliance of international and regional agreements on the conservation of migratory birds"*.

The Project operated through a series of regional initiatives and model collaborative projects involving government, hunting and conservation groups. Tunisia and Lebanon were the focal or "hub" countries in North-Africa and in the Middle East respectively for demonstration of activities aimed at achieving sustainable hunting which can be replicated in the other project countries. Even though the scale of impact is different between both countries, hunting of migrants is of socio-economic importance to both of them and also raises related management and conservation issues (e.g. illegal or unregulated hunting). Both countries also have "bottlenecks" and wintering sites of crucial conservation importance for migratory birds, as well as good stakeholder collaboration on hunting issues.

The Project successfully achieved its primary objectives and produced a number of key outputs, including eight national reports on migratory birds hunting from the eight project countries, seven regional synthesis reports on key topics, the regional *"Guidelines for moving Towards Sustainable Hunting of Migratory Birds in MTC countries"* and their associated *"Code of Practice for Responsible Hunting of Migratory Birds in MTC Countries"*.

Lessons Learned from the Project

Several key lessons were learned during the implementation of the Sustainable Hunting Project,. Some of these lessons were specific to the two 'Hub' countries³, however; several others are wide-ranging and apply to all countries in the region. Moreover, many of the lessons learned are also applicable at the flyway scale and highlight the importance of cross-regional cooperation.

The following is an account of key lessons learned which are mentioned herein to aid proper comprehension of the need for action at the regional and national levels.:

1. Unsustainable and uncontrolled hunting of migratory birds in the region is a primary cause of the decline in avifaunal diversity;
2. A significant proportion of the hunting of migratory birds in the region is illegal under existing national legislation; with the use of illegal trapping devices and poisons, shooting out-of-season and in prohibited areas, and the killing of protected species, being widespread. This is due, in part, to a lack of knowledge and/or irresponsible behaviour among some hunters;
3. Unsustainable hunting of migratory birds is a global issue of concern and is the subject of several global and regional discussions and negotiations, and needs to be addressed at the regional and flyway levels;
4. Countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean lack sufficient political or public pressure to act, because of a general ignorance of the plight of migratory birds and the need for their conservation, except for conservation NGOs, some governmental authorities related to hunting management and responsible hunters who are serious about their hunting traditions/sport and recognise the need for sustainable practices;
5. Hunting management and law enforcement are sensitive issues due to the large number of involved interest groups, complexity of the political and social processes in the region, the regional and flyway considerations, socio-economic and socio-cultural characteristics of the regional community and the hunters body, differences in the development status of countries in the region and other countries within the migration flyways, economic consideration and many others;
6. Tourism hunting often circumvents national hunting policy, legislation and management systems;

³ Lebanon and Tunisia

7. Despite advances made during the Sustainable Hunting Project, there is still a need to strengthen national and regional capacities for moving toward sustainable hunting of migratory birds, including the following capacity areas;
 - Preparation of hunting regulations that complies with the relevant international conventions and agreements
 - Improving law enforcement
 - Cooperation and coordination between national and regional institutions
 - Provision of environmentally sound economic alternatives to unsustainable hunting of migratory birds
 - Public awareness, education
 - Development and maintenance of updated data bases for bird species, hunting areas, hunters, scale of hunting and hunting methods
 - Conflict resolution (e.g. avian flu, hunting areas and times, etc)
 - Species conservation, including the preparation and implementation of Species Action Plans at the national and flyway levels
 - Phasing out the use of lead shot and replacing it with alternative non-toxic ammunition
 - Enhancing local communities' involvement in the management/conservation of IBAs and Hunting areas
 - Information management
8. Limited financial resources for the implementation of sustainable hunting initiatives restrict NGOs and hunters associations from increasing their engagement in activities to promote responsible hunting practices in accordance with conservation and sustainable use guidelines.

The Need for Regional Action

Many migratory birds which breed in Europe and central and western Asia follow traditional routes south across, or around, the Mediterranean during autumn migration in order to reach their wintering grounds (and use similar routes in reverse on their return journeys in the spring). In addition, some Siberian breeding birds (e.g. ducks and thrushes) start by flying westwards to Europe before joining routes to the south. Some species, especially waterbirds, use a chain of stopover sites scattered along their flyways. Soaring bird species, such as storks, pelicans and many raptors choose narrow sea crossings ("bottleneck sites") at the Straits of Gibraltar and Messina or follow the eastern Mediterranean coast. Many songbirds and some raptors migrate on broad fronts and fly straight across the Mediterranean, sometimes using islands for stopovers. Many migrants (especially waterbirds) stop and over-winter along the North African coast; other species continue further south to winter in sub-Saharan Africa.

Despite clear differences between countries with regard to numbers of hunters per country and hunting practice, migratory bird hunting is an important socio-economic activity across the region, involving hundreds of thousands of people, particularly in rural areas. Methods include shooting, trapping, use of nets, snares, lime sticks, traps and decoys, falconry and use of poisons. Subsistence hunting occurs only at very low levels. 'Sport hunting' has become widespread and the number of migratory birds hunted overall is thought to be increasing as a result of people's increased leisure time and disposable incomes; easier access to guns, cheaper ammunition and 4-wheel drive vehicles to gain access to remote areas. Diminishing populations of some native traditional "game" species may also be leading to increases in numbers of hunters interested in migratory bird species.

Few countries in the region have accurate information on hunters or numbers of hunters employing different hunting methods. Those countries which record different hunting methods do so according to membership of hunting organizations or issue of hunting permits, not actual monitoring of activity (though some countries also make estimates of numbers of illegal hunters). The distinction between legal and illegal hunters is not always clear.

National estimates of numbers of hunters include: up to 1,000 (weapons) in Palestine; 11,400 registered hunters in Tunisia (no figure for illegal hunters); over 40,000 in Morocco; 92,000 in Algeria; up to 20,000 registered hunters in Lebanon⁴; 500,000 (300,000 registered) hunters in Syria⁵, and at least 10,000 individuals in Egypt⁶

⁴ According to the last official census by the National Society for Wild Hunting in 1995

⁵ Sport hunters (not including tourists from the Gulf States) number about 400,000; falcon trappers 200-300, and about 20,000 people are estimated to hunt for their livelihood.

⁶ Approximately 10% of the local population – mostly Bedouin communities - of the North Coast, comprising 4,000 falcon catchers and 500 families carrying out traditional autumn Quail netting in

A significant feature of falconry and sport hunting throughout the region is that they are widely practiced by nationals of other countries (particularly the Gulf States) visiting the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean for this purpose. Many foreign hunters travel to Syria from the Gulf and Lebanon, for falconry and, increasingly, to hunt with guns. In Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, falconry on protected Houbara Bustard is only practiced by foreign nationals from the Gulf States. Spanish hunters shoot partridge in Morocco and tourist bird-hunters from Italy, France and Malta shoot thrushes in Tunisia. In Egypt most foreign hunters are Europeans visiting to shoot waterbirds, with smaller numbers from the Gulf and Lebanon (total of 990 foreign tourist hunters registered in 2000).

Quantitative information on hunting methods is very limited. The use of guns (shotguns and air guns) appears to predominate in most countries of the region, apart from localized parts of Egypt where the use of traditional nets and lime sticks is widespread. Lead shot is the dominant type of shot and is used on a large scale.

Since countries on the migratory flyways hold a shared responsibility for conserving migratory birds, and since unsustainable hunting is wide-spread in countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean and has deleterious impacts on avifaunal and biological diversity, there is a pressing need for moving toward regionally and nationally coordinated, internationally accepted and science-based sustainable hunting of migratory birds in specific and birds in general.

Consultations by the Sustainable Hunting Project identified four priority gaps pertaining to responsible hunting of migratory birds at the regional level. Addressing these gaps will complement actions being undertaken by national authorities and NGOs to promote conservation, as well as those actions undertaken by the Sustainable Hunting Project to strengthen the management of bird hunting in the region to promote more sustainable hunting practices and enhance the compliance of international and regional agreements on the conservation of migratory birds.

1. Gaps and needs related to stakeholder AWARENESS:

- a. There is a general lack of awareness of inappropriate hunting practices and behaviour, migratory bird declines, threatened species, what sustainability means and the need for sustainable hunting practices among hunters, decision-makers, legal establishment, students and the general public alike in countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean. It should be noted, however, that the level of awareness differs significantly across the region.

- b. Despite education by the Sustainable Hunting Project, many hunters lack even a basic knowledge of bird identification and habits, and few hesitate to kill rarities simply because they are unable to distinguish them from common species;
- c. All across the southern and eastern Mediterranean region, there is a clear need to increase levels of awareness of the value of hunting and of sustainable practices and to instil responsible hunting attitudes and behaviour into hunters;
- d. The lack of awareness weakens national capacity to implement legislation, achieve effective enforcement and undertake management to achieve sustainable hunting; and
- e. Limited attention is given by the media to the enormous numbers of migratory birds killed each year and the illegal, excessive and indiscriminate nature of this hunting.

2. Gaps and needs related to MANAGEMENT and LAW ENFORCEMENT capacities:

- a. The scarcity of information and published material on migratory bird hunting in the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean means that, even when some information is available, it is discrete, outdated or not necessarily accurate. Availability of good, up-to-date, information is critical to the planning and management of sustainable hunting;
- b. Poor availability of information on the hunting management **process** in the public domain in the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean, along with poor identification and involvement of stakeholders and other relevant bodies likely to be affected in the decision-making processes relating to migratory bird hunting;
- c. Research and monitoring for sustainable hunting are generally weak or lacking across the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean, and where these do exist, they are usually carried out by different institutions, using different methods, with no agreed national priorities or coordinated programmes and no mechanisms for integrating results between different data-collecting groups;
- d. Some countries clearly distinguish between legal hunting and poaching (illegal hunting), however, in other countries the distinction between legal and illegal hunting is not always clear.
- e. Many countries are not yet members of key multilateral environmental agreements (such as the Convention on Migratory Species, CITES and AEWA), and even when the country is a member, fulfilment of obligations under these agreements is very poor;
- f. There is an absence of regional initiatives and coordination mechanisms for hunting management;

- g. Most countries lack a clear overall policy framework or planning system for sustainable hunting, and no single government authority with overall responsibility for these tasks (the roles and responsibilities of key ministries are often unclear and in some cases overlap);
- h. A general lack of national coordinating mechanisms for joint sector policy and planning development in relation to sustainable hunting, including lack of a higher national council to integrate management roles of different ministries, and poorly developed communication and information sharing systems;
- i. Institutional weaknesses including no single body or individual able to represent all hunters' in many countries (e.g. national hunting association);
- j. Poor legal regulation, lack of a permit system (or not yet implemented in law) and poor law enforcement across the southern and eastern Mediterranean region;
- k. Lack of capacity and resources to implement responsibilities, including lack of funding, inadequately qualified staff and lack of training, equipment and resources;
- l. Deficiency of consultation and stakeholder involvement in hunting management at both national and local levels, and having relatively little local community input; and
- m. Past conflicts between the various stakeholders (e.g. hunters and conservation groups), where hunters in some countries are a strong lobbying and political force and may be influential in resisting any approach which they see as limiting their freedom to hunt.

3. Gaps and needs related to the application of sound ECONOMIC ALTERNATIVES:

- a. Alternative economic models to wild bird hunting are not well developed in the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean, and virtually nothing has been done to identify alternative sources of income for trappers and others who make their living from hunting (except for the synthesis report prepared by the Sustainable Hunting Project in 2006);
- b. In most countries, socio-economic characteristics of the hunters community and the true economic values of hunting are not well documented and better information on this, as well as on the economics of the possible alternatives, is needed in order to promote both sustainable hunting and economically-viable alternatives to hunting;
- c. Potential and actual conflicts between competing activities – for example, some of the best bird watching sites are also places favoured by tourism hunters but birdwatchers do not want to visit sites where hunters may be active and the birds are disturbed.

- d. In most countries of the region there is a general lack of capacity and resources for the development of economically-viable alternatives and the security situation in some countries is also a constraint (discouraging foreign visitors and investments);
- e. Lack of political will and interest in promoting and developing economic alternatives to unsustainable hunting of migratory birds; and
- f. Poor management and degradation of habitats and wildlife in areas which were previously attractive for tourists to visit also undermines the development of ecotourism.

4. Gaps and needs related to COOPERATION and COMMUNICATION between related stakeholders:

- a. Some countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean are not parties to all the main international agreements relevant to the conservation of migratory birds, and also there is a lack of clarity and awareness among all stakeholders on the obligations set by the conventions;
- b. Lack of institutional mechanisms for cross-border and regional data sharing and exchange;
- c. Limited representation of key national institutions, particularly NGOs and hunter associations, in international and regional events related to hunting and hunting management and having only government authorities, who are not necessarily the party taking the lead in hunting management in that country;
- d. Lack of regional collaboration, development and training related to improving levels of national competency, improving and standardizing regional data collection and sharing ideas and good practice within the region and with European Mediterranean countries;
- e. No country of the southern and eastern Mediterranean has adequate mechanisms to control or monitor its own citizens when they travel abroad (often to neighbouring countries) for tourism hunting, and there are no regional mechanisms to standardize hunting licences and permits, nor for exchange of information about tourist hunting between countries; and
- f. There is a need to continue the dialogue initiated by the Sustainable Hunting Project aiming at developing cooperation between all organisations concerned with the sustainable use of wild birds in the southern and eastern Mediterranean region..

2. REGIONAL TARGETS AND ACTIONS

Five themes have been identified as priority action: legislation and the regulatory framework; cooperation and communication; outreach and public awareness; and management of migratory birds hunting.

THEME 1: Legislative and Regulatory Framework

Regional Target

Each country in the region has clear overall policies, and well established legislative and regulatory frameworks for sustainable hunting of birds which are in compliance with related international agreements and promote conservation and sustainable use of bird populations, species diversity and their habitats.

Key Objectives

- A) Endorsement and adoption of the “*Guidelines for moving toward sustainable hunting of migratory birds in MTC countries*” as an overall regional policy and programme of work in the region;
- B) Each country adopts and uses the “*Guidelines for moving toward sustainable hunting of migratory birds in MTC countries*” in the development of its national policy, legislative and regulatory framework ; and
- C) Development and revitalization of relevant legislation in each country to reveal compliance with related international agreements and the adopted regional Guidelines.

Operational Objectives

1. to prepare national reports describing the position of regional counties with regard to membership in regional and international conventions/agreements relevant to the protection of birds -in particular AEWA, CMS, CBD, RAMSAR and CITES- and compliance with obligations under these agreements;
2. to develop and implement a campaign aiming at encouraging governmental authorities of all countries in the region to become party to regional and international conventions/agreements relevant to the protection of birds, in particular migratory species, and encourage national compliance with these agreements
3. to develop and implement sub-regional and regional events aiming at encouraging all countries in the two sub-regions to adopt and apply the

regional Guidelines and recommendations related to sustainable hunting of migratory birds, which were prepared by the Sustainable Hunting Project, as an overall regional policy in countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean;

4. to develop and implement a regional training module on the development and updating of national legalisation related to migratory bird hunting to comply with obligations under related international agreements and conservation best practice guidelines. This module should be adaptable at the national level;
5. to encourage and provide all countries in the region with the necessary support needed for adopting the regional Guidelines and using these for developing and revising current national legislation to comply with related international conventions/agreements relevant to the protection of birds and aiming at promoting conservation and sustainable use of migratory birds;
6. to carry out necessary activities needed for gaining political support from related national and regional civil society organizations, conservation NGOs and hunters associations for the endorsement and application of the regional guidelines prepared by the Sustainable Hunting Project;
7. to develop and implement regional training modules focusing on law enforcement of related hunting management legislations and conflict resolution in order to provide law enforcement authorities with the needed technical capacity for implementation on the ground; and
8. to develop and implement public awareness and education modules/tools targeting all related stakeholders encouraging the enforcement of legislations related to birds hunting by all countries in the region.

THEME 2: Cooperation, Collaboration and Communication

Regional Target

Effective and functional communication, cooperation and collaboration mechanism established and operating between all stakeholders related to sustainable hunting of migratory birds at the national level in each country in the region and between countries along the flyways of the African-Eurasian region.

Key Objectives:

- A) Partnership and communication mechanisms with clear responsibilities are well established, functional and effective on the ground in all countries in the region;

- B) Establishment, and effective working, of two sub-regional working groups of stakeholders with the aim of coordinating/promoting effective and sustainable management of migratory bird hunting along the flyways of the African\Eurasian region;
- C) Continuation of the cross-regional communication, cooperation and exchange of knowledge initiated by the Sustainable Hunting Project along the flyways of the African-Eurasian region;

Operational Objectives:

1. To hold series of workshops, discussion groups and meetings at the national level in each country in the region aiming at building strong partnership between national governmental hunting management institutions, environmental NGOs and Hunter associations;
2. To encourage the establishment of a higher council for hunting management with representation of governmental and nongovernmental environmental organizations in all countries in the region;
3. To develop and implement programme of work aiming at building strong partnership between the official hunting management organizations along the flyways of the African-Eurasian region under the umbrella of the AEWA agreement;
4. To enhance the cooperation, coordination and exchange of experience between all Mediterranean countries, including north-south and east-west Mediterranean cooperation under the umbrella of AEWA and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs);
5. To improve cooperation and exchange of experience with other (non-Mediterranean) countries in the flyways of the African Eurasian region through the BirdLife Partnership and other interested international NGOs and institutions;
6. To establish effective communication and cooperation mechanisms and powerful information system concerning the management of foreign hunters and trans-boundary hunting, and focusing on exchanging information on related active local legislation, protected and hunted bird species;
7. To encourage partnership between regional and international bird conservation and hunting organizations with the aim of improving stakeholder's awareness about the need to practice more responsible hunting;
8. Support the establishment of two sub-regional working groups of wide range of stakeholders (authorities, hunters associations, birds conservation NGOs and others) aiming at developing, promoting and implementing sustainable hunting measures at the regional level;

9. Develop regional training modules on sustainable hunting of birds (based on training needs assessment) and implement regional Training of Trainers workshops on those modules for representatives from governments, NGOs and hunters associations, encourage the trained trainers to conduct the same training to other national stakeholders each in his country;
10. Develop and implement regional training modules and awareness materials targeting hunters on birds identification, sustainable hunting management and the use of non-toxic shot in replacement of lead shots in each country;
11. Enhance and improve the use of internet as effective tool for the exchange of information and for public awareness:
12. Working with CIC (International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation) & hunter's Associations to raise awareness about responsible hunting tourism;
13. to encourage the establishment of regional and national funds for promoting responsible hunting of birds in accordance with sustainable use and conservation guidelines;
14. To develop and implement regional training modules for decision makers on planning and management of sustainable hunting of migratory birds in the Mediterranean basin; and
15. To develop and implement regional training modules on effective communication and conflict resolution targeting related stakeholders in the region.

THEME 3: Outreach, Education and Public Awareness

Regional Target

High levels of public awareness about the need to conserve migratory birds and for responsible hunting of migratory birds in accordance with sustainable use and conservation guidelines.

Key Objectives

- A) Development and implementation of a regional outreach module aimed at raising the awareness of the wider community of the need to conserve migratory birds and the need for achieving sustainable hunting of migratory birds
- B) Development and implementation of public awareness and education tools that contribute to the creation of a responsible hunters' community which is aware of the need to conserve migratory birds through sustainable-use hunting

Operational Objectives:

1. To develop regional outreach module target all related stakeholders that can be adapted at the national level. Such a module is needed to include regional training kit on developing, implementing and monitoring the implementation of similar modules;
2. To develop a regional education and public awareness program targeting hunters' associations, hunters, NGOs and local communities living in, or close to, key migratory bird hunting. This also needs to include regional training modules on developing, implementing and monitoring the implementation of similar programs targeting all related stakeholders;
3. Conduct national and regional workshops on public awareness and education of hunting of migratory birds;
4. Governments to collaborate with conservation NGOs to ensure that understanding of the biology and importance of migratory birds and sustainable hunting is part of the natural curriculum, and that sufficient materials and training are available to support teaching needs;
5. To ensure that hunting associations, with support of government and institution organizations, promote a high degree of awareness and respect for the principles of sustainable hunting of migratory birds;
6. To use the media to effectively inform and build support among the general public and hunting community about the importance of migratory birds and the need for sustainable hunting policies and practices;
7. To ensure decision makers and politicians are aware of the importance and requirements of the conservation of migratory birds and take the necessary action to put in place sufficient legislation to secure sustainable hunting and the necessary politics and practice to implement and enforce them;
8. Continue to develop and distributed training and awareness materials prepared by the Sustainable Hunting Project to all countries in the region;
9. Develop and implement a regional module for a media campaign that can be adapted at the national level in each country in the region;
10. Develop and deliver training workshops for hunters on bird identification, sustainable hunting management and the use of non-toxic shot in each country of the region;
11. Enhance and improve the use of internet as effective tool for the exchange of information and for public awareness.;
12. Encourage cooperation and collaboration with CIC & Hunter Associations to raise awareness about responsible hunting tourism in the region;

13. Encourage universities in the region to incorporate sustainable hunting and effective hunting management in the university ecology and environmental management courses;
14. Produce regular publications to provide hunters with the necessary information for the conservation of migratory birds and on sustainable and responsible hunting measures, including hunters' bird identification guide and information on species; and
15. Encourage the exchange of experience between countries in the region and also with other regions.

THEME 4: Management of Migratory Birds Sustainable Hunting

Regional Target

Each country in the region acquires and utilises the capacity needed to manage hunting in way that reduces excessive, indiscriminate and illegal hunting of migratory birds, promotes more sustainable hunting practices and enhances the compliance of international and regional agreements on the conservation of migratory birds.

Key Objectives:

- A) Endorsement and adoption of the “*Guidelines for moving toward sustainable hunting of migratory birds in MTC countries*” as a regional module for management of sustainable hunting in the region;
- B) Each country adopts and uses the “*Guidelines for moving toward sustainable hunting of migratory birds in MTC countries*” in the development of its hunting management system administrative framework ;
- C) Development and/or refining of existing hunting management systems and administrative frameworks in a way that eliminates the ambiguity and overlap of responsibilities improves data gathering and monitoring systems, improves coordination mechanisms at the national and regional levels, improves staff capacities to take over there responsibilities, and enhances law enforcement of relevant legislation in each country to ensure compliance with related international agreements and the adopted regional Guidelines.
- D) Development of national capacities in each country in the region to manage hunting in a way that reduces excessive, indiscriminate and illegal hunting of migratory birds, promotes more sustainable hunting practices and enhances the compliance of international and regional agreements on the conservation of migratory birds the conservation of migratory birds;

- E) Initiation of pilot alternative economic models to illegal and unsustainable hunting of migratory birds in each country in the region;

Operational Objectives:

1. to develop and implement sub-regional and regional events aimed at encouraging all countries in the two sub-region to adopt and apply the regional Guidelines and recommendations related to sustainable hunting of migratory birds, which were prepared by the Sustainable Hunting Project, as an overall regional policy in countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean;
2. to develop and implement regional training module on the development and implementation of management plans and of migratory birds hunting in a way revealing best sustainable hunting practice and comply with obligations under related international agreements. This module is needed to be adaptable at the national level;
3. to encourage and provide all countries in the region with the necessary support needed for adopting the regional Guidelines and using them to develop and implement law enforcement mechanisms for legislation related to migratory birds hunting;
4. To ensure proper institutional arrangements for effective implementation of legislation;
5. To develop and implement effective institutional arrangements in each country in the region through adopting the Guidelines prepared by the Sustainable Hunting Project and by:
 - a. Clarifying management responsibilities and involvement of the various related institutions
 - b. Encouraging each country to establish a higher council or steering committee to be in charge organising the hunting management sector and administrating hunting management at the country level
 - c. Building the capacity of all involved institutions involved in hunting management in each country and also at the regional level
 - d. Improving the coordination and communication between the various institutions
6. To enhance national capacity of law enforcement and application of the regional "*Guidelines for moving Towards Sustainable Hunting of Migratory Birds in MTC countries*" and its associated "*Code of Practice for Responsible Hunting of Migratory Birds in MTC Countries*" through:
 - a. Identifying and analysing key law enforcement challenges at the national level in each country

- b. Develop national plan for law enforcement of the hunting legislations and guidelines
 - c. Build the capacity of the law enforcement body(ies)
 - d. Enhance the involvement of NGOs and local communities in law enforcement through the adoption of community based approaches like Hima and Site Support Groups
 - e. Develop and implement a training module on conflict resolution and effective communication for key target groups
7. To develop and implement outreach programme to:
- a. Raise the awareness of the hunters and local communities
 - b. Raise the awareness of political decision makers
 - c. Raise the awareness of the law enforcement sector
 - d. Raise the awareness of the public
 - e. Gain support for the adoption of the Guidelines and the implementation of a new management approach of migratory birds hunting
8. To encourage the application of alternative economic models to migratory birds hunting through
- a. Study the socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions associated with bird hunting at the national and regional levels
 - b. Develop and implement pilot alternative economic models to illegal and unsustainable hunting of migratory birds in each country in the region, (for example ecotourism, hunting reserves, establishment of clay pigeon shooting clubs, etc.)
9. To develop and improve data gathering and management through:
- c. Specifying the nature of the data to be collected
 - d. Establishing data base for hunting related information (hunters, hunted species, hunting equipments, hunting sites, etc.)
 - e. Coordinating the exchange of information at the regional level
10. Encourage the development and implementation of regional Single Species Action Plans aiming at the conservation of migratory bird populations significantly affected by the unsustainable hunting practices; and
11. To promote the phasing out of the use of lead shot, and its replacement with non-toxic alternatives, in in all countries in the region.

3. RAP APPLICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

A copy of the RAP will be sent to all national governments , leading conservation NGOs and hunters' associations in the region. Copies will also be distributed to the AEWA Secretariat and CIC and will be available on request from BirdLife International as well as being available for download from the Project home page⁷.

It is likely that another regional intergovernmental meeting will be needed for the Countries in the region to identify a legal and institutional option and to officially adopt the Action Plan text.

At the flyway level, BirdLife Partnership will work closely with the UNEP-GEF Wings over Wetlands Project, Wetlands International and other interested institutions within the AEWA geographic scope to support and explore opportunities for RAP implementation and the development of global training module on sustainable hunting of migratory birds.

BirdLife International will encourage its regional divisions in Africa and the Middle East and also the BirdLife partners to incorporate the RAP objectives and suggested activities into their national strategies and action plans.

BirdLife will also encourage its national partners to take advantage of the regional discussions held during the course of the Sustainable Hunting Project to develop and maintain sub-regional and regional working groups aiming at promoting sustainable hunting of migratory birds at the flyway and regional levels. The working groups can operate, or at least start with operating, through low cost virtual means like internet groups, emails and phone conferences/calls. Such measures can, and hopefully will, result in bilateral and multilateral partnership across the region and also across the flyways in cooperation with northern and southern countries to the region.

⁷ http://www.birdlife.org/action/change/sustainable_hunting/index.html

4. RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION (FUND RAISING)

The following steps are still required to obtain resources for implementation:

- Prioritization of the RAP operation objectives and activities;
- Holding round-table discussions with interested donors, convention secretariats, BirdLife Secretariat, government and leading NGOs in the region, and other interested institutions to discuss funding opportunities for the implementation of the RAP;
- Encourage governments in the region to allocate funds from its national budget for the implementation of related national RAP activities in each country;
- Discuss the establishment of regional and national funds for hunting management and promoting sustainable hunting; and
- Formalising the links between the RAP and other ongoing, and expected, related initiatives and regional projects (for example: UNEP-GEF Wings over Wetlands Project, UNDP-GEF Migratory Soaring Birds Project.)

5. REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READING

The development of the Guidelines has drawn on previously published sets of guidance on sustainable use of natural resources and the results of several other recent relevant initiatives from around the world, particularly:

Aarhus, (1998). The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation Decision-Making, and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters Obtained from <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/documents/cep43e.pdf>

Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) Conservation Guidelines, particularly Guidelines on sustainable harvest of migratory waterbirds (no. 5) and Guidelines on regulating trade in migratory waterbirds (no 6) (concluded on 16 June 1995 in the Hague, the Netherlands and entered into force on 1 November 1999)

Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). Central Asian Flyway Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitat (As finalised by Range States of the Central Asian Flyway at their second meeting in New Delhi, 10-12 June 2005)

Forstner, M., Reimoser, F., Hackel, J., & F. Heckl, (2003). Criteria and Indicators of Sustainable Hunting. Monographien Band 163 (English version of Monograph No. 158 (2001)). Umweltbundesamt GmbH (Federal Environment Agency Ltd.), Austria. Available at <http://www.biodiv.at/chm/jagd>.

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Lexer, W., F. Reimoser, J. Hackl, F. Heckl & M. Forstner (2005). Criteria and Indicators of Sustainable Hunting – The Austrian Assessment Approach. *Wildl. Biol. Pract.* 1(2): 163-183.

Madsen & Fox (1997), The impact of hunting disturbance on waterfowl populations: The concept of flyway networks of disturbance-free areas. *Gibier faune sauvage* 14: 201-209.

Madsen, Pihl & Clausen (1998), Establishing a reserve network for waterfowl in Denmark: a biological evaluation of needs and consequences. *Biological Conservation* 85: 241-256.

Ramsar (1999). Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands (Resolution VII.8). Obtained from <http://www.ramsar.org/keyres708e.doc>

Ramsar Handbook for the Wise Use of Wetlands. (Ramsar Convention Secretariat 2004), and the 'Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands' (Resolution VII.8) (Ramsar 1999)

Sustainable Hunting Project (2005). National report on migratory bird hunting in Algeria.

Sustainable Hunting Project (2005). National report on migratory bird hunting in Egypt.

Sustainable Hunting Project (2005). National report on migratory bird hunting in Jordan.

Sustainable Hunting Project (2005). National report on migratory bird hunting in Lebanon.

Sustainable Hunting Project (2005). National report on migratory bird hunting in Morocco.

Sustainable Hunting Project (2005). National report on migratory bird hunting in Palestine.

Sustainable Hunting Project (2005). National report on migratory bird hunting in Syria.

Sustainable Hunting Project (2005). National report on migratory bird hunting in Tunisia.

Sustainable Hunting Project (2006). Code of Practice for Responsible Hunting of Migratory Birds in MTC Countries.

Sustainable Hunting Project (2006). Guidelines for moving toward sustainable hunting of migratory birds in MTC countries.

Sustainable Hunting Project (2006). Five synthesis reports on hunting of migratory birds in MTC countries.

Sustainable Hunting Project (2006). Synthesis report on international conventions and agreements relevant to the conservation of migratory birds and management of bird hunting in Mediterranean Third Countries.

Sustainable Hunting Project (2006). Synthesis report on the use of lead shot for bird hunting in wetlands in Mediterranean Third Countries.

The Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity 2004)

Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005).