

WINGS OVER WETLANDS

The UNEP/GEF African Eurasian Flyways Project

INCEPTION REPORT (Quarterly Report #1)

REPORT #: 1

REPORTING PERIOD: 1 January – 31 March 2007

[Covering also preparatory activities conducted prior to contract signature]

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Country	Regional
Project Title	Wings Over Wetlands
Contract ref. number	WOW001
Name of Implementing Agency/NGO	Wetlands International
Total amount of funds under this agreement	USD 966,001
Expected project duration	4 years
Date of signature of the agreement	1 January 2007
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Report prepared for the UNOPS UNEP/GEF WOW Project Coordination Unit

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1. Executive Summary

Work on component one, particularly the Site Network Tool is not meeting significant problems in its implementation. Work on the Capacity Development component is developing more slowly, due to difficulties in finding the right candidate for the position of Capacity Development Officer.

Contracting staff:

WI has issued and activated subcontracts to BirdLife International and the UNEP-WCMC in December 2006. Subcontracts for the East African - and West African Subregional Centers have been also prepared. Project staff in these subregions identified. For the Central Asian and the Middle East Subregional Centers subcontractors have been identified and modalities for contracting are being examined in collaboration with the PCU.

Resource mobilization:

WI works with AEWA to secure the co-funding contribution to the project pledged by AEWA. A proposal encompassing the total amount of pledged co-funding has been developed by WI for the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries. This proposal is currently being evaluated and considered for funding. WI also negotiates with the German BfN about changing the allocation of their contribution. This resulted in WI having to re-allocate and/or re-schedule their entire WOW internal project budget, i.e. including funding to be received from most other donors (including the GEF-UNEP). The negotiations with BfN are still ongoing, but it does not cause a risk for successful implementation of the project thanks to the helpful flexibility of UNOPS concerning the disbursement of the GEF funding.

Component 1:

The development of the Critical Site Network has started in September. Staff was assigned and recruited and have started work at all three organizations (Wetlands International, BirdLife International and UNEP-WCMC) responsible for the implementation of this component. Available spatial data were pulled together and a map showing the location of all IBA, IWC and Ramsar sites was produced to aid identification of spatial gaps in the network. First steps have been taken according to schedule in establishing interoperability between the key databases and in developing the concept for the web-portal. The collection of the digital boundary information for IBAs, IWC sites and Ramsar sites has also started.

Co-funding was secured to make sure gap filling surveys took place in ca. 80 additional sites in January 2007 in West and East Africa and Central Asia. Thus gap filling activity is ahead of schedule, but it is adjusted to the shorter project duration.

A review paper on the state-of-the-art on waterbird monitoring is being drafted by Wetlands International as part of Activity 1.3.1. This paper reviews the networks and the procedures for the major waterbird monitoring programmes, the IBA and IWC schemes,

in the region, analyses the overlap between the networks of the schemes and recommends actions for further harmonization between them.

Binoculars and spotting scopes have been purchased with the support of BfN and shipped to the East and West Africa Subcontractors to strengthen monitoring capacity.

Component 2:

Progress is slightly delayed on the development of the Training and Awareness Raising Framework Programme due to the need to recruit a Capacity Development Officer and difficulties to find suitable candidates for this complex position. However, WI has temporarily assigned a dedicated staff member to produce the first draft of the Training and Awareness Raising Programme and hold a Programme Development Workshop in June as planned.

On the positive side, Capacity Development Officers were identified for East and West Africa and they will meet with WI staff in Entebbe, Uganda, to discuss the Framework Program, which will provide them guidance to start developing their sub-regional programs.

Component 3:

WI staff have accompanied the PCU when visiting demo projects supervised by WI in Estonia. PCU staff were accompanied by staff of the WI Africa Office in Niger, Senegal-The Gambia and Mauritania.

In terms of communicating the project the WI project supervisor participated in the WoW launch, organized by the AEWA in Bonn in November 2006. Furthermore the WoW concept was promoted by the WI project supervisor as a model for flyway conservation implementation in 6 international meetings in other flyways (‘inter flyway meetings’) where presentations addressed the WoW project. Also within the flyway the project was promoted by presenting it to at least 5 relevant meetings. in Bonn (CMS Standing Committee, Sept 06), Berne (WIGWAG and AEWA Technical Committee, Sept/Oct 06), Bonn (AEWA Standing Committee, Nov 06), Brussels (Ornis Committee, SCOFCA, EU DG ENV/DG SANCO, Dec 06). The awareness of this project has increased dramatically with relevant stakeholders as a result of this and e.g. for the Americas there is interest in looking at how to apply this model to their flyway.

2. Key project achievements during the reporting period

Highlight the most important 5 project achievements in the reporting period.

#	Key Project Achievements
1	2 Subcontracts signed by WI with: BirdLife International and the UNEP-WCMC, the two major partners in developing the Critical Site Network Tool. The total amount of these contracts is USD 536,872. All potential Subregional Subcontractors are now identified. 2 Subcontracts are prepared for the East and West Africa Subregional Subcontractors in the total value of USD 430,544.

2	WI, BirdLife International and the UNEP-WCMC have started developing the critical site network tool. 3 technical meetings took place on 5-6 October 2006, 19 January and 22 February 2007. Available spatial data were combined to provide overview about their spatial distribution and quality.
3	WI managed to secure USD 87,000 to contribute to the to gap filling and training surveys in Africa and Central Asia
4	Good media interest and outreach, promoting the project as the model Flyway implementation project globally. Project is well recognized. The project was communicated to the media in a team effort and it is not possible to quantify what part was due to activities of WI specifically. See overview in Progress Report #1. Firm embedding and linkage of project with(in) AEWA implementation priorities through participation in Technical Committee and Standing Committee meeting of AEWA
5	Strong outreach to stakeholders in other flyways (5 'inter flyway' meetings) and in the African Eurasian Flyway (at least 4 relevant international meetings).

3. Progress on project outcomes

Provide an overview of the contribution made towards progress & achievements for each project outcome during the reporting period.

Outcome #	Status (% achieved)	Progress & Achievements
Component 1: Establishment of a fundamental tool to assist planning and management in flyway conservation		
Outcome 1.1 The network of critical sites is available as a tool for use by practitioners to underpin planning and management of and catalyse site level activity in, flyway conservation.	5%	Technical Workshop held in October 2006. Interoperability issues for sites and species identified and approach agreed. Species list agreed and a scoping document produced in collaboration with BirdLife International. Site Network Technical Officer recruited at Wetlands International starting 1 st of April. Draft flyer promoting the site network tool has been prepared and key events identified to raise profile of the initiative. Work on digitizing IWC site boundaries started in collaboration with the WI Kiev Office. Guidelines were drafted to the national IWC about digitizing the boundaries of their sites. Concept for the Web-portal ready.
Outcome 1.2. Primary data resources that underpin flyway conservation, planning and management activities enhanced to include all critically important sites in the AEWA region	10%	Gap filling surveys in approx. 80 additional sites in East and West Africa and Central Asia took place in January 2007, mainly using additionally mobilized resources and focusing on some of the obvious gaps in coverage. For Africa, approx. USD 75,000 were raised from FAO and GAINS to organize additional census work and on develop monitoring capacity. This was delivered in Angola: (2 sites), Congo: (1), Cameroon: 'coast' (ca. 10), Kenya: (ca. 5), Eritrea: (ca. 5), Ethiopia: (ca. 25), Sudan: (ca. 10), Malawi: (ca. 5), Nigeria: (ca. 5), so all together ca. 70 sites. Some 12K€ was mobilized from AEWA for census work in Central Asia, which was coordinated through the Moscow office of WI. Preparation for the gap identification workshops to identify and prioritize further areas for additional field surveys started in collaboration with BirdLife International. They are going to be held in the fourth quarter of 2007 in East and West Africa, and in the first quarter of 2008 in Central Asia and Middle East.
Outcome 1.3. Flyway data gathering and monitoring capacity strengthened to support the updating and maintenance of primary data resources that	5%	6 scopes with tripods and 75 binoculars in the value of approx. USD 7,000 were purchased and shipped to Nairobi and Dakar to the East and West Africa subregional subcontractors. 5 additional binoculars and other field equipment (incl waders, boots and torches) were bought and brought to Nigeria. Capacity development and training was delivered to field teams in several countries in the project area, including Nigeria, Kenya, Mali, Malawi, Egypt, Ukraine, Turkey, Tunisia and into workshops addressing government

Outcome #	Status (% achieved)	Progress & Achievements
underpin conservation of the network of critical sites		<p>officials in the field of environment, veterinary issues and health in West-, East - and North Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe in the field of complementary projects related to avian influenza coordinated by Wetlands International.</p> <p>Review of the state-of-the art on waterbird monitoring has started by Wetlands International. First draft of the review paper to be discussed at the Critical Sites Network Tool Technical Workshop, planned for 17-18 April.</p>
Outcome 1.4 Species and critical site knowledge base supports management and planning decision-making in flyway conservation	1%	Potential subcontractor (BirdLife International) to compile available information about the species ecological requirements is identified, and negotiations about the subcontract have started. ToR to be finalized at the Technical Workshop planned for 17-18 April.
Component 2: Establishing a basis for strengthening decision-making and technical capacity for wetland and migratory waterbird conservation		
Outcome 2.1 Transferable model Training and Awareness Raising Programme framework produced for developing wetland and waterbird conservation capacity	1%	Recruiting a Capacity Development Officer is in progress. Position was advertised in major journals, on websites and through the extensive networks of BirdLife and Wetlands International, the Ramsar Convention and AEWA. Interviews were held starting 21 March after long pre-selection process, followed by several more interviews. The first round did not deliver a candidate who has skills needed for the complex project situation. Efforts have been stepped up to organize a further recruitment round.
Outcome 2.2: Wetland and waterbird conservation Training and Awareness Raising Programmes produced ready for implementation in four sub-regions	2%	<p>The Subregional Capacity Development Officer is identified for West Africa within the WIAP team.</p> <p>The Kenya Wildlife Service is subcontracted by the BirdLife International Africa Partnership Secretariat .to provide Capacity building support to the project (and the BLAPS is being subcontracted by WI and UNOPS for the implementation of the sub-regional activities for Eastern and Southern Africa, including the subcontract to the KWSTI)</p>
Component 3: Enhanced availability and exchange of information through improved communications capacity and resource provision		
Outcome 3.1: Demonstrations of best practice management of migratory waterbirds and wetlands available across the flyway	3%	WI provides technical backup for the demonstration projects The WI Site Network Technical Coordinator joined the PCU visiting the demonstration project in Estonia, several staff members of the WI West Africa Office joined to the PCU visiting the demonstration projects in West Africa. WI project supervisor visited the site in Nigeria in February and discussed with (future) project staff member.
Outcome 3.2. Strengthened mechanisms for governments and NGOs to communicate and work together on wise use of wetlands and migratory waterbirds	5%	WI hosts the preliminary project website (www.wingsoverwetlands.org). The WOW Communications Officer made information about the project available on the AEWA website (http://www.unep-awea.org/activities/wow/index.htm). The AEWA Secretariat organized a launch of the project on 20 November in Bonn in collaboration with the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. The WI project supervisor promotes WoW project and concepts in international for a and flyway meetings. This happened in the Philippines in October 2006, Indonesia in November 2006, Russia December 2006, Ecuador January 2007, China January 2007, Nigeria Feb 2007. Also within the AEWA flyway the project was promoted by presenting it to at least 5

Outcome #	Status (% achieved)	Progress & Achievements
		relevant meetings in Bonn (CMS Standing Committee, Sept 06), Berne (WIGWAG and AEWA Technical Committee, Sept/Oct 06), Bonn (AEWA Standing Committee, Nov 06), Brussels (Ornis Committee, SCOFCA, EU DG ENV/DG SANCO, Dec 06). The awareness of this project has increased dramatically with relevant stakeholders as a result of this and e.g. for the Americas there is interest in looking at how to apply this model to their flyway.
Outcome 3.3. Mechanisms of exchange between and within sub-regions for improved flyway-level migratory waterbird and wetland	0%	No work scheduled for this reporting period. WI project supervisor has explored options for exchange with other flyways as well and there is tangible interest to develop such approach between the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network from (N) America and the WoW project.
Outcome 3.4 The wise-use of migratory waterbirds and wetlands is better understood and implemented by governments in focal sub-regions	2%	Activity is postponed until the full AEWA funding is confirmed and made available. In the framework of management of wild migratory birds as part of a risk management strategy for Avian Influenza the WoW project and its Critical Site Network tool has been promoted as an important tool in at least 5 international meetings with stakeholders (see above).

4. Key issues & proposed solutions

Identify up to a maximum of 10 key project issues encountered, requiring the attention of the UNEP/GEF, of the Steering Committee and/or of UNOPS.

#	Issue	Proposed Solution	Deadline	Party Responsible
1	Delay with the recruitment of the Capacity Development Officer	The Capacity Development Officer of the WI Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project will allocate time to develop the first draft of the programme in consultation with the regional capacity development officers in the East and West Africa Subregions. The Training and Awareness Programme Development Workshop will be held in June/July as planned.	30 May	WI
2	Delays with making available of the whole AEWA co-funding originally foreseen for the first two years of the project, which is now needed in the first year of the project due to the reduction of the project duration to 4 years.	Some of the activities (where it was possible without affecting subsequent activities) rescheduled for 2008. WI to help AEWA to work with the Dutch government to secure the missing amount	Done on-going	WI AEWA, WI

3	French contribution to the project does not materialize in cash	Seeking new funding and cost saving opportunities in the West Africa subregion (partly successful already)	June	WI, AEWA
		CTA to assist in mobilizing pledged resources	June	PCU
4	Difficulties with rescheduling the German co-funding according to the revised project schedule	Submitting revised formal request to BfN.	30 April 2007	WI