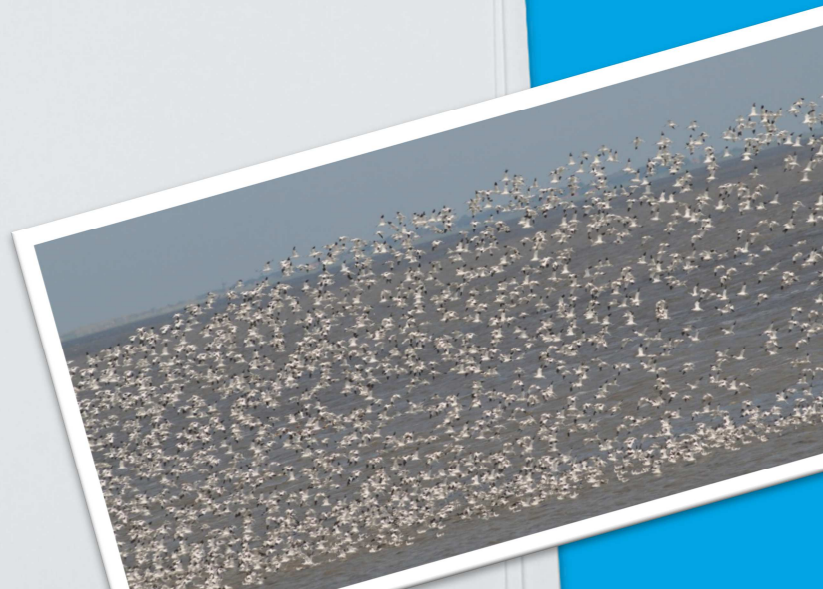




# The Future of the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative

*Part 2: Further prioritization of activities and  
identification of key players*





PROGRAMMA NAAR EEN  
RIJKE WADDENZEE

## **The Future of the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative**

### **Part 2: Further prioritization of activities and identification of key players**

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# Summary

This report proposes ten projects suitable for taking forward the objectives of WSFI. The activities in the 2014 Plan of Action evaluated and prioritized in Part One of this Concept have been further prioritized using more explicit criteria. The resulting ten projects depend on a fund-raising strategy and a communication plan and rely on cooperation and partnerships with a wide variety of stakeholders. This approach will multiply the available funding and bring greater coherence to conservation efforts on the East Atlantic Flyway. The role of WSFI was initiated, and has been guided by, criteria set when the International Wadden Sea was nominated as a World Heritage Site. This role is often to facilitate and stimulate activities among a group of partners, but there are some activities where WSFI will take the lead itself, and possibly support or undertake activities on the ground. The emphasis throughout is on projects that will benefit from long-term funding, and result in solid conservation action for sites, species and people throughout the flyway.

## 1. Introduction

This report is the second part of a Concept for the future of the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative. It builds on and adds to the findings of Part 1, completed in November 2014, which was titled *Concept: The Future of the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative - Part 1: Assessment of the Plan of Action and preliminary prioritization of activities*. Part 1 provided essential, detailed information on the development and future of WSFI. Part 2 adopts a more concise, summarized approach, suggesting 10 priority projects which should be considered within the context provided in Part 1.

Some brief repetition of the main findings of Part 1 has been unavoidable in this Part 2 report, but the principal aim has been to elaborate on aspects of WSFI that were identified as requiring more attention in Part 1, and to provide a clear list of well-justified priorities for action, and a clear idea of the organizations which need to be involved. This report uses a clearer set of criteria for setting priorities than Part 1, and so provides a more focused set of activities. It also attempts to identify a niche for WSFI within the context of other flyway projects and initiatives.

### 1.1 Organization of WSFI

WSFI works in a way that complements and builds on other existing initiatives, notably those focused on the conservation of key sites for migratory birds along the East Atlantic Flyway (EAF), including projects led by IUCN, Tour du Valat, Wetlands International, BirdLife International and WWF under a regional partnership scheme (the PRCM). It also builds on wider flyway initiatives, such as the extensive Wings Over Wetlands Programme, and the long-term regional support of agencies such as Tour du Valat/ONCFS. Where appropriate, it also works directly for the conservation of waterbirds and their wetland coastal habitats on the EAF, in partnership with local communities, and national and international organizations. Networking is a key component of the modus operandi of WSFI, and it achieves its goals by collaborating, stimulating, facilitating, and intensifying engagement with other organizations and initiatives. As a government-led initiative with a likelihood of modest long-term funding, there is scope for long-term activities and long-term commitment to partnerships. These characteristics of WSFI strongly influence its priorities, and the criteria that should be used in setting these priorities.

### 1.2 Criteria for prioritizing future WSFI Projects

The criteria for evaluating priorities are identified and presented in Part 1 of this draft concept, which are further refined here taking account of the following considerations:

1. The importance or urgency of addressing an issue affecting the security of waterbird populations or the resilience of their habitats on the EAF.
2. The contribution of the activity to a sustainable solution to an issue negatively affecting migratory waterbird populations and their habitats.
3. The value added by WSFI to the solution of the issue. Where other organizations are better placed to address a particular issue, WSFI should encourage them to do this and facilitate funding. Such facilitation is a central part of the work of WSFI and has been included in projects where WSFI will not necessarily take a leading role.

Evaluating activities against these criteria still requires subjective 'expert opinion', but the criteria provide a basis for transparency and structure in discussion of priorities.

## 1.3 Proposed Structure of WSFI

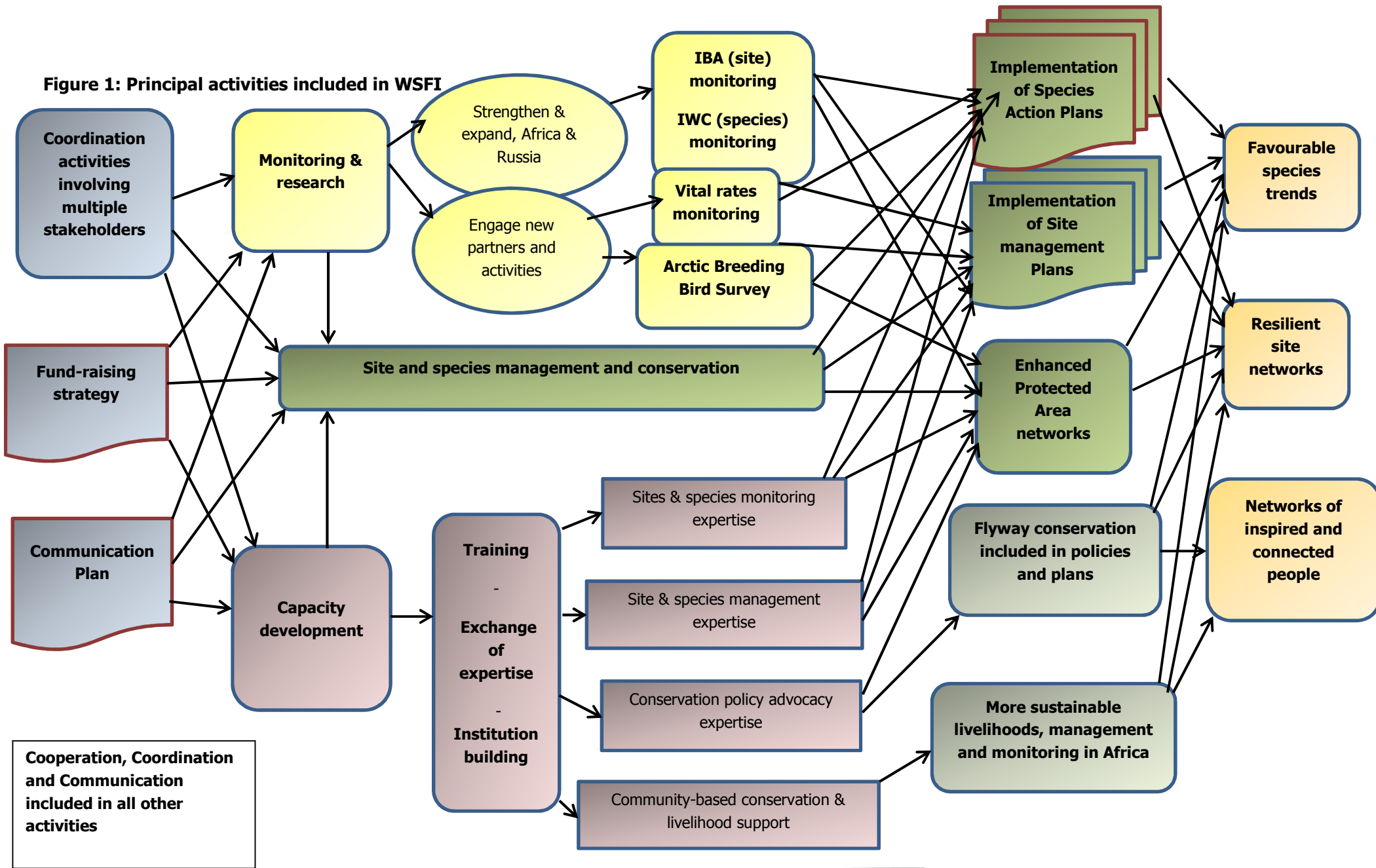
Thought and discussion since preparation of Part 1 have thus resulted in further adjustments to the priorities identified in the Plan of Action 2015-2020. Figure 1 shows the proposed structure of WSFI including these adjustments. The principal change from the earlier structure is explicit recognition of monitoring and of capacity building as tools for implementing the strategy rather than as goals in their own right. Both monitoring and capacity building can be seen as approaches to identifying and addressing threats to species and sites. The conservation activities of WSFI need to focus on areas (geographic and thematic) where threats are greatest. These activities will be most successful and sustainable where local communities feel a sense of involvement and ownership, so that continuing monitoring and management of sites becomes embedded in the activities of local and national communities and institutions. The effectiveness of this approach can be enhanced by ensuring that local resources such as fisheries, mangrove areas, and a variety of other wetland types provide sustainable livelihoods for local communities.

The activities proposed for WSFI flow logically from left to right in Figure 1, starting with fund-raising and establishing the necessary coordination and communication processes, and moving through the various project activities to the three principle elements of the 2014 Vision Statement on the far right hand side. The flow also represents the passage of time, with the already-established monitoring and fund-raising activities enhancing the development of the conservation and management of sites, species and coastal resources that lead in turn to the realization of the Vision. It is important to note that the flow from left to right represents the sequence of implementation of activities, and that once established, all these activities will need to continue if WSFI is to enjoy continuing success and the support of governments involved as well as the World Heritage Convention (WHC) Committee.

Not fully included in Figure 1 are the communication, education and public awareness activities which will be essential in every project if WSFI is to succeed. These activities should be included in every project, and may be more effective if carried out within the framework of a web portal, which should be considered as a part of Project 1.3 (see below).



**Figure 1: Principal activities included in WSFI**





## 2. Ten projects to address the objectives of WSFI

Projects suitable for taking forward the objectives of WSFI from 2015 onwards have been identified based on the findings of the Part 1 report assessing the WSFI Plan of Action, refined by use of the criteria outlined above and following the logic of Figure 1. A cross-cutting approach to the 2014 *Plan of Action*, as amended in the Part 1 report, has been used to compile topics for projects which each combine two or more of the activities in the *Plan of Action*. The second-level headings below (2.1, 2.2, etc.) cover the principal goals of WSFI, identified in the 2014 *Plan of Action*, and the third-level headings (Project 1.1, Project 1.2, etc.) are the suggested topics for projects. The rationale behind each suggested project is briefly described in the text under standard headings based on the criteria for prioritization outlined above. Important details about each proposed project, including potential stakeholders, are summarized in Table 1. The priorities are listed in the same order as in the *Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative Plan of Action 2014-2020* and in the Part 1 report.

### 2.1 Objective 1. Strengthen cooperation, coordination and communication along the East Atlantic Flyway

#### Project 1.1 A fund-raising strategy for WSFI

##### *Issue addressed*

The *Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative Plan of Action 2014-2020*, produced in 2014 did not include a budget. There is a need to realistically estimate the costs of all proposed activities, and to include them in a fund-raising strategy.

##### *Solution & sustainability*

The relevant government authorities in The Netherlands, Germany and Denmark can be expected to give basic medium to long-term support to WSFI as part of their recently acquired responsibilities to the World Heritage Convention, and these commitments should provide the basis for proposals to fund (or co-fund) a variety of projects. This approach ensures the multiplication of funding from the three governments through cooperation and partnership, and direct funding of projects where no other support can be identified. The long-term nature of the projects means that fund-raising will need to continue to secure a sustainable future for the work.

A WSFI Conference in 2015, to present and evaluate the first years of WSFI activities, has been identified as an urgent priority, where it would be appropriate to include a donors' meeting as one session of this conference.

##### *Link to other (flyway) initiatives and organizations*

The fund-raising strategy should examine each of the other nine projects in this concept in turn, identify and explore possibilities for suitable stakeholders and funders, and calculate an estimated budget for each project. It will then be up to the lead organization identified for each project to prepare a detailed proposal for their project. As a part of this process, a wide variety of donors should be approached with proposals, including other (mainly European) governments on the EAF, governmental and non-governmental agencies and foundations in the fields of international development, rural development, poverty alleviation, civil society development, climate change, marine and coastal zone management and hunting. Approaches should also be made to international development agencies for work in Africa, and to Corporate Social Responsibility interests in the business and commercial sector, for example, oil and mining companies which are active in the Arctic. International Conventions and Agreements, particularly WHC, AEWA, CMS and Ramsar, while not being significant funding bodies themselves, have mechanisms for partnership and fund raising which should be used as much as possible. Maintaining and enhancing good relations with donors will be a key activity for all projects.

### *Specific role for WSFI*

The fund-raising strategy will facilitate the provision of support necessary for the most appropriate and important activities where WSFI can add the most value. There is an option to include the necessary cooperation, coordination and communication processes (Projects 1.2 and 1.3) within this project, but the current separation is preferred because the projects are reasonably small, manageable and self-contained.

Initial responsibility for preparing the fund-raising strategy should rest with relevant government agencies in the three Wadden Sea countries, working through CWSS. The preparation of project proposals for which CWSS is not taking a lead should then be sub-contracted to the organizations involved, but coordinated and supervised by CWSS given their responsibility under WHC.

## **Project 1.2 Coordination of WSFI**

### *Issue addressed*

The WSFI programme involves numerous organizations and potentially over 40 countries. The Plan of Action (2014) included 5 major objectives divided into 38 activities. This Concept reduces these to 10 projects under four objectives, but the scale and complexity of this scenario mean that effective coordination will be essential to the success of the programme.

### *Solution & sustainability*

CWSS, guided by the WSFI Steering Group, has acted effectively as the secretariat for WSFI, forming partnerships and making use of consultants where necessary for particular tasks. This way of working should continue. However, the capacity required by CWSS will inevitably increase, as the scale of the programme develops.

This project involves the establishment and management of all the other projects. An important part of this will be measuring the impact of the executed projects, and research into the impact of activities should be integrated into all projects. This will be crucial for adaptive management, for informing communication, and for attracting and sustaining donor interest.

### *Link to other (flyway) initiatives and organizations*

A key part of the project is identifying partners and experts along the flyway and engaging appropriately with them. Some of these will be a part of the programme while others belong to related conservation, development and research projects and programmes that run in parallel to WSFI and which support its overall aim

### *Specific role for WSFI*

The principal role for WSFI in this project is to ensure that CWSS receives the support and guidance it needs through the Steering Group, so that CWSS can establish and maintain appropriate relations with the WSFI project stakeholders and with complementary projects and programmes.

## Project 1.3 Develop and implement a WSFI Communication Plan

This was included under objective 5 in the WSFI Plan of Action and in the Part 1 report. Communication is included in Objective 1 of the Plan of Action, and like Project 1.2, the activities under this project will need to be included in all other projects.

### *Issue addressed*

Effective communication is a key part of engaging and maintaining the cooperation of donors, project stakeholders, complementary projects and programmes, and the general public. Improved communication will raise the profile and establish the niche of WSFI among donors, policy makers and conservation practitioners along the flyway.

### *Solution & sustainability*

WSFI has wide appeal and this can be greatly enhanced through a combination of hardcopy, web-based and broadcast materials including substantial reports, popular articles, newsletters, publicity reports, brochures, flyers and posters, videos and podcasts. Media presence can be enhanced through press releases and establishing relations with a variety of print, broadcast and web-based media along the flyway.

A web portal would provide a strong framework for these activities, and The Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool developed under the 2005-2010 Wings over Wetlands (WOW) Project was identified in the Part 1 report as having potential as a means of taking forward some of the aims of WSFI. This internet portal was, however, designed for use throughout the AEWA region, and was, recognized as being a potentially expensive and risky project, and for these reasons, a cost-benefit analysis and risk assessment were recommended in the Part 1 report. The Communication Plan could include this analysis, and should in any case consider the advantages of creating and maintaining a web portal. The participants in the WOW project (AEWA, BirdLife International, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and Wetlands International) signed a Memorandum of Cooperation and may be willing to support a proposal for the suggested analysis, possibly funded by a voluntary contribution from one of the Contracting Parties to Ramsar or AEWA.

### *Link to other (flyway) initiatives and organizations*

Communication is itself the means of linking to other flyway initiatives and organizations. A Communication Plan will propose the appropriate mix of methods and media for each project, and for wider-scale communication needs related to projects, programmes and the general public.

### *Specific role for WSFI*

WSFI, by supporting a project to compile a Communication Plan, will assist the implementation of all the projects comprising WSFI, and help the programme to maintain and enhance its niche.

## 2.2 Objective 2. Establish an integrated flyway monitoring programme for the East Atlantic Flyway

Waterbird monitoring under WSFI produced a number of concrete outputs in 2012-2014, building on programmes that were already well established. Monitoring of waterbirds outside Western Europe remains sporadic, however, and this knowledge gap allows only partial understanding of waterbird trends and threats to species and sites along the flyway. The monitoring of sites, and in particular of threats acting on sites and species, were identified as requiring greater attention.

### Project 2.1 Enhance efforts to identify, evaluate and monitor sites, species, and the threats they face along the East Atlantic Flyway

#### *Issue addressed*

The need to direct conservation action to species and areas where threats are greatest is obvious, but the identification and monitoring of threats along the EAF has so far been very incomplete and uncoordinated.

Threats to the conservation of waterbirds and the sites they use can be identified and monitored in three main areas:

1. Waterbird populations - monitoring population trends (principally through the well-established International Waterbird Census (IWC)), and understanding drivers of trends (through detailed research into the ecology of key species, addressed in Project 2.3).
2. Monitoring sites and habitats (principally through IBA monitoring methodology). The low take-up and use of IBA monitoring, needs to be addressed. A review of the IBA Programme to investigate the low appeal to practitioners of IBA monitoring, and to refine and more closely align it with IWC, is required as part of a programme to collect information on threats.
3. A review of sectors, involving assessment of unsustainable practices and policies relating to activities such as agriculture, mineral extraction, and infrastructure development impacting migratory waterbirds, their sites and habitats. A horizon-scanning approach will ensure consideration of future risks and how they might best be addressed.

#### *Solution & sustainability*

The enhancement of monitoring under the IWC and IBA programmes in West Africa, and preparation of a strategy for waterbird monitoring were successfully implemented in 2012-2014, and with a strategy now in place, the way forward is clear. The annual count of a selection of sites in January, and the organizing of the next comprehensive Flyway survey should be an early priority. In West Africa, an effort has been made to integrate the IWC and IBA methods into one programme of work, and the logic and practicality of this approach mean that it is still the best way forward. It will be necessary, however, to address the current shortcomings in IBA monitoring mentioned above.

Effective monitoring requires long-term financial support (which may be relatively modest) and a sense of ownership by organizations and individuals at local and national level. The embedding of monitoring in national level institutions is therefore a high priority. The three Wadden Sea countries share waterbird populations with countries all along the EAF, and flyway-wide monitoring provides essential context for the understanding of data from the Wadden Sea. Links with the Banc d'Arguin and other World Heritage Sites along the Flyway (notably the proposed WHS in the Bijagos Archipelago) offer opportunities to further the goals of the World Heritage Convention as well as the Conservation of Wadden Sea waterbirds.

#### *Link to other (flyway) initiatives and organizations*

WSFI has established effective relations with Wetlands International and BirdLife International, custodians of the two principal existing monitoring programmes, and their national partners. The role of Sovon in the success of monitoring under WSFI was crucial in 2012-2014. There is thus every reason to recommend that Sovon should continue to lead this work in cooperation with Wetlands International and BirdLife International. The Wetlands International network of national coordinators throughout the flyway, working for a wide variety of governmental and non-governmental organizations, will play an essential role. Much of this cooperation, especially in Europe, is on a voluntary basis and thus provides exceptional value for money.

There is a need to extend cooperation, particularly in African countries beyond those in West Africa which have been the core focus of WSFI to date. This will involve cooperation through BirdLife International, Wetlands International and Sovon, but may also involve cooperation with additional partners at the national level in countries where these organizations are not yet active. Capacity building will play an important part in this.

#### *Specific role for WSFI*

For waterbird and site monitoring, WSFI can build on the success of partnerships established in 2012-2014. For the review of sectors, potential partners still need to be identified and engaged. The results of IBA and IWC monitoring provide evidence of threatened sites and species. The next step will be to cooperate with appropriate partners to influence policies (local, national, and international) that will reduce threats through lobbying and advocacy. Further, whilst monitoring activities were greatly enhanced between 2012 and 2014 in the coastal zone of West Africa, there is a need to extend more comprehensive monitoring to other parts of the flyway.

It is important for WSFI to be directly involved in (and if possible to facilitate funding for) the periodic extended counts of the entire flyway. The first of these took place in January 2014, and the strategy for waterbird monitoring along the flyway proposed the next count six years thereafter. Because of the need to further implement methods and cooperation, an additional flyway count was proposed in the intervening time period.

## **Project 2.2 Establish an Arctic Breeding Birds Survey**

#### *Issue addressed*

The Arctic is heavily threatened by rapid climate change and industrial development, particularly mineral extraction, whose effects on biodiversity need to be more intensively researched and monitored if they are to be understood.

The Arctic is the source of the EAF for many species, and the principal breeding area of a high proportion of the waterbird populations that use the flyway (particularly waders and geese). Understanding of numbers and population trends of most of these species is currently limited by the incomplete and sporadic coverage of monitoring programmes outside Western Europe. Intensification of monitoring in Africa was an important part of WSFI in 2012-2014, and the programme would be much improved by monitoring on the breeding grounds in addition to current monitoring which is restricted to the non-breeding season.

#### *Solution & sustainability*

A number of existing programmes monitor Arctic breeding waterbirds in Greenland, the Nordic countries (including Iceland) and Russia, but coverage as a whole is limited and often inconsistent or short-term, and the intensity of effort has diminished in the largest country, Russia. There is a need to standardize methodology in monitoring methods, and to establish a sustainable funding base. All the relevant governments are members of the Arctic Council and its biodiversity working group Conservation of Arctic Flora & Fauna (CAFF) and monitoring Arctic breeding waterbirds would be highly relevant to the mandate of this group.

#### *Link to other (flyway) initiatives and organizations*

Cooperation with CAFF is essential for this project. The activities of CAFF include the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment and Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI), which provide frameworks suitable for the project. The Arctic Terrestrial Biodiversity Monitoring Plan under the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP) of CAFF has the aim of improving the collective ability of Arctic traditional knowledge holders, northern communities

and scientists, to detect, understand and report on long-term change in Arctic terrestrial ecosystems and biodiversity. Cooperation with this programme would be invaluable for monitoring Arctic breeding waterbirds.

The Russian Steering Committee member of AMBI has long experience of research into Arctic waterbirds, and the leader of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment was editor of the first (1994) report on trilateral waterbird counts in the Wadden Sea. Methods used by Danish scientists at the Zackenberg field station in Greenland, by ornithologists in Iceland, and by existing projects in the Russian Arctic should provide a basis for methodology of a standardized and centrally coordinated Arctic Breeding Birds Survey. Scientists at Moscow State University have coordinated a long-term programme of monitoring Arctic Breeding Conditions, and might provide a useful focal point for activities in Russia.

#### *Specific role for WSFI*

Whilst WSFI is a logical player in the Arctic, given the high numbers of Arctic-breeding birds that the Wadden Sea supports during their migration, the feasibility and appropriateness of this project would need to be discussed with existing organizations, particularly CAFF. AMBI is already involved in work under WSFI to facilitate the listing of the Bijagós Archipelago as a World Heritage Site and possibilities for further cooperation elsewhere on the flyway should be fully explored.

## Project 2.3 Develop and implement a programme to monitor vital rates of coastal waterbirds in the East Atlantic Flyway

### *Issue addressed*

Understanding of numbers and trends of migratory waterbirds is currently partial, descriptive and sporadic, and there have long been calls, for example by the International Wader Study Group, to integrate available datasets on bird counting and bird ringing, together with data collected by academic studies of reproduction, recruitment and survival (vital rates) and movements of birds. Such integrated studies require high levels of expertise and cooperation, but are extremely valuable as a means of explaining and understanding population processes, allowing biological bottlenecks to be identified and conservation action directed to where it is most needed. This is an essential next step in international waterbird monitoring which WSFI is well-placed to contribute to and facilitate.

### *Solution & sustainability*

The principal need is for better cooperation between existing academic and ornithological institutes and organizations within a well-trusted framework. The approach adopted will depend on the needs and ambitions of the partners, but such a programme would need to start with a small number of pilot projects, centred on existing studies and focused on the Wadden Sea, before growing to include increasing numbers of species, countries and processes.

### *Link to other (flyway) initiatives and organizations*

A number of academic and ornithological organizations and institutions along the flyway have strong interests in avian population processes. In the Netherlands, the Centre for Avian Population Studies (CAPS), a partnership of Sovon, the Dutch bird ringing centre (VT), the Dutch Institute of Ecology (NIOO), Radboud University, Nijmegen, and Vogelbescherming Nederland (the Dutch BirdLife partner) was established in 2014. Data from large-scale counting and ringing of birds are integrated and used in sophisticated population models to answer questions about bird populations. The many other potential stakeholders include Wetlands International and BirdLife International (in their roles as custodians of the IWC, Critical Site Network Tool, and IBA databases) the Global Flyway Network, the British Trust for Ornithology, and a number of universities and museums in a wide range of countries. The waterbird monitoring strategy for WSFI prepared in 2014 includes an outline of the work needed for this project, and Sovon would be a good organization to continue coordinating the development of these activities.

### *Specific role for WSFI*

The role of WSFI in this project would be to facilitate, stimulate and encourage activities and to help build trust between institutions which are sometimes possessive of their data and disinclined to cooperate internationally. WSFI can add value by networking with potential stakeholders, providing a focal point for proposal writing, and a forum to identify and steer studies in the context of the EAF.



## 2.3 Objective 3. Strengthen capacity along the East Atlantic Flyway in conservation and management of migratory waterbirds and their critical sites

Capacity building is another goal of WSFI that met with success in 2012-2014. Strategic development and strengthening are the next steps.

### Project 3.1 – Develop and implement a programme for integrated capacity building along the East Atlantic Flyway, especially in Africa and Russia

#### *Issue addressed*

Cooperative nature conservation activities are well developed in Europe but the extension of the approach to Africa requires considerable development of capacity in most countries. European nesting waterbird species migrating to Africa require a network of good quality sites and habitats. International monitoring only occurs in the non-breeding season, when many species are in Africa, where monitoring and management capacity are, in general, still poorly developed. These issues can only be sustainably resolved by building the capacity of organizations and institutions in Africa to undertake the necessary monitoring and conservation activities. (However, capacity-building alone does not imply future sustainability, which requires other parameters to be in place.)

#### *Solution & sustainability*

The successful capacity building activities implemented by WSFI in 2012-2014 should be maintained and enhanced. A simple, concise, capacity development plan for the EAF, drawing together existing advice and expertise and setting priorities for future work would provide a basis for a project proposal with appeal for governmental and non-governmental international development agencies.

Capacity building should be targeted at solving particular issues for migratory waterbirds and their habitats in Africa and Russia. The plan should include an element of flexibility, to allow the filling of gaps as they become apparent.

Institution building, particularly the development of appropriate government departments and conservation-related NGOs should go hand in hand with these training activities. Embedding capacity development in institutions, both in government and NGOs, will be key to WSFI achieving a sustainable impact.

A detailed, integrated capacity building programme is required to ensure a strategic approach that involves an appropriate selection of practitioners in a suitable selection of countries. Capacity development is needed in four main areas:

#### 3.1.1 Training in waterbird and wetland site monitoring

for local communities, students, protected area management staff and NGOs, in the practical implementation of the IWC and IBA programmes, in the field and in the office. The training should focus on critical sites for waterbirds along the western African seaboard.

#### 3.1.2 Training in site and species management methods

Practical and theoretical training, aimed particularly at site managers at key sites for which management plans will be developed under objective 4.

#### 3.1.3 Training in flyway advocacy and policy development

for policy makers and advocates in governmental and non-governmental organizations. The training will include the use of monitoring data in site and national level management and policy development.

### 3.1.4 Training of local communities

in site management and monitoring (linked to 3.1.1 and 3.1.2) and sustainable livelihood approaches to coastal resource management.

#### *Link to other (flyway) initiatives and organizations*

International organizations will play a major role in this project through their networks of partner organizations in Africa, and Government Parks and Wildlife services in Africa and NGOs in Africa and Russia are also expected to play an active role. It will also be important to align planning with the strategy of the AEWA Africa initiative.

#### *Specific role for WSFI*

WSFI, through CWSS, will engage with partner organizations to organise capacity building where it is most needed to contribute to the specific aims of WSFI. In countries where institutions and organizations working in nature conservation are poorly developed, WSFI should play a more direct role in assessing needs and establishing training and institution building.

## 2.4 Objective 4. Promote conservation and wise use management of coastal resources and migratory waterbirds of the East Atlantic Flyway

Growth and enhancement of work in this area should be a high priority in the next phase of WSFI, now that monitoring and capacity development have become better-established in the African part of the flyway.

### Project 4.1 Support the establishment of Protected Area networks, and develop and implement Management Plans for selected wetlands of the East Atlantic Flyway

#### *Issue addressed*

A majority of the most important sites along the EAF have been identified by the IBA and IWC programmes of BirdLife International and Wetlands International, and the CSN Tool developed under the WOW Project provides data and information about many of these sites (see 1.3 above). The importance of many sites remains unrecognized, however, and even at those included in existing inventories, there is no guarantee of sustainable site management. Site management plans are widely used in Europe, but unavailable at many sites in Africa and the Arctic. Existing protected area networks include Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and World Heritage Sites. There is a need to increase the number of sites in these and other networks, and perhaps more importantly, to implement site-level management plans to ensure that exploitation of resources is sustainable and that habitat quality for biodiversity is maximized. A further need is to identify sites where Management Plans already exist, and ensure that they are being implemented.

#### *Solution & sustainability*

The application for World Heritage status at the Bijagós Archipelago in Guinea Bissau should be followed through until the site is accepted for listing. A small number of additional sites, or connected groups of sites, on the flyway suitable for World Heritage designation should be identified and the process for listing pursued with the relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations at local, national and international level. Where necessary, the institutions involved in this process should be strengthened and their capacity developed. Support should also be given to other sites suitable for designation as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and recognition under national legislation as National Parks and other protected area designations.

Capacity building will enhance the development of the expertise needed by agencies to identify and designate sites and develop management plans. Improved monitoring will help identify the sites in need of management

plans, and provide the data necessary for appropriate conservation and management activities. Useful sources of guidance for this project are *AEWA Conservation Guidelines No. 3. Guidelines on the preparation of site inventories for migratory waterbirds*, and *AEWA Conservation Guidelines No. 4. Guidelines on the management of key sites for migratory waterbirds*.

#### *Link to other (flyway) initiatives and organizations*

The development of WSFI was a result of designation of the Wadden Sea as a World Heritage Site, and the World Heritage Convention can be used as a focus of activities elsewhere on the flyway.

This project is of clear relevance to the AEWA African Initiative and of vital concern to the governmental and non-governmental organizations responsible for protected area management at national level and to site managers in all countries along the flyway.

A project with the aim of extending protected area networks and improving site management along the EAF in Africa would align well with the objectives of the AEWA African Initiative and would be suitable for support by means of a voluntary contribution from one of the governments that regularly supports AEWA. The Nordic governments and CAFF have a similar interest in protected areas and site management, as a priority in the Arctic, but also in other parts of the flyway.

#### *Specific role for WSFI*

The governments of the three Wadden Sea countries, and CWSS, in its role as the Secretariat of WSFI, have valuable experience gained during the process of designating the Wadden Sea as a World Heritage site. This experience should be used in supporting and lobbying governments and potential donors to contribute to this project. WSFI would also have a role coordinating action at international level.

Small-scale site management projects could be supported through the establishment of a small grants fund for countries to submit coastal management projects, with associated elements of capacity development. Such an approach would appeal to enthusiastic, well-established organizations which submit good proposals, and so, would reward initiative.

The World Heritage Convention will be a key player in this project and the 2014 MoU between the CWSS and the Banc d'Arguin National Park is open for signature by other authorities managing WHC properties along the EAF. The Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI) project to facilitate the addition of the Bijagós Archipelago in Guinea Bissau to the list of World Heritage Sites should be supported, and possibly used as an example for the listing of further sites along the flyway.

## Project 4.2 Support implementation of migratory waterbird Species Action Plans

### *Issue addressed*

The conservation requirements of species differ, and Single Species Action Plans (SSAPs) under AEWA are a recognized method of identifying and summarizing these needs for species with poor conservation status. The Part 1 report identified (in Annex 3) a preliminary list of EAF species for which Species Action Plans are required under AEWA. It is anticipated that further monitoring and capacity building in Africa and the Arctic will provide a basis for extending this list. The key requirement from 2015 onward is implementation of the existing plans, and activities at national and local level will be an important part of this.

### *Solution & sustainability*

As with the development of site management plans, monitoring, research and capacity development activities are necessary to provide the data and information upon which Species Action Plans are based. The emphasis should be on implementing existing plans, and national agencies will need to be reminded and informed of their obligations to particular species, and advised as to the activities necessary for each. An important source of

guidance for this project will be: *AEWA Conservation Guidelines No.1: Guidelines on the preparation of National Single Species Action Plans for migratory waterbirds.*

Special measures are needed to conserve quarry species and hunting organizations such as FACE and OMPO might have an interest in involvement and support for this project.

#### *Link to other (flyway) initiatives and organizations*

Under the Conservation of Migratory Birds (CMB) project in West Africa, international Species Action Plans for four species were adapted to national level in five countries. The species concerned were Eurasian Spoonbill, Black-tailed Godwit, Lesser Flamingo and Black-crowned Crane.

A project with the aim of improving species management along the EAF in Africa would align well with the objectives of AEWA and its African Initiative, and would be suitable for support by means of a voluntary contribution from one of the governments that regularly supports AEWA. Many of the species involved breed in the Arctic and there would also be a case for involving CAFF and the Nordic governments in mobilizing resources for this project.

#### *Specific role for WSFI*

The principal role of WSFI in this project would be to lobby governments to adopt and implement SSAPs, (and to join AEWA where relevant). Communication of the requirements to practitioners at local and national level under the existing plans, and mobilization of resources to meet these requirements would be the key activities.

### **Project 4.3 Promote sustainable livelihood approaches in selected communities to foster community-based management and address specific issues of unsustainable natural resource management**

#### *Issue addressed*

Overexploitation of natural resources such as mangroves and fisheries decreases the quality of coastal wetlands for migratory waterbirds and people. This overexploitation is driven by a complex suite of factors operating at local, national and international level.

#### *Solution & sustainability*

At local level, involvement of local communities in the monitoring of nearby key sites, and site management and regulation of resource use should be encouraged. This is a proven method for them to acquire a sense of responsibility and ownership of the site and care for its management, especially if the results include improvements in the livelihoods of community members.

At national level, policies and laws need to be strengthened and enforced for nature-inclusive rural development and trade initiatives.

The international aid policies of governments and donors also require a shift towards nature-inclusive development, and stimulation of ecologically sustainable trade initiatives.

The destruction and damage of mangroves has been identified by various sources, such as the VBN/RSPB study, as a major issue in West Africa. In some areas, the provision of alternative sources of income for people dependent on these unsustainable practices has promoted improved management of mangroves important for waterbirds and other biodiversity. Capacity building and training at community level in monitoring, management and sustainable livelihoods should be delivered to a carefully selected set of communities throughout Western Africa, which would be identified during the course of Project 3.1.

### *Link to other (flyway) initiatives and organizations*

Successful 2012-2014 pilot projects under the CMB Project and under the WSFI in coastal West Africa provide an example for future work.

This project should be of interest to international development agencies and NGOS in Europe, and especially in the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark.

### *Specific role for WSFI*

Governments and (international) donors should be lobbied to encourage nature-inclusive sustainable development in countries along the EAF, particularly in Africa. Policies and plans should be developed to counter the negative effects of sectoral policies (which will be identified during the threat identification and monitoring activities under project 2.1).

This project is closely related to project 3.1 above, and should be included (in 3.1.4) in the development of the integrated capacity development under that project. This separate project is required to facilitate further 'learning by doing' for the selected communities. The project should appeal to international development agencies and a proposal should be submitted to one or more governmental or non-governmental agencies based in Europe.

The Small Grants approach suggested under project 4.1 above would also be very appropriate for funding small-scale community-based activities under this project. WSFI could promote coordination by a partner based in Africa.

## 2.5. Objective 5. Build awareness of the East Atlantic Flyway, and of the value and connections of migratory waterbirds

The needs of this objective can be met by preparing a communications plan and including a communications component in the other projects. A project to address this objective is included under Objective 1 above.

### *Priority activities*

Priority activities for WSFI are presented as a series of 10 projects, based on the criteria listed above and on Figure 1, and using Annex 2 of the Declaration of Intent on the Flyway Vision of WSFI, signed in Tønder, Denmark in February 2014, titled *Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative Plan of Action 2014-2020*.

The proposed projects are listed under the five WSFI objectives presented in the *Plan of Action*, which are highlighted in the table with pale blue shading. Each project involves two or more of the activities listed in the original table.

The lists of potential stakeholders are incomplete and will be developed in the course of preparing project proposals. CWSS, in its role as the Secretariat of WSFI, will be involved in every project, and is only listed where it is expected to be significantly involved in the substance of the projects.

Table 1. Proposed list of priority projects for future development of WSFI

Project title	Important potential stakeholders (most important in bold)	Remarks
<b>1 Strengthen cooperation, coordination and communication along the East Atlantic Flyway</b>		
<b>Project 1.1</b> - A fund-raising strategy for WSFI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>CWSS and Governments of NL, DE &amp; DK</b></li> <li>- Other governments of EAF range states, especially in Western Europe</li> <li>- Governmental and Non-governmental agencies and foundations in the fields of international development, rural development, poverty alleviation, civil society development, climate change, marine and coastal zone management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provision of co-funding from the 3 WSFI governments will allow strong proposals.</li> <li>- An urgent part of this is coordination of a WSFI Conference in 2015, if possible including participants from other flyways. A donors' meeting could be a key session in this conference.</li> </ul>
<b>Project 1.2</b> - Coordination of WSFI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>CWSS</b></li> <li>-- All WSFI Stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuation, and scaling-up where necessary of current coordination procedures.</li> <li>- Measuring impact of all projects needs to be included in management procedures.</li> </ul>
<b>Project 1.3</b> - Develop and implement a WSFI Communication Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>CWSS</b></li> <li>- AEWA</li> <li>- Ramsar</li> <li>- BirdLife International</li> <li>- Wetlands International</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Activities under this project will need to be included in all other projects.</li> <li>- Project includes development of web portal, possibly including cost-benefit analysis of adapting CSN Tool developed under the 2006-2010 WOW Project.</li> </ul>
<b>2 Establish an integrated flyway monitoring programme for the East Atlantic Flyway</b>		

Project title	Important potential stakeholders (most important in bold)	Remarks
<p><b>Project 2.1</b> - Enhance efforts to identify, evaluate and monitor sites, species, and the threats they face along the East Atlantic Flyway</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Sovon</b></li> <li>- BirdLife International secretariat</li> <li>- Wetlands International</li> <li>- BirdLife partner organizations, especially in Africa and Russia</li> <li>- AEWA, Ramsar, Environmental Consultancies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The BirdLife IBA monitoring programme needs to be strengthened and enhanced on the East Atlantic Flyway outside Europe.</li> <li>- The VBN/RSPB report is a starting point for information on threats, but enhanced efforts to identify, measure and monitor threats in the Arctic and Africa are needed.</li> <li>- Reduction of threats through lobbying and advocacy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Project 2.2</b> - Establish an Arctic Breeding Birds Survey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>CAFF &amp; AMBI</b></li> <li>- Moscow State University (ABBCS)</li> <li>- NERI (Aarhus University), Denmark,</li> <li>- Icelandic Museum of Natural History (?)</li> <li>- Governments of Nordic Countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2014 Strategy prepared by SOVON provides basis.</li> <li>- CAFF is key partner, and follow-up of AMBI in 2015 may offer opportunity for input by WSFI.</li> <li>- Arctic Birds Breeding Condition Survey (ABBCS) offers possible starting point and template.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Project 2.3</b> – Develop and implement a programme to monitor vital rates of coastal waterbirds in the East Atlantic Flyway</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>SOVON,</b></li> <li>- TMAP</li> <li>- WI &amp; BirdLife networks</li> <li>- New Arctic partners</li> <li>- METAWAD</li> <li>- CAPS, Research Institutes and Universities to be identified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2014 Strategy prepared by SOVON provides basis.</li> <li>- The project should start a consortium of researchers and establish pilot projects.</li> <li>- Need to build trust and engage new network, ensuring that they benefit.</li> <li>- Possible data ownership issues.</li> </ul>



Project title	Important potential stakeholders (most important in bold)	Remarks
<b>3 Strengthen capacity along the East Atlantic Flyway in conservation, management of migratory waterbirds and their critical sites</b>		
<b>Project 3.1</b> – Develop and implement a programme for integrated capacity building along the East Atlantic Flyway, especially in Africa and Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Specialist in capacity development</b></li> <li>- AEWA Africa Initiative</li> <li>- BirdLife Secretariat and partners</li> <li>- Government National Parks and Wildlife services in Africa</li> <li>- NGOs in Africa and Russia</li> <li>- Russian Bird Conservation Union</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Long-term funding will be necessary.</li> <li>- Training of Trainers with monitoring of results and any necessary follow-up.</li> <li>- Potential for funding by an international development agency.</li> </ul>
<b>4 Promote conservation and wise use management of coastal resources and migratory waterbirds of the East Atlantic Flyway</b>		
<b>Project 4.1</b> - Support the establishment of Protected Area networks, and develop and implement Management Plans for selected wetlands of the East Atlantic Flyway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>CWSS</b></li> <li>- WHC</li> <li>- AEWA</li> <li>- Ramsar</li> <li>- Governmental and NGO Site management agencies</li> <li>- CAFF</li> </ul>	Project suitable for funding by a voluntary contribution from a signatory government to AEWA, WHC or Ramsar.
<b>Project 4.2</b> - Support implementation of migratory waterbird Species Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>CWSS</b></li> <li>- AEWA</li> <li>- National government agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project suitable for funding by a voluntary contribution from a signatory government to AEWA.</li> <li>- Many species breed in the Arctic and are relevant to CAFF and Nordic governments.</li> </ul>

Project title	Important potential stakeholders (most important in bold)	Remarks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Site managers</li> <li>- Hunting organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Top priority are AEWA AP Table 1 Column A species (See Annex 3 of Part 1 report).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Project 4.3</b> – Promote sustainable livelihood approaches in selected communities to foster community-based management and address specific issues of unsustainable natural resource management</p>	<p><b>- An International Development Agency based in Europe?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leadership by local organizations (including site-based ones) to provide a bottom-up approach.</li> <li>- WSFI could invest coordination in a partner based in Africa.</li> <li>- Possible facilitation of funding through e.g. RAMPPO, PRCM, UNEP-WCMC, MAVFA Foundation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify a suite of project communities throughout western Africa.</li> <li>- Potentially appealing to international development agencies.</li> <li>- Suitable for support by small-grants fund.</li> </ul>
<b>5 Build awareness of the East Atlantic Flyway, and of the value and connections of migratory waterbirds</b>		
		<p>Project 1.3 under this objective is included under Objective 1.</p>

## 3. Potential stakeholders and participants

### 3.1 The niche of WSFI

The principal niche of the WSFI is to translate the World Heritage request to the Wadden Sea countries for wider flyway support into practical implementation through partnership and support. Through these projects the WSFI will establish its role as a recognized facilitator and enabler of conservation activities for waterbirds and their wetland sites along the East Atlantic Flyway, which also engages directly with projects and partners along the flyway. The crucial roles of other agencies are recognized through their leadership of and involvement in some of the WSFI projects. Bodies such as European governments and international development agencies, and organizations such as AEWA, BirdLife International, CAFF, Ramsar, Sovon, Wetlands International and the World heritage Convention are all expected to contribute to, and benefit from, WSFI, and these partnerships should provide greater coherence to the activities being implemented on the flyway.

### 3.2 The role of CWSS

The Common Wadden Sea Secretariat has only been specifically included in the proposed projects listed in Table 1 where it is expected to play a substantial and leading role in the project. CWSS has a clear and vital role in acting as the secretariat for WSFI. The projects will expand and enhance the work of WSFI for at least the next five years, and even though many of the projects will be managed by other organizations, an increase in capacity at CWSS will be needed to ensure the effective cooperation, coordination and communication necessary for efficient governance and management of these projects. Any necessary increase in capacity could be addressed either by employing additional staff or by contracting particular tasks out to consultants.

### 3.3 Lead organizations for projects

It is suggested that the 10 proposed projects should be led and developed by a diversity of stakeholders. As well as the governments of The Netherlands, Germany and Denmark, these include AEWA, the World Heritage Convention, the Ramsar Convention, BirdLife International, Wetlands International, Sovon, universities, consultancies and International Development Agencies. As proposals for projects are developed, it is likely that additional organizations will become involved, especially those based within the regions of project focus (i.e. Africa and Russia).

### 3.4 Established Commitments

A number of organizations have signed agreements committing them to work related to WSFI. In March 2014, Representatives of 23 stakeholders in WSFI signed a Ministerial Council Declaration confirming their intention:

- to support and contribute to the implementation of the Flyway Vision,
- to cooperate with partners along the EAF to further strengthen and enhance the flyway network,
- to cooperate in implementing the Plan of Action and to seek additional funding for its implementation.

In June 2010, representatives of AEWA, BirdLife International, Ramsar and Wetlands International signed a Memorandum of Cooperation establishing a partnership for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats, which was, in effect, an agreement to extend the activities of the Wings over Wetlands (WOW) Project.

## 4. Conclusions

The 10 projects suggested in this report are open for discussion and amendment, and an effective means of implementing the goals of WSFI should emerge in early 2015.

The governments of The Netherlands and Germany have already demonstrated their commitment to WSFI by funding a solid programme of work from 2012-2014. It is hoped that in 2015, Denmark will recognize its new commitments under the World heritage Convention, and join the Dutch and German governments in continuing the Initiative at a realistic scale. All three countries have rich traditions of involvement in flyway research, including activities in the Arctic and Africa. Funding from these governments will provide the basis for the development of the 10 projects under WSFI, with the addition of co-funding from a number of sources to be gained through a set of project proposals. The role of Germany as the host Government of AEWA and the Convention on Migratory Species ('The Bonn Convention'), and The Netherlands as the depository of AEWA, gives these countries additional responsibilities.

Good cooperation, coordination and communication at local, national and international level along the flyway will support effective implementation of the projects and the realization of the vision for WSFI.

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