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BERN CONVENTION: USING THE ONLINE REPORTING SYSTEM

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World Conservation Monitoring Centre

BERN CONVENTION: USING THE ONLINE REPORTING SYSTEM

SUMMARY

The Online Reporting System (ORS) is a new electronic platform developed to transform national reporting under Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs). The ORS is designed to help ensure that better data is available for global decision-makers to track progress towards the Aichi targets, and to simplify the task of national authorities in meeting reporting requirements. This project aims to customise the Online Reporting System (ORS) for use by the Bern Convention.

1. OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Objectives:

1. To streamline the Bern Convention's reporting processes, such that Parties can submit reports on line and the information is then compiled, stored and readily accessible, in order to reduce reporting burdens on Parties.
2. To support the Secretariat in supporting the Parties to meet their reporting obligations so as to ensure effectiveness in safeguarding biodiversity.

Outcomes:

1. The ORS is customised for use by the Bern Convention.
2. The Secretariat is trained to use the ORS.
3. Support is provided to the Secretariat during creation of the first questionnaire.

2. CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

Online reporting is increasingly used to monitor progress in many spheres – it provides easy access to information and can provide a secure way to store data as well as being cost-effective in terms of data submission. The Online Reporting System (ORS) is a new electronic platform developed to transform reporting under Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs).

The system has been developed by the Secretariats of the Convention on Migratory Species and the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (UNEP-AEWA) with UNEP-WCMC. The ORS has already been used successfully to capture national report data submitted by AEWA parties prior to MOP5. Using the ORS, the AEWA submission rate was the highest in the Agreement's history. The ORS is also currently in use by CMS for the 2013/14 reporting cycle and is undergoing testing by CITES for biennial reporting. Training has been provided to the secretariats of CMS, AEWA and CITES by UNEP-WCMC.

At the international level, the ORS enables MEA secretariats to generate online questionnaires for completion by Parties. The ORS has the flexibility to enable the Secretariat to develop a range of questionnaires national reporting and for other instances where information from Parties is needed to inform decision-making. The Secretariat can assist Parties by checking data in the ORS before the Party's final submission. Individual Party reports may be downloaded in pdf format; alternatively, the full set of responses can be downloaded as a csv file for analysis. The ORS also includes a search facility that enables users to selectively view all of the responses to a particular question. Using the compiled national report data, the Secretariat can undertake cross-Party analysis which can be used to inform Parties about progress in convention implementation and to provide the basis for decision-making on future action by the Parties.

At the Party level, the ORS enables national authorities to compile their information in one place, but also to delegate sections of the report to be completed by staff from different departments. The information from previous reporting cycles is retained in the ORS and can be updated in subsequent reporting cycles, thus improving efficiency.

Future phases of development of the ORS envisage linking additional capacities such as: incorporating geo-spatial data, the ability to work off-line, an analytical module and links to data-holdings such as listing of species on the appendices to different conventions. The means to deliver such development and ensure re-generation and upgrading of the system would require further discussion and prioritization amongst participating Secretariats.

3. ACTIVITIES

Activities:

1. Customisation of the ORS for use by the Bern Convention, involving development of a standalone site and supporting background software, hosting and basic support during the first reporting cycle.
2. Two-day training of the Bern Convention Secretariat staff in use of the ORS and support during creation of the first questionnaire.

4. BUDGET

The total cost of the project will be £13,670¹

5. FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Hosting and maintenance beyond the first reporting cycle would require further discussion with participating Secretariats.

Activity	Total (£)
1. Customisation of the ORS for use by the Bern Convention, involving development of a standalone site in one language with supporting background software, hosting and basic support during the first reporting cycle	5,195
2. Two-day training of the Bern Convention Secretariat (including travel to Strasbourg and DSA) and basic support during creation of the first questionnaire	4,960
3. Project coordination, communication and collaboration	3,515
TOTAL	13,670

¹ Exclusive of taxes and based on work undertaken in 2014.

About UNEP-WCMC

The UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) is the specialist biodiversity assessment centre of the United Nations Environment Programme. The Centre has been in operation for over 30 years, combining scientific research with policy advice and the development of decision-support tools. To do this, we source, verify and collate data on biodiversity and ecosystem services; interpret and analyse information to provide comprehensive assessments and policy advice; and make the results available in appropriate forms for national and international level decision-makers and businesses. In the delivery of its biodiversity

portfolio at the Centre, UNEP collaborates with WCMC, a UK not-for-profit organisation that provides the expertise of dozens of specialists in the fields of biodiversity and ecosystem services in marine and terrestrial environments, as well as experts in information systems.

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