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**DRAFT METHODOLOGY, GUIDANCE AND  
COMMON FORMAT FOR CONDUCTING SOCIO-  
ECONOMIC RESEARCH INTO THE  
MOTIVATIONS BEHIND ILLEGAL KILLING,  
TAKING AND TRADE OF BIRDS**

*Document prepared by*

*Birdlife International on behalf of CMS Secretariat*

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**Joint Meeting of the Bern Convention Network of Special Focal Points on Eradication of Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds and the CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean**

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**DRAFT**

**AGREED METHODOLOGY, GUIDANCE AND COMMON FORMAT FOR CONDUCTING SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESEARCH INTO THE MOTIVATIONS BEHIND ILLEGAL KILLING, TAKING AND TRADE OF BIRDS**

*(Prepared by BirdLife International on behalf of CMS Secretariat)*

**Summary:**

This document provides a draft outline of a suggested methodology, guidance and a common format which may be used by Governments for surveying the motivations, drivers and modus operandi behind the illegal killing, taking and trade of wild birds (IKB), in order to facilitate their delivery of Objective 1.2b of the Rome Strategic Plan (RSP) and delivery of Objective 1.2a, 1.2c and 1.2d by the CMS and Bern Convention Secretariats.

It is presented as a draft for comments and suggestions.



The European Union was recognized as Champion Plus for their generous support and commitment towards addressing Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean for the period 2018 - 2023. This activity has been funded with the contribution granted by the European Commission under the Migratory Species Champion Programme and through the Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC Programme) Cooperation Agreements with UNEP.



**Proposed Outline  
for  
Agreed methodology, guidance and common format for conducting socio-economic research  
into the motivations behind illegal killing, taking and trade of birds**

This document provides an outline of a suggested methodology, guidance and a common format which may be used by Governments for surveying the motivations, drivers and *modus operandi* behind the illegal killing, taking and trade of wild birds (IKB), in order to facilitate their delivery of Objective 1.2b of the Rome Strategic Plan (RSP). (Objective No. 1: To understand the scope, scale and motivations behind illegal killing, taking and trade of birds, 1.2 The motivations behind the illegal killing of birds are fully understood in each country covered by the scope of the Strategic Plan and action to address these drivers is included in the national action plan and implemented).

This guidance document, suggested methodology and a summary of best available evidence in the form of relevant case studies will be supported by a set of standardised overview questions for each government to answer as part of their national assessment process. This “common format” will allow governments to collect comparable information for an overall survey, summary report and recommendations which will be undertaken by the MIKT/ Bern Secretariat will facilitate the delivery of RSP Objective 1.2a, 1.2c and 1.2d) (Objective No. 1: To understand the scope, scale and motivations behind illegal killing, taking and trade of birds, 1.2 The motivations behind the illegal killing of birds are fully understood in each country covered by the scope of the Strategic Plan and action to address these drivers is included in the national action plan and implemented, a) An overall survey and review of the motivations behind IKB, based on a common format and best available evidence is carried out for all countries in the scope of the Strategic Plan by 2021, including regional/national recommendations for further review using robust methods and action to address the identified motivations, c) Summary report of the country assessments to identify priority countries for action and issues is produced d) Recommendations are issued to address the identified motivations and appropriate action is included in National Action Plans and implemented).

This document includes the following components (although not in this order):

1. Guidance information
2. A step-by-step guide
3. Best available evidence in the form of case studies
4. Links and resources
5. Agreed methodology and guidance to support governments in developing their socio-economic surveys in line with RSP Objective 1.2b (as a separate annex)

6. Common format for Standardised overview questions to enable CMS MIKT to compile an overall survey, summary report and recommendations (RSP Objective 1.2a, 1.2c and 1.2d) (as a separate annex)

### **Suggested Methodology & Guidance document**

#### **Draft Outline for discussion**

(with a template for suggested methodology and a common format for the standardised overview questions included in annex)

#### **Title page**

#### **Contents page**

#### **Glossary of terminology**

#### **Introduction**

##### **▪ Background/ context**

- o What is IKB, and why is it important
- o Rome Strategic Plan/ MIKT/ Bern context
- o IKB as a “social” issue and not just a “conservation” issue
- o What do we mean by motivations, drivers and social context
- o Identifying key knowledge gaps
- o Using socio-economic/motivation studies to inform your National Action Plan on IKB

#### **Introduction to using social science tools to understand motivations behind IKB**

- o What kind of information can social science help us to gather? ▪ demographics
  - drivers
  - perceptions
  - actor profiles
  - roles and relationships
  - value chains
- o What kind of problems can social science help us to understand?
- o What does social science research involve? ▪ Explanation of quantitative and qualitative approaches
  - Available tools and resources
- o Who can undertake social science research to assess IKB? ▪ Aspects of multidisciplinary teams and partnerships

#### **Key considerations/ principles in social science research**

- o Ethics

- o Sample size
- o Sampling strategy
- o Randomness and representativeness
- o Bias
- o Positionality
- o General best practices or golden rules of social research [pop up box summarising key points]

Short half-page case study example of developing a social research plan to inform a conservation issue re: IKB [pop up box]

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## **A step-by-step guide to conducting a social research study on aspects of illegal killing**

### **STEP 1: Agree the scope and set aims and objectives**

#### **- Gather all relevant information**

- Consider what is already known about IKB in this country – understanding what types of IKB are present and to what extent is a prerequisite to undertaking a sociological analysis of motivations behind IKB
- Consider what is already known about drivers of this IKB (e.g., from published and unpublished reports, expert knowledge etc.)
- What does the research indicate are the highest priority knowledge gaps to fill in relation to understanding motivations/ socio-economic drivers to be able to better direct effective action to address IKB?

#### **- Consult stakeholders to decide on the scope of the study**

- A National Action Plan committee or similar may be a suitable group for these discussions; consider if other entities have suitable expertise to collaborate (e.g., Universities/NGOs/research institutes/hunters associations) and should be involved
- What do the stakeholders indicate are the highest priority knowledge gaps to fill in relation to understanding motivations/ socio-economic drivers to be able to better direct effective action to address IKB?

#### **- Agree the aims and objectives of the study**

- Will the study contribute to understanding the drivers behind all forms of IKB in the country or focus on some priority aspects?
- Aim: What will the study achieve?
- Objectives: How will this be achieved?
- Formulate overarching research question and sub-questions (examples)
- Articulate related questions which will not be addressed by this study, but should be pursued in future
- Is this study linked to a particular intervention (e.g., is it forming a baseline against which impact will be measured)?

**- Decide on timeframe & geographic scope for study**

- Decide on the spatial scale at which the study be carried out (e.g., national, regional or local scale)
- Decide when the study will be carried out
- Consider any known seasonality or temporal variation in the pattern of the relevant form of IKB and time appropriately
- Will the study be carried out for a continuous period or at intervals?
- Is the study a one-off or will it be repeated?
- Is the aim of the study to establish a baseline against which to measure progress after a particular intervention?
- Is it possible to include a pilot study, evaluate results and adjust methods before wider roll-out?

**STEP 2: Decide on methodology**

**- Identify appropriate methodological approaches**

- What kind of methods might suit different types of research questions (Case studies) and what kind of data result from using these methods?

Including:

- Telephone polls
- Online surveys
- In-person surveys
- Focus group discussions
- Demographic surveys
- Attitude surveys
- Semi-structured interviews
- Value-chain assessment
- Cost-benefit analysis (Costs of inputs, price and destination of outputs versus deterrents)
- Direct observation
- Specific techniques for eliciting information on illegal behaviour

- Decide which methodological approach to use to answer different aspects of the research question/ sub-questions

- Decide how research assistants will collect the data (paper forms, digital forms, apps etc, bearing in mind ease of collation for analysis)

- If respondents record the information themselves, consider literacy, language/ translation etc. when devising data collection tools
- Consider the research assistants you may be able to recruit and the ease with which they can be trained to use different candidate methods effectively
- Consider what data analysis approaches will be appropriate for the selected methods

**- Decide sampling strategy for each methodological approach used**

- How will the participants be selected/sampled? (Refer back to earlier section on ‘Sample Size’ and ‘Sampling Strategy’)
- The sampling unit used: individuals, stakeholder groups, e.g., bird hunters, traders, officials, etc.
- Consider sample size and any issues of reliability

**STEP 3: Plan and prepare for the research**

- Develop a research workplan and timeline
- Where necessary seek ethics approval
- Obtain permissions from relevant authorities, community leaders etc.
- Hire and train research assistants
- Consider hiring people from the relevant geographic area, ideally able to be accepted by the study community, but not necessarily from the community itself (giving a balance between local understanding and objectivity)

**- Pilot methods**

- If possible, conduct a pilot study and leave time to evaluate results and adjust methods accordingly before rolling out to a wider area/cohort
- This can be a useful training exercise for newly recruited / trained research assistants, it can help calibrate the data, avoid mistakes, highlight issues that were unexpected / outcomes that were unintended and can avoid wasting resources collecting data in a way / of a quality that is not usable

**- Plan to review progress periodically**

- Even if the pilot study is successful, review progress periodically throughout the main study period



- Build in moments to ‘Pause and reflect’ which can help address problems early on so any issues can be mitigated or resolved

#### **STEP 5: Analyse data and check results**

##### **- Collate and store data**

- Ensure data are sent from the field regularly / backed up safely
- Collate data in a form that facilitates data analysis
- Screen data for clear errors, gaps and discard any unusable data

##### **- Analyse data**

- Typical methods for analysis of different data types
- Ensuring that the analysis responds to the assessment / study objectives.

##### **- Carry out validity checks on results**

- Are results from different research assistants working in the same community comparable?
- Are answers from participants congruent with direct observations?
- Is key participant information about seasonality, community history, and attitudes congruent with other available information?

#### **STEP 6: Write up and disseminate your findings**

- Use the template / common format in Annex 3 as a basic framework for the report
- Consider publishing findings in peer-reviewed literature or making them publicly accessible in other forms
- Provide authorship or appropriate acknowledgement for local collaborators/ participants
- Provide a report or feedback results and recommendations to the community/ respondents/ participants
- Ensure raw data are made available to local collaborators, with appropriate modifications to ensure confidentiality for respondents
- Ensure any key results, recommendations and next steps are discussed in relevant fora such as any NAP committee and fed into planning of initiatives to tackle IKB

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## **Best Available Evidence**

### **Case Studies**

#### **of common social science methods useful for socio-economic research**

*(note: list below indicative examples, not complete; case studies may be inserted throughout the document rather than in separate section)*

#### **Method: Questionnaires/written surveys/polls (online surveys, email surveys etc)**

**Case Study:** Changing social awareness of the illegal killing of migratory birds in the Ionian Islands, western Greece

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00219266.2018.1554597>

A questionnaire-based survey aimed at monitoring, measuring and evaluating the ‘Safe havens for wild birds’ campaign, implemented within the framework of the LIFE programme, in Greece and more specifically in the Ionian Islands. The study was conducted in two phases, just before the launch (2013) and after the completion of the campaign (2015), to enable a comparison of answers and data. The study detects attitude changes that occurred in three target groups (pupils, local hunters and residents) on three islands where the phenomenon of illegal spring killing is more intense

**Case study:** Trends in legal and illegal trade of wild birds: a global assessment based on expert knowledge, Biodiversity and Conservation, 2019

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10531-019-01825-5>

Focusing on consumer demand in each country, the study conducted a global survey among 105 international experts on bird conservation to identify expected trends, drivers and market characteristics of legal and illegal wild-caught pet bird trade.

**Case Study:** Survey on the Relation of hunting to livelihood of People Pre- and Post-Project, Zeina Badran (2012)

National study to determine the prevailing attitudes of people towards bird hunting conducted on citizens of different regions in Lebanon. A total of 2000 respondents were sampled randomly. The study covered respondents of different educational levels, and self-administered questionnaires were answered by respondents from different ages and backgrounds, in order to cover the various attitudes and views.

**Method: Structured/Semi-structured interviews (face-to-face)**

**Case study:** What motivates hunters to target exotic or endemic species on the island of São Tomé, Gulf of Guinea? Carvahlo et al. 2014 Fauna & Flora International, Oryx, 1–9

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/oryx/article/what-motivates-hunters-to-target-exotic-or-endemic-species-on-the-island-of-sao-tome-gulf-of-guinea/E1728FC9D03047BB8684D42B417E6E8A>

Semi-structured interviews with 119 hunters to assess the relative importance of native and introduced prey species, gathering information on personal profiles, preference and practice, and hunters' perceptions of trends in prey populations

**Case Study:** Structured interviews with enforcement officers on barriers to IKB enforcement (unpublished, BIOM, Croatia)

**Method: Interdisciplinary or mixed-method approach:**

**Case study:** Socio-economic study of Bird Hunting Along the Mediterranean Coast of Egypt

[https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/uploads/meetings/MIKT1/NCE\\_BirdLife\\_Bird-Hunting-Along-the-Mediterranean-Coast-of-Egypt.pdf](https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/uploads/meetings/MIKT1/NCE_BirdLife_Bird-Hunting-Along-the-Mediterranean-Coast-of-Egypt.pdf)

The primary data source for the study was a field survey including quantitative and qualitative data, preceded by a review of relevant literature (see reference list). 73 bird hunters and traders from 25 local communities, towns and cities along the coast were interviewed following a comprehensive set of questions designed and tested prior to the survey. Group discussions were also held in communities where hunters agreed to participate.

**Case study:** Study on the origins of motivations of environmental crime (ES,PT)

<https://guardianes.seo.org/download/estudio-sobre-el-origen-y-las-motivaciones-de-la-criminalidad-ambiental-es-pt/>

The objective of this research was to analyze the motivations behind environmental crimes in Spain and Portugal, although some of the chapters carry out a universal analysis of the motivation of environmental crime. What motivates criminal actions against the environment and especially against wildlife? What characterizes the people who commit them? This report reviewed the scientific literature, surveyed the general public, analysed criminal sentencing data and interviewed the different professionals involved in their investigation. It concludes by proposing future lines of action: both further research and options for intervention.

**Case Study:** Using government data and hunters' perceptions to establish the efficacy of enforcement action. Ferns, B, Campbell, B & Veríssimo, D. 2022. Emerging contradictions in the enforcement of bird hunting regulations in Malta. *Conservation Science and Practice*, e12655. DOI: <https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/csp2.12655>

To better understand the complexity of wildlife crime and enforcement in Malta, a mixed-method approach was utilized and triangulation techniques employed to build reliable narratives. Governmental data were

supplemented and corroborated using the key informant technique (Marshall, 1996), whereby key interlocutors (n = 6) were identified based on their knowledge and role in the hunting arena. Interviewees included an ornithologist, a police inspector, a politician heavily involved on the anti-hunting side of the 2015 referendum, two WRBU officials, and the President of a hunting association. All interviews were semi-structured.

## **Annex 1**

### **A Suggested Methodology for socio-economic research**

#### *Sample socio-economic study template*

This section outlines the basic sections a socio-economic assessment could contain. Note that there is no one-size-fits-all protocol for studying the motivations and profiles of those undertaking IKB or for those enabling or accepting it. The techniques that work best depend on the questions being asked and the characteristics of the social context and stakeholders under investigation. Below is a typical general framework that could be adapted and elaborated according to the topic under investigation.

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## **1 Introduction**

### *1.1 Overview of background information on IKB context in-country (see guidance document Step 1)*

Including:

- Key IKB types/methods
- Species affected
- Scale and intensity of IKB
- Geographic distribution of IKB
- Types of actors involved in IKB
- Known motivations/drivers of actor types
- Key knowledge gaps

### *1.2 Relevant legislative frameworks, guiding documents and IKB national fora (see guidance document Step 1)*

Including:

- What structures and processes are in place? National Action Plan, local action Plans, government declarations or policy objectives.
- Are there other state-led initiatives in place?
- Are there civil society or non-state actors that may be actively tackling the issue (hunters associations, NGOs, universities etc.)
- Signed international treaties/conventions
- Summary or link to relevant legislation

- National or Local action plans, MoUs or declarations relating to IKB
- Relevant national committees (e.g., IKB NAP committees, anti-poisoning working groups, illegal wildlife trade taskforces etc.)

## **2 Aims and objectives of study (see guidance document Step 2)**

- Aim: The overall result the study aims to achieve
- Objectives: How these will be achieved

## **3 Study methods and approach (see guidance document Step 3-11)**

### *3.1 Actor Identification*

### *3.2 Geographical scope of study/ assessment*

### *3.3 Timeframe of study/ assessment*

### *3.4 Quantitative and/or qualitative data collection methods used*

### *3.5 Sampling approach*

## **4 Data analysis (see guidance document Step 6)**

### *4.1 Data collation/ synthesis*

### *4.2 Analytical methods*

## **5 Results (see guidance document Step 6)**

Including:

- Describe results re: actor types in this IKB issue (consider all aspects of the issue, from the person removing the bird from the wild to any middle-person, seller or end consumer, as well as decision-makers, enforcement officials, general public, school children, etc. etc.),
- Describe results re: the role each of these actors plays in perpetrating, enabling or accepting the IKB issue/s which are the focus of the study
- Describe the motivations of these different types of actors
- Describe any enabling conditions affecting their motivation (eg/ economic situation, perception of impunity, social pressure to engage in the activity, cultural/ societal traditions normalise the activity etc.)
- Other key findings
- Visualisation of findings using figures, tables, maps, photographs, etc.

## **6 Discussion (see guidance document Step 6)**

Including:

- Insights from results related back to aims and objectives
- Representativity of results re: the wider population of actors
- Validity checks: Are results congruent with other sources/ direct observations? Is key informant information about seasonality, community history, and attitudes congruent with other available information?

- Key actions identified from results that could help reduce IKB either by changing the motivation of actors and/ or by changing the enabling conditions around their activities
- Whether results indicate actors in the chain whose motivation might be easier to change than others

## **7 Conclusions and Recommendations** (*see guidance document Step 6*)

Including:

- What the study has helped achieve
- What recommendations and suggested actions have been identified for discussion in multistakeholder national action plan committees or other relevant fora and for implementation
- Which members of the multistakeholder IKB forum or other relevant entities could help enact the recommended interventions and what next steps should be in engaging them
- How the impact of such actions will be monitored to see whether they are effective (e.g., through a baseline survey which can be repeated post-intervention)
- How strategies will be adapted on the basis of that monitoring
- What knowledge gaps remain to be filled, how will they be filled and which collaborators could help to fill these knowledge gaps



## **Annex 2**

### **Common Format for an overall regional summary report**

#### *Sample standardised overview questions for an overall regional summary report*

Each government will be asked to respond to a set of standardised overview questions as part of their national assessment process. Responses to these questions will provide comparable information for an overall regional summary report and recommendations which will be conducted by MIKT/ Bern Secretariat (and which will facilitate the delivery of RSP Objective 1.2a, 1.2c and 1.2d).

Example questions below, to be developed in discussion with CMS and governments (during and post-MIKT 5)

Examples:

*To understand the context:*

1. How would you rate your knowledge of which types of IKB are responsible for the majority of IKB in your country?
  - full knowledge backed up by studies listed below
  - good knowledge that some types of IKB are important (backed up by studies), but incomplete (some other types may also be important but haven't been assessed)
  - fair knowledge but based on expert opinion
  - little or no knowledge
  
2. Number the types of IKB listed below in order of their contribution to scale of IKB in your country with 1 responsible for the most and identifying the main method/s of IKB used for each IKB type
  - 
  -

*To understand their knowledge of IKB motivations in country:*

3. For each of the types of IKB listed in 2/ above rate the state of knowledge of the motivations/ drivers behind them

*To understand the key motivation types and actor types behind IKB in country:*

4. For each of the types of IKB listed in 2/ above select the category/ categories below that best describe/s a) the motivation type/s, b) the main type/s of actor

- -
- -

*To understand national stakeholder constituency in work on motivations/ socioeconomic drivers:*

5. Which collaborator types do you consider can make an important contribution to knowledge of IKB motivation in your country?

*To understand areas where there is national expertise that could be shared with other MIKT members:*

6. List any expertise/ experience/ areas of strength within your country relevant to the assessment of motivations/ socioeconomic drivers of IKB

7. Please indicate if you would be willing to share this expertise in an online or in person meeting/ workshop and if so, who would be the key contact for each (Name/ Institution/ Role/ e-mail)

*To understand national capacity building/ training/ exchange needs:*

8. Select/List any areas where you would like to receive training/ join targeted experience sharing

*To understand next steps nationally from knowledge gained in assessment:*

8/ a) In which of the following ways will you make use of the knowledge you have acquired?

- -
- -

b) on what time-scale?

c) which collaborator types will be important in taking the relevant action?

d) If you will not be able to pursue action on the basis of the assessment within the next x years, what are the main reasons for this?

*To understand national priorities for action on IKB:*

9. What types of action are of highest priority to address IKB in your country? (select 5 from the list below, numbered in order of priority with 1 highest priority)

*To understand national knowledge gaps remaining to be addressed:*

10. What are the key knowledge gaps you would like to fill to have sufficient understanding of the motivations/ socioeconomic drivers of IKB to be able to address it effectively?

b) Do you plan to fill these within the next x years?

-

c) If not, what are the main impediments to progress?

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### Annex 3

Rome Strategic Plan: Objective No. 1: To understand the scope, scale and motivations behind illegal killing, taking and trade of birds

<p><b>2030 Target:</b> 1.2 The motivations behind the illegal killing of birds are fully understood in each country covered by the scope of the Strategic Plan and action to address these drivers is included in the national action plan and implemented</p>	<p><b>Indicator</b> (quantitative): i. Number of countries and stakeholders that have carried out an assessment of the motivations behind IKB based on robust evidence</p>	<p>a) An overall survey and review of the motivations behind IKB, based on a common format and best available evidence is carried out for all countries in the scope of the Strategic Plan by 2021, including regional/national recommendations for further review using robust methods and action to address the identified motivations.</p>	<p>All countries Countries with the greatest needs are prioritized, with support from Secretariats</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>SWM<sup>1</sup> RESSOURCE<sup>2</sup></p>
	<p><b>Means of verification:</b> Gap assessment reports</p>	<p>b) By 2022 national surveys are completed based on agreed methodology and guidance in countries with greatest needs further refining understanding of IKB motivations, building on the work already achieved under the TAP.</p>	<p>Bern Convention and CMS Secretariats to facilitate/commission work, including development of agreed methodology</p>	<p>All</p>	
	<p><b>Scoreboard indicator:</b> E25, E26</p> <p><b>Indicator</b> (qualitative): ii. The extent to which cultural, social and economic aspects of IKB are considered in activities and all stakeholders are engaged</p> <p><b>Means of verification:</b> Documentation provided by the countries and stakeholders and inclusion of appropriate</p>	<p>c) Summary report of the country assessments to identify priority countries for action and issues is produced d) Recommendations are issued to address the identified motivations and appropriate action is included in National Action Plans and implemented</p>	<p>Bern Convention and CMS Secretariats to produce synthesis and propose recommendations  National governments supported by international and national partners, as appropriate</p>	<p>All</p>	

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fao.org/forestry/wildlife/95602/en/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.fao.org/forestry/wildlife/63179/en/>



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	activities in National Action Plan				
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