Strasbourg, 12 July 2024 **T-PVS(2024)05**

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

SECOND MEETING OF THE NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS FOR THE PAN-EUROPEAN ACTION PLAN FOR STURGEONS

Strasbourg, 10 - 11 June 2024

MEETING REPORT

Document prepared by
the Secretariat of the Bern Convention

The second meeting of the National Focal Points for the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons took place from 10 to 11 June 2024 in Strasbourg.

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- Take note of the report of the second meeting of the National Focal Points for the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons;

- Take note of the findings of the mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons and encourage range Contracting Parties to fully implement the Action Plan;

- Examine and, if appropriate, approve the guidelines on habitat assessment, population monitoring and *ex situ* conservation measures;

1. Opening of the meeting by the Chair

Ms Salome Nozadze, Chair of the National Focal Points on the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons, welcomed the participants in the second meeting of the National Focal Points for the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons. She thanked the eighteen range Contracting Parties represented and noted the increasing interest for the conservation of sturgeons (see list of participants in Appendix I). She recalled that the first meeting was very successful and informative. She informed that the second meeting would aim to take stock of the progress in the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons and to examine outputs of a project supported by the European Commission.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda (T-PVS/Agenda(2024)06) was adopted without amendments and is reproduced in Appendix II.

3. Oral update on the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for the conservation of the sturgeon by the National Focal Points of the range countries since the first meeting of the National Focal Points.

The Chair invited the National Focal Points for the conservation of Sturgeons to report on the progress in the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons.

- Austria: the National Focal Point had just been nominated and had nothing to report.

- Bulgaria: the National Focal Point reported that fishing bans regulars bans were issued, that police officers were trained for species identification and handling of poached sturgeons, that local fishermen were involved in the sturgeon monitoring, habitats along the Danube have been mapped since 2013, studies were carried out to understand the migration routes, a roadmap will be implemented as from 2025 to achieve the objectives of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons.

See the entire intervention in Annex III

- Croatia, the National Focal Point reported that a monitoring programme for the conservation of the sturgeon had been developed.

See the entire intervention in Annex III

- Estonia: the National Focal Point recalled that there was only one sturgeon species in the Baltic Sea which was extinct. With the help of Germany, Estonia had initiated activities to restore the population of the Baltic sturgeon.

- Georgia: the Chair and National Focal Point informed participants that a National Action Plan was still pending. A mapping of rivers had been undertaken which revealed that sturgeons were spawning only in the Rioni river. A monitoring programme was prepared. A cooperation platform had been set up. The National Species Recovery Plan was in development. The planning for the establishment of the Rioni protected area was ongoing.

- Finland: the National Focal Point reported that Finland had initiated data collection on bycatch of sturgeons by commercial fishermen. Within the frame of a LIFE project data on observation of

sturgeons were recorded. No work on habitat protection/restoration had been undertaken as there was no evidence that sturgeons spawn in Finnish rivers.

See the entire intervention in Annex III

- Germany: the National Focal Point reported that research projects dealing with the reintroduction of sturgeons into German waters had been carried out since 1996. 3,5 million individuals had been released in the Oder river in cooperation with Poland. In 2010, an action plan for the reintroduction of sturgeon in Germany had been elaborated. In 2024 the implementation of a project aimed to study the migration routes and habitat use and to record bycatch had started.

See the entire intervention in Annex III

- Hungary: the National Focal Point recalled that 3 out of the 5 native species present in Hungary and protected were critically endangered and extinct in the wild. To stop the population decline and secure the genetic diversity, an *ex situ* gene bank had been created. Habitats had been identified and were protected. The coordination of the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons was still a challenge.

- Italy: the National Focal Point recalled that the Adriatic Sturgeon was the only species present in Italy. An Action Plan for sturgeons had been included in the National Biodiversity Strategy but was still pending its approval. Guidelines for the conservation of sturgeons will be prepared.

See the entire intervention in Annex III

- Lithuania: the National Focal Points informed participants of the Lithuanian Pisciculture Strategy for 2022 2026 aimed to restore migration routes, fish stocks and to develop renewal energy infrastructures in pisciculture. Suitable rivers and habitats for sturgeon stocking had been selected, tagging and monitoring of sturgeons had been carried out, *ex-situ* facilities had been created, 366 254 individuals had been released between 2011 and 2023.

See the entire intervention in Annex III

- The Netherlands: the National Focal Point reported that a National Action Plan aiming to the reintroduction of the European Sturgeon in the Lower Rhine had been adopted in 2020. The Action Plan complemented the Action Plans of France and Germany.

See the entire intervention in Annex III

- See the entire intervention in Annex IIIPoland: the National Focal Point informed participants that broodstock had been developed in 4 breeding centers. Breeding of juveniles had been improved. In 2023 1,8 M individuals had been released. Bycatches had been registered. Awareness activities had been implemented. She stressed however that no dedicated programme for the protection and reintroduction of the sturgeon existed, and illegal fishing remained a concern.

See the entire intervention in Annex III

- Romania: the National Focal Points reported that no National Action Plan had been developed so far. Commercial fishing of sturgeons had been prohibited since 2006. Poaching cases had been registered each year. A common database of bycatches had been created. There was no release

programme established for the time being. An *ex-situ* facility had been established in the Danube Delta. Not all habitats had been identified yet. There were no habitats restoration plans in place. Studies had been performed to assess solutions for creating fish passes at the Iron Gates I and II dams.

See the entire intervention in Annex III

- Serbia: the National Focal Point informed participants that 6 species had been recorded in Serbia. He emphasized that the main obstacle to the sturgeon recovery was the Iron Gates I and II. Several projects had been implemented to assess solutions for creating fish passes. He concluded that a permanent fishing ban was in place.

See the entire intervention in Annex III

- Slovenia: the National Focal Point reported that there was still no evidence of sturgeon's presence in Slovenia excepted for the Sterlet. Slovenia was in the process of drafting a National Action Plan based on the outcomes of the LIFE Boat 4 Sturgeon project. In 2027/2028 an important release of juveniles was planned which should enable to raise awareness among stakeholders including decision-makers.

See the entire intervention in Annex III

- Spain: the National Focal Point recalled that a feasibility study started already in 2012. An agreement had been concluded with the French authorities in 2018. 45 juveniles had been transferred from Aquitaine to Catalonia and were monitored. A recovery plan of the European Sturgeon was in preparation.

- Ukraine: the National Focal Point reported that commercial fishery had been prohibited since 2000. Since 2009 all sturgeon species present in Ukraine had been included in the national Red Book. In 2020 the "Action Plan for the Conservation of Sturgeons in Ukraine for 2021-2030" had been adopted. In 2023 a Working Group on the Implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons had been established.

See the entire intervention in Annex III

4. European Commission service contract to support the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons

Mr András Bartal, European Commission, informed participants of the objectives of the service contract signed between the European Commission and the SCUTE consortium led by WWF Central and Eastern Europe. The contract of a total value of EUR 600,000 ran from January 2023 till December 2024 and comprised 6 tasks:

- compiling information on the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons in key range countries;
- guiding the protection and restoration of sturgeon habitats by assessing existing knowledge about sturgeon habitats and migration obstacles and developing guidelines on sturgeon habitat monitoring;
- supporting efforts to protect sturgeons from bycatch;
- developing a standard population monitoring methodology;
- developing best-practice technical guidelines on *ex situ* breeding and release programmes;

- increasing support from stakeholders for sturgeon conservation measures by organising intersectoral meetings and preparing communication materials.

The expected deliverables included:

- Factsheet in 17 languages with recommendations to stakeholders;
- A promotional video of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons;
- Five regional progress reports;
- Technical guidelines on habitat assessment, population monitoring and *ex situ* conservation measures;
- Studies on bycatch and on habitat characteristics.

4a. Assessment of the national and regional implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons (mid-term evaluation)

Ms Beate Striebel, WWF Central Eastern Europe, informed participants that within the frame of the service contract funded by the European Commission, a mid-term assessment of the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons had been undertaken. The assessment covered 8 sturgeon species in 18 countries representing 5 regions. Information had been collected by the means of a questionnaire with 85 questions covering the 9 objectives of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons.

Ms Striebel shared with participants the main findings of the survey:

- 9 out of 18 countries had a national strategy for the conservation of sturgeons;
- Legal protection of the sturgeon was largely achieved but 8 out of 18 countries reported that poaching was an issue;
- Bycatch was a problem for the majority of the 18 countries;
- All 18 countries considered release programmes as necessary but 10 out of 18 countries had not an *ex situ* programme;
- 16 out of 18 countries had identified habitats of the sturgeon but their protection was lagging behind and their restoration was almost inexistent;
- All 18 countries had identified the obstacles to the migration of sturgeons but no solutions for overcoming the obstacles were in place;
- 4 out of 18 countries were implementing monitoring programmes and 5 further countries had monitoring programmes in development. In most cases the monitoring was not coordinated with other countries for shared sturgeon populations;
- 17 of 18 countries had nominated a national focal point but their mandate required clarification;
- A majority of the 18 countries had not an evaluation mechanism of the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons.

4b. Study on sturgeon bycatch

Mr Jörn Gessner, Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries, presented to participants the findings of a study on sturgeon bycatch carried out within the frame of the service contract funded by the European Commission. He emphasised that bycatch occurred in almost all fisheries and recalled that information on bycatch was provided voluntarily and was therefore limited.

The study resulted in a set of recommendations structured along the following headings:

<u>Cooperation and involvement of key target groups</u>

- Raise awareness of fishermen and fishing authorities on the impact of bycatch on the sturgeon;
- Train fishermen in identifying and handling fish for safe release in case of bycatch;

- Actively involve them in conservation actions such as monitoring or bycatch reporting;
- Encourage collaboration between authorities, fishers, scientists, and conservation organisations to develop and apply methods to reduce sturgeon bycatch.

Improve and enforce regulations

- Every sturgeon must be returned into the water as soon as possible;
- Authorities must increase enforcement of existing regulations;
- Raise awareness of fishers and fishing authorities on existing regulations and ensure they are understood, and their implementation is practical;
- Fines must reflect the impact of the activity on the protected species.

Improve protection measures

- Set up mandatory surveillance systems to increase the survival of bycaught sturgeons;
- Establish regional data collection on sturgeon occurrence and bycatch between countries;
- Apply effective protection through restrictions of gear and critical fisheries techniques;
- Restrict fisheries in marine protected areas.

Data acquisition, research and innovation

- Improve knowledge on bycatch through reporting and monitoring obligations;
- Widely apply surveillance techniques to increase data availability;
- Improve the knowledge base on sturgeon habitats, range and temporal distribution patterns to
- identify potential overlap with fisheries at sea and in freshwaters;
- Establish effective protected areas for the species;
- Develop innovative fishing gear that catches target species while minimising bycatch;
- Identify measures effective in bycatch avoidance for multiple protected species.

Participants in the second meeting of the National Focal Points for the conservation of Sturgeons welcomed the outcomes of the study on sturgeon bycatch and acknowledged that a more systematic monitoring of bycatch cases was needed. To this end the cooperation between the various sectors involved should be strengthened.

4c. Habitat assessment guideline

Mr Ralf Reinartz, consultant, presented to participant the draft Guideline on habitat assessment developed in support to Contracting Parties for the achievement of objective 3 – Sturgeon habitats are protected and restored in key rivers as well as objective 4 – Sturgeon migration (up- and downstream) of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons.

He recalled that the sturgeon life cycle required specific habitats and their accessibility to support use such as spawning, feeding, and wintering to ensure viable populations. The identification and monitoring of sturgeon habitats and their functionality were crucial for understanding the dynamic interactions between populations and their environments, as well as to guide the development and implementation of sturgeon conservation measures through habitat protection and restoration.

Mr Reinartz underlined that monitoring of sturgeon populations and habitats of sturgeons were closely linked.

The guideline proposed a four-step approach to structure the monitoring of habitats:

1. Identification of relevant areas of past presence (catchments, rivers, areas and sections);

2. Verification of habitats (measurement and documentation of actual relevant environmental variables in the field targeting specific locations, timings, and conditions);

3. Confirmation of habitat utilisation (observation of the sturgeon presence and movement and documentation of the habitat);

4. Recurring and real-time monitoring measures (measurement and documentation of the ongoing functionality of habitat and habitat types over time).

Mr Reinartz concluded his presentation stressing that habitat monitoring was an important and indispensable part of any approach for sturgeon conservation and/or restoration had to be organised and synchronised with all other aspects of sturgeon conservation such as population monitoring.

4d. Population monitoring guideline

Mr Jakob Neuburg, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, presented to participants the Guideline on population monitoring and its 3 annexes: Annex 1: Field protocol, Annex 2: Example of datasheet, Annex 3: Database structure developed in support to Contracting Parties for the achievement of objective 5 - Timely and continuous detection of population sizes and changes in remaining wild stocks of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons.

Sturgeon populations in European rivers and coastal waters have undergone a dramatic decline. This stressed even more the importance of monitoring sturgeon populations. Due to their ecology, late maturation, and long lifespan, changes in sturgeon populations could only be assessed through long-term monitoring.

Population monitoring provided the essential means to evaluate and confirm the status of a sturgeon population and assess the resulting effects of conservation measures.

The guideline proposed a five-step approach that addressed the critical issues required to assess any relevant changes in population status.

1. Assessment of sturgeon presence
2. Identification of timing and habitat use
3. Identification of the genetic properties of a population
4. Determination of the recruitment into the reproductive population & year class strength
5. Data management

Mr Neuburg concluded his presentation stressing that population monitoring provided for science-based decision making. A harmonised monitoring methodology and tools were needed to ensure the systematic collection of data, the comparability of data, the access to data.

4e. *Ex-situ* conservation measures guideline

Mr Jörn Gessner, Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries, presented to participants the Guideline on *Ex-situ* conservation measures developed in support to Contracting Parties for the achievement of Objective 2 - Population structure is actively supported to reverse the decline of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons.

The ultimate objective of *ex situ* measures was to restore viable self-sustaining populations. *Ex situ* measures were a means to safeguard the genetic heterogeneity and diversity of the populations that still exist following detrimental anthropogenic impacts. The measures comprised the safeguarding of remaining individuals under controlled condition (in captivity) to allow their utilisation in future

reproduction and providing the basis for population support through releases of fish being reared under controlled conditions. To be effective, *in situ* sturgeon habitat had to be functional and sufficiently protected from adverse impact and direct threats to wild populations (i.e., bycatch, poaching, etc.) had to be reduced to biologically safe levels.
The measures for re-introduction required decades to become effective. Since the *ex situ* approach had to be maintained over long periods, due to the long generation time of the species and the fact that available broodstock were rare, the *ex situ* measures were complex and expensive. *Ex situ* measures could require the construction or utilisation of specialised facilities which result in long term costly investments.

Since sturgeon populations were shared between countries, *ex situ* conservation measures required a close collaboration between the countries concerned to manage the resource jointly including the sharing of costs. Results of *ex situ* actions had to be shared transparently with the public and relevant stakeholders involved in sturgeon conservation.

Mr Gessner concluded his presentation stressing that the guideline outlined best practices to implement *ex situ* measures at different levels, provided the basis for harmonisation of measures and approaches in range countries and could serve as a reference and training tool for implementing entities.

4f. Planned regional stakeholder meetings in 2024

Ms Beate Striebel, WWF Central Eastern Europe, informed participants that one stakeholder meeting was scheduled in each of the 5 key regions (Atlantic, Baltic, Mediterranean, Upper/Middle Danube and Lower Danube).

The purpose of the meetings was to:

- Connect stakeholders across borders from responsible authorities across sectors (water management, biodiversity and conservation, fisheries, navigation);
- disseminate the outputs of the service contract;
- to highlight potential issues in sturgeon conservation in the respective regions;
- to engage with participants to identify solutions;
- to foster cooperation and data sharing between stakeholders;
- to encourage transnational and intersectoral actions in the framework of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons.

5. Next steps concerning the involvement of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention

The Secretariat recalled that the meeting took place within the frame of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons adopted by the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention in 2018.

The outcomes of the meeting would attract the attention of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention and National Focal Points for the conservation of Sturgeons could invite the Standing Committee to support the implementation of the guidelines on habitat assessment, on population monitoring and on *ex-situ* conservation measures in all range Contracting Parties.

In the subsequent discussion, participants in the meeting supported that guidelines were presented to the Standing Committee for possible adoption in the form of recommendations. Participants would be consulted in writing on the wording of the draft recommendations.

To ensure all Contracting Parties had the opportunity to comment the guidelines, they would be shared with the National Focal Points for the conservation of Sturgeons of all range Contracting Parties for written comments.

6. Coordination among National Focal Points

Participants discussed how to maintain the momentum of the meeting and continue exchanging until the third meeting of the National Focal Points for the conservation of Sturgeons. Participants agreed to exchange information by e-mail.

Participants also agreed that they would suggest topics to be considered for the online meetings scheduled in between every second year in-person meetings.

The Secretariat informed participants in the meeting that a webpage dedicated to sturgeon conservation would be designed under the website of the Bern Convention. The webpage would bring together the guidelines, possibly the mid-term evaluation, the bycatch study and display information provided by range countries on national, regional initiatives subject to their availability in English.

7. Date and place of the next meeting

Pending the availability of resources, the National Focal Points for the conservation of Sturgeons would meet in person for the 3rd time in 2026. Participants agreed to meet online in 2025.

The Secretariat invited range Contracting Parties wishing to host the third meeting of the National Focal Points for the conservation of Surgeons to inform the Secretariat.

8. Any other business

Participants discussed in break out groups the role and roadmap of National Focal Points for the conservation of Sturgeons, building capacity and training needs and forms for collecting data on sturgeons (Annex 2: Example of datasheet, Annex 3: Database structure).

Role and roadmap of National Focal Points for the conservation of Surgeons

The group reported that National Focal Points:

- Should work towards developing National Action Plans;
- Facilitate the cooperation and exchange of information between stakeholders;
- Ensure that elements of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons are considered within the frame of other national strategies;
- Should exchange information with other National Focal Points at regional or international level.

Building capacity and training needs

The group reported that it would be useful:

- To set up a communication platform;
- To carry out stakeholder mapping;
- To secure permanent sources of funding for the conservation of sturgeons;
- To be trained in drafting project applications;
- To ensure that elements of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons were included in other Action Plans;
- To receive guidance on how to identify the regulations in which to find relevant information for the work of the National Focal Points;
- To harmonise the monitoring of sturgeons and train the people involved in monitoring;
- To develop guidelines on fish passage.

Forms for collecting data on sturgeons

The group reported that:

- The field form and data sheet could be used as a standard for data collection pending some fields providing basic information become mandatory;
- National Focal Points should promote both forms among stakeholders involved in the conservation of sturgeons;
- National Focal Points could collect datasheets from stakeholders, aggregate data and make data accessible to the public. An app for data collection, like the one developed by Bulgaria could be created;
- Data collection could become systematic and mandatory.

9. Conclusions of the meeting

The meeting results were briefly summarised. The Chair thanked the National Focal Points and the speakers. The meeting was closed.

APPENDIX I: List of participants

National Focal Points for the Pan-European Action Plan on the Conservation of Sturgeons

1. Austria Mr Martin WILDENBERG
2. Bulgaria Mr Tihomir STEFANOV
3. Croatia Ms Tanja MIHINJAČ
4. Estonia Mr Mellis TAMBETS
5. Finland Mr Teppo VEHANEN
6. Georgia Ms Salome NOZADZE
7. Germany Ms Miriam S. MÜLLER
8. Hungary Mr Gabor GUTI
9. Italy Ms Giovanna MARINO
10. Lithuania Mr Justas POVILIŪNAS
11. Lithuania Mr Tomas KAZLAUSKAS
12. Netherlands Mr Menno DE RIDDER
13. Poland Ms Katarzyna KAMIŃSKA
14. Romania Mr Gheorghe CONSTANTIN
15. Romania Mr Ilie MIHALACHE
16. Romania Ms Cristina Laura MUNTEANU
17. Serbia Mr Dusan OGNJANOVIC
18. Slovakia Mr Juraj HAJDÚ (Apologised)
19. Slovenia Ms Tanja KOŠAR STARIČ
20. Spain Mr Marc ORDEIX
21. Ukraine Ms Tetiana YAKOVLIEVA

22. European Commission - Mr Andras BARTAL

Experts for the Pan-European Action Plan on the Conservation of Sturgeons

23. Ms Beate STRIEBEL GREITER – World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
24. Mr Jakob NEUBURG – Institute of Hydrobiology and Aquatic Ecosystem Management (IHG)
25. Mr Jörn GEBNER – Leibniz Institute for Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries (IGB)
26. Mr Ralf REINARTZ – Fisheries & Aquatic Ecology

Observers for the Pan-European Action Plan on the Conservation of Sturgeons

27. Ms Michelle KLAILOVA – Fauna and Flora International, Caucasus Programme

Secretariat

28. Mr Mikaël POUTIERS, Secretary of the Bern Convention
29. Mr Marc HORY, Project Manager
30. Ms Irina SPOIALA, Project Assistant

APPENDIX II: Agenda

		Documents	Expected results
Monday 10 June			
9.30	**1. Opening of the meeting by the Chair**	List of National Focal Points for the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons T-PVS/Inf(2024)09 Recommendation No. 199 (2018) of the Standing Committee on the Pan-European Action Plan for the conservation of the sturgeon T-PVS(2018)09	
	2. Adoption of the agenda	Meeting agenda T-PVS/Agenda(2024)06 **For adoption**	National Focal Points are informed of the aims of the meeting and adopt the agenda.
	3. Oral update on the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for the conservation of the sturgeon by the National Focal Points of the range countries since the first meeting of the National Focal Points. National Focal Points report orally (5 minutes maximum) on the actions undertaken to implement the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons since the first meeting of the National Focal Points.	**For information**	National Focal Points take note of the state of implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons in range Contracting Parties.

	4. European Commission service contract to support the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons *Presentation by Mr Andras Bartal (DG ENVIRONMENT)* *National Focal Points are informed of the status and first outcomes of the EC service contract supporting the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons.*	**For information**	National Focal Points take note of the state of implementation of the EC service contract.
	4a. Assessment of the national and regional implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons (mid-term evaluation) *Presentation by Ms Beate Striebel (WWF) / Mr Jörn Gessner (Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries)* National Focal Points are informed of the mid-term evaluation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons and invited to discuss its outcomes.	**For information**	National Focal Points take note of the state of implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons in range Contracting Parties.
	4b. Study on sturgeon bycatch *Presentation by Mr Jörn Gessner (Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries)* National Focal Points are informed of the study on sturgeon bycatch and invited to exchange views on possible follow up work.	**For information and discussion**	National Focal Points take note of the outcomes of the study on sturgeon bycatch and discuss the extent to which it could be used in their own context.

	4c. Habitat assessment guideline *Presentation by Mr Ralf Reinartz* National Focal Points are informed of the habitat assessment guideline and invited to exchange views on possible follow up work.	Guideline on habitat assessment **For information and discussion**	National Focal Points take note of the habitat assessment guideline and discuss the extent to which it could be used in their own context.
	4d. Population monitoring guideline *Presentation by Mr Jakob Neuburg, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna* National Focal Points are informed of the population monitoring guideline and invited to exchange views on possible follow up work.	Guideline on population monitoring Annex 1: Field protocol Annex 2: Example of datasheet Annex 3: Database structure **For information and discussion**	National Focal Points take note of the population monitoring guideline and discuss the extent to which it could be used in their own context.
	4e. *Ex-situ* conservation measures guideline *Presentation by Mr Jörn Gessner, Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries* National Focal Points are informed of the *ex-situ* guideline and invited to exchange views on possible follow up work.	Guideline on *Ex-situ* conservation measures **For information and discussion**	National Focal Points take note of the *ex-situ* guideline and discuss the extent to which it could be used in their own context.
	4f. Planned regional stakeholder meetings in 2024 *Presentation by Ms Beate Striebel (WWF)* National Focal Points are informed of the planned regional meetings in 2024 and invited to discuss their possible contribution to them.	**For information and discussion**	National Focal Points take note of the planned regional meetings in 2024 and agree on the extent of their involvement.

	5. Next steps concerning the involvement of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention *Presentation by the Secretariat* National Focal Points are informed of the extent to which the Standing Committee could support the outreach and use of the resources produced.	**For information and discussion**	National Focal Points provide the Secretariat with guidance on how to involve the Standing Committee and provide the appropriate political impetus for the use of the project outputs.
	6. **Coordination among National Focal Points** *Presentation by the Secretariat / Chair* National Focal Points are invited to discuss how to coordinate their efforts in order to contribute to / benefit from the project implementation.	**For information**	National Focal Points agree on pointers to contribute to / benefit from the project implementation.
	7. Date and place of the next meeting *Presentation by the Secretariat* Contracting Parties wishing to host the next meeting of the National Focal Points for the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons are invited to inform the Secretariat.	**For decision**	The provisional venue and date of the next meeting are agreed on.
	8. Any other business		
	9. Conclusions of the meeting		
13.00	***Tuesday 11 June*** **End of the meeting**		

APPENDIX III: Updates on the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons