TWELTH MEETING OF PARTNERS OF THE EAST ASIAN – AUSTRALASIAN FLYWAY PARTNERSHIP
Cebu, Philippines, 8-14 November 2025

Document 12

Progress on the Implementation of the EAAFP Strategic Plan 2019-2028: Analysis and Synthesis of Reports Provided by Partners, Working Groups, and Task Forces

Submitted by the EAAFP Secretariat

Summary

To monitor progress on the implementation of the EAAFP Strategic Plan 2019-2028, the Secretariat gathered implementation reports from Partners, Working Groups, and Task Forces, using an updated Partner Reporting Template. The template was refined based on feedback from MOP11, with three tailored versions introduced to streamline reporting.

32 out of 59 expected reports were submitted, representing national governments, inter-governmental and international non-governmental organisations, one international organisation, and several Working Groups and Task Forces.

This document presents a high-level integrated analysis of progress, challenges, opportunities, and case studies derived from the submitted reports. Detailed summaries for each respondent group are included in the annexes, along with key findings from the Stakeholder and Capacity Needs Assessment of the Regional Flyway Initiative. The analysis is intended to support collective reflection and forward planning at the 12th Meeting of Partners, while the case studies highlight practices that may serve as useful references for future implementation efforts.

Background

1. The EAAFP Strategic Plan 2019-2028, adopted at MOP10, has provided the Partnership with specific guidance on the Key Result Areas the Partnership is to achieve and contribute to the Strategic Plan and its objectives.

2. The Report on Implementation is an important mechanism for Partners, Working Groups, and Task Forces to record and monitor their implementation of the EAAFP Strategic Plan and as a result, Partners, Working Groups, and Task Forces were encouraged to respond to all questions in the report prior to the Meeting of the Partners.

3. In preparation for MOP12, the Secretariat has amended the Partner Reporting Template to incorporate feedback and recommendations from MOP11. The updated template has been carefully aligned with the Strategic Plan to ensure comprehensive reporting and consistency. While some questions appear to overlap, completing all sections enabled better comparability with previous Partner Reports.

4. To facilitate more focused reporting and reduce the overall length of the document, the Secretariat developed three tailored templates to streamline the reporting process and requested Partners, Working Groups, and Task Forces to submit their reports either through the online form or as a Word document.
5. The summary of results below is from the information provided by EAAFP Partners, Working Groups, and Task Forces in their reports submitted by 16 July 2025. A total of 32 reports out of 59 were received from the following:

    - **National Governments (11):** Australia, Bangladesh, China (Hong Kong S.A.R), Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, USA

    - **Inter-Governmental Organisations (2)**: Convention on Migratory Species, Convention of Arctic Flora and Fauna

    - **International Non-Governmental Organisations (11):** Australian Wader Studies Group – BirdLife Australia, Hanns Seidel Foundation Korea, International Crane Foundation, Mangrove Conservation Foundation, Pukorokoro Miranda Naturalist Trust, The Paulson Institute, Wild Bird Society Japan, Wildlife Conservation Society, Wetlands International, WWF, WWT

    - **International Organisation (1):** International Union for Conservation of Nature

    - **Working Groups (5):** Anatidae WG, Avian Disease WG, CEPA WG, Crane WG, Shorebird WG

    - **Task Forces (4):** Spoon-billed Sandpiper TF, Scaly-side Merganser TF, Yellow Sea Eco Region TF, Youth TF

6. This MOP12 implementation report format follows the five objectives (as listed in the Partnership Document), 23 Key Result Areas (KRAs), and 35 Indicators. Individual reports are available at the MOP12 webpage: https://eaaflyway.org/mop12-documents/.

7. The Secretariat prepared a high-level, integrated analysis of progress, challenges, opportunities, as well as case studies based on the submitted reports, which is presented in Appendix 1.

8. Annexes 2, 3, and 4 contain detailed summaries of each group of responders: Government, Non-Government, Working Groups and Task Forces.

9. In addition, Annex 5 provides a summary of the key findings of the Stakeholder and Capacity Needs Assessment of the Regional Flyway Initiative (full report available in **Doc.13**), with three themes for consideration by Partners.

10. Based on the analysis, the EAAFP Secretariat recommends:
    a. Partners to review the analysis and synthesis of the reports submitted by EAAFP Partners, Working Groups, and Task Forces presented in Annexes 1, 2, 3, and 4.

    b. Partners to review the key findings of the Stakeholder and Capacity Needs Assessment of the Regional Flyway Initiative and taking note of the three themes for consideration by Partners.

    c. In line with the recommendation from the Management Committee presented at **Doc.6** (*paragraph 84. d*.), the Secretariat reiterates:

    "Either through internal or external support, review the EAAFP Strategic Plan 2019-2028 and invite the Secretariat and Partners to focus on implementation gaps. This recommendation includes developing advice to Partners on the next iteration of the Strategic Plan, and should be submitted for consideration at MOP13."

Annex 1

Integrated High-Level Summary Report on the Implementation of the EAAFP Strategic Plan (2019–2028)

This high-level integrated analysis of progress, challenges, and opportunities draws on government, non-government, and Working Groups/Task Forces contributions under the EAAFP Strategic Plan taken from the Partners Reporting Template. More detailed information can be found in the individual reports submitted, which have been uploaded on the MOP12 webpage: https://eaaflyway.org/mop12-documents/

This intends to support collective reflection and planning at the 12th Meeting of Partners and reported case studies are included to identify practices Partners may wish to refer to.

Common Themes Across Objectives

Common themes reinforce collaboration pathways ahead of the MOP12 Partner meeting.

Progress

- Data on internationally important sites and species is expanding, supported by government portals, NGO research, and flyway-wide assessments.
- CEPA, capacity building, and management planning activities are increasingly integrated into national programmes and community initiatives.
- The Flyway Site Network (FSN) continues to grow with new nominations, stronger branding, and improved site-level partnerships.
- Policy engagement through regional and global frameworks has strengthened flyway governance.

Challenges

- Many countries face capacity limitations, especially for sustained site management, monitoring, and CEPA delivery.
- Several national databases remain incomplete or outdated; data sharing across sectors is fragmented.
- Illegal hunting, habitat loss, and development pressures persist, with enforcement gaps in multiple jurisdictions.
- Engagement of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and youth is inconsistent across the Flyway.

Opportunities

- **Site Network**: Prioritise FNS nominations, update management plans, and fund Sister Site exchanges, networks and regional coordination.

- **CEPA**: Build capacity of site managers and educators, develop multilingual tools, and embed CEPA in policy frameworks.

- **Data & Knowledge**: Harmonise databases, integrate citizen science, expand participation in CSR II and species reviews.

- **Capacity Building**: Establish standardised training modules with good practice, mentorship, support career pathways for conservation professionals. Map and coordinate existing capacity building across the Flyway.

- **Flyway wide and policy frameworks**: Align national laws with EAAFP objectives, support international cooperation, and address illegal hunting.

Objective 1: Develop the Flyway Network of Sites of international importance for the conservation of migratory waterbirds

Progress

- **Government Partners**: Many governments maintain publicly accessible databases of internationally important sites, with countries like Japan, Ro Korea, and Thailand regularly updating site designations. Regional cooperation contributed to data harmonisation. There has also been progress in nominating new Flyway Network Sites and developing associated management plans.

- **NGOs**: Produced population estimates, ecological studies, and habitat threat assessments. Shared knowledge via webinars and journals; several supported CSR I.

- **WGs/TFs**: Developed species-specific monitoring tools, supported data repositories, and contributed to CSR I through joint scientific efforts.

- **Flyway Network Sites**: Countries have shown increased interest in promoting and expanding the Flyway Site Network. Efforts include identifying new sites, nominating high-priority wetlands, promoting public awareness of FNS branding, and strengthening site partnerships. Many sites now have management plans, and national meetings of site managers have been held in several countries.

Challenges

- Incomplete or outdated national databases of internationally important sites.
- Lack of centralised or harmonised data-sharing platforms across the Flyway.
- Limited representation in coordinated population monitoring.
- Limited integration of traditional knowledge and citizen science.
- Uneven visibility, partnerships, and management planning at Flyway Network Sites.
- Limited capacity in some countries to support site managers and engage communities.

Opportunities

- Harmonise national and flyway-wide data systems and portals.
- Promote integration of citizen science and traditional knowledge.

- Prioritise nomination of high-value wetlands to the Flyway Network.
- Ensure all FNS have robust, updated management plans.
- Facilitate regular national and regional site manager meetings (i.e., National Partnership and Site Partnership).
- Boost FNS visibility through signage, CEPA, and Sister Site partnerships or networks.
- Support co-development of national wetland inventories between NGOs and governments.

Case Studies

- **China** (Paulsen Institute): Identified 31 under protected wetlands with national policy implications.
- **Mongolia** (WG/TF): Transboundary research on Scaly-sided Merganser reduced breeding disturbance and engaged communities.
- **Malaysia** (MNSKB): Used IBA criteria and community engagement to propose candidate FSN sites.

Objective 2: Enhance Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA)

Progress

- **Government Partners**: National CEPA programmes implemented by several countries, often integrated into school curricula or public events (e.g. World Migratory Bird Day). Some governments supported learning centres and signage.
- **NGOs**: Developed CEPA toolkits, organised public festivals and field training, and produced educational resources.
- **WGs/TFs**: Provided guidance documents, promoted awareness through species-themed campaigns, and conducted outreach at flyway events.

Challenges

- Uneven CEPA capacity across countries and sites.
- Limited targeting of key stakeholders (e.g. local government, youth, Indigenous communities).
- Few monitoring and evaluation systems for CEPA effectiveness.
- Need for more professional training for CEPA implementers.

Opportunities

- Strengthen CEPA coordination between government and NGO partners.
- Build capacity of site managers, educators, and local champions.
- Develop monitoring indicators and evaluation frameworks for CEPA impact.
- Expand digital and multilingual outreach materials.
- Promote CEPA integration into national policy and planning.

Case Studies

- **Australia**: Overwintering Project combined art, outreach, and science across 50+ exhibitions.
- **China**: MCF's "Wetland Guardian Stars" mobilised over 10,000 youth.
- **Philippines**: EAAFP Youth TF is co-developing Wetland Curricula for young conservationists and educated 50+ youth members on youth-led initiatives of the TF in the Flyway region.

Objective 3: Enhance Flyway Research and monitoring activities, build knowledge and promote exchange of information on waterbirds and their habitats

Progress

- **Government Partners**: Many countries reported new site nominations, improved site management planning, and Flyway Network visibility. National site manager workshops held in multiple countries.
- **NGOs**: Facilitated site partnerships, supported Sister Site exchanges, and implemented restoration projects.
- **WGs/TFs**: Provided technical support for site nominations, developed site profiles, and helped align monitoring priorities.

Challenges

- Inconsistent support for site nominations and follow-up actions.
- Limited funding and staffing for site management and monitoring.
- Insufficient coordination across transboundary or coastal cluster sites.
- Habitat degradation remains a key threat, especially at staging and stopover sites.
- Integration of migratory waterbirds into national spatial planning is limited.
- Restoration techniques and outcomes are unevenly documented.

Opportunities

- Expand the number and geographic spread of FNS nominations.
- Ensure all designated sites have up-to-date and operational management plans.
- Provide regular technical training and capacity building for site managers.
- Facilitate Sister Site relationships, species networks and regional site networks.
- Strengthen funding pathways and policy support for site stewardship.
- Expand flyway-wide ecosystem restoration initiatives, including restoration case studies.
- Create a toolkit for local wetland centres to support CEPA, monitoring, and sustainable use.

Case Studies

- **Mongolia**: Khurkh-Khuiten co-management model integrated herder knowledge and formal governance.

- **China**: MCF urban bird collision programme led to new bird-friendly building guidelines and planning tools.

- **Indonesia and Philippines**: Coastal habitat restoration and citizen monitoring at sites in Sumatra and Manila Bay.

Objective 4: Build habitat and waterbird management Capacity of natural resource managers, decision makers and local stakeholders

Progress

- **Government Partners**: Participated in regional training (e.g. RFI, AFN, CEPA, IBBRI workshops) and strengthened cross-agency coordination.

- **NGOs**: Delivered specialist training (e.g. bird ID, monitoring, habitat management), supported local leaders and youth.

- **WGs/TFs**: Shared guidelines and protocols, created expert networks, supported national workshops.

Challenges

- High staff turnover and limited succession planning.
- Lack of standardised training curricula or accreditation.
- Technical gaps in shorebird identification, ecological monitoring, and governance.
- Limited coordination among capacity providers.

Opportunities

- Create flyway-wide capacity building strategy.
- Develop online and field-based learning modules.
- Provide long-term support to early-career professionals.
- Facilitate sister site and regional relationships.
- Map capacity needs and training providers.
- Develop and regularly deliver regionally tailored training modules and mentor networks.
- Leverage online platforms for wider participation.

Case Studies

- **Viet Nam**: Tram Chim capacity building integrated EbA and CEPA into ranger training (WWT/IUCN).
- **China**: Bird banding training with MCF and National Bird Banding Center improved monitoring practices.

- **Ro Korea and Mongolia**: Crane WG exchange trained next-generation researchers in migration ecology.

Objective 5: Develop, especially for priority species and habitats, flyway wide approaches to enhance the conservation status of migratory waterbirds

Progress

- **Government Partners**: Contributed to regional initiatives, and Ramsar-related mechanisms. Some strengthened EIA laws and designated new protected areas.

- **NGOs**: Supported international policy dialogue, helped revise hunting laws, and proposed site-level protections.

- **WGs/TFs**: Coordinated action plans and provided input to CMS and AMBI strategies.

Challenges

- Gaps in domestic legislation and enforcement on illegal hunting.
- Weak integration of flyway priorities into national biodiversity policies.
- Limited participation in international frameworks by some range states.

Opportunities

- Strengthen legislation and enforcement on illegal taking and trade.
- Align national policies with EAAFP and global biodiversity targets.
- Support active participation in CMS, Ramsar, and regional initiatives such as AMBI, AFN, RFI.
- Promote cross-sector coordination (e.g. energy, agriculture, tourism).

Case Studies

- **Russia and China**: Scaly-sided Merganser conservation reflects longstanding bilateral research and threat mitigation.
- **Indonesia, Philippines, Australia**: Transboundary seabird and shorebird surveys supported by Wetlands International and BirdLife.
- **Alaska and Japan**: Sister Site relationship between Qupaluk and Saga City emphasised Indigenous knowledge sharing and community outreach.

Annex 2

Summary Government Partner Responses on the Implementation of the EAAFP Strategic Plan 2023 – 2025

This summarises the alignment of Government Partner activities with the Strategic Objectives of the EAAFP Strategic Plan, using data from the MOP12 reporting survey.

Objective 1: Flyway Network Site Identification, Designation, and Management

Progress:

- Publicly Accessible Site Lists:
  10 of 11 countries reported having publicly accessible or government-maintained lists of internationally important sites for migratory waterbirds. These lists include:
  - National Directories (e.g. Australia's Ramsar Wetlands & Directory of Important Wetlands)
  - Thematic databases (e.g. Ro Korea's "Key Habitats" report, Thailand's ONEP online portal)
  - Field survey outputs (e.g. Indonesia's social media CEPA platforms; NZ's Miranda-linked assessments)
  - Flyway Site Network (FNS) integration is improving, with several countries updating or expanding their list of designated or candidate sites.
- New Site Designations (Since MOP11):
  - Myanmar (2): Paleik Lake (EAAF154) and Pyu Lake (EAAF155) designated, November 2023
  - Ro Korea (1): Yeoncheon Imjin River designated (EAAF156), October 2024
  - Thailand (1): Bangpu Nature Education Center designated (EAAF157), March 2025
  - Indonesia: Cemara Beach & Sejarah Beach in active nomination stages
  - Australia: National Directory of Important Migratory Shorebird Habitat updated (2025)
- Data-Sharing and Cross-Border Dialogue:
  Several governments participated in regional coordination platforms such as the ASEAN Flyway Network (AFN), Regional Flyway Initiative (RFI), and North-East Asia cooperation (NEASPEC), Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative (AMBI), supporting shared monitoring frameworks, wetland assessment methods, and joint planning.
- Management Plans and Knowledge Exchange:
  At least 9 countries reported that some, or all, of their FNS have updated or actively use management plans (e.g., Japan, Indonesia, Australia, Ro Korea). Site-level managers presented plans and reports at national coordination workshops (e.g., in Indonesia, Myanmar, NZ, Japan).
- Priority Site Identification for Nomination:
  High-priority site pipelines exist in most countries, often based on recent surveys or ecological evaluations (e.g. Manukau Harbour in NZ, Deli Serdang Coast in Indonesia, nine Thai sites under Cabinet resolution).

Challenges

- Site Recognition and Branding Weaknesses:
  Despite formal designation, many FNS sites do not yet display EAAFP signage or leverage the Flyway Site Network branding for public engagement and visibility (e.g., NZ, Myanmar, Indonesia).
- Underuse of Shared Frameworks:
  Not all countries fully utilise or integrate with EAAFP guidance, Site Information Sheets (SIS), or standard data collection and monitoring frameworks. Many countries highlighted the need for assistance in technical assessments.
- Management Plan Currency and Gaps:
  While many countries have some site-level plans, many are outdated, missing, or not formally aligned with EAAFP objectives. Coordination between Ramsar Sites, FNS, and local land-use planning varies widely.
- Data Gaps in Key Regions:
  - Some potential sites, especially in Myanmar, Singapore, and parts of Indonesia, lack comprehensive population or 1% threshold data to justify FNS nomination.
  - Several sites are ecologically significant but under-surveyed or monitored irregularly.
  - Only a few countries maintain interactive, centralised databases of designated and candidate sites.
- No or Stalled Nominations:
  - Australia and Japan have acknowledged difficulties in updating older site lists (e.g. Australia's Directory not updated since 2006 prior to recent efforts).
  - Some countries reported no new planned additions to the Flyway Network, citing lack of local coordination, data, or institutional capacity.

Opportunities

- Increase Support for Management Plan Updates:
  Offer funding and expert facilitation to review and align site-level management plans with EAAFP Strategic Objectives, especially for aging or unpublished plans.
- Strengthen Regional and National Dialogue Platforms:
  Promote regular meetings of site managers, as exemplified by Japan and Indonesia, and expand peer-to-peer exchanges using the Sister Site framework.
- Standardise and Promote Flyway Branding:
  Encourage EAAFP site branding (signage, educational material) and ensure visibility of FNS within community and tourism infrastructure.
- Foster Public Engagement in Data Sharing:
  Advance tools for citizen science and open-data portals, building on examples from Australia, Thailand, and Japan.
- Assistance with Site Nomination & Monitoring:
  Myanmar and Indonesia explicitly expressed interest in technical support to confirm candidate sites, enhance surveys, and complete nomination documents (SIS).
- Flyway-level Collaboration:
  Several countries identified value in cross-border support, shared survey protocols, or CEPA

alignment to strengthen site identification and monitoring (particularly in ASEAN region and the Yellow Sea).

- Improved Site Information Systems:
  Several countries would benefit from support to establish or digitise national-level databases that align with the FNS framework and EAAFP Strategic Plan.
- Support for Underrepresented Regions:
  Continued Partner support is recommended to help countries like Myanmar, Indonesia, and Bangladesh translate known important sites into formal nominations with supporting data.

Case Study 1: Indonesia – Strategic Site Development and Data Consolidation

- Indonesia actively identified and nominated new FNS (Cemara Beach, Sejarah Beach), supported by national workshops with site managers, NGOs, and researchers. Management plans in Sembilang and Wasur National Parks integrate community-based resource use and migratory bird monitoring. The AFN and RFI supported capacity-building for data collection, and public databases are under development.

Case Study 2: Republic of Korea – National Site Inventory and Management Alignment

- Ro Korea has publicly released a comprehensive inventory of internationally important waterbird sites via NIBR. New sites like Yeoncheon Imjin River were designated based on recent surveys. Ro Korea also published management plans for 16 FNS and plans to host a national site manager workshop. Participation in NEASPEC, Yellow Sea, and inter-Korean dialogue mechanisms supports transboundary site management. This approach ensures sites are not only identified but also legally protected, reflecting strong national ownership of Flyway commitments.

Case Study 3: Thailand – Policy-led Expansion of Site Recognition

- Thailand uses a cabinet-endorsed list of over 20 important wetland sites and developed management plans for several. National workshops supported by ASEAN Flyway Network and RFI trained managers on integrating monitoring and CEPA. Thailand promotes the Flyway Site Network branding through CEPA events and eco-labelling (e.g., “Sarus Rice”).

Case Study 4: United States (Alaska) – Indigenous Co-Management and Monitoring

- Alaska’s Qupaluk site integrates traditional harvest management through the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council, combining traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) with federal management. Although some site data is threatened by future energy development, public engagement is included through national environmental review processes.

Objective 2 – Promote CEPA (Communication, Education, Participation, and Awareness)

Progress Summary

- Use of CEPA Action Plan 2023–2028:
  - 9 of 11 countries confirmed they are using the CEPA Action Plan to guide activities. Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, Ro Korea, and Thailand provided explicit examples.
- CEPA Activities at FNS:
  - All reporting countries indicated CEPA events occurred at Flyway Network Sites — especially during WMBD and WWD.
- National Campaigns:
  - 8 countries have active national-level CEPA programming involving media, school programmes, or citizen science.
- International Events:
  - WMBD and WWD were celebrated in 9 of 11 countries. Indonesia, Thailand, and Singapore hosted particularly large events.
- Target Groups:
  - The most frequently engaged audiences were students, the general public, site managers, and local communities. Several countries also targeted indigenous communities and educators.

Challenges

- Fragmented implementation: Some CEPA efforts are led by NGOs or site managers, but are not coordinated nationally (e.g., New Zealand, Bangladesh).
- Limited formal strategy: Not all countries have integrated the EAAFP CEPA Action Plan into national policies or site-level planning.
- Underutilised regional collaboration: ASEAN CEPA collaboration (e.g., via the AFN) remains limited to a few countries.
- Digital reach varies: While some countries effectively use social media (e.g., Thailand, Japan), others lack online presence for their CEPA programmes.

Opportunities:

- Mainstream the EAAFP CEPA Action Plan into national and site-level conservation strategies across all countries.
- Establish national CEPA coordinators or task forces to ensure consistency and scale-up local successes.
- Promote peer learning and collaboration, using the ASEAN Flyway Network (AFN) and other regional platforms.
- Expand use of digital media to share site stories, bird festivals, and educational materials, especially targeting youth and schools.
- Strengthen support for Indigenous and community-led CEPA, ensuring cultural and local values are incorporated.

Case Study 1: Indonesia – Multi-Level CEPA and Youth Mobilisation at FNS

Sembilang & Wasur National Parks, Lake Limboto, Aceh

- Integrated CEPA strategy combining journalists, local governments, universities, and private sector engagement.
- Annual migratory bird photo/video contests at Sembilang NP garnered strong media and public attention.
- Rawa Wana Rally in Wasur is a flagship Wetland Day event involving schools and local officials.
- CEPA included performance arts like the "Migratory Bird Dance", bringing bird conservation into cultural spaces.
- In 2025, a capacity-building program at Batu Bara Mangrove Park trained 20 local youths in bird guiding and eco-tourism.

This demonstrates how CEPA can scale from site-based storytelling to national visibility, while empowering local youth and media to become conservation champions.

Case Study 2: Singapore – ASEAN CEPA Learning Forum & Regional Coordination

Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve (SBWR)

- Hosted the inaugural ASEAN Flyway Network (AFN) CEPA Learning Forum in May 2025.
- Co-organised with the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and supported by New Zealand MFAT.
- 39 participants from all 10 ASEAN Member States participated in workshops, showcases, and field learning.
- Used the forum to develop a regional CEPA Action Plan, exchange best practices, and demonstrate CEPA in action at SBWR.
- Supported by local NGO “Friends of SBWR” and volunteers.

This initiative goes beyond national CEPA — it models how regional cooperation can enhance CEPA capacity across the Flyway using real-world demonstration, peer learning, and partnership.

Objective 3: Research, monitoring and knowledge exchange

Progress

- National Monitoring:
    - All 11 countries conduct regular national or site-level monitoring — most notably via the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC).
- Citizen Science:
    - Citizen-led efforts are widespread and long-running in at least 9 countries (e.g., Thailand, Indonesia, NZ, Japan, Ro Korea, Singapore).
- Data Management:
    - 10+ countries archive waterbird data nationally and/or share with platforms like IWC, BirdLife, or Notornis.

- CSR Contributions:
    - 8 countries have formally contributed or plan to contribute. Some countries (e.g., Thailand) contribute indirectly through census data.
- Climate Change Research:
    - Active or emerging in 10 countries. Research includes habitat vulnerability, breeding impacts, and migratory shifts.
- Collaborative Research:
    - Almost all countries report partnerships — e.g., bird tracking, avian flu surveillance, genetics, habitat modelling.
- Avian Disease Monitoring:
    - Studies on HPAI and pathogen pathways are underway in Australia, NZ, Thailand, Singapore, and USA (Alaska).
- Traditional Knowledge / IPLCs Engagement:
    - Examples reported in Alaska, Australia, Myanmar, Indonesia. Some efforts remain limited or aspirational.

Best Practice Guidelines: A growing number of countries are codifying field knowledge into national or site-based best practice guidelines.

- Australia published Light Pollution Guidelines endorsed under CMS, covering shorebird habitat protection and behavioural ecology.
- Indonesia released the *Panduan Identifikasi Burung Migran Maluku Utara* (2023) and *Panduan Inventarisasi Aves* (2025) to support standardised data collection and monitoring.
- Thailand established multiple learning centres and citizen science hubs (e.g., Pak Thale, Kok Kham, Buriram) that integrate CEPA, monitoring, and adaptive management.

These tools help translate research and monitoring into accessible, action-ready frameworks for site managers and stakeholders.

Challenges

- Data coverage remains uneven — particularly in remote or less accessible regions.
- Volunteer bias: Data often clustered near urban or well-connected sites.
- Underuse of traditional and Indigenous knowledge in monitoring and site planning.
- Climate and disease data not always integrated into national conservation frameworks.
- Limited linkages between research outputs and policy or site management guidelines.

Opportunities

- Standardise and expand citizen science networks with training and shared methodologies.
- Facilitate collaborative Flyway-wide data platforms for real-time sharing and synthesis.
- Embed IPLCs and Indigenous knowledge systems in research, planning, and monitoring.
- Translate scientific findings into applied best practice documents for site managers and local authorities.
- Support formal contribution to CSR II from all countries via structured data sharing, expert input, and threat trend analysis.

Case Study 1: Australia – Predicting Avian Disease Spread and Climate Impacts

Australia's National Environmental Science Program (NESP) is leading global efforts to model how avian influenza (HPAI) may spread along migratory shorebird routes.

- Projects like 4.26 – Migration and Disease Modelling combine banding, citizen science, and predictive tools.
- Outcomes include a shorebird migration forecasting tool, risk maps for HPAI incursion, and identification of hotspot chains across the EAAF.
- Supports Australia's biosecurity readiness while informing Flyway-wide disease preparedness and habitat protection.

Case Study 2: Bangladesh – Integrating Climate Risk into Shorebird Conservation

Under its SUFAL Project, the Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD) is:

- Leading the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Conservation Program to safeguard wintering habitats and assess coastal vulnerability.
- Initiating climate-related habitat research alongside national NGOs.
- Starting to archive monitoring data in-house for long-term planning.
- Exploring site-level management interventions tied to both species protection and climate adaptation.

This marks a shift toward data-informed, locally grounded conservation aligned with Flyway goals.

Objective 4: Capacity Building and Collaboration

Progress

Across the East Asian–Australasian Flyway, countries have made strong, multi-dimensional progress in capacity building, especially at the national and site levels:

- Capacity Building Programmes: All 11 countries report some form of training, ranging from short workshops to multi-year CEPA initiatives. Notable examples include Singapore's AFN-led regional workshops, Thailand's provincial census training, and Myanmar's sanctuary-based staff education.
- Citizen Science and CEPA Integration: Several countries (e.g. Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore) are integrating citizen science into formal training programmes, enhancing local ownership and continuity. These include youth birdwatching groups, subdistrict officer engagement, and digital tools for real-time monitoring.
- Use of EAAFP Training Resources: Nine countries report using EAAFP technical materials or strategic documents (e.g., AWC guidelines, CEPA Plan 2023–2028), though feedback on usability varies. Indonesia and Singapore actively adapted and promoted these tools for Flyway Site management.
- Training Needs Assessment: At least four countries conduct formal needs assessments or feedback surveys post-training. Singapore and Japan use these insights to tailor future program content.
- The Stakeholder and Capacity Needs Assessment of the Regional Flyway Initiative (2022-2024) identified key capacity building needs from four countries.

- Participation in Partner Meetings: Most countries have engaged in AFN workshops, CMS events, or Science Symposiums, often resulting in new collaborations or joint research (e.g., Dunlin study, Spoon-billed Sandpiper plans, indigenous engagement).
- Transboundary Collaboration: Widespread involvement in bilateral agreements (e.g., China–Australia, NZ–China), regional platforms (AFN, NEASPEC, AMBI), and flyway-wide initiatives (e.g., Sister Sites, CMS task forces) was evident.
- Corporate and Private Sector Engagement: Emerging examples include Dow Mangrove Alliance in Thailand, PT Inalum's habitat restoration in Indonesia, and eco-tourism-linked conservation models.

Challenges

Despite good momentum, challenges persist:

- Uneven Implementation: While some countries have full-scale national frameworks (e.g., Indonesia's KNKBBH), others rely on ad-hoc or project-based capacity building, limiting long-term institutional memory.
- Limited Corporate Engagement: Corporate partnerships remain underdeveloped in most countries. Where they exist, they often lack formal accountability or alignment with national strategies.
- Training Material Usability: Some EAAFP training resources were noted as dense or not user-friendly by site-level practitioners. More modular, visual, or localised formats are needed.
- Data-sharing and Impact Tracking: There is limited follow-up reporting on whether capacity building translates into better monitoring, conservation outcomes, or policy change.
- Under-representation of IPLCs: Indigenous and local knowledge integration is still incipient or aspirational in many responses, despite strong relevance to wetland stewardship.

Opportunities

- Consolidate Regional Platforms: Strengthen the ASEAN Flyway Network and other sub-regional platforms to support ongoing capacity sharing, peer learning, and regional policy alignment.
- Localise and Simplify Materials: Invest in simplified training formats, infographics, and field-ready tools translated into local languages and customised to habitat types.
- Promote Public-Private Partnerships: Establish guidance or incentives for corporate engagement at Flyway Network Sites, particularly in tourism, infrastructure, and fisheries sectors.
- Invest in Monitoring Impact: Include capacity indicators and follow-up surveys in all major projects, and share success metrics across the Partnership.
- Elevate Indigenous and Community Roles: Create formal mechanisms for IPLCs participation in site co-management, including recognition of traditional ecological knowledge.

Case Study 1: Thailand's Integrated Local Capacity Building Model

Thailand stands out for its multi-level, practical approach to building conservation capacity:

- In Rayong Province, the Bird Conservation Society of Thailand (BCST) delivered a full-day shorebird survey workshop, training over 30 participants from schools, local government, and youth birding clubs. The workshop included:
    - AWC field protocols
    - Identification and leg-banding methods

  - Real-time digital data submission
  - Environmental condition monitoring
- Post-training follow-up included data quality checks and annual census planning. A dedicated volunteer network was created, supporting sustained citizen science engagement.
- In parallel, BCST and the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources ran training at the Pak Thale Bird Learning Centre, helping embed CEPA and monitoring practices into coastal management frameworks.

This model successfully blends education, community science, and digital tools, setting a high standard for local-level implementation.

Case Study 2: Indonesia's National Partnership for Migratory Birds (KNKBBH)

Indonesia has launched a nationally coordinated platform – the National Partnership on Conservation of Migratory Birds and Their Habitats (KNKBBH) – bringing together government ministries, NGOs, academics, and local stakeholders.

Key features:

- Facilitated national workshops and training programmes in 2024–2025 on habitat monitoring and data exchange
- Developed and tested citizen science protocols aligned with AWC and EAAFP objectives
- Introduced training needs assessments to inform strategic priorities
- Committed to mainstreaming climate change considerations and adaptive management
- Provided technical support for under-represented Flyway Sites, including Berbak–Sembilang and Pulau Dua

This platform creates a nationally owned and bottom-up pathway for capacity building, monitoring, and knowledge exchange.

Case Study 3: Alaska–Japan Indigenous Collaboration on Bar-tailed Godwit Conservation

The partnership between Indigenous communities in Alaska (USA) and Māori in New Zealand, supported by Japan-based flyway stakeholders, represents a unique transboundary and cultural approach to migratory bird conservation.

Key Features:

- Shared Cultural Connection:
  Indigenous hunters in the Yukon Delta of Alaska and Māori communities in New Zealand both revere the Bar-tailed Godwit, a species central to traditional knowledge and seasonal rhythms.
- Cross-Cultural Exchange:
  A side meeting during the EAAFP Science Symposium (Beijing, 2024) brought these groups together to exchange stories, conservation knowledge, and restoration ideas.
- Collaborative Vision:
  Though currently unfunded on the U.S. side, the initiative seeks to integrate Indigenous ecological

knowledge into Bar-tailed Godwit monitoring, habitat management, and youth education across the Flyway.

- Symbolic and Strategic Significance:
  This initiative highlights how Indigenous partnerships can advance both conservation goals and cultural heritage protection, and demonstrates the importance of linking science, spirituality, and sovereignty.

Objective 5 – Flyway wide approaches

Progress

Since MOP11, notable strides have been made in aligning national policies, legal frameworks, and regional collaboration mechanisms to strengthen the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats. The EAA Flyway is increasingly supported by a coherent network of legislation, regional action plans, and enforcement mechanisms, enhancing coordination and governance effectiveness.

Policy Integration, Strengthening Legal and Enforcement Mechanisms

Across the Flyway, countries have continued to embed migratory waterbird conservation into their national legislation adopting more sophisticated and multi-stakeholder approaches:

- **Australia** continues to lead with the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)*, bolstered by the *Threatened Species Action Plan 2022–2032* which prioritises migratory shorebirds and integrates climate resilience, Indigenous-led management, and ecosystem-based planning.
- **Indonesia:**
  - enacted *Law No. 32 (2024)*, mandating habitat protection within national development planning and formalising biodiversity as a cross-sectoral priority through *Instruction No. 1 of 2023*.
  - signed a 2025 MoU with the E-Commerce Association (idEA) to monitor and prosecute online wildlife trafficking — a notable innovation reflecting the shift to digital markets.
- **Thailand:**
  - implemented new zero-quota policies for reserved species and introduced digital permitting systems (FSW) for wildlife movement.
  - modernised several key acts, including *Wild Animal Conservation and Protection Act (2019)*, with expanded lists of protected species and strengthened enforcement protocols introduced in 2024 and 2025.
- **Bangladesh:**
  - increased its network of protected areas under the *Wildlife Conservation and Security Act (2012)*, with legal provisions against hunting, trade, and habitat destruction.
  - **Wildlife Crime Control Unit** continues to lead patrols and enforce laws in border zones prone to illegal winter-season hunting.
- **Australia** supports the CMS-led Asia-Pacific Illegal Taking Intergovernmental Task Force, aligned with EAAFP's own task force.

These efforts collectively aim to disrupt illegal trade chains, strengthen border controls, and raise awareness through public campaigns and institutional capacity building.

Many countries also continue to update national red lists and develop species-specific action plans to align with global conservation frameworks.

Regional Action Plans and Multilateral Engagement

Regional coordination has deepened since MOP11, as countries increasingly co-develop and implement regional action plans:

- **The ASEAN Flyway Network (AFN)** continues to serve as a platform for coordinated action. Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Singapore have supported AFN CEPA strategies including regional CEPA Action Plan for use across ASEAN, flyway site management training, and CEPA Learning Forums.
- **Australia** contributes to SPREP's *Regional Marine Species Programme*, targeting migratory seabirds in the Pacific, and participates in multiple binding bilateral agreements (JAMBA, CAMBA, ROKAMBA).
- The **United States** plays a strategic role in the Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI), supporting regional planning for waterfowl and shorebirds through its position on both the steering committee and East/Central Asian flyway subcommittees.

This increased collaboration ensures that governance is moving from isolated national efforts to **connected regional frameworks** that address migration at scale.

Case Example 1: Indigenous-to-Indigenous Cooperation for Governance Innovation

A notable highlight is the Alaska–New Zealand Indigenous collaboration, which emerged from the 2024 EAAFP Science Symposium. Through a new Bar-tailed Godwit initiative, Indigenous groups from Western Alaska and Māori communities in Aotearoa began joint knowledge exchanges on shorebird governance, habitat protection, and cultural values. This initiative links traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) with international conservation governance and is a unique governance innovation that could be scaled across the Flyway.

Case Study 3: New Zealand–China Red Knot and Godwit Conservation Collaboration

New Zealand's Department of Conservation (DOC) and China's National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) are strengthening transboundary conservation through bilateral agreements targeting migratory shorebirds like the *Red Knot (Calidris canutus rogersi)* and the *Eastern Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica baueri)*. These species traverse thousands of kilometers between breeding grounds in the Arctic and non-breeding sites in New Zealand, using staging areas in the Yellow Sea region.

Key elements include:

- A 2024 Memorandum of Arrangement facilitating the exchange of bird banding data, critical for population monitoring and migratory route mapping.
- Active discussions to renew sister site arrangements between Pūkorokoro Miranda Shorebird Centre (New Zealand) and Chongming Dongtan and Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserves (China).
- Cooperative efforts to control invasive Spartina that threatens habitat quality at staging sites.
- Exploratory work toward developing a Single Species Action Plan for the Red Knot.

This collaboration exemplifies flyway-level implementation of EAAFP objectives through joint research, coordinated habitat management, and the harmonisation of conservation priorities across two range states.

Case Example 2: Singapore's Leadership on CEPA Governance

As the technical lead and Chair of the ASEAN Flyway Network, Singapore's NParks (SBWR) has played a key role in embedding CEPA governance across ASEAN. It co-hosted regional CEPA workshops, contributed to strategy development, and signed sister site agreements with partners in Hong Kong (Mai Po) and China (Chongming Dongtan). These partnerships focus not only on ecological outcomes but also mutual learning, education exchanges, and site-level capacity building.

Case Study 4: Thailand - Viet Nam – Eastern Sarus Crane Reintroduction and Joint Monitoring

This transboundary initiative exemplifies progress under Objective 5. The project centres on the reintroduction and monitoring of the Eastern Sarus Crane, a globally vulnerable species, across its range in Thailand and Viet Nam.

- **Bilateral cooperation** is underpinned by a formal MoU between the two governments, enabling coordinated species recovery, habitat restoration, and aligned policy frameworks.
- **Shared** data systems, training workshops, and joint field research contribute to a model of collaborative species management across borders.
- **Community** engagement and capacity building are core elements, integrating citizen science, education, and ecotourism to foster local stewardship and sustainable livelihoods.
- **Institutional** collaboration includes the Zoological Park Organization of Thailand, Tram Chim National Park authorities in Viet Nam, and international technical support from the International Crane Foundation.
- The initiative aligns with both Objective 4 (capacity development) and Objective 5 (policy and legal frameworks), and serves as a replicable model for transboundary threatened species conservation under the EAAFP.

Annex 3

Summary Non-Government and Inter-governmental Partner Responses on the Implementation of the EAAFP Strategic Plan (2029 – 2028)

This summarises the alignment of non-government and inter-governmental activities with the EAAFP Strategic Plan, using data from the MOP12 reporting survey.

Objective 1: Identification and Management of Internationally Important Sites for Migratory Waterbirds

Progress

Non-government partners continue to play a critical role in identifying, surveying, and advocating for internationally important waterbird sites throughout the Flyway. Highlights include:

- New Site Identification:
  Six NGOs confirmed active identification and documentation of new sites.
  - In Malaysia, the Malaysian Nature Society (MNSKB) identified multiple candidate sites including *Batong Maro*, *Pulau Patok*, and *Trusan Sundar* using IBA criteria.
  - In China, the Pacific Institute (PI) mapped 31 high-priority wetlands across coastal and inland basins needing protection.
  - Wetlands International Indonesia documented and promoted sites such as *Sejarah Beach*, *Bagan Percut*, and *Cemara Beach* as part of their AWC and partnership support.
- Support to Government Partners:
  Over half of respondents (57%) provided direct support to governments through:
  - Field data and population surveys
  - Technical input into national habitat directories (e.g., BirdLife Australia)
  - Collaborative training and site planning (e.g., AMBI work in Russia, USA, and DPRK)
- Flyway Site Network Branding and Outreach:
  FSN branding is actively promoted via education centres, training workshops, signage, and communication campaigns.
  Examples include:
  - *WWF-Hong Kong's Sister Site displays and outreach*
  - *HSF Korea's exhibitions during international forums*
  - *Wetlands International's regional strategy (Wings over Wetlands – Asia)*

Sister Site Capacity and Support

While enthusiasm for Sister Site relationships remains high among non-government partners, dedicated resources remain limited:

• Only a small number of respondents reported having funding or in-kind resources currently available to initiate or maintain Sister Site relationships.

• WWF-Hong Kong stands out with active coordination and resource mobilisation to support learning exchanges between Mai Po (HK) and Incheon (Ro Korea) and Sungei Buloh (Singapore), including student

exchanges and joint education materials.

• Wetlands International Philippines and Wetlands International Global are actively pursuing opportunities under the Wings Over Wetlands – Asia (WOW Asia) project to fund or formalise these relationships.

• Other partners such as BirdLife Australia, AWSG, and AMBI expressed interest in supporting future efforts, especially as part of broader site connectivity or US–China collaboration.

The data suggests that Sister Site initiatives remain critically dependent on donor coordination and project-based support rather than being embedded in institutional core funding.

Challenges

- Unaligned Site Recognition:
  Many sites identified by NGOs remain unofficial due to absence of national-level endorsement, delaying their nomination to the Flyway Site Network.
- Underutilised NGO Data:
  Significant monitoring and mapping work has yet to be systematically translated into formal site submissions or policy uptake.
- Threats to Candidate Sites:
  Several NGO-identified sites face serious development pressure, including Toondah Harbour (Australia), Lianyungang coast (China), and North Manila Bay (Philippines), with some lacking sufficient legal protections or mitigation frameworks.

Opportunities

- Stronger Government - NGO Nomination Mechanisms. NGOs are seeking clearer, more inclusive pathways to co-develop and submit site nominations with government partners.
- Guidance on Integration. Tools to link FSN nominations with Ramsar designations, OECMs, and national biodiversity strategies would improve alignment and uptake.
- Recognition of NGO-led Management Models. Supporting NGOs that act as de facto site managers (e.g., those managing or co-managing FSN sites) could enhance long-term stewardship and implementation of the EAAFP Strategic Plan.

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Malaysia – MNSKB's Local Mapping and Community Engagement

MNSKB has identified potential FSN sites through IBA criteria and partnered with Sarawak Forestry Corporation for training and CEPA initiatives at both designated and proposed sites, including Buntal Bay (EAAF112) and Sejingkat Ash Ponds.

Case Study 2: China – Paulsen Institute's Wetland Prioritisation

The Paulsen Institute's Coastal Wetlands Blueprint and Yellow River Basin strategy identified 31 high-priority but underprotected wetlands. Their evidence-based approach aims to inform government planning and nomination strategies.

Case Study 3: Indonesia – Wetlands International's Integrated Support Model

Wetlands International Indonesia supports the National Partnership for Migratory Birds, facilitates AWC data mobilisation, and assists in identifying and nominating FSN candidate sites. Their model links citizen science, national data systems, and policy engagement.

Objective 2: Strengthening Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA)

Progress

Non-Government Partners demonstrated strong alignment with the EAAFP CEPA Action Plan 2023–2028, with the majority incorporating its principles into their awareness campaigns, training programmes, and site-based engagement.

- Strategic Integration: Organisations like BirdLife Australia and AWSG actively contributed to shaping CEPA policy through the Working Group while implementing aligned national programmes.
- Site-Based CEPA Implementation: NGOs reported a wide range of activities across Flyway Network Sites (FNS), including school visits, teacher training, ecotourism outreach, and youth birdwatching festivals. Sites such as Anlung Pring (Cambodia) and Shenzhen Bay (China) became key hubs for community learning.
- International Event Engagement: Most NGOs actively celebrated World Migratory Bird Day, World Wetlands Day, and national bird festivals, using these to build public awareness and reinforce conservation messages.
- Multi-Stakeholder Reach: CEPA efforts successfully engaged governments, education ministries, site managers, local communities, students, and even Indigenous groups, as reported in Sarawak and Alaska.

Challenges

- Inconsistent Use of CEPA Action Plan: While many NGOs referred to the plan, systematic use in programme design or monitoring was limited. Some CEPA efforts remain ad hoc rather than guided by structured objectives or indicators.
- Limited CEPA Funding: Few NGOs have dedicated budgets for sustained CEPA programming. This restricts the scale, consistency, and innovation in outreach efforts across the Flyway.
- Underserved Audiences: Indigenous communities, urban youth, and policymakers remain underrepresented in many CEPA activities. CEPA tends to concentrate on school-aged children and existing wetland visitors.
- Language and Cultural Gaps: Outreach materials are not always locally adapted, limiting effectiveness in diverse communities or across transboundary regions.

Opportunities

- Mainstream CEPA into Site Management and Monitoring: Incorporate CEPA indicators into site assessments and Flyway Site Network reporting to improve accountability and impact tracking.
- Build Capacity for CEPA Professionals: Support regional training programmes (like the Indo-Burma Wetland Hub) that blend technical skills with community engagement approaches.

- Expand Youth Leadership and Citizen Science: Replicate youth-driven models like the "Wetland Guardian Stars" across other countries to build long-term conservation culture.
- Mobilise Regional CEPA Funding: Develop joint proposals that support networked CEPA efforts, especially during international events, and enable translation/adaptation of EAAFP resources.
- Strengthen Flyway-Wide CEPA Storytelling: Foster exchange of CEPA success stories, videos, toolkits, and art-based engagement to unify and inspire across the Flyway.

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Australia – The Overwintering Project (BirdLife Australia & AWSG)

Art-based CEPA outreach | Target: General public, artists, schools

The Overwintering Project connects artists and communities with local migratory shorebirds through exhibitions, storytelling, and environmental education. Since 2017, over 50 exhibitions have reached thousands across Australia and New Zealand, raising over AUD 50,000 for conservation.

Key CEPA Results:

- Translated scientific content into compelling art and education materials.
- Enabled deeper public connection to flyway sites through creativity.
- Integrated CEPA into national dialogue on shorebird protection.

Case Study 2: Cambodia – Anlung Pring FNS Ecotourism Centre (WWT)

Community-based CEPA and ecotourism | Target: Local communities, students, tourists

The WWT co-developed a CEPA hub at Anlung Pring Flyway Network Site, linking wetland conservation with sustainable livelihoods. The site now offers school programmes, ecotourism education, and CEPA training for local farmers and guides.

Key CEPA Results:

- Enabled financial literacy and bird awareness training for local farmers.
- Hosted Indo-Burma CEPA Learning Hub trainees in 2025.
- Enhanced long-term local ownership of migratory bird conservation.

Case Study 3: China – Shenzhen Bay's "Wetland Guardian Stars" (MCF)

Youth and community mobilisation | Target: Students, teachers, general public

The Mangrove Conservation Foundation (MCF) trained over 200 youth and community members to become "Wetland Guardians," who now lead surveys, events, and CEPA outreach in Shenzhen Bay. Their work has engaged over 10,000 students since 2019.

Key CEPA Results:

- Annual citizen science training and student field trips.
- Strategic collaboration with education bureaus.
- Integrated CEPA into urban conservation and policy outreach.

Objective 3: Research, monitoring and knowledge exchange

Progress

Non-Government Partners have made substantial contributions toward improving the conservation status of migratory waterbirds and their habitats across the East Asian–Australasian Flyway. Their efforts span long-term monitoring, habitat restoration, local community engagement, research, and public awareness.

- Extensive Monitoring Networks: NGOs led and supported nationwide and regional monitoring initiatives, including the Australian Summer Count, Asian Waterbird Census (AWC), MYSMA, and site-specific surveys across China, Myanmar, Philippines, Mongolia, and beyond. Methods include ringing, leg-flagging, GPS telemetry, and AI-based image detection tools.
- Habitat Restoration and Protection: NGOs are actively restoring degraded wetlands, identifying important roosting and staging areas, and publishing technical guidelines for habitat management (e.g. saltmarsh restoration, high-tide roosting site design).
- Community and Indigenous Engagement: Many partners worked directly with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), integrating traditional knowledge into monitoring, education, and conservation planning. Examples include Mongolian herders at Khurkh-Khuiten and Indigenous Rangers in Australia.
- Contributions to Conservation Status Review (CSR II): Many NGOs played a pivotal role in supplying updated population data, trend estimates, and habitat prioritisation inputs for the next CSR through their field surveys, satellite tracking, and citizen science programmes.

Challenges

- Regional Imbalance in Monitoring Coverage: Monitoring efforts are heavily concentrated in a few countries. Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and island states often lack continuous NGO-supported efforts due to capacity or funding constraints.
- Fragmented Data Use: While partners collect valuable ecological data, these are not always integrated into national biodiversity databases or consistently used for planning and policy advocacy.
- Limited Government Uptake: In some cases, NGO research has not translated into legal site protection, habitat zoning, or policy reform, limiting on-the-ground impact.
- Sustainability of Efforts: Monitoring and restoration activities often rely on volunteer labour or short-term funding, which may not support the consistent, long-term investment needed for species recovery.

Opportunities

- Strengthen Cross-Flyway Monitoring Systems: Continue building local capacity in underrepresented countries through training, equipment support, and peer exchange. Expand citizen science initiatives with local government support.
- Improve Data Integration and Communication: Enhance standardisation of monitoring outputs and promote open access to inform site management and national planning.
- Translate Science to Policy: Support NGOs in developing policy briefs, maps, and management Opportunitiesto influence land-use decisions and gain protection for priority habitats.

- Mainstream Traditional Knowledge and Community Governance: Document and integrate local/Indigenous knowledge into formal conservation practices and monitoring protocols.

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Australia – Multi-Layered Monitoring and Indigenous Participation (BirdLife Australia & AWSG)

Focus: National-scale monitoring, citizen science, Indigenous partnerships

BirdLife Australia and AWSG coordinate several flagship programmes, including the Australian Summer Count, which recorded over 1.6 million shorebirds, and MYSMA, which surveys key Yellow Sea migrants in north-western Australia. These programmes, supported by Indigenous Ranger groups, also collect blood samples for avian influenza risk mapping and provide critical survival and migration data through platforms like BirdMark and AvifluMap.

- 1,673 surveys across Australia using citizen science methods
- Indigenous groups engaged in survey design, netting, and tracking
- Core data source for species population and habitat prioritisation

Case Study 2: China – Urban Collision Monitoring and Habitat Restoration (MCF)

Focus: Citizen science, bird-friendly infrastructure, youth education

The Mangrove Conservation Foundation (MCF) coordinated a national Bird-Window Collision Prevention Network, involving over 1,000 volunteers in 27,000+ surveys. The initiative led to retrofitting of high-risk buildings in urban areas like Shenzhen. In parallel, MCF conducted long-term habitat and waterbird monitoring, contributing to site-level ecological change tracking and public education.

- 8 seasonal collision surveys across 900+ buildings
- Integrated results into local government urban planning
- Supported habitat management in key Spoon-billed Sandpiper sites

Case Study 3: Mongolia – Community Co-Management at Khurkh-Khuiten (ICF & Local Herders)

Indigenous collaboration, co-management, wetland protection

In 2024, a landmark agreement was signed between ICF, Mongolian authorities, and local herder communities to co-manage the Khurkh-Khuiten Nature Reserve—a breeding stronghold for cranes and migratory waterbirds. The project combined traditional grazing knowledge with modern monitoring tools and has become a model of community-based wetland governance.

- Community members trained in monitoring and site stewardship
- Traditional seasonal land use incorporated into site management
- Strengthened governance and habitat resilience through co-ownership.

Objective 4: Enhance Capacity Building

Progress

Since MOP11, Non-Government Partners have made measurable progress in training, institutional knowledge sharing, site management capacity, and international collaboration.

- Training Programs Implemented at Multiple Levels: National NGOs and international partners implemented a variety of training workshops covering topics such as bird banding, high tide roost site design, habitat restoration, species monitoring, and community engagement. Examples include BirdLife Australia's training for volunteers and the WWT ranger and youth programs in the Mekong.
- Capacity-Building Embedded in Larger Initiatives: Wetlands International embedded capacity development within the Flyway Bottleneck Yellow Sea Project, operating at local, national, and flyway scales. Similarly, WWT and IUCN implemented wetland restoration training linked to EbA (Ecosystem-based Adaptation) projects.
- Use of Technical Materials and Online Tools: NGOs have begun integrating EAAFP training toolkits into materials for regional learning hubs. These were used, for example, in the Wetland Learning Hub Indo-Burma course (Jan 2025).
- Participation in International Forums: Many NGOs attended and contributed to the EAAFP Science Symposium, CMS COP, AFN Workshops, and the World Coastal Forum, facilitating peer-to-peer exchange and collaborative action planning.
- Training Needs Assessed at Multiple Levels: Several NGOs conducted formal or informal needs assessments, including pre-training surveys and stakeholder consultations (e.g. at Poyang Lake Crane Guardian Station and ASEAN Flyway Network forum).
- Private sector Engagement: A number of organisations are working with private sector actors—e.g. San Miguel Aerocity Inc. in the Philippines or Alibaba Foundation in China—to align infrastructure projects with conservation goals.

Challenges

- Limited Institutionalisation of Training Outcomes: Many workshops are not followed by structured knowledge transfer, nor are learnings consistently embedded in national frameworks or repeated annually.
- Low Uptake of EAAFP Online Resources: Despite availability, most NGOs have not yet adopted EAAFP's online training materials in their core programs. Awareness and localisation may be barriers.
- Lack of Formal Needs Assessments in Some Cases: A number of partners have not yet conducted systematic capacity needs assessments, which limits tailoring of interventions.
- Uneven Access Across Flyway: Some subregions—particularly smaller Southeast Asian and island states—report little to no capacity building engagement, due to funding or institutional gaps.

Opportunities

- Broaden Capacity Building Through Regional Learning Networks: Invest in scaling up regional hubs like the Wetland Learning Hub Indo-Burma or Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force as models for structured, flyway-aligned learning.

- Encourage use and localisation of EAAFP Training Tools: Translate and adapt the EAAFP Flyway Site Management Training Toolkit and promote them via workshops, webinars, and peer mentoring.
- Formalise and Share Training Needs Assessments: Provide a template or framework for simple training needs assessments that partners can implement across contexts.
- Mainstream Capacity Building into MoUs and Project Design: Ensure that bilateral MoUs, national partnerships, and new flyway projects include explicit capacity-building objectives and evaluation mechanisms.

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Viet Nam – Community-Based Capacity Building at Tram Chim (IUCN/WWT)

Focus: Wetland restoration training, site management, EbA

WWT and IUCN supported wetland restoration and ecological training for staff and communities at Tram Chim National Park, a Ramsar Site and key migratory waterbird habitat. Training included ranger-level water quality monitoring, education on Sarus Crane ecology, and workshops under an Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) project.

- Hosted 50 early-career conservationists in Jan 2025
- Focused on hydrology, Sarus Crane ecology, and engagement methods
- Training informed future restoration design and monitoring protocols

Case Study 2: China – Bird Banding Training in Shenzhen (MCF & Government)

Focus: Volunteer engagement, bird monitoring techniques

Supported by the Shenzhen Wildlife Conservation Department and Tencent Foundation, the Mangrove Conservation Foundation (MCF) ran consecutive bird banding training programs (2023–2024). These enhanced technical skills for volunteers and contributed to Shenzhen's long-term bird monitoring strategy.

- Co-hosted with the National Bird Banding Center
- Built a cadre of trained banders among volunteers
- Created safeguards for standardised monitoring practices

Objective 5: Flyway-Wide Approaches

Progress

Partners report strong and expanding involvement in cross-border and multilateral initiatives to improve the conservation status of migratory waterbirds:

- Regional Platforms & Action Plans: Wetlands International, BirdLife International, WWF, and other NGOs are contributing to key platforms like AMBI, AFN, CMS Intergovernmental Task Forces, and the Regional Flyway Initiative (RFI). These platforms support joint actions such as species assessments, policy alignment, and habitat prioritisation.
- Species-focused Cooperation: Active coordination around threatened species includes:
    - Spoon-billed Sandpiper: Action Plan (2025–2035) updates and coordinated winter surveys across multiple countries (MCF, WWT, SBSTF).

  - Far Eastern Curlew: Regional population surveys and local monitoring in Malaysia and Russia (CMS, BirdLife Australia, MNSKB).
  - Black-faced Spoonbill: Supported by WWF Hong Kong, NEASPEC and CMS with action planning, monitoring, and Sister Site exchanges.
- Innovative Transboundary Engagements:
  - Sister Site relationships have developed, particularly between WWF-Hong Kong and sites in Ro Korea and Singapore, facilitating staff exchanges and CEPA programmes.
  - City-to-city and NGO exchanges between Australia and Ro Korea/Japan have built awareness and enabled local site improvements.
  - MCF's Species-based Sister Wetland Network is a promising new model for coordinated species-habitat collaboration.
- Policy Advocacy and Legal Reform:
  - Partners contributed to reforms, such as Japan's Wildlife Protection and Hunting Management Law, and supported regulatory measures to combat illegal hunting, including training and SMART patrol systems in wetlands.
- Engagement in Multilateral Mechanisms. Many NGOs participated in multilateral forums and task forces, including CMS-led ITTEA (Illegal Taking Task Force), AMBI, and the EAAFP SBSTF (Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force), helping shape shared policies and aligning implementation across borders.
- Collaboration with international and regional bodies such as CMS, NEASPEC, and ASEAN has expanded action plan development and knowledge exchange platforms.
- Species-focused Sister Site Networks and coordinated population monitoring for species like the Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Bar tailed Godwit and Black-faced Spoonbill have fostered regionally aligned research and protection.
- Many organisations now share monitoring data across borders and support multi-lingual open-access platforms (e.g., the Waterbird Population Portal, AviFluMap).
- Technology and Innovation: New tools such as AI-assisted monitoring, remote sensing, and biodiversity credits are being explored and implemented in China, Australia, and across WWF's Smart Wetland Programme.
- Threat Reduction Measures: NGO-led habitat restoration, bird collision mitigation, invasive species removal, and illegal hunting assessments (e.g., CMS ITTEA, AMBI) are being implemented at multiple flyway-relevant sites.

Challenges

- Limited participation by some Partner countries in key action plans and regional initiatives (e.g., CMS Task Forces, AMBI).
- Few formalised mechanisms for data exchange or coordination on species and site management between neighbouring countries.
- Underuse of Sister Site potential: While several Sister Site partnerships exist, funding, technical exchanges, and community engagement are uneven and often ad hoc.
- Weak integration of local site managers and non-government stakeholders into transboundary agreements, particularly in decision-making roles.

Opportunities

- Strengthen coordination and visibility of Threatened Species Action Plans, particularly those recently updated (e.g., Spoon-billed Sandpiper), and ensure they are integrated into national biodiversity strategies and linked to funding.
- Scale up Sister Site partnerships and similar mechanisms into more structured, funded, and results-oriented initiatives. Encourage participation of underrepresented NGOs, community groups, and youth.
- Leverage EAAFP and CMS to integrate IPLCs and citizen-led monitoring into cross-border site management and species recovery.
- Develop flyway-wide tools to enable real-time sharing of population and habitat data, with standardised protocols for joint assessments.
- Support broader engagement in regional platforms (e.g., RFI, AFN, AMBI) by simplifying access, providing small grants, and hosting joint learning exchanges.
- Mainstream conservation into non-environmental sectors (e.g., energy, infrastructure) through dialogue platforms like the CMS Energy Task Force and new biodiversity finance mechanisms (e.g., biodiversity credits, ESG initiatives).

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Spoon-billed Sandpiper (SBS): Coordinated Multi-Country Response

Organisations: MCF, SBSTF, WWT, CMS, AMBI

- Ongoing development and roll-out of the SBS Action Plan (2025–2035).
- Joint winter surveys in China and Myanmar, use of satellite tracking, anti-poaching patrols, and community engagement.
- Linked to mist net removal and habitat management activities under ITTEA

Case Study 2: Indo-Burma Ramsar Regional Initiative (IBRRI) Strategic Plan (2025–2030)

Organisation: IUCN

- Developed a transboundary wetland conservation strategy across Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam.
- Focuses on integrating wetlands into ASEAN, MRC, and Ramsar platforms, and mobilising partners for thematic policy dialogues and OECMs.

Case Study 3: Black-faced Spoonbill: Flyway-Wide Monitoring and Engagement

Organisations: WWF-Hong Kong, NEASPEC, CMS, MCF

- Annual synchronised census across 8+ countries.
- Environmental education workshops, learning exchanges, and city-to-city staff exchanges through Sister Site partnerships (e.g., Incheon, Hong Kong).

Challenges

- Bilateral and multilateral agreements remain unevenly implemented, especially where government-to-government frameworks lack NGO and IPLCs involvement.
- Use of Sister Site mechanisms is inconsistent across the flyway, with few examples of meaningful joint activities or shared monitoring across borders.
- Limited data harmonisation and lack of real-time data platforms inhibit timely transboundary decision-making, particularly in Central and Southeast Asia.
- ILK (Indigenous and Local Knowledge) and IPLCs engagement are largely missing from formal flyway-level agreements, despite their frontline conservation role.
- Funding and coordination for cross-border illegal hunting enforcement and habitat restoration remain ad hoc and project-based.

Opportunities

- Strengthen integration across regional mechanisms, such as CMS Task Forces, NEASPEC, SPREP, and ASEAN working groups, with EAAFP playing a more formal coordinating role.
- Revitalise Sister Site arrangements by pairing sites with active migratory waterbird conservation agendas, facilitating joint projects, exchanges, and reporting mechanisms.
- Elevate IPLCs and youth participation in cross-border action plans, embedding ILK and co-management principles into implementation.
- Invest in shared data platforms that standardise monitoring protocols, allow real-time updates, and connect site managers across borders.
- Expand support for illegal hunting task forces, especially in areas identified as poaching hotspots, and back them with sustained funding.

Case Studies

Case Study 1: BirdLife Australia & AWSG: Australia, Ro Korea, Japan Sister Site and Shorebird Exchange

BirdLife Australia supported transboundary exchanges, including hosting delegations from Ro Korea and Japan through long-term Sister Site partnerships in Moreton Bay. These partnerships facilitated sharing of shorebird monitoring, habitat management, and youth engagement approaches, culminating in joint events like the Getbol World Heritage Conference in Incheon.

Case Study 2: Wetlands International: RFI and AMBI Steering Group Contributions

Wetlands International contributed to both the RFI and AMBI through strategic planning, Steering Group roles, and delivery of coordinated site-level action, including support for GEF proposals and ASEAN wetland collaboration frameworks. Their work spans policy dialogue and monitoring coordination across more than ten EAAF countries.

Annex 4

Summary Working Group and Task Force Responses on the Implementation of the EAAFP Strategic Plan (2019 – 2028)

This summarises the alignment of Working Groups (WGs) and Task Forces (TFs) activities with the Strategic Objectives of the EAAFP Strategic Plan, using data from the MOP12 reporting survey.

Objective 1: Develop, share, and apply knowledge to support the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats

Progress

- Many WGs/TFs have engaged in coordinated research and data-sharing, with efforts to standardise monitoring protocols across flyway sites.
- Key knowledge generation includes:
    - Population estimates (e.g., Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Lesser White-fronted Goose)
    - Ecological studies on climate change impacts (e.g., Arctic-breeding shorebirds)
    - Habitat threat assessments (e.g., impacts of aquaculture and mangrove expansion)
- Scientific outputs were shared through webinars, symposia (e.g., Flyway Science Symposium), and international journals.
- SBS TF and SWG developed species-specific monitoring, hosted data repositories, and supported the CSR I review.

Challenges

- Some WGs/TFs lack centralised databases and depend on individual researchers.
- Limited integration of traditional knowledge (TK) and citizen science in scientific outputs.
- Not all groups are involved in CSR or regional population assessments.

Opportunities

- Continue integrating tracking and population data across Working Groups and improve access to flyway-wide platforms.
- Expand support for flyway-wide threat assessments and publications.
- Include TK/IPLCs and citizen science data into research outputs.

Case Studies

- Mongolia: The Scaly-sided Merganser Working Group supported joint research between Russia and China, including nest monitoring and community-based eco-tourism to reduce disturbance during breeding seasons.
- Spoon-billed Sandpiper: The TF published a new population estimate and supported targeted monitoring at breeding and wintering sites, integrating satellite tracking and ground surveys across China, Bangladesh, and Myanmar.

Objective 2: Enhance communication, education, participation, and awareness (CEPA) of the values of migratory waterbirds and their habitats

Progress

- The CEPA Action Plan (2023–2028) has been integrated into workplans by several groups including the CEPA WG, Youth TF, and Shorebird WG.
- WMBD and WWD campaigns were widely supported with training, communication guidance, and small grants.
- Youth-led initiatives across the flyway (e.g., Philippines, Indonesia, Ro Korea) were showcased in CEPA webinars.
- Education activities were implemented through site-level engagement (e.g., Spoon-billed Sandpiper materials in China).

Challenges

- Awareness of the CEPA Action Plan among non-CEPA groups remains inconsistent.
- CEPA implementation is stronger in some groups and regions than others.

Opportunities

- Promote CEPA integration across all WGs and TFs, not just CEPA WG.
- Expand cross-regional training programs for communication.
- Develop a CEPA resource hub for accessible, centralised CEPA materials.

Case Studies

- Philippines: Youth TF promoted Wetland Curriculum development and led local events for WMBD engaging schools and policymakers.
- China and Ro Korea: Sister site visits and CEPA-themed exchanges occurred between Mai Po Nature Reserve and Songdo Tidal Flat, emphasising shared learning.

Objective 3: Enhance flyway-wide site and habitat management through participatory approaches

Progress

- Many WGs/TFs delivered site-based trainings and conservation plans, including management manuals, habitat monitoring, and species-specific guidelines.
- SBS TF, SWG, and ADWG have delivered capacity building on disease surveillance, shorebird monitoring, and roost site management.
- ASEAN Flyway Network (AFN) and the Crane WG are supporting training at Flyway Network Sites.

Challenges

- Not all groups have undertaken training needs assessments or used EAAFP training resources.
- Technical materials (e.g., for site managers) are underused.

Opportunities

- Standardise training needs assessments across TFs and WGs.
- Promote use and co-development of the EAAFP technical training modules.
- Strengthen institutional partnerships with national wetland centers, RRIs and universities.

Case Studies

- Thailand and China: The SBS TF led waterbird counting and tracking method workshops in key staging and wintering areas.
- Utqiagvik, Alaska: Local bird festival strengthened connections between Alaskan and East Asian FNS, incorporating Indigenous knowledge and flyway-wide awareness.

Objective 4: Build capacity for conservation of migratory waterbirds and habitats across the flyway

Progress

- 78% of respondents have undertaken capacity-building activities, including regional workshops (e.g., AFN), site manager training (e.g., disease surveillance), and webinars.
- Several manuals, toolkits, and curriculum materials have been created or shared (e.g., Philippines wetland curriculum, SWG guidance).
- International exchanges (e.g., Alaska–Japan shorebird talks) were conducted under cultural and scientific collaboration.

Challenges

- Few TFs/WGs have conducted formal training needs assessments.
- Use of online materials and tools remains uneven.

Opportunities

- Encourage all groups to embed capacity-building components in projects.
- Develop an open-source library of training content in multiple languages.
- Identify capacity-building focal points in each WG/TF.

Case Studies

- Japan–Mongolia: Training for young crane researchers and exchange programs facilitated by the Crane WG are improving regional technical expertise.
- AFN: Regional wetland management workshops provided structured capacity building in monitoring and site governance.

Objective 5: Enhance flyway-wide and transboundary conservation of migratory waterbirds

Progress

- Most WGs/TFs have participated in transboundary cooperation via AFN, NEASPEC, AMBI, and bilateral sister site exchanges.
- SBS TF and SWG have advanced collaborative research and site management across borders.
- The Crane WG has long-established trilateral cooperation (e.g., Russia-Mongolia-China).
- Joint action plans and coordination efforts have been improved, including for species like the Black-faced Spoonbill and Nordmann's Greenshank.

Challenges

- Still limited cross-border implementation in some working groups.
- No standard platform for transboundary data or project coordination.
- Few initiatives include IPLCs co-management or traditional knowledge.

Opportunities

- Strengthen flyway-wide data and coordination platforms.
- Support Sister Site programs with active, resourced partnerships.
- Elevate IPLCs and TK integration in transboundary projects.

Case Studies

- Russia–China: Coordinated conservation efforts for Scaly-sided Merganser and Lesser White-fronted Goose reflect long-standing bilateral cooperation.
- Sister Sites: Cross-visit and engagement between sites in Alaska and Saga City, Japan, reinforce migratory connectivity through citizen engagement and knowledge exchange.

Annex 5

Summary Key Findings of the Stakeholder and Capacity Needs Assessment of the Regional Flyway Initiative (2022 – 2024)

The Regional Flyway Initiative (RFI) is a partnership between the Asian Development Bank (ADB), BirdLife International, and the East Asian–Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) to protect and restore priority wetland ecosystems and their associated ecosystem services in eleven (11) ADB Developing Member Countries (DMCs): Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Malaysia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

One outcome of the RFI is the stakeholder and capacity needs assessment. Drawing on findings from four countries, as well as opportunities identified in the broader Regional Flyway Initiative assessment, and aligned with EAAFP's Strategic Objectives, three themes have emerged for consideration by Partners. The full report is available in **Doc.13**.

Three key themes emerge for Partners' consideration:

1. Strengthen Policy and Governance for Wetland Conservation (EAAFP National Partnership mechanism)

2. Build Capacity and Resources Across All Stakeholders (EAAFP INGO Partners)

3. Empower and Engage Local Communities (EAAFP Site Partnership mechanism)