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

Document 6

Report of the Management Committee

Submitted by Management Committee

Summary

This report is submitted by the Management Committee to the 12th Meeting of Partners to the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership. It provides information on the administrative and financial management of the Partnership during the intersessional period between the 11th Meeting of Partners (12 – 17 March 2023) to present.

Partners are invited to read the report and take note of the recommendations contained in the report. A new Management Committee will be elected at MOP12 (refer to Doc.17).

Introduction

1. This report is submitted by the Management Committee for consideration by Partners at the 12th Meeting of Partners of the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership (MOP12), held in Cebu City, Philippines from 8 – 14 November 2025.
2. In accordance with the Terms of Reference of the EAAFP Management Committee, the Committee provides general policy, operational and financial direction to the Secretariat concerning the implementation and the expansion of the Partnership.
3. The report provides a summary of the main administrative and financial items considered and decisions taken during the intersessional period between the conclusion of 11th Meeting of Partners (12 – 17 March 2023; MOP11) to present.
4. The report also provides a set of recommendations from the Management Committee for the next intersessional period. Partners are invited to read the report and take note of the recommendations.

Committee Membership

5. At MOP11, Partners elected a new Management Committee to serve between the conclusion of MOP11 to the conclusion of MOP12.
6. The Government of Australia was elected as Chair of the Partnership and Cambodia was elected as Vice-Chair. Thailand, Wetlands International and the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species continued to serve on the Management Committee for a second consecutive term. Mangrove Conservation Foundation joined the Committee for the first time and the Republic of Korea continued to serve as a permanent representative in their capacity of Host Government Partner of the Secretariat.
7. Dr Ilse Kiessling was appointed by the Australian Government to serve as Chair of the Partnership and Dr Srey Sunleang was appointed by the Cambodian Government as Vice-Chair of the Partnership.
8. On 13 October 2023, the Government of Australia informed Management Committee of a change in Australia's appointee as Chair of the Partnership due to an internal restructure of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. Ms Narelle Montgomery, Director of the Migratory Species Section, International Environment Branch, was nominated as the new Chair of the Partnership and of the Management Committee for the remainder of the intersessional period.
9. At MOP12, Thailand, Wetlands International and the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species will be required to step down from Management Committee as these Partners have completed the maximum number of consecutive terms. Australia, Cambodia and the Mangrove Conservation Foundation are eligible for a second term if they wish to continue, while the Republic of Korea will remain as a permanent member of Management Committee.
10. Details of the appointment and election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Partnership and of Management Committee are outlined further in Doc.17.

Committee Meetings

11. At its first meeting on 6 July 2023, Management Committee agreed to establish a regular schedule of meetings for the intersessional period up until MOP12. It was acknowledged that a regular schedule of meetings would provide more certainty to Management Committee members, the Secretariat and Partners and ensure the intersessional work was progressed in a timely manner. It was also noted that regular meetings of the Management Committee would support enhanced reporting to Partners on its intersessional work and associated decisions.
12. The Management Committee agreed to meet three times a year (every four months) in March, July and November of each calendar year. It was further agreed that Management Committee meetings would continue to occur online during the intersessional period, with one face-to-face meeting immediately preceding MOP12 (9 November 2025).
13. Members of the Secretariat and Science Unit attended meetings of the Management Committee. The Secretariat, in particular the Chief Executive and Programme Officer, played a pivotal role in Management Committee meetings and its discussions.
14. The Chairs of the Finance Sub-Committee and Technical Sub-Committee were invited to attend Management Committee meetings as observers.

15. The Australian Government national focal point, Dr Mark Carey, attended Committee meetings as a regular observer. Australia also provided the in-kind services of Mr David Mould to record and compile meeting minutes and actions arising.
16. Management Committee agreed to establish a potential, perceived and actual conflicts of interest register to manage any conflicts during the intersessional period. Management Committee further recommended that each sub-committee establish their own conflict of interest process to manage conflict issues arising from their meetings and decisions.
17. In accordance with the Terms of Reference of the Management Committee, Partners were notified of each meeting 60 days prior to the meeting and meeting minutes were circulated to all Partners within four weeks.
18. The Management Committee's meeting schedule is outlined below, and meeting minutes are provided at Attachment A.

2023	2024	2025
	20 March	6 March
6 July	24 July	1 July
15 November	20 November	9 November

19. Management Committee arranged two additional closed sessions (Management Committee members only) during the intersessional period to discuss preparations for the MOU renewal concerning hosting, Secretariat and administrative services with the Republic of Korea and the Incheon City Government in December 2023. The second closed session was held on 26 September 2024 to review and discuss the Secretariat's draft budget and workplan for 2025.
20. Regular meetings of the Management Committee that were supplemented with specific, targeted meetings proved to be a successful working arrangement. The meeting schedule facilitated a productive and efficient intersessional period as demonstrated by the volume of work Management Committee considered between MOP11 and MOP12.

Summary of key items considered and decisions taken

Recruitment of Secretariat Staff

21. Following the departure of Mr Doug Watkins as Chief Executive after MOP11, the Chair of the Partnership and of Management Committee worked closely with the former Chair (Robb Kaler, USA) and the Secretariat to finalize the recruitment of the new Chief Executive.
22. On 4 April 2023, the Hiring Panel's recommendation was finalized and endorsed by the Chair. The hiring panel advised that Ms Jennifer George was selected as the preferred candidate and Ms George accepted the offer for the position of Chief Executive.
23. The Secretariat progressed the draft contract and other administrative matters in consultation with the Republic of Korea, Incheon City Government and the Chair of the Partnership.
24. Management Committee welcomed Ms George as the new Chief Executive in June 2023.
25. The Chair worked closely with the hiring committee, the Republic of Korea Ministry of Environment, Incheon City Government and the Secretariat to ensure a smooth transition.

26. As an interim measure, the Chair established fortnightly meetings with the Secretariat to discuss and progress items of high priority and support the Secretariat where required.
27. The Chair continued to offer regular meetings until the new Chief Executive became established in the role.
28. On 26 April 2023, the Secretariat notified Partners of the departure of Ms Hyeseon Do (Senior Programme Officer) from the Secretariat. Ms Do served the Secretariat with great dedication and professionalism for the previous six years and Management Committee were grateful for her valuable contributions to the organization during her tenure. Ms Kyle Esperanza Zuleta joined the Secretariat as the new Programme Officer in August 2023.
29. On 24 May 2023, the Secretariat notified Partners of the resignation of Ms Vivian Fu (Senior Communications Officer). Ms Fu played a key role in Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) activities throughout the East Asian – Australasian Flyway. Ms Fu's contribution to the Flyway had been exceptional and her dedication was unanimously acknowledged by the Management Committee.
30. Following the departure of Ms Fu as Communications Officer, Ms. Wen Qing Ng started with the Secretariat in September 2023 for a period of 12 months. Ms Minjae Baek replaced Ms Ng in September 2024.
31. Ms. Yoon Lee, External Relations Manager returned from maternity leave in early December 2023. Ms Lee was promoted to Deputy Chief Executive in early 2025 reflecting her on-going leadership role in the Secretariat.
32. Management Committee approved the hiring of two coordinators in November 2023 to support the programme and communication teams. Officers began in February 2024 and contracts were later extended into 2025.
33. With a complete turnover of senior staff in the Secretariat since March 2023, and the accompanying loss of institutional knowledge, there was an understandable disruption to some Partnership activities and communications in 2023 and 2024. The Chair and Management Committee continued to provide guidance to the Secretariat on key matters to ensure priority activities were progressed during the intersessional period.

<u>MOU renewal with the Republic of Korea Ministry of Environment and Incheon City Government</u>

34. Management Committee acknowledges with deep appreciation the generous financial support of the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea and the Metropolitan City of Incheon of the Republic of Korea to the Secretariat since 2009. Without the financial support provided though the MOU, many of the Partnership achievements would not be possible.
35. During MOP11, Partners were informed that the five-year term of the MOU for hosting the Secretariat would end in May 2024 but was subject to a further five-year renewal until 2029.
36. The MOU states that the Host City contributes 509 million KRW to support the Secretariat plus a further 200 million KRW from the Host Government Partner each year subject to the budget planning of the Ministry of Environment. Financial support is provided for personnel expenses, operational expenses for the Secretariat and Partnership activities.
37. Additional voluntary contributions from Partners further support the Secretariat and its activities.

38. In accordance with paragraph 7 (D), the MOU would be automatically renewed for a further period of five years unless it was terminated by the Chair, the Host Government Partner and the Host City in consultation with the Management Committee by giving six months prior notice in writing that the MOU will not be automatically renewed. The six months prior notice deadline was 10 November 2023.
39. The automatic renewal of the MOU for periods of five-years can be varied by a mutual decision in writing between the Host Government Partner, Host City and the Management Committee.
40. In accordance with paragraph 2(D) of the MOU, Management Committee is responsible for reviewing the hosting arrangement at no more than five-year intervals, in conjunction with Meeting of Partners or meetings of the Management Committee.
41. Management Committee initiated discussions on the MOU renewal on 6 July 2023 and invited the Chief Executive, the Chair of the Partnership, the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea and the Metropolitan City of Incheon of the Republic of Korea to discuss the renewal of the MOU and future hosting arrangements.
42. Management Committee members met during a closed session on 13 December 2023 to discuss the renewal of the MOU with the Korean Ministry of Environment and the Incheon City Government.
43. Discussions canvassed a range of issues and potential amendments to the MOU. Management Committee also sought to clarify financial contributions, ambiguous language and processes contained in the MOU text.
44. The outcomes of the discussion were sent to the Ministry of Environment on 22 December 2023 for their consideration.
45. At Management Committee's meeting in March 2024, the Ministry of Environment provided an update on the MOU renewal and transmitted a message from the Incheon City Government that it would renew the MOU for a further 5 years without amendment.
46. A meeting between the Secretariat, the Ministry of Environment and the Incheon City Government occurred shortly after to further discuss the MOU renewal and next steps.
47. On 7 May 2024, the Secretariat received a notification from the Ministry of Environment informing them that the MOU concerning the hosting and administrative work of the EAAFP Secretariat was to be extended for a period of 5 years under the same conditions through discussions among the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea, Incheon Metropolitan City, and the Management Committee.
48. On 4 July 2024, the Chair circulated a notification to Partners informing them of the MOU renewal.

<u>Governance Harmonisation</u>

49. At MOP11, Partners identified some discrepancies within and across the Partnership governance documents which caused some consternation. During the meeting it became apparent that a comprehensive review of the adopted governance documents would be beneficial to ensure they were fit for purpose, contemporary and continued to meet their intended purpose.
50. Partners expressed a desire for Management Committee to take the lead on the review of the EAAFP governance documents and bring forward any proposed amendments to MOP12 for consideration and approval.

51. During the intersessional period, Management Committee identified nine relevant EAAFP governance documents that were within scope of the review. The MOU concerning the hosting, Secretariat and administrative services was dealt with separately as discussed above.
52. Management Committee proposed that the initial review of documents would be led by either the Chair of the Partnership, Management Committee, Finance Sub-Committee, Technical Sub-Committee, or the Chief Executive to generate ideas about possible amendments and reform options. Once the initial review had been completed, Management Committee coordinated the overall response to the harmonisation of EAAFP governance documents.
53. Management Committee acknowledged that consultation with all Partners, the Secretariat, working groups and task forces was vital to ensure all concerns raised at MOP11 had been appropriately identified and addressed through the process.
54. After Management Committee considered the outcomes of the initial review, a broad consultation process was initiated with all Partners, the Finance Sub-Committee and Technical Sub-Committee during 2024. This included three webinars hosted by the Chair to facilitate consultation and address any outstanding concerns.
55. Once consultation was completed, the amended documents were considered by Management Committee in November 2024 and March 2025. All documents were endorsed by Management Committee and were prepared for Partner consideration at MOP12.
56. Specific amendments can be found in draft decisions 01 – 08.
57. It should be noted that the harmonization process recommends that the Finance Sub-Committee remain a sub-committee of the Management Committee. This allows the Management Committee to retain oversight of the Partnership budget, both agreed and planned expenditures and re-allocations, during the intersessional period. The current Finance Sub-Committee members have suggested that it become a full Committee, separate to the Management Committee, and that the Chair of the Finance Committee become a permanent member of the Management Committee, with full voting rights.
58. Management Committee members discussed this option with the Chair of the Finance Sub-Committee and concluded that retaining oversight of, and responsibility for, financial matters of the Partnership was a key duty for Management Committee and making the Finance Sub-Committee a standalone Committee would hinder its oversight and collaboration, and would not allow Management Committee to adequately fulfill its responsibilities.
59. The Management Committee noted that the Chair of the Finance Sub-Committee is currently an invited observer of Management Committee meetings, which allows for the Finance Sub-Committee to participate in discussions and remain aware of Partnership priorities during the intersessional period.

<u>Finance and budgeting matters</u>

60. In accordance with the Terms of Reference of the EAAFP Management Committee, the Committee provides general policy, operational and financial direction to the Secretariat concerning the implementation and the expansion of the Partnership.

61. The Committee also oversees, on behalf of the Partners, the development and execution of the Secretariat's budget, and all aspects of revenue raising and expenditure undertaken by the Secretariat to carry out specific functions authorized by the Meeting of Partners.
62. The Management Committee received regular updates on the Secretariat's budget, including details of revenue and expenditure, throughout the intersessional period. The new financial management system implemented by the Secretariat greatly improved the quality of information that was considered by the Management Committee.
63. Requests by the Chief Executive for additional expenditure were approved on a case-by-case basis. The additional expenditure was made possible because of an underspend on previously approved activities or the provision of voluntary contributions.
64. The Secretariat's workplan and budget for 2025 was approved by Management Committee in November 2024. This decision occurred because of the slightly extended intersessional period combined with the fact that at MOP11, Partners only approved a budget and workplan that covered the period to the end of 2024.
65. The financial audits covering 2023 and 2024 have been completed and are available on the EAAFP website.
66. Adequate resourcing of the Secretariat and Partnership activities was a constant theme during the intersessional period. In July 2023, Management Committee initiated a discussion seeking a solution to resolve funding gaps and develop a broader funding base of the Secretariat and Partnership activities. This discussion was informed by the Secretariat's need for additional resources to implement MOP11 decisions. The Secretariat calculated that an additional $350,000 USD would be required to implement all activities that were adopted by Partners at MOP11.
67. In July 2023, the Secretariat was invited to identify priority items requiring additional resources during the intersessional period and the Finance Sub-Committee was requested to develop options to progress a EAAFP Resourcing Plan. This request included the organization of a joint workshop between the Management Committee and Finance Sub-Committee to discuss resourcing needs and develop a series of recommendations to address funding gaps. Management Committee also requested that the joint workshop discuss ways of enhancing engagement with Partners on resourcing matters.
68. At the request of the Chair of the Finance Sub-Committee, the joint workshop was postponed several times while the Sub-Committee progressed work on the EAAFP Resourcing Plan. Eventually, it was agreed that it was not possible to progress this work during this period, and it would occur post MOP12.
69. While the joint workshop did not proceed, Management Committee continued to work with the Secretariat on developing ways to broaden the funding base and engage Partners on resourcing, including more specific requests for voluntary contributions and targeted corporate engagement such as developing a prospectus.
70. Management Committee further requested that the Finance Sub-Committee revise MOP9/Agenda Item/1.7.2 – *Proposal for Voluntary Contribution Fee to EAAFP* prior to MOP12. This was identified as an important activity given the decision had been adopted in 2017, the number of Partners had grown from 35 to 42 and the funding pressures had only increased.

Partnership expansion

71. Management Committee was pleased to see new Partners join the EAAFP since MOP11. Three new Partners joined the Partnership during the intersessional period.
    a. Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia (RRC-EA) – 14 May 2023
    b. Eco Foundation Global – 4 January 2025
    c. ICLEI Cities Biodiversity Center (ICLEI CBC) – 13 April 2025
72. The broad membership of the Partnership brings together national governments, intergovernmental organizations, international NGOs and the corporate sector. With a broad membership, it brings a diversity of views and opportunities to pursue innovative ways to address the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats.
73. Management Committee welcomes interest from other national governments and organizations looking to join the Partnership and would welcome their active participation in due course.

Preparation for the 12th Meeting of Partners

74. At the conclusion of MOP11 the Philippines expressed an interest in hosting MOP12 in 2025. Vietnam also expressed an interest in hosting a future MOP.
75. The Head of Delegation of the Philippines requested a letter be sent from the Chair to facilitate full consideration by the Government of the Philippines.
76. A letter was sent by the Chair on 15 May 2023 inviting the Government of the Philippines to consider hosting MOP12.
77. Management Committee acknowledged that the Government of the Philippines was an important Partner to the EAAFP, with significant experience in hosting international meetings, including the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals in 2017. Additionally, there were already many ongoing relevant migratory waterbird projects linked with the EAAFP Goal and Objectives that are central to the Philippines, such as the ASEAN Flyway Network and the ASEAN Heritage Parks Programme.
78. Management Committee believed that hosting MOP12 would be an excellent opportunity for the Government of the Philippines to invite site managers and stakeholders from ASEAN countries to participate, as well as share experiences with other Partners and collaborators in the Flyway. The participation of high-level government officials and key stakeholders attending MOP was seen as an important opportunity to pursue international conservation priorities and grow recognition of several ongoing conservation efforts.
79. On 29 September 2023, the Republic of the Philippines confirmed their interest in hosting the 12th Meeting of Partners in November 2025.
80. The Secretariat, with support and guidance from Management Committee, worked closely with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to commence preparations.
81. A notification was circulated to all Partners on 26th January 2024 informing Partnership focal points of the host Partner and expected timing.
82. Management Committee sincerely appreciates the offer from the Philippines to host MOP12 and thanks them for their excellent work to date.

Recommendations from the Management Committee for the next intersessional period

83. Based on Management Committee's experience during the last two and a half years, the Committee wishes to make the following recommendations to assist shaping the intersessional work of the next Management Committee.
84. Management Committee recommendations:
    a. Continue to meet at regular intervals during the intersessional period with the option of additional meetings to address specific issues as they arise. This action will assist with progressing the intersessional work and reporting outcomes to all Partners.
    b. Prioritise the financial sustainability of the Secretariat by developing solutions to funding needs and gaps. This recommendation includes developing ways to expand the funding base to support Partnership activities.
    c. Continue to expand the Partnership by attracting new Partners and encouraging the nomination of new Flyway Sites. Corporate partnerships may provide opportunities to develop innovative solutions to biodiversity loss.
    d. 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.
    e. Encourage Partners, particularly those who have not yet had the opportunity, to host MOP13 in 2027 or early 2028. The Management Committee recommends early engagement with interested Partners to secure a host for MOP13 and beyond.