

Summary

ATTENDEES:	
Narelle Montgomery	Australian Government, Chair, Management Committee
Mark Carey	Australian Government
Bruce McKinlay	New Zealand Government
Doug Watkins	Australasian Wader Studies Group
Minoru Kashiwagi	Wild Bird Society of Japan
Li He	FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
Jennifer George	EAAFP Secretariat, Chief Executive
Kyle Esperanza Zuleta	EAAFP Secretariat, Programme Officer
Sabine Leykam	EAAFP Secretariat, Programme Coordinator

Overview

The Chair announced that three webinars would be held to assist Partners and to discuss proposed amendments to the Partnership documents, which will be considered as a package at MOP12 in November 2025. The Chair also provided an update on the Management Committee's progress on the Governance Harmonisation project, which aimed to review and harmonise various governance documents underpinning the Partnership. The first tranche of documents were circulated for consultation, with a deadline for written feedback set for 31 May. Further opportunities for input and comments would be provided on subsequent tranches of documents.

Partnership document

Appendix VI - New Partnership Organisational Structure Proposal

Bruce McKinlay (New Zealand) proposed a new organisational structure for the Partnership (as it can be seen in Appendix VI – Organisational Structure of the EAAF Partnership), suggesting a hierarchical approach with the Partners at the top, followed by the Management Committee, and then the Secretariat or Chief Executive. The Chair agreed that further refinement of the organisational structure was required, emphasising the need for clarity and proper representation.

Mark Carey (Australia) brought up the proposal to elevate the Technical Sub-committee to a full Committee to enhance coordination and communication and stressed the importance of MOPs as decision-making fora. The Chair and Bruce McKinlay (New Zealand) discussed the possibility of restructuring the diagram and adding explanatory text to the Partnership document. The level of detail in the text was also deliberated, aiming to strike a balance between clarity and the Management Committee's flexibility.

The Chair discussed the roles and functions of various sub-committees and Working Groups/Task Forces within the Partnership. The Chair clarified the hierarchy, noting that the Finance Sub-Committee is obviously a sub-committee of the Management Committee as Management Committee is responsible for overseeing financial aspects of Partnership operation during the intersessional period. While the Technical Sub-committee is currently a sub-committee of Management Committee, it was noted that in other international forums, the administrative and scientific bodies are usually equal committees, reporting directly to Partners given their distinct mandates. The Chair also outlined the responsibilities of the Technical Sub-committee and the Science Unit, emphasising the importance of their collaboration in supporting research across the Flyway. The discussion highlighted the need for better integration between these entities and the consideration of this in the development of the Partnership document at MOP12.

Updating Partners' Categorisation and Definition of Flyway

The categorisation of Partners and definition of Flyway were also discussed, acknowledging the challenges in drawing clear boundaries due to the migration patterns of waterbirds and shared values across different nations. It was underlined the need to revise the Partnership document to accommodate more nations and to balance current practical issues with evolving knowledge. The Chair proposed a more flexible approach to Partnership eligibility, while Mark Carey (Australia) suggested reevaluating the fundamental definition of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway due to its overlap with other flyways. The discussion concluded with the group undertaking to consider potential options for amendments, and the possibility of expanding the Partnership to allow more countries to join if the species are moving through them, and provide these in writing by 31 May.

Doug Watkins (AWSG) suggested seeking information from SPREP (South Pacific Regional Environment Programme) about Pacific nations' interest in migratory waterbird conservation in the Pacific. The Chair acknowledged SPREP as a key organisation in the Pacific region that should have a good idea of potential interest within their member countries as to whether they

want to set up their own flyway mechanism or look to sort of enhance existing mechanisms if the species happen to be captured through there.

Terms of Reference of the EAAFP Secretariat

The Chair shared that the Terms of Reference outline the broad roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat and during the review, some misalignments were found with the current MOU that hosts the Secretariat which led the Management Committee to propose updates to the document to better reflect MOU arrangements and fix some of the outdated terminology. Bruce McKinlay (New Zealand) suggested clarifying the relationships between the Secretariat, Management Committee, and the Chief Executive, emphasising the importance of knowing the roles and reporting lines. The Chair agreed, noting that any changes should be consistent across all documents being considering.

Delegation of authority between Chair of the Partnership & Chief Executive

The Chair shared that this document outlines the role of the Chair of the Partnership and the Chief Executive in relation to certain specific Partnership activities and processes. With regard to the business registration process of the Secretariat in its host country, Bruce McKinlay (New Zealand) recommended that there might be a need to be explicit somewhere about maintaining the relationship with the authorities in the host country and someone needs to be accountable if updating or supplying more information is being required by the host nation. The Chief Executive shared that the requirements and frequency of auditing will be clarified in the next review once the audit process is completed.

Next Steps

The Chair outlined the next steps, including the deadline of 31 May for written comments, and the schedule for future consultations for Tranches 2 and 3.