

ELEVENTH MEETING OF PARTNERS OF THE EAST ASIAN – AUSTRALASIAN FLYWAY PARTNERSHIP
Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, 12-17 March 2023



Draft Decision 7

Guidelines for the EAAFP Sister Site Program

Submitted by the EAAFP Secretariat

Summary

EAAFP MOP10 adopted Decision 10.9 “Developing the EAAFP Sister Site Program” so as to improve the systematic mechanism of the EAAFP Sister Site Program and invite Partners to consider establishing new Sister Site relationships.

The Secretariat has prepared the draft Sister Site guidelines [Appendix 1 to this Draft Decision] in consultation with Partners, Working Groups, Task Forces and other necessary stakeholders. The guidelines include case studies of existing arrangements, benefits and expectations of twinning sites, and a draft MOU template for future twinning arrangements. The draft guidelines have been circulated to Partners as a part of the Guidelines development process, including the National Site Partnership (DD 10.8). The Secretariat has also communicated with the site managers from the existing Sister Sites, facilitated the implementation of the existing Sister Site between Incheon Songdo Tidal Flat [EAAF 145] and Hong Kong Mai Po Inner Deep Bay [EAAF003], and supported the new arrangement between Higashiyoka-higata [EAAF124] and Qupaluk [EAAF 33] in February 2023 as the 11th EAAFP Sister Sites.

Background

1. In accordance with Paragraph 3 and Paragraph 6 (1) of the Partnership document, Partners are encouraged to support the development of an East Asian – Australasian Flyway Site Network (Flyway Site Network) to ensure a chain of internationally important sites are managed to support the populations of migratory waterbirds in the flyway. With the aim of linking the Flyway Network Sites or potential Sites through sharing information and capacity building, to further improve the protection and management of internationally important sites, a number of communities, site

managers and Partners have developed eleven Sister Site arrangements under the EAAFP Sister Site Program.

2. As per Decision 10.9, the Partnership acknowledged the importance of the development of a mechanism for the establishment of the new EAAFP Sister Site arrangements for more participants to contribute to KRA 1.6 [Indicator: At least five new EAAFP Sister Site relationships have been developed] of the Partnership Objective 1 of the Decision 10.1 [East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership 2019-2028 Strategic Plan].
3. To implement these decisions, the Secretariat hired a consultant, Ms. Jennifer George on 9 April 2021 for five months to develop guidelines and recommendations of the EAAFP Sister Site Program and National and Site Partnership (Ref. DD. 11.06) with the following original timeline:
 - April 2021: Review of all the documents provided by the Secretariat, including all contacts and advice on the best approaches; Develop a detailed plan to undertake the work working closely in discussion with the Secretariat; Identify the best platform to work with the Secretariat.
 - May 2021: Gather all contacts and begin to connect with them to identify where the challenges will be; Set up surveys; Set up interviews; Set up systems to record information
 - June – July: Continue with surveys and interviews; Collating information; Identify and follow up conversations needed.
 - August 2021: Preparing report; Recommendations; Framework.
4. However, there were some delays in compiling the necessary information and data, and the Secretariat, with the consultant, presented the first draft document for briefing via a webinar on 2 July 2021. The participants included 5 National Governments, 2 INGOS, 2 IGOS and 2 Site Managers (Summary - [link](#)). The comments and introductions from speakers were reflected in a second draft. The updated overall concept of the guidelines was presented in the Partners Workshop on 3 August 2022, and circulated on 22 August and 24 October 2022 via email. The final document was submitted to the Secretariat [Appendix I].
5. During the preparation process, bilateral interviews were also conducted to obtain feedback on the drafts and learn perspectives on the existing international/domestic cooperation mechanism from the Flyway stakeholders beyond the EAAF:
 - Government Partners: Japan, Australia, Singapore, United States, RO Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, DPR Korea (written responses only),
 - INGOS Partners: Pukorokoro Miranda Trust, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Birdlife International, Paulson Institute,
 - IGOS: ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity,
 - Site Managers: Shinan-RO Korea, Incheon-RO Korea, Boondall Wetlands, Pukorokoro Miranda Trust
 - Other stakeholders: Ramsar Regional Center-East Asia, Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, Audubon, Snow Leopard Trust, Birding Beijing.

6. The resulting Guidelines contains the purpose, benefits, and impacts on the program; a review of achievements of existing Sister Sites under the program [Annex 2]; case studies from EAAF and other Flyways; examples of cooperation; recommended steps for the establishment of new twinning sites; and a template for the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
7. The Secretariat has also supported the implementation and promotion of cooperative activities between existing Sister Sites, such as between Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve [EAAF 073] and Chongming Dongtan National Nature Reserve [EAAF 002], and between Incheon Songdo Tidal Flat [EAAF 145] and Hong Kong Mai Po Inner Deep Bay [EAAF003]. A new Flyway Network Leaflet was introduced the EAAFP Sister Site Program and disseminated to Partners, Working Groups, Task Forces and subscribers via e-newsletters and social media channels.
8. As per the Australian Government's request (DD.10.09), the Secretariat has also tried to facilitate the identification of a sister site for the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary [EAAF131] e.g., Hwaseong Wetlands [EAAF 142], which the EAAFP Secretariat had engaged in a local project in 2020. However, due to the delay in finalizing the draft guidelines, this new arrangement has not progressed, but its development will continue following the adoption of the new Guidelines for the EAAFP Sister Site Program by MOP11.

Decision:

Partners at the 11th Meeting of the Partners are requested to approve the proposed new Guidelines of the EAAFP Sister Site Program [Appendix 1] to adopt the list of existing Sister Sites, and guidelines for the establishment of the new Sister Site arrangements.

Annex 1

Draft Decision 7

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Submitted by the EAAFP Secretariat

Recalling that, in accordance with Paragraph 3 and Paragraph 6(1) of the Partnership document, Partners are encouraged to support the development of an East Asian – Australasian Flyway Waterbird Site Network (Flyway Site Network) to ensure a chain of internationally important sites are managed to support the populations of migratory waterbirds of the flyway. With the aim of linking the Flyway Network Sites through sharing information and capacity building, to further improve the protection and management of important sites, several communities, site managers and Partners have made eleven Sister Site arrangements under the EAAFP Sister Site Program;

Recognizing that several sites have developed the EAAFP Sister Site Program, which has been used as a case study, and encourages them to continue to engage in the activities [Appendix II]; and

Further recognizing the new guidelines for EAAFP Sister Site Program developed in accordance with Decision 10.09 “Developing an EAAFP Sister Site Program”.

The 11th Meeting of Partners of the East Asian- Australasian Flyway Partnership

1. *Endorses* the new Guidelines of the EAAFP Sister Site Program [Appendix 1] to be adopted at existing Sister Sites and for the establishment of the new Sister Site arrangements;
2. *Requests* the Secretariat to work with Working Groups, Task Forces, and the Technical Sub-Committee to facilitate relationships between sites for new Sister Site arrangements as this will contribute to KRA 1.6 of the EAAFP Strategic Plan;
3. *Endorse* a Secretariat budget for 2023 – 2024 (Doc. 11.10) to support the establishment and operation of the arrangements following the new Guideline by providing EAAF languages-translated brief documents, CEPA materials, hosting workshops, and capacity-building training sessions; and
4. *Requests* Partners and the Secretariat to report on their progress to establish and operate the Sister Site arrangements through the Reporting Template to each MOP, and as a part of the Report on the status of the EAAFP Flyway Site Network.

Annex 2

Existing Sister Site arrangements in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway (as of 11 Feb 2023)

<https://www.eaaflyway.net/sister-sites/>

#	Site name	Country	Local government or management authority	Site name	Country	Local government or management authority
1	Yalujiang National Nature Reserve	China, People's Republic	Dandong City, Liaoning Province	Firth of Thames	New Zealand	Pukorokoro Miranda Naturalist Trust
2	Junam Reservoir	Korea, Republic of	Changwon City, Gyeongsangnam-do	Kejo-numa	Japan	Osaki City, Miyagi Prefecture
3	Zhalong National Nature Reserve	China, People's Republic	Qiqihar City, Heilongjiang Province	Janghang Wetland Protected Area	Republic of Korea	Goyang City, Gyeonggi Province
4	Moreton Bay, Boondall wetlands	Australia	Brisbane City, Queensland	Yatsu-higata	Japan	Narashino City, Chiba Prefecture
5	Hunter River Estuary Wetlands	Australia	Newcastle City, NSW	Kushiro Wetland	Japan	Kushiro City, Hokkaido Prefecture
6	Suncheon Bay	Korea, Republic of	Suncheon City, South Jeolla Province	Arasaki	Japan	Izumi City, Kagoshima Prefecture
7	Fujimae Tidal Flat	Japan	Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture	Swan Bay Tidal Flats	Australia	City of Greater Geelong, Victoria
8	Yubudo Tidal Flat	Korea, Republic of	Seocheon County, Chungcheongnam-do	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve	Singapore	National Parks Board of Singapore
9	Chongming Dongtan National Nature Reserve	China, People's Republic of	Shanghai City	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve	Singapore	National Parks Board of Singapore
10	Incheon Songdo Tidal Flat	Korea, Republic of	Incheon Metropolitan City	Mai Po Inner Deep Bay	China, People's Republic	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
11	Qupatuk	United States of America	Bureau of Land Management Alaska	Higashiyoka-higata	Japan	Saga City, Saga Prefecture