



Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout their Range

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REPORT OF THE DUGONG TECHNICAL GROUP

Prepared by the Dugong MOU Secretariat

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the activities of the Dugong Technical Group (DTG) of the Dugong MOU since the Second Meeting of Signatories (MOS2) to the Dugong MOU in February 2013.

Background

2. The DTG and the related Terms of Reference (see Annex 1) were formally endorsed by Signatories at MOS2.

3. The role of the DTG is to provide technical and scientific support to Signatories and the Secretariat, for the effective implementation of the Dugong MOU and the associated Conservation and Management Plan (CMP).

4. Members of the DTG do not represent their institution and instead serve in their capacity as specialist individuals. Membership of the DTG is voluntary and where possible, advice is provided pro-bono or in-kind. A list of current DTG members can be found in Annex 2.

5. The Secretariat is the focal point for all requests, feedback and communication between the DTG and Signatories. This approach has enabled the Secretariat to be an effective conduit for communication, cost management, strategic direction and prioritisation.

Activities of the DTG

6. The DTG has made a significant contribution towards capacity building in dugong range states, fundraising for dugong and seagrass conservation and providing technical support to the Secretariat and its partners as outlined below. Members of the DTG are also actively contributing to MOS3 and are playing key role in delivering the Seagrass and Dugong Technical Workshop.

GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project

7. The DTG has played an active role in the preparations of the implementation of GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project initiated at the GEF International Workshop held in association with MOS2.

8. Since the start of implementation of the GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project in 2015, the DTG has continued to provide technical advice to project partners on specific research

needs in relation to seagrass assessment and monitoring, dugong population monitoring and applying conservation incentives for dugong and seagrass protection. This has included:

- Developing a research template for Project Partners to complete. This helped the DTG to better understand their projects and provide more detailed advice.
- Providing feedback to the Project Coordination Team on the status of projects based on the half-yearly reports from Project Partners.
- Providing feedback to the first and second meetings of the Executive Project Steering Committee in October 2015 and November 2016 respectively, on the implementation of projects and utilisation of DTG technical advice to date.
- Liaising directly with project partners on technical issues including methodologies and specific equipment for dugong, and seagrass assessment and monitoring.
- Participating in meetings and workshops for the GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project, including during the Project Preparatory Grant (PPG) Phase, as listed in the following section.

Meetings and workshops

9. The presence of the DTG members at Dugong MOU related meetings has provided an opportunity for the DTG to share its expertise, identified potential areas of technical support for projects and built positive relationships with project partners.

10. Since MOS2, members of the DTG have participated in the following meetings and workshops:

- GEF-5 International Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project Workshop – Manila, Philippines (February 2013).
- GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project PPG Phase: Timor-Leste project development meeting – Dili, Timor-Leste (February 2013).
- GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project PPG Phase: Sri Lanka project development meeting – Colombo, Sri Lanka (March 2013).
- GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project PPG Phase: Review of Project Document – London, United Kingdom (April 2013).
- Addressing Bycatch of Marine Megafauna in the Gulf Workshop – Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (March 2014).
- GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project PPG Phase: Review of Project Document – London, United Kingdom (April 2014).
- GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project: Indonesian partner meeting – Jakarta, Indonesia (January 2015).
- GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project: Indonesian technical advice meeting – Doha, Qatar (March 2015).
- GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project: Solomon Islands National Inception Workshop – Honiara, Solomon Islands (April 2015).
- GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project: Partner meeting – Dili, Timor-Leste (June 2015).
- Scoping Workshop of the E-Resource Kit – Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (September 2015).
- GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project Inception Workshop – Colombo, Sri Lanka (October 2015).
- GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project Executive Project Steering Committee Meeting – Colombo, Sri Lanka (October 2015).
- Meeting of the Dugong MOU Technical Advisors – Bangkok, Thailand (February 2016).
- GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project: Indonesian Partners Meeting – Jakarta, Indonesia (October 2016).

- GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project: Malaysia partner planning meeting – Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (November 2016).
- GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project Executive Project Steering Committee Meeting – Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (November 2016).
- GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project – Field visit to Johor Bahru, Malaysia (November 2016).

Projects

11. In addition to the GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project, the DTG supports other Dugong MOU related projects both in planning and implementation.

12. One of the most substantial contributions of the DTG during the reporting period has been to the development of the E-Resource Kit. The DTG developed the content for the dugong, seagrass and human communities streams of the E-Resource Kit and worked with the IT developer to integrate the three streams into a cohesive, user-friendly document. More information on the E-Resource Kit can be found in CMS/Dugong/MOS3/11.2.

13. Since MOS2, members of the DTG have also provided support to the following projects:

- Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Action Plan for Trang Province, Thailand.
- Development of an Incentive-based Model and Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA) - based Management Approach for Conservation of Dugongs and Seagrass Ecosystems in Myanmar.
- Increasing Conservation Capacity in Tamil Nadu, India.
- Dugong Conservation Project, Trang Province, Thailand.
- GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project.
- CMS Dugong MOU Questionnaire.
- South East Andaman Community Tourism and Seagrass Initiative.

More Information on these projects can also be found in CMS/Dugong/MOS3/11.2.

Fundraising

14. The Dugong MOU Secretariat has invested a substantial amount of staff time and core funding to seeking funds for dugong and seagrass conservation. Since MOS2, the Secretariat has developed numerous grant applications as detailed in CMS/Dugong/MOS3/13.1. The DTG has played a core role in developing these proposals by providing advice on the scope, feasibility and technical requirements, as well as connecting the Secretariat with relevant stakeholders around the world.

Ad hoc advice

15. The DTG has provided *ad hoc* advice to the Secretariat, the Dugong MOU Signatory States and the GEF-5 Project partners, primarily through electronic forms of communication (such as email, telephone and Skype). This advice has been invaluable and has always been provided promptly.

Summary

16. The DTG is of great value to the Dugong MOU Secretariat and has made a significant contribution to the implementation of the Dugong MOU and its CMP. The current members of the DTG have kindly offered to continue to fulfil this role within the Dugong MOU after MOS3. As per paragraph 16 of the Terms of Reference for the DTG, the Secretariat recommends the reappointment of the current members for another three-year term, until MOS4.

17. The Dugong MOU Secretariat wishes to thank the DTG for the provision of invaluable technical advice to dugong range states, often at no cost.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- a) Note the report of the DTG.
- b) Reappoint the current members of the DTG for another three-year term.

Annex 1

Terms of Reference for the Dugong Technical Group (DTG) to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout their Range (Dugong MOU)

Preamble

These Terms of Reference have been established to guide the appointment, engagement and remuneration of specialist advisors to the Dugong MOU.

Purpose

1. The purpose of the Dugong Technical Group (DTG) is to serve and assist the Signatory States and the Dugong MOU Secretariat in the effective implementation of the Dugong MOU and the associated Conservation and Management Plan (CMP) through the provision of expert advice on request.

2. The Secretariat of the Dugong MOU will serve to receive and transmit requests from the Signatories for advice from the DTG and communicate responses of the DTG to the Signatories.

Role of the DTG

3. The main tasks of the DTG will be to:

- a) Provide expert advice and information, and make recommendations on the implementation of the Dugong MOU to the Signatory States and the Secretariat, as requested;
- b) Analyse, as necessary, scientific data and status assessments and provide recommendations on actions needed;
- c) Provide comments on any proposals to amend the MOU text which have a technical content;
- d) Carry out any other tasks referred to it through the Secretariat by the Signatory State Meeting.

4. The Secretariat may request the DTG to give priority to certain activities and tasks, which may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Evaluating and providing advice on any conservation and management programme proposed or implemented within Range States;
- b) Assisting the Secretariat in the development of projects and initiatives so that regional, sub-regional and local concerns and interests are taken into account;
- c) Providing advice to the meetings of Signatory States on the adoption of additional conservation and management actions and on revisions to the CMP;
- d) Evaluating, at the request of the Secretariat, the efficiency of different measures proposed or implemented to reduce the capture and incidental mortality of dugongs in fishing operations;
- e) Promoting the use of standardised dugong research techniques, monitoring programmes, data collection, data storage and reporting;
- f) Reviewing scientific reports, annual reports of the Signatory and Range States, and other appropriate documents to assist the Secretariat in assessing progress in the implementation of the MOU and its associated CMP;

- g) Bringing to the attention of the Secretariat significant new information relating to the conservation and management of dugongs and their habitats;
- h) Seeking input from other individuals and bodies, as appropriate, in responding to requests for advice; and
- i) Making recommendations regarding other fields of expertise needed within the Secretariat to assist with its work.

Membership

1. Members of the DTG serve in their capacity as specialist individuals rather than as representatives of Governments or organisations with which they also may be affiliated.

Meetings and Remuneration

- 2. Where possible, the provision of advice will be sought on a pro-bono or in-kind basis.
- 3. Where possible, advice will be sought through electronic forms of communication.
- 4. To minimise costs, the DTG will conduct as many of its activities as possible through electronic forms of communication. Meetings of the DTG will be held periodically, where possible and as funds permit, for example prior to the regular meetings of Signatory States or other key meetings and workshops.
- 5. Members of the DTG may be invited to participate in Signatory State meetings, and may also be requested to participate in the meetings of related and associated projects and organisations that the Secretariat deems relevant to the work of the MOU.
- 6. Where a meeting of the DTG is considered essential, for example prior to the regular meetings of Signatory States or other key meetings and workshops, the travel (economy class) and accommodation for members attending will be arranged and provided by the CMS Secretariat.
- 7. The cost of supporting DTG members' work will be borne by the Dugong MOU Secretariat and will be reported at the following Signatory State Meeting.

Size and Composition

- 8. The size of the DTG may fluctuate and the composition of the DTG will strike a balance among the areas of expertise set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding, which include dugong biology and ecology, marine resource management, fisheries bycatch mitigation, socio-economics, sustainable development and other relevant disciplines. Additional experts may be invited to participate on an *ad hoc* basis, at the request of the Secretariat.
- 9. Members of DTG will have widely recognized experience and expertise in one or more aspects of dugong research, conservation and/or management of species and their habitats; and experience of working with relevant experts at local, national and international levels. Members of the DTG will also have full access to electronic mail and web-based information and communication systems, through which the intercessional work of the DTG will take place.
- 10. Any additional expertise identified by the Signatories will be sought through a "Call for expressions of interest" process organised by the Secretariat. The Secretariat will report any appointments to the Signatories.

Conditions of Membership

11. Membership of the DTG is voluntary.
12. Membership of the DTG is for three years and may be ended at any time by either party by written notice. Members may be re-appointed by mutual consent.
13. Membership of the DTG will not preclude an individual from being recruited as a paid consultant. These tasks will be of a substantial nature outside of the remit of the general Terms of Reference for DTG members. Selection of, and remuneration for, consultants will be in line with current United Nations established practice.

Annex 2

**List of Members of the Dugong Technical Group to the Dugong MOU
(as at December 2016)**

Name	Expertise	Affiliation
Prof David Blair	Population genetics of dugongs across their range. Parasites of dugongs.	James Cook University, Australia
Dr Christophe Cleguer	Dugong abundance, distribution, habitat use, movements, spatial analysis of threats.	Senior Research Officer James Cook University, Australia
Dr Josh Donlan	Program Design, Incentives, Entrepreneurism, Conservation Finance. Integrating human-centered design and science into conservation programs.	Executive Director, Advanced Conservation Strategies, Spain and United States
Dr Alana Grech	Spatial analysis, vulnerability and cumulative impact assessments, conservation planning, and spatial priority-setting for conservation actions.	Lecturer in Spatial Information Science, Macquarie University, NSW 2109, Australia
Dr Amanda Hodgson	Marine mammal population assessments, using aerial survey techniques, including pioneering UAV surveys (unmanned aerial vehicle) in Australia. Research interests include dugong behaviour and their responses to human activities.	Cetacean Research Unit, Murdoch University, Australia
Prof Helene Marsh	Internationally recognized expert on the biology and Conservation of dugongs.	Distinguished Professor of Environmental Science, James Cook University, Australia; Co-Chair IUCN Sirenian Special Group
Mr Len McKenzie	Expertise in seagrass ecology, including mapping, monitoring and assessment of tropical seagrasses. Extensive experience in capacity building, including participatory monitoring of seagrass habitats (e.g. Seagrass-Watch).	Principal Researcher, James Cook University, Australia
Dr Nicolas Pilcher	Bycatch and supporting community-based conservation in the Asia Pacific.	Founder and Executive Director, Marine Research Foundation, Malaysia

Name	Expertise	Affiliation
Dr Joshua Smith	Social and acoustic behaviour and habitat use of marine mammals. Recent research focuses on passive acoustic monitoring of coastal dolphins and the behavioural ecology of humpback whales in the Great Barrier Reef.	Murdoch University Cetacean Research Unit (MUCRU), Murdoch University, Victoria, Australia
Dr Richard Unsworth	Assessment of ecosystem services of seagrass; Artisanal fisheries of tropical coastal ecosystems; Use of local ecological knowledge; Ecology and management of seagrass ecosystems; Community-based management of seagrass ecosystems.	Seagrass Ecosystem Research Group, Swansea University, UK Director, Project Seagrass, United Kingdom
Mr Simon Woodley	Strategic planning, policy and management of marine protected areas. Management of tropical marine scientific research organisations and programmes. Design and facilitation of marine conferences, workshops and expert groups.	Director, S & J Woodley Pty Ltd, Australia