



Memorandum of Understanding on the
Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and
their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia

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FOURTH MEETING OF THE SIGNATORY STATES
Muscat, Oman, 11-14 March 2006

CURRENT USE AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

1. As discussed at the Third Meeting of the Signatory States, a variety of tools might be developed to facilitate implementation of the IOSEA Memorandum of Understanding, such as manuals of best practice, guidelines on beach and/or hatchery management, educational videos etc. While little progress has so far been made in these areas, the Signatory States may wish to consider what kinds of tools would be useful at sub-regional levels and perhaps even region-wide.

2. The IOSEA website is an extremely versatile implementation tool in its own right. A substantial investment has been made to keep it current since its inception more than two years ago. A new "Profile of the Month" – featuring a project or important event in turtle conservation in the IOSEA region – has been added to the site every month since April 2004. The list of titles from 2005 gives an indication of the breadth of coverage of these Profiles: The Status of Sea Turtles in Qatar; The Tanzania Turtle and Dugong Conservation Programme; Tracking Olive Ridley Turtles from the Tiwi Islands, Northern Australia; Community Effort Averts Plastic Disaster at Watamu Beach, Kenya; Marine Turtle Tagging Programme in the Islamic Republic of Iran; Protecting Red Sea Turtles: The Eritrea Coastal, Island and Marine Biodiversity (ECMIB) Project; Proposed Indian Port under Scrutiny: Olive Ridelies at Risk; Marine Turtle Protection in Pakistan; Australian Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles; Rushikulya Sea Turtle Protection Committee (RSTPC); Caring for the Turtles of Redang Island, Malaysia; and Snapshots of Research and Conservation Action across Northern Australia.

3. Additionally, over 40 feature stories have been added to the homepage since April 2005, containing information on project activities, national implementation arrangements, newsworthy events, meeting announcements, and new publications. Over that same period, links were made to more than 160 individual news stories concerning marine turtle and habitat conservation in and around the IOSEA region. An important innovation was introduced with the upgrading of the IOSEA website last year: the possibility to search headlines and features using keywords, making these archival information sources very useful for research purposes.

4. The electronic library continues to be populated with useful reference material. For example, it now contains summaries of more than 20 informative PowerPoint presentations delivered at various meetings and workshops; and details of more than 50 useful publications of various kinds. An education section allows users to download booklets and posters that have been made freely available. Elsewhere on the site, the Flipper Tag Series database now contains information about the flipper tag series used in 18 countries around the IOSEA region – in Signatories and non-Signatories alike. The comprehensive Online Reporting Facility is described in more detail in document MT-IOSEA/SS.4/Doc. 8.1.

5. The IOSEA Interactive Mapping System (IMapS), a collaborative venture with UNEP-WCMC, was formally launched in February 2004. With its detailed maps of marine turtle nesting from around the IOSEA region, and overlays of important coral reef, mangrove and sea grass habitats, the IMapS remains at the forefront of this kind of interactive management tool. While the underlying data have

not been updated as frequently as had been hoped over the past year, the Secretariat has initiated discussions with UNEP-WCMC and the Advisory Committee about a protocol that would allow individual users to input data, subject to a rigorous screening process.

6. Finally, the Projects Database now contains detailed descriptions of more than 60 project activities in 22 countries around the region. The Secretariat has made a concerted effort to solicit and compile the information from a wide range of sources. Though there are numerous project activities still not included in the system, a good start has been made to populate the database which is now searchable with keywords.

7. It is reasonable, of course, to ask how widely the IOSEA website is being visited. Statistics compiled since October 2005 show that there have been over 60,000 visits to the site during that period -- averaging just over 12,000 'hits' per month. As with any website statistics, the absolute numbers are less important than the trends (since such statistics include a considerable percentage of visits by commercial 'web-crawlers' that index sites for search purposes). In the case of the IOSEA website, the monthly totals have been remarkably stable over the first five months of reporting. However, there has been a noticeable increase in traffic in the first week of March 2006, since the official launch of the Year of the Turtle campaign.

8. It is pleasing to note that of the top 20 countries of origin for visits to the site, fourteen are IOSEA Signatory States or are from the IOSEA region. In descending order of frequency: United States, Thailand, Australia, United Kingdom, China, India, South Africa, Malaysia, Philippines, Japan, Indonesia, France, Pakistan and Islamic Republic of Iran. This suggests that the website is at least beginning to reach its intended target audience in the IOSEA region, with good penetration in Australia, South Asia, and South-East Asia. With a few exceptions, rather less traffic is observed from countries in the Western Indian Ocean – in line with general internet accessibility – and in countries of West Asia, where language may be a factor.

9. Internet search engines, such as Google, are the predominant origins of visits to the IOSEA website. However, the website has also been attracting visitors from other websites that have links to www.ioseaturtles.org, notably: the websites of the Convention on Migratory Species, Australia's Department of Environment and Heritage, the United States' National Marine Fisheries Service, UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre, and 'Operation Migration'. This suggests that if other IOSEA Signatory States and partner organisations, such as international NGOs with significant turtle conservation programmes, were to make links to the IOSEA website, traffic volumes would increase even further.

10. Signatory States and co-operating partner organisations can also play an important role in ensuring that the website serves its intended purpose by providing regular feedback and contributions to broaden the content and keep it up to date. To that end, the Secretariat has prepared a simple questionnaire for distribution to all meeting participants, with a request that it be completed and returned to the Secretariat by the end of the meeting.

Action requested / Expected outcome:

All meeting participants are invited to complete the questionnaire and to return it to the Secretariat by the end of the session on Tuesday, 14 March. The Secretariat will use the feedback to consider possible improvements to the website, and will be pleased to incorporate future contributions of content from all users.

Questionnaire on use of the IOSEA MoU Website and its further development (06.03.06)

Name: _____ E-mail address: _____ Date: _____

Organisation: _____ Country _____

1. Which of the following best describes the relative ease or difficulty with which you are able to access the Internet?

- High speed (broadband) access – excellent, reliable connection
- Access through Local Area Network – good, reliable connection
- Dial-up modem – fairly good, reliable connection
- Dial-up modem – poor connection, not always reliable
- Extremely limited or no internet access
- Other (explain):

2. How frequently do you access the IOSEA Website (www.ioseaturtles.org)? (Tick one):

- Almost daily About 1-3 times per week About 1-3 times per month
- Occasionally, for specific issues Rarely Never

3. Which of its features do you find useful / informative? Indicate, in the box, the degree of usefulness with a number from 1 to 5, where: 1 = Very useful >>> 5 = Not useful

- E-News Profile of the Month Headlines Stories Electronic Library
- Interactive Map System Online Reporting Facility Flipper tag series Projects database
- Contacts list / links Message board
- Other (describe) _____

4. How could the existing features be improved? What other features / information would you like to see included on the site that are/is not already there?

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Your contributions can help to improve the content of the IOSEA Website. Please indicate below what kinds of information you can provide, and when.

Information requested / to be provided	Tick ✓	It would be helpful if you could indicate when you might be able to submit your contribution <i>(For example, 3 weeks from today, within 1 month, by end of June, 2nd half of this year etc.)</i>	Remarks / more details of what you will provide
One or more "Profiles of the Month" (with text and photos) on some important site, project or activity			
Details of one or more marine turtle conservation projects or programmes for inclusion in the Projects Database			
News stories in the (electronic) media relevant to marine turtle conservation, suitable for posting as "Headlines"			
Brief reports of recently held meetings, workshops			
Announcements of upcoming meetings, workshops of interest			
Information on studies completed or planned (e.g. satellite tracking, surveys, genetics etc)			
Details of flipper tag series being used in your country / by your project (see http://www.ioseaturtles.org/flippertags.html)			
Information on interesting tag recoveries			
Copies of publications, articles, brochures, videos etc. that warrant mention in the electronic library			
Good quality digital photographs that can be used freely for IOSEA publications or on the website (with credits given)			

Information requested / to be provided	Tick ✓	It would be helpful if you could indicate when you might be able to submit your contribution <i>(For example, 3 weeks from today, within 1 month, by end of June, 2nd half of this year etc.)</i>	Remarks / more details of what you will provide
PowerPoint presentations (which the Secretariat will transform into pdf handouts for inclusion in the electronic library)			
Project proposals / concepts / descriptions for which funding is being sought (suitable for posting in a newly created section on the website)			
Ideas for Year of the Turtle activities in your country			
Comments on the "IOSEA Site Network" proposal, including suggestions of potential candidate sites (see Document MT-IOSEA/SS.4/Doc. 10)			
Confirmation of the name and contact details of the official Focal Point in your country			
Details of any national committees that have been established			
Suggestions for additions to the list of useful contacts and/or links to relevant websites)			
Suggestions of persons/organisations to include on the Secretariat's e-mailing list			
Other remarks / Other information not mentioned above, which you undertake to provide:			