



# CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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## FIRST MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR THE CONSERVATION OF CETACEANS AND THEIR HABITATS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION

Apia, Samoa, 6 March 2007

Agenda Item 8.1

### MOU COORDINATION

*(Note prepared by the Secretariat)*

1. Paragraph 17 of the MoU raises the issue of MoU coordination. It states: “An organisation to coordinate the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding will be determined by consensus of the signatories at their first meeting after the consideration of all offers received”.
2. It is generally accepted that the CMS Secretariat acts as the secretariat to MoUs developed under CMS auspices. This has historically been at no cost to the MoU signatories, the exception being the Indian Ocean-South-east Asia Marine Turtles MoU where voluntary contributions from the signatories fund an out-posted secretariat. The CMS Secretariat acts as Secretariat for the Pacific Islands Cetaceans MoU pursuant to MoU paragraph 17.
3. As the number of MoUs has grown, the CMS Secretariat has increasingly sought to partner with collaborating organisations to support it in organising MoU meetings and to provide technically oriented documentation and advice.
4. In addition, in order to provide a more solid basis for MoUs and their accompanying action plans to be effectively implemented, the CMS Secretariat has been developing the theory and practice of outsourced “MoU coordinators” with many of the same collaborating partner organisations. This is in response to CMS Conference of the Parties Resolutions 7.7 and 8.5, which encouraged the Secretariat to continue exploring partnerships with interested organisations specialised in the conservation and management of migratory species for the provision of coordination services for selected MoUs.
5. To date coordinators have been established for the Siberian Crane, Great Bustard, Aquatic Warbler and West African Elephants MoUs.
6. The Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator was the first to be established and has been funded by the International Crane Foundation and CMS. BirdLife International is providing coordination functions for the Great Bustard MoU with funding from the Austrian Government.

7. Interim coordination functions for the Aquatic Warbler MoU were established for 3 years in collaboration with BirdLife International and the BirdLife United Kingdom Partner Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). At its own initiative, RSPB secured funding from the Michael Otto Foundation in Germany. The BirdLife Belarus Partner APB hosts the coordinator in collaboration with the Government of Belarus. At first the coordinator was provided at no cost to the Convention though this will change in 2007 with Birdlife and CMS splitting the costs for a 2-year period.

8. MoU coordinators, at least in part, are foreseen to offer technical advice to Range States in their project development under an MoU's action plan, to support the CMS Secretariat in the preparation of MoU regular meetings of the Signatories, and to undertake range-wide communication efforts to raise awareness and share information.

9. The attributes that would make a collaborating organisation potentially attractive to act as an MoU coordinator include *inter alia*: (1) a long term interest in the particular species; (2) a demonstrated commitment towards the MoU; (3) a regional presence or influence, including good relations with Range States as well as international and national level NGOs in the agreement area; (4) a demonstrated ability to fundraise and successfully implement projects; and (5) the ability to make financial or in-kind contributions towards the coordinator's position. The organisation could be intergovernmental, governmental or non-governmental.

10. Typically the coordinator operates in a purely technical capacity, and the CMS Secretariat maintains official contact with the Range States, the relevant CMS institutions and would remain ultimately responsible for the MoU's oversight. The coordinator would be tasked to work in a balanced way across the Agreement area to the extent possible and would work within the confines of available financial resources. Ultimate responsibility for implementing the MoU and Action Plan would remain with the MoU Signatories.

11. The CMS Secretariat has worked very closely with the SPREP Secretariat to develop the Pacific Islands Cetaceans MoU for almost three years. The idea of SPREP providing coordination functions to the MoU was first presented at the Third Workshop on CMS and Marine Mammals Conservation in Nadi, Fiji, 5-7 July 2005, where the drafting group for the MoU met. It was foreseen that because the SPREP Secretariat already coordinated the implementation of the SPREP Whale and Dolphins Action Plan (WDAP), it would also become the MoU's Coordinator since the WDAP would be appended to the MoU.

**Action requested:**

The Signatories, and as appropriate other meeting participants, are invited to:

- Consider the MoU coordination issue generally and determine what options are most desirable for the MoU's effective implementation which the Secretariat should therefore pursue.
- Consider the financial aspects of the coordination issue and provide any guidance on possible options for financing and other support, including appealing for additional voluntary in-kind and financial contributions.
- Consider offers to host and/or fund an MoU coordination mechanism.