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## GUIDANCE FOR NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS OF THE DUGONG MOU

### Introduction

Paragraph 8 of the Dugong MOU states that each Signatory State will: “*Designate a competent national authority to serve as a focal point for communication among Signatory States and for implementing activities under this Memorandum of Understanding, and communicate the complete contact details of this authority (and any changes thereto) to the Secretariat.*”

This Guidance has been developed to provide advice for current and future National Focal Points (NFPs) of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout their Range (Dugong MOU). The document sets out the function of NFPs, as well as providing information about the role of the Secretariat of the Dugong MOU. This Guidance is designed to promote efficient and effective contributions by NFPs to the operation and implementation of the Dugong MOU, and also to facilitate smooth and timely interactions between Signatories (through their NFPs) and the Secretariat.

The working language of the Dugong MOU is **English**, and therefore it is necessary that the NFP is able to communicate in English.

### Role of the Dugong MOU Secretariat

The Dugong MOU Secretariat operates from an outposted CMS Office in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, hosted by the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, on behalf of the Government of the United Arab Emirates. The Programme Management Officer for dugongs leads the Secretariat, which comprises a small team of supporting staff. The Secretariat acts as the liaison point for all matters relating to the Dugong MOU, and are the central coordinating body for all MOU-related activities.

A key aim of the Secretariat is to develop a mutually beneficial relationship between the NFPs and the Secretariat. In support of this goal, it commits to:

- Providing regular updates to NFPs on developments within the Dugong MOU;
- Forwarding CMS Notifications considered of particular interest to Signatories and/or Range States of the Dugong MOU (e.g. upcoming workshops, calls for CMS grant applications, etc.);
- Circulating and/or publishing news stories or other relevant items (e.g. national workshops, training courses, new publications, etc.) submitted by NFPs on the Dugong MOU website;
- Acting as a liaison point for Signatories to assist communication, encourage reporting and facilitate activities between and among Signatories and other Range States and interested organisations;

- Providing technical advice or assisting in locating an appropriate source of specialist expertise relating to dugong or seagrass and their conservation;
- Listening to the views of NFPs and responding or sharing such information, as appropriate;
- Being available, on request, to offer advice and clarification on any aspect of the Dugong MOU;
- Arranging Meetings of Signatories (MOS), and other meetings or workshops on an ad-hoc basis;
- Preparing an overview of progress in implementation of the Dugong MOU, including the Conservation and Management Plan, at Meetings of Signatories;
- Compiling and making available to all Signatories and other Range States the national and international progress reports provided for in Paragraph 9 of the MOU.

### **Functions of National Focal Points**

National Focal Points play a crucial role by acting as a link between the Secretariat and the responsible institutions in the country that they represent, by ensuring and maintaining a timely constant two-way flow of information. Ideally, the appointed NFP should be based within the relevant Ministry or responsible agency dealing with nature conservation in their country.

The following non-exhaustive list details some appropriate functions for the National Focal Point.

#### **Ongoing functions:**

1. Arrange formal confirmation of the appointment by obtaining and submitting to the Secretariat an official communication from the Minister or appropriately authorized Government official, including full contact details. A Focal Point Designation Form can be obtained from the Secretariat on request. Any change of NFP or contact details should be communicated to the Secretariat as soon as possible after it takes place;
2. Inform the Secretariat as soon as possible about any changes in the key personnel responsible for specific matters relating to dugongs and their habitats, so that the Secretariat can ensure that all relevant communications are targeted appropriately;
3. Consider establishing a National Dugong Committee, network or an alternative means of regularly exchanging information to bring together representatives of relevant Government Ministries, Departments, Agencies, and other relevant stakeholders, including research and academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector (such as tourism authorities, fishing companies, etc.). This will help to promote synergies and strengthen national liaison as well as avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts in terms of dugong and its habitat conservation and the implementation of the Dugong MOU.
4. Check the CMS ([www.cms.int](http://www.cms.int)) and the Dugong MOU ([www.cms.int/dugong](http://www.cms.int/dugong)) websites regularly to keep informed of developments and updates, and share with the Secretariat key national achievements and actions towards the implementation of the Dugong MOU, as well as any other activities related to the conservation of dugongs and their habitats;
5. Transmit and share information relating to the Dugong MOU as widely as possible within the country, via an established network of contacts (see point 3 above);

6. Respond to requests for information from the Secretariat in a timely manner, including by seeking and coordinating contributions from relevant specialists within the established network of contacts.

**Functions related to Meetings and Workshops:**

7. Work to ensure that the country is represented at official meetings of the Dugong MOU, such as the MOS or workshops, by: coordinating in a timely manner the nomination of the delegation; securing and submitting credentials; and, applying for funding, if applicable and needed;

8. Hold consultations with relevant institutions and individuals in advance of meetings to discuss the Provisional Agenda and any other documents which may be circulated by the Secretariat in advance;

9. Coordinate the country's inputs for meetings, which may include developing a policy stance, drafting implementation reports including information on dugong conservation and management actions, results of scientific research, threats encountered, etc.;

10. Upon request, give presentations at meetings describing recent national activities at the strategic, tactical and/or practical levels, and/or other relevant updates;

11. Oversee the compilation of a National Report, to be finalised and submitted at least 60 days prior to a MOS to enable the Secretariat to prepare an overall synthesis of the implementation progress of the Dugong MOU;

12. Ensure that any proposed draft Recommendations or amendments to existing Dugong MOU documents are submitted to the Secretariat at least 150 days prior to a MOS. FPs are expected to consult widely with interested parties, including via their established network of contacts (see paragraph 3 – above), when preparing or commenting on such documents;

13. Where possible, hold internal discussions prior to a MOS, inter alia, in order to explore possible sources of funding that their Government or outside organisations may be able to offer for the Dugong MOU;

14. Follow-up on requests made after meetings by the Secretariat (e.g. commenting on meeting minutes, promoting revision of meeting reports, provision of inputs on proposed Resolutions, etc.) within the designated time-frame;

15. Ensure that the outcomes of meetings are shared with your national network, and discuss and initiate the implementation at a national level of any decisions taken, if appropriate;

16. Initiate the internal process required to secure any financial or in-kind contributions volunteered at meetings;

17. Continue dialogue with regional and/or other partners after meetings with a view to implementing any projects and collaborative activities agreed upon during, for example, regional discussions;

18. Any other relevant function that the Signatory State may authorize the NFP to undertake.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the Secretariat of the Dugong MOU:  
[cmsoffice.ae@cms.int](mailto:cmsoffice.ae@cms.int)