



## Benefits, Entitlements and Responsibilities of Signing the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs (*Dugong dugon*) and their Habitats throughout their Range (Dugong MOU)

### Introduction

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) aims to conserve terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range. It is an Intergovernmental Treaty, concluded under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme, which is concerned with the conservation of wildlife and habitats on a global scale.

CMS acts as a framework Convention. It catalyses national-level conservation activities amongst its Contracting Parties, while encouraging Range States to develop more specialised regional or global agreements and dedicated action plans covering single or groups of migratory species. The Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs (*Dugong dugon*) and their Habitats throughout their Range (Dugong MOU) is one such regional agreement. It was finalised and opened for signature in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) on 31 October 2007, and came into effect immediately.

The Secretariat of the Dugong MOU is located in CMS Office - Abu Dhabi, established in 2009 at the kind invitation of Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD). CMS Office - Abu Dhabi and the Secretariat are generously funded by EAD, on behalf of the Government of the United Arab Emirates.

The Dugong MOU recognises the extensive distribution of dugongs, covering 140,000 km of coastline across over 40 countries in the Indo-Pacific region, from the East coast of Africa to islands of the Western Pacific. There is a good reason on biological grounds alone to extend international cooperation efforts. The Dugong MOU adds value to national conservation programmes by facilitating the exchange of essential information, by promoting the adoption and/or adaptation of best practices from other participating countries and sub-regions, and by providing services and products to Signatory States to increase capacity to conserve dugongs and their habitats.

States that are not yet Parties to the Convention are welcome to sign the Dugong MOU. Although the MOU is not a legally binding arrangement, it is recognized as an international agreement.

Currently there are 26 Signatories to the Dugong MOU.



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

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## **Aims**

The MOU aims to promote and support Signatories in taking coordinated actions to ensure a favourable conservation status and long-term survival of dugongs and their seagrass habitats throughout their extensive range.

## **Benefits and Entitlements**

Some of the many ways in which Signatories to the Dugong MOU can benefit include:

- Access to services and products generated by the Dugong MOU Secretariat to enhance capacity to implement research and conservation measures for dugongs and their seagrass habitats;
- Invitations to attend and fully participate in Signatory State Meetings with the opportunity to influence future policies and implementation of the Dugong MOU;
- Underpinning and strengthening of the new Signatory State's legal and institutional framework related to dugongs and their seagrass habitats;
- Ability to determine the orientation and the priorities of the Dugong MOU in cooperation with other Signatory States;
- Access to support in developing partnerships or collaborative dugong conservation activities with other Range States, inter-governmental (IGO) or non-governmental organisations (NGO);
- Access to support in coordinating with other regional or international dugong initiatives;
- Invitations to participate in capacity-building or technical workshops, including potential access to funding to support attendance at these gatherings;
- Access to technical advice and support either from the Dugong MOU Secretariat or through the Dugong Technical Group and other contacts;
- Exposure on the Dugong MOU website to highlight a Signatory's key achievements in dugong conservation;
- Opportunities to apply for 'Letters of Support' from the Dugong MOU Secretariat to elevate the standing of applications or proposals for funding of dugong and seagrass conservation projects;
- Access to funding opportunities for dugong conservation initiatives (e.g. through small grants or in partnership with other Range States);
- Enhanced international standing by cooperating with other Signatory States in global and regional dugong conservation efforts;
- Access to a wide-range of other international networks, specialists, IGOs and NGOs.

Any effective measures introduced to conserve dugongs are likely to support the conservation of other marine wildlife such as cetaceans, marine turtles and sharks, and ultimately contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. Conserving seagrass and other coastal and marine habitats will benefit the livelihoods of communities depending on those habitats, as well as the socio-economic situation of the country. Implementation of the Dugong MOU supports achievement of the CMS Strategic Plan for Migratory Species (2015-2023), the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (2010-2020) under the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2030).

## **Responsibilities**

Signatories to the Dugong MOU agree to implement the provisions of the MOU in a spirit of good faith, consensus, cooperation and mutual support. Implementation is expected to the extent resources permit. Signatories also agree to cooperate to restore or maintain a favourable dugong conservation status, enhance the legal protection of the species in the region, implement the Conservation and Management Plan to the best extent possible, facilitate the exchange of relevant information, and cooperate with relevant organisations and experts.

Signatories should endeavor to coordinate their efforts, to cooperate in emergency situations requiring concerted international action, to take appropriate measures for the recovery of dugong populations, to exchange information, and to cooperate with a view to assisting each other to implement the Dugong MOU, particularly in the areas of research and monitoring.

Signatories have the responsibility to designate a competent national authority to serve as a focal point for all matters relating to the implementation of the MOU, and to transmit the contact details of the focal point to the Secretariat as soon as possible after signing the MOU to facilitate communications.

Signatories have the responsibility to provide a report on their activities at triennial meetings of Signatory States to share information on activities. This helps the Meeting of Signatory States to gauge the MOU's implementation, and set priorities and the direction of the Dugong MOU for the following triennium.

Financial contributions to the MOU are not mandatory. This gives Signatories the flexibility to make a voluntary contribution when they have the capacity to do so. Voluntary financial and/or in-kind contributions to provide for the ongoing operations of the Dugong MOU are most welcome.

## **Generic arrangements for signing the Dugong MOU**

The Dugong MOU Secretariat offers various options for States wishing to sign the MOU:

- Signature by the country's Ambassador to the UAE, either at CMS Office - Abu Dhabi, or at the country's Embassy, whichever is most convenient for both parties.
- Signature by the responsible Minister or by another official with delegated authority. This may be arranged in the country concerned or in any other country on the occasion of a relevant meeting/workshop, where the Minister or the other official and a representative of the Dugong MOU Secretariat are both present.
- Signature at a Meeting of Dugong MOU Signatory States (or other meetings organised by the Dugong MOU, or the CMS Secretariat) by the Ambassador of the country concerned or by a duly accredited official who presents to the Secretariat a suitable original Instrument of Full Powers, prior to the meeting.

The MOU takes effect immediately for a new Signatory State on the date of signature.

*Kindly contact the Dugong MOU Secretariat in Abu Dhabi by telephone or e-mail to make the necessary arrangements, or if you have any questions. Thank you.*