



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

IOSEA Illegal Trade Working Group (ITWG) Task List 2020-2024

Background

The ITWG is an informal working group, which was established in 2015 and aims to increase the visibility of the issue of illegal take of and trade in marine turtles in the IOSEA region and beyond. At their 8th Meeting (MOS8) in 2019, Signatories to the IOSEA Marine Turtles MOU decided to revive the group, instructing the ITWG to update its membership and task list as well as elect its own chair ([IOSEA Work Programme 2020-2024](#) (WP), Measure 60). Supported by the IOSEA Secretariat, the group fulfilled this first task intersessionally.

The current members of the ITWG are:

- Signatory States: Australia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mozambique, Philippines, United Republic of Tanzania, United States, Viet Nam
- Advisory Committee Members: Dr. Colin Limpus, Dr. Jeff Miller
- IGOs: Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention (IAC)
- NGOs: WWF, TRAFFIC
- Chair: Mr. Asghar Mobaraki, Islamic Republic of Iran

The ITWG task list is based on the IOSEA WP and the [IOSEA Conservation and Management Plan](#) (CMP). It also takes into consideration CITES Decisions 18.210-18.217 in an attempt to enhance implementation of both the WP and the CITES Decisions and to avoid duplication of effort. The tasks of the ITWG mainly deal with, but are not limited to, strengthening communication, cooperation and outreach at all levels to tackle the issue of illegal take and trade.



IOSEA Illegal Trade Working Group Task List

Tasks	Reference
1. Elect ITWG chair to cover the period until the next MOS	WP 60
2. Adopt a task list and review it before each meeting of the Signatory States to the IOSEA MOU (MOS), or as instructed by the latest MOS.	WP60
3. Report on the implementation of the task list at each MOS.	Secretariat
4. Raise funds for implementing the activities of the Working Group, if needed.	ITWG task list 2015-2019
5. Consider inviting additional Signatory States, non-Signatory Consumer States, CITES, Ramsar and relevant NGOs to join the working group.	WP60
MOU internal communication and coordination	
6. Exchange and discuss information on monitoring, compliance and trade issues at regular intervals, particularly on illegal take and domestic illegal trade. Take into consideration or contribute to similar discussions at the CITES Animals Committee and Standing Committee, as applicable (see CITES Decision 18.211 d).	CMP 5.1 e
7. Based on 6, consider preparing written reports on illegal take and trade in the IOSEA region/sub-regions in cooperation with CITES with the view to addressing gaps and avoiding duplication of effort (See CITES Decision 18.211 e)	ITWG Members 2020
8. Liaise with the IOSEA Site Network Working Group, with a view to giving more consideration to the issue of illegal take of and trade in marine turtles in the Site Network proposal evaluation process.	ITWG 2015-2019
9. Jointly prepare outreach materials to present any new findings, exemplary actions, legislation, projects to further understand and reduce illegal take of marine turtles, carried out in Signatory (and Consumer) States by various actors. Post these on the IOSEA Website and/or disseminate at relevant forums.	ITWG task list 2015-2019
10. Members of the Working Group to submit any relevant materials and present these at the meetings organized by CITES, TRAFFIC, ASEAN-WEN, SAWEN, CTI-CFF, Interpol, etc. or to encourage other MOU Members (Signatories, AC Members, partner organizations) to do so.	ITWG task list 2015-2019
Cooperation and outreach	
11. Cooperate with CMS in the joint development of a draft Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) for the conservation of the Hawksbill Turtle to address the trade, use and other threats to the conservation of Hawksbill Turtles in South-east Asia, and the adjacent western Pacific.	WP 62
12. Strengthen internal, bilateral and international cooperation in enforcement, collaborating with IGOs and NGOs, such as CITES, Ramsar, ICCWC, ASEAN WEN, SAWEN, CTI-CFF, and TRAFFIC, to ensure the issue of marine turtle trade is on the agenda of future meetings.	ITWG task list 2015-2019
13. Join mailing lists of TRAFFIC and other relevant partners to ensure receipt of illegal trade news and associated information, such as reports of court cases.	ITWG task list 2015-2019
14. Members of the ITWG and Secretariat to ensure communication and coordination with relevant partner organizations, such as Ramsar and CITES to avoid duplication of effort.	Secretariat



15. Enhance communication with neighbouring non-Signatory States and neighbouring non-Range States to raise awareness and address illegal trade in marine turtles (e.g. non-Range States: Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Range States: Somalia, China, Republic of Korea, Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan).	ITWG members 2020
16. Exchange actionable intelligence regarding illegal take of and trade in marine turtles and encourage transboundary database use and analysis.	ITWG members 2020
Awareness campaigns	
17. Address consumptive use and domestic trade by raising awareness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. work with local communities to reduce illegal take b. raise awareness of turtle consumers including subsistence users, highlight existing regulations, conservation and possibly health issues involved (e.g. tourists, vendors, egg consumers) c. consider using and promoting existing campaigns, such as UNEP's Wild for Life) d. engage religious leaders, as appropriate, in awareness campaigns to stop illegal take and consumption e. educate youth and women 	WP51
18. Investigate and develop campaigns to address online trade, where applicable.	WP61
Research	
19. Promote and, where applicable, support studies of take and trade, especially domestic illegal trade. Studies can include the topics of genetic traceability, socio-economic drivers of take and trade, sustainability of alternative livelihoods and/or address further research needs identified by the 2019 CITES report titled "Status, Scope and Trends of the Legal and Illegal International Trade in Marine Turtles, its Conservation Impacts, Management Options and Management Priorities".	WP21
20. Assess the level and impact of traditional harvest on marine turtles and their eggs, suggest and negotiate limits of harvest accordingly	CMP1.5 c, e
21. Take into consideration CITES Decision 18.213 and the possibility of technical and financial support for research that is encouraged by this decision.	CITES Decision 18.213
22. Consider the use of community voice method and consider applying MIKE methodology for village-based monitoring of turtle harvest (see Solomon Islands example) and using community voice method to engage communities in policy-making processes and manage turtles more effectively.	WP28
23. In cooperation with CITES, continue to identify supply and demand areas and trade routes (including online trade) for the domestic and international illegal trade in marine turtles and their products (see CITES Decision 18.211 (i))	WP59