



Terms of Reference for Signatory State Focal Points of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout their Range (Dugong MOU)

Introduction

Recalling Point 8 of the Dugong MOU, each Signatory State has agreed to: *“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.”*

These Terms of Reference have been developed to provide advice for current and future Focal Points (FPs) of the Dugong MOU. The document sets out the function of Focal Points, as well as providing information about the role of the Secretariat. The Terms of Reference are designed to promote efficient and effective contributions by Focal Points to the operation of the MOU, and also to facilitate smooth and timely interactions between Signatories through their Focal Points and the Secretariat.

Language

The working language of the UNEP/CMS Dugong MOU is English, and therefore it is necessary that the Focal Point is able to communicate in English.

Role of the Secretariat

The Dugong MOU Secretariat operates from the 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 Officer for Dugongs leads the Secretariat, which comprises a small team of support staff. The Secretariat acts as the liaison for all matters relating to the UNEP/CMS Dugong MOU, and is the central coordinating body for all MOU-related activities.

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

- Providing regular updates to FPs 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 FPs on the Dugong MOU website;
- Acting as a liaison 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;
- Listening to the views of FPs 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 Signatory State Meetings, and other meetings or workshops on an ad-hoc basis;
- Compiling and making available to all Signatories and other Range States the national and international progress reports provided for in Paragraph 17 of the MOU.

Functions of Focal Points

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 FP 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 FP.

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 FP 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). This will help to promote synergies and strengthen national liaison as well as avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts in terms of dugong conservation and the implementation of the Dugong MOU.
4. Check the CMS (www.cms.int) and the Dugong MOU (<http://www.cms.int/species/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 Signatory country, via an established network of contacts (see paragraph 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 Signatory State Meetings (SS) 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. Finalise a National Report at least 90 days prior to a Signatory State meeting to enable the Secretariat to prepare an overall synthesis of the implementation progress of the Dugong MOU;
12. Ensure that any proposed draft Resolutions or amendments to existing MOU documents are submitted to the Secretariat at least 60 days prior to a Signatory State meeting. 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 Signatory State meeting, *inter alia*, in order to explore possible sources of funding that their Government or outside organisations may be able to offer for the MOU;
14. Follow-up on requests made at the Signatory State meeting (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 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 FP to undertake.