



**MEMORANDUM OF
UNDERSTANDING ON THE
CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY
SHARKS**

CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Doc.7.1
1 October 2018
Original: English

3rd Meeting of the Signatories (Sharks MOS3)
Monaco, 10 – 14 December 2018
Agenda Item 7

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

1. The present report provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the Secretariat since MOS2 in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the Secretariat ([CMS/Sharks/Outcome 1.3](#)), adopted at the 1st Meeting of the Signatories (MOS1) and of the tasks that were assigned to the Secretariat in the Programme of Work 2016-2018, adopted at the 2nd Meeting of the Signatories (MOS2).

Status of the Secretariat

2. At their 12th Conference, the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), noted in [Resolution 12.02](#) on “Financial and Administrative Matters” the “Decision of the Second Meeting of the Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (Sharks MOU) about having the CMS Secretariat as permanent Secretariat of the Sharks MOU”.
3. The CMS Parties decided in paragraph 20 of Resolution 12.02, “that the CMS Secretariat will serve as the permanent Secretariat of the Sharks MOU”.

Status of Signatures

4. As of September 2018, the MOU has been signed by 47 countries and the European Union, which brings the overall number of Signatories to 48. The following nine Range States have become Signatories since MOS2:
 - Portugal (signed on 18.02.2016)
 - Somalia (signed on 03.10.2016)
 - Saudi Arabia (signed on 13.03.2017)
 - Benin (signed on 24.10.2017)
 - Brazil (signed on 24.10.2017)
 - Ecuador (signed on 23.10.2017)
 - Sri Lanka (signed on 24.10.2017)
 - Madagascar (signed on 15.11.2017)
 - Côte d’Ivoire (signed on 16.11.2017)

5. The Secretariat has actively encouraged non-Signatory Range States to sign the Sharks MOU. The objectives of the Sharks MOU were presented at several workshops, organized or supported by the CMS Secretariat and other stakeholders, as described below.
6. In accordance with paragraph 30 of the MOU and the Terms of Reference for Cooperating Partners the following two organizations have joined as Cooperating Partners since MOS2:
 - World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF, signed on 24.10.2017)
 - Dutch Elasmobranch Society/Nederlandse Elasmobranchen Vereniging (NEV, signed on 24.11.2017)
7. As of September 2018, eleven organizations are Cooperating Partners to the Sharks MOU.
8. At the time of writing this document, Divers for Sharks, which has been admitted by the Signatories to sign the MOU, is preparing to sign the Sharks MOU as a Cooperating Partner. The admission process for the Large Marine Vertebrate Research Institute Philippines (LAMAVE) is currently ongoing.

National Focal Points

9. According to paragraph 15a of the MOU, Signatories are expected to designate a focal point for communication among Signatories and for coordinating implementation measures and activities under this MOU and the Conservation Plan.
10. To date, 38 out of 48 Signatories have officially nominated a Focal Point. The Secretariat constantly updates the list of designated Focal Points and makes this information available online at: <https://www.cms.int/sharks/en/focal-points>
11. The Secretariat requests the Signatories that have not yet done so, or whose Focal Point has changed positions, to designate a Focal Point for all matters relating to the implementation of the MOU.

Supporting the Advisory Committee and Conservation Working Group

12. The Secretariat has supported the Advisory Committee (AC) and the Conservation Working Group (CWG) in implementing their tasks as defined in the Terms of Reference of the AC and the CWG, by facilitating communication, drafting emails and documents and through regular consultations with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the AC. A report on activities of the AC is presented as [CMS/Sharks/MOS2/Doc.7.3](#).

Conservation Working Group

13. With kind support from the World Wide Fund for Nature in Germany (WWF), the 1st Workshop of the CWG (CWG1) was held from 31 October to 1 November in Bristol, UK. WWF funded a number of participants, arranged for the venue, technical equipment, a facilitator and the catering. The EU funded the attendance of an expert on Regional Fisheries Management Organizations.

14. The two-day workshop was attended by 12 leading experts in elasmobranchs and fisheries, who had been identified by the AC in advance of the workshop. The aim was to provide technical guidance to the AC and Signatories. In particular, the CWG worked on identifying priority management measures for the conservation of sharks and rays and identifying gaps in research, conservation and management of shark and ray populations.
15. The Secretariat has commissioned a “Gap Analysis of Activities for the Conservation of Species listed in Annex 1 under relevant Fisheries Bodies” ([CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Inf.17](#)) and a “Review and Gap Analysis of Shark and Ray Bycatch Mitigation Measures employed by Fisheries Management Bodies” ([CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Inf.18](#)) to support the CWG with the implementation of their tasks. Both publications were used as background documents at CWG1.
16. The outcomes of the meeting fed into the 2nd Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC2). Several documents, that the AC presented to this Meeting contain elements of CWG1 outcomes, such as [CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Doc.10.1](#) and [11.1](#). The Workshop Report was made available as [CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Inf.7](#).

Advisory Committee

17. In consultation with the AC, the Secretariat undertook a survey amongst Signatories to evaluate capacity gaps that Signatories to the Sharks MOU may encounter regarding the implementation of tasks and activities agreed in the Conservation Plan and as further specified in the Programme of Work 2016-2018. The outcome of this survey was made available as [CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Inf.13](#) and formed the basis for the development of the Draft Capacity-Building Strategy for the MOU by the AC, which is presented as [CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Doc.13.1](#).
18. The 2nd Meeting of the AC (AC2) was held from 20 to 24 November 2017 in Bonaire, Netherlands. The Government of the Netherlands kindly hosted the meeting and provided significant funding to support the participation of the AC, CWG members and the Secretariat. The local government of Bonaire in cooperation with the National Park Foundation (STINAPA) provided the venue and took care of all logistics in Bonaire.
19. Nine experts from the AC representing all five MOU regions and two additional experts from the CWG prepared important expert recommendations to the Signatories on the implementation of the MOU and its Conservation Plan over the course of five days.
20. The meeting also attracted observers from Signatory States (the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia and South Africa), IGOs (UN Environment Regional Seas – Cartagena Convention, the Regional Activity Centre for the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife for the Wider Caribbean Region), international NGOs (Dutch Elasmobranch Society (NEV), Pew Charitable Trust, Shark Advocates) and local NGOs that actively work on the conservation of sharks and rays in the Caribbean (STINAPA, Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance).
21. The experts addressed a number of important topics related to the implementation of the MOU and developed recommendations to this meeting, which are included in documents:

- [CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Doc.9.1](#) “Amendment of Annex 1 of the Sharks MOU”
 - [CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Doc.10.1](#) “Species-specific Conservation Measures for Species listed in Annex 1 of the Sharks MOU
 - [CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Doc.10.2](#) “Habitat Conservation”
 - [CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Doc.11.1](#) “Engagement with Regional Fisheries Management Organizations”
 - [CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Doc.13.1](#) “Draft Capacity-Building Strategy for the Sharks MOU”
 - [CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Doc.15.1](#) “Cooperation with CMS on the implementation of Concerted Action for Sharks and Rays”
22. The report of AC2 is provided as [CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Inf.6](#).
23. The AC decided that it would not hold AC3 during the current triennium and that it would pursue its work online until MOS3. To this end the AC has provided comments on proposals for the inclusion of species in Annex 1, that were submitted by Signatories, intersessionally. Those comments are included [CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Doc.9.1/Annex 2](#). An online meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 2018 and will be held, if the ACs comments are required on documents submitted by Signatories.

Supporting the Intersessional Working Group

24. The Secretariat supported an Intersessional Working Group (IWG), which was established at MOS2, with the implementation of the IWG’s task to develop a draft “Communication and Awareness-raising Strategy”, in accordance with activity 27 in the Programme of Work 2016-2018.
25. Guided by the two co-Chairs of the IWG (Australia and Colombia), the Secretariat assisted with drafting communication and coordinating the discussions, which were undertaken via email exchange.
26. At the request of the IWG, the Secretariat prepared a draft strategy for discussion, which was modelled after the communication strategy of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA).
27. A draft “Communication and Awareness-raising Strategy is provided as [CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Doc.12.1](#).

Supporting Signatories

28. The Secretariat has continued to share all relevant information about the Sharks MOU with the Focal Points on a regular basis.
29. Signatories have not approached the Secretariat for assistance with the implementation of the Sharks MOU. However, the Secretariat has supported implementation activities by sharing information about important funding opportunities regularly, providing guidance and advice on the development of proposals for Concerted Action under CMS and for the inclusion of species in CMS Appendices.

Workshops

30. In 2016, the Sharks MOU was invited by the Pew Charitable Trust to participate in several workshops aiming at supporting countries to improve implementation of shark and ray related decisions under CITES and CMS.
 - *Shark conservation training workshop in Senegal (2016)*
 - *Shark conservation training workshop in the Dominican Republic (2016)*
 - *Shark conservation training workshop in Sri Lanka (2016)*
31. The Secretariat used the opportunity to promote the MOU and its objectives and to reach out to non-Signatories. Sri Lanka signed the MOU soon afterwards.
32. In 2017, the Secretariat contributed to a legal workshop on marine species in Peru, which was organized by Sea Shepherd Legal. The Secretariat could not be present at the workshop itself, due to funding restrictions. However, information about legal obligations under CMS for marine species and the objectives of the Sharks MOU were presented as a pre-recorded PowerPoint.
33. In accordance with activity 18 in the Programme of Work 2016-2018, the Secretariat supported a Regional IUCN Red List Workshop, which was held in February 2017, in Abu Dhabi. The Workshop was organized by the Environmental Agency – Abu Dhabi (AED), in collaboration with the IUCN Shark Specialist Group (SSG). The workshop comprised leading international and regional experts, who were asked to prepare 30 global and 123 regional species assessments, which were submitted to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The Secretariat provided a small grant of US\$4,479 to contribute to the development of these assessments.
34. The report from this workshop is available at:
http://www.iucnssg.org/uploads/5/4/1/2/54120303/jabado_et_al._2017_-_arabian_seas_conservation_sharks_rays_chimaeras.pdf
 It shows that 78 species (50.9 per cent) within the Arabian Seas region are considered threatened, a number which is significantly higher than other areas with regional assessments. This result does not include Data Deficient species, which if assumed to be equally threatened, indicates that 62.9 per cent of the species are threatened.

Communication, Information and Outreach

35. The Secretariat has worked closely with the Joint Communications Unit¹ to produce a variety of materials to be disseminated through different media.

Website

36. The Sharks MOU website has constantly been updated and maintained as part of the overall CMS Family website (www.cms.int/sharks).

¹ Joint CMS & AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Unit

Online Reporting System

37. As requested by the Signatories at MOS2, the Secretariat has transferred the agreed format for national reports into an online reporting system (ORS).

Social Media

38. The Facebook page and Twitter account of CMS have been regularly used to promote the MOU and other relevant articles and news regarding shark conservation. In addition, the Secretariat has set up a dedicated Twitter account for the Sharks MOU ([@SharksMOU](#)).

Press Articles and Press Releases

39. A number of press articles and press releases related to sharks were developed and published in close collaboration with the management of CMS and the Joint Communications Unit. Please find an overview on the CMS news page at (<http://www.cms.int/en/news>).

Cooperation with the CMS Family

40. The Secretariat continues to benefit from being placed within the Convention Secretariat. Besides receiving guidance from CMS management, the Secretariat was able to draw upon the services and support from several units of CMS.
41. The Conference Management Team provided assistance in the preparations of CWG1, AC2 and MOS3, including support with translations, document editing, the organization of delegate travel and facilitation of visa.
42. The Joint Communications Unit assisted with the development of media products, including press release, the Sharks MOU page of the CMS Family website, Facebook and Twitter accounts. In addition, the Sharks MOU received significant technical support with the development of the Online Reporting Webpage for national reports by Signatories.
43. Since fundraising is by necessity a core activity, the Secretariat has relied on support from the CMS Partnerships and Fundraising Officer and the Administrative and Fund Management Unit, the latter also supporting the management of the budget, human resources and procurement. As a result of these efforts, significant financial support was obtained for species of sharks under the Migratory Species Champion Programme. The Government of the Philippines was recognized with Champion status for its commitment towards Whale Shark Conservation for the 2018-2020. This grant follows the listing of the species on Appendix I of the Convention proposed by the Filipino Government and will ensure the implementation of key measures under the dedicated concerted action. Furthermore, the Government of the Principality of Monaco was recognized with Champion *Plus* status for their support to Marine Species Conservation for the period 2018-2020. This contribution builds on the Government's support for 2015-2017 and will enable the implementation of new decisions on the conservation of several marine species including Angelsharks.
44. The Secretariat has raised voluntary contributions to fund the budget of the Sharks MOU Secretariat, including for the organization of CWG1, AC2 and MOS3. Further details are provided in [CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Doc.17.1](#).

45. The Secretariat has submitted a funding request to the European Commission for a project on “Historical data mining for Annex 1 listed species in the Indian Ocean region”. The project would also contribute to the implementation of activity 2.1.3 of the Work Programme of the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC WPEB). This fundraising initiative was in response to a recommendation of AC2.
46. Upon request, the Secretariat has supported funding proposals of Cooperating Partners, that were relevant for the implementation of the Sharks MOU.
47. In line with its Terms of Reference, the Secretariat liaised with the wider CMS Secretariat and its marine species Agreements and other MOUs to identify synergies which could assist in the implementation of this MOU.
48. The Secretariat liaised regularly with the CMS-appointed Councilor for Bycatch and the CMS Family Working Group on Bycatch.
49. The Secretariat of CMS is currently cooperating with BirdLife International on the implementation of a project on “Minimizing Bycatch of Seabirds and Sea Turtles in West African Industrial Fisheries”. The MAVA funded project, in which CMS is a junior partner of BirdLife International, started in 2018. Its initial phase will be two years. If the project is successful it will be followed by a second phase.
50. CMS as a project partner will largely focus on “International Policy Advocacy”. The overall aim is to pave the way for improved fisheries governance in West Africa. It will focus on ensuring the sustainable use of marine resources with a special focus on seabirds and marine turtles. This will also have a positive side effect on other species that are fished either directly or indirectly in regional fisheries.
51. The project is focusing on bycatch of seabirds and sea turtles. However, some elements of the project will also contribute to the implementation of the Sharks MOU. For example, the inclusion of the review of national and regional legislation on bycatch and the overall objective to strengthen governance and sustainable use of resources.
52. The Secretariat took part in the 1st and 2nd Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC), in Bonn, providing technical advice on a number of proposals for the inclusion of shark and ray species in the CMS Appendices.
53. Prior to COP 12, the CMS Secretariat organized Pre-COP meetings in all regions. The Aquatic Species officer attended two of these, ensuing the Sharks MOU, and the shark proposals were fully discussed.
54. The Secretariat further attended the 12th Conference of the Parties to CMS (COP12), held in Manila from 23 to 28 October 2017. The Secretariat advised Parties to CMS on all matters related to sharks and rays, in particular by supporting Parties with expertise regarding their proposals to list species on the CMS Appendices and the development of proposals for Concerted Action. As well as assisting the CMS Secretariat with shark related issues, this presented another opportunity for discussions with Signatories, non-Signatory Range States, Cooperating Partners and other relevant NGOs.

55. At COP12, five additional species of sharks and rays were included in the Appendices of CMS, while the Whale Shark was added to CMS App I. Further details on the Amendment of CMS Appendices at COP12 are provided in [CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Doc.9.1](#).
56. As described in [CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Doc.15.1](#), three proposals for Concerted Action for the Whale Shark, Mobulid Rays and Angelsharks were adopted at CMS COP12. This meeting is requested to discuss the involvement of the Sharks MOU in the implementation of the three Action Plans.

Cooperation with International Organizations, Regional Fisheries Management Organizations

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

57. CMS and CITES Secretariats continue to cooperate on the implementation of the Joint Work Programme (2015-2020)². This includes optimizing the effectiveness of actions taken by Parties to both CMS and CITES concerning sharks and rays and strengthening synergies with FAO, RFMOs and other relevant bodies. Both Secretariats update each other on recent and upcoming initiatives through regular phone calls and attend each other's meetings where appropriate.
58. In 2016, the Secretariat was requested by the CITES Secretariat to provide comments on several shark and ray species proposed for the inclusion in CITES Appendices at CITES COP17. The position of the Secretariat was published on the CITES COP 17 meeting website as COP17 Doc. 88.3, Annex 4 (<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/E-CoP17-88-03-A4.pdf>)
59. At CITES COP16, the Secretariat was represented and made an intervention on behalf of CMS and the Sharks MOU. The Secretariat held a side event to raise awareness of the MOU among non-Signatories. Likewise, the secretariat attended CITES AC29 and 30 and participated in the Intersessional Working group of CITES on the Conservation of Sharks and Rays.
60. Just prior to this, the CMS Secretariat attended two CITES Regional pre-COP meetings in Asia and Oceania. In these meetings there were discussions on the synergies between CMS and CITES sharks listings, and a chance to inform non-Signatories about the MOU.

Other Relevant Meetings and Activities

61. The Secretariat represented the Sharks MOU at the following international meetings related to shark conservation:
 - Regional Workshop: Sharks and Rays of the Southwest Indian Ocean – Status Review and Development of a Roadmap for Conservation and Management, hosted by the Indian Ocean Commission Biodiversity Program (Port Louis, Mauritius, 5-7 April 2017)
 - Nairobi Convention: Inception Meeting for Implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the Protection of the Western Indian Ocean from Land-based Sources and Activities (WIOSAP Project) (Flic en Flac, Mauritius, 10-11 April 2017);
 - Nairobi Convention Focal Point Meeting; FARI Meeting (Flic en Flac, Mauritius, 12 April 2017)

² http://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/uploads/pdfs/CITES-CMS-JWP-2015-2020_e.pdf

Staffing and Organization of the Secretariat

62. As agreed at MOS2 and indicated in CMS/Sharks/Outcome 2.5 the Signatories adopted a budget based on voluntary contributions to provide adequate resources for the MOU for the Triennium 2013-2015. The budget included a P2 post and a part-time G5 post, to be established.
63. The position of the P2 Officer is funded through the Trust Fund. For the period between August 2016 and July 2019, this is provided via an earmarked voluntary contribution from the German Government.
64. In times of peak workload, resources from the Trust Fund were used to hire temporary consultants, using the G5 budget allocation. In the framework of the CMS Family Internship Programme, the Sharks MOU Secretariat has also been supported by five different CMS interns, who worked between three and six months each.
65. The recruitment of the G5 Assistant is currently underway. The new staff member is expected to report on duty during the last quarter of 2018.

Action Requested:

The Meeting is requested to:

- a) Take note of the report;
- b) Provide any guidance to the Secretariat as may be appropriate.