



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

CMS/Sharks/MOS2/Doc.7.1/
Rev.1

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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 MOS1 and are in accordance with Section 8 of the Sharks MOU and Terms of Reference for the Secretariat (CMS/Sharks/Outcome 1.3), which were adopted at the First Meeting of the Signatories (MOS1) in 2012.
2. Under Section 8 of the Sharks MOU, the Signatories have agreed that the CMS Secretariat should act as the Interim Secretariat to this MOU until permanent arrangements are agreed.

Status of signatures and recruitment efforts to date:

3. As of September 2012, when the First Meeting of the Signatories (MOS1) was held, there were 25 Signatories to the MOU. By 31 December 2015, the MOU has been signed by additional 14 countries, bringing the overall membership to 39 Signatories, including the European Union. Vanuatu became a Signatory as of on 19 February, 2013, Colombia on 14 October 2013, Comoros, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Mauritania, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen on 17 February 2014, Sweden on 5 November 2014, Samoa on 7 November 2014 and finally New Zealand signed the MOU on 7 July 2015.
4. 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, which are mentioned below.

National focal points

5. 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.
6. To date, 34 out of 39 Signatories have nominated a focal point. The current list of designated focal points is available as CMS/Sharks/MOS2/Inf.5.

7. 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

8. The Secretariat has supported the Advisory Committee (AC) in all tasks as defined in the Terms of References of the Committee by facilitating communication, drafting emails and documents and through regular consultations with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee. A description of the activities of the AC can be found in CMS/Sharks/MOS2/Doc.7.2

9. With funding from the German Government and in close consultation with the AC Chair and Vice-Chair, a study on priorities for species conservation was designed and an expert commissioned to carry it out. The aim of the study was to identify priorities for conservation on the level species or population of species listed or proposed for listing based on the MOU's Conservation Plan and objectives. This will be presented to AC1 and MOS2 to inform the Committee and the Signatories. The full study is available as CMS/Sharks/MOS2/Inf.12 and is introduced in CMS/Sharks/MOS2/Doc.9.2.

10. As agreed at MOS1, an online Workspace, was developed by the Secretariat to facilitate the online collaboration of the AC. However, members preferred to work by email.

11. The Secretariat has organized the first meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC1) to be held on 12-13 February, 2016, at the same venue as MOS2. Documents for this meeting can be found at <http://www.cms.int/sharks/en/ac1>.

Supporting the Intersessional Working Group

12. The Secretariat supported the Intersessional Working Group (IWG), established by MOS1, through regular consultations with the Co-Chairs of the Working Group, Ms. Cheri McCarty (USA) and Mr. Jamie Rendell (UK).

13. At the request of the IWG, the Secretariat undertook a survey of agreed non-governmental organizations and relevant intergovernmental organizations, evaluating their interest in associating themselves with the MOU as cooperating partners and the nature of their potential contribution to the MOU. An analysis of the survey, presented as CMS/Sharks/MOS2/Inf.6, has been considered by the IWG as basis for their draft Terms of Reference for Cooperating Partners, which is included in CMS/Sharks/MOS2/Doc.11.1.

14. At the request of the Co-Chairs, an informal meeting of the Working Group, open to all Signatories, has been scheduled for 14 February, immediately prior to MOS2. This meeting aims to discuss open questions related to the draft Rules of Procedure, which were developed by the Working Group and which were made available as CMS/Sharks/MOS2/Doc.2.2.

Supporting Signatories

15. The Secretariat supported Signatories in the implementation of the MOU with guidance and advice, as well as assisting with grant proposals, developing project proposals and raising funds for conservation projects or national campaigns to improve awareness on threats to sharks and their conservation needs. Some examples include:

- At the request of a Signatory, the Secretariat wrote to the World Customs Organization (WCO), in order to express its support for a proposal by FAO to revise the Harmonized System with a view towards enhanced monitoring of the global trade of shark species.
- At the request of the Kenyan Government, the Secretariat and the AC provided advice on a planned tourism project which would have involved the capture of whale sharks for commercial purpose.
- Regarding plans to catch Great White Sharks above 4 metres in length in Western Australia, in response to several fatal attacks by sharks on humans, the Secretariat has advised the Government about requirements in accordance with CMS Article III and the CMS Sharks MOU.

16. In 2015 the Secretariat undertook a survey amongst all Signatories and Range States, to gather information about the status of domestic legislation, policies and other measures for the conservation of sharks as requested in activity 7.1.1 of the Conservation Plan. The results of this survey are made available as CMS/Sharks/MOS2/Inf.17. The low number of replies, however, indicates that a different approach would be required to achieve a complete overview.

Conservation and Research Projects

17. With the assistance of extra budgetary contributions from Signatories and other donors, the Secretariat was able to develop and implement a number of conservation and research projects, aiming to implement the objectives of the MOU.

Raising awareness on threats to migratory sharks in Palau

18. This project supported the Government of Palau to raise awareness on key conservation issues relevant to the commercial fishing of pelagic sharks in Palau and thereby to support new national legislation to protect sharks from commercial fisheries and finning in national waters. Donor: Government of Monaco, €15,000.

“Sharks of the Arabian Seas” an identification guide

19. The illustrated identification guide “Sharks of the Arabian Seas” (CMS/Sharks/MOS2/Inf.8) was developed in cooperation with the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and the Gulf Elasmobranch Project, to support capacity-building activities in the region and to improve compliance with CMS and other relevant treaties. This guide will assist field biologists, researchers, fisheries enumerators, commercial and recreational fishermen, divers and the interested public to rapidly and accurately identify sharks encountered whilst at sea, at landing sites or domestic fish markets in the region. It also served as a tool for a training workshop on bycatch in gillnet fisheries, organized by the CMS Secretariat at the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). Donor: Government of Germany, €21,562 (partial funding).

Migratory Sharks in the Gulf of Gabes

20. Within the CMS Small Grants Programme, the project Migratory Sharks in the Gulf of Gabes: bycatch, ecology and critical habitats, was funded for the period March, 2015–September, 2016. The objectives of this project include the monitoring of migratory shark bycatch along the Tunisian coasts and the collection of biological data. (Donor: UNEP via CMS Small Grants Programme, US\$15,000).

Connectivity between Manta Ray Populations

21. A pilot study on the connectivity between Giant Manta Ray populations in the Galapagos and coastal Ecuador and Peru was launched in October 2015, implemented by the Manta Trust. The spatial ecology and connectivity of Giant Manta Ray populations is poorly understood, making it challenging to manage the species effectively. This project aims to determine the degree of connectivity between the populations of Giant Manta Rays in the Galapagos Islands and coastal Ecuador and Peru, and the implications for the management of this vulnerable species. Donor: Government of Monaco, €15,000.

22. More detailed information about the above-mentioned projects can be found on the projects page of the website: www.cms.int/sharks/projects.

Workshops

Shark conservation training workshops in Northern Africa and the Middle East

23. In cooperation with the International Fund for Animal Welfare in the Middle East (IFAW Middle East) training workshops on the implementation of international regulations for the conservation of sharks under CMS, CITES, FAO and relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) were organized in Yemen and Egypt. These workshops applied a national model for first level training focusing on:

- Informing participants (fisheries officers operating in the landing sites, customs officers and coast guards) about legal requirements and guidelines regarding the conservation of sharks under CMS, CITES, FAO and relevant RFMOs;
- Training participant in identifying species (particularly parts and derivatives);
- Introducing participants to requirements under CITES.

Training Workshop on the Conservation of Sharks and Rays

24. In February 2014, a third training workshop as described above was organized in Dubai, UAE, also in cooperation with IFAW, and in this case the Ministry of Environment and Water of the United Arab Emirates (MOEW). As a result of this series of workshops, nine Range States in the region became Signatories to the MOU. Funding for these workshops was provided by the European Commission.

Regional capacity building workshop to support progress in implementation of the Regional Observer Scheme of IOTC

25. A capacity-building workshop to support the implementation of the Regional Observer Scheme of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) was organized by the IOTC Secretariat in cooperation with the CMS Secretariat and supported by both the Sharks and IOSEA Marine Turtle MOUs. It was hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries of Oman in Muscat from 18-22 October 2015. It provided expert training to support the creation and implementation of observer schemes in Oman, Pakistan and Iran with a specific focus on gillnet fisheries.

Communication, Information and Outreach

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

Publications

The Secretariat has developed a number of publications either in-house or commissioned through experts where funding was available. All can be found on the website <http://www.cms.int/sharks/en/publications>

- CMS Sharks MOU Fact Sheet (2015)
- Sharks of the Arabian Seas – an identification guide (Jabado & Ebert, 2015)
- Review: The Conservation Status of Migratory Sharks (Fowler, 2014)
- Palau National Marine Reserve – Shark Conservation Poster (2013)
- Palau National Marine Reserve – Shark Conservation Leaflets and Brochures (2013)

Website

27. In 2013, as an interim measure, while CMS overhauled its family website, a Sharks MOU website (www.sharksmou.org) was developed alongside a web-based workspace to facilitate the work of the Advisory Committee of the MOU (<http://workspace.cms.int/sharks>). As part of the CMS Family Website Project, the CMS Sharks MOU new website (www.cms.int/sharks) was launched in 2014, and is kept updated.

Social Media

28. 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. A Facebook special event page was established for MOS2 as well as a social media communication strategy in collaboration with the Joint Communications Unit, to promote MOS2 and give updates on the meeting.

Press articles and press releases

29. 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>.

30. In 2014 an article about shark conservation under CMS and the next steps and challenges for the international protection of migratory sharks and rays was published in the Save our Seas Magazine (http://issuu.com/saveourseas/docs/save_our_seas_magazine_issue_03_sum/112).

Cooperation with International Organizations, Regional Fisheries Management Organizations

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

31. CMS and CITES Secretariats have agreed in their Joint Work Programme (2015-2020) (http://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/uploads/pdfs/CITES-CMS-JWP-2015-2020_e.pdf), to cooperate on optimizing the effectiveness of actions taken by Parties to both CMS and CITES concerning sharks and rays, and strengthen synergies with FAO, RFMOs and other relevant

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

bodies. Furthermore, they have agreed to cooperate on capacity-building regarding the implementation of regulations of both Conventions related to sharks and rays. Both Secretariats update each other on recent and upcoming initiatives through regular phone calls and attend each other's meetings where appropriate.

32. In 2012, the Secretariat was requested by the CITES Secretariat to provide comments on a number of shark and ray species proposed for the inclusion in CITES Appendices at CITES COP16. The position of the Secretariat and the Chair of the CMS Scientific Council were published on the CITES COP 16 meeting website as COP16 Doc.77 Annex 4 (<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/16/doc/E-CoP16-77-A4.pdf>).

33. At CITES COP16, the Secretariat organized a side event on shark and ray conservation under CMS and the Sharks MOU.

Regional Fisheries Management Organizations

34. The Secretariat, through CMS, worked closely with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) to strengthen collaboration by organizing a capacity building workshop in Oman. In addition, the Secretariat, prepared a draft MOU between the IOTC and CMS to support efforts to minimize the impact of fisheries on species listed on Appendix I and II, also covering sharks listed on Annex 1 of the MOU. The Chairs of the AC and the IWG were further consulted on the draft. Information about this initiative can be found in CMS/Sharks/MOS2/Doc.11.2 and the Draft MOU between IOTC and CMS is presented in CMS/Sharks/MOS2/Inf.16.

35. The Secretariat attended meetings of the Commission on the Conservation of Bluefin Tuna, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas and the Scientific Committee of IOTC.

Other Relevant Meetings and Activities

36. The Secretariat represented the Sharks MOU at the following international meetings related to shark conservation:

- Shark Conservation in Arabia Workshop (October 8-11, 2012, Dubai UAE) in collaboration with the UAE Ministry of Environment and Water and Shark Quest Arabia.*
- CITES COP 16 (3-14 March 2013, Bangkok, Thailand). In the margins of the COP, a side event on the Sharks MOU was organized as outreach to non-Signatories.**
- 10th Meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG) of the Commission on the Conservation of Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), (28-30 August 2013, Canberra, Australia), to participate in discussion on the porbeagle stock assessment and build relationships with the CCSBT.*
- International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) (November 18-25 2013, Cape Town, South Africa) where a statement on the Sharks MOU was submitted.
- West African Marine and Coastal Conservation Partnership (25-29 November 2013, Senegal) to promote discussions on the conservation of marine species in the region.*
- 11th Conference of the Parties to the Abidjan Convention (11-14 March 2014, Cape Town, South Africa), to promote the MOU in the region.*
- Sharks International Conference (2 - 6 June 2014, Durban South Africa) to build up the network with key scientists and to be informed about recent developments.

- MEA accession workshop (11 - 15 Aug 2014, Nadi, Fiji) to reach out to non-Signatories about the CMS Sharks MOU.*
- Participation of the AC Chair at the 18th Meeting of the CMS Scientific Council (1 – 3 July 2014, Bonn, Germany).
- Annual Symposium of the Fisheries Society of the British Isles (27-31 July, 2015, Plymouth, UK) to obtain an overview of the current research topics and advances, as well as expanding the network of the Sharks MOU.
- 18th session of the Scientific Committee of IOTC (November 2015, Kuta, Indonesia) to present the objectives of the MOU invite to MOS2 and inform about the joint efforts of the CMS and IOTC Secretariats in the field of capacity building. The Committee has recommend to the Commission of IOTC that the IOTC Secretariat should approach CMS on future cooperation.**

*No travel costs incurred, **Partial travel costs incurred

Staffing and organization of the Secretariat

16. As agreed at MOS1 and indicated in CMS/Sharks/Outcome 1.3 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 P3 post and a part-time G5 post, to be established.

17. The duties of the P3 officer were implemented by a P2 officer, whose position was funded through voluntary contributions from the German Government during 2013 and 2014 and from the Trust Fund in 2015.

18. In times of peak workload, such as the organization of the MOS2, resources from the Trust Fund were used to hire temporary consultants on the budget for the post of the G5. 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.

Cooperation with the CMS Family

37. The Secretariat has benefited from the interim solution of 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.

38. The Conference Management Team provided significant assistance to the preparations of AC1 and MOS2, including support with translations, document editing and organization of delegate travel and facilitation of visa.

39. The Joint Communications Unit assisted with the development of several key media products, including press releases, an op-eds, and the Sharks MOU page of the CMS Family website, Facebook and Twitter accounts. Much of the press work for MOS2 was organized by this team.

40. 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.

41. 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. The ACAP Secretariat provided advice on working with RFMOs. As described above, an MOU with the IOTC Secretariat was drafted on the Convention level and joint activities between CMS and IOTC have already been undertaken on capacity-building.

42. The Secretariat and the Chair of the AC took part in the 17th meeting of the CMS Scientific Council in July 2014, in Bonn, providing technical advice on a number of proposals for the inclusion of shark and ray species in the CMS Appendices.

43. Furthermore, the Secretariat advised CMS on all matters related to sharks and rays, in particular by evaluating proposals for the Small Grants Programme, supporting Parties with expertise regarding their proposals to list species on the CMS Appendices and the development of a Resolution on the Conservation and Management of Sharks and Rays. The latter was adopted by CMS COP11, in 2014, and is available as [CMS/Res.11.20](#).

44. In order to increase the membership to the MOU, the CMS Capacity Building Unit has included the MOU objectives and work in outreach workshops in Africa (Zimbabwe), the Pacific (Fiji), Latin America (Panama) and Asia (Philippines), which were held in 2014 and 2015.

Administrative Changes at UNEP and CMS

45. The United Nations system is in the process of implementing a new enterprise resource (ERP) system which became operational on 1 June 2015. The SAP-based system will provide a harmonized and streamlined approach to the following core organization functions: Finance and Budget Management, Human Resources Management, Workforce Management (Organizational Management, Travel Management, Payroll, Programme & Project Management) and Supply Chain/ Procurement/ Logistics Management. The new system is called Umoja; ‘unity’ in Swahili.

46. The implementation of Umoja is a major undertaking which had and still has a tremendous impact on the day-to-day work of the Secretariat. Besides undertaking mandatory training in the use and functionality of the new system, staff needed to dedicate much time to preparing the data of the old system for migration into Umoja, and into verifying, completing and allocating data. This has resulted in significant disruptions to all administrative functions from March 2015 until today, which continues to pose a major challenge for the Secretariat.

The Strategic Plan for Migratory Species

47. The Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 was adopted at CMS COP11 (CMS/Sharks/MOS2/Inf.9). While the plan was developed and adopted by CMS Parties, it was intended for the use of all CMS Agreements and MOUs, and beyond. The accompanying Resolution directs a number of actions towards the Signatories to the Sharks MOU, as follows:

- urges Signatories to integrate the goals and targets of the Strategic Plan with relevant policy and planning instruments and also to take action to raise awareness of the Plan.
- invites the Signatories to consider adopting the Strategic Plan at MOS.
- encourages the MOS to identify existing or develop new sub-targets for the species and issues relevant to the Sharks MOU and to inform the CMS Secretariat of such sub-targets.

48. Signatories may wish to consider their engagement with the CMS process.

Action Requested:

The Meeting of the Signatories is invited to:

- a) Take note of the report;
- b) Provide any guidance to the Secretariat as may be appropriate;
- c) Consider the invitation from CMS Parties regarding the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species.