



Benefits, entitlements and obligations of signing the *Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout their Range*

The Dugong Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed under the auspices of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS). The Dugong MOU was finalized and opened for signature in Abu Dhabi on 31 October 2007. Under the provisions of CMS it is possible for States that are not yet Parties to the Convention to participate in CMS Agreements without any wider commitments vis-à-vis the parent Convention. Nonetheless, membership in the latter is encouraged.

The MOU recognizes 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, and by promoting the adoption and/or adaptation of best practices from other participating countries and sub-regions, and providing services and products to Signatory States to increase capacity to conserve dugongs and their habitats. Currently there are 21 Signatories to the Dugong MOU.

Although the MOU is not a legally binding arrangement, it is an internationally recognised one.

Obligations

Signatory States agree to implement the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding in a spirit of consensus, cooperation and mutual support, and to the extent that resources permit. Signatories also agree in co-operating to restore/maintain favourable dugong conservation status, enhancing the legal protection of the species in the region, implementing the Conservation and Management Plan to the best extent possible, facilitating the exchange of relevant information, and cooperating with relevant organisations and experts.

The Secretariat to the Dugong MOU is fully funded with the generous support of the Government of the United Arab Emirates through the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi. Financial contributions to the MOU are voluntary, not mandatory, which gives Signatories the flexibility to make a voluntary contribution when they have the capacity to contribute. Voluntary financial and/or in-kind contributions from member States to provide for the ongoing operations of the organization are most welcome.

Entitlements and benefits

Signatories to the Dugong MOU would benefit, mainly but not only, from:

- Participation in meetings of the Signatory States and, as a consequence, be in a position to influence MOU policy;
- Possible access to funding for conservation priorities (e.g. through Small Grants Programme or in partnership with other Range States);
- Possibility of funding support to participate in various workshops;
- Support from the Dugong MOU Secretariat for funding applications (through letters of support or proposals);
- Support in coordinating with other regional or international dugong initiatives a Signatory State is involved in;

- Technical support either from the Secretariat or through technical advisors and other contacts;
- Exposure on the Dugong MOU website on Signatory State's achievements in dugong conservation;
- International credibility for cooperating with other signatory states in global and regional dugong conservation efforts;
- Access to products or services generated by the Secretariat to enhance capacity to implement research and conservation measures for dugongs and their habitats;
- Access to international networks, liaising with other experts, IGOs and NGOs.

To this end it is worthwhile to mention that actions being effective for dugongs can also benefit other marine wildlife such as marine turtles. Furthermore, improvement of marine and coastal habitats benefits to the livelihoods of communities depending on those habitats, as well as to the socio-economics of the country as a whole.

Generic arrangements for signing the Dugong MOU

The Secretariat of the Dugong Memorandum of Understanding offers various options for signing the MOU:

- (1) Signature of the Memorandum by the Ambassador (in the United Arab Emirates) of the country concerned, either in the offices of the UNEP/CMS Secretariat in Abu Dhabi, or at the Embassy of the country concerned (in Abu Dhabi), whichever is most convenient for both parties.
- (2) Signature of the Memorandum by the responsible Minister or other high level official with delegated authority. This may be arranged on the occasion of a relevant meeting/workshop, where the Minister and a representative of the Secretariat are both present.
- (3) Signature of the Memorandum at a Meeting of Dugong MOU Signatory States, by the Ambassador of the country concerned or by a duly accredited official – subject to presentation to the Secretariat of a suitable original Instrument of Full Powers, prior to the meeting. The next meeting of the Signatory States is scheduled to take place in February 2013.

The Memorandum of Understanding shall take effect for new Signatory States on the date of signature.

Kindly contact the UNEP/CMS Dugong MOU Secretariat in Abu Dhabi by telephone or e-mail to make the necessary arrangements.



UNEP/CMS Office – Abu Dhabi
 Secretariat to the Dugong MOU
 Tel: +971 2 6934 437/410
 Email: CmsOffice.ae@cms.int
 Website: <http://www.cms.int/species/dugong/index.htm>