



Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout their Range

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Seagrass and Dugong Technical Workshop | Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 15-16 March 2017

WORKSHOP REPORT

Prepared by the Secretariat of the Dugong MOU

Purpose

1. The Seagrass and Dugong Technical Workshop was hosted by the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) together with Total, Total Abu Al Bukhoosh and the CMS Dugong MOU Secretariat. The purpose was to build capacity for seagrass and dugong conservation and to showcase the newly launched Dugong and Seagrass Research Toolkit.¹
2. The Technical Workshop was held at the Dusit Thani Hotel in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates from 15-16 March 2017, following on from the Third Meeting of Signatories (MOS3) to the Dugong MOU.² The workshop was aimed at researchers, conservation practitioners and marine resource managers. Over 100 participants attended the two-day event with representatives from non-government, inter-government, research and private sector organisations from 25 countries.
3. The agenda for the Technical Workshop, along with other documents and presentations can be found on the Technical Workshop webpage.³ A List of Participants can be found at Annex 1 of this report.

Objectives

4. The objectives of the Seagrass and Dugong Technical Workshop were to:
 - a. share perspectives and experiences to build capacity in fund-raising techniques for dugong and seagrass conservation;
 - b. share experiences to build capacity in communications techniques and tools to enhance fundraising for dugong and seagrass conservation;
 - c. showcase the Dugong and Seagrass Research Toolkit and demonstrate its application for dugong and seagrass research and for selecting techniques or tools most appropriate for monitoring and data collection; and
 - d. offer hands-on instruction with experts to use the Dugong and Seagrass Research Toolkit and to apply it to local situations.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 5 September 2017.

¹ The Dugong and Seagrass Research Toolkit is available online at www.conservation.tools.

² www.cms.int/dugong/en/meeting/third-meeting-signatories-dugong-mou

³ www.cms.int/dugong/en/meeting/seagrass-and-dugong-technical-workshop



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throughout their Range

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Technical Workshop Summary

5. The Technical Workshop was facilitated by Mr. Simon Woodley of the CMS Dugong MOU's Dugong Technical Group. Mr. Woodley welcomed participants to the workshop and invited Dr. Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheri, Executive Director, Terrestrial and Marine Biodiversity Sector, EAD to open the workshop on behalf of EAD, Total, Total Abu Al Bukhoosh and the Dugong MOU.

6. The first session of the Technical Workshop, *Fundraising Techniques for Dugong and Seagrass Conservation*, was organised and led by Dr. Nicolas Pilcher and included presentations from Mr. Nicolas Heard – Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, Mr. Roderic Mast – Oceanic Society, Ms. Sarah Fowler – Save Our Seas Foundation and Mr. Sultan Al Hajji – Total E&P UAE. Dr. Pilcher also called upon Mr. Rob Yordi – Seaworld Parks and Entertainment and Mr. Marcus Chandler – Occidental Oil and Gas International to briefly share their insights. This session provided valuable lessons and insights into ways of attracting and securing funds from private donors and funding bodies.

7. The second session of the Technical Workshop, *Communicating Successes*, was also organised and led by Dr. Pilcher and included presentations from Ms. Tamara Withers – Emirates Wildlife Society-WWF, Mr. Kirk Duthler – Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund and Mr. Reynante Ramilo – Community Centred Conservation (C3) Philippines. This session provided important guidance on ways of communicating an organisation's success in delivering projects or conservation goals to potential donors and funding bodies to secure ongoing funding for dugong and seagrass conservation projects, and to better promote the work they are already doing. The three presentations given during this session provided different techniques and perspectives on communicating success.

8. The final session of the first day of the workshop included an introduction to the *Dugong and Seagrass Research Toolkit*, with presentations from Professor Helene Marsh, Dr. Christophe Cleguer, Mr. Len McKenzie and Dr. Richard Unsworth. Professor Marsh provided a short overview of what to do with a live stranded dugong for rehab, rescue or release. Dr. Cleguer gave two presentations, one on the key considerations for undertaking dugong aerial surveys, and the second on current knowledge and tracking tools for measuring dugong movements. Mr. McKenzie and Dr. Unsworth gave a presentation on the key considerations for using the Dugong and Seagrass Research Toolkit for seagrass research.

9. The second day of the Technical Workshop focused on the Dugong and Seagrass Research Toolkit. Participants were split into three groups and each group was taken through each of the three streams of the toolkit (dugong, seagrass, and human communities). The dugong stream was led by Professor Marsh and Dr. Cleguer, the seagrass stream by Mr. McKenzie and Dr. Unsworth, and the community stream by Dr. Tara Sayuri Whitty and Mr. Woodley. The Technical Advisors demonstrated how to use the Toolkit to choose tools and techniques suited to the participants' own particular circumstances. More information on how to use the Toolkit is available in the User Guide.⁴ In this session participants also learned about some of the complexities and constraints inherent in collecting robust data for seagrass and dugong conservation including the need for comparable data sets, validation of results and the limitations of different tools and techniques.

10. During the final session participants were firstly given the opportunity to ask the facilitators questions on any aspect of the earlier sessions and then were given a short presentation on seagrass mapping techniques by Mr. McKenzie. Throughout the sessions on the second day of the workshop, participants were asked to provide written feedback on the Dugong and Seagrass Research Toolkit.

11. Mr. Woodley acknowledged the hard work that had gone into organising the Technical Workshop and developing the Dugong and Seagrass Research Toolkit. He thanked the presenters for providing

⁴ www.conservation.tools/user-guide/

their expertise and the participants for their active involvement throughout the day, and officially closed the meeting at 17:30.

Outcomes of the Technical Workshop

12. The Technical Workshop aimed to enhance the capacity of the participants in fundraising techniques and principles such as knowing which donors to target and how to successfully raise funds for conservation, as well as in communicating successes in a way that would enhance fundraising for conservation.

13. The Dugong and Seagrass Research Toolkit was showcased, as were a number of specific research tools and techniques including handling live stranded dugongs, aerial surveys, and satellite tracking. Participants were shown how to use the Research Toolkit and to refine their research questions to determine the most appropriate research tool or technique suited to their particular circumstances, before undertaking a project.

14. The feedback received on the Toolkit was valuable to the Project Team and highlighted some possible areas of the Toolkit for improvement and/or clarification. Some feedback, such as typos, missing hyperlinks and unclear guidelines will be rectified by the developers of the toolkit. However other feedback, such as translation into other languages and adding new functions to the toolkit would require additional funding to address.

Dugong and Seagrass Research Toolkit: Next Steps

15. The Technical Advisors responsible for the Dugong and Research Toolkit will review the feedback received during the Technical Workshop and identify what can be addressed quickly and at a no/low cost. In addition to this, the entire Toolkit will be reviewed by members of the Dugong Technical Group to ensure consistency and ease of use.

16. Dugong and seagrass conservationists are encouraged to promote the Dugong and Seagrass Research Toolkit amongst their networks and utilise it in planning their future research projects. The Toolkit can also be used to assist with grant applications and assessments as it can help to identify the most appropriate tools and techniques to answer a research question, considering cost, expertise and scale.

17. The CMS Dugong MOU Secretariat will work with the Project Partners to identify future sources of funding in order to continue refining the Dugong and Seagrass Research Toolkit and addressing the feedback received to date.

Annex 1

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