



(From CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Doc.12.1/Annex 1)

**COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING STRATEGY FOR  
THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON THE CONSERVATION OF  
MIGRATORY SHARKS (SHARKS MOU)**

The following Communication and Awareness-raising Strategy outlines the Sharks MOU's future approach to strategic communication based on key messages for portraying its work and niche and how these fit into the broader picture of global marine biodiversity conservation, sustainable development and food security.

It also establishes objectives, approaches and principles which are aligned to those of its parent convention, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

The Communication Strategy is intended as a guiding document for all of the Sharks MOU's main communication actors or 'stakeholders', which include the Secretariat, Signatories, Cooperating Partners and CMS.

The overall communication goal is to support the implementation of the Sharks MOU as well as to improve the recognition of the Sharks MOU as the only global instrument to conserve and manage sharks globally.

## **Foreword**

Many chondrichthyan species have shown dramatic declines over the past 60 years despite their ecological importance, including for people that depend on healthy marine ecosystems for their livelihoods. An IUCN assessment by Dulvy et al., which was undertaken in 2014 revealed that ca. 30 per cent of sharks and ray species that were assessed (and not data deficient) were threatened by extinction, whereby the situation for rays is even more severe than for sharks<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Dulvy et al. 2014. Extinction risk and conservation of the world's sharks and rays. eLife 2014; 3:e00590 DOI: 10.7554/eLife.00590

The Sharks MOU contributes significantly to the implementation of Aichi Target 6, SDG 12 and 14, as well as to the Strategic Plan of its mother Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)<sup>2</sup>. The Sharks MOU has identified the clear need for targeted research to inform fisheries managers and conservation experts on priorities for actions to ensure the sustainable use and conservation of elasmobranchs across the world. Marine species in general, but in particular highly migratory and widely distributed species, require an international, global approach to conservation and management. As the first agreement of its kind, the Sharks MOU brings together Range States on a global scale to agree on the above-mentioned activities and to mainstream those with relevant political and managerial processes within the fisheries sector.

## 1. What is the CMS Sharks MOU?

The Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (Sharks MOU) commenced in 2010 to achieve or maintain a favourable conservation status for migratory sharks<sup>3</sup> based on the best available scientific information, taking into account the socio-economic and other values of these species for the people of the Signatories. The Sharks MOU aims to identify ways to address the main threats faced by sharks, mainly unsustainable catch and bycatch as well as habitat loss and degradation. The Sharks MOU represents a specialized inter-governmental agreement under the umbrella of CMS in accordance with Art IV (4) of the Convention.

It is global in scope as the Signatories are Range States<sup>4</sup> or regional. economic integration organizations<sup>5</sup>. The Sharks MOU is young and still growing. At the end of 2017 there were 48 Signatories covering all regions of the world. The Sharks MOU is a non-legally binding instrument, but it demonstrates the political commitment of the Signatories to the conservation and sustainable management of sharks.

## 2. Communication to Support the Objective of the Sharks MOU

Communication efforts are vital to support a number of the objectives of the Sharks MOU - such as to support implementation of the Sharks MOU, to increase public awareness of shark conservation issues, and to reinforce the reputation of the Sharks MOU amongst decision-makers as the leading, neutral and credible UN authority for shark conservation globally. The Sharks MOU's strategic communication efforts will focus on working closely with key players on priority topics in order to:

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<sup>2</sup> **Aichi Target 6:** By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits; **SDG 12:** Responsible Consumption and Production - Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; **SDG14:** Life Below Water - Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

<sup>3</sup> "Sharks" is defined under the Sharks MOU as all species of chondrichthyan species, which includes sharks, rays, chimaeras and skates.

<sup>4</sup> any State that exercises jurisdiction over any part of the range of migratory sharks, or a State, flag vessels of which are engaged outside its national jurisdictional limits in taking, or which have the potential to take, migratory sharks.

<sup>5</sup> an organization constituted by sovereign States of a given region which has competence in respect of matters governed by this Memorandum of Understanding and has been duly authorized, in accordance with its internal procedures, to sign this Memorandum of Understanding.

- ✓ **Highlight the Achievements and Effectiveness of the Sharks MOU and its associated conservation plan** - by consistently communicating the objectives and niche of the Sharks MOU and by showcasing successful activities underway to implement the Sharks MOU;
- ✓ **Demonstrate the importance of the Sharks MOU** as an instrument for conserving and managing sharks globally - by raising awareness of the successful examples of international cooperation and conservation actions which are taking place in the framework of the Sharks MOU, including capacity-building, support for research, cooperation with relevant organizations, development of guidelines and scientific recommendations.
- ✓ **Convey Reasons Why Sharks Matter** - including the different values attached to sharks, their significance for biological diversity, role in ecosystem services, and relevance for sustainable development - to generate interest in, and attention to, shark conservation, and to increase the level of priority given to shark conservation and management on the political agenda (both nationally and internationally);
- ✓ **Draw Attention to Threats to Sharks** - such as illegal and unsustainable catch and bycatch, habitat loss or marine debris - by outlining steps that can be taken to address the threats and ensure that any use is sustainable.

The Communication Strategy aims to:

- ✓ Increase the number of Signatories and Cooperating Partners and reinforce the commitments made by existing Signatories and Cooperating Partners;
- ✓ Engage partners and mobilize resources for shark conservation and management;
- ✓ Enhance cooperation with relevant fisheries organizations, MEAs and Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans.

### 3. The Objectives of the Sharks MOU

The overarching objective of the Sharks MOU is “to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for migratory sharks based on the best available scientific information, taking into account the socio-economic and other values of these species for the people of the Signatories.” (Sharks MOU text, paragraph 5).

Five further objectives form the foundation of the Conservation Plan:

- I. Improving understanding of migratory shark populations through research, monitoring and information exchange;
- II. Ensuring that directed and non-directed fisheries for shark are sustainable;
- III. Ensuring to the extent practicable the protection of critical habitats and migratory corridors and critical life stages of sharks;
- IV. Increasing public awareness of threats to sharks and their habitats, and enhance public participation in conservation activities; and
- V. Enhancing national, regional and international cooperation.

The conservation and management of sharks and their habitats has an impact on a number of international policy areas, especially those relevant to fisheries, sustainable development and biodiversity. For development to be sustainable, it must consider the needs of people, as well as the environments in which they live - of which wild animals, including sharks, are an integral part. Together with the CMS Family and the other biodiversity-related MEAs, the Sharks MOU contributes to the SDGs by helping to balance the conservation and sustainable use of sharks - as well as the protection of their critical habitats, by recognizing the different values attached to sharks and the livelihoods they support.

#### **4. Defining the Niche of the Sharks MOU**

✓ **Bridging Conservation and Sustainable Use:**

The Sharks MOU has a strong focus on both the protection of and the sustainable use of sharks. Its overall goal, to maintain and improve the conservation status of sharks, also recognizes the economic needs of Range States. To contribute to the sustainable management of shark fisheries, the Sharks MOU is mandated to cooperate with relevant fisheries organizations. In this context, the Sharks MOU has the role to promote its decisions taken from an ecosystem perspective on the conservation and management of sharks within fisheries fora.

✓ **Unique Global Platform for Chondrichthyan Species:**

The Sharks MOU is the only inter-governmental instrument dedicated exclusively to the international conservation of chondrichthyan species listed under Annex I of the MOU, as well as their natural habitats. The agreement helps to elevate the policy relevance of sharks and habitat conservation both nationally and internationally on a global level. It complements and supports other global agreements and conventions, especially those working on issues related to fisheries, biodiversity and habitat conservation – including CMS, CITES, CBD, RSC and AP, FAO and RFBs. Furthermore, it enhances the exchange of information and makes recommendations to Range States and other relevant fora on conservation and fisheries management to the benefit of sharks from an ecosystem perspective.

✓ **Supporting Signatories and Range States with implementation:**

Implementation is key for the success of the Sharks MOU. Therefore, the Sharks MOU offers a network of experts and partners to support Range States with the implementation of their commitments under the Sharks MOU. Through international and regional cooperation, it facilitates the exchange of knowledge, methodologies, policies and concepts.

#### **5. Key Players**

As an inter-governmental instrument established to foster international cooperation amongst countries and other stakeholders, the Sharks MOU brings together a community of actors that are all dedicated to the conservation and management of sharks globally. These actors are often involved as strategic partners in communication but can also be target audiences for communication activities.

Main Communicators:

The main communication actors are:

- ✓ Signatories

The Signatories of the Sharks MOU are represented by appointed Focal Points (FPs) in the responsible ministries or other institutions in their countries. Focal Points are, in accordance with paragraph 15 of the Sharks MOU, the central person within the government with whom to communicate. A Focal Point would normally communicate with other Focal Points, representatives of other Range States and with the Secretariat.

- ✓ The Secretariat

The Secretariat, as a communication actor has a key facilitation role in bringing the different key players together and to provide the tools and international guidance which is needed to support the overall communication efforts. Furthermore, the Secretariat is in charge of raising awareness of threats to sharks and conservation needs in general. The Secretariat is also a key communicator in the context of engaging with other relevant organizations and partners as well as the scientific community.

- ✓ Cooperating Partners

Cooperating Partners also play a key role in communicating widely the objectives of the Sharks MOU, threats to sharks, conservation needs, knowledge about sharks and research needs.

- ✓ CMS

As framework and mother Convention of the Sharks MOU, CMS has the role to support and promote activities and objectives of the Sharks MOU.

It is important to note, that all of the above key actors might act as executors of communication activities and take the role of strategic partner, advocate, or even intermediary - while depending on the context, they can also be target groups for communication efforts.

Target Groups:

The most common target audience groups for the Sharks MOU include the governments and in particular the decision-makers of both Signatories and non-Signatory Range States.

- ✓ Signatories
- ✓ Non-Signatory Range States
- ✓ Relevant International Organizations (RFMOs, RFBs, RSC and AP, FAO, CITES)
- ✓ Donors
- ✓ Wider Public (depending on communicator)
- ✓ Private Sector (e.g. Marine Stewardship Council - MSC)
- ✓ Research Organizations
- ✓ Stakeholders (fishing industry, local communities)

Target audiences must be narrowed down and specified depending on the topic, context and specific communication campaign being planned - for example, to include the wider public living near the coast, consumers such as local fishing communities, the tourism sector, or fishing industry – always depending on the context and goals of the communication efforts.

**Table 1: Communication matrix: Communicators and their target groups**

The matrix below shows which target groups the main communicators of the Sharks MOU communicate with.

<b>Target Groups Communicators</b>	<b>Signatories</b>	<b>Range States</b>	<b>Scientific Community</b>	<b>Relevant Organizations</b>	<b>Donors</b>	<b>Wider Public</b>	<b>Private Sector</b>	<b>Research Organizations</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
<b>Sharks MOU Secretariat</b>	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
<b>Signatories</b>	X	X		X		X	X	X	X
<b>Cooperating Partners</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>CMS</b>					X			X	X

## 6. Communication Approach

The communication efforts of the Sharks MOU will be aligned with the overall branding for the Convention and CMS Family, as part of UNEP, to build and further strengthen a common identity around priority species, themes and topics. These priorities should be guided by the overall mandates established by the Convention and the Sharks MOU, and the decisions adopted by Signatories.

Emphasis is placed on:

- ✓ Thematic Approach – to facilitate communication according to the topics, issues and species prioritized;
- ✓ Strategic Partnerships - by working in cooperation with key partners to more strategically address shared objectives, while linking joint efforts to the Sharks MOU and the CMS Family (e.g. cooperating partners, ambassadors, spokespersons);
- ✓ Timing and Special Events - efforts timed to complement the Sharks MOU and CMS Family processes at peak-times of global and media attention - especially around main conference (COPs), meetings (MOSs) and other events, taking into consideration the events of other key organizations to take advantage of heightened media attention and to facilitate partnership building.

## 7. Communication Principles

The communication work of the Sharks MOU is guided by the following principles:

- ✓ Scientifically sound information provided;
- ✓ Packaging tailored to the respective audiences (cultural, geographic, social-economic, generational differences, etc.);
- ✓ Languages (English, French and Spanish as much as possible, others where appropriate);
- ✓ Non-confrontational, supportive.

## 8. Tools and Channels

The communication tools and channels used by the Sharks MOU are similar to those used by CMS, they include:

- ✓ Website
- ✓ Direct Communications (notifications, surveys, invitations)
- ✓ Press and Media (press releases, interviews)
- ✓ Social Media (Twitter, Facebook)
- ✓ Audio-Visual and Digital (Presentations, Interviews)
- ✓ Special Events (UN Observances and related campaigns)

## 9. Branding

An agreement in accordance with Article IV (4) of CMS, the Sharks MOU should be recognized as part of the overall CMS Family and UN Environment<sup>6</sup> by which CMS is administered. This affiliation should be visible in all communication and should be used in all communication tools. Branding as part of CMS will facilitate to communicate the message that the Sharks MOU aims to implement and is guided by CMS and its overall objectives and decisions.

### a) Website:

The Sharks MOU website is managed as subpage of the CMS Family website, sharing the URL of the Convention.

### b) Logos:

In all forms of communication, which includes letterheads, presentations, meeting documents, online media, social media, website etc.), the Sharks MOU Logo (in its current form) used together with the CMS and UN Environment/UNEP logos. Thereby, a strong affiliation of the Sharks MOU with its mother Convention and UN Environment is demonstrated.

### c) Email address: name@un.org

### d) Letter heads/ document mast heads/presentation masters:

All letterheads, document mast heads and presentations would include logos of the Sharks MOU, CMS and *UN Environment*. Meeting document labels/numbers would begin with CMS/Sharks/....

### e) Social media / media:

The Sharks MOU links or shares social media accounts with CMS and communicates itself as part of CMS in op-eds, press releases and other media products.

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<sup>6</sup> The United Nations Environment Programme recently changed its short-form name from UNEP to UN Environment. However there remains some discussion about this. In this document we will use UN Environment.

## List of Acronyms

AC	Advisory Committee
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMS	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Migratory Animals
COP	Conference of the Parties
FAO	Fisheries and Agriculture Organization
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MOS	Meeting of the Signatories
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NFP	National Focal Point
RFB	Regional Fisheries Body
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organization
RSC and AP	Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment)