



Report on the Establishment of Abu Dhabi UNEP/CMS Office

A. Background

1. Parties to CMS and the Range States of the agreements on the conservation of migratory birds of prey and dugongs recorded with gratitude the generous offer of the Government of Abu Dhabi to host an UNEP / CMS Office in Abu Dhabi as a result of fruitful cooperation between the environment Agency – Abu Dhabi and CMS over the last decade.

2. The foundation of the productive collaboration over many years between UNEP/CMS Secretariat and the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) has resulted in two major contributions to the conservation and management of dugongs and birds of prey:

- a. In October 2007, UNEP/CMS and EAD organised an Intergovernmental Meeting in Abu Dhabi to conclude the *Agreement on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and Their Habitats throughout Their Range*. The agreement entered into force after signature by 7 range states (*Australia, Eritrea, France, Madagascar, Myanmar, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania*) and they have been joined by 4 additional signatories (*India, Comoros, Kenya and the Philippines*) to raise the signatories to 11 amongst at least 48 states throughout a wide range from the East and West Pacific, East and South Asia, the Indian Ocean, East Africa, the Red Sea and the Gulf Regions. More details are available at: http://www.cms.int/pdf/en/summary_sheets/Dugong.pdf
- b. In addition, UNEP/CMS and EAD organised another successful Intergovernmental Meeting in October 2008 in Abu Dhabi which concluded the *Agreement concerning the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia*, which became effective with the signature of 28 signatory countries (*Angola, Armenia, Burundi, Chad, Congo, DR of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, Gambia, Guinea, Hungary, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Senegal, Sudan, Togo, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Yemen*). 1 new range state (*South Africa*) and 1 associated supporting International Non Governmental Organisation (*BirdLife International*) have signed the agreement enabling its entry into force for 29 signatories amongst 130 range states in the Africa and Eurasia Region. More details are available at: http://www.cms.int/pdf/en/summary_sheets/birds_of_pre.pdf



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3. EAD has committed funding and offered to host the Secretariat of these two agreements in Abu Dhabi. The range states, as well as the 33rd Session of the CMS Standing Committee (Bonn, September 2008) and the 9th Conference of the Parties to CMS (Rome, December 2008), acknowledged the pledge and thanked the United Arab Emirates, through EAD, for their generous offer.

B. Progress made in establishing the new Office

5. UNEP/CMS Secretariat was requested by the 9th Conference of the Parties to CMS (paragraph 7 of resolution 9.2) to continue negotiations with EAD for the establishment of the Office. EAD and UNEP/CMS Secretariat agreed that the new Office will be actively supporting the implementation of the provisions of the agreements relevant to dugongs and birds of prey across their range, facilitating regional programmes for marine turtle conservation and coordinating with other conservation initiatives in the Gulf and Red Sea Region, to the greatest extent possible. The UNEP/CMS Office is foreseen to provide an innovative framework to tackle major threats by providing a coordinating role to identify effective tools to reverse the declining trend and to secure a favourable status for relevant key migratory species internationally, under the auspices of UNEP/CMS.

6. Following up on CMS COP9 outcomes, UNEP/CMS Secretariat and EAD maintained continuous contacts and held a meeting on 1 March 2009 in Abu Dhabi, which enabled develop a structure for the Abu Dhabi UNEP Office, and planned for it to be set up by early June 2009. In the meantime, the establishment of job descriptions and posts for the relevant new staff have been launched in early-January 2009 following COP9.

7. Since then, the main achievements regarding the Office establishment begun with completing the staff recruitment process through the panel interviews held within the UNDP Offices for G-6 and G-5 positions, on 31 May and 3 June 2009 respectively.

8. The selection process and interviews ended to the staff recruitment status below:

Name	Function, Grade	Nationality	Reporting date
Mr. Lahcen El Kabiri	Executive Coordinator, P-5	Moroccan	1 June 2009
Ms. Donna Kwan	Programme Officer – Dugongs, P-4	Australian	5 sept. 2009
Mr. Peter Pechacek	Programme Officer – Birds, P-4	German	18 Aug. 2009
Ms. Jenny Renell	Associate Programme Officer, P-2	Finnish	14 Dec. 2009
Ms. Reema Al Mubarak	Administrative/Finance Assistant, G-6	Syrian	6 Aug. 2009
Ms. Jumana Farouqa	Secretary/Programme Assistant, G-5	Jordanian	23 Aug. 2009

9. Upon arrival, the Executive Coordinator visited the EAD Office and held meetings with the relevant services to discuss recruitment status and prepare provisional offices for the forthcoming staff in the current building, as the EAD move to a new building was imminent.

10. He established a Work Plan for the UNEP/CMS Office, shared with the CMS Family and the two newly recruited Programme Officers dealing with birds and dugong conservation for their inputs and finally EAD for information and any further comments. The Work Plan subject to updates is presented below.

11. Concerning staff security and general personnel issues, he coordinated with the UN Resident Representative in Abu Dhabi seeking his support for issuance of staff ID Cards and compliance with UN Security requirements. UN Designated Security Officer has been advised and provided with the contact details of the first arrived staff, the Executive Coordinator and his family, then the requested necessary information for the new Office, periodically updated.

12. The UN associate Security visited the new Office by mid-October 2009 and provided staff with guidelines and security material, including detailed coordinates. It was an occasion for the Executive Coordinator to accept his offer to be part of the UN Head of Agencies Committee for UAE and Bahrein.

13. The Executive Coordinator worked out final drafts for required legal instruments, i.e. (i) funding and premises through a Donor Agreement (DA), on one hand, and (ii) a juridical personality which allows for functioning as an UN body to deal with personnel status and relations with UAE Authorities on behalf of UNEP and UN, on the other hand, through a Host Country Agreement (HCA). Both texts have been established, then cleared with UNEP HQ, UN HQ and circulated to the host country.

14. The EAD Secretary General and the CMS Officer-in-Charge signed the DA on 12 October 2009. The HCA has been circulated to the UAE authorities for consultation and review before final signature by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EAD and UNEP

15. In the meantime, various challenging tasks for a new Office have been launched and/or accomplished:

- ***Organisation and administration***

16. The Office's human resources comprise an Executive Coordinator, supported by a team of three programme officers sharing responsibility for the Birds of Prey, Dugong and marine turtle programmes, together with administrative staff. When staff recruitment is completed, the team will include four Professionals and two general support staff. At present, the Executive Coordinator, Programme Officer-Birds, Programme Officer-Dugongs, Administrative/ Finance Assistant and Secretary/Programme Assistant have joined the team. The Associate Programme Officer is under recruitment.

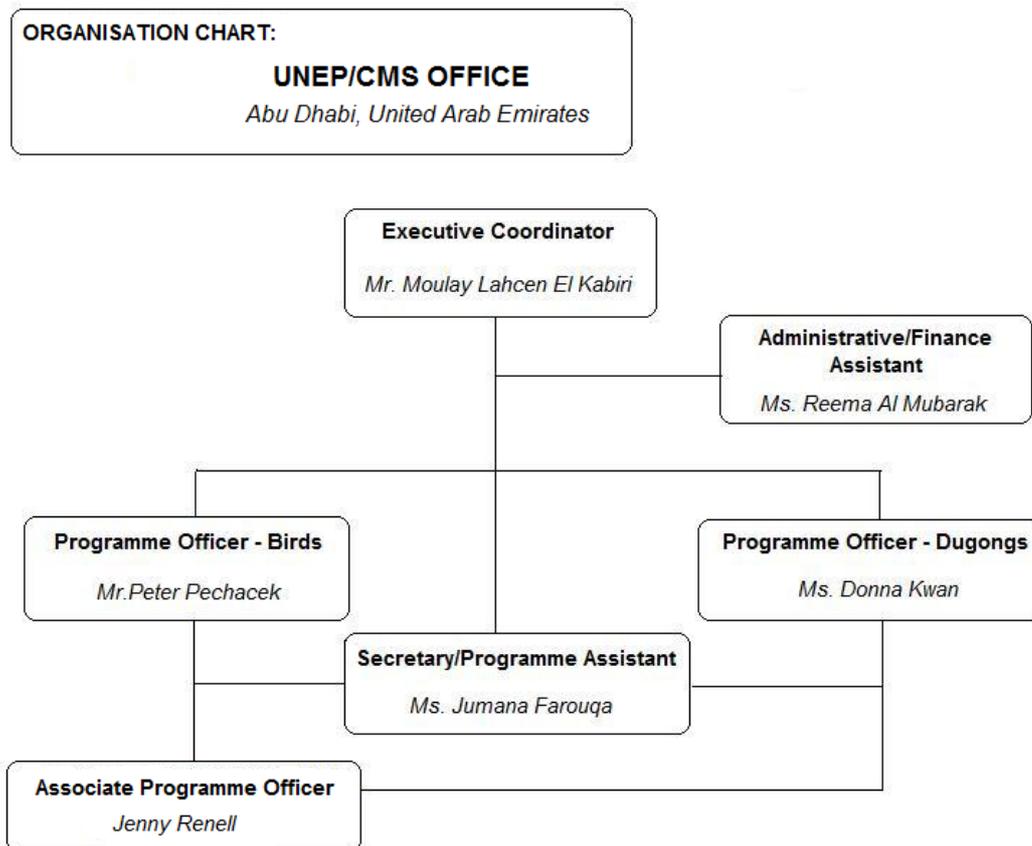
17. As agreed by 33rd Session of the CMS Standing Committee in Bonn, September 2008, the Executive Coordinator reports to CMS Executive Secretary and is responsible to the Meetings of the Signatory States. The Executive Coordinator is responsible for relations with the Host Country and represents the Executive Director of UNEP as appropriate and determined by the Host Country Agreement or any other relevant document. He might assign any other priority task to others.

18. The Administrative/Finance Assistant supports the Executive Coordinator in all administrative and finance issues, and contacts with EAD for logistics and other relevant Abu Dhabi Authorities. She will play a key role in making the Office's meetings and events successful, and in cooperating with the whole team, under the supervision of the Executive Coordinator.

19. The support team, especially the two agreement Officers for birds of prey and dugongs, will endeavour to perform technical duties relevant to the secretarial units of the agreements, including contacts with range states and other partners, compilation of data and reporting, and elaborating and implementing grant programmes.

20. The two main Officers are supported by an Associate Programme Officer and a Secretary/Programme Assistant. The latter will be sharing average work time up to 80% equally dedicated to birds of prey activities and dugongs/turtle activities (40% each) and 20% to secretarial work such as filing and running the Executive Coordinator’s Office. As for the Associate Officer, average work time up to 40% to birds of prey activities, 40% to dugong/turtle and 20% to common office tasks, such as the website, awareness-raising material and press releases.

21. The Organisation Chart and Work Plan below explain the work flow, supervision, responsibilities and guidelines for the new team.



- **Work Plan** (as at 19 November 2009)

TASK	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE	STATUS/COMMENTS
➤ STAFF RECRUITMENT			
1. Executive Coordinator	UNEP/UNON/Bonn	1 June 2009	DONE
2. Programme Officer -Birds	UNEP/UNON/Bonn	18 Aug 2009	DONE
3. Programme Officer- Dugongs	UNEP/UNON/Bonn	5 Sept 2009	DONE
4. Associate Programme Officer	UNEP/UNON/Bonn	14 Dec 2009	-
5. Admin/Finance Assistant	UNEP/UNON/Bonn	6 Aug 2009	DONE
6. Secretary/Programme Assistant	UNEP/UNON/Bonn	23 Aug 2009	DONE
➤ STAFF SECURITY/RESIDENCE PERMITS, ETC.			
7. Communication of personal details to UN DSS in Dubai	Head of Office	Ongoing	DONE
8. Issuance of Staff Residence authorization/permit	Head of Office	Ongoing	DONE (via UNDP)
➤ COMMUNICATION/ IT ISSUES & PREMISES			
9. Email accounts for staff	SCMS/Bonn	DONE	Necessary to maintain links with CMS Server & UNV in Bonn – Connection via Internet Outlook Website Access.
10. Internet connection high speed for Office	EAD & UNEP Office	Ongoing	In process
11. Networking wireless via router	EAD & UNEP Office	Ongoing	In process
12. Printer laser & scanner wireless all in one medium size	EAD & UNEP Office	Ongoing	In process
13. Telephone	EAD & UNEP Office	Ongoing	In process

14. Fax	EAD & UNEP Office	Ongoing	In process
15. Determine office space & other requirements in new premises	EAD & UNEP Office	Ongoing	Office space and other requirements discussed with EAD prior to move to new building, in presence of CMS Officer-in-Charge on 12 October 2009.
➤ DONOR AGREEMENT (DA) & HOST COUNTRY AGREEMENT (HCA)			
16. Circulation of the draft	Head of UNEP/CMS Office (HO)	DONE	
17. Follow up	HO	Ongoing	
18. Clearance by UN OLA	DEL/C/HO/CMS	Ongoing	DONE – HCA sent to EAD for consultation and final text to be signed by MOFA, EAD and UNEP
19. Letter(s) by UNEP to MOFA & EAD	DEL/C		Follow up by UNEP/DEL/C after consultation and agreement on HCA final text to be signed (see above)
20. Signature of the Donor Agreement	EAD/UNEP	DONE	DA signed during visit of CMS Officer-In-Charge on 12 October, on behalf of UNEP
21. Final text(s) signature – Side Event	EAD/Government/ HO	Dec. 2009 – Q1 2010	Side Event to announce the official opening & Press release – prepare a brochure on the new Office – Possible signatures of Birds of Prey and/or Dugong MoUs during the event
➤ GENERAL STAFF TRAINING & INDIVIDUAL WORK PROGRAMMES (ePAS)			
22. Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) training for UNEP/CMS Office staff in Abu Dhabi	UNON/HO	21-28 October 2009	DONE
23. Determine dates for GS training in Bonn – IMIS, administrative instructions, procurement, travel, archiving, etc.	HO/CMS	7-11 December. 2009	DONE
24. Drafting Individual work programmes (ePAS)	All new staff	Oct.- Nov. 2009	Prog Officers & Sec/Prog Assistant – DONE – Others -Ongoing
➤ NOTIFICATION TO RANGE STATES & PARTNERS			

25. General notification of the launch of the UNEP/CMS Office	HO	Q1 2010	Formal announcement of setting up the Office
26. Notification to Birds of Prey Range States & Partners	HO	10 Sept 2009	DONE
27. Notification to Dugongs Range States & Partners	HO	Sept 2009	DONE
28. Designing brochure on the new project office & its distribution to range states & partners	All	Mid/End October	Introducing newly established office, scope of work & objectives also to be distributed at the official opening
↻ WEBSITE			
29. Build up and maintain a website in cooperation with CMS secretariat	HO/All	Ongoing	As soon as the Associate Officer is settled.
↻ CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES			
→ PROGRAMME OF WORK – BIRDS OF PREY			
30. Seek and follow up on formal designation of contact points within range states	Programme Officer, Birds (POB)/All	Q3 - 2009	DONE
31. Start working with range states on their strategies	POB/All	Q3 - 2009	As soon as possible
32. Priority focus on UAE's Strategy elaboration (support)	POB/All	Oct.-Dec. 2009	Ongoing
33. Build up a Programme of Work with BLI	POB/All	Q3 - 2009	POB & HO to link with BLI - DONE
34. Build up a Programme of Work with European Network	POB/All	Q3 - 2009	POB & HO to link with Mr. Duke (EURAPMON) - DONE
35. Organise workshop on strategies & monitoring BOP	POB/All	Q2 - 2010	POB to prepare key documents with the team
36. Follow up on Saker Falcon issues and progress	POB/All	Q4 - 2009	POB & HO to follow up with KSA & BLI
37. Prepare the first Meeting of Signatories	POB/All	Q2-Q3 2010	POB to focus on implementing key actions at 30. to 34. of this Work Plan.
38. Assure getting ¾ signatory strategies and documents	POB/All	Q3 - 2010	POB to focus on implementing key actions at 30. to 34. of this Work Plan.
39. Organise first Meeting of Signatories	POB/All	Q1 - 2011	POB to prepare key documents with the team.

40. Prepare awareness material on MoU objectives & activities	POB/All	Ongoing	As soon as possible
41. Organise awareness & capacity building events in Abu Dhabi	POB/All	Q3 – 2010 Q4 - 2011	POB to take the lead and coordinate with EAD & HO
42. Organise workshops with BLI	POB/All	Q2 - 2010 onwards	POB & HO to determine the best timing and resources with BLI
43. Review status of species in cooperation with BLI	POB	Q2 - 2010 onwards	POB to compile literature and link with BLI. POB & HO to link with CMS Secretariat & CMS Scientific Council & range states.
44. Organise workshops with the EU Network	POB/All	Q2 - 2010 onward	Determine the best timing and resources
45. Determine small grant projects with range states	POB/All	Q2 - 2010 onward	POB to communicate with Range States
46. Implement small grant projects with range states	POB/All	Q2 - 2010 onwards	POB to communicate with Range States
47. Coordinate and establish a work programme with CITES/Traffic	POB/All	Q3 - 2010	POB & HO to seize opportunities of meetings and/or information on illegal use of BOP – POB to follow up
48. Promote the agreement membership & support	POB/All	Ongoing	POB to prepare letters to range states representations and selected International/National Organisations & follow up
49. Build up a strategy for fundraising and networking	POB	Q4-2010	HO & POB to take the lead
50. Collaborate with other bird species conservation instruments under CMS auspices for work harmonization, mutual representation and/or implementation	POB/All	Ongoing	Existing and new agreements within Asia and Pacific region, including AEWA
51. Represent CMS when requested in Asia and Pacific region	POB	Ongoing	As Focal point and when requested
→ PROGRAMME OF WORK - DUGONGS			
52. Seek and follow up on formal designation of competent national authorities to serve as focal points within range states	Programme Officer, Dugong (POD)/All	Q3 - 2009	Programme Officer to take the lead, GS & Associate Officer to support by identification & updates o

53. Follow up on key action points of the informal meeting of Signatory States, Bali, August 2008: synergies with IOSEA; awareness; use of Australian voluntary contribution; trans boundary projects	POD/All	Ongoing	POD to prepare a task list for urgent activities
54. Follow up on Conservation priorities identified by the Bali meeting (Annex 4 of the report)	POD/All	Q4 2009 – Q4 2010	POD to sort out priorities with Signatory States & Non Signatory States and seek resources in cooperation with the HO
55. Provide guidance to range states for small grant projects	POD/All	Q3 – 2009 onwards	POD to diffuse and use CMS criteria for projects selection
56. Determine small grant projects with range states	POB/All	Q2 - 2010 onward	POD to communicate with Range States
57. Implement small grant projects with range states	POB/All	Q2 - 2010 onwards	POD to communicate with Range States
58. Prepare and organize the first Meeting of Signatories	POD/All	Q4 - 2009	POD to take the lead and plan for meeting to hold at Q3 - 2010
59. Focus on UAE's Programme/Strategy for dugong conservation (support)	POD/All	October 2009	As soon as possible
60. Build up a Programme for the sub-region with UAE	POD/All	Q2-Q4 - 2010	Dugong conservation Programme for the Indian ocean , Arab and East African region
61. Seek resources for the sub-regional Programme with UAE	POD/All	Q3 - 2010 onwards	POD/HO to take the lead
62. Build up a Programme of Work with IGOs/ NGOs Network and other relevant initiatives eg. CTI	POD/All	Ongoing	POD to link with IGOs/NGOs concerned by dugongs conservation in signatory and non signatory states
63. Organise workshop on dugongs research & monitoring	POD/All	Q2 - 2010 onward	Coordinate dates with Birds of Prey agreement
64. Sort out an online reporting for range states and partners, based on IOSEA experience	POD/HO	Q1 – Q4 2010	POD to liaise with IOSEA Secretariat to seek advice. Coordinate with CMS for UNEP/WCMC Knowledge Management Project
65. Promote the agreement membership & support	POD/All	Ongoing	POD to prepare letters to range states representations and selected International/National Organisations & follow up

66. Build up a strategy for fundraising and networking	POD/All	Q4-2010	HO & POD to take the lead
67. Collaborate with other marine species conservation instruments under CMS auspices for work harmonization and mutual representation	POD/All	Ongoing	Existing and new agreements within Asia and Pacific region
68. Represent CMS when requested in Asia and Pacific region	POD	Ongoing	As Focal point and when requested
➔ MARINE TURTLE			
69. Coordinate with IOSEA Secretariat to support the West Asia subregion, including developing a programme of work with IGOs/ NGOs Network and other relevant initiatives eg. CTI	Programme Officer, Dugong/turtle (PODt)	Ongoing	PODt to liaise with IOSEA Secretariat – Coordination through first mission to Bangkok - DONE
70. Build up a Programme for the sub-region West Asia subregion with UAE	PODt/All	Q2-Q4 - 2010	PODt to liaise with EAD
71. Seek resources for the sub-regional West Asia subregion Programme with UAE	PODt/All	Q3 - 2010 onwards	PODt/HO to take the lead
72. Collaborate with other marine species conservation instruments under CMS auspices for work harmonization and mutual representation	PODt/All	Ongoing	Existing and new agreements within Asia and Pacific region
73. Coordinate with IOSEA Secretariat with regards to meetings scheduled with the 2010 Sea Turtle Symposia	PODt	24-29 April 2010	PODt to liaise with IOSEA Secretariat - Coordination through first mission to Bangkok - DONE
➔ REPRESENTATION AT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS			
74. Seize any opportunity at the extent possible, and resources permitting:	HO/POB/POD	Ongoing	To organize according CMS Dates of Interest needs and availability of resources (requires periodical updates)
75. Programme Officer - Dugongs	POD	10-17 Oct. 2009	18th Biennial Marine Mammals Conference, Quebec, Canada, October 2009

76. Programme Officer - Dugongs	POD	16-20 Nov. 2009	Side Event on Dugongs MoU at 20th SPREP Senior Officials Meeting, Apia, Samoa, 17 November 2009
77. Programme Officer - Dugongs	POD	27-29 April 2010	30th Sea Turtle Symposium, Goa, India, 27-29 April 2010
78. Programme Officer - Birds	POB	17-20 Mar.10	Internat. Conf. on 'Bird Migration and Global Change', Spain
79. Programme Officer - Birds	POB	15-18 Ap. 10	Hawk Migration Association of North America, USA
80. Programme Officer - Birds	POB	22-28Aug. 10	25th International Ornithological Congress, Brazil
81. Programme Officer - Birds	POB	22-26 Sep. 10	Raptor Research Foundation , USA

➤ ACRONYMS:

UNEP = United Nations Environment Programme; UNDP = United Nations Development Programme; CMS = Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals; UNV = United Nations Volunteers (in Bonn); UN OLA = United Nations Office mandated for texts clearance ; MOFA = Ministry of Foreign Affairs, United Arab Emirates; EAD = Environment Agency –Abu Dhabi; DELC = Division of Environment Law and Conventions of UNEP; Q1-Q4 = Quarters; PODt = Programme Officer – Dugongs involved in facilitating Marine Turtle conservation by relevant bodies within the sub-region

C. Other progress in Work Plan's execution

i. Teamwork and preparation for an official opening

22. Staffing the Office has been done steadily, and successively recruitments were accomplished according staff conditions as mentioned in the status tabled above. Team building did not take more than required, despite local specific conditions as regards accommodation and housing in Abu Dhabi where rental market is higher and harder then everywhere worldwide. Experience of the first arriving was useful for successive comers.

23. Coordination with the CMS Secretariat has been also supportive through email exchanges and telephone calls. It allowed for better clarify steps forward and speed up an official office's establishment to be celebrated through an opening event to sign the HCA within a reasonable time-frame in November-December 2009. A promotional brochure is under preparation as well as a logo for the UNEP/CMS Office.

ii. Conservation of migratory birds of prey:

Memrandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia

24. Program Officer, Birds (Peter Pechacek) resumed duty on 17 August 2009. After finalizing security and induction procedures, he began to work on 1) seeking formal designation of Focal Points within the Range States, and 2) maintaining contacts to main partners of the CMS MoU on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey (BirdLife International and European Commission).

25. For the formal designation of Focal Points, a mailing list has been developed and is continuously updated. Letter of Notification to countries that participated at least in one of the constituting meetings of the MoU was sent off in September 2009. Contact details for communication with UNEP/CMS Office Abu Dhabi were provided along with information on Office launch. On the occasion of signing the Donor Agreement to formally establish a UNEP/CMS Office in Abu Dhabi between UNEP and EAD (Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi) in October 2009, further letters went to signatories urging them in accordance with the text of MoU to submit coordinates of their Focal Points and conservation strategies. In addition, Range States that did not yet sign the MoU received a letter in which they were informed on signing the Donor Agreement and encouraged to join the alliance of Signatories based on CMS Article IV (4).

26. For the developing and maintaining contacts to the main MoU partners, information was exchanged with BirdLife International regarding the support of the project 'Mainstreaming Conservation of Migratory Soaring Birds into Key Productive Sectors along the Rift Valley / Red Sea Flyway' by the UNEP/CMS Office Abu Dhabi. The project is highly relevant to develop awareness for conservation of migratory raptors. Development of a working plan was proposed to define mutual benefits and roles of BirdLife International and UNEP/CMS Office Abu Dhabi.

27. To strengthen the partnership with European Community, letters were sent to the Range States that are members to the European Science Foundation (ESF). The UNEP/CMS Office Abu Dhabi encouraged the Focal Points of the Range States to contact relevant members organizations of ESF in their countries to indicate support for the Research Networking Program (RNP) 'Research and Monitoring For and With Raptors in Europe' (EURAPMON). EURAPMON was positively evaluated by the scientific committee of the ESF and funding decision which is up to the respective member organization of ESF is pending. EURAPMON under the coordination of the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (Natural Environment Research Council) would make an important contribution to implementation of the MoU in Europe.

28. Programme Officer further registered and submitted abstract to participate at the 25th International Ornithological Congress (IOC) in Campos do Jordão - SP, Brazil, 22 - 28 August, 2010. Active participation of the UNEP/CMS Office Abu Dhabi at the IOC will substantially increase awareness on efforts to conserve and maintain favorable conservation status of raptors in Africa and Eurasia.

**iii. Dugong conservation and management:
MoU on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their
Habitats in their Range (UNEP/CMS Dugong MoU)**

29. The UNEP/CMS Dugong MOU is serviced by UNEP/CMS Abu Dhabi Office with the support of a full time dedicated programme officer, Dr Donna Kwan who commenced appointment in September 2009.

30. Since September 2009, all Parties, dugong range states, NGOs, researchers and other stakeholders who have been involved with development and finalization of the UNEP/CMS Dugong MOU, have been notified of the establishment of the UNEP/CMS Abu Dhabi Office.

31. Given that organization of an official signatory states meeting is unlikely to occur until the UNEP/CMS Abu Dhabi Office is fully operational, the focus has been on identifying feasible options that facilitate or directly support regional cooperation between range states on conservation and management actions to address key threats to dugongs.

32. An opportunity to maximise the outcomes of a collaborative project between Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Viet Nam which was submitted for funding made available from Australia's voluntary contribution in 2008 is being progressed. This project aims to share and build technical capacity in the 4 range states in using fisher surveys to investigate dugong mortality from bycatch in artisanal fisheries as well as undertaking habitat assessment and monitoring. It is intended that the project be used as a pilot study to develop standardised methodology and protocols for fisher surveys and related work (eg. habitat monitoring) with the involvement of key experts including Professor Helene Marsh (James Cook University) and Dr Ellen Hines (San Francisco State University).

33. Initial advice is being sought from Dr Nick Pilcher (Marine Research Foundation) who is undertaking a global study on bycatch in artisanal fisheries. While the development of a standardised methodology and protocol would focus on dugongs, it would also include the collection of data for other marine wildlife such as marine turtles, manatees, small cetaceans and sharks. The US Marine Mammal Commission (Dr John Reynolds and Dr Tim Ragan) has

expressed an interest in co-funding workshops/projects if the methodology can be applied to manatees and small cetaceans.

34. Individual contact has also been made with a number of range states with regards to potential projects or other initiatives to facilitate engagement by the UNEP/CMS Abu Dhabi Office in local or regional conservation and management efforts for dugongs. Contact with range states has been facilitated by missions by the dugong programme officer to represent the UNEP/CMS Abu Dhabi Project Office at appropriate events such conferences and specific meetings to build networks. For example the dugong programme officer recently attended the associated International Sirenian Symposium on 11 October 2009 and selected sessions of the 18th Biennial Marine Mammal Conference in Quebec City on 12-16 October 2009.

35. In November 2009, the dugong programme officer will present a side meeting at the 20th Senior Officials Meeting being organized by Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The side meeting will provide an opportunity to give an update on the establishment of the UNEP/Abu Dhabi Office and how the Office might support SPREP range states to the Dugong MoU (ie. PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Palau), noting that to date only New Caledonia through France has signed the Dugong MoU. The mission will also enable informal meetings with appropriate SPREP officials such Mr Lui Bell, SPREP marine species officer and his manager, Dr Jeff Kinch to discuss further opportunities to engage with SPREP countries. In transit through Australia for this mission, the dugong programme officer will also meet with Australian Government officials to discuss Australia's regional interests in relation to dugong conservation and management, including opportunities for co-funding through the Australian Marine Mammal Centre.

36. The UNEP/CMS Abu Dhabi Office has also provided letters of support to a funding proposal by the NGO C3 submitted to the US Marine Mammal Commission to progress development of a network to share information, resources and capacity for dugong conservation and management in East Africa.

37. The UNEP/CMS Abu Dhabi Office will continue to work with the EAD to identify opportunities for regional collaboration to implement the Conservation and Management Plan for Dugong in Western Indian Ocean Sub-Region.