



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

CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Doc.11.1
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4th Meeting of the Signatories (Sharks MOS4)
Bonn, 28 February – 2 March 2023
Agenda Item 11

**IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW
OF THE CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAMME**

1. This document includes in part 1 an overview of activities undertaken during the triennium to implement the Capacity-building Programme (CBP) of the MOU undertaken by the Signatories, Cooperating Partners, the Advisory Committee, and the Secretariat.
2. Part 2 reviews whether revisions to the CBP are required based on needs reported by Signatories in the National Reports under question 21.

Introduction

3. The CBP of the Sharks MOU was adopted at MOS3 ([CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Outcome 3.6](#)) and

“aims at guiding the Sharks MOU Signatories, the Advisory Committee, Secretariat, and Cooperating Partners to improve overall capacity that is required to implement the Sharks MOU Conservation Plan.”

The Programme includes key activities of the highest priority, which are intended to address the main capacity-building needs of Signatories. The Programme should be updated regularly at each MOS and should be based on capacity-building needs expressed by Signatories.

The implementation of the Programme should be funded through voluntary contributions and in-kind contributions of Signatories and other donor countries or organizations.

Wherever possible, CMS is requested to support such activities in the context of CMS-related outreach and capacity-building activities.

As appropriate and feasible, capacity building should be undertaken in cooperation with other relevant organizations, in particular, but not limited to CITES, FAO, RFMOs, and RSC and AP, as well as the non-profit and private sector.”

4. The implementation of the CBP was mandated also under activity 10 of the Programme of Work 2019-2021 ([CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Outcome 3.9](#)).

Part 1: Implementation of capacity-building activities

5. In contribution to the Capacity-building Programme ([CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Outcome 3.6](#)) and the Programme of Work (POW) 2019-2021 ([CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Outcome 3.9](#)), the Secretariat has raised funds to implement several important initiatives which are introduced below and as further described in [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Doc.11.1](#). These activities were kindly funded by the government of Germany and the Principality of Monaco. The Advisory Committee (AC) guided the Secretariat and was involved actively in the implementation of these activities.
6. Many activities were focused on supporting capacity-building in West Africa which had been identified as a priority region at MOS3.

Onboard Guide for the identification of sharks and rays in West Africa'

7. A comprehensive identification guide has been devised, featuring a selection of 26 species of sharks and rays listed under three international instruments:
 - a) the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks,
 - b) the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and
 - c) the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).
8. The species included in the guide have been confirmed to occur in the waters of at least one of the seven countries comprising the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC), namely Cabo Verde, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia. The guide has been produced in three languages, and a total of 650 copies have been printed, with 250 copies each in English and French and 150 in Portuguese.
9. These guides have been distributed to observers operating across seven countries and were used in observer training workshops that were organized in collaboration with BirdLife International Africa in the context of the project "Minimizing Bycatch in Seabirds and Sea Turtles in West African Industrial Fisheries". The onboard guide is provided in three languages as [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Inf.4](#).
10. This activity was mandated by activities 1 a), b), and e) in the CBP which requested relevant entities to "*develop or update/translate and disseminate identification guides*" and to "*develop CMS/CITES ID guide in multiple languages*" and to "*facilitates the exchange of knowledge and expertise between Signatories within and across regions*" respectively.

Observer training in shark and ray conservation in West Africa

11. A comprehensive curriculum and learning materials were developed to facilitate training sessions for fisheries observers in West Africa aimed at enhancing the ability to accurately identify species of sharks and rays covered under international instruments. The above-mentioned '*Onboard Guide for the identification of sharks and rays in West Africa*' was used to provide hands-on support during these workshops.
12. One-day training sessions for industrial fisheries observers were undertaken in Dakar, Senegal (18 March 2022), Banjul, The Gambia (20 March 2022), and Cabo Verde (24 August 2022) providing training to approximately 100 new fisheries observers. A report from the Workshops in Senegal and The Gambia is provided as [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Inf.10](#).

13. This activity was mandated by activities 1 c) and d) in the CBP which requested to “*identify existing or develop training materials, including for Training of Trainers (TOT), on species identification, documentation of (standardized) protocols, data collection and reporting, and safe handling and release techniques*” and to “*provide training or inform Signatories about appropriate training workshops occurring in the region*”.

Factsheets on threats to sharks and rays

14. Five fact sheets on the threats and human impacts on sharks and rays (CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Inf.7) have been prepared in collaboration with the IUCN SSC SSG, with funding provided by the government of Germany and the Principality of Monaco and with technical support from the AC. These factsheets, authored by Simon J Pierce and Ryan Charles, address (1) overfishing, (2) habitat degradation and loss (3) climate change, (3) pollution, and (4) tourism are provided in three languages as [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Inf.7](#).
15. This activity was mandated by activity 6 a) of the CBP requesting to “*develop awareness-raising materials or identify existing ones, that can be tailored to the needs of the different regions and countries*”. Additional funds would be required for preparing printed versions. These factsheets have been made available in the [Info Hub](#) of the Sharks MOU website and will be featured in the quarterly [Sharks News](#), issued by the IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group. The first factsheet on “*The Impacts of Overfishing on Sharks and Rays*” was already included in the latest edition of [Sharks News, published on 7 January 2023](#).

Species posters

16. Two posters have been developed and designed to showcase CMS Appendix I, II, Sharks MOU, and CITES-listed species and the critically endangered group of Rhino Rays in English, French, and Spanish and are provided as [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Inf.8](#) and [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Inf.9](#).
17. The Government of Germany kindly provided 100 printed copies of the English and French versions. These were distributed amongst participants concerned with the conservation and management of sharks and rays at the 10th Regional Coastal and Marine (PRCM) Forum which took place in Saly, Senegal March 29 to April 1, 2022. The Forum gathered experts and high-level representatives across national and regional institutions, technical specialists, financing partners, and actors from civil society in West Africa. This activity was also mandated by activity 6 a) in the CBP.

Sharks MOU INFO Hub

18. The Secretariat has worked closely with the IMCA Unit¹ to update and maintain the Sharks MOU website as part of the overall CMS Family website (www.cms.int/sharks). The social media accounts of CMS have been regularly used to promote the MOU and other relevant articles and news regarding shark conservation.
19. The Secretariat has established a new page on its website, this “[Info Hub](#)” which contains information that is relevant to the conservation and management of sharks and rays and which aims to support Signatories and relevant stakeholders with the implementation of the MOU and its objectives.

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

20. The establishment of this new information section implements activity 8 of the Programme of Work 2019-2021, which requests the Advisory Committee, Secretariat, and Signatories to:

„Set up a repository for relevant information to assist managers, including species identification, bycatch mitigation and safe handling, discard survival, and other relevant fisheries management information. Encourage Signatories to provide such information to the Secretariat. “

21. Please note that the tool is still a work in progress and that it is foreseen to continuously update the portal, adding new documents and materials as they become available. We, therefore, encourage you to send us documents and materials that you wish to share with the wider MOU community through our website. We also appreciate your feedback and suggestions on how to improve the portal in the future.

Part 2: Review of the Capacity-building Programme

22. For a review of the CBP, the Secretariat referred to information provided by Signatories in response to question 21 in the National Reporting Format. Out of 21 Signatories that submitted reports, 18 have expressed that they have capacity needs while only four respondents specified that they do not currently have any capacity needs. Such needs were largely in the areas of “Technical Capacity” and “Funding”. For further details please refer to [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Doc.8.1](#).
23. Upon comparison of the reported needs by Signatories, the Secretariat concluded that those were already largely covered by the existing CBP and suggest that no revision shall be made to the latter at this point, particularly in light of the limited resources of the MOU.

Action requested:

24. The Meeting is requested to:

Take note of the report and review and provide guidance.