



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

CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Inf.22
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Agenda Item XX

Cooperation between CITES and FAO – Experiences and Recommendations

(Prepared by the Secretariats of CITES and FAO)

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is a legally binding international agreement that aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. Appendix I includes species that are threatened with extinction and prohibits trade of wild-sourced specimens for primarily commercial trade, while Appendix II includes species that are not necessarily threatened with extinction, but that may become so unless trade is regulated, as well as look-alike species. Appendix II allows for strictly regulated international trade through the issuance of permits to ensure that any such trade is legal, sustainable and reported.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the oldest permanent specialized agency of the United Nations has as its objective the elimination of hunger and improving nutrition and standards of living through making fisheries more productive and sustainable. To strengthen global governance and the managerial and technical capacities of FAO's 194 Member states, the Fishery and Aquaculture Department leads consensus-building towards the definition of standards and normative process that improve sustainable utilization and conservation of aquatic resources within an ecosystem approach.

Most commercially exploited marine fish listed under CITES, in particular sharks, are found on Appendix II, which places CITES at the interface between sustainable use and international trade for fisheries, focusing on species that have declined to a level that requires strong trade and management measures to maintain or rebuilt stocks, complementing the work of other organizations to improve fisheries management, such as that of the FAO.

The increasingly frequent technical cooperation between FAO and CITES (see e.g. https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/prog/shark/docs/Sharks_E_fsht05_FAO.pdf), which includes but is not limited to the implementation of two multi-year capacity building projects generously financed by the European Union (2013-2016: 1.3 Mio USD, 2017-2020: 0.9 Mio USD), involve many activities that could directly or indirectly contribute to the programme of work of the CMS Sharks MoU (PoW).

FAO and CITES therefore see opportunities to work collaboratively with the CMS Sharks MoU and strengthen coherence across our work (underway - or in planning), pursuant to Activities 11, 15 and 16 of the PoW.

Drawing from the experiences made in the cooperation between FAO and CITES and the main themes reflected in the CITES Animals Committee's recommendations on priorities for future work, important areas where synergies exist may include the following:

1. Assessing and managing populations under low data situations (see Activities 7 and 9 of the PoW)
2. Bycatch mitigation (see Activities 6 , 8, 13 of the PoW);
3. Species identification (Activities 9, 11 of the PoW) and lastly,
4. Closer cooperation with regional fisheries bodies and management organizations (Activities 14, 15, 16 of the PoW)

For examples of recent collaboration between CITES, FAO and RFMO/RFBs, see e.g.:

https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/prog/shark/docs/Sharks_E_fsht07_ICCAT.pdf

https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/prog/shark/docs/Sharks_E_fsht09_IOTC.pdf

https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/prog/shark/docs/Sharks_E_fsht08_SEAFDEC.pdf

Recommendations to facilitate cooperation between CITES, FAO and the Sharks MoU

1. With regards to cooperation in the short-term Signatories to the MoU may wish to consider whether joint activities in the areas outlined above would be desirable, could contribute to the implementation of the Programme of Work of the Sharks MoU and, if so, which type of activities would have the highest priority.
2. With regards to more long-term cooperation and further advancing coherence between the respective work plans, the CITES and FAO Secretariats note that in CMS/Sharks/MOS3/Doc.14.1, the Meeting is requested to “make suggestions for further changes in the TOR of the Advisory Committee as appropriate” and invite Signatories of the MoU to consider if this could include an allocation of a seat for CITES and/or FAO to participate in an official capacity in this Committee. This step may offer the opportunity to further improve coordination across fisheries and conservation initiatives analogous or highly relevant to those of the MoU workplan. Such a step would also go some way to implementing Activity 15 of the PoW.