# Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia

## Criteria for the Evaluation of Nominations to the Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles in the Indian Ocean – South-East Asia Region

*(Version: March 2024)*

## INTRODUCTION

The Signatory States to the *Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia* (IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU) have resolved at the 6th Meeting of the Signatory States in Bangkok, Thailand, 23 to 27 January 2012, to establish a *Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles in the Indian Ocean – South-East Asia Region.* The overarching goal of the IOSEA Marine Turtle Site Network is to promote the long-term conservation of sites of regional and global importance to marine turtles and their habitats. The network will serve as a mechanism for sites to operate more cooperatively and synergistically, ecologically and administratively, rather than working in isolation with minimal coordination. Using a set of criteria to evaluate sites nominated for inclusion in the network aims to highlight the most critical sites needed to secure the future of marine turtle species/management units.

Detailed information on the rationale for the site network proposal, the processes for nominating and evaluating candidate sites, and alternative approaches for coordinated governance of sites included in the network is presented in the annex to the resolution formally establishing the Site Network[1]. The Site Network will be populated with sites, each of which will have been nominated by a respective Signatory State and officially accepted for inclusion in the network by the Meeting of Signatory States based on a recommendation of the IOSEA Advisory Committee. Assistance can be offered to the Signatory States to facilitate the preparation of nominations.

The present document presents the criteria that the Advisory Committee will use to (i) evaluate Signatory State nominations of new sites and (ii), if needed, assess the rationale for the continued inclusion of existing sites. While proponents need not be preoccupied with the details of the scoring mechanism, they should be familiar with the rationale and guidance underpinning each evaluation criterion when considering whether to nominate a given site. Throughout the document, cross-references are made to the template for the IOSEA Site Network Information Sheets, one of which will be completed for each site nominated for inclusion in the network. These cross-references, shown in square brackets [**SIS #**], are meant to guide evaluators to where they might expect to find relevant information in the Site Information Sheet submitted with the nomination proposal (Similarly, the template for the Site Information Sheet has cross-references to the Evaluation Criteria, to help proponents assess whether they have provided sufficient information for evaluation purposes).

There are 18 evaluation criteria, divided into four categories: Ecological and Biological, Governance, Socio-economic and Political, and Network-wide Ecological. The maximum value assigned to each criterion determines its relative importance in the overall rating. Points are awarded against/for each criterion up to its maximum value.

Guidance is provided to assist evaluators and proponents in their respective tasks. While the assessments should strive to be based on evidence, for several criteria, they will inevitably be based on expert opinions. In cases where quantitative data or even expert opinion are not available, evaluators should try to reach a consensus based on information available on a score that best reflects

the actual situation. Where uncertainty or lack of data is an essential issue for a particular site, evaluators might recommend prioritising future funding/research to fill the data gap.

For a site to be recommended for inclusion in the network, it must obtain a minimum score against *each* of the four categories and a minimum *total score*. For example, a site must obtain a minimum score of 5 from the five criteria that comprise the Governance Criteria category. The site must also achieve a minimum total score of 43 over all categories combined.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR THE IOSEA MARINE TURTLE SITE NETWORK

### I. ECOLOGICAL AND BIOLOGICAL CRITERIA (Minimum Total Category Value: 6)

### EB1a. Turtle abundance (nesting within the site boundary) [SIS 9]

Definition: The number of marine turtles nesting within the site. Rationale: At marine turtle nesting sites, the larger the number of adult females, the larger the number of clutches or hatchlings expected to contribute to the maintenance/growth of the population. Thus, a site that supports a large number of nesting marine turtles is critical for sustaining local and regional turtle populations.

A site that provides a significant nesting area for individuals has higher chances of being genetically diverse and increasing the chances of a population adapting to changing environmental conditions in an ultimately dynamic, unpredictable world [[see EB3]]

A site that provides significant nesting area for individuals will provide individuals with the potential to use an area that may take on greater importance given ongoing increases in sand temperatures, sea surface temperatures, and other environmental trends resulting from global warming.

Maximum Possible Value: **3**

| Score | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 | The site comprises less than one-third of the estimated annual nesting abundance for one marine turtle management unit[2] (or for a sub-region if MU is unknown). |
| 2 | The site comprises one to two-thirds of the estimated annual nesting abundance for one or more marine turtle management units (or for sub-region if MU is unknown). |
| 3 | The site encompasses more than two-thirds of the estimated annual nesting abundance for one or more marine turtle management units (or for sub-regions if MU is not known). |

Guidance: If quantitative data are lacking in the site nomination, local or other expert opinion may be called upon to indicate abundance. [3]

### EB1b. Turtle abundance (at foraging sites) [SIS 9]

Definition: The relative number of marine turtle species foraging within a site

Rationale: At marine turtle foraging sites, the larger the relative number of individuals (as evidenced by any of the following categories), the more important that foraging site is likely to be for sustaining one or more turtle species.

Maximum Possible Value: **3**

| | Score | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **None or sporadic foraging** | 1 | Foraging turtles are not, or only occasionally, recorded in the area |
| **Moderately important foraging** | 2 | Foraging turtles regularly but intermittently observed from boats or by divers and/or<br>Known records of flipper tag returns or satellite tracking endpoints (especially long distances>200 km or from international rookeries) and/or<br>Records of stranded turtles and/or<br>Records of by-catch reported and /or |
| **Very important foraging site** | 3 | There is a high abundance of foraging turtles, turtles easily observed daily from boats or by divers and/or<br>Frequent records of long-distance flipper tag returns or satellite tracking endpoints (especially long distances>200 km or from international rookeries) and/or<br>Frequent records of stranded turtles and/or<br>Frequent records of by-catch reported |

**EB2. Species or (if known) management unit richness [SIS 9]**

Definition: The number of species or marine turtle management units (if known) regularly using a site's nesting or foraging habitat. Rationale: The greater the number of marine turtle species or management units supported by a site, the higher the site's contribution to regional marine turtle conservation.

Maximum Possible Value: **3**

| Score | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 | The site regularly supports 1 species |
| 2 | The site regularly supports 2-3 species |
| 3 | The site regularly supports > 3 species |

Guidance: This criterion considers only the *number* of species supported by a given site; it does not consider the *species' rarity*, which is addressed by criterion EB3.

**EB3. Resistance [SIS 8, 9, 14-17]**

Definition: A site containing habitat(s) of importance to marine turtles that is likely to be relatively resistant to disturbance.

Rationale: This criterion considers explicitly predicted ecosystem vulnerability and responses to (primarily) anthropogenic disturbance, with an underlying premise that protecting areas that can resist and/or recover quickly from disturbance is important.

Maximum Possible Value: **3**

| Score | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 | Relatively disturbed site, with low/minor relative degree of resistance |
| 2 | Site with a relatively modest degree of disturbance and thus modest resistance |
| 3 | Undisturbed site, thus considered to possess a high degree of resistance |

Guidance: A site with few or no threats to marine turtles and their habitats would be characterised as relatively undisturbed and hence of relatively high resistance to disturbance; such a site might be assigned a value of 3. Examples might include sites with a relatively low degree of existing human development and where threats from habitat degradation, including coastal erosion and natural threats, are considered low.[4]

## II. GOVERNANCE CRITERIA (Minimum Category Value: 5)

### G1. Management framework [SIS 11, 12-19]

Definition: A management framework provides adequate protection of the site and the life stage(s) of the marine turtle population(s) found at the site.

Rationale: While management frameworks vary for protected areas depending on the local context – from traditional management to central government-led management, or combinations thereof – the existence of management frameworks for protecting the site and its marine turtles is critical in most cases.

Maximum Possible Value: **3**

| Score | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 | Documentation provided by the proponent suggests very limited protection of the site and/or its turtle population(s). |
| 2 | Moderate, but not completely sufficient, degree of protection. |
| 3 | Documentation provided by the proponent describes comprehensive and fully adequate protection appropriate to the site context OR articulates how network designation could be an essential driver for an appropriate management framework to be put in place. |

Guidance: Site descriptions are expected to include sufficient detail of the legislation and regulations or traditional laws and norms that permit an assessment of their efficacy in addressing known pressures/predictable threats. A low score would be assigned to a site where incompatible human

activities and/or uses of land or sea are not controlled through management or where such activities/uses are allowed to occur without regulations. Where a convincing rationale is given that either private and/or public tenure or customary or traditional approaches do not require additional legislation/function efficiently without formal legislation and that land/sea management is demonstrated to be providing fully adequate protection, then the full score may be awarded for the site[5].

**G2. Conservation actions [SIS 16, 17, 18, 19, 21]**

Definition: Conservation interventions have been undertaken to mitigate known and potential threats to marine turtles identified at the site.

Rationale: Implementing effective management actions to address threats facing marine turtles at a site indicates a high degree of socio-political will and support for marine turtle conservation and protection. A management authority that can demonstrate the implementation of activities designed to mitigate important threats to marine turtles indicates that the site can potentially retain high regional conservation value to marine turtles for the long term. Effective exclusion/management of activities incompatible with the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats ensures the long-term protection of the site's value to marine turtles.

Maximum Possible Value: 3

| Score | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 | There is a relatively low/minor degree of existing conservation effort. |
| 2 | A modest but not completely sufficient degree of existing conservation effort OR the proposal articulates how network designation could be an important driver for an appropriate conservation action(s) to be put in place. |
| 3 | The documentation provided by the proponent describes a very high degree of existing conservation effort (or if the site requires no or only nominal conservation intervention due to the total absence of any threats). |

Guidance: A site benefitting from a wide array of described interventions and a few current threats to marine turtles and their habitats might be assigned a value of 3 when assessed against this criterion. Exceptionally, a site lacking non-human or human threats to marine turtles and their habitats may be assigned a high value, even without intensive management intervention, if the demonstrated conservation action includes regular monitoring of the site in question.

**G3. Research and monitoring [SIS 9, 19, 20]**

Definition: Extent to which: (i) the site is currently used to conduct research and monitoring of marine turtle abundance and or other critical parameters (such as at index nesting beaches and other reproductive areas, foraging grounds, refuge and migratory areas); and/or (ii) the site has marine turtle surveys with standardised data; and/or (iii) survey data are used to estimate trends in the species (or management unit if known).

Rationale: Information obtained through research and monitoring informs adaptive management processes/initiatives. Research and monitoring activities also present a mechanism to promote stakeholder involvement. An index site and/or sites with a long time-series of monitoring data are critically important for understanding the trends in marine turtles at various scales. They provide essential data to enable modelling to determine robust estimates of population trends, changes in age and sex structures, sources of mortality, etc. A sufficiently long time-series of monitoring data (>15 years), as well as a long-term understanding of management activities, is critical to distinguish long-term trends from cyclical, random, or other shorter-term, serially correlated patterns in ecosystem changes and changes in characteristics of populations of long-lived, slow-maturing species. For these species, anthropogenic and other mortality effects will likely be detectable only over decades or longer. Furthermore, for marine turtles, mortality of juveniles and sub-adults may be undetected when monitoring only focuses on nesting females. Therefore, long-term monitoring using standardised procedures across marine turtle habitats and diverse life stages is critical.

Maximum Possible Value: **3**

| Score | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 | The site is characterised by one of the following: (i) Contains an index beach or index foraging area (ii) Survey data based on standardised procedures spans > 15 years; (iii) the survey data have been used to estimate trends in the abundance of the species at the site or for the management unit (if known). |
| 2 | The site is characterised by two of the following: (i) Contains an index beach or index foraging area, (ii) Survey data spans > 15 years; (iii) the survey data have been used to estimate trends in the abundance of the species at the site or for the management unit (if known). |
| 3 | The site is characterised by all three of the following: (i Contains an index beach or index foraging area (ii) Survey data spans > 15 years; (iii) the survey data have been used to estimate trends in the size of the abundance of the species at the site or for the management unit (if known).Guidance: Site descriptions must give evidence (for example, by citing published literature) that one or more of these conditions have been met. |

**III. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CRITERIA (Minimum Category Value: 8)**

**S1. Social-Cultural importance [SIS 10]**

Definition: The site contains prehistoric, historical, and/or contemporary resources or embodies non-consumptive traditional beliefs/practices of cultural, religious and/or spiritual/social significance in relation to marine turtles and their habitats.

Rationale: A culturally important site justifies its protection in addition to biological and ecological arguments; these added social and cultural values may help leverage additional or continued resources for long-term site protection.

Maximum Possible Value: **3**

| Score | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 | The site is described as having low/minor social/cultural importance. |
| 2 | The site is recognised as having national social/cultural importance. |
| 3 | The site is recognised as having regional social/cultural importance. |

Guidance: Site descriptions must document the site's social and/or cultural importance, preferably with reference to published or unpublished historical or other accounts that may, for example, highlight social or cultural importance in a national context.

**S2. Compatible activities [SIS 16,17]**

Definition: Activities occurring within or adjacent to the site, including upstream issues (such as ghost nets drifting in), are often incompatible with the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats.

Rationale: Allowing and encouraging local communities associated with protected sites to engage in socio-economic and cultural activities that are consistent with ecological objectives (i.e. do not degrade the integrity of marine turtle habitat and do not entail unsustainable use of marine turtles) should complement effective governance through community support for restrictions on incompatible activities. Conversely, many incompatible socio-economic activities occurring at or adjacent to the site or affecting the site from upstream sources may degrade its value for marine turtle conservation.

Maximum Possible Value: **3**

| Score | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 | Frequent incompatible socio-economic activities occur at, or adjacent to, the site. |
| 2 | Some incompatible socio-economic activities are occurring at, or adjacent to, the site OR incompatible activities suspected to affect turtles upstream (i.e. at distant foraging areas). |
| 3 | Few, if any, incompatible socio-economic activities are known to occur at or adjacent to the site. |

Guidance: Site descriptions must document the activities occurring within and adjacent to the site and indicate in sufficient detail whether any of these are incompatible with the conservation of marine turtles to allow for a subjective rating. Refer to the instructions given with the Site Information Sheet template (especially point 16) for examples of potentially incompatible activities. Sites that demonstrate a higher probability of making a significant contribution to the network (e.g., by having to contend with fewer incompatible activities) are rated more highly [6].

**S3. History of recognition [SIS 12, 13, 14]**

Definition: Length of existing protected status or other national, regional, or international recognition for the site's value to marine turtles.

Rationale: A history of recognition of the importance of the site to marine turtles may indicate awareness and political support for the site's protection.

Maximum Possible Value: **3**

| Score | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 | The site has never been afforded any protection status |
| 2 | The site has been afforded protected status for ≤ 10 years. |
| 3 | The site has been afforded protected status for > 10 years. |

Guidance: Note that this criterion looks only at existing 'recognition' of the site in quantitative terms, as distinct from the efficacy of the legal framework for protection and actual management interventions, which are to be assessed through the Governance Criteria.

**S4. National significance [SIS 8, 9, 10, 20]**

Definition: Significance of the site in a national context relative to other sites.

Rationale: The site's uniqueness (for example, if this is the only area of high abundance or nesting of marine turtles in the country or the country's only transboundary site) may provide additional justification/motivation for social and political support for the site's protection. A site identified to be of national importance, by virtue of its uniqueness, might assist in leveraging resources for long-term protection.

Maximum Possible Value: 3

| Score | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 | The site is described as having physical/ecological characteristics and national importance shared by some other sites in the country |
| 2 | The site is described as having exceptional national importance by virtue of its unique physical/ecological characteristics and has been afforded some protection status (see S4). |
| 3 | The site is described as having exceptional national importance by virtue of its unique physical/ecological characteristics and has not been afforded any protection status (see S4). |

Guidance: A site containing the only marine turtle nesting habitat in a country might be assigned a maximum value of 3 when assessed against this criterion. Where many sites exist in a given country, making it difficult to differentiate among them (without information from the proponent), other indicators of relative importance might include existing local or national protected status designation.

**S5. Perceived ancillary benefits as a consequence of the site's inclusion in the network [SIS 8, 9, 19, 21]**

Definition: Perception of ancillary conservation benefit (e.g. for other species or habitats that would be achieved through the site's inclusion in the network.

Rationale: Species conservation should not and cannot occur in isolation. Value is placed on adding sites to the network that, because of their designation, would likely secure substantial, ancillary conservation benefits, irrespective of other considerations. Potential conservation benefits might be described in terms of protecting other species at the site.

Maximum Possible Value: **3**

| Score | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 | Limited potential for ancillary conservation benefit is expected from including the site in the network by virtue of the low or unknown presence of other threatened species/habitats. |
| 2 | Modest potential for ancillary conservation benefit is expected from including the site in the network (e.g. by virtue of empirical or expert data indicating the site's biodiversity value or presence of other threatened species/habitats). |
| 3 | High potential for ancillary conservation benefit is expected to be achieved by including the site in the network (e.g. by virtue of other biodiversity value and expected conservation value for different threatened species/habitats.) |

Guidance: The potential for ancillary conservation benefits for biodiversity might be assessed from empirical or expert data indicating the site's high biodiversity value or the presence of other species of conservation concern that would directly benefit (e.g., sea bird colonies, dugongs, cetaceans, seagrass pastures, coral reefs, fragile coastal dune systems) or other statements made by the proponent regarding existing socio-economic initiatives. These could be species listed by international (i.e. IUCN Red List) or on National databases of threatened species.

## IV. NETWORK-WIDE ECOLOGICAL CRITERIA (Minimum Total Category Value: 5)

### N1. Representativeness and replication [SIS 8, 9]

Definition: Inclusion of the site contributes to the network's (i) adequate representation of the full range of habitat diversity required for the maintenance of marine turtle management units and species of the IOSEA region (*representativeness*) and/or (ii) inclusion of multiple sites containing identical habitat types (*replication*).

Rationale: Representativeness and replication are required components of an effective site network. Including examples of each habitat used by marine turtles across their life history stages – including nesting, foraging, reproductive and migratory habitat, and examples of each community type within these habitats – achieves a network of representative marine turtle habitat sites. Replicating these critical habitat types in the network reduces the risk of regional losses of a single habitat type by spreading the risk and increasing the chance for a marine turtle habitat type to survive disturbances[7].

Maximum Possible Value: **3**

| Score | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 | Low/minor contribution to representativeness/replication: the habitat types included in the site are already well represented in the network. |
| 2 | Modest contribution to representativeness/replication: the habitat types found at the site are moderately covered within the network. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 3 | Very significant/unique contribution to representativeness/replication: the habitat types found at the site are not yet well represented in the network. |

Guidance: Evaluators must bear in mind other sites already in the network when making this assessment. In the initial phase of network development with few sites, assessment against this criterion will likely result in a score of 3. For example, a site containing marine turtle nesting, foraging and development habitat, which at the initiation of the network would contribute to the representation (and eventual replication) of the full range of marine turtle habitats, would be assigned a score of 3.

**N2. Ecological connectivity [SIS 5, 9, 20]**

Definition: Including the site protects connectivity among marine turtle habitat areas. Inclusion of this site – considering geographic location and ecological characteristics in relation to other sites in the network and based on information from ecological, migration and genetic studies – contributes to ecological connectivity between sites.

Rationale: Providing, protecting, and promoting connectivity among habitat types required for the life history stages of marine turtles is critical for maintaining turtle management units. A network of managed sites can be designed to protect connectivity between marine turtle habitats, where conservation activities at individual sites benefit from one another. The *shape* (to consider edge effects, where margins of protected areas may be heavily exploited) and *spacing* of the individual sites in the network determine the ecological connectivity of the network as a whole.

Maximum Possible Value: **3**

| Score | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 | Low/minor contribution to connectivity. |
| 2 | A modest contribution to connectivity. |
| 3 | A very significant contribution to connectivity |

Guidance: Connectivity between individual sites might include, for example, inter-nesting habitat adjacent to a nesting beach or serial nesting beaches known to be used by individuals of a single management unit. Sites known to be close to other important marine turtle habitats would be assigned a high value. For example, a site adjacent to other marine turtle foraging areas might be assigned a value of n or n when assessed against this criterion[10].

**N3. Area [SIS 7]**

Definition: The area of a site contributes to protecting the habitat needed to sustain turtle management units.

Rationale: Protection of sufficient habitat area is a required component of an effective site network. The area of relatively undisturbed habitat may be critical to the ability of turtles to nest, forage, reproduce or migrate. However, assessing the spatial extent of important foraging areas is currently challenging, so this criterion refers only to nesting beach habitats.

Maximum Possible Value: **3**

| Score | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 | The site comprises less than one-third of the estimated nesting habitat area for a marine turtle management unit, or MU is not known, for the species in the sub-region. |
| 2 | The site comprises one to two-thirds of the estimated nesting habitat area for a marine turtle management unit, or MU is not known, for the species in the sub-region OR less than one-third of the estimated nesting habitat area for more than one species. |
| 3 | The site encompasses more than two-thirds of the estimated nesting area for a marine turtle management unit, or MU is not known, for the species in the sub-region. |

Guidance: The proportion of essential habitat refers to a marine turtle management unit's required habitat for each life history stage. For instance, a site that comprises about a third of the area of a management unit's total known nesting habitat would warrant the assignment of n points.

**Endnotes**

1. Resolution to Establish the IOSEA Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles in the Indian Ocean – South-East Asia Region (Bangkok, 2012). Available at: https://www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/meeting/MOS6
Some of the various people involved in establishing the IOSEA Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles have suggested that there is a need to elevate the site network to an ecological network, in the true sense, by incorporating provisions that go beyond the protection of nesting, foraging and reproductive habitat (i.e. to embrace new ways to promote the management of critically important corridors and other marine areas, especially those beyond national jurisdictions, by establishing international marine sanctuaries/reserves or incorporating existing ones that are important for turtles, into the network). While it is beyond the scope of this document to contemplate such additional measures, it is clear that further consideration should be given to addressing threats to marine turtles beyond national jurisdictions.

2. Management units can be based on molecular studies as per Moritz et al. 2002 and Dethmers et al. 2006, etc., such that they are genetically distinct and the term is used synonymously with genetic populations; they can be based on tagging/migration data in combination with molecular data e.g. DPS (Connant et al. 2009); or in the absence of detailed quantitative data they could be considered in context of RMUs (Wallace et al. 2010).

3. Alternatively, for future consideration, it has been suggested to use some estimator of the population percentage rather than a fixed absolute number, as this fixed number will change over time as the population increases or decreases and as population estimates vary from different techniques and improved information. A percentage value could be less subject to gross variation, reducing the need to revise these scores continually. However, the present difficulty in obtaining estimates of population (and management unit) size makes this approach unrealistic to implement.

4. It is recognised that outcomes of climate change – including relative sea-level rise, rising air and sea surface temperatures, and possibly the spread of invasive alien species (alterations to species' distributions) – are also predicted to affect marine turtles and their habitats. However, making credible predictions about these threats will be a major challenge, possibly requiring the development of vulnerability risk models. Given the inherent difficulties in evaluating this criterion objectively, it has been proposed that this criterion focus mainly on anthropogenic pressures that can realistically be

evaluated (and possibly mitigated) by the agency/agencies concerned and that consideration be given in future to designing an alternative scale that is less subjective.

5. Ideally, site management would also include an effective mechanism for contingency planning to deal with new and unpredicted threats; however, this is unlikely to be realised in the present situation of most Signatory States.

6. It could be argued that sites with many incompatible activities could benefit as much or more from inclusion in the network, however, it should be remembered that this is only one of nearly 20 criteria that will be assessed to determine a site's suitability for inclusion in the network. If there are other compelling grounds for selecting a given site, this should be manifest in the overall assessment of the site.

7. This criterion implies that there will be a clear advantage for sites that are nominated in the initial stage of the network (i.e. a site may receive a relatively high score because it is evaluated when the network has very few sites). Once a network is "mature" and more "populated, " higher scores of the early nominated sites could have much less value than later-nominated sites. Although it is only one criterion, this bias favouring sites with early nomination needs to be kept in mind. The maximum possible score for this criterion has been set at a low value to avoid having this bias cause too much distortion in the early formation of the network.

Note also that there is an inherent possibility of conflict between representativeness and replication – a site might contribute to representativeness by adding a previously unrepresented habitat type, but in this case, it would have no replication value. Conversely, a site might contribute to replication value by replicating the habitat type in existing sites but add nothing new for representativeness.

## Annex: EVALUATOR RATING SHEET

| | |
|---|---|
| **Signatory State:** | |
| **Site name:** | |
| **Date evaluation concluded:** | |
| **Evaluator:** | |

**** * PLEASE REFER TO THE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE * ****

| **CRITERIA** | **SCORE RANGE** | **SCORE** | **SUB-TOTAL** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **I. Ecological and Biological Criteria** | | | |
| EB1a. Turtle abundance (at nesting sites)* | 1 to 3 | | |
| EB1b. Turtle abundance (foraging sites)* | 1 to 3 | | |
| EB2. Species and/or management unit richness | 1 to 3 | | |
| EB3. Resistance | 1 to 3 | | |
| *Sub-Total* [ *cf. Minimum category value = 6* ] | | | |
| | | | |
| **II. Governance Criteria** | | | |
| G1. Management framework | 1 to 3 | | |
| G2. Conservation actions | 1 to 3 | | |
| G3. Research and monitoring | 1 to 3 | | |
| *Sub-Total* [ *cf Minimum category value = 5* ] | | | |
| | | | |
| **III. Socio-economic and Political Criteria** | | | |
| S1. Social-Cultural importance | 1 to 3 | | |
| S2. Compatible activities | 1 to 3 | | |
| S3. History of recognition | 1 to 3 | | |
| S4. National significance | 1 to 3 | | |
| S5. Perceived ancillary benefits because of the site's inclusion in the network | 1 to 3 | | |
| *Sub-Total* [ *cf. Minimum category value = 8* ] | | | |
| | | | |
| **IV. Network-wide Ecological Criteria** | | | |
| N1. Representativeness and replication | 1 to 3 | | |
| N2. Ecological connectivity | 1 to 3 | | |
| N3. Area | 1 to 3 | | |
| *Sub-Total* [ *cf. Minimum category value = 5*] | | | |
| | | | |
| **GRAND TOTAL** [ *cf. Minimum total score = 23*] | | | |

**Feedback to proponent:**

**Recommendation to Meeting of IOSEA Signatory States, and final comments:**