

# **REPORT OF THE 9<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE SIGNATORY STATES**

**Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania  
24-27 June 2024**



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



All information relating to the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Signatory States is available at <https://www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/meeting/IOSEA-MOS9> .



## 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Signatory States Report

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## **Report of the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Signatory States**

### **1. Opening Ceremony and Welcoming Remarks**

1. Melanie Virtue (Secretariat) opened the meeting, taking on the role of chair until the officers for the meeting were elected (agenda item 3). She welcomed both in-person and remote participants to the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Signatory States of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia.
2. She called upon Mr Davis Mpotwa, Acting Manager, Marine Parks and Reserves, Tanzania to address the meeting. Mr Davis welcomed participants to Tanzania. He thanked the Secretariat for the opportunity to host the meeting which would involve discussions on a range of issues concerning marine turtles to ensure that they and their habitat are safeguarded. He highlighted the many migratory species in Tanzania, marine and terrestrial, and noted the importance of migratory species in Tanzania's culture, economic well-being and ecosystems. He encouraged participants to explore Tanzania when the meeting was finished.
3. Ms Virtue extended thanks to the Government of Tanzania, and specifically to Mr Mpotwa, and the Marine Parks and Reserves Department, for generously hosting the meeting and doing so much to make it successful. She reflected on how much happened since the last meeting of the MOU in Da Nang, Viet Nam in 2019 and introduced the Secretariat team, which besides herself as Head of the Aquatic Species Team of CMS included the MOU Coordinator, Heidrun Frisch-Nwakanma, Tine Lindberg-Roncari of the CMS Conference Services Team, and consultant Ana Berta García. She welcomed new Focal Points and other stakeholders, and especially the many Tanzanian staff who were attending. She noted that this was the first time that the MOU Signatories met in the Western Indian Ocean region, which hosted vital ecosystems for the five marine turtle species found in the region in all their life stages. She outlined the key issues to be discussed at MOS9 and wished participants a successful and productive meeting.
4. On the afternoon of the first day, the meeting was addressed by Professor Riziki Shemdoe, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries speaking on behalf of the Honourable Abdallah Ulega who was invited to officiate this important meeting but couldn't be there due to another commitment. His remarks are included in Annex 3.

### **2. Signature of the Memorandum by Additional States**

5. Ms Virtue (Secretariat) reported that Somalia had hoped to become a new signatory to the MOU but unfortunately it had not been possible to make the arrangements in time.
6. On 30 June, the Secretariat invited Abdullah Al Zaidan to come to the podium for Kuwait to become the 36<sup>th</sup> Signatory of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU. The remarks of Mr Al Zaidan are attached as Annex 4. Participants were also shown a short video of the work in Kuwait on marine turtle conservation. The Chair congratulated Kuwait for signing the MOU.



### **3. Election of Officers**

7. Ms Virtue (Secretariat) asked for nominations for the post of Chair of MOS9. Participants agreed to nominate United Republic of Tanzania. Rose Sallema, Manager of Environmental Management Coordination, National Environmental Management Council, was appointed as Chair.
8. Ms Virtue asked for nominations for the post of Vice-Chair of MOS9. Participants nominated Sri Lanka. Chandana Sooriyabandara, Director General, Department of Wildlife Conservation, Sri Lanka, was appointed as Vice-Chair.

### **4. Adoption of the Agenda and Schedule**

9. Rose Sallema (Tanzania) assumed the role of Chair and welcomed everyone to Tanzania. She hoped that delegates would enjoy their time here and thanked the Secretariat for their hard work organizing the meeting. She highlighted the need to collaborate as a region in management efforts for marine turtles.
10. Heidrun Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) introduced CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.4.1/Rev.4 [Provisional Agenda and Documents](#), and CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.4.2/Rev.1 [Provisional Annotated Agenda and Schedule](#). She noted that during the meeting, sub-regional working groups would be established and she encouraged all delegates to participate actively in these. A key task for the sub-regional working groups, as well as for plenary, would be to make sure that the agreed Work Programme 2024-2028 would reflect all the activities that Signatory States wanted to see in it.
11. There were no comments on the agenda or schedule, and both were adopted as presented. The final agenda is attached as Annex 2.

### **5. Credentials Committee**

12. Ms Virtue (Secretariat) asked for volunteers to serve on the Credentials Committee, which ideally would have representation from each of the four sub-regions (Western Indian Ocean, North-Western Indian Ocean, Northern Indian Ocean, South-East Asia+). A Credentials Committee comprised of Australia, Kenya, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates was formed and agreed to meet in the margins of the meeting.
13. Later in the meeting, the United Arab Emirates reported that the Credentials Committee had met and concluded its business. Of the 35 Signatory States, 26 had participated in this meeting: 2 online and 24 in person. Of the 24 Signatory States attending in person, 23 documents of credentials had been examined and found to be in order. The Committee reminded all Signatory States to ensure they carry original credentials with them to all meetings (not copies).

### **6. Review of Implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan**

#### **6.1. Report on Implementation of the Work Programme 2020-2024 by the Secretariat and Advisory Committee**

14. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) introduced CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.6.1 [Implementation of the Work Programme 2020-2024](#), which provides an overview of the



activities of the Advisory Committee (AC) and the Secretariat in relation to the Work Programme 2020-2024. She explained that the colour coding in the document was to indicate the status of the various activities. Highlights in the period included the publication in 2022 of the [Assessment of the Conservation Status of the Hawksbill Turtle in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia Region](#); the celebration of World Sea Turtle Day (see also agenda item 10.3); the publication of the list of IOSEA AC-endorsed research and other priorities to help to leverage funding for scientific research; and many meetings on issues of relevance. She added that the national reports provided an update on the many activities undertaken by the Signatory States.

15. The Chair thanked the Secretariat for their work on this issue. The progress report was endorsed.

## **6.2. Reports of the Chairs of the Marine Turtle Task Forces and of Sub-regional Focal Points**

### *Northern Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Task Force*

16. Muralidharan Manoharakrishnan (Vice-Chair of the Northern Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Task Force (NIO-MTTF)) reported on the work of the Task Force on behalf of the Chair. The NIO-MTTF had been formed in October 2015 in the Maldives, and all Signatory States in the region (Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) were represented with one governmental and one non-governmental member. The MTTF was led by a Chair (Governmental Member Maldives) and a Vice-Chair (Non-governmental Member India); the next elections for these roles would be held during the next Task Force meeting. Since its establishment, the Task Force has met in 2018 (Sri Lanka), 2021 (online) and in 2023 (Maldives) with high participation at all events.
17. The Task Force members strove to exchange information regularly, for example through an active WhatsApp group, but there has been a gap in terms of developing regional collaborative projects with Government support and this will be a focus of the next sub-regional meeting. NGO partners had expressed interest in collaborative planning of larger regional projects.
18. Meetings had been held in alternate years instead of annually due to the limited financial resources available. Hybrid meetings were also under discussion. The next Task Force meeting was planned for 2025 and the venue was yet to be identified dependent on funding.

### *Western Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Task Force*

19. The Chair noted that no representative of the Western Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Task Force (WIO-MTTF) was present, hence no report would be heard. She referred to the published reports of recent meetings for anyone seeking more information.

### *Sub-regional Focal Point Western Indian Ocean*

20. Kenya presented the report for the Western Indian Ocean. He explained that there were various initiatives in the region including work to establish sites of importance for marine turtles under the MOU. Tanzania and other countries had already selected sites and in Kenya, work was ongoing to identify and map key sites for turtle nesting.



21. There has also been much discussion about transboundary conservation and cooperation, including between Tanzania and Mozambique and between Kenya and Tanzania, with the latter two countries in the process of developing an MOU for transboundary conservation. Kenya had proposed a large area to be a Ramsar site and would liaise with Tanzania to explore the establishment of a transboundary Ramsar site.
22. Additionally in Kenya was trying to streamline data collection and storage and was piloting a mobile app which would be rolled out in Kenya and then be offered more widely in the region with the aim of having a centralised database making it easier to monitor turtle populations regionally. Through the Olive Ridley Project, techniques were being developed to monitor turtles underwater.
23. Kenya thanked Tanzania on behalf of the sub-region for hosting MOS9 and hoped that Kenya would host in the future, noting it was a great opportunity to highlight measures taken in the region.

*Sub-regional Focal Point North-Western Indian Ocean*

24. Oman presented on the activities undertaken in 2020-2024 in the North-Western Indian Ocean noting that Bahrain, Oman and Yemen had contributed to the report. In Bahrain, work had been undertaken on habitat protection and monitoring, including the designation of protected zones in the Hawar Islands and the surrounding waters. Bahrain has also partnered with NGOs to develop educational materials and conduct outreach programmes in coastal communities as well as initiating collaborative discussions with fishing communities.
25. Oman had undertaken work to assess the vulnerability of turtles to marine debris and was implementing a bycatch mitigation project. They were also working to promote the use of the CMS Light Pollution Guidelines and improving enforcement of national legislation on exploitation of turtles. A multi-year hatching success project was underway and work was ongoing to determine foraging distributions, migration pathways, habitat use etc. using technology including flipper tagging and satellite telemetry. The National Marine Turtle Conservation Action Plan – Sultanate of Oman (2023-2027) was being finalized. Oman was also implementing a Turtle Commando Programme, with objectives that included enhancing public awareness, inspiring youth volunteers and cleaning turtle nesting beaches.
26. In Yemen, two natural reserves for marine turtles were declared two years ago, but due to the current situation in the country, studies had not been completed. Yemen added that there were many conservation activities ongoing, with eight or nine sites on the mainland, and work undertaken on Socotra Island.
27. The United Arab Emirates drew attention to the [Report of the 1st Sub-Regional Meeting North-Western Indian Ocean](#) that was held in November 2021. A summary of activities in the region was also provided in that report.

*Sub-regional Focal Point Northern Indian Ocean*

28. Maldives presented the report for the Northern Indian Ocean. They noted that that the recent NIO-MTF meeting had been held in the Maldives, where Task Force members agreed to undertake a number of activities following that meeting. They had also established a WhatsApp group to streamline communication within the sub-region.



### *Sub-regional Focal Point South-East Asia+*

29. Thailand presented the report for South-East Asia+. At AC10 in Thailand, an update on in-country progress with marine turtle conservation had been given based on reports from three countries in or assigned to the sub-region (Australia, Thailand, USA). Key activities included work on long-term monitoring of nesting beaches and standardized marine turtle nesting monitoring guidelines; reviewing and developing action plans and guidelines; work on a database for strandings and tagging; increasing public awareness and participation; training workshops; participation in regional/bilateral agreements related to turtle conservation; and government funding to implement marine turtle conservation activities.
30. Key challenges included a lack of support from law enforcement; maintaining the capacity of staff and volunteers; and budget. Going forward, the top priorities in the sub-region included improving capacity-building for research and monitoring; improving bycatch mitigation; developing stranding networks and engaging communities in conservation programmes; restoring and protecting foraging and nesting habitat; and developing climate change mitigation methods. The most important capacity-building needs in the sub-region included training/strengthening capacity-building for traditional owners, local and coastal communities, researchers, veterinarians, field workers, authorities/managers/local enforcement officers, and stranding networks.

### **6.3. Analysis of National Reports**

31. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) explained that the intention had been to present under this agenda item a thorough analysis of the national reports, focused on key indicators of progress made in the implementation of the MOU while identifying gaps in implementation and priorities to be addressed. This analysis was to be organized by CMP Objective and, where applicable, relate to Work Programme 2020-2024 activities, and summarize findings by sub-region. Following advertisement of the position, Manjula Tiwari had been chosen as a consultant to undertake this work.
32. Unfortunately, the export files from the Online Reporting System were very poorly generated, requiring substantial preparation of the data before they could be properly analysed. While undertaking this data preparation, Ms Tiwari noticed that answers did not match her in-depth knowledge of some of the sites being reported on and flagged the issue with the Secretariat. Further exploration found multiple errors in the exported CSV data and in the PDF exports.
33. Following work with UNEP-WCMC to address the issues, the PDF export function was fixed. The Secretariat regenerated all 20 submitted reports which were re-uploaded to the website. Unfortunately, the issues with the CSV files needed for analysis could only be partially resolved, making it impossible to conduct the analysis before MOS9. Instead, Ms Tiwari would present information that has been manually extracted on the intensity of threats reported from index sites, along with some next steps. Ms Ana Berta Garcia (Secretariat) would summarize the comments/suggestions to improve the current national reporting format that had been submitted by Signatories in response to this question in the questionnaire.
34. Australia recounted problems with the national reporting format because some tables in the online form were not big enough for Australia's data. They asked if any other Signatory States had experienced the same problem and whether Australia's data, provided in a Word document, could still be used. The Secretariat explained that no other



country had this problem but that Australia's data had been included in the analysis that would be presented at MOS9 and all efforts would be made to ensure that these data would also be included in the subsequent full analysis.

35. Bahrain asked if late submission of national reports was still possible. The Secretariat confirmed that given the need for work post-MOS, reports could be submitted until 31 July 2024 and encouraged countries that had not yet submitted reports to do so.

#### *Overview of Intensity of Threats Reported at Index Sites*

36. Manjula Tiwari (Consultant to the Secretariat/AC Member) presented the first part of the analysis undertaken on national reports submitted by Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mozambique, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, USA and Yemen. The objective of the analysis was to review the intensity of the main threats for index beaches and/or IOSEA Site Network Sites within the MOU region, including both nesting beaches and in-water habitat. Reports comprised 65 sites representing 11 countries and all four sub-regions. Medium to high threats were reported from all index sites, with marine debris, habitat degradation, agricultural/urban/tourism development and artificial lighting being the most frequently reported threats. Other threats included incidental capture in coastal fisheries, vehicle activity, natural threats, predation by domestic/feral animals and various other threats including climate change.
37. Ms Tiwari noted that the distribution of threats was important to consider when identifying priorities for each region, with some threats reported across the region and others mainly in some sub-regions. She noted that for the 65 sites and 11 countries, most responses for each threat classified it as a 'low/none' threat; this needed to be evaluated against conservation activities and/or local realities.
38. The next steps would include a data preparation phase in collaboration with the Secretariat, followed by analysis, including evaluating threats against mitigation measures and identifying gaps and priorities within each sub-region. The final analyses would be made available to all Signatory States, Task Forces, and any sub-regional meetings.
39. The USA highlighted the need to consider the nuanced nature of threats, with a high mortality associated with some threats (e.g. bycatch) and therefore a high impact on populations. They emphasized the importance of considering population impacts when prioritizing threats.

#### *Feedback on National Reporting Format*

40. Ana Berta Garcia (Consultant to the Secretariat) summarized the feedback received on ways to improve the current reporting format provided by Signatory States in their national reports.
41. Several Signatory States had asked that related questions be grouped together, rather than having them in different sections corresponding to the structure of the CMP to streamline the process. Some respondents had mentioned that questions should be more specific and succinct, with a recurring comment to shorten the report template. One Signatory State had noted that some questions were too legislative in nature and fell outside the expertise of the departments responsible for completing the report. There was also a suggestion to create an online system where each country could provide regular updates. Two Signatory States had mentioned that the Secretariat should clarify



how the information from the national reports would be used and potentially develop a strategy for its utilization. She also noted that in addition to these general comments, some specific suggestions were received regarding sections and questions that could be merged, updated wording, and other improvements.

42. Based on these views, Ms Garcia asked Signatory States for feedback on whether the national reporting format should be revised and, if so, whether a working group should be established to undertake this task.
43. The USA welcomed the opportunity to revisit the national reporting template to ensure that the questions match the MOU objectives and expressed support for shortening the template and for grouping related questions to make sure they were specific and succinct. They said it would be useful to understand how the data would be used and suggested reviewing how each country was fulfilling the objectives of the MOU.
44. Australia supported the establishment of an intersessional working group to review and revise the reporting template, noting the reporting burden was onerous for many Signatory States. Australia had reported on all sites rather than the subset that was required, and a map would be useful to delineate the sites to be included. They also noted that it could be challenging to separate some data (e.g. fisheries data) to focus only on the MOU area. Given the effort required, the purpose of how the reports would be used needed clarification.
45. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) presented the relevant points in the draft Work Programme 2024-2028 relating to national reporting including the suggestion to establish a working group to review and improve the national reporting format.
46. The USA appreciated the inclusion of this task in the Work Programme and asked for clarification on the process to receive, incorporate and feedback on comments received from Signatory States. They noted that when comments were submitted on a document and it was revised, Signatory States should have opportunity to provide additional comments and clarifications on the next version of the document.
47. The Secretariat clarified that the working group would be open to all Signatory States and suggested that AC members should also be invited for technical advice. The working group would have the responsibility of deciding how to address conflicting comments and a revised document would be circulated to Signatory States for either adoption or additional comments, if needed. She cautioned that a cut-off point for commenting would be needed as the format needed to be finalized in time for the next reporting round.
48. In response to a question from Bahrain, the Secretariat clarified that the working group would use comments already received on the reporting template, along with the comments received during MOS9, as a starting point for its work. Signatory States that had not yet filled in their national reports could share their views in their reports. She noted that additional opportunity to submit reports, including feedback on the form, would be given until the end of July 2024. In addition, if any national reports need updating, Signatory States should contact the Secretariat.
49. An intersessional working group was established to review the national report template (see Annex 12 ([Outcome 9.8](#)) for details).



## 7. Further Implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan

### 7.1. Draft Work Programme 2024-2028

50. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) introduced CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.7.1 [Draft Work Programme 2024-2028](#). The Secretariat recalled that the Work Programme 2020-2024 had been the first Work Programme of the MOU, developed from a compilation of previous mandates and recommendations that were found across multiple documents and reports. It was a big improvement on previous practice, but there was still room for improvement. Signatory States and Advisory Committee Members had been asked for their feedback on the Work Programme 2020-2024 in order to help develop an improved version for presentation at this meeting. The responses had been presented to AC10 (see [CMS/IOSEA/AC10/Doc.4.1](#)). The AC had considered all suggestions carefully and had accommodated as many as possible in the revised draft contained in Document 7.1.
51. The Secretariat explained that while the responsibility for developing this draft was with the AC, it was now given into the hands of Signatory States, who would meet throughout the meeting in sub-regional working groups to discuss the draft Work Programme in detail, revise it as needed, and prioritize each measure. In addition, individual measures in the draft Work Programme would be presented under relevant agenda items and the revised Work Programme would be adopted on the final day of the meeting.
52. Australia asked whether all activities from the previous Work Programme had been carried across to the new Work Programme, noting that since some measures had been reworded, it was difficult to identify all those that have been transferred. They noted that most of the comments they had submitted had been incorporated into the Work Programme 2024-2028.
53. Australia added some additional points that could be useful to consider such as: defining the subjects to ensure a consistent understanding among Signatory States; consideration of how to adequately reference fishing fleets under Signatory State control; and possibly reducing duplication between a number of activities.
54. Further, Australia suggested that there may be benefit in ensuring that all activities to be reported on in the national reports were cross-referenced in the Work Programme. This would help to show why the data was requested in the national reports. In addition, similar measures could be grouped under the same objective, though Australia recognised this might not be in line with the CMP so required some debate.
55. The USA agreed with the comments made by Australia. In some cases it was difficult to link the measures in the Work Programme to the corresponding objectives of the MOU. They suggested that a review could be undertaken to ensure that the Work Programme measures were linked to the main objectives of the MOU, and removing measures that were no longer needed. The USA added that it would also be useful to reflect work that could be done in a four-year period, so it was possible to observe progress.
56. The Secretariat explained that not all measures had been transferred from the previous Work Programme to the new one because some were one off activities and had been completed, some had moved on to the next step, and the AC had advised that not all activities from 2019 were still relevant. In addition, some measures had been grouped to reduce duplication as requested by Signatory States. The Secretariat also noted that the current structure linked the Work Programme to the Conservation and Management Plan (CMP) of the MOU, meaning that it was not possible to consistently group activities by topic, e.g. on bycatch, since some items related to addressing the threat, some related



to co-operation etc., and therefore they responded to different CMP Objectives and Programmes.

57. Mr Colin Limpus (AC Member/Acting Chair) recalled that the activities in the draft Work Programme 2024-2028 were initially articulated by Signatory States during previous meetings of the MOU. He noted that the role of the AC was to give advice where needed by the Signatory States. As such, they had developed a draft in cooperation with the Secretariat, but determining the shape and content of the final Work Programme to be adopted was not its role. He highlighted the importance of Signatory States articulating the actions needed, whether regional or for the MOU more broadly, which would help the AC to give appropriate advice.
58. The United Arab Emirates believed that the comprehensive Work Programme 2024-2028 would help to advance collective efforts to conserve marine turtles and their habitats in the region. However, the list of activities would be challenging to accomplish in a five-year period and they recommended an approach that prioritized high impact activities, ensuring resources were directed to these key areas.
59. The Secretariat observed that several comments had raised the concerns that the Work Programme had more measures than could be implemented in a five-year period. She noted that not all measures would apply equally to all countries, and also that some measures were likely to be more important than others. There had been discussion at the AC on highlighting critical measures as suggested by one Signatory State and this issue could be considered in the sub-regional working groups. The AC had also proposed a measure on defining how implementation could be evaluated and proposed to set up a working group for this (see Annex 12 ([Outcome 9.8](#)) for details).
60. Sub-regional working groups were established in the afternoon of the first day. The Secretariat explained that as in the past, Advisory Committee Members were available to support all groups to provide technical advice and context. It was agreed that other observers could also participate in the working groups which would meet on the first, second and third day after plenary sessions.
61. On the third day of the meeting, the sub-regional working groups reported back on their discussions, highlighting key changes, new lines and deletions to the draft Work Programme 2024-2028. The rapporteurs were asked to provide all changes and the prioritization made in their respective working groups to the Secretariat.
62. The Secretariat explained that it would compile the changes provided, including the sub-regional prioritization, into a new version of the draft Work Programme for further consideration and adoption the next morning.
63. Ms Nel (AC Member) reflected on the richness of discussions during the sub-regional working groups. She reminded participants that the AC was present to serve Signatory States and to provide continuity and interpretation during discussions. Its role was not to influence discussions and the AC recognized that it is the right of Signatory States to direct proceedings.
64. Ms Nel commented on the substantial work undertaken intersessionally and suggested that AC involvement in relevant meetings could help them to understand the priorities of Signatory States and the issues and differences around the region. She invited Signatory States to use the AC as needed. Kenya, supported by the United Arab Emirates, welcomed the presence of the AC in working groups and commented on the value and insights that the AC can provide.



65. On the fourth day of the meeting, the Secretariat presented an in-session version of the [Draft Work Programme 2024-2028](#) that combined all changes proposed during the sub-regional working groups, as well as additions that had been agreed during the plenary so far, and proposed overall priority ranking based on the priority assigned by the sub-regions. Participants went through the document line by line making further changes where needed.
66. There was discussion on how Signatory States could best contribute to the development of the draft Work Programme in advance of the MOS. The United Arab Emirates asked how a potential process for this could work, noting challenges with capacity. The Secretariat suggested this could be a written consultation, but in the light of capacity issues, it would be helpful for the Secretariat to understand the expectations for any consultation. The USA felt it was critical to ensure that Signatory States have opportunity to comment on and review the draft Work Programme and also that comments were included before the meeting. They noted that the USA had already provided comments on the Work Programme 2020-2024 but very few were included in the new Work Programme. The Secretariat clarified that the comments from the USA had been on the old Work Programme, which is why they were not obvious in the new Programme.
67. The USA, supported by the United Arab Emirates and the AC, suggested that a discussion on the draft Work Programme could be undertaken in sub-regional working groups prior to the MOS. Ronel Nel (AC Member) and Mr Manoharakrishnan (NIO-MTTF) also stated that the Task Forces were active and could contribute on issues of sub-regional relevance.
68. The Secretariat recalled that the AC met to bring documents into their final form for submission to the MOS about three to four months before the MOS. In order to allow for input from the sub-regions, it would be necessary to have a draft Work Programme ready for sub-regional review significantly before the AC meets for its second intersessional meeting, noting the limited time between the AC and MOS for consultation and the need to publish MOS documents sufficiently in advance of the meeting.
69. The USA suggested that sub-regional working groups should meet and then provide comments to the AC as a group, asking for transparency on which comments were included in draft documents and which were not. The United Arab Emirates suggested that the draft Work Programme could be prepared 6 or 9 months in advance of the MOS, then reviewed by the sub-regional groups over a couple of months, and then presented to the AC that would finalize documents for the MOS. Ms Nel (AC Member) and the USA highlighted the advisory role of the AC.
70. The Work Programme 2024-2028 ([Outcome 9.1](#)) was adopted and is attached as Annex 5.

## 7.2. Capacity-Building Strategy

71. Scott Whiting (AC Member) and Manjula Tiwari (AC Member) presented CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.7.2 [Capacity-Building Strategy](#) about the development of an IOSEA Capacity-Building Framework. There were a number of capacity-building actions in the IOSEA Work Programme 2020-2024, and similar ones in the draft of the new Work Programme.



72. Mr Whiting drew attention to the proposed definition of capacity-building: “*Capacity-building is defined as the process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in a fast-changing world.*”
73. The proposals outlined in the document included forming a working group to develop a capacity-building framework and circulating a “Needs Assessment Questionnaire” to stakeholders around the MOU area. Mr Whiting noted that capacity-building should be considered ‘two-way learning’ and not a top-down approach. Within the MOU network each range state and/or group had knowledge, skills or resources that could benefit others.
74. Ms Tiwari outlined the structure and components of the Needs Assessment Questionnaire and explained that it would be an important part of understanding the variety and priority of needs across the IOSEA region.
75. The USA thanked the Advisory Committee for the document. They requested that the list of potential capacity-building activities be focussed on the objectives of the MoU, noting that the current list of activities was very comprehensive and might mean that it would be difficult to focus on and address threats. They also recommended that the working group on capacity-building be multidisciplinary, to include economic and possibly legal expertise, to help address some of the key threats.
76. Mr Whiting explained that the draft IOSEA Work Programme contained capacity-building activities both to address threats and also to address other issues such as scientific expertise, monitoring, communication etc. He invited Signatory States to send in specific comments on gaps or things that should be removed. Ms Tiwari added that the approach taken was very much that if in-country actors were asked in the Work Programme to do something, support in developing the necessary skills should also be offered when needed.
77. Kenya emphasised the importance of capacity-building to ensure that conservation targets could be met. They observed that many technical skills were required for conservation (e.g. genetic studies, translocation, telemetry) but capacity was often limited. In addition, much conservation work was done by communities on a voluntary basis, and therefore a key challenge to ensure that turtle conservation could be sustained was for local communities to be supported to make a living while conserving turtles and their habitat. Kenya highlighted discussions on the Blue Economy, which was often considered in a fisheries context, but for marine turtles, that fishery might be a threat. This should be considered in a capacity-building context.
78. Bahrain noted the importance of enhancing regional cooperation and of data sharing. They suggested promotion of joint research between countries which could help overcome capacity-building challenges.
79. The United Arab Emirates supported the development of the capacity-building framework and the inclusion of this measure in the Work Programme 2024-2028. This would help to ensure that capacity-building was a central focus of the conservation effort and that the necessary resources were allocated.
80. Bangladesh indicated that in its country, capacity development was mainly focussed on monitoring, noting that monitoring of fishing activities was very limited. Collaboration and cooperative data sharing were important for monitoring purposes.



81. Thailand supported the capacity-building framework proposed and encouraged collaboration on monitoring marine turtles in South-East Asia. They stressed the importance of improving expertise on how to use technology for monitoring and understanding the movement of marine turtles. Training veterinarians and collaboration between the scientists were also important.
82. Maldives highlighted the need to include the regulatory frameworks that accompany the veterinary and rehabilitation work in the capacity-building strategy, along with research and monitoring work.
83. Iran emphasised the importance of capacity-building in the North-Western Indian Ocean but expressed concern that there was insufficient cooperation and data exchange between countries and that the regional and sub-regional working groups were not active enough. They noted the fragility of habitats in the region and that turtle populations were small and threatened by numerous activities and threats, including development and climate change impacts. Iran welcomed help from the Secretariat or other technical sources to support cooperation and help provide equipment. Improved funding and collaboration would lead to better outcomes.
84. Papua New Guinea suggested that traditional knowledge within the four sub-regions could be included in the capacity-building strategy.
85. Sudan noted that it was known for its diverse wildlife and rich natural resources but that it has faced numerous challenges in recent years including political instability, economic struggles, and environmental issues. However, Sudan remained committed to the conservation and protection of marine turtles. Recognizing the importance of international cooperation in safeguarding marine turtle species, Sudan had worked to meet the requirements and obligations of the MOU, which has been impacted by the current situation in the country. They also noted that capacity development was key for marine turtle conservation in Sudan, noting the learning offered from successful initiatives like the training workshop in Oman. Collaboration, education, monitoring and data collection, sharing and networking and the local communities and indigenous people and their traditional knowledge involvement were vital for protecting marine turtles.
86. Sea Sense Tanzania noted that another important area for capacity-building was to support data analysis to ensure that analyses were done properly and could inform policy and support decision-making. In addition, there might be a need to assess the kinds of data being collected by different parties e.g. governments, NGOs and other stakeholders. They noted that, in Tanzania, various data tools were used but it might be useful to consider a shared data collection tool.
87. Yowed Foundation noted that taboos and custom laws should be considered for people in some areas. For example, in one area, a taboo might stop people going to the beach during certain months, which might be beneficial to marine turtles. They also emphasized the impact of sound pollution on marine animals, including through the noise generated when people use the beach for parties.
88. An intersessional working group was established to support the development of a capacity-building framework (see Annex 12 ([Outcome 9.8](#)) for details).



### 7.3. National Networks

89. Ms Garcia (Secretariat) introduced CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.7.3 on [National Networks](#). These were coordination mechanisms encouraged under the MOU and established by Signatory States to improve cooperation and collaboration in marine turtle conservation within each country. Many years ago, the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat had developed a questionnaire to gather information from Signatory States on their initiatives regarding national networks. This questionnaire had been used for reporting in 2008, 2011, and 2014. Currently, information on national networks was compiled through one simple question in the national reports.
90. The Secretariat sought feedback on whether a measure relating to national networks should be included in the Work Programme 2024-2028 and whether the current question on the national report template was sufficient to meet reporting needs.
91. The United Arab Emirates noted that it had a national network for conservation comprising government agencies, NGOs, private sector and other stakeholders which facilitated information sharing and data coordination. While national networks were valuable, they cautioned that adding new tasks might divert resources from other critical areas of work. Therefore, the United Arab Emirates, supported by Australia, recommended that national networks be included in the Work Programme with a focus on optimising existing structures, rather than creating new ones, where possible. This would ensure that the resources and efforts were concentrated on high priority actions while still recognizing the importance of effective coordination. Regarding the reporting mechanism, the United Arab Emirates proposed an amendment in the section in the national report to reflect key activities and achievements of the national network while also minimizing additional reporting burden.
92. Australia proposed that Signatory States with well-established national networks could provide a brief overview of the composition of national membership and an outline of how they operate which might help to guide others. In Australia, the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water hosted an annual Australian Government marine turtle round table meeting with members of relevant state and territory agencies. The aim was to provide an opportunity for cross-jurisdictional discussion of issues relating to marine turtles and to develop action items. Stakeholders were invited on an *ad hoc* basis, e.g. from academia and research institutions.
93. Australia noted that the national reporting template could be refined to encourage the submission of information relevant to national networks. They felt that the current wording was ambiguous and that explanatory text, or additional questions on national networks, might be useful to include in future templates. Australia asked that the intersessional working group tasked with examining the national report template take this point into consideration.

## 8. Conservation of Marine Turtles and their Habitats

### 8.1. Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles in the Indian Ocean - South-East Asia Region

#### 8.1.1. Updates from Existing Sites

94. The Chair explained that managers of existing Sites of importance for marine turtles had been invited by the Secretariat to provide written updates on the sites in their countries.



All reports received were available online as Information Documents 8.1.1.1-8. A series of presentations followed, with updates from some of the sites included in the IOSEA Site Network.

95. The United Arab Emirates described progress at Bu Tinah Shoal, Abu Dhabi (see [CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Inf.8.1.1.1](#) for details) which includes nesting habitat for hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), and foraging habitat for both hawksbill and green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*). They outlined the ongoing monitoring programmes at the site noting that the populations of both turtle species appeared stable. Work was being undertaken to understand the effects of climate change on turtle nesting and to identify resilient beaches in the area.
96. South Africa gave an update on progress in iSimangaliso Wetland Park (see [CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Inf.8.1.1.2](#) for details), an area that supported approximately 80 nesting leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) (stable) and over 700 nesting loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*) (increasing). Key threats included low level poaching, plastic pollution, natural hazards including coastal erosion, illegal fishing, ghost nets, and artificial light. They highlighted the WildOceans project which had developed resource centres/hubs at three sites. Ronel Nel (AC Member) added that since 2019, South Africa had increased the number of Marine Protected Areas in the country, including some designated because of the presence of marine turtles and which could be considered for inclusion in the IOSEA Network of Sites. In addition, iSimangaliso had significantly increased in size since first proclaimed demonstrating the opportunity to protect critical habitat through site expansion. Ms Nel also noted that in South Africa the Site Network had helped to leverage funding because it was an internationally recognized designation, and this could be utilized more broadly.
97. Tanzania gave an update on the Rufiji-Mafia Seascape (see [CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Inf.8.1.1.4](#) for details) and the establishment of a community-based network for turtle monitoring which includes 36 community members in three seascapes. Key threats included consumption of eggs and meat, climate change, coastal development and bycatch. Highlights since MOS8 included the designation in 2023 of Rufiji-Mafia-Kibiti-Kilwa as a Man and Biosphere Reserve and the development of a National Action Plan for Conservation of Marine Turtles which was launched in March 2024, and which was aligned to the IOSEA Conservation and Management Plan. Tanzania gave an update on key capacity-building needs and challenges.
98. Viet Nam gave an update on Con Dao National Park (see [CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Inf.8.1.1.5](#) for details) which contains important nesting habitat for green turtles (c. 700 nesting females annually) and feeding grounds for hawksbill turtles. Key natural threats included duplicate egg-laying, predation and erosion and key anthropogenic threats included poaching, illegal activities such as discharge of plastic waste or other pollutants, illegal fishing and tourism activities. Viet Nam gave an update on the ongoing management, research and conservation efforts including working with volunteers and NGOs.
99. Seychelles gave an update on the Aldabra Atoll (see [CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Inf.8.1.1.6](#) for details), which was habitat to nesting green turtles (3,059-5,099 females nesting annually) and hawksbill turtles (no estimate available). Loggerhead and leatherback turtles have been reported in Aldabra waters but were not frequently found in the area. Since the 1980s, Aldabra Atoll has been highly protected through its Special Reserve and UNESCO World Heritage Site designations. It was also recognised as an Important Marine Mammal Area (IMMA) and an Important Shark and Ray Area (ISRA). Key threats included development in neighbouring islands, marine debris, invasive species and



climate change. Management measures included an eradication programme for cats and rats, and beach clean ups.

100. The United Arab Emirates provided an update on Sir Bu Na'air Protected Area (see [CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Inf.8.1.1.7](#) for details). This was a nesting site for hawksbill turtles, with 307 nests recorded in 2021, 131 in 2022 and 410 in 2024. Most human activities were controlled but threats included severe climate events, invasive species, oil spills, boat strikes and marine debris. Management measures included beach clean-ups, coral translocation and restoration, ghost net removal, and prevention of illegal fishing. Application of marine spatial planning by establishing a 1.5 nautical mile zone has been implemented.
101. Iran gave an update on Sheedvar Island (see [CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Inf.8.1.1.8](#) for details) which was home to nesting hawksbill turtles (estimated 50-100 nests annually). Annual monitoring and tagging was undertaken as well as genetic sampling. Iran noted that the Lavan refinery and Lavan Offshore oil company were important stakeholders and provided support for field work. Key threats included poaching (although this was now controlled), marine debris, natural hazards (storms etc), illegal fishing which damages nearby habitat and bycatch, and tourism in some places.
102. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) asked whether the draft Work Programme 2024-2028 should include a task to request Signatory States to prepare reports on the IOSEA Site Network for the next MOS, which was agreed. Australia found the reports on the Sites to be very informative and suggested to standardize the information requested. The Secretariat clarified that while the presentations at the meeting were in different formats, the information on the website was already in a standardized form.

#### **8.1.2. Proposals for Inclusion into the Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles in the Indian Ocean South-East Asia Region**

103. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) introduced CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.1.2 [Proposals for Inclusion into the Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles in the Indian Ocean South-East Asia Region](#), noting that to date, eleven Sites had been accepted into the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU Site Network. She highlighted changes to the evaluation process and criteria for Site inclusion revised by a working group and agreed by Signatory States during the intersessional period.
104. In mid-March, the Secretariat had circulated a call for proposals of sites to be considered for inclusion in the Site Network and by the deadline of 30 April, five nominations had been received:
  - Al Qurm Protected Area, United Arab Emirates ([CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.1.2.1](#))
  - Cox's Bazar Coast, Bangladesh ([CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.1.2.2](#))
  - Sharma, Jathmoun & Dhargum, Yemen ([CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.1.2.3](#))
  - Khore Omiera, Yemen ([CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.1.2.4](#))
  - Mawtin Coast, Myanmar (which could not be considered because UN engagement with the de facto government is limited to urgent humanitarian needs and necessary transactional correspondence).
105. Each proposal would be discussed, and the advice of the AC would be presented.
106. Sudan proposed the nomination of the Dunganab Bay-Mukkawar Island Marine National Park (DMNP) as a Site within the Site Network. This nationally protected area was also a Ramsar site and a World Heritage Site and was home to five species of marine turtles



(green, hawksbill, loggerhead, olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) and leatherback turtles) with nesting green, hawksbill and loggerhead turtles. Sudan noted the need for support and capacity-building to undertake conservation projects in the area. The Secretariat highlighted the process to be followed to include a site in the IOSEA Site Network and invited Sudan to liaise with the Secretariat and Advisory Committee to take this proposal forward for consideration by MOS10.

*Al Qurm Protected Area (Khor Kalba), United Arab Emirates*

107. The United Arab Emirates gave a presentation on CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.1.2.1 [Proposals for Inclusion into the Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles in the Indian Ocean South-East Asia Region: Al Qurm Protected Area, United Arab Emirates](#). Located on the eastern coast of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Alqurm Protected Area consists of a series of tidal mangrove channels, mud flats, five kilometres of sandy beach and a narrow tidal inlet that links to the Gulf of Oman. The Alqurm Protected Area was declared a protected area in 2012 for its high biodiversity, and was designated as a Ramsar site.
108. The Alqurm Protected Area was an important feeding ground for large aggregations of mostly juvenile green turtles. Hawksbill and loggerhead turtles have also been recorded on site. UAV<sup>1</sup>-based counts suggested that over 200 turtles forage in the mangrove habitat, however, this was likely to be an underestimate. Nesting on-site was rare but the site had the only contemporary records of nesting marine turtles on the Gulf of Oman coast of the UAE, including the first and only record of the olive ridley turtle in the UAE.
109. Threats were mainly investigated through the Sharjah Strandings Response Program (SSRP). Observations had been made of marine turtles stranding during heavy storms and cyclones. Boat strikes accounted for 11% of strandings and marine debris entanglement for 6% of strandings. Chemical pollutants had been observed. Other unquantified threats included urban and construction noise pollution, mobilized sediments from coastal development, aquacultural waste water and unregulated recreational boating.
110. Conservation and management interventions were ongoing. Research on the feeding ecology, threats and genetics of marine turtles was underway along with monitoring and census work. The Khor Kalba Mangrove Centre, managed by the EPAA, served as an educational hub. The designation of Al Qurm Protected Area as part of the IOSEA Site Network would serve as evidence for policymakers of the site's ecological value, thus advocating for its protection. It would also provide a compelling argument for policymakers to expand the protected area.
111. Mr Whiting (AC Member) reported on the AC's evaluation of the proposal (available under the same link). The views of the two reviewers were unanimous that the site would enhance the Network. Green turtles at this inshore foraging area showed site fidelity and were connected to offshore foraging areas and to Oman. Recognition within the Site Network was likely to increase awareness in the wider area of the site, which had unique features within the region and the potential for multiple natural values. The advice of the AC reviewers was to include the site in the Network.
112. The MOS endorsed the recommendation, and the Al Qurm Protected Area was included in the Site Network.

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<sup>1</sup> Unmanned aerial vehicle



*Cox's Bazar Coast, Bangladesh*

113. Bangladesh presented CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.1.2.2 [Proposals for Inclusion into the Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles in the Indian Ocean South-East Asia Region: Cox's Bazar Coast, Bangladesh](#). The Cox's Bazar coast, known for its significance as marine turtle habitat, is situated along the southeastern shoreline of Bangladesh. Stretching over 120 km, the area was rich in biodiversity with an estimated 1,000 olive ridley turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) nesting at the site annually, and smaller numbers of green turtle nests. Although less common, occasional sightings of hawksbill turtles had been reported. Conservation work by government agencies and NGOs was ongoing including working with the fishing community on bycatch mitigation. Monitoring was undertaken using tagging and satellite tracking. To date 1.5 million hatchlings had been released.
114. Bangladesh was a populous country and human activity was a threat to the site including through tourism and coastal development, pollution, fisheries interactions, climate change, poaching and light pollution. Overall, the Cox's Bazar coast and its surrounding areas were characterized by a variety of social and economic values, with diverse human activities and land uses contributing to the region's significance.
115. Mr Whiting (AC Member) reported on the AC's evaluation of the proposal (available under the same link). This site enhances the network by the sheer linear extent of the beach, which provided resilience in terms of natural and anthropogenic impacts, including climate change. The observations of hawksbill turtles in the inshore areas were promising and added value to the nomination. This could be enhanced in the future by quantifying these observations. The cultural and social records supported the importance of this area to the local people with both consumptive and non-consumptive values recognized. The current non-consumptive values provided real incentives for local engagement and protection. The application was well written with many aspects of future management and future research and monitoring well thought out. This area would be an asset to the Network. The advice of the AC reviewers was to include the site in the Network.
116. The MOS endorsed the recommendation, and the Cox's Bazar Coast was included in the Site Network.

*Sharma, Jathmoun & Dhargum and Khore Omiera, Yemen*

117. Yemen made a presentation on CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.1.2.3 [Proposals for Inclusion into the Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles in the Indian Ocean South-East Asia Region: Sharma, Jathmoun & Dhargum, Yemen](#). Located in Hadhramaut Governorate, in eastern Yemen, the Sharma, Jathmoun & Dhargum site runs about 12.9 km from east to west. The site was biodiversity rich, and its beaches were considered one of the most important turtle nesting areas in the Gulf of Aden. Four species of turtle used the beach: green, hawksbill, loggerhead and olive ridley turtles.
118. The site had not yet officially been declared as a nature reserve by a decision of the Prime Minister, but rather it was managed in the governorate by the General Administration of the General Authority for Environmental Protection. There were local laws enacted by the EPA in coordination with the local authority and the Coast Guard leadership, in addition to rules for visitors to the site. Over the past years, the EPA in Hadhramaut Coast Governorate had intensified efforts and coordination with relevant authorities to officially declare the site a natural reserve by the state. The Sharma Reserve had been included in the list of temporary World Heritage areas of UNESCO in



2002. There were no human population centres in the site other than unofficial plans and land reservations. There were seasonal agricultural activities during rains and floods and fishing activity.
119. Yemen presented a second proposal contained in CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.1.2.4 [Proposals for Inclusion into the Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles in the Indian Ocean South-East Asia Region: Khore Omiera, Yemen](#). This national marine reserve was a feeding ground for green turtles. There were plans to develop management approaches and to raise awareness. Yemen noted that the data were incomplete and that the site documentation needed more work.
120. Ms Tiwari (AC Member) reported on the AC's evaluation of the proposals (available under the same links). She explained that both sites were of local, regional and international importance but that additional details and clarification were needed in the proposals. The AC offered to work with Yemen to revise the proposals. The advice of the AC reviewers was to include the sites in the Network on the basis that the proposals would be revised.
121. Australia thanked the UAE, Bangladesh and Yemen for their proposals and the AC for the time spent reviewing them. Australia, supported by Bahrain and the USA, recognized that a new nomination process had been agreed, but noted that both proposals from Yemen had scored above the overall minimum needed to be accepted as Network Sites. Their view was that both sites should be accepted, and the proposals did not need to be revised unless Yemen wished to do so. The USA noted that they had previously sent comments expressing the view that the nomination template was too complex.
122. The Secretariat explained that the criteria endorsed by the Signatory States foresaw that besides a minimum overall score, a minimum score in each of the categories needed to be achieved. Yemen's proposals had not reached the minimum score required in all categories, hence the AC's recommendation was consistent with agreed procedures. In addition, the documents would be placed on the website and therefore needed to include sufficient information. Ms Tiwari offered support to Yemen from the AC to make the appropriate updates.
123. Both Sites proposed by Yemen were accepted for inclusion in the Site Network. Yemen indicated their desire to work with the AC to improve the quality of the Site Information Sheets to be published on the MOU website.
124. An overview of current Sites in the Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles in the Indian Ocean South-East Asia Region is contained in Annex 6 ([Outcome 9.2](#)).

#### *Site Network Nomination Template*

125. Following on from the discussions, Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) recalled that MOS8 had established a working group to revise the Site Network nomination template and the scoring process, which accordingly had been simplified and harmonized. The revised template had been used for the nominations just discussed under agenda item 8.1.2. She noted that the intersessional work had taken more time than anticipated, so that when the revised template was circulated to all Signatory States for endorsement, there had been no time for further revisions before the nomination process itself had to begin. This had affected the USA who had not been part of the working group and had submitted further suggested revisions to the template. The Secretariat noted that a new working group could be established to continue to improve the process and criteria.



126. Australia believed the Site Network to be a critical component of the MOU. They were keen that the nomination template should not be a barrier to site nomination and therefore the template should collect essential information only. Australia supported the establishment of a working group and offered to join it. The USA welcomed the opportunity to look at barriers that prevented countries from submitting site nominations and offered to join the working group.
127. An intersessional working group was established to review and update the template for site nominations (see Annex 12 ([Outcome 9.8](#)) for details).

### 8.1.3. Maximizing the Benefits of Inclusion in the Site Network

128. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) reported that the form circulated to Site managers for updates on their Sites (see agenda item 8.1.1) had included a request for information on how the designation of sites in the Site Network had benefited conservation efforts. Responses included that the international recognition gave a higher status to a Site and supported implementation/enforcement of conservation measures. Some responded that the designation helped leverage funding and offered a framework for coordination between stakeholders, helping with communication. While some noted that it provided “a sense of common effort”, another response stated that this was not always apparent at the grassroots level.
129. Site managers were also asked about suggestions on to maximise the benefits of the Site Network. One suggestion was increased exchanges of knowledge, expertise and best practice between Sites. The Secretariat noted that there was already a Site Network Discussion Group, which however had not been active, but which could be revived and used for this purpose. Other suggestions included support with fundraising for conservation projects, research initiatives and educational programmes, and development of guidance materials on how to realize benefits. She cautioned that any such initiatives needed to take into account the limited capacity of the Secretariat, AC, and many Site managers. She suggested that the fundraising document on the MOU website could be made available to Site managers.
130. The United Arab Emirates agreed with the points raised by the Secretariat. They welcomed the idea of having a platform to exchange knowledge and information with other Sites and noted the need to enhance visibility of Sites at both national and international levels. The United Arab Emirates suggested the development of a robust monitoring and evaluation framework. They indicated that the Site Network of the MOU should be mainstreamed with other international instruments such as Ramsar, Important Bird Areas etc.
131. Bahrain suggested the development of joint conservation projects between neighbouring countries with adjacent sites. Egypt supported the comments of the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain and highlighted the need to engage other stakeholders such as local communities as well as using social media to raise awareness. Kenya agreed with the importance of engaging with local communities.
132. Mr Scott Whiting (AC Member) expressed a personal view that the Site Network had not yet reached its full potential, with many other sites that could be included. He suggested that the TurtleNet database (see agenda item 10.1) be used for information on the Site Network.
133. The United Arab Emirates suggested that the process for nomination needed to start



sooner to allow more time to nominate sites. They asked whether the AC could reach out to Signatory States if they knew of obvious site candidates. Ms Nel (AC Member) noted that while the AC could certainly advise, the nominations needed to come from Signatory States. She highlighted the approach taken in the Western Indian Ocean many years ago which was to have a workshop to help with the nominations. She suggested that Task Forces could assist Signatory States in this process.

134. Sea Sense Tanzania suggested that the Site Network could be used to help leverage funding including to unlock larger pots of money for groups of sites, bigger projects and longer-term work. The Chair concurred, noting that working collaboratively in this way could assist in fundraising and monitoring of Sites.
135. Participants agreed that efforts should be made to revive the Site Network Discussion Group (see Annex 12 ([Outcome 9.8](#)) for details).

## 8.2. Beach Management and Hatchery Practices

136. Ms Nel (AC Member) and her collaborator Andrea Phillott (FLAME University) introduced CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.2 [Beach Management and Hatchery Practices](#) which provides an overview of and recommendations on beach management (Annex 1 to Document 8.2) and hatchery management (Annex 2 to Document 8.2).
137. Ms Nel outlined the importance of sandy beaches as ecosystems, noting that they were often under-recognized and under-valued as just sand and waves. She gave an overview of the characteristics of beach ecosystems, including the physical drivers of ocean-facing beach ecosystems (sand, waves, and tides) and the many interactions and life in the dune system, intertidal beach and subtidal area. Marine turtles, across their life cycle, were part of the nutrient and trophic connectivity cycle in beach ecosystems. She noted that the littoral active zone was the area that was often considered from a turtle conservation perspective, however, this constituted a small part of the ecosystem as a whole. Ms Nel also highlighted the many uses and values of beaches to humans from recreational use to sand and gravel mining. With the changing climate, beach erosion might lead to the loss of half of the world's sandy beaches.
138. Marine turtles likely took a 'shorescape' approach to beach selection for nesting, assessing the entire sea- and landscape with all its visual, sound and odour cues in the water and on land that indicate the general beach location and condition. The key conditions for nesting include that the site is: accessible to and from the ocean; high enough to avoid tidal inundation; has adequate moisture and sand compatibility to facilitate successful body pitting, egg chamber construction and hatching; and has sufficient sand to cover and disguise the nest.
139. Ms Nel outlined the many threats to this habitat, to the nesting/egg incubation environment, to emergence, and from natural processes. She emphasized the "tyranny of small decisions" as an important factor to consider for coastal management, whereby development decisions were taken in isolation without consideration of their collective impact.
140. The document provided a range of management options which should be considered before concluding that relocation and hatcheries were the best solution.
141. Ms Nel cautioned against simply assuming that warmer beaches caused population impacts and suggested that measuring the temperature of a beach over one season



- would not give a good understanding of the impacts. Some feminization as a result of warmer temperatures might not be problematic, but she emphasized the importance of understanding lethal limits for marine turtles. In response to a question from Ms Tiwari (AC Member), Ms Nel clarified that while in general the aim was to have a balanced sex ratio, in the short term feminization could be beneficial and an enhanced number of females could potentially increase the population. The sex ratio would need to be very imbalanced over significant time spans before it became problematic. She cautioned against manipulating nests without a good understanding of factors such as reproduction rates.
142. Ms Phillott presented a 'Structured Decision-Making Framework for Evidence-Based Assessment of Threats and Protection of Sea Turtle Eggs and Hatchlings' (Annex 2 of Doc.8.2 [Beach Management and Hatchery Practices](#)). The framework was proposed to help conservationists, managers and beach monitoring personnel decide on which action(s) to take in protecting marine turtle eggs and hatchlings. It proposed that if <30% of nests/eggs were threatened, then conservation actions might not be required unless the population was very small, demonstrating significant decline or was in the early stages of recovery. She gave an overview of common actions to protect eggs and hatchlings including unprotected *in situ*, protected *in situ*, relocated to a beach, or relocated to a hatchery.
  143. Ms Phillott outlined the steps in the decision-making process which should include: to assess threats to eggs and/or hatchlings using evidence-based methods; to consider the potential conservation actions; to evaluate the risk for each action based on available resources and other requirements; to implement the conservation action; and to evaluate the outcome based on data and modify the action if needed again in the future. She noted the costs associated with actions.
  144. The USA commended the evidence-based approach taken. They welcomed the focus on habitat conservation and on addressing threats in the first instance. They asked whether there was an opportunity for Signatory States to share information on successful management approaches.
  145. Ms Nel asked whether there was literature in which it had been demonstrated that hatchlings from a hatchery had returned to a nesting beach close by, or whether success was assumed because hatchlings were entering the water. Mr Limpus (AC Member) stated that he was aware of two or three studies in eastern Australia, where green and loggerhead turtles had returned within a 200 km radius from the beach they hatched.
  146. Australia welcomed the work which appeared to be scientifically sound and well structured, but asked why the review foreseen as Information Document 8.2 had not become available prior to MOS9. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) explained that the originally planned information document had been removed from the agenda in consultation with Ms Nel and that the main document had instead been expanded to ensure Signatory States had all important information easily accessible.
  147. The Maldives asked for advice on what to do if there was illegal take of nests, noting that in some instances nests might then be relocated for protection until the hatchlings emerge. Ms Phillott explained that the scale of the illegal take and its impact should first be understood in order to take a decision on whether management action was needed. The reasons for the illegal take should also be explored, and where possible addressed, before considering moving the nest.
  148. Iran highlighted the challenges of sand management in areas where there was



exploitation of sand in important turtle nesting habitat. They noted that sometimes translocation was used in places where it was not needed, and they highlighted the threat posed by climate change to the hawksbill turtle in the Gulf area. Iran encouraged cooperation between countries to study effects of climate change.

149. MOS9 endorsed the publication of the guidance contained in [Document 8.2](#) under “Capacity-building Resources” on the MOU website.
150. Regarding measure #11 in the draft Work Programme 2024-2028 ([Doc.7.1](#)), the Secretariat noted that this would involve collaboration with the CMS Scientific Council. Ms Nel proposed the complex issue of beach management be taken forward with the CMS more broadly including to set up a Steering Group which would build on the work already undertaken under the MOU (see Annex 12 ([Outcome 9.8](#)) for details).

### 8.3. Critical Habitat

151. Scott Whiting (AC Member) presented CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.3 on [Critical Habitat](#), noting that the IOSEA Conservation and Management Plan (CMP) mentioned “critical habitat” three times but that the concept was not defined. The Work Programme 2020-2024 requested the AC to develop a definition of critical habitat and the proposed definition presented to MOS9 combined key elements of several existing definitions to form a comprehensive version that most suited the intent of the MOU:

*Critical habitats are recognisable areas that are essential for the maintenance and recovery of sea turtle Management Units, with consideration of ecological function, evolutionary process is unscientific, social or cultural values.*

152. Document 8.3 provided guidance for identifying critical habitat and this information could be reviewed and updated occasionally to ensure that it remained in line with latest science. Mr Whiting suggested that MOS9 review the document and endorse its publication under “Capacity-Building Resources” on the MOU website and advise whether further guidance was required.
153. Australia noted that the critical habitat definition proposed was quite broad. In Australia, defining habitat critical to survival for species listed as threatened that have a recovery plan was required under national environment law. Under Australia’s definition, habitat critical to the survival of a species were areas necessary: for activities such as foraging, breeding or dispersal; for the long-term maintenance of the species (including the maintenance of species essential to the survival of the species); to maintain genetic diversity and long-term evolutionary development; and for the reintroduction of populations or recovery of the species.
154. Australia noted that it had also designated Biologically Important Areas (BIAs) that were separated into four categories: reproduction, migration, feeding and resting areas. The BIAs are based on behavioural data and are important decision support tools for both conservation planning and regulatory decision-making. The Australian Government is currently conducting a review and update of the BIAs for Protected Marine Species. A new Protocol for Designation of Biologically Important Areas for Protected Marine Species has recently been published.<sup>2</sup>
155. Australia noted that it had not historically recognised social or culturally important areas,

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<sup>2</sup> More information: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/marine/bias>



however, work was underway to develop these. Indigenous Protected Areas, Indigenous Land Use Agreements and Traditional Use of Marine Resource Agreements often had a marine turtle management component.

156. The USA noted that the term critical habitat was included in the legal terminology used by the Endangered Species Act in the USA. Understanding and learning how other countries within the IOSEA used the principle of critical habitat was helpful and could be part of the knowledge and learning exchanges between Signatory States.
157. The United Arab Emirates felt that the guidance provided was sufficient and suggested having a platform to share experiences would be very helpful.
158. Document 8.3 was endorsed as was its publication under “Capacity-Building Resources” on the MOU website, and corresponding items in the Work Programme 2024-2028 were agreed.

#### **8.4. Illegal Take and Trade**

159. As Chair of the IOSEA Illegal Trade Working Group (ITWG), Asghar Mobaraki (Iran) introduced CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.4/Rev.1 [Illegal Take and Trade](#) which provides an overview of relevant activities since MOS8. He noted that in 2019, the MOU’s Illegal Trade Working Group (ITWG) was revived, prompted by the findings of the CITES-led report “Status, scope and trends of the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles, its conservation impacts, management options and mitigation priorities” which had been prepared in cooperation with, *inter alia*, the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU and CMS.
160. A number of tasks had been assigned to the ITWG in the Work Programme 2020-2024 including to: strengthen internal, bilateral and international cooperation in enforcement, collaborating with IGOs and NGOs; cooperate with CITES to ensure synergies; enlarge membership of the ITWG; and take further steps to understand and reduce use and domestic trade and to develop awareness campaigns to target online illegal trade.
161. With the new Work Programme due to be adopted, Signatory States were asked whether to maintain this working group, and if so, what tasks to assign to it. A number of proposals were already included in the draft Work Programme.
162. The Secretariat drew attention to the linkages with the CMS work on aquatic wild meat and the CMS Resolution on the illegal and unsustainable take of wildlife, as well as work in CITES, and the MOU Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle (see agenda item 8.5).
163. The intersessional working group was maintained (see Annex 12 ([Outcome 9.8](#))).

#### **8.5. Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region**

164. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) introduced CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.5 which reports on the implementation of a joint activity between CMS and the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU to develop a [Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle \(\*Eretmochelys imbricata\*\) in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region](#). The SSAP sought to integrate the actions necessary to address trade, use and key threats



to Hawksbill Turtle populations in the South-East Asia and Western Pacific Ocean region, at both the domestic and the international level. It intended to assist governments in implementing their commitments from numerous international agreements in a cohesive way.

165. The Secretariat highlighted two scientific assessments used to underpin the SSAP, one covering the IOSEA region developed under leadership of the Advisory Committee (available [here](#)), and a complementary report covering the Western Pacific Ocean region done by volunteer experts working in that region (available [here](#)).
166. The SSAP had been adopted by four IOSEA Signatory States in June 2022: Cambodia, Myanmar, Philippines and Viet Nam. It was then also adopted by CMS COP14 in February 2024 and therefore all CMS Parties in its range signed up in this way. The SSAP was now presented to Signatory States for adoption.
167. The Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region was adopted (see [Outcome 9.3](#)).

#### *Marine Turtle Legislative Review in the Asia-Pacific Region*

168. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) explained that one of the activities foreseen in the SSAP was a legislative review. WWF had launched a legislative review initiative that included but also went beyond the hawksbill turtle and the IOSEA region.
169. Christine Madden (WWF) introduced the Marine Turtle Legislative Review in the Asia-Pacific Region, a project born out of the SSAP and a collaboration between WWF, CMS and SPREP. An interim report was available as [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Inf.27.6.1](#). Ms Madden noted that countries might share the same marine turtle populations, but legislation differed between countries. For this reason, a legislative review was initiated in 2023, to better understand where differences between countries' legislations might lie and would benefit from being harmonized.
170. The work included engagement with 51 countries and territories and 390 stakeholders and a matrix was used to better understand the various protections in place for marine turtles (harvest, tourism etc.). Responses had been received from 22 of 51 countries and territories and the analysis found that marine turtles were fully protected in 62% of these, partially protected in 34% of these and not protected at all in 4%. The report contained a detailed review of legislation relating to harvest/direct take, bycatch, habitat protection and enforcement.
171. In terms of next steps, Ms Madden asked whether Signatory States could add the completion of their review as an activity in the Work Programme 2024-2028. She highlighted the need to undertake a connectivity assessment as well as a re-analysis of the data. Additional funding would also be needed. In response to a question from the Secretariat, Ms Madden noted that she could provide a list to the Secretariat of Signatory States that had not yet input to the review.

#### *ShellBank Information Session*

In the evening of 25 June, and on behalf of the ShellBank core team, WWF presented an information session on ShellBank - the World's First Traceability Toolkit and Global Database of Marine Turtle DNA. ShellBank is



a genetic-based traceability toolkit that tracks and traces marine turtle populations globally. It helps facilitate the identification of genetically distinct turtle populations in order to define which turtle populations are most at-risk, and those that require better protection. At its core, ShellBank aims to ensure marine turtles are traceable to aid effective conservation research, management and protection. Initially conceived in 2018 to help fight the illegal turtle trade, ShellBank has evolved to serve as a tool for addressing other threats, such as overexploitation and bycatch. WWF gave an overview of ShellBank, its utility for law enforcers (including delivery of CITES mandates), decision makers, and conservation researchers, how it operates in practice, and what the ShellBank toolkit offers.

WWF presented a number of case studies from collaborative partners including Australia, UK, Philippines, Hong Kong, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, and showcased the open-source online database released on 16 June 2024. The session ended with WWF offering collaboration with IOSEA Signatory States and Observers to help fill data gaps to track a turtle's population origin, its connectivity and geographic (transmigratory) boundary, and bolster in-country capabilities. For more information, please contact ShellBank at: [shellbank@wwfint.org](mailto:shellbank@wwfint.org).

## 9. Partnerships and Collaboration

172. Ms Garcia (Secretariat) introduced CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.9 [Partnerships and Collaboration](#), noting that the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU emphasizes the importance of collaboration among international instruments and organizations. Accordingly, Signatory States had asked the Secretariat to provide an overview of the relevant ones, which was provided in this document. The Secretariat asked Signatory States to review the overview of membership, consider synergies and decide whether collaboration and partnerships were adequately reflected in the draft Work Programme 2024-2028.
173. Australia felt that opportunities for collaboration were adequately reflected in the draft Work Programme 2024-2028. They suggested an addition to the list: the Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystems Action (ATSEA) Programme. ATSEA was a long-standing, non-legally binding forum under which Australia, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, and Papua New Guinea promoted transboundary cooperation in support of the environmental health of the Arafura and Timor Seas region. The ATSEA Strategic Action Programme 2024-2033 identified four priorities: marine litter (including ghost nets); oil pollution; illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing in small scale fisheries; and protection of threatened marine species, such as marine turtles, sawfish and dugong.

### 9.1. Convention on Migratory Species and Related Agreements

174. Ms Virtue (Secretariat) presented CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.9.1 [Convention on Migratory Species and Related Agreements](#) which provided an update of relevant developments in the 'CMS Family', in particular relating to CMS COP14, the Dugong MOU and the Atlantic Turtles MOU.
175. At the most recent CMS COP in February 2024, a number of mandates relating to turtles were adopted, including decisions taken on bycatch. IOSEA AC10 had discussed these mandates and proposed establishing a Steering Group on Bycatch to develop an



implementation approach and recommendations. This proposal was reflected in the draft Work Programme 2024-2028 (see Annex 12 ([Outcome 9.8](#)) for details). Another joint mandate relating to management of beaches had already been discussed under agenda item 8.2.

176. Other relevant outcomes of COP14 included the adoption of Guidelines for Recreational In-water Interactions with Marine Wildlife through [Resolution 12.16 \(Rev.COP14\)](#); reference to the Guidelines had been included in the Draft Work Programme 2024-2028 to encourage their uptake. The adoption of the Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region by CMS had already been discussed (agenda item 8.5).
177. The Secretariat explained that the next meeting of Signatory States to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs (*Dugong dugon*) and their Habitats was expected to take place in the first quarter of 2025 at the earliest. The Terms of Reference of the Dugong Technical Advisory Group (DTAG) foresaw that a member of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU should be part of the DTAG. This had been included in the Draft Work Programme 2024-2028 for the AC to decide to who could best represent the IOSEA.
178. The Secretariat also drew attention to the Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species (SPMS) 2024-2032. [Resolution 14.1](#) invited the decision-making bodies of CMS instruments to reflect the SPMS in appropriate decisions and resolutions at their next meetings and the Secretariat sought guidance on whether and how to reflect the SPMS 2024-2032 in the IOSEA Work Programme 2024-2028.
179. Australia expressed support for cross referencing the SPMS 2024-2032 in the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU Work Programme. She asked whether the Secretariat could map the links between the SPMS and the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU Work Programme and circulate it out of session or, if there was time, for consideration at this meeting. The Secretariat clarified that it would be a substantial task to do a full mapping exercise, using up substantial amounts of staff time, and instead suggested that some short text could be included in the Work Programme to make the link. This approach was agreed, and draft text was discussed and finalised under agenda item 7.1.

## 9.2. Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and other RFMOs

180. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) introduced CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.9.2 [Indian Ocean Tuna Commission \(IOTC\) and other RFMOs](#) which provided an overview of the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) of relevance to the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU.
181. The Secretariat noted that the focus of recent work with RFMOs had been with the IOTC. A cooperation agreement ([available online](#)) with the IOTC on marine turtles had been concluded, thus formalizing the long-standing informal cooperation between the two instruments. The Secretariats of the IOTC and the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU had met to discuss practical next steps. Corresponding measures had been included in the draft Work Programme 2024-2028. The Secretariat encouraged Signatory States and AC Members to get in touch if they became aware of any other issues or actions on marine turtles that should be brought to the attention of the IOTC Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch. She also encouraged Signatory States to liaise with their IOTC counterparts to discuss recommended measures for marine turtles as appropriate.



182. A technical Multi-Taxa Gillnet Bycatch Mitigation Workshop had been held under the framework of IOTC in 2022, co-organized by the MOU Secretariat, which aimed to undertake an evaluation of existing mitigation measures for their effectiveness in reducing bycatch of multiple taxa in drift/gillnet fisheries and to scope and assess the feasibility of novel or experimental measures being developed for this purpose in the Indian Ocean.
183. The Secretariat highlighted several other RFMOs of relevance but noted that no outreach to the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA), the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) or the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) had been made since MOS8. She explained that there was a task in the draft IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU Work Programme 2024-2028 to review the overlaps in activity of these RFMOs and assess the potential for collaboration.

### 9.3. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

184. Ms Virtue (Secretariat) introduced CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Inf.9.3 [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#). She noted that CITES remained an important partner for CMS and all its instruments, including the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU. The Secretariat drew attention to CITES [Resolution Conf. 19.5](#) on *Conservation of and trade in marine turtles* and [Decision 18.217](#) (Rev. CoP19) on *Marine turtles* which were adopted by CITES in 2022, and encouraged Signatory States to liaise with their CITES counterparts.
185. The Secretariat reminded participants of a [2019 Study on Legal and Illegal International Trade in Marine Turtles](#) undertaken by CITES which found strong evidence for active international trade, mainly in the South-East Asia region. As a domestic issue, it was something that IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU could help to address. The CITES Secretariat also commissioned a [study](#) on marine turtle bycatch relating to trade.
186. In response to a question from the USA, the Secretariat confirmed that these issues could be followed up in the Illegal Trade Working Group.

### 9.4. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

187. Ms Garcia (Secretariat) provided an update on Ramsar activities related to marine turtles. In 2021 the report "[Ramsar Sites and Marine Turtles: An Overview](#)" by Jacques Fretey and Patrick Triplet had been published and included a region-by-region inventory of turtle habitats with the potential for designation as Ramsar Sites, aiming to create a network that supports the life cycle of marine turtles across their distribution areas. One conclusion was that [Ramsar Resolution XIII.24](#) was inadequate for managing the conservation of oceanic migration corridors between nesting and feeding habitats that sometimes spanned 1000s of kilometres. For migratory turtle species that did not consistently return to exactly the same site for reproduction, the authors recommended a dense network of Ramsar sites, each with individualized management plans, but also regional plans that consider habitat dispersion throughout their life cycles.
188. The Secretariat noted that several new Ramsar Sites had been designated in the IOSEA region where marine turtle species were present, including locations in Indonesia, India, Myanmar, and the United Arab Emirates. None of these sites were currently part of the IOSEA Site Network.



189. Bangladesh drew attention to the Sundarbans Reserve Ramsar site which was habitat for marine turtles.
190. Thailand reported that they were working towards the goal of '30 by 30' (30% of marine areas protected by 2030). They hoped that the Andaman Sea coast, along the border between Thailand and Myanmar, would become a Ramsar site.
191. Kenya reported that it was in the process of designating its first marine Ramsar site, Msambweni-Vanga Land- and Seascape, an important area for marine turtles. This diverse Marine Protected Area was on the border with the United Republic of Tanzania, and Kenya would liaise with their counterparts in Tanzania to explore the possibility of a transboundary Ramsar site.
192. The United Republic of Tanzania drew attention to the Rufiji-Mafia-Kilwa Sea Scape which was declared a Ramsar Site, and is an important site for marine turtle conservation.

## 10. Outreach

### 10.1. New Features of the Website

193. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) gave an overview on the main features of the MOU website. It was in the process of being redesigned as part of a wider CMS review, and the new site would be more intuitive and user friendly while the content would remain the same. The launch date for the new site had not yet been finalised.
194. The Secretariat gave a tour of the main sections of the website and highlighted a number of features including: the news section; the list of Focal Points and Sub-regional Focal Points; new pages on noise and seagrass; publications including capacity-building resources; and the Flipper Tag series and TurtleNet.
195. The Secretariat explained that the Flipper Tag series had two main purposes: to avoid duplication of code numbers used in the region and to help signpost to the appropriate person if a tag was found. She encouraged participants to review this information and send updates as appropriate.
196. The Secretariat further encouraged participants to submit news articles for inclusion in the news section of the website and for the newsletter. The newsletter was a great way to showcase the many excellent projects around the region; it didn't have a fixed timeframe but rather it was produced when there was sufficient content for a full issue.

#### *TurtleNet*

197. Colin Limpus (AC Member) introduced the main features of [TurtleNet](#), a mapping tool displaying the distribution of marine turtle breeding, abundance and migration. The tool, now in its third phase, was first created 30 years ago and was originally housed and delivered by UNEP-WCMC. With changing software and funding limitations, it had been moved several times and was currently hosted by the Queensland Government – Department of Environment, Science and Innovation where Mr Limpus was based, through a partnership with the CMS. An ongoing software upgrade would enable additional functionality in TurtleNet in the near future.



198. Mr Limpus gave an overview of the functionality of TurtleNet. It contained information on sites where turtles had been recorded breeding (both quantified and unquantified records), with the size of the dot on the map being indicative of the abundance of nesting at that site where that information was known. There were a number of filters that could be applied e.g. by species. He noted that for some sites, called index sites, there were almost 100 years of continuous data and in such cases, the trend information could be displayed. TurtleNet could also show the movements of turtles using information from flipper tag data. Videos would soon be available, using data from satellite telemetry, showing the movements of groups of turtles from nesting areas to foraging areas. The updated site would also enable users to filter data by year. A jpeg map could be generated from TurtleNet, functionality that has been used by schools, government agencies and others.
199. Mr Limpus explained that the public could not see the raw data behind the records and if there was a request to access the raw data, it would be referred back to the original data owners. Mr Limpus did not have a budget or a team to work on the database, so TurtleNet was reliant on collaboration with others to ensure it was up-to-date. Geographic gaps in the data reflected the time spent gathering and reviewing literature on those areas.
200. Mr Limpus concluded by encouraging participants to contact him to discuss collaboration and to share nesting, flipper tag and other data.
201. In response to a question from Somalia, Mr Limpus confirmed that, when the updated TurtleNet site was operational, anyone in the world could access and use it.
202. Ms Nel (AC Member) thanked Ms Frisch-Nwakanma and Mr Limpus on behalf of the AC. She reflected that while some flipper tagging schemes continued to rely on postal returns, others now offered options for electronic reporting of tags encountered. She asked Signatory States whether they had moved from the old way of tag returns in favour of using new technology and whether this had impacted the rate of tag returns. She proposed that the AC could be tasked to review how to get the most from flipper tagging using new technology.
203. Mr Limpus noted that tags deployed over 30 years ago were still being returned. He used a post office address, since when the government agency changed address, as had happened several times over that time span, that could otherwise be a challenge. Australia drew attention to a bird and bat tagging scheme running in Australia since 1946, which used a PO Box number for tag returns. The same PO Box number had been retained for the duration of the scheme which helped with returns. They noted, however, that increasingly people tended to search online to learn what to do with a recovered bird band.
204. Ms Nel asked whether TurtleNet could be used to indicate whether conservation interventions were making a difference, e.g. could it show any changes after the establishment of a new Marine Protected Area or a new piece of legislation. Mr Limpus indicated that for some index beaches, changing trends in abundance could be observed, and linked to management (e.g. domestic legislation, CITES measures etc). He explained that he was working with UNEP-WCMC to see whether a layer of the global Marine Protected Areas could be added, in addition to Ramsar site information, which was already included. Ms Nel suggested that the AC could be tasked to reflect on how to maximise this kind of information.



205. Mr Whiting (AC Member) and Ms Tiwari (AC Member) both emphasized the value of TurtleNet. Mr Whiting highlighted the importance of collaboration for the success of a tool like TurtleNet, welcoming the role that the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU could play. He asked whether a promotional video might help to encourage people to contribute data. Ms Tiwari suggested that national report information could be included in TurtleNet.
206. Australia reflected that the database contained a huge amount of information that was displayed in a user-friendly way. They wondered about potential linkages between the data on nesting and foraging used for the ShellBank database and that in TurtleNet.
207. The Secretariat noted that there had been a number of suggestions from the AC to work with Mr Limpus on TurtleNet to see which additional information could be incorporated, and asked if Signatory States would support this. Participants agreed this should be included in the Work Programme 2024-2028 (see also Annex 12 ([Outcome 9.8](#))).

## 10.2. Fact Sheets and Other Outreach Material

208. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) presented CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.10.2 [Fact Sheets and Other Outreach Material](#), noting that the main outreach tools of the MOU were the website and the newsletters. She sought the views of Signatory States on the development of a new series of outreach materials in the form of Fact Sheets, following the example of other instruments, such as CMS and the CMS Sharks MOU. Fact Sheets, on a range of topics, could be distributed as pdfs and printed as required. The current draft of the Work Programme 2024-2028 had a number of items related to outreach but something on fact sheets could be added.
209. The USA requested opportunity to provide input to any such materials when they were being prepared. They highlighted the importance of engagement with Signatory States during the drafting process, including an iterative process for commenting, and transparency on how comments were handled.
210. Australia expressed support for the development of media material relating to marine conservation issues. They suggested that it would be useful to cross-promote materials from elsewhere, e.g. Australia had already developed light pollution fact sheets in line with Guidelines that were recently adopted by CMS. They also proposed greater use of TurtleNet, including using moving animations to showcase marine turtle migration. Australia offered to assist with the development of communications material and with website updates.
211. The suggestion to start developing Fact Sheets was endorsed and added to the Work Programme.

## 10.3. Lessons Learnt from World Sea Turtle Day 2021

212. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) presented CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.10.3 [Lessons Learnt from World Sea Turtle Day 2021](#) on behalf of AC Member Jarina Mohd Jani who was unable to attend MOS9 in person. The document provided an overview of a round-the-clock, virtual event held for World Sea Turtle Day in 2021, the year of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the MOU entering into effect. The videos from the day could be accessed on [YouTube](#) and she highly recommended watching them, as they illustrated the amazing range of activities undertaken around the MOU area.



213. Following the event, local hosts had been sent an evaluation questionnaire. 19 responses from 17 countries had been received. Generally, the local hosts were highly satisfied with the event organization which created a sense of togetherness and helped to foster greater regional collaboration. The Secretariat outlined the recommendations for future events.
214. Mr Manoharakrishnan (NIO-MTTF) asked how many people had viewed the events which should be taken into account when making future plans. The Secretariat agreed that this was an important metric and reported that viewers of the live event varied from 20 to a few hundred. Information on the number of viewers of the YouTube videos after the event would be sought from the CMS.
215. Ms Mohd Jani (AC Member) explained that this was the first time that Signatory States were brought together in this way to participate in a region-wide event on sea turtle awareness. At the time, there were restricted options due to COVID-19. It had been a great opportunity to share the turtle conservation work going on in the region. She encouraged people to watch the videos online which contained some very interesting content about activities in the region.
216. The agenda item concluded by watching a brief compilation of video clips from people around the IOSEA region wishing people a Happy World Sea Turtle Day that had also been used during the event.

## **11. Financial and Administrative Matters**

### **11.1. Review of Income and Expenditures 2019-2024**

217. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) presented CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.11.1 [Review of Income and Expenditures 2019-2024](#) which completed the reporting for the previous budgetary period, which ended in 2019, and reported on the current budgetary period until and including April 2024. It provided an overview of the income received from Signatory States and the shortfall of income received compared to the agreed annual budget. For the period 2015-2019, an average of 55.1% of expected income was received, and for the period 2020-2023, not counting the current year, in which the average was at 49.8%. The Secretariat thanked Thailand and the USA for their contributions for 2024 which had been received since this report ended.
218. The Secretariat noted that as a legally non-binding agreement, contributions to the Trust Fund by Signatory States were voluntary. However, funds were needed to maintain a Secretariat, organize meetings and implement activities. The Secretariat thanked the Signatory States who had contributed and especially those who did so regularly and reliably. She encouraged countries who had not, or not recently, been in a position to contribute to discuss with her the reasons for this.
219. Australia suggested that additional external funding could be explored for high priority activities in the Work Programme. This could include applying to recognized funding mechanisms such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Australia suggested that the list of AC endorsed research projects available on the website could be made more appealing to potential donors through the development of a prospectus summarising key activities. The Chair concurred that finding a way to secure funds for projects in the region might encourage countries to contribute.



220. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma agreed that seeking funding for implementation of work on the ground should be explored and the Work Programme 2024-2028 included an action on this. However, this would not address the need for funding core costs such as the Secretariat, meeting organization, travel etc. She also cautioned that GEF projects required substantial capacity to administer and also that partner countries would be required. External funding for projects would be additional to rather than an alternative to contributing to the MOU itself.
221. Ms Virtue (Secretariat) highlighted the success of the Dugong MoU in securing a GEF project. Experience of that process suggested that an experienced consultant would be needed for an extended period of time in order to secure a GEF project on marine turtles. There was no allocation in the budget for that.
222. In conclusion, participants took note of the report.

### 11.2. Indicative Budget for 2025-2028

223. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) presented CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.11.2 [Indicative Budget for 2025-2028](#) which contained the budget proposal (Annex 1 of Doc.11.2) for the 2025-2028 budgetary period using “a modest but healthy scenario”. Ms Virtue (Secretariat) noted that not all actual staff costs were showing in the budget proposal: her position was fully funded by CMS, along with time of the Administrative and Fund Management Unit and the Conference Service Team of CMS. Signatory States were not expected to cover these costs but should be aware.
224. Australia drew attention to paragraph 8 of Document 11.2 about costs for a part-time assistant at G-4 level which the Secretariat had suggested could be filled by increasing the hours of existing staff or using a consultant. Australia was supportive of whichever option works best for the Secretariat. If a consultant was used, Australia asked whether that would impact the budget lines 12 and 13 (Annex 1) which are related to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and UN “Umoja” costs. The Secretariat clarified that the Umoja costs were calculated for staff so not applicable for consultants. An increase in the hours of an existing staff member to support the MOU would not affect these costs either, as that staff member would already have an account and already pay for their work stations. Therefore, no adjustments to the budget would be needed.
225. Australia next drew attention to paragraph 12 of Document 11.2 which discussed the budget for travel including “attendance at important external meetings”. They asked for clarification on the process to identify and prioritize important external meetings. The Secretariat reported that this budget line had not been used in the previous budgetary period, in part because of reduced travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, there were no examples to fall back on. She explained that meeting prioritization would be on the basis of the priorities agreed in the Work Programme. Signatory States could also indicate important meetings intersessionally, which Australia welcomed.
226. Australia then highlighted paragraph 22 in Document 11.2 which discussed miscellaneous costs including telephone and fax costs (budget line 16). This budget line had not been used in the previous budgetary period and Australia proposed that budget lines 16 and 17 be combined into one line to give more flexibility. This was agreed.
227. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) drew attention to the indicative scale of voluntary contributions provided in Annex 2 of Document 11.2, showing the annual share of the budget foreseen for each Signatory State. Annex 3 contained draft Terms of Reference



for the Trust Fund of the MOU which had been developed based on those of the sister MOU on Migratory Sharks, tailored to fit the specifics of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU.

228. With respect to Annex 3 of Doc.11.2, Australia queried how paragraph 21 stating “the Executive Director of UNEP may proceed to transfer any unspent balance of appropriations to the second, third and fourth calendar year respectively, provided that the total budget approved by the Parties shall not be exceeded” interacted with paragraph 23 stating that “Extra-budgetary contributions may be accepted for purposes that are consistent with the objectives of the MOU.” They noted that if extra budgetary contributions were received, these would exceed the allocated budget.
229. The Secretariat clarified that the MOU could receive earmarked contributions in addition to the agreed budget and so would fall outside the provision in paragraph 21. The intent of paragraph 21 was to ensure that expenditure on standard items did not exceed the budget that Signatory States had agreed for the relevant period. A large external grant would be handled separately to the agreed budget. Australia welcomed the clarification and expressed support for the flexible use of funds as outlined. Australia recognized that to have fully functioning MOU, all Signatory States needed to contribute their due.
230. Noting that the budget and respective activities were tied to the Work Programme 2024-2028, the USA asked for further information on how Signatory States were involved in the final production of the Work Programme 2024-2028. The Secretariat clarified that on the third and fourth days of MOS9, feedback from sub-regional groups would be incorporated into a revised Work Programme for detailed review by all Signatory States and subsequent adoption. This would include ensuring that the overall priorities agreed reflected the wishes of Signatory States, and that the sub-regions agreed with the proposed edits of the other sub-regions.
231. The USA indicated that contributions should be tied to activities and that the Work Programme prioritization would make it easier to demonstrate that a contribution would go to high priority actions, as well as supporting overall administration and Secretariat costs. The Secretariat explained that the budget was primarily to cover the basic costs of the MOU including Secretariat function, meeting and travel costs. There was a very low-level allocation for implementation of other activities, e.g. workshops or developing guidance, and she stressed the difference between maintaining the basic costs to run the MOU and additional funds needed to take forward the Work Programme.
232. In conclusion, Signatory States agreed the budget for the coming intersessional period as reflected in Annex 8 ([Outcome 9.4](#)).

## 12. Institutional Matters

### 12.1. Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committee

233. Ms Virtue (Secretariat) introduced CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.12.1 [Revised Draft Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committee](#). The approaches employed by various instruments in the CMS Family and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) were considered when undertaking the update, which had been developed in consultation with the AC. Much of the content of the previous Terms of Reference had been retained, with some reordering, and a summary of substantive changes was provided in the document. Given the often long timespans between meetings of the Signatory States, the Secretariat proposed that the revised Terms of Reference take effect immediately upon adoption by MOS9.



234. The USA asked if Signatory States had already reviewed the draft ToR. The Secretariat clarified that this was the first time they were being discussed by Signatory States, in line with the mandate given by MOS8 to present them to this meeting.
235. The USA, supported by Australia, proposed that clause 35 be amended so that National Focal Points could attend AC meetings as observers at their own cost. Australia suggested this would help to strengthen the relationship between the AC and Signatory States. Mr Manohar Krishnan (NIO- MTTF) noted that National Focal Points were already involved in the AC through representation of the Sub-Regional Focal Points and the Task Forces. The United Arab Emirates and the Secretariat expressed concern that it would place a logistical burden on the host country if the meeting size increased substantially. Ms Nel noted that not all countries had equal resources to send representatives to meetings and suggested that perhaps National Focal Point attendance could be limited to online participation so there were no financial implications and to ensure equal access. Participants agreed with this suggestion and a corresponding provision was added.
236. Australia suggested adding a provision that requires members of the AC to declare any potential, perceived or actual conflicts of interest on commencement of their term, and as required during their tenure. This was agreed.
237. Australia further drew attention to ambiguous language in paragraph 10 relating to the length of the terms of the committee members. Participants agreed that the term should include two intersessional periods and revised draft text was agreed.
238. Referring to paragraph 20 about continuity of AC members, Australia highlighted a mathematical inconsistency between the number of members to be replaced and the length of a term served. They suggested the text be revised to say that 'Ideally no less than three members should be replaced'. This was agreed.
239. Australia noted that there was no provision in the ToR with respect to funding attendance at the two AC meetings in each intersessional period. However, Document 11.2 on the budget noted that the voluntary fund could be used for AC members to attend meetings and Australia asked if there were any eligibility criteria for this funding. The Secretariat clarified that the budget foresaw funding for all ten members of the AC to attend its meetings. If a need to prioritize occurred, while there were no official criteria to allocate funding, priorities were usually agenda-based, with higher priority given to those that were leading on an issue to be presented at a meeting. The ToR were revised to clarify the funding situation.
240. With these revisions, the Terms of Reference were adopted (see Annex 9 ([Outcome 9.5](#))).

## **12.2. Advisory Committee Membership**

241. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) presented CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.12.2 [Advisory Committee Membership](#) which gave an overview of the status of each of the serving Advisory Committee members. The terms of three members were ongoing (Manjula Tiwari, Scott Whiting, Jarina Mohd Jani). The terms of three other current members were ending at MOS9 but they had been nominated to continue to serve (Robert Baldwin, Mark Hamann, Ronel Nel). These were confirmed.



242. The terms of four members of the AC were ending: Jérôme Bourjea, Jack Frazier, Colin Limpus, Jeffrey Miller. Many of these were long-serving members that had a huge impact on the work of the MOU. The Secretariat drew attention to the option to serve as emeritus members in the newly adopted ToR for the AC and welcomed the interest from some of those stepping down to continue to provide advice where needed. Participants expressed their gratitude to those AC members stepping down. The AC praised their in-depth knowledge, wisdom, sense of humour and humility.
243. Four new members were appointed to the AC: Sali Jayne Bache, Andrea Phillott, Nicolas Pilcher, and Madhuri Ramesh (see [Outcome 9.6](#) for the full membership of the AC).
244. Signatory States agreed that more effort should be put into finding candidates from each of the MOU sub-regions when they were next asked to make nominations.

### 12.3. Nomination of Focal Points

245. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) explained that MOS8 had asked the Secretariat to provide guidance to this meeting on the implications of offering the opportunity to designate administrative, technical or other additional Focal Points. She explained that there were no examples of this in the CMS Family and she had not found an example elsewhere where terms of reference described the roles of different focal points. Following engagement with the Inter-American Convention Secretariat, the IAC Secretary confirmed that they had both technical and political Focal Points, but did not have terms of reference for these. Each IAC member decided how many Focal Points they would like to appoint according to their staff availability, national structure, needs and experience. In many cases, as IAC was a legally binding treaty, countries needed to have a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as their “Political Focal Point”, and the Ministry of Environment or Fisheries provided a “Technical Focal Point”. The arrangement seemed to work well. However, it was important that the Secretariat knows who is who, and that between the two focal points there was a clear understanding of the role of each.
246. The Secretariat concluded that while it could not give clear guidance on whether offering opportunity to designate administrative, technical or other additional Focal Points would be beneficial, it did welcome the option of having an alternate contact who could respond if the main Focal Point was unavailable. She sought guidance from Signatory States on whether the option to designate more than one Focal Point with different roles should be given during future nominations processes.
247. Bahrain was not supportive of having many focal points with different roles, as this was a small MOU, but they did support the option of having an alternative Focal Point for when the main Focal Point was not contactable. Maldives and Sudan supported the option of having more than one Focal Point with different roles, technical and administrative, or on different topics. They agreed with the suggestion from the Secretariat that having an Alternate Focal Point would enable this approach.
248. The Secretariat invited Signatory States to send the names of alternate Focal Points, which could potentially be technical or administrative. The Work Programme 2024-2028 would be updated to include an action for the Secretariat to contact countries to seek alternate Focal Point nominations.



#### 12.4. Sub-regional Focal Points

249. The Chair invited each sub-regional group to confirm their Sub-Regional Focal Points for the intersessional period and MOS10. They were confirmed as: Kenya for the Western Indian Ocean (Seychelles as alternate), Oman for the North-Western Indian Ocean, Maldives for the Northern Indian Ocean, and Thailand for South-East Asia+ (see [Outcome 9.7](#)).

#### 12.5. Key Performance Indicators

250. Ms Garcia (Secretariat) introduced CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.12.5 [Key Performance Indicators](#). The proposed KPIs, presented in Annex 1 of the document, had been developed by the Secretariat and AC and were linked to the objectives of the Conservation and Management Plan and were divided into five impact areas: Organization, People, Knowledge, Policy, and Ecosystems. The KPIs were designed to be qualitative metrics, mainly assessing the level of satisfaction and the perception of Signatory States and other stakeholders regarding the MOU's services and achievements.

251. The next step in this process would be the development of a short questionnaire, based on selected KPIs, to gather specific feedback and suggestions for improvement. Given the specific skills needed for this task, this was proposed to be an activity led by the Advisory Committee, but input from Signatory States, the Marine Turtle Task Forces, and other stakeholders would be crucial. The Secretariat proposed establishing a working group led by the AC.

252. Australia supported the idea of evaluating the MOU with KPIs, but cautioned that this process should not be too onerous. Ms Frisch-Nwakanma (Secretariat) encouraged Signatory States to be involved, including anyone with experience in designing questionnaires.

253. Participants agreed to include the establishment of the working group on KPIs in the Work Programme 2024-2028 (see Annex 12 ([Outcome 9.8](#)) for details).

#### 12.6. Next Meeting of the Signatory States (MOS10)

254. The Chair invited Signatory States to consider offering to host the next MOS which was anticipated to be held in 2028. Expressions of interest should be made to the Secretariat, which stood ready to assist and advise and provide an updated list of requirements.

#### 13. Closure of the Meeting

255. Ms Virtue (Secretariat) gave particular thanks to Colin Limpus (AC Member) on behalf of both CMS and the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU. She noted that Mr Limpus had started working with UNEP in 1995, that he had been a CMS COP-appointed Councillor for almost 30 years, and that he had been very involved in the establishment of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU. She noted his extraordinary contributions to the work of the CMS Family and expressed enormous gratitude to him for his service. While he now had stepped down from his role on the AC, his kind offer to remain involved as emeritus member would be gratefully accepted and the Secretariat looked forward to continued collaboration.



256. After the customary expression of thanks to the hosts for the generous arrangements, to the officers, the participants, the Secretariat and all that had contributed to the success of the meeting, including the support and hotel staff, the Chair declared proceedings closed.



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Annex 2

Agenda

Agenda Item	Document Number
1. Opening Ceremony and Welcoming Remarks	<i>no document</i>
2. Signature of the Memorandum by Additional States	<i>no document</i>
3. Election of Officers	<i>no document</i>
4. Adoption of the Agenda and Schedule	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.4.1/Rev.1</a> <a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.4.2/Rev.1</a>
5. Credentials Committee	<i>no document</i>
6. Review of Implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan	<i>no document</i>
6.1 Report on Implementation of the Work Programme 2020-2024 by the Secretariat and Advisory Committee	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.6.1</a>
6.2 Reports of the Chairs of the Marine Turtle Task Forces and of Sub-regional Focal Points	Ref. <a href="#">9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Western Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Task Force (WIO-MTTF)</a> (2021) Ref. <a href="#">1<sup>st</sup> Sub-Regional Meeting North-Western Indian Ocean</a> (2021) Ref. <a href="#">3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Northern Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Task Force (NIO-MTTF)</a> (2021) Ref. <a href="#">10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Western Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Task Force (WIO-MTTF)</a> (2022) Ref. <a href="#">4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Northern Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Task Force (NIO-MTTF)</a> (2023)
6.3 Analysis of National Reports	<i>no document</i> Ref.: <a href="#">National Reports</a>
7. Further Implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan	<i>no document</i>
7.1. Draft Work Programme 2024-2028	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.7.1</a>
7.2. Capacity-Building Strategy	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.7.2</a>
7.3. National Networks	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.7.3</a>
8. Conservation of Marine Turtles and their Habitats	<i>no document</i>
8.1. Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles in the Indian Ocean - South-East Asia Region	<i>no document</i>



Agenda Item	Document Number
8.1.1. Updates from Existing Sites	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Inf.8.1.1.1</a> (Bu Tinah Shoal, United Arab Emirates) <a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Inf.8.1.1.2</a> (iSimangaliso Wetland Park World Heritage Site, South Africa) <a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Inf.8.1.1.3</a> (Europa Island, France) <a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Inf.8.1.1.4</a> (Rufiji-Mafia Seascape, Tanzania) <a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Inf.8.1.1.5</a> (Con Dao National Park, Viet Nam) <a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Inf.8.1.1.6</a> (Aldabra Atoll, Seychelles) <a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Inf.8.1.1.7</a> (Sir Bu Nair Island, United Arab Emirates) <a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Inf.8.1.1.8</a> (Sheedvar Island, Iran)
8.1.2. Proposals for Inclusion into the Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles in the Indian Ocean South-East Asia Region	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.1.2</a> <a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.1.2.1</a> (Al Qurm Protected Area, United Arab Emirates) <a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.1.2.2</a> (Cox's Bazar Coast, Bangladesh) <a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.1.2.3</a> (Sharma, Jathmoun & Dhargum, Yemen) <a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.1.2.4</a> (Khore Omiera, Yemen)
8.1.3. Maximizing the Benefits of Inclusion in the Site Network	<i>no document</i>
8.2. Beach Management and Hatchery Practices	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.2</a>
8.3. Critical Habitat	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.3</a>
8.4. Illegal Take and Trade	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.4/Rev.1</a>
8.5. Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle ( <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> ) in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.8.5</a> Ref.: <a href="#">UNEP/CMS/COP14/Inf.27.6.1</a>
9. Partnerships and Collaboration	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.9</a>
9.1. Convention on Migratory Species and Related Agreements	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.9.1</a>
9.2. Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and other RFMOs	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.9.2</a>
9.3. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Inf.9.3</a>



Agenda Item	Document Number
9.4. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands	Ref.: <a href="#">Ramsar Sites and Marine Turtles – An Overview</a>
10. Outreach	<i>no document</i>
10.1. New Features of the Website	<i>no document</i>
10.2. Fact Sheets and Other Outreach Material	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.10.2</a>
10.3. Lessons Learnt from World Sea Turtle Day 2021	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.10.3</a>
11. Financial and Administrative Matters	<i>no document</i>
11.1. Review of Income and Expenditures 2019-2024	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.11.1</a>
11.2. Indicative Budget for 2025-2028	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.11.2</a>
12. Institutional Matters	<i>no document</i>
12.1. Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committee	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.12.1</a>
12.2. Advisory Committee Membership	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.12.2</a>
12.3. Nomination of Focal Points	<i>no document</i>
12.4. Sub-regional Focal Points	<i>no document</i>
12.5. Key Performance Indicators	<a href="#">CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.12.5</a>
12.6. Next Meeting of the Signatory States (MOS10)	<i>no document</i>
13. Closure of the Meeting	<i>no document</i>



### **Annex 3**

#### **Opening Address by Professor Riziki Shemdoe, Permanent Secretary, on behalf of the Honourable Abdallah Ulega, Minister of Livestock and Fisheries**

- Chairperson
- Secretary
- Representatives of the Signatory States
- Distinguished guests from Non-Government Organizations
- Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives a great pleasure to speak to you this morning to welcome you at the official opening of the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Signatory States on Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia.

This event is the culmination of an enormous collective effort of CMS, IOSEA, States, Marine Parks and Reserves Tanzania and all participants who registered to attend this meeting – without your attendances we could have no meeting.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to CMS and all Member States for giving our country an opportunity to host the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen, migratory species face a great danger that affect Marine Ecosystems, world heritage resources, and bad enough a threat to our unique different species of Marine Turtles. If not meetings, Action, and implementation of good and objectives assigned for us we will still have a long way to go, and only through joint efforts, we will be able to reach fundamental goals.

In this manner, I consider this 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Signatory States as taking on a transcendental role for the future of the conservation.

Coastal cities expansion, unsustainable industrial development, unfriendly shipping industry poses a threat to habitats with Marine turtles hatching sites. The United Republic of Tanzania has joined hands with IOSEA states by coming up with a National Action Plan for the Conservation of the Marine turtles which was officially launched this year. With this setting of professionals, we hope we will move together towards implementation of the actions set forth, since the marine turtle you see today in Tanzania are the same we will see in another country in the IOSEA region.

Distinguished members and attendees let me express in the name of the Organizing Committee, our most sincere wish that the discussions and agreements resulting from four days for this meeting will positively contribute to the conservation of the sea turtles, their ecosystems, and their habitats.

The United Republic of Tanzania wish to share with you the taste of the gift of nature by visiting different places in Country however where time limits please visit our city as well as marine protected areas and share experiences soon after these sessions.

With the duty ahead (the technical meeting) may I use this opportunity to declare that the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Signatory States, in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania 2024 is officially opened.

Thank You for Listening.



## Annex 4

### Remarks of Dr Abdullah Al Zaidan (Kuwait) on Signature of the MOU

Since this is the first time for Kuwait to be given such opportunity to take the floor I would like to thank the hosting country Tanzania for their warm hospitality and also the hard work the secretariat and the Signatory States of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU have conducted for a successful 9th meeting bringing together specialists around the different regions of the globe to protect these unique organisms and their fragile ecosystems against the ongoing anthropogenic activities and global challenges.

Madam chair, the marine sea turtles are of special historical relation and connection to Kuwait since the Dilmun civilization. Ruins found on Failaka island date back 2000 years ago show sea turtles drawings on them. In the early 1990s special research was conducted by Dr. Salem Al-Mohanna from Kuwait University to understand population distribution and species identification quantitatively and qualitatively. And the first book was published under the title of Sea Turtles of Kuwait in 2004.

A rescue and rehabilitation program for the injured and stranded marine turtles was established 10yrs ago by myself and with the aid of the Scientific centre and such program is still ongoing. Through such program we have also strengthen the bonds with the local NGO's and Coast guard, research institutes and general public to aid with its success.

In 2022 and 2023 for the first time through such program Kuwait was able to release the rehabilitated turtles back into the wild fitted with tracking devices and by doing that we have the first data established for Kuwait knowing the route of migration within the Arabian Gulf reaching the western coastlines of India. Such technology will aid and guide us through the implementation of legislations to protect the local nesting grounds and to exchange information regionally and internationally.

Within the past 25yrs Kuwait has established many capacity-building programs with the local Governmental and Non-governmental bodies to monitor the frequent visits of turtle nesting sites especially within the southern coastal areas to better understand the main factors effecting these precious organisms.

The state of Kuwait's priority of conservation is implementation of the different international conventions the country has adopted such as CBD, CITES and also regional commitments by ROPME which all seek for the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats in addition to EPA law 42/2014 article 100 that prevents the capture of disturbance of wild fauna and their nesting grounds.

Madam Chair, distinguished guests, I would like thank you for such an opportunity and guarantee that the addition of the state of Kuwait to the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU will aid the turtle preservation, protection awareness and management cause toward the conservation action to be fulfilled on a national, regional and international level.



**Annex 5**

**Work Programme 2024-2028**

(also available as [Outcome 9.1](#))



CMP <sup>4</sup>	Subject	Measures to be taken	In-Country Actors <sup>5</sup>	Support from AC, Sec & MTTF (* requires funding)	Overall Priority	WIO <sup>6</sup>	NW IO <sup>7</sup>	NIO <sup>8</sup>	SEA <sup>+</sup> <sup>9</sup>
<b>Section 1: Measures that Implement CMP Objectives and Programmes</b>									
<b>Objective 1: Reduce direct and indirect causes of marine turtle mortality</b>									
1.1	<b>Identify and document the threats to marine turtle populations and their habitats</b> a) Collate and organise existing data on threats to marine turtle populations b) Establish baseline data collection and monitoring programmes to gather information on the nature and magnitude of threats c) Determine those populations affected by traditional and direct harvest, incidental capture in fisheries, and other sources of mortality								
	Threat assessment	1. Conduct a situational analysis of threats to sea turtle populations in the SEA+ region a) Identify gaps in knowledge on threats b) Prioritize threats based on impacts to populations (e.g., risk analysis)	Sigs NGO Res	AC to provide advice upon request.		n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Genetics Fisheries Interactions Take and Trade	2. Determine population-specific threats to be used as a basis for monitoring and management: a) collect samples to perform genetic analysis on marine turtles caught in fisheries interactions, take or trade and record results systematically b) using existing information (e.g., satellite tracking, stable isotopes, flipper tags, genetic markers) to determine population structure of marine turtles caught in fisheries interactions, take or trade c) map potential overlaps of fishing activities and turtle distribution.	Sigs NGO Res	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	H	H	

<sup>4</sup> **CMP** = Conservation and Management Plan. Number of the Programme (indicated by a number) or a specific activity (indicated by a number and a letter) from the CMP

<sup>5</sup> **AC** = Advisory Committee, **Cons** = specialized project consultancy, **CBD** = Convention on Biological Diversity, **CBM** = Community Fisheries Initiatives, **CITES** = *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora*, **Exp** = in-country or external experts, **Fleets** = nations with fleets in the region, **IGO** = Intergovernmental Organizations, **ITWG** = IOSEA Illegal Trade Working Group, **LC** = Local Communities, **Media** = media, incl. social media **MTSG** = IUCN Species Survival Commission Marine Turtle Specialist Group, **MTTF** = IOSEA Marine Turtle Task Forces, **Nat St** = national stakeholders, **NGO** = Non-governmental Organizations, **Res** = research institutions, **PS** = private sector, **RFMO** = Regional Fisheries Management Organizations, **RS** = Range States, **Sec** = Secretariat, **Sigs** = Signatory States, **SRFP** = IOSEA Sub-regional Focal Points

<sup>6</sup> Western Indian Ocean Sub-Region (Sigs: Comoros, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania)

<sup>7</sup> North-Western Indian Ocean Sub-Region (Sigs: Bahrain, Egypt, Eritrea, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, Yemen)

<sup>8</sup> Northern Indian Ocean Sub-Region (Sigs: Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka)

<sup>9</sup> South-East Asia+ Sub-Region (Sigs: Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam + Australia, United States)



CMP <sup>4</sup>	Subject	Measures to be taken	In-Country Actors <sup>5</sup>	Support from AC, Sec & MTF (* requires funding)	Overall Priority	WIO <sup>6</sup>	NW IO <sup>7</sup>	NIO <sup>8</sup>	SEA <sup>+</sup> <sup>9</sup>
	Marine Debris Pollution Health Genetics	<p>3. Assess vulnerability of turtles to marine pollution, including marine debris entanglement and ingestion, heavy metals, and chemical pollutants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) investigate transport, abundance, exposure pathways of marine pollution to describe the impact on marine turtles, life stage of turtle affected and estimated numbers affected</li> <li>b) investigate impact on each genetic stock / population / management unit</li> <li>c) Identify the locations where mitigation is required including marine spatial planning with sensitive areas identified</li> <li>d) Review and or develop effective waste management plans (liquid, solid)</li> <li>e) Monitor causes of mortality and injury in strandings</li> </ul>	Sigs NGO Res	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	H	H	
	Noise Pollution	<p>4. Review, investigate and measure impacts of noise on turtles, including underwater, in-ground and aerial noise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Conduct mapping of where noise pollution and sea turtle distribution overlap</li> <li>b) Identify the locations where mitigation is required, and include them in marine spatial planning with sensitive areas identified</li> <li>c) Exchange information on and make use of existing guidelines/best practices aimed at reducing noise pollution underwater, in-ground and at nesting beaches<sup>10</sup></li> </ul>	Sigs NGO Res PS	AC to provide advice upon request.	M	H	M	L	
	Light Pollution	<p>5. Collect data on light pollution and its impact on nesting turtles and their hatchlings on the beaches and at sea.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Conduct mapping of where light pollution and sea turtle distribution overlap</li> <li>b) Identify the locations where mitigation is required, and include them in marine spatial planning with sensitive areas identified</li> <li>c) Exchange information on and make use of existing guidelines/best practices aimed at reducing light pollution on nesting beaches<sup>11</sup></li> </ul>	Sigs NGO Res PS	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	H	M	

<sup>10</sup> See also #22

<sup>11</sup> See also #21



CMP <sup>4</sup>	Subject	Measures to be taken	In-Country Actors <sup>5</sup>	Support from AC, Sec & MTTF (* requires funding)	Overall Priority	WIO <sup>6</sup>	NW IO <sup>7</sup>	NIO <sup>8</sup>	SEA <sup>+</sup> <sup>9</sup>
	Climate Change	6. Identify the current and potential impacts of climate change on all life stages of marine turtles present and map the critical habitats at risk, including nesting beaches and in-water habitats, at national and regional levels, and come up with mitigation strategies.	Sigs NGO Res	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	H	H	
	Fisheries Interactions National Reporting	7. Report on the status of on-board observer programmes, and/or alternative data collection methods, and the status of marine turtle bycatch recording within those observer programmes, including by improving technology use on vessels (e.g. cameras) to facilitate remote observation.	Sigs	AC to analyse the information and develop recommendations.	H	H	H	H	
	Fisheries Interactions	8. Collaborate with the CMS Scientific Council in addressing CMS Decision 14.33 to: a) identify regions where reviews of relative levels of bycatch of CMS-listed marine mammals and marine turtles in commercial and artisanal fisheries would be a priority and/or beneficial; collaborate with all relevant organizations including fisheries management bodies to develop regional reviews with a view to reducing the levels of bycatch of all CMS-listed marine mammals and turtles in commercial and artisanal fisheries; identify and prioritize fisheries and areas in which adverse impacts of bycatch are highest for CMS-listed marine mammals and turtles and cooperate with the relevant organizations, including fisheries bodies to develop the most appropriate bycatch mitigation measures for fisheries of highest priority; and develop appropriate bycatch mitigation measures with associated timebound action plans; b) in collaboration with the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU and, if possible, the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles and the Caribbean Environment Programme, review current knowledge about existing measures to reduce and mitigate bycatch of marine turtles for both commercial fisheries and artisanal fisheries, and make recommendations to Parties and the Signatory States of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU on the most effective and appropriate measures to reduce and mitigate bycatch, while ensuring that recommended measures do not act to the disadvantage of other CMS-listed marine species.		AC to establish and lead a Steering Group on Bycatch to a) develop an implementation approach and recommendations b) draft ToR for identified potential implementing agencies/ individuals.	M		M	M	



CMP <sup>4</sup>	Subject	Measures to be taken	In-Country Actors <sup>5</sup>	Support from AC, Sec & MTTF (* requires funding)	Overall Priority	WIO <sup>6</sup>	NW IO <sup>7</sup>	NIO <sup>8</sup>	SEA <sup>+</sup> <sup>9</sup>
	Fisheries Interactions Take and Trade	9. Conduct community surveys to estimate catch and motivations behind that catch to identify solutions to mitigate targeted take and bycatch by using and adapting as appropriate e.g. the questionnaire developed by the CMS Dugong MOU	Sigs NGO Res	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	M	H	H	
	Marine Debris Cooperation	10. Collect data on ghost gear, and entanglement of turtles in ghost gear, and develop rehabilitation/rescue plans and ghost gear removal programmes.	Sigs NGO Res	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	M	H	H	
	Nesting Sites	11. Establish and/or continue a reliable nesting beach monitoring programme <sup>12</sup> to monitor and report current threats impacting nesting and hatching, using reliable methods that are standardized across the years.	Sigs NGO Res	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	H	H	
	Climate Change Marine Debris Light Pollution Cooperation	12. Collaborate with the CMS Scientific Council in addressing CMS Decision 14.94 to: a) review, as far as feasible in collaboration with 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) and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles, relevant scientific information on conservation and threats to marine turtles in a region- and species-specific context, including their vulnerability to climate change, the threats of plastic pollution and light pollution on post-hatchlings, and the identification of habitats resilient to climate change as these habitats may require increased conservation effort over time; and b) based on this review, develop new recommendations for the conservation of all species of marine turtle included in Appendix I or II of the Convention including on the preservation of the current nesting beaches and the identification of new nesting beaches, and collate current and innovative management options to mitigate the effects of climate change on nesting beaches, such as beach cooling and beach restoration projects, for presentation at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.		AC to establish and lead a Steering Group to advise on implementation of these mandates. Sec to assist by organizing an expert workshop. *	M		M	M	

<sup>12</sup> Signatories in the NWIO sub-region to consult PERSGA manuals (available [here](#))



CMP <sup>4</sup>	Subject	Measures to be taken	In-Country Actors <sup>5</sup>	Support from AC, Sec & MTTF (* requires funding)	Overall Priority	WIO <sup>6</sup>	NW IO <sup>7</sup>	NIO <sup>8</sup>	SEA <sup>+</sup> <sup>9</sup>
	Information Sharing	13. Identify or establish and maintain long-term national secure data management systems, and consider sharing data with relevant regional and global databases.	Sigs NGO Res	AC and MTTF to provide advice on relevant regional and global databases.	H	H	M	H	
	Species: Olive Ridley	14. Initiate the next species assessment for Olive Ridley Turtles.		AC to lead.	H	L	H	H	
	Species: Flatback	15. Circulate the Red List Assessment for Flatback Turtles once it is completed and provide a summary document of it, if required.		AC to provide summary, if required. Sec to circulate.		n/a	n/a	n/a	
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Determine and apply best practice approaches to minimising those threats to marine turtle populations and their habitats</b> <b>a) Identify and document best practice protocols for conserving and managing marine turtle populations within the region</b> <b>b) Adapt and adopt the best conservation and management practices for marine turtle populations</b>								
	Methods Standardization	16. Identify, tailor to local context, and apply best practice protocols to mitigate main threats to marine turtle populations.	Sigs NGO Res	AC to provide guidance on best practice protocols.	H	H	H	M	
	Nesting Sites Hatcheries	17. Use the guidelines on the management of beaches as an ecosystem and for successful hatchling production <sup>13</sup> , including management of hatcheries if and when required, as presented to MOS9. a) Review existing national beach management guidelines to ensure sea turtle protection needs are met. b) Identify and map the existing nesting sites c) Identify other potential sites for nesting.	Sigs NGO Res	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	H	H	

<sup>13</sup> See MOS9/Doc.8.2 [Beach Management and Hatchery Practices](http://www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources) (available on [www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources](http://www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources)); relates also to CMP Programme 1.6 Develop nesting beach management programmes to maximize hatchling recruitment



CMP <sup>4</sup>	Subject	Measures to be taken	In-Country Actors <sup>5</sup>	Support from AC, Sec & MTTF (* requires funding)	Overall Priority	WIO <sup>6</sup>	NW IO <sup>7</sup>	NIO <sup>8</sup>	SEA <sup>+</sup> <sup>9</sup>
	Nesting Sites Hatcheries Climate Change	18. Expand the guidelines on the management of beaches as an ecosystem and for successful hatchling production to include relevant mandates given in CMS Decision 14.94 (see measure #12 above).		AC to establish and lead a Steering Group. Consult with MTTFs and other sub-regional experts through workshops. * Develop revised guidelines including recommendations.	H	H	M	H	
	Nesting Sites Hatcheries	19. Organize workshops to disseminate best practice information for the protection of eggs and hatchlings.	Sigs NGO Res	AC to lead. Secretariat to invite countries to nominate to participate in the training and assist by organizing workshops. *	M	M	M	H	
	Tourism Cooperation	20. Utilize the CMS <i>Guidelines for Recreational In-Water Interactions with Marine Wildlife</i> <sup>14</sup> nationally and disseminate them to relevant national authorities/departments and tourism operators.	Sigs NGO Res	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	M	H	H	
	Light Pollution Cooperation	21. Utilize the CMS <i>International Light Pollution Guidelines for Migratory Species</i> <sup>15</sup> nationally and disseminate them to the relevant authorities/departments.	Sigs NGO Res	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	M	H	H	
	Noise Pollution	22. Utilize the CMS <i>Family Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessments for Marine Noise-generating Activities</i> <sup>16</sup> and disseminate them to relevant authorities/departments.	Sigs NGO Res	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	M	H	H	

<sup>14</sup> See Resolution 12.16 (Rev.COP14) [Recreational In-Water Interaction with Aquatic Wildlife](#) and Resolution 11.29 (Rev.COP12) [Sustainable Boat-based Marine Wildlife Watching](#)

<sup>15</sup> See Resolution 13.5 (Rev.COP14) [CMS International Light Pollution Guidelines for Migratory Species](#)

<sup>16</sup> See Resolution 12.14 [Adverse Impacts of Anthropogenic Noise on Cetaceans and Other Migratory Species](#)



CMP <sup>4</sup>	Subject	Measures to be taken	In-Country Actors <sup>5</sup>	Support from AC, Sec & MTTF (* requires funding)	Overall Priority	WIO <sup>6</sup>	NW IO <sup>7</sup>	NIO <sup>8</sup>	SEA <sup>+</sup> <sup>9</sup>
1.3	<b>Implement programmes to correct adverse economic incentives that threaten marine turtle populations</b> a) <b>Conduct socio-economic studies among communities that interact with marine turtles and their habitats</b> b) <b>Identify desired modifications to the economic incentives in order to reduce threats and mortality, and develop programmes to implement the modifications</b> c) <b>Identify resources and sources of funding for the programmes</b>								
	Socio-economics	23. Identify and assess the suitability of available tools and mechanisms that incorporate engagement with all stakeholders to evaluate and address socio-economic issues.	Cons NGO Res	MTTF to coordinate in the sub-region and report to AC. AC to review and provide recommendations.	H	H	M	H	
	Socio-economics Take and Trade	24. Review knowledge on motivations and drivers that underpin the use and trade of marine turtles, turtle products, eggs and hatchlings in order to develop context-specific solutions	Sigs NGO Res	MTTF to coordinate in the sub-region and report to AC. AC to review and provide recommendations.	M	H	M	M	
1.4	<b>Reduce to the greatest extent practicable the incidental capture and mortality of marine turtles in the course of fishing activities</b> a) <b>Develop and use gear, devices and techniques to minimise incidental capture of marine turtles in fisheries, such as devices that effectively allow the escape of marine turtles, and spatial and seasonal closures</b> b) <b>Develop procedures and training programmes to promote implementation of these measures, such as vessel monitoring systems and inspections at sea, in port and at landing sites, and national on-board observer programmes</b> c) <b>Exchange information and, upon request, provide technical assistance to other Signatory States to promote these activities</b> d) <b>Liaise and coordinate with fisheries industries and fisheries management organisations to develop and implement incidental capture mitigation mechanisms in national waters and on the high seas</b> e) <b>Support the UN General Assembly resolution 46/215 concerning the moratorium on the use of large-scale driftnets on the high seas</b> f) <b>Develop and implement net retention and recycling schemes to minimise the disposal of fishing gear at sea and on beaches</b> g) <b>Provide and ensure the use of port facilities for the disposal of ship-borne waste</b>								
	Fisheries Interactions	25. Establish or continue national and/or regional bycatch mitigation programmes for industrial and artisanal fisheries (including gear modification, TEDs, and improved fishing practices to reduce bycatch).	Sigs Fleets RFMO NGO CBM PS	AC-led Steering Group on Bycatch to provide advice upon request.	H	H	H	H	



CMP <sup>4</sup>	Subject	Measures to be taken	In-Country Actors <sup>5</sup>	Support from AC, Sec & MTTF (* requires funding)	Overall Priority	WIO <sup>6</sup>	NW IO <sup>7</sup>	NIO <sup>8</sup>	SEA <sup>+</sup> <sup>9</sup>
	Fisheries Interactions	26. Identify high priority areas, sea turtle RMUs and fisheries for establishing additional bycatch mitigation programmes.	Sigs Fleets Res PS	AC-led Steering Group on Bycatch to provide advice upon request.	H	H	H	H	
	Fisheries Interactions	27. Promote national observer, assessment, and quantification programmes to assess the impact on different turtle life stages and populations.	Sigs Fleets RFMO PS	AC-led Steering Group on Bycatch to provide advice upon request.	H	M	H	H	
	Fisheries Interactions Cooperation	28. Ensure that concerns related to fisheries interactions with marine turtles are presented at relevant RFMO Meetings a) initiate dialogue on current issues of concern among Signatories and RFMO members in advance of each RFMO meeting (including subsidiary bodies) b) National Focal Points to communicate important issues to members of national delegations attending relevant RFMOs in advance of each meeting	Sigs Res NGO	AC-led Steering Group on Bycatch to provide advice. Secretariat to communicate with National Focal Points regarding upcoming RFMO meetings.	M	M	L	H	
1.5	<p><b>Prohibit the direct harvest (capture or killing) of, and domestic trade in, marine turtles, their eggs, parts or products, whilst allowing exceptions for traditional harvest by communities within each jurisdiction provided that: such harvest does not undermine efforts to protect, conserve and recover marine turtle populations and their habitats; and the marine turtle populations in question are able to sustain the harvest</b></p> <p>a) Enact, where not already in place, legislation to prohibit direct harvest and domestic trade b) Assess the level and impact of traditional harvest on marine turtles and their eggs c) Establish management programmes that may include limits on levels of intentional harvest d) Determine the cultural and traditional values and economic uses of marine turtles (both consumptive and non-consumptive) e) Negotiate, where appropriate, management agreements on the sustainable level of traditional harvest, in consultation with other concerned States, to ensure that such harvest does not undermine conservation efforts</p>								
	Take and Trade Cooperation	29. Engage with the Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group of the CMS Scientific Council and transmit any relevant advice to Signatories.		AC to lead with participation from ITWG	M	M	M	L	



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	Take and Trade Cooperation	30. Improve enforcement of national legislation on exploitation of turtles, if needed: a) identify efficiencies and/or inconsistencies and/or gaps in existing legislation, judicial processes and actions in communities b) identify and articulate resource needs and raise funds required to improve outcomes c) build field-level capacity at national and regional levels, if required d) take into consideration the knowledge and laws of local communities and indigenous peoples	Sigs CITES NGO Res LC	AC to provide advice on request and review recommendations contained in the draft Marine Turtle Legislative Review (WWF/CMS/SPREP)	H	H	H	M	
	Stakeholder Engagement	31. Consider applying effective techniques to ensure that concerns of subsistence resource users are incorporated in decision-making.	Sigs NGO Res LC	MTTF and AC to provide advice on request.	M	L	M	M	
	Socio-economics	32. In consultation with local communities, develop culturally acceptable management agreements on the sustainable level of legal traditional harvest, where appropriate.	Sigs NGO CBM LC	MTTF and AC to provide advice on request.	L	L	M	L	
	Stakeholder Engagement Cooperation Socio-economics	33. In consultation with local communities, develop culturally acceptable recommendations on human dimensions, incl. cultural and traditional values and economic values, and behaviour-change models informed by social science concepts to understand and reduce the demand for use and trade of marine turtle products, where appropriate.	Sigs Res NGO CBM LC	MTTF and AC to provide advice on request.	H	H	M	H	
<b>1.6</b>	<b>Develop nesting beach management programmes to maximize hatchling recruitment</b> a) Evaluate the effectiveness of nest and beach management programmes b) Reduce the mortality of eggs and hatchlings to maximise hatchling recruitment and survival, preferably using conservation techniques that emphasize natural processes wherever possible c) Minimise the mortality of eggs, hatchlings and nesting female turtles caused by feral and domestic animals								
	Habitat Protection Nesting Sites	34. Review effectiveness of nest and beach management programmes, in particular at index beaches, including evaluation of nesting success, clutch survival, hatching and emergence success, hatchling fitness, and hatchlings entering the sea.	Sigs NGO Res LC	AC to provide advice on request.	H	H	H	H	



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	Habitat Protection Nesting Sites Information Sharing	35. Share information and best practices on measures used successfully in nest and beach management programmes.	Sigs NGO Res LC	MTTF and AC to share or compile and update as necessary.	H	H	H	H	
<b>Objective 2. Protect, conserve and rehabilitate marine turtle habitats</b>									
2.1	<b>Establish necessary measures to protect and conserve marine turtle habitats</b> a) Identify areas of critical habitat such as migratory corridors, nesting beaches, inter-nesting and feeding areas b) Designate and manage protected/conservation areas, sanctuaries or temporary exclusion zones in areas of critical habitat, or take other measures (e.g. modification of fishing gear, restrictions on vessel traffic) to remove threats to such areas c) Develop incentives for adequate protection of areas of critical habitat outside protected areas d) Undertake assessments of the environmental impact of marine and coastal development and other human activities that may affect marine turtle populations and their habitats e) Manage and regulate within each jurisdiction the use of beaches and coastal dunes, for example location and design of buildings, use of artificial lighting, and transit of vehicles in nesting areas f) Monitor and promote the protection of water quality from land-based and maritime pollution, including marine debris, that may adversely affect marine turtles g) Strengthen the application of existing bans on the use of poisonous chemicals and explosives in the exploitation of marine resources								
	Habitat Protection	36. Identify critical habitats for each turtle management unit and life stage, such as nesting beaches, inter-nesting habitats, migratory corridors, foraging habitats and oceanic dispersal areas, making use of the criteria developed by the AC, <sup>17</sup> as appropriate.	Sigs NGO Res LC PS	AC to provide advice on request.	H	H	M	H	
	Habitat Protection	37. Identify, protect and adequately manage critical habitats for each species, contributing to meeting the '30 by 30' target of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.	Sigs LC CBD Res NGO	AC to provide advice on request.	H	H	H	H	
	Habitat Protection	38. Identify habitats already protected, as well as critical habitats still in need of protection, and create protected area networks to provide management and connectivity.	Sigs NGO Res	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	H	H	

<sup>17</sup> See [Critical Habitat for Sea Turtles in the IOSEA Region](http://www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources) (available on [www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources](http://www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources))



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	Habitat Protection	39. In any beach management measures, consider the potential impact of planting non-native vegetation (e.g. Casuarina trees) <sup>18</sup> and evaluate which native plants could serve the purposes of providing shading, shielding and beach protection without the negative side effects of non-native vegetation.	Sigs NGO Res LC	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	M	H	
	Tourism	40. Where coastal tourism occurs, ensure it is following best practices of ecotourism <sup>19</sup> to minimize impacts to marine turtles and their habitats, while seeking opportunities to engage local communities.	Sigs NGO Res LC PS	AC to provide advice upon request and include in development of beach management guidelines.	H	M	H	H	
<b>Site Network</b>									
	Site Network	41. Revive the Site Network Discussion Group to provide advice to Site Managers, identify funding sources, and discuss how the designation can add value to the accepted Sites, and maximize the benefit to the IOSEA network.	Sigs NGO LC	Sec to update membership and initiate discussions. AC to provide advice upon request.	H	M	H	H	
	Site Network	42. Establish a working group <sup>20</sup> to further revise the Site Information Template required for proposal of sites and the associated evaluation criteria and scoring instructions. It will deliver its outputs to the Secretariat by 30 June 2025 for circulation to the Signatories for their comments within two months. The Secretariat will circulate to Signatories the final proposals for intersessional adoption by correspondence in order to enable their use in the run-up to MOS10.	Sigs NGO	AC and Sec to engage.	H				
	Site Network Cooperation	43. Consider nominating IOSEA Network Sites under legally binding mechanisms, such as those under the Ramsar Convention, to achieve additional support and recognition.	Sigs Res NGO LC	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	H	H	

<sup>18</sup> See MOS8/Doc.7.4 [The Vulnerability of Casuarina-backed Sea Turtle Nesting Beaches to Erosion](http://www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources) (available on [www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources](http://www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources))

<sup>19</sup> See definition of principles of ecotourism here: <https://ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism/>

<sup>20</sup> Members: Australia, Papua New Guinea, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, United States, Advisory Committee (other Signatories and MTTF Members are welcome to join)



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	Site Network	44. Prepare brief updates on the situation in IOSEA Network Sites using a form circulated by the Secretariat in advance of MOS10.	Sigs	Sec to circulate form to Focal Points and Site Managers.	H				
<b>Environmental Impact Assessments</b>									
	Environmental Impact Assessment	45. Analyse if and how marine turtles and their habitats are considered in EIA processes in place in each country.	Sigs Res NGO LC PS	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	H	H	
	Environmental Impact Assessment	46. If needed, use the <i>Guidelines for the review of EIAs of developments impacting on sea turtles and turtle habitat</i> <sup>21</sup> and incorporate turtle conservation needs into EIA / risk assessment of new developments and into Integrated Coastal Zone Management and spatial planning processes. The key emerging issues may include: energy sector (e.g. oil refineries, nuclear power energy plants, offshore wind developments), desalination infrastructure development and effluent, harbour development and dredged channels, industrial and domestic wastewater, light pollution (residential and tourism development and industrial activities).	Sigs Cons PS NGO Res LC	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	H	H	
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Rehabilitate degraded marine turtle habitats</b> a) Re-vegetate, where appropriate, frontal dunes at nesting beaches, with indigenous flora as far as possible, in order to provide visual barriers to coastal development and to restore appropriate beach temperature regimes b) Remove debris that impedes turtle nesting and hatchling production c) Enhance recovery of degraded coral reefs d) Enhance recovery of degraded mangrove and seagrass habitats								
	Habitat Protection	47. Identify key areas for habitat restoration, e.g. coral reefs, nesting beaches, mangrove, seagrass, and intertidal habitats, and address existing and potential threats using best practice guidelines.	Sigs Res NGO LC	AC and MTTF, assisted by Sec, to provide advice on best practice guidelines.	H	H	H	H	

<sup>21</sup> See MOS8/Doc.7.5 [EIA guidelines regarding impacts on sea turtles and their habitats](http://www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources) (available on [www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources](http://www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources))



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		<b>Objective 3. Improve understanding of marine turtle ecology and populations through research, monitoring and information exchange</b>							
	Research Funding	48. Review and prioritize by sub-region or country the <i>List of AC-endorsed research and other priorities</i> <sup>22</sup> , to leverage funding for research on marine turtles and their habitats. <sup>23</sup>	Sigs NGO Res	AC to review and update periodically.	H	M	H	H	
3.1	<b>Conduct studies on marine turtles and their habitats targeted to their conservation and management<sup>24</sup></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Conduct baseline studies or gather secondary information on marine turtle populations and their habitats</li> <li>b) Initiate and/or continue long-term monitoring of priority marine turtle populations in order to assess conservation status</li> <li>c) Characterise genetic identity of marine turtle populations</li> <li>d) Identify migratory routes through the use of tagging, genetic studies and/or satellite tracking</li> <li>e) Carry out studies on marine turtle population dynamics and survival rates</li> <li>f) Conduct research on the frequency and pathology of diseases of marine turtles</li> <li>g) Promote the use of traditional ecological knowledge in research studies</li> <li>h) Review periodically and evaluate research and monitoring activities</li> </ul>								

<sup>22</sup> See [List of IOSEA AC-endorsed research and other priorities to help to leverage funding for scientific research](http://www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources) (available on [www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources](http://www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources))

<sup>23</sup> Relates also to CMP Programme 3.2 Conduct collaborative research and monitoring

<sup>24</sup> Relates also to CMP Programme 3.2 Conduct collaborative research and monitoring, and CMP Programme 3.3 Analyse data to support mitigation of threats and to assess and improve conservation practices



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	Biological Research	<p>49. Improve understanding of the biological structure of marine turtle populations through scientific and traditional knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) explore opportunities to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge in IOSEA processes and considerations</li> <li>b) prioritize major research gaps in each sub-region</li> <li>b) quantify key demographic parameters (e.g. reproductive output, clutches per season, remigration interval, growth rates, annual survivorship, sex ratio)</li> <li>c) map the breeding distributions and assess population size and status (e.g., TurtleNet)</li> <li>d) determine foraging distributions, migration pathways, habitat use etc, using appropriate technology, (e.g. flipper and pit tagging, satellite telemetry, genetic sampling, photo-ID) (TurtleNet)</li> <li>e) collect data on hatchling production including sex ratios, fitness, health and survivorship</li> <li>f) improve understanding of the dispersal mechanisms and routes for marine turtle hatchlings and post-hatchlings, and migration routes for adults of each of the management units.</li> </ul>	Sigs NGO Res	AC and MTTF to provide advice upon request.	H	M	H	H	



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	Genetics	50. Conduct genetic analyses to identify genetic stocks (management units) for marine turtles: a) compile and assess available information to identify gaps, needs and opportunities for regional analyses to inform genetic stock assessment, starting with nesting beach sampling b) develop maps for each genetic stock indicating rookery locations and habitat use in pelagic and benthic environments, to provide greater resolution to the Regional Management Unit (RMU) 2.0 maps given in Wallace et al. (2023) <sup>25</sup> c) incorporate genetic sampling into ongoing monitoring activities (subject to budget and resources available) d) agree on, and then use, a standardize protocol for collection and storage of samples to ensure they will remain usable in the long term e) address capacity building gaps and needs to enable in-country analyses, upon request	Sigs NGO Res	AC to provide advice on standardizing protocols. AC and Secretariat to facilitate contacts with laboratories and experts, incl. specialized working groups. Sec to liaise with CITES Sec to promote simplification of obtaining permits for sending of genetic samples.	H	H	H	H	
	Genetics	51. Periodically contribute, if appropriate, to a list of genetic samples collected in the IOSEA region and publish it on the IOSEA website.	Sigs NGO Res	MTTF to help compile information. Sec to publish on website.	M	M	L	H	
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Conduct collaborative research and monitoring</b> a) <b>Identify and include priority research and monitoring needs in regional and sub-regional action plans</b> b) <b>Conduct collaborative studies and monitoring on genetic identity, conservation status, migrations, and other biological and ecological aspects of marine turtles</b>								
	Sub-regional Coordination	52. Promote and engage in collaborative studies within and among sub-regions.	Sigs NGO Res	AC and MTTF to identify and facilitate.	H	M	H	H	

<sup>25</sup> Wallace et al. (2023) Marine turtle regional management units 2.0: an updated framework for conservation and research of wide-ranging megafauna species. *Endang Species Res* 52:209-223. <https://doi.org/10.3354/esr01243>



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3.3	<b>Analyse data to support mitigation of threats and to assess and improve conservation practices</b> a) <b>Prioritise populations for conservation actions</b> b) <b>Identify population trends</b> c) <b>Use research results to improve management, mitigate threats and assess the efficacy of conservation activities (e.g. hatchery management practices, habitat loss, etc.)</b>								
	Information Sharing Evaluation	53. Ensure that data collected and existing trend analyses are used to a) inform and prioritize conservation action through periodic population trend analyses b) Evaluate the effectiveness of mitigation measures and conservation and management practices.	Sigs NGO Res	AC and MTTF to provide advice upon request. AC to identify priority sites or populations at regional level.	H	H	M	H	
3.4	<b>Exchange Information</b> a) <b>Standardise methods and levels of data collection and adopt or develop an agreed set of protocols for inter alia monitoring of nesting beaches, feeding ground studies, genetic sampling, and collection of mortality data</b> b) <b>Determine the most appropriate methods for information dissemination</b> c) <b>Exchange at regular intervals scientific and technical information and expertise among nations, scientific institutions, non-governmental and international organisations, in order to develop and implement best practice approaches to conservation of marine turtles and their habitats</b> d) <b>Disseminate traditional knowledge on marine turtles and their habitats for conservation and management</b> e) <b>Compile on a regular basis data on marine turtle populations of regional interest</b>								
	Method Standardization	54. Review, and apply where appropriate, protocols recommended by the Advisory Committee for data collection and management of sea turtles and their habitats. <sup>26</sup>	Sigs NGO Res LC	AC and MTTF to provide advice on guidelines and protocols.	M	M	M	H	
	Method Standardization	55. Review data collected to assess gaps and needs for the sub-regions in terms of research and monitoring methodology.	Sigs NGO Res	MTTF to lead. AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	M	H	
	Method Standardization	56. Facilitate capacity building in applying best practice/standard methods and recognizing all forms of knowledge.	NGO Res LC CBM	AC and Capacity Building Working Group to include in Capacity Building Strategy.	H	M	H	H	

<sup>26</sup> Citations to useful and accepted guidelines and protocols for data collection and management will be provided on the IOSEA website (link to be provided in due course).



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	Information Sharing	57. Engage with all knowledge holders (e.g. research, traditional, indigenous, fishers, local) to exchange information.	Sigs NGO Res LC CBM	AC and MTTF to provide advice upon request.	H	M	H	H	
	Information Sharing	58. Encourage voluntary contribution of nesting abundance and distribution data to the existing format of the TurtleNet, <sup>27</sup> and establish an AC-lead working group to explore future options i.e. to: a) Expand the data collected and displayed in TurtleNet, and b) Maximize the use of the National Report information in the database	Sigs NGO Res	AC and Sec to provide advice and support upon request. AC to lead WG.	M				
	Information Sharing	59. Identify suitable data repositories such as TurtleNet, ShellBank <sup>28</sup> and "Report a Ghost Net" <sup>29</sup> to facilitate region-wide information exchange and consider data sharing.	Sigs NGO Res	AC and MTTF to provide advice upon request	M	H	M	M	
<b>Objective 4. Increase public awareness and public participation</b>									
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Establish public education, awareness and information programmes</b> a) <b>Collect, develop and disseminate education materials</b> b) <b>Establish community learning / information centres</b> c) <b>Develop and implement accurate mass media information programmes</b> d) <b>Develop and conduct focused education and awareness programmes for target groups (e.g. policy makers, teachers, schools, fishing communities, media)</b> e) <b>Encourage the incorporation of marine turtle biology and conservation issues into school curricula</b> f) <b>Organize special events related to marine turtle conservation and biology (e.g. Turtle Day, Year of the Turtle, symposia, Track-a-turtle)</b>								
	Outreach and Communication	60. Promote high profile events such as World Sea Turtle Day for the purpose, <i>inter alia</i> , of raising public and political awareness of turtle conservation and IOSEA's role. Develop media, including social media, materials to raise the profile of marine turtle conservation issues.	Sigs NGO PS Res LC Media	AC to provide advice upon request. AC and MTTF to support gathering of material. Sec to coordinate "anniversary" events, as feasible.	H	M	H	H	

<sup>27</sup> TurtleNet: <https://apps.information.qld.gov.au/TurtleDistribution/>

<sup>28</sup> ShellBank: <https://shellbankproject.org/>

<sup>29</sup> Report a Ghost Net: <https://oliveridleyproject.org/report-a-ghost-net>



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	Outreach and Communication	61. Develop Fact Sheets on topics such as the species covered by the MOU, main threats, specifics of each sub-region, the Site Network, information on the MOU and CMP, and the guidance and capacity-building material available.		Sec to draft in collaboration with AC and the Sigs.	M				
	Outreach and Communication Take and Trade	62. To collect information on, evaluate the context of, and address consumptive use and domestic trade in marine turtles through a culturally sensitive process: a) Work with local communities to reduce unsustainable use, incl. by engaging appropriate local actors, such as educators b) raise awareness of turtle consumers, highlight existing regulations, conservation and possibly health issues involved (e.g. tourists, vendors, egg consumers) c) engage religious leaders, as appropriate, in awareness campaigns d) support initiatives to increase youth and women participation in marine turtle conservation e) enhance transboundary cooperation in education and awareness campaigns	Sigs NGO Nat St PS LC Res Media	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	M	H	
	Outreach and Communication	63. Develop and document lessons learnt from successful campaigns about turtle conservation issues: a) use examples and lessons learnt from previous campaigns to develop successful approaches b) evaluate and document lessons learnt from campaigns based on evaluation criteria c) share examples of campaigns and lessons learnt publicly, e.g., on the website and social media.	Sigs NGO Nat St LC PS Media	AC to develop evaluation criteria and provide advice upon request. Sec to request information and publish on website, if appropriate.	M	M	M	H	
	Fisheries Interactions Outreach and Communication	64. Compile and exchange information on effective mitigation programs and fisher engagement to reduce interactions for that fishery.	Sigs Fleets RFMO PS	AC-led Steering Group on Bycatch to provide advice upon request.	H	M	H	H	



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4.2	<b>Develop alternative livelihood opportunities for local communities to encourage their active participation in conservation efforts</b> a) <b>Identify and facilitate alternative livelihoods (including income generating activities) that are not detrimental to marine turtles and their habitats, in consultation with local communities and other stakeholders</b>								
	Alternative Livelihoods	65. Compile and assess available knowledge on best practice approaches to produce best practice guidance for alternative livelihood projects.	Sigs Cons NGO LC Res PS	AC to work with consultancy to develop guidance.	H	H	M	H	
	Alternative Livelihoods	66. Develop socially and culturally appropriate alternative livelihoods, using established best practices to ensure sustainable approaches tailored to local conditions, which will be beneficial in the long run for both humans and turtle populations.	Sigs NGO LC Res PS	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	M	H	
	Alternative Livelihoods	67. Share and learn from existing alternative livelihood projects that use established best practices.	Sigs Cons NGO LC Res PS	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	M	H	
4.3	<b>Promote public participation</b> a) <b>Involve stakeholders, and local communities in particular, in planning and implementation of conservation and management measures</b> b) <b>Encourage the participation of Government institutions, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and the general community (e.g. students, volunteers, fishing communities, local communities) in research and conservation efforts</b> c) <b>Implement, where appropriate, incentive schemes to encourage public participation (e.g. T-shirts for tag returns, public acknowledgement, certificates)</b>								
	Stakeholder Engagement	68. Engage and train organizers and (potential) participants, including local communities, of citizen science activities in species identification, data collection and monitoring.	Exp NGO Res LC PS	AC to provide advice upon request in consultation with local experts	H	H	H	H	



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	Stakeholder Engagement	69. Showcase exemplary work through appropriate avenues to highlight successes to multiple stakeholders: a) periodically recognize and acknowledge noteworthy contributions to IOSEA implementation (by Signatory States, organizations, corporate sector, individuals, influencers, etc.) b) enhance appreciation and recognition of all partners.	Sigs NGO Res Sigs LC PS	AC to provide advice upon request. Sec to periodically call for input and publish information.	M	H	M	M	
<b>Objective 5. Enhance national, regional and international cooperation</b>									
5.1	<b>Collaborate with and assist Signatory and non-Signatory States to regulate and share information on trade, to combat illegal trade, and to cooperate in enforcement activities relating to marine turtle products</b> a) Encourage signatory States that have not already done so to become Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) b) Review at a national level compliance with obligations under CITES relating to trade in marine turtles, their eggs, parts or products c) Facilitate better compliance with CITES through training of relevant authorities in cooperation with other signatory States, the CITES Secretariat and other relevant organisations d) Identify routes of international illegal trade through monitoring, and seek cooperation to take action to prevent, deter and, where possible, eliminate illegal trade e) Exchange and discuss information on compliance and trade issues at regular intervals, such as through annual reporting to the MoU Secretariat and at meetings of the signatory States f) Identify, prevent, deter and, where possible, eliminate domestic illegal trade through monitoring, implementation of legislation, identification of gaps in enforcement capabilities in each country, and training of enforcement officers								
	Take and Trade Cooperation	70. Use information collected in National Reports to identify potential barriers for Signatory States to join and implement CITES obligations.	Sigs ITWG IGO NGO	AC to support and engage, as required. Sec to engage, as required.					
	Take and Trade Cooperation	71. Strengthen internal, bilateral and international cooperation in enforcement, collaborating with IGOs and NGOs, including but not limited to CITES, ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (WEN), South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN), and TRAFFIC, to ensure the issue of marine turtle trade is on the agenda of future meetings, where required.	Sigs ITWG IGO NGO	AC to support and engage, as required. Sec to engage, as required.	H	H	M	H	
	Take and Trade Cooperation	72. Cooperate with CITES to ensure synergies and identify supply and demand areas and trade routes for the international trade in marine turtles and their products and develop targeted strategies to address these issues.	Sigs ITWG NGO	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	M	H	



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	Take and Trade Cooperation Species: Hawksbill	73. Cooperate with CMS in the joint implementation of the <i>Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) for the Hawksbill Turtle (Eretmochelys imbricata) in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region</i> <sup>30</sup> to address the trade and use of hawksbill turtles at both the domestic and the international level. <sup>31</sup>	Sigs ITWG IGO NGO	AC to provide advice upon request Sec to support Sigs in setting up governance structure.		n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Take and Trade, Cooperation	74. Review and update the task list for the ITWG. <sup>32</sup>	ITWG	AC to review and provide advice.	M	M	M	M	
	Take and Trade	75. Take further steps to understand and reduce use and domestic trade, if necessary, and to develop education and awareness campaigns on existing laws, including online trade.	Sigs ITWG NGO	AC to provide advice upon request.	M	M	M	M	
	Legislation	76. Strengthen effective protection of marine turtle populations by: a) Participating in relevant projects regarding regional legislative reviews, such as the WWF/CMS/SPREP Asia-Pacific Marine Turtle Legislative Review, where capacity allows b) Expanding the WWF/CMS/SPREP Asia-Pacific Marine Turtle Legislative Review to include all Signatories * c) Assess compliance of existing regulations d) Encourage national level reviews of compliance to and effectiveness of existing legislation.	Sigs NGO Res	AC to provide advice upon request.	M	H	M	M	

<sup>30</sup> See [Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle \(Eretmochelys imbricata\) in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region](#) (Meeting Outcome 9.3)

<sup>31</sup> Relates also to CMP Programme 5.2 Assist Signatory and non-Signatory States, upon request, to develop and implement national, sub-regional and regional action plans for the conservation and management of marine turtles and their habitats

<sup>32</sup> Membership: Australia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mozambique, Philippines, United Republic of Tanzania, United States, Advisory Committee, Inter American Sea Turtle Convention, TRAFFIC Vietnam and WWF



CMP <sup>4</sup>	Subject	Measures to be taken	In-Country Actors <sup>5</sup>	Support from AC, Sec & MTTF (* requires funding)	Overall Priority	WIO <sup>6</sup>	NW IO <sup>7</sup>	NIO <sup>8</sup>	SEA <sup>+</sup> <sup>9</sup>
5.2	<b>Assist Signatory and non-Signatory States, upon request, to develop and implement national, sub-regional and regional action plans for the conservation and management of marine turtles and their habitats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Develop a set of key management measures that could be used as a basis for action plans, through consultation with concerned Government authorities, research institutions, NGOs, local communities and other stakeholders</li> <li>b) Identify existing action plans that could be used as models</li> <li>c) Identify specific local management issues where cooperation among States is required for successful conservation and management</li> <li>d) Review action plans at regular intervals to take into account recent advances in skills and knowledge regarding marine turtle conservation and management, as well as changes in conservation status of marine turtle populations</li> </ul>								
	Evaluation	77. Establish a working group to develop a system allowing evaluation of the progress made with the implementation of this Work Programme, including key performance indicators for high priority measures, where appropriate.	Sigs NGO Res	AC to lead in collaboration with the Secretariat.	M	H	M	M	
	Capacity Building	78. Encourage development, implementation and regular review of national action plans, where needed, in collaboration with local communities and other stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) compile/provide examples of National Action Plans for review and possible adoption by Signatory States to other contexts</li> <li>b) prioritize countries that need National Action Plans and offer additional assistance to Signatory States in their development (e.g. using expertise within the Advisory Committee, Focal Points, external expertise)</li> <li>c) assist in the implementation and review of such plans, if requested.</li> </ul>	Sigs Exp NGO Res PS	AC and MTTF to provide advice upon request. Sec to provide links to National Action Plans on website.	M	H	M	M	



CMP <sup>4</sup>	Subject	Measures to be taken	In-Country Actors <sup>5</sup>	Support from AC, Sec & MTTF (* requires funding)	Overall Priority	WIO <sup>6</sup>	NW IO <sup>7</sup>	NIO <sup>8</sup>	SEA <sup>+</sup> <sup>9</sup>
5.3	<b>Enhance mechanisms for cooperation and promote information exchange</b> a) Identify and strengthen existing mechanisms for cooperation at the sub-regional level b) Develop a website and/or newsletter to facilitate networking and exchange of information c) Develop a web-based information resource for marine turtle conservation (including data on populations, nesting, migration, on-going projects) d) Create a directory of experts and organisations concerned with marine turtle conservation e) Develop networks for cooperative management of shared populations, within or across sub-regions, and, where appropriate, formalise cooperative management arrangements f) Cooperate where possible in the establishment of transboundary marine protected areas using ecological rather than political boundaries g) Develop a streamlined format for reporting and exchanging information (through the MoU Secretariat and among signatory States) on the state of marine turtle conservation at the national level h) Encourage MoU signatory States that have not already done so to become Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) i) Encourage signatory States to become Parties to global fisheries agreements such as the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (1995) and the FAO Compliance Agreement (1993) and implement the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (1995) j) Establish relationships with regional fisheries bodies with a view to obtaining data on incidental capture and encourage them to adopt marine turtle conservation measures within EEZs and on the high seas								
	Method Standardization	79. Hold virtual information exchange workshops to highlight case studies of where protocols or new threat-reduction techniques have been successfully applied.	Sigs SRFP Res	AC and MTTF to provide advice upon request.	H				
	Sub-regional Coordination	80. Encourage more sub-regional interactions (e.g. by organizing intersessional sub-regional meetings, training, task forces, etc.)	Sigs SRFP	MTTF to identify opportunities and priorities.	H	H	H	H	
	Sub-regional Coordination Fisheries Interactions Cooperation	81. Encourage the participation of RFMOs and other relevant bodies (e.g. IOTC, IOC, SEAFDEC, CTI) in the Marine Turtle Task Forces (MTTF) or other sub-regional meetings.	RS Sigs	MTTF to identify. Sec to invite.	H	H	L	H	
	Cooperation	82. Cooperate with IAC on activities of mutual interest in relevant action plans and initiatives.	Sigs ITWG IGO NGO	AC to provide advice upon request.					
	Cooperation	83. Engage with other relevant initiatives, such as international and regional Sea Turtle Symposia, regional networks (e.g., VOCAL (Voice of Conservation Action Leaders)), global and regional Newsletters and Regional Seas Programmes.	Sigs Res NGO	MTTF and Sec to support.	M	M	M	M	



CMP <sup>4</sup>	Subject	Measures to be taken	In-Country Actors <sup>5</sup>	Support from AC, Sec & MTTF (* requires funding)	Overall Priority	WIO <sup>6</sup>	NW IO <sup>7</sup>	NIO <sup>8</sup>	SEA <sup>+</sup> <sup>9</sup>
	Sub-regional Coordination	84. Encourage cooperative research and management of marine turtle management units that are shared across international boundaries, incl. by exploring shared interests with neighbouring countries making use of information provided in the national reports.	Sigs SRFP NGO Res	AC to provide advice on opportunities and priorities <sup>33</sup> .	M	M	M	H	
	Cooperation	85. Establish a database of expertise available to support Signatory States and the AC and provide a platform to match up requests with the appropriate expertise.	Sigs Exp Res NGO	AC to lead in setting up. Sec to host on website.	H	H	M	H	
	Sub-regional Coordination	86. Organize with a host country in the region a SEA+ sub-regional meeting to facilitate coordination and discuss the potential establishment of a Marine Turtle Task Force (MTTF).	Sigs NGO	AC to provide advice upon request. Sec to liaise with SRFP and potential host countries.	H	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Sub-regional Coordination	87. Organize with a host country in the region a NWIO sub-regional meeting to facilitate coordination and discuss the potential establishment of a Marine Turtle Task Force (MTTF).	Sigs NGO Res	AC to provide advice upon request. Sec to liaise with SRFP and potential host countries.	M	n/a	M	n/a	
	Cooperation	88. Strengthen synergies with CMS by making linkages between national conservation planning documents and the Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2024-2032, <sup>34</sup> where appropriate.	Sigs	AC to provide advice upon request.	L				
<b>Area-based measures</b>									
	Sub-regional Coordination	89. Liaise with counterparts in neighbouring countries regarding possibilities for developing transboundary MPAs or other forms of transboundary collaboration, where applicable considering EBSAs.	Sigs IGO NGO Res	AC and MTTF to provide advice upon request.	M	M	L	H	
	Sub-regional Coordination Habitat Protection	90. When developing MPAs, get sound scientific advice so as to ensure boundaries are based on socio-ecological criteria, where applicable considering EBSAs.	Sigs Res NGO LC	AC and MTTF to provide advice upon request.	H	H	H	H	

<sup>33</sup> See also #48

<sup>34</sup> See CMS Resolution 14.1 [Samarkand Strategic Plan for migratory species 2024 - 2032](#)



CMP <sup>4</sup>	Subject	Measures to be taken	In-Country Actors <sup>5</sup>	Support from AC, Sec & MTTF (* requires funding)	Overall Priority	WIO <sup>6</sup>	NW IO <sup>7</sup>	NIO <sup>8</sup>	SEA <sup>+</sup> <sup>9</sup>
	Sub-regional Coordination Habitat Protection	91. Consider ecological information on marine turtles when identifying new EBSAs and report on progress in identified EBSAs through national reports.	Sigs Res NGO	AC and MTTF to provide advice upon request.	H	H	M	H	
	Sub-regional Coordination Habitat Protection	92. Consider making use of the criteria for identification of Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTA) developed by the IUCN MTSG to identify priority areas for transboundary and sub-regional initiatives.	Sigs MTSG Res NGO	AC and MTTF to engage in the process.	M	H		M	
<b>Regional Fisheries Management Organizations</b>									
	Stakeholder Engagement Fisheries Interactions Cooperation	93. Work with national focal points to RFMOs to encourage better data collection and reporting on the occurrence, distribution and take of marine turtles in oceanic areas.	Sigs	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	L	H	
	Fisheries Interactions Cooperation	94. Collaborate with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) on marine turtles, in particular with the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB) with regard to the development of indicators for sea turtles, potential revisions of relevant Conservation and Management Measures, as well as preparation of updates of the Executive Summary: Marine Turtles, as and when required.	Sigs NGO Res	AC-led Steering Group on Bycatch to lead.	M	H	L	L	
	Fisheries Interactions Cooperation	95. Review the overlap of the activities managed by the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA), the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) with turtle populations covered by IOSEA, the data availability, level of information available, nature of the discussions in these fora and potential for collaboration.	Sigs NGO Res	AC-led Steering Group on Bycatch to lead.	L	M	L	L	



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<b>National Reporting</b>									
	National Reports	96. Establish a working group <sup>35</sup> to conduct an in-depth review and improve the national reporting format to facilitate effective reporting and analysis, incl. spatial analysis. It will deliver its outputs to the Secretariat by 30 June 2025 for circulation to the Signatories for their comments within two months. The Secretariat will circulate to Signatories the final proposals for intersessional adoption by correspondence in order to enable their use in the run-up to MOS10.	Sigs NGO	AC and Sec to engage.	H	H	H	H	
	National Reports	97. Extend the deadline for submission of National Reports for 2024 until 31 July 2024, after which the Secretariat will commence the preparation of the data for analysis. The full analysis of all reports submitted by the deadline will be made available to Signatories latest by 28 February 2025.	Sigs	Sec to manage process.	H				
	National Reports Information Sharing	98. Continue to improve the quality of information provided in National Reports and encourage integration in National Reports of positive substantive contributions from NGO/IGO partners, research institutes and other key stakeholders	Sigs Res NGO	AC and MTTF to provide advice upon request.	H	M	H	H	
	National Reports	99. Include in the analysis of the National Report matrices indicating which countries reported implementation of different activities outlined in the reporting questionnaire.	Sec	AC to provide advice upon request.	M	M	L	H	
	National Reports Information Sharing	100. Work directly with MTTF members and relevant stakeholders to complete and improve the quality of data in National Reports, for example, in relation to identifying specific resource needs and improving data on fisheries and fisheries interactions, in particular.	Sigs Res NGO PS	MTTF to offer support to Sigs. AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	H	H	
	National Reports Capacity Building	101. Provide training or webinars or any further technical help, when requested, to prepare and submit National Reports and available IOSEA online tools.	Sigs Res NGO	AC and Sec to provide advice upon request and respond as required.	M	H	M	M	

<sup>35</sup> Members: Australia, Kenya, Sri Lanka, United Arab Emirates, Advisory Committee (other Signatories and MTTF Members are welcome to join)



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	National Reports Capacity Building	102. Encourage and facilitate online communications between Signatories and the Secretariat (e.g. submit reports through online system and use online tools).	Sigs	Sec to reach out.	H	H	H	H	
<b>Online Tools</b>									
	Information Sharing	103. Periodically call for up-to-date lists of flipper tag series used in the countries to the IOSEA Secretariat for inclusion in and management of the existing IOSEA online database of tag series.	Sigs Res NGO	Sec to call for information and provide on website.	H	H	M	H	
	Information Sharing	104. Set up a database compiling information on PIT tagging practices, incl. applied location and all tag types.	Sigs Res NGO	Sec to call for information and provide on website.	M	H	M	L	
	Information Sharing	105. Submit information on marine turtle nesting, distribution, abundance and migration, reporting on index beach monitoring, as well as satellite tracking studies to the TurtleNet database. <sup>36</sup>	Sigs Res NGO LC	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	H	L	
	Information Sharing Environmental Impact Assessments	106. Develop a page on EIA guidance based on MOS8 Documents 7.5 and 11.2 on the IOSEA website.		AC to provide advice. Sec to lead.	H	H	H	H	
	Information Sharing	107. Continue work to restore and update IOSEA bibliography and library in collaboration with the AC and set up the electronic bibliography on the IOSEA Website, as well as other features as feasible.		AC to provide advice. Sec to lead.	H	M	H	H	

<sup>36</sup> TurtleNet: <https://apps.information.qld.gov.au/TurtleDistribution/>



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5.4	<b>Build capacity to strengthen conservation measures</b> a) Identify needs for capacity-building in terms of human resources, knowledge and facilities b) Provide training (e.g. through workshops) in marine turtle conservation and management techniques to relevant agencies, individuals and local communities c) Coordinate training programmes and workshops d) Develop partnerships with universities, research institutions, training bodies and other relevant organisations								
	Capacity-building	108. Adopt a proactive process for identifying needs and providing training within the IOSEA region, including by: a) establishing an intersessional working group <sup>37</sup> to develop a Capacity Building Strategy based on the Objectives of the CMP and activities in the Work Programme b) offering Signatory States training topic options and options for developing co-funding arrangements for capacity building c) structuring training to address the needs identified by Signatory States in the process of developing the Capacity Building Strategy d) developing skills of country representatives in the preparation and revision of country reports e) developing skills of the AC, Sub-regional and Country representatives and researchers in (1) collecting, analysing, and presenting biological data, (2) defining foraging populations, and (3) conservation management techniques (interactions with fisheries, coastal development). In addition, training should emphasize communication and coordination techniques that can be used among various levels (local, province, country, sub-region, region) to coordinate conservation activities f) organizing follow-up visits to assess the effectiveness of the transfer of information and skills.	Sigs NGO Res LC	AC to lead in developing Capacity Building Strategy. AC and Sec to provide advice and/or facilitate training. *	H	H	H	H	
	Capacity-building Sub-regional Coordination	109. Promote regional exchange of expertise and utilize the MTTFs to identify and plan opportunities for exchange.	Sigs NGO Res	MTTF to assist.	H	H	M	H	

<sup>37</sup> Members: Bahrain, Maldives, Pakistan, Thailand, United States, Advisory Committee (other Signatories and MTTF Members are welcome to join)



CMP <sup>4</sup>	Subject	Measures to be taken	In-Country Actors <sup>5</sup>	Support from AC, Sec & MTTF (* requires funding)	Overall Priority	WIO <sup>6</sup>	NW IO <sup>7</sup>	NIO <sup>8</sup>	SEA <sup>+</sup> <sup>9</sup>
	Capacity-building Fisheries Interactions Habitat Protection Site Network Hatcheries	110. Encourage organization of sub-regional capacity building / technical workshops, on topics such as: a) management of nesting beaches, hatchery management, lighting etc. b) identification of threatening processes c) rescue and rehabilitation d) training on site network management e) socio-economic and cultural aspects f) training and technology-transfer needs to reduce mortalities in fisheries operations, in particular by providing training for: i. observers particularly for small-scale fisheries (separate for trawlers/ gill nets, smaller outboard fisheries in large quantities) ii. proper recording of turtle interactions in a harmonized and standard way, inter alia, to assist IOTC member countries in meeting their reporting requirements iii. safe release of bycaught turtles iv. enhancing use of bycatch reduction technologies.	Sigs SRFP NGO Res LC PS LC	AC to lead in developing Capacity Building Strategy. AC and Sec to provide advice and/or facilitate training. * MTTF to assist.	H	H	H	H	
	Capacity-building Fisheries interactions	111. Conduct sub-regional capacity-building workshops on bycatch assessment methods and engagement strategies with key government authorities and stakeholders: a) develop a concept note and send a formal proposal to potential hosting countries b) government and NGOs in the region to investigate potential opportunities for organizing the workshops and identify the role that each party can play c) conduct follow-up workshops to address specific issues at country level following regional capacity building workshops, involving fishers associations and communities. <sup>38</sup>	Sigs NGO RFMO PS	AC-led Bycatch Steering Group and Capacity-Building WG to advise. AC, MTTF and Sec to organize workshops. *	H	H	H	H	

<sup>38</sup> Note: The involvement of experts, policy/administrative government officials and fishermen is important to be considered at different stages of engagement and during these workshops - the role of NGOs providing the links between government and fishermen associations/communities should be considered.



CMP <sup>4</sup>	Subject	Measures to be taken	In-Country Actors <sup>5</sup>	Support from AC, Sec & MTF (* requires funding)	Overall Priority	WIO <sup>6</sup>	NW IO <sup>7</sup>	NIO <sup>8</sup>	SEA <sup>+</sup> <sup>9</sup>
	Capacity-building Cooperation Funding	112. Consider: a) activities to address capacity-building needs to integrate marine turtle considerations into existing Ramsar Site management plans b) cooperating with the Ramsar Secretariat to raise funds for implementing these activities c) soliciting capacity-building support to conduct coordinated or joined activities, e.g. for sites that are both IOSEA Network Sites and Ramsar Sites.	Sigs NGO Res	AC to provide advice upon request. Sec to reach out to Ramsar Secretariat.	M	M	M	H	
	Capacity-building	113. Develop training material (e.g. a handbook) and a training programme (e.g. webinars and/or workshops) to assist National Focal Points to fulfil their role		AC to provide advice. Sec to lead. *	H	M	H	H	
<b>5.5</b>	<b>Strengthen and improve enforcement of conservation legislation</b> a) Review domestic policies and laws to address gaps or impediments to marine turtle conservation b) Cooperate in law enforcement to ensure compatible application of laws across and between jurisdictions (including through bilateral/multilateral agreements and intelligence sharing)								
	Legislation	114. Identify gaps in legislation relating to current conservation needs of marine turtles and their habitats including assessing the effectiveness of the implementation of legislations.	Sigs NGO Res LC PS	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	H	H	
	Legislation	115. Improve enforcement of compliance with regulations, relating to activities such as fishing, tourism, coastal and offshore development, industrial development, international trade restrictions.	Sigs Res NGO PS LC	AC to provide advice upon request.	H	H	H	H	
	Legislation Collaboration	116. Improve interagency coordination and collaborations to enhance the monitoring and enforcement of legislations.	Sigs Res NGO PS LC	AC to provide advice upon request.					



CMP <sup>4</sup>	Subject	Measures to be taken	In-Country Actors <sup>5</sup>	Support from AC, Sec & MTTF (* requires funding)	Overall Priority	WIO <sup>6</sup>	NW IO <sup>7</sup>	NIO <sup>8</sup>	SEA <sup>+</sup> <sup>9</sup>
<b>Objective 6. Promote implementation of the MOU including the Conservation and Management Plan</b>									
6.1	<b>Broaden membership in the MOU, and ensure continuity of MOU activities</b> a) Encourage non-signatory States to sign the MoU b) Arrange sub-regional workshops involving non-signatory States to raise awareness of the MoU c) Consider at the first meeting of the signatory States the development of a timetable for possible amendment of the MoU to make it a legally binding instrument								
	Recruitment of New Signatory States	117. Approach non-Signatory States in the IOSEA region and other countries with a view to securing IOSEA membership.	Sigs NGO	AC to provide advice upon request. Sec to reach out periodically.	L	L	L	M	
	Cooperation, Fisheries Interactions Stakeholder Engagement	118. Engage with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, and the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), as well as other RFMOs relevant to the IOSEA, to reach out to non-Signatory States with fleets fishing in the IOSEA region (e.g. China / Taiwan, Japan, Republic of Korea, Spain etc).	Sigs SRFP NGO	AC to provide advice upon request.	M	H	L	M	
6.2	<b>Promote the role of the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee of the MOU in ensuring the objectives of the Conservation and Management Plan are met</b> a) Secure reliable sources of funding to support the MoU Secretariat b) Appoint at the first meeting of the signatory States the members of the Advisory Committee c) Establish lines of communication between the MoU Secretariat and the Advisory Committee to facilitate advice to the signatory States								
	Institutional	119. Periodically review the appropriateness of the size and composition (skill sets appropriate for the activities identified in the WP) of the Advisory Committee.	Sigs	AC and Sec to provide advice upon request.	H	M	H	H	
	Institutional	120. Arrange two intersessional meetings of the Advisory Committee, the first one within the first 12 months after a MOS, the second one preferably three to four months prior to the next MOS.		Sec to arrange.	H	M	H	H	
	Evaluation	121. Review, comment, and provide guidance on advances and new and emerging issues related to species and habitat management raised by Signatory States and/or identified by the global turtle research and conservation community.	Sigs NGO Res	AC and MTTF to review and provide advice.	H	M	H	H	
	Institutional	122. In time for the process foreseen in #123, develop a draft Work Programme to implement the CMP.		AC to lead in collaboration with Sec and MTTF.	H				



CMP <sup>4</sup>	Subject	Measures to be taken	In-Country Actors <sup>5</sup>	Support from AC, Sec & MTTF (* requires funding)	Overall Priority	WIO <sup>6</sup>	NW IO <sup>7</sup>	NIO <sup>8</sup>	SEA <sup>+</sup> <sup>9</sup>
	Institutional	123. Provide comments on the draft Work Programme (see #122) through a sub-regional process approximately six months in advance of each MOS, which will then be considered by the AC in its preparations of the final draft.	Sigs SRFP	AC to finalize draft for consideration by MOS10.	H	H	H	H	
	Institutional Evaluation	124. Establish a working group <sup>39</sup> to develop an evaluation questionnaire based on the Key Performance Indicators drafted by the Sec and AC.		AC to lead. MTTF and Sec to support and engage.					
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Seek resources to support the implementation of the MOU</b> a) <b>Prioritise conservation and management activities for funding</b> b) <b>Explore funding options with Governments and other donors such as the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, UNDP, European Union, UNEP, GEF, etc.</b> c) <b>Solicit funding and other contributions from industries that have impacts on marine turtles and their habitats (e.g. fisheries, tourism, oil industry, real estate)</b> d) <b>Explore the use of economic instruments for the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats</b> e) <b>Approach the private sector, foundations and NGOs that may have an interest in funding activities in particular countries to catalyse the creation of a small grants fund</b> f) <b>Generate funding for conservation and management activities through managed ecotourism and other self-supporting schemes (while benefiting local communities)</b> g) <b>Seek synergies (with respect to fund-raising, provision of institutional support, etc.) with other regional/global convention secretariats</b> h) <b>Explore international funding support and other incentives for signatory States that effectively manage marine turtle populations, which might include the complete prohibition of direct harvest (capture or killing)</b>								
	Institutional	125. Identify and actively seek adequate resources for the Advisory Committee (and MTTFs) to function effectively (increased frequency of meetings, strengthened capacity to respond to requests from Signatory States, etc.)	Sigs	Sec to reach out to Sigs.	H	H	H	H	
	Institutional	126. Identify and secure adequate resources for the attendance of Sub-regional Focal Points and Chairs of the sub-regional Marine Turtle Task Forces as observers at Advisory Committee Meetings to provide advice on core issues to be addressed at Signatory State meetings.	Sigs	Sec to reach out to Sigs.	H	H	H	H	

<sup>39</sup> Membership: Advisory Committee, MTTF Members, experts and Signatory States to be determined



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	Capacity Building Funding	127. Assist countries to seek available counterpart funding (e.g. by helping with national or regional project proposal development, offering guidance on 'packaging' of proposals, facilitating links to potential donors, providing letters of support, etc.).	Sigs Res NGO	AC and MTTF to provide advice upon request. Sec to circulate List of AC-endorsed research projects, and provide letters of support, as appropriate.	H	H	H	H	
	Funding	128. Review and periodically update information on <i>Funding Opportunities and Fundraising Resources for Marine Turtle Conservation</i> <sup>40</sup> and circulate ad hoc, opportunities to Sigs.	Sigs	AC, MTTF and Sec to lead.	H	M	H	H	
	Funding	129. Seek advice on diversifying funding sources (e.g. private sector) for implementation of conservation measures for marine turtles and their habitats, as well as activities in the framework of the MOU.	Sigs Cons NGO	AC and Sec to develop a fundraising plan.	H	H	H	H	
	Institutional	130. Strengthen synergies with the CMS Dugong MOU by ensuring representation of the Advisory Committee on the Dugong Technical Advisory Group (DTAG).		AC to identify representative.	H	H	H	M	
<b>6.4</b>	<b>Improve coordination among government and non-government sectors in the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats</b> <b>a) Review the roles and responsibilities of government agencies related to the conservation and management of marine turtles and their habitats</b> <b>b) Designate a lead agency responsible for coordinating national marine turtle conservation and management policy</b> <b>c) Encourage cooperation within and among government and non-government sectors, including through the development and/or strengthening of national networks</b>								
	National Networks Stakeholder Engagement	131. Establish formal and/or informal inclusive national committees/networks in order to develop synergies among governments and partners and report on their work through the national reports.	Sigs Res NGO PS LC	AC to provide advice upon request. Sec to support as required.	H	H	H	H	
	Cooperation	132. Engage with relevant national and international bodies to address the problem of ghost nets, plastic debris, oil pollution, etc. and undertake direct dialogue with relevant local industries and stakeholders.	Sigs NGO Res LC PS	AC to provide advice upon request. Sec to support as required.	H	H	H	H	

<sup>40</sup> See [Funding Opportunities and Fundraising Resources for Marine Turtle Conservation](http://www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources) (available on [www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources](http://www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/page/capacity-building-resources))



<b>Section 2: Measures Related to MOU Administration and Coordination<sup>41</sup></b>		<b>Actors<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Meetings, Working Groups and Workshops</b>		
133.	Ensure Advisory Committee Meetings are organized as scheduled, with key documents circulated at least one month in advance of the meetings.	Sec, AC
134.	Facilitate conference calls with the Advisory Committee on a quarterly basis to discuss and facilitate progress in the implementation of the WP, with additional calls to be arranged as needed.	Sec
135.	Ensure Meetings of Signatory States (MOS) are organized as scheduled, with key documents circulated at least two months in advance of the meetings.	Sec
136.	Organize meetings of sub-regional groups and assist with organization of the meetings of Marine Turtle Task Forces (NIO, WIO MTTF, NWIO and SEA+ sub-regions) at intervals defined in each group's terms of reference.	Sec
137.	Support intersessional correspondence (Illegal Trade Working Group, Site Network Discussion Group, Advisory Committee) as needed.	Sec
138.	Organize workshops if agreed by MOS <sup>9</sup> and subject to available funding.	Sec
139.	Organize sub-regional working groups more effectively during Signatory State meetings, by engaging Sub-regional Focal Points more actively in pre-meeting organization <sup>42</sup> .	Sec, SRFP
140.	Secure a host for MOS <sup>10</sup> and correspond with the host to ensure all necessary arrangements are met for the next MOS.	Sec
<b>Website</b>		
141.	Maintain and develop the IOSEA website, post news items and other material as appropriate. Reach out to Signatories and stakeholders to solicit their input and publish relevant information in the website news section.	Sigs, AC, Sec, MTTF, NGO
<b>Budgetary, Administrative and Institutional Matters</b>		
142.	Reach out to Signatory States to encourage the nomination of alternate Focal Points.	Sec, Sigs
143.	Administer the MOU's Trust Fund in collaboration with the CMS Administrative and Fund Management Unit and report on budgetary and administrative issues to each meeting of the Signatory States, and intersessionally as required.	Sec
144.	Prepare a draft budget for consideration by MOS <sup>10</sup> .	Sec
145.	Encourage Signatories to pay agreed voluntary contributions and encourage voluntary contributions for projects and initiatives prioritized by MOS <sup>9</sup> .	Sec
146.	Develop funding agreements for projects prioritized by the Meeting of Signatories.	Sec
147.	Advertise consultancies, select and supervise candidates as required for the implementation of the WP.	Sec

<sup>41</sup> If not yet included in Section 1

<sup>42</sup> Ideally, Sub-regional Focal Points should be individuals who are likely to be in the post for a longer period of time, to provide continuity, and be knowledgeable / experienced in key IOSEA matters.



**Annex 6**

**Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles  
in the Indian Ocean South-East Asia Region**

(also available as [Outcome 9.2](#))

**Sites Included at MOS9 (2024)**

1. Al Qurm Protected Area, United Arab Emirates
2. Cox's Bazar Coast, Bangladesh
3. Khore Omiera, Yemen
4. Sharma, Jathmoun & Dhargum, Yemen

**Site Included at MOS8 (2019)**

1. Con Dao National Park, Viet Nam

**Sites Included at MOS7 (2014)**

1. Aldabra Atoll, Seychelles
2. Bu Tinah Shoal, United Arab Emirates
3. Europa Island, France
4. iSimangaliso Wetland Park, South Africa
5. Itsamia Mohéli, Comoros
6. Rufiji-Mafia Seascape, United Republic of Tanzania
7. Sheedvar Island, Islamic Republic of Iran
8. Sir Bu Na'air, United Arab Emirates
9. Thameehla Island, Myanmar
10. Turtle Islands Wildlife Sanctuary, Philippines



**Annex 7**

**Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys Imbricata*)  
in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region**

(available as [Outcome 9.3](#))

*NB: Not reproduced here due to the length of the Action Plan. Please use the link provided above to access the Action Plan as adopted.*



**Annex 8**

**Budget for 2025-2028**

(also available as [Outcome 9.4](#))

<b>Budget 2025-2028 (in USD) for 32MRL - Trust Fund for the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA)</b>						
<b>No.</b>	<b>Budget line</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b><u>Personnel</u></b>					
01	Coordinator (P-3 80%)	143.638	146.511	149.441	152.430	592.021
02	Programme Assistant (G-4, 50%)	37.218	37.963	38.722	39.496	153.399
03	Consultants / Individual Contractors	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	40.000
04	Staff training	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	8.000
	<b>Personnel Subtotal</b>	<b>192.857</b>	<b>196.474</b>	<b>200.163</b>	<b>203.927</b>	<b>793.421</b>
	<b><u>Travel</u></b>					
05	Staff travel	15.000	15.000	15.000	15.000	60.000
06	Expert travel	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	20.000
	<b>Travel Subtotal</b>	<b>20.000</b>	<b>20.000</b>	<b>20.000</b>	<b>20.000</b>	<b>80.000</b>
	<b><u>Sub-contracts</u></b>					
07	Project activities / SSFA	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	80.000
	<b>Sub-contracts Subtotal</b>	<b>20.000</b>	<b>20.000</b>	<b>20.000</b>	<b>20.000</b>	<b>80.000</b>
	<b><u>Meetings</u></b>					
08	Meeting of Signatory States (MOS)	0	0	0	140.000	140.000
09	Advisory Committee Meetings (AC)	32.500	0	32.500	0	65.000
	<b>Meetings Subtotal</b>	<b>32.500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>32.500</b>	<b>140.000</b>	<b>205.000</b>
	<b><u>Operating Costs</u></b>					
10	Office Equipment (incl. shared costs)	500	500	3.000	500	4.500
11	Software and Website	2.500	2.500	2.500	2.500	10.000
12	Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Services	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	12.000
13	Enterprise Resource Planning fees ("Umoja")	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	12.000
14	Premises (rent and maintenance costs)	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Operating Costs Subtotal</b>	<b>9.000</b>	<b>9.000</b>	<b>11.500</b>	<b>9.000</b>	<b>38.500</b>
	<b><u>Miscellaneous Costs</u></b>					
15	Information material	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	4.000
16	Communication, courier services & Miscellaneous	1.900	1.900	1.900	1.900	7.600
	<b>Miscellaneous Costs Subtotal</b>	<b>2.900</b>	<b>2.900</b>	<b>2.900</b>	<b>2.900</b>	<b>11.600</b>
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>277.257</b>	<b>248.374</b>	<b>287.063</b>	<b>395.827</b>	<b>1.208.521</b>
	UNEP programme support costs (13%)	36.043	32.289	37.318	51.457	157.108
	<b>Grand-total</b>	<b>313.300</b>	<b>280.663</b>	<b>324.382</b>	<b>447.284</b>	<b>1.365.628</b>



### Indicative Scale of Voluntary Contributions

**Indicative Scale of Voluntary Contributions**, applying a minimum contribution of US\$ 750, and fixing the following contributions at the same levels as in previous budgetary periods: United States: US\$ 80,000, South Africa: US\$ 25,000, India: US\$ 15,000

	Signatory	UN Scale (2022-2024)	Scale Adjusted to 100%	Amended Scale Adjusted to 100%	Indicative Voluntary Contribution in USD
1	Australia	2,111	5,488	8,61	29.401
2	Bahrain	0,054	0,140	0,22	750
3	Bangladesh	0,01	0,026	0,22	750
4	Cambodia	0,007	0,018	0,22	750
5	Comoros	0,001	0,003	0,22	750
6	Egypt	0,139	0,361	0,57	1.936
7	Eritrea	0,001	0,003	0,22	750
8	France	4,318	11,225	17,61	60.138
9	India	1,044	2,714	4,39	15.000
10	Indonesia	0,549	1,427	2,24	7.646
11	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	0,371	0,964	1,51	5.167
12	Jordan	0,022	0,057	0,22	750
13	Kenya	0,03	0,078	0,22	750
14	Madagascar	0,004	0,010	0,22	750
15	Malaysia	0,348	0,905	1,42	4.847
16	Maldives	0,004	0,010	0,22	750
17	Mauritius	0,019	0,049	0,22	750
18	Mozambique	0,004	0,010	0,22	750
19	Myanmar	0,01	0,026	0,22	750
20	Oman	0,111	0,289	0,45	1.546
21	Pakistan	0,114	0,296	0,47	1.588
22	Papua New Guinea	0,01	0,026	0,22	750
23	Philippines	0,212	0,551	0,86	2.953
24	Saudi Arabia	1,184	3,078	4,83	16.490
25	Seychelles	0,002	0,005	0,22	750
26	South Africa	0,244	0,634	7,32	25.000
27	Sri Lanka	0,045	0,117	0,22	750
28	Sudan	0,01	0,026	0,22	750
29	Thailand	0,368	0,957	1,50	5.125
30	United Arab Emirates	0,635	1,651	2,59	8.844
31	United Kingdom	4,375	11,373	17,85	60.932
32	United Republic of Tanzania	0,01	0,026	0,22	750
33	United States of America	22	57,192	23,43	80.000
34	Viet Nam	0,093	0,242	0,38	1.295
35	Yemen	0,008	0,021	0,22	750
		<b>38,467</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>341.408</b>



**Terms Of Reference**  
**for the Administration of the Trust Fund for the Conservation and Management of**  
**Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA)**

1. The Trust Fund for the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats (hereinafter referred to as the Trust Fund) shall be extended by four years to provide financial support for the aims of the MOU.
2. The present Terms of Reference shall be effective from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2028.
3. The financial period shall be four calendar years beginning 1 January 2025 and ending 31 December 2028, subject to the approval of the UN Environment Assembly.
4. The Trust Fund shall be administered by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
5. The administration of the Trust Fund shall be governed by the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, and other administrative policies or procedures promulgated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
6. Commitments against the resources of the Trust Fund may be made only if they are covered by the necessary income. No commitments shall be made in advance of the receipt of contributions.
7. There should be maintained an operating reserve at a constant level of at least 15 per cent of estimated annual expenditure or US\$50,000, whichever is higher.
8. In accordance with the United Nations rules, UNEP shall deduct from the income of the Trust Fund an administrative charge equal to 13 per cent of the expenditure charged to the Trust Fund in respect of activities financed under the Trust Fund.
9. The threshold of eligibility for funding delegates to attend the Meetings of the Signatories should be set at 0.200 per cent on the United Nations scale of assessment.
10. The Trust Fund shall be subject to audit by the United Nations Board of Auditors.
11. The financial resources of the Trust Fund for 2025-2028 should be derived from Voluntary Contributions from Signatories and Non-Signatories to the MOU, other governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and other sources.
12. Signatories will receive an invoice for their indicative voluntary contributions from the Secretariat. Signatories may indicate to the Secretariat if they would like to receive an invoice for a higher amount. Contributions should be paid to the bank account of the United Nations.
13. If the determined indicative voluntary contribution of a Signatory were to be more than 22 per cent of the budget, the contribution of that Signatory should be no more than 22 per cent of the budget for the financial year, unless a higher amount is mutually agreed.



14. For the convenience of Signatories, for each of the years of the financial period, the Secretariat should, as soon as possible, after the first day of each year, request contributions from Signatories.
15. Contributions received into the Trust Fund that are not immediately required shall be invested at the discretion of the United Nations, and any income shall be credited to the Trust Fund.
16. Budget estimates covering the income and expenditure for the four calendar years constituting the financial period should be submitted to the meeting of the Signatories.
17. The estimates for each of the calendar years covered by the financial period should be specified according to budget lines and should be accompanied by such information as may be required by or on behalf of the contributors and such further information as the Executive Director of UNEP may deem useful and advisable.
18. The proposed budget, including all necessary information, should be made available by the Secretariat to all Signatories at least 60 days before the date fixed for the opening of the Meeting of the Signatories to which they are to be considered.
19. The budget should be adopted by consensus of the Signatories present at the Meeting of the Signatories.
20. In the event that the Executive Director of UNEP anticipates that there might be a shortfall in resources over the financial period as a whole, the Executive Director should consult with the Secretariat, which should seek the advice of the Signatories regarding priorities for expenditure.
21. Upon the request of the Secretariat of the MOU, after seeking the advice of the Signatories, the Executive Director of UNEP should, to the extent consistent with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, make transfers from one budget class (Personnel, Travel, Sub-contracts, Meetings, Operating Costs, Miscellaneous Costs) to another. At the end of the first, second and third calendar year of the financial period, the Executive Director of UNEP may proceed to transfer any unspent balance of appropriations to the second, third and fourth calendar year respectively, provided that the total budget approved by the Parties shall not be exceeded, unless specifically sanctioned in writing by the Signatories.
22. At the end of each calendar year of the financial period, the Executive Director of UNEP should make the year-end accounts available through the MOU Secretariat. The Executive Director should also make available, as soon as practicable, the audited accounts for the financial period. Those accounts should include full details of actual expenditure compared to the original provisions for each budget line.
23. Extra-budgetary contributions may be accepted for purposes that are consistent with the objectives of the MOU.
24. Extra-budgetary contributions should be used in accordance with terms and conditions agreed upon between the Contributor and the Secretariat.



## Annex 9

### Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committee

(also available as [Outcome 9.5](#))

#### Mandate and Tasks

1. As set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding, the mandate of the Advisory Committee is to "provide scientific, technical and legal advice to the Signatory States, individually and collectively, on the conservation and management of marine turtles and their habitats in the Region." Accordingly, the purpose of the Advisory Committee is to serve and assist the Signatory States in the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding.
2. Members of the Advisory Committee (AC) serve in their individual capacities, rather than as representatives of Governments or organizations with which they may be affiliated.
3. Members of the AC are to declare any potential, perceived or actual conflicts of interest on commencement of their term, and as required during their tenure.
4. The Signatory States may request the AC to undertake certain activities and tasks, which may include, but are not limited to, actions to:
  - evaluate and provide advice, at the request of any Signatory State, on any conservation and management programme proposed or implemented within the State;
  - provide advice to the meetings of Signatory States on the adoption of additional conservation and management actions to be included in the Work Programme for the MOU and on revisions to the Conservation and Management Plan;
  - review activities, priorities and responsible entities for implementation of the Work Programme;
  - evaluate, at the request of any Signatory State, the efficiency of different measures proposed or implemented to reduce the capture and incidental mortality of marine turtles in fishing operations;
  - promote the use of standardized marine turtle research techniques, monitoring programme data collection, and data storage and reporting;
  - review scientific reports, annual reports of the Signatory States, and other appropriate documents to assist the Secretariat in assessing progress in the implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan;
  - bring to the attention of the Signatory States significant new information relating to the conservation and management of marine turtles;
  - respond to requests for advice from Signatory States in the fields of socio-economics and law related to the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding;
  - seek input from other individuals and bodies, as appropriate, in responding to requests for advice, e.g., from the IUCN Species Survival Commission Marine Turtle Specialist Group;
  - assist Signatory States and Marine Turtle Task Forces in the development of projects and initiatives so that regional, subregional and local concerns and interests are taken into account;



- provide such other scientific, technical and legal advice relating to the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding as the Signatory States may request, individually or collectively;
  - undertake further tasks as identified in the Work Programme adopted by Signatory States;
  - make recommendations regarding other fields of expertise needed within the AC to assist with its work; and
  - provide a report on its activities to each meeting of the Signatory States.
5. The Secretariat should serve as a clearinghouse of requests from the Signatory States for advice from the AC.

### **Size and Composition**

6. The AC should have up to ten members.
7. In appointing the AC, Signatory States should strive to achieve a balance among the areas of expertise set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding:
- marine turtle biology
  - marine resource management
  - coastal development
  - socio-economics
  - law
  - fisheries technology
  - other relevant disciplines
- as well as an equitable representation of sub-regions and gender, to the extent possible.
8. The AC may establish Working Groups to support the implementation of their mandates and tasks and invite additional experts to participate in the work of these groups.
9. The AC may invite specialists to attend its meetings in order to provide additional expertise or to supplement known gaps in diversity.
10. Former AC Members willing to continue supporting the AC and Secretariat may become emeritus members. They will be invited to contribute on a case-by-case basis.

### **Term of Office**

11. AC members should serve for two intersessional periods between regular meetings of the Signatory States. They are eligible for re-nomination and re-appointment for a second term of two intersessional periods. If deemed necessary by the Signatory States, exceptional appointment for a third consecutive term is possible.

### **Nominations to Fill Vacancies**

12. The Secretariat should inform the Signatory States of any vacancies arising from the end of a term or other reasons, such as somebody voluntarily stepping down.



13. A list of potential expert members for the AC will be determined through a “call for expressions of interest” process organized by the Secretariat.
14. Signatory States, the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group (MTSG) and AC members may nominate experts, regardless of their nationality and in accordance with paragraph 7. The MTSG Chair(s) and relevant Regional Chairs will be invited to select up to two of their members who expressed their interest and have experience in the IOSEA region and will forward their candidature to the Secretariat.
15. Current members wishing to serve for a consecutive second (but not a third) term may also self-nominate.
16. Nominations for any vacancies should be provided in writing to the Secretariat at least 60 days in advance of the meeting of Signatory States, and should include detailed and complete curriculum vitae (CV) and justification for the nomination.
17. Nominations for a third term can only be made by Signatory States and should outline the specific need and expected benefits to justify the potential exceptional reappointment.
18. The AC will review all nominations, and make recommendations to the MOS, bearing in mind the criteria outlined in paragraph 7. The Secretariat will assist the AC in this, and ensure re-nominated AC members will not be involved in discussions of their own nomination.
19. The Secretariat will circulate all eligible nominations to Signatory States.

### **Appointments**

20. At their meetings, the Signatory States will appoint the members of the AC from among the individuals nominated, taking into consideration the recommendations made by the AC.
21. If there are more nominees than vacancies, the Signatory States will make every effort to appoint members by consensus following close consultation. If necessary, Signatory States may decide on appointments by means of a vote. Renewal of members of the AC should take into account consideration of the continuity of the committee. Ideally no less than three members should be replaced simultaneously.
22. Should a vacancy arise intersessionally, the AC may propose a replacement for consideration by the Signatory States. The Secretariat should communicate the proposal to Signatory States, and accompany it with the same supporting documents that would be required for a regular nomination. In the absence of an objection of any Signatory State, received within 30 days of the communication from the Secretariat, the interim appointment will be considered as having been accepted, and will become effective immediately. If an objection is raised by a Signatory State, appointment will be deferred until the next meeting of Signatory States. The term of appointment of the provisional nominee will expire at the end of the next meeting of Signatory States. The provisional nominee will be eligible for nomination and appointment to the AC, as a full member, at that meeting, which will count as the start of their first term, unless their appointment took place less than 12 months after the previous meeting of Signatory States.



### **Officers**

23. The AC will select a Chair and a Vice-Chair by means of secret ballots coordinated by the Secretariat.
24. Both the Chair and the Vice-Chair will be the principal points of contact between the AC and the Secretariat. If the Chair is unavailable, the Vice-Chair is entitled to make necessary decisions.
25. Both Chair and Vice-Chair can be re-elected at the end of a term of office. They shall not hold one office for more than two consecutive terms.
26. The Chair and/or Vice-Chair should participate in the meetings of the Signatory States and may also participate, if funding permits, in the meetings of related and associated agreements and organizations that the Signatories deem relevant to the work of the MOU. All members of the AC are welcome to participate as observers in the meetings of Signatory States.
27. The Chair should provide a report of the committee's work to each session of the meetings of Signatory States.
28. The Vice-Chair should assist in the execution of the Chair's functions and should preside over conference calls and meetings in the absence of the Chair.

### **Meetings and Modus Operandi**

29. In order to minimize costs, the AC should conduct its work through electronic means (e.g., email, online platforms, video conferencing) whenever possible.
30. The AC should aim to hold quarterly conference calls to discuss and facilitate progress in the implementation of the Work Programme, with additional calls of the full or a subset of the AC to be scheduled upon request and as the need arises. External experts may be invited to these calls in agreement with the AC members.
31. Two regular meetings of the AC should be arranged by the Secretariat in each intersessional period, the first one within the first 12 months after a meeting of Signatory States; the second one preferably three to four months prior to the next meeting of Signatory States. At the direction or approval of the Signatory States, the Advisory Committee may hold additional meetings.
32. If funding permits, one or two days prior to the second intersessional meeting should be dedicated to AC working groups.
33. Meetings of the AC should be held in hybrid format (allowing both in-person and online participation) whenever possible. AC members should strive to attend in person; their travel will be funded through the Secretariat, if required.

### **Observers**

34. Subject to the availability of resources, the following observers will be invited to meetings of the AC:
  - Sub-regional Focal Points



- Chairs of the Marine Turtle Task Forces (MTTF)
  - Invited experts (to be determined by the Secretariat in consultation with the AC based on the agenda of the meeting)
35. Observers may provide input, views and comments to the Committee as appropriate and at the invitation of the Chair. Sub-regional Focal Points and MTTF Chairs may bring issues of concern of the sub-region they represent to the attention of the AC, and report back to the Signatory States of their sub-region or Task Force members.
36. As a courtesy, the National Focal Point of the host country of an AC meeting may attend the meeting as an observer at their own cost. Other National Focal Points may attend as observers online.
37. Additional persons qualified in fields relating to the conservation and management of marine turtles, including other National Focal Points, who wish to attend meetings of the AC as observers at their own cost should notify the Secretariat. A decision on their exceptional admittance will be made by the Secretariat in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the AC six weeks in advance of the meeting, bearing in mind the priorities and needs of the AC to accomplish their agenda and tasks, logistical constraints, and numbers in relation to the AC members attending.



## Annex 10

### Advisory Committee Membership

(available as [Outcome 9.6](#))

The membership of the Advisory Committee for the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU is as follows for the intersessional period between the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Signatory States.

#### Dr. Sali Jayne Bache

Adjunct Associate Professor Monash University Monash Sustainable Development Institute Melbourne Australia	sali.bache@monash.edu  <i>Fields of expertise: Marine resource management, Law, Fisheries technology</i>
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#### Robert Baldwin

Director Five Oceans Environmental Services P.O. Box 660 Muscat 131 Oman	Robert.Baldwin@5oceans.group  <i>Fields of expertise: Marine turtle biology, Marine resource management, Coastal development</i>
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#### Dr. Mark Hamann

Professor College of Marine and Environment Science James Cook University (JCU) Townsville Australia	mark.hamann@jcu.edu.au  <i>Field of expertise: Marine turtle biology</i>
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#### Dr. Jarina Mohd Jani

Senior Lecturer Biodiversity Conservation and Management Programme Faculty of Science and Marine Environment Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) Terengganu Malaysia	jarina@umt.edu.my  <i>Fields of expertise: Marine turtle biology, Marine resource management, Socio-economics</i>
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#### Dr. Ronel Nel

Professor Nelson Mandela University (NMU) Department of Zoology Port Elizabeth South Africa	Executive Director for Sea Turtle Conservation SHAMS Jeddah Saudi Arabia	petronella.nel@shams.gov.sa  <i>Fields of expertise: Marine turtle biology, Coastal development, Coastal ecology</i>
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**Dr. Andrea D. Phillott**

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*Fields of expertise: Marine turtle biology, Marine resource management, Coastal development, Socio-economics*

**Dr. Nicolas Pilcher**

Founder & Executive Director  
Marine Research Foundation  
Kota Kinabalu  
Sabah  
Malaysia

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*Fields of expertise: Marine turtle biology, Marine resource management, Fisheries technology, Sea turtle bycatch reduction*

**Dr. Madhuri Ramesh**

Associate Professor  
School of Development  
Azim Premji University  
Bengaluru  
India

madhuri.ramesh@apu.edu.in

*Fields of expertise: Coastal development, Socio-economics, Conservation and sustainability, Political ecology*

**Dr. Manjula Tiwari**

NOAA Fisheries  
Southwest Fisheries Science Center  
Marine Turtle Ecology and Assessment Program  
La Jolla, CA  
United States

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*Fields of expertise: Marine turtle biology, Integrative conservation, Fisheries bycatch*

**Dr. Scott Whiting**

Principal Research Scientist  
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions  
Parks and Wildlife Service, Western Australia  
Australia

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*Fields of expertise: Marine turtle biology, Marine resource management, Coastal development, Socio-economics*



## Annex 11

### Sub-Regional Focal Points

(available as [Outcome 9.7](#))

The National Focal Points<sup>43</sup> of the following countries will serve as Sub-regional Focal Points for the intersessional period between the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Signatory States:

#### Western Indian Ocean<sup>44</sup>

Kenya  
Alternate: Seychelles

#### North-Western Indian Ocean<sup>45</sup>

Oman

#### Northern Indian Ocean<sup>46</sup>

Maldives

#### South-East Asia<sup>47</sup>

Thailand

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<sup>43</sup> Click here for details: [www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/about/iosea-organizational-structure](http://www.cms.int/iosea-turtles/en/about/iosea-organizational-structure)

<sup>44</sup> Signatories: Comoros, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania; Non-Signatory Range State: Somalia

<sup>45</sup> Signatories: Bahrain, Egypt, Eritrea, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, Yemen; Non-Signatory Range States: Djibouti, Qatar

<sup>46</sup> Signatories: Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

<sup>47</sup> Signatories: Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam + Australia, United States; Non-Signatory Range States: Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, Timor-Leste + China, Japan, Republic of Korea



## Annex 12

### Intersessional Working Groups

(available as [Outcome 9.8](#))

The following intersessional working groups or steering groups were established or reconfirmed by MOS9.

Membership is indicated where already decided. Signatory States wishing to participate in any of them who are not yet listed below should please contact the Secretariat. Key mandates in the Work Programme 2024-2028 (WP) are indicated for ease of reference.

Working Groups will be supported by the Secretariat and requested to choose their own Chairs.

#### Convened by Signatory States

##### **Working Group on the National Reporting Format**

Membership: Australia, Kenya, Sri Lanka, United Arab Emirates, Advisory Committee, Marine Turtle Task Forces

Mandate: WP #96

##### **Working Group on Site Network Documents**

Membership: Australia, Papua New Guinea, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, United States, Advisory Committee, Marine Turtle Task Forces

Mandate: WP #42

##### **Working Group on Illegal Take and Trade (ITWG)**

Membership: Australia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mozambique, Philippines, United Republic of Tanzania, United States, Advisory Committee, Inter American Sea Turtle Convention, TRAFFIC Vietnam and WWF

Mandate: WP #29, 70-75, 82

##### **Site Network Discussion Group**

Membership: Signatory States and Site Managers of all Network Sites, experts

Mandate: WP #41



### **Convened by the Advisory Committee**

#### **Steering Group on Bycatch**

Membership: Advisory Committee, CMS Scientific Council, Marine Turtle Task Forces, experts and Signatory States to be determined

Mandate: WP #8, 25-28, 64, 94, 95, 111

#### **Steering Group on Nesting Beach Management**

Membership: Advisory Committee, CMS Scientific Council, Marine Turtle Task Forces, experts and Signatory States to be determined

Mandate: WP #12, 18

#### **Working Group on Capacity Building**

Membership: Bahrain, Maldives, Pakistan, Thailand, United States, Advisory Committee, Marine Turtle Task Forces

Mandate: WP #56, 108, 110, 111

#### **Working Group on TurtleNet**

Membership: Advisory Committee, Marine Turtle Task Forces, Signatory States to be determined

Mandate: WP #58

#### **Working Group on Evaluation of Progress in Implementing the Work Programme 2024-2028**

Membership: Advisory Committee, Marine Turtle Task Forces, Signatory States to be determined

Mandate: WP #77

#### **Working Group to Develop an Evaluation Questionnaire**

Membership: Advisory Committee, Marine Turtle Task Forces, Signatory States to be determined

Mandate: WP #124



# **IOSEA**

**Marine Turtle MOU**

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

