



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

Analysis of the Responses to the MOS9 Follow-Up Questionnaire

The questionnaire received responses from **34 participants**, including **26 government representatives** from **19 countries** and **8 non-government participants** representing various roles and organizations.

- **Government Representatives:** Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Comoros, Jordan, Madagascar, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Vietnam, Yemen.
- **Non-Government Participants:** Advisory Committee Members, Marine Turtle Task Forces, Invited Experts, NGOs: Nyanjura Creative Company, Tanzania Feminist Initiative, Sea Sense Tanzania, Fauna & Flora, WWF.

Overall Observations

Participants universally appreciated the **quality of preparatory materials**, which were praised for their readability and usefulness. Pre-meeting communication was highly effective, with the majority expressing satisfaction in how it facilitated preparation. The event was considered broadly beneficial, particularly for networking and receiving guidance. However, several areas for improvement emerged, such as allocating more time for substantive discussions and enhancing regional collaboration to address shared challenges like climate change and illegal trade.

Feedback from Government Representatives

Government representatives provided largely positive feedback, particularly on the **organization of the meeting** and the **support provided by the Secretariat and Advisory Committee (AC)**. The regional discussions were particularly valued for enabling candid conversations among Signatory States.

- While participants were satisfied with the meeting's agenda, several called for a **stronger focus on substantive topics**, such as climate change, illegal trade, and updates from Signatory States. Interactive elements like case studies and practical exercises were suggested to enhance engagement.
- Feedback on the **meeting structure** was overall that the plenary and sub-regional sessions were seen as appropriately balanced. Some recommended allocating more time to regional discussions and ensuring preparatory work on the work programme to maximize in-person discussions.
- Regarding the **division of the subregions**, most found the current setup effective but saw potential for better intersessional collaboration. Activities like pre-meeting consultations, subgroup discussions, and ice-breaking exercises were suggested to foster stronger relationships and facilitate more active engagement.



Government representatives also identified specific logistical improvements, such as addressing visa challenges earlier, providing transportation from airports, and circulating documents well in advance of the meeting.

Feedback from Others

Feedback from **Others** identified similar strengths and challenges but offered distinct perspectives. Participants found the meeting well-organized and the agenda relevant, though they advocated for more **capacity-building activities** and practical workshops to complement thematic discussions.

- While participants appreciated the **support of the Secretariat and AC**, they suggested providing clearer guidance on the inclusion of AC members and other partners during discussions to ensure consistency and amplify quieter voices. Additionally, some participants expressed a desire for more time to interact with AC members on national and regional work plans. Early preparation, including pre-meeting sessions for host countries and non-native English speakers, was recommended to ensure greater accessibility and participation.
- The **structure of the meeting** was generally satisfactory, but participants highlighted the need for extended durations to allow deeper discussions and prioritize operational over planning-focused topics. Sub-regional discussions, they suggested, could be more impactful if focused on substantive issues rather than solely addressing work programmes.
- Feedback on **division of the subregions** emphasized cultural and linguistic alignment, with a proposal to split the Asia-Pacific region and include the USA and Australia in the Pacific group to enhance collaboration and connectivity.

Other suggestions related to incorporating art and film exhibitions to broaden outreach and engagement.

Comments from the Secretariat

In the Annex, where concrete suggestions were made that the Secretariat felt they could respond to, these have been repeated in a table below the answers to each question, with a colour coding system indicating how easily/to what degree these can be implemented:

Green	Can and will be taken on board as suggested
Yellow	Depends on external factors and/or can only partly be implemented
Orange	Not possible or practical



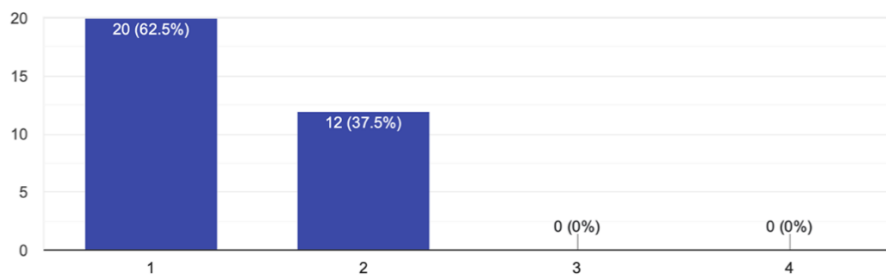
ANNEX – Summary and Analysis of Responses (Question by Question)

1. Question: *Please rate the quality (readability, helpfulness, etc.) of the documents.*
1=Excellent, 4=Poor

- **All Responses:** All rated the quality highly (1 or 2).
- **Governments:** Predominantly positive (13 rated 1, 11 rated 2, 2 no answer).
- **Others:** Predominantly positive (7 rated 1, 1 rated 2).

Please rate the quality (readability, helpfulness, etc.) of the documents.

32 responses

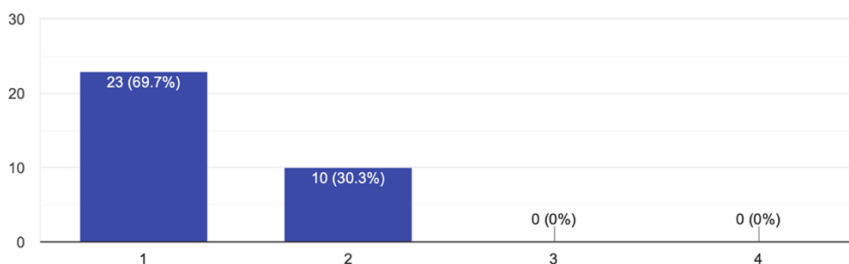


2. Question: *How satisfied were you with the communication before the meeting?*
1=very satisfied, 4=very dissatisfied

- **All Responses:** 70% of participants were very satisfied, all at least satisfied (1 or 2).
- **Governments:** Overall satisfied (16 rated 1, 9 rated 2, 1 no answer)
- **Others:** Overall satisfied (7 rated 1, 1 rated 2).

How satisfied were you with the communication before the meeting?

33 responses





3. Question: Do you have any comments on the overall meeting preparation process (e.g. on the quality/quantity of documents, travel arrangements, registration process, meeting schedule)?

- **All Responses:** Many participants (28) were satisfied or had no additional comments.
- **Governments:** The feedback on the meeting preparation process was generally positive, with most respondents (13) expressing satisfaction with the organization, quality and accessibility of documents, and smooth travel arrangements. The registration process was noted as efficient, and the meeting schedule was deemed appropriate. Some suggestions for improvement included addressing visa challenges by providing information earlier, clarifying the process for commenting on documents pre-meeting, and possibly offering free airport-to-hotel transportation. One respondent also suggested dedicating more time to substantive issues by refining the work programme prior to the meeting. Overall, the preparations were well-received, with clear communication highlighted as a strength.
- **Others:** Two comments to extend the time period (we may need to look at a moderate schedule in future; extend meeting duration time to at least five days so as to have enough time for deep insight discussions)

Suggestion	Secretariat Comments
Address visa challenges by providing information earlier	Depends on host country. The next host, once identified, will be made aware of this request.
Clarify the process for commenting on documents pre-meeting	Documents under the responsibility of the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat are, in line with standard MEA procedures, published sufficiently in advance of the meeting to enable Signatory States to review them and decide their positions in advance of the meeting. They are not subject to a written revision process in advance of the meeting.
Dedicate more time to substantive issues by refining the work programme prior to the meeting	In line with the decision of MOS9, the Work Programme for the next period will be drafted by the AC in collaboration with the Secretariat and MTTFs (WP#122), then consulted on through a sub-regional process, before a final draft will be prepared by the AC (WP#123) for consideration by the MOS.
Extend the time period	Depends on budget available and host country. May require additional voluntary contributions to cover the associated higher costs for delegate travel.



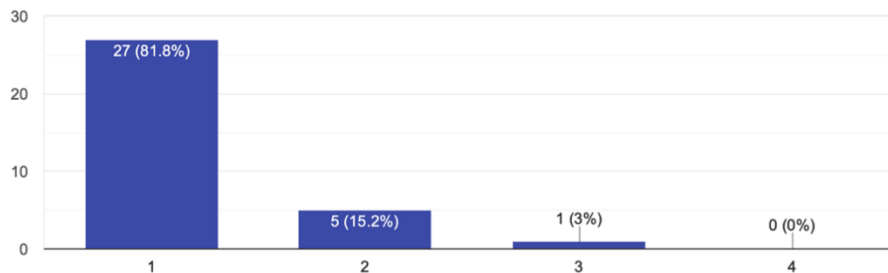
4. Question: Were you satisfied with the topics covered by the agenda?

1=very satisfied, 4=very dissatisfied

- **All Responses:** The majority were very satisfied (27 rated 1), with a few giving slightly lower ratings.
- **Governments:** Overall very satisfied (21 rated 1, 4 rated 2, 1 no answer).
- **Others:** Satisfied (6 rated 1, 1 rated 2, 1 rated 3).

Were you satisfied with the topics covered by the agenda?

33 responses



5. Question: Are there any other topics you would have liked to see included in the meeting agenda?

- **All Responses:** Participants highlighted the need for better work programme preparation, more interactive sessions for collaboration and experience sharing, and greater emphasis on addressing priority threats like climate change and illegal trade.
- **Governments:** The feedback emphasized aligning topics with MOU objectives, dedicating more time to updates from Signatory States, addressing climate change and illegal trade, and enhancing regional collaboration. There was also interest in practical exercises and sharing case studies.
- **Others:** Key themes included a desire for more focus on capacity building and practical workshops. Participants also suggested integrating innovative topics like the blue economy and art in conservation.

Suggestion	Secretariat Comments
More interactive sessions and opportunity for experience sharing	The time freed due to consultations on the draft Work Programme in advance of the meeting should allow inclusion of more discussion time especially in the sub-regional working groups. This will be taken into account in the development of the agenda for MOS10.
Greater emphasis on addressing priority threats like climate change and illegal trade	This will be taken into account in the development of the agenda for MOS10.
Include practical workshops with a focus on capacity building	This would likely require an extra day added to the meeting (see question 3 above), but will be taken into account in the development of the agenda for MOS10 and accommodated as far as possible.



6. Question: Please share your feedback on the support provided to delegates by the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee (AC) during the meeting.

- **All Responses:** participants expressed satisfaction with the Secretariat and AC's support (23), praising their guidance, expertise, and logistical assistance. However, one country expressed a desire for more balanced discussions to ensure signatories felt fully engaged.
- **Governments:** feedback was highly positive, emphasizing excellent support from both the Secretariat and AC in guiding discussions and addressing technical needs. One government appreciated closed sessions to discuss regional issues, as it allowed for candid conversations without the presence of experts. One noted that the AC's strong presence occasionally overshadowed signatory engagement.
- **Others:** the feedback highlighted that the Secretariat and Advisory Committee were knowledgeable, helpful, and proactive in providing definitions, explanations, and solutions that facilitated discussions, one wished for more time to interact with AC members on national/regional workplans.

Suggestion	Secretariat Comments
Allow more time to interact with AC members on national/regional workplans	This could for example be achieved by adding a day specifically for local NGOs with (some) AC Members before or after the main meeting. Given the budgetary implications both for the host and the Secretariat, this may not be easily possible, but can be tried.

7. Question: Many Signatories were rather quiet during the plenary sessions at MOS9. Do you have any suggestions on how to increase participation and engagement from all countries?

- **All Responses:** Both groups emphasized better pre-meeting preparation, regional and subgroup discussions, and addressing language barriers to create an inclusive and participatory environment.
- **Governments:** Participants emphasized the importance of regional workshops and early feedback from previous meetings. They suggested practical steps to encourage participation, such as starting with regional updates, allocating more time for discussion, and addressing language barriers, particularly for French-speaking participants. Suggestions also included all countries sharing information about their implementation efforts, and tools like breakout sessions, live polling, and nominating relevant delegates to attend the meeting. Several countries also thought that pre-meeting online discussions and categorized questions could also foster better preparation. Informal chats, intersessional relationship-building, and training on meeting procedures were recommended to empower quieter or less experienced participants. Additionally, one country emphasized the need for clarification of the Advisory Committee's role, feeling that their suggestions were overlooked in favour of AC recommendations, leading to a sense of underappreciation.
- **Others:** Concerns were raised about government delegates unfamiliar with marine turtle agendas. There was also a call for preparatory sub-regional meetings.



Suggestion	Secretariat Comments
Better pre-meeting preparation e.g. through sub-regional online meetings	This can likely be achieved in concert with the consultations on the draft Work Programme.
Starting with regional updates	These were already foreseen very early in the agenda, before the lunch break on the first day.
Addressing language barriers	This clearly is an important issue. However, the MOU budget does not allow for translations of documents or interpretation during meetings. Technical solutions may hopefully become available withing a few years that help overcome these problems. Concrete suggestions what to do in the meantime are welcome.
Tools like breakout sessions, live polling	There is consensus that the sub-regional WGs will be continued. Live polling is a very unusual practice for government negotiation meetings. The views of Signatory States on how they would like to see live polls being used would be welcome.
Selecting government representatives knowledgeable in marine turtle conservation	Invitations are sent to the MOU Focal Points. The selection of the person to represent each Signatory State, whether eligible for funding or not, is the responsibility of each country's government.
Training on meeting procedures	This is an item to be included in the Capacity Building Strategy. It could be provided separately (e.g. through webinars) or together with the sub-regional consultations on the Work Programme.
Need for clarification of the Advisory Committee's (AC) role when a Signatory suggests a different way forward	If conflicting views are presented in the meeting, the Chair needs to try to read the room to gauge whether the majority of government representatives leans one way or the other. In several cases, nods across the room indicated agreement with the AC, resulting in their advice to be taken on board, despite disagreement from one or two countries. This often related to issues for which a neutral, international perspective was preferred by most Signatory States.

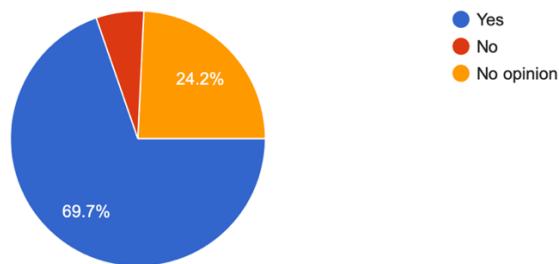


8. Question: Getting translation for all languages of the IOSEA Region is currently impossible. Would it help if sub-regions were seated together in plenary to enable mutual support?

- **All Responses:** 70% yes, 95% yes or no opinion.
- **Governments:** 18 responded YES, 2 responded NO, 6 had NO OPINION.
- **Others:** 5 responded YES, 2 had NO OPINION, 1 N/A.

Getting translation for all languages of the IOSEA Region is currently impossible. Would it help if sub-regions were seated together in plenary to enable mutual support?

33 responses



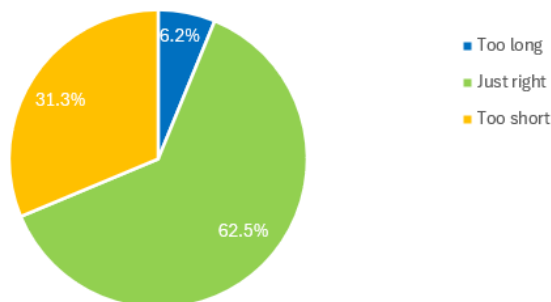
Suggestion	Secretariat Comments
Seat sub-regions together	This will be taken on board in preparations for MOS10.

9. Question: How would you rate the time allocated for the sub-regional group discussions?

- **All Responses:** Most thought the time allocation was "just right", but some felt it was too short.
- **Governments:** Majority thought the time allocation was "just right". (17 said "just right", 6 "too short", 2 "too long" and 1 N/A)
- **Others:** A larger proportion felt the meeting was too short and could benefit from extensions. (3 "just right", 4 "too short", 1 N/A)

How would you rate the time allocated for the sub-regional group discussions?

32 responses





10. Question: Do you have any feedback on the overall structure of the meeting, especially regarding the division between plenary sessions and sub-regional group discussions?

- **All Responses:** participants appreciated the meeting's structure but suggested improving the use of sub-regional discussions by focusing on substantive issues and addressing the work programme in advance to maximize in-person engagement.
- **Governments:** Many participants were generally satisfied with the structure of the meeting, describing it as “good”, “ok”, “excellent”, or “appropriate”. Two countries mentioned that the use of that time for going through the work programme was a wasted opportunity. Sub-regional discussions of the work programme should take place before the meeting so that use of time in in-person discussions is optimized and used to discuss substantive issues. One country said that they would like to see more emphasis on collaborations between Signatory States and feedback on progress in the implementation of the Work Programme directly from the sub-Regional WGs and the Signatory States. The same country also suggested that we hear more on the progress of addressing the objectives of the MOU from the sub-regional groups. One country would have appreciated more time dedicated to the sub-regional groups.
- **Others:** General the feedback said it was “ok”, while Advisory Committee Members said that the sub-regional discussions would be more productive if they worked on issues rather than just on the plan. One observer said for the sub-regional group discussions, some guidance from the Secretariat on inclusion of AC and other partners would be good, noting this was not consistent and with quieter voices may not have been a unanimous decision.

Suggestion	Secretariat Comments
Improve the use of sub-regional discussions by focusing on substantive issues and addressing the work programme in advance to maximize in-person engagement	In line with the decision of MOS9, the Work Programme for the next period will be drafted by the AC in collaboration with the Secretariat and MTTFs (WP#122), then consulted on through a sub-regional process, before a final draft will be prepared by the AC (WP#123) for consideration by the MOS. This should allow for more time for substantive discussions, both on the sub-regional WGs and in plenary.
Agreement on the inclusion of AC members and other partners in sub-regional WGs to ensure consistency	This is a matter for Signatory States to decide. The issue will be brought up for discussion when WGs are set up at MOS10.



11. Question: Do you think the current division of subregions is appropriate in terms of biological, political, cultural and linguistic factors to enable effective collaboration? If not, do you have any suggestions for improvement?

- **All Responses:** the current sub-regional divisions were seen as appropriate, with suggestions focusing on fine-tuning groupings for cultural and linguistic alignment and increasing collaboration and engagement within and across regions.
- **Governments:** The majority of participants found the current division of subregions to be appropriate or suitable (14). Many believed it enabled effective collaboration, with some describing the structure as "perfect" or "very appropriate." Others mentioned satisfaction with specific arrangements and their geographic scope, such as with the Northern Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Task Force (NIO-MTTF). Suggestions for improvement included enhancing interaction between countries within the same region and sharing expertise across sub-regions. A few participants highlighted the importance of maintaining regional meetings and providing space for team-building activities like games to improve communication.
- **Others:** Several concerns and suggestions were raised. One participant felt that the Asia-Pacific region should be split into two, as linguistic and cultural differences between countries hindered collaboration. Others said that Australia should be in SE Asia but not as a "Plus", given its location. Other "Plus" countries (currently UK and USA) could rotate through the sub-regional WGs to allow all to benefit from their expertise.

Suggestion	Secretariat Comments
Split Asia-Pacific region into two	Given the geographic boundaries of the MOU area, this does not seem practical. Only Papua New Guinea would be likely to fully belong to the Pacific sub-region.
The SEA sub-region should encompass Australia (not as a "Plus")	This is a matter for Signatory States to decide. The issue will be brought up for discussion during MOS10.
"Plus" countries could rotate through the sub-regional WGs	This is a matter for Signatory States to decide. The issue will be brought up for discussion during MOS10.



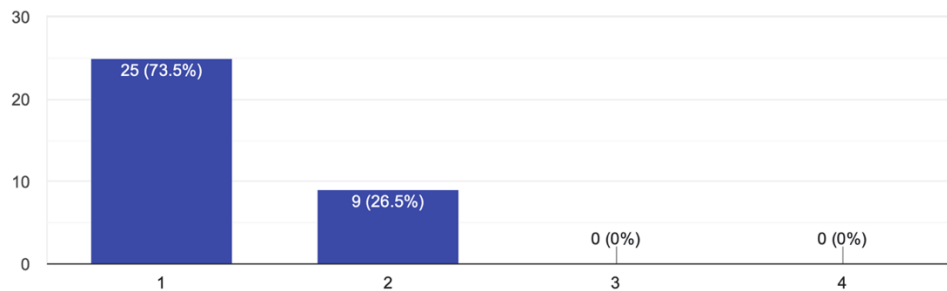
12. Question: Overall, how beneficial was attending the meeting for you (e.g. with respect to information and guidance received, networking opportunities)?

1=very beneficial, 4=not beneficial at all

- **All Responses:** All rated the meeting as beneficial (25 voted 1, 9 voted 2).
- **Governments:** 19 voted 1, 7 voted 2.
- **Others:** 6 voted 1, 2 voted 2.

Overall, how beneficial was attending the meeting for you (e.g. with respect to information and guidance received, networking opportunities)?

34 responses



13. Question: How do you think future meetings could be improved?

- **All Responses:** Overall, participants stressed better preparation, streamlined work program discussions, enhanced regional collaboration, and creating a more interactive and engaging meeting environment to optimize time for substantive discussions and knowledge exchange.
- **Governments:** Feedback from countries highlights several common themes for improving future meetings, mostly touched on before. Regarding meeting preparations and document management, it was reiterated that the draft work programme should be consulted on remotely before the meeting, thereby enabling more time for sub-regional updates and discussions on emerging issues. One country emphasized the importance of timely dissemination of documents and proposed holding a preparatory meeting between sub-regions and the Secretariat prior to the main session. Another country reiterated the need to improve the document review process by showing how feedback from Signatory States is evaluated and incorporated, and to ensure consistent engagement of Sub-Regional Working Groups and Signatory States throughout the process.

In terms of interaction and structure during the meeting, countries advocated for more interactive sessions, though less intense, and suggested maximizing participant involvement, sharing documents in advance, and incorporating icebreakers between meetings to enhance engagement reiterated the request for more time for sub-regional discussions, recommended allowing additional time for exchanging experiences and organizing field visits, facilitating practical learning and collaboration.

One country focused on logistics and inclusivity, which proposed selecting meeting locations that are spacious and equipped with all necessary amenities. One country suggested including Arabic as one of the official languages of the meeting to make it more accessible to Arabic-speaking participants. Some countries also provided ideas for enhancing engagement and showcasing regional efforts, including giving opportunity to each country to present on their national initiatives. Another suggestion



was to ask host countries demonstrate projects aligned with the meeting theme, offering participants practical examples of ongoing initiatives. Referring to the success of a WhatsApp group created for the WIO region, which has kept members engaged since its initiation in July, one country recommended replicating this model in other regions.

- **Others:** In the area of sub-regional engagement and support for participants, one participant proposed organizing pre-plenary meetings specifically for non-native English speakers to help them prepare and engage more effectively. This suggestion aims to ensure equitable participation and inclusivity. Similarly, another highlighted the importance of host countries being informed well in advance and adequately prepared to chair the meetings, ensuring smooth proceedings. Concerning time allocation and meeting structure, Advisory Committee Members and other participants suggested dedicating less time to discussing the work plan and more to addressing operational issues, enabling a focus on pressing topics. Some also proposed extending the meeting duration by adding more days to the schedule, ensuring sufficient time for all agenda items and meaningful participant engagement.

Suggestion	Secretariat Comments
Timely dissemination of documents	The Work Programme 2020-2024 foresaw availability of documents two months before the meeting. This deadline was indeed kept only for 7 of a total of 26 documents, however with the most crucial documents (e.g. draft Work Programme, draft budget, draft ToR for the AC) available on time. Delays in documents under the responsibility of the Secretariat were mostly due to the rescheduling of CMS COP14, resulting in a shortened meeting preparation phase. In addition, the availability of other documents depended on external inputs (e.g. documents prepared by the AC, Site Network proposals, National Reports). Signatories included the same timeframe in the Work Programme 2024-2028. All efforts will be made to meet the deadline for all documents, with the exception of any that can only be prepared closer to the meeting (i.e. the annotated agenda and schedule).
Incorporate icebreakers before or between meetings to enhance engagement	Clarification on what Signatories would like to see would be welcome.
Organizing field visits, facilitating practical learning and collaboration	This has significant budgetary implications both for the Secretariat and the host and requires a lot of time to prepare. It can be suggested to future hosts but may not be feasible.
Including Arabic as one of the official languages of the meeting	Arabic speaking countries are welcome to request simultaneous interpretation sufficiently in advance of the meeting to enable arrangements to be made. They would need to cover the related costs, however, as this is not an obligation of the host country and is not budgeted for in the MOU budget.
Provide opportunity for each country to present on their national initiatives	While these presentations would certainly be very interesting to hear, given the number of Signatory States (36), even if everyone was given only 10 minutes for presentation including questions and discussion, this would add another six hours of meeting time (i.e. one full day) to the meeting. The budgetary implications would be severe.



	Generally, through the analysis of the national reports, a good overview of the overall situation across the MOU area is given.
Encourage host countries to highlight projects offering practical examples of ongoing initiatives	Future host countries to be made aware of this request.
Offer preparatory meetings specifically for non-native English speakers to help them prepare and engage more effectively	This can likely be achieved in concert with the consultations on the draft Work Programme.
Inform host countries well in advance and adequately prepare them to chair the meeting	This is routinely done. Regular consultations with the host country are held as soon as the hosting is agreed. Meetings with the prospective chair are generally scheduled several weeks in advance of the meeting (depending on availability of the designated chair).
Dedicate less time to discussing the work plan and more to addressing operational issues	In line with the decision of MOS9, the Work Programme for the next period will be drafted by the AC in collaboration with the Secretariat and MTTFs (WP#122), then consulted on through a sub-regional process, before a final draft will be prepared by the AC (WP#123) for consideration by the MOS. This should allow for more time for substantive discussions, both on the sub-regional WGs and in plenary.
Extending the meeting duration	Depends on budget available and host country. May require additional voluntary contributions to cover the associated higher costs for delegate travel.



14. Question: *Do you have any additional comments or feedback regarding this meeting?*

- **All Responses:** In summary, participants appreciated the well-organized and informative nature of the meeting while suggesting ways to enhance engagement, clarity of roles, and interactive discussions for future events.
- **Governments:** Many participants praised the meeting for being well-organized, effective, and covering important topics. Feedback highlighted key areas for improvement and appreciation. One country emphasized the importance of simplicity and avoiding complexity, noting this as the secret to successful meetings. Regarding meeting structure and focus, one country suggested structuring breakout group discussions with key guiding questions to make conversations more focused and productive. Another country proposed developing regional projects so that regions can present their findings during meetings, fostering greater interactivity rather than relying solely on designated experts. The technical nature of the meetings was praised, with one country having found it very helpful for learning from other countries and expressed a desire for more such exchanges in the next MOS. One country appreciated the opportunity to attend and contribute, offering to discuss specific inputs in greater detail if needed.
- **Others:** Some participants suggested providing clear guidance at the beginning of the meeting regarding the roles of the Secretariat, the AC, and the members. One observer suggested to prepare films and art painting exhibition in the evening, and invite other people to participate and give them forms to give their opinions. No significant negative feedback was provided, with several respondents indicating no additional comments.

Suggestion	Secretariat Comments
Structure breakout group discussions with key guiding questions to make conversations more focused and productive	This will be taken into account in the development of the agenda for MOS10.