



**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
ON THE CONSERVATION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF MARINE TURTLES  
AND THEIR HABITATS OF THE INDIAN  
OCEAN AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA**

CMS/IOSEA/MOS9/Doc.7.3  
27 May 2024

9<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE SIGNATORY STATES  
Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, 24-27 June 2024  
Agenda Item 7.3

**NATIONAL NETWORKS**

*(Prepared by the Secretariat)*

1. National Networks, also referred to as National Committees, were conceived by Signatory States as coordination mechanisms established to facilitate cooperation and collaboration in marine turtle conservation efforts within each country.
2. It is crucial for government agencies to be aware of each other's policies and actions to avoid working at cross-purposes. Additionally, many non-governmental organizations are actively involved in marine turtle conservation, and government bodies need to be informed of these efforts. Establishing national networks/committees that periodically bring together relevant stakeholders can facilitate better coordination.
3. The establishment and strengthening of national networks are in line with Objective 6.4 of the IOSEA Conservation and Management Plan, which calls upon Signatory States to "improve coordination among government and non-government sectors in the conservation of marine turtles and their habitat", and specifically to "encourage cooperation within and among government and non-government sectors, including through the development and/or strengthening of national networks".
4. Recognizing the importance of this issue, the Advisory Committee and Secretariat developed a short questionnaire to encourage Signatory States to report in more depth on the initiatives undertaken to date and their plans, with the aim to help monitor progress and identify areas for improvement in coordination mechanisms. The questionnaire was circulated in 2008, 2011 and 2014.
5. During the 2008 and 2011 reporting exercises, conducted prior to MOS5 and MOS6 respectively, 19 out of 27 Signatory States provided responses, along with several updates. An analysis of the feedback received can be found in [MT-IOSEA/SS6.Doc.12](#). The questionnaires submitted by Signatories in 2008 and 2011 are published on the [dedicated section](#) of the IOSEA website.
6. Another reporting exercise took place in 2014 ahead of MOS7 with an improved version of the questionnaire as contained in [MT-IOSEA/SS7.14](#). This elicited three new responses, with some updates provided orally by Signatories during the meeting.
7. No further questionnaires have been circulated since then, but at MOS8, the following measure was included in the Work Programme 2020-2024: #103 "Establish formal and/or informal inclusive national committees/networks in order to develop synergies among governments and NGO partners" and given an overall priority of 'High'.

8. Currently the only effort to compile relevant information is through the National Report, which in question 4.2.3 asks Signatories to “Describe initiatives undertaken or planned since 2019 to involve and encourage the cooperation of Government institutions, NGOs and the private sector in marine turtle conservation programmes”.
9. Although reporting on national networks has been mostly dormant since 2011, there is still a mandate related to national networks in the Work Programme 2020-2024, and the AC Chair has suggested to reopen this topic. The Secretariat is now seeking feedback from the Signatories on whether the current National Report template sufficiently covers reporting needs. If Signatories consider that more emphasis is needed on National Networks, an intersessional Working Group could be established to develop this topic further, either by strengthening the National Report form, or as a self-standing questionnaire.

**Action requested of MOS9:**

- Review the document and decide whether and how national networks/committees should be reflected in the Work Programme 2024-2028 (see Doc.7.1).
- Provide feedback on whether the current National Report sufficiently covers reporting needs on National Networks, and if not, decide whether improvements should be taken up in the context of a revision of the National Report template or the self-standing questionnaire should be reviewed and reinstated.