



**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.8.5  
25 April 2024

9<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE SIGNATORY STATES  
Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, 24-27 June 2024  
Agenda Item 8.5

**SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLAN FOR  
THE HAWKSBILL TURTLE (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)  
IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA AND THE WESTERN PACIFIC OCEAN REGION**

*(Prepared by the Secretariat)*

1. Measure #63 in the Work Programme 2020-2024 instructed Signatory States, the Advisory Committee (AC) and the Secretariat to “cooperate with CMS in the joint development of a draft Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) for the conservation of the Hawksbill Turtle to address the trade, use and other threats to the conservation of hawksbill turtles in South-east Asia, and the adjacent western Pacific.” This mandate relates to CMS Decisions 12.17 and 13.70 c) directed to the CMS Scientific Council.
2. Throughout much of 2021 and the first half of 2022, the CMS Secretariat worked closely with the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU Secretariat to prepare a draft Action Plan and an approach for consultations, thereby assisting the Scientific Council with the implementation of this mandate. Following the activities described below, a Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) was successfully finalized, as presented in Annex 1 of this document.
3. The SSAP seeks to integrate the actions necessary to address trade and use at both the domestic and the international level, in line with the mandate of the Decision, to assist governments in implementing their commitments under CMS, the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU, CITES and other frameworks in a cohesive way.
4. The Secretariat worked together with CMS partner organization World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to undertake important background work collating existing policies and mandates (see [CMS/IOSEA/Hawksbill-SSAP/Inf.5](#)). In a next step, the most urgent high priority actions were identified and included in the draft SSAP.
5. In March 2022, a first complete draft of the SSAP was shared with the Scientific Council of CMS, the AC and Illegal Trade Working Group of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU, and all Range States for written comments. Additional partners, such as the CITES Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) and the Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), were consulted in the development of this SSAP.
6. Following these written consultations, a revised draft was considered in three sub-regional meetings of the Range States to elicit more detailed comments, and a consolidated draft incorporating these further comments was presented to a Range State Plenary Meeting (31 May - 2 June 2022) for final changes and adoption by that meeting. The report of the meeting, along with the presentations given by country

representatives, can be found on the [meeting page](#).

7. Following adoption of the SSAP, the AC of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU was asked specifically for its recommendation of the SSAP, which was given with full agreement.

### **Two Scientific Assessments Underpinning the Need for the SSAP**

8. The development of the SSAP, in addition to considering in detail existing commitments of Range States, as outlined above, was also based on the clear identification of a need for urgent action based on findings of two regional assessments of the conservation status of hawksbill turtles.
9. In March 2022, under the leadership of the AC, the [Assessment of the Conservation Status of the Hawksbill Turtle in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia Region](#) was published.
10. In May 2023, the parallel [Assessment of the Conservation Status of the Hawksbill Turtle in the Western Pacific Ocean Region](#) was published. At the time of the development of the SSAP, this report was already available in draft form.

### **Status of Adoption**

11. The SSAP is open for adoption by all Range States, no matter whether they are Parties to CMS, Signatories to the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU, or currently not participating in either of these agreements. Four countries, Cambodia, Myanmar, Philippines and Viet Nam adopted the SSAP already at the meeting on 2 June 2022, while others indicated their readiness to do so in the near future. At the recent 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS (COP14), the SSAP was adopted by all Parties to the Convention (see [CMS Resolution 14.11](#)).
12. The SSAP is now presented to MOS9 for adoption. If MOS9 adopts it, 16 of the 33 States in the range covered by the SSAP will have signed up to it<sup>1</sup>.
13. 17 Range States of the SSAP that are neither Parties to CMS nor Signatories to the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU will not yet be participating in the Action Plan<sup>2</sup>.

### **Next Steps**

14. There is a need for concerted efforts to reach out to non-Party or non-Signatory Range States to encourage them to adopt the SSAP for their own use. Both Signatories and the Secretariat can have a role in encouraging them to join forces with CMS Parties and MOU Signatories in order to address the urgent need for action related to use and trade of hawksbill turtles in the South-East Asia and Western Pacific Ocean Region.

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<sup>1</sup> Australia, Cambodia, Cook Islands, Fiji, France (French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna), Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Thailand, United States of America (American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, Northern Marianas) and Viet Nam

<sup>2</sup> Brunei Darussalam, China (incl. Hong Kong and Taiwan), Federated States of Micronesia, Japan, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu

15. The next focus of the CMS Secretariat will be therefore on promoting the SSAP and encouraging further Range States to adopt it. One success in this regard was getting the SSAP recognized in [CITES Resolution Conf.19.5 Conservation of and trade in marine turtles](#). There are also plans for joint outreach with the CITES Secretariat to promote uptake of the SSAP by more Range States.
16. Further, as agreed in the above-mentioned Range State Meeting, based on [CMS/IOSEA/Hawksbill-SSAP/Doc.8 Suggestions for a Governance Structure to Support the Implementation of the Single Species Action Plan](#), a Steering Group comprised one national government representative (Focal Point) and one national expert per Range State, plus international stakeholders, will be established shortly. Further, participating countries are encouraged to establish National Working Groups (NWG) consisting of National Focal Points, local stakeholders and scientists, particularly those who would be involved to implement actions.

**Action requested of MOS9:**

- Adopt the Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region presented in Annex 1

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NB: The Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region is presented as a separate file [here](#).