

SECOND MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP TO THE DUGONG MOU

Online, 2 July 2026, 10:00am – 12:00pm (GMT+4)

UNEP/CMS/DUGONG/TAG2/Report

REPORT

(Prepared by the Dugong MOU Secretariat)

1. Welcome and introductions

Abdelmenam Mohamed (Coordinator of the Dugong MOU Secretariat), welcomed participants to the second meeting of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to the Dugong MOU, expressing appreciation for members' continued commitment and expertise. Abdelmenam Mohamed highlighted the meeting as an important opportunity to reconnect after a three-year interval, review progress since the first TAG meeting, and strengthen the TAG's role in providing scientific and technical guidance to the Dugong MOU. Following the introductory remarks, participants engaged in a round of introductions, providing an overview of their roles and affiliations.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Abdelmenam Mohamed presented the agenda for the meeting and informed participants of a modification made by the Secretariat, namely the reordering of agenda items 3 and 4 compared to Version 1 that had been circulated with the meeting invitation. He then invited participants to propose any additional amendments to the agenda. As no further changes were suggested, the agenda was adopted. The meeting was scheduled to discuss TAG membership, roles and the associated Terms of References (TOR), review progress since the first TAG meeting held in March 2023, share updates from the Dugong MOU Secretariat, consider proposed amendments to the Conservation and Management Plan (CMP), discuss revisions to the national report form, and brainstorm options for updating the *Global Assessment of Dugong Status and Conservation Needs*.

3. Updates from the Dugong MOU

Abdelmenam Mohamed shared updates from the Dugong MOU.

3.1. 4th Meeting of the Signatories (MOS4)

The previous Meeting of the Signatories (MOS3) was held in 2017. The fourth Meeting of the Signatories (MOS4) was initially planned for 2024 but was delayed due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, during which Saudi Arabia had expressed interest in hosting the meeting. As a result of the postponement, the Secretariat is currently seeking alternative hosting arrangements and is targeting the second or third quarter of 2027 for the organization of MOS4.

3.2. Regional dialogues

Three regional dialogues on seagrass conservation within the dugong range were convened in 2025, providing an opportunity to share knowledge and build momentum on this issue:

- Asian Dialogue on Seagrass and Dugong Conservation (Bangkok, Thailand; ten countries represented)
- Arabian Peninsula Dialogue (Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; eight countries represented, along with international experts; report forthcoming)
- West Indian Ocean Dialogue (Mombasa, Kenya; five countries represented)

Further efforts are planned to expand these regional workshops to additional regions and to replicate this model.

The outcomes of the three dialogues were presented at a side event held during the CMS COP15 in Brazil in March 2026. To capture and disseminate the key findings and recommendations from the event, the Secretariat developed a factsheet, which has been published on the Dugong MOU website and is available through this link: [CMS COP15 Dugong MOU Side Event Summary](#). The Secretariat will circulate the factsheet directly to TAG members for their information.

3.3. ROPME Agreement

The Secretariat has signed a new agreement with the Regional Organization for the Protection of Marine Environment (ROPME), based in Kuwait, to undertake a baseline study aimed at identifying knowledge gaps and key challenges relating to dugongs, turtles, and sharks and rays under the related CMS instruments: Dugong MOU, IOSEA Marine Turtles MOU, and Sharks MOU. This initiative represents an important development, and the relevant countries will be informed in due course.

This is a unique effort, marking the first time that three CMS instruments are being implemented jointly within a single region, covering eight countries. There is an intention to replicate this model in other regions, such as the Red Sea, as well as to explore its application in additional regions, including the Pacific and Africa, where appropriate.

3.4. 2030 Seagrass Breakthrough

The 2030 Seagrass Breakthrough was launched at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai in December 2023, and is endorsed by two countries so far: the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. The initiative provides a coordinated framework for governments and non-State actors to accelerate seagrass conservation and restoration worldwide, with the overarching goal of securing the future of seagrass ecosystems by 2030 through mobilizing long-term finance, halting seagrass loss, doubling the area under effective protection, and scaling up restoration efforts.

The Secretariat is currently in discussions with the Climate Finance Unit at UNEP Headquarters regarding the establishment of a financing facility for the initiative. The Secretariat hopes that this facility can be launched during UNFCCC COP31, which will be held in Türkiye later this year. In addition, the Secretariat is planning to meet with the COP31 co-Presidencies, Türkiye and Australia, as both countries have demonstrated a strong interest in marine conservation and are keen to advance related initiatives at the conference.

3.5. Infographic on Dugong Global Conservation

The Secretariat has prepared an infographic to showcase global conservation reserves dedicated specifically to dugongs. The Secretariat will share this draft document with the TAG members for their information and review.

4. TAG membership, roles, and Terms of References

Abdelmenam Mohamed gave an overview of the situation of the TAG, on membership, roles and on the Terms of References, as three years have passed since the last meeting.

Membership

Abdelmenam Mohamed reminded participants that the new TAG had been established in 2023. However, due to delays associated with MOS4, formal approval of the TAG membership by the Signatories could not yet be obtained. Abdelmenam Mohamed added that approval would be sought at MOS4, which is expected to take place in 2027. In the meantime, TAG meetings would continue to be convened under the existing arrangements to ensure continuity of work.

Abdelmenam Mohamed reported that the Secretariat was undertaking a review of both former and newly nominated TAG members to assess their availability and continued interest in participating in the group, as invitations to attend the meeting were extended to all members of both the former TAG (pre-2023) and the current TAG (from 2023 onwards). At the same time, an assessment of the current TAG composition is being conducted against the TOR to identify filled and vacant positions. Based on confirmations received to date, vacancies remained in the Southeast Asia and Oceania regional representation.

Roles

Abdelmenam Mohamed noted that Helene Marsh (TAG Member), had served as Chair of the TAG1 meeting in 2023, and had agreed to mentor Asma Hadi (TAG Chair) as she transitioned into the position of TAG Chair. During the TAG2 meeting, Asma Hadi kindly agreed to assume the role of TAG Chair and the Secretariat thanked her for her willingness to lead the group.

Terms of References

Abdelmenam Mohamed recalled that, in 2023, Gabriel Grimsditch, Coordinator of the Dugong MOU Secretariat at the time, had initiated the process of revising the TAG's Terms of References (TOR). Abdelmenam Mohamed informed participants that the revised TOR would need to be submitted to the Signatories for approval at MOS4. This process would also provide an opportunity to incorporate any additional amendments considered necessary before formal adoption.

Abdelmenam Mohamed invited members to consider several proposed revisions to the TOR, including:

- **Membership structure:** Abdelmenam Mohamed noted that the current TOR identifies six regions: Western Indian Ocean; Northwest Indian Ocean (Arabian Gulf and Red Sea); South Asia; Southeast Asia (with separate representation for coastal and archipelagic States); Australia; and Oceania. To better align TAG representation with the regional framework used in the *Global Assessment of Dugong Status and Conservation Needs*, the Secretariat proposed revising the structure to include one representative from

each of the following regions: East Africa; Red Sea; Arabian/Persian Gulf; South Asia; Continental Southeast Asia; Maritime Southeast Asia; East Asia; Pacific Islands; and Australia.

- **Number of members:** Abdelmenam Mohamed recalled that the current TOR provides for 13 members, comprising seven regional representatives or experts, five additional technical experts, and one member of the IOSEA Marine Turtles Advisory Committee. The Secretariat invited members to share their views on the optimal size of the group, taking into account the need to ensure comprehensive regional and thematic representation while maintaining the effectiveness of the TAG.
- **Duration of membership:** Abdelmenam Mohamed noted that the current TOR limits membership to a maximum of two MOS cycles. Abdelmenam Mohamed proposed revising this provision so that membership would be valid for “two MOS cycles or 10 years,” and adding a provision stating that, “in exceptional circumstances, members may be renewed for a third term, primarily to ensure adequate regional representation within the TAG.” The Secretariat explained that this amendment would provide greater flexibility while preserving the principle of periodic membership renewal.

Abdelmenam Mohamed informed the TAG that proposed amendments to the TOR would be circulated for review prior to their submission to MOS4 for approval.

Helen Marsh suggested developing a membership matrix to help ensure balanced geographical representation and coverage of the key skills and expertise required by the TAG. She further noted the importance of maintaining representation with links to the IOSEA Marine Turtles MOU, a role currently fulfilled by Nick Pilcher (TAG Member). Helene Marsh added that his continued participation would be valuable, should he be available to continue serving on the TAG.

Abdelmenam Mohamed welcomed the suggestion and confirmed that the Secretariat would develop the proposed matrix to support the review of TAG membership and representation.

5. Recap from DTAG1

Philippa Loates (Secretariat) provided a summary of the first TAG meeting, held on 3 April 2023. The TAG agreed to meet every six months, with additional meetings convened as necessary, and supported interim arrangements for the Chair pending the appointment of a permanent Chair. During the meeting, members also highlighted the need to strengthen regional representation, particularly from Southeast Asia, and to broaden the range of technical expertise represented within the TAG.

The TAG reviewed ongoing and planned activities under the Dugong MOU, including preparations for MOS4 and the associated Dugong Technical Conference, implementation of the IKI Seagrass Ecosystem Services Project, development of the Dugong and Seagrass Hub, the Small Grants Programme, the Bazaruto Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project, and planned updates to the *Global Assessment of Dugong Status and Conservation Needs* and dugong bycatch assessment. Members discussed opportunities to revive the dugong genetics project, including follow-up on previously collected samples, strengthening collaboration with research institutions, and linking emerging genomic research initiatives across the species’ range.

The TAG also considered the revision of the Conservation and Management Plan and supported a comprehensive update that would strengthen consideration of climate change, ecosystem services, resilience, seagrass restoration, marine litter, and emerging technologies such as eDNA, genetics, and satellite tracking. In addition, members

agreed that the national reporting framework should be revised to better capture lessons learned, best practices, and regional collaboration, and supported testing of a revised reporting template prior to MOS4.

To finalize the summary, Philippa Loates provided an update on action points from the meeting. Key completed actions included the identification of a TAG Chair, appointment of a representative from the IOSEA Marine Turtles MOU, circulation of Small Grants proposals for TAG review, and completion of the *Global Assessment of Dugong Status and Conservation Needs*. Work remained ongoing or pending on recruitment of additional TAG members from Southeast Asia, follow-up on the dugong genetics project, revision of the CMP, and the development and piloting of a revised national reporting template.

Helene Marsh provided an update on dugong genetics research, noting that Eva Paulus, PhD student at James Cook University (JCU), Australia, is applying genomic approaches to improve the global understanding of dugong population structure and connectivity. She highlighted that, while the Mohamed bin Zayed Fund has supported a number of dugong conservation projects, its investments are generally focused on local-scale initiatives. As a result, important knowledge gaps remain at broader spatial scales. Drawing on findings from the *Global Assessment of Dugong Status and Conservation Needs* and related work, Helene Marsh noted that significant information gaps persist, particularly in coastal and maritime Southeast Asia, as well as in estimates of population abundance across the dugong's range. She emphasized the need for further discussion on research priorities and proposed that this be considered at MOS4 to help identify and agree on future priorities for dugong conservation and research.

Himansu Sekhar Das (TAG Member) noted that, at the beginning of the dugong genetics project, the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi had sent samples to JCU for analysis. However, with the subsequent development of genetic laboratory capacity in Abu Dhabi, such analyses can now be conducted locally. He suggested that the Secretariat develop a white paper outlining the rationale, objectives, and expected conservation value of completing the genetics work, including how the resulting data would support dugong management and conservation. Himansu Sekhar Das also recommended the development of a standardized methodology document to guide participating institutions and ensure consistency and comparability of data collected across the dugong range.

Helene Marsh highlighted that Eva Paulus has gained valuable experience in optimizing genetic research through the application of different analytical techniques. She suggested that it would be beneficial to commission an overview study examining the insights that various laboratory methods can provide on dugong genetics. Helene Marsh noted that a technical report outlining the strengths, limitations, and applications of different genetic techniques across the dugong range would be a valuable resource for researchers and practitioners, helping to guide future genetic studies and promote greater consistency in methodologies.

Philippa Loates enquired about the status of the South African dugong samples. Helene Marsh explained that challenges had been encountered in-country with the analysis of the samples. She noted that significant advances in genetic research capacity now allow much more work to be undertaken nationally, provided that researchers are aware of the strengths and limitations of the different analytical techniques available.

Kuppusamy Sivakumar (TAG Member) added that he had also experienced challenges in the past when attempting to send biological samples outside of India, highlighting the practical and regulatory constraints associated with international sample transfers.

6. Amendments on the Conservation and Management Plan

Alexandra Caron-Strehlow (Secretariat) provided an update on the ongoing revision of the Dugong MOU CMP.

She explained that, following the launch of the *Global Assessment of Dugong Status and Conservation Needs* at the IUCN Congress in 2025, discussions were initiated with Helene Marsh regarding a comprehensive update of the CMP. The proposed revisions were developed based on the report's Executive Summary and Chapter 11, with the objective of aligning the CMP with the latest scientific findings and conservation recommendations. An informal meeting with Dugong MOU National Focal Points (NFPs) was held in April 2026 to present the proposed revisions, and feedback received during that consultation was subsequently incorporated into the draft.

Alexandra Caron-Strehlow presented the key revisions and outlined the next steps in the consultation process. She further noted that the Secretariat would share the Excel version of the CMP alongside the updated Word document with Signatories, which would be invited to prioritize actions at the regional level, identify indicative timelines based on national circumstances and available resources, and provide examples of ongoing initiatives that contribute to the implementation of the CMP. This exercise is intended to support regional adaptation of the CMP and inform decision-making by Signatories.

Alexandra Caron-Strehlow also noted that NFPs had emphasized the need for greater clarity regarding the definitions of “important dugong areas” and “important dugong populations” in the CMP and sought the views and guidance of the TAG members on these definitions.

Alexandra Caron-Strehlow then invited comments and feedback from TAG members on the proposed revisions and on the Excel format of the CMP.

Benjamin Jones (TAG Member) noted that the Dugong and Seagrass Research Toolkit link in Action 2.1 of the CMP needs to be updated, as the existing link is now out of date.

Himansu Sekhar Das observed that the draft document classified more than 80 per cent of actions as high priority, with a further 15-20 per cent identified as medium priority. He expressed concern that the large number of high-priority actions could make implementation challenging from a resource perspective. He suggested that, during the revision process, the prioritization of actions be reviewed to determine whether some activities could be assigned a lower priority while still ensuring their implementation. Himansu Sekhar Das further noted that the establishment of a stranding network had not been addressed in the document and suggested that this be included under Action 1.1. He emphasized the importance of making the implementation of rescue and rehabilitation protocols a mandatory component of this action. In addition, Himansu Sekhar Das recommended that, in collaboration with the IUCN Sirenia Specialist Group, a regional assessment of the conservation status of dugongs be undertaken every five to ten years to support ongoing monitoring and conservation efforts. Himansu Sekhar Das indicated that he would provide detailed comments and recommendations to the Secretariat in writing following the meeting.

David Blair (Tag Member) supported the points raised by Himansu Sekhar Das and sought clarification regarding the use of the term “important” in reference to dugong populations. He noted that the term could be interpreted in different ways, such as referring to large populations, small but genetically distinct populations, or populations of particular conservation significance. He suggested that the CMP provide a clear definition or explanation whenever the term is used to ensure consistent interpretation. David Blair also observed that many of the current documents adopt a predominantly national perspective. Given the evidence that dugong populations across neighbouring countries may form part of broader, interconnected genetic populations, he emphasized the need for a stronger focus on regional collaboration and coordinated conservation efforts across the dugong's range.

Amanda Hodgson (TAG Member) sought clarification on the purpose of the Excel version of the CMP and requested further information on how the data provided by Signatories would be compiled and used in the revision process. In response, Alexandra Caron-Strehlow explained that, consistent with the earlier points raised by Himansu Sekhar Das, the exercise would help to further define conservation priorities and identify priority actions at the regional level, which would then inform the development of overarching global priorities within the CMP. Amanda Hodgson noted that, in order to encourage meaningful engagement from Signatories, it would be important to clearly communicate the purpose of the exercise and how the information provided would be used. She emphasized that participants should understand the expected outcomes and the value of their contributions to the revision and implementation of the CMP.

Damboia Cossa (TAG Member) emphasized the importance of ensuring that the revised CMP supports effective implementation across Africa. Speaking from the East African perspective, she noted the value of understanding and documenting ongoing conservation efforts in different parts of the continent. She highlighted the existence of several regional initiatives in the Western Indian Ocean region that are generating field data across multiple countries and stressed the importance of building on this momentum. Damboia Cossa further underscored the need to strengthen the integration of existing initiatives and improve monitoring efforts, particularly in areas where dugong populations occur at low densities, in order to enhance regional cooperation and conservation outcomes.

Kuppusamy Sivakumar highlighted the challenges associated with completing and analyzing the proposed CMP prioritization forms, particularly at the regional level. While he considered national-level assessments to be feasible, he noted that compiling information across multiple countries and translating it into meaningful regional priorities could prove difficult. He therefore suggested that the Secretariat provide support to Signatories in undertaking regional-level assessments and consolidating information across countries to facilitate the identification of regional conservation priorities.

Nicolas Pilcher (TAG Member) suggested adding a column to the CMP prioritization template for the projected completion date of each action, where applicable. He noted that activities are often reported as “in progress” without any indication of the expected timeframe for completion, making it difficult to assess progress and accountability. Including an indicative completion date, he suggested, would encourage more realistic planning and provide a clearer understanding of implementation timelines.

Helene Marsh stressed the importance of distinguishing between actions undertaken at the national level and those implemented through regional cooperation. She suggested developing an exemplar format for a global report that would enable countries to better understand activities being undertaken elsewhere in their region and facilitate the exchange of experiences and lessons learned. Drawing on her experience across the dugong range, Helene Marsh emphasized that there is no single approach that is appropriate for all countries. She noted that the objective should not be to identify which countries have completed the greatest number of actions, but rather to ensure that conservation measures are tailored to national circumstances and are effective within the local context.

7. Discussion on the national report form

Abdelmenam Mohamed noted that, based on the reporting process for the preparation of MOS4, only a limited number of countries submitted their national reports. Additionally, a review of the reporting form was undertaken to simplify and streamline it, in collaboration with Helene Marsh. Looking ahead to the next MOS, Abdelmenam Mohamed sought the TAG’s advice on the most appropriate approach. He emphasized the importance of avoiding duplication by ensuring that countries are not asked to provide the same information through both the national reporting form and the CMP prioritization template (Excel) which is to be circulated later this year. Recognizing the challenges many countries face in completing the reporting requirements and understanding the overall reporting framework, he stressed the need to further simplify and streamline the process wherever possible.

Philippa Loates reminded participants that Signatories are requested to submit national reports in advance of each MOS. She noted that, prior to MOS4 in 2023, only six reports had been received. Of these, two could not be used because they had been submitted in an incorrect format, and only two contained sufficient information to support meaningful analysis. Given that three years have elapsed since the last reporting cycle, Philippa Loates indicated that the Secretariat would need to request updated national reports from Signatories. She further suggested that the reporting template be revised to place greater emphasis on outcomes, achievements, and lessons learned, rather than relying predominantly on checklist-style reporting.

Kuppusamy Sivakumar observed that low reporting rates are a common challenge for government officials, given competing priorities and limited capacity. He suggested that the Secretariat first circulate the reporting template to Signatories and encourage submissions. Where responses are not received, he proposed that the Secretariat, with support from TAG members where appropriate, prepare an initial draft based on the best available information. The draft could then be shared with the relevant NFPs for review, validation, and completion, thereby facilitating the reporting process and improving the availability of information ahead of MOS4.

Helene Marsh noted that approximately one quarter of the Dugong MOU range States are currently affected by conflict or instability, which can make completion of national reports particularly challenging. In light of these circumstances, she suggested that the Secretariat consider offering Signatories the option of a bilateral meeting to complete the reporting process collaboratively, rather than requiring NFPs to complete the report independently. She noted that such an approach could help address capacity constraints, improve reporting rates, and ensure that relevant information is captured despite challenging national circumstances.

Nicolas Pilcher further noted that NFPs may not always circulate reporting requests widely enough across relevant government agencies, which can result in important information not being captured in national reports. He suggested that the Secretariat consider engaging directly with other relevant government departments and institutions, where appropriate, to support the collection of information and provide a more comprehensive picture of implementation. He also observed that levels of engagement among NFPs can vary and emphasized the need to consider additional approaches to strengthen participation and improve the reporting process.

Himansu Sekhar Das suggested that an alternative format to the Word document circulated in 2023 could make the reporting process less burdensome for NFPs. In particular, he proposed the use of an online reporting form, which may be more user-friendly, easier to complete, and less overwhelming for respondents. Alexandra Caron-Strehlow confirmed that an online form will be used for the next reporting period.

Asma Hadi reported encountering similar challenges with NFPs that have limited capacity to complete reporting requirements. She noted that, in East Africa, there is considerable interest and expertise among non-governmental organizations working on dugong and seagrass conservation. In this context, she suggested exploring opportunities to involve relevant organizations and partners in contributing information to national reports, where appropriate, in order to strengthen the quality and completeness of reporting while supporting NFPs in fulfilling their responsibilities.

Participants noted in the meeting chat that the wording used in the national reporting template was not fully aligned with the wording of the actions contained in the revised CMP. Members agreed that this issue should be addressed to ensure consistency across reporting and implementation documents. The Secretariat acknowledged the concern and noted that, while the proposed CMP revisions have not yet been formally endorsed due to the postponement of MOS4, efforts will be made to ensure that the terminology and structure of all relevant documents are aligned prior to their finalization and adoption.

8. Brainstorming on options for updating the Global Assessment of Dugong Status and Conservation Needs

Abdelmenam Mohamed presented a proposal to establish a structured mechanism for updating the *Global Assessment of Dugong Status and Conservation Needs*. The proposed approach would provide an annual process for updating information on dugong populations, threats, conservation actions, and research developments across the species' range, while ensuring continued scientific review and regional engagement.

Under the proposal, two TAG members would serve as co-chairs to provide oversight of the process, supported by Regional Lead Authors drawn from the TAG and teams of regional contributing authors. The Secretariat would coordinate the process, including author appointments, preparation of templates, management of timelines, and publication of approved updates through the Dugong and Seagrass Hub.

The annual reporting cycle would involve the preparation and review of updated regional chapters, which would be published online each year to maintain an accessible and up-to-date knowledge base. In every third year preceding a MOS, the Secretariat, in collaboration with the co-chairs, would compile a consolidated report incorporating updated regional chapters, a revised global overview, and a synthesis of key lessons learned and recommendations. The report would be formally launched at the MOS and serve as a key technical reference document for decision-making and future conservation planning.

The proposal aims to strengthen collaboration among TAG members and regional experts, improve the consistency and quality of assessments, and ensure that the latest information is available to support dugong conservation across the species' range.

Members discussed the appropriate frequency for updating the report. Nicolas Pilcher questioned whether changes occur frequently enough to justify annual updates, while Helene Marsh suggested that biannual updates may be sufficient and recommended that the approach should be piloted in a selected study region to better understand the resources required. David Blair proposed maintaining a regularly updated list of relevant publications and reports on the website, with a more comprehensive report revision every five years. Helene Marsh also noted that the report was already somewhat outdated at the time of publication, meaning the next update would need to incorporate information predating 2025.

Amanda Hodgson noted that regular updates could require a substantial amount of work and emphasized the need for a clearly defined methodology. She questioned whether updates should be limited to new information brought to the group's attention or involve actively seeking updates, and highlighted the importance of establishing a robust feedback process to avoid the challenges experienced with the national reports.

Abdelmenam Mohamed noted that the ROPME project is expected to deliver a regional baseline by the end of the year. He suggested using this study as a pilot to test the update process and to inform revisions to the Gulf chapter.

Helene Marsh agreed that the scope of an "update" should be clearly defined for this exercise. She noted that failing to update the report could reduce its usefulness, particularly where new information becomes available, such as recent evidence of dugong populations in areas where the species was previously thought to be absent.

Abdelmenam Mohamed noted that he would revise the proposal based on the feedback received and subsequently submit it to the TAG for review.

9. Any Other Business

Arabian Seagrass report

Alexandra Caron-Strehlow informed members that the Arabian Seagrass report is being finalized and will be circulated for review. Nicolas Pilcher noted that he has access to a more up-to-date GIS layer for Saudi Arabian seagrass habitats.

Dugong and Seagrass Research Toolkit

Philippa Loates asked whether the *Dugong and Seagrass Research Toolkit* requires updating and requested that any comments, suggestions, or concerns be directed to her for consideration.

Seaweed farming

Benjamin Jones highlighted concerns that, under the blue carbon agenda, major funders (e.g., the World Bank and GEF) are supporting large-scale seaweed farming projects that may overlap with and degrade dugong habitats. He noted that farming infrastructure, including extensive surface and seabed rope systems, could further disrupt dugong movement and habitat use, and questioned how best to engage funders on these issues.

10. Action Points

- The Secretariat will share the COP15 side event factsheet with TAG members.
- The Secretariat will circulate the global dugong conservation infographic to TAG members for review.
- The Secretariat will share proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference with the TAG for review prior to submission to the MOS for approval.
- The Secretariat will develop a matrix to support the review of TAG membership and representation.
- The Secretariat will follow up with Eva Paulus regarding the genetics project and explore opportunities for a potential second phase. Vic Cockcroft (TAG Member) will provide a one-page project overview, and Eva Paulus will provide a complementary summary. Based on these inputs, Abdelmenam Mohamed will prepare a proposal for a project with the Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi, including a white paper on dugong genetics, as recommended by Himansu Sekhar Das.
- The Secretariat will incorporate comments received on the revised Conservation and Management Plan and accompanying Excel document and circulate the updated versions to TAG members for review.
- The Secretariat will incorporate comments received on the proposal to establish a structured mechanism for updating the *Global Assessment of Dugong Status and Conservation Needs* and will circulate the revised proposal to TAG members for review.
- The Secretariat will issue a save-the-date notification for the next TAG meeting, scheduled for January 2027.

ANNEX 1

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Members of the TAG

Dr. Asma Hadi <i>Chair</i>	Resource Mobilization Manager – Conservation Programs WWF Kenya Kenya
Dr. Amanda Hogson	Senior Research Fellow Centre for Marine Ecological Research, Edith Cowan University Australia
Dr. Anna Lafratta	Lecturer Centre for Marine Ecosystems Research (CMER), School of Science, Edith Cowan University Australia
Dr. Benjamin Jones	Chief Conservation Officer and Co-Founder Project Seagrass United Kingdom
Dr. Damboia Cossa	Lecturer Eduardo Mondlane University Mozambique Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Programme Coordinator Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA)
Pr. David Blair	Adjunct Professor College of Science and Engineering James Cook University Australia
Pr. Edward Patterson	Director Suganthi Devadason Marine Research Institute India
Pr. Helene Marsh	Emeritus Professor, Environmental Science James Cook University Co-Chair IUCN Sirenian Specialist Group Australia
Dr. Himansu Sekhar Das	Expert - Marine Biodiversity Assessment and Conservation Terrestrial and Marine Biodiversity Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi Member of IUCN Sirenian Specialist Group United Arab Emirates
Pr. Kuppusamy Sivakumar	Professor Department of Ecology and Environmental Sciences Pondicherry University India
Dr. Len McKenzie	Principal Researcher James Cook University Seagrass Watch Australia

Dr. Nicolas Pilcher	Founder and Executive Director Marine Research Foundation Malaysia
Pr. Vic Cockcroft	Professor Institute for Coastal and Marine Research Nelson Mandela University South Africa

Convention on Migratory Species

Dr. Abdelmenam Mohamed	Programme Management Officer (Dugong MOU) CMS Office - Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates
Ms. Alexandra Caron-Strehlow	Associate Programme Management Officer CMS Office - Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates
Ms. Georgia Smith	Programme Support Intern CMS Office - Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates
Ms. Philippa Loates	Programme Management Officer CMS Office - Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates

Apologies received

Pr. Alana Grech	Head of Earth and Environmental Science College of Science and Engineering James Cook University Australia
Dr. Christophe Cleguer	Principal Research Officer, Marine Megafauna Program Lead Centre for Tropical Water and Aquatic Ecosystem Research (TropWATER), James Cook University Australia
Dr. Joshua Smith	Senior Marine Mammal Research Scientist Australian Antarctic Division Australia
Dr. Norbert Andrianarivelo	Enseignant Chercheur Institut Halieutique et des Sciences Marines (IHSM) and Institut d'Enseignement Supérieur d'Anosy (IESA), University of Toliara, Madagascar

No attendance confirmation received

Dr. Claire Garrigue	Chargée de Recherche French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD)
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	Member IUCN Sirenian Specialist Group France
Dr. Josh Donlan	Founder and Executive Director Advanced Conservation Strategies United States of America
Ms. Maitha Al Hameli	Director of Marine Biodiversity Division Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates
Dr Richard Unsworth	Chief Scientist and Co-Founder Project Seagrass United Kingdom
Mr. Saumil Shah	Chief Executive Officer EnerGaia Malaysia
Mr. Simon Woodley	Adjunct Associate Professor – Retired James Cook University Australia
Mr. Thibault Giulioli	Chief Executive Officer Indian Ocean Trepang Madagascar

ANNEX 2

GROUP PICTURE

