



SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Twenty-Second SPREP Meeting

Apia, Samoa
13 – 15 September 2011



Agenda Item 8.1.1:

2011 Pacific Year of the Dugong Campaign and on collaboration with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

Purpose of paper

1. To update the Meeting on the status of the 2011 Pacific Year of the Dugong Campaign and on the collaboration with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS). The paper also seeks the Meeting's decision for the extension of the CMS Pacific Officer's term.

Background

2. One of the priority actions listed under the Theme of Education and Awareness in the Regional Dugong Action Plan 2008-2012 is to declare a Pacific Year of the Dugong. The 21st SPREP Meeting endorsed the year 2011 as the Pacific Year of the Dugong (PYoD).

3. In 2005, SPREP and CMS signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) primarily aimed at strengthening joint work programming. Article 4 of the MoC deals with Coordination of Programmes of Work and that the Secretariats will regularly consult and brief each other on their respective activities and plans and that they will also decide on a joint programme of work activities.

Pacific Year of the Dugong

4. In preparation for the Pacific Year of the Dugong campaign, a Coordinating Committee, comprising of the SPREP PYoD team and representatives from main organizations and all six dugong range states in the Pacific Islands region, was established. The Coordinating Committee was tasked to develop the campaign plan, timelines and funding requirements for the PYoD campaign. National representatives were also tasked to facilitate the establishment of national dugong campaign committees for national activities, "coordinate" their respective inputs into the regional campaign, as well as the reporting aspects.

5. The goal of the regional Dugong Action Plan 2008-2012 was adopted as the PYoD campaign goal: “To maintain and improve the status of dugong populations and their habitats, in keeping with the traditions of the people of the Pacific Islands dugong range states”. The key objectives of campaign are to:

- Promote awareness and conservation of dugongs at site-level targeting key stewards and the fishing industry;
- Reduce dugong mortality from human activities;
- Improve status information and promote sustainable management of dugong populations and protection of their habitats at the national level through effective and practical national legislation and policies;
- Advance partnerships and secure resources for long-term support for dugong conservation in the region.

6. The main activities and achievements so far include:

- Development and finalization of PYoD Campaign Plan.
- Regional PYoD campaign launch in Palau on 14 March 2011.
- National PYoD campaign launches in Palau (14 March 2011), Papua New Guinea (24 March 2011), Solomon Islands (10 May 2011), and Vanuatu (6 June 2011). New Caledonia celebrated their national Year of the Dugong in 2010 as recommended in the regional Dugong Action Plan 2008-2012. Nevertheless, New Caledonia joined the regional campaign in 2011 with the production of materials such as the 2011 Dugong Calender.
- Development, printing and distribution of information material:
 - Poster: Respect and Protect Dugongs and their Coastal Environment.
 - Information/Fact sheets (Pacific Dugongs; Working Together to Save Dugongs; Pacific Seagrasses)
 - T-shirts: Respect and Protect
 - 2011 Dugong Calender by New Caledonia.
- PYOD Webpage: launched and operative (<http://www.sprep.org/Biodiversity/PYoD/resources.html>)
- PYOD Facebook: launched and operative.
- Funding as direct assistance to national dugong project during the year (UNEP/CMS Dugong MoU).
- Vision Pacific Media Award launched.
- Questionnaire-based dugong survey: completed in New Caledonia and Palau and on-going for PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (UNEP/CMS).

7. Material production and activities in progress include:

- Pacific Dugong 10 minute Video (Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, Australia).
- Pacific Range State Dugong Profiles (Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, Australia).
- 2-year Project: Dugong Adaptation to Climate Change (ICCAI).

Collaboration with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

8. There are six SPREP Member Countries that are currently parties to CMS. SPREP and CMS have been collaborating on several activities since signing the MoC in 2005. Two recent but major undertakings include:

- the partnership in the 2011 Pacific Year of the Dugong campaign and the establishment of a CMS Pacific Officer (CMSPO) housed at SPREP. CMSPO will facilitate a *Joint Programme of Work*, as articulated in the SPREP/CMS MoC. The officer will be responsible for supporting CMS in the Pacific Islands Region; coordinating and maintaining oversight of existing and developing CMS MoUs; collaborating with and supporting the SPREP Marine Species Programme. In early 2011, CMS provided most of the funding to enable employment of the CMS Pacific Officer to be housed at SPREP.

Recommendations

9. The Meeting is invited to:

- **note** the new position of CMS Pacific Islands Officer at SPREP and **direct** the Secretariat to collaborate with partners to seek funding to extend the position including consideration to incorporate CITES;
- **note** the progress of the Pacific Year of the Dugong campaign, and acknowledging:
 - the support of the Government of Palau, private sector and NGOs towards the regional launch,
 - financial support from UNEP/CMS and the Australian Government (through the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities) towards the campaign,
 - permissions by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Parks Authority (Australia), New Caledonia and others for the use of dugong images for the PYOD poster, fact sheets and webpage.
- **call** on the Pacific Islands Dugong Range States to maintain the interest and momentum to establish long-term programmes, through active collaboration, participation and support in regional initiatives on dugongs and their habitats. These include the Dugong MOU Secretariats' initiative to develop the GEF project concept/PIF with the working title "Catalysing robust dugong and habitat conservation across the Indian and Pacific Oceans through community-led stewardship and economic development" through formal allocation of their respective GEF STAR allocation, where appropriate;
- **call** on other partners and donors to continue to provide assistance to build the capacity of the Pacific Island Dugong Range States to undertake other dugong and seagrass conservation and management actions and for the continuation of the CMSPO position at SPREP;
- **encourage** members that have not signed the Pacific Islands Cetacean MoU to sign and members that are not parties to CMS to join.