**Inter-American Convention for the Protection and
Conservation of Sea Turtles
9th Conference of the Parties (COP9)**
June 12 – 14, 2019, Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic

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ONLINE SYSTEM FOR IAC ANNUAL REPORT

The Online Reporting System (ORS) is a web application which streamlines the environmental reporting process through a four-step procedure: 1) create the questionnaire, 2) distribute to Parties/users, 3) receive responses and 4) analyze and share data.

The UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) has developed the online reporting systems for the Parties annual reports for intergovernmental conventions such as CMS, CITES, and RAMSAR, and most recently IOSEA is in the process of implementation.

With the goal to achieve a more efficient way to collect the information requested in the IAC Annual Report, share it with IAC Parties and provide access to the information more efficiently by exploring the use of an online system, the IAC Secretary *Pro Tempore* contacted representatives from the WCMC who provided the offer included here with the description of the ORS that they have developed. We present this to the Conference of the Parties for consideration.

We ask the 9th Conference of the Parties the following:

1) Evaluate the WCMC proposal below, and make a decision if it is desirable for the IAC to use this system.

2) Recommendations on the proposal to be transmitted to WCMC.

3) Recommendations on mechanisms to fund the implementation of the IAC Online Reporting System, regarding the budget included in the proposal.

Facilitating online reporting for Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles

Streamlining national reporting to the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles through deployment of the Online Reporting System

Summary   The reporting cycle for the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles continues in 2020, providing a good opportunity for the Convention to begin using an online reporting process, capitalizing on the advantages and efficiencies which electronic preparation and submission of national reports can bring, building on the experience of several other biodiversity-related conventions.

1   Objectives and outcomes

There are three major objectives for this work:

1. To provide the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles with a system that will allow countries to report online by creating a new installation of the Online Reporting System for the Minamata Convention.
2. To create and set up the first online national reporting questionnaire, based on the Convention's reporting requirements.
3. To provide support to the Convention Secretariat that will allow them to fully make use of the Online Reporting System's features.

Outcomes:

1. By using the ORS, the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles will be able to receive and collect information from reporting countries in one centralized and secure location.
2. Reporting countries will have a simple online tool to manage the completion of their national reports to the Convention, leading to more streamlined reporting and increased response rates.
3. The Convention will have a centralized mechanism to manage and monitor the distribution of, and responses to, their first online reporting cycle.
4. The Convention will be better placed to allow access to reported information both on its own website, and through other channels.

5. The Convention will be well placed to take advantage of online reporting for future reporting cycles, and could extend this to cover other data collection activities.

2 Context and justification

The reporting cycle for the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles continues in 2020. It is desirable for the treaty to have one centralized online system, offering the advantages of online reporting where reporting is streamlined, and information received from countries is consolidated. The Secretariat is exploring existing online survey options but are in need of a solution that specifically meets MEA reporting needs.

The Online Reporting System (ORS) was originally developed by UNEP-WCMC working with the CMS family of agreements, and is already being used by a number of MEAs (African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Ramsar, Bern Convention) several of which are already benefitting from more streamlined reporting compared to previous offline reporting systems.

The Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles has expressed interest in potentially using the ORS as a way of receiving reports from Contracting Parties, and as a tool for centrally storing reported information. The ORS provides both the multi-language support and the user management features required by the Convention.

Moving to an online reporting system would reduce the administration burden for the Convention during their reporting cycle, as well as making it easier for reporting countries to submit information. As a result, more up-to-date and comprehensive information will be made available to the Convention, in turn leading to improved efforts and impact in conserving turtles in the region.

In late 2019 work on a new evolved and improved version of the Online Reporting System is expected to begin. The new system will retain all the current benefits of the system, but have improved user interface design, an increased ability to visualize reporting information and enhanced methods for extracting and distributing data from the system. The Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles would be one of the first MEAs to use the new system, helping test features with real live reporting, benefitting the development of the system for all users.

3   Activities and outputs

Activities:

1. Implementation of Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles branding
2. Training of Secretariat and country focal points:
   - Preparation
   - Deliver training via webinars, online meetings or face-to-face
   - Webinar/screencast made available
   - Supporting materials made available
3. Creation, and support of creation, for initial questionnaire:
4. Setting up the application:
   - Deployment
   - Database Back-up
   - Hosting, Analytics and Server Monitoring for first online reporting cycle
5. Management
6. Support to Secretariat during first 12 months of online reporting

Outputs:

1. Demo instance set up on current ORS with example questions added
2. Convention branded full instance of ORS set-up and deployed.
3. ORS Instance hosted on secure WCMC servers. Data stored safely with regular back-ups in place.
4. Key Convention staff and country focal points trained on how to use ORS
5. Initial questionnaire for the first online reporting cycle created and working.
6. Reporting countries using the ORS in developing and delivering reports.

Expected timing of activities												
	2019-2020											
	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July
Activity												
1. Implement first reporting format into new ORS								▓	▓			
2. Training								▓	▓	▓		
3. Questionnaire creation					▓	▓	▓	▓				
4. Setting Up							▓	▓	▓			
5. Management	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓			
6. Hosting & Support									▓	▓	▓	▓

Expected timing of activities continued												
	2020–2021											
	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr			
Activity												
1. Implement first reporting format into exist ORS												
2. Training												
3. Questionnaire creation												
4. Setting Up												
5. Management												
6. Hosting & Support												

Budget

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The total cost of the project will be USD $15,295. From the second year onwards, there is an estimated annual fee of USD $600.

Budget breakdown

Activity	Total (USD)
1. Implementing Convention branding on ORS	$824
2. Training	$5,652
3. Questionnaire creation	$2,112
4. Setting up application	$2,939
5. Management	$3,168
6. Hosting & support for first year	$600
TOTAL	**15, 295**

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Assumptions and risks

It is assumed that the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles and reporting countries have the appropriate computer equipment at their disposal, possess the basic-level IT skills required to create and submit a questionnaire, and have internet access.

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Collaborators

The project would be carried out as a direct collaboration between UNEP-WCMC and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles, ideally with the involvement of selected reporting countries and other experts in testing the implementation before all reporting countries are then informed and asked to report via the online system.

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