



Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area, concluded under the auspices of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

Accord sur la Conservation des Cétacés de la Mer Noire, de la Méditerranée et de la zone Atlantique adjacente, conclu sous l'égide de la Convention sur la Conservation des Espèces Migratrices appartenant à la Faune Sauvage (CMS)



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REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ACCOBAMS STRATEGY 2014-2025

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REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ACCOBAMS STRATEGY 2014-2025

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Acronyms

ACCOBAMS	Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black and Mediterranean Seas and contiguous Atlantic area
ASCOBANS	Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas
ASI	ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative
BarCon	Barcelona Convention (Convention on the protection of the Mediterranean
BSC	Commission on the protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (Bucharest)
Bern	Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats (Council of Europe)
Bonn	Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals (CMS)
BU	Bureau of ACCOBAMS with also an Extended Bureau (EBU)
Bucharest	Convention on the protection of the Black Sea Against pollution
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CIESM	Commission Internationale pour l'Exploration Scientifique de la Méditerranée
CITES	Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species
CMS	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn)
CP	Contracting Parties to ACCOBAMS
CPA	Collaborating/cooperating Partners of ACCOBAMS
EBU	Extended Bureau of ACCOBAMS
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
ECS	European Cetacean Society
FC	Follow up Committee of ACCOBAMS
FINS	ACCOBAMS newsletter
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFCM	General Commission for Fisheries in the Mediterranean
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
IMMA	Important Marine Mammals Area (IUCN)
IPA	International Partners of ACCOBAMS
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IWC	International Whaling Commission
MEDACES	Mediterranean database on cetacean strandings
MedSeaLitter	Project on marine debris in the Mediterranean
MEDPAN	Mediterranean Protected Areas Network
MMPATF	Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force (IUCN)
MOC	Memorandum of Cooperation
MOP	Meeting of Parties
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAP	National Action Plan
NETCCOBAMS	ACCOBAMS platform of information
NFP	National Focal Point of ACCOBAMS
NPA	National Partners of ACCOBAMS
OSPAR	Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (Oslo-Paris Convention)
PELAGOS	Pelagos Agreement, creating the Sanctuary for Mediterranean Marine Mammals
PS	Permanent Secretariat of ACCOBAMS
QUIETMed	Project on noise in the Mediterranean marine environment
REMPEC	Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea
SSC	Species Survival Commission of IUCN responsible for the Red List of Threatened Species
SC	Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS
SPA/RAC	Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre UN-Environment, Mediterranean Action Plan, Barcelona Convention
SRCU	Sub regional Coordination Unit (Mediterranean and Black Sea)
TA	Thematic Areas of ACCOBAMS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment (before United Nations Environment Programme)

A - Background

ACCOBAMS Strategy

ACCOBAMS Parties adopted the Resolution 5.1 (ACCOBAMS Strategy – period 2014/2025) during the Fifth Meeting of the Parties (5-8 November 2013, Tangier, Morocco) since they considered that the effectiveness of ACCOBAMS and of the Resolutions adopted within its framework would be strengthened by a long-term Strategy covering the period 2014-2025,

The chapter 9 of the ACCOBAMS Strategy (Annex 1 of the Resolution 5.1) states that monitoring of the Strategy implementation progress will include regular monitoring of operational work programmes and resolutions implementation.

The overall objective of the ACCOBAMS Strategy is to improve current conservation status of cetaceans and their habitats in the ACCOBAMS area by 2025, more specifically to achieve that status of at least all the regularly present species listed as endangered (EN) in the IUCN Red List downgraded to at least vulnerable (VU), with support of ACCOBAMS and ensure good environmental status (GES) as defined in the MSFD and according to the Ecosystem approach process implemented by the Mediterranean Action Plan, at least in the areas representing critical habitats.

The previous “Evaluation of the ACCOBAMS effectiveness for the 2002-2010 period”, provides details insight ACCOBAMS operations, pointing out strength and weaknesses of existing practices and proposing steps that may provide improvement of the ACCOBAMS’s effectiveness.

Terms of reference for the present evaluation

The purpose is to evaluate the level of effectiveness of the ACCOBAMS Strategy 2014 – 2025 by assessing:

- the achievements of Strategic objectives of the ACCOBAMS Strategy,
- the invested resources and efforts,
- the implementation level of the ACCOBAMS Resolutions, including the working programme adopted at each ACCOBAMS Meeting of Parties since MOP5 (November 2013).

The consultant will be requested to carry out the below mentioned tasks:

- Gather relevant information;
- Assess the implementation of the ACCOBAMS Strategy;
- Assess the adequacy of the Strategy with the new developments in the orientations and programmes of the relevant partners IGOs;
- Propose relevant adaptations in the ACCOBAMS Strategy and recommendations to improve its implementation;
- Provide the Permanent Secretariat with recommendations and elements for the preparation of the 2020-2022 work programme as well as of the relevant Resolutions in order to reflect adaptations proposed to the current Strategy.

Moreover, in order to gather relevant information and/or present the draft assessment of the implementation of the Strategy, the appointed expert will be invited to participate and to present relevant documents to the relevant ACCOBAMS meetings in 2018/2019 such as regional workshops, meetings of the scientific committee, the Follow up Committee, the Bureau, the Extended Bureau and all other meetings / workshops of interests. A preliminary list of relevant Meetings is presented in Annex 1. ^[1] The final output of the Consultant mission will be an evaluation report that shall include the conclusions of the evaluation, the proposed amendment to the strategy and the recommendations to the Permanent Secretariat for the preparation of the 2020-2022 programme of work.

The evaluation report will be submitted to the 4th Extended Bureau for presentation to Seventh Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS in November 2019.

B-ACCOBAMS STRATEGY EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION: REPORT ON FINDINGS

1. ACCOBAMS Agreement

The Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans in the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS) is 'a cooperative tool for the conservation of marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean and Black Seas'. ACCOBAMS aim is to reduce threats to cetaceans and improve the knowledge of these animals. ACCOBAMS was concluded under the auspices of Convention on Migratory Species in 1996 and entered into force in 2001.

The meeting of Parties

The Meeting of the Parties is the decision-making body of the Agreement. Ordinary sessions of the Meeting of the Parties occur at intervals of not more than three years, unless the Meeting of the Parties decides otherwise. The United Nations, its Specialized Agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency, any State not a Party to this Agreement, secretariats of other global and regional conventions or agreements concerned inter alia with the conservation of cetaceans, and regional or sub-regional fisheries management organizations with competence for species found temporarily or permanently resident in the Agreement area may be represented by observers in sessions of the Meeting of the Parties.

2. ACCOBAMS Agreement and its constituency

The constituency of the ACCOBAMS include eight elements and the implementation of the strategy is linked to the activities of each constituents of the agreement that could be evaluated separately, by group or jointly.

- The Parties (Ps, represented by their National Focal Points - NFPs)
- The Bureau (B - representing the Parties between meetings) and the Extended Bureau (EB)
- The Permanent Secretariat (PS - assisting the Parties)
- The Follow-up Committee (FC – evaluating the compliance)
- The Scientific Committee (SC – defining the scientific strategy)
- The Meeting of National representatives
- The two sub-regional coordination units (SRCUs) linked to the areas of competence of the Barcelona Convention for the Mediterranean and the Bucharest Convention for the Black Sea
- The partners, divided in three categories
 - o The collaborating or cooperating partners/entities (CPs, under MoU, MoC or not)
 - o The international partners (IPs, under MoU, MoC or not)
 - o The national partners (NPs, agreed upon by and reporting to each Party)

The first five are essential for the functioning of the Agreement and they are responsible for the implementation of the Strategy.

The sixth has been set-up to assist the countries in bilateral and multilateral discussions and for the identification of the national and regional priorities and the preparation of the following triennium programme of work.

The last one is related to partnership with other stakeholders, at the international, regional and national levels. It is considered that the CPs and the IPs could link directly with the Secretariat, but the NPs are the full responsibility of the countries, being validated by the NFPs and have to report to their NFPs at least for the preparation of the national reports. The status and modalities of agreement of these three categories

of entities or partners need to be reviewed and precisely defined and specific recommendations are developed in the report summary report.

2.1. The Parties

As of 2018, 24 countries, with the recent ratification of Turkey, out of 28 Range States, are Parties to ACCOBAMS.

ACCOBAMS Signatory

Country	Date	Tool	Deposit if the tool	Entry into force
Albania	24/11/1996	25/05/2001	03/07/2001	01/10/2001
Algeria		19/03/2007	25/09/2007	01/12/2007
Bosnia-Herzegovina				
Bulgaria	16/09/1996	23/09/1999	10/11/1999	01/06/2001
Croatia	24/11/1996	03/05/2000	10/07/2000	01/06/2001
Cyprus	24/11/1996	30/01/2006	14/02/2006	01/05/2006
Egypt		04/03/2010	19/04/2010	01/07/2010
France	24/11/1996	26/02/2004	10/03/2004	01/06/2004
Georgia	24/11/1996	30/03/2001	31/05/2001	01/06/2001
Greece	24/11/1996	24/11/1996	24/11/1996	01/06/2001
Israel				
Italy	24/11/1996	10/02/2005	24/06/2005	01/09/2005
Lebanon		05/05/2004	13/12/2004	01/03/2005
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya		12/05/2002	18/06/2002	01/09/2002
Malta	23/03/2001	23/03/2001	23/03/2001	01/06/2001
Monaco	24/11/1996	25/04/1997	30/04/1997	01/06/2001
Montenegro		17/02/2009	18/05/2009	01/08/2009
Morocco	28/03/1997	13/05/1999	05/07/1999	01/06/2001
Portugal	24/11/1996	30/09/2004	15/10/2004	01/01/2005
Romania	28/09/1998	13/06/2000	17/07/2000	01/06/2001
Russia				
Slovenia		12/07/2006	25/09/2006	01/12/2006
Spain	24/11/1996	07/01/1999	02/02/1999	01/06/2001
Syria		07/02/2002	22/03/2002	01/06/2002
Tunisia	24/11/1996	31/12/2001	15/01/2002	01/04/2002
Turkey		29/05/2017	03/11/2017	01/02/2018
Ukraine		09/07/2003	23/10/2003	01/01/2004
United Kingdom				

2.2. The Bureau and the Extended Bureau

The Bureau (BU) provides general policy guidance and operational and financial direction to the Agreement Secretariat and the Sub-Regional Coordination Units (SRCUs) concerning the implementation and promotion of the Agreement; carries out, between sessions of the Meeting of the Parties, such interim activities on its behalf as may be necessary or assigned to it by the Meeting of the Parties; represents the Parties vis-à-vis the Government of the host country (Monaco) of the Agreement Secretariat and the Meeting of the Parties, the Depositary and other international organizations on matters relating to the Agreement and its secretariat; and officially appoint the ACCOBAMS Executive Secretary.

In addition, before the MOPs, an Extended Bureau (EBU) reviews the progress made in the activities of the Secretariat and the Sub-Regional Coordination Units; the proposals made by the Scientific Committee, and the drafts of Recommendations and Resolutions to be submitted to the Meeting of the Parties.

2.3. The Secretariat

The ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat is hosted by the Principality of Monaco and performs numerous functions, and in particular the following:

- Arranges and services the sessions of the Meeting of the Parties, of the Bureau, the follow-up Committee and the Scientific Committee,
- Facilitates cooperation between Parties and non-Party Range States, and international or regional organizations,
- Assists the Parties in the implementation of the Agreement,
- Raises fund for the activities, manages projects, and,
- Administers the budget.

2.4. The follow up Committee

The follow-up procedure is based on Article III, paragraph 8 c), of the Agreement. The objective of the Procedure is to monitor, facilitate and promote follow up with the provisions of the Agreement, taking into account the specific situation of each Party and with a view to preventing disputes. The Procedure shall complement the work performed by other bodies of the Agreement.

The Follow-up Committee (FC) was created by the ACCOBAMS Parties at MOP5 through the adoption of the Resolution 5.4. The FC shall:

- Consider any submission made in accordance with Articles 7 to 9 below, with a view to determining the facts and causes of the matter of -follow up and assisting the Party concerned in its resolution;
- Adopt recommendations that it considers appropriate to resolve such a follow up issue;
- Ensure the follow up of its recommendations and of the relevant decisions of the Meeting of the Parties and report the results to the latter;
- At the request of the Meeting of the Parties, review general issues of implementation and follow up under the Agreement and prepare a report, including relevant recommendations on them, to be presented at the Meeting of the Parties;
- Report on its activities at each ordinary Meeting of the Parties and make recommendations as it considers appropriate.

2.5. The Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS, composed of persons qualified as experts in cetacean conservation science, is an advisory body to the Meeting of the Parties. Its role and tasks are defined in the Article VII of the Agreement. The Scientific Committee usually meets twice per triennium.

IUCN and CIESM play a specific role in the scientific committee as they are both supporting the participation, for each triennium, of three experts. The Presidency of the Scientific Committee will be successively occupied by a representative of one of these two international organizations.

2.6. The Sub Regional Coordination Units

Two Sub Regional Coordination Units (SRCUs) have been set-up, one for the Mediterranean and the contiguous Atlantic and one for the Black Sea. Their functions are to:

- Facilitate the implementation of the ACCOBAMS activities in the two sub regions;
- Collect and evaluate information that will further support the objectives and implementation of the Agreement in the sub regions;
- Provide information for the meetings of the Scientific Committee and prepare a report to the MOP on the sub-regional activities.

2.7. The meeting of National representatives

Previously called “ACCOBAMS Regional workshops” this meeting was first implemented in 2009. During each following Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS, Parties reiterated their interest towards the organization of such meetings whose objective is to evaluate and facilitate the implementation of the ACCOBAMS

These Meetings help in the preparation of the work program for the coming triennium, by identifying priorities of each sub-region, according to national priorities, and thus to improve the current conservation status of cetaceans and of their habitats in the Agreement area.

2.8. The Partners

ACCOBAMS Partners, include Organizations and Institutions technically qualified in Cetacean Conservation playing a significant role in the relevant activities of the Agreement. A specific section on Partnership and partners is developed below.

3. The National reports

The main source of information is coming from the reports of each country that are used for the preparation of the reports of the Secretariat. Nevertheless, these reports are incomplete and do not allow a straightforward and complete evaluation.

To date, the ACCOBAMS has 24 Parties. Each Party is due to report at each Meeting of Party, starting from the one following their accession to the Agreement.

The Secretariat has provided all the reports available to date and a table has been prepared indicating the date of accession by countries and the provisions of report by Parties since MOP 2 in 2004 and for the successive MOPs in 2007, 2010, 2013 and 2016.

Three countries have provided a report without being a Party, Montenegro in 2007, Russia and Turkey in 2004. These reports are quotes between brackets in the table and are not considered in the evaluation. The results show that the rates of provision of national reports versus the number of Parties at the different MOPs are 58% (8/14) in 2004, 84% in 2007 (16/20), 80% (18/22) in 2010, 100% in 2013 (22/22), and 64% (14/22) in 2016. The average is 78%. The low level of reporting in 2016 compared to the previous years is perhaps due to the change of format.

Country	Party in	MOP2 -2004	MOP3 -2007	MOP4 -2010	MOP5 -2013	MOP6 -2016	MOP7 -2019	Rate
ALB	2001	Y	Y	Y	Y	?		4/5
ALG	2007		N	Y	Y	N		2/4
BH								
BUL	2001	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		5/5
CRO	2001	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		5/5
CYP	2006		Y	Y	Y	?		3/4
EGY	2010				Y	Y		2/2
FRA	2004		Y	Y	Y	Y		4/4
GEO	2001	Y	Y	Y	Y	?		4/5
GRE	2001	N	N	N	Y	Y		2/5
ISR								
ITA	2005		Y	Y	Y	?		3/4
LEB	2005		Y	Y	Y	Y		

LIB	2002	N	N	N	Y	N		1/5
MAL	2001	N	N	N	Y	?		1/5
MON	2001	Y	Y	Y	Y	?		4/5
MONT	2009		(Y)	Y	Y	Y		3/3
MOR	2001	N	Y	Y	Y	Y		4/5
POR	2005		Y	Y	Y	Y		4/4
ROM	2001	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		5/5
RUS		(Y)						
SLO	2006		Y	N	Y	Y		3/4
SPA	2001	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		5/5
SYR	2002	N	Y	Y	Y	?		3/5
TUN	2002	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		5/5
TK	2018	(Y)						(1)
UKR	2004	N	Y	Y	Y	Y		4/5
		8/14	16/20	18/22	22/22	14/22		78/100
		57%	84%	80%	100%	64%		78%

The report to be prepared for the next MOP 7 in 2019 will be again with a new format and will be online.

All the reports provided by the countries have been reviewed and each Party reports have been synthesized in one report (24 word documents as Annex 1), to be reviewed and improved by each Party for the next meeting of Parties in 2019.

Nevertheless, there is no complete conformity between the sections of the national reports and the different sections of the Strategy. One of the main objectives of the evaluation will be to reach a complete coherence between the elements identified in the Strategy and those included in the national reports, allowing to provide an easier evaluation, by the countries, the Secretariat, the Bureau, the Follow-up Committee or the Scientific Committee. Changes will be proposed for the Strategy and for the National Reports. This has also an effect on the **Resolutions**, often repetitive and covering topics outside the full responsibility of the ACCOBAMS, and some recommendations will be done also on this aspect.

Some sections of the national report are difficult to fill by the country (in particular when the relevant information needs to be repeated several times) or others being never filled, a new format has been discussed with the Secretariat and a dedicated member from the Scientific Committee. It appeared necessary to **review the format of the report** and to improve the information provided.

A new format is provided and still needs some refinement. As this format will be available online with the content of previous national reports to be filled by the countries National focal points, it will be easier to correct the existing information and to complete with the ending triennium specific data. The online data will show all the efforts of each country since their first report, in 2004 for the earlier ones and the successive reports of 2007, 2010, 2013 and 2016. As far as possible, data from other sources until 2018 have been added. The format is available as Annex 1.

4. The resolutions, follow up their implementation

To date, 83 resolutions have been passed, 38 concerning the Management of the Agreement (MA) covering 6 topics and 45 concerning the Conservation Actions (CA) covering 16 topics. Considering the topics covered by the Strategy, it seems necessary to simplify and reorganize the sections based on:

- the responsibilities of the Parties, the Secretariat, the Bureau and the Follow up committee for the Management of the Agreement, and,
- the responsibilities of the Parties and the Scientific Committee for the Conservations Actions

First, the list of resolutions under the Management of the Agreement could be completed, moving 5 resolutions topics from the Conservation Actions to the Management, as follow:

- Transfer the Public awareness resolution (1) included in the conservation actions to the Information and Communication topic for the regional activities of the Management of the Agreement, as at the national level, it is the full responsibility of the countries.
- Transfer all capacity building resolutions (3) included in the conservation actions to the management of the Agreement as they are developed at the request of the country with the support of the Secretariat.
- Transfer the resolution on climate change (1) to the management of the Agreement, as it is a regional concern and/or a national one.

For the list of resolutions concerning conservation actions, they could be re-arranged under two main themes, as follow:

Knowledge for management of cetaceans (17 resolutions)

- Cetacean population and distribution, population structure and monitoring cetaceans covering 5 resolutions
- Functional stranding networks and responses to emergency situations corresponding to 5 resolutions
- Species management plans corresponding to 6 resolutions
- Protected areas for cetaceans (1 resolution)

Management of threats by human activities (21 resolutions)

- Interaction with fisheries corresponding to 7 resolutions
- Anthropogenic noise corresponding to 6 resolutions
- Maritime traffic and ship strikes corresponding to 2 resolutions
- Cetacean watching corresponding to 3 resolutions
- Captivity related issues corresponding to 3 resolutions

It is interesting to note at this level that some points included in the national reports or the strategy are not covered by resolutions, such as the marine pollution that is the main responsibility of other instruments. The Agreement responsibility is to develop cooperation with these instruments.

For the countries, the repetition of resolutions on the same topic could be confusing and there is a need for simplification or at least a revision of all the resolutions on the same topic and the redaction of one resolution when possible.

In addition, instead of repeating or drafting a new resolution on the same topic, the relevant body, such as the Scientific Committee for the Conservation Actions could consider a redrafting for replacing the existing one(s), adding new ones only for new topics.

An example, review of the 5 resolutions on the noise is provided as Annex 3.

5. The amendments

The Secretariat and the national reports show also an important gap in accepting, signing or **ratifying the Amendment** to the ACCOBAMS original text as presented in the Resolution 4.1 of the MoP4 of 2010 concerning the amendments on the extension of the ACCOBAMS geographical scope concerning directly Spain, Morocco and Portugal (only Spain has ratified). A reminder was provided to the Parties by the Resolution 6.10 of the MoP6, as the number of approvals was limited (8, including Bulgaria, Cyprus, Monaco, Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain and Ukraine) and as the amendment can only enter into force with 16 approval.

Other amendments included in other resolutions (3.1, 6.2 modifying 5.7, 6.4, 6.8 modifying 5.4) have been agreed upon as they were falling under the responsibility of the Bureau, the Secretariat hosting country or the meeting of Parties.

6. The revision of the Strategy

Looking at the gaps between the national reports information and the Strategy requirements, it seems necessary to **review the Strategy** by redefining the responsibilities of each ACCOBAMS constituency element. It is necessary and to separate the following elements:

- What is directly the responsibility of each ACCOBAMS constituent, alone or jointly with others?
- What has to be developed with other entities at the international or regional levels, such as the Barcelona Convention for the Mediterranean (MedPOL and EcAp process) concerning pollution, the Bucharest Convention for the Black Sea, the GFCM-FAO concerning fisheries, the CITES for trade of endangered species, the UNCLOS-IMO for maritime transport regulations or the UNFCCC for climate change aspects?
- What can be developed at the national level with the national partners?

The strategy general objective is to improve the conservation status of cetaceans and of their habitats in the area of competence of the Agreement by 2023. The strategy includes 10 specific objectives, 5 for the good management of the agreement (MA) and 5 for the conservation of cetacean and their habitats (CA).

For the good management of the Agreement, the 5 specific objectives are:

- A1 Improve communication across, up and down ACCOBAMS as an organization
- A2 Strengthen involvement of all key stakeholders in ACCOBAMS's operations, including all riparian countries
- A3 Ensure adequate funding, in particularly for conservation activities
- A4 Improve the level of implementation of and compliance with ACCOBAMS resolutions as well as the monitoring of its progress
- A5 Ensure implementation of the ACCOBAMS's cetacean conservation standards in the adjacent areas in close cooperation with other CMS instruments

For the **cetacean's conservation actions**, the 5 specific objectives are:

- B1 Improve the knowledge about state of cetaceans
- B2 Reduce human pressures on cetaceans, particularly those related to interaction with fisheries, habitat loss and degradation
- B3 Enhance public awareness about cetaceans
- B4 Improve capacities of national organizations and experts
- B5 Enhance effective conservation of cetaceans critical habitats

As several of the 10 specific objectives included in the Management of the Agreement and in the Conservation Actions are concerning similar topics, the specific objectives could be reconsidered and grouped under 6 different thematic areas (TA), under the responsibility and supervision of specific constituents of the ACCOBAMS (as indicated between brackets), as follow:

TA1- Concerning the Agreement (under the supervision of the Parties, the Bureau, the Follow-up Committee and the Permanent Secretariat):

- Improve the level of implementation of and compliance with the ACCOBAMS agreement, its amendments and its resolutions, through the involvement of all relevant stakeholders,
- Assist the other instruments or organizations that tackle more specific issues (such as fisheries, navigation, tourism) or more general ones (such as pollution, climate change) with an impact on the conservation of cetaceans or of their habitats
- Monitor the progress in all the sectors of activities of the Agreement

- TA2- Concerning the funding: (under the supervision of the Parties and the Permanent Secretariat)
- Ensure that adequate funding is made available, for the management of the agreement, for enhancement the communication and awareness, for the improvement of knowledge, for the development of conservation activities and for the upgrade of local, national and regional capacities.
- TA3- Concerning the enhancement of capacities for conservation of cetaceans: (under the supervision of the Parties and the Permanent Secretariat):
- Develop, implement and monitor a capacity enhancement plan
- TA4- Concerning the communication and awareness (common responsibility of all constituent)
- Develop, implement and monitor a common communication plan
- TA5- Concerning the improvement of knowledge for conservation: (under the supervision of the Parties, the Permanent Secretariat and the Scientific Committee):
- Centralize, organize and disseminate the existing knowledge on cetaceans, their habitat, the pressures and impacts, the national institutions, legislations and capacities,
 - Identify the gaps in knowledge and capacities and propose actions or programmes to improve the knowledge on cetaceans
- TA6- Concerning the development of conservation activities and the development of management measures (under the supervision of the Parties and the Scientific Committee):
- Identify the pressures and propose measures to reduce their impacts on the species or their habitats
 - Identify cetaceans critical habitats and based on the existing pressures propose changes in the national legislation (environment, fisheries, maritime transport, etc.) and support the implementation of area based measures of conservation, such as sanctuaries, marine protected areas or fisheries reserves

Based on these 6 thematic areas (TAs), it is proposed that the leadership will be assumed by the Parties and the Permanent Secretariat for the TAs 1, 2 and 3, by all constituents for the TAs 4 and by the Parties and the Scientific Committee for TAs 5 and 6.

7. The Partners: international, regional and national partners

Presently, one resolution defines the partners and the partnership conditions, but the definition of partners is very wide and does not include some important partners. A review of the system could benefits the Agreement and the implementation of the Strategy.

As of 2018, the 49 ACCOBAMS partners can be identified in four groups, the international conservation entities (3), the NGOs or foundations (25), the research or scientific institutes (22) and the governmental administrations (1) presented in the following table:

Partners of ACCOBAMS, names, categories with INT for international organizations, NGO for associations, SCI for scientific institutes, GVT for governmental administration, and countries.

Name	INT	NGO	SCI	GVT	Country
Association pour la Gestion Intégrée des Ressources AGIR		X			Morocco
Alnilam		X			Spain
Alnitak		X			Spain
Archipelagos Institute of Marine Conservation			X		Greece
Association Ecologie Marine Barbarous		X			Algeria
Association Monegasque pour la protection de la		X			Monaco

Nature (AMPN)					
Association protection des cétacés et de l'environnement marin		X			Algeria
Atutax		X			Tunisia
Biological Conservation Research Foundation (BICREF) ^[SEP]			X		Malta
Blue Word Institute of Marine Research & Conservation			X		Croatia
BREMA Laboratory			X		Ukraine
Centre national de recherche et de développement de la pêche et de l'aquaculture (CNRDPA)				X	Algeria
CIMA Research Foundation		X			Italy
Conservation Biology Research Group University of Malta			X		Malta
Conservation Information and Research on Cetaceans (CIRCE)		X			Spain
Corsica Mare Osservazione		X			France
CRAM Fundación		X			Spain
Dipartimento di Scienze della Terra dell' Ambiente e della Vita (DISTAV)			X		Italy
EcoOcéan Institut			X		France
European Cetacean Society (ECS)	X				Norway International
EQUINAC		X			Spain
Groupe d'Etude des Cétacés de Méditerranée (GECEM)			X		France
Groupement d'intérêt scientifique pour les mammifères marins et leur environnement (GIS3M)			X		France
Green Balkans		X			Bulgaria
Groupe de Recherche sur les Cétacés		X			France
International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)	X				International
Israel Marine Mammals Research and assistance Centre (IMMRAC)			X		Israel
International Union for Conservation of Nature ^[SEP] (IUCN)	X				International
Mare Nostrum		X			Romania
Marine Mammals research Institute			X		Turkey
Morigenos Slovenian Marine Mammal Society			X		Slovenia
National Institute for marine research and development « Grigore Antipa »			X		Romania
Nature Trust		X			Malta
Oceanomare Delphis Onlus		X			Italy
Ocean Care https://www.oceancare.org/en/startpage/		X			Switzerland
Oceana Foundation		X			Spain
Oceanographic Museum of Monaco			X		Monaco
Orca		X			UK
Pelagos cetacean research Institute			X		Greece
Portuguese wildlife Society (SPVS)			X		Portugal
Projecte NINAM		X			Spain
Souffleurs d'Ecume		X			France

Syrian Society fir the Conservation of Wildlife (SSCW)		X			Syria
Swiss Cetaceans Society		X			Switzerland
Tethys Research Institute			X		Italy
Turkish Marine Research Foundation TUDAV			X		Turkey
University of Valencia			X		Spain
Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC)		X			UK
WWF Mediterranean Programme Office	X				International
	4	25	19	1	

The total is 49 partners and they represent 20 countries of the area of the Agreement, 1 outside and 4 international organizations. They are from the Mediterranean (35), the Black Sea (6), the Atlantic area (1) and from other part of the world (7).

Nevertheless, it appears that the partners of ACCOBAMs are more than these 49, and in particular it could be necessary to consider different modes of partnerships and different categories such as:

- The international and regional instruments as partners such as the Barcelona, Bucharest, CITES Convention, the GFCM-FAO, the UNCLOS-IMO, could be recognize by establishing triennial (with automatic extension) or permanent Memorandum Understanding (MoU) to be confirmed by the Parties during the MoP.
- The collaborating or cooperating entities will be selected according to their mandate when covering activities that are not the full but a joint responsibility between different instruments or organizations (such as fisheries, climate change, pollution, maritime traffic).
- The international and regional organizations as partners such as IUCN Headquarters and the Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, WWF Headquarters and the Mediterranean Programme Office (MedPO), OCEANA, MedPAN, could be recognized by establishing a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) triennial (with automatic extension) or permanent to be confirmed by the Parties during the MoP.
- The national partners (such as national administrations, institutes, universities, rescue centres, foundations, cooperatives, associations, NGOS, private companies) with relation to cetacean knowledge or management could be recognized and supervised by each Party and a list provided to the ACCOBAMS with their reports each triennium. ACCOBAMS needs to define a list of conditions for acceptance and removal of partners (status, reporting obligation to the NFP, delivery of information on any event or project related to cetaceans).

When considering all the options, it appears that the number of partners is limited and that their role and functions in the agreement could be more important in the future and in particular for some aspects of the Strategy. For this an effort could be necessary at the level of the Permanent Secretariat develop the partnership system and involve partners of different origin (NGOs, Administration, institutes, independent experts, etc.) in multiple aspects, but the present resources in staff and budget are limited.

For example, for the research and scientific institutes, presently representing only 13 countries, the list could be extended to more institutes and more countries, and a section of the national report could consider the official list of national institutes or universities laboratories involved in research activities on cetacean.

Also, only one national administration is on the list of partners, for Algeria and this could be a target in the coming years, to include all relevant administrations involved in research and management of the marine environment, in particular those concerned by environment (including MPAs), fisheries (including fishery reserves), maritime transport and tourism activities related to the sea.

8. Restructure, reinforce the Permanent Secretariat

This point has not been considered, as there is another consultancy on this specific topic. Nevertheless, one way or the other, the permanent Secretariat needs reinforcement to fulfil all the tasks related to the implementation of the Agreement and of the Strategy.

9. Self Evaluation System

The self-evaluation system (SES) is proposed in order to assist countries Parties to the ACCOBAMS to evaluate their effectiveness regarding the Strategy of ACCOBAMS. The essential document for the SES is the national report that countries have to produce for each Meeting of Parties (MOP), every three years.

This could allow the Secretariat and in the present case, the evaluator, to be able to evaluate the progress made, but the objective is to assist the countries in doing a self-evaluation of their own progress when they wish to do it and to be able to identify and tackle their main gaps in the implementation or to identify the areas where they need support or training before the next reporting.

For the purpose of this evaluation of the effective implementation of the ACCOBAMS Strategy 2014 -2025 (as adopted under Resolution 5.1), the format of the National Report has been slightly reviewed in order to locate in the national report the elements in order to evaluate the 25 items proposed to be considered, divided in 5 sections as follow:

SECTION 1: MANAGEMENT OF THE AGREEMENT (11 items)

1. ACCOBAMS is signed, ratified, accepted, approved or entered into force
2. National Focal Point is designated
3. National reports are submitted regularly (2016 – 2013 – 2010 – 2007 – 2004)
4. Amendment concerning the extension of the ACCOBAMS geographical scope (Resolution A4.1 and 6.10) has been accepted, signed or ratified
- 5 Amendment of Article 2 of the Conservation Plan concerning the driftnets (Resolution A3.1) has been transferred in the national legislation and is enforced
6. National authorities, administrations or institutions are officially designated or mandated for ACCOBAMS follow up and implementation
7. National legislative and regulatory texts, pertinent or specific for conservation of cetaceans, are adopted and enforced
8. Country is Party to most of international or regional instruments involved in conservation of cetaceans
9. National research centres, universities are working on cetaceans and/or accepted as ACCOBAMS partners
10. National NGOS are supporting activities on cetaceans and/or accepted as ACCOBAMS partners
11. Funds are earmarked for activities for the conservation of cetaceans

SECTION 2: RESEARCH AND MONITORING FOR THE CONSERVATION OF CETACEANS (4 items)

12. Research programs and research projects related to cetaceans (national, bi-lateral or multi-lateral) are conducted in national waters, concerning cetacean species, population (abundance, distribution, structure) monitoring, and analysis of threats
13. A national Cetacean stranding network is in place and data are compiled in a national database and sent to the regional one (MEDACES)
14. The evaluation of the status of cetacean in national waters (or at the sub regional level) has been conducted and species afforded specific protections measures.
15. Conservation management plan(s) for cetacean species have been developed and are implemented

SECTION 3: MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR THE CONSERVATION OF CETACEANS (8 items)

16. Interaction between fisheries and cetacean (by catch and depredation) are monitored, studied and managed using fisheries and/or environmental national legislation or regional instruments (such as GFCM)

<p>17. Marine pollution, including marine debris, is monitored and managed using national legislation or regional instruments (such as the Barcelona or Bucharest Conventions)</p> <p>18. Emergency plans for specific events (pollution, strandings) are adopted and implemented</p> <p>19. Navigation regulations are in place in sensitive areas for reducing ship strikes (navigation schemes, observers on board)</p> <p>20. Underwater anthropogenic noise is regulated and considered in Environmental Impact Assessment procedures (EIA)</p> <p>21. Whale watching and other commercial tourism activities are regulated and enforced</p> <p>22. Captivity related issues and Dolphinariums are strictly regulated or banned</p> <p>23. Marine protected areas (MPA), fishery zones, fisheries reserves, or other effective area based conservation measures (OECM-CBD) are in place and relevant for conservation and management of cetaceans.</p>
<p>SECTION 4: CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE CONSERVATION OF CETACEANS (1 item)</p> <p>24. Capacity building on cetaceans, including training sessions, lectures and syllabus are realised at the national level or attended abroad</p>
<p>SECTION 5: COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS ON THE CONSERVATION OF CETACEANS (1 item)</p> <p>25. Events (meeting, symposium, awareness activities, etc.) are organized and products (newsletter, brochure, leaflet, poster, video, sticker, etc.) are disseminated</p>

For each of the 25 items, the country will have to evaluate its action according to the following system:

- A score of 0.0 for no action
- A score of 0.5 for started action
- A score of 1.0 for completed and operational action

The following table presents the Self Evaluation System format and includes the evaluated points, the section providing the source of information for evaluation, then three columns for valuating the effectiveness of each item (0.0 for no action, 0.5 for starting the process and 1.0 for completing the process). The highest value HV is noted in the right column and the total for each column at the bottom of the table.

Self Evaluation System format

Name of Party:

Evaluation item	Explanatory note/reference to national report	Values afforded			
		No action	Started	Completed	HV
Numbers refer to sections of national report	Numbers refer to Party, sections and items of national report	0.0	0.5	1.0	
Evaluation item	Values	0.0	0.5	1.0	
1. ACCOBAMS is signed, ratified, accepted, approved or entered into force	Section 1 item 1.1				
2. National Focal Point is designated	Party Item A				
3. National reports are submitted regularly (2016 – 2013 – 2010 – 2007 – 2004)	Party Item C				
4. Amendment concerning the extension of the ACCOBAMS geographical scope (Res. A4.1 and 6.10) has been accepted, signed or ratified	Section 1 Item 1.3.1				
5 Amendment of Article 2 of the Conservation Plan concerning the driftnets (Resolution A3.1)	Section 1 Item 1.3.2				

transferred in the national legislation and enforced					
6. National authorities, administrations are designated or mandated for ACCOBAMS implementation	Section 1 Item 1.6				
7. National legislative and regulatory texts pertinent or specific for conservation of cetaceans are adopted and enforced	Section 1 Item 1.7				
8. Country is Party to most of international or regional instruments involved in conservation of cetaceans	Section 1 Item 1.9				
9. National research centres, universities are working on cetaceans and/or accepted as ACCOBAMS partners	Section 1 Item 1.6				
10. National NGOs are supporting activities on cetaceans and/or accepted as ACCOBAMS partners	Section 1 Item 1.6				
11. Funds are earmarked for activities for the conservation of cetaceans	Section 1 Item 1.8				
12. Research programs and research projects related to cetaceans (national, bi-lateral or multi-lateral) are conducted in national waters, concerning cetacean species, population (abundance, distribution, structure) monitoring, and analysis of threats	Section 2 Item 2.1 and 2.2				
13. A national Cetacean stranding network is in place and data are compiled in a national database and sent to the regional one (MEDACES)	Section 2 Item 2.3				
14. The evaluation of the status of cetacean in national waters (or at the sub regional level) has been conducted and species afforded specific protections measures.	Section 2 Item 2.4				
15. Conservation management plan for cetacean species have been developed and are implemented	Section 2 Item 2.5				
16. Interaction between fisheries and cetacean (by catch and depredation) are monitored, studied and managed using fisheries or environmental national legislation or regional instruments (such as GFCM)	Section 3 Item 3.1				
17. Navigation regulations are in place in sensitive areas for reducing ship strikes (navigation schemes, observers on board)	Section 3 Item 3.2				
18. Underwater anthropogenic noise is regulated and considered in Environmental Impact Assessment procedures (EIA)	Section 3 Item 3.3				
19. Whale watching and other commercial tourism activities are regulated and enforced	Section 3 Item 3.4				
20. Marine pollution, including marine debris, is monitored and managed using national legislation or regional instruments (such as the Barcelona and Bucharest Conventions)	Section 3 Item 3.5				
21. Emergency plans for specific events (pollution, strandings) are adopted and implemented	Section 3 Item 3.6				
22. Captivity related issues and Dolphinarium are strictly regulated or banned	Section 3 Item 3.7				
23. Marine protected areas (MPA), fishery zones,	Section 3 Item 3.8				

fisheries reserves, or other effective area based conservation measures (OECM-CBD) are in place and relevant for conservation and management of cetaceans.					
24. Capacity building on cetaceans, including training sessions, lectures and syllabus are realised at the national level or attended abroad	Section 4				
25. Events (meeting, symposium, awareness activities, etc.) are organized and products (newsletter, brochure, leaflet, poster, video, sticker, etc.) are produced and disseminated	Section 5				
Total		0	T1	T2	S

The first column of values is 0 but shows the elements on which the country has to start activities. The second and third columns provide values for the evaluation. The sum (S) is the total of T1 and T2. According to the total, the following table provides with the ranking of the country as follow:

Rating value for the country between	Meaning in term of evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Strategy	Code
0 to 5.5	Unsatisfactory	US
6 to 10.5	Lightly satisfactory	LS
11 to 15.5	Moderately Satisfactory	MS
16 to 20.5	Satisfactory	S
21 to 25	Highly Satisfactory	HS

In summary, based on the available data, the evaluator has ranked the countries as follow: no country unsatisfactory, 8 are lightly satisfactory, 6 are moderately satisfactory and 9 are satisfactory. The average gives an overall evaluation of moderately satisfactory, which could move to satisfactory if all the countries fill completely the national reports.

The evaluator provided the Secretariat with the summary reports as prepared for each country which were used for prefilling the National Reports online.