



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPING A ACCOBAMS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

One of the major objectives of the New ACCOBAMS Strategy 2014-2025 concerns the communication and awareness about the role, mandate and work of ACCOBAMS. The Meeting of the Parties, held in Istanbul in November 2019 (MOP7) adopted Resolution 7.4 which recommends the development, implementing and monitoring of a common communication, information and awareness plan for ACCOBAMS.

The ACCOBAMS context for developing a Communication Strategy

The activities associated with the overall goal of developing a Communication Strategy are stated as follows in the ACCOBAMS [new Strategy 2014-2025](#), following adoption of Resolution 7.4, which amended Resolution 5.1:

- a. *'to develop a mechanism to be used as the central tool for communication, information and awareness and progressively as the central repository of knowledge about cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area conservation recommendations using the survey results that would be brought to the attention of ACCOBAMS Parties at MOP8 and other relevant stakeholders'.*
- b. *'identification of the cetacean community, including Parties, Partners, international and national entities, scientific institutes and scientists, NGOs, volunteers, etc.'.*

The ACCOBAMS [Funding Strategy](#) has also been adopted by the Parties last MOP7 through Resolution 7.5. Parties and the Permanent Secretariat were requested to implement the Funding Strategy in connection with the ACCOBAMS Strategy 2014-2025 in order to contribute to adequate funding of the activities, particularly through improving the visibility of ACCOBAMS work and the implementation of agreed conservation actions.

- c. One of the key actions of the Funding Strategy (Resolution 7.5) is to strengthen communication and outreach on ACCOBAMS. The development of an ACCOBAMS Information/Communication Strategy is seen as decisive to increase ACCOBAMS prominence and as a *'key step for strengthening ACCOBAMS visibility and reputation, being mindful of the virtuous cycle between communication/outreach and fundraising'*.
- d. The Parties believe that successful fundraising relies on effective and relevant communication. The actions seen in relation with raising interest on cetacean conservation and attracting new funds and support are the following:
 - i. dissemination of information on cetacean conservation issues, highlighting the actions carried out by ACCOBAMS and communicating on their impacts contribute to enhance the image of ACCOBAMS;
 - ii. updating the ACCOBAMS webpage regularly, publishing news on social media and creating outreach material.
 - iii. Participating in national/regional/international fora, meetings and conferences relevant to ACCOBAMS objectives, organizing side events on specific activities to present ACCOBAMS activities and to strengthen its reputation.

- e. The Funding Strategy considers collaboration as a key success factor in fundraising in a context of growth in maritime activities which promotes the use of the oceans while increasing the human pressures on cetaceans.
 - i. It is believed that the ACCOBAMS mission can only be fully realized within a collaboration framework with relevant international/regional organizations, such as Regional Seas Conventions, global organizations and regional fisheries management organizations.
 - ii. A main aspect to be highlighted to the outside world is that several ACCOBAMS activities contribute directly to the implementation of other regional environmental policies, such as the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Ecosystem Approach promoted by the Regional Sea Conventions.

The overarching international, institutional and policy framework for developing an ACCOBAMS multi-annual Communication Strategy

At the internal level

ACCOBAMS was created as a regional cooperation mechanism to promote conservation of cetaceans. A long-term Strategy included an action plan with many activities aimed at tackling managerial issues and simultaneously conservation actions. The managerial part of the Strategy regards information and communication activities, existing partnerships, new partnerships, new funding opportunities, amongst other. Under the conservation actions, public awareness on the different ACCOBAMS themes is envisaged: cetacean populations estimates and distribution, population structure, monitoring cetaceans status, interaction with fisheries, chemical pollution, anthropogenic noise, ship strikes, cetaceans watching, marine debris, climate change, species conservation plans, captivity related issues, functional stranding networks and responses to emergency situations, capacities to use photo ID, undertake aerial surveys and other issues, cetacean conservation postgraduate programmes, protected areas for cetaceans.

It is important that the future Communication Strategy contributes to provide solutions to the less positive outcomes of the ACCOBAMS' effectiveness assessment carried out in 2014, in particular through communication actions capable of increasing ACCOBAMS' visibility and, consequently, its influencing capacity in accordance with its mission - *"ACCOBAMS promotes and facilitates active regional cooperation at all levels, providing best expertise and standards and propelling implementation of all necessary measures for conserving cetaceans in the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area."* - and vision - *"Cetacean populations in the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area will be in a favourable conservation status, expressed as healthy populations and habitats with minimised adverse human impacts, with ACCOBAMS having a role of key regional player."*

The outcome of the SWOT analysis carried out on the state of ACCOBAMS affairs is part of Resolution 5.1 establishing the ACCOBAMS Strategy (Period 2014 – 2025) in 2014. It stated, amongst other aspects, that *'ACCOBAMS (...) contributed to a better regional cooperation (...) promoted better linkages between scientists and facilitated that countries with good human and financial capacities help those lacking these capacities. (...) On the other hand, insufficient support of the sectoral stakeholders has been identified as the most relevant weakness (...). The most important external opportunities (...) to seize are the constant demand to address emerging issues (such as marine debris, climate change) and the potential for synergies with existing and operating international marine conservation agreements.'* Improved communication, information sharing and dissemination are key elements to take advantage of the assessed Opportunities and Strengths, while tackling identified Weaknesses and Threats. The positive public perception around the protection of cetaceans or the great potential of future generations in ensuring public support are relevant opportunities to be explored through communication activities. Tackling identified Threats or challenges, such as the decreased national funding capacities, namely through growing other partners' interest in ACCOBAMS relevance merits full consideration. Likewise, reinforcing Strengths, such as the existence of concrete guidelines and best practices, or the significant amount of scientific knowledge and expertise, is determinant to underpin new or renewed strategic partnerships and to motivate the co-funding of activities of common interest.

From an external perspective

In order to define how the Communication Strategy will be conceived, the overarching institutional and policy context is of interest when assessing the relevance of ACCOBAMS framework and the way in which it contributes to a successful regional cooperation for the conservation of cetaceans in the Mediterranean, Black Seas and contiguous Atlantic area, by highlighting namely:

- ✓ ACCOBAMS Resolutions, Guidelines, expertise in face of an increasing public demand to address emerging risks and increasing pressures;
- ✓ Existing scientific knowledge and the constantly increasing amount of data that will become reachable by other organisations: in particular the Survey Initiative (ASI), CeNoBS project and the Netcobams data platform;
- ✓ ACCOBAMS's role in supporting the assessment and mitigation of human pressures on cetaceans;
- ✓ ACCOBAMS's role in contributing to the protection of Important Marine Mammal Areas through the designation of ACCOBAMS Cetacean Critical Habitats;
- ✓ The importance of showcasing successful initiatives in place: The ACCOBAMS High-Quality Whale Watching label and the certification mechanisms promoting best practices in cetacean observation activities;
- ✓ Relevance of ACCOBAMS in the global context of conservation of marine resources, its mandate, role and work achievements in relation to the protection of world marine biodiversity and the need to improve the knowledge about the biological status of cetacean populations;
- ✓ Importance of ACCOBAMS as a successful cooperation mechanism and a relevant partner to other organisations, projects and initiatives with similar/different/complementary mandates: The ACCOBAMS's overall objective and its 10 supportive specific objectives are linked to the Aichi targets and the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2010-2020;
- ✓ Its global objective is to improve the current conservation status of cetaceans and their habitats 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;
- ✓ ACCOBAMS's role in promoting North-South cooperation, exchanges of best practices and capacity-building;
- ✓ usefulness of ACCOBAMS to Parties that are also EU member states and need to comply with EU regulations and Directives, by supporting the good environmental status (GES) as defined in the MSFD, and according to the Ecosystem approach process implemented by the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Black Sea Commission.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL

The development of a multi-annual Communication Strategy will be assigned to a Consultant, who will:

1. *prepare an overview of the existing communication tools in ACCOBAMS, highlighting areas and gaps on which an intervention is to be considered. This overview will also include a review of other communication strategies implemented by other international and regional organizations of interest to ACCOBAMS, in particular the CMS Family, the IWC, the UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC and the Black Sea Commission, in order to identify gaps, synergies and potential leverages.*
2. *draft a multi-annual Communication Strategy towards strengthening synergies, transparency and outreach of ACCOBAMS in order to enhance the impact of its conservation efforts and thus contributing to scale up the conservation results and communication capacities, including to leverage of co-funding opportunities.*

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The Communication Strategy will address:

- a. What, How and When, is to be communicated, while considering to Whom - target audiences;
- b. any possible communication tools necessary for the implementation of the Communication Strategy;

- c. the strategic phases of the multi-annual Communication Strategy, respective goals and related actions;
- d. a timeline for the implementation of the Communication Strategy;
- e. the following communication objectives, giving consideration to the key messages below:

- **Communication Objectives**

- a. reinforcing the visibility of ACCOBAMS role in contributing to the conservation and protection of cetacean populations, regionally and worldwide, and to demonstrate effectiveness in delivering a positive change, through user-targeted information;
- b. building on ACCOBAMS legacy through sharing achievements and best practices, which contribute to the implementation of an Ecosystem Approach in the region and globally;
- c. improving the dissemination of information on cetacean conservation issues and cetacean threats, such as incidental catches during fishing operations, anthropogenic underwater noise, marine litter, ship strikes, etc.;
- d. encouraging a more collaborative work, encouraging, in particular, the replication of successful initiatives within and across regions and encouraging the active channelling of mirrored information between project sites and/or partners sites;
- e. promoting the full range of ACCOBAMS activities, in particular the visibility of its products to stakeholders, partners and general public, aiming at increasing funding opportunities for ACCOBAMS objectives and Programme of Work;
- f. targeting different publics to make best use of resources;
- g. increasing ACCOBAMS importance as a strategic partner in the region;
- h. intensifying collaboration with other international or regional nature conservation and environmental protection agreements, stakeholders and ACCOBAMS partners;
- i. establishing communication priorities based both on ACCOBAMS specific context and the international, institutional and policy framework.

- **Key messages**

- a. influencing and persuading:
 - by generating a rolling programme of key thematic messages, to be spread through speaking occasions, public events, publications and/or the website. In the short-term it may include an emphasis on who ACCOBAMS is, its role and how it can make a real difference;
- b. publicising key information and products:
 - by making readily available information on specific achievements, and reinforcing ACCOBAMS as a key source of expertise and guidance;
- c. displaying existing solutions and solutions under development:
 - by showcasing where ACCOBAMS initiatives are making a difference, illustrating with practical examples on correlation between policy and action, and
- d. smart working:
 - by using communications tools to enable ACCOBAMS ability to provide and exchange data.

4. ASSIGNMENT ORGANISATION

Under the leadership and supervision of the Permanent Secretariat, which in turn liaise with the ACCOBAMS constituents, a Communication Strategy as a common communication, information and awareness plan is to be developed by the Consultant during the period 2020-2022.

The ACCOBAMS Meeting of the Parties in 2022 (MOP8) will look at the progress achieved in developing such a mechanism, which will be used in the future as the central ACCOBAMS' tool for communication, information and awareness, with the objective of raising ACCOBAMS's visibility and reputation.

The next meeting of the Bureau, planned for 2020, is expected to launch the basis for the work to be developed during the 2020-2022 triennium and completed in time for the approval by the Meeting of the Parties in 2022 (MOP8).

The next steps will be followed to achieve this end:

1. In December 2020 the meeting of the Bureau provides guidance on the selected application;
2. In March 2021, an overview on the existing ACCOBAMS communication tools, and a review of other communication strategies, are delivered by the Consultant;
3. In October 2021, a preliminary draft Communication Strategy elaborated by the Consultant is delivered in order to be presented at the Fourteenth meeting of the Bureau (BU14), together with a proposal on the necessary communication tools for its implementation;
4. After the BU14 meeting, a written procedure for comments on the draft Communication Strategy is launched amongst all ACCOBAMS constituents in order to consider any suggested modifications;
5. June 2022, a final draft Communication Strategy reviewed by the Consultant and the Secretariat is delivered to be submitted for adoption at the Meeting of the Parties (MOP8) in Malta;
6. In December 2022, in parallel with the expected adoption of the Communication Strategy, the related communication tools and means to implement the Communication Strategy will be given consideration by the MOP8, also from a budgetary perspective in relation to the following triennium 2023-2025.

The ACCOBAMS Secretariat will provide the Consultant with all documentation available, as well as the contacts of key stakeholders who may be interviewed. Regular meetings (online or face-to-face) with the Secretariat for guidance and advice, as well as interviews with main stakeholders should also be factored in. The Consultant will be invited to attend the Fifth Conference on Cetacean Conservation in South Mediterranean Countries to be organized tentatively in April 2021, date still subject to *confirmation*.

5. EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND TIMEFRAME

Considering the above, the Consultant will be expected to provide:

- ❖ an overview of the existing ACCOBAMS communication tools, *highlighting areas where an intervention is advised and a review of other communication strategies*, in March 2021;
- ❖ a preliminary draft Communication Strategy with a proposal on the communication tools considered necessary for its implementation, in October 2021;
- ❖ a final revised draft Communication Strategy taking into consideration the comments received during the review phase, in June 2022.

6. BUDGET

The total workload of the Consultant is estimated to around 3 months distributed over 18 months.

The maximum available budget for the requested task is **17.000,00 Euros**. The travel and accommodation costs of the Consultant that could be organized in fulfillment of the task will be covered by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat directly, according to the ACCOBAMS Secretariat internal rules.

7. CONDITIONS FOR THE SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

The applications are to be submitted by individual Consultants or companies who will be contractually the unique vis-à-vis of the ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat in relation to the assigned task.

The applicants must provide evidence of the following:

- Minimum 5 and preferably 10 years of experience in the field of communications, marketing, partnership development at the international level, in particular in the environmental sector;
- Excellent analytical and organizational skills;
- Proven expertise in developing successful communication and outreach strategies and campaigns;
- Excellent drafting capacities in English and/or French.

Applications shall provide the following information:

- a) A detailed methodology, including:
 - presentation of the applicant's background and relevant experience as regards the objective of the mission, including CV(s) of the expert(s) and references. In case several experts are involved in the proposal, the applicant must describe the role and responsibilities of each expert;
 - a description of the different steps/methodologies to be undertaken to achieve the objectives of this task;
 - a provisional calendar of work.

- b) A detailed budget proposal based on the maximum budget available.

8. DEADLINE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Interested Consultants or companies should submit their CV/credentials together with the respective applications to the ACCOBAMS Executive Secretary (ssalvador@accobams.net) and, in copy, to the ACCOBAMS Secretariat (secretariat@accobams.net) **no later than 1 November 2020**.

For additional information or clarification on this Call for applications, applicants may write to secretariat@accobams.net.