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PROGRESS REPORT OF THE ACCOBAMS HIGHLY QUALIFIED MMOS/PAM WORKING GROUP

**PROGRESS REPORT OF THE ACCOBAMS
HIGHLY QUALIFIED MMOS/PAM WORKING GROUP**

Presented by Léa David, Vice-Chair of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and chair of the ACCOBAMS MMO/PAM Working Group

Issue: progress report of the ACCOBAMS Highly Qualified MMOs/PAM Working Group

1. Action requested

The Scientific Committee is invited to:

- a. **note** the progress of the ACCOBAMS Highly Qualified MMOs/PAM Working Group;
- b. **provide** advice on future actions to be undertaken.

2. Background

During the triennium 2014-2016, The Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS has recommended to the Parties the creation of an ACCOBAMS HQMMO/PAM certification.

Resolution 6.18 “Implementation of an ACCOBAMS Certification for Highly Qualified Marine Mammals Observers” was adopted by the Parties in November 2016, so to ensure throughout a high-quality standardized training of MMOs/PAM by:

- ensuring the recognition of the ACCOBAMS Highly Qualified MMOs/PAM operators at the international level;
- improving the effectiveness of conservation measures to limit the impact of noise on cetaceans.

The objective is to encourage ACCOBAMS Parties to give priority permits to those activities developed in their national area by industrial companies which employ Highly Qualified MMOs/PAM operators, or alternatively, other operators who have, at least, internationally agreed certifications.

The role of the Working Group of ACCOBAMS Highly Qualified MMOs/PAM is to ensure that the whole process is implemented smoothly, within a clear framework and in a transparent and fair manner.

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ACCOBAMS CERTIFICATION FOR HIGHLY QUALIFIED MMOs/PAM

By Léa DAVID, chair of the ACCOBAMS MMO/PAM Working Group

The main objective is that the ACCOBAMS Highly Qualified Marine Mammals Observers/PAM (HQMMO/PAM) certification is implemented in order to mitigate impact of noise on cetaceans. The process is ongoing.

Ongoing work since the 13th Scientific Committee in February 2020:

Training

The last training took place in 2019 and since then, due to the COVID situation, no training has been realised.

Communication plan

An article has been published in the marine professional journal IMarEST about ACCOBAMS, cetaceans and the measures to mitigate the impact of noise, and among them, the MMO/PAM certification. (Lyne P., 2021. Mitigating cetacean decline in the Med. Interactions, IMarEST, Issue 2/2021: 51-52)

Improvements

Working group: the list of active members of the working group has evolved and is now as following:

Name	Institution	Status
Léa DAVID (Leader)	EcoOcéan Institut	Leader
Nathalie DI-MEGLIO	EcoOcéan Institut	member
Claudio FOSSATI	CIBRA	member
Patrick Lyne	DMAD	member
Caterina LANFREDI	Tethys Research Institute	member
Alessio MAGLIO	SINAY	Member, also member of the JNWG
Barbara MUSSI	Oceanomare Delphis Onlus	member
Gianni PAVAN	CIBRA / JNWG*	Member, also member of the JNWG
Yanis SOUAMI	SINAY / JNWG*	Member, also member of the JNWG
<i>Marine Jullian, now David Barthelemy</i>	Total Energy	member
<i>Wendy Brown, Sureiya Pochee, now Harvey Johnstone</i>	International Organisation of Oil&Gas producers (IOGP)	New member
Ross Compton	International Association of Geophysical Contractors (IAGC)	New member

A **“feedback” workshop** was planned in 2020 in order to improve the whole certification process after the first trainings, but due to the pandemic crisis it has been shifted into a questionnaire requesting feedback from **trainers** on various questions.

Following that feedback step of gathering comments and ideas, a period of exchanges within the **members of the MMO/PAM working group** in order to sort out main points so to improve the certification process went on throughout 2020.

The 25th of March 2021 an **online workshop** took place with the members of the **working group**, resulting in a list of tasks aiming at improving the process in all steps needed: definition, forms, courses, format of the training, evaluation forms... A **program of work** has been established and is still ongoing.

The chapters of the course will also be updated with the last agreed thresholds or knowledge on the topic of noise.

PROGRAM OF WORK 2021/2022

ACCOBAMS MMO/PAM working group

“Feedback from trainings realised and proposal for improvements of the training and associated doc”

Based on the report’s outputs from the Online meeting - 25th of March 2021

	Question raised	What/how ?	Deliverable	Ongoing/ done
The training	what is the meaning of “highly qualified”?	We should delete the two words and use ACCOBAMS “certified” instead	New resolution	At the end of the process
	prerequisite for candidate?	1) Delete the prerequisite and at the end of the training, strengthen and standardise the exam/evaluation 2) Create an example of standardised exam	Example of standardised exam	done
	MMO/PAM as separate modules?	result of survey for those who employed MMO/PAM = prefer people with dual skills (MMO & PAM) Think about a “new” format: basic and advanced course? Different modules? Ex: Mitigation “common” module / MMO module / PAM (beginner) module; number of days, how many in classroom and/or at sea...	Proposal for a new training	Survey: Done New format:
	duration and place for “introduction to PAM”: at sea? more classroom with playback?	More classroom is requested by all. Optimal duration (has to be defined based on the new format of the training – see above)		

	create a feed-back questionnaire about the training for the trainees?	Agree Feedbacks should be sent to trainers and "ACCOBAMS"	Feedback questionnaire	done
	These changes lead to revise the Resolution (to be adopted by Parties in 2022)	Gather all changes (above) and revise the resolution accordingly	New resolution	At the end of the process
	Standardisation of acoustic instrumentation/equipment, training schedule...? => cooperation not competition between trainers	Need more discussion between trainers !	Operational MMO/PAM group on a standard social network tool (telegram, WhatsApp, discord...) for chat and some doc exchanges	ongoing
The documents	Improving the forms, a balance between standard and simplification	balance between standard and simplification compare with other forms => no change for the moment but highlight the most important parameters to be filled during training: position, depth, distance to source, species	New forms? NO	done
	Provide specific definition of behaviour for the different species	Visual + acoustic (Introduce them in the relevant course)	Paragraph defining standard behaviour (visual + acoustic)	ongoing
	update the different chapters of the courses ➤ 1 (presentation of the certificate) ➤ 2 (intro to acoustics) ➤ 3 (marine mammal and acoustics)	➤ Chapter 1: Update the new rules for the certificate ➤ All chapters: Update new references from literature and from standards (see also the doc presenting the comments from IOGP + IAGC)	All chapters updated	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 4 (human activities generating noise) ➤ 5 (regulations and ACCOBAMS guidelines) ➤ 6A (role of MMO/PAM) ➤ 6B (PAM and Pamguard) ➤ 7 (life onboard) 			
	plan a schedule/process for updating/reviewing the documents and monitor standards	Who? when? where? what?	Description of a schedule/process for updating/reviewing the documents and monitor standards	ongoing
To be developed	content for a short course for already trained/experienced MMO/(PAM)	To be done after some previous changes above (should be ready to be launched this summer?) Mitigation + species specific to ACCOBAMS area should be the focus (+ specific exam ?)	content for a short course for already trained/experienced MMO/(PAM)	ongoing
	Remote course for the complete training	Think about how to propose a training with separate theoretical and practical parts	Proposition of a format	
	remote version of the short course (with presence of trainer with PPT)	Remote feasibility: comparing existing Platforms (Moodle, Canvas, Zoom, etc) about cost, easy to use, capacity...	A table comparing relevant parameters for each of the relevant platforms	ongoing
	section in the course about best practice after the training to get a job?	Linked to relevant chapter in the course	Paragraph on “best practice after the training to get a job”	

other	more awareness for countries/industrials for at least 1 ACCOBAMS certified MMO/PAM in each "mitigation" team and one person from the country where the survey take place	Raise awareness for competent authorities which give permit/ Focal point => com' campaign. Be sure there is a pool of ACCOBAMS certified people	Communication plan	At the end of the process
	Guidelines on Soft-start, number of MMO required, ...for the JNWG!	Create some specific guidelines for MMO/PAM? Points to forward to the JNWG?	Identify the way of sending comments to the JNWG and send comments to the JNWG	ongoing
	Personal data	Be in accordance with the law on personal data	A charter towards personal data for MMO/PAM	

Working documents available in the google drive file:

- 1) Feedback from trainers who have implemented the training for the "High quality ACCOBAMS MMO/PAM certificate" and comments from members of the ACCOBAMS MMO/PAM WG (meeting of the 25/03/2021)
- 2) Comments on the course content from IOGP and IAGC
- 3) Proposals for a short course for already trained MMO/(PAM), remote/online version