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PRELIMINARY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2023-2025

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Presented by the Secretariat

Issue: Preliminary Work Programme for 2023-2025

1. Action requested

The Scientific Committee is invited to:

- a) **comment** on conservation actions and their means of implementation regarding the Preliminary Work Programme for 2023-2025.

2. Background

During the Fifth Meeting of ACCOBAMS National Representatives (online, 12th to 15th July 2021), participants were invited to propose general conservation actions for 2023-2025 Work Programme, including means of implementation and level of priority, taking into account their national priorities.

The proposed actions and means of implementation will be used by the Secretariat to elaborate, in consultation with the Scientific Committee, the draft ACCOBAMS Work Programme for 2023-2025, including by taking into account progress made in the implementation of ongoing activities under the 2020-2022 Work Programme.

A final draft Work Programme for 2023-2025 will be presented to the Fifth Meeting of the Extended Bureau, in Spring 2022 for 2023-2025, and then to the Eight Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS in November 2022

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MANAGEMENT OF THE AGREEMENT (MA)

MA1	INVOLVEMENT OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS
MA1a	Strengthen involvement of all key stakeholders in ACCOBAMS's operations

<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
<p>Implement an attractive strategy for organizations at the national level (NGOs, associations, national partners)</p> <p>To streamline the role of NFP</p>	<p>Formal collaborations (MoU) with other government bodies, scientific organizations, Universities and relevant NGOs</p> <p>Establishment of national Working Groups or Councils in the framework of National Actions Plan</p> <p>Dissemination of the guide on the role of the ACCOBAMS Focal Point</p>
<p>Strengthen the involvement of national representatives of ACCOBAMS Parties and non-Parties in formulating actions related to cetacean conservation, according to their national priorities</p>	<p>Meetings, events, joint projects, workshops</p>
<p>Increase liaison between scientific partners and National Representatives - increase transparency</p>	<p>Joint workshop with partners / meeting of Partners in order to share expertise/knowledge/information</p>
<p>Establish coherent synergies with the European (MSFD) and Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and Black Sea (Bucharest Convention) strategies to avoid duplication of efforts / relevant uses of information / pooling efforts</p>	<p>Joint meetings to coordinate and capitalize synergies</p> <p>Use the NETCCOBAMS platform as sharing/consultation tool</p> <p>Facilitate the reporting by Countries in the framework of other Conventions: Dialogue between regional conventions for standardized reporting</p>
<p>Exchange of information on the results of national and regional projects of other organizations and on their experience feedbacks</p>	<p>Joint projects and programmes</p> <p>Participation in project feedback meetings</p>
<p>Facilitate partnerships between countries on conservation issues for species (case of the porpoise between Portugal and Morocco)</p>	<p>Use of a joint platform such as NETCCOBAMS</p>

MA2	ENSURE ADEQUATE FUNDING, IN PARTICULAR FOR CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES
MA2a	Mobilizing and diversifying funding sources

<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
Diversify funding sources to ensure projects sustainability	Training (including online sessions) for Focal Points, experts and NGOs on projects funding
Explore and examine international funding opportunities for cetacean conservation projects in the framework of partnership with donors	
Inform and train FPs + experts and NGOs on funding opportunities and on the modalities and techniques for applying for national project funding from international donors	
Investigate how to Secure national funds to be able to support projects launched by national organizations (co-funding) in line with ACCOBAMS priorities	

MA3	IMPLEMENTATION OF AND COMPLIANCE WITH ACCOBAMS
MA3a	Improve the level of implementation of and compliance with ACCOBAMS Resolutions as well as the monitoring of its progress

<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
Carry out a mid-term review to ensure that objectives are achieved and to be able to take action in time if necessary	Update on the implementation of Resolutions by Parties (centralized by the Secretariat) Organization of the National Representatives Meeting with sub-regional meetings
More involvement of FPs by reminding them of the ACCOBAMS obligations and regularly informing them	Workshops/ meetings/ information note Disseminate the guide on the role of the ACCOBAMS National Focal Point

MA4	ACCOBAMS EXTENSION AREA
MA4a	Ensure implementation of the ACCOBAMS's cetacean conservation standards in the adjacent areas
<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
Promote the ratification of the Amendment on the geographical extension of the Agreement area to the Atlantic	Identifying relevant national authorities to be contacted Use of diplomatic channels Organization of trilateral meetings between the National Focal Point, the Secretariat and an ACCOBAMS legal consultant in order to solve problems that can be identified at the national level (ex Portugal fishing gear issue) Explanation note to be provided to all Focal Points (by the Secretariat)

CONSERVATION ACTIONS (CA)

CA1	IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE STATUS OF CETACEANS
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CA 1 a	Cetacean population estimates and distribution
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<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
Promote standardization of data collection from scientific surveys such as fisheries programs/WW companies so that datasets complement each other	Handbooks with simple and standardized methods Trainings and Workshops
Customize ASI results / results by geographic areas by producing specific maps	
Promote data collection at regional but also at national levels	
Encourage publications of national experts in international journal	Information provided to the Secretariat on National Surveys- then disseminate information in particular to the Regional Representative Dissemination of information on the existing monitoring programmes Exchanges and coordination between Parties on regional surveys (example of Adriatic where 2 aerial surveys are implemented: by Italy and Croatia- 2 independent surveys) Surveys jointly carried out to optimize national efforts / programmes and provide regional scale data
Promote the implementation of the Long-Term Monitoring Programme including new technologies reviewed by the Scientific Committee	
Regularly review « Best Available Technologies »	
Harmonize monitoring and reporting considering other obligations of countries (MSFD, Barcelona Convention, Bucharest Convention + other regional Agreements such as ASCOBANS)	Standardized protocols agreed at scientific level Specific consultation between Secretariat and National Focal Points
Investigate if monitoring projects in line with ACCOBAMS needs / conservation actions priorities are available	
Investigate at national / EU level any possible funds for monitoring needs, in particular for the LTMP	

CA 1 b	Population Structure
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<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
<p>Improve photo ID data collection and dissemination</p> <p>Update and harmonize protocols on data collection for photo ID</p> <p>Share photo ID data</p>	<p>Organization of expert meeting / for best practices guide on how to collect data for comparison</p> <p>Organizing regional experts trainings on photo ID Catalogues – ToR to facilitate exchanges or a harmonized regional database (https://seamap.env.duke.edu/photoid/bscpc)</p>
Develop acoustic identification	Trainings
<p>Improve data collection on cetacean populations genetic in the ACCOBAMS Area</p> <p>Development of genetical identification (eDNA) of population (particularly for Mediterranean)</p>	<p>Common protocol on data collection on cetacean populations genetic</p> <p>Workshops data collection on cetacean populations genetic</p> <p>Workshop about DNA for marine mammals in the framework of international scientific events or meetings</p> <p>Creating a network to exchange information on sampling</p>
<p>Encourage better collaboration at regional level between tissue banks to facilitate exchanges of samples for joint analysis</p> <p>(Example of the necropsy training)</p>	<p>Use of the NETCCOBAMS Platform</p> <p>Regional network /Working groups / reference persons / Task Force that can work online in order to exchange photos / advices / have scientific explanations even in the field</p>

CA 1 c	Monitoring cetacean's status
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<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
Facilitate the creation/ development/ revision/ implementation of National or Regional Action Plans for cetaceans	Assistance by experts

CA 1 d	Functional stranding networks and responses to emergency situation
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<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
Set up /Reinforce official national stranding networks	Dissemination of the study on legal/institutional status of National stranding networks in order to assist experts in the establishment of official national stranding network when relevant Assistance in the preparation of a legislative framework to settle the national coordination network
Encourage collaborations among national networks of Parties Perpetuate mutualization of stranding protocols between Parties	Creation of a regional task force for stranding events including strandings of non-common species taking into account national legislations in order to support national network to deal with non-common events Dissemination of existing national legislative frameworks Dissemination of the procedures on Best Practices on cetacean postmortem investigation and tissue sampling resulted from the harmonization process in ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS Make these procedures available to national Stranding Networks
Communicate simply and efficiently on uncommon situations in the ACCOBAMS area (Example of killer whales in 2019/2020)	Creation of a task force for the management of uncommon situations, including monitoring of uncommon species in the ACCOBAMS area, taking into account national legislations Dissemination of existing national legislative frameworks

CA2	REDUCE HUMAN PRESSURES ON CETACEANS, IN PARTICULARLY THOSE RELATED TO BYCATCH, HABITAT LOSS AND DEGRADATION (POLLUTION)
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CA 2 a	Interactions with fisheries / aquaculture
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<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
Continue to support countries that have adopted technical solutions to mitigate depredation (experiment with reinforced nets in Morocco, more cost effective)	Sharing of experiences with organization of workshops Use of NETCCOBAMS platform Field visits Dissemination of information
Encourage the use of technical solutions in other countries to develop the generalization	
Assess needs and relevance of compensation measures in case of depredation	
Monitor depredation and bycatch situations	
Strengthen collaboration with GFCM on data collection on by-catches	
Encourage measures for improving reporting and data collection	
Develop projects / collaboration with other countries	Reinforcement of dialogues with EU (meetings with DG Mare and DG Environment), Barcelona Convention (Ecap III project) and other relevant organizations such as GFCM
Take advantage of EU funds to mitigate unwanted interactions	
Use national funds for research	

CA 2 b	Anthropogenic underwater noise
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<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
<p>Raising awareness amongst countries and different stakeholders at the ministerial level in order to establish a roadmap</p> <p>Involve different national stakeholders (coordination by National Focal Points) and identify an entity that can centralize information at the national level</p>	<p>Dissemination and exchange of information</p> <p>Awareness / consultation workshop in at national level with different stakeholders, especially at ministerial level, to establish a roadmap</p> <p>Formal letter to Focal Points and support meetings at the national level (technical support from ACCOBAMS)</p>
<p>Agree common minimum requirements for appropriate national legislation and other regulations regarding underwater noise impacts on cetacean</p>	<p>Collaboration with other regional projects on noise issues</p> <p>Review of the ACCOBAMS Guidelines taking into account outcomes from recent projects</p>
<p>Exchange of relevant information with competent authorities during military activities / exercises</p>	<p>Regular information letter from the Secretariat to NATO and to national Navy forces to raise attention of impacts on noise on cetaceans and to propose mitigation measures</p> <p>Workshop/meeting with national Navy forces and NATO members</p>

CA 2 c	Ship strikes
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<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
Develop an internet based interactive map of areas with high risk of ship strikes for crews of relevant ships	Internet based interactive map of areas with high risk of ship strikes for crews of relevant ships
Strengthen cooperation between countries that share marine areas with high risk of collision for cetaceans in order to develop a joint and coherent management for these areas	Exchange of information on concrete proposals from countries Information meetings with other organizations where the issue is discussed
Continue to be involved in national or regional projects in order to reduce the risk of collision (FLT network / REPCET system...)	Implementation of national or regional projects in order to reduce the risk of collision

CA 2 d	Cetacean watching
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<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
<p>Update the guidelines for commercial whale watching and send them to the relevant Parties</p> <p>Assist Parties in sharing information to assess the financial feasibility/the costs/the risks/the cost effective/the possible funding sources to implement Whale Watching activities at the national level</p> <p>Establish a national legislative framework</p>	<p>Collaborations between Countries that have implemented HQWW and those that want to implement it and feedback on the implementation of sustainable Whale Watching activities</p>
<p>Promote and facilitate feedback from Whale Watchers at the scientific level</p>	<p>Standard Forms</p>
<p>Communicate about the HQWW label and the importance of certification</p>	<p>NETCCOBAMS platform</p> <p>Website</p>
<p>Develop a guide about the optimal characteristics of whale watching boats and how to develop load capacity studies</p>	<p>Dissemination of posters / communication tools on the label and good practices</p>

CA 2 e	Marine litters
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<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
<p>Combine and enhance available information in order to raise awareness at the national and regional levels</p> <p>Monitor distribution of marine litters</p>	<p>Disseminate information from the ASI report during seminars or any other event to raise awareness.</p> <p>Collaborate with other initiatives and other entities to find solutions</p> <p>NETCCOBAMS platform</p> <p>Disseminate results of necropsies</p> <p>Video spots on social networks to show impacts of marine litter on cetaceans</p> <p>Disseminate the ACCOBAMS/Pelagos/Ramoge video on marine litter</p>
<p>Support laws to ban single use plastics at national or regional level</p>	<p>Update of an ACCOBAMS Resolution</p>
<p>Use this thematic to mobilize national NGOs and the general public (schools, colleges, high schools - children and youth) / citizen sciences</p>	<p>Regular newsletter on ACCOBAMS activities / communication strategy</p> <p>Scientific watch on cetaceans // disseminate information</p>
<p>Propose joint natural history exhibitions on marine biodiversity</p>	<p>Informal contacts with museum</p> <p>Collaboration with museums and share exhibitions with other museums in other countries</p>

CA 2 f	Chemical & biological pollution
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<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
Liase with relevant other Organizations, such as IWC, to assess the impact of chemical & biological pollution (such as pathogens, invasive species) on cetaceans	Developing international collaboration

CA 2 g	Climate change
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<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
Strengthen contribution and ensure participation	Liaising with relevant CMS Working Group Participating in Meetings (COP) and side events
Contribute to regional initiatives on climate change	

CA 2 h	Captivity related issues
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<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
Identify specimens held in captivity in the ACCOBAMS area	Regular update of the overview of specimens held in captivity in the ACCOBAMS area
Develop a template of genetic passport for different cetacean species kept in captivity	

CA3	ENHANCE EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION OF CETACEANS CRITICAL HABITATS
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CA 3 a	Area-based measures for cetacean conservation
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<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
Regularly update Cetacean Critical Habitats (CCH), as appropriate, including by identifying priority areas for action to mitigate the known threats (bycatch...) / area-based management measures	NETCCOBAMS platform
Support implementation of relevant measures for adequate management in CCH	
Encourage the development of international collaboration among all Parties to protect CCH	
Raise Parties' awareness on CCHs and on their added value	Disseminate identified CCHs during meetings Online workshop
Collect data on human activities / facilitate access to data / support from Focal Points	Mails / request to Focal Points through questionnaires

CA4	ENHANCE PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT CETACEANS
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CA 4 a	Information /Communication / Awareness about cetaceans
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<i>Proposed actions for next Triennium</i>	<i>Means of implementation</i>
Maintain regular information/ communication about ongoing activities, cooperation and funding possibilities, cetacean conservation scientists and experts operating in the region and other relevant information; facilitate communication among cetacean conservation actors of the ACCOBAMS area, in particular in Southern Mediterranean countries	<p>Collect information available on social networks</p> <p>Create a information platform for the general public</p> <p>Disseminate information materials and tools on cetaceans</p> <p>Supporting and financing of Medaces</p> <p>Encouraging and maintaining events through which ACCOBAMS communicates and raises public awareness on cetacean conservation</p> <p>Give more visibility to ACCOBAMS through the logo</p> <p>Creation of short videos to raise the attention of public on the ACCOBAMS role and propose thematic videos</p> <p>Initiating joint natural history exhibitions and offering expertise and knowledge at ACCOBAMS level</p> <p>Promoting links between culture and conservation (UNESCO/ Ocean decade)</p>
Develop citizen sciences approaches	<p>Overview of initiatives and tools already in place (example of Obsenmer) / in order to mutualize efforts in particular at the level of young people</p> <p>Supporting the use of mobile phone apps (and online services)</p> <p>Creating more interactive apps and more in line with today use and include geolocation information</p> <p>Workshop on how to collect data and data exchanges through citizen apps (harmonization)</p>
Introduce in a new Country / Disseminate the ACCOBAMS Teaching Module courses	<p>Introduction of new teaching module in universities dealing with cetacean conservation</p> <p>Translation of the Teaching Module on national languages of ACCOBAMS Parties</p>