

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ACCOBAMS AD'HOC GROUP "LTMP"

FOREWORD

During the 14th Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Bureau in January 2022, the Bureau agreed to establish an *Ad'hoc* group composed of National Focal Points to support the preparation of a draft Resolution on the ACCOBAMS Long Term Monitoring Programme in view of facilitating MOP8 discussions and decision, in particular on budgetary and financial implications. This group met online on 21st April and on 15th June 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations that follow reflect the *Ad'hoc* group's view on how the ACCOBAMS Long Term Monitoring Programme for estimating trends in abundance and distribution of cetacean annexed to the Resolution should be funded.

Those recommendations are based on an LTMP estimated budget amounting **2,8 million euros** for a 6-year period (see [Estimated Budget in Annex](#))

During the meetings, the *Ad'hoc* group addressed 4 main questions and concluded on a series of additional recommendations:

– Which funding scenario should be prioritized?

The *Ad'hoc* group concluded that although a scenario based on a full **"internal funding"** would be the most sustainable way to finance the LTMP, some Parties may have difficulties in contributing to the budget. Notwithstanding the fact that some countries may provide additional voluntary support for the LTMP, this funding model seems far from becoming the most viable option.

A scenario entirely based on **"external funding"** is neither considered as such by the *Ad'hoc* group as it seems unlikely that an external funder would agree to support the LTMP total budget.

Recommendation 1: the *Ad'hoc* group recommends using a scenario mixing internal and external funding, as applied for the ASI project.

– To what extent Parties should contribute in financing the LTMP?

The ASI project was financed from external sources up to almost 70% of the total budget (in-kind support not included). Conscious that it could be more difficult to get such an external support in the future (due to the closure of MAVA Foundation), the *Ad'hoc* group agreed that the financial contribution from Parties should be increased as compared to that provided for the ASI project.

Recommendation 2: Parties are invited to finance at least 40% out of the total estimated LTMP budget, through voluntary contributions. According to the LTMP [Estimated Budget in Annex](#), this would represent around 1,1 million euros.

Recommendation 3: for the next synoptic basin-wide surveys in the Mediterranean and Black Seas in 2024-2025, Parties are invited to consider announcing their potential Voluntary Contributions during the 8th Meeting of the Parties and to provide their Voluntary Contributions by June 2023, at the latest, so to allow an effective start of the surveys preparation a year ahead of their implementation.

– **Which funders should be approached in priority?**

Mobilizing partnership to undertake monitoring activities and sustain the LTMP will be essential in the next months. Priority should be given to identifying/mobilizing target funding partners and getting the message across to the need of implementing the LTMP, which would respond to their own strategies/policies/contributions on marine ecosystem preservation and sustainable development (climate change, fisheries, pollution, tourism, shipping...). The adoption and implementation of the ACCOBAMS Communication Strategy will serve to increase ACCOBAMS visibility and reputation, which will be an asset to identify and approach external funding partners for the LTMP.

Recommendation 4: the ACCOBAMS Secretariat together with the national focal points should organize a systematic/permanent monitoring of programmes/projects and calls for tenders and proposals that may provide opportunities for funding LTMP activities. Potential donors should be kept aware of ASI results and achievements.

The Ad'hoc group wishes to add the following recommendation:

Recommendation 5: in order to optimize human, technical and financial resources for the LTMP, Parties are strongly encouraged to:

- provide in-kind support to the LTMP as such support was instrumental to the success of the ASI initiative;
- optimize available public funds allocated to biodiversity monitoring in the ACCOBAMS area, including EU Structural Funds (ex. European Maritime and Fisheries Fund);
- harmonize and coordinate their monitoring processes and protocols and seek synergies between existing monitoring activities, in particular in the context of EU monitoring and reporting obligations under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Habitat Directive, as well as in the framework of the Ecosystem Approach of Barcelona and Bucharest Conventions.

They should also:

- evaluate the feasibility of innovative targeted funding mechanisms in line with the ACCOBAMS funding strategy (Resolution 7.5);
- elaborate strategies and operational guidelines for their implementation (sponsorship, crowdfunding, offset programmes, ...)
- develop new funding mechanisms to sustain the LTMP in the long-term.



ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR THE LTMP MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEA SURVEYS

During the first Meeting of the *Ad'hoc* group established in accordance with BU14 Decision, *Ad'hoc* group members invited the Secretariat to prepare a budget estimation for the next LTMP Mediterranean and Black Sea surveys.

The estimated budget shown below was prepared taking into consideration the actual costs/expenses that occurred in implementing the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative and CeNoBS projects in the Mediterranean and Black Sea during the 2017-2022 period as well as a few recommendations from the ASI intermediary Assessment done in 2021.

Thanks to the experience gained through ASI some costs can be optimized in the replication of future surveys. However, this budget follows an optimistic scenario and relatively low estimates. It is important to bear in mind the potential cost increase, depending on market developments and inflation at the time when the next surveys will be put in place, which cannot be estimated at present. For instance, fuel prices are likely to significantly increase as compared to 2018-2019 prices.

Estimated Budget (in Euros)		
Component 1 Surveys preparation	Scientific, technical, administrative and logistical preparation of the survey operations This component covers all the expenses related to the preparation of aerial and boat survey campaigns from administrative, scientific, technical and logistical perspectives: it includes in particular the contracts of the Scientific Coordinator, of the experts who will assist with survey design and software preparation, identification of survey platforms, the preparation of authorisation requests and other relevant permits, the Meetings of the Country Contact Group Members and the training workshops on data collection protocols for field teams.	250 000 €
Component 2 Surveys implementation	Aerial and boat-based surveys implementation This component covers the expenses related to the field work. This includes the contracting/renting of airplanes and boats (direct contracts or through partnering organisations at national level), purchasing of survey equipment, contracts of observers and team leaders (for those who are not appointed by their country, as an in-kind contribution) and all costs related to the teams daily life during the survey.	2 000 000 € ¹

¹ This amount is based on real costs from ASI and CeNoBS related activities, but it is important to consider that the plane and boat renting may increase significantly due to fuel prices, in particular.

Component 3 Data analysis and results interpretation	Analysis of data collected and establishment of conservation recommendations This component covers the analysis and interpretation of data collected (abundance and distribution of species; Identification, characterisation and location of critical and preferential habitats), following the analytical methods used during ASI (2017-2022). Related expenses include recruitment of data analysis experts to produce results reports, including through consultation meetings with survey teams and national experts, and regional workshop for the interpretation of results, from a conservation perspective.	250 000 €
Component 4 Coordination and communication / awareness	ACCOBAMS Secretariat Coordination & Communication / awareness raising Coordination expenses include a dedicated Project Officer over a 3-year period, backed by an administrative assistant (1 year) to support the survey implementation phase, meetings of the Steering Committee, Secretariat staff travels related to the coordination and external assistance as regards administrative preparation. Communication & awareness expenses include in particular the organisation of survey campaign events, including through local & national teams, development of communication materials (social media campaign, movie, photos, leaflets, exhibitions, etc.), participation to conferences to share results/outcomes, organisation of event(s) on survey results, as well as support to local & national teams to organize dedicated events.	300 000 €
TOTAL		2 800 000 €