

SUMMARY DOCUMENT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACCOBAMS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

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I. Context

One of the major objectives of the ACCOBAMS Strategy 2014-2025 concerns communication and awareness about the role, mandate and work of ACCOBAMS through the implementation of a communication, information and awareness plan.

The last Meeting of the Parties, held in Istanbul in November 2019, decided the following in relation to communication:

- Resolution 7.4 - The ACCOBAMS Strategy 2014-2025

The Meeting of the Parties adopted Resolution 7.4 on a new ACCOBAMS Strategy, under the overall objective “to manage effectively the Agreement and to improve the conservation status of cetaceans and of their habitats in the area of competence of the Agreement by 2030”.

The new ACCOBAMS Strategy foresees a thematic area (TA4) which concerns communication and awareness, notably “(4.1) to develop, implement and monitor a common communication, information and awareness plan”. The activities mentioned therein are:

- “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”;
- “identification of the cetacean community, including Parties, Partners, international, regional and national entities, scientific institutes and scientists, NGOs, volunteers, etc.”

- Resolution 7.5 - The ACCOBAMS Funding Strategy

The ACCOBAMS Funding Strategy adopted by the Parties through Resolution 7.5. request Parties and the Secretariat 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.

One of the key actions therein, under point “2. From analysis to action” (Annex, 2.3.g) is to “strengthen communication and outreach on ACCOBAMS”, which reads as follows:

“Successful fundraising relies on effective and relevant communication. Disseminating information on cetacean conservation issues, highlighting the actions carried out by ACCOBAMS and communicating on their impacts contribute to enhance the image of ACCOBAMS, to raise interest on cetacean conservation and to attract new funds and support.

Updating the ACCOBAMS webpage regularly, publishing news on social media and creating outreach material are decisive to increase visibility on ACCOBAMS. Participating in national/regional/international fora, meetings and conferences relevant to ACCOBAMS objectives, organizing side events on specific activities also contribute to present ACCOBAMS activities and to strengthen ACCOBAMS’s reputation.

The development of an ACCOBAMS Information/Communication Strategy is a key step for strengthening ACCOBAMS visibility and reputation, being mindful of the virtuous cycle between communication/outreach and fundraising.”

In sum, the development of a Communication Strategy is considered decisive to increase ACCOBAMS’ prominence, visibility and reputation, given the advantages of a successful communication plan to boost the outreach, and thus to improve fundraising opportunities. In turn, the Parties believe that successful fundraising relies on effective and relevant communication. The actions seen in relation to raising interest on cetacean conservation and attracting new funds and support are three-fold:

- a. 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;

- b. updating regularly the ACCOBAMS webpage, creating and publishing news and outreach material on social media;
- c. participating in national/regional/international fora, meetings and conferences relevant to ACCOBAMS objectives, organizing side events on specific activities to (1) present ACCOBAMS activities and (2) strengthen its reputation.

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. Parties concluded 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. Background

In August 2020, the Secretariat launched a Call for Applications for developing a Communication Strategy for ACCOBAMS, based on Terms of Reference previously validated by the Bureau.

A Consultant was selected - FCB Lisboa - a branch of the worldwide FCB, a creative agency of communication and brand planning, with experience in working with social and environmental causes, notably in campaigns to generating environmental changes, or in favor of environmental preservation.

According to the agreed Terms of Reference, the Consultant:

- developed a step-by-step approach, starting with the examination of the current communication tools used by ACCOBAMS, in the form of a Diagnostic Report ([Annex 1](#)) - an overview of current communication activities – highlighting the areas where an intervention is advised, and identifying target groups and different internal and external audiences;
- provided a preliminary draft Communication Strategy;
- recommended implementation tools, including a new logo, estimated necessary to launch and implement the draft Communication Strategy from 2023 onwards, once adopted by MOP8;
- recommended that, prior to the launching of the Communication Strategy, if and once adopted by MOP8, ACCOBAMS adopts a refreshed visual corporate identity, commonly known as logotype.

The ACCOBAMS Secretariat developed the following actions:

- invited all interested ACCOBAMS Parties to join a **Steering Communication Group**, with the aim of liaising with both the Secretariat and the Consultant, and to provide guidance on the drafting of the Communication Strategy. In addition to ACCOBAMS Secretariat, the Communication Steering Group comprised participants on behalf of CMS, Black Sea Commission and SPA/RAC, as well as national representatives from Algeria, France, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco and Syria;
- organised meetings of the Steering Group aimed at examining/revising the **preliminary draft Communication Strategy** provided by the Consultant;
- reflected suggestions received from the Bureau and the Steering Group into the **final draft Communication Strategy**, as shown in draft Resolution 8.6, for the consideration of MOP8 ([Annex 2](#));
- incorporated **estimated implementation costs**, including a mid-term assessment on the effectiveness of the Communication Strategy ([Annex 3](#)), also reflected in document MOP8/2022/Doc19Rev2-Explanatory Note on Draft Resolution 8.2 -Work Programme and Budget 2023-2025;

- in relation to the recommended **implementation tools**, notably a new or refreshed logo, which is proposed as a prerequisite for the launching phase of the Communication Strategy in 2023, the Extended Bureau (April 2022) further requested the Secretariat (*Conclusion 7¹*) to develop **proposals on a new/modernized logo** to be submitted for consideration of the MOP8. For that reason, document MOP8/2022/Doc24 offers three layout proposals that were developed by the consultant ([Annex 4](#)) and discussed within the Communication Steering Group, in July 2022. These proposals reflect three possible visual approaches - evolution, movement, or disruptive - for the ACCOBAMS logo, in order to increase ACCOBAMS visibility at the launching of the Communication Strategy.
- In result of this preparatory task, a corresponding **draft resolution 8.8** was approved by the Extended Bureau to be submitted for decision by the MOP8, with a view to replace the current ACCOBAMS logo, as well as Resolutions 1.14 and 4.21.

¹ *“The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for the work undertaken with the consulting company, with the support of the Communication Steering Group, on the development of the ACCOBAMS communication strategy. Recognizing the need to strengthening the ACCOBAMS brand positioning, the Bureau agreed that it would be beneficial if all conditions are in place for an efficient implementation of the Strategy during the next triennium. With that in mind, the Bureau mandated the Secretariat to work on proposals for a new or a modernized logo to be submitted for the consideration and decision by MOP8, through a corresponding draft Resolution.”*

Annex 1

Diagnostic Report, an overview of ACCOBAMS current communication activity



DIAGNOSTIC REPORT

an overview of ACCOBAMS current communication activity

9th march 2021

developed by:

FCBLISBOA

Introduction



This diagnostic report provides an analysis of the existing ACCOBAMS communication tools, highlighting areas where an intervention is advised and contains an overview of communication activity developed by IGO's in similar areas as ACCOBAMS.

Being part of FCB Lisbon's work methodology, this report is the starting point for developing a communication strategy for ACCOBAMS, and it is the result of a series of interviews with leading members of ACCOBAMS Secretariat; the analysis of a series of documents obtained through ACCOBAMS; and also documents and findings obtained through our desk research.

Lisbon, 9th March 2021

BRAND POSITIONING

brand positioning



ACCOBAMS PURPOSE:

to reduce **threats to cetaceans** notably by **improving current knowledge** on these animals.

Although the Organization has its purpose defined, this was not converted into a brand positioning in order to define how ACCOBAMS intends to be perceived by its various stakeholders. An organizational strategy is in place but it needs to have a correspondence in terms of brand strategy, addressing specific goals.

In the heart of that communication strategy should be ACCOBAMS brand positioning, expressed through a **Brand Positioning Statement** transversal to all stakeholders.

POSITIONING ACTION NEEDED:

We need to **convey a brand dimension to ACCOBAMS organisation.**

By defining the ACCOBAMS brand characteristics and traits we will be providing the organisation with (brand) strategic pillars that will determine how do we want to position ACCOBAMS amidst other IGO's that operate in similar and/or complementary areas.

BRAND IDENTITY

brand identity



Although the ACCOBAMS logo is commonly applied to most communication materials, we detected several issues that must be tackled to make brand identity more consistent:

Example 1: The proportions of the institutional logo and its anniversary logo are inverted (IWC anniversary logo, for example, managed to communicate its anniversary keeping their main logo in the center of the message).

1

TWO BRAND EXPRESSIONS: ACCOBAMS AND ACCOBAMS SECRETARIAT

All communication should be branded ACCOBAMS despite being generated by the Secretariat.



2

BRAND & SUB BRANDS

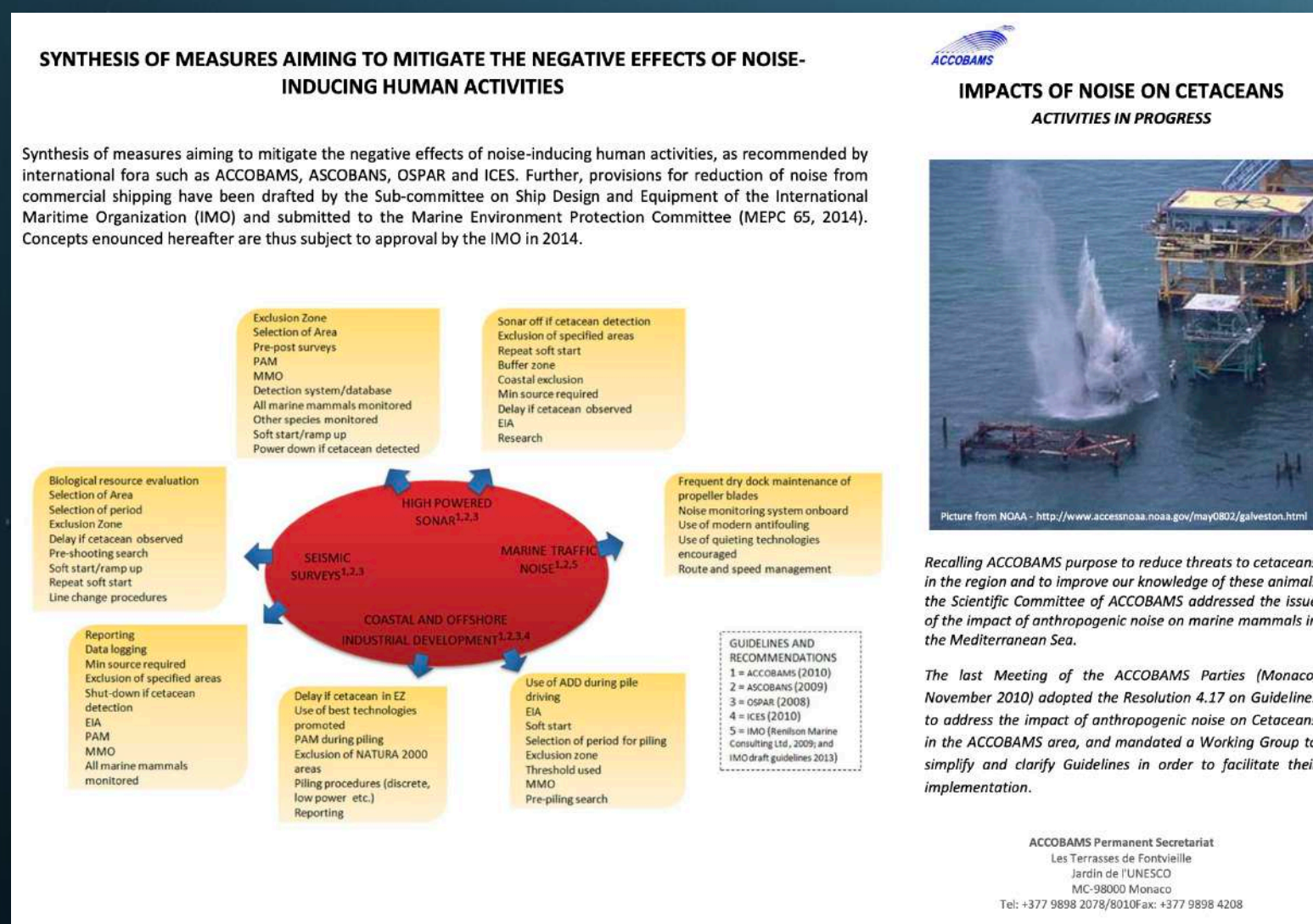
Most of the time the ACCOBAMS brand appears as secondary to its sub brands. Examples as follows:

Example 2: The same logic is applied to the ASI Survey (that most likely is read as RSI) where the sub brand has more impact than the main brand.



brand identity

Example 3: Some of the documents/findings produced by ACCOBAMS are poorly branded.



3

ABSENT BRAND

All communication should be branded ACCOBAMS since every communication is form of brand expression. Sometimes the brand is absent.

The pdf files that describe the cetaceans species in ACCOBAMS website have no branding whatsoever.

The great majority of Facebook and Twitter photos and images are not branded (even third parties images can be branded if authorised by the authors).

4

BRAND PARTNERSHIPS

While communicating projects or findings with partnerships ACCOBAMS should enhance their own brand (example: "an ACCOBAMS partnership with _____") instead of diluting the brand among others. All communication materials from ACCOBAMS should enhance the brand.

brand identity

5

BRAND LOGO

While not being imperative for the future communication strategy, it would be advisable to review the ACCOBAMS logo. Its design is bit dated and the logo itself is not actually built to fully function in digital communication - since the model of communication will tend to be based in digital communication, it would be advisable to evolve in terms of design.

IDENTITY ACTION NEEDED:

Reviewing the institutional logo to make it more adequate to the available communication channels.

The development of a brand style book would be advisable to establish a set of rules to be applied in terms of brand identity: logo usage in print and digital materials, logo behaviour in different situations, identity templates for stationery, reports, findings, leaflets, etc.

The brand book protects the brand and makes its usage more consistent, across partnerships and across communication suppliers. Example of "I love NY" brand style book [here](#).

BRAND MOOD

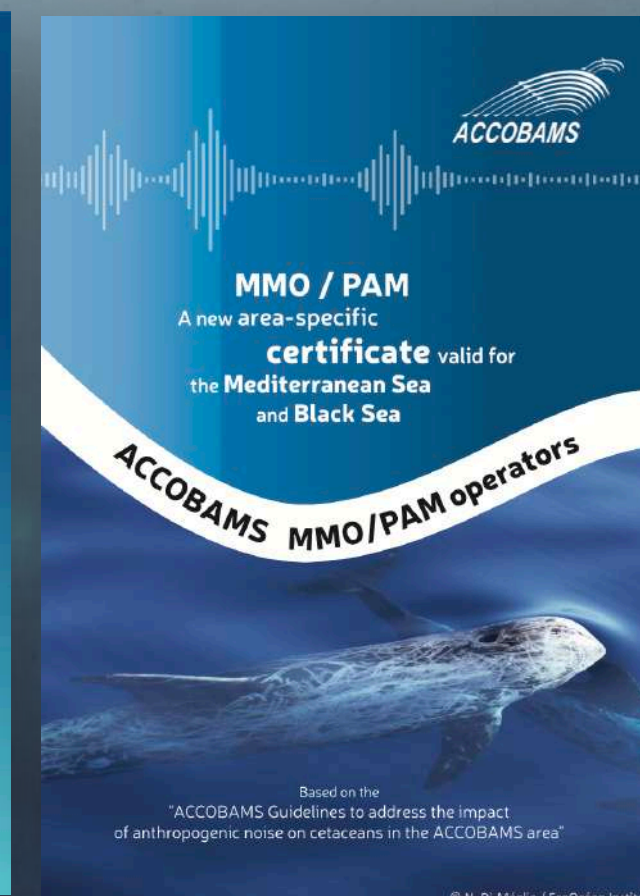
brand mood



By “Brand Mood” we mean the way the brand presents itself physically and also the tone it uses when speaking (brands use specific tones - friendly, formal, down to earth, inquisitive, serious, just to name a few). Its like a personality trait, that influences the way it is “dressed” and the way it “behaves and speaks”.

ACCOBAMS doesn't have a coherent brand mood today. Without it its more difficult to be recognisable as the brand appears to its audiences differently along the time. The more consistent the brand mood is the more recognisable (and visible) the brand will be.

The colour blue and sea are the two common elements of most ACCOBAMS communication. We could say that they are part of the actual brand mood. But we are missing other elements that make part of brand identity that help define and build a consistent brand mood: font types, design style, brand properties, tone of voice - all these contribute to form a unique identity and mood that, in time, will be associated to brand.



BRAND MOOD ACTION NEEDED:

The development of a brand style book would be advisable to establish a set of rules to be applied in terms of brand identity that help define a brand mood, the way that the brand behaves when communicates.

While brand identity gives us the rational side of the brand, brand mood deals with the emotional side of it.

BRAND ONLINE & OFFLINE

brand offline

It is not visible in ACCOBAMS offline communication activity a key message (or a set of messages) that resume what the organisation stands for. The communication material, as described before, are not homogenous graphically and communicate specific activities without a central message.

Note: In online communication (specifically in Facebook) a central message was created encapsulating a core message: "Dolphin and whale conservation".

ACTION NEEDED:

Developing a brand signature would help establish its brand positioning. This should be part of the future brand strategy - a signature that expresses how the brand wants to be recognised, differentiating it from other organization with similar activities.

brand offline



Although most of the brand materials are developed according to a number of constant elements (similar colour palette, the sea, the cetaceans, a number of rules should be set in order to define a more consistent brand style, specially when the brand communicates by its own.

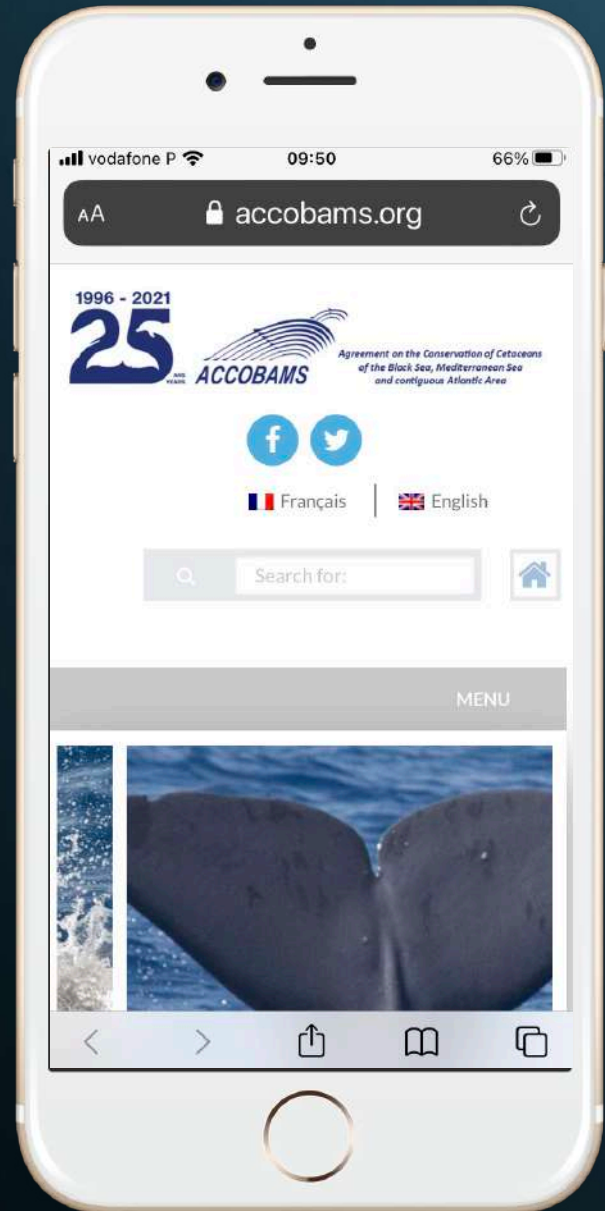
Communicating through or with partnerships is usually a more free process in terms of style, but the brand should retain its main characteristics. For instance in the good practise handbooks there is no reason for the ACCOBAMS logotype to appear in black & white.

ACTION NEEDED:

Developing a brand style guide to help graphic designers, marketers, web developers, community managers, etc. to stay on the same page and present a unified vision of the brand to its stakeholders.



brand online



Although it is a bit dated in terms of design, the website is well organised and it is relatively easy to find a specific piece of information in the desktop version.

The mobile version is not as easy to navigate as the desktop one.

The way the website it is structured leads us to believe that it is more directed to internal audiences ("Meetings" being the second tab) making it less appealing to general audiences .

brand online



ACTIONS TO CONSIDER:

The website should be more fluid in navigational terms. It would make more sense to design it following a more outer directed approach: who are we/ what do we do/ where/ with whom/ with what results. The purpose of ACCOBAMS should be shortly described in the homepage.

We miss a "Media Section" that can be used as part of a PR programme to increase awareness on activities and events developed by the organisation.

If we consider the website to be part of the brand communication and an expression of its positioning, then we believe that ACCOBAMS should modernize its online presence.

In the end of the day, the website is ACCOBAMS best and biggest touch point to its various stakeholders.

BRAND ON SOCIAL MEDIA

brand on social media

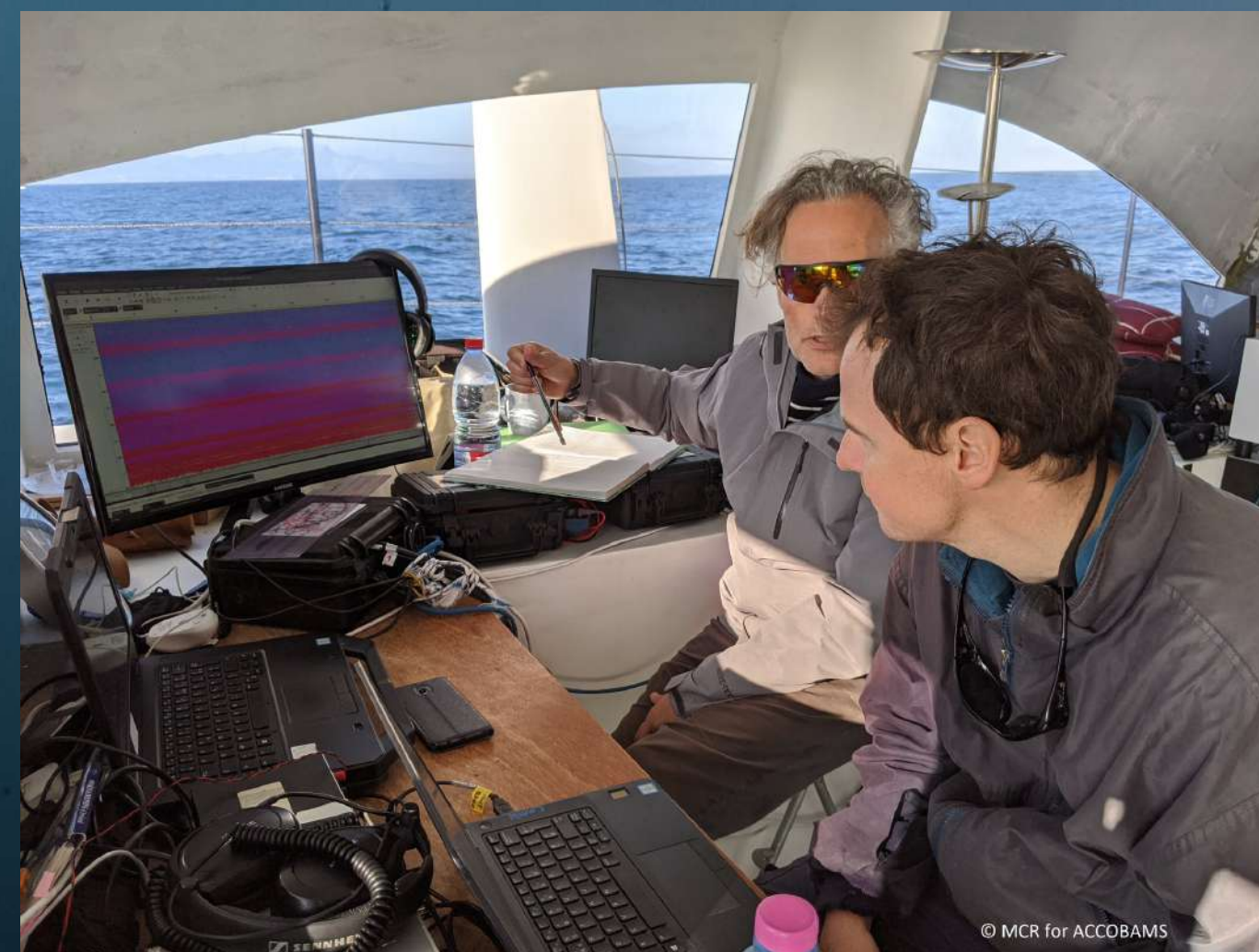
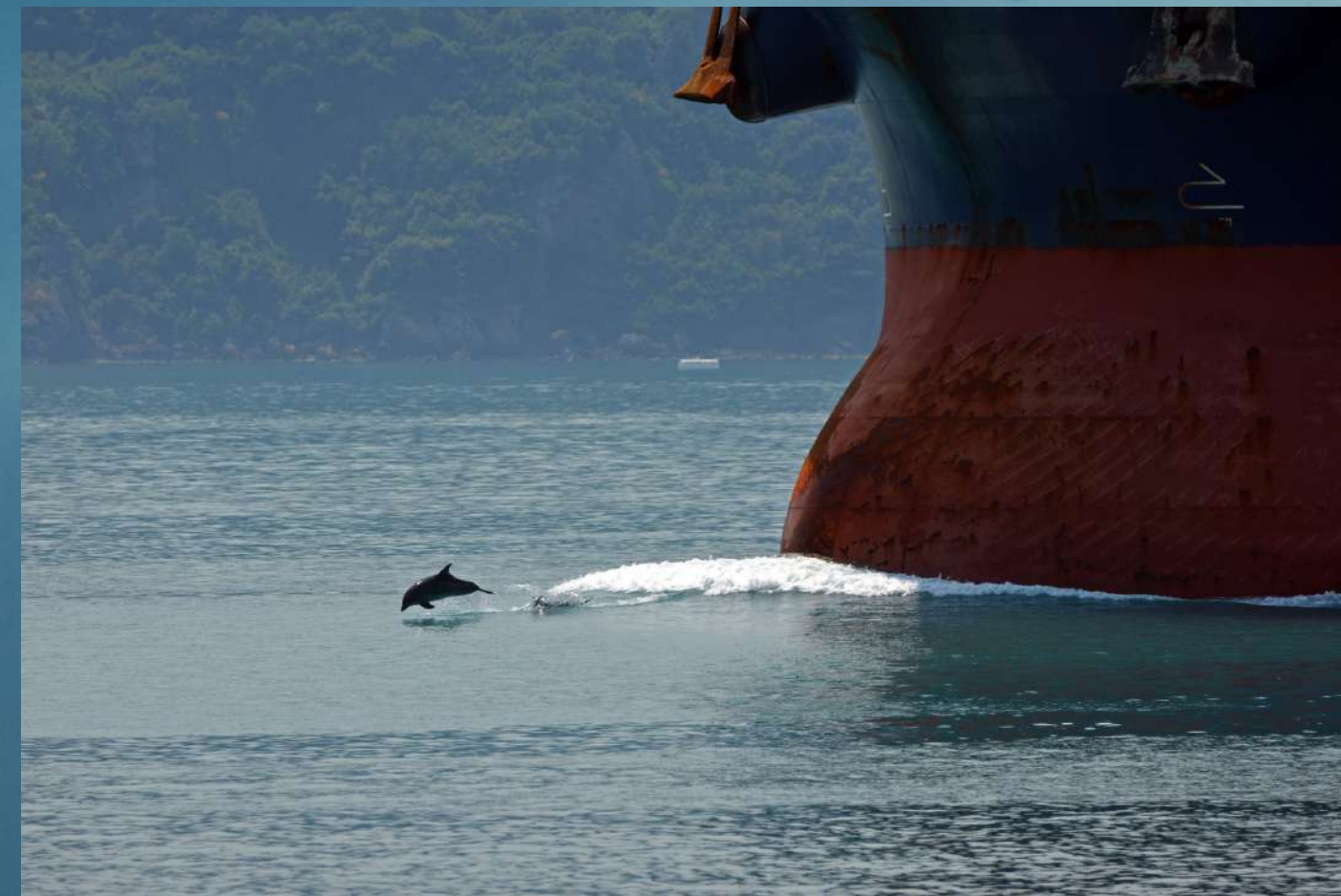


example

ACTIONS TO CONSIDER:

The great majority of visual content published in Facebook and Twitter is not branded.

If you brand your material (even the material of your partners published in your social media pages, with their consent) you are increasing the chances of amplifying the visibility of your brand when someone picks one of your photos and publishes in their social media page or somewhere else with public access.



brand on social media

ACTIONS TO CONSIDER:

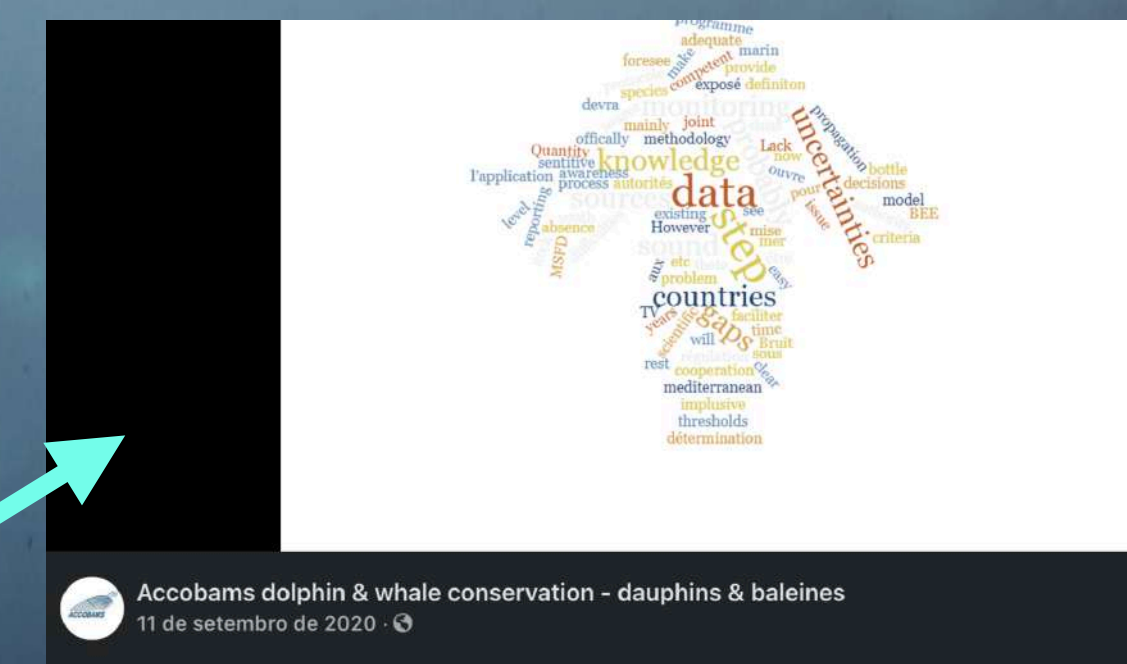
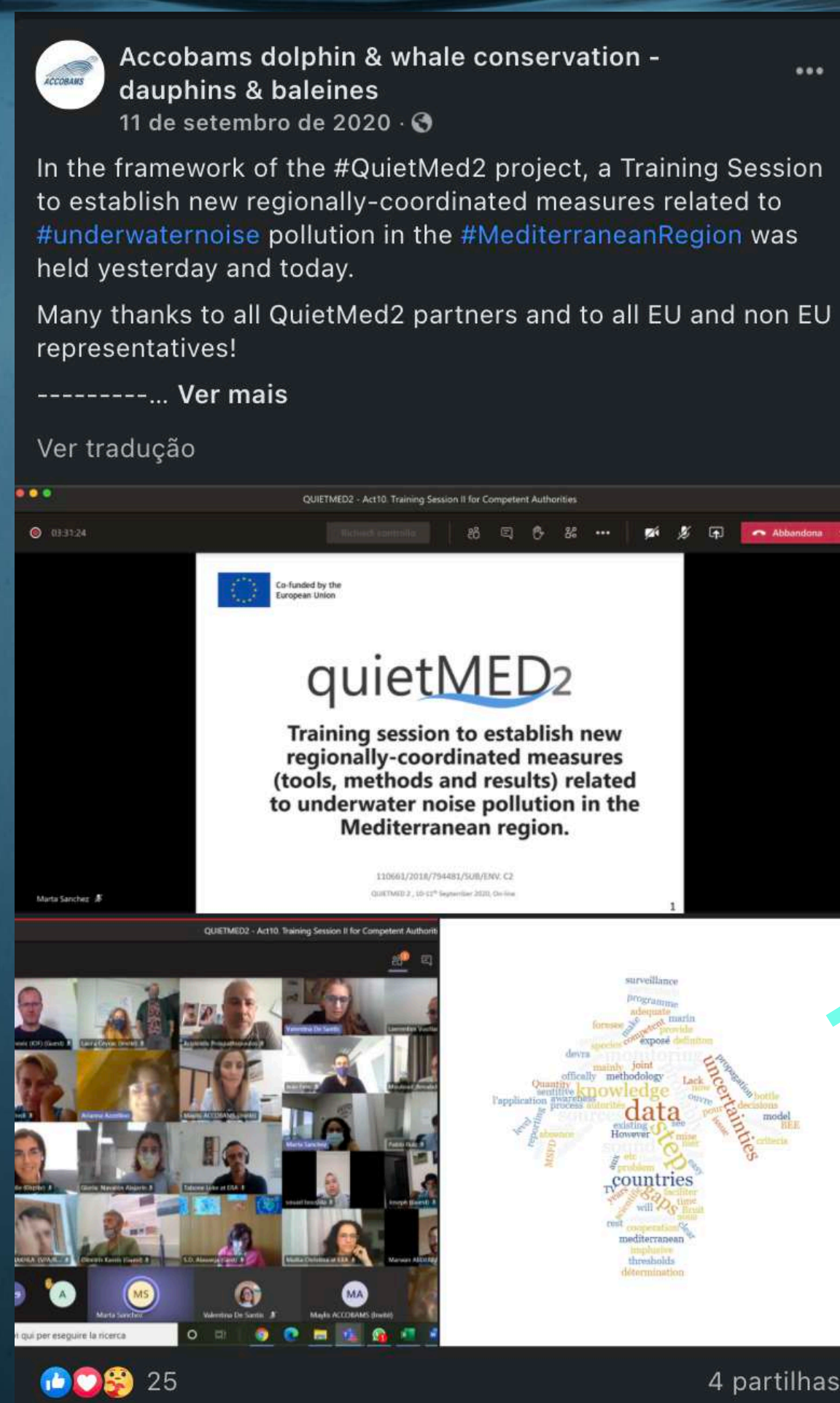
Include context in every visual content you publish on Facebook.

When you publish content using a group of visuals, your content is part of the group and it not part of each individual visual. If you consult a specific visual on the photo section you will find no context for that specific visual (see example on the right).

You should provide the context when you publish your group post. Enter each specific visual and provide a context (and if possible an #accobams tag and a link to your website where people could read more about it).

(Twitter does this automatically and replicates the group content in every single visual)

Understand that social media is a mean to increase people's interaction with your organisation.



COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

COMM. OBJECTIVES

In its Call for Submission, ACCOBAMS defined an ambitious set of goals for its communication activity scheduled for the triennium 2023-2025, as described in the right.

Communication activity is considered key to improve fund raising and therefore creating a virtuous circle :

ACTION NEEDED:

The list of goals must be prioritised in order to be financially achievable, having in mind that changing perceptions and increasing the organisation's profile is a cumulative process that takes time (and investment). We will need to create priorities according with the available resources.



TARGET GROUPS

target groups

In our work sessions with Secretariat members, several communication targets were identified (to be considered in the future communication strategy):

INTERNAL TARGETS

1. **Country representatives/ National Focal Points** (NFP) of the 24 member countries including the Bureau, coordination units, steering groups.
2. **IGO's e NGO's** partnerships

EXTERNAL TARGETS

1. **Other public managers** (other than NFP) in different institutions of the 24 member countries.
2. **Specialist organisations and professional associations** with interest in the Mediterranean and Black Sea that can amplify ACCOBAMS messages.
3. **Journalists** from different areas and ACCOBAMS information users (University **students**, individual **researchers** and interested people)
4. **General public** (with special focus on **children**).

ACTION NEEDED:

Since not all of these targets can be approached simultaneously (each of these clusters has different set of interests and motivations) because it would imply a considerable level of communication investment, it will be necessary to select them according to ACCOBAMS communication objectives and the key messages that will come out of it.

When defining the communication strategy it is advisable to approach these segments in different phases, identifying priority targets for each year of the triennium. This segmentation will have an impact on the media strategy to apply in each year and also in ACCOBAMS content strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

recommendations

1

BRAND IDENTITY

If we consider the brand logo to be the central expression of a brand and the starting point for the building a specific perception about any organisation, we should evaluate if, despite any communication strategy to be developed to ACCOBAMS, we should keep the actual logotype or if we should rethink it and refresh it, turning the organisation brand identity the beginning of a strategic process to convey a more relevant and modern image and increase ACCOBAMS reputation and awareness.

recommendations

2

BRAND STYLE GUIDE

Along with refreshing brand identity it will be necessary to develop a brand style guide that establishes a specific set of rules that helps everyone (internal and external audiences) to perceive the brand in a unique and only way. The brand style guide defines design styles, colour palettes, type fonts, editorial styles, the general look & feel and the way the brand behaves when communicates in offline media, online media, solo, via its sub-brands or via partnerships.

The brand style guide is a tool that guarantees brand consistency in every material produced by the brand.

3

THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR 2023-2025

A communication strategy to be efficient needs focus. If we aim too many goals at the same time we will probably disperse key messages, resources and investment. In order to achieve a reasonable set of goals we must define priorities. FCB Lisboa recommends the following priorities:

- 3.1. Define a brand positioning and a brand positioning statement defining how do we want to be perceived.
- 3.2. Prioritize ACCOBAMS communication goals along the 3 year communication plan.
- 3.3. Identify the most relevant targets to impact (considering every specific year of the triennium)
- 3.4. Identify the most relevant ACCOBAMS key messages and prioritize it for each target (considering every specific year of the triennium)
- 3.5. Define a communication calendar that takes advantage of ACCOBAMS activities along every year.
- 3.6. Define a PR strategy (based in Secretariat) that can amplify communication and organizational activity, establishing a regular news feed for the media.

4

CONTENT STRATEGY

Refreshing and redesigning the website to change the organisation image and profile will open an opportunity to define a content strategy that helps to structure the future website and influence the way ACCOBAMS communicates regularly to its various stakeholders.

Having in mind the communication strategy the contact strategy should:

- 4.1. identify and prioritise the content themes (ex: ASI Survey, Whale Watching Best Practices, Pollution in the Mediterranean, Netccobams data base, ACCOBAMS for Kids, etc)
- 4.2. having in mind the communication targets for each year, create relevant content clusters to address them
- 4.3. create content around ACCOBAMS regular yearly activities
- 4.4. constantly curate content (inside and outside ACCOBAMS) to feed social media pages and website dynamic pages (News section, Media section)

A wide-angle photograph of a vast ocean under a heavy, dark, and stormy sky. The water is dark blue with white-capped waves, and a bright light source behind the clouds creates a shimmering path of light across the water's surface. The overall mood is dramatic and powerful.

thank you.

Annex 2



ACCOBAMS Communication Strategy for 2023-2028

Introduction

1. ACCOBAMS overall objective, as a daughter Agreement of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), is to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for cetaceans in the Agreement area, notably by improving knowledge on their populations and by implementing protective and conservation measures in areas considered critical habitats.
2. The efforts implemented since its entry into force in 2001 made ACCOBAMS an international recognized organization in cetacean conservation, at the national and regional levels, as well as at the global level.
3. The majority of the communication actions developed so far were targeted towards ACCOBAMS community (National Focal Points, ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee, Sub-regional Coordinating Units, ACCOBAMS Partners and other partner organizations with which ACCOBAMS collaborates) to inform them of Agreement's activities and encourage them to disseminate this information. Many communication actions targeted towards a wider non-ACCOBAMS audience were also carried out on an opportunistic basis, in the framework of projects such as the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative, or during special events, such as IUCN World Conservation Congresses or Monaco Ocean Weeks.
4. ACCOBAMS has a high potential in terms of communication, in particular considering how much cetaceans are emblematic species, alongside with the vitality of the Agreement and its community. From a strategic communication perspective, ACCOBAMS should strengthen its brand and assure homogenic visual aspects of its communication products while adapting the messages to convey according to the different audiences targeted, and thus boosting the echo to the ACCOBAMS action.
5. The implementation of an ACCOBAMS Communication Strategy is a key step for increasing visibility of the work being carried out under ACCOBAMS, highlighting its activities and outcomes, as well as improving the Organization's reputation.
6. Effective and better-targeted communication will help ACCOBAMS reaching its objectives. In particular, making ACCOBAMS more visible will help in disseminating experience and good practices but also in raising awareness on cetacean conservation issues.
7. Highlighting the actions carried out by ACCOBAMS and communicating its impacts will also contribute to enhancing the image of ACCOBAMS, making ACCOBAMS more reliable, and better able to attract new opportunities for partnership and funding, as highlighted in the ACCOBAMS Funding Strategy adopted through Resolution 7.5.
8. This Communication Strategy is designed to enable ACCOBAMS to plan, manage and focus the institutional communication process and it should be considered as a leverage tool to support the implementation of the overall ACCOBAMS Strategy² and to strengthen its effectiveness.
9. This Communication Strategy is an overarching framework providing main orientations for the Communication plans to be developed at each triennium. It is not intended to provide details on specific activities and financial resources needed to ensure its implementation. Those are to be specified in the Programs of Work for each triennium presented for adoption by Parties.

² The current ACCOBAMS long-term Strategy covers the period 2014-2025 and was adopted by Resolution 5.1 and completed by ACCOBAMS Resolution 7.4.

I. Communication Strategy

I.1 Goal and specific objectives of the Communication Strategy

10. The overarching goal of the ACCOBAMS Communication Strategy is to enhance the visibility of ACCOBAMS' activities and achievements in promoting cetacean conservation in the Mediterranean, Black Sea and adjacent Atlantic area.
11. More specifically the ACCOBAMS Communication Strategy aims to:
- Highlight the actions being taken to accomplish ACCOBAMS' Mission and Vision;
 - Strengthen ACCOBAMS' reputation as an efficient and reliable regional cooperation organization for cetacean conservation;
 - Engage key stakeholders in the implementation of ACCOBAMS provisions, guidelines, and best practices;
 - Raise awareness about cetacean ecology and biology, their conservation status, and threats affecting them;
 - Inform and mobilize various audiences on the need to improve efforts for cetacean conservation in the Mediterranean, Black Sea and adjacent Atlantic area.
12. From an operational perspective, implementing the ACCOBAMS Communication Strategy helps to:
- Maintain regular communication within the ACCOBAMS community and improve communication with external audiences;
 - Improve quality and consistency in the dissemination of information materials;
 - Increase quality, consistency and quantity of media coverage, through regular communication tools, based on a well-structured communication plan.

I.2 Audiences

13. Audience identification is vital to any communication strategy. ACCOBAMS must talk to the right people, making best use of resources - budget, time and human power - by targeting different "publics".
14. The way the messages are delivered depends on the target audience, as different audiences have:
- different levels of awareness on ACCOBAMS,
 - different perceptions of what ACCOBAMS is and does,
 - different needs and motivations when dealing with ACCOBAMS as an organisation.
15. Internal and external audiences should be distinguished. Internal audiences are those who are familiar with / involved in ACCOBAMS, as members of the different ACCOBAMS bodies or through close collaboration with ACCOBAMS (such as the organizations with whom Memorandum of Understanding are signed): CMS Family members, Bureau Members, National Focal Points, Scientific Committee Members, Sub-regional Coordinating Units, ACCOBAMS Partners, IGO partners and other international Agreements and Conventions.
16. External audiences are not (yet) familiar with and involved in ACCOBAMS, but they are interested in cetacean conservation: national public managers, professional organizations, researchers, university students, journalists and general public, in particular of the Agreement Area. Their interests are different from each other, and they may need different levels of background information which would be unnecessary when communicating with internal audiences.
17. Internal and external communication does not have the same objectives, communication messages should be then adapted.

I.3 Key messages

18. To improve ACCOBAMS positioning and avoid communication and resources dispersion, ACCOBAMS communication should follow three main orientations:

- Who ACCOBAMS is (vision, mission and positioning)
- What ACCOBAMS does (activities)
- What the outcome of ACCOBAMS action is (achievements)

19. The messages to broadcast should be aligned with these main communication orientations. Here are some examples targeted to external audience:

What ACCOBAMS is:

- ❖ ACCOBAMS is the only organization in the world specially focused on protection and conservation of whales and dolphins in the geographical area of the treaty: the Mediterranean, Black Sea and contiguous Atlantic area.
- ❖ ACCOBAMS is an agreement and a commitment between 24 countries to protect whales and dolphins since 1996.
- ❖ ACCOBAMS is the collaborative exchange of human knowledge and international cooperation aiming to protect and conserve cetacean life.
- ❖ ACCOBAMS is a collective effort to engage and communicate externally.
- ❖ ACCOBAMS is a coordination tool that maximizes the individual efforts towards cetaceans' protection.

What ACCOBAMS does:

- ❖ ACCOBAMS is a cooperation tool that relies on the production and exchange of information and knowledge in order to help countries, organisations and individuals to protect cetaceans and their habitats.
- ❖ ACCOBAMS thoroughly researches and monitors cetaceans, their habitats and the impact of human activity, developing measures to mitigate the threats caused by it.
- ❖ ACCOBAMS aids people and organisations helping cetaceans and protecting the environment surrounding these animals, through training and education.
- ❖ ACCOBAMS responds to emergency situations involving cetaceans, by providing knowledge and guidelines to tackle those occurrences.

What the outcome of ACCOBAMS activity is/will be:

- ❖ More and better means to improve the lives and habitats of cetaceans, not only in the Agreement Area, but around the globe.
- ❖ A hub of knowledge exchange amongst people and institutions interested in making sure we respect cetaceans, whom we share the same planet with.
- ❖ Cetaceans playing an important part in our present and in our future.

20. Internal communication is all about promoting effective communications among the ACCOBAMS community. It involves producing and delivering messages on ACCOBAMS activities, results and achievements, as well as facilitating dialogue with and among the people who contribute to the functioning of the organization.

II. Implementing the Communication Strategy

II.1 Definition of a corporate identity: the ACCOBAMS brand, signature and style

21. The diagnostic phase that supported the development of the Communication Strategy highlighted that one of the main weaknesses in ACCOBAMS communication is the lack of corporate identity and positioning.
22. ACCOBAMS needs to have a corporate identity and thus to be looked at as a brand, with a set of values and a specific positioning, so to be relevant to different audiences.

II.1.1 The brand ACCOBAMS

23. ACCOBAMS develops a series of activities that are branded, yet not in a consistent manner, which assume different graphical expressions, different moods, and a low brand consistency. The corporate identity or brand is the starting point of any Communication Strategy, and it influences the way in which ACCOBAMS will communicate in the future.
24. The brand of an organization is based on their defined Mission and Vision, and on how they envisage their future. The ACCOBAMS Mission and Vision³ are the foundations of its brand or corporate expression:

The ACCOBAMS Mission	The ACCOBAMS Vision
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.	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 as an Agreement applied on a large scale in areas of great interest for cetaceans, including the adjacent Atlantic areas.

II.1.2 The ACCOBAMS logotype

25. The existing visual brand - or corporate identity - of ACCOBAMS, commonly referred to as the logotype, is currently difficult to read, with a design a bit outdated, and not built to fully function in a world of digital communication.
26. As the communication model tends to be increasingly based on digital communication channels, it is advisable to make it more adequate in terms of its design. The creation of a modern ACCOBAMS logotype based on ACCOBAMS brand, positioning and signature is recommended to improve ACCOBAMS image, visibility and outreach.

II.1.3 The ACCOBAMS positioning

27. ACCOBAMS has its purpose well defined, yet it has not been converted into a brand positioning, which is important in order to define how ACCOBAMS intends to be perceived by its various audiences. Nonetheless, in social media, specifically on Facebook, the central message already displayed encapsulates the core message "dolphin and whale conservation".
28. An ACCOBAMS positioning will provide the brand strategic pillars to position ACCOBAMS amidst other organisations that operate in similar, related or complementary fields.

³ ACCOBAMS Mission and Vision were adopted in Resolution 5.1 on the ACCOBAMS Strategy for the Period 2014 – 2025

29. The proposed ACCOBAMS brand positioning was developed based on a positioning model which comprises some of the following elements:

Uniqueness	The only IGO exclusively devoted to protecting and improving the life of cetaceans in its specific geographical area
Brand values	Regional cooperation; Knowledge sharing; Protection; Respect; Collective action
Brand purpose	Taking coordinated measures to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for cetaceans
Positioning statement	ACCOBAMS is a legal conservation tool where 24 countries cooperate towards cetaceans' conservation
Brand in two words	Healthy Cetaceans

30. The recommended brand positioning for ACCOBAMS is *“knowledge and regional cooperation to protect cetacean lives”*.

II.1.4 The ACCOBAMS signature

31. Developing a brand signature based on the ACCOBAMS positioning will synthetically express how the ACCOBAMS brand wants to be perceived, while differentiating it from other organisations with similar activities.

32. The recommended ACCOBAMS signature results from the brand positioning and its field of activity and is *“cetacean protection has a voice”*. The signature feeds into the ACCOBAMS brand identity, including graphically, and will be aligned with a specific brand style, used consistently, as well as with a new ACCOBAMS logotype.

II.1.5 The ACCOBAMS Brand mood and style guide

33. ACCOBAMS style for internal documentation is relatively well-embedded in the routines of the Secretariat. Nonetheless, ACCOBAMS lacks a consistent brand style and a coherent brand mood. Brand mood means the way the brand presents itself graphically and the tone it uses when communicating, as brands use specific tones - friendly, formal, down to earth, inquisitive, serious, amongst many other.

34. Currently, ACCOBAMS doesn't have a consistent brand mood, which makes it difficult to be publicly recognised. The more consistent the mood is, the more recognizable and visible the brand will be. The colour blue and the sea are the two common elements of most ACCOBAMS communication, and they can be considered as part of its current brand mood. Yet, other elements are still lacking in order to define a coherent brand mood, such as the same font type, design style, brand properties, tone of voice, in sum, a brand style that contributes to form a unique identity that, in time, will be associated to ACCOBAMS brand.

35. A brand style needs to be established so to provide ACCOBAMS publications with a consistent expression of text and pictures used, based on, and projecting beyond its corporate brand or logotype. The development of a brand style guide will enable brand consistency across different platforms, partnership activities, and communication channels. A design advice is necessary so to apply the same brand style to all communication products.

II.2 Communication tools

II.2.1 The ACCOBAMS website

36. Consistent communications within the ACCOBAMS community are a strength of the organisation. However, the way in which the website is structured seems to have been planned to be more directed to internal audiences.
37. The ACCOBAMS website already centralizes an important and huge repository of information and knowledge.
38. The direct access to the NETCCOBAMS through the ACCOBAMS site would be advantageous so to promptly accede to this knowledge platform, which provides the visualization of different layers of information and offers a communication channel with internal and external communication targets.
39. Although a bit dated in terms of design, the desktop version of the current ACCOBAMS website provides a relatively easy access to find information, as opposed to its mobile version, not easy to navigate on. Also, while currently disposing of a huge image repository, ACCOBAMS website displays a basic image library, which may be boosted and used consistently.
40. The ACCOBAMS website should be easier and more fluid to navigate on, to search and find appropriate information, both for internal and external audiences, including for users with little background in cetacean conservation.
41. An essential is to promptly provide information to target audiences, the solution being to apply a user-friendly access in a new style website, presenting updated images and reshaped content.
42. The website being a component of brand communication and an expression of positioning, it is the ACCOBAMS best and most important “touch point” to ACCOBAMS various audiences and stakeholders.
43. Thus, ACCOBAMS online presence should be modernized and include a more outer directed approach. Also, a “Media section” could be used as part of a Public Relations (PR) programme in order to increase awareness on ACCOBAMS activities and events.

II.2.2 Media outreach

44. To date, ACCOBAMS media activity has been focused on providing information, with rare press briefings or press releases on significant ACCOBAMS initiatives or events. Few proactive stories have been initiated, neither have specific press briefings been held.
45. It is advisable to broadly plan media content on a yearly basis, and to consider any necessary quarterly adjustments depending on the concrete activities developed and on the communication priorities, in case they evolve differently from the initial planning.
46. Regarding branding social media channels, ACCOBAMS currently uses Facebook and Twitter. However, publishing the same content in both channels should be avoided as channels audiences are different and motivated by unlike topics. Twitter should be used for internal communication, with relevant topics for internal audiences, while Facebook, for external communication, featuring less “technical” information.
47. Currently used social channels target mainly adult audiences. If younger or professional audiences are to be considered as part of the strategy, a 3rd (or 4th) social media channel could be considered, like Instagram or LinkedIn, respectively. Adding more channels would require more resources (internal or external) as they would imply using a different approach and tone to the topics.

48. The posting frequency is a much-debated subject as it relates to social media budget, and depends on the channels, the subject and the audience. Environmental activists, for example, are more aware of subjects regarding the environment and probably search for it on a weekly or daily basis.

49. ACCOBAMS internal audiences will probably be open to have regular weekly information about different activities and subjects, while external audiences could find exhausting to receive daily posts about main topics. One to two weekly posts in Facebook and one to three weekly posts in Twitter are recommended.

II.2.3 Printed material and video

50. The ACCOBAMS offline communication activity should contain a key message, or a set of central messages, reflecting what the organization stands for. The printed material should also be graphically homogeneous, and specific activities should be communicated based on such messages.

51. The ACCOBAMS offline material currently follows a number of constant elements, like colour palette or images of the sea, but a number of rules should be set in order to define a consistent brand style, given that the brand communicates directly to its audiences, on its own.

52. It is advisable to apply and consistently follow an established brand style guide to the different offline materials, which would also help graphic designers or/and web developers to respect the unified vision of the ACCOBAMS brand.

II.2.4. Presential events

53. ACCOBAMS is regularly invited to participate in national events, such as conferences, forums, fairs, awareness raising activities organized by local organizations with which ACCOBAMS collaborates. When budget and time allow, participation in such events is a good way to make ACCOBAMS more visible, to share information about the role and activities of ACCOBAMS with wider audiences.

54. Participation in international meetings, such as official meetings of IGOs with which ACCOBAMS collaborates, and international events is also a way to make ACCOBAMS visible, especially to stakeholders working in the field of environmental conservation and sustainable development. Beyond the official statements in session, the organization or participation in side events on these occasions contribute to highlight the actions of ACCOBAMS.

II.3 Communication Content Planning

55. Communication content is all information produced by ACCOBAMS (and some specific 3rd parties) that can be conveyed to various audiences.

56. The determination of the communication content helps planning in advance the themes to be included in the ACCOBAMS communication calendar, and so pre-defining when and where to communicate them.

57. Content planning has an impact on social media strategy, on the Public Relations (PR) strategy, and eventually on website content, if ACCOBAMS makes use of a dynamic news section.

58. It is advisable to plan in advance ACCOBAMS communication content on a yearly basis, and to define the detailed content each quarter, always working one quarter ahead. This will allow considering those content pieces that became relevant although they had not been initially planned.

II.4 Resources needed

59. Properly implementing the ACCOBAMS Communication Strategy requires both human and financial resources. The details of specific activities to be carried out to achieve the overall objectives of the Communication Strategy are not detailed in the Strategy itself. Rather, they are specified in the Work Program for each triennium, along with information on the required budget. For some of these activities, costs can be externalized, while those related to systematic communication activity could be provided in-house by a Communication Officer, upon availability of resources.

II.5 Monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the Communication Strategy

60. Key implementation tools that will be necessary to put in place the Communication Strategy will on their own offer the means to monitor and assess outreach and effectiveness.

61. Subject to establishing baselines and quantitative indicators, from which an assessment of the effectiveness of the Communication Strategy can be done, notably through quarterly performance reports, evaluation means may include those already existing (FINS) and/or in development (NETCCOBAMS), as well as those related to the online and offline presence of ACCOBAMS, as shown, non-exhaustively, hereafter:

website	number of visits, of page-views, time per visit, most-visited pages
social media	number of followers, positive feedback, number of republication/retweets
online and offline material and newsletter (FINS)	number of requests to be added to the mailing list, comments received, number of favourable feedbacks
offline material	number of printed materials distributed
NETCCOBAMS	number of national reports introduced by countries in NETCCOBAMS number of projects introduced in NETCCOBAMS
Face-to-face events/International meetings	Number of national/international events & meetings attended

62. Monitoring the implementation of the Communication Strategy can be made internally by the Secretariat who can report every year to the Bureau and every three years to the Meeting of the Parties.

63. The assessment of the implementation and the effectiveness of the Communication Strategy should be made externally and should include both a mid-term assessment in 2025 and a final assessment in 2028. Outcome of the mid-term and final assessments will be also useful in the framework of the revision of the Communication Strategy (see below).

II.6 Duration and revision of the Communication Strategy

64. This Communication Strategy is planned for an initial period of 6 years, from 2023 to 2028.

65. Being considered as a leverage tool in support of the implementation of the ACCOBAMS overall Strategy, the ACCOBAMS Communication Strategy shall be revised when updating the ACCOBAMS Strategy. A revision of the later is expected for 2023-2025 leading to the adoption of a revised ACCOBAMS overall Strategy at the Ninth Meeting of the Parties in 2025. In face of that, a revision of the Communication Strategy may be necessary in 2025 to align it with the revised ACCOBAMS overall Strategy.

II.7 Synergy with the ACCOBAMS Funding Strategy

66. As highlighted in the ACCOBAMS Funding Strategy adopted through Resolution 7.5, the development of an ACCOBAMS Communication Strategy is a key step for strengthening ACCOBAMS visibility and reputation, being mindful of the virtuous cycle between communication/outreach and fundraising. Strengthening communication to targeted donors will be then support and facilitate the efforts to liaise with them.
67. Finally, keeping in mind how emblematic cetaceans are, a well-structured, dynamic and effective communication could support the launching of sponsorship programs and/or crowdfunding campaigns.

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Annex 3

Breakdown of estimated implementation costs for 2023/25 of ACCOBAMS Communication Strategy

These activities and estimated costs have been identified by the Secretariat with the support of the Communication Strategy Consultant as priority ones to start efficient implementation of ACCOBAMS Communication Strategy during 2023-2025.

The overall budget for 2023-2025 has been estimated at 152 500 € of which 60 000 € will come from ordinary contributions (OC), 8 000 € from 2020-2022 remaining and 84 500 € from voluntary contributions.

Activities		Estimated total costs for 2023-2025	Proposed costs to be covered by OC
Defining ACCOBAMS as brand			
Brand Style Guide (one-off)	Based on the new brand and Signature, a Brand Style Guide will be developed to guide future brand communication actions. It includes the description of the brand's manifesto, reflecting its mission, attitudes, and values. The brand style guide will present the defined brand tone of voice, lexicon, and graphic guidelines.	7 500 €	7 500 €
Creation of templates for offline products	Design of templates for offline products (Factsheets, Technical reports...), Press releases (for content insertion and edition), promotional mails following the graphic guidelines	2 500 €	2 500 €
Brand launching/ACCOBAMS introduction video(s) (one-off)	Brand Manifesto video (option 1) Video production using archive footage and music, up to 2' max, for web publishing and presentations to ACCOBAMS partners/sponsors	30 000 €	10 000€
	Animated Short Videos (option 2) Creation and Animation execution of four animated videos up to 1'30" each (videos for web publishing and/or in-person presentations to partners/potential sponsors)		
New website (one-off)	Web design development of a new website, in two languages (English and French), with responsive layout, considering the architecture review to integrate new areas such as the ones related to the "High Quality Whale Watching" Certificate and "NETCCOBAMS"	21 000 €	21 000 €
	Website production including backoffice programming (this estimate considers content will be edited and provided by the Secretariat in both languages)		
	Website content loading (one-off)		
	Website server hosting (for 3 years)		
	Website technical maintenance (for 3 years)		
<i>Subtotal Defining ACCOBAMS as a brand</i>		61 000 €	41 000 €
Upgrading communication products			
Communication/promotional material	Content creation, design and production of communication/promotional material with the new ACCOBAMS brand	60 000 €	10 000 €
<i>Subtotal Upgrading communication products</i>		60 000 €	10 000 €
Improving presence on social networks			

Social networks management	Creation and definition of management guidelines for different communities (FB, Twitter, Instagram)	7 000 €	
	Content creation and management	15 000 €	4 000 €
	Quarterly performance reports	4 500 €	
<i>subtotal improving presence on social networks</i>		26 500 €	4 000 €
Assessing the effectiveness of the Communication Strategy			
Mid-term assessment of Communication Strategy	Recruiting an external consultant to perform a mid-term evaluation of ACCOBAMS Communication Strategy in 2025	5 000 €	5 000 €
<i>subtotal Assessing the effectiveness of the Communication Strategy</i>		5 000 €	5 000 €
Communication costs proposed for OC 2023-2025		152 500 €	60 000 €

Annex 4

LAYOUT PROPOSAL 1:



LAYOUT PROPOSAL 2:



LAYOUT PROPOSAL 3:



Cetaceans protection
has a voice.

