

**ACCOBAMS SURVEY INITIATIVE - ROADMAP TOWARDS THE FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF MONITORING IN THE
ACCOBAMS AREA**

Accord sur la Conservation des Cétacés
de la Mer Noire, de la Méditerranée et
de la zone Atlantique adjacente



Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans
of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea
and contiguous Atlantic Area

EMC²I

Ecosystem Management Conservation

Consulting International

Expertise Mediation Communication

ACCOBAMS SURVEY INITIATIVE
(ASI)

ROADMAP

**TOWARDS THE FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY
OF MONITORING IN THE ACCOBAMS AREA**

Prepared for: ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretary,

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ACRONYMS

ASI	ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative
BSIMAP	Black Sea Integrated Monitoring Assessment Program
CBD	Convention on Biodiversity
CC	Climate Change
CeNoBS	Support MSFD implementation in the Black Sea through establishing a regional monitoring system of cetaceans (D1) and noise monitoring (D11) for achieving GES
<i>DG</i>	<i>Directorate General</i>
<i>Emblas</i>	<i>Improving Environmental Monitoring in the Black Sea – Special Measures</i>
EU	European Union
FFEM	Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial
GES	Good Environmental Status
IMAP	Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MAP	Mediterranean Action Plan
MFSD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MoU	Memorandum Of Understanding
NFP	National Focal Point
PID	Project Identification Document
PS	Permanent Secretary
RAC/SPA	UN Environments Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas
SCF	Supplementary Conservation Fund
SPA	Specially Protected Areas
UNEP	United Nation Environmental Program
UNSD	United Nations Sustainable Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report aims to recommend a roadmap based on scenarios that can be used in order to sustain the financial resources needed for implementing a long-term monitoring programme, under the ACCOBAMS Agreement.

The analysis was undertaken on the basis of a literature review of documents provided by the ACCOBAMS Secretary, completed with the ASI review report¹, the ASI Interim evaluation report and the interviews of 15 stakeholders involved in the ASI project implementation as well as consultations of all 24 ACCOBAMS National Focal Points (NFPs).

The conclusions and recommendations of the report have been prepared in close cooperation with the expert contracted by the Secretariat for establishing *“the scientific and technical methods recommended for implementing a regular and perennial monitoring programme”*².

It is recommended to structure the roadmap for the next months in 5 main operational steps as per the provisional timeframe specified in [Table 1](#).

Step 1 – Build up the scientific and technical monitoring concept

- Finalize the **concept document** under preparation;
- Submit this document to the MoP 8 for adoption;

Step 2 – Communicate on the ASI results and achievements

- Publish and communicate on the ASI results, **defining messages and using media** targeted both on the NFPs and priority potential funding partners;
- Set up **awareness and communication tools** to catalyze the potential funding partners and keep them aware of the Parties’ wishes/expectations, on a regular basis;
- Reactivate the NFP network in order to get/maintain a strong **political and institutional support**;

Step 3 – Prepare a financial model for monitoring

- Evaluate the needed **capacities** (human, technical, financial) to implement the monitoring programme;
- Make a broad **cost estimation**;
- Identify and evaluate **the in-kind and financial support potential**;
- Present various **funding scenarios**;
- Select the scenario;

Step 4 – Mobilize partnership to sustain monitoring

¹ ACCOBAMS (2021c).

² Chedly Rais who was in charge of *“developing a document describing the ACCOBAMS long-term monitoring programme for estimating trends in abundance and distribution of cetaceans”* (See Rais, Ch. (no date).

- **Identify and mobilize targeted funding partners** in order to convince them that cetaceans monitoring is one of the responses to their own targets and priorities, in their strategies and policies linked to marine ecosystem preservation and sustainable development (climate change, fisheries, pollution, tourism, shipping, ...);
- Create a **web-based network** (extranet) linking all ACCOBAMS targeted partners and organize a systematic and permanent digital (on-line) monitoring on their programmes/projects and calls for tenders and proposals;
- Set up a **Donor's Club** and create a **blog** providing updated information, on a regular basis, to keep them aware of the ACCOBAMS projects results and achievements;

Step 5- Leverage and catalyze new funding mechanisms

- Evaluate **the feasibility of innovative targeted funding mechanisms** to suit the ACCOBAMS context;
- Elaborate **strategies and operational guidelines** for their implementation (sponsorship, crowd-funding, offset programmes, ...);
- Develop **new funding mechanisms**.

Actions	2021	MoP8	Mid-term	Long-term
Step 1				
Action 1-1				
Action 1-2				
Step 2				
Action 2-1				
Action 2-2				
Action 2-3				
Step 3				
Action 3-1				
Action 3-2				
Action 3-3				
Action 3-4				
Action 3-5				
Step 4				
Action 4-1				
Action 4-2				
Action 4-3				
Step 5				
Action 5-1				
Action 5-2				
Action 5-3				

Table 1 – Provisional timeframe.

FOREWORD

The cetaceans monitoring results both from the text of the Agreement and from the States Members' decisions and priorities, as included in the Agreement's strategy for the period 2014-2025³ and action plan⁴.

This monitoring should not be seen as an objective *per se*, but as a mean for the Parties to meet their commitments and priorities with regards to the Agreement. It should also be seen by the Parties as a tool to best fulfill their obligations under several other world, European and regional legal instruments, *inter alia*, the Convention on biodiversity⁵, the European MSFD⁶, the EU Biodiversity Strategy⁷, as well as the Black Sea⁸ and Barcelona Conventions⁹.

It should and could as well respond to internationally and nationally driven initiatives, programmes and projects, towards preservation of the marine environment and sustainable development in the macroregion.

In this context, the question arises as to how best undertake this long-term monitoring programme, administratively, technically and also financially.

INTRODUCTION

Background

At their 6th Meeting (MoP)¹⁰, the Parties concluded that the work for obtaining baseline population estimates and distributional information of cetaceans within the ACCOBAMS area, is the utmost priority for conservation research within the ACCOBAMS area and is of great importance in both the assessment of risk from diverse sources (e.g., by-catch, degradation of habitats, disturbances, pollutions) and the determination of appropriate mitigation measures and priority actions.

³ E.g.; overall objective to « *Improve conservation status of cetaceans and their habitats in the ACCOBAMS area by 2023* ». Desired outcomes: “*status of at least all the regularly present species listed as endangered (EN) in the IUCN Red List downgraded to at least vulnerable (VU) with support of ACCOBAMS Good environmental status (GES) achieved in at least areas representing cetacean critical habitats*”. § B – Cetacean conservation efforts (B1 to 5).

⁴ E.g.: B.1.1. Cetaceans Populations Estimates and distribution, especially B.1.1.1 - Undertake two comprehensive surveys of abundance and distribution of cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea using aerial surveys where possible.

⁵ E.g.: Strategic Goal B: Targets 6,8, Strategic Goal C, Target 12.

⁶ Including the obligation of establishment of a monitoring programme for the ongoing assessment and the regular update of targets.

⁷ E.g.: Targets 1, 4 (action 14) and 6.

⁸ E.g.: Strategic Action Plan for the Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea, 17 April 2009.

⁹ E.g.: Decision IG.22/1 UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021/Strategic outcome 3.4 - Monitoring, inventory and assessment of biodiversity with focus on endangered and threatened species, non-indigenous species and key habitats. Decision IG.22/7 Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria/IMAP (EcAp MED III Project 2020-2023/Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme).

¹⁰ ACCOBAMS-MOP6/2016/Res.6.13.

The Parties also stressed that, without such information and a suitable monitoring programme, it will be impossible, *inter alia*, to determine whether ACCOBAMS is meeting its conservation objectives, in particular its specific objective B.1 “*Improve the knowledge about state of cetaceans*”¹¹.

They also concluded that the implementation of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative (ASI) would allow to obtain baseline cetacean population estimates and distribution in the ACCOBAMS Area and to progress in the regional monitoring of cetacean populations. Recognizing the importance given by the MSFD to qualitative descriptors for determining good environment status, including the maintenance of biological biodiversity, the ASI project could provide a fundamental contribution to other relevant initiatives, such as the Ecosystems Approach (EcAp) Process within the framework of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean¹² and the 2009 Strategic Action Plan for the Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea¹³.

At the MoP 7¹⁴, the Parties strongly welcomed the realization of the ASI project and commended all involved stakeholders, for their support and contribution in the implementation of this monitoring survey, stressing that the ASI results would contribute to the achievements of the ACCOBAMS objectives and could also make a fundamental contribution to initiatives outside the ACCOBAMS, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development (UNSD) Goal 14 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets under the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)¹⁵.

Hence, capitalizing on the ASI project and improving cetaceans’ distribution and abundance monitoring efforts in the Agreement area appeared as fundamental structural components of the ACCOBAMS activities for the future, leading the ACCOBAMS Secretariat (the Secretariat) to see how to secure the ASI results and sustain this monitoring process in the long term, from a financial point of view.

Purpose

This report aims to recommend a roadmap based on scenarios that can be used in order to sustain the financial resources needed for implementing a long-term monitoring programme, under the ACCOBAMS Agreement. The conclusions and recommendations of the report have been prepared in close cooperation with the expert contracted by the PS for establishing the scientific and technical methods recommended for implementing a regular and perennial monitoring programme¹⁶.

Methodology

The analysis was undertaken on the basis of:

- a literature review of documents provided by the ACCOBAMS PS to the consultant (**Bibliography**) and completed by the latter;

¹¹ Resolution 5.1 on the ACCOBAMS Strategy for the period 2014-2025.

¹² See also the commitment of the Barcelona Convention’ Contracting Parties to facilitate and support the ACCOBAMS Survey initiative (Decision IG.22/12 related to the adoption of the updated Action Plan for the Conservation of Cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea).

¹³ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/policy-documents/strategic-action-plan-for-the-1>.

¹⁴ ACCOBAMS-MOP7/2019/Doc38/Annex15/Res.7.10.

¹⁵ <https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>.

¹⁶ Chedly Rais who was in charge of “*developing a document describing the ACCOBAMS long-term monitoring programme for estimating trends in abundance and distribution of cetaceans*” (See Rais, Ch. (no date).

- the ASI review report¹⁷;
- the ASI Interim evaluation report;
- interviews of **15** stakeholders involved in the ASI project implementation (**Annex 2.1**);
- written consultations of all 24 ACCOBAMS National Focal Points (NFPs) (**Annex 2.2**).

This analysis was based on a desk review only; it did not include field visits. Furthermore, the physical meetings initially planned with the stakeholders could unfortunately not be organized, due to the sanitary crisis; all exchanges were led by the consultant, by phone and Emails.

I FROM THE ASI EXPERIENCE

Table 1 and Table 2 provide with a general overview on the multi-source financing scheme of the ASI project.

Those tables demonstrate the importance of mixing:

- financial and in-kind supports;
- internal and external funding
- mandatory and voluntary contributions.

I-1 The financial efforts

As designed in the Project Identification Document (PID) 2015, the total budget of the ASI Project was EUR 5,000,000. However, this budget was adapted in February 2017 and funded of EUR **3,158,700**, by grants (EUR 2,029,850/64%), voluntary contributions (EUR 986,107/32%)-and various sources (EUR 142,743/4%) (**Table 1**).

Source of funding	Type of support	Supporting documents	Period	Total amount (EUR)	Notes
Mediterranean region					
MAVA foundation	Grant	Convention Email Exchanges and Note	2016-2019	1,676,000	Extended until Dec 2022
FPA2		Convention	2017-2019	100,000	
IFAW		Collaboration Agreement	2018	50,000	Funding provided to Marine Conservation Research directly for Boat survey in Hellenic Trench/Greece

¹⁷ ACCOBAMS (2021c).

Source of funding	Type of support	Supporting documents	Period	Total amount (EUR)	Notes
France	Voluntary contribution	MoU (with Agence Française Biodiversité) ¹⁸	2017-2019	400,000	Signed in 2017 and finalized early 2020
Spain		Letter 2015	used in 2017-2020	300,000	Announced at MoP3 (2007) invested in 2008 ¹⁹
Italy		Letters (2015 & 2016)	used in 2018-2019	228,000	Announced in 2015 provided in 2017
		Proposal in the allocation of the 2017 Italian voluntary contribution ²⁰	Used in 2018-2019	35,000	Part of a VC of EUR 220,000 provided in 2018
Monaco		Accord de financement (2016)	Used in 2019-2021	20,000 + 1,500	Euros 20,000 to be used for data analysis Workshop in Monaco
Slovenia		Letters/invoice	2019	1,607	Reimbursement of survey costs done in Slovenia, provided by Morigenos
ACCOBAMS	Own funds ²¹		2016-2021	45,000	Used for the project implementation and coming from leftovers invested since 2008 ²²
IUCN Med	Indirect support	Letter	2018	7,500	Organization of an ASI event for the launch of the survey in Malaga (8 June 2018)
MAVA	Grant	Contrat de subventionnement	2020-2021	25,000	Additional funding for the ASI project review and evaluation
Sub total 1				2,889,107	
Black sea region					
European Commission	CeNoBS Grant	Grant Agreement (MoU 02/2019 with Mare Nostrum) ²³	2018-2019	153 850	Extended until June 2021

¹⁸ MoP6 report point 49 (p.9).

¹⁹ MoP 5 - Doc25_Report on incomes and expenditures for 2011-2013 (p.15).

²⁰ MoP6 report point 95 (p.15).

²¹ MoP4 Report on incomes & expenditures.

²² MOP 4 Report on incomes & expenditures (p.16).

²³ CeNoBS project leader.

					+ EUR 90,000 of co-funding from ACCOBAMS
ACCOBAMS Secretariat	Own funds	Co-funding of CeNoBS		45 000	
ACCOBAMS Secretariat	Own funds	Contract with Mare Nostrum ²⁴		45,000	Provided to Mare Nostrum directly And coming from leftovers invested since 2008 ²⁵
ACCOBAMS Secretariat	Coming from ASI MAVA grant (indirect costs)	Tripartite Agreement with Russian partners ²⁶	2019	25,000	Contract with aerial operator ²⁷
Subtotal 2				268,850	
Total				3,158,700	

Table 1 – Distribution of the ASI financing per category (Source: ACCOBAMS Secretariat).

I-2 The in-kind efforts

The financial support was completed by an in-kind support from the countries (**Table 2**). This support was provided by all participating countries, through the mobilization of the ASI Contacts group members, the NFPs and scientific staff, and for various administrative aspects, meetings and ASI events organization.

No financial estimation of this support was made back at the time and the documentation currently available does not allow to make such an estimation. However, this in-kind support was instrumental in the implementation of the ASI project, for the execution of the field activities and it will be likely a key lever for future monitoring activities.

I-3 The unsuccessful efforts

The financial model of the ASI project was not easy to establish; it took a long time to agree on a final monitoring project that met the Parties' wishes and achieved the quality standards expected, at a reasonable cost. Thanks to a major donor, the MAVA Foundation which contributed to almost 55% of the total financial contribution, the ASI project was undertaken successfully, more than ten years after the start of the discussions.

Several initiatives to get funds were unsuccessful:

²⁴ MoU07/2019.

²⁵ Note supra p. 16.

²⁶ MoU13/2019.

²⁷ Navicharter Limited Liability Company.

- a proposal was sent to the Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM) for a requested support of EUR 1,03 Million; after a round of exchanges, a final negative answer was given in July 2016;
- a proposal on “Monitoring Marine Mammals in the Black Sea region” was sent to the European Union (EU) Commission in 2016, in the framework of a first call from Directorate General (DG) Environment for the implementation of the Marine Strategic Framework Directive (MSFD); this proposal was not accepted;
- in 2017, the Secretariat together with Black Sea partners responded to a proposal to a call for proposal of the ENI CBC Joint Operational Programme Black Sea Basin 2014-2020²⁸; a negative response was received;
- a support of EUR 400,000 was originally requested to the Foundation Prince Albert 2 of Monaco; EUR 100,000 were finally granted, out of which EUR 30,000 had to be spent on activities that were out of the initial scope of the ASI project²⁹; the amount of the expected contribution was significantly reduced and - notwithstanding its technical interest - the additional activity brought more work to the Secretariat.

It is crucial to remember that the grant approach is always challenging; the ASI project experience should lead the countries to assess the possibility to increase their own contributions and to mix and diversify funding sources as much as possible.

I-4 The constraints and opportunities

The following lessons can also be learned from those unsuccessful funding experiences and from the ASI project in general; they highlight the administrative and technical difficulties and opportunities met for sustaining monitoring activities.

- due to the combination of various sources of funding, it was not easy for the Secretariat to report on the use of funds to the funding organizations, as templates and administrative processes were different from each other; these administrative constraints added consequent work for the Secretariat. As mentioned above, funding organizations may have specific requirements that are out of the scope of the project and can put more pressure on the Secretariat, as it was the case for the drone survey mentioned here above;
- delays in amending the conventions for revising the budget and/or adapting the timeframes have also affected the project execution³⁰;
- another difficulty met during the ASI project came from the necessity to sometimes support field activity managers in addressing concrete legal³¹, financial³² and logistic³³ problems; getting the legal permits on time, paying locally the accommodations, supplies and materials, in cash or by credit card, finding appropriate fuel for the planes were not easy in some countries and/or localities.

²⁸ <https://interreg.eu/programme/eni-cbc-black-sea-basin/>.

²⁹ Testing of drone for monitoring cetaceans.

³⁰ E.g. : letter ACCOBAMS to the FPA2 dated 19 January 2020 (SS/ jb /2021-13).

³¹ E.g.: to get the administrative permits and authorizations in due time.

³² E.g.: to provide the field teams with sufficient cashflows or money.

³³ E.g.: to find fuels nearby the field operations.

All those difficulties were solved by the Secretariat during the execution of the project but they may occur again, among others, in future monitoring activities; they must be taken into consideration in the elaboration of the monitoring scheme and its financial model for the future.

Positive lessons can also be drawn from the ASI project with regard to several opportunities that contributed to leverage external funds and led to complete the budget and to succeed this project. By nature, opportunities cannot always be anticipated; they do require a great flexibility from the Parties, ACCOBAMS governing bodies and Secretariat. A good example is the extension of the ASI project to the Black Sea, granted by the EU with contributions not initially planned and expected.

The in-kind support was also a key opportunity that contributed widely to the ASI project success³⁴. In addition to the funding, most Parties have offered involvement and participation of officials, scientists, experts and other stakeholders, on a voluntary basis, which was a prominent support to the ASI project. This support should still be an important opportunity for future monitoring activities.

Recommendation 1 – Minimizing the administrative and technical constraints and identifying opportunities are central and essential components of the process; this requires capacities to fully identify the challenges and priorities and their related funding and gaps³⁵.

³⁴ As assumed in ACCOBAMS (ACCOBAMS-MOP7/2019/Doc38/Annex15/Res.7.5), in-kind support may include public funds of States and own funds of organizations that took part in the project implementation, as well as external funding mobilized for the project. This definition is only conventional; furthermore, to estimate this support is not easy to address, and in case of the ASI project, part of the financial external sources was not treated as in-kind, *stricto sensu*, but as financial support.

³⁵ OECD (2015).

Country	Foreseen contribution (answers from consultation in 2015)	Actual in kind contribution			
		Participation to ASI Contact Group	Participation to survey (boat/plane)	Administrative support (ie. Permits) ³⁶	Notes
ALBANIA		All countries have participated to the ASI Contact Group	No		
ALGERIE	National scientists support to the organization of trainings or workshops at sea equipment (oceanographic vessel)		National scientists for plane surveys and for Boat Survey (Marine Research Conservation)	Yes	Support for the obtention of permits (for the Song of the Whales and for the 2 planes) and airplane logistics
CROATIA	Delivering all relevant data owned by the former State Institute for Nature Protection or by scientific and field relevant institutions and civil society organizations development of a monitoring and reporting system for conservation of all species of cetaceans (funded under ESF)				Scientists were paid through direct contracts
CYPRUS	Share results from national survey 2016		No	Yes	
EGYPT	National scientists & logistics support		National boat survey – only Egyptian staff	Yes (managed nationally)	Survey conducted nationally, with a financial support from ASI (through MoU)
FRANCE			Survey preparation: design, survey software, training wage portage for French observers		The participation of French Contact group member and scientists was Indispensable at many stages of the project implementation

³⁶ In general, all countries facilitated the obtention of the permits (this task was managed directly by the ASI service providers/air companies for the EU countries).

Country	Foreseen contribution (answers from consultation in 2015)	Actual in kind contribution			
		Participation to ASI Contact Group	Participation to survey (boat/plane)	Administrative support (ie. Permits) ³⁶	Notes
			Data pretreatment and analysis participation Contribution to training		through the ASI Steering Committee and in particular for the data collection and analysis.
GREECE	National scientists Database of a surveillance project funded by the Ministry National database on strandings maintained by the HCMR		Observer from WWF on plane Observers from NGOs and on Boat	Yes	
ISRAEL			National Scientist on Plane Students on boat		
ITALY	National experts and/or scientists		National Scientist as Team leader on plane	Yes	Hosted one sub regional meeting of Contact Group ASI Members (Adriatic zone)
LEBANON	National scientists CANA Oceanographic vessel		National scientists CANA Oceanographic vessel	Yes (managed nationally)	Survey conducted nationally with a financial support from ASI (MoU with CNRS Lebanon)
LIBYA	Communicate with the Libyan National Oil Sector to provide subsidized fuel to the different vehicles involved in the survey (including airplanes) Accommodation and transportation to the team in Libya Gather and inform the local experts to get involved in the field survey Contact with the local universities to provide support		National scientists on boat Students	Yes	Key support was provided by the National focal point, including for the exchanges between the Eastern and Western officials. Several meetings took place in this country/ Archipelagos (Failed) survey and Marine Conservation Research survey off-shore Libya

Country	Foreseen contribution (answers from consultation in 2015)	Actual in kind contribution			
		Participation to ASI Contact Group	Participation to survey (boat/plane)	Administrative support (ie. Permits) ³⁶	Notes
	in terms of laboratories and scientific equipment				
MALTA	Use of platforms of opportunities with the Armed Forces (AFM) and Transport Malta (TM).		No		Difficulties to confirm participation of national Scientists
MONACO			No		
MONTENEGRO			Students for MCR Boat survey		
MOROCCO	National scientists		National scientists on Boat and plane surveys		MoU
PORTUGAL					Countries scientists were paid through direct contracts
SLOVENIA	Survey in the sea under the Slovenian jurisdiction Administrative support (0,25 full-time equivalent)				
SPAIN	Monitoring requirements done through the implementation of the MSFD				
SYRIA			National Boat survey	Managed nationally	The survey had to be conducted nationally, with a financial support from ASI through an Agreement with UNDP Damascus
TUNISIA	National scientists and material resources available Support to the organization of trainings or workshops Oceanographic vessel (without fuel)		National Scientists on plane and boat surveys	Yes	Through MoU ACCOBAMS-INAT-INSTM-CAR ASP
TÜRKIYE	No answer	National Scientists on plane			

Country	Foreseen contribution (answers from consultation in 2015)	Actual in kind contribution			
		Participation to ASI Contact Group	Participation to survey (boat/plane)	Administrative support (ie. Permits) ³⁶	Notes
			Student on boat		

Table 2 – ASI project in-kind support (Source: ACCOBAMS).

II-1 The inductive factors

II-1-1 The technical lessons learned from the ASI project

The ASI project review and interim evaluation reports conclude on a series of lessons aiming to guide the stakeholders throughout the preparation process of future monitoring efforts; those lessons should inspire the ACCOBAMS Parties and partners in their reflection towards the establishment of a comprehensive and sustainable monitoring scheme that should be adopted ideally at the MoP 8, in 2022.

- **Lesson 1** – It is important to develop as much as possible a synoptic approach to conduct monitoring activities at the macroregion level and with respect to the ecosystem approach; however, these activities may be carried out and synchronized at various subregional levels in order to facilitate logistics and best seize opportunities;
- **Lesson 2** – It is useful and preferable to follow an holistic, integrated and cross-thematic approach, mixing species, themes and environmental issues; this will optimize resources and may facilitate political support and fund raising;
- **Lesson 3** – The monitoring methods and protocols should be fully harmonized at the studied area level; this would guarantee a high standard of data quality and facilitate the aggregation of data and their analysis;
- **Lesson 4** – The monitoring objectives should be ambitious but achievable; the expectations should be realistic and strictly compatible with the duration and budget constraints, and *vice versa*;
- **Lesson 5** – Human resources dedicated to the overall and scientific coordination of the activities should be also carefully adapted to the ambitions and needs;
- **Lesson 6** – Attention should also be paid to minimize all transaction and organisation costs;
- **Lesson 7** – It is crucial for the success of the activities to foster an inclusive and participatory approach, throughout the project cycle, at all levels, international/national;
- **Lesson 8** – Results and information should be specifically adapted to the targeted audiences and disseminated timely, on a regular basis;
- **Lesson 9** – The monitoring objectives and results should meet the legal European and international obligations and commitments of the Parties for biodiversity conservation and adaptation to CC;
- **Lesson 10** – The monitoring results should be interpreted in practical way and the drawn up recommendations should respond directly to the decision-makers and policy advisors' wills and needs;
- **Lesson 11** – Support measures and actions should be undertaken to enhance implementation of those results and recommendations for conservation, at all levels, especially at national level;
- **Lesson 12** – The ACCOBAMS monitoring activities should seek to develop the most effective synergies and convergence with other international and European policies and priorities, thus increase their attractiveness to external funding;
- **Lesson 13** – For the future, the monitoring activities should be transformed in fully-fledged ACCOBAMS programme and sourced properly, in view to leverage its contribution to the execution of other ACCOBAMS programmes and projects;
- **Lesson 14** – Those activities should as well be fully integrated in the relevant biodiversity and CC strategies, plans and programmes, in each country in the macroregion.

II-1-2 The main stakes

Based on the above lessons, the Parties and their partners should address the following questions in their forthcoming works and discussions:

- On what scale the **synoptic approach** should be developed for future monitoring surveys (macroregional, regional, subregional, national, ...)?
- To what extent the monitoring scheme should be **holistic, integrated and cross-thematic** (species, themes, topics, ...)?
- What should be the **frequency** of the monitoring surveys?
- To what extent **harmonize the monitoring methods and protocols** at the studied area level?
- What could be **ambitious but realistic objectives and expectations** for future monitoring activities, in terms of knowledge and conservation?
- Which **human, technical, financial resources (magnitude, scope and structure)** are needed to meet those objectives and expectations?
- How to minimize the **transaction and organizational costs**?
- How to improve **governance, planning and functioning** of monitoring in an inclusive way, throughout the monitoring programme cycle and at all levels (international, macroregional, subregional, national, ...)?
- How to adapt the monitoring studies' **results** to the various targeted stakeholders, in order to facilitate and foster their utilization and operationalization?
- How to ensure those **results** will help the Parties to meet their legal obligations, commitments and policies for biodiversity conservation and adaptation to CC?
- How to develop the most effective **synergies and convergence** between ACCOBAMS, the Parties and the potential partners organizations, and best seize opportunities?

The financial model will depend partly from the responses given to those questions. In addition to the programme under preparation, the Parties should also be guided by the “*ACCOBAMS funding strategy*” adopted at the MoP 7 (Resolution 7.5/Specific Objective A3)³⁷ and aiming “*to ensure adequate funding, in particular for conservation activities*”; 3 of the 4 strategic pillars deal with monitoring activities:

- analyze available funding possibilities in the region;
- regularly inform Parties about project call of proposals and other funding possibilities;
- encourage development of multilateral/transboundary projects.

This strategy should be implemented in a way to facilitate the access to funding resources for developing monitoring and conservation activities.

Recommendation 2 – Completing the long-term monitoring programme under preparation should be the first step on the road towards the establishment of a funding operational model, based on the assessment of the priorities and opportunities.

The ACCOBAMS funding strategy should provide “*food for thoughts*” and guide the stakeholders in their task.

II-1-3 The monitoring components

³⁷ ACCOBAMS-MOP7/2019/Doc38/Annex15/Res.7.5.

Furthermore, part of the components of the ASI project will not be relevant anymore; for example:

- it will not be necessary to work again, in detail, on the definition of a standardized approach of the monitoring method; some adjustments may only be needed;
- the protocols tested and used for the ASI project could be used in the future with likely few adaptations, only if necessary;
- national human capacities have been built and strengthened during the ASI Project (Activity 9); it is hoped that at least part of the participants in the ASI field surveys, trained on monitoring method and protocols, will contribute to the next monitoring works and that they will not have to be trained once again; only a few new persons may likely need to be trained in the future;
- several other activities, parts of the ASI project, such as the preparatory study for a long-term funding mechanism (Activity 11), as well as the external intermediate evaluation (Activity 12), should not need to be renewed.

For those reasons, the cost of the next monitoring programme will be slightly different and might be cheaper.

The Parties could as well wish to emphasize a number of points that were not addressed properly or sufficiently during the ASI project, for instance with regard to cetaceans conservation (e.g.: establishment and/or extension of marine protected areas, adaptation of socio-economic uses/activities regulation, awareness and communication), having in mind that the ASI project general objective was to monitor cetaceans abundance and distribution *“with a view to improving the conservation status of these species and their habitats through appropriate management for the good status of the marine and coastal environments in the area of the study”*³⁸. They could prefer to focus on monitoring activities *stricto sensu* and not address the conservation problem; in that case, the scope of this monitoring programme would be minimized, and would cover only (1) the preparation of the field survey, (2) its conduction, (3) the data collection and analysis, and (4) the publication of results.

Recommendation 3 - The funding scenarios cannot be established before the technical monitoring concept is available and adopted by the Parties (e.g.: studied species, studied uses/activities, data to be collected, associated activities).

However, whatever the stakeholder decision and the contents of the programme will be, the market volatility (e.g.: seasonality effects, transportation costs, oil and equipment prices) does not and will never permit a definite estimate of its cost for the mid-term and long-terms; this volatility requires the stakeholders to take a realistic and flexible approach and to be reactive, practical and pragmatic.

³⁸ For the record the « *Good Environmental Status* » (GES) is defined by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) as **“the environmental status of marine waters where these provide ecologically diverse and dynamic oceans and seas which are clean, healthy and productive” (Art. 3), which means *inter alia* that “The decline of biodiversity caused by human activities is prevented and biodiversity is protected; human activities introducing substances and energy into the marine environment do not cause pollution effects. Noise from human activities is compatible with the marine environment and its ecosystems”.**

II-1-4 The external factors

Another important issue is the overall coherence between the ACCOBAMS monitoring efforts and other public policies, strategies and plans to be developed by the Parties, based on their international and regional obligations and commitments. This may also have direct effects on the content and structure of the monitoring programme, as well as on its budget and financing.

At least four organizations intervene in the macroregion on knowledge and conservation of marine biodiversity (**Table 3**):

- all ACCOBAMS State members are parties to the Convention on biodiversity;
- 6 involved countries are Parties to the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Black Sea Convention)³⁹;
- 19 are Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution (Barcelona Convention)⁴⁰, plus Israel and the European Union ;
- 11 are members of the European Union (EU)⁴¹.

Those legal instruments and organizations carry out and/or support activities overlapping the ACCOBAMS monitoring activities, through their decisions and programmes,

ACCOBAMS Parties	Black Sea Convention	Barcelona Convention Parties	European Union Members
Albania		X	
Algeria		X	
Bulgaria	X		X
Croatia		X	X
Cyprus		X	X
Egypt		X	
France		X	X
Georgia	X		
Greece		X	X
Israel		X	
Italy		X	X
Lebanon		X	
Lybia		X	
Malta		X	X
Monaco		X	
Montenegro		X	
Morocco		X	
Portugal			X
Romania	X		X

³⁹ Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Türkiye and Ukraine (<http://www.blacksea-commission.org/convention.asp>).

⁴⁰ Albania, Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia and Türkiye (<https://www.unep.org/unepmap/who-we-are/contracting-parties>).

⁴¹ Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain (https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries_en#28members).

ACCOBAMS Parties	Black Sea Convention	Barcelona Convention Parties	European Union Members
Russia	X		
Slovenia		X	X
Spain		X	X
Syria		X	
Tunisia		X	
Türkiye	X	X	
Ukraine	X		
European Union		X	

Table 3 - List of countries, Parties to the relevant multilateral Agreements encompassing the ACCOBAMS area.

Recommendation 4 - The ACCOBAMS Parties obligations and commitments to those international and regional legal instruments and organizations should be reviewed, with regards to knowledge and conservation of cetacean and their habitats, more widely to preservation of marine biodiversity and ecosystem services.

This review should help the Parties to consolidate and merge their priorities and wishes, together with their international and regional obligations and commitments; it should also bring more cohesiveness across governments, regional and multilateral institutions, as well as other potential donors, public and private.

It should lastly contribute in identifying funding opportunities for developing monitoring, seen not as a goal in itself, but as a mean to an end, leading the Parties to fulfil their obligations and respect their commitments, and to implement their own monitoring and conservation programmes and projects, at national level.

II-2 The funding opportunities

According to its internal rules and procedures, ACCOBAMS can mobilize all kinds of funding for conservation actions that contribute to the implementation of the Agreement and beyond ordinary contributions. It is reminded that the ordinary contributions of the Parties as well as the specific contribution of the Principality of Monaco under the headquarters Agreement must ensure first and foremost the administrative and institutional functioning of the Agreement, and not funding monitoring and conservations actions.

To be efficient, a project, whatever it is, must be funded with selected financial instruments and mechanisms, reflecting countries/region contexts, and benefitting from appropriate governance frameworks as well as necessary technical and institutional capacities.

In the context, 55% of the ASI project budget was granted by one donor only, whilst the total cash budget of the Agreement supported by external funding to the ratio of 44%. This donor will stop its activities in 2022 and, thus, will not be able to contribute in financing future monitoring activities anymore.

This shows the weakness of the ASI financial model that was concentrated on very few donors and exposed the Parties tremendously.

Recommendation 5 – The ASI project shows the limits of a funding strategy concentrated on a very small number of donors and the necessity to diversify funding sources in the future. It also shows the strong exposure of ACCOBAMS to external funding globally.

This leads to recommend diversifying funding resources in the future and, in light of limited capacities of most Parties, best leveraging external funds, public and private. This should as well lead the Parties to strengthen gradually their ordinary/voluntary contributions and to increase the ACCOBAMS' budget allocated to implementation of the Agreement strategy and action plan, with special effort on monitoring that is one of the most relevant indicator to evaluate the ACCOBAMS overall performance and results properly.

II-2-1 The ACCOBAMS budget

Notwithstanding the recommendations above, a first scenario could theoretically be based on a contribution from the State Parties, either on a mandatory or on a voluntary basis.

Table 4 shows the national repartition of the Parties contributions for a monitoring project based on the cost of the ASI project (EUR 3 Million), responding to the EU countries obligations to report every 6 years to the EU Commission on the implementation of the MSFD, and using the current ACCOBAMS allocation key for contribution (Columns 3 and 4).

State Parties	ACCOBAMS Key	Total contribution (on a 6 year period, EUR)	Annual contribution (EUR)	ASI Ratio External/Internal funding sources (0,33) (EUR)
Albania	0,80	24,000	4,000	1,320
Algeria	1,50	45,000	7,500	2,475
Bulgaria	0,80	24,000	4,000	1,320
Croatia	0,92	27,600	4,600	1,518
Cyprus	0,80	24,000	4,000	1,320
Egypt	1,42	43,500	7,250	2,392
France	23,16	694,800	115,800	38,214
Georgia	0,80	24,000	4,000	1,320
Greece	4,40	132,000	22,000	7,260
Italy	22,49	674,700	112,450	37,108
Lebanon	0,80	24,000	4,000	1,320
Libya	1,17	35,100	5,850	1,930
Malta	0,80	24,000	4,000	1,320
Monaco	0,80	24,000	4,000	1,320
Montenegro	0,80	24,000	4,000	1,320
Morocco	0,80	24,000	4,000	1,320
Portugal	3,66	109,800	18,300	6,039
Romania	1,72	51,600	8,600	2,838
Slovenia	0,80	24,000	4,000	1,320
Spain	19,70	591,000	98,500	32,550
Syrian Arab Republic	0,80	24,000	4,000	1,320

State Parties	ACCOBAMS Key	Total contribution (on a 6 year period, EUR)	Annual contribution (EUR)	ASI Ratio External/Internal funding sources (0,33) (EUR)
Tunisia	0,80	24,000	4,000	1,320
Türkiye	9,50	285,000	47,500	15,675
Ukraine	0,96	28,800	4,800	1,584
TOTAL	100	3,000,000	500,000	165,000

Table 4 – Estimation of the Parties internal contributions to a monitoring programme based on the ASI project example.

Those contributions could ideally rely on resources, such as:

- increase of the Parties ordinary contributions, including the Agreement Trust Fund;
- specific Parties contributions to the Supplementary Conservation Grants Fund (SCGF) that can be funded from voluntary contributions of Parties or from any other source, in order to increase the funds available for projects relating to the conservation of Cetaceans, including monitoring and research activities⁴²;
- external replenishment of this Fund with a specific budget for monitoring activities;
- establishment of a new internal fund or specific budget allocated to those activities.

They can be provided either on an obligatory or on a voluntary basis⁴³, and they can be mixed and completed with external funding, as done for the ASI project, based on the same ratio (66%/external, 33% internal) or on another one to be fixed. For information and throughout the 2002-2018 period, the cash annual budget of the Agreement has averaged EUR 500,000, consisting of ordinary (39%) and voluntary (61%) contributions⁴⁴.

II-2-2 The external support

The ACCOBAMS funding strategy⁴⁵ lists a series of 11 key actions in order to raise additional funds for implementation of ACCOBAMS in general:

- to monitor external funding opportunities: an overview of the available opportunities was presented at the MoP 6, with a list of potential donors, public and private, who may be interested in contributing to the ACCOBAMS activities;
- to encourage the development of multilateral/transboundary projects on which the donors are used to pay particular attention when evaluating project proposals;
- to build capacities in project development/management;
- to strengthen the mobilization of voluntary contributions from ACCOBAMS Parties, through the SCF cited here above,
- to develop or strengthen relationships with donors, and organizing events to raise their interest and attention on ACCOBAMS;

⁴² Resolution 1.7.

⁴³ According to the ACCOBAMS rules, voluntary contributions can be accepted when the purpose is consistent with the policies and aims of the Agreement. Voluntary contributions - both financial and in-kind- are welcome would they seek particularly to support implementation of the Agreement, provided that they are used to cover activities approved by the MoP.

⁴⁴ ACCOBAMS-MOP7/2019/Doc38/Annex15/Res.7.5.

⁴⁵ Resolution 7.5.

- to animate and mobilize the ACCOBAMS family and recruit new partner organizations;
- to strengthen communication and outreach on ACCOBAMS and thus enhance its image and raise interest on cetacean conservation;
- to develop collaborations with stakeholders developing or evolving in marine activities and therefore putting pressure on cetaceans;
- to develop partnerships with the private sector and involve stakeholders from this sector in ACCOBAMS working groups and events on cetacean conservation;
- to engage in crowdfunding⁴⁶;
- to explore innovative financing mechanism, like the establishment of taxes and others resource based on marine uses and activities.

This “*toolbox*” contains strategic recommendations for raising external funds for conservation activities; it details many operational tools and innovative mechanisms, calling for public and/or private supports. Each tool is however not best adapted to the project and/or to the macroregion; it would be unwise and not realistic to recommend all of them in the studied context (e.g.: impact investing, debt for Nature swaps, green bonds, blue bonds, marine protected areas bonds,).

A recent review of the funding mechanisms that may contribute in sustaining biodiversity conservation in the Mediterranean region⁴⁷ concluded that, based on the number of organisations working in the Mediterranean at international, national and/or local level, regional entities “*play a critical role in convening and aligning key players around conservation goals*”. The report suggests also that philanthropy and multilateral aid may have the highest overall potential and that “*a key factor for success is the effective marshalling and channelling of resources*” .

For the authors of this report, “*now more than ever, environmental philanthropists are in an ideal position to take risks, support pilot projects and feasibility studies, and try out new mechanisms most relevant to specific places and situations ... [like] Blue Bonds and Debt-for-Nature Swaps in the Mediterranean* ». However, as long as the ACCOBAMS monitoring activities will be treated separately from other conservation activities, and not merged in a larger transversal programme of conservation aiming to implement the whole Agreement strategy and action plan, it seems inappropriate to promote financing mechanisms, like blue bonds and debt for nature swaps for this type of activities and in the macroregion.

Recommendation 6 - In summary, voluntary contributions mixed with multilateral aid remain an operational strategy for sustaining monitoring efforts on biodiversity, within the context of the macroregion.

Those efforts should be enhanced so as to respond to several sectoral policies and strategies, directly or indirectly linked to marine and coastal socio-economic uses and activities (such as climate change, fisheries, tourism, plastic pollution, noise, water management); they should be placed high on the political agendas, national, regional and international.

⁴⁶ Crow funding is the practice of funding a project by raising money from a large number of people who each contribute a relatively small amount, often via internet; this mechanism could however be best adapted to small and medium business projects/ventures, and not directly adapted to research and monitoring programmes.

⁴⁷ MAVA Foundation (2018).

Using the abundance and distribution of cetaceans and their habitats as a key integrated ecological indicator, monitoring should be seen as a mean to improve knowledge on the Mediterranean and Black Sea socio-ecosystem and thus, to bridge the gap in developing sustainable development strategies, plans and actions.

III THE ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS

The ASI project evaluation report concludes on a very satisfactory financial efficiency of the project. Lower than estimated initially⁴⁸, the overall budget for the project was fixed around EUR 3 Million, completed by an important but not estimated in-kind support from the Parties. This budget was well-balanced, in line with the real needs whilst those needs had to be adapted to the funds available along the project cycle without affecting the quality of the Project' results and achievements; half of the budget was provided by one external donor, the MAVA foundation. According to the interim evaluation report, the allocated budget has not changed substantially up until now; only few adaptations were decided in 2019, not jeopardizing any of the Project objectives and key activities⁴⁹.

Additional financial resources were even found during the Project implementation, thanks to new partners; those resources allowed to expand the initial geographical coverage of the ASI project to almost the entire macroregion, and to develop as well additional innovative activities.

III-1 A comprehensive internal funding scheme

III-1-1 A fully integrated model

This solution would be based on an increase in ordinary contributions from the Parties, at a level which may not be acceptable by them, taking into account the difficulties that several of them currently encounter in paying their annual ordinary contribution and in light of their capacities.

This scenario would certainly best guarantee the financial sustainability of the monitoring scheme in the mid and long-terms, but it is also likely the less realistic in the socioeconomic and institutional context.

III-1-2 A mixed compulsory and voluntary model

This second option would mix ordinary with voluntary contributions, both provided by the Parties, at levels to be determined, in the sense of Resolution 7.5; it would involve all Parties in building the funding scheme, at a reasonable rate for those having the lowest financial capacities, the main funding being ensured through voluntary contributions from more contributing countries, within the spirit of the ASI project where France, Italy, Monaco, Slovenia and Spain, were the main internal contributors. Those contributions could participate in the replenishment of the ACCOBAMS Supplementary Conservation Grants Fund (SCGF)⁵⁰.

⁴⁸ ASI (2015).

⁴⁹ In several cases, the budget allocated to the activity was reduced (e.g.: Activity 8 "Training workshops for local stakeholders by subregion or group of subregions, in the use of the standardized survey method and in information management"; Activity 9 "Preparatory study for a long-term funding mechanism for monitoring operations relating to the species in question, through optimization of existing resources").

⁵⁰ See above foot note 42.

This option would aim and guarantee that all countries Parties to the Agreement bring a financial contribution, at least in principle; it may be acceptable by all Parties but might need additional fund from external sources to complete the budget; this is somehow the ASI project model.

III-1-3 A purely voluntary model

A third option would be based on voluntary contributions only; it would lead to a funding scheme concentrated on a limited number of voluntary internal donors, all Parties to ACCOBAMS. Like the previous scenario, those voluntary contributions might require additional external funds to secure the budget and thus, become a mixed approach, as presented here after.

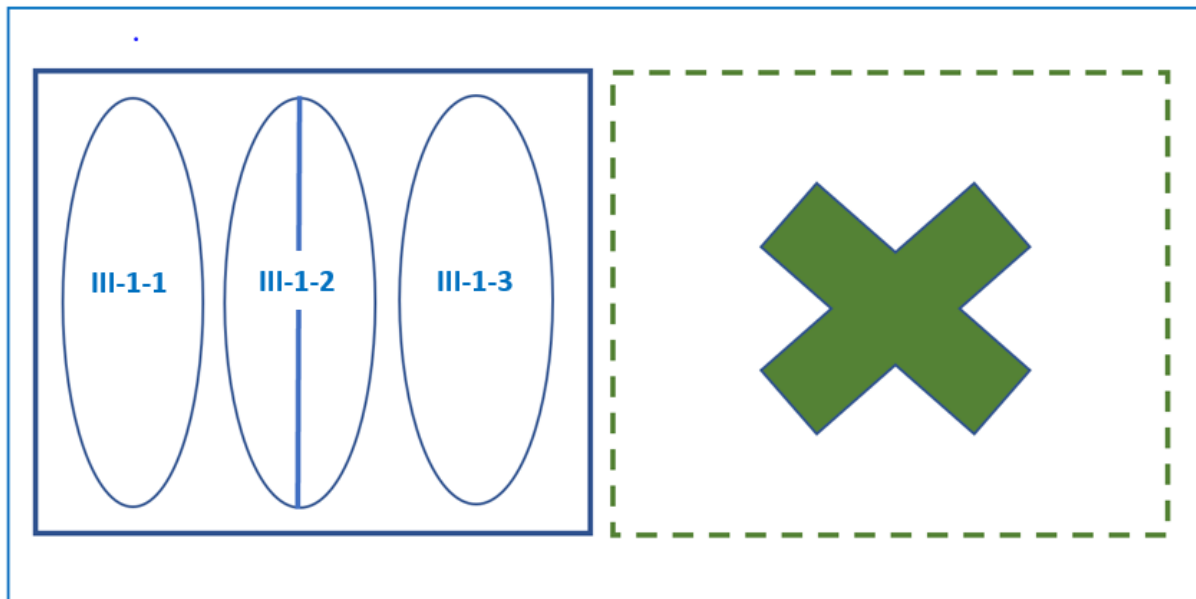


Figure 1 – Scenarios (Internal funding ; External funding).

III-2 A mixed approach

The mixed scenarios that follow are likely the most realistic, although, in contrast to the above, they do not ensure the highest level of sustainability, financially speaking:

III-2-1 The ASI project funding model

This model mixed internal/external, obligatory/voluntary contributions, from private/public donors. It is the most diversified and does require a strong regional and international coordination.

Given the interconnectedness of cetaceans conservation with socioeconomic matters, it meets well the needs to ensuring the alignment of efforts on marine biodiversity conservation in general, species and ecosystems, and to embedding this conservation into most sectoral policies. The main questions are who will accept to contribute and at what level the various contributions are considered appropriate.

III-2-2 A model induced by the ASI project

Other philanthropic and voluntary funding sources can be mobilized to cover the cost of monitoring activities; there is a large range of mechanisms that can be tested and used, complementing each other, in order to get those diversified sources of funding. As standalone project on cetaceans,

monitoring is however unlikely to be granted by large donors like GEF, even focusing on small-sized project opportunities, except if the monitoring activities are part of a larger project⁵¹.

Several sectors of economy, especially those which may have adverse impacts on the cetacean conservation status may be keen in [sponsoring](#) monitoring activities on cetaceans (e.g.: oil and gas exploration and exploitation, fisheries, maritime traffic and cruise companies, tourism companies) through sponsorship activities and/or [offsets programmes](#) ; they could be approached and mobilized at all levels, on the occasion of events and meetings (e.g.: dedicated blog, club of donors, conferences, workshops, roundtables, ...) to allocate financial and in-kind supports. [Subsidies, gifts and bequests](#) may also be tested for developing those monitoring activities,

In this particular context, [crowdfunding](#) may be considered using an ACCOBAMS web site dedicated to Black Sea/Mediterranean cetacean conservation. Specific campaigns could also be organized, like for other species (e.g.: the Day of the whales). Finally, the establishment of a new Trust Fund to solely support monitoring activities also seems suitable; however, funding could be sought with the existing mechanisms⁵² intervening in the geographical scope and on the themes/topics that overlap with cetaceans monitoring and conservation⁵³.

Figure 2 shows possible fund-raising targets to select and prioritize.

⁵¹ E.g.: “*Build back a blue and stronger Mediterranean*”, GEF, n°10685. This 5-year project will invest 5 million US dollars to strengthen the management effectiveness and financing of Mediterranean MPAs addressing global changes and providing long-term socio-ecological benefits in the Mediterranean in a post COVID recovery context.

⁵² ACCOBAMS-MOP6/2016/Inf10.

⁵³ E.g.: various foundations (e.g.: *Fundacion Biodiversidad/Marine and coastal biodiversity*/<https://fundacion-biodiversidad.es/en/marine-coastal-biodiversity>; the Total Foundation/<https://foundation.totalenergies.com/en/our-actions/climate-coastal-areas-and-oceans>; the Bertarelli Foundation/<https://www.fondation-bertarelli.org/marine/>; BNP Paribas Foundation (<https://group.bnpparibas/actualite/premiere-traversee-antarctique-est>) and trust funds (e.g.: the MedFund/<https://themedfund.org/qui-sommes-nous/>); the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)/<https://www.cepf.net/>).

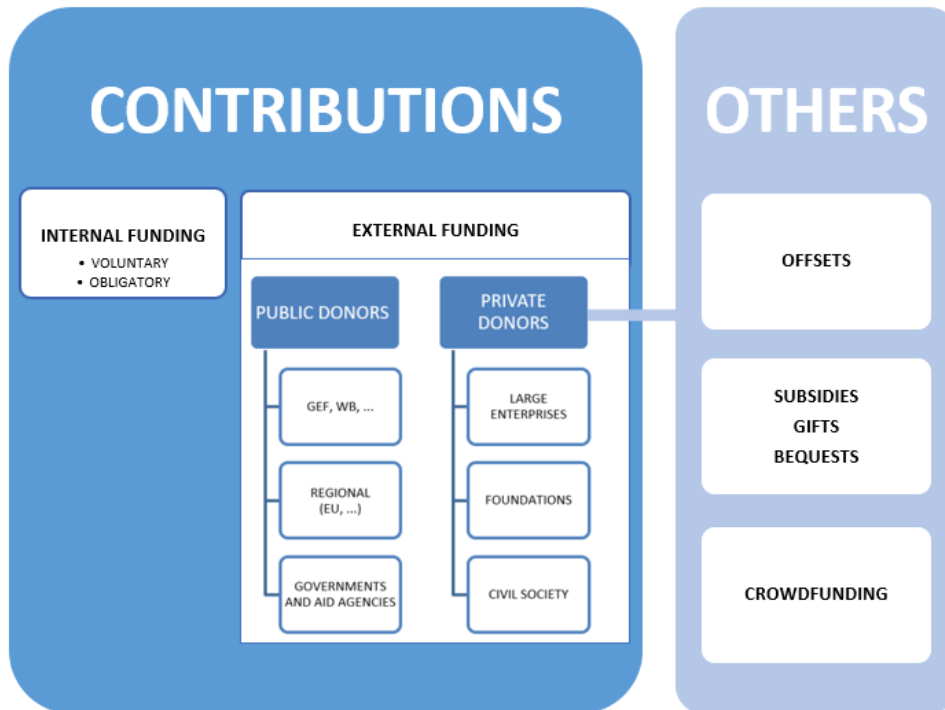


Figure 2 – Fund-raising possible targets.

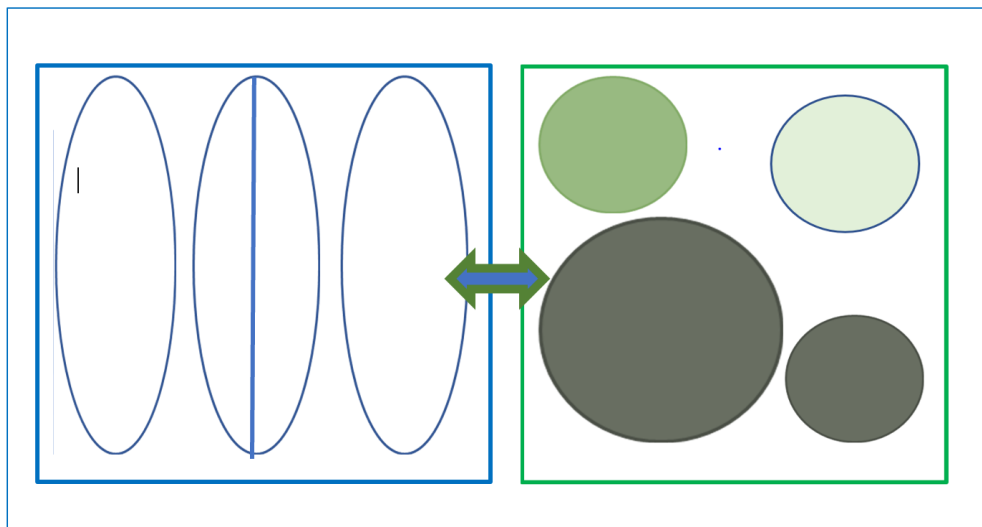


Figure 3 – Scenarios III-2.

Recommendation 7 - Those efforts need strong coherence and are time- and money-consuming; they require also a minimum amount of professional expertise from the Secretariat and adequate staffing. The process should be coordinated with the bi- and multilateral technical and financial targeted partners, so as to pool means and resources and harmonize fund raising actions, as efficiently as possible, at the macroregion level.

Connections and congruences should be sought with existing transversal development programmes like the EU Southern Neighbourhood and Cross Border Cooperation (CBC), amongst others⁵⁴, and information on monitoring capacities should be strengthened within the Secretariat; a web-based network linking all potential ACCOBAMS partners could be set up to do so.

ACCOBAMS should also maintain sufficient flexibility to respond to donor's requests and meet their priorities as much as possible; convergences should be sought through a permanent dialogue with them and regular bilateral exchanges. This dialogue should be built/strengthened with all groups of institutional stakeholders acting on marine species and ecosystem conservation, such as in particular the major environmental conventions and organizations (GFCM, UNWTO, Blue Plan, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), MedPan, ...), in order to ensure a global external coherence between the ACCOBAMS monitoring activities and the conservation programmes and projects conducted under these instruments and/or by those organizations.

III-3 A full external support scheme

The ASI Project was co-constructed and continuously executed inclusively, with the participation of the ACCOBAMS governance bodies, in collaboration with external partners who brought significant in-kind and financial supports. In this last scenario, the budget of the monitoring scheme would be supported only by external donors, public and/or private. Such scenario would be based in priority on subsidies, sponsoring and crowdfunding.

Among all scenarios, it is likely the less sustainable and the most exposed to externalities. Assuming that it is suitable and achievable - which should be demonstrated - this scenario is definitely the least realistic and wise, as most donors require eligible counterparties to their support.

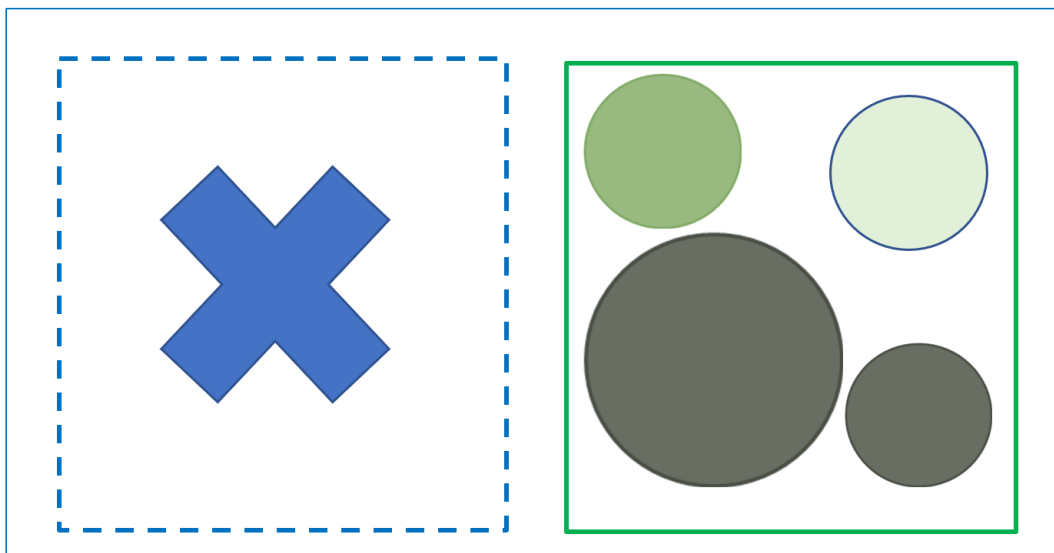


Figure 4 – Scenarios III-3.

⁵⁴ 2020 will be a pivotal year for EU support as several programmes/projects developed in the macroregion, will terminate (e.g.: EU framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2000), CBC Black Sea basin Programme, Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme, LIFE regulation, ENI CBC Med Joint Operational Programme/Mediterranean sea basin Programme).

CONCLUSION

From the elaboration phase of the ASI project, sustainability has been a matter of discussion and concern, geopolitically, institutionally, environmentally, also financially speaking. All persons consulted during the ASI evaluation process were willing to sustain and secure the monitoring activities at the macroregion level; however, most of them recognized that financing will be not easy.

- most actors agree that an important success factor will be to convince their governments and the large funder organisations (e.g.: European Union, UN agencies) that such efforts respond directly to their needs and obligations, and that they should support such activities, in the future, at a reasonable cost;
- based on lessons learned from the ASI project, a new monitoring programme might be less expensive and easier to manage and implement; this will depend upon the objectives and conditions set for those activities, as well as the goals, priorities and conditions fixed by the potential external donors⁵⁵;
- from a strategic point of view, funding monitoring activities will be easier if those activities are seen as a mean to succeed in the ACCOBAMS strategy and action plan, but also in other public environmental policies like climate change, fisheries, tourism and pollution;
- last but not least, this will require strong capacities and administrative coordination within the Secretariat⁵⁶ to best address various thematics (such as monitoring *per se*, communication and awareness, as well as fund raising), and programmes (such as marine biodiversity conservation, pollution, whale watching, bycatch among others).

As concluded in the ASI interim evaluation report, the overall impact of the ASI project has gone far beyond the monitoring of the studied species and, as such, contributed to recognize the macroregion as a large ecosystem beyond state boundaries, requiring collaborative partnerships to effectively meet the challenge of conserving marine natural heritage across multiple actors and countries. The ASI Project results and achievements should serve as bridges between knowledge and conservation works, not only in the macroregion, but also worldwide.

In that context, **convincing donors to finance monitoring activities will require the elaboration of a comprehensive monitoring scheme meeting their own priorities**. In fact, donors increase their likelihood of achieving their own purpose by strengthening their partners in the field and ACCOBAMS image and legitimacy enlightened by the ASI success should foster donors' trust in supporting future monitoring.

It is therefore fair to conclude that, should this programme be conceived suitably and the Parties be prepared to support politically the project and to finance the monitoring activities at a reasonable level, donors may be keen in contributing in those efforts.

To succeed, a series of steps should be followed, mapping the ACCOBAMS' road in the next months (**Tableau 2**):

⁵⁵ See for example the Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848 of 17 May 2017 laying down criteria and methodological standards on good environmental status of marine waters and specifications and standardised methods for monitoring and assessment and repealing Decision 2010/477/EU.

⁵⁶ On the topic, see: ACCOBAMS-MOP7/2019/Inf 37.

Step 1 – Build up the scientific and technical monitoring concept

- 1-1 – Finalize the **concept document** under preparation (timeline: by the MoP 8);
- 1-2 – Submit this document to the MoP 8 for adoption (timeline: at the MoP 8).

Step 2 – Communicate on the ASI results and achievements

- 2-1 – Publish and communicate on the ASI results, **defining messages and using media** targeted both on the NFPs and priority potential funding partners;
- 2-2 – Set up **awareness and communication tools** to catalyze the potential funding partners and keep them aware of the Parties' wishes/expectations, on a regular basis (from now to the MoP 8 and afterwards);
- 2-3 – Reactivate the NFP network in order to get/maintain a strong **political and institutional support** (timeline: by the MoP 8 and afterwards);

Step 3 – Prepare a financial model for monitoring

- 3-1 - Evaluate the needed **capacities** (human, technical, financial) to implement the monitoring programme;
- 3-2 – Make a broad **cost estimation** (timeline: by the MoP 8);
- 3-3 - Identify and evaluate **the in-kind and financial support potential** (timeline: by the MoP 8 preferably);
- 3-4 – Present various **funding scenarios** to the MoP 8 for adoption (timeline: at the MoP 8);
- 3-5 – Select the scenario (timeline: at the MoP 8).

Step 4 – Mobilize partnership to sustain monitoring

- 4-1 - **Identify and mobilize targeted funding partners** in order to convince them that cetaceans monitoring is one of the responses to their own targets and priorities, in their strategies and policies linked to marine ecosystem preservation and sustainable development (climate change, fisheries, pollution, tourism, shipping, ...) (timeline: from now and permanently);
- 4-2 - Create a **web-based network** linking all ACCOBAMS targeted partners and organize a systematic and permanent digital (on-line) monitoring on their programmes/projects and calls for tenders and proposals (timeline: from now and permanently) (timeline: by the MoP 8);
- 4-3 - Set up a **Donor's Club** and create a **blog** providing updated information, on a regular basis, to keep them aware of the ACCOBAMS projects results and achievements (timeline: from the MoP 8 and permanently).

Step 5- Leverage and catalyze new funding mechanisms

- 5-1 - Evaluate **the feasibility of innovative targeted funding mechanisms** to suit the ACCOBAMS context (timeline: from now to the MoP 8);
- 5.2 - Elaborate **strategies and operational guidelines** for their implementation (sponsorship, crowdfunding, offset programmes, ...) (timeline: from the MoP 8 onwards, on mid-term);
- 5-3 – Develop **new funding mechanisms** (timeline: from mid-term to long-term).

Actions	2021	MoP8	Mid-term	Long-term
Step 1				
Action 1-1				
Action 1-2				
Step 2				
Action 2-1				
Action 2-2				
Action 2-3				
Step 3				
Action 3-1				
Action 3-2				
Action 3-3				
Action 3-4				
Action 3-5				
Step 4				
Action 4-1				
Action 4-2				
Action 4-3				
Step 5				
Action 5-1				
Action 5-2				
Action 5-3				

Table 5 – Provisional timeframe.

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LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex 1	Terms of reference
Annex 2	List of persons consulted

ANNEX 1 – Terms of reference (from Contract N° 16/2020/LB 6402 & 6403)

Elaborer un projet de feuille de route détaillée pour la pérennisation financière du projet ASI. Le Consultant se coordonnera avec l'expert chargé de mener les réflexions sur les méthodes nécessaires à la mise en œuvre régulière et pérenne du programme, en particulier des points de vue du calendrier d'exécution de sa prestation et des indicateurs d'évaluation à employer. Le Consultant recommandera plusieurs scénarii de réalisation du programme où seront décrits des mécanismes institutionnels et financiers susceptibles d'être utilisés. Le Consultant présentera ses recommandations durant la réunion des Représentants Nationaux en 2021, au Comité scientifique (SC14) et au Bureau (BU14).

ANNEX 2 – LIST OF PERSONS CONSULTED

2-1 PERSONS INTERVIEWED

	NAME	POSITION	DATE	CONTACTS
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