

## **WORK PROGRAMME 2023-2025 WITH PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY PARTIES AT MOP8**

### **Note of the Secretariat:**

This document was prepared by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat based on Annex 6 (Programme of Work for the triennium 2023 -2025) of Resolution 8.2 (Work Programme and budget for the triennium 2023-2025), in order to specifically address those activities that are to be undertaken by the Scientific Committee, and to facilitate reporting on Work Programme implementation.

The "*Objectives to be achieved before SC16*" correspond to the activities to be developed, and/or to the outputs to be produced by the Scientific Committee members up until the next Scientific Committee Meeting, in Autumn 2024.

**This draft provides a basis for the discussion on the expected work of the Scientific Committee members, who will be invited to establish a work programme for 2023-2025, and to identify priority efforts to be developed in the run up to the next meeting of the Scientific Committee in 2024.**

## CONSERVATION ACTIONS (CA)

<b>CA 1 a</b>	<b>Cetacean population estimates and distribution</b>
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<b>Expected outcomes</b>	<b>Improved knowledge of cetacean populations in the ACCOBAMS Area Global distribution and abundance of cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea and Black Seas established, based on results of surveys</b>
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Proposed Action(s)	Priority	Action led by and in cooperation with	Means of implementation	Objectives to be achieved before SC16
Promote the implementation of the Long-Term Monitoring Programme, taking into consideration monitoring and reporting obligations of countries (MSFD, Barcelona Convention, Bucharest Convention)	Main	Scientific Committee Secretariat Parties, Non-Party Range States Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure funds for implementing ASI2, including by investigating the existence of possible funding at national / regional levels</li> <li>Development and implementation of a simulation framework to examine the performance of different future survey strategies (synoptic, regional/national)</li> <li>Undertaking synoptic basin-wide surveys in the ACCOBAMS Area with a focus on abundance and trends in 2024/2025 (ASI2) with the support of an ASI Contact Group to define the implementation conditions/protocol related to logistics (research platform, human means, equipment, training...) and administration (survey restrictions, permits,...), and of the SC to review and update as necessary the field and analytical protocols</li> <li>Promoting synchronization and standardization of existing monitoring efforts to contribute to LTMP purpose (coordination meetings at the sub-regional level, Working Group on cetaceans monitoring...)</li> <li>Collaborating with relevant organizations, such as the Barcelona Convention (EcAp-Med III), the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present the results of the simulation framework to examine the performance of different future survey strategies (synoptic, regional/national)</li> <li>Support the Scientific Coordinator of the next basin-wide surveys in the ACCOBAMS Area to be undertaken in 2024-2026, in particular to review and update as necessary the field and analytical protocols</li> <li>Participate in relevant meetings of the Barcelona Convention, the Bucharest Convention and the European Commission, such as the Online working group on marine mammals</li> </ul>

			Bucharest Convention and the European Commission (MSFD),	
Promote the use of ASI data by increasing the visibility of ASI (and future) datasets and related results and encourage further analyses	High	Scientific Committee Secretariat SRCUs Parties, Non-Party Range States Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing NETCCOBAMS functionalities to create a repository system for ASI data</li> <li>• Promoting ASI data and results in relevant fora, also through the Special Issue in Frontiers of Marine Science</li> <li>• Sharing ASI data following received requests in accordance with ASI Terms of use and archiving/monitoring of the requests</li> <li>• Collecting outputs of work and analysis conducted following ASI full dataset requests to be used by the SC to give best scientific advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise the development of NETCCOBAMS to create a repository system for ASI data</li> <li>• Promote ASI data and results in relevant fora</li> </ul>
Promote data collection at sub-regional and national levels (in coherence with ACCOBAMS survey methodologies)	Main	Scientific Committee, Secretariat, Parties, Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitating exchanges and coordination between Parties on sub-regional surveys</li> <li>• Organizing training activities on monitoring methods/protocols and data analysis for smaller-scale surveys (at local, national and sub-regional levels)</li> <li>• Develop handbooks on standardized monitoring methods (aerial surveys, boat-based surveys, acoustic surveys...)</li> <li>• Collaborating with relevant organizations, such as Barcelona Convention (EcAp-Med III), the Bucharest Convention and the European Commission (MSFD)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support training activities on monitoring methods/protocols and data analysis for smaller-scale surveys (at local, national and sub-regional levels)</li> <li>• Contribute to the development of handbooks on standardized monitoring methods (aerial surveys, boat-based surveys, acoustic surveys...)</li> </ul>
Promote data collection from multidisciplinary surveys (such as fisheries / acoustic surveys), innovative technologies (UAV, satellite) and of platforms of opportunity (ferries, whale watching vessels, navy vessels, etc..)	High	Scientific Committee Secretariat Parties, Non-Party Range States Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertaking activities in pilot areas to collect data using multidisciplinary surveys (such as fisheries / acoustic surveys), innovative technologies (UAV, satellite) and platforms of opportunity (ferries, whale watching vessels, navy vessels, etc..) based on recommendations of previous studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the implementation of pilot activities to collect data using multidisciplinary surveys and platforms of opportunity (ferries, whale watching vessels, navy vessels, etc..) based on recommendations of previous studies</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiating collaboration with existing regional fisheries surveys (MEDITS, MEDIAS) and relevant organizations such as GFCM and ICCAT</li> <li>• Collaborate with relevant existing networks (FLT) and initiatives/projects (ex. CONCEPTU MARIS Life project)</li> <li>• Organizing meetings/workshops to discuss possible synergies and shared methodology and data analysis</li> <li>• Developing protocols on standardized monitoring methods for multidisciplinary surveys/ Ferries</li> <li>• Update the "Guidelines for the Monitoring of the Range of Cetaceans, Abundance and Demographic Characteristics of Populations"</li> <li>• Regularly review « Best Available Technologies » and assess potential contribution to LTMP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate to meetings/workshops to discuss possible synergies and shared methodology and data analysis</li> <li>• Updated "Guidelines for the Monitoring of the Range of Cetaceans, Abundance and Demographic Characteristics of Populations" to be presented at SC16</li> </ul>
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<b>CA 1 b</b>	<b>Population Structure</b>
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<b>Expected outcomes</b>	<b>Improved knowledge on population structure in the ACCOBAMS Area and species conservation management plans completed Exchange of samples is facilitated for joint analysis Data exchange is facilitated for basin wide analysis</b>
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<b>Proposed Action(s)</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Action led by and in cooperation with</b>	<b>Means of implementation</b>	<b>Objectives to be achieved before SC16</b>
Improve photo ID data collection and dissemination: - Update and harmonize protocols on data collection for photo ID	High	Scientific Committee Secretariat Parties, Non-Party Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizing experts meeting for best practices guide on how to collect data for comparison</li> <li>• Organizing regional experts trainings on analysis on photo ID including AI (Artificial Intelligence)–</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to experts meeting for best practices guide on how to collect data for comparison</li> <li>• Contribute to regional expert</li> </ul>

- Share photo ID data		States Partners, SRCUs	draft ToR to facilitate exchanges or an harmonized relevant databases  • Facilitating data sharing and the creation of large scale photo-id catalogues for in-depth analysis	trainings on analysis on photo ID including AI
Improve data collection on cetacean populations genetic in the ACCOBAMS Area  Development of genetical identification of population structure (particularly for Mediterranean), including e.g eDNA	High	Scientific Committee Secretariat Parties, Non-Party Range States Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing and promoting a common protocol on data collection on cetacean populations genetic</li> <li>• Facilitating the creation of a general data-base/archive/inventory on existing samples/tissues in ACCOBAMS Area</li> <li>• Disseminating databases and guidelines to stakeholders</li>   <li>• Facilitating analysis of existing tissue samples (including those from biopsies) to address questions on stock structure and genetic diversity</li>   <li>• Organizing workshop about genetic population structure (including e-DNA) for marine mammals in the framework of international scientific events or meetings</li> <li>• Collaborating with relevant organizations (CITES, ABS Nagoya Protocol...)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the dissemination of the “ACCOBAMS Best Practices on Cetacean Population Genetics”</li> <li>• Advise the creation of a general data-base/archive/inventory on existing samples/tissues in ACCOBAMS Area</li>   <li>• Facilitate analysis of existing tissue samples (including those from biopsies) and review results of population genetics studies to address questions on stock structure and genetic diversity</li>   <li>• Contribute to workshop about genetic population structure (including e-DNA) for marine mammals</li> </ul>

CA 1 c	Monitoring cetaceans status
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Expected outcomes	<p><b>Regional conservation plans (Med and BS) for cetacean are promoted at the national level</b></p> <p><b>Relevant conservation management plans are developed and implemented</b></p> <p><b>National Action Plans are developed and implemented in several Countries</b></p>
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Proposed Action(s)	Priority	Action led by and in cooperation with	Means of implementation	Objectives to be achieved before SC16
Support in implementing Regional Conservation Plans for cetaceans (in Black Sea and in Mediterranean Sea)	Main	SRCUs Parties Non-Party Range States Secretariat Scientific Committee, Partners,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the BSC in the revision of the Regional Conservation Plan for cetacean in Black Sea, taking into consideration the IWC Conservation Management Plan.</li> <li>Supporting the SPA/RAC in the implementation of the Mediterranean Action Plan for Cetaceans adopted by Parties to the Barcelona Convention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute to the revision of the Regional Conservation Plan for cetacean in Black Sea</li> </ul>
Develop/ revise/ implement relevant Conservation Management Plans for cetacean species	Main	Scientific Committee Secretariat, Parties Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizing Experts Workshop(s) to develop/ revise/ Conservation Management Plans for cetacean species, taking into account all national conservation plans</li> <li>Initiating focus on Black Sea with preliminary document</li> <li>Supporting the implementation of relevant actions of the approved Conservation Management Plans for cetacean species with emphasize of coordination actions and organization of stakeholders' workshop</li> <li>Starting the development of CMP for other Mediterranean species such as Cuvier's beaked whales and sperm whales</li> <li>Derived CMP actions are cross-cutting and considered in the framework of other specific activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute to the finalization and implementation of Fin Whales, Grampus, Bottlenose and common dolphin's CMP</li> <li>Initiate Black Sea preliminary document</li> <li>Participation in the identification of relevant coordinators and in stakeholders' workshop</li> </ul>
Facilitate the Development/ revision/ implementation of National Action Plans for cetaceans	High	Parties Non-Party Range States, Secretariat,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the revision / development of National Action Plans for cetaceans in collaboration with SRCUs and national authorities, through participatory process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support of SC in the preparation of relevant NAP (to be identified in collaboration with SRCUs)</li> </ul>

		SRCUs Scientific Committee, Partners	involving all relevant organizations (NGOs, associations, national partners...)  • Establishment of national Working Groups or Councils in the framework of National Actions Plan	
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CA 1 d	<b>Functional stranding networks and responses to emergency situations</b>
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<b>Expected outcomes</b>	<b>Official National Stranding networks are established and operating Information on stranding events is regularly exchanged among national networks</b>
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Proposed Action(s)	Priority	Action led by and in cooperation with	Means of implementation	Objectives to be achieved before SC16
Set up /Reinforce official national stranding networks (with all national institutions concerned and relevant international agreements)	Main	Parties, Non-Party Range States, Scientific Committee, Secretariat, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminating study on legal/institutional status of National stranding networks in order to assist experts in the establishment of official national stranding network when relevant</li> <li>Assistance in the preparation of a legislative framework to settle the national coordination network</li> <li>Organizing trainings on necropsies, response to live strandings and emergency situation in the ACCOBAMS Area, and on the use of relevant databases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute to the organization of trainings on necropsies, live strandings and response to emergency situation in the ACCOBAMS area following the best practices on causes of death including marine litters, and on the use of relevant databases</li> </ul>
Encourage collaboration among national networks of Parties  Perpetuate mutualization of stranding protocols between Parties	Main	Scientific Committee Secretariat Parties, Non-Party Range States Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminating the procedures on Best Practices on cetacean postmortem investigation and tissue sampling resulted from the harmonization process in ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS</li> <li>Creating Regional Task Force for stranding events (exchange photos/ advice / scientific explanations even in the field) including strandings of non-common species taking into account national legislations in order to support national network to deal with non-common events</li> <li>Developing tele-necropsy in the ACCOBAMS Area (workshops and trainings)</li> <li>Entering relevant national data into relevant regional databases, such as MEDACES</li> <li>Supporting and financing of MEDACES</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the dissemination of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- study on legal/institutional status of National stranding networks</li> <li>- the procedures on Best Practices on cetacean postmortem investigation and tissue sampling resulted from the harmonization process in ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS</li> </ul> </li> <li>Support of the SC for the Emergency Task Force for strandings (ETFS) to assist on emergencies and unusual mortality. The</li> <li>Report of the ETFS to be presented to SC16</li> </ul>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a network to exchange information on sampling through NETCCOBAMS Platform</li> </ul>	
Communicate simply and efficiently on uncommon situations in the ACCOBAMS Area (Example of killer whales in 2019/2020)	High	Scientific Committee Secretariat Parties, Non-Party Range States Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a task force for the management of uncommon situations, including monitoring of uncommon species in the ACCOBAMS Area, taking into account national legislations</li> </ul>	

CA 2 a	<b>Interactions with fisheries / aquaculture</b>
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<b>Expected outcomes</b>	<p><b>Impacts of cetaceans' bycatch and depredation are assessed and reduced</b></p> <p><b>Ecotourism activities (whale watching and pescatourism) are proposed as an alternative income source to fishermen impacted by depredation</b></p>
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Proposed Action(s)	Priority	Action led by and in cooperation with	Means of implementation	Objectives to be achieved before SC16
Support countries in monitoring and mitigating depredation and bycatch situations, with urgent focus on harbour porpoise bycatch in the Black Sea	Main	Secretariat, Parties, Scientific Committee (JBWG), Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving data collection on interactions with fisheries (implementation of on-board observers' programs and port questionnaires...) and testing mitigation measures</li> <li>• Sharing experience and results, including from past projects on interactions with fisheries (workshops, field visits...)</li> <li>• Investigating the use of stranding data to assess bycatch mortality (using drifting models)</li> <li>• Collaborating with relevant entities, in particular with GFCM, EC (DG MARE and DG Environment), Barcelona Convention (EcAp-Med III project) and IWC BMI</li> <li>• Establishing an Emergency Task Force with EC, GFCM and BSC to address the porpoise bycatch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise future bycatch/depredation monitoring and mitigation program</li> <li>• Investigate the use of stranding data to assess bycatch mortality (using drifting models)</li> <li>• Contribute to the Emergency Task Force with EC, GFCM and BSC to address the porpoise bycatch critical issue in the Black Sea</li> <li>• Report of the JBWG to be presented at SC16</li> </ul>

			critical issue in the Black Sea	
Provide support to Parties to promote the development of ecotourism activities as an alternative income to fishers (pescatourism and whale watching)	High	Secretariat, Parties Scientific Committee, Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the development of sustainable ecotourism activities in pilot sites</li> <li>Considering socio-economic aspects of alternative solutions</li> </ul>	

CA 2 b	Anthropogenic underwater noise
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Expected outcomes	<p>Main anthropogenic activities generating underwater noise are monitored in the ACCOBAMS Area</p> <p>Use of mitigation measures for anthropogenic activities generating underwater noise</p>
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Proposed Action(s)	Priority	Action led by and in cooperation with	Means of implementation	Objectives to be achieved before SC16
Encourage the monitoring of anthropogenic activities generating underwater noise	Main	Scientific Committee including through the JN WG Secretariat, Parties Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising awareness amongst countries by organizing an awareness &amp; consultation workshop at national level with different stakeholders, especially at ministerial level,</li> <li>Involving different national stakeholders (coordination by National Focal Points) and identify an entity that can centralize information at the national level,</li> <li>Inviting Port authorities to develop incentive programmes to encourage the monitoring of and reduction in underwater noise emissions, and to report regularly all activities generating noise to improve the mapping for Noise Hotspots Report,</li> <li>Organizing trainings for national entities on noise monitoring (CB), including analyses of PAM collected data in some identified priority areas,</li> <li>Taking into consideration work achieved and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involvement of JN WG in the organization of trainings for national entities on noise monitoring (CB), including analyses of PAM collected data in some identified priority areas // <b>required additional funds</b></li> <li>Progress report of the JN WG</li> <li>Assistance in the development of incentive programmes</li> <li>Consider progress reports on the ongoing regional projects on noise including QuietSeas on continuous noise where some members of the JN WG are involved in order to</li> </ul>

			<p>advices provided by the JNWG,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing the regional noise register,</li> <li>• Feeding data on impulsive noise generating sources from the entire ACCOBAMS Area into the existing International Noise Registry managed by ACCOBAMS,</li> <li>• Providing necessary data to update risk maps and generate maps for the Black Sea by considering relevant target species,</li> <li>• Reviewing the Noise Hotspots Report II,</li> <li>• Revising and updating the ACCOBAMS Guidelines on underwater noise taking into account outcomes from recent projects,</li> <li>• Producing a study on the effects of underwater noise generated by the foreseeable increase of wind farms in the ACCOBAMS Area,</li> <li>• Developing cooperation on underwater noise issue with other international Organizations, such as Barcelona Convention (ECAP) and EU (MSFD) and collaboration with other regional projects on noise issues</li> </ul>	<p>revise, if necessary ACCOBAMS Guidelines</p>
Encourage the use of mitigation measures for anthropogenic activities generating underwater noise	Main	<p>Scientific Committee including through the JNWG Secretariat, Parties Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving enhanced training of regulators on the appropriate application of the CMS Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and ACCOBAMS Noise Guidelines</li> <li>• Producing common minimum requirements for appropriate national legislation and other regulations regarding underwater noise impacts on cetacean</li> <li>• Promoting the ACCOBAMS Highly qualified MMO/PAM operators' certificate</li> <li>• Supporting the development and update of the ACCOBAMS HQMMO/PAM training tools</li> <li>• Granting the status of ACCOBAMS HQMMO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress report of the MMO WG</li> </ul>

			Partners to entities for the implementation of the Highly qualified MMO/PAM operators' certificate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revising and updating the ACCOBAMS "Guide for Parties to use mitigation measures "</li> <li>• Developing joint project/initiatives for simulating mitigation measures such as speed reduction and related benefits</li> <li>• Developing cooperation on underwater noise issues with other International Organizations</li> </ul>	
Exchange of relevant information with competent authorities before military activities / exercises	High	Scientific Committee including through the JNWG Secretariat, Parties Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular information letter from the Secretariat to NATO and to national Navy forces to raise attention of impacts on noise on cetaceans and to propose mitigation measures</li> <li>• Workshop/meeting with national Navy forces and NATO members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement of the JNWG in the preparation of a workshop with national Navy forces and NATO members</li> </ul>

CA 2 c	Ship strikes
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Expected outcomes	Reduction of ship strikes in high risk areas
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Proposed Action(s)	Priority	Action led by and in cooperation with	Means of implementation	Objectives to be achieved before SC16
Monitor / assess high-risk areas for ship strikes (CCH) in the Mediterranean Sea and adjacent Atlantic Area	High	Scientific Committee Secretariat, Parties, Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging the entry of ship strikes data in relevant databases such as the IWC central database on ship strikes</li> <li>• Improving protocols for the identification of ship strikes via necropsies in collaboration with the Pelagos Agreement</li> <li>• Identifying high risk areas for ship strikes (CCH) by encouraging studies that improve understanding of temporal and spatial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to the improvement of protocols for identification of ship strikes via necropsies // <b>Task of the WG on ship strikes</b></li> <li>• Report on the identification of high-risk areas for ship strikes (CCH)</li> </ul>

			<p>distribution of shipping and of cetaceans (IMMAs), and supporting interactive map of areas with high risk of ship strikes for crews of relevant ships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing cooperation on ships strike issue with other International Organizations, such IWC, EMSA (EU) / REMPEC / IMO/ Pelagos Agreement and contributing in any other relevant initiatives, projects and workshops in the ACCOBAMS Area</li> <li>• Follow and assist Parties in the PSSA project process in collaboration with the Permanent Secretariat of the Pelagos Agreement</li> </ul>	
Promote the use of mitigation measures	High	Secretariat, Scientific Committee Parties, Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening cooperation between countries that share marine areas with high risk of collision for cetaceans in order to develop a joint and coherent management for these areas</li> <li>• Fostering the development of incentive systems to shipping companies adopting suggested mitigation measures</li> <li>• Supporting national or regional projects in order to reduce the risk of collision (FLT network / REPCET system...)</li> <li>• Evaluation the efficiency of implemented or proposed new mitigation measures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study on the follow-up of mitigation measures already implemented // <b>Task of the WG on ship strikes</b></li> <li>• Contribute to the promotion of the use of relevant mitigation tools/measures</li> </ul>

CA 2 d	<b>Cetacean watching</b>
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<b>Expected outcomes</b>	<b>Cetacean watching activities are properly conducted in the ACCOBAMS Area</b>
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Proposed Action(s)	Priority	Action led by and in cooperation with	Means of implementation	Objectives to be achieved before SC16
Monitoring status of whale watching activities in the ACCOBAMS Area and their potential adverse impacts on individual cetaceans and on populations	High	Scientific Committee through the WWWG, Parties, Secretariat Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revising the Guidelines for commercial cetacean-watching in the ACCOBAMS Area</li> <li>Analysis of existing national legislations related to whale watching regulation</li> <li>Implementing a pilot study to define the whale watching 'carrying capacity' in a targeted geographical area where commercial whale watching is intensively practiced</li> <li>Collaborating with relevant organizations, such as IWC and Pelagos Agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated Guidelines for commercial cetacean-watching in the ACCOBAMS Area to be presented at SC16</li> <li>Support the analysis of existing national legislation related to whale watching regulation</li> <li>Review the results of the studies carried out to define the whale watching 'carrying capacity' in targeted geographical areas</li> </ul>
Promote the use of whale watching vessels as platforms of opportunity	High	Scientific Committee through the WWWG, Parties, Secretariat Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewing and updating the data collection form for commercial whale watching vessels and test the revised common procedure for whale watching activity in identified pilot areas (e.g. the Ligurian-Provençal Basin, including the Pelagos Sanctuary, Gibraltar Strait, and south Portugal)</li> <li>Organizing photo-ID and data collection training for whale watching operators, with the final goal of sharing the collected data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue testing the common procedure for data collection and assess the results achieved so far and the lessons learnt in the areas where the procedure is being tested</li> <li>Report of the WWWG to be presented at SC16</li> </ul>
Support the implementation of the HQWW certificate in the ACCOBAMS Area	High	Secretariat, Partners Parties Non-Party Range States, Scientific Committee SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting the implementation of the HQWW certificate by Parties and in areas -based management measures in collaboration with relevant projects/ organizations</li> <li>Organizing Trainings on HQWW (CB Parties)</li> <li>Liaising with relevant tourism Organizations</li> </ul>	

CA 2 e	Marine litter
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Expected outcomes	Improved monitoring of marine litter in relation with cetaceans.
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Proposed Action(s)	Priority	Action led by and in cooperation with	Means of implementation	Objectives to be achieved before SC16
Monitor the impacts of marine litter (ingested marine litter / microplastics / entanglements in ghost nets) on cetaceans	High	Scientific Committee Secretariat, Parties Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting pilot actions to implement the best practice guidelines for cetacean <i>post-mortem</i> investigation, including the assessment of ingested marine litter and entanglement in ghost nets</li> <li>• Promoting/ supporting/ liaising with projects, research activities in order to develop standardized methods to detect the occurrence and effects of marine litter, including micro-plastics, in cetacean species</li> <li>• Identifying hot-spot areas for marine litter accumulation and identifying threat to cetacean species occurring in those areas</li> <li>• Developing a proposal to use cetacean species as indicators of marine litter in the ACCOBAMS Area</li> <li>• Collaborating with relevant Organizations (ASCOBANS, IWC, MEDPOL, IMO, FAO) including through joint activities</li> <li>• Promoting campaigns on the ban of single-use plastics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the results of the pilot action carried out in Adriatic</li> <li>• Promote the development of standardized methods to detect the occurrence and effects of marine litter, including micro-plastics, in cetacean species</li> <li>• Proposal to use cetacean species as indicators of marine litter in the ACCOBAMS Area to be presented at SC16</li> </ul>

CA 2 f	Chemical & biological pollution
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Expected outcomes	Improved monitoring of chemical & biological pollution on cetaceans.
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Proposed Action(s)	Priority	Action led by and in cooperation with	Means of implementation	Objectives to be achieved before SC16
Monitor the impact of chemical & biological pollution (such as pathogens, invasive species) on cetaceans	Medium	Scientific Committee Secretariat, Parties Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing an inventory of institutions or laboratories within the ACCOBAMS Area able to analyze samples for legacy and emerging pollutants</li> <li>• Establishing a common database on diseases and chemical burdens</li> <li>• Assessing cumulative effects and multiple stressors, including chemicals, marine litter, climate change, and emerging pathogens, on cetaceans in ACCOBAMS Area</li> <li>• Disseminating the best practices to assess the impact of chemical pollution on cetaceans with a focus on emerging contaminants</li> <li>• Organize training on the best practices to assess the impact of chemical pollution</li> <li>• Collaborating with relevant Organizations, initiatives and projects</li> <li>• Encouraging Parties to follow existing protocols to minimize the introduction of pollutants in the marine environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the inventory of institutions or laboratories within the ACCOBAMS Area able to analyze samples for legacy and emerging pollutants</li> <li>• Advise on a common database on diseases and chemical burdens</li> <li>• Promote studies aimed at assessing cumulative effects and multiple stressors, including chemicals, marine litter, climate change, and emerging pathogens, on cetaceans in ACCOBAMS Area</li> <li>• Contribute to the dissemination of the best practices to assess the impact of chemical pollution on cetaceans with a focus on emerging contaminants</li> </ul>



CA 2 g	<b>Climate change</b>
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<b>Expected outcomes</b>	<b>ACCOBAMS cooperates with regional initiatives on climate change, taking into account cetacean conservation</b>
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Proposed Action(s)	Priority	Action led by and in cooperation with	Means of implementation	Objectives to be achieved before SC16
Contribute to regional initiatives on climate change	Medium	Scientific Committee Secretariat, Parties, Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaising with relevant CMS Working Group</li> <li>• Participating in Meetings and side events</li> </ul>	

CA 2 i	<b>Captivity related issues</b>
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<b>Expected outcomes</b>	<b>All specimens held in captivity in the ACCOBAMS Area are listed Advisory Committee on captivity issues and semi-enclosed facilities is operational</b>
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Proposed Action(s)	Priority	Action led by and in cooperation with	Means of implementation	Objectives to be achieved before SC16
Identify specimens held in captivity in the ACCOBAMS Area	High	Scientific Committee Parties Non-Party Range States, Secretariat Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing an ACCOBAMS Advisory Committee on semi-enclosed facilities that should provide guidance, based on best scientific evidence, to interested Parties on all the questions related to semi-enclosed facilities for cetaceans on the basis of the conclusion of the Follow-up Committee related to “interactions between humans and dolphins by resolution 3.13 (dolphin interaction programme</li> <li>• Updating the overview of specimens held in captivity in the ACCOBAMS Area in collaboration with international organizations (such as CITES)</li> <li>• Reinforcing collaboration with NFP / NGO/ ACCOBAMS Partners / CITES authorities in each country</li> <li>• Developing a template of genetic passport for different cetacean species kept in captivity, in collaboration with the ACCOBAMS Advisory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the update of the overview of specimens held in captivity in the ACCOBAMS Area</li> <li>• Develop a template of genetic passport for different cetacean species kept in captivity</li> <li>• Report of the ACCOBAMS Advisory Committee on semi-enclosed facilities to be presented at SC16</li> </ul>

			Committee on Captivity related issues	
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CA 3 a	Area-based measures for cetacean conservation
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Expected outcomes	<p>Cetacean Critical Habitats are updated</p> <p>IMMAs are updated and new ones are identified</p> <p>Implementation of relevant measures are initiated in some pilot Cetacean Critical Habitats</p>
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Proposed Action(s)	Priority	Action led by and in cooperation with	Means of implementation	Objectives to be achieved before SC16
Regularly update Cetacean Critical Habitats (CCH) and Important Marine mammal Areas (IMMAs), as appropriate, including by identifying priority areas for action to mitigate the known threats (bycatch...) / area-based management measures	Main	Scientific Committee Secretariat, Parties Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gathering data, in particular through the organization of regional workshops to update CCH, taking into account IMMAs and EBSAs process)</li> <li>Gathering data on human activities and cetaceans, in particular through the organization of regional workshops with relevant regional organization (GFCM, maritime organization...), taking into account the IMMAs and EBSAs process and upcoming regional study from Duke Marine Lab.</li> <li>Launching a working group in order to review the best metrics to use considering the CCH aim</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report on CCH updated</li> <li>Contribute to the CCH working group in order to review the best metrics to use considering the CCH aim</li> </ul>
Support implementation of relevant measures for adequate management in CCH	Main	Scientific Committee Secretariat, Parties Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying and promoting relevant management measures in pilot CCH, in collaboration with all stakeholders, including network of MPAs managers</li> <li>Raising Parties' awareness on CCHs, on their added value during online workshops, on the use of existing IMMAs to identify and to declare new MPAs or MPAs network</li> <li>Collaborating with other Organizations, such as UNEP-MAP/ SPA-RAC, BSC, IMO, IWC, and GFCM, and in particular through the Strategic alliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report on management measures implemented in pilot CCH</li> </ul>

CA 4 a	Information /Communication / Awareness about cetaceans
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Expected outcomes	All ACCOBAMS Bodies, national focal/contact points, Partners and other relevant national institutions, Organizations and experts are familiar with activities implemented by or relevant for ACCOBAMS and share accurately information General public and other relevant stakeholders are aware about cetaceans and need for their conservation through activities supported by or linked to ACCOBAMS
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Proposed Action(s)	Priority	Action led by and in cooperation with	Means of implementation	Objectives to be achieved before SC16
Maintain regular information/ communication about ongoing activities, cooperation and funding possibilities, cetacean conservation scientists and experts operating in the region and other relevant information; facilitate communication among cetacean conservation actors of the ACCOBAMS Area, in particular in Southern Mediterranean countries	Main	Secretariat Parties Scientific Committee Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementing the ACCOBAMS Communication Strategy, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- defining ACCOBAMS as brand</li> <li>- upgrading communication products</li> <li>- improving presence on social networks</li> <li>- assessing the effectiveness of the Communication Strategy</li> </ul> </li> <li>Development of NETCCOBAMS Platform (MA1a)</li> <li>Promoting the use of the HQWW label (CA2d)</li> <li>Linking conservation with culture (UNESCO/ Ocean decade) by initiating joint natural history exhibitions and offering expertise and knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress report on NETCCOBAMS (Task of the WG on NETCCOBAMS)</li> </ul>
Promote citizen sciences uses		Secretariat Parties Scientific Committee Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of initiatives and tools already in place / in order to mutualize efforts in particular at the level of young people</li> <li>Workshop on how to collect data and data exchanges through citizen apps (standardization of the protocols and methodology for data collection) in the context of proposed analytical techniques</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of “Citizen Science” initiatives and tools</li> </ul>
Introduce in a new Country / Disseminate the ACCOBAMS Teaching Module courses		Secretariat Parties Scientific Committee Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introducing new teaching module in universities dealing with cetacean conservation</li> <li>Translation of the Teaching Module on national languages of ACCOBAMS Parties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involvement of some SC members in the review of the Teaching Module</li> </ul>

Promote and disseminate project results and tools		Secretariat Parties Scientific Committee Non-Party Range States, Partners, SRCUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizing a Conference on cetacean conservation in South Mediterranean Countries - CSMC</li> <li>• Disseminating projects tools such as “whale risk”</li> <li>• Special ACCOBAMS issue in a scientific review</li> <li>• Encouraging publications of national experts in international journal with handbooks with simple and standardized methods and specific trainings and workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement of some SC members in the organization of the CSMS</li> </ul>
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