

ANNEX IX - TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE WORKING GROUP ON WHALE WATCHING

Background

A Working Group for the assessment, monitoring and data collection of cetacean watching activities in the ACCOBAMS area was established in 2014 during the Ninth Meeting of the Scientific Committee.

The Whale Watching Working Group was reactivated in 2020 and its Terms of Reference need to be updated in light of the activities of the ACCOBAMS Program of Work for 2023-2025 adopted at the 8th Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS (Resolution 8.2) related to Cetacean watching (CA2d).

These draft Terms of Reference were prepared by the Chair of the Working Group, with the support from the Secretariat, in collaboration with WG Members. They will be presented for review to the Fifteenth Meeting of the Scientific Committee in May 2023.

Mandate

With a view to assessing cetacean watching activities in the Agreement area and their potential adverse impacts on cetacean individuals and populations, the Whale Watching Working Group (WWWG) in cooperation with other experts and partners will:

- Revise the Guidelines for commercial cetacean-watching in the ACCOBAMS Area in view of their presentation at SC16 in 2024, in coordination with IWC whose General principles for Whale Watching are being revised;
- Support the work of the expert who will be tasked to analyze existing national legislations related to whale watching. The report of the study will be presented at SC16;
- Review the results of the study carried out in Portugal to define the whale watching 'carrying capacity' in a targeted geographical area where commercial whale watching is intensively practiced (Sado estuary);
- Continue testing the common procedure for data collection and assess the results achieved so far and lessons learnt in the areas where the procedure is being tested;
- Support the development of project proposal(s) aimed at strengthening the exchange and cooperation between tourism operators, policy makers and scientific institutions in order to assess the cetacean watching pressure on cetacean populations.

Composition (by alphabetical order):

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