

**REPORT OF THE INTERSESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE GROUP  
ON REVISION OF RECOMMENDATION 12.1 ON REGIONAL REPORTS**

**Issue: Revision of Recommendation 12.1 on Regional Reports**

**Background**

During the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (xx), the Chair raised the issue of the format of the regional reports. Some Scientific Committee members highlighted the need to review and update procedures and guidelines for the preparation of Regional Representatives reports, including the associated template, for consideration of the SC16 meeting.

An intersessional Correspondence Group on Revision of Recommendation 12.1 on Regional Reports was created with the aim to review and update the procedures and guidelines for the preparation of Regional Representatives reports, including the associated template, for consideration at SC16 meeting.

**SUMMARY OF THE WORK CARRIED OUT BY THE CORRESPONDENCE GROUP ON REVISION OF RECOMMENDATION 12.1 [REGIONAL REPORTS ON THE CONSERVATION STATUS OF CETACEANS AND RELEVANT ACTIVITIES]**

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In light of the discussions carried out at the SC14, the primary objective of the “Recommendation 12.1 Correspondence Group” was to review and update the procedures and guidelines for the preparation of the reports from Regional Representatives (RRs), including the associated template, for consideration at SC16 meeting.

The Correspondence Group (CG) reconsidered the two existing objectives of such reports (i.e. (1) to “*provide a report to the SC [Scientific Committee] on the conservation status of cetaceans*” and (2) on “*relevant activities*”). In particular, it was considered if the RRs wanted and could engage into the activity of providing a periodic report (e.g., triennial) to the SC “*on the conservation status of cetaceans*” rather than just compile a list of “*relevant activities*” twice within a triennium. If this was the case, it was noted that RRs would need to receive some instructions from the National Focal Points (NFPs) of the Contracting Parties (CP) on how “*conservation status of cetaceans*” should be defined in the ACCOBAMS context. The CG concluded that such reports would represent a challenging task to be achieved but, in principle, this would be an appropriate challenge for members of the ACCOBAMS SC. The CG also felt that simpler reports, such as ones listing ongoing activities, had little utility and high risk of duplicating National Reports submitted by Contracting Parties at the MOP.

The CG considered if some sort of “indices” could be identified and used as “proxies” of conservation status, at least to highlight whether the status of a population and/or species was improving, stagnating or deteriorating. For example, using semi-quantitative information on abundance, mortality, reproduction and newly identified threats or cessation of those.

When considering ways to achieve useful and streamlined reporting on relevant activities in the Agreement, the CG agreed that the SC needed to identify a formal and systematic process on how RRs gather the necessary information, so that the reports are informative, efficient and, most importantly do not duplicate, even partially, the National Reports submitted by NFPs. The formal and systematic process to prepare Regional Reports on useful and streamlined information on relevant activities in the Agreement should consider at least, the following points:

- i. WHAT: identify the necessary information to achieve given objectives (e.g., alert on important/unusual issues, provide news on ongoing activities or threats, or assess conservation status of species and populations).
- ii. HOW: identify ways to collate the necessary information (e.g., decide which “communication tools/protocols” and a temporal process to put in place, including considerations on: (a) the time

required to develop such reports; (b) the appropriateness of the reporting period in relation to the preparation of other relevant reports (e.g., National Reports, IUCN/ACCOBAMS Red List updates and any other major assessment by the Scientific Committee); (c) potential new/other ways to convey at least some of the information (e.g., ACCOBAMS website, NETCCOBAMS, ACCOBAMS newsletter digest, published papers digest); and (d) the role and contribution of Regional Representatives and of other members of the Scientific Committee to the preparation of these reports.

In terms of template for the *“Regional Reports on the conservation status of cetaceans and relevant activities”*, especially regarding the part on *“relevant activities”* the CG developed the attached proposal ([Annex 1](#)) largely based on the list of subsections of the ACCOBAMS work plan.

In regards to the need to avoid duplications or overlaps with National Reports ([Annex 2](#)), the CG **recommends** that the SC develops precise guidelines on aspects that should be considered in the Regional Reports (some preliminary guidance is included in the proposed template). To this end, the CG also **proposes** the drafting of a single triennial Report including all four ACCOBAMS regions, which would also ensure consistency and brevity.

The CG **recommends** that the Secretariat establishes a shared online reporting system including, inter alia, past National reports, past Regional reports, which would allow RRs to work on a shared report and avoid duplications.

The CG **recommends** devoting some time to agree on the *“data collection”* method (e.g., where will the data/information come from? Would data gathering be the responsibility of the RRs or NFPs that will provide the relevant ones to the RRs?).

Finally, regarding the RRs recommendation section, the CG **requests clarifications** on how these are used by both the SC and the NFPs and what their use implies (e.g., endorsement by the user). In fact, the initial section D.2 of the National Reports includes an item on *“Recommendations / suggestions for Improvement of the conservation from the regional report(s) of the scientific committee”*. In this context, the CG notes that perhaps the National Report needs some suggested revision by the SC (e.g., the list of species).

## ANNEX 1

**REPORT ON THE CONSERVATION STATUS OF CETACEANS AND RELEVANT ACTIVITIES**  
**IN [select your region: WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND ATLANTIC ADJACENT AREA or CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN**  
**or EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN or BLACK SEA]**

This report contains information on: <i>[check the correct boxes]</i>			
Western Mediterranean and Atlantic adjacent Area	Central Mediterranean	Eastern Mediterranean	Black Sea
Algeria	Albania	Cyprus	Bulgaria
Portugal	Croatia	Egypt	Georgia
Italy (western coast)	<i>[Bosnia-Herzegovina]</i>	Greece (south-eastern coast)	Romania
Monaco	Greece (western coast)	<i>[Israel]</i>	<i>[Russian Federation]</i>
Morocco	Italy (Adriatic and Ionian coasts and Sicily Channel)	Lebanon	Türkiye (BS coast)
Portugal	Libya Arab Jamahiriya	Syria	Ukraine
Spain	Malta	Türkiye (Mediterranean coast)	
Tunisia (northern coast)	Montenegro	<i>[Please note that cetaceans know no political boundaries: information from non-Contracting Parties is also welcome]</i>	
<i>[United Kingdom (Gibraltar)]</i>	Slovenia		
	Tunisia (eastern coast)		

**1. RATIONALE**

The aim of this report, drafted by the Regional Representatives (RR) of each ACCOBAMS region (the western, central and eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea), is to provide a regional update on cetacean research and monitoring activities, as well as on the most important and/or recent threats to cetacean conservation. Each report focuses on the past triennium and also includes recommendations on important research and conservation actions deemed necessary for the following triennium, to be submitted to the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee for its consideration.

*[RRs must check the latest report for their region to avoid duplications and fill the following sections]*

**2. DATE OF THE LAST UPDATE OF THE REPORT**

DD/MM/YY

**3. OVERVIEW OF MAIN SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES AND MAIN ISSUE(S) AND THREATS EMERGED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD IN THE REGION SINCE THE LAST REPORT**

*[RRs summarise **only new scientific information** on the following topic, including listing new papers under each relevant heading. RR's **should not list National projects** (this information is included in the National Reports). RR's are encouraged to get in contact with ACCOBAMS Task Managers and the Secretariat to get an update on relevant activities carried out in their regions.*

*For topics with no new information, RR's should simply write "No new information available".*

*RR's should summarise information by region, mentioning activities/issues relevant for single Countries at the beginning of the relevant paragraph (e.g., SPAIN: .....); however, RR's should make sure that this information was not already included in previous National Reports]*

**3.1 Cetacean abundance and distribution**

### **3.2 Population structure**

### **3.3 Monitoring cetacean status**

### **3.4 Functional stranding networks and responses to emergency situations**

### **3.5 Interactions with fisheries / aquaculture**

### **3.6 Anthropogenic underwater noise**

### **3.7 Ship strikes**

### **3.8 Cetacean watching**

### **3.9 Marine litter**

### **3.10 Chemical & biological pollution**

### **3.11 Climate change**

### **3.12 Captivity-related issues**

## **4. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

*[Based on the above information, RRs should identify the main high-priority recommendations to be submitted to the ACCOBAMS SC for its consideration.]*

*The text of recommendation needs to be SMART:*

***Specific:** the recommendation clearly states **what** should be done and **who** is supposed to do it.*

***Measurable:** the recommendation includes how the progress on the action will be measured.*

***Achievable:** the recommendation is realistic and implementable.*

***Relevant:** the recommendation is in line with ACCOBAMS strategic plan, ACCOBAMS work Programme or linked to an urgent emerging issue.*

***Time-bound:** the recommendation has a specific timeline for completion (preferably within the upcoming triennium.)*

**ANNEX 2**  
**FORMAT OF NATIONAL REPORTS 2020 - 2022**

**Name of country:**

**NATIONAL FOCAL POINT, NATIONAL REPORTS, MAIN ISSUES AND NEEDS**

A. Focal Point details

**Name and Surname:**

**Email:**

**Tel:**

**Address:**

B. List the successive national focal points (NFP) and period covered

C. Date of submission of national reports (list the years when report was provided):

D. Specific questions and requests to be considered by the Secretariat, the Bureau, the Follow up Committee, the Scientific Committee or during the next MOP. Major issue(s), specific needs or "hot" topics: please provide details on emerging issues, threats or difficulties encountered and indicate what should be implemented to answer of fix the points raised.

1/ Specific issues and requests to be considered by the Secretariat, the Bureau, the Follow-up Committee, the Scientific Committee or at the next meeting of the Parties:

2/ Recommendations / suggestions for Improvement of the conservation from the regional report(s) of the scientific committee

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3/ Major issue(s) or main threats or "hot" topics:

(1/2 page, max 1 page):

(Subjects that is/was important for cetaceans in the region, and probably need that the Scientific Committee take into account and address. Example of subjects: Exceptional high level of strandings, or high seismic activities planned, or new high-speed ferries operating in the region raising the threat of ship-strikes, etc.)

**SECTION 1 - MANAGEMENT OF THE AGREEMENT**

1.1. *Dates when signed (S), ratified (R), accepted (AC), approved (AP) or joined (J) the ACCOBAMS and competent authority.*

1.2. *Reservations expressed in accordance with Article XV or Article X of the Agreement*

1.3. *Date of acceptance, signature, ratification of amendment(s); if under process, please indicate the competent authority, the procedure and the steps taken.*

- Amendment to Annex 2 of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Adjacent Atlantic Area on the use of driftnets

Date entry into force:

Transposition at National Level:

- Extension of the geographical area of ACCOBAMS

Ratification status:

Competent authority:

1.4. *Dispensations allowed in accordance with Art. II, par. 2 of the Agreement and par. 6 of Annex 2*

1.5. *Definition of the marine areas under national jurisdiction included in the Agreement's field of application. Please indicate if negotiations are under way for limits with neighbouring countries.*

*For information, an unofficial map of the extension of the maritime domain of the country is available on the following site: [www.marineregions.org](http://www.marineregions.org)*

1.6. *List the entities with competence, responsibility or interest for cetaceans conservation. Please review and complete the list provided and describe their activities. Please precise the information/communication/coordination mechanisms with other national entities.*

- Intergovernmental Organizations:

- National authorities / administrations:

- Non Governmental Organizations:

- Research Institutes / Universities:

- Rescue centers:

- Dolphinaria:

- Whale-watching operators:

- Others:

### 1.7. Main national legislative and regulatory texts pertinent to cetaceans

*Texts may concern environment (protected species or areas, biodiversity and pollution), fisheries, maritime transport (collision), tourism, energy, pollution, environmental impact assessment or other topics as far as they can concern cetaceans. Provide date, title, responsible authority and link. Add a short description or quote the relevant articles or sections related to cetaceans*

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### 1.8. Funds earmarked for research, monitoring and management of cetaceans (including national funding, international, regional or sub regional projects)

### 1.9. Relevant International or Regional Conventions, Commissions and Agreements to which the country is Party.

Convention/Agreement	Signature	Ratification	Acceptance	Entry into force	Comments
Agreement on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks(1995)					
Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS)					
Annex V concerning the protection and conservation of ecosystems and Biological Diversity of the Maritime Area (OSPAR Convention)					
Barcelona Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean sea against pollution (1976)					
Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (Barcelona, 1995)					
Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio, 1992)					
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES - Washington, 1973)					
Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne, 1979)					
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn, 1979)					
Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Bucharest					



Convention)					
General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean					
International Commission for Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean					
International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (Washington, 1946)					
OSPAR Convention for the protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic					
United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Montego Bay, 1982)					
Commission Internationale pour l'Exploration Scientifique de la Méditerranée CIESM					

1.10. Bilateral or multilateral fishing agreements with regard to the area of the Agreement (such as GFCM, ICCAT, specific fisheries agreements with the European Union, provide relevant information on the date of signature, duration, area concerned, measures)

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## SECTION 2: CONSERVATION ACTIONS FOR CETACEANS

### 2.1: RESEARCH AND MONITORING

2.1. List of cetaceans reported in the area under the jurisdiction of the country included in the distribution area (as defined in Article I, paragraph 3 f of the Agreement).

Legend: "C": Common, "R": Rare, "O": Occasional

Scientific name	English name	C	R	O	Comments
<b>PHOCOENIDAE</b>					
<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>	Harbour porpoise				
<b>DELPHINIDAE</b>					
<i>Steno bredanensis</i>	Rough-toothed dolphin				
<i>Grampus griseus</i>	Risso's dolphin				
<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	Bottlenose dolphin				
<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>	Striped dolphin				
<i>Delphinus delphis</i>	Short-beaked common dolphin				
<i>Pseudorca crassidens</i>	False killer whale				
<i>Orcinus orca</i>	Killer whale				
<i>Globicephala melas</i>	Long-finned pilot whale				
<b>ZIPHIIDAE</b>					
<i>Mesoplodon densirostris</i>	Blainville's beaked whale				
<i>Ziphius cavirostris</i>	Cuvier's beaked whale				
<b>PHYSETERIDAE</b>					
<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>	Sperm whale				
<b>KOGIIDAE</b>					
<i>Kogia simus</i>	Dwarf sperm whale				

BALAENIDAE					
<i>Eubalaena glacialis</i>	Northern right whale				
BALAENOPTERIDAE					
<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>	Minke whale				
<i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>	Sei whale				
<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>	Fin whale				
<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	Humpback whale				

2.2. List and description of **research programs** and **research projects** related to cetaceans taking into account national, bi-lateral and multi-lateral activities,

Please provide information on programs and projects regarding cetacean conservation (name of the project, contact details and short description).

Please list the projects regarding improvement of knowledge about status of cetaceans (Cetacean population estimates and distribution, Population Structure, Monitoring cetacean's status, Functional stranding networks and responses to emergency situation, etc.)

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Please list the projects regarding reduction of human pressures on cetaceans (Interactions with fisheries / aquaculture, Anthropogenic underwater noise, Ship strikes, Cetacean watching, Marine debris, Chemical & biological pollution, Climate change, Captivity related issues)

Please list the projects regarding conservation of cetaceans habitats

Please list the projects on public awareness about cetaceans (Information / Communication / Awareness about cetaceans)

Please list any other relevant projects

### 2.3. Cetacean stranding

Does the country have a stranding network?

If not, please precise why? If yes, please provide name, contacts and link to database.

Are you transmitting data to MEDACES database?

### 2.4. Red List of cetaceans at the national or regional level using the IUCN Red List methodology.

Has your country developed or participated in the evaluation of the cetaceans in your national waters or at the regional level? If yes please describe and provide a summary of the results or links to reports and publications. If the use of the IUCN Red List methodology is required by Law, please quote the legal text or relevant articles.

2.5. Existence or preparation of **conservation management plan** for cetacean species. Please provide any relevant information.

## 2.2: MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR THE CONSERVATION OF CETACEANS

Please list all management / conservation measures introduced to attain and maintain a favourable state of conservation to cetaceans, and reduce the potential threats, in accordance with ACCOBAMS Resolutions.

2.2.1. **Interaction with fisheries.** Please provide information on existing or potential interaction between fisheries and cetaceans or cetaceans and fisheries (text and/or table). Particularly, the interactions between the following techniques: gill-nets, purse seine nets, drift nets, surface long-lines or others could be documented, indicating the species and number of animals by-caught or depredating in the nets and indicating the existing or planned management measures.

2.2.2. **Navigation regulations and ship strikes**

2.2.3. **Anthropogenic noise** (such as exploration/exploitation of mineral resources or military exercises) and Environmental Impact Assessment procedures (EIA)

2.2.4. **Whale watching** and other commercial tourism activities

2.2.5. **Marine pollution, including marine debris**

2.2.6. **Emergency plans for pollution, strandings and rescue centres**

2.2.7. **Captivity related issues and Dolphinarium**

2.2.8. **Marine protected areas (MPA), fishery zones, fisheries reserves, or other effective area based conservation measures (OECM-CBD).** List and indicate if they are relevant or develop activities for conservation and management of cetaceans.

2.2.9. **Others, please specify**

## 2.3: COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS ON THE CONSERVATION OF CETACEANS

Please list all relevant communication and awareness activities

2.3.1. *Main events (meeting, symposium, awareness activities, etc.) organized or planned in the Country.*

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2.3.2. *Main events (meeting, symposium, awareness activities, etc.) attended by national abroad*

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2.3.3. *Main Products (newsletter, brochure, leaflet, poster, video, sticker, etc.)*

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## **2.4: CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE CONSERVATION OF CETACEANS**

*Please list all relevant capacity building activities*

2.4.1. *National needs in terms of capacity building, in reference to the ACCOBAMS strategy and programme of work*

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2.4.2. *Training / workshop sessions realised (national and international) or planned*

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2.4.3. *Lectures, syllabus on cetaceans (universities, schools)*

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