

PROGRESS REPORT SHIPRINT PROJECT



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1. INTRODUCTION

The ShiPrint project is rooted in the policy framework established by the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee's adoption of Resolution MEPC.380(80) in July 2023, which designated the Northwestern Mediterranean Sea as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) at the initiative of four ACCOBAMS countries: Spain, France, Italy, and Monaco.

This joint initiative began on 1 January 2025 and is expected to conclude on 31 March 2026. It is funded by the 'Initiative Pelagos' and led by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, in collaboration with OceanCare and We Are Méditerranée. Its primary aim is to support the implementation of the adopted Associated Protective Measures (APMs) within the Northwestern Mediterranean PSSA by providing the adjacent coastal states with technical solutions and awareness-raising tools.

The ShiPrint project is structured around 4 major components:

1. The **achievement of a new module in the NETCCOBAMS platform** that will enable relevant countries to track all AIS-equipped vessels in the area. This will allow further developing the existing prototype and reach the first milestone for assessing the implementation of ship speed recommendation in the PSSA. Furthermore, such achievement will enable the integration of GHG emissions in the same module and to further improve the underwater noise assessment functions in order to prepare the integration of these into the new module.
2. A **series of four in-person workshops** with prior online training courses will be organised targeting different vessel categories (and shipping companies, including interest groups), as well as relevant national and port authorities in order to exchange information and assist them in better understanding environmental impacts posed by the sector on marine biodiversity, in the PSSA, and in order to actively involve stakeholders in reducing the risk of collision with fin and sperm whales in the PSSA. The planned four in-person workshops will be hosted by the three States signatory to the Multilateral Agreement establishing the Pelagos Sanctuary.
3. A **photo-exhibition held in parallel to the Third United Nations Ocean Conference** will contribute to raise awareness to cetacean conservation and marine life in the Pelagos Sanctuary, and to the need to deploy conservation efforts.
4. **Guidelines with advice on a whale-safe certificate** will be elaborated in order to be proposed for adoption by ACCOBAMS Parties.

2. ACHIEVED PROGRESS

Regarding the development of a new module in the NETCCOBAMS platform

A **VisiZone module of NETCCOBAMS** (currently accessible as a Proof of Concept – PoC - from the platform) has been developed as part of the project. The PoC includes a map to show all AIS-equipped vessels in a user defined area, updated every 15 minutes, and information related to single vessels present in the area (latest received GPS position, speed, flag, destination, etc.) that appear after clicking on them directly in the map. The current version of VisiZone also includes a function to set a speed threshold to flag all vessels that are above the limit. The updated version, expected to be up and running in October 2025, will include a page to visualize statistics over a period about ship traffic, especially related to navigation speed. The user will be able to select a period, and the platform will generate the statistics for that period, allowing comparison and trend analyses about navigation speed and further ship traffic statistics in the designed area. The area where these functionalities will be available is the Pelagos Sanctuary, which is the focus of the ShiPrint project, and the period for the visualization of the statistics starts from January 2023. The new version stores new AIS data every day and once a year will update the statistics. At the date of release (October 2025), the VisiZone module will show statistics for 2023 and 2024, downloadable as report as well as editable data, allowing the comparison before and after the entry into force of the PSSA.

Regarding the ShiPrint workshop series

Two workshops have been held as part of the ShiPrint project:

- The **first workshop, Safeguarding Whales in the Northwestern Mediterranean PSSA, dedicated to the Cargo Shipping Sector took place on 14 March 2025 in Marseille, France**. It was organized by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat in collaboration with OceanCare, Sinay, and We Are Méditerranée. The event brought together around 30 participants both online and in person, including key stakeholders of the cargo shipping sector, but also representatives from a Range State, the Pelagos Scientific Committee, classification societies, scientists, and conservation organizations, with the objective to discuss strategies for reducing the environmental footprint of the Cargo Shipping sector and mitigating the risks of collisions with endangered whales.
- The **second workshop, Collaborative Knowledge Sharing for Cetaceans' Protection in the Northwestern Mediterranean PSSA, dedicated to the Passenger and Cruise Shipping Sector, took place on 2 October 2025 in Genoa, Italy**. It was organized by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat in collaboration with OceanCare, Sinay, and the Conceptu Maris Project. The event brought together around 30 participants both online and in person with the objective of aligning expertise to enhance the implementation and effectiveness of Associated Protective Measures (APMs) in the NW Mediterranean PSSA and to discuss strategies to reduce environmental pressures from passenger and cruise traffic in the PSSA.

Regarding the photo-exhibit

In parallel with the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) held in Nice and as part of the ShiPrint Project, the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, in collaboration with the association *We Are Méditerranée* and the *Fédération des Groupements Français de Monaco*, organized a photography exhibition entitled "**Méditerranée sauvage: cétacés en images, protection en action**".

Hosted at *la Maison de France* in Monaco from 2 to 13 June 2025, the exhibition featured the work of photographer Greg Lecoœur. Through a compelling series of images, the exhibition highlighted the beauty and vulnerability of Mediterranean cetaceans, raising awareness about the threats they face and the urgent need for marine conservation.

Regarding Guidelines with advice on a whale-safe certificate

The ACCOBAMS Secretariat has been undertaking work in collaboration with “Consortium Pelagos” project with the objective to collaborate with Green Marine Europe to jointly propose, along with the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee, best practices that could be used to identify “best practitioners”, meaning vessels identified through the NETCCOBAMS platform that follow the established best practices, in order to reward them for reducing the impact of their activities on cetaceans.

In this context, Draft Resolution 9.17 on Vessel Strikes will be discussed during Ninth Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS (Cyprus, 18-21 November 2025); [ACCOBAMS-MOP9/2025/DraftRes9.17].

The aforementioned Resolution “asks the Chair of the Scientific Committee to cooperate with the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Pelagos Agreement to create a joint Ship Strikes Working Group with agreed Terms of Reference, including the review of the progress on the development of a reward for “best practitioners” (Whale safe certificate) given to identified vessels who follow ACCOBAMS’ best practices to be initially tested in the North-Western Mediterranean Particularly Sensitive Sea Area” thereby contributing to advance the fourth objective of the ShiPrint Project.

3. FUTURE EFFORTS FOR THE PERIOD 2026 - 2028

Regarding the development of NETCCOBAMS Platform, efforts will involve:

- Collaborating with the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to populate the online data-base;
- Contributing to the assessment of the Associated Protective Measures (APM) of the PSSA and to the evaluation, through NETCCOBAMS, of the compliance by vessels;
- Collect telemetry data through bio-logging, to overlap whales’ movements and AIS data to assess Close Point of Approach (CPA) and suggest appropriate mitigation measures.
- Enhance the use of place-based conservation effort, such as IMMAs, to identify high-risk areas with vessels and cetaceans overlap.

Regarding the development of a reward for “best practitioners” (Whale safe certificate), efforts will involve:

- Liaising with the Pelagos Agreement and the relevant working group on impacts;
- Liaising with “Consortium Pelagos” project;
- Pursuing the development, a whale-safe certificate, taking note on similar ongoing activities in the U.S. (e.g., Stellwagen Bank National Park), or the European level, such as the Green Marine Europe (GME) label, to encourage shipping companies who are part of the GME programme to apply the 10 to 13 knots speed reduction.

Throughout the duration of the project, the ACCOBAMS Secretariat will continue to participate to ongoing effort in the Agreement area to mitigate the risk of vessel strike (e.g., Life SeaDetect project, Life Conceptu Maris project).