

REPORT OF THE ACCOBAMS FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE



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The ACCOBAMS Follow-up Committee was created by the ACCOBAMS Parties at MOP5 through the adoption of the Resolution 5.4.

1. COMPOSITION

For the 2023- 2025 period, the composition of the ACCOBAMS Follow-up Committee was the following:

Members elected by Parties :

Gaby KHALAF CNRS Lebanon Senior Consultant National Centre for Marine Sciences 189 Jounieh - Lebanon Tel: +961 330 3969 bihar@cnrs.edu.lb	Full term: 2023- 2028
Bayram OZTÜRK Turkish Marine Research Foundation President P.K. 10 34825 Beykoz Istanbul - Türkiye Tel: +90 216 424 0772 tudav@tudav.org	Full term: 2023- 2028
Imane TAI Institut National de Recherche Halieutique Boulevard Sidi Abderrahmane, 2 Aïn Diab, 20180 Casablanca - Morocco Tel: +212 672 827 416 taiimane.it@gmail.com	Full term: 2020- 2025
Sarah CHENITI Inspectrice Ministère de la Pêche et des Productions Halieutiques Rue des quatre canons 16 000 Alger - Algérie aqua200271@gmail.com	Alternate

Members elected by ACCOBAMS Partners:

Aurélie MOULINS CIMA Foundation Via Magliotto, 2 17100 Savona - Italy Tel : +39 019 230271 aurelie.moulins@cimafoundation.org	Full term : 2020- 2025
Romulus-Marian PAIU Mare Nostrum NGO Executive director Tomis Blvd. n°215, 900647 Constanta - Romania Tel: +40 720258785 romulus.marian@gmail.com	Full term : 2023- 2028
Dimitar POPOV Project Coordinator GREEN BALKANS NGO 1, Skopje str., office 10 Plovdiv 4004 - Bulgaria Tel: +359 (0) 32 626 977 dpopov@greenbalkans.org	Alternate

2. OVERVIEW OF THE MEETING AND PARTICIPANTS

The Fourth Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Follow-up Committee was held in Nice, France, on 2–3 September 2025.

The Committee was composed of four members, with two members absent.

Also present were the Chair of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee, representatives from two NGOs, and representatives from three Observing Parties: Algeria, Cyprus, and Malta.

The ACCOBAMS Secretariat was represented by Ms. Maylis Salivas (Executive Secretary), Ms. Camille Montiglio, Ms. Salomé Calley, and Mr. Tullio Scovazzi (Legal Advisor).

3. MAIN ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN**1. Adoption of the Agenda and Confidentiality Agreement**

At the opening of the meeting, the Committee reaffirmed its commitment to impartiality and integrity, in line with the principles governing the Follow-up Procedure. It was confirmed that all members present had already submitted their signed confidentiality undertakings and declarations of impartiality prior to the meeting.

Following this confirmation, the agenda was formally adopted. In addition to the scheduled items, the Committee agreed to include a dedicated discussion on proposed amendments to the Follow-up Procedure, with the aim of enhancing its clarity, efficiency, and effectiveness in future sessions.

2. Consideration of a New Submission (Spain)

The Committee examined a new submission by OceanCare, concerning Spain's failure to update the national conservation status of the sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) and the fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*) in the Mediterranean.

Although these two species are listed as *Endangered* on the IUCN Red List and recognized as such by ACCOBAMS Resolution 8.12, they remain categorized as *Vulnerable* under Spanish national legislation.

Spain was unable to attend the meeting due to internal institutional workload but provided a written response dated 11 April 2025, expressing openness to dialogue and readiness to provide further clarifications on its review process.

After reviewing the case, the Committee noted the admissibility of the submission and adopted by consensus Recommendation FC4.1, presented in Annex 3 of the official report.

Summary of the recommendation:

- Spain should clarify the procedure and timeline for updating its national Red List to align with the IUCN and ACCOBAMS standards.
- All Parties should be reminded of their obligation to harmonize national conservation statuses with international assessments to ensure coherence across the ACCOBAMS area.
- The Secretariat was tasked with collecting similar information from all Parties to monitor consistency in species classification.

3. Follow-up on Previous Submissions

The Committee reviewed the follow-up of two ongoing cases submitted by OceanCare in 2016:

- a) ***Military activities around South-East Crete (Greece)***
- b) ***Failure by several Parties to implement the ACCOBAMS Conservation Plan for Mediterranean Common Dolphins.***

Given their interconnected nature and shared themes, the Committee decided to examine both cases jointly.

a) ***Military activities around South-East Crete (Greece)***

Despite multiple invitations and resolutions (notably Resolution 8.8.B), no new information has been received from Greece regarding the implementation of ACCOBAMS guidelines to address underwater noise since 2014.

The Committee reiterated the importance of transparency and cooperation, emphasizing that all Parties have a duty to collaborate in good faith with the Follow-up Procedure.

Recommendation FC4.2:

- Greece should provide updated information on the implementation of the noise mitigation guidelines (Resolutions 4.17 and 7.13).
 - The Committee will remain seized of the matter until adequate information is submitted.
- b) *Failure by several Parties to implement the ACCOBAMS Conservation Plan for Mediterranean Common Dolphins***
- The second follow-up concerned the lack of implementation of Resolution 4.13 by 17 Parties.
 - Despite several reminders, only 4 countries (Cyprus, Malta, Morocco and Spain) responded and with varying degrees of completeness. 14 Parties have yet to submit any information.

Recommendation FC4.2 (Part II):

- The format of the National Reports should be amended to include a specific section on cooperation with the Follow-up Committee.
- The Parties concerned are urged to provide the missing information without further delay.

4. Update on Implementation Issues as Requested by MOPs

a) Seismic and Military Activities Producing Underwater Noise

The Committee reviewed progress on the implementation of existing obligations related to underwater noise (Resolutions 6.17, 6.18, 7.13, and 8.17).

Key achievements include:

- The establishment of the ACCOBAMS Emergency Task Force for Stranding Events (AETFS).
- The organization of the Joint ACCOBAMS–ASCOBANS Workshop with Navies (Toulon, November 2024), which strengthened collaboration between military and scientific actors.
- The continued development of the Noise Register and passive acoustic monitoring initiatives.

Parties were encouraged to:

- Engage actively with the AETFS and report atypical strandings promptly;
- Avoid or minimize noise-generating activities in sensitive areas (e.g., IMMAs, SPAMIs);
- Share seismic activity data via the Noise Register;
- Employ certified MMO/PAM operators for all offshore industrial activities.

b) Interactions Between Humans and Dolphins (Resolution 3.13)

The Committee acknowledged the progress made through the creation of the ACCOBAMS Advisory Committee on Semi-Enclosed Facilities and endorsed the draft Resolution 9.19 on Semi-Captivity (Passport and Guidelines) for adoption at MOP9.

Further recommendations were made to:

- Assess the scale of human–dolphin interactions in the wild;
- Gather national legislation data regarding these interactions;
- Continue monitoring implementation of Resolution 3.13

5. Other Business

Under this agenda item, the Committee examined in detail the proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Follow-up Committee, as referenced in Resolution 6.8 and presented in Annex 7 of the meeting documentation.

The Legal Advisor, Professor Tullio Scovazzi, provided an in-depth explanation of the background and rationale for these proposed amendments. He recalled that, since the adoption of the current Rules of Procedure, several meetings of the Committee had highlighted the need for minor adjustments to improve clarity, efficiency, and internal consistency, without modifying the substance or the spirit of the Follow-up Procedure itself.

The proposed revisions aimed primarily to:

- clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Committee members and observers, particularly regarding participation rights and confidentiality obligations;
- streamline the submission and admissibility process, ensuring that communications from non-governmental organizations or third parties are processed in a transparent and timely manner;
- refine the reporting and recommendation framework, notably by standardizing how the Committee's conclusions are presented to the Meeting of the Parties;
- and ensure better alignment between the Follow-up Committee's Rules of Procedure and the overall governance framework of ACCOBAMS.

Following this discussion, and in the absence of any objection, the Committee approved the Draft Resolution by consensus, as presented. It was agreed that the Secretariat would transmit the document to the Bureau, with a request for its inclusion in the provisional agenda of the Ninth Meeting of the Parties (MOP9) for formal consideration and adoption.