

CALL FOR TENDERS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE QUIETMED PROJECT

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Underwater noise is considered as a major threat to cetacean conservation and mitigating the impacts of noise on cetaceans is thus considered as one of the highest priority by ACCOBAMS. Monitoring all activities in the region including noise component and mapping and developing the monitoring of sea ambient noise, particularly in critical habitats, is recognized as of high priority for achieving the ACCOBAMS objectives - specific objectives B.2.3.2 and B.2.3.3 of the ACCOBAMS Strategy for the period 2014-2025 - and even if the institutional and legal frameworks are in place, lack of information and data in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, like in other parts of the world, is the key issue to assess underwater noise and to reduce its impact on marine biodiversity, in particular on cetaceans.

Monitoring underwater noise is a component of the regional policies related to the monitoring of marine environment, in particular within the framework of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), as well as its complementary process at the Mediterranean level within the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) process led by the Barcelona Convention (UNEP/MAP). Strengthening synergies with these processes is critical to harmonize and coordinate approaches and to not duplicate efforts.

Several important achievement have been made in the recent years with the support of the Joint CMS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Noise Working Group, and important milestones have been reached through specific activities such as the identification of the noise hot spots, the elaboration of the basin-wide strategy for underwater noise monitoring in the Mediterranean and the development of the Mediterranean Noise Register Demonstrator. In addition, the ACCOBAMS Secretariat has been closely collaborating with UNEP/MAP for developing noise related indicators within the EcAp process during the 2014-2016 triennium¹.

To pursue these efforts, the ACCOBAMS Secretariat is taking part in a regional project – the QUIETMED project - coordinated by CTN- Marine Technology Center (www.ctnaval.com) and funded by the European Commission.

The QUIETMED project - “Joint programme on noise (D11) for the implementation of the Second Cycle of the MSFD in the Mediterranean Sea” – is aimed at enhancing cooperation among Member States in the Mediterranean Sea Basin to implement the Second Cycle of the Marine Directive and in particular to assist them in the preparation of their MSFD reports by 2018, in particular as regards Descriptor 11 on underwater noise. It will also contribute to address underwater noise monitoring gaps in the Mediterranean improving coherence and adequacy of MSFD implementation. The project has started on 1 January 2017 and will be finalized on December 2018.

¹ The Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme adopted in February 2016 by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention includes two candidate common indicators on noise , “with the intention for these candidate common indicators to be further developed, based on pilot monitoring activities, additional expert knowledge, and scientific developments”.

Common approaches to the determination of the Good Environmental Status (GES) and the definition of thresholds, guidance on methodologies and policy recommendations for the review of the national assessment and the environmental targets and a regional joint register on impulsive noise will be set.

Its specific objectives could be summarized as follow:

- Develop a common approach to the definition of threshold at MED level (in link with TG Noise future work and revised decision requirements) and impact indicators.
- Coordinate with the Regional Sea Convention (the Barcelona Convention) to ensure the consistency of the project with the implementation of the EcAp process
- Promote and facilitate the coordination of underwater noise monitoring at the Mediterranean Sea level with third countries of the region (MSFD Article 6), in particular through building capacities of non-EU Countries and taking advantage of the ACCOBAMS-UNEP/MAP cooperation related to the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach Process (EcAp process) on underwater noise monitoring.
- Recommend methodology for assessments of noise indicators in the Mediterranean Sea basin taking into account the criteria and methodological standards defined for Descriptor11 (Decision 2010/477/EU, its revision and Monitoring Guidelines of TG Noise).
- Establish guidelines on how to perform sensor calibration and mooring to avoid or reduce any possible mistakes for monitoring ambient noise (D 11.2.1). These common recommendations should allow traceability in case the sensor give unexpected results and help to obtain high quality and comparable data.
- Establish guidelines on the best signal processing algorithms for the preprocessing of the data and for obtaining the ambient noise indicators (D 11.2.1).
- Implement a Joint register of impulsive noise (D11.1.1) and hotspot map at Mediterranean Sea Region level by impulsive noise national data gathering and joint processing.
- Enhance collaboration among a wide network of stakeholders through the dissemination of the project results, knowledge share and networking.

This project is coordinated by CTN- Marine Technology Center (www.ctnaval.com) from Spain and it includes, in addition to the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, 8 national partners from Mediterranean EU Member States appointed by their respective National Authorities to support the implementation of the MSFD as regard noise monitoring:

- IEO - Spanish Institute of Oceanography, Spain
- UPV - Polytechnic University of Valencia, Spain
- SHOM - Naval Hydrographic and Oceanographic Service, France
- ISPRA - National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research, Italy
- IZVRS - Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia, Slovenia
- University of Malta, Malta
- IOF - Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries, Croatia
- FORTH - Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas, Greece

Within this project, the contribution of the ACCOBAMS Secretariat is to support regional coordination in particular with non EU-Countries and with UNEP/MAP, to contribute to the development of the methodological guidance documents, to implement some pilot activities for mapping/modelling ambient noise, to implement the regional noise register and to conduct capacity-building activities through the organization of training workshops for representatives and experts from non-EU countries.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL, REQUESTED TASKS AND AVAILABLE BUDGET

In order to support the implementation of the activities of QUIETMED project, the ACCOBAMS Secretariat is looking for technical assistance for the tasks described in the table below.

The total workload is estimated to around 20 man-months distributed over the implementation period of the project. The maximum available budget for the requested tasks is **49.000,00 Euros**.

Description of the activity	Leader	Requested tasks and expected outputs	Timetable <i>(as provided by the project document)</i>	Available budget <i>(as provided by the project document)</i>
<p>Activity 2 - Extensively review the national 2012 assessment (MSFD, Article 8) of Descriptor 11- Underwater Noise and develop recommendations to MS to update it in a consistent manner taking into account the regional approach</p> <p><i>This activity is aimed at comparing the state of the art at national levels as regards GES definition and first cycle implementation of the D11 descriptor. Convergence and divergence points (geographic scales, thresholds, tools, data...) will be identified and discussed. This general exchange of knowledge between the consortium members will enable the assessment of lessons learned of the first cycle including available best practices.</i></p>	SHOM	Providing inputs during the preparation of the assessment report and to review the assessment report	1 st Semester 2017	2 000 Euros
<p>Activity 3 - Common understanding and GES assessment methodology (both impulsive and continuous noise)</p> <p><i>This activity will enable to identify the convergence and divergence of national 2012 approaches. The purpose of the current activity is to build a share vision of the GES definition and achievement in each member state. Such a share vision will enable to draw a common understanding of GES definition and assessment methods. A common understanding does not mean a unique understanding but rather a framework which ensure that each member states can account for national or subregional specificities without leading to any contradictory or incoherent assessment in particular between transboundary regions.</i></p>	ACCOBAMS	<p>Preparing a reference document outlining the common understanding of GES and the assessment methodology</p> <p><u>Expected output:</u> Report on common understanding and GES assessment methodology</p>	April 2017 – March 2018	3 000 Euros

<i>This activity will also take profit of the work carried on at the european level by through the participation of several members of the consortium to TG Noise meeting and reports.</i>		(both impulsive and continuous noise)		
<p>Activity 4 - Perspectives on the definition of threshold at Mediterranean</p> <p><i>Within this activity these tasks will be done: firstly the scientific works undertaken in the Mediterranean so far (by ACCOBAMS, by Countries alone, in the PELAGOS Sanctuary, etc.) relevant for the definition of thresholds will be reviewed. Then pros and cons of different types of possible thresholds will be identified. Finally the applicability of an impact indicator in the Mediterranean Sea Region will be discussed.</i></p>	ISPRA	Contributing to the definition of threshold	April 2017 – March 2018	2 000 Euros
<p>Activity 5 - Methodology for monitoring of underwater noise in the Mediterranean Sea</p> <p><i>The aim of this activity is to identify the present state of the art of underwater noise monitoring methodologies worldwide, as well as in each partner MS, asses methodology suitability and recommend most suitable ones to the partner MS. This activity is necessary to be aware of the best/successful practices already implemented, to critically exchange knowledge and experience and to gain common understanding of peculiar characteristics in different environment and the monitoring methodology required for each case.</i></p>	IOF/ISPRA	Contributing to the preparation of the guidance document on the monitoring methodology	April 2017 – October 2018	2 000 Euros
<p>Activity 6 - Standards and joint recommendations for hardware calibration and signal processing</p> <p><i>The aim of this activity is to establish guidelines on how to perform hardware calibration and signal processing in order to avoid or reduce any possible mistakes and to achieve comparable recordings and noise indicators with different devices.</i></p>	UPV	Contributing to the preparation of the guidance document related to the hardware calibration and signal processing	April 2017 – October 2018	4 000 Euros
<p>Activity 7 - Pilot projects of underwater noise monitoring</p> <p><i>The aim of this activity is to perform pilot projects of ambient noise monitoring, including measurements and modelling/mapping to validate the monitoring schemes and methodologies of Activity 6.</i></p>	University of Malta	Developing and coordinating the modelling/mapping part of the pilot project in Malta	Sept. 2017 – Aug. 2018	7 500 Euros

<p>Activity 8 - Preparatory study for the development of the common register for impulsive noise</p> <p><i>This study is aimed at discussing the design of the common register of impulsive noise to gather information about the pressure on the marine environment caused by the introduction of this type of energy from maritime economic activities, to support the implementation of the D11.1.1 indicator “distribution in time and place, of loud, low and mid frequency impulsive sounds”. The joint register will be based on the characteristics of the demonstrator currently under development, and at ensuring its long-term sustainability at the end of the project. Means required for managing the register and processing the data on the long term will be assessed. Needs and requirements of Member States will be assessed, as well as of third countries Parties to the Barcelona Convention. A link with other marine regions has already been established by ACCOBAMS with the ICES, as they developed the noise register for the OSPAR and HELCOM regions). This was done to ensure consistency and compatibility and to avoid duplication of reporting efforts for the Member States concerned by both the North-east Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea marine regions. Further particular attention will be given to ensure appropriate integration of MSFD noise monitoring with the monitoring requirements of the EcAp process under the Barcelona Convention.</i></p>	ACCOBAMS	<p>Assessing the conditions for developing the common register for impulsive noise and preparing the study report</p> <p><u>Expected output:</u> Report of the preparatory study for the development of the common register for impulsive noise</p>	1 st Semester 2017	3 000 Euros
<p>Activity 9 - Development of a GIS tool to implement the joint register</p> <p><i>The aim of this activity is creating an operational tool to implement the joint register based on the Mediterranean Noise Register Demonstrator developed by ACCOBAMS. The common register for impulsive noise will be developed taking into consideration the results and recommendations of the preparatory study (activity 8).</i></p>	CTN	Collaborating with CTN to develop the GIS tool to implement the joint register	May 2017 – Dec. 2017	10 000 Euros
<p>Activity 10 - Joint register and hotspot map of impulsive underwater noise indicator (D11.1.1) in Mediterranean Sea Region</p> <p><i>The results of activities 8 and 9 will serve to implement the joint impulsive noise register in the Mediterranean Sea.</i></p>	ACCOBAMS	Ensuring the implementation of the common register of impulsive underwater noise in the Mediterranean region through data collection and data analysis	Dec. 2017 – Oct. 2018	12 500 Euros

		<p><u>Expected outputs:</u></p> <p>1/ Joint register for impulsive noise available on a website with GIS and hotspot map, based on the conclusions of the preparatory study</p> <p>2/ Recommendations to Member States to set up the national registers of impulsive noise</p>		
<p>Activity 12 - Networking with other projects and initiatives</p> <p><i>Work in close collaboration and coordinate dissemination with other relevant projects in the same region or with the same objectives</i></p>	ISPRA	Contributing to networking with other projects and initiatives in order to exchange information and best practices, in particular as regards the development of the common regional register of impulsive noise	Over the implementation period of the project	3000 Euros

3. CONDITIONS FOR THE SUBMISSION OF A TENDER

The tender could be submitted by individual consultants or by a consortium of consultants with a leader clearly identified who will be contractually the unique vis-à-vis of the ACCOBAMS Secretariat for all tasks related to the mission. Tenders should be established within the allocated budget as indicated in the above Paragraph 2 (OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL, REQUESTED TASKS AND AVAILABLE BUDGET).

Tenderers must provide evidence of the following:

- be graduated in marine sciences or in engineer sciences
- prove experience in :
 - i. Assessment and management of noise-producing human activities
 - ii. Studying the effects on underwater noise on the marine environment
 - iii. underwater acoustics, in particular passive acoustics
 - iv. designing and programming GIS related database
 - v. analyzing underwater noise data
 - vi. contributing to the development of marine noise regulations and policy, at the national or regional level.
- be :
 - i. familiar with the environmental policies related to the monitoring of the marine environment (EU MSFD and EcAp process of the Barcelona Convention), in particular on underwater noise monitoring
 - ii. familiar with relevant organizations and advisory bodies (such as the MSFD Technical Subgroup on Noise and the Joint CMS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Noise Working Group) addressing underwater noise issues and noise impacts on marine life;
 - iii. familiar with ACCOBAMS and the Mediterranean geographical area;
 - iv. able to work well under pressure and to work effectively and harmoniously with people of different national and cultural backgrounds;
 - v. able to plan and prioritize workloads and capability of meeting deadlines;
 - vi. persistent when problems or challenges appear;
 - vii. able to interact with tact and diplomacy;
 - viii. fluent in English (compulsory) and orally fluent in French;
- have an excellent interpersonal skills, especially within multicultural/multilingual settings.

Tenders shall provide the following information:

- a) A detailed methodology, including :
 - presentation of the tenderer's background and relevant experience as regards the objective of the mission, including a CV and a list of projects and publications in relation to the tasks to perform ;
 - a detailed description of the work to be carried out during the mission.

In the case the tender is submitted by a consortium of consultants, the methodology document has to include a presentation of each expert/specialist who will compose the team (including their CVs and references), a description of the working arrangements within the team and the repartition of the tasks among the experts/specialists (including an assessment of the number of working days expected per expert/specialist and per task).

- b) A detailed budget proposal, with the number of working days per task and the daily rate applicable, based on the maximum budget available.

In the case the tender is submitted by a consortium of consultants, the tenderer has to detail in the budget proposal the repartition of the costs between the different experts/specialists, as well as the number of working days expected per expert/specialist and the daily rate of each expert/specialist. The maximum available budget for this mission of technical assistance is indicated in the above Paragraph 2 (OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL, REQUESTED TASKS AND AVAILABLE BUDGET).

4. SUBMISSION OF THE TENDERS

Interested consultants should submit a tender to the ACCOBAMS Executive Secretary (fcdescroix@accobams.net) and, in copy, to the Programme Officer (msalivas@accobams.net) and to the Project and Fundraising Officer (clervallec@accobams.net) not later than 30 April 2017.

For additional information, clarification or any communication relating to this Call for tenders, tenderers may write to fcdescroix@accobams.net and, in copy, to msalivas@accobams.net and to clervallec@accobams.net.

5. SELECTION OF THE TENDERS

The tenders will be evaluated with reference to the scoring system included in Annex 1. The ACCOBAMS Secretariat will notify the result of the selection process by mid-May 2017.

6. PAYMENT DETAILS

One contract will be established by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat with the consultant. Payments will be made upon presentation of invoices, based on the work achieved, within the limit of the available budget.

Annex 1 – Evaluation of the tenders

The tenders will be evaluated on 100 points, based on the following criteria:

1. General experience: 50 points

a- Relevant experience (30 points)

Previous experience of the tenderer will be assessed in relation to the fields of expertise required to achieve the intended outcomes of the project. Recent experience is more valuable than historic experience.

b- Technical skills (20 points):

The competence of the experts that the tenderer proposes to employ on the project will be assessed with particular emphasis on the skills and experience in technical areas comparable to the project.

2. Methodology, organization and planning: 50 points

a- Quality of the proposed methodology (30 points)

The tenderer should be able to demonstrate its capability to bring the contract to a satisfactory conclusion by describing the methodology of approach to accomplish the project's required outcomes.

b- Organization and planning (20 points)

Distribution of the roles and responsibilities of the proposed team, method, strategy and structures proposed for organizing, managing and coordinating the work will be assessed.

The contract will be awarded to the tender which offers the best quality/price ratio (provided that the quality mark is 70 or more), in which respect quality will account for 70% of the overall mark and price 30%.