



**GUIDELINES FOR THE CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF
PROTECTED AREAS**

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1. Discussion of the merits or otherwise of potential MPAs must occur within the context of the most appropriate tools for addressing particular actual or potential threats to cetacean populations and enabling them to reach or maintain favourable conservation status. A key issue when considering MPAs to protect important cetacean habitat and thus conserve cetacean populations is what is meant by important. Large areas may be important at some level to cetaceans but not all areas can be protected. The aim should be to protect the most important habitat/areas; the challenge is to identify which are the most important habitats/areas (see (2) below).
2. The concept of 'critical habitat' is commonly referred to in the context of MPAs and a number of suggestions and definitions for this exist (e.g., breeding areas; feeding areas; migratory corridors etc). However, in the context of cetacean conservation and management it is important to incorporate the concept of actual and/or potential threats at the population level into consideration of 'critical' and appropriate for consideration as a MPA. Thus the definition of what comprises 'critical habitat' and suitable candidates for MPAs can be best addressed on a case-by-case basis in the light of the available scientific knowledge. The spatial modelling approach is a powerful tool in this regard.
3. Criteria to identify sites containing cetacean critical habitat may include:
 - Areas used by cetaceans for feeding, breeding, calving, nursing and social behaviour;
 - Migration routes and corridors and related resting areas;
 - Areas where there are seasonal concentrations of cetacean species;
 - Areas of importance to cetacean prey;
 - Natural processes that support continued productivity of cetacean foraging species (upwellings, fronts, etc.);
 - Topographic structures favourable for enhancing foraging opportunities for cetacean species (canyons, seamounts).
4. These criteria can be applied for the identification of sites containing cetacean critical habitats, in need of protection due to the occurrence of significant interactions between cetaceans and human activities, where:
 - Conflicts between cetaceans and fishing activities have been reported;
 - Significant or frequent bycatch of cetaceans is reported;
 - Intensive whale watching or other marine tourism activities occur;
 - Navigation presents a potential threat to cetaceans;
 - Pollution runoff, outflow or other marine dumping occur;
 - Military exercises are known to routinely occur.

5. In every one of the above cases, one has to consider very carefully whether the threat can be the focus of regulatory action that is generic, or whether MPA creation would provide added value.

6. In specifying potential MPAs, to the extent possible and noting that this can be a staged process, proposals should include information on the following:
 - clearly stated objectives of the MPA;
 - the rationale for choosing an MPA as the appropriate management tool and the particular temporal and geographical boundaries (including specification of the data and analytical techniques used);
 - a draft management plan that is linked to documented actual and potential threats to one or more populations of cetaceans;
 - proposals for mitigation measures (and/or research designed to develop such measures), with consideration of appropriate compliance monitoring (to ensure that such measures are correctly implemented) plus scientific monitoring to ensure that each of the proposed mitigation measures (where there are more than one) are working as expected;
 - proposals for overall monitoring to ensure that stated objectives are being met;
 - details of consultation with and views of interested stakeholders;
 - details of legal aspects of the proposed MPA, including co-operation with the appropriate local, national and international authorities must occur.



FORMAT FOR THE PROPOSAL OF PROTECTED AREAS FOR CETACEANS

INTRODUCTION

During MOP2, the Contracting Parties to ACCOBAMS asked the Scientific Committee to prepare a special format for the proposal of protected areas for cetaceans, adapted from the existing format for proposing SPAMIs under the Barcelona Convention.

The draft data-entry form below is based on the SPAMI template. It is comprised of the following 7 main sections:

- Area identification
- Executive summary
- Site description
- Statement about the importance of the area for the cetacean species
- Human population and use of natural resources
- Protection regime
- Proposed management measures and relevant institutional arrangements



1. AREA IDENTIFICATION

COUNTRY/COUNTRIES (in the case of transboundary areas)

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ADMINISTRATIVE PROVINCE OR REGION

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NAME OF THE PROPOSED MPA

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GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

(Please describe the co-ordinates here and make a separate annex with a map and a description of geographical co-ordinates for the proposed area).

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SURFACE AREA OF THE PROPOSED MPA (total)

(in national unit)	(in ha)
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LENGTH OF THE ADJACENT COAST (km)

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2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (maximum 3 pages)

Supply a summary of the information contained in sections 3 to 7.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

TYOLOGY OF THE SITE

Marine surface area (sq. km):

Marine internal waters

Territorial seas

High seas

MAIN PHYSICAL FEATURES

3.2.1. Geology/Geomorphology

Give a brief description of: (i) geological aspects (lithologic and tectonics); (ii) processes of sedimentation and erosion observable in the area; (iii) coastal geomorphology and (iv) island system. Indicate sources.



3.2.2. Other interesting physical features: Such as hydrodynamics, volcanic formations, caves, underwater formations, etc.

BIOLOGICAL FEATURES

3.3.1. Habitats: A brief description of dominant marine habitats, on the basis of the habitat classifications adopted within the framework of MAP (and their coverage in ha)

3.3.2. List of regionally/globally important species (flora and fauna, cetaceans excluded)

List here ONLY those species protected by international agreements which are known to be present in the area. Any other species may be listed if they are clearly considered of regional importance and have high representation in the area. Put the species list under separate headings for Marine Plants, Terrestrial Plants, Marine Invertebrates, Fish, Amphibians and Reptiles, Birds, and Mammals. For each species state:

- a) its relative abundance as Common (C), Uncommon (U) or Occasional (O),
- b) Its global status as rare (r), endemic (e) and/or threatened (t), and
- c) its status as an important resident population (R), or important for its breeding (B), feeding (F), wintering (W) or migratory passage (M)

SPECIES	Rel. Abundance (C) (U) (O)	Regional STATUS (r) (e) (t)	Local STATUS (R) (B) (F) (W) (M)

3.3.3. Flora: Describe in a few sentences the main plant assemblages significant in the area.

3.3.4. Fauna: Describe in a few sentences the main fauna populations present in the area, cetaceans excluded.



4. IMPORTANCE OF THE AREA FOR CETACEANS

4.1. Cetacean species present in the area: For each species known to occupy the area, list the following information (duplicate table for each species):

Name of species	
Density (relative or absolute)	
Group size (mean, range)	
Habitat use (include maps if available). Spatial modelling highly recommended.	
Diet	
Life history parameters	
Existing threats ¹	
Potential threats	
Known status and trends	

4.2. Describe scientific information on the population which is not available but considered essential for its protection

4.3. Features of the area that make it of particular importance to cetaceans (e.g., areas used by cetaceans for feeding, breeding, calving, nursing and social behaviour; migration routes and corridors and related resting areas; areas where there are seasonal concentrations of cetacean species; areas of importance to cetacean prey; natural processes that support continued productivity of cetacean foraging species (upwellings, fronts, etc.); topographic structures favourable for enhancing foraging opportunities for cetacean species (canyons, seamounts).

4.4. Rationale of proposal: reason(s) why the establishment of a protected area is considered essential to the protection of the population (as opposed to other more wide-ranging or generalised measures)

¹ E.g., conflicts between cetaceans and fishing activities; significant or frequent bycatch of cetaceans, Intensive whale watching or other marine tourism activities; navigational threats to cetaceans; pollution runoff, outflow or other marine dumping; military exercises.



4.5. Measures that would be desirable to protect the population outside the limits of the proposed area

4.6. Is the area likely to support protection of cetaceans as part of a wider regional network of MPAs?

4.7. State the goals of the proposed MPA:

5. HUMAN POPULATION AND USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

5.1 Human population

Description of local residents and visitors

Resident population

Tourist population

Main human settlements and their populations

5.2 Current human use and development

a) Briefly describe the current use of the area for subsistence, artisanal, commercial and recreational fishing, tourism and other economic sectors.

Fishing:

Tourism:

Maritime traffic:

Whalewatching:

Military activities:

Infrastructures / construction:

Research:

b) Enter how many of the users depend on these resources, seasonality of use, and provide an assessment of the social and economic importance of their use and of the perceived impact on the conservation of the area, in a score of 0-1-2-3 (meaning null, low, medium, high).

ACTIVITY AND CATEGORY	ASSESS IMPORTANCE OF								Estimated No. of Users	Seasonality
	Socio-economic impact				Conservation impact					
FISHING	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Subsistence	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Commercial, local	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Commercial, non-local	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Controlled recreational	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Uncontrolled recreational	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Other										
TOURISM	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Regulated	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Unregulated	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Indicate the type of tourism	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
- ecotourism	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
- general marine tourism.....	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
. mass or general tourism	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Tourism facilities										
OTHER ACTIVITIES	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		

5.3 Traditional economic or subsistence uses

Name any environmentally sound traditional activities integrated with nature, which support the well being of the local human population. E.g. target species, if closed seasons or closed zones are used as management techniques.

Whalewatching
Artisanal fisheries
Scuba diving
Yachting

5.4. Identification of stakeholders



5.4.1 Institutional (International, regional, national, local)

5.4.2 Private (Industry, military, scientific, NGOs, other)

5.5 Expected development and trends

5.6 Potential conflicts in the area (between cetaceans and human activities or potential conflicts between users).

Prey depletion:

Fishery interactions (bycatch / predation):

Acoustic pollution:

Debris pollution:

Collisions:

Harrassment:



6. PROTECTION REGIME

6.1. Legal status

6.1.1 Historical background of the protection of the site (if any)

6.1.2 Proposed legal status

(use the national conservation categories)

6.1.3. If the area lies partially or totally on the High Seas, list here the proposed institutional arrangements.

7. PROPOSED MANAGEMENT MEASURES AND RELEVANT INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Please suggest here how the management of the proposed MPA will be undertaken. Indicate management measures which could be used for the proposed MPA to protect cetaceans and reduce or eliminate conflicts with human use of the area. For example, you could suggest an MPA with zoning and a highly protected critical habitat area and/or you could use other management tools such as regulations to control pollution dumping or boat noise, shipping activities, fast ferries, undersea noise pollution, and dumping activities. Suggestions and proposal for enforcement can be made here as well. What about educational programmes for public and all users of the area? Which existing institutions, government or other agencies can undertake management and enforcement, or will new agencies need to be created?

7.1. Describe provisions for the establishment of a management body and formulation of a management plan²

7.2. Define management objectives designed to meet the stated goals (listed in section 4.7). Effective management of an MPA is founded on the articulation of clear and quantifiable objectives to attain the institutional goals, and the implementation of a monitoring system to assess whether these objectives are being met. A significant challenge to the effective management of MPAs dedicated to the protection of top predators such as cetaceans is the need for a framework to guide and assess effectiveness in the context of broader ecosystem-level objectives, which seek to extend conservation benefits from the protected species and their habitats to marine trophic webs and ecosystem-wide processes. Ecosystem-level management requires a clear rationale and a firm knowledge base.

7.3. List periodic management reviews to assess whether objectives are met. A fundamental step in the management process involves the monitoring and periodic review of activities to assess whether the objectives are being met. A practical way of achieving this result is to devise specific management indicators. Pomeroy *et al.* (2004) provide an excellent review of the MPA management evaluation process, including the development and application of indicators (subdivided into biophysical, socio-economic and governance indicators). Given the complexity involved in selecting appropriate indicators, planning and conducting the evaluation, and consequently adapting further management actions, it is strongly recommended that the entire MPA management evaluation process be the subject of specific training

² The management plan will, among other things, detail the measures enacted to reach the objectives. These include: Zoning, to separate highly protected no-entry sites containing cetacean critical habitat from human-use sites where activities such as whale watching, tourism, moderate fishing and vessel traffic may occur in a regulated fashion; Regulations and mitigating measures to maintain potentially harmful human activities (e.g., fishing, vessel traffic, military exercises) within acceptable levels; Research activities to generate knowledge susceptible to allow management adaptiveness and increase management effectiveness; Enforcement and compliance monitoring to ensure that rules are respected and measures are correctly implemented; Monitoring of the status and trends of the target populations and relevant human activities as a feedback mechanism to the management plan, to ensure that the proposed mitigation measures are working as expected; Monitoring and periodic review to ensure that the stated objectives are being met; Development of risk assessment techniques to take cumulative impact into account and identify emergent risks; Promotion of fair decision-making and conflict resolution concerning access to ocean resources within the protected areas; Administration, financing and fund-raising; Implementation of education and awareness programmes.