

PROJECT « TOWARDS SOLUTIONS TO INTERACTIONS BETWEEN FISHERIES AND CETACEANS IN MOROCCAN AND TUNISIAN WATERS »

CALL FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CONSULTANCY SERVICES

1. Background

Conscious of the environmental challenges, the Mediterranean countries are committed, within the framework of the different regional cooperation agreements, to reduce the impacts of the interactions between fishing activities and threatened species (incidental catches in fishing gears – active gears or ghost gears - overexploitation of the available fisheries resources). Some of these species, particularly cetaceans, compete with fishers by feeding on commercially important marine species during fishing operations, sometimes causing damages to fishing nets (depredation). This phenomenon represents a source of conflict with fishers, often powerless to preserve their working tools. This situation leads to hostility on the part of fishers towards the species concerned, which is likely to make conservation efforts more difficult.

Established under the Convention of the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (UNEP/CMS), the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS) in an intergovernmental agreement which aims to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status of cetaceans through the implementation of coordinated conservation measures. The ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat, based in Monaco, ensures the coordination of the Agreement implementation and provides assistance to the Contracting Parties.

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) is a Regional Fisheries Management Organization - established under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) - whose main objective is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of living marine resources as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean and in the Black Sea. The GFCM's key function is to adopt binding recommendations for the management of fisheries and aquaculture and level the playing field across riparian States. GFCM policy and activities are implemented through its Secretariat, including through close collaboration with partner organizations.

Within this framework, the ACCOBAMS and GFCM Secretariats received a financial support from the MAVA Foundation to implement the project “Towards solutions to interactions between fisheries and cetaceans in Moroccan and Tunisian waters” (hereinafter referred to as the “MAVA Depredation project”) which aims at achieving the strategic objective to reduce interactions between cetaceans and fisheries.

This project focuses on depredation caused by Bottlenose dolphins in purse seine small pelagic fisheries and to assess interactions with aquaculture. It has been designed to ensure the follow up of the activities carried out within the framework of the pilot actions of the project on mitigating interactions between endangered marine species and fishing activities implemented between 2015 and 2017, in particular the pilot action “Purse seine sardine fisheries in the Moroccan Mediterranean:

mitigating depredation by bottlenose dolphins in purse seine sardine fisheries” implemented in Morocco¹.

This project is coordinated by the ACCOBAMS and GFCM Secretariats. The activities in Morocco are implemented by the National Institute for Fisheries Research (INRH).

Within this framework, it is expected that two experts provide a technical support to the INRH scientific team in implementing their activities:

- An expert in fishing gear technologies
- An expert in cetacean population monitoring, in particular by photo-identification method, and cetacean ethology (study of behaviours).

These experts are recruited by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat and they will work under the joint supervision of the ACCOBAMS and GFCM Secretariats, in coordination with the INRH scientific team.

This document is aimed at presenting the organization of the experts’ mandate, the expected outputs as well as the conditions for the submission of applications.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL

The main objective of this technical assistance is to provide technical support to the scientific team of the MAVA Depredation project in Morocco in implementing their activities. In addition, the experts will provide guidance and support to the ACCOBAMS and GFCM Secretariats regarding the technical aspects related to the implementation of the project activities.

3. REQUESTED TASKS

The expert in fishing gear technologies is expected to:

- Advise and assist the INRH scientific team in the monitoring and assessment of the interactions between purse seines and dolphins;
- Advise and assist the INRH scientific team in the trials with the strengthened purse seine, as well as in other mitigation measures that could be tested (acoustic devices for example).

The expert in cetacean population monitoring and photo-identification is expected to:

- Train the INRH scientific team in photo-identification techniques and capture/recapture methods to assess abundance of bottlenose dolphins in the study area. A first training will be organized, possibly, at the end of September/beginning of October 2019, either in Morocco or outside of Morocco (the training place chosen should guarantee dolphins presence for practical training sessions). The training should include the study of bottlenose dolphin behaviour;
- Assist the INRH scientific team in setting up their photo-identification program in Morocco, including storage and management of collected data, as well as in analysis/interpretation the results;
- Advise the project team in the definition of the experimental protocols of mitigation measures (strengthened purse seine, acoustic deterrent devices...);
- Provide, if possible, the necessary equipment for photo-identification during the training and first mission in Morocco and advise the INRH team in the equipment to be purchased.

¹ The report of this pilot action can be sent on request to the ACCOBAMS Secretariat.

4. ASSIGNMENT ORGANISATION

The duration of the assignment covers a period from the signature of the contract to the end of 2020. During this period, several missions to Morocco will be planned to assist the project scientific team in the implementation of their activities.

Firstly, **it is expected that the technical assistance experts attend a first coordination meeting with INRH scientific team in order to: 1) advise INRH in the design of their program of work and 2) establish a joint roadmap defining the objectives and planification of the next missions according to the project program of work.** As far as possible, this first mission will be organized at the end of September/beginning of October 2019, back to back with the training session on photo-identification techniques and dolphin behaviour study.

As for administrative aspects, a contract will be established by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat with each consultant, within a maximum limit of 40 working days, at 250 euros/day, until end of 2020, for each consultant.

Payments will be made upon presentation of detailed invoices, based on the number of working days achieved.

The travel and accommodation costs for the different missions in Morocco will be covered by the GFCM Secretariat according to the GFCM Secretariat internal rules.

5. EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The experts are expected to provide:

- ❖ At the end of the first mission: a roadmap presenting the planned schedule for their future missions in Morocco
- ❖ At the end of each mission: a report including recommendations
- ❖ A final report presenting the work carried out during the assignment, including recommendations.

6. CONDITIONS FOR THE SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION

The proposals should be submitted by individual consultants or Organizations who will be contractually the unique vis-à-vis of the ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat for all tasks related to the mission.

The applicants must provide evidence of the following:

For the expert in fishing gear technologies:

- Be graduated in fishery sciences or in marine biology/ecology (a Master degree is a requirement);
- Proven experience in:
 - i. fishing gear technologies
 - ii. fisheries management
 - iii. monitoring and assessment of the interactions between vulnerable species and fisheries

- Be:
 - i. Expert in Mediterranean fisheries, in particular in small pelagic fisheries
 - ii. Familiar with the issues related to interactions between cetaceans and fisheries, previous experience in depredation would be an asset;
 - iii. able to work effectively and harmoniously in a multicultural environment with persons having different backgrounds;
 - iv. able to plan and prioritize workloads and capability of meeting deadlines;
- Be fluent or able to interact and work in French (preferably, but English is accepted)
- Have excellent interpersonal skills, especially within multicultural/multilingual settings.

For the expert in cetacean population monitoring and photo-identification:

- Be graduated in marine biology. A PhD in biology, ecology and behaviour of cetaceans, in particular bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) in the ACCOBAMS area will be an asset;
- Proven experience in:
 - i. Design and implementation of cetacean population monitoring programs;
 - ii. Data processing and analysis following capture/recapture methods;
- Be:
 - i. Familiar of the practical questions related to cetaceans monitoring at sea, storage and management of the data collected following the photo-identification method;
 - ii. Able to support the scientific team in the preparation of their program of work
 - iii. An expert in statistical tools for processing collected data (© MARK and/or © SocProg) ;
 - iv. Able to work effectively and harmoniously in a multicultural environment with persons having different backgrounds;
 - v. Able to plan and prioritize workloads and capability of meeting deadlines;
- Have the necessary equipment for the photo-identification training;
- Be fluent or able to interact and work in French (preferably, but English is accepted);
- Have excellent interpersonal skills, especially within multicultural/multilingual settings.

7. SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATIONS

Applications are accepted separately for each profile; no combined offer is expected.

Interested consultants should submit their CV to the ACCOBAMS Executive Secretary (fcdescroix@accobams.net) and, in copy, to the Project Officer (cleravallec@accobams.net) **no later than 15 September 2019.**

For additional information, clarification or any communication relating to this Call for proposals, applicants may write to fcdescroix@accobams.net and cleravallec@accobams.net.