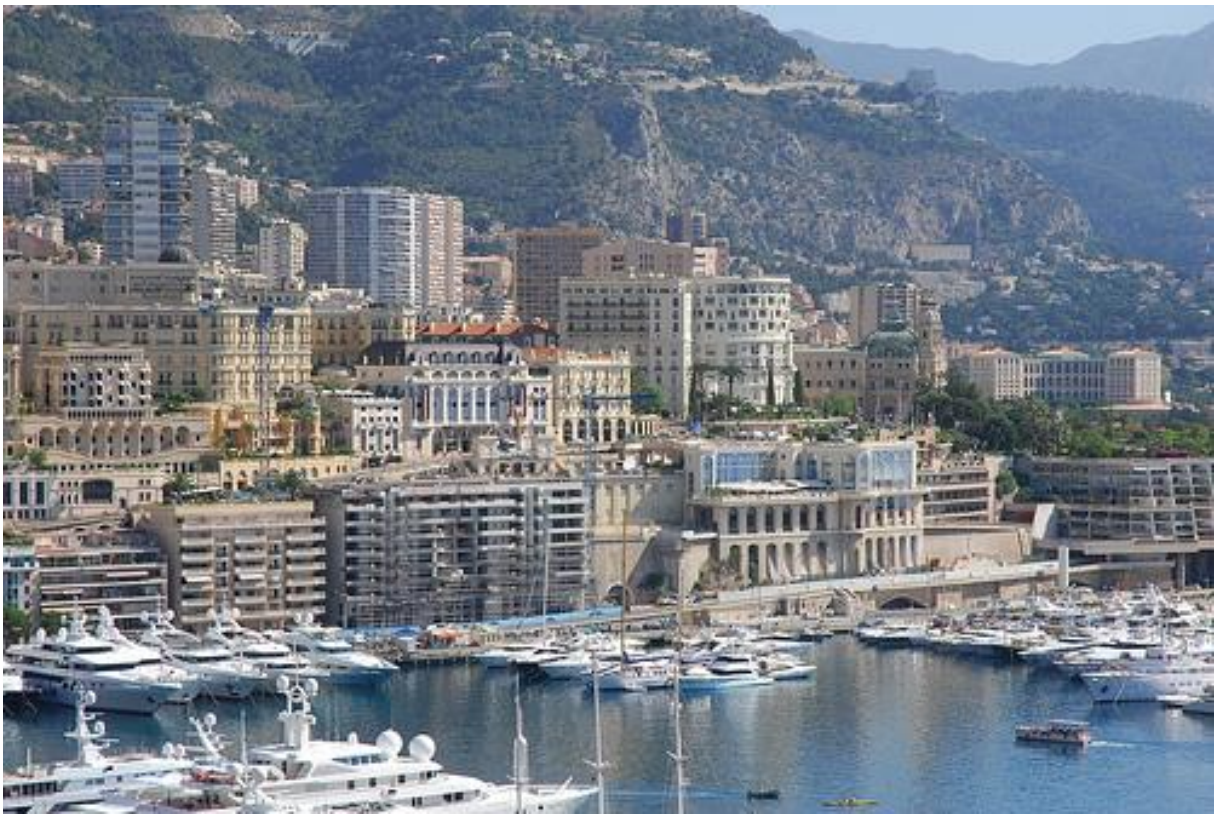
Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area, concluded under the auspices of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

Accord sur la Conservation des Cétacés de la Mer Noire, de la Méditerranée et de la zone Atlantique adjacente, conclu sous l'égide de la Convention sur la Conservation des Espèces Migratrices appartenant à la Faune Sauvage (CMS)

REPORT OF THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE OF ACCOBAMS

Monaco, 29th - 31st March 2011



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SUMMARY

ANNEXES

Introduction

1. The Seventh Meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC7) of ACCOBAMS was convened in Monaco from the 29th to the 31st March 2011. It was attended by Members of the Scientific Committee, Representatives from the Sub-Regional Coordination Units, Representatives from International Organisations and Observers including Partners of ACCOBAMS.

2. Mr. Cyril GOMEZ, the Chair of the ACCOBAMS Bureau attended the Meeting.

3. The full list of participants appears as Annex 1 to this report.

1. Opening of the Meeting

4. Mr. Alexei BIRKUN, the Chair of the Scientific Committee, welcomed the participants and opened the Meeting at 8:30 am, Tuesday 29th March 2011, at the Congress Centre "Auditorium Rainier III" (Monaco).

2. Adoption of the agenda

5. The Chair introduced the provisional agenda of the Meeting contained in the Document SC7/Doc01 and invited the participants to review and comment it.

6. The Meeting adopted the agenda as it appears in Annex 2 and the proposed timetable.

3. Scientific Committee

3.1. The future composition of the Scientific Committee and the provision of advice on scientific and socio-economic matters to the Parties

7. The Chair of the Scientific Committee introduced this agenda item and invited Mr. Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, the former Chair of the Scientific Committee, to inform the Meeting about the decisions of the Fourth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (MOP4) concerning the composition of the Scientific Committee.

8. Mr. Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara noted that Resolution 4.4 contains the Terms of Reference of the work ahead in its Annex 1. He suggested that the Scientific Committee establishes a small Working Group to carry out the tasks detailed in the Terms of Reference, and proposed the following roadmap: a) the Working Group prepares a draft containing all the needed considerations and suggestions pertaining to the future composition and Rules of Procedure of the Scientific Committee, and circulates it within the Scientific Committee in the coming months; b) the draft is sent to the Secretariat by September; c) the Bureau discusses the draft during its next Meeting in November. In that occasion the timing and modalities of the remaining part of the process can be decided, eventually leading to a final proposal to be tabled at Fifth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (MOP5).

9. The Scientific Committee approved the proposed roadmap and decided that the Members of the Working Group will be: Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, Dan Kerem, Vincent Ridoux, Alexei Birkun and Greg Donovan.

3.2. Nomination of the Task Managers coordinating works of the Scientific Committee for the implementation of the Work Programme 2011-2013

10. The Chair invited the Vice Chair, Mr. Vincent Ridoux, to introduce the Terms of Reference of the Task Managers (SC7_Doc05).

11. The Scientific Committee Members were invited to review the Terms of Reference of Task Managers and nominate Task Managers according to their expertise and to the main topics of the Work Programme.

12. Noting that according to the Resolution 4.4, not all Members of the Scientific Committee can be nominated as Task Managers the ECS representative expressed his dissatisfaction on the proposed procedure, since it implied differences within the Scientific Committee. He highlighted that this proposal would result in a wrong and possibly unwanted output, with a Scientific Committee composed by three types of Members, with different leverage: the CIESM Members, the regional representatives and representatives from IUCN, IWC and ECS.

13. The IWC representative shared the same discomfort and highlighted the need for a less bureaucratic and more inclusive approach to the composition of the Scientific Committee Membership, requiring a mechanism that would ensure equal opportunities for all Members.

14. Following an extensive debate about the role and the number of the Task Managers, a working group was established to revise the Terms of Reference. The Meeting reviewed the output of the working group and adopted the Terms of reference and nominated the Task Managers and the supporting experts (Annex 3 to this report).

4. Strategic planning – Long term strategy for ACCOBAMS (2013-2023)

15. The Executive Secretary, Mrs. Grillo-Compulsione, reminded the participants that the MOP4 mandated the Secretariat to organise a Working Group to prepare a draft Strategy for ACCOBAMS (2013-2023). As recommended by the Parties, the Secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau and the Chair of the Scientific Committee appointed Mrs. Ana Štrbenac as facilitator to coordinate the Working Group.

16. Mrs. Ana Štrbenac was invited to inform the Scientific Committee about the process to be launched for the elaboration of the draft Strategy. She emphasised that the Strategic planning is a structured and disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it. It helps to build on organizations strengths and take advantage of major opportunities while they also minimize weaknesses and serious challenges. The process itself should be planned, involving relevant stakeholders, and it should result with the strategic plan (strategy).

17. She stressed that the development of the strategy will involve all relevant stakeholders; ranging from the ACCOBAMS bodies (Bureau, Scientific Committee, Secretariat), Focal Points to Partners and if necessary other Organisations. She then presented the proposed steps for the elaboration of the strategy appearing as Annex 4 to this report.

18. The Scientific Committee took note of the proposed steps and invited the relevant Task Manager (Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara) to contribute in and follow the process for the Scientific Committee.

5. Implementation of the Work Programme for 2011-2013

5.1. Conservation actions: Research, Monitoring and Threats Mitigations (RMTM)

5.1.1. The ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative (RMTM 1)

19. Simone Panigada presented the results of the set of aerial surveys funded in 2009 and 2010 by the Italian Ministry of the Environment and conducted in cooperation with Giancarlo Lauriano from ISPRA, Rome. The results collected so far have been presented in light of a more involvement of aerial surveys in the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative versus ship based survey, as suggested by the Italian Delegation during the ACCOBAMS MOP4. Two abstracts (SC7_Inf16 & Inf17), presented at the ECS Conference in 2010 and 2011, have been discussed to provide preliminary results of the survey conducted.

20. In addition, SC7_Doc07 has been discussed; this document provides two tables, one describing a simple comparison of strengths of vessel and aircraft survey platforms, and one providing a summary of the experience gained during the aerial surveys in the Central Mediterranean Sea (2009-2010), with species-specific emphasis on: (a) estimating the two parameters of G(0) (availability and perception bias), (b) robustness of estimates provided (CV < 30 %), and (c) estimates produced up to now.

21. Caterina Fortuna introduced the document SC7_Doc06, containing a summary on the main results of the first aerial cetacean survey in the Adriatic Sea. This project was carried out within the framework of research activities due to fulfil the Italian obligations to Regulation (EC) n. 812/2004 and to the ACCOBAMS ratification laws.

22. The Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA), in cooperation with the Blue World Institute of Marine Research and Conservation (Croatia) conducted this survey in order to provide the first basin-wide information on abundance and distribution of cetaceans - particularly the common bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) - and protected species in the Adriatic Sea. This information is meant to constitute a fundamental step for assessing their status and implementing activities to improve their protection and management at the basin level. The project was mostly funded by Department of Fishery of the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry. The Italian Ministry of the Environment provided funding for the training of the observers and some support for data collection. In addition, the Croatian State Institute for Nature Protection funded extra research effort in two selected areas. This international project, including high seas and national waters of all of the Adriatic countries, benefited from the support of a number of local institutions and organisations.

23. Draško Holcer pointed out that this survey could be seen as a test for organisation of the ACCOBAMS basin-wide survey concerning the cooperative aspects as it included five countries of the Adriatic Sea in a joint effort. Particular aspects like different languages and juridical issues were resolved by inclusion of a number of partners from each country and with support from the ACCOBAMS Secretariat.

24. The document SC7_Doc06, report of the survey, also presented a list of different issues from planning, organisational and logistical phases of the survey that could serve as a help in planning of the ACCOBAMS basin-wide survey. It was pointed out that participation of the organisations and scientists from all countries was seen as the main strength of this survey. Furthermore, an ad hoc training was organised in Croatia that included several local scientists, and although planned for other countries too, due to logistical problems it was impossible to organise it during the survey.

25. Ana Cañadas presented a revised version of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative Project. She proposed, in the light of the recent successful aerial surveys in part of the region, to consider the inclusion of a greater aerial survey component than previously agreed. She also proposed to create a steering group to undertake this work and organize a small expert workshop to finalize a draft proposal. The composition and Terms of Reference of the workshop were adopted as presented in Annex 5.

26. The Executive Secretary informed the Scientific Committee that during the last Meeting of the Parties, the Italian delegation offered to share the Italian experience on aerial surveys and to provide a voluntary contribution (€100,000) to support the use of aerial surveys within the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative. She emphasised that the Focal Point of Italy will be invited to proceed with the transfer to ACCOBAMS of the amount pledged to support aerial surveys and that the organisation of the proposed workshop will be covered by this voluntary contribution.

27. The Executive Secretary added that during the MOP4, the French delegation offered the support of the French Agency for Marine Protected Areas to appoint a project manager to help in developing the survey project and fund raising.

28. Philippe Robert, the representative of the French Agency for Marine Protected Areas, confirmed the commitment of the Agency and informed the Meeting that in this context an agreement will be signed with ACCOBAMS, IUCN and RAC/SPA. IUCN will host the project manager. A Steering Committee composed of representatives of these organisations will be responsible for the administrative, scientific and technical aspects of his/her work. He suggested that the project manager to be appointed would participate in the workshop to be organised to further develop the aerial survey component in the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative.

5.1.2. Population Structure (RMTM 2)

29. The Chair introduced the agenda item and presented the document SC7_Inf20 prepared by Stefania Gaspari & Ada Natoli. He recalled that the Population Structure Working Group was created in 2008 on the request of the ACCOBAMS Parties and in accordance with the Working Programme adopted in 2007 to create a Genetic Working Group. Considering the very high budget required for this project, there was no progress since the last Meeting of the Scientific Committee.

30. Heidrun Frisch, the UNEP/CMS/ASCOBANS representative, presented the work done under ASCOBANS on methodology for discriminating population structure and proposed management units for harbour porpoise, bottlenose dolphin and short-beaked common dolphin in the common ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS area (SC7_Inf06). These management units had

been identified following a workshop in 2007, based on the integration of different lines of evidence. The proceedings of the workshop detailed the data considered and also highlighted priorities for future research to allow further refinement of these proposed management units.

31. Léa David, representative of the Pelagos Sanctuary French part, informed the Meeting that France funded a study concerning the genetics of fin whales in its Pelagos area. 150 biopsies had been collected from 2006 to 2010 and analyses were still ongoing, showing for the moment a three group structure. The results, in terms of microsatellites loci for each sample, would be available for future research and gathering of data on that subject (with the citation of the authors). She added that genetic analyses of the skin were expensive, but considering that some times the number of samples is less than the robot analyser capacity, scientists should consider offering the remaining capacity to samples coming from other research teams (ex: from countries were resources are not available for such analyses). She added that the genetic studies based on the same analysed elements (microsatellites for example) could share the microsatellites result for each sample rather than the tissue. This could help to reduce costs for a wider study.

32. Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara suggested that the plans may now be slightly changed, in view of the evolving of the situation concerning the many studies of cetacean population structure that have been started independently on a local basis by many research groups, and are ongoing within the ACCOBAMS area. A joint workshop ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS could be organised at the occasion of the next Meeting of the ECS. He suggested that Stefania Gaspari and Ada Natoli be involved in the workshop whose objective is to provide an overview of the existing studies and gap analysis concerning population structure in the ACCOBAMS area. He suggested that Terms of Reference for the workshop should include the production of a gap analysis and the outline of a work programme to support population structure studies in the ACCOBAMS area for the subsequent quinquennium.

33. The Scientific Committee agreed that Stefania Gaspari and Ada Natoli be involved in the organisation of the joint workshop.

5.1.3. Species Conservation Plans

34. The Executive Secretary recalled the steps undertaken for the development and the implementation of the Conservation Plans since the First Meeting of the Scientific Committee.

35. Tilen Genov presented a progress report on the ACCOBAMS initiative to contribute representative cetacean datasets from the Mediterranean and Black seas region to OBIS-SEAMAP. He presented the short term project on identifying data holders, facilitating data contribution, main results and obstacles in implementing the project.

36. Replying to a question by the representative of RAC/SPA, Lobna Ben Nakhla, about the lack of data from southern Mediterranean countries, in the considered datasets, Tilen Genov emphasised that he received no inputs from the southern countries. In this context the Scientific Committee recommended to involve the SRCU to help collecting data from countries.

37. Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara briefly presented the work in progress by the Tethys Research Institute, which is supported by WDCS and the Secretariat, whereby by 15th June 2011 all the Tethys' sighting data (including 25 years of campaigns in various locations within and outside the Mediterranean) will be transmitted to OBIS SEAMAP for inclusion in the online database.

38. The Chair asked to promote the work made by Tilen Genov and acknowledged the work of Tethys Research Institute for the Mediterranean and the Brema Laboratory for the Black Sea (EMODnet project supported by EC). He suggested that the work should be continued by involving both Sub-Regional Coordination Units.

5.1.3.1. Mediterranean short-beaked common dolphin (RMTM 3)

39. The Chair presented a project developed for Maltese waters by Adriana Vella and invited the Scientific Committee to review the project.

40. Following the discussion on the project, the Scientific Committee suggested to ask the proponent to include in the project document more detailed analysis of existing information (historical data, the threats, the stakeholders) and to further develop the methodology. The Scientific Committee offered its assistance to help her in further developing the aerial survey methodology of the project.

41. Joan Gonzalvo, Tethys Research Institute, presented documents SC7_Doc09 and SC7_Doc11 regarding the creation a Steering Committee for the conservation of Mediterranean common dolphins, as well as the organization of a joint workshop between ACCOBAMS and GFCM with the goal of identifying appropriate measures to ensure the conservation of *Delphinus delphis* in its critical habitat. The Terms of Reference for the workshop included: a) review geographical distribution and, when possible, population trends of *Delphinus delphis* in the ACCOBAMS area; b) identification of the areas where both ecological and/or operational interactions between common dolphins and local fisheries are present (or suspected); c) examine and evaluate existing mitigation approaches/regulations, and identify mitigation measures for priority populations/areas to be complemented with ecosystem-based approaches such as the establishment of Marine Protected Areas; and d) develop scientific and conservation recommendations and a two-year work plan for consideration by ACCOBAMS, GFCM, IWC and others.

42. He proposed the following preliminary list of Members of the Steering Committee:
- Giovanni BEARZI
- Giuseppe NOTARBARTOLO DI SCIARA
- Ana CAÑADAS
- Alexandros FRANTZIS
- Adriana VELLA
- Peter EVANS
- Joan GONZALVO

43. The goals of the Steering Committee were as follows:
- to facilitate the implementation of the priority actions of the Conservation Plan for short-beaked common dolphins in the Mediterranean Sea and to coordinate with the relevant authorities;

- to obtain information on distribution and abundance of the species, particularly in the southern and eastern portions of the Mediterranean basin;
- to identify appropriate measures to be applied to ensure the conservation of Mediterranean short-beaked common dolphins in critical areas.

44. The Scientific Committee approved the proposed composition of the Steering Committee and invited the Chair to contact the selected experts and invite them to be Members of the Steering Committee. The Meeting suggested inviting the GFCM to designate a representative in the Steering Committee and to invite Greg Donovan to join it.

45. Concerning the proposed joint workshop with GFCM and considering the Resolution 4.13 recommending to organise a workshop in collaboration with the GFCM to address both the ecological and operational interactions between common dolphin populations and fisheries, the Scientific Committee recommended to take the opportunity offered by the working group on selectivity/bycatch to be convened by GFCM in 2011 to start collaborating with the GFCM on the identification of fishery management measures for the conservation of common dolphin. However, since the ecological interactions will not be fully addressed by the selectivity/bycatch working group, the Scientific Committee recommended to use the Steering Committee to bring the issue of ecological interactions (impact of fish stock depletion on the common dolphin) to the attention of GFCM with the perspective to have a second joint workshop to be dedicated to the ecological interactions.

46. Ana Štrbenac stressed that in practice, species conservation plans are mostly prepared without any consideration or involvement of relevant stakeholders. Hence, most of the plans remain as "paper plans". This is probably one of the problems hindering effective implementation of the *Delphinus delphis* conservation plan. If this issue should be challenged with establishment of the Steering Committee for *Delphinus delphis*, this Committee should include representative of the fishery (GFCM), since apparently conservation of the species foremostly depends on acceptance and assistance of that sector. For the future, a stakeholder analysis should be performed before development of any conservation plan, and at least most relevant stakeholders should be included in the plan's development process.

5.1.3.2. Black Sea cetaceans (RMTM 4)

47. A proposal for a three years joint programme with the Black Sea Commission was presented by Ayaka Amaha Öztürk. The activities regarding cetacean conservation in the Black Sea basin were presented. These included the Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans which have been ratified by four riparian countries and put into force soon, the actions taken such as bycatch and stranding surveys, conferences, public awareness campaigns. The reporting of strandings and bycatch has not been improved in the region. The list of priority actions needed for the next three years in collaboration with ACCOBAMS was presented (SC7_Doc 12) and the importance of the funding and input by ACCOBAMS expertise was emphasized.

5.1.3.3. Mediterranean bottlenose dolphin (RMTM 5)

48. Caterina Fortuna introduced document SC7_Doc13 containing an update on the drafting of an ACCOBAMS Mediterranean bottlenose dolphin Conservation Plan and a proposed work plan to conclude this activity. She recalled that at the Fifth Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee a procedure for the drafting of a Priority Action Plan was adopted. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, this work was not completed. In order to finalise the due work, she suggested a new timeline presented in Annex 6 of the report.

49. Caterina Fortuna presented document SC7_Doc14 on the Terms of Reference of the sub regional coordinators. The Terms of Reference for the realisation of the ACCOBAMS Mediterranean bottlenose dolphin Conservation Plan were approved by the Scientific Committee, including a list of regional coordinators (Annex 7) and Caterina Fortuna was designated as general coordinator.

5.1.3.4. Fin whales (RMTM 6)

50. This agenda item was addressed by the Meeting with the issue of ship strikes (see Agenda 5.1.6 item Ship Strikes - RMTM 12)

5.1.3.5. Cuvier's beaked whales (RMTM 7)

51. Ana Cañadas presented SC7_Doc15. The modelling initiative is a collaborative effort with all those holding suitable effort and sightings data in the area. This work has used habitat preference modelling as tool for data analysis. The approach uses physical and environmental data to help explain variation in cetacean distribution and predict areas that are important for target species. A list with all data contributors to this initiative was provided.

52. The best model selected three covariates: depth, average sea surface temperature, and latitude, with a total deviance explained of 57.8%. Maps with the predicted relative densities of beaked whales in the Mediterranean were presented. The best model highlights three areas with the highest relative density of beaked whales: the Alboran Sea, the Northern Ligurian Sea, and the Hellenic Trench and north of Crete. In addition, the Tyrrhenian Sea, the Southern Adriatic Sea and some areas to the north of the Balearic Islands and south of Sicily show relatively high predicted density compared to the rest of the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, it is very important to highlight that this analysis used a compilation of 21 years of very heterogeneous data. In particular, there are large areas where there are little or no data. Therefore, this analysis should be considered as a preliminary exploration and the results should be taken with considerable caution.

53. Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara remarked that the result of five years of work based on a large base of data should be considered sufficiently robust to provide recommendations that can be used for management and mitigation purposes. He further suggested that a Working Group be created to formulate the consequences of Ana Cañadas' report.

54. After having met, the Working Group proposed the following:
   a. a large portion of slope and deep waters (deeper than 600 m) throughout the Mediterranean contained suitable *Ziphius* habitat;

b. based on existing knowledge of noise disturbance thresholds, beaked whales should not be exposed to received levels greater than SPL 140 dB re 1 µPa @ 1 m;
c. it was therefore recommended to apply a safety buffer around the preferred habitat mentioned in a) so that the threshold would not be exceeded.

55. The Scientific Committee approved the outcome of the Working Group.

56. Ana Cañadas informed the Committee that after consultation with all the data providers, she was going to produce a final report inclusive of the Scientific Committee recommendations, for wider circulation, as appropriate.

5.1.3.6. Sperm whales (RMTM 8)

57. Tim Lewis introduced the agenda item and made an oral presentation (SC7_Inf18) regarding recent information on the status of sperm whales in the ACCOBAMS region. After his introduction on the population structure, the conservation status, the threats and the distribution of the species in the ACCOBAMS area; he raised several points of interest regarding research and conservation needs. He proposed surveys to fill gaps on interim abundance estimates, regional survey initiative across the basin for definitive abundance estimate, investigation of movements – including photo-ID and maintenance of catalogue, elimination of high-seas driftnets to limit entanglement, continued investigation of overlap of sperm whale distribution with shipping densities and where appropriate implementation of shipping lanes or 'Areas to be avoided', investigation of the noise issue (including the variable depth military sonar) and encouragement of IMO Recommendations on assessing vessel noise, and investigation of pollutant levels in stranded animals / live animals.

58. Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara noted that knowledge in eastern Mediterranean Sea is insufficient and added that the access for IFAW survey (observation and acoustic) to the EEZ of Egypt was denied. However, considering that now Egypt became a Party to ACCOBAMS and is preparing its national action plan for cetacean conservation, it would be useful to reconsider surveying its EEZ area for sperm whale presence.

5.1.3.7. Other species and populations (RMTM 9)

59. Tim Lewis made an oral presentation (SC7_Inf19) relating to the recent information on the status of rough-toothed dolphins in the ACCOBAMS area. After his introduction on the population structure, the conservation status, the threats and the distribution of the species in the ACCOBAMS area; he raised several points of interest regarding research and conservation needs. Moreover, he stressed the need to fill gaps in knowledge of distribution, numbers, genetics and threats in the region. He said that the contiguous recordings made during the 2007 survey of the East Mediterranean could be analysed to detect the presence of Rough-toothed dolphins, so providing important information on distribution and detection rates of *Steno brendanesis*.

60. Dan Kerem stressed the importance of ongoing genetic studies on Rough-toothed dolphins and encouraged institutions to collaborate in tissues sampling and exchanging.

61. Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara noted that the Killer whale in the Gibraltar Strait area is an endangered species and that there are indications that the range area of Pilot whales may be shrinking. He stressed that Harbour Porpoise in the Aegean Sea should be surveyed and suggested that experts and actions should be proposed for each of these species to the next Scientific Committee. Dan Kerem, task manager for conservation issues, could coordinate this task.

62. Tim Lewis informed the Meeting that IFAW would welcome requests to share data on *Steno brendanesis*.

5.1.4. Bycatch and interactions with fisheries (RMTM 10)

63. Chedly Rais introduced this agenda item making reference to SC7_Doc17. He emphasized that the interaction between cetaceans and fishing activities is a common concern for GFCM and ACCOBAMS and that within GFCM, this issue is addressed as part of the application of the Code of conduct for responsible fisheries and in particular through the activities aimed at improving the selectivity of fishing gear and measures for mitigating bycatch in endangered species. He presented the main items in the programme of work of GFCM for 2011 that are of particular relevance to ACCOBAMS. He suggested to the Scientific Committee to make recommendations for strengthening the collaboration with GFCM.

64. Zitouni Boutiba introduced SC7_Doc16 on the concept of Potential Biological Removal (PBR). He stated that fishing activities cause accidental death of numerous cetaceans annually. These accidental captures can threaten the survival of populations in their natural habitat. The additional mortality induced by the withdrawal of individuals can be compensated by an increased reproduction rate of the spared sires; however the population dynamics shows that this additional mortality becomes disastrous if it goes above a theoretical level of catches called the PBR. Beyond this theoretical level, which can be calculate with a 10% relative uncertainty, the number of spared individuals become inferior to the minimal number of individuals necessary to maintain the stocks, the sire density is then too low so that an excess of births cannot compensate for the natural and induced mortalities.

65. Caterina Fortuna informed the Meeting that there are a number of methods used or proposed to estimate the "acceptable" level of accidental captures, e.g. the PBR (see the assessments on US Marine Mammal Protection Act), the 1.7% used in ASCOBANS and methods derived from the RMP (Revised Management Procedure) used by the IWC. All these management methods have limits and merits that need to be properly considered under the ecological point of view. Understanding that the only acceptable limit for ACCOBAMS is zero, the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS should nevertheless actively participate in scientific discussions within the GFCM and any other relevant fishery organisation, on the estimate of an "acceptable" level of cetacean accidental captures.

66. Following the debate related to the PBR concept, the Scientific Committee stressed that determination of a minimal rate of accidental catches can prejudge from the ACCOBAMS obligations, more specifically from the general obligation to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for cetaceans (Art. II, para.1), along with the measures described in paragraphs 1,b and 5,a of the Annex II of the Agreement Text. The determination

of a minimal rate of accidental catches could never be interpreted as an implicit authorisation to carry out accidental catches, which must be at all time avoided as far as possible.

5.1.5. Anthropogenic Noise (RMTM 11)

67. Yanis Souami introduced the document SC7_Doc18 concerning the Terms of Reference and composition of the working group on noise. He reminded the participants that during the last Meeting of the Parties, the Resolution 4.17 was adopted with the task for the working group to go ahead with this issue. Due to their complexity, in terms of important financial, technologic and human supports, guidelines seem unworkable for the Parties. The role of the working group is to simplify and clarify guidelines to facilitate their implementation by the Parties and shipping operators. The next step of the working group would be to define concrete action to be lead in the next few months.

68. After adding new Members, such as the relevant Task Manager (Draško Holcer), the working group, as presented in Annex 8, was approved by the Scientific Committee.

69. In presenting SC7_Doc28 provided by Gianni Pavan and others, Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara brought to the attention of the Meeting an incident in which an atypical mass stranding of Cuvier's beaked whales occurred last February along the eastern coast in Sicily, in concomitance with a major NATO naval exercise in the area. He remarked that although it was impossible to establish a certain causal link between military activities and the strandings, such link was extremely likely, and in any case it was a fact that the exercises had happened in an area which was known to contain Ziphius habitat.

70. Considering the prescriptions contained in Resolution 4.17, in particular operant paragraph 4 ("*Encourages Parties …. to address fully the issue of anthropogenic noise in the marine environment, … particularly as regards the need for thorough environmental impact assessments being undertaken before granting approval to proposed noise-producing activities" and "to avoid or minimize producing noise in … particular in areas containing critical habitat of cetaceans likely to be affected by man-made sound*"), 5 ("*Strongly requests Parties to emphasize the need for a precautionary approach and to envisage the appropriate mitigation measures, including a provision for expert review by specialists and a provision for the action to be taken if unusual events*"), and 7 ("*Directs the Secretariat to work with Parties to collect information on noise levels and noise sources in the ACCOBAMS area, and directs the Scientific Committee to evaluate such information, in order to detect the most affected sites within the region and determine if cetacean critical habitats are involved, and to report its findings to the next Meeting of Parties*"), the Meeting recommended that this event be brought with high urgency by the Secretariat to the Bureau so that it could react in the most appropriate manner.

71. The Executive Secretary informed the Meeting that, as soon as the Secretariat learned about the atypical Cuvier's beaked whales mass stranding near Fontane Bianche, an official letter was sent to the Italian Focal Point to obtain more information concerning activities in that marine area that could be connected with such strandings. The Secretariat will inform the Scientific Committee as soon as it will receive a response.

72. The Scientific Committee suggested that the contacts with the NATO Undersea Research Centre (NURC) should be strengthened.

73. Chedly Rais informed the Meeting that the Off Shore Protocol of the Barcelona Convention (adopted on 14th October 1994) entered into force on 24th March 2011 and it provides for the mitigation of impacts of many human activities undertaken in the Mediterranean Sea area under the jurisdiction of countries. The issue of noise being of particular relevance to this new Protocol, he suggested that the working group liaises and collaborates with the Secretariat of the Protocol in Athens. He added that the issue of noise is also among the priorities of the CBD as defined at its 10th COP (Nagoya, 2010) and that the report of the COP recommended that the CBD collaborates on the issue of marine noise with relevant organisations, including ACCOBAMS.

5.1.6. Ship Strikes (RMTM 12)

74. Léa David presented the model developed by écoOcean Institut in the area of the Pelagos Sanctuary, which dealt with identification of high risk areas of collision between large commercial vessels and large cetaceans. This model was proposed to be implemented in another highly "at risk" area: Gibraltar. A proposal was presented to the Scientific Committee for support. The project also proposed to model the noise generated by maritime traffic in this area and also to study the collision between medium cetacean species with all types of vessels excluding large commercial vessels.

75. The Scientific Committee agreed with this proposal and supported it.

76. As customarily dealt during previous Scientific Committee Meetings, fin whales have been considered under the same agenda item of ship strikes. Simone Panigada presented the outcome of a recent workshop on 'fin whales research and conservation in the Mediterranean Sea', held in Cadiz, on March 20th 2011, during the European Cetacean Society annual Conference. The workshop has been organized by Pauline Gauffier, Manolo Castellote, Simone Panigada and Renaud de Stephanis. The workshop participants agreed that currently there is some lack of coordination between scientific groups operating at the Mediterranean level and auspicated some degree of coordination structure, with regional coordinators and a general facilitator, with management-politics-science competences. The participants to the workshop agreed on a list of priority actions to be pursued in the short time, including among others:

    a. to update actions listed in the "ACCOBAMS fin whale workshop" held in 2005,
    b. to draft concise research actions to fill the gaps, and
    c. to prepare a list of experts active at the Mediterranean level.

The report will be circulated to the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee Members with a list of priority actions and relevant budget for consideration by the Scientific Committee and the Secretariat. The need for a conservation plan was also discussed and the final decision was to wait for the report and the list of action to be evaluated before deciding about the need of a plan, even though some level of conservation concern for Mediterranean fin whales exists.

77. Simone Panigada also presented SC7_Doc20, on a "Work Programme for the joint two years IWC/ACCOBAMS work plan", dealing with an extract from the joint workshop's report, held in France in September 2010. The document is composed by a list of recommendations on

research, conservation and reporting, with a focus on the ACCOBAMS area and finishes with a two-year work-plan. The report will have to be approved by the International Whaling Commission during its Annual Meeting in Jersey from July 11th-14th 2011, and currently it does not represent the views of the IWC. The Scientific Committee approved the content of the document and the joint workshop report.

78. Heidrun Frisch (UNEP/CMS/ASCOBANS) drew the Committee's attention to document SC7_Inf7, which contained the final report of an ASCOBANS study trialling the identification of risk areas for ship strikes with two different types of shipping data. The Automatic Identification System (AIS) was operating with shore-based receivers and therefore did not cover areas further offshore. Only large vessels were normally equipped with AIS. In contrast, the World Meteorological Organization's VOS Monitoring System was satellite-based and therefore had global coverage. However, as a voluntary scheme, an unknown number of vessels was not covered, including some ferry routes. Both types of data did not cover military vessels, most fishing boats and pleasure craft. Nevertheless, both data sets highlighted the same areas as having high shipping densities. When overlaid with cetacean distribution and density data, risk areas identified also included some in the common ACCOBAMS / ASCOBANS area, namely the Bay of Biscay and the waters off the North Iberian Peninsula.

79. The Executive Secretary stressed the importance for ACCOBAMS to pursue and strengthen the collaboration with IWC and ASCOBANS.

5.1.7. Whale-watching (RMTM 13)

80. The Permanent Secretariat introduced the Guidelines on commercial cetacean-watching activities in the ACCOBAMS area: Work programme (SC7_Doc21).

81. The Scientific Committee Members were invited to consider the working document and informed that Marc Simmonds and the IWC agreed to revise the guidelines. A new document on this issue will be available on the IWC website after the next Meeting of the IWC Scientific Committee. The assembly proposed to involve Dr. Carole Carlson in this work in collaboration with WDCS.

82. The Scientific Committee charged the Permanent Secretariat to contact the Chair of Pelagos in order to implement the label on whale watching activities.

5.1.8. Responses to emergency situations (RMTM 14)

83. Sandro Mazzariol presented the document SC7_Doc22 on Emergency framework for stranding. He emphasized that in December 2009 a sperm whales mass stranding occurred in the Italian Southern Adriatic coast. The response to this event was coordinated by the Unit for the Necropsy of Large cetaceans funded by the Ministry of the Environment in the University of Padova. The results of the post-mortem investigations will be soon available in a paper accepted in PlosOne and other related papers.

84. The event highlighted the many critical points that have to be faced during similar circumstances and in particular:

- logistics: it is necessary to have a well organized logistics with a suitable equipment in case of large animals, mass strandings and strandings of alive animals.
- safety procedures: in order to avoid any risk (physical and biological) it is necessary to define specific safety procedures because the field working situation is very stressful due to the heavy work and adverse meteorological conditions. Specific protocols should also be implemented to reduce zoonotic risk.
- communication: a communication plan should be defined between local authorities, regional stranding network and the Unit in order to ensure the public safety, animal welfare and inform public opinion and media.
- institutional jurisdiction: it is necessary to identify the institutional bodies involved in similar events and create a flowchart and emergency framework.
- euthanasia: euthanasic procedures have to be studied and adapted to national legislation. In the case of the Italy, a dialogue between Ministry of the Environment and Health helped to define the right protocols according to the existing legislation. In case of large whales, a "humane death" (deep sedation and quiet environmental conditions) will be preferred to chemical euthanasia in order to avoid risks to personnel.
- disposal of the carcasses: cetaceans carcasses should not be cathegorized as high risk wastes (cat.1 according to reg. CE 1774/2002) because no risks for infectious diseases and public health have been recognized. The recent fin whale stranding along Tuscany coast will permit to study sinking as a possible solution, investigating also any risk for public health.

85. A specific project funded by the Italian Ministry of the Environment will allow the Necropsy Unit to upgrade to Emergency Unit with acquiring specific equipment and a mobile lab unit to face unusual stranding events and to define specific national protocols with Authorities in order to ensure public health and safety.

86. Sandro Mazzariol added that the Italian Emergency Unit was willing to help other ACCOBAMS countries in case of Emergencies and to give advices in specific cases, according its specific experiences.

87. The Chair recommended organizing a working group on emergency situations.

88. The Scientific Committee recommended to held a joint workshop ACCOBAMS/Pelagos on the issue of Live standings taking into account also the administrative aspects of the issue.

5.1.9. Marine Protected Areas (RMTM 15)

89. Chedly Rais presented document SC7_Doc27 on the work of ACCOBAMS on MPAs. He informed the Scientific Committee about the relevant ongoing initiatives under other organisations in the ACCOBAMS area. These were aimed mainly at facilitating networking and synergies regarding the development of MPAs. One of these initiatives is the Project being implemented by the RAC/SPA, with financial support from the European Commission, for identifying sites of conservation interest in Mediterranean areas located partially or wholly beyond national jurisdiction. He added that the Third International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC3) will be held in Marseilles (France) in 2013 and suggested that ACCOBAMS contributes to this event.

90. Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara reminded that soon (November 2011) the second International Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas (ICMMPA2) will be organised in Martinique, by initiative of the French Agency for marine Protected Areas. He recommended that, like with the first conference (Hawaii, 2009), ACCOBAMS and its Scientific Committee continue to be involved in such initiative with contributions of substance. In particular, recalling that establishing protected areas can be a laborious and costly exercise, he informed about the intention of organising within the ICMMPA2 framework a workshop on the use of cetaceans (and marine mammals in general) as umbrella and/or flagship species to extend place-based protection to a larger number of species, so that the case for establishing an MPA could be made stronger that if it were to protect only cetaceans.

91. Philippe Robert, the representative of the French Agency for Marine Protected Areas, added that the main missions of the French Agency for Marine Protected Areas, created pursuant to the French law of 14th April 2006, were to provide support to public policy concerning the creation and management of protected marine areas, to manage the resources of marine nature parks and provide assistance to the administrators of protected marine areas.

92. Based on the work of a group of experts from the French natural history museum (MNHN), the scientific referent concerning seabirds, the centre for research on marine mammals (CRMM/ULR), scientific referent concerning marine mammals, the Chizé centre for biological studies (CEBC) and the centre for functional and evolutionary ecology (CEFE), a programme of data collection (2011 – 2013) concerning seabirds and marine mammals has been drawn up within the scope of Natura 2000 network needs. Dedicated aerial campaigns will be planned, including observations on platforms of opportunity to enhance the data obtained, and to establish a functional link between prey and predator, the deployment of a network of hydrophones for acoustic detection of harbour porpoises and support for local projects (ship based or tagging).

93. Referring to the information given by Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, he emphasized that France will organise the second international conference on protected areas for marine mammals, in collaboration with the NOAA, from the 7th to 12th November 2011 in Martinique. 400 experts were expected to participate and to exchange their experiences through discussions during plenary sessions and workshops. The outcomes were expected to provide concrete recommendations to managers for a better efficiency of MMPAs (Marine Mammal Protected Areas) to face the impacts of human activities. A particular emphasis would be given to species and habitats near extinction. Information and registration on: www.ICMMPA.org.

94. Alain Jeudy de Grissac, the representative of IUCN, presented the activities of IUCN Med that were developed during the past 5 years according to the following lines:

- Develop cooperation and coordination between all relevant regional organizations and institutions through direct contact and/or signature of memorandum of cooperation or of understanding. To date, memoranda had been signed with 14 organizations including the Mediterranean Action Plan, the RAC/SPA, WWF MedPo, the FAO/GFCM- COPEMED programme or MedPAN. Concerning ACCOBAMS, IUCN-Med is Member of the Scientific Committee and for MedWET Member of the Steering Committee. IUCN Med wished to increase the cooperation with ACCOBAMS.

- Prepare projects and search for funding for common projects for Mediterranean conservation. At the moment, the marine office of IUCN Med was working on the identification development of coherent and representative networks of marine protected areas with activities in the Alboran Sea, in the Libyan territorial waters and in the Lebanese territorial waters. These activities would be developed during the next two years, extending to Syria, Albania and Montenegro, potentially to Egypt and Turkey.
- Focus on the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean and on the Eastern Adriatic as all evaluation showed a deficit in research, marine protected areas or capacity of national institutions. On this topic they were recruiting for 3 years a responsible expert for North Africa in charge of supporting all conservation activities in these countries. This was not the same position than the one announced by the French Agency for Marine Protected Areas. This person would be available to assist any programme in the North African Countries, using the IUCN national committees or IUCN Members when necessary. He stressed that at the moment they had a permanent in Lebanon with the Ministry of Environment and another in Morocco.

95. Lobna Ben Nakhla informed the Meeting that in addition to the project on SPAMI, the RAC SPA was implementing the MedMPAnet project that consisted in developing the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Protected Areas Network through the boosting of MPA creation and management.

96. The Executive Secretary acknowledged IUCN for its wish to increase collaboration with ACCOBAMS, and underlined the importance of a close cooperation with Sub-Regional Coordination Units.

97. Pelagos France presented the scientific activities and partners for the triennial project funded by the French Ministry of Environment. Eight actions have been conducted in the last triennium 2007-2009 in different thematic: maritime traffic (characterisation, distribution and quantification and also a review of its impacts on cetaceans), high risk area of collision for sperm whale and fin whale and mitigate solutions, spatio-temporal distribution and habitat modelisation, monitoring by boat and helicopter (seasonal variation and discussion about monitoring methods), monitoring by photo-identification (bottlenose dolphin and Risso's dolphin), monitoring by acoustic, contaminant level in mysticetes and odontocetes and finally genetic structure of fin whales. Eight other studies are ongoing for the 2010-2012 scientific partnerships.

98. The Scientific Committee stressed that it would have been appropriate to know actions undertaken by the two other Parties of Pelagos (Italy and Monaco).

5.1.10. Chemical pollution (RMTM 16)

99. Cristina Fossi introduced the document SC7_Doc24 regarding a concrete proposal concerning some areas important in relation to cetacean habitat and pollution. She described two draft projects on emerging issues concerning: 1) the study of the possible connection between Persistent Organic Pollutant (POP) levels and fin whale *Morbillivirus* infection, exploring the case study of the fin whale stranded along the Tuscany coast in 2011; 2) the study, for the first time in cetaceans, of the potential impact and effect of microplastics in the Mediterranean key species fin whale. She stressed that impacts of microplastics on organisms and the environment remained largely unknown. More than 180 species have been documented to

absorb plastic debris including planktophagous species. Moreover, contaminants such as phthalates and PAHs are principal constituents of microplastic. The fin whale, feeding largely on the planktonic euphasiacean *Meganichthyphanes norvegica* could potentially undergo to the risk of ingestion and degradation of microplastics.

100. The Executive Secretary explained that she was contacted by Professor Zitouni Boutiba concerning the impact of organochlorine compounds contamination on cetaceans along Algerian coasts.

101. Professor Boutiba presented document (SC7_Doc23) in which he stressed that marine organisms, in particular cetaceans, have been under high anthropogenic pressure characterised by an elevated urban concentration along the shoreline and a constantly increasing chemical pollution which impacts were closely correlated to the pollution levels of the environment they live in. Harmful contamination effects on the marine system have been studied in order to explain the correlation between the presence of chemical, metallic and organic compounds and the various impacts observed in cetaceans. The results have shown that organochlorine compounds, in particular polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), were often associated with a weakness of the immune system, a dysfunction of the reproductive system, and an ease to develop virus, bacterial and parasitical infections. Recent studies have successfully shown the usefulness of combining biomarker techniques and the analyses of chemicals remnants for evaluating the toxic risks brought upon marine mammals following exposition to a polluted environment. Professor Boutiba suggested to establish a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the contamination, provoked by these halogenous hydrocarbons and the responses generated by some biochemical makers: Monooxygenase with dual function (MFO), endured by cetaceans in Algerian waters.

102. The Executive Secretary commended the dynamism of the team of Professor Boutiba and its interest in developing activities on cetacean conservation.

103. The Meeting recommended that the projects presented by Cristina Fossi and Zitouni Boutiba be drafted by the proponents according to the ACCOBAMS forms. The Scientific Committee suggested collaboration between both research teams.

104. Heidrun Frisch (UNEP/CMS/ASCOBANS) reported on a joint ECS/ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS Workshop on Pollution and Marine Mammals which had been convened by Peter Evans (Sea Watch Foundation) and Mark Simmonds (WDCS), held on 20th March 2011, during the ECS annual Conference. Participants looked at a variety of pollutants and their effects on marine mammals. It was clear that chronic health concerns from pollution were not a thing of the past. Accordingly, participants formulated a number of recommendations which would be forwarded to ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS, which concerned research needs on understudied contaminants, including newly emerging ones; effects of pollutants on individual animals; population level effects; priority areas, which include the Mediterranean and Black Seas; priority species; as well as biomarkers and gene expression analyses. The report of the workshop would become available shortly and the publication of more extensive proceedings was planned.

5.1.11. Climate change (RMTM 17)

105. Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara introduced SC7_Doc25 "Climate change: Proposals for a specific workshop on a targeted region taking into account the IWC intersessional workshop in Vienna". He informed the Meeting that the Parties at MOP4 requested the Scientific Committee, among other things, to progress on a targeted region-specific workshop on this issue within the next triennium, in cooperation with ACCOBAMS Partners, and other relevant Organisations, and to continue its works on studies of climate change and the impacts of other environmental changes on cetaceans as appropriate. Parties also requested the Scientific Committee to make contact with the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) in order to broaden its knowledge on this subject and also contribute with its experience and knowledge about this topic.

106. He then informed the Meeting that the Workshop in Vienna, which dealt only with "small" cetaceans, touched on various issues that are of interest to ACCOBAMS, including an examination of case studies (Mediterranean and Black Seas), the recommendation for a global review of the effects of climate change on populations living in restricted habitats, and an encouragement to ACCOBAMS to proceed with plans for a future climate change workshop to further determine the consequences of climate change for cetaceans there. The Vienna workshop further recommended that significant contribution from the oceanographic community be sought at an early/planning stage, e.g., through the involvement of CIESM, to interface in greater detail with knowledge of past events and try to set up different ways of collecting data in the future. The Vienna Meeting also recommended that consideration of the Red Sea should be included in the ACCOBAMS workshop, since oceanographic differences amongst the three regions could be used to evince insight. Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara suggested that this should be ideally carried out with the collaboration of Egypt, an ACCOBAMS Party.

107. He proposed the following road map for the workshop:
   a) SC7 to establish Steering Committee tasked to organise workshop, including: definition of terms of reference, definition of programme, list potential participants.
   b) Steering Committee to prepare workshop proposal in conjunction with Secretariat. Proposal to be endorsed by SC via email during 2011.
   c) Workshop to take place before SC8 (possibility of holding workshop at next ECS Meeting, or other suitable occasion providing higher results and lower costs, to be contemplated).
   d) Report of workshop submitted to SC8 for adoption.
   e) SC8 enabled to draft recommendations to MOP5 based on workshop

108. The Scientific Committee agreed to establish a Steering Committee. Draško Holcer, as Task Manager on Pressures, will invite Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, Mark Simmonds and Delphine Gambaiani to join the Committee.

5.2. Conservation actions: Capacity Building (CB)

109. The Chair introduced this agenda item stressing the importance of capacity building for the implementation of ACCOBAMS. He invited the Scientific Committee to make suggestions for

strengthening the capacity of the Parties of ACCOBAMS, in particular in the Mediterranean areas where data about cetacean is lacking and also in the Black Sea.

110. The Meeting suggested, under this agenda item to encourage the international courses on biology, ecology and conservation of cetaceans and to support the national universities willing to include the conservation of cetacean in their teaching programmes.

111. Considering the importance of the national action plans for the conservation of cetaceans, one participant recommended to ensure the follow-up of the existing national action plans and to assist, where necessary, countries in implementing these plans.

5.3. Institutional issues

112. The Executive Secretary presented the following calendar for Meetings under ACCOBAMS:

2011	SC 7	29th -31st March 2011
	BU 7	November 2011
2012	SC 8	Early November 2012
	BU 8	December 2012
2013	BU Ext	May 2013
	MOP 5	November 2013

113. The Scientific Committee took note of the calendar of Meetings and Caterina Fortuna emphasized that IWC The IWC is pleased to co-operate on issues of shared interest - primarily with shared expertise. IWC have held workshops on Whale-watching, Climate change and Ship strikes – some jointly with ACCOBAMS – but their reports need to be approved by the IWC Scientific Committee and Commission before they can formally represent the view of IWC. The Meeting was informed that Greg Donovan would gladly work on the issues of shared interest, including the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative, stock structure, as well as the topic focus of the mentioned workshops. IWC representative/experts are also happy to work on issues related to quantitative management in face of uncertainty. The latter is an area in which the IWC have considerable experience and great care is needed before, for example, using approaches such as PBR, which have limitations.

6. Any other business

6.1. Promoting the cooperation with scientific institutions of the south shore of the ACCOBAMS area

114. The Executive Secretary presented the Document SC7_Inf 08 containing a list of the scientific institutions working on the conservation of cetaceans in the Southern Mediterranean countries. She explained that the list was aimed at promoting exchanges with these scientific institutions as recommended by MOP4. In this context, she informed the Meeting that the Second

Biennial Conference on Cetacean Conservation in South Mediterranean Countries was planned for October 2011 and that the Moroccan authorities offered to host it.

6.2. Contribution to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive

115. The Chair presented results of expert appraisal regarding the relevance to ACCOBAMS of EU criteria and methodological standards. Six experts/participants to the Meeting contributed to this exercise: Dani Kerem, Sergey Krivokhizhin, Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, Ayaka Amaha Öztürk, Philippe Robert and Alexei Birkun. The results of their work are included in the Annex 9 to this report.

116. The Meeting suggested to create a common ASCOBANS / ACCOBAMS working group on this issue, with Vincent Ridoux in his position of Task Manager on Research. This working group will go deeper on this issue to collect more material for the next ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee.

117. The Representative of ASCOBANS welcomed the idea to have a common working group, and informed the Meeting that she will suggest the idea to the next ASCOBANS Advisory Meeting.

6.3. Invitation to tender for projects supported by the Supplementary Conservation Funds: procedure

118. Chedly Rais presented the document SC7_Inf 15 containing an information note about the call for proposals of projects under the Supplementary Conservation Fund of ACCOBAMS. He emphasised that the aim of the call for proposals was to introduce more transparency in the process for granting funds to projects under the Additional Conservation Fund. The call for proposals will posted on the website of ACCOBAMS and circulated to the Focal Points of ACCOBAMS in the eligible countries.

119. The Scientific Committee approved the call for proposal.

7. Date and venue of next Meeting

120. The Executive Secretary informed the Meeting that the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco offered to host the Eighth Meeting of the Scientific Committee planned for November 2012.

8. Adoption of report

121. The Meeting approved the present report on the basis of a draft prepared by the Secretariat and reviewed by the participants.

9. Closure of the Meeting

122. After the customary exchange of courtesies, the Chair closed the Meeting at 6.15 p.m. on Thursday 31st March 2011.

ANNEX 1: List of participants

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ANNEX 2: Agenda

1. **Opening of the Meeting**
2. **Adoption of the agenda**
3. **Scientific Committee**

   3.1. The future composition of the Scientific Committee and the provision of advice on scientific and socio-economic matters to the Parties
   3.2. Nomination of the Task Managers coordinating works of the Scientific Committee for the implementation of the Work Programme 2011-2013

4. **Strategic planning – Long term strategy for ACCOBAMS (2013-2023)**

5. **Implementation of the Work Programme for 2011-2013**
   5.1. Conservation actions: Research, Monitoring and Threats Mitigations (RMTM)
      5.1.1. The ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative (RMTM 1)
      5.1.2. Population Structure (RMTM 2)
      5.1.3. Species Conservation Plans:
         5.1.3.1. Mediterranean short-beaked common dolphin (RMTM 3)
         5.1.3.2. Black Sea cetaceans (RMTM 4)
         5.1.3.3. Mediterranean bottlenose dolphin (RMTM 5)
         5.1.3.4. Fin whales (RMTM 6)
         5.1.3.5. Cuvier's beaked whales (RMTM 7)
         5.1.3.6. Sperm whales (RMTM 8)
         5.1.3.7. Other species and populations (RMTM 9)

      5.1.4. Bycatch and interactions with fisheries (RMTM 10)
      5.1.5. Anthropogenic Noise (RMTM 11)
      5.1.6. Ship Strikes (RMTM 12)
      5.1.7. Whale-watching (RMTM 13)
      5.1.8. Responses to emergency situations (RMTM 14)
      5.1.9. Marine Protected Areas (RMTM 15)
      5.1.10. Chemical pollution (RMTM 16)
      5.1.11. Climate change (RMTM 17)

   5.2. Conservation actions: Capacity Building (CB)
   5.3. Institutional issues

6. **Any other business**

   6.1. Promoting the cooperation with scientific institutions of the south shore of the ACCOBAMS area
   6.2. Contribution to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive
   6.3. Invitation to tender for projects supported by the Supplementary Conservation Funds: procedure

7. **Date and venue of next Meeting**
8. **Adoption of report**
9. **Closure of the Meeting**

ANNEX 3: Terms of Reference for Task Managers

Following Resolutions Res 4.4, relative to the composition of the Scientific Committee, and Res 4.5, relative to the Scientific Committee work programme for the period 2011-2013, adopted by the Parties at the MOP 4, the Vice-Chair and the Task Managers will assist the Chair in coordinating of the Scientific Committee work programme. The work programme includes 23 conservation actions (17 Research Monitoring and Threats Mitigation actions, 5 Capacity Building actions, 1 Strategic Planning action). The task managers will mainly act as facilitators between the Chair and groups of experts in the different actions included in the work programme; most of this work will be done electronically between Scientific Committee Meetings.

The terms of reference for task managers are:

- task managers (including the Vice-Chair), in addition to their role as Member of the Scientific Committee, will help the Chair coordinating the works of the Scientific Committee in the fields determined by the Meeting of the Parties;

- task managers will be identified among Scientific Committee Members nominated by CIESM or by the Parties or by ECS, IWC or IUCN.

- priority actions of the work programme defined at MOP 4 can be pooled in broader categories (research, conservation, capacity building, pressures and threats, procedure) which are shared between task managers according to their respective fields of expertise;

- task managers, together with the Agreement Secretariat and Bureau, the Sub-Regional Coordinating Units, ACCOBAMS Partners and international and national non-governmental Organizations, will contribute to promoting the actions necessary to facilitate implementation of the Work Programme, bearing in mind the Resolutions adopted by the Meetings of the Parties;

- task managers will further contribute to promote cooperation in particular with scientific Institutions of the South shore of the ACCOBAMS area;

- task managers will conduct their work in close collaboration with the Chair of the Scientific Committee, with the Secretariat of the Agreement and, when actions are interconnected, with the other task managers as appropriate.

RESEARCH

RMTM 1 - The ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative
RMTM 2 - Population Structure

Task manager: Vincent Ridoux

Support group of experts[*]:

- Simone Panigada
- Ana Cañadas
- Caterina Fortuna
- Greg Donovan
- Draško Holcer
- Bayram Öztürk
- Stephania Gaspari

CONSERVATION

RMTM 3 - Species Conservation Plans: Mediterranean short-beaked common dolphin
RMTM 4 - Species Conservation Plans: Black Sea cetaceans
RMTM 5 - Species Conservation Plans: Mediterranean bottlenose dolphin
RMTM 6 - Species Conservation Plans: Fin whales
RMTM 7 - Species Conservation Plans: Cuvier's beaked whales
RMTM 8 - Species Conservation Plans: Sperm whales
RMTM 9 - Species Conservation Plans: Other species and populations
RMTM 15 - Marine Protected Areas

Task manager: **Dani Kerem**

Support group of experts*:

- Ana Cañadas
- Draško Holcer
- Simone Panigada
- Caterina Fortuna
- Ayaka A. Öztürk
- Alain Jeudy de Grissac
- RAC/SPA
- Léa David
- Sylvia Frey
- Tilen Genov
- Joan Gonzalvo
- Yanis Souami
- Philippe Robert
- Ana Štrbenac

[*] Lists of support group of experts are open.

PRESSURES AND THREATS

RMTM 10 - Bycatch and interactions with fisheries
RMTM 11 - Anthropogenic Noise
RMTM 12 - Ship Strikes
RMTM 13 - Whale-watching
RMTM 14 - Responses to emergency situations
RMTM 16 - Chemical pollution
RMTM 17 - Climate change

Task manager: Draško Holcer

Support group of experts*:

- Jacques Sacchi
- Cristina Fossi
- Sylvia Frey
- Joan Gonzalvo
- Yanis Souami
- Allison Perry
- Pascal Mayol[1]
- Simone Panigada
- Karsten Brensing
- Léa David

[1]Pascal Mayol suggests contacting Delphine Gambaiani for the part on climate change (RMTM17) (delphine.gambaiani@souffleursdecume.com)

CAPACITY BUILDING

CB 1 - Promoting National Plans on cetacean conservation
CB 2 - Monitoring of cetacean stranding
CB 3 - Promoting the use of cetacean photo-identification
CB 4 - Establishing a Clearinghouse mechanism for cetaceans (CETA-CHM)
CB 5 - Biennial Conference

Task manager: Ayaka A. Öztürk

Support group of experts*:

- Sergey Krivokhizhin
- RAC/SPA
- Tilen Genov
- Silvia Frey

PROCEDURE

SP - Long term strategy for ACCOBAMS (2013 – 2023)

Task manager: Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara

Support group of experts*:

- Greg Donovan
- Alexei Birkun
- Vincent Ridoux

ANNEX 4: Development of the ACCOBAMS Strategy (2013-2023)

Proposal of the development steps (Reference: Resolution 4.24, point 2)

Steps/Tasks	Persons/Groups Responsible	Schedule
Prepare the proposal of strategy development steps	Facilitator	March 2011
Discuss the proposal of strategy development steps and responsibilities	Chairs of the Bureau and Scientific Committee, Executive Secretary	March 2011
Present and review the proposal of strategy development steps and responsibilities	Facilitator	SC 7 Meeting March 2011
Review the proposal by the Bureau Members	Chair of the Bureau	March/April 2011
Organise the Working Group for preparation of the Strategy (WG) WG MEMBERSHIP: Members of the Bureau, Chair of the SC and former Chair of the SC, Executive Secretary, representatives of Subregional coordination units, representatives of focal points (or their representatives) and representatives of partners[1]. The CMS will be invited to nominate a representative to the WG. Meetings of the WG should be ajoined to the Meetings of the Bureau	Secretariat	March/April 2011
Gather information (existing written information + interviews /questionnaires of all ACCOBAMS stakeholders) and prepare a draft preliminary analysis of the current state (Agreement's effectiveness analysis)[2]	Facilitator, Secretariat in cooperation with SC, Bureau, partners, FPs	October 2011
Organise the 1st Meeting of the WG (adjoining BU7) to discuss the draft preliminary analysis document	Secretariat	November 2011, at the occasion of the BU7
Circulate the analysis to the WG for comments (via e-mail)	Secretariat	December 2011 – February 2012
Organise and facilitate 1/2 day workshops ajoining regional workshops with all relevant stakeholders to present the analysis, discuss key issues, objectives and actions	Secretariat, Facilitator, Stakeholders (focal points)	March -May 2012
Prepare a draft strategic plan based on results of workshops and consultations	Facilitator	August 2012
Circulate the plan to the working group	Facilitator, Stakeholders	September 2012

[1] The WG is opened to other participants, if necessary
[2] The content of the document will be used as a part of the Strategic Plan

via e-mail to collect comments and include it in the document		
Present the document to the SC 8	Facilitator	November 2012 (SC8)
Organise the 2nd Meeting of the WG (adjoining BU8) to present a draft strategy plan	Secretariat, Facilitator	December 2012, at the occasion of the BU8
Include all comments and prepare a final draft	Facilitator	January – March 2013
Present the final draft document to the Extended Bureau	Facilitator	May 2013 (EB2)
Present the document to the Meeting of Parties (MOP 5)	Facilitator	November 2013 (MOP 5)

ANNEX 5: Terms of Reference of the workshop on aerial component of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative

Background:

A working group has been proposed to meet in a small workshop, in accordance to the proposal in SC7_Doc08. This responds to a request to the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS to revise the project proposal for a basin-wide survey, to consider the inclusion of a greater aerial survey component than previously agreed, in the light of recent successful aerial surveys in part of the region. The provisional areas suggested for aerial surveys in the original proposal were the north and central Adriatic Sea, the Aegean Sea and the offshore area of the Black Sea.

Terms of Reference:

The main issues that this Meeting should address include:

(a) re-evaluation of areas that can be logistically covered by aerial survey (distance from airports, distance from coast, etc.) and species (not only cetacean species, e.g. tuna, turtles, rays);

(b) assessment of potential political/military problems that would preclude obtaining the necessary permits for aerial survey;

(c) determination of proposed aerial survey blocks and necessary coverage and tracks;

(d) determination of the blocks that require visual vessel surveys (if any), e.g. due to aerial surveys not being feasible or due to particular species identification problems from the air;

(e) estimation of the resources needed (vessels, observers, costs) to complete an additional acoustic survey component and relate this to:

1. the number of vessels needed and the cost to conduct this survey over the entire basin;
2. consider the implications of the above changes to other work (e.g. biopsy sampling, photo-identification) related to stock structure and movements.

Suggested participants (the group should be kept rather small to facilitate work):

- Ana Cañadas (steering group)
- Caterina Fortuna (steering group)
- Alexei Birkun (steering group)
- Simone Panigada (expert)
- Greg Donovan (steering group)
- Phil Hammond (expert)
- Tim Lewis (expert)
- Michele Albertario (pilot)
- Vincent Ridoux (Task Manager on Research)

Draft costs:

- Flights: 2400 €
- Hotel: 2400 €
- Food: 1440 €
- Consultancy fee for Ana Cañadas, Simone Panigada, Tim Lewis (workshop logistics, data gathering, report writing, updating proposal): 3000 €

TOTAL: 9240 €

Location (to be determined):
Rome, Milan, Madrid, Cambridge, ...

Duration:
3 days

ANNEX 6: Timeline for the implementation of an ACCOBAMS Mediterranean bottlenose dolphin conservation plan

What	When	Who	To whom
Official appointment of the sub regional coordinators according to a proposed list by the Scientific Committee	As soon as possible according to the reply from the experts	Secretariat	Focal Points
Reminder for resuming the work of expert groups	End of April 2011	Secretariat / General coordinator	Sub-regional coordinators
Finalisation of the list of experts for each sub-region	Mid May 2011	Each sub-regional coordinator	Secretariat and general coordinator
Work of the Working Group: Drafting of priority actions and general introductory on bottlenose dolphin in each sub-region (See guidelines in Annex to SC7_Doc 13)	Mid June 2011	Each sub-regional expert group	-
Submission of the final drafts	End of June 2011	Each sub-regional coordinator	Secretariat and general coordinator
Compilation and submission of a single draft plan with all proposed actions	End of July 2011	General coordinator	Secretariat
Submission of the draft plan for consideration by the Scientific Committee	End of August 2011	Secretariat	Scientific Committee
Final deliberation on the draft plan by the Scientific Committee and submission to the Secretariat	End of September 2011	Scientific Committee	Secretariat

ANNEX 7: The ACCOBAMS Mediterranean bottlenose dolphin Conservation Plan: provisional list of coordinators of sub-region groups as adopted by the Seventh Scientific Committee (2011)

Caterina Fortuna was appointed as general coordinator of this initiative.

Area	Coordinator
Area 1. Gibraltar & adjacent Atlantic	Marina Sequeira
Area 2. Alboran Sea	Ana Cañadas
Area 3. Algerian sea	Zitouni Boutiba
Area 4. Balearic and Catalan seas	Manel Gazo
Area 5. Gulf of Lions and Pelagos Sanctuary	Guido Gnone , Léa David
Area 6. Tyrrhenian Sea, Pelagos Sanctuary excluded	Giancarlo Lauriano
Area 7. Sicily Channel and Gulf of Gabes	Mohamed Nejmeddine Bradai - *to be confirmed*
Area 8. Adriatic sea	Draško Holcer
Area 9. Ionian Sea	Ibrahim Ben Ameur for the south - *to be confirmed*
Area 10. Aegean Sea	Ayhan Dede for Turkish side Joan Gonzalvo for the Greek side
Area 11. Turkish strait system	Bayram Öztürk
Area 12. Levantine basin	Ayaka Öztürk
Area 13. South East Mediterranean	Dan Kerem

ANNEX 8: Terms of Reference and composition of the working group on noise

1- Terms of reference for the ACCOBAMS intersessional noise working group

This will be an intersessional correspondence group that will work using email unless other opportunities arise or there is a need for an in-person meeting.

The Noise Working Group will report back to each Meeting of the Scientific Committee on its activities under Res. 4.17 and these terms of reference, and on any potential activities that it may undertake or would propose for approval by the Scientific Committee or other bodies of ACCOBAMS.

The Working Group will focus on how to concretely implement and adapt the guidelines for each noise-producing activity in the ACCOBAMS area. To this end, the Working Group will engage in the following actions:

1. The Working Group will examine the conclusions on noise and disturbance of other international bodies (e.g., ASCOBANS, HELCOM, IWC, and OSPAR) and under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, and will help progress as appropriate any promising joint initiatives with these bodies.
2. The Working Group will design, and will help implement as appropriate, pilot projects to test and improve the noise guidelines of Res. 4.17 for their application in the field.
3. The Working Group will improve and revise the noise guidelines for their concrete implementation in the field, considering the specificity of each noise-producing activity.
4. The Working Group will explore ways it can assist Parties and operators in Meeting the requirements of the noise guidelines, such as by providing Parties with information about mitigation technologies and management measures and their effectiveness and cost.

2- Composition of the ACCOBAMS intersessional noise working group

The Working group is composed as follow:

Experts:

- Yanis SOUAMI (Coordinator)
- Natacha AGUILAR
- Michel ANDRE
- Martine BIGAN
- Marta GARCIA PEREZ
- Draško HOLCER (Task Manager on Pressure issues)
- Elie JARMACHE
- Gianni PAVAN
- Ana TEJEDOR
- Peter TYACK

Organisations:

- ASCOBANS (Heidrun FRISCH and Karsten BRENSING as coordinator of ASCOBANS Working group on Noise)
- IFAW (Tim LEWIS)
- NRDC (Jasny MICHAEL)
- Ocean Care (Sigrid LÜBER)
- OSPAR Convention (David JOHNSON)
- Pelagos (Patrick VAN KLAVEREN)
- WDCS (Karsten BRENSING and Mark SIMMONDS)

ANNEX 9: Criteria and methodological standards relevant to ACCOBAMS on good environmental status of marine waters

This working document is based on: the Commission Decision of 1st September 2010 on criteria and methodological standards on good environmental status of marine waters (2010/477/EU); http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:232:0014:0024:EN:PDF

The Scientific Committee Members and other participants of Seventh Meeting of the Scientific Committee were invited to review and complete the document with relevant information.

The completed forms were received by Chair of the Scientific Committee from **six experts** as follows (alphabetically): **Alexei Birkun, Dani Kerem, Sergey Krivokhizhin, Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, Ayaka Amaha Öztürk and Philippe Robert**.

EU Criteria and Methodological Standards (Decision 2010/477/EU)	**Relevant or Not Relevant to ACCOBAMS goal** Yes / No	**Extent of the relevance** (High, Medium, Low)	**Cetaceans species (or groups of species)** to which every particular criterion/standard has a relation and/or may be applied
Descriptor 1 - Biological diversity is maintained. The quality and occurrence of habitats and the distribution and abundance of species are in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic and climate conditions.			
1.1 Species distribution **1.1.1** Distributional range	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
1.1.2 Distributional pattern within the latter, where appropriate	Was not included in the questionnaire. Therefore, expert appraisal is not available.		
1.1.3 Area covered by the species	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
1.2 Population size **1.2.1** Population abundance	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
1.3 Population condition **1.3.1** Population demographic characteristics (e.g. body size or age class structure, sex ratio, fecundity rates, survival/ mortality rates)	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
1.3.2 Population genetic structure, where appropriate	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (50%) Some species (50%)

1.4 Habitat distribution **1.4.1** Distributional range	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
1.4.2 Distributional pattern	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
1.5 Habitat extent **1.5.1** Habitat area	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
1.5.2 Habitat volume, where relevant	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
1.6 Habitat condition **1.6.1** Condition of the typical species and communities	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
1.6.2 Relative abundance and/or biomass, as appropriate	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
1.6.3 Physical, hydrological and chemical conditions	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
1.7 Ecosystem structure **1.7.1** Composition and relative proportions of ecosystem components (habitats and species)	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
Descriptor 2 - Non-indigenous species introduced by human activities are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystem			
2.1 Abundance and state characterisation of non-indigenous species, in particular invasive species **2.1.1** Trends in abundance, temporal occurrence and spatial distribution in the wild of non-indigenous species, particularly invasive non-indigenous species, notably in risk areas, in relation to the main vectors and pathways of spreading of such species	Yes (100%)	High (83%) Medium (17%)	All regular species (100%)

2.2 Environmental impact of invasive non-indigenous species **2.2.1** Ratio between invasive non-indigenous species and native species in some well studied taxonomic groups (e.g. fish, macroalgae, molluscs) that may provide a measure of change in species composition (e.g. further to the displacement of native species)	Yes (100%)	Medium (100%)	All regular species (100%)
2.2.2 Impacts of non-indigenous invasive species at the level of species, habitats and ecosystem, where feasible	Yes (100%)	High (17%) Medium (83%)	All regular species (100%)
Descriptor 3 - Populations of all commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within safe biological limits, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock			
3.1 Level of pressure of the fishing activity **3.1.1** Fishing mortality	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
3.1.2 Ratio between catch and biomass index (hereinafter 'catch/biomass ratio')	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
3.2 Reproductive capacity of the stock **3.2.1** Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB)	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
3.2.2 Biomass indices	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
3.3 Population age and size distribution **3.3.1** Proportion of fish larger than the mean size of first sexual maturation	Yes (100%)	Medium (100%)	All regular species (100%)
3.3.2 Mean maximum length across all species found in research vessel surveys	Yes (100%)	Medium (100%)	All regular species (100%)

3.3.3 95 % percentile of the fish length distribution observed in research vessel surveys	Yes (100%)	Medium (100%)	All regular species (100%)
3.3.4 Size at first sexual maturation, which may reflect the extent of undesirable genetic effects of exploitation	Yes (100%)	Medium (100%)	All regular species (100%)
Descriptor 4 - All elements of the **marine food webs**, to the extent that they are known, occur at normal abundance and diversity and levels capable of ensuring the long-term abundance of the species and the retention of their full reproductive capacity.			
4.1 Productivity (production per unit biomass) of key species or trophic groups **4.1.1** Performance of key predator species using their production per unit biomass (productivity	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
4.2 Proportion of selected species at the top of food webs **4.2.1** Large fish (by weight)	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
4.3 Abundance /distribution of key trophic groups /species: Abundance trends of functionally important selected groups /species **4.3.1** Abundance trends of functionally important selected groups/species	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
Descriptor 5 - Human-induced **eutrophication** is minimised, especially adverse effects thereof, such as losses in biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, harmful algal blooms and oxygen deficiency in bottom waters			
5.1 Nutrients levels **5.1.1** Nutrients concentration in the water column	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)

5.1.2 Nutrient ratios (silica, nitrogen and phosphorus), where appropriate	Yes (100%)	Medium (17%) Low (83%)	All regular species (66%) Mostly coastal species (17%) Mostly pelagic species (17%)
5.2 Direct effects of nutrient enrichment **5.2.1** Chlorophyll concentration in the water column	Yes (100%)	Medium (17%) Low (83%)	All regular species (66%) Mostly coastal species (17%) Mostly pelagic species (17%)
5.2.2 Water transparency related to increase in suspended algae, where relevant	Yes (100%)	Medium (17%) Low (83%)	All regular species (66%) Mostly coastal species (17%) Mostly pelagic species (17%)
5.2.3 Abundance of opportunistic macroalgae	Yes (100%)	Medium (83%) Low (17%)	Mostly coastal species (100%)
5.2.4 Species shift in floristic composition such as diatom to flagellate ratio, benthic to pelagic shifts, as well as bloom events of nuisance/toxic algal blooms (e.g. cyanobacteria) caused by human activities	Yes (100%)	High (83%) Medium (17%)	All regular species (17%) Mostly coastal species (50%) Fin wale (33%)
5.3 Indirect effects of nutrient enrichment **5.3.1** Abundance of perennial seaweeds and seagrasses (e.g. fucoids, eelgrass and Neptune grass) adversely impacted by decrease in water transparency	Yes (100%)	Medium (17%) Low (83%)	All regular species (33%) Mostly coastal species (17%) Bottlenose dolphin (17%) No appraisal (33%)
5.3.2 Dissolved oxygen, i.e. changes due to increased organic matter decomposition and size of the area concerned	Yes (100%)	Medium (34%) Low (66%)	All regular species (50%) Bottlenose dolphin (17%) No appraisal (33%)
Descriptor 6 - Physical damage, having regard to substrate characteristics			
6.1 Physical damage, having regard to substrate characteristics **6.1.1** Type, abundance, biomass and areal extent of relevant biogenic substrate	Yes (100%)	High (83%) Medium (17%)	Bottlenose dolphin and harbour porpoise (50%) Bottlenose dolphin (50%)

6.1.2 Extent of the seabed significantly affected by human activities for the different substrate types	Yes (100%)	High (83%) Medium (17%)	Bottlenose dolphin and harbour porpoise (50%) Bottlenose dolphin (50%)
6.2 Condition of benthic community **6.2.1** Extent of area affected by permanent alterations	Yes (100%)	High (83%) Medium (17%)	Bottlenose dolphin and harbour porpoise (50%) Bottlenose dolphin (50%)
6.2.2 Multi-metric indexes assessing benthic community condition and functionality, such as species diversity and richness, proportion of opportunistic to sensitive species	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	Bottlenose dolphin and harbour porpoise (50%) Bottlenose dolphin (50%)
6.2.3 Proportion of biomass or number of individuals in the macrobenthos above some specified length/size	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	Bottlenose dolphin and harbour porpoise (50%) Bottlenose dolphin (50%)
6.2.4 Parameters describing the characteristics (shape, slope and intercept) of the size spectrum of the benthic community	Yes (100%)	Medium (100%)	Bottlenose dolphin and harbour porpoise (34%) Bottlenose dolphin (66%)
Descriptor 7 - Permanent alteration of **hydrographical conditions** does not adversely affect marine ecosystems			
7.1 Spatial characterisation of permanent alterations **7.1.1** Extent of area affected by permanent alterations	Yes (100%)	High (17%) Low (83%)	All regular species (50%) No appraisal (50%)
7.2 Impact of permanent hydrographical changes **7.2.1** Spatial extent of habitats affected by the permanent alteration	Yes (100%)	High (17%) Low (83%)	All regular species (50%) No appraisal (50%)
7.2.2 Changes in habitats, in particular the functions provided (e.g. spawning, breeding and feeding areas and migration routes of fish, birds and mammals), due to altered hydrographical conditions	Yes (100%)	High (17%) Low (83%)	All regular species (50%) No appraisal (50%)

Descriptor 8 - Concentrations of **contaminants** are at levels not giving rise to **pollution** effects			
8.1 Concentration of contaminants **8.1.1** Concentration of the contaminants mentioned above, measured in the relevant matrix (such as biota, sediment and water) in a way that ensures comparability with the assessments under Directive 2000/60/EC	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
8.2 Effects of contaminants **8.2.1** Levels of pollution effects on the ecosystem components concerned, having regard to the selected biological processes and taxonomic groups where a cause/effect relationship has been established and needs to be monitored	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
8.2.2 Occurrence, origin (where possible), extent of significant acute pollution events (e.g. slicks from oil and oil products) and their impact on biota physically affected by this pollution	Yes (100%)	High (17%) Medium (33%) Low (50%)	All regular species (17%) Bottlenose dolphin and harbour porpoise (33%) No appraisal (50%)
Descriptor 9 - Contaminants in fish and other seafood for human consumption do not exceed levels established by Community legislation or other relevant standards			
9.1 Levels, number and frequency of contaminants **9.1.1** Actual levels of contaminants that have been detected and number of contaminants which have exceeded maximum regulatory levels	Yes (100%)	High (100%)	All regular species (100%)
9.1.2 Frequency of regulatory levels being exceeded	Yes (100%)	High (17%) Low (83%)	All regular species (100%)

Descriptor 10 - Properties and quantities **of marine litter** do not cause harm to the coastal and marine environment			
10.1 Characteristics of litter in the marine and coastal environment **10.1.1** Trends in the amount of litter washed ashore and/or deposited on coastlines, including analysis of its composition, spatial distribution and, where possible, source	Yes (17%) No (83%)	Medium (17%)	Mainly teutophags (17%)
10.1.2 Trends in the amount of litter in the water column (including floating at the surface) and deposited on the sea- floor, including analysis of its composition, spatial distribution and, where possible, source	Yes (100%)	Medium (100%)	Mainly teutophags (66%) Mainly teutophags and bottlenose dolphin (17%) Mainly teutophags, bottlenose dolphin and harbour porpoise (17%)
10.1.3 Trends in the amount, distribution and, where possible, composition of micro-particles (in particular micro- plastics)	Yes (17%) No (66%) Unknown (17%)	Low (17%) Unknown (17%)	All regular species (34%)
10. 2 Impacts of litter on marine life **10.2.1** Trends in the amount and composition of litter ingested by marine animals (e.g. stomach analysis)	Yes (100%)	High (17%) Medium (83%)	All regular species (17%) Mainly teutophags (66%) Mainly teutophags and harbour porpoise (17%)
Descriptor 11- Introduction of energy, including **underwater noise**, is at levels that do not adversely affect the marine environment			
11.1 Distribution in time and place of loud, low and mid frequency impulsive sounds **11.1.1** Proportion of days and their distribution within a calendar year over areas of a determined surface, as well as their spatial distribution, in which anthropogenic sound sources exceed levels that are likely to entail significant impact on marine animals measured as Sound Exposure Level (in dB re 1µPa 2.s) or as peak sound pressure level (in dB re 1µPa peak) at one metre, measured over the frequency band 10 Hz to 10 kHz	Yes (100%)	High (83%) No appraisal (17%)	All regular species (50%) Cuvier´s beaked whale (50%)

11.2 Continuous low frequency sound **11.2.1** Trends in the ambient noise level within the 1/3 octave bands 63 and 125 Hz (centre frequency) (re 1µPa RMS; average noise level in these octave bands over a year) measured by observation stations and/or with the use of models if appropriate	Yes (100%)	High (83%) No appraisal (17%)	All regular species (34%) Sperm whale, fin wale, Cuvier´s beaked whale (66%)