CALL FOR PROPOSALS

"ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative"
Feasibility study and experimentation on the use of drones for Cetaceans monitoring in the ACCOBAMS Agreement area

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Established under the auspices of the UNEP Convention on Migratory Species (UNEP/CMS), the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS) is an Intergovernmental Agreement aimed at achieving and maintaining a favorable conservation status for cetaceans though the implementation of coordinated conservation measures.

The Permanent Secretariat of ACCOBAMS, based in Monaco, ensures the coordination of the Agreement implementation and provides assistance to the Contracting Parties. In this context, the Permanent Secretariat is implementing the "ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative" (ASI) aimed at responding to the ACCOBAMS strategic objective on improving the understanding of the conservation status of cetaceans at the Mediterranean/Black Sea macroregional level. Implemented in coordination with the riparian countries and with their participation, the ASI project will support the countries to meet their national and international commitments, in particular as regards to the regional policies related to the monitoring of the marine environment (EU MSFD, Ecosystem Approach implemented by the Barcelona and Bucharest Conventions, fisheries policies, etc.).

The project is funded by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Environmental Affairs, the French Agency for Biodiversity, the Italian Ministry for Environment and Protection of Land and Sea, the Principality of Monaco, the MAVA Foundation, the Prince Albert II Foundation and the International Fund for Animal Welfare. In-kind support is also provided by all riparian countries.

The overall coordination of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative is provided by the ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat, with the support of a Project Steering Committee composed of the Regional Activity Center for Specially Protected Areas, the IUCN Center for Mediterranean Cooperation, the French Agency for Biodiversity, the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research and the PELAGIS Observatory of the University of La Rochelle.

The ASI is conducted over 3 and a half years and is declined in several components derived from its specific objectives. In particular the ASI aims at establishing an integrated and coordinated monitoring system for cetaceans in the all ACCOBAMS Agreement Area, that encompasses the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area. To address this, one main action of this component consists in establishing a baseline framework to assess cetacean's abundance and distribution at the macroregional level. A synoptic survey will be carried out across the Agreement area combining visual survey methods (aerial- and ship-based surveys) and passive acoustic monitoring (PAM) with the participation of scientists of the area. At this stage, a first synoptic survey for the Mediterranean is thus planned for the summer 2018, while additional funds are being sought for implementing the survey in the Black Sea.

The implementation of surveys of macro fauna remains a costly and challenging exercise in terms of implementation, in particular at a large scale, and it has become essential to explore the use of new techniques and instruments in order to facilitate cetaceans monitoring at a wide variety of scale, including for example at the level of a Marine Protected Area (MPA). Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) have been developed significantly during the past decades for various purposes, including for environmental monitoring. They also represent a promising approach for surveying cetaceans and marine macro fauna in a close future, as they may require reduced fieldwork human effort and prove economical on the long run. However, a number of limits remains, in particular regarding UAV current technical capacities, data treatment, and administrative and legal aspects related to the UAV use. Therefore, the ASI includes a specific activity that aims at exploring the potentiality of using drones in the ACCOBAMS Agreement Area to implement cetacean monitoring. This activity will be funded thanks to a dedicated support from the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL

The objective of this call is to conduct a feasibility study on the potential to use drones for collecting data on cetacean distribution and abundance in the ACCOBAMS Agreement Area and to conduct a pilot demonstration activity at small scale.

Through this work, it is expected that strengths and weaknesses of this technique will be assessed against traditional techniques for cetaceans monitoring, in particular the visual observations from boat or planes.

In this context, the ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat is looking for a highly skilled consultant (or consultant firm, research laboratory, or relevant organization) (named hereafter the "Consultant") in the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (drones) for environmental science purposes, with experience in marine monitoring.

3. REQUESTED TASKS

The Consultant to be recruited will have to:

A. Conduct a feasibility study on the use of drone for cetaceans monitoring. This feasibility study will be aimed at defining UAV potential for monitoring cetaceans and at comparing this technique (strengths and weaknesses) with current traditional visual techniques.

In this context, the study on UAV use for cetaceans monitoring will include:

- A state of the art aimed at identifying, reviewing and comparing existing initiatives and work (or to be developed) using UAV for monitoring marine macro fauna, and cetaceans in particular, within the framework of other organizations, initiatives and projects related to marine biodiversity conservation

- An analysis of the possibilities and limits of integrating UAV collected data in existing 'traditional' monitoring protocols (direct visual observations from planes and/or boats, capture-recapture protocols), the comparability of resulting data and long and medium terms perspectives for UAV to monitor cetaceans and macro fauna in the ACCOBAMS Agreement Area

For this study, the consultant will have to take into consideration the existing limitations for using UAV drones at various scales (technical, legal, administrative, economical…) in the ACCOBAMS Agreement area. Thus, it

may include technical and performance aspects of the UAV, but also data collection methods (video, pictures...) and associated treatment of data.

B. Implement a pilot small-scale experimentation on the use of drones for cetaceans monitoring and produce a report including an analysis of the results.

The experimentation can be conducted anywhere within the ACCOBAMS Agreement area, therefore, the consultant is free to select an appropriate and relevant area for his experimentation, in liaison with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat. The experimentation could be conducted during the ASI 2018 summer survey campaign, in a perspective of comparing the results (if relevant), but this is not mandatory. In order to increase the interest of this experimentation at the small scale, the proposal could include a collaboration with any management body (national competent authority, MPA managers,…).

After the evaluation of the proposals and once the Consultant is selected, the ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat will organize a kick-off meeting (via Skype or a phone call) in order to review and agree on the methodological approach, and to set the schedule of the work.

The expected outputs of this Consultant's mission could be summarized as follows:

- a first report including:
    - a state of the art on the existing marine fauna monitoring work and studies using UAV and the ones in development
    - an analysis of the possibilities and limits of using UAV for collecting data in the ACCOBAMS Agreement area and of integrating these data in existing monitoring protocols, and the comparability of resulting data and long and medium terms perspectives in the ACCOBAMS Agreement Area
    - conclusions and recommendations

- a second report including:
    - UAV small-scale experimentation results and analysis, and lessons learnt

All outputs should include an executive summary.

All the outputs produced by the consultant will be reviewed by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat and circulated to the Project Steering Committee for consideration and advice.

4. WORKLOAD, BUDGET AND PAYMENT DETAILS

The total workload should be distributed over 6 months maximum.

The maximum available budget for the requested tasks is **30.000,00 Euros**.

A contract will be established by the ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat with the Consultant. Payments will be made upon presentation of invoices, based on the outputs produced, within the limit of the contract budget.

The travel and accommodation costs for the eventual participation of the consultant in any relevant meetings, agreed in advance by the ACCOBAMS Executive Secretary, for presenting data and updates on the project for example, will be covered under separate budget, according to the ACCOBAMS Secretariat internal rules.

5. CONDITIONS FOR THE SUBMISSION OF A PROPOSAL

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

The applicants must provide evidence of the following:

- proven experience in:
    i. UAV use and/or development
    ii. UAV use in environmental monitoring context, ideally in marine monitoring context;
    iii. familiar with all legal context associated with UAV drones in one or several countries of the ACCOBAMS Agreement Area
    iv. able to interact in English (compulsory);

Proposals shall provide the following information:

a) A detailed methodology, including:
    - presentation of the applicant's background and relevant experience as regards the objective of the mission, including team members' CVs and a list of projects and/or publications in relation to the tasks to perform;
    - a detailed description of the work to be carried out during the consultancy, including main steps to undertake, organization of the team and a detailed calendar. The proposal for the small-scale experimentation using UAV (drones) for cetaceans monitoring will be detailed as much as possible, including objectives, methods, action plan, calendar and budget. Collaboration with any management body (national competent authority, MPA managers,…) for the pilot demonstration activity will be considered as an asset.

b) A detailed budget proposal, that would also include the anticipated number of working days per team member and the daily rate applicable, based on the maximum budget available.

6. SUBMISSION OF THE PROPOSALS

Interested Consultant or organization should submit a proposal to the ACCOBAMS Executive Secretary (fcdescroix@accobams.net) and, in copy, to the ASI Project Officer (jbelmont@accobams.net) and to the ACCOBAMS Projects Officer (cleravallec@accobams.net) **not later than Sunday, 13 May 2018.**

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

7. SELECTION OF THE PROPOSAL

The proposals will be evaluated with reference to the scoring system included in Annex 1. The ACCOBAMS Secretariat will notify the result of the selection process by 1st June 2018.

8. CALENDAR OF THE CALL

Opening of the call	9 April 2018
Deadline for applying	13 May 2018
Selection of the Consultant and information to applicants	1 June 2018
Signature of the contract and kick off meeting	Mid-June 2018

ANNEX
General Notation System Offers

Technical offer

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

1. Applicant general experience: 40 points

Previous experience of the applicant will be assessed in relation to the fields of consultancy required to achieve the intended outcomes of the mission. Recent experience is more valuable than historic experience.

2. Methodology, organization and planning: 60 points

a- Quality of the proposed methodology (40 points)
The applicant should be able to demonstrate its capability to bring the contract to a satisfactory conclusion by describing the methodology of approach to accomplish the project's required outcomes.

b- Organization and planning (20 points)
Strategy and structures proposed for organizing (i.e. work calendar), managing and coordinating the work will be assessed.

Competitors with technical offers scoring under 70 points will be automatically eliminated.