



REPORT on ACCOBAMS activities (mid 2011- end of October 2012)

Ratifications Status / Agreement Area Extension

Ratification status: As of October 2012, there are 23 States Parties to the Agreement.

Extension of the Agreement: A proposal of extension of the ACCOBAMS to cover the Atlantic EEZ of Spain and Portugal was adopted by the MOP4. On May 2012 Monaco and Bulgaria deposited their instrument of acceptance to the Depositary. Spain and Ukraine informed the Secretariat that the ratification is ongoing.

Institutional issues

- **7th Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Bureau** was held in Monaco from 13th to 14th December 2011.
- Five **Regional workshops** were organized in June 2012 in order to assess the implementation of the Agreement and define priorities for the next triennium.
- **8th Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee** will be held in Monaco from 13th to 15th November 2012.
- **ACCOBAMS Partnerships:** at present 35 organizations are ACCOBAMS Partners.

Implementation of the Work Programme 2010-2012

a- Main activities on Research and Conservation

ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative : An agreement was signed with ACCOBAMS, IUCN, French Agency for Marine Protected Areas and RAC/SPA to appoint a project manager to help in developing the survey project and fund raising. The process is underway. A workshop gathering the scientists involved in the project was held in Rome (16th-17^h November 2011), under the request of those scientists to finalize the project in including aerial surveys for some areas.

The Secretariat was informed by the ACCOBAMS Chair of the Scientific Committee about a Survey to be conducted in the Black Sea in the frame of a EC DG MARE contract. Cetacean surveys will be implemented in the western Black Sea, including Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine (comprehensive aerial and boat surveys), and an opportunistic survey (using a ferry route) could be carry out for the entire Black Sea with subsequent synoptic assessment of cetacean abundance and distribution, and identification of hot spots and critical habitats.

Collisions issue: In the frame of the support to the REPCET programme, the Secretariat undertook the translation of a study on “the evaluation of technical alternatives and management measures internationally implemented to reduce the impact of shipping on cetaceans” that will be distributed to the scientific community and made available on the web site. The extension of REPCET in the ACCOBAMS area is pending to the awareness of the maritime companies. Funds should be raised to approach such company and present the programme.

Cetacean Population Structure : A joint ECS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS workshop, whose objective is to provide an overview of the existing studies and gap analysis concerning population structure in the ACCOBAMS area, will be organised during the 2013 Meeting of the ECS.

Underwater noise issue: A joint WG was created on the occasion of the 19th ASCOBANS Advisory Committee (19-23 March 2012). A questionnaire for industries devoted to collect information on possible way to mitigate the impact of noise is in preparation.

The ACCOBAMS Secretariat attended the Sixteenth Meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical And Technological Advice (30 April – 5 May 2012, Montreal, Canada) and more precisely the Side Event on the impacts of underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity.

Interactions with Fisheries: On the occasion of the 36th GFCM Commission (14-19 May 2012, Marrakech, Morocco) a MoU was signed between the GFCM and ACCOBAMS Secretariats. An International Workshop on By-Catch was organized (7-9 December 2011, Antalya, Turkey) in collaboration with the GFCM. A project proposal developed jointly by ACCOBAMS and GFCM, on cetacean bycatch and depredation reduction in the Agreement's area is in preparation.

Marine Protected Areas: A joint workshop on the Management of MPAs for Cetaceans will be organized jointly by ACCOBAMS, ASCOBANS and ECS in 2013 at the annual ECS conference in Spring in Portugal.

Climate Change: During the first semester 2013, a workshop will be organized in collaboration with other regional instruments to address the climate change issues and their impacts on the migratory species, in particular on the cetaceans in the Black and Mediterranean Seas.

Commercial whale watching activities in the Agreement area: A feasibility study for developing pilot projects of whale watching was carried out in Morocco and Tunisia in 2012. A training on the Label for French and Monegasque operators was organised by Pelagos France during spring 2012 (2-6 April 2012) in collaboration with ACCOBAMS.

National Action Plans: National Action Plans for cetacean conservation for Algeria and Morocco are in preparation.

Long term strategy for ACCOBAMS: According to the decision of the last Meeting of ACCOBAMS Parties, reflected in the Resolution 4.24, a long term Strategy for the 2014 – 2024 period is in preparation. It is based on the analysis of the Agreement's effectiveness.

b- Communication, awareness and capacity building

Cetacean sighting database: An expert (Tilen Genov) continues his work on the ACCOBAMS initiative to contribute to add representative cetacean datasets from the Mediterranean and Black seas region in OBIS-SEAMAP.

The ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat is implementing an interactive database. The aim of the project is to collect the main and most important information of the ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat and transpose them to multiple GIS layers.

“Train the Trainers” Programme: In April 2011, the “Train the trainers” program was extended to Montenegro and Albania and was organized by the Blue World Institute of Marine Research and Conservation (Blue World) with the aim to provide knowledge on cetacean research through training on data collection and analysis, including field practical.

Second Biennial Conference on Cetacean Conservation in South Mediterranean Countries (CSMC 2, 12-14 October 2011, El Jadida, Morocco): The Second Conference was organised in collaboration with the Department of Maritime Fisheries of Morocco, the University Chouaïb Doukkali (UCD) and the "Réseau National des Sciences et Techniques de la Mer" (REMER). This Conference benefited from the financial support of the Regional Activity Center for Specially protected Areas (UNEP/MAP/RAC-SPA) and the Principality of Monaco.

Public awareness and communication material:

- The ACCOBAMS leaflet (in French and in English) was updated and His Highness, Prince Albert II of Monaco has accepted to provide us with a new statement.
- CDs, posters, roll-up panels presenting the Agreement and its activities on the occasion of various international meetings have also been edited.

c- Projects

Call for proposals of projects under the Supplementary Conservation Grants fund 2011: two different projects on photo identification are supported in Bulgaria and Romania.

Call for proposals of projects under the Supplementary Conservation Grants fund 2012: a new call for proposals is ongoing. It addresses capacity building issues.

Module on cetacean conservation: the project already started in 3 Scientific Masters (Tanger, El Jadida in Morocco and Oran in Algeria).

Projects submitted by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat to the calls for proposals under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument: the Secretariat applied to two different calls for proposals under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI - financing instrument of the European Neighbourhood Policy).