

30th MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Bonn, Germany, 1–3 September 2026
Agenda Item 10

ASCOBANS WORK PLAN 2025-2028: OVERVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

1. This document presents an overview of the progress made in 2026 on implementation of the ASCOBANS Work Plan 2025-2028 adopted at the 10th Meeting of the Parties (2024). Colour codes to the status of the Work Plan Activities are:

Done
Partly done or an ongoing activity
No progress
Requires action by AC30
Scheduled or to be undertaken at a later date

Action requested:

2. The Advisory Committee is requested to:
 - a) take note of the overview available in Annex 1; and
 - b) provide advice as needed.

ASCOBANS WORK PLAN 2025-2028: OVERVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION

Work Plan Activity	Link to Extant Resolutions	Action by	Timing	Priority	Status	Related AC30 docs
Species Action Plans and Regional Initiatives						
1. Evaluate progress in the implementation of the Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (Jastarnia Plan), establish further implementation priorities, carry out the periodic review of the Plan and promote the implementation of the Plan.	8.3 Jastarnia Plan 7.1 Porpoise Conservation 6.1 Jastarnia and North Sea Plans	Jastarnia Group	At each meeting	Core / ongoing	JG21 (March 2025), AC29 (Sept 2025), JG22 (April 2026), AC30	Inf.6.1a Inf.6.1b
2. Evaluate progress in the implementation of the Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the Western Baltic, the Belt Seas and the Kattegat, establish further implementation priorities, carry out the periodic review of the Plan and promote the implementation of the Plan.	7.1 Porpoise Conservation	Jastarnia Group	At each meeting	Core / ongoing	JG21 (March 2025), AC29 (Sept 2025), JG22 (April 2026), AC30	Inf.6.2 Inf.6.1b
3. Evaluate progress in the implementation of the Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea, establish further implementation priorities, carry out the periodic review of the Plan (following national consultations and any national conservation plans) and promote the implementation of the Plan.	10.3 North Sea Plan 7.1 Porpoise Conservation 6.1 Jastarnia and North Sea Plans	North Sea Group	At each meeting	Core / ongoing	NSG13 (April 2025), AC29 (Sept 2025), NSG14 (April 2026), AC30	Inf.6.3a Inf.6.3b
4. Evaluate progress in the implementation of the Species Action Plan for the North-East Atlantic Common Dolphin, promote its ongoing implementation, establish further priorities, carry out the periodic review of the Plan.	8.4 (Rev.MOP9) Common Dolphins	Common Dolphin Group	At each meeting	Core / ongoing	CDG5 (Jan 2025), CDG6 (Jan 2026); currently no SAP Coordinator	Inf.6.4
5. Review progress and actions in the "Extension Area", maintain or establish collaboration, as appropriate. Consider output of the informal working group on large cetaceans in the Agreement Area, which summarizes information on the species and addresses aspects of their conservation.	10.1 National Reporting 7.3 Actions in Extension Area 5.3 Extension of Area	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2028	Medium		
6. Update the Report of the Intersessional Working Group on Beaked Whales to include the missing data.	10.4 Beaked Whales	AC (incl. relevant Working Group)	2025	Medium	AC29	

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7.Update the Report of the Intersessional Working Group on Lagenorhynchus species.		AC (incl. relevant Working Group)	2025	Medium	AC29	
8. Request the IWC to report back on the progress on the Iberian harbour porpoise.		Secretariat	For each meeting of the AC	Medium	AC29; AC30	
Habitat Conservation and Management						
Fisheries-related Threats						
9. Review new information on bycatch and associated strandings, bycatch mitigation and monitoring measures, including remote electronic monitoring and any further new techniques as well as local initiatives, and fisheries effort. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	9.2 (Rev.MOP10) Baltic Proper HP 8.3 Jastarnia Plan 8.4 (Rev.MOP9) Common Dolphins 8.5 (Rev.MOP9) Bycatch	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2026	Core / ongoing	NR 2025; AC30	Doc.3.1a Doc.3.1b NR.1-9
10. Identify future pilot studies for bycatch mitigation, taking into account the outputs of the review of mitigation measures in fisheries with high bycatch within the ASCOBANS Agreement Area, and in close liaison with other initiatives (e.g. IWC Bycatch Mitigation Initiative and CIBBRiNA).	8.5 (Rev.MOP9) Bycatch	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups, in particular the Joint Bycatch WG)	As soon as possible	High		
11. Continue to review ASCOBANS conservation objectives, and further develop a conservation management framework procedure. Make recommendations on appropriate triggers indicating when an environmental limit (the sum of all interactions within the environment that impact animals) is at risk of being reached or exceeded.	8.5 (Rev.MOP9) Bycatch	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2026	High	AC30	Doc.3.1c
12. Review new information on resource depletion and its impacts on small cetacean populations. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	9.4 Food Availability and Resource Depletion 8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2026	Core / ongoing	NR 2025; AC30	NR.1-9 Inf.3.2
Disturbance (incl. potential physical impacts)						
13. Review new information on underwater noise , its impacts on small cetaceans and their prey species, mitigation measures, monitoring, technological developments, best practices and guidelines. Make	8.6 (Rev.MOP10) Ocean Energy 8.8 Munitions 8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups, in particular the Joint Noise WG)	2025	Core / ongoing	NR 2024; AC29	

Work Plan Activity	Link to Extant Resolutions	Action by	Timing	Priority	Status	Related AC30 docs
recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.11 (Rev.MOP9) Noise EIA Guidelines 6.2 (Rev.MOP10) Offshore Construction 5.4 Adverse Effects					
14. Review new information on high order and low order UXO detonation in the marine environment, the associated chemical release and the effect on small cetaceans and their prey. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities e.g. when proposing noise mitigation measures.	8.8 Munitions	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups, in particular the Joint Noise WG)	2025	High	NR 2024; AC29	
15. Assess whether national navies' mitigation protocols for use of military sonar are effective. This requires Parties to request the mitigation protocols from the navies.	8.8 Munitions 8.9 Cumulative Impacts 8.11 (Rev.MOP9) Noise EIA Guidelines 5.4 Adverse Effects	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups, particularly the Joint Noise WG) / Parties	2025	High		
16. Review new information on ocean energy , its impacts on small cetaceans, mitigation measures, technological developments, best practices and guidelines. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.6 (Rev.MOP10) Ocean Energy 8.9 Cumulative Impacts 6.2 (Rev.MOP10) Offshore Construction 5.4 Adverse Effects	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2025	Core / ongoing	NR 2024; AC29	
17. Review new information on the cetacean watching industry , impacts on small cetaceans, best practices and guidelines. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2027	Core / ongoing		
18. Review new information on recreational sea use , impacts on small cetaceans, best practices and guidelines. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.9 Cumulative Impacts 10.6 Recreational Activities	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2027	Core / ongoing		
19. Review new information on other sources of disturbance , impacts on small cetaceans, best practices and guidelines. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	10.7 Shallow-water Mining 8.9 Cumulative Impacts 5.4 Adverse Effects	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2027	Core / ongoing		
Habitat Change and Degradation (incl. potential physical impacts)						
20. Review new information on unexploded ordnance and underwater munitions and, their impacts on small cetaceans	8.8 Munitions 8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2025	Core / ongoing	NR 2024; AC29	

Work Plan Activity	Link to Extant Resolutions	Action by	Timing	Priority	Status	Related AC30 docs
and cetacean habitat. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities and fora, such as OSPAR and HELCOM for further action.						
21. Review new information on marine debris (ingestion and entanglement), including microplastics, and its impacts on small cetaceans. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	9.3 Marine Debris 8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2026	Core / ongoing	NR 2025; AC30	NR.1-9
22. Review new information on other forms of pollution and hazardous substances, and their impacts on small cetaceans and cetacean habitat. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.7 PCBs 8.9 Cumulative Impacts 7.4 Chemical Pollution 5.7 Research	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2027	Core / ongoing		
23. Review new information on ship strikes and their impacts on small cetaceans. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.9 Cumulative Impacts 5.4 Adverse Effects	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2027	Core / ongoing		
24. Review new information on climate change and ocean acidification, and the impacts these have on small cetaceans, as for example distribution, habitat, and prey. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2027	Core / ongoing		
25. Review new information on physical habitat change , e.g. from construction, and its impacts on small cetaceans, their prey and their habitat. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2027	Core / ongoing		
26. Review new information on any other issues , including emerging issues posing a potential threat, and the impact they have on small cetaceans, their prey and their habitat. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.9 Cumulative Impacts 10.7 Shallow-water Mining	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2027	Core / ongoing	AC29; AC30	Doc.4.1
Management of Cumulative Impacts						
27. Review best practice approaches to management of cumulative impacts and ecosystem-based approach for small cetaceans and their habitats, such as marine spatial planning. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2025	Core / ongoing	NR 2024; AC29	

Work Plan Activity	Link to Extant Resolutions	Action by	Timing	Priority	Status	Related AC30 docs
28. Contribute to the development or updating of risk maps showing the spatial and temporal (by season) distribution of activities that have an impact on cetaceans, including information provided in National Reports (in the context of marine spatial planning), taking into account the work done by other organizations such as ICES, HELCOM and OSPAR.	10.1 National Reporting 10.5 MSP	AC	2028	Medium		
Area-based Conservation / Marine Protected Areas						
29. Review best practice approaches to management of marine protected areas for small cetaceans. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	10.1 National Reporting 5.7 Research	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2027	Core / ongoing		
30. Contribute to the development or updating of the map of MPAs where cetaceans form part of the selection criteria, for the entire ASCOBANS Area, including information provided in National Reports, taking into account the work done by other organizations.	10.1 National Reporting	AC	2028	Medium		
Surveys and Research						
Biological Information						
31. Review new information on population size, distribution, structure, life-history parameters and causes of any changes in the ASCOBANS Area of populations of small cetaceans. Make appropriate recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities.	10.1 National Reporting 5.7 Research	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2026	Core / ongoing	NR 2025; AC30	NR.1-9
Monitoring and Survey Schemes						
32. Review new information on monitoring programmes relevant for small cetaceans, their prey and their habitat. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	10.1 National Reporting 5.7 Research	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2026	Core / ongoing	NR 2025; AC30	NR.1-9
33. Review new information on dedicated surveys and other research relevant for small cetaceans, their prey and their habitat. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	10.1 National Reporting 5.7 Research 4.7 Populations 3.5 Pop. Studies	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2026	Core / ongoing	NR 2025; AC30	NR.1-9

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34. Develop a mechanism to structurally fund SAMBAH and SCANS surveys on a regular basis.		AC	2025	High		
35. Contribute to the development or updating of maps of survey effort, including information provided in National Reports, and in collaboration with ICES.	10.1 National Reporting	AC	2028	Medium		
Use of Strandings Records						
Stranding Networks and Strandings						
36. Review new information on the establishment and functionality of stranding networks , particularly the European strandings database, especially with a view to facilitating liaison and skill-sharing. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.10 (Rev.MOP9) Stranding Response	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2026	Core / ongoing	NR 2025; AC30	NR.1-9
37. Continue monitoring new information on the causes of strandings and mortality of cetaceans, as well as best practice guidance on stranding responses and necropsies, and to make recommendations to Parties as appropriate.	8.10 (Rev.MOP9) Stranding Response 5.7 Research	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2026	Core / ongoing	NR 2025; AC30	Doc.3.5b NR.1-9
38. Engage actively in the ongoing work on best practice guidelines for stranding events in the frameworks of the International Whaling Commission and ACCOBAMS.	8.10 (Rev.MOP9) Stranding Response	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups) / Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period	Medium		
39. Facilitate development of guidelines for responses to individuals or groups of live small cetaceans at risk in dangerous circumstances.	8.10 (Rev.MOP9) Stranding Response	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	Throughout the intersessional period	Medium		
40. Establish a Working Group on Unusual Mortality Events (UMEs) comprising members of national stranding programmes and scientific experts on pathology and anthropogenic impacts. The Working Group would activate when UMEs occur, to provide advice on the investigation and response to UMEs and collate data on the event, particularly for those transboundary UMEs.		AC	2025	Medium	AC30	Doc.3.5a
41. Standardize reporting procedures of Post-Mortem Examinations statistics, using the joint ASCOBANS/ ACCOBAMS best practice on cetacean post-mortem investigation and tissue sampling.	8.10 (Rev.MOP9) Stranding Response	AC / Secretariat / Parties	Throughout the intersessional period	Core / ongoing		
42. Contribute to the development or updating of a map showing location and numbers of strandings (both dead and	10.1 National Reporting	AC	2028	Medium		

Work Plan Activity	Link to Extant Resolutions	Action by	Timing	Priority	Status	Related AC30 docs
alive), including information provided in National Reports, taking into account the work done by other organizations where appropriate.	8.10 (Rev.MOP9) Stranding Response					
Information and Education						
Education and Outreach						
43. Assess the need for information material on conservation issues facing small cetaceans in the ASCOBANS Area, and develop material as necessary.	5.8 Education and Promotion	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	Throughout the intersessional period	Core / ongoing		Doc.9
44. Update the ASCOBANS website and other information material as needed, aiming to meet the needs of a wide range of target audiences in the languages of the Agreement Area.	5.8 Education and Promotion	Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period	Core / ongoing		Doc.9
45. Support annual celebration of the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise on the 3 rd Sunday in May.	9.2 (Rev.MOP10) Baltic Proper HP 8.3 Jastarnia Plan	Parties / Partners / Secretariat	Every year	Core / ongoing		Doc.9
46. Facilitate presentation of the ASCOBANS Outreach and Education Award at the 11 th Meeting of the Parties.		Secretariat / AC	2028	Core / ongoing		
47. Take advantage of attendance at other fora to give presentations or make information available on topics related to ASCOBANS.		Secretariat / Parties / Partners	Throughout the intersessional period	Core / ongoing	OSPAR-NEAFC 8, CMS StC56 & COP15, ECS36-37, OSPAR Comm, bycatch conference	Doc.9 Inf.8.1
48. Consider the report provided by NGOs on ideas for education and outreach work for ASCOBANS.		AC	2025	Medium	AC29	
49. Report on communication and outreach matters to the Advisory Committee.		Secretariat	For each AC meeting	Core / ongoing	AC29; AC30	Doc.9
Institutional Issues						
Meetings, Working Groups and Workshops						
50. Organize Advisory Committee Meetings as scheduled, with papers circulated one month in advance of the meetings.		Secretariat	For each AC meeting	Core / ongoing	AC29; AC30	
51. Arrange for a special session dealing with a species selected by the previous meeting at each meeting of the Advisory Committee, covering issues such as population		AC / Secretariat	For each AC meeting	Core / ongoing	AC29: Lagenorhynchus sp.;	

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status and structure, distribution, abundance, life history, threats and pressures, the conservation status and recommendations for research and conservation actions.					AC30: Risso's, AWSO, WBD	
52. Organize meetings of regional working groups (Jastarnia Group, North Sea Group, Common Dolphin Group) at intervals defined in each group's TOR.		Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period	Core / ongoing	CDG5, JG21, NSG13; CDG6, JG22, NSG14	
53. Organize workshops including at the annual conferences of the ECS on topics of priority interest to ASCOBANS, funding permitting.		Secretariat	As instructed	Core / ongoing	Workshops at ECS36 and ECS37	
54. Support intersessional working groups as needed.		Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period	Core / ongoing	Shallow-water Mining, NR Overlaps, NR Data Use, Climate Change, Cet.Culture, Request from NATO MARCOM, Discussion Group with Navies.	Doc.4.3
55. Seek to secure a host for MOP11 at least a year in advance of the meeting; otherwise arrange for it to be held in Bonn.		Secretariat	2027	Core / ongoing		
Project Funding						
56. Issue call for project proposals when instructed to do so by the Meeting of the Parties or the Advisory Committee, and conduct consultation on prioritization to the next meeting.		Secretariat	As instructed	Core		
57. Prepare for each meeting of the Advisory Committee, and for MOP, an overview of activities requiring funding.		Secretariat	For each AC meeting & MOP	Core	AC29; AC30	Doc.17.4
Budgetary and Administrative Matters						
58. Report on budgetary and administrative issues to the Advisory Committee.		Secretariat	For each AC Meeting	Core / ongoing	AC29; AC30	Doc.17.1, 17.2, 17.3
59. Encourage Parties and partner organizations to provide voluntary contributions, and seek new sources of funding for projects prioritized by the AC or for outreach initiatives.		Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period	Core / ongoing		Doc.17.4
Cooperation with Other Organizations						

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60. Identify priorities and complementarity and improve cooperation between ASCOBANS and institutions of the European Union.		AC / Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period	Core / ongoing		
61. Ensure close collaboration with the Secretariats and scientific advisory bodies of the CMS Family on all issues of mutual interest.		Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period	Core / ongoing	CMS StC56 (March 2025), ScC-SC7 (Dec 2025), COP15 (March 2026); ACCOBAMS MOP9 (Nov 2025)	Inf.8.1a Inf.8.1b
62. Seek to cooperate closely with relevant organizations on matters aligned with the objectives of ASCOBANS, for example ECS, HELCOM, ICES, IWC, NAMMCO, OSPAR, UNCLOS, UNEP and other relevant organizations by determining possible win-wins.	10.4 Beaked Whales 10.6 Recreational Act. 9.3 Marine Debris 8.6 (Rev.MOP10) Ocean Energy 8.7 PCBs 8.8 Munitions 8.10 (Rev.MOP9) Stranding Response 5.8 Education	AC / Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period	Core / ongoing	ECS36-37, IWC Conservation Committee Planning Group, coop. with ICES & IWC on the strandings database, OSPAR-NEAFC Collective Arr. Mtg, joint WS/mtgs with ACCOBAMS	Inf.8.1a
63. Seek to collaborate with the ICES Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC), the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) established by the European Union, the Regional Coordination Groups, the IWC Bycatch Mitigation Initiative, and other relevant organizations addressing bycatch.	8.5 (Rev.MOP9) Bycatch	AC	Throughout the intersessional period	Core / ongoing	AC30	
64. Work towards strengthening or establishing positive relationships with stakeholders, especially the fishing industry and European Advisory Councils.		AC / Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period	Core / ongoing		
65. Compile a list of Dates of Interest and report back on issues relevant to ASCOBANS to each meeting of the Parties and Advisory Committee. This requires participants at meetings identified in the list to confirm their attendance by email to the Secretariat after the meeting.		Secretariat / Parties / Partners	For next MOP and each AC meeting	Core / ongoing	AC29, AC30	Doc.8.2 Inf.8.1
66. Insofar as budgetary provisions and guidance by the Advisory Committee allow for it, ensure proper representation at meetings of other relevant organizations.		Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period	Core / ongoing	ECS36-37, IWC CC, OSPAR-NEAFC Coll.Arr.8-9, CMS	Doc.9 Inf.8.1

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					StC56, ScC-SC7 & SC8, ACCOBAMS SC16-17 & MOP9	
National Reports						
67. Identify and, where possible, address any issues that Parties might encounter regarding the compilation of the National Report.		Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period	Core / ongoing	AC29, AC30	
68. Review overlaps in national reporting with other reporting obligations (e.g. MPAs to EMODNet, noise and bycatch to ICES) and identify if any topics in ASCOBANS National Reports can instead be accessed in such databases to avoid duplication of efforts.		AC (through its intersessional WG on national reporting)	2025	Medium		Doc.16.1
69. Review how data from ASCOBANS National Reports are used, who might be the target audience, what are the objectives for data usage, and how the data could be presented.		AC (through an intersessional WG)	2025	Medium	AC29	
70. Present to Parties, each year no later than 30 June, provided all reports have been received sufficiently in advance of that date, a compilation of Annual National Reports.		Secretariat	For next MOP and each AC meeting	Core / ongoing	AC29, AC30	Inf.3
71. Make full use of the information submitted in order to assess progress in the implementation of the Agreement and make recommendations to Parties.		AC	Annually	Core / ongoing		NR.1-9
Other Matters						
72. Present a summary of i.a. progress made and difficulties encountered since the last Meeting of the Parties.		Secretariat	For MOP	Core		