

Agenda Item 6.1

Project Funding through ASCOBANS  
Progress of Supported Projects

Document 6-06

**Tursiops SEAS Project Proposal  
Progress**

**Action Requested**

- Take note of the report
- Comment

Submitted by

United Kingdom



**NOTE:**  
IN THE INTERESTS OF ECONOMY, DELEGATES ARE KINDLY REMINDED TO BRING THEIR  
OWN COPIES OF DOCUMENTS TO THE MEETING

## **Secretariat's Note**

1. The Triennium Work Plan 2010-2012 requires the Advisory Committee to review the progress of the Tursiops SEAs project and provide guidance as required (Activity 11).
2. Accordingly, the Secretariat requested the JNCC, the Secretariat's legal counterpart in the Letter of Agreement, to provide a progress report for the consideration of the Committee, which is contained in this document.

## **Tursiops SEAS project proposal progress**

We intend to submit a bid for grant funding under the LIFE+ initiative in 2011. The current project plan is somewhat reduced in scope and ambition compared to original ideas partly due to the recent progress in some of the coastal areas and partly due to the recent economic downturn and the challenge of raising the 50% matching costs required under the LIFE+ initiative. Since the conception of the Tursiops SEAS project plan, several partner regions have progressed with separately funded work investigating the abundance, movements and genetic population structuring in various parts of the NE Atlantic region. Some of these studies are currently coming to fruition and results are indicating a high degree of structuring at relatively small spatial scales (Mirimin et al., 2011). The Tursiops SEAS project will facilitate collaboration of workers between partner regions to integrate their findings into a regional framework. The project will also aim to provide support to gather data (particularly for genetic analysis) from poorly sampled coastal and shelf regions such as the inshore waters of west and North Wales. In addition the project will aim to provide data from animals using the pelagic, shelf edge region from west of Ireland/Scotland to Northern Spain since the relatively large number of *Tursiops* using this habitat are, to date, poorly understood and may provide a genetic link between coastal populations in different regions. This work will represent a significant contribution to our understanding of the role of regional SACs in providing a network of protected areas in accordance with Natura2000.

### **The project region**

The project is intended to cover coastal and shelf sea areas including key sites in Scotland, Ireland, Wales, England, France, Spain and Portugal. Offshore areas will include data from the Canaries, Madeira and the Azores islands and the shelf edge region from NW of Ireland/Scotland to NW Spain.

### **Project General Aims**

- Integrated estimate of abundance of *Tursiops* derived using mark-recapture analysis of photo-identification data across the NE Atlantic EU region.
- Assess the population structure of *Tursiops* in the waters of EU sector of the NE Atlantic
- Examine inferences of population partitioning from dietary signals (stable isotope ratios)

### **Project Specific Objectives**

- Survey of poorly known areas concentrating on the shelf edge region. Survey effort will include photo-id and biopsy sampling of encountered bottlenose dolphins.
- Integration and matching of existing recent photo-identification data within and between partner states.
- Molecular genetic analysis including (mtDNA and nuclear) of existing samples from each partner state and offshore area.

### **Planned activities (with suggested timeline necessary for submission on July 18<sup>th</sup> 2011)**

- 1) Appoint assistant to manage the proposal writing activities and to communicate with regional project representatives. (April)
- 2) Contact regional competent authorities to communicate the project objectives (April)

- 3) Re-establish contact with potential regional project partners and compile a directory of relevant data held for each coastal area. (April/May)
- 4) Re-establish contact and work with theme leaders for each activity to build the relevant sections of the proposal including budgets. (May/June)
- 5) Calculate the matched funding required to support the submission (June)
- 6) Draft proposal for circulation (June)
- 7) Submission of proposal (18<sup>th</sup> July 2011)