

**24th ASCOBANS Advisory Committee Meeting
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**INTERNATIONAL
WHALING COMMISSION**

**Bycatch Mitigation Initiative - Collaborating on the development
and promotion of solutions for tackling cetacean bycatch**

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Cetacean bycatch

IWC Bycatch Mitigation Programme



Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI)

- BMI established in 2016 at IWC66 Commission meeting
- Structure:
 - Standing Working Group on bycatch (governance)
 - Bycatch Coordinator
 - Bycatch Expert Panel (fisheries technologists, social scientists, cetacean ecologists, economists, industry specialists)

Key documents:

- 10 year strategic plan
- 2 year workplan

Endorsement during IWC67
(Florianopolis, Brazil - September 2018)



Bycatch Mitigation Initiative

Main focus of initiative:

- Adding **value to existing initiatives** on solutions for tackling cetacean bycatch
- Working with others towards developing **experimental techniques** & solutions
- Raising national & international **awareness** of issue & strategies available to tackle problem
- Exporting **experience & capacity** between countries



Bycatch Mitigation Initiative 'vision'

- Build on and add mutual value to existing international initiatives on cetacean bycatch and develop a **collaborative approach** to achieving its objectives.
- To develop a strong **multi-disciplinary** and **technical capacity** on methods for tackling cetacean bycatch, via collaborations with experts and participation in ongoing and new projects
- Work towards the development and demonstration of **effective cetacean bycatch mitigation measures**
e.g., gear developments or switching, changes in fishing practices or management, within pilot projects through to the systematic implementation at relevant local (and national scales...?)

Strategic Plan 2018-2028

2018-2020

Focus: setting up programme & building internal BMI capacity; fundraising; establishing pilot projects & collaborations; identifying gaps & potential new approaches for small scale fisheries; scoping other opportunities/ initiatives; raising awareness in IWC contracting governments about BMI & technical advice available; set up & trial of RFMO network

2021-2024

Focus: consolidation of pilot projects; evaluation of results; driving further innovation; promote uptake of BMI technical advice/capacity development; promote best practice; improvement/streamlining of bycatch reporting to IWC & other processes

2025-2028

Focus: capacity development & technical advisory programme; innovation testing; identification of future priority fisheries & populations; improvement in monitoring & reporting of bycatch information

Strategic Plan 2018-2028

Objectives including:

- Programme **coordination & fundraising**
 - Identification of **priority locations** for focused work to trial mitigation work
 - Develop, test, demonstrate effective bycatch **mitigation and monitoring solutions** in pilot & affiliated projects
 - Bring about **change in attitudes** within fishing communities towards cetacean bycatch mitigation
 - Raise **awareness** and **capacity** within national governments to tackle cetacean bycatch
 - Identify and promote **available solutions** within regional and international fisheries management organisations
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Main activities planned 2018-2020

- Focus on **small scale fisheries (particularly gillnets)** & explore opportunities for high seas commercial fisheries work
- Develop **collaborations** with others on bycatch (cetacean & non-cetacean)
- Identify ongoing projects willing to **affiliate & share experience**
- Fundraise & establish **pilot projects**
- Carry out a cetacean sensory ecology review to identify priorities for bycatch mitigation research (e.g. **potential alternatives to acoustic devices**)
- Test **mitigation, bycatch assessment & socio/economic strategies** for tackling bycatch with governments/fishing communities & stakeholders
- Raise **awareness** through communication activities
- **Engage** with priority Regional Fisheries Management organisations/bodies, Regional Seas bodies & others who manage fisheries to raise awareness of cetacean bycatch

Progress 2018

- Bycatch coordinator- commenced January 2018
- Expert panel established (gaps in Central & South America)
- Development of 2 year workplan 2018-2020
- Development of 10 year Strategic Plan
- Exploring & developing collaborations with IGOs/NGOs/experts
- IWC participation in FAO expert workshop on marine mammal bycatch mitigation



Bycatch side event- FAO COFI meeting, Rome, July 2018



IWC Secretariat @FAO COFI meeting, Rome, July 2018

Next steps 2018

- Identify **affiliate projects that are already ongoing** & willing to work with IWC & how this can be mutually beneficial
- Identify **priority fisheries/locations** to develop needed pilot projects & fundraise & establish them
- Identify **capacity development needs for IWC** and **non-IWC countries** & how the IWC can complement existing initiatives
- **2 day workshop** (Kenya, May 2019) on challenges and strategies for tackling bycatch in small scale fisheries & evaluation of usefulness of existing data



Photo: GWERN, IWC



Questions/discussion/ideas

- Any interest in considering **collaboration/affiliation** of local projects with the IWC's BMI?
- What are you working on that could be **relevant to share** with the BMI? Any novel mitigation strategies or management approaches?
- Are there elements of work that the **IWC could help with?** e.g. rapid bycatch assessments in data poor regions? Testing socio/economic/incentive based strategies? Use of our expert panel for technical advice?

