

Agenda Item 3

Species Action Plan

Document 3.0

**Draft Project Plan for the long-term
Coordination of the Harbour Porpoise
Action Plan**

Action Requested

- Take note
- Comment

Submitted by

HP Coordinator/ Secretariat



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

Secretariat's Note

The Rules of Procedure adopted at the ASCOBANS 8th Meeting of Parties remain in force until and unless an amendment is called for and adopted.

Draft Project Plan for the long-term coordination of the Harbour Porpoise Action Plans

1. At the 23rd Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC23) in September 2017 it was agreed to put in place a coordinator for the three Harbour Porpoise Action Plans to support the implementation of these instruments, following the positive experience made during 2011-2015 with the Coordinator for the North Sea Plans and across the CMS Family (e.g. African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, Saiga Antelope MOU). Terms of References were agreed at AC23 (see Annex I) and € 24,981¹ were allocated from the surplus funds available under conservation projects to fund coordination during 2018 (Budget line WBSE-SB000143.03.09, see AC24/Doc.18.2.b).
2. AC23 further agreed that action plan coordination can only be effective if it is established for the long-term. Experience needs to be built up, networks need to be established and a mechanism for reviewing and thereby improving implementation put in place amongst other matters. At a more fundamental level, trust with stakeholders needs to be built and work relationships established. This tends to take time, and experience across the CMS Family has shown that the impact of external coordination support is greatest when it is established for the long-term. Such a setup depends heavily on the commitment of Parties providing in-kind and political, as well as essential financial support.

Proposed deliverables

3. In order to establish long-term coordination, AC23 requested the in-coming coordinator for 2018 and the Secretariat to jointly develop a project plan, including deliverables and a process for cost sharing amongst all Parties (see AC23 Action Point 17). In the following, such a draft project plan is presented for AC24 to review.

Deliverables of TOR Task 1	
Review progress under the North Sea, Jastarnia and WBBK Plans and make proposals for amending the Action Points in advance of the meetings of the Groups	
Background information The three Conservation Plans have steering groups that meet annually to review progress. In support of those meetings, annual reports synthesising the main advances made by Parties, and identifying gaps, have an important role to play. A table scoring progress by individual countries in implementing each of the major actions, allows targets to be assessed on a regular basis, and where considered appropriate, for actions to be revised or new ones added.	
List of deliverables <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Production of reports reviewing implementation• Assessment of countries' progress on implementing actions in the three conservation plans	

¹ Given that these funds were taken from the ASCOBANS budget, the 13% of Programme Support Cost (PSC) had already been paid when annual contributions were paid by Parties.

Indicators	3 progress reports, 3 implementation tables
Deadlines	One month before steering group meetings
Comments	At intervals, review priority actions

Deliverables of TOR Task 2	
Review latest available information on harbour porpoise bycatch from the fleets operating in the North, Belt and Baltic Seas	
<p>Background information</p> <p>Bycatch, mainly through entanglement in static gillnets, is identified as the major source of mortality for harbour porpoise in the regions covered by the three conservation plans. Under Council Regulation 812/2004, information leading to an assessment of bycatch rates is required annually from each EU member state for submission to the European Commission. This is collated and reviewed by the ICES Working Group on the Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC), who then provide advice. In the future, the monitoring of bycatch will be incorporated within the new Data Collection Framework. This poses challenges relating to adequate sampling of high-risk fisheries, and attention to protected species bycatch (beyond discards). Attention is required to maximise the accuracy and precision of harbour porpoise bycatch rates in the three regions, working directly with ASCOBANS Parties.</p> <p>List of deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments of bycatch rates by country in each of the three regions • Gap analysis of factors influencing accurate assessment of bycatch rates 	
Indicators	Summary of bycatch rates by country for each regional conservation plan
Deadlines	One month before steering group meetings
Comments	Strategic review to identify weaknesses & propose ways to address these

Deliverables of TOR Task 3	
Provide technical support at the ICES WGBYC annual meetings and other relevant fora (e.g. the North Sea Advisory Council, Baltic Sea Advisory Council, HELCOM, OSPAR)	
<p>Background information</p> <p>Conservation threats and actions to mitigate those threats are being considered within a variety of fora. Monitoring to assess bycatch along with progress on various potential mitigation measures are reviewed annually by the ICES Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC). It is also considered at the stakeholder level by Regional Advisory Councils, whilst wider conservation issues are also addressed through HELCOM for the Baltic and OSPAR for the North-east Atlantic (including Irish & Greater North Seas). The specific focus of the three ASCOBANS Conservation Plans on the harbour porpoise in the North Sea, Belt Seas and Baltic Sea, can provide valuable technical support to those fora.</p> <p>List of deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary reports of interactions with ICES WGBYC and other relevant fora • Copies of reports from ICES WGBYC and other relevant fora (where they are available for more general release) 	
Indicators	Key information from other fora incorporated in conservation plan progress reports
Deadlines	One month before steering group meetings
Comments	Review new fora for engagement

Deliverables of TOR Task 4	
Provide technical support at meetings of the Regional Coordination Group which will develop the regional implementation of the Data Collection Framework (DCF), assuming this is practically feasible	
<p>Background information</p> <p>The new Data Collection Framework has strong implications on robust estimates of bycatch rates for harbour porpoise, which already are proving challenging to obtain. For Harbour Porpoise Conservation Plans in the three regions to achieve their objectives, it is important that close attention is paid to ensuring the best estimates practically possible so that appropriate mitigation actions can be taken. This requires liaison where possible with the Regional Coordination Group that is developing implementation of the DCF.</p> <p>List of deliverables</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input to the Marine Expert Group of the European Commission • Technical support through other appropriate channels 	
Indicators	Factors affecting effective monitoring of bycatch
Deadlines	No specific deadlines
Comments	Establish avenues for communication between ASCOBANS & the European Commission

Deliverables of TOR Task 5	
Collate regional information on life history parameters (e.g. age structure, age at sexual maturity, reproductive information) and diet for harbour porpoises in the areas covered by the three plans, ensuring synergies with other fora	
Background information Harbour porpoises face a variety of anthropogenic threats in the areas covered by the three conservation plans. In order to assess their impacts on porpoise populations, it is necessary to identify demographic trends. One way to do this is to examine aspects of their life history – changes in age structure, growth rates and ages of sexual maturity, reproductive and survival rates. Changes in diet reflecting food availability may also impact upon population life history parameters.	
List of deliverables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of regional information on life history parameters, identifying trends and gaps in knowledge • Regional review of harbour porpoise diet 	
Indicators	Existing & new information on life history parameters
Deadlines	No specific deadlines
Comments	Once a review has been completed, new research directions can be identified to fill priority gaps

Deliverables of TOR Task 6	
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Coordinate efforts to deliver the action plans, identifying synergies and opportunities for efficiency savings.

Background information

At AC23 Parties agreed that additional capacity was required to implement the three harbour porpoise action plans under ASCOBANS by establishing the post of Coordinator for the Harbour Action Plans in line with the TORs in Annex 1. Across the CMS Family such external coordination support is commonly used to strengthen implementation and has led to tremendous progress across the board, not least given that dedicated experts in the field are usually recruited.

The Coordinator for the Harbour Porpoise Action Plans is expected to not only coordinate efforts to facilitate implementation of the action plans, the incumbent is also expected to make use of the entire network of legal instruments (including IWC, ICES, OSPAR, HELCOM, EC), countries, organizations, experts and others that could be beneficial in achieving this. It is important that efforts to deliver upon each of the action plans in the three regions identify synergies and opportunities for efficiency savings, minimising unnecessary duplication of effort.

List of deliverables

- Active contribution to the implementation of all actions within the three SAPs, in close liaison with the Secretariat
- Regular correspondence with Parties, Approved Observers and other relevant stakeholders
- Provision of expert advice (e.g. information to request from ASCOBANS Parties in their National Reports with links to facilitate ready access to relevant reports provided to other fora)
- Gap analysis of information and actions relevant to implementation of the three conservation plans (see Task 1)

Indicators	Regular exchange of information with stakeholders Improved implementation of the SAPs, including national reporting
Deadlines	No specific deadlines
Comments	Close liaison with the Secretariat is essential, given that this task is essentially an add-on to the core Secretariat duty, i.e. providing implementation support.

Deliverables of TOR Task 7	
Provide advice on appropriate funding mechanisms for the long-term implementation of the three action plans and support fundraising efforts	
<p>Background information</p> <p>A number of actions have been identified for priority attention within each of the conservation plans. These have funding implications if they are to be successfully taken forward. Potential funding sources therefore need to be identified for each, at both national and international level. The Coordinator is expected to fundraise for the implementation of the three action plans and to regularly propose funding sources, which could be accessed. The Coordinator is further expected to contribute towards project proposals as part of the fundraising process, in close liaison with the Secretariat.</p> <p>List of deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of potential sources for funding aspects of implementation of the three action plans, for example, Life+ and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) • Production of fact sheets or other documents to support the fundraising process • Assistance where requested towards project proposals (e.g. Life+ SAMBAH-II application in 2019) 	
Indicators	Funding sources to implement conservation plan actions
Deadlines	No specific deadlines
Comments	For each action, there is a resource need for its successful implementation. These require to be identified, but other constraints (e.g. stakeholder engagement) may also be important

Draft process for cost sharing

4. In 2011-2015 and in 2018 the annual cost of coordination was € 25,000. Over six years from 2019-2024 until MOP10 the estimated cost for each of the ten ASCOBANS Parties would be € 17,820 (see Table 1 below).

5. Table 1 provides an example of how annual payments could be distributed and shared amongst Parties. However, this system is flexible and Parties might instead wish to make one single payment of €17,820 every six years or three payments of €5,940 every two years.

Table 1 Total coordination costs per annum have been estimated at € 28,250 (including 13% Programme Support Costs), increasing at the standard ASCOBANS 2% per annum.

Party/Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total cost per country (2019-2024)
Belgium	8,910			8,910			€ 17,820
Denmark	8,910			8,910			€ 17,820
Finland	8,910			8,910			€ 17,820
France	8,910			8,910			€ 17,820
Germany		8,910			8,910		€ 17,820
Lithuania		8,910			8,910		€ 17,820
Netherlands		8,910			8,910		€ 17,820
Poland			8,910			8,910	€ 17,820
Sweden			8,910			8,910	€ 17,820
United Kingdom			8,910			8,910	€ 17,820
Total budget available per year	35,640	26,730	26,730	35,640	26,730	26,730	
Annual coordination budget (€)	25,000	25,500	26,010	26,530	27061	27602	
PSC (13%)	3,250	3,315	3,381	3,449	3,518	3,588	
Funds needed per year	28,250	28,815	29,391	29,979	30,579	31,190	TOTAL: € 178,204

Annex I: Terms of Reference for a Coordinator of Harbour Porpoise Action Plans

1. Background

As outlined in the ASCOBANS [Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea](#), “Experience has shown that in order to be effective, Conservation Plans must have a recognised, full-time co-ordinator. This is particularly true where effective conservation requires action (including legislative action) by a number of stakeholders including: intergovernmental and national authorities, scientists from several disciplines, representatives from industry, local communities, and interested NGOs. The scale of work required by this Plan exceeds the resources available within the (part-time) ASCOBANS Secretariat.”

This is equally true with respect to the Baltic and Belt Sea areas and the ambitious [Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises](#) (Jastarnia Plan) and [Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise Population in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat](#) (WBBK) under ASCOBANS. A Coordinator for the three ASCOBANS Action Plans on Harbour Porpoises (i.e. covering the North, Belt and Baltic Seas) should therefore be appointed, not least to maximise synergies amongst the different plans.

2. Terms of Reference

a) Qualifications

The co-ordinator should have a background in marine nature conservation as well as experience and a proven understanding of the political and legal context and of scientific issues concerning harbour porpoise conservation in the North, Belt and Baltic Seas. He or she should be an effective communicator, able to establish and maintain relations with and to represent ASCOBANS positions vis-à-vis the various stakeholders.

b) Tasks

Reporting to the Jastarnia and North Sea Group, the Coordinator would, in particular, have to perform the following tasks:

- 1) Review progress under the North Sea, Jastarnia and WBBK Plans and make proposals for amending the Action Points in advance of the meetings of the Groups;
- 2) Review latest available information on harbour porpoise bycatch from the fleets operating in the North, Belt and Baltic Seas;
- 3) Provide technical support at the ICES WGBYC annual meetings and other relevant fora (e.g. the North Sea Advisory Council, Baltic Sea Advisory Council, HELCOM, OSPAR);
- 4) Provide technical support at meetings of the Regional Coordination Group which will develop the regional implementation of the Data Collection Framework (DCF), assuming this is practically feasible;
- 5) Collate regional information on life history parameters (e.g. age structure, age at sexual maturity, reproductive information) for harbour porpoises in the areas covered by the three plans, ensuring synergies with other fora;
- 6) Coordinate efforts to deliver the action plans, identifying synergies and opportunities for efficiency savings;
- 7) Provide advice on appropriate funding mechanisms for the long-term implementation of the three action plans and support fundraising efforts.

c) Working hours and travel budget

It is expected that the Coordinator would require an initial one month phase of full time work and the work would then average 2.5 days per week. Up to Euro 8,000 can be used for travel per annum.