

Agenda Item 2

Review of New Information on Threats and
Other Issues Relevant to Small Cetaceans

Information Document 2

Summary Compilation of the 2022 National
Reports Submitted by ASCOBANS Parties

Action Requested

Take note

Submitted by

Secretariat



SUMMARY COMPILATION OF THE 2022 NATIONAL REPORTS SUBMITTED BY ASCOBANS PARTIES

This information document compiles, in a summary format, the responses given to the questions in the ASCOBANS National Report Form 2022. The National Reports compiled here are those submitted in time for AC28: [Belgium](#), [Denmark](#), [Finland](#), [Germany](#), [Lithuania](#), [The Netherlands](#), [Poland](#), and [United Kingdom](#). Please refer to these full reports for detailed information.

Contents

High-level Summary of Key Messages.....	1
Section II: Habitat Conservation and Management (threats and pressures on cetaceans).....	3
B. Disturbance (incl. potential physical impacts).....	3
5. Cetacean Watching Industry	3
6. Recreational Sea Use	5
7. Other Sources of Disturbance	8
C. Habitat Change and Degradation (incl. potential physical impacts).....	8
10. Pollution and Hazardous Substances (incl. microplastics).....	8
11. Ship Strikes.....	11
12. Climate Change (incl. ocean acidification).....	12
13. Physical Habitat Change (e.g. from construction).....	14
14. Other Issues	16
E. Area-based Conservation / Marine Protected Areas.....	16
16. Protected Areas, e.g. Natura 2000 Sites	16
Section VI: Information and Education	17
A. Education and outreach	17
Section VII: Other Matters	
A. Other information or comments important for the Agreement	19
B. Difficulties in implementing the Agreement.....	19
C. Burning Issues	19

High-level Summary of Key Messages

In your country, for 2022 (Year 3), what does this report reveal about:

1. The most successful aspects of implementation of the Agreement?

BE	1) Cooperation with neighbouring countries. 2) Cooperation with the NGO's involved in ASCOBANS. 3) Feeding the regulatory framework, including MSFD
DK	1) 6-10 cetacean safari operators are currently offering whale watching in Denmark, a code of conduct has been produced (2022) and the industry seem to be sustainable. 2) Very few ship strikes documented in the annual necropsies (2 in 10 years). 3) Designated 35 Natura 2000 sites where HPs are forming part of the selection criteria.
FI	1) Active participation in the work of ASCOBANS and 2) in the work to find funding for SAMBAH II.
FR	
DE	1) The UN convention (adopted in 2022) to avoid and reduce marine plastic garbage is an important step to diminish risks for cetaceans too, as autopsies reveal they already suffer considerably by plastic garbage. 2) Negotiation of Management plans for the German MPAs (agreed in Feb 2022).
LT	1) Public awareness and interest in small cetaceans (mainly HP) has significantly increased during the period when Lithuania has been a Party. 2) Some data obtained and analysed from the EIA Programme in the planned wind farm territory. 3) Opened The Baltic Sea Animal Rehabilitation Centre.
NL	1) Successful SCANS-IV survey. 2) Continuation and formalisation of monitoring tasks on abundance (incl. SCANS), post-mortem examinations and contaminants. 3) Development of an EU LIFE proposal (CIBBRiNA) with multiple stakeholders and parties to assess bycatch of cetaceans in the North Sea. 4) Initiation of a pilot to investigate the potential to tag porpoises for determining habitat use in the southern North Sea. 5) Evaluation of the Dutch HP Conservation Plan (2020).
PL	1) Promise of financing the project made by the Kołobrzaska Fishing Group named "Development and use of trap fishing gear adapted to the conditions prevailing in the Polish coastal zone of the Baltic Sea". 2) Granting conditional financing from the EU LIFE programme of the bycatch project named CIBBRINA in which the National Marine Fisheries Research Institute in Poland is one of beneficiaries. 3) Conducting of the porpoise monitoring programme within the framework of the State Environmental Monitoring, based on SAMBAH's results. 4) A number of long-term, educational campaigns conducted by the Prof. Krzysztof Skóra Hel Marine Station of the University of Gdańsk's, as well as WWF Poland. Particularly important is the beach patrol project by volunteers, so-called "Blue Patrol". Publication and the implementation of the EC Delegated regulation on the reduction of bycatch of the Baltic Proper HP in the Baltic Sea (Regulation no 2022/303). 5) Ongoing dialogue with the fishing community on the protection of the Baltic ecosystem, including harbour porpoises.
SE	
UK	1) Long-term monitoring & management of fisheries being developed and implemented with consideration of marine mammals. 2) The continuation of several long-term monitoring schemes in the UK have been an invaluable source of information on threats, population health & pollutants in the marine environment. 3) MCCIP Marine Mammal review publication – significant work in collating available research on climate change impacts and identification of knowledge gaps and priority research areas. 4) Launch of the Joint Cetacean Data Programme in 2022 improves access to data to improve trends in abundance and distribution. 5) Publication of the Marine Wildlife Bycatch Mitigation Initiative in 2022 sets policy ambition to address bycatch, including for cetaceans.

2. The greatest challenges in implementing the Agreement?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
<p>1) Keeping the strandings network up and running. 2) Reporting obligations are currently very high, with challenges for civil servants to be as efficient as possible and to avoid duplication of efforts, with a high risk of losing momentum and efficiency.</p>	<p>1) Not much is known about the impact on recreational sea use on cetaceans. 2) There are no continuous monitoring of pollutants in small cetaceans in DK. 3) The future impact of climate change on cetaceans are unknown. 4) Multiple major wind farms planned to be constructed in the upcoming years. It will be difficult to assess the cumulative impact of them all on cetaceans. 5) General lack of awareness of the Baltic HP in DK.</p>	<p>No major challenges.</p>		<p>Reducing bycatch and a sufficient noise protection (in particular during the construction of marine wind energy plants).</p>	<p>1) Lack of human resources, especially for researchers. 2) Lack of financial resources. 3) Lack of infrastructure.</p>	<p>1) Data sharing barriers. 2) Long term funding for e.g. SCANS. 3) Not having the right organisations at the table, e.g. navies, fishers. 4) Too many technical outputs and too few communicable key messages for policy makers.</p>	<p>1) Degradation of the Baltic Sea both in terms of species structure and the expansion of anoxic areas on its bottom. 2) Cumulative effect of anthropopressure in the Baltic Sea in connection with the increasing number of new investments and ventures. 3) Fish resources depletion.</p>		<p>1) Increasing anthropogenic presence in and influence on marine environments from energy, shipping and leisure industries. 2) Understanding and management of pressures faced by cetaceans against a backdrop of uncertainties around impacts of climate change.</p>

3. The main priorities for future implementation of the Agreement?

BE	To deal with over-lap with other work and/or obligations in international fora, e.g. in OSPAR, IWC, ICES, MSFD. ASCOBANS could find niches with preparatory work for other fora, or newly emerging threats, instead of working on similar issues as other international fora?
DK	1) Baltic Proper HP: Lack of knowledge on current abundance & distribution + the Swedish military refusing permits for deploying passive acoustic equipment in the Swedish part of the Baltic Proper. 2) Essential to get SAMBAH-II funded and begun asap and to find a permanent solution for future funding. Not sustainable that scientist spend so much time trying to get funding. For the SCANS covering the neighbouring populations, funding is now covered by national funding.
FI	To implement the proposed work in SAMBAH II and continue finding effective conservation measures for Baltic proper HP.
FR	
DE	Listing the Baltic proper population of the HP in CMS Annex I will be one of the major priorities of the ASC Parties in the close future and in pursuance the resulting nature protection necessities will be a challenge for the further future.
LT	1) To involve the Lithuanian Sea Museum in the activities, to strive for the collection of information and the necessary research on harbour porpoise. 2) Obtain and analyse data by conducting the EIA Programme in the planned wind farm territory. 3) Obtain and analyse data on underwater noise in Lithuanian Baltic Sea territory by the Environment Protection Agency.
NL	1) Collaboration between navies on underwater noise from explosions (and also pinger use in Baltic). 2) Harmonising strandings databases, or at least determining the potential and appetite for this. 3) Collaborating on bycatch work, among others within CIBBRiNA.
PL	1) Save Baltic porpoise populations by improving protection in areas of their existence and monitoring of by-catch, reducing and mitigating. 2) Continuation of activities carried out so far, together with promotion of pro-ecological practices throughout the country, which affects the quality of the waters feeding the Baltic Sea.
SE	
UK	1) Further development of management and monitoring plans for marine protected areas. 2) Improving understanding of the impacts of climate change on small cetaceans in UK waters, including better understanding the impacts of environmental variables beyond temperature, better understanding cumulative impacts and the impacts of bottom-up changes on marine mammals. 3) Continued focus on improving the existing bycatch monitoring and mitigation.

Section II: Habitat Conservation and Management (threats and pressures on cetaceans)

B. Disturbance (incl. potential physical impacts)

5. Cetacean Watching Industry

5.1. Do you have any commercial small cetacean watching industry operation in your country?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	Yes.	No.		Yes.	No.	Yes.	No.		Yes.

5.2. Please identify the total number of operators conducting commercial cetacean watching in your country and provide details in the table.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	6-10. HP primary and secondary focus in H The Sound and H Belt Sea. BD primary focus in H Kattegat. All links provided to websites or contact details of ports and operators.	-		0-5. HP primary focus in OII Southern North Sea. Link .	-	0-5. -	-		21+. List of operators attached in the NR.

5.3. Does your country have a definition of the term 'harassment' in general and/or as it relates to the Cetacean Watching Industry?

BE	Yes. In legislation, intentional disturbance of marine mammals is prohibited and should be avoided.
DK	Yes. There is no official definition of harassment in relation to the Cetacean Watching Industry, but the Danish “Hunting and Game Management Act” describes disturbance as follows: “The mammals mentioned in Annex 1 must not be intentionally disturbed with a harmful effect on the species or population. The prohibition applies in relation to all life stages of the covered animal species.” The Act is part of the implementation of the Habitat Directive in Danish law.
FI	Yes. Nature conservation act 70§ stipulates that intentional harassment of all protected animal species if forbidden.
FR	
DE	Yes. The “Federal Nature Conservation Act” §44 prohibits ‘harassment’ which is defined as: to chase, catch, disturb, injure or kill wild protected species or to remove them from nature, damage or destroy breeding or resting places. The National Park Law Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea: Art. 5 Protection prohibits any actions that could destroy, damage, change or lastingly disturb the protected area or its components. In addition, it prohibits the significant disturbance of whales.
LT	No.
NL	Yes. The Nature Conservation Act, which follows the EU Habitats Directive directly, defines deliberate disturbance.
PL	No.
SE	
UK	No. There is currently no UK-wide set definition but the UK Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) and The Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) defines disturbance as any disturbance which is likely to impair the animal’s ability to survive, reproduce or rear/nurture young, or effect migration, or significantly affect local distribution or abundance.

5.4. Have there been any incidents of harassment towards small cetaceans in the context of commercial cetacean watching reported to authorities during the reporting period?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	No.	No.		No.	No.	No.	No.		Yes. In 2021, there were 254 incidences of cetacean disturbance in coastal waters around Cornwall. 2 reported cases were referred to the wildlife crime officers of the police, outcome is unknown.

5.5. Does your country have any operators that offer swimming with dolphins (or other small cetaceans)?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	No.	No.		No.	No.	No.	No.		No.

5.6. List any incidents of harassment to small cetaceans during the reporting period in your country in the context of swimming with small cetaceans reported to authorities - and the outcome if known (behavioural response, injury, death, any court proceedings).

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	-	NA		No incidents.	NA	-	-		-

5.7. Are there any solitary sociable dolphin interactions in your country?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes. BD in OII Southern North Sea. 2022. No incidents: a resident BND (Belgian-French waters) regularly interacts with divers, at its own initiative, and the divers respectfully interact with the animal.	Yes. BD in H Belt Sea Oct. 2019-Apr. 2023. The dolphin " Delle " stayed in the waters near Svendborg for more than 3 years and has regular human interactions.	No.		No.	No.	Yes. BD in Southern North Sea on 12/05/2020.	No.		No.

5.8. Does your country have any mitigation measures (codes of conduct/guidelines) in place in the event of disturbance or harassment in the context of commercial cetacean watching, swimming with cetaceans, and interactions with solitary sociable dolphins?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	Yes. Measure: Code of conduct (in Danish) . Date of implementation: 2022. Region: all Danish waters	-		Yes. Laws that forbid harassment in general (see 5.3) and the possibility of proceedings and, where appropriate, penalties. Voluntary code of conduct to regulate the behaviour of humans around wild cetaceans.	No.	Yes. Not specifically, however, the Netherlands Animal Welfare act is applicable.	-		Yes. Multiple codes of conduct and links referred to including Defra Marine and Coastal Wildlife Code and The Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code .

5.9. List any incidents of harassment to small cetaceans during the reporting period in the context of interactions with solitary sociable dolphins reported to authorities - and the outcome if known (behavioural response, injury, death, any court proceedings).

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	-	-		No incidents.	NA	A solitary-sociable bottlenose dolphin known by the name of "Zafar" washed up dead and a post-mortem revealed that there was an anthropogenic source of death consistent with vessel collision.	-		-

5.10. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on the cetacean watching industry, "swim with small cetacean" operations, solitary sociable dolphin interactions and their possible effects on small cetaceans in your country.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	Riisager-Simonsen & Lusseau. 2022. Status for Marine mammal tourism in Denmark; Code of Conduct for whale industry in Denmark (in Danish); Brief on Code of Conduct (in Danish)	NA		No relevant research or work.	NA	Jsseldijk et al., 2020. Fatal attraction: The death of a solitary-sociable bottlenose dolphin due to anthropogenic trauma in the Netherlands. Lutra 63 (1-2): 17-32	-		-

5.11. Have there been any other instances/issues related to the cetacean watching industry during the reporting period in your country?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	No.	No.		No.	No.	No.	-		Yes. The Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code 2021 report highlighted commercial wildlife boat trips accounted was the second highest cause of disturbance reporting in Cornwall, accounting for a quarter of reports. With leisure craft accounting for half of the reports between 2014 and 2020.

5.12. Is the perceived level of pressure from commercial small cetacean watching in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
N/A.	Staying the same (HP, BND). <10 operators cannot have a major impact on HP. BND: very few operators (2).	N/A.		Staying the same.	N/A. No small cetaceans present.	Staying the same. Number of operators and the number of trips is limited. One operator ceased HP trips in 2019, and now offers 4 North Sea bird tours with HP as secondary aim.	N/A.		Increasing (BND, WBD). Noted by Natural England local area teams and CMCC reported increasing pressure across all locally present species.

Section II: Habitat Conservation and Management (threats and pressures on cetaceans)

B. Disturbance (incl. potential physical impacts)

6. Recreational Sea Use

6.1. Are data on recreational sea use available for your country?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes. Information on number of recreational vessels per port and socio-economic aspects. Belgische Staat, 2018; Dauwe et al., 2022.	Yes. Nation-wide PPGIS-mapping of coastal and marine recreation (92 different activities in 16 main types). Detailed information on the activities can be found	Yes. Look at the previous reports. [The number of recreational vessels (but incl. also inland water). For marine sites, there are a higher number of visitors, because		Yes. Tourist number per region. SparkassenTouris musbarometer Schleswig-Holstein; Saisonumfrage Tourismus; Sozioökonomische Monitoring	No.	Yes. There are about 400,000 recreational vessels in use (but this includes freshwater recreation; link). The NL has a relatively long coastline, with many accessible beaches that are visited by many local and international tourists, especially in summer. The Dutch North Sea sees a lot of recreational	Yes.		Yes. Hotspot map of recreational boating activity in the UK, published by Royal Yachting Association (RYA)

	in the report and in the ECOMAR appendix .	those who came by boat and don't visit e.g. visitor centres are not usually counted. 2016-2019 NR Finland]		(SÖM): Forschungsbericht "Strukturen im Bootsmarkt" ; Marina in Nordseeküste .		boating from surfers, recreational fishermen, sailors and divers. Map of recreational areas along the coast . Coastal tourism is increasing: In 2017, the coast attracted 6.5M tourists; by 2030, expected to reach 10M (link).			last updated in 2019.
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6.2. Is the information on main areas of recreational sea use available for your country?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No & not applicable. Recreational sea use is, for the major part, taking place within the coastal zone, at the most up to a few miles offshore.	Yes. 1) PPGIS-mapping of 92 coastal and marine recreation in Danish marine waters and report 174 pp (link); 2) Above data in 500 x 500 m cells and triangulated with AIS data for recreational boats (link). Both data can be obtained through the University of Copenhagen.	Yes. Look at previous reports. [Northern Baltic Proper. General information, including maps etc. Data available online (many links provided) 2016-2019 NR Finland]		Yes.	No.	No. There is some local information on tourism and recreation in the various provinces, or for various types of recreation. However, there is no comprehensive overview of all recreational sea use.	-		Yes (link).

6.3. Were there any incidents of disturbance or harassment to small cetaceans in relation to recreational sea use in your country?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	Unknown.	Unknown.		Unknown. No incidents known.	No.	No.	No.		Yes. 3 incidents (2021-2022) involving boat-related disturbances of dolphins. 1) A speeding boat harassed a pod of feeding bottlenose dolphins, leading to behaviour changes and animal displacement from area. Legal action resulted in the boat driver's conviction (link). 2) Leisure boat disrupting a pod of 6 common dolphins (CD), dispersing them and prompting a report to the Marine Management Organisation. 3) Another hire leisure boat caused altered behaviour in a pod of 10+ CD, without legal consequences.

6.4. Does your country have any mitigation measures (codes of conduct/guidelines/laws/rules) in place in the event of disturbance or harassment of small cetaceans through recreational sea use?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes. Legislation (2001) states that it is illegal to disturb marine mammals, and that disturbance needs to be avoided in the Oil Southern North Sea region. The interactions have been very rare – none in 2022. Notably, there was a case involving a non-	Yes. Code of conduct for whale watching industry (2022) may also be applied to recreational sea-use.	No.		Yes. Laws in place (see 5.3 and 5.8); provisions and conditions can be set within the framework of approval procedures. 1) An updated regulation of the use of the Wadden Sea by ships and water sports (2023) covers the area of the whale sanctuary which is part of the National Park SH Wattenmeer; 2) Speed boats: In 2021 &	No.	Yes. The Nature Conservation Act requires an assessment of new activities that can potentially cause negative effects in harbour por-	-		Yes. Same codes as listed under 5.8 apply to both commercial and recreation sea-use.

small cetacean in 2022. A humpback whale near the Belgian coast attracted interest from a company for whale watching, but plans were abandoned due to public pressure.				2023, letters / mails were sent to operators of speed boat tours in the Baltic Sea by MEKUN informing them of measures and requirements in order to comply with the conservation law (e.g., continuous search for harbour porpoises at the surface, precautionary distance to MPAs).		poises. Mitigation measures need to be taken when effects are expected.			
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6.5. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on disturbance or harassment of small cetaceans through recreational sea use in your country?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	5 listed.	NA.		1 listed. (Study on underwater sound radiation from RHIBs in the Baltic Sea)	NA.	1 listed. (About recreational boating activities in the Wadden Sea)	-		Operation Seabird – collaborative project with NGOs, police and the Marine Management Organisation to address the issues of marine wildlife disturbance from recreational use of the sea.

6.6. Have there been any other instances/issues related to recreational sea use in your country during the reporting period?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	No.	No.		No.	No.	No.	No.		Yes. Though the 2022 report has not been published, the UK wildlife and countryside link report on wildlife crime in 2021 reported increasing numbers of cetacean disturbance incidences in coastal waters in Cornwall being reported to the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code group. The number of incidences which were perceived to be probable wildlife crime raised from 73 (2018), 90 (2019), 33 (2020) to 254 in 2021.

6.7. Is the perceived level of pressure from recreational sea use in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Unknown.	Staying the same. Generally, recreational participation is fairly stable in the population – University of Copenhagen has studies since the 1980s approximately every 10 years. New data in 2024. The PPGIS study has (so far) not been repeated so no longitudinal studies to see changes in individual activities beyond a few from general study. 78% of the Danish adult population annually participate in water-oriented outdoor recreation. No studies on small cetaceans in relation to recreation.	Staying the same.		Increasing.	Unknown.	Unknown.	-		Increasing. Reports to CMCC, Reports from Natural England Area Teams & Natural Resource Wales broadly across all small cetacean species found in the area.

Section II: Habitat Conservation and Management (threats and pressures on cetaceans)

B. Disturbance (incl. potential physical impacts)

7. Other Sources of Disturbance

7.1. Have there been any incidents of disturbance to small cetaceans in your country during the reporting period, not covered in the items above?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	No.	No.		No.	No.	Yes. An incident occurred with a civilian and a beaked whale that was beached in Zandvoort (southern region, Northern Sea). Bystanders rescued the beached whale, and as it was swimming away, a female attempted to ride on the back of the whale. The woman faced with Public Prosecution Service with a conditional dismissal and probation of one year.	No.		No.

7.2. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on other sources of disturbance in your country.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	No.	No.		No.	None.	-	No.		-

Section II: Habitat Conservation and Management (threats and pressures on cetaceans)

C. Habitat Change and Degradation (incl. potential physical impacts)

10. Pollution and Hazardous Substances (incl. microplastics)

10.1. Does your country conduct monitoring of pollutants in small cetaceans?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes. Belgium participates in the OSPAR work – indicator on persistent chemicals in marine mammals (link).	No.	No.		Yes. In Schleswig-Holstein (SH) and Meckelnburg-Vorpommern (MV): Samples (faeces as well as stomach and intestine content) are collected during regular conducted necropsies. Organ samples (liver, kidneys, muscle, blubber) are collected for tissue banks and toxicological analyses depending on the state of preservation. Lower Saxony: Pilot monitoring started last year with 10 HPs.	No.	Yes. Tissue samples of a selection of fifty annually necropsied harbour porpoises are analysed on PCB's and PFAS. In 2022 PFAS, PCB, PBDE and HCB were sampled in a selection of fish species that are known prey of harbour porpoise.	No.		Yes. Pollutants in small cetaceans are monitored through a collaboration between the Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme (CSIP), Scottish Marine Animal Strandings Scheme (SMASS) and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Agriculture Science (CEFAS). Additional funding for small cetacean contaminant analyses has been provided through the NERC funded consortium project ' ChemPop '.

10.2. Who is carrying out the pollutant monitoring program? Please provide information on institution(s)/agencies that collect the samples and carry out analyses.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
2 listed.	-	-		2 listed.	-	2 listed.	-		3 listed.

10.3. Identify the small cetacean species that were covered by your monitoring program during the reporting period.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Information not received from University of Liège.	-	-		HP, CD.	-	HP.	-		BD, KW, SBW, HP.

10.4. Select the source of your samples.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Necropsy from stranding & from bycatch.	-	-		Necropsy from stranding & from bycatch.	-	Necropsy from stranding.	-		Necropsy from stranding & from bycatch.

10.5. Select the geographical coverage of your monitoring program

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
OSPAR Region II (Southern North Sea)	-	-		OSPAR Region II (Dogger Bank & Southern North Sea), HELCOM (Arkona Basin, Kattegat, Belt Sea, The Sound)	-	OSPAR Reg.II (Southern North Sea)	-		OSPAR Reg.II (Southern & Northern North Sea, Channel), OSPAR Reg.III (Celtic Sea, Irish Sea, Irish & Scottish W. Coast)

10.6. Select the contaminant / pathogen analyses you have conducted for small cetaceans.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Morbillivirus, Brucella, Herpesvirus, Influenzavirus, fungus.	-	-		POPs, Toxic elements, Brucella, Microplastics, Salmonella sp. Virbrio sp., Hafnia alvei, Hathewayia limosa, nematods: Torynurus convolutes, Halocercus sp., Pseudalius inflexus, Influenzavirus, Leptospiren.	-	POPs, Morbillivirus, Brucella. No regular screening for viruses, but based on suspicion of prevalence of a virus a PCR- or IHC- test is performed. Apart from morbilivirus and brucella, samples were regularly screened for herpes, pox and influenza viruses. Avian influenza has not been found.	-		POPs, Toxic elements, Brucella. The POPs analysed were HCB, HCHs, DDTs, PCBs, BDEs, HBCDs, and PFASs. In HP, additional analyses were carried out to determine concentrations of the following metals: chromium, nickel, copper, zinc, arsenic, cadmium, lead, selenium, manganese, iron, mercury and silver. NB: Brucella sp. tested for in majority of necropsies conducted during 2022. (Tested species not listed in table 10.3.) NB: samples have been collected from all small cetacean necropsies conducted in the UK during 2022 for potential future contaminant analyses. Includes ongoing collaborative research for POPs, radionuclides, microplastics etc. (Sampled species not listed in table 10.3.)

10.7. Does your country determine microplastics in small cetaceans?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	Yes.	No.		Yes.	No.	Yes.	No.		Yes.

10.7. (cont.) Do you have a specific protocol to monitor microplastics in small cetaceans?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	Not a particular protocol, but the implemented method is described in: Mikkelsen et al., 2022.	-		Yes. Samples (faeces as well as stomach and intestine content) are collected during regular conducted necropsies of marine mammals from German waters, including cetaceans such as the harbour porpoise for microplastic monitoring.	-	Yes. Microplastics are ad-hoc determined; stomach remains are stored and assessed irregularly, using the proposed protocol for monitoring of microplastics that can be found in: van Franeker et al., 2018.	-		Yes. Methodology according to: Nelms et al., 2019.

10.8. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on impact of pollution and hazardous substances (incl. microplastics) on small cetaceans in your country.

FBE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	2 listed.	-		6 listed.	-	-	-		3 listed.

10.9. If applicable, list any additional evidence/data of reduced impacts of pollutants on small cetaceans following implementation of national mitigation measures (e.g. decline of contaminant levels in blubber over time).

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No information.	No data.	NA.		Not applicable.	NA.	-	-		Decline of PCB concentrations detailed in: Williams et al., 2023.

10.10. Have there been any instances/issues related to pollution and hazardous substances in your country during the reporting period?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	No.	No.		No.	No.	No.	No.		No.

10.11. Is the perceived level of pressure from pollution and hazardous substances in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	Unknown.	Unknown.		Increasing & unknown. Regional variations LS: Increasing: building, ship traffic and coastal construction (LNG terminals).	Unknown.	Unknown.	-		Decreasing & staying the same. HP: Modelling of PCB blubber concentrations in HPs shows decreasing impact; CD: Modelling of PCB blubber concentrations appears to be decreasing in females & juveniles but staying the same in males. Manuscript in prep. Please note, 10.11 relates to expert opinion on PCB blubber concentrations in selected small cetacean species only. It does not include opinion on all contaminants/pathogens listed in Table 10.6.

Section II: Habitat Conservation and Management (threats and pressures on cetaceans)

C. Habitat Change and Degradation (incl. potential physical impacts)

11. Ship Strikes

11.1 Are there reports available in your country of ship strikes with small cetaceans from visual observations?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	No.	No.		No.	No.	No.	No.		No.

11.2. Are there reports in your country of vessel strikes from necropsies of stranded animals for the reporting period?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes. 1 possible BD in 2022 in the OII Southern North Sea. Lesions present on body.	[No data for 2022. LFPW in 2018]	No.		No.	No.	Yes. 1 possible HP in Southern North Sea. (Van Schalkwijk et al., 2023)	No.		Yes. 2 certain CD (Short beaked Common Dolphin) in 2022. One in OII Channel and another in OIII Irish & Scottish W. Coast. Diagnosed by CSIP and SMASS respectively.

11.3. Does your country have a protocol in use to determine that a cause of death in postmortem examination is due to a vessel strike?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes. Standard necropsy protocol.	No. Not a particular protocol, but all necropsied cetaceans are examined for outer and inner lesions.	Yes. Using the ASCOBANS protocol.		Yes. In Germany, ship strikes are protocolled within the standard post-mortem examination protocol.	No.	Yes. The necropsy procedure involves the use of a standardized protocol by LJs-seldijk t al., 2019 along with other report documents and scientific journal articles.	No.		Yes. All cetacean post-mortem investigations were conducted using standard procedures e.g., Best Practice on Cetacean Post-mortem Investigation and Tissue Sampling. Joint ACCOBAMS & ASCOBANS document

11.4. Is there evidence in your country from existing photo-identification catalogues of small cetaceans of any non-lethal ship strike during the reporting period?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	No.	No.		No.	No.	No.	No.		No.

11.5. Do you have any other photographs or evidence of ship strikes outside of the photo identification catalogue?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	[no data for 2022]	No.		No.	No.	Yes. Refer to 11.2: Van Schalkwijk et al. (2023)	No.		No.

11.6. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on ship strikes and its possible effects on small cetaceans in your country.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Participating in the EU Life-project "Seadetec".	No.	NA		No new research / work.	NA	-	-		Organisation Cetacea (Orca) conduct research into ship strike via platforms of opportunity. Link

11.7. List any management/policy actions/relevant regulations/guidelines related to mitigating ship strike for small cetaceans (re-routing, tracking animals, ship speed limits) in your country and the year of implementation (current and planned).

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
None.	No.	NA		There are rules that regulate the speed of motorboats inside National Parks. Speed boats (also see section 6.4): In 2021 & 2023, letters/Mails were sent to operators of speed boat tours in the Baltic Sea by MEKUN informing them of measures and requirements in order to comply with the conservation law LS: "Befahrensverordnung".	NA	NA	-		Refer to 11.6 – Orca have developed training and a toolkit for mitigating ship strike.

11.8. Have there been any other instances/issues of ship strike on small cetaceans in your country in the reporting period?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	No.	No.		No.	No.	No.	No.		No.

11.9. Is the perceived level of pressure from ship strikes on small cetaceans in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Not applicable. Hardly any animals present that are vulnerable to ship strikes.	Unknown for the HP as there are very few documented cases.	Unknown.		Unknown.	Unknown.	Unknown.	NA		CD pressure is staying the same based on monitoring through UK stranding programmes (CSIP and SMASS).

Section II: Habitat Conservation and Management (threats and pressures on cetaceans)

C. Habitat Change and Degradation (incl. potential physical impacts)

12. Climate Change (incl. ocean acidification)

12.1. Does your country undertake monitoring that has potential to contribute to knowledge and identification of climate impacts on small cetaceans?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes.	Yes.	Yes.		Yes.	No.	Yes.	Yes.		Yes.

12.2. Which effects has your country been monitoring during the reporting period?

Effect	BE	DK	FI*	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Changes in small cetacean abundance	✓	✓			✓		✓			✓
Changes in small cetacean distribution	✓	✓			✓		✓			✓
Changes in small cetacean migration or movement timing							✓			
Changes in small cetacean community structure							✓			
Changes in reproductive success and timing of small cetaceans	✓						✓			
Changes in prey (fish) abundance and distribution	✓	✓			✓		✓			✓

Effect	BE	DK	FI*	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Changes in timing of prey (fish) spawning and migration	✓						✓			
Changes in fishing effort	✓	✓					✓			✓
Changes in the occurrence of pathogens	✓						✓			✓
Incidence of algal blooms							✓			

*FI indicated general monitoring of marine environment and climate.

12.3. Relevant new research/work/collaborations which provide evidence/data about climate change, including its emerging potential issues and effects on small cetaceans in your country.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	1 publication listed: "Forecasting shifts in habitat suitability of three marine predators suggests a rapid decline in inter-specific overlap under future climate change"	The HELCOM Climate Change Fact Sheet has been produced to better understand the effects of climate change in the Baltic Sea. The publication provides the latest available science in the region on what has now become a global emergency.		-	-	11 publications listed.	Institute of Meteorology conducted the project "Climate conditions of changes in the marine environment on the example of the southern Baltic Sea". The results of the project enabled the creation of scenarios of changes in the Baltic Sea.		6 publications listed.

12.4. Have there been any instances/issues related to identified trends in small cetacean populations as a result of climate change in your country during the reporting period?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	No.	No.		No.	No.	No.	Yes. State monitoring results have indicated the existence of a stable population of western harbour porpoise in our waters in numbers significantly exceeding the number resulting from the SAMBAH project. The results also indicate some increase of the Baltic proper population abundance.		No.

12.5. Is the perceived level of pressure from climate change to small cetaceans in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Unknown.	Unknown.	Unknown.		Unknown.	Unknown.	Unknown.	Unknown.		Evidence of the impacts of climate change on small cetaceans in the United Kingdom may be increasing but more long-term monitoring of marine mammals is needed to better identify changes in the distribution and abundance of species, as well as more research into the impacts of environmental variables.

Section II: Habitat Conservation and Management (threats and pressures on cetaceans)

C. Habitat Change and Degradation (incl. potential physical impacts)

13. Physical Habitat Change (e.g. from construction)

13.1. Provide spatial information on locations (in form of maps and/or links) of physical habitat change in your country by activity type (dredging, marine construction, coastal construction) for the reporting period.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Oil Southern North Sea. Maps, GIS, reports. Link .	All Danish seas. MSP map. Link .	HELCOM Map and data service		Kaskasi, DWk, and BE OSS Maps provided in the National Report . Links were also provided to MarinEars , GeoSeaPortal , and MDI-DE portal .	NA	Sand extraction map . GIS-data on sand extraction, dredging, construction work is available on request .	Geoportal		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marine Information System (MIS) provided by the MMO hosts information for England and Wales. - Marine Scotland - Wales Marine Planning Portal - Defra Mapper

13.2. Does your country have any reported cases of physical habitat changes (e.g. dredging, marine construction, coastal construction) impacting small cetaceans during the reporting period?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
During the reporting period, no specific habitat change took place. There was no offshore construction, except for the construction of a mariculture farm (blue mussels), for which no information of an impact is available (yet). Four publications were listed to highlight the temporary unavailability or marine space for porpoises during construction activities.	No.	No.		No. Lower Saxony (LS): There is fishing pressure (shrimp fisheries, dredging) and construction (noise) for new cables to connect OWF with land, but the impacts on harbour porpoise are unknown.	No.	No.	No.		Yes. In Wales - Harbour construction for aggregate extraction and oil & Gas prospecting. Impacts not thought to be significant to marine mammals and best practices used.

13.3. Does your country have any mitigation measures (regulations/guidelines) to prevent impacts on small cetaceans during physical habitat change activities (e.g. dredging, marine construction, coastal construction)?

BE	Yes. The use of sound mitigation and effect mitigation during offshore wind farm construction (but no construction activities took place in 2022). Measurement has been effective, refer to 13.2.
DK	Yes. All major physical changes to the marine environment must go through the EIA process, where the potential impact on all marine mammals must be assessed and minimised. Measurement is thought to be effective.
FI	Bubble curtains are sometimes used.
FR	
DE	Yes. <u>Measures:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction of the noise at the source: Mandatory low-noise working methods for pile installation and restricted noise emissions during pile-driving works. - Avoidance of significant cumulative impacts: It is ensured, that at any time, not more than 10% of the area of the German EEZ of the North Sea and not more than 10% of an adjacent nature conservation area are affected by significant pile driving installation noise disturbance. From 1 May to 31 August, it must be

	ensured, that not more than 1% of the sub-region I of the nature conservation area „Sylter Außenriff – Östliche Deutsche Bucht“ which serves as a breeding area is not affected by significant disturbance-causing. The measures have been shown to be effective and acoustic monitoring has shown that porpoises do leave the immediate impact zone, but return as construction works ceases.
LT	NA
NL	Not to our knowledge. Acoustic impact is mitigated.
PL	Yes. Measures introduced to mitigate impacts of projects include soft start procedures, using acoustic scaring devices called “pingers”, bubble curtains, presence monitoring during the construction phase.
SE	
UK	Yes, marine mammal mitigation plans are a requirement of EIAs for offshore development, or as part of Habitats Regulation Assessments. Links: MPA & SAC Management Scotland , GOV.UK Habitat regulations assessments . Assessments of effects (EIA, HRA, SEA) and industry best practices are also implemented where applicable. These measures have been effective and allow the development of knowledge regarding the harm caused to species if an MPA is reduced/removed.

13.4. Relevant new initiatives/projects/publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) in your country during the reporting period on impacts from physical habitat change on small cetaceans (incl. title, organization, lead author).

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Refer to 13.2.	Assessments of planned wind farms are published but very few studies include monitoring of the actual construction and operational phase.	NA		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The construction of the Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link is accompanied by a harbour porpoise monitoring - Redirect/Refine (BSH with ITAW and JASCO), Cumulative effects of construction noise on harbour porpoises (report pending mid 2023). - OWF Noise (BSH with itap GmbH), Technical report on operational noise of offshore wind farms, report pending mid-2023 	NA	Not to their knowledge.	-		-

13.5. Have there been any other instances/issues in your country regarding physical habitat change during the reporting period?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	No.	No.		No	No.	No.	No		No.

13.6. Is the perceived level of pressure from physical habitat change in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Increasing level of activities at sea with an effect on habitats.	Increasing for the HP. There is a plan to construct a number of new wind farms within a short period of time.	Increasing. Wind power constructions are increasing especially in the Gulf of Bothnia.		Increasing and staying the same due to regional variation. Measures to mitigate noise impact are very effective, e.g. the use of species-specific deterrence signals instead of seal scarers for HP. Lower-Saxony: increasing due to increasing construction work and ship traffic.	Unknown.	Staying the same.	-		Increasing across all species, as seen by an increase in number of planning applications annually.

Section II: Habitat Conservation and Management (threats and pressures on cetaceans)

C. Habitat Change and Degradation (incl. potential physical impacts)

14. Other Issues

14.1. List any other issues related to habitat change and degradation not mentioned above.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	-	NA.		No other issues.	NA.	-	-		-

Section II: Habitat Conservation and Management (threats and pressures on cetaceans)

E. Area-based Conservation / Marine Protected Areas

16. Protected Areas, e.g. Natura 2000 Sites

16.1. Does your country have MPAs (existing or proposed) where small cetaceans are the primary reason for the (proposed) designation?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	Yes, 4 MPAs in the H. Belt Sea, H The Sound, and OII Skagerrak.	No.		No.	No.	No.	No.		Yes, 9 MPAs in OIII Celtic Sea, OIII Irish & Scottish W. Coast, OIII Irish Sea, OII Northern North Sea and OII Southern North Sea.

16.2. Does your country have MPAs (existing or proposed) with small cetaceans are forming part of the selection criteria?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes, 1 MPA.	Yes, 31 MPAs.	No.		Yes, 26 MPAs.	No.	Yes, 8 MPAs.	Yes, 4 MPAs.		Yes, 3 MPAs.

16.3. Provide information on management measures, including regulations/guidelines, particularly relevant to small cetaceans in MPAs listed above. Including any temporal/spatial restriction of activities (i.e. seasonal fishery closures).

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
[Pressure is not listed] Site is not designated for small cetaceans and no specific measures are taking place.	Site: Adler grund. Pressure: By-catch of the Baltic Proper HP. Measure: Temporary closure of fishery	NA		Multiple sites. Pressures: bycatch, fishing, exploration of hydrocarbons, and ship traffic. Measures: regulations on fishery equipment, navigation regulations and reduction of fishing.	NA	Multiple sites. Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of seasonal/year-round closed areas in coastal MPAs for specific fisheries or all activities. - Imposition of restrictions and seasonal limitations on (commercial) gillnet fisheries. - Requirement of individual licensing and review for most (new) activities in N2000 areas. 	Multiple sites. Pressure: by-catch. Measures: pingers used on static nets and the closure of the use of static nets.		Site: Skomer MCZ. Measure: fishing/ marine developments not allowed within site and there is a speed limit.

16.4. Provide details of existing or proposed monitoring schemes related to the effectiveness of MPAs/management measured listed above for small cetaceans.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No specific measures or monitoring scheme for the Natura 2000 site.	Danish Natura 2000 sites for HP are monitored by aerial surveys and/or passive acoustic monitoring. Link to paper.	NA		<u>Aerial surveys</u> covering the entire EEZ of the German North Sea, parts of Schleswig-Holstein National Park (esp. the whale sanctuary) and the western German Baltic Sea. <u>Monitoring acoustic activities</u> of harbour porpoises in the German Wadden Sea using PODs.	NA	Every six years, a review and assessment of all HD species and habitats is conducted to determine their conservation status. The most recent assessment was performed in 2019, and the conservation status of the harbour porpoise was determined to be 'favourable'. As for N2000 areas, management plans are renewed every 6 years.	Acoustic CPODs were located in three areas to provide information on the abundance and distribution of the Baltic Sea harbour porpoises and possible changes in these two parameters as a result of conservation measures and/or pressures.		Annual Bottlenose dolphin monitoring to determine condition/status of SAC (Cardigan Bay/Pen Llyn ar Sarnau SACs) and ad hoc monitoring of porpoise presence in Skomer MCZ waters.

16.5. Relevant new research/work/collaboration relating to MPAs in your country.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	-	In Life IP Biodiversea project , the whole MPA network and many individual MPAs will be evaluated.		No new research.	NA	MONS study on the behaviour of cetaceans within closed areas. Refer to "other matters" for more information.	-		Paper: Modelled Distribution and Abundance of Cetaceans and Seabirds in Wales and Surrounding Waters

Section VI: Information and Education

A. Education and outreach

1.1 List education/outreach activities in the reporting period in your country, which are of relevance to conservation of small cetaceans in the ASCOBANS Area.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
RBINS produces a yearly report in marine mammals for the larger audience.	Aarhus University does continual monitoring through a permanent listening station located in Middelfart Old Harbour. Fjord & Baelt Aquarium hosts live harbour porpoises all year round. Both initiatives have the gen-	No.		Outreach has been organised through National Parks, administration, local NGOs in the form of guided tours, educational offers and events, interactive information modules, reporting	Lithuanian Sea Museum hosts the IDBHP annually. The museum invited sustainable fashion house META to the event to share the importance of reusing	Hosted a number of outreach events throughout the year, incl. a new rehabilitation centre including an education area by SOS Dolfijn, a Day for Stranding Network Volunteers facilitated by the Ministry and Utrecht University, Junior Summer School by Utrecht University, a yearly beach clean-up by Stichting	Celebrated IDBHP and The Underwater Noise Day organised by the University of Gdansk. The university additionally runs a Facebook		Several outreach programs including through SMMSS, CWTMS, CSIP, SWF, WDC, Scottish Dolphin Centre and HWDT. All activities have involved a form of educational outreach such as

	eral public as their target audience.			campaign for dead findings.	clothes to have less impact on the environment.	De Noordzee, primary school visits by SOS Dolfijn, "Bruinvis Buddys" educational kids group.	page dedicated to the HP.		school talks and volunteer groups.
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1.2 List current information/outreach materials produced in your country, which are of relevance to the ASCOBANS Area and species.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Two publications, "Strandings and sightings of marine mammals in Belgium 2022" and "Marine mammals in Belgium in 2022" were published by RBINS within the last year.	-	-		"Marine conservation in Schleswig-Holstein: Programme of measures of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2022-2027 to protect Germany's marine waters in the North Sea and Baltic Sea" published by MEKUN, Faltblatt Schweinswal by the National Parks Authority, Walpfad by the National Parks Authority.	-	An online lesson package for primary school students and teachers called "De Walviswereld Dichtbij" (The World of the Whale Closer), prepared by SOS Dolfijn. Utrecht University published a one-time magazine entitled "De Bruinvis" (The Harbour Porpoise), providing information and current research about the species. Stichting De Noordzee produced a toolkit for beach clean-ups .	An article entitled "This is a harbour porpoise, over", published by the Polish Society for the Protection of Nature "Salamandra".		-

1.3 List other organizations engaged in outreach relevant to the ASCOBANS Area.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	Greenpeace, WWF Denmark, The Danish Society for Nature Conservation.	No changes from previous years.		Erlebniszentrum Naturgewalten in List auf Sylt, Die Schutzstation Wattenmeer	-	Stichting Rugvin, Ecomare, Stichting De Noordzee.	WWF Poland.		-

1.4 List other initiatives/work/collaboration relevant to the ASCOBANS Area that are not included above.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	-	No.		-	-	-	-		-

1.5 List any gaps in your country's outreach relevant to the ASCOBANS Area. What would be needed to fill these gaps?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	There is very little outreach focussed on harbour porpoises other than the current initiatives stated above. More outreach should be undertaken for the Baltic Proper Harbour Porpoise.			A shortage of resources.		-	-	-	-

1.6 Resources permitting, are there any materials that you think the ASCOBANS Secretariat should produce?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	Yes, a national pamphlet on harbour porpoises specifically for each country.	No.		Yes, a summary of pressures that harbour porpoises face, their impacts and mitigation strategies.	-	No.	No.		No.

Section VII: Other Matters

A. Other information or comments important for the Agreement

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	-	-		No other information.	-	1) The NL initiated a four-year tagging pilot project for HP in the southern North Sea. Within this project the feasibility of tagging HPs in the Dutch North Sea will be explored, with the aim of developing a method for and gaining experience with catching, tagging and releasing HPs in their natural environment. Collaboration with experts and regular evaluations will guide the project's progress. 2) A new research program was initiated: MONS (Monitoring and research for nature reinforcement and species protection). The main question is: how does anthropogenic use fit within the carrying capacity of the North Sea? The program includes a multitude of studies, including into cetaceans. 3) The CIBBRiNA project was granted (EU LIFE). Goal of project is to achieve EU cross-border cooperation and fisheries engagement by optimising, developing and evaluating proven and promising mitigation methods as well as support tools and processes, such as monitoring and assessment, and working to ensure their long-term implementation to minimise, and where possible eliminate the incidental bycatch of marine mammals, birds, turtles and non-commercial fish.	-		Cetacean welfare during live stranding or bycatch events is an area of increasing interest and importance. The UK stranding programmes are currently undertaking a scoping project to enhance the knowledgebase.

B. Difficulties in implementing the Agreement

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Time constraints to participate to relevant meetings organised by ASCOBANS (e.g. AC, North Sea Plan, bycatch), also given that many issues are discussed in parallel at other fora.	Baltic Prober HP: Lack of knowledge on current abundance and distribution as well as the Swedish military refusing permits for deploying passive acoustic equipment in the Swedish part of the Baltic Proper.	Look at previous reports. [No difficulties, however, the implementation of many of the monitoring actions and concrete conservation measures is either n/a or impossible /extremely difficult in Finnish waters due to extremely low density of animals (HP) at the northern edge of their distribution range. 2016-2019 NR Finland]		No difficulties.	-	1) Data sharing barriers. 2) Long term funding for e.g. SCANS. 3) Not having the right organisations at the table, e.g. navies, fishers. 4) Too many technical outputs and too few communicable key messages for policy makers.	-		-

C. Burning Issues

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
In the near future, new activities will take place, such as the construction of offshore Solar, new pipelines (CO2, H2?) and new wind farms. New windfarms will likely have turbines of 12 to 20 MW, and it is as yet unclear which underwater noise levels will be reached during the construction of foundations.	It is essential to get SAMBAH-II funded and begun asap and to find a permanent solution for future funding. It is not sustainable that scientist from all around the Baltic should spend so much time trying to get funding from EU or other sources. For the SCANS surveys covering the neighbouring populations, the funding is now covered by national funding.	Wind power constructions → EU Re-Power plan.		No burning issues.	-	-	-		-