

Agenda Item 9.1

Funded Projects and Activities

Progress of Projects/Activities Supported  
by ASCOBANS

**Information Document 9.1**

**Development of a Web-Accessed Database  
for Marine Mammals Stranding and  
Necropsy Data**

**Action Requested**

Take note

Submitted by

Zoological Society of London



*Note:*

*Delegates are kindly reminded to bring their own document copies to the meeting, if needed.*

# Development of a web-accessed database for marine mammal stranding and necropsy data



**ASCOBANS Small scale funding agreement project update  
Reference SSFA2018-2**



## Background

This project aims to create a web-accessed portal, which will facilitate the display of selected data on stranded cetaceans and associated necropsies collected within the ASCOBANS region. Funding was agreed in September 2018, following submission of a costed proposal in 2017<sup>1</sup> and a prior workshop in 2011<sup>2</sup>. The project is contracted to run over a two-year period and has a final delivery date of September 2020. The project broadly aims to create a data repository and web portal;

Database- the proposed database (back end) should;

- *Be able to display agreed data on strandings and cause of death information to a variety of potential stakeholders. Data held within the proposed database to be add/view/delete only and not editable. Master versions of data to remain within national database systems*
- *Be able to facilitate periodic upload of relevant data by partner networks*
- *Be capable of being amended/upgraded in the future as required*

Portal- the website (front end) interface should;

- *Be appropriately ASCOBANS badged/branded and mirror existing ASCOBANS website. Appropriate background information on ASCOBANS and Parties/Range States to be included*
- *Contain sub-pages for each contributing network/country, using a standard agreed format which may contain logos, links, background and metadata (on both strandings/necropsy data and on national tissue archives); information on data provision/intellectual property rights to national data; national network contact details for reporting of strandings and/or data/sample requests. Possibly accessed via a map of ASCOBANS Agreement Parties and Non-Party Range States*
- *Facilitate simple data display and summary statistics e.g. how many common dolphins in a region/country, between set date points etc*
- *Allow geographic mapping of data to a variety of levels (ASCOBANS national, regional etc)*
- *Facilitate password-protected access to wider dataset. Downloads only possible by contributing networks and ASCOBANS parties. Requests for access to data by third parties to be directed to relevant national network/s by automated email forms*

Delivery of the project objectives are to be managed by ZSL, with the creation of the portal and data repository undertaken by the ZSL ICT team. Please see Deaville (2017)<sup>1</sup> for additional information.

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<sup>1</sup> Deaville (2017) Web accessed database for strandings and necropsy data

<sup>2</sup> Deaville and Jepson (2012) ASCOBANS Project Report (SSFA2010-2) Interest and feasibility of a web accessed database for marine mammal strandings and necropsy data in the ASCOBANS region

[https://www.ascobans.org/sites/default/files/document/AC19\\_6-05\\_ProjectReport\\_DatabaseZSL\\_1.pdf](https://www.ascobans.org/sites/default/files/document/AC19_6-05_ProjectReport_DatabaseZSL_1.pdf)



## Project update

Because final sign off of the project was delayed, with sign off in September 2018, rather than the originally scheduled April 2018, there has been some impact on the projects initiation. The ZSL ICT team had begun work on other internal projects over the intervening period during the delay in sign off and these had to be completed before work could begin on this project.

Work to date has largely focused on internal discussion around the design of the backend (data repository) that will hold strandings data provided by project partners. In addition, progress on the potential design and output requirements of the data display module (portal) has also been made.

Over the next 12-month period, work will continue following a condensed timetable, with work on the strandings, necropsy and data output modules progressing alongside each other. Input from the various project stakeholders, including the Secretariat, will be sought about requirements for portal design, project partner metadata and other areas.

In addition, the project contractor also intends to hold one or more meetings between project partners over the short term to help drive the work forward, as direct face-to-face meeting between project partners are considered to be vital to help progression of this project. *Ad hoc* meeting/s will take place at the forthcoming WMMC meeting in Barcelona in December with partners that may be attending. However, initial plans to hold a specific meeting/workshop at the WMMC (originally proposed in an effort to keep costs low) around this topic were abandoned, as some partners felt it would be too difficult fit this around existing conference commitments.

The contractor instead intends to host a specific workshop at ZSL, potentially in November 2019 or January 2020 (date TBC). This workshop would have two broad aims;

- Discussion between partner networks on the potential mechanics of data provision, partner metadata design etc
- Discussion between project pathologists and others around how data derived from necropsies (specifically any agreed cause of death data) may be displayed on the portal, given potential differences in data interpretation between networks

Funding for the proposed meeting/workshop will be derived from the travel component of SSFA2018-2 and may also potentially be drawn from additional internal funding within ZSL.

Final project delivery is still scheduled for September 2020, with a revised programme structure and internal timetable.

