



# **SAMBAH II**

**Spatio-temporal Monitoring of the Baltic Proper Harbour Porpoise**



# Aims of the project

- **Evaluation of the Conservation Status of the critically endangered Baltic Proper harbour porpoise population**
  - Determine abundance
  - Produce seasonal density maps
- **Collection of a second harmonised set of acoustic monitoring data throughout project area**
  - Available for further projects/analysis on impact of threats and marine spatial planning





# Current Status

- **MOU is being signed by Consortium members**
  - **At least one Ministry (financing) and one scientific organisation (completing the work) in each country**
  - **Some countries have additional partners**
- **The money available currently only covers data collection with CPODs for 12 months**
  - **In some countries money also covers some costs associated with the detection function and playbacks**
- **Germany (BfN) has applied for money nationally to cover the costs of analysis**
  - **Should know more about the outcome by the end of the year**





## Current Status (cont.)

- Project coordination was transferred from the Federal Ministry for Nature Conservation Germany (BfN) to the Swedish Museum of Natural History (NRM)
- Currently have confirmation from Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Poland, and Germany
  - Positive signs from Lithuania and Estonia- pending funding decisions
  - Latvia have said it is not possible to fund as the species is not listed on their Natura2000 reference.





# Timeline

Currently	Equipment and vessel procurement/hiring of staff/contracts
2024/04	Methods workshop at ECS
2024/04	Some countries begin deployment of CPODs
2024/06	MOU signed by all
2024/07	All CPODs must be in the water recording by the start of the month
2025/07	Start taking up CPODs after the 12 months monitoring
2025/10	Analysis could start (pending funding)
2026/06	First results possible (pending funding)



# Side project- Baltic-wide mapping of relative prey availability



- Funding secured from WWF to complete eDNA sampling twice at all SAMBAH II stations while servicing CPODs
- Still need funding for analysis
- Potential uses and outcomes of the eDNA data collected (when additional funding is obtained):
  - Provide Baltic Proper wide information on relative prey availability
  - Examine the relationship between porpoises and their prey for the first time in the Baltic Sea
  - Examine the detection of harbour porpoises and seal species using eDNA, and how this relates to the distribution maps obtained using passive acoustic monitoring or satellite tags
  - Modelling of habitat quality for a range of predators
  - Development of habitat quality indicators for a range of predators within HELCOM



# Take Home Message

- Funding to collect data has largely been secured
- Still lacking funding for data analysis
- Coordinated effort is ongoing, with strong support from all partners working towards beginning to collect data in July 2024
- Support is needed to involve all countries throughout the Baltic Sea, so that:
  - the whole distribution range can be covered, and
  - the results are as accurate as possible for all countries
- Once data are collected a whole range of analyses should be possible to inform conservation of the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise



# Future needs

- **Getting SAMBAH II to this point has taken 6 years and a lot of time and money!**
- **Need to develop a regionally agreed plan to not repeat this issue for SAMBAH III, IV...**
- **National monitoring in the Baltic Sea needs to be harmonised**
  - **Need an analysis to determine how/when national monitoring should be completed for the best result/best use of resources**