

Agenda Item 14.3

Relations with Other Bodies

Cooperation with European Union
Institutions

Document 14.3

**Terms of Reference of the Joint
ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Working
Group on the Marine Strategy
Framework Directive (MSFD)**

Action Requested

- Take note
- Give guidance how to proceed

Submitted by

Secretariat



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

Secretariat's Note

At the 18th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee, the representative of ACCOBAMS had proposed a joint working group on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). AC19 (March 2012) endorsed the enclosed terms of reference for the working group, which were later confirmed by the 8th Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (November 2012).

A first call for members had been issued before the 19th Advisory Committee Meeting, and several additional participants joined during and following this meeting and the ACCOBAMS SC8. In total, membership of this working group now comprises 28 persons.

On 6 December 2012, on behalf also of the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, the ASCOBANS Secretariat sent a message to the working group members, circulating the final terms of reference, listing membership and asking for volunteers to act as conveners for the working group to step forward by 20 December 2012, in view of the fact that the first tasks needed to be addressed urgently.

Regrettably, despite repeated calls, no one stepped forward as willing to chair. Hence, despite the substantive membership and also confirmation by several members that they are willing to contribute, in the absence of someone taking the lead, the group has not yet become operational.

Since the terms of reference for the group require it to complete two important points by mid-2013, the guidance of the Advisory Committee is sought as to the appropriate way ahead, with regard to:

- Appointment of a chair
- Possible adjustment of the terms of reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE JOINT ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS WORKING GROUP ON THE MARINE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE (MSFD)

This working group will operate by correspondence. It should collaborate closely with other relevant working groups, such as those established under HELCOM, OSPAR and the ICES Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology as well as national processes.

In view of the elaboration of monitoring programmes (before mid-2013), the Working Group should:

- Identify relevant species, geographical and temporal scales and parameters to measure, including developing, if appropriate, an index of cumulative impacts, in order to assess the environmental status of cetaceans
- Propose a common methodology for cetacean monitoring

In view of improving GES and targets definition by 2018, the Working Group should:

- Review the work done on cetaceans by Regional Seas Conventions (including the OSPAR/ICG/COBAM/WKBIOD workshop organized in November 2011 regarding GES and targets for biodiversity descriptors, as well as HELCOM CORESET) and further discuss areas where no specific work has been done related to:
 - examining the proposed species list for the various MSFD subregions or establishing the species list for subregions where no proposal exist
 - establishing the relevant geographical scale for GES assessment for cetaceans
 - examining proposed GES determination and targets or establishing GES determination and targets where no proposal exists, following where relevant the methodology established by ICG COBAM (advice document that was widely distributed through the EU)
 - identifying the main pressures acting on cetaceans and proposing “pressure targets” in order to reach or maintain GES for cetaceans
- Participate in the current Ecosystem Approach process within the Mediterranean Action Plan
- Complete the table containing the expert appraisal for “Criteria and methodological standards relevant to ACCOBAMS on good environmental status of marine waters” for the ASCOBANS area
- Participate in the future revision of the EC Decision on criteria and methodological standards on good environmental status of marine waters, to include relevant aspects related to the status of and pressures on cetaceans