

Agenda Item 3.2.1

Review of New Information on Threats to Small
Cetaceans

Underwater Noise

Report and Recommendations of the
Working Group

Document 3.2.1.b

**Draft Terms of Reference for a
Joint Noise Working Group of CMS,
ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS**

Action Requested

- Take note
- Comment
- Endorse the proposal

Submitted by

Secretariat



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

Secretariat's Note

In mid-2012, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS combined their underwater noise working groups into one in line with the mandates received from Parties for such collaboration on issues of common interest. At the moment, the working group is governed by two different terms of reference, one adopted by ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee 7 and the other by ASCOBANS Advisory Committee 18.

The CMS Scientific Council has also been given the task of developing voluntary guidelines on underwater noise (see [Res.9.19](#)); however, it has not yet been able to address this assignment. The joint Secretariat for CMS and ASCOBANS would accordingly like to propose an amendment to the terms of reference for the working group in order to enable the expertise available in the Joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Noise Working Group to be channelled into CMS processes, too. In addition, a joint approach would serve to avoid duplication.

In order to integrate the work required under all three organizations, the Secretariat therefore proposes to Parties new terms of reference for a Joint CMS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Noise Working Group, to be endorsed by the Parties to all three.

The draft terms of reference contained in this document have been the subject of consultations with the co-chairs of the current ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS working group, the chair of the CMS Scientific Council, the chair of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and the Secretariats of CMS and ACCOBAMS. All tasks assigned to the current working group have been included, and the necessary additions for integrating CMS made. The intention is to allow a smooth continuation of the ongoing work and add new momentum to this important area of work.

With this document, the Secretariat seeks endorsement from the ASCOBANS AC of the revised terms of reference. The ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and the CMS Scientific Council would then be asked to endorse them in turn. For practical and timing reasons, this may best be achieved through a correspondence process.

Draft Terms of Reference for a Joint Noise Working Group of CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS

This Working Group will be comprised of members and observers of the scientific advisory bodies of the CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS. External experts are encouraged to join the Working Group, too, in order to ensure the best possible advice can be generated for the Parties. The Working Group will generally operate by using the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee Workspace for its discussions.

The Working Group will address the mandates of relevant Resolutions of all three organizations, such as [CMS Res.9.19](#), [CMS Res.10.24](#), [ACCOBAMS Res.4.17](#), [ASCOBANS Res.6.2](#) and [ASCOBANS Res.7.2](#) and any relevant Resolutions still to be passed. It will present reports on progress and new information to each meeting of the CMS Scientific Council, ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and ASCOBANS Advisory Committee; if several of these meet in short succession, the same report with only relevant updates should be submitted.

The Working Group will carry out the following functions:

- i. Compilation of information on:
 - a) Relevant activities and developments in other international bodies (both regional and global) and under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive
 - b) Relevant developments and new literature especially with respect to technologies aimed at mitigating the propagation of marine noise and noise sources that may present a threat to marine life
 - c) Parties' progress in implementation of the resolutions mentioned above
- ii. Development of applicable, science-based guidelines, detailing available mitigation measures, alternative technologies and standards required for achieving the conservation goals of the treaties, in particular by:
 - a) Updating and structuring the recommendations in the ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS noise guidelines and making them applicable globally
 - b) Providing details on relevant mitigation technologies and management measures, and their effectiveness and cost
 - c) Consulting stakeholders for advice on operational constraints to take into account
 - d) Recommending appropriate biological indicators and thresholds

These guidelines will be presented for endorsement to Parties of CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS.
- iii. Provision of advice on:
 - a) Collaboration with other international bodies
 - b) Requirements of the relevant other bodies that countries have elected to adhere to with respect to underwater noise, such as European Directives (i.e. the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive)
 - c) Opportunities for influencing decisions of other relevant bodies in order to achieve more effective protection of marine life from impacts of underwater noise.
- iv. Design, and help implement as appropriate, pilot projects to test and improve the existing noise guidelines (ACCOBAMS Res. 4.17 and ASCOBANS AC17/Doc.4-08) for their application in the field
- v. Responding to any other mandate stemming from the relevant Resolutions of CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS