

**DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK 2025-2027
FOR THE JOINT BYCATCH WORKING GROUP OF ACCOBAMS AND ASCOBANS**

TOR	Task description	Lead	Priority	Timeframe	Reporting
1.	Collate and prepare an overview of scientific information relevant to bycatch of affected cetacean species.				
	1.1. ACCOBAMS Area. Engage Parties.	ACCOBAMS Co-Chair	High	Ongoing	SC17
	1.2. ASCOBANS Area. Engage Parties.	ASCOBANS Co-Chair	High	Ongoing	AC30
2.	Review available information on IUU (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated) fishing, recreational fishing, identification of bycatch risk areas, fishing techniques and gears applied in both agreement areas related to bycatch				
	2.1. IUU: ACCOBAMS Secretariat to contact Parties regarding illegal driftnets	ACCOBAMS Secretariat	High (ACC); Medium (ASC)	?	ACC Bureau meeting; AC30
	2.2. Recreational fishing	--	Medium	Ongoing	JBWG2; JBWG3?
	2.3. Identification of bycatch risk areas	Peter Evans et al. (ASC); --- (ACC)	High	Ongoing; Before SC17	AC30
	2.4. Fishing techniques and gears	Leave to ICES WGBYC / CIBBRiNA; GFCM	High (ACC); Medium (ASC)	Ongoing	AC30 SC17

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3.	Contribute to the assessment process of the EU-MSFD criteria and/or UNEP-MAP EcAp, and associated targets				
	3.1. EU MSFD: Comparison between the Agreement areas. Intermediate report.	Sinéad Murphy	High	Ongoing	JBWG2; JBWG3
	3.2. EU MSFD: ABIOMMED project in the ACCOBAMS Area. OSPAR and HELCOM leading in the ASCOBANS Area.	ABIOMMED Partners (ACC); OSPAR, OMMEG, HELCOM (ASC)	High	Completed	JBWG2
	3.3. UNEP-MAP EcAp: Report on SPA-RAC in ACCOBAMS Area	SPA/RAC	High	Ongoing	SC17
4.	Review and provide updates on bycatch mitigation reduction measures currently available or under development and their effectiveness, using existing sources	JBWG; Co-chairs & Secretariats	Medium	Ongoing	JBWG2; JBWG3; AC30
5.	Prepare an overview of national and international legislation and other measures relevant to the monitoring and management of cetacean bycatch, and include an overview of actions taken to deliver on ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS obligations	Secretariats; ICES WGs	Low	Ongoing	JBWG3
6.	Prepare, as appropriate, and in coordination with ICES WGBYC, advice on:				
	6.1. Target setting (bycatch limits) including potential conservation and user objectives, in accordance with the policies of the two Agreements;	--- (ACC); ASCOBANS WG	High (ACC); Medium (ASC)	??	SC17 AC30
	6.2. Monitoring cetacean bycatch and fishing operations	ICES WGBYC	Medium	Ongoing	SC17 AC30
7.	Provide technical support to facilitate dialogue with relevant bodies that have certification schemes, such as the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), including by actively contributing to the assessment of relevant fisheries with respect to cetacean bycatch	Secretariats	High	Ongoing	AC30
8.	Comment on requests for information or advice received through	Secretariats;	High	Ongoing	As requested

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	the Secretariats	JBWG Co-chairs			
9.	Engagement with fishers				
	9.1. Develop guidelines on how to best incentivise and engage fishers in mitigation and monitoring programmes.	CIBBRINA	High	Ongoing	AC30 SC17
	9.2. Develop an outreach strategy (include sociologists)	CIBBRINA?	High	Ongoing?	JBWG3
10.	Identify future pilot studies for bycatch mitigation, taking into account the outputs of the review of mitigation measures in fisheries with high bycatch within the ASCOBANS Agreement Area, and in close liaison with other initiatives (e.g. IWC Bycatch Mitigation Initiative and CIBBRINA, Marine Beacon).	ASCOBANS	High	Asap	AC30
11.	Look at fisheries-generated marine debris.	Pine Eisfeld-Pierantonio	?	?	AC30