

Agenda Item 2.1

Review on New Information on Threats and Other  
Issues Relevant to Small Cetaceans

Noise

**Document 2.1**

**Responses to a Query on National Navies'  
Mitigation Protocols for Use of Military Sonar**

**Action Requested**

- Review
- Provide advice on the way forward

Submitted by

Secretariat

## RESPONSES TO A QUERY ON NATIONAL NAVIES' MITIGATION PROTOCOLS FOR USE OF MILITARY SONAR

1. Referring to the Work Plan 2021-2024 Activity #8 (as per ASCOBANS [Resolution 9.1](#) Annex 1), the Advisory Committee, including relevant Working Groups, are to “assess whether national navies’ mitigation protocols for use of military sonar are effective. This requires Parties to request the mitigation protocols from the navies.” Timing for this activity is 2021.
2. With the aim that the Advisory Committee, and particularly the Joint Noise Working Group of CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS, be able to assess these protocols in advance of AC26, the Secretariat sent out a request on 1 September 2021 to ASCOBANS National Coordinators to contact their navies and send (links to) the protocols to the Secretariat as soon as possible.
3. In response to the Secretariat’s query, two Parties have replied to date:

a. The Netherlands:

“Please find attached some information from our Navy:

*The Royal Netherlands Navy has protocols in place for responsible use of active sonar. These mitigation Protocols are stated in internal document VCZSK CZSK DOPS MWC 230 Responsible Use of Active Sonar. This document describes mandatory regulation but also provides practical information on mitigation measures. Together with this document the Netherlands Navy has Software (SAKAMATA) which was developed by the Navy and TNO. This software supports the user in planning and performing active sonar operations in an environmentally responsible way. SAKAMATA quantifies the risk for marine mammals associated with an active sonar operation, taking into account physical injury, temporary hearing impairment and behavioural disturbance. Also, the efficiency of possible mitigation measures, such as variation of the sonar parameters, ramp-up schemes or alternative operation areas are presented to the operator. Further development of SAKAMATA is performed in close collaboration with several marine mammal research projects which focus on studying the impact of sonar on marine mammals and collecting the necessary environmental and marine mammal information.*

Unfortunately, due to security reasons, we cannot provide the internal document.”

b. Poland:

“Please see enclosed an extract from our protocol:

*Naval ships are equipped with high-power hydroacoustic stations (medium and low frequency stations).*

*If the presence of marine mammals is detected, the procedure interrupts the transmission of acoustic impulses.*

*The presence of marine mammals is identified by acoustic and visual observations.*

*The active work of the acoustic sensors is resumed when the animals move beyond the observation range.”*

4. The Advisory Committee may wish to decide how to proceed with Activity 8 of the Work Plan.