

Agenda Item 15

National Reporting Form

**Information Document 15**

**2020 ASCOBANS National Report Form**

**Action Requested**

Take note

Submitted by

Secretariat





## ASCOBANS

# 2020 ASCOBANS National Report

The deadline for the submission of National Reports is **31 March 2021**.

As outlined in ASCOBANS Resolution 8.1 (Rev.MOP9) National Reporting, this form will cover the year 2020 (Year 1), and the following topics included in the Annex to the Resolution, in addition to the standard Sections I (General Information) and VII (Other Matters):

- Noise (impulsive i.e. piling and continuous/ambient i.e. shipping) (Section II B3)
- Ocean Energy (Section II B4)
- Unexploded Ordnance (Section II C8)
- Marine Spatial Planning (Section II D15)

The national reports submitted will inform discussions at the 26th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee (8-12 November 2021).

- All questions apply to the reporting period of 1 January - 31 December 2020.
- Region in the tables refers to the sub-regions as defined by the HELCOM and OSPAR, and Areas refers to the sub-areas as defined by ICES. An overview and maps of these can be found in **Annex A**. Species can be chosen from the list provided, based on ASCOBANS species list, see **Annex B**.
- Throughout the form, please include relevant web links where applicable.

Where possible, National Coordinators should consult with, or delegate to, experts for particular topics so as to ease the reporting burden. The Secretariat has provided a list of potential country contacts as a starting point. Once the baseline information is in place, it should become easier to update in the future.

For any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Secretariat: [ascobans.secretariat@ascobans.org](mailto:ascobans.secretariat@ascobans.org).

## **High-level Summary of Key Messages**

**In your country, for 2020 (Year 1), what does this report reveal about:**

**The most successful aspects of implementation of the Agreement?(List up to five items)**

>>>

**The greatest challenges in implementing the Agreement? (List up to five items)**

>>>

**The main priorities for future implementation of the Agreement? (List up to five items)**

>>>

# I. General Information

## A. Country Information

**Name of Party / Non-Party Range State:**

>>>

### **Details of the Report Compiler**

Name:

>>>

Function:

>>>

Organization:

>>>

Postal Address:

>>>

Telephone:

>>>

Email:

>>>

Does the Report Compiler act as ASCOBANS National Coordinator (i.e. focal point)?

*Please select only one option*

Yes

No

### **Details of contributor(s)**

Please provide the following details per contributor:

Topic(s) contributed to, Name, Function, Organization, Postal Address, Telephone, and Email.

>>>

## II. Habitat Conservation and Management (threats and pressures on cetaceans)

### A. Fisheries-related Threats

#### 1. Bycatch

**AIM:** to illustrate progress on understanding, monitoring and mitigating bycatch of small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 9.2, 8.5 (Rev.MOP9), 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.3, 7.1, 6.1, 5.8, 5.7, 5.5, 3.3

Bycatch, the entanglement of an animal in fishing gear, is identified as a major cause of mortality in small cetaceans. Every effort should be made to reduce bycatch towards zero as quickly as possible. Parties to ASCOBANS have agreed on a number of resolutions that highlight the importance of mitigating bycatch of small cetaceans in the Agreement Area, as available data indicates that levels of bycatch pose a considerable threat to their conservation status. Parties have agreed that modifications of fishing gear and relevant practices shall be applied in order to reduce negative impacts where data indicates unacceptable interaction. The Agreement Area requires improved monitoring, collation of data, and consideration of appropriate mitigation measures, while also taking into account similar work in other areas.

To better understand the extent of the impact of bycatch on small cetaceans, monitoring and mitigation measures in place, and ongoing work in the Agreement Area, countries are requested to provide relevant information.

Note: This section includes bycatch in recreational fisheries.

##### 1.1. How is bycatch assessed/monitored in your country?

For the reporting period, please identify whether the following methods were used and the percentage (by monitoring method, of total bycaught animals, by gear type if applicable):

Dedicated observer schemes

Fisheries observes

Remote Electronic Monitoring

Self-reporting by fishermen

Pathological investigation

Assessment at stranding site

>>>

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

[TEST2](#)

[TEST1](#)

Comments:

>>>

##### 1.2. Which species of small cetaceans were recorded as bycatch by commercial fishing in the reporting period?

Please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.

Hold 'Ctrl' to select multiple options.

- AWSD - Atlantic white-sided dolphin
- BBW - Blainville's beaked whale
- BD - Bottlenose dolphin
- CBW - Cuvier's beaked whale
- CD - Short-beaked Common Dolphin
- FKW - False killer whale
- GBW - Gervais' beaked whale
- HP - Harbour Porpoise
- KW - Killer Whale
- LFPW - Long-finned pilot whale
- NBW - Northern bottlenose whale
- PKW - Pygmy killer whale
- PSW - Pygmy sperm whale
- RD - Risso's dolphin
- RTD - Rough-toothed dolphin
- SBW - Sowerby's beaked whale
- SD - Striped dolphin
- SFPW - Short-finned pilot whale
- TBW - True's beaked whale
- WBD - White-beaked dolphin

- Not Applicable
- Please provide amount per species:

>>>

### 1.3. Which species of small cetaceans were recorded as bycatch by recreational fishing in the reporting period?

Please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below

Hold 'Ctrl' to select multiple options.

- AWSD - Atlantic white-sided dolphin
- BBW - Blainville's beaked whale
- BD - Bottlenose dolphin
- CBW - Cuvier's beaked whale
- CD - Short-beaked Common Dolphin
- FKW - False killer whale
- GBW - Gervais' beaked whale
- HP - Harbour Porpoise
- KW - Killer Whale
- LFPW - Long-finned pilot whale
- NBW - Northern bottlenose whale
- PKW - Pygmy killer whale
- PSW - Pygmy sperm whale
- RD - Risso's dolphin
- RTD - Rough-toothed dolphin
- SBW - Sowerby's beaked whale
- SD - Striped dolphin
- SFPW - Short-finned pilot whale
- TBW - True's beaked whale
- WBD - White-beaked dolphin
- Not Applicable
- Please provide amount per species:

>>>

### 1.4. Has there been any notable incidents/issues related to bycatch during the reporting period in your country?

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes

Please provide details (mass bycatch incidents, unusual species bycatch etc.):

>>>

### 1.5. Are there are mitigation measures in place?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes

The following measures are in place:

>>>

### 1.6. Have there been changes in fishing effort (for fisheries known to have an impact) in the reporting period?

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Unknown/Not Applicable
- Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

### 1.7. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on bycatch in your country.

List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information.

>>>

**1.8. Is the perceived level of pressure from bycatch in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?**

- Increasing
- Decreasing
- Staying the same
- Unknown
- Not Applicable. Comments:

>>>

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable.

>>>

**2. Resource Depletion**

**AIM:** to determine areas where, and to what extent, depletion of fish stocks have occurred during the reporting period. In addition; identify ongoing mitigation efforts regarding detrimental implications for small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 8.9, 8.3, 7.1, 6.1

Depletion in fish stocks due to overfishing and other factors generates pressure on the favourable conservation status of small cetaceans (through possible food shortage). More integrated management and reductions in fishing effort (also prompted by concern about fish stock depletion or other ecosystem considerations) have been encouraged, especially in areas of known risk. Further research, effective fishery regulations and innovation within certain fishing methods are considered to be helpful steps towards mitigating this pressure.

Parties to ASCOBANS have agreed on a number of resolutions that (1) determine the impact of the depletion of fish stocks on small cetaceans, (2) encourage fishing effort reductions and (3) review new information on these depletions to make recommendations. Resource depletion in the Agreement Area requires improved monitoring, collation of data, and consideration of appropriate mitigation measures, while also taking into account similar work in other areas.

It is of particular interest to ASCOBANS to understand the extent of prey depletions, any related ongoing work, monitoring and mitigation measures in the Agreement Area. Countries are requested to provide relevant information.

**2.1. Based on the latest stock assessments, are there any notable depletions of fish species which would be a concern for small cetaceans?**

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

**2.2. Where are these depletions in national water occurring?**

Please choose the sub-Regions from Annex A as defined by OSPAR & HELCOM.

Hold 'Ctrl' to select multiple options.

- OSPAR and HELCOM sub-regions:
- OI Norwegian Sea
- OII Dogger Bank
- OII Southern Northern Sea
- OII Northern North Sea
- OII Channel
- OII Norwegian Trench
- OII Skagerrak
- OIII Celtic Sea
- OIII Irish Sea
- OIII Irish & Scottish W. Coast
- OIV N. Bay of Biscay
- OIV Iberian Sea
- OIV Gulf of Cadiz

- OV Wider Atlantic
- H Bothnian Bay
- H Bothnian Sea
- H Archipelago Sea
- H Aland Sea
- H Gulf of Finland
- H Northern Baltic Proper
- H Western Gotland Basin
- H Eastern Gotland Basin
- H Gulf of Riga
- H Gdansk Basin
- H Bornholm Basin
- H Arkona Basin
- H Kattegat
- H Belt Sea
- H The Sound
- Not Applicable

Please choose the sub-Areas from Annex A as defined by ICES.

Hold 'Ctrl' to select multiple options.

- 27.3 - Skagerrak, Kattegat, Sound, Belt and Baltic Seas
- 27.3.a - Skagerrak and Kattegat
- 27.3.a.20 - Skagerrak
- 27.3.a.21 - Kattegat
- 27.3.b,c - Sound and Belt Sea
- 27.3.b.23 - Sound
- 27.3.c.22 - Belt Sea
- 27.3.d - Baltic Sea
- 27.3.d.24 - Baltic West of Bornholm
- 27.3.d.25 - Southern Central Baltic - West
- 27.3.d.26 - Southern Central Baltic - East
- 27.3.d.27 - West of Gotland
- 27.3.d.28.1 - Gulf of Riga
- 27.3.d.28.2 - East of Gotland
- 27.3.d.29 - Archipelago Sea
- 27.3.d.30 - Bothnian Sea
- 27.3.d.31 - Bothnian Bay
- 27.3.d.32 - Bay of Finland
- 27.4 - North Sea
- 27.4.a - Northern North Sea
- 27.4.b - Central North Sea
- 27.4.c - Southern North Sea
- 27.6 - Rockall, NW Coast of Scotland and N. Ireland
- 27.6.a - NW Coast of Scotland and N. Ireland
- 27.6.b - Rockall
- 27.6.b.1 - Rockall / NEAFC Reg. Area I
- 27.6.b.2 - Rockall / Non-NEAFC Reg. Area
- 27.7 - Irish Sea, West of Ireland, Porcupine Bank, Eastern and Western English Channel, Bristol Channel, Celtic Sea North and South, and Southwest of Ireland - East and West
- 27.7.a - Irish Sea
- 27.7.b - West of Ireland
- 27.7.c - Porcupine Bank
- 27.7.c.1 - Porcupine Bank / NEAFC Reg. Area
- 27.7.c.2 - Porcupine Bank / Non-NEAFC Reg. Area
- 27.7.d - Eastern English Channel
- 27.7.e - Western English Channel
- 27.7.f - Bristol Channel
- 27.7.g - Celtic North Sea
- 27.7.h - Celtic Sea South
- 27.7.j SW of Ireland - East
- 27.7.j.1 - SW of Ireland - East - Parts of the NEAFC Reg. Area
- 27.7.j.2 - SW of Ireland - East - Non-NEAFC Reg. Area
- 27.7.k - SW of Ireland - West
- 27.7.k.1 - SW of Ireland - West - Part of the NEAFC Reg. Area
- 27.7.k.2 - SW of Ireland - West - Part of the Non-NEAFC Area I
- 27.8 - Bay of Biscay

- 27.8.a - Bay of Biscay North
- 27.8.b - Bay of Biscay Central
- 27.8.c - Bay of Biscay South
- 27.8.d - Bay of Biscay Offshore
- 27.8.d.1 - Bay of Biscay Offshore – Part of the NEAFC Reg. Area
- 27.8.d.2 - Bay of Biscay Offshore – Non-NEAFC Reg. Area
- 27.8.e - West of Bay of Biscay
- 27.9 - Portuguese Waters
- 27.9.a - Portuguese Waters – East
- 27.9.b - Portuguese Water - West
- 27.9.b.1 - Portuguese waters – West Part of the NEAFC Reg. Area
- 27.9.b.2 - Portuguese waters – Non-NEAFC Reg. Area
- Not Applicable

**2.3. What measures are being taken to manage pressures on depleted fish stocks, including relevant regulations/guidelines (current/planned/year of implementation)?**

Per measure, please provide timeframe information and relevant driver.

>>>

**2.4. Is there any evidence within your country's national waters that resource depletion may be impacting small cetaceans (e.g. evidence of starvation)?**

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

**2.5. Are there any national efforts to evaluate cetacean body condition at sea (e.g. surveys)?**

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

**2.6. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on resource depletion in your country.**

List initiatives/project (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information.

>>>

**2.7. Is the perceived level of pressure from resource depletion in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?**

- Increasing
- Decreasing
- Staying the same
- Unknown
- Not Applicable. Comments:

>>>

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

>>>

**B. Disturbance (incl. potential physical impacts)**

**3. Noise (impulsive i.e. piling and continuous/ambient i.e. shipping)**

**AIM:** to illustrate progress on understanding, monitoring and mitigating negative effects on small cetaceans from underwater noise during the reporting period.

Relevant Resolutions: 9.2, 9.1, 8.11 (Rev.MOP9), 8.9, 8.6, 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.1, 6.2, 6.1

Small cetaceans are especially susceptible to underwater noise due to their high responsiveness to sound and wide hearing range. Good environmental status, as defined by the European Union, suggests that the introduction of energy, including underwater noise, is at levels that do not adversely affect the marine

environment. Anthropogenic noise pollution has generally increased in recent times and generates a broad range of frequencies due to a wide variety of human activities. Impulsive and continuous noise present different impacts on small cetaceans, which include communicative masking, behavioural response and physiological injury. Noise in marine environments potentially impedes communication, affects distribution and hence feeding and reproduction of small cetaceans. Studies show that not only cetaceans but also fish and other marine life may be negatively impacted by anthropogenic noise.

Parties to ASCOBANS have agreed on implementation of measures through a number of resolutions that (1) highlight the potential impact that noise pollution may have on small cetaceans in the Agreement Area and (2) commit to reduce the pressure presented by underwater noise. The Agreement Area requires improved monitoring, collation of data, and consideration of appropriate mitigation measures.

To better understand the extent to which noise negatively impacts the health of small cetaceans, and to learn about new work relevant to the topic, countries are requested to provide related information.

### **3.1. To which noise registers/databases has your country contributed to date?**

ICES Impulsive Noise Register (for HELCOM and OSPAR Parties)

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes
- Not Applicable

#### **National Registry**

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes, please specify (e.g. JNCC noise registry):

>>>

- Not Applicable

#### **Other**

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes, please specify:

>>>

### **3.2. Any instances/issues in the reporting period including information on planned or completed significant developments/activities, including the details of monitoring in place before, during and after the project.**

If you selected 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes. Please provide details in the table.

### **3.3. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on underwater noise in your country.**

List initiatives/project (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information.

>>>

### **3.4. Report on noise management for cumulative impacts, including relevant regulations and guidelines, seismic shot point densities and level of impact deemed acceptable.**

>>>

### **3.5. Is the perceived level of pressure from underwater noise in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?**

- Increasing
- Decreasing
- Staying the same
- Unknown
- Not Applicable. Comments:

>>>

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

>>>

## 4. Ocean Energy

**AIM:** to understand the extent and development of current and planned ocean energy projects, and progress in monitoring and mitigation of their negative effects on small cetaceans during the reporting period.

Relevant Resolutions: 8.11 (Rev.MOP9), 8.9, 8.6, 8.3, 6.2

Renewable energy is a necessary component of the efforts to supply the energy needs of human populations while combatting climate change. Efforts to harness renewable energy sources, however, should be conducted in a way that does not have a harmful impact on biological diversity and the marine environment. There are potential adverse effects of ocean energy on small cetaceans from such energy projects. In regard to small cetaceans, this can include potential lethal interactions or injury, negative behavioural impacts from displacement and changes in fecundity, calf survival and juvenile and adult mortality. There remains uncertainty regarding quantifying the (magnitude of the) pressure from ocean energy production on small cetaceans.

Parties to ASCOBANS have agreed to introduce precautionary measures and procedures for activities surrounding the development of renewable energy in marine environments in order to minimise and mitigate possible effects on small cetaceans, by following best practices. Parties have committed to investigating such pressures and robustly monitoring and mitigating them through environmental impact assessments. Addressing all aspects relevant to the conservation of protected species in regard to ocean energy and collaboration with other organizations working on or potentially interested in the issue is to the benefit of small cetaceans in the Agreement Area.

It is of particular interest to ASCOBANS to understand current and ongoing renewable energy projects in the Agreement Area, mitigation measures and procedures in use and other work relevant to the topic. Countries are requested to provide information relevant to their activities.

### 4.1. Were there any new wind energy farms in development/construction during the reporting period?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue link button below.

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes. Please provide details in the table.
- Not Applicable. Comments:

>>>

### 4.2. Were there any new wave power installations in development/construction during the reporting period?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes. Please provide details in the table.
- Not Applicable. Comments:

>>>

### 4.3. Were there any new tidal energy installations in development/construction during the reporting period?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes. Please provide details in the table.
- Not Applicable. Comments:

>>>

### 4.4. Were there any new tidal lagoon/barrage installations in development/construction during the reporting period?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes. Please provide details in the table.
- Not Applicable. Comments:

>>>

**4.5. Has there been any other instances/issues related to ocean energy during the reporting period in your country?**

Please select only one option

- No
- Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

**4.6. How is the pressure managed, incl. relevant regulations / guidelines and the year of implementation (current and planned)?**

>>>

**4.7. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on ocean energy in your country.**

List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other information.

>>>

**4.8. Mark the perceived level of pressure from ocean energy in your country in the table below.**

For example, active construction of new developments could increase the pressure, while decommissioning or addition of mitigation measures to pre-existing projects could decrease the pressure.

	1. Status relative to previous years [Increasing, Decreasing, Staying the same, Unknown, Not Applicable]	2. Nature of the evidence
Tidal lagoon/barrage		
Tidal energy		
Wave power		
Wind energy		

Comments:

>>>

**5. Cetacean Watching Industry**

**AIM:** to determine if the developing cetacean watching industry poses a threat to small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 8.9, 6.1, 5.4

Whale and dolphin watching is a global industry that can provide socio-economic benefits to local communities by attracting tourism, as well as strengthening public awareness of conservation needs. However, it also has the potential of being harmful when it interferes with the behaviour of animals in their natural environment and may even lead to injury or death. As the cetacean watching industry is still scarcely developed in some countries, collecting this data now allows tracking the development of the industry.

It is of particular importance to ASCOBANS to obtain an overview of the current scale of the activities and to monitor the development of the industry in the future. This is done by quantifying the number and locations of operators, reporting negative interactions and providing information on the development and implementation of any guidelines regarding cetacean watching.

Filling out this section accurately and completely will help to detect any indications of potential threats, allow timely mitigation action and enable Parties and Non-Party Range States to work towards a coordinated approach regarding the development of cetacean watching guidelines in the Agreement Area. Note: We are only addressing commercial cetacean watching activities which take place from vessels and include viewing of small cetacean species. Operators are defined as those offering trips with a **primary focus:** they advertise specifically with the aim to see small cetaceans, or a **secondary focus:** they advertise either for other taxa, such as birds or seals, or large cetaceans, or more general for wildlife, but mention the opportunity to see small cetaceans.

**5.1. Do you have any commercial small cetacean watching industry operation in your country?**

Please select only one option

- No. Go to Question 5.3.
- Yes

**5.2. Please identify the total number of operators conducting commercial cetacean watching in your country and provide details in the table.**

Please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue link button below.

In the table, provide the sub-regions in which commercial cetacean watching takes place. Identify if small cetacean watching is a primary and/or secondary focus of the operators and, in the first case, what the target species are.

*Please select only one option*

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21+

**5.3. Does your country have a definition of the term 'harassment' in general and/or as it relates to the Cetacean Watching Industry?**

For example, the US Marine Mammal Protection Act uses the term harassment, and defines two levels: Level A harassment means any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance that has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild. Level B harassment refers to acts that have the potential to disturb (but not injure) a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by disrupting behavioural patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes

Provide definition:

>>>

**5.4. Have there been any incidents of harassment towards small cetaceans in the context of commercial cetacean watching reported to authorities during the reporting period?**

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes. Please provide information below.

Provide per incident: date, context of incidence, outcome for (a) the animal or (b) human, legal procedures/court proceedings/ convictions that took place, responsible authority for such reports, links to websites or documentation of this report.

>>>

**5.5. Does your country have any operators that offer swimming with dolphins (or other small cetaceans)?**

In some parts of the world, this has become an important tourism industry with potential impacts for both small cetaceans and swimmers. Although scarcely developed, it has occurred within the ASCOBANS Agreement Area, and requires at least background monitoring. Sometimes incidents occur and can lead to harm for small cetaceans and/or swimmers.

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes. Please provide information below.

Identify per location: the species, operator (include link to website), and any reported incidents between small cetaceans or swimmers with description.

>>>

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

[operator x](#) - testing....

**5.6. List any incidents of harassment to small cetaceans during the reporting period in your country in the context of swimming with small cetaceans reported to authorities - and the outcome if known (behavioural response, injury, death, any court proceedings).**

Per date, please provide: the context of incidence, outcome for (a) the animal or (b) human (e.g. behavioural response, injury, death), legal procedures/court proceedings/convictions that took place, responsible authority for such reports, and link to websites or documentation of the report.

>>>

**5.7. Are there any solitary sociable dolphin interactions in your country?**

Occasionally, individual solitary dolphins may associate with humans, resulting in increased interactions between the two which may lead to impacts upon either. Sometimes incidents occur and can lead to harm for small cetaceans and/or swimmers.

Please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue link button below.

Select "Yes" when you have attached the table.

*Please select only one option*

No. Go to Question 5.10.

Yes. Please provide details in the table.

**5.8. Does your country have any mitigation measures (codes of conduct/guidelines) in place in the event of disturbance or harassment in the context of commercial cetacean watching, swimming with cetaceans, and interactions with solitary sociable dolphins?**

*Please select only one option*

No

Yes. Please provide information below.

Per measure (may include regional measures), please include: date of implementation, application region (Annex A), whether the measure has been effective (include comments), and other relevant information.

>>>

**5.9. List any incidents of harassment to small cetaceans during the reporting period in the context of interactions with solitary sociable dolphins reported to authorities - and the outcome if known (behavioural response, injury, death, any court proceedings).**

Per date, please provide: the context of incidence, outcome for (a) the animal or (b) human (e.g. behavioural response, injury, death), legal procedures/court proceedings/convictions that took place, responsible authority for such reports, and link to websites or documentation of the report.

>>>

**5.10. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on the cetacean watching industry, "swim with small cetacean" operations, solitary sociable dolphin interactions and their possible effects on small cetaceans in your country.**

List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information).

>>>

**5.11. Have there been any other instances/issues related to the cetacean watching industry during the reporting period in your country?**

*Please select only one option*

No

Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

**5.12. Is the perceived level of pressure from commercial small cetacean watching in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?**

Increasing

Decreasing

Staying the same

Unknown

Not Applicable. Comments:

>>>

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

>>>

**6. Recreational Sea Use**

**AIM:** to determine whether recreational sea use is detrimental to small cetaceans and, if so, to identify types of activity and areas of concern.

Relevant Resolutions: **8.9, 8.3, 7.1, 6.1, 5.4**

Recreational use of the sea by humans includes a wide variety of activities, some of which are known to have a potential negative impact on small cetaceans. This includes the use of RIBs (rigid-hulled inflatable

boats), hard-hulled boats exceeding 10 knots in speed, yachts and personal watercrafts such as jet skis, kayaks and surfboards; and excludes recreational fishing and sea-angling. Interactions can cause animals to change behaviour and move away, but can also have more serious impacts, such as injury or even death due to collision. ASCOBANS has agreed on a number of resolutions that highlight the importance to review all available information on recreational use of the sea. Obtaining an overview of best practices and guidelines will enable comparisons to be made across the Agreement Area, and ultimately may lead to the provision of overall, consistent guidelines that might be developed at a regional or national level. In this section we strive to obtain an overview of potential risk areas and national sources that have data on incidents with small cetaceans related to recreational sea use.

### **6.1. Are data on recreational sea use available for your country?**

*Please select only one option*

- No. Go to Question 6.3.
- Yes. Please provide information below.

Provide the type of information (e.g. number of licensed recreational vessels per region, tourist number per region, other) and web link or other relevant link to the data (where can this information be found)

>>>

### **6.2. Is the information on main areas of recreational sea use available for your country?**

Many Range States are mapping human activities to fulfil obligations under the EU Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, MSFD, OSPAR, and HELCOM; this information is relevant (though often not readily accessible) to ASCOBANS in understanding the extent and trends of human activities potentially impacting small cetaceans.

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Not Applicable. Comments:

>>>

- Yes. Please provide information below.

Provide per region (Annex A): type of information (e.g. maps, GIS, reports), whether the data is available online, and link to data, or comment on unavailability.

>>>

### **6.3. Were there any incidents of disturbance or harassment to small cetaceans in relation to recreational sea use in your country?**

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Unknown
- Yes. Please provide information below.

Per date, please provide: the Area (Annex A), context of incidence (e.g. what kind of recreational activity), outcome for (a) the animal or (b) human, legal procedures/court proceedings/convictions, and link to websites or documentation of the incident.

>>>

### **6.4. Does your country have any mitigation measures (codes of conduct/guidelines/laws/rules) in place in the event of disturbance or harassment of small cetaceans through recreational sea use?**

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes. Please provide information below.

Per measure, please provide: the date of implementation, Region (Annex A), whether the measure has been effective (yes or no) with comments, and other relevant information.

>>>

### **6.5. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on disturbance or harassment of small cetaceans through recreational sea use in your country?**

List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information.

>>>

### **6.6. Have there been any other instances/issues related to recreational sea use in your country?**

## during the reporting period?

Please select only one option

- No
- Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

### **6.7. Is the perceived level of pressure from recreational sea use in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?**

- Increasing
- Decreasing
- Staying the same
- Unknown
- Not Applicable. Comments:

>>>

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

>>>

## **7. Other Sources of Disturbance**

**AIM:** to identify new sources of disturbance that could be a threat to small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 8.9, 6.1

Overlap of small cetacean and human habitat use is not covered by the questions above, while human activities in the seas are increasing, particularly in the coastal zone. Human activities can, for example, cause a small cetacean to change behaviour, or it can cause physical harm or death. This section aims to identify new sources of disturbance that could be a threat to small cetaceans. The issue of noise is covered under section B3.

### **7.1. Have there been any incidents of disturbance to small cetaceans in your country during the reporting period, not covered in the items above?**

Any incidents of disturbance to small cetaceans not covered in Sections B5 or B6.

Please select only one option

- No
- Unknown
- Yes. Please provide information below.

Per incident of disturbance, please provide: a description of the event, date, Area (Annex A), outcome for (a) the animal or (b) human (e.g. behavioural response, injury, death), describe mitigation measures, legal procedures/court proceedings/convictions, links to relevant information (websites, etc.)

>>>

### **7.2. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on other sources of disturbance in your country.**

List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other information.

>>>

## **C. Habitat Change and Degradation (incl. potential physical impacts)**

### **8. Unexploded Ordnance**

**AIM:** to provide information on the mitigation, management and potential negative impacts of unexploded ordnance on small cetaceans during the reporting period.

Relevant Resolutions: 8.11 (Rev.MOP9), 8.9, 8.8, 8.3

Unexploded chemical and conventional munitions present a threat to small cetaceans. Hazards exist from unexploded munitions, which release chronic contaminants, and upon detonation, which is physically hazardous from extreme underwater noise and a sudden release of toxic substances. Unexploded ordnance is a notable threat in many areas, such as the Baltic Sea, where the quantity is unknown, though estimates are high. Information on disposal, state of corrosion and quantities of dumped munition is limited, as are meaningful data on the measured environmental impacts. The significance of this pressure's impact on small cetaceans requires further quantification. However, it is clear that mitigation measures are necessary

to support alternatives to detonations, and when no alternative is feasible, to reduce negative impacts on small cetaceans.

In the ASCOBANS Area, millions of tons of unexploded ordnance are present in the marine environment and thousands of sea users, such as fishermen, encounter such munitions every year. Parties have agreed on resolutions to support (1) research investigating the pressure on marine animals and habitat and (2) mitigation measures regarding effects of disintegrating submerged munitions on the marine environment. Parties are to strive towards providing relevant information to required bodies and supporting efforts to address the negative implications from this pressure in other regional and international organizations and waters.

### **8.1. To which registers/databases covering conventional and chemical munitions has your country contributed to date?**

Respondents may select multiple options.

- OSPAR
- HELCOM
- None
- Unknown
- Other, please state:

>>>

### **8.2. How many UXOs were destroyed/released at sea?**

Provide link to database record if available.

*Please select only one option*

- 1-9
- 10-49
- 50-99
- 100+

### **8.3. Have there been any other instances/issues related to the issue of unexploded ordnance during the reporting period in your country?**

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

### **8.4. How is the issue of unexploded ordnance being managed?**

Include mitigation measures, relevant regulations/guidelines, year of implementation; may include planned management.

>>>

### **8.5. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on the issue of unexploded ordnance in your country.**

List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to relevant information.

>>>

### **8.6. Is the perceived level of pressure from unexploded ordnance in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same, or unknown?**

- Increasing
- Decreasing
- Staying the same
- Unknown
- Not Applicable. Comments:

>>>

Please provide the nature of the evidence where applicable:

>>>

## **9. Marine Debris (ingestion and entanglement)**

**AIM:** to illustrate progress, during the reporting period, on understanding, monitoring and mitigating impacts of marine debris on small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 8.8, 8.3, 6.1

Marine debris, such as macroplastics and discarded fishing gear, poses a threat to small cetaceans due to the potential for these materials to be ingested or to cause entanglement. Commercial fishing operations, recreational fishing and cargo shipping are notable sources of this material, of which the majority is plastic and ghost nets. However, it is assumed that most of the marine litter worldwide comes from land, although this differs per region. Even small amounts of macroplastics that have been ingested may present serious effects on small cetaceans, such as detrimental influence on the gastrointestinal tract or leaching pollutants into the body, potentially leading to mortality or reduced body condition. Entanglement is well-established as a threat to small cetaceans as plastic debris continues to accumulate in aquatic environments, and may cause physical injuries, reduced survival or drowning.

To better understand the impact of marine debris on small cetaceans and measures in place to mitigate these effects, countries are requested to provide relevant information.

Note: Includes macroplastics and discarded fishing gear. Microplastics are covered under Section C 10 Pollution and Hazardous Substances.

### **9.1. Does your country have monitoring in place to assess levels of marine debris?**

*Please select only one option*

- No. Go to Question 9.3.  
 Yes. Please provide information below.

Include parameters provided through monitoring (e.g. type of litter (size, shape, material), amount, impacts on species, geographical location, etc.).

>>>

### **9.2. Are these data publicly available?**

Please provide web link.

*Please select only one option*

- No  
 Yes

### **9.3. What species of small cetaceans were found to have been impacted by marine debris? Please provide details in the table.**

Please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.

>>>

### **9.4. Are there any mitigation measures in place?**

Mitigation measures might include changes in gear to prevent loss, entanglement response, adoption of measures to reduce land-based/boat-based sources of marine debris, etc.

*Please select only one option*

- No  
 Yes. Please provide information below.

Per measure, please provide: date of implementation, Region (Annex A), identify whether the measure has been effective and provide comments, and other relevant information.

>>>

### **9.5. How is marine debris managed?**

Include relevant regulations/guidelines and the year of implementation, current and planned.

>>>

### **9.6. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on marine debris in your country.**

List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information (e.g. link to OSPAR reports).

>>>

### **9.7. Is the perceived level of pressure from marine debris in your country increasing,**

## decreasing, staying the same, or unknown?

- Increasing
- Decreasing
- Staying the same
- Unknown
- Not applicable. Comments:

>>>

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

>>>

## 10. Pollution and Hazardous Substances (incl. microplastics)

**AIM:** to illustrate progress on understanding, monitoring and mitigating impacts of important current and emerging pollution-related hazards on small cetaceans. during the reporting period

Relevant Resolutions: 8.9, 8.8, **8.7**, 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, **7.4**, 7.1, 6.1, 5.7

Marine environments have been subject to a wide range of different types of pollution over the last decades. Top predators, such as small cetaceans that feed on higher trophic prey, tend to accumulate many of these potentially hazardous substances. There are a number of contaminants and pathogens that are known, or suspected, to have impacts on small cetacean health, immune status or reproduction. These include, for example: polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and other persistent organic pollutants (POPs), oil pollution (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons), toxins from harmful algal blooms (HABs), sewage, radionuclides, toxic elements, tri-butyl tin (TBT), morbillivirus, and Brucella. In addition, micro- and nano-plastics are also present in marine environment and their impacts are presently poorly understood. Monitoring can be done using body tissue from small cetaceans obtained from live animals through biopsies, or from dead animals that are generally found on the shore. Necropsies allow the sampling of different types of tissue such as blubber, muscle, kidney or liver and these can be analyzed subsequently.

To better understand the impact of contaminants on small cetacean health, to detect new emerging hazards and to work towards a common protocol for analyzing samples, countries are asked to provide information on their programs.

Note:Includes microplastics.Macroplastics and discarded fishing gear are covered under Section C 9 Marine Debris.

### 10.1. Does your country conduct monitoring of pollutants in small cetaceans?

Several pollutants have serious effects on individual small cetaceans and can threaten populations. The aim is to capture the nature of existing monitoring and identify gaps in terms of which pollutants are monitored, the extent of this monitoring and the establishment of securely funded long-term data series.

*Please select only one option*

- No. Go to Question 10.7.
- Yes

Comments:

>>>

### 10.2. Who is carrying out the pollutant monitoring program? Please provide information on institution(s)/agencies that collect the samples and carry out analyses.

Please provide the following information per instituion(s)/agencies: name of institution/agency, role in monitoring (e.g. sample collection, analyses, other), postal address, contact person, telephone, email, weblink.

>>>

### 10.3. Identify the small cetacean species that were covered by your monitoring program during the reporting period.

>>>

Comments:

>>>

### 10.4. Select the source of your samples.

Respondents may select multiple options.

- Necropsy from stranding
- Necropsy from bycatch
- Sample from live stranding
- Biopsy from live animal
- Other (specify in comments)

Comments:

>>>

### **10.5. Select the geographical coverage of your monitoring program**

Hold 'Ctrl' to select multiple options.

- OI Norwegian Sea
- OII Dogger Bank
- OII Southern North Sea
- OII Northern North Sea
- OII Channel
- OII Norwegian Trench
- OII Skagerrak
- OIII Celtic Sea
- OIII Irish Sea
- OIII Irish & Scottish W. Coast
- OIV N. Bay of Biscay
- OIV Iberian Sea
- OIV Gulf of Cadiz
- OV Wider Atlantic
- H Bothnian Bay
- H Bothnian Sea
- H Archipelago Sea
- H Åland Sea
- H Gulf of Finland
- H Northern Baltic Proper
- H Western Gotland Basin
- H Eastern Gotland Basin
- H Gulf of Riga
- H Gdansk Basin
- H Bornholm Basin
- H Arkona Basin
- H Kattegat
- H Belt Sea
- H The Sound
- Not Applicable

### **10.6. Select the contaminant / pathogen analyses you have conducted for small cetaceans.**

Hold 'Ctrl' to select multiple options.

- POP (e.g. PCBs)
- Oil (e.g. PAHs)
- HAB toxin
- Sewage
- Radionuclides
- Toxic elements
- TBT
- Morbillivirus
- Brucella
- Microplastics
- Nanoplastics
- Others (specify in comments)
- Not Applicable

Comments:

>>>

### **10.7. Does your country determine microplastics in small cetaceans?**

*Please select only one option*

- No. Go to Question 10.9.  
 Yes

Do you have a specific protocol to monitor microplastics in small cetaceans?

There is currently no agreed protocol between Parties. Best practice needs to be established to make sure that all results obtained are comparable between research institutes. In particular, it is essential to avoid contamination of samples during processing, e.g. with airborne microplastic fibres.

*Please select only one option*

- No  
 Yes

Please provide details and web link or upload document:

>>>

### **10.8. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on impact of pollution and hazardous substances (incl. microplastics) on small cetaceans in your country.**

We need to capture information on new knowledge arising from monitoring schemes or other research projects, especially results which enhance our understanding of impacts of hazardous pollutants and/or assess their known or likely effects on small cetacean population status (e.g. considering PCB concentrations in blubber in relation to threshold for inhibition of reproduction). Where relevant, please report separately per pollutant, species and area. List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information.

>>>

### **10.9. If applicable, list any additional evidence/data of reduced impacts of pollutants on small cetaceans following implementation of national mitigation measures (e.g. decline of contaminant levels in blubber over time).**

>>>

### **10.10. Have there been any instances/issues related to pollution and hazardous substances in your country during the reporting period?**

*Please select only one option*

- No  
 Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

### **10.11. Is the perceived level of pressure from pollution and hazardous substances in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?**

- Increasing  
 Decreasing  
 Staying the same  
 Unknown  
 Not Applicable. Comments:

>>>

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

>>>

## **11. Ship Strikes**

**AIM:** understanding the potential risk of ship strike as a cause of injury/death in small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 8.9, 8.2, 8.1 (Rev.MOP9), 6.1, 5.4

Ship strikes are collisions between vessels and cetaceans. In the last decades, evidence has emerged that ship strikes might occur more often than previously thought and can have a significant impact on small resident cetacean populations. Most research so far has focused on large cetaceans as those animals are often carried visibly into port at the bow of a vessel. For small cetaceans, ship strike events are not well documented.

Ship strike occurrence is directly linked to the frequency of shipping activity, including such directed at cetaceans, i.e. cetacean watching. To quantify this pressure, it is important to know what kind of vessels

are involved in the strike, as well as the type, size and speed of the vessel. But it is also important to have information on the small cetaceans involved, in particular if the animals were engaged in certain behaviour such as feeding.

Ship strike can cause direct death or injury in cetaceans. Even collisions that are non-fatal might leave individuals with a reduction in their chance of survival. To determine the occurrence of ship-strikes, different sources are used. For small cetaceans, direct observations are the rarest. Necropsies of stranded animals can find evidence of characteristic trauma and photographs of animals that survived ship strikes can show typical injuries, such as marks left by propellers. One way to quantify how many animals in a population are impacted by ship strike is to assess the percentage of animals in a photo-identification catalogue that bear ship strike marks.

As this is still a not well documented threat, this section aims to obtain an overview of what kind of data and research is available and ongoing in the countries.

### **11.1 Are there reports available in your country of ship strikes with small cetaceans from visual observations?**

The International Whaling Commission (IWC) has a global database for ship strike incidents with small cetaceans. Whether or not your country is Party to the IWC, it is encouraged for countries to provide all ship strike incident information to the IWC database.

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.

*Please select only one option*

- No  
 Yes. Please provide details in the table.

### **11.2. Are there reports in your country of vessel strikes from necropsies of stranded animals for the reporting period?**

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.

*Please select only one option*

- No  
 Yes. Please provide details in the table.

### **11.3. Does your country have a protocol in use to determine that a cause of death in post-mortem examination is due to a vessel strike?**

*Please select only one option*

- No  
 Yes

Please provide information below:

>>>

### **11.4. Is there evidence in your country from existing photo-identification catalogues of small cetaceans of any non-lethal ship strike during the reporting period?**

For populations of small cetaceans, such as bottlenose dolphins, one can identify those animals in photo-identification catalogues of animals that show ship-strike evidence (e.g. scars). Monitoring the % of animals that show ship strike evidence can be a useful tool to monitor the development of this threat.

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.

*Please select only one option*

- No  
 Yes. Please provide details in the table.

### **11.5. Do you have any other photographs or evidence of ship strikes outside of the photo identification catalogue?**

*Please select only one option*

- No  
 Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

### **11.6. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on ship strikes and its possible effects on small cetaceans in your country.**

List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web

links to other relevant information).

>>>

**11.7. List any management/policy actions/relevant regulations/guidelines related to mitigating ship strike for small cetaceans (re-routing, tracking animals, ship speed limits) in your country and the year of implementation (current and planned).**

Provide web links if available.

>>>

**11.8. Have there been any other instances/issues of ship strike on small cetaceans in your country in the reporting period?**

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

**11.9. Is the perceived level of pressure from ship strikes on small cetaceans in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?**

- Increasing
- Decreasing
- Staying the same
- Unknown
- Not Applicable. Comments:

>>>

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

>>>

**12. Climate Change (incl. ocean acidification)**

**AIM:** to illustrate progress on understanding, monitoring and mitigating negative effects of important and emerging climate change related impacts on small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 8.9, 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.4, 7.1, 6.1, 5.7

It is certain that climate change is altering the habitat of cetaceans. However, our understanding of how the predicted changes will impact different species and populations can be further developed by identifying issues and trends through reporting. CMS[1] highlights the importance of addressing potential issues through the engagement of (1) researchers to better understand the underlying processes, as well as (2) conservation managers and policy makers to monitor changes and to mitigate negative impacts. Focus should be given to understanding tangible climate change effects relevant to cetaceans, such as changing ocean temperatures, prey depletion / prey range shifts, ocean acidification, increased frequency and intensity of ocean storms, changes in sea ice and weakening of the North Atlantic Drift. Such occurrences require that we gather evidence on the existence and nature of climate change effects on small cetaceans and evaluate current monitoring programmes and mitigation measures. This section aims to provide an overview of what kind of activities are already ongoing in the member states to address climate change. The focus is on those actions specifically regarding cetaceans as well as the most likely impacts on their habitat and prey. Climate change possibly represents one of the most important future threat to the status of cetaceans in the ASCOBANS region. Direct effects may arise due to ocean warming, resulting in distribution shifts (generally northward) so that the animals continue to occupy waters with temperature regimes compatible with their thermal niches. Key indirect effects will result from changes in prey distribution and abundance due to ocean warming, ocean acidification and changes in ocean current systems.

[1]CMS Resolution 12.21 on Climate Change and Migratory Species.

**12.1. Does your country undertake monitoring that has potential to contribute to knowledge and identification of climate impacts on small cetaceans?**

Climate change will have a multitude of possible direct and indirect effects on small cetaceans. Attempting to quantify this is challenging. These questions are an attempt at providing an overview of the type of monitoring programmes that are conducted that may provide indirect evidence of climate change on small cetaceans.

*Please select only one option*

- No. Go to Question 12.3.
- Yes. Continue to Question 12.2.

## 12.2. Which effects has your country been monitoring during the reporting period?

Hold 'Ctrl' to select multiple options.

- Changes in small cetacean abundance
- Changes in small cetacean distribution
- Changes in small cetacean migration or movement range
- Changes in small cetacean migration or movement timing
- Changes in small cetacean community structure
- Changes in reproductive success and timing in small cetaceans
- Changes in prey (fish) abundance and distribution
- Changes in timing of prey (fish) spawning and migration
- Changes in fishing effort
- Changes in the occurrence of pathogens (from sampled individuals)
- Incidence of algal blooms (in comments, specify where and year)
- Other (specify in comments)

Comments (if possible, provide contact/link to project):

>>>

## 12.3. Relevant new research/work/collaborations which provide evidence/data about climate change, including its emerging potential issues and effects on small cetaceans in your country.

List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information); include the species concerned, the climate change effect observed, who did the work)

>>>

## 12.4. Have there been any instances/issues related to identified trends in small cetacean populations as a result of climate change in your country during the reporting period?

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

## 12.5. Is the perceived level of pressure from climate change to small cetaceans in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

- Increasing
- Decreasing
- Staying the same
- Unknown
- Not Applicable. Comments:

>>>

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

>>>

## 13. Physical Habitat Change (e.g. from construction)

**AIM:** human activities in the Agreement Area have the potential to impact upon small cetaceans. Tracking those activities that cause physical habitat change and improving our understanding of their relative impacts will help shape any necessary mitigation action required.

Relevant Resolutions: **8.11 (Rev.MOP9)**, 8.9, 8.6, 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.1, 6.2, 6.1, 5.7

This section aims to review new information on physical habitat change, e.g. from construction, and its impacts on small cetaceans, their prey and their habitat, and make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.

The collation of this information will contribute to the development of risk maps showing the spatial and temporal (by season) distribution of activities that have an impact on small cetaceans, including information provided in National Reports, taking into account the work done by other organizations.

Note: In the term "physical habitat change", we include a) coastal/marine construction - artificial islands,

harbours, bridges, oil/gas platforms, wind turbines, tidal turbines; and b) seabed damage – dredging, bottom trawling.

**13.1. Provide spatial information on locations (in form of maps and/or links) of physical habitat change in your country by activity type (dredging, marine construction, coastal construction) for the reporting period.**

Many range states are mapping human activities to fulfil obligations under the EU Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, MSFD, OSPAR, and HELCOM; this information is relevant (though often not readily accessible) to ASCOBANS in understanding the extent and trends of human activities potentially impacting small cetaceans.

Please provide per region (Annex A): the type of information (e.g. maps, GIS, reports), whether the data is available online, and web links to data, or comment on unavailability.

>>>

**13.2. Does your country have any reported cases of physical habitat changes (e.g. dredging, marine construction, coastal construction) impacting small cetaceans during the reporting period?**

If you select 'Yes', please also provide web links if available.

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

**13.3. Does your country have any mitigation measures (regulations/guidelines) to prevent impacts on small cetaceans during physical habitat change activities (e.g. dredging, marine construction, coastal construction)?**

Per measure, please provide: the applicable industry, activity type, whether the measure has been effective with additional comments, and other relevant information.

>>>

**13.4. Relevant new initiatives/projects/publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) in your country during the reporting period on impacts from physical habitat change on small cetaceans (incl. title, organization, lead author).**

Provide web links if available.

>>>

**13.5. Have there been any other instances/issues in your country regarding physical habitat change during the reporting period?**

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

**13.6. Is the perceived level of pressure from physical habitat change in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?**

- Increasing
- Decreasing
- Staying the same
- Unknown
- Not applicable. Comments:

>>>

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

>>>

**14. Other Issues**

**14.1. List any other issues related to habitat change and degradation not mentioned above.**

>>>

## D. Management of Cumulative Impacts

### 15. Marine Spatial Planning

**AIM:** to provide information on existing and proposed marine spatial plans and processes during the reporting period that may impact small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions 9.1, 8.9, 8.6, 8.3

A growing demand for use of maritime space increases pressure on ecosystems and marine resources. Marine ecosystems with good environmental status provide notable benefits to a number of economic outputs. Implementation of an integrated spatial planning and management approach can better mitigate negative impacts from maritime activities on marine environments. Spatial planning can support sustainable marine development through coordinated, coherent and transparent decision-making and the encouragement and identification of multi-purpose uses in relevant projects. Marine spatial planning is essential when selecting the most appropriate siting for marine-based projects. Particular attention should be given to critical habitat and relevant species, such as small cetaceans, in order to achieve good environmental status.

ASCOBANS Parties have agreed on a number of resolutions that support the integration of marine spatial planning into development processes. Small cetaceans benefit from good marine spatial planning and this is highlighted in the resolutions. Countries are requested to provide information relevant to their country in this regard.

#### 15.1. Please provide information in regard to current and foreseen marine spatial planning.

National plan(s) and processes in force:

>>>

National plan(s) and processes in preparation:

>>>

Further information regarding national plans, including links to online resources and maps where available:

>>>

Transboundary plan(s) and processes in force:

>>>

Transboundary plan(s) and processes in preparation:

>>>

Further information regarding transboundary plans, including links to online resources and maps where available:

>>>

#### 15.2. Have there been any other instances/issues in your country regarding marine spatial planning during the reporting period.

*Please select only one option*

No

Yes

Provide details:

Provide details:

>>>

#### 15.3. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on marine spatial planning in your country.

List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information.

>>>

## E. Area-based Conservation / Marine Protected Areas

### 16. Protected Areas, e.g. Natura 2000 Sites

**AIM:** to provide information on existing and proposed marine protected areas with small cetaceans as part

of the selection criteria.

Relevant Resolutions: 5.7

Marine protected areas (MPAs) are considered under numerous agreements (including the Convention on Biological Diversity, Habitats Directive, Bern Convention, Ramsar Convention, OSPAR Convention, HELCOM, ACCOBAMS, MSFD) as a tool to achieve conservation goals. Part of ASCOBANS remit is to provide expert advice on the conservation and management of small cetaceans. This includes inviting Parties and Range States to continue or initiate research aimed at locating areas of special importance to the survival (in particular breeding and feeding) of small cetaceans as suitable sites for the establishment of protected areas. This also includes advising on appropriate management measures in these areas, on their own or in the context of other intergovernmental bodies to ensure the protection of small cetaceans.

To monitor the progress of such work to fulfil the obligations of Resolution 5.7 and actions in the workplan, ASCOBANS requires information (e.g. location, species, status, spatial data, management plans and monitoring) on existing and proposed marine protected areas with small cetaceans as part of the selection criteria.

It is of particular interest to ASCOBANS to obtain an overview of the current scale of marine protected areas and to review best practice approaches to management of marine protected areas, in order to make recommendations to Parties.

**16.1. Does your country have MPAs (existing or proposed) where small cetaceans are the primary reason for the (proposed) designation?**

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes

How many? Please also provide more details in the table.

>>>

**16.2. Does your country have MPAs (existing or proposed) with small cetaceans are forming part of the selection criteria?**

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.

*Please select only one option*

- No
- Yes

How many? Please also provide more details in the table.

>>>

**16.3. Provide information on management measures, including regulations/guidelines, particularly relevant to small cetaceans in MPAs listed above. Including any temporal/spatial restriction of activities (i.e. seasonal fishery closures).**

In order to monitor implementation of MPA management measures and make recommendations on best practice, we need to understand what management measures are being used and be aware of examples of what approaches are proving effective.

Please provide per site name, the pressure, and the measure per pressure.

>>>

**16.4. Provide details of existing or proposed monitoring schemes related to the effectiveness of MPAs/management measured listed above for small cetaceans.**

>>>

**16.5. Relevant new research/work/collaboration relating to MPAs in your country.**

In order to plan future approaches to MPA management and monitoring, we need to be aware of current gaps and emerging issues.

List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information; include the species concerned, who did the work)

>>>

### III. Surveys and Research

#### A. Biological Information (per species)

##### 1. Abundance Estimates

**AIM:** to provide new information on abundance and life history parameters of small cetaceans during the reporting period.

Relevant Resolutions: 8.5 (Rev.MOP9), 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.1, 6.1, 5.7, 5.5, 4.7, 3.5, 3.3

Abundance estimates and information on life history are of critical importance for the determination of broader species attributes such as populations levels, health and overall status. These parameters can contribute towards determination of GES and provide a reference for mortality events. Abundance and life history parameters are typically assessed from monitoring programmes. Fluctuations in these parameters can provide insight into trends in populations. Information on abundance and life history parameters can inform the need for mitigation measures, and regional assessment of these parameters allows for a more spatially targeted and concentrated response to support national assessments.

In the ASCOBANS Area, small cetacean abundance and life history should be monitored in response to a number of ASCOBANS resolutions. Continued monitoring of these parameters is essential to understanding current status and trends.

##### 1.1. Did your country conduct national dedicated surveys on abundance and distribution during the reporting period?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below. Attach maps separately, clearly marking which survey they apply to.

Note: Information relevant to SCANS-III is to be provided in Questions 1.2.

Please select only one option

- No
- Yes. Please provide details in table.

##### 1.2. Other relevant new research/work/collaboration on abundance estimates in regard to small cetaceans in your country during the reporting period.

List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study and information relevant to SCANS-III; web links to other relevant information.

>>>

##### 1.3. Is the abundance of species in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same, or unknown?

Please select only one option

- Increasing
- Decreasing
- Staying the same
- Unknown
- Not Applicable. Comments:

>>>

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

>>>

#### 2. New Information on Life History Parameters

##### 2.1. Is there new information on the following life history parameters in the reporting period?

For each life history parameters, please identify the species and provide web links and details where applicable.

	1. Yes / No	2. Describe per species
Other relevant factors		
Age and sex structure		
Diet		
Longevity		

Potential reproductive span/capacity		
Calf and adult mortality rates		
Inter-birth intervals		
Age of sexual and physical maturity		

## B. Monitoring Programmes

### 3. Overview of Current Monitoring and Survey Schemes

**AIM:** to provide information on the progress of monitoring programmes, relevant methodologies and aims thereof, and status of small cetaceans during the reporting period.

Relevant Resolutions: 8.11 (Rev.MOP9), 8.9, 8.8, 8.5 (Rev.MOP9), 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.3, 7.1, 6.1, 5.7  
Monitoring programmes provide important data on biological and environmental attributes, such as population status, abundance and spatial-temporal distribution. They create opportunities for new research and development, including potential improvements to methodology for monitoring in terms of accuracy, practicality and cost efficiency.

In the ASCOBANS Area, application of coherent monitoring programmes focused on small cetaceans, which collect and provide objective, robust and comparable data, is a key component in understanding and improving the conservation status of small cetaceans through appropriate management. Parties have agreed to design, implement and support relevant monitoring programmes through a number of resolutions. Such efforts are also supported by legislation from a number of bodies which identify monitoring as a requirement in management systems. Additionally, Parties have been encouraged to coordinate their monitoring programmes, which promotes international cooperation and synergies. Parties have also been encouraged to review such monitoring programmes and propose improvements for the betterment of conservation efforts.

It is the interest of ASCOBANS to understand the current monitoring programmes utilised, their outputs, and future activities in the Agreement Area. Countries are requested to provide information relevant to their activities as well as potential improvements to such programmes and efforts.

#### 3.1. Did your country have national monitoring programmes that enabled assessment of the Conservation Status of small cetaceans in your waters (i.e. provides abundance estimates and/or life history parameters and information on pressures) during the reporting period?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.  
*Please select only one option*

- No  
 Yes. Please provide details in the table.

#### 3.2. Please provide the relevant information regarding aerial surveying activities.

Provide the number of surveys, area covered, relevant species, and timeframe of the survey.  
>>>

#### 3.3. Please provide the relevant information regarding Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM).

Provide the location of moored instruments, timeframe of the survey, the relevant species, and the make and model of instruments used.  
>>>

#### 3.4. Are any of these programmes carried out in collaboration with other countries?

*Please select only one option*

- No  
 Yes. Provide information below.

Please provide the collaborators and links per programme.  
>>>

#### 3.5. Please provide details on any planned activities relevant to monitoring programmes.

Provide web links if available.  
>>>

### **3.6. Relevant outputs/findings from monitoring programmes to note.**

Per species, please identify the relevant outputs.  
Provide web links if available.

>>>

### **C. Other Research (not mentioned elsewhere in Section II, II, or IV)**

**Please provide relevant information in regard to other research (not mentioned elsewhere in Sections II, III, IV).**

Per project, please provide the institution, duration, aim(s)/objective(s), and the method.

>>>

## IV. Use of Strandings Records

### A. Stranding Network and Strandings

**AIM:** to provide information on stranding events and demonstrate progress of stranding networks in understanding, monitoring and mitigating strandings of small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: **8.10 (Rev.MOP9)**, 8.7, 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.4, 7.3, 7.1, 6.1, 5.7

Stranding of cetaceans is an ever-present occurrence and analysis through necropsy and sampling can provide indications of reason for injury and death. Stranding numbers also provide information on population status, abundance and distribution. Effective response to strandings contributes to the maintenance of favourable conservation status of small cetaceans and also has implications for animal welfare. Comprehensive stranding networks are a critical asset in managing small cetacean strandings and have resulted in large numbers of animals rescued and returned to sea. These networks also have the capacity to guide the public on animal welfare, human health and safety considerations during stranding events.

In the effort to mitigate the anthropogenic causes of these occurrences, Parties have agreed to measures through a number of resolutions. Continued monitoring of stranding causation and further developing guidance for best practices in stranding response and necropsies was identified by Parties as important tasks to pursue, as was setting up stranding response networks. This information is to align with appropriate sampling practices and countries should ensure that the data is available for researchers. Additionally, development and support of international strandings databases and regular reporting is conducted through relevant research institutes and stranding schemes. ASCOBANS Secretariat encourages the ongoing funding and support of engagement with organizations for further development of guidelines, best practices and maintaining dataflow for capacity building across stranding networks.

To better understand the extent to which stranding events occur and how these events are managed, it is the interest of ASCOBANS for countries to provide the relevant information on these occurrences within the Agreement Area, procedures undertaken in response to stranding events, necropsies and information on stranding networks.

#### 1.1. Is there a national stranding network in place?

*Please select only one option*

- No. Go to Question 1.4.  
 Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

#### 1.2. Does the national stranding network cover the whole, or part of the reporting country's coastline?

*Please select only one option*

- Whole coastline  
 Part of the coastline

Please provide details:

>>>

#### 1.3. Are necropsies carried out to determine cause of death?

*Please select only one option*

- No  
 Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

#### 1.4. Is there a database of strandings?

*Please select only one option*

- No. Go to Question 1.6.  
 Yes. Continue to Question 1.5.

#### 1.5. Is there data available online or downloadable on request?

Please select only one option

- No
- Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

**1.6. Provide details for any new institution(s) responsible for a stranding database, responding to live-strandings, collection of carcasses, and for conducting necropsies.**

Please identify the new responsible institution(s) and provide their: responsibility (responding to live-strandings, collection of carcasses, necropsies, stranding database), phone number, email, and website.

>>>

**1.7. Were cases photographed, measured or sampled even if not collected for necropsy during the reporting period?**

Please select only one option

- No
- Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

**1.8. Were there recorded stranding events in your country during the reporting period?**

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below. Provide details relevant for recorded stranding events during the reporting period.

Please select only one option

- No
- Yes

How many strandings occurred during the reporting period (specify live and dead)? Please also provide more details in the table.

>>>

**1.9. Were any necropsies conducted during the reporting period?**

Please select only one option

- No
- Yes. Provide information below.

Per necropsy, please provide: the protocol used for dissection/methodologies/collection of samples etc., number of carcasses necropsied, what causes of death were identified (add percentage if available), and any additional comments.

>>>

**1.10. Other relevant new research/work/collaboration on strandings and stranding networks in your country.**

List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information.

>>>

## V. Legislation

### A. Overview of Legislative Framework

**AIM:** to provide information on national, regional and international legislation and guidelines relevant to small cetaceans during the reporting period.

Relevant Resolutions: 8.10 (Rev.MOP9), 8.9, 8.8, 8.6, 8.5 (Rev.MOP9), 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.1, 6.2, 6.1, 5.7, 5.4

Legislation and guidelines are a key component of efforts to support favourable conservation status of small cetaceans in the ASCOBANS Area. A number of existing legislation and guidelines bear relevance to conservation efforts for small cetaceans on national, regional and international scales. Regular updating and adaptation of guidelines and legislation (where applicable) can ensure ongoing prevention, minimization and reduction of negative impacts of marine activities on small cetaceans. In addition, these actions support transparent and reliable management.

Parties to ASCOBANS have agreed to support the requisition, development and the implementation of legislation and guidelines to assess, minimize and mitigate pressures on favourable conservation status of small cetaceans in the Agreement Area. Parties have committed to these actions through a number of resolutions regarding pressures known to be detrimental to small cetaceans. It is in the interest of ASCOBANS for countries to provide information on current and foreseen national, regional and international legislation and guidelines relevant to small cetaceans in the Agreement Area.

#### 1.1. Please provide the applicable information regarding legislation and guidelines relevant to small cetaceans below.

Are national guidelines relevant for small cetaceans currently in place in your country?

*Please select only one option*

- No  
 Yes

Please identify the guidelines concerned:

>>>

Is national legislation relevant for small cetaceans currently in place in your country?

*Please select only one option*

- No  
 Yes

Please identify the legal statutes concerned:

>>>

Are regional and/or international guidelines relevant for small cetaceans currently in place in your country?

*Please select only one option*

- No  
 Yes

Please identify the guidelines concerned:

>>>

Is regional and/or international legislation relevant for small cetaceans currently in place in your country?

*Please select only one option*

- No  
 Yes

Please identify the legal statutes concerned:

>>>

#### 1.2. Have there been any instances/issues related to national, regional and/or international legislation during the reporting period in your country?

*Please select only one option*

- No  
 Yes

Please provide details:

>>>

## VI. Information and Education

### A. Education and Outreach

#### A. Education and Outreach

**AIM:** to determine if there are gaps in the outreach and education activities and if additional material should be produced in your country or by the Secretariat (e.g. on certain themes, species, regions, languages, for certain target audiences).

Relevant Resolutions: 8.13, 8.3, 8.2, 5.8

ASCOBANS Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Plan<sup>[1]</sup> was presented at the 17th Meeting of the Advisory Committee. The purpose of the CEPA Plan was to identify actions and activities to be undertaken by the Secretariat, Parties and relevant partners. In addition, the Advisory Committee recommended the following overarching principles: (i) Carefully identifying the audience – e.g. children, students, policy makers, fishers – and making materials appropriate to each particular audience; (ii) Noting that different localities, communities and cultures may require different approaches; (iii) Preparing outreach and education materials in relevant languages (including on the website); and (iv) Building joint initiatives with ‘partner’ organizations and others. The CEPA aimed for more effective engagement with audiences, greater impact upon audiences, closer relationship with key conservation issues; more effective connection with educational, fundraising and promotional initiatives; and more effective and easily understood communication of relevant areas of science. In this spirit, the purpose of this section is to highlight successes and to identify potential gaps in outreach and education activities and related materials.

[1] See AC17 Report, Annex 10 (starting on page 65).

#### **1.1. List education/outreach activities in the reporting period in your country, which are of relevance to conservation of small cetaceans in the ASCOBANS Area.**

E.g. activities during the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Proposee in May.

Per activity, please identify: the organizer, name of activity (incl. translation to English, where applicable), date(s), location, target audience (general public, scientists, children, fisheries; others - please state), and links for further information.

>>>

#### **1.2. List current information/outreach materials produced in your country, which are of relevance to the ASCOBANS Area and species.**

Per publication, please provide: the name of the publication (inc. translation into English, where applicable), author(s), publisher, year, links (to download publication), and identify whether ASCOBANS may distribute the link to publication for outreach purposes.

>>>

#### **1.3. List other organizations engaged in outreach relevant to the ASCOBANS Area.**

Please include web links where applicable.

>>>

#### **1.4. List other initiatives/work/collaboration relevant to the ASCOBANS Area that are not included above.**

>>>

#### **1.5. List any gaps in your country's outreach relevant to the ASCOBANS Area. What would be needed to fill these gaps?**

>>>

#### **1.6. Resources permitting, are there any materials that you think the ASCOBANS Secretariat should produce?**

*Please select only one option*

No

Yes

Please describe what, and why:

>>>

## **VII. Other Matters**

### **A. Other information or comments important for the Agreement.**

Opportunity to include other information relevant to the topics covered in this form but which are missing.  
>>>

### **B. Difficulties in implementing the Agreement.**

>>>

### **C. Burning Issues.**

>>>