

Agenda Item 9

Funding of Projects and Activities

Progress of Projects Supported by
ASCOBANS

Document 9.1

**Progress of Projects Supported
through ASCOBANS**

Action Requested

- Take note
- Comment

Submitted by

Secretariat



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

Secretariat's Note

The Rules of Procedure adopted at the 19th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee remain in force until and unless an amendment is called for and adopted.

Progress of Projects Supported through ASCOBANS

1. In this document, the Secretariat reports on the progress of the projects that were funded through the Agreement. The document contains details of projects concluded since MoP8, as well as the status of those underway. Previous reports can be accessed as [AC21/Doc.6.1](#) and [AC22/Doc.8.1](#).

A. Web-Accessed Database for Marine Mammal Stranding and Necropsy Data

2. This project addresses a long-standing call by Parties to create a web-accessed database for marine mammal strandings and necropsy data in the ASCOBANS region (see para 5, Resolution 7.4). It followed on from an initial project on the “Interest and feasibility of a web-accessed database for marine mammal strandings and necropsy data in the ASCOBANS region (see [AC19/Doc.6.05](#)). The most recent project was financially supported through a voluntary contribution from Germany and from the “Conservation Projects” budget line and was covered by SSFA/2015/01 and SSFA/2017/02, which were concluded with the Zoological Society of London (ZSL). The project came to an end in July 2017.
3. The project developed a full-costed proposal for the delivery of a web-accessed database, designed to periodically capture and display data on strandings and necropsies carried out in the ASCOBANS area, in close collaboration with European stranding networks.
4. This proposal describes a potential process for the collaborative creation and phased delivery of a web-accessed database of cetacean strandings across the ASCOBANS region. It would initially allow periodic upload and display of data on strandings, followed at a later date by the upload and display of data on causes of death in animals where necropsies have been carried out. It would allow display to a variety of end users, with allocation of appropriate access levels. End users could include, but not be limited to the general public, media/press, policy officials, the scientific community and of course, stranding networks that contribute data.
5. The collective integration of stranding datasets across the region, leading to the production of a significant combined dataset on strandings over a 20+ year period, would create significant synergies between stranding networks and will hopefully help facilitate additional collaborations. The inception of such a system would also potentially enable more efficient investigation of issues that may be transnational in nature (e.g. Dolman et al. 2008, Unger et al. 2016, Peltier et al. 2017). The putative web-accessed database would also help promote the roles of all stakeholders involved in the project, from ASCOBANS and Parties and Range States to national funders and of course, collaborating stranding networks.
6. Finally, it would help educate and inform the public about the drivers behind cetacean stranding events and enable us to further our understanding of a wide range of issues, so that we can try to improve the long-term conservation status of these charismatic marine species
7. The final project report has been published as [AC23/Inf.9.1.a](#).

B. Baltic Sea harbour porpoise foraging habitats (BALHAB)

8. This project had originally been selected for financial support by AC21, but had to be postponed due to unforeseen circumstances. The lead researcher was able to return to the project last year and a funding agreement (SSFA/2017/02) was concluded with Aarhus University in December 2016.

9. The main aims of the project are to examine whether porpoise feeding buzzes can be used to identify foraging habitats by comparing occurrence of buzzes at a number of different sampling stations (304 stations). It will further investigate the temporal distribution of harbour porpoise foraging buzzes in the SAMBAH data. Finally, the project will produce seasonal maps of the frequency of occurrence of foraging buzzes within the SAMBAH project area to propose foraging habitats especially important for porpoises.
10. The project is currently ongoing and is due to conclude at the end of 2017.