

NATIONAL REPORTING

Recalling Article 2.5 of the Agreement requesting Parties to submit to the Secretariat a brief report not later than 31 March each year, covering progress made and difficulties experienced during the past calendar year in implementing the Agreement,

Conscious that an assessment of the progress in implementing the Agreement is possible only through meaningful national reporting,

Mindful that in national reporting, the right balance needs to be struck with respect to the information desired and the use to which the data will be put, so as not to burden the Parties unnecessarily, and

Grateful for the work undertaken by the Advisory Committee in developing a new reporting format that reflects the range of issues relevant to small cetacean conservation in the Agreement Area, and for its advice on the periodicity.

The Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS

1. *Decides* that Parties will be required to submit one comprehensive national report within each MOP-cycle;
2. *Further decides* that in order to meet the requirements of Article 2.5 of the Agreement the obligation to submit brief annual reports is retained, covering basic information as well as in-depth considerations on specific topics, as outlined below;
3. *Adopts* the outline for national reports presented in Annex 1;
4. *Directs* that each topic should be considered at least once per intersessional period, and that the report submitted in the year of the Meeting of the Parties should provide up-to-date information on all these topics, as follows:
 - (a) all reports (annually): Section I, Section VII
 - (b) the report to be submitted in the first and fourth year of the quadrennium: Section II B3, B4, C8 and D15
 - (c) the report to be submitted in the second and fourth year of the quadrennium: Section II A1, A2 and C9, Section III, Section IV
 - (d) the report to be submitted in the third and fourth year of the quadrennium: Section II B5, B6, B7, C10, C11, C12, C13, C14, and E16, Section VI
 - (e) the report that is to be submitted only in the fourth year of the quadrennium: Section V
5. *Requests* the Advisory Committee:
 - (a) to review and amend the reporting form, as necessary;
 - (b) to make full use of the information submitted in order to assess progress in the implementation of the Agreement and make recommendations to Parties;
 - (c) to tailor the agenda for each of its meetings to reflect the topics selected for the previous year's national reports;

6. *Would welcome it* if Parties submitted their national reports by the deadline of 31 March of each year, indicated in Article 2.5 of the Agreement – submission would be done via Word document until the form is available in the online reporting system developed for the CMS Family;
7. *Requests* the Secretariat to remind Parties of the date for submission of their national reports; and
8. *Recognizes* that in order to meet its obligation to present Parties with a summary of the Party reports by 30 June of each year, as required in Article 4.2 of the Agreement, the Secretariat requires the submission of all national reports sufficiently in advance of this date.

Annex 1: Outline of the National Reporting Form for ASCOBANS

High-level Summary of Key Messages

Section I: General Information

A. Country Information

Section II: Habitat Conservation and Management (threats and pressures on cetaceans)

A. Fisheries-related Threats

1. Bycatch
2. Resource Depletion

B. Disturbance (incl. potential physical impacts)

3. Noise (impulsive i.e. piling and continuous/ambient i.e. shipping)
4. Ocean Energy
5. Cetacean Watching Industry
6. Recreational Sea Use
7. Other Sources of Disturbance

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

8. Unexploded Ordnance
9. Marine Debris (ingestion and entanglement)
10. Pollution and hazardous substances (incl. microplastics)
11. Ship Strikes
12. Climate change (incl. ocean acidification)
13. Physical Habitat Change (e.g. from construction)
14. Other issues

D. Management of Cumulative Impacts

15. Marine Spatial Planning

E. Area-based Conservation / Marine Protected Areas

16. Protected Areas, e.g. Natura 2000 sites

Section III: Surveys and Research

A. Biological information (per species)

1. Abundance estimates
2. New information on life history parameters

B. Monitoring Programmes

3. Overview of current monitoring and survey schemes

C. Other research (not mentioned elsewhere in Section II III or IV)

Section IV: Use of Strandings Records

A. Stranding Networks and Strandings

Section V: Legislation

A. Overview of Legislative Framework

Section VI: Information and Education

A. Education and outreach

Section VII: Other Matters

- A. Other information or comments important for the Agreement
- B. Difficulties in implementing the Agreement
- C. Burning issues