



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**

EP



UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.390/Inf.6
14 February 2014

Original: ENGLISH



MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

Integrated Correspondence Groups of GES and Targets Meeting

Athens (Greece), 17-19 February 2014

Accobams Information Note on EO11

UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2014

ACCOBAMS Information Note on EO11

Recalling ACCOBAMS purpose to reduce threats to cetaceans in the region and to improve knowledge on these animals, the last Meeting of ACCOBAMS Parties (5-8 November 2013, Tangier, Morocco), reaffirmed that anthropogenic marine noise was a form of pollution, caused by the introduction of energy into the marine environment, which can have adverse effects on marine life (Resolution 5.15).

The Meeting also encouraged the Secretariat to liaise with the Barcelona Convention for the determination of the Good Environmental Status (GES), in particular through the joint ACCOBAMS/ASCBANS/CMS working group on noise for the EO11 “Energy including underwater noise”, as agreed by the Correspondence Group on GES and Targets – Pollution and Litter Cluster – and the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points (June 2013).

Members of the joint ACCOBAMS/ASCBANS/CMS working group were approached and they proposed the table here below, based on the second report of the Technical Subgroup on Underwater Noise (November 2013). Comments of the joint ACCOBAMS/ASCBANS/CMS working group can be found in annex.

This document is for discussion during the Integrated Correspondence Groups of GES and Targets Meeting. It has not been circulated for review among the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee, nor the ACCOBAMS Focal Points.

Operational Objectives ¹	Indicators	Objectives	EU Member States Responsibilities	Recommended Actions
11.1 Energy inputs into the marine environment, especially noise from human activities is minimized	11.1.1 Proportion of days and their distribution within a calendar year over areas of a determined surface, as well as their spatial distribution, in which anthropogenic sound sources exceed levels that are likely to entail significant impact on marine animals measured as Sound Exposure Level (in dB re 1 µPa 2 .s) or as peak sound pressure level (in dB re 1 µPa peak) at one metre, measured over the frequency band 10 Hz to 10 kHz	TSG Noise suggested that “considerable” displacement is the most relevant effect of loud low and mid-frequency sounds. “Considerable” displacement means displacement of a significant proportion of individuals for a relevant time period and at a relevant spatial scale.	TSG Noise recommends monitoring of indicator 11.1.1 by setting up a register of the occurrence of these impulsive sounds.	<u>Thresholds of the registry:</u> Explosive: mTNTeq > 8 g Airgun: SLz-p > 209 dB re 1 µPa m Other pulse sound source: SL _E > 186 dB re 1 µPa ² s Low-mid frequency sonar: SL > 176 dB re 1 µPa m Low-mid freq. acoustic deterrent: SL > 176 dB re 1 µPa m Other nonpulse sound source: SL > 176 dB re 1 µPa m Pile-drivers: all pile-driving activities should be registered.
	11.1.2 Trends in the ambient noise level within the 1/3 octave bands 63 and 125 Hz (centre frequency) (re 1µPa RMS; average noise level in these octave	This indicator focuses on chronic exposure of marine life to low frequency, anthropogenic ambient noise. ... Data suggests	TSG Noise concludes that the combined use of measurements and models (and possibly sound	<u>Monitoring programme:</u> Category A Monitoring - to establish information on the ambient noise in a location and to ground truth noise prediction, Category B Monitoring- to reduce

¹ Dekeling, R.P.A., Tasker, M.L., Van der Graaf, A.J., Ainslie, M.A., Andersson, M.H., André, M., Borsani, J.F., Brensing, K., Castellote, M., Cronin, D., Dalen, J., Folegot, T., Leaper, R., Pajala, J., Redman, P., Robinson, S.P., Sigray, P., Sutton, G., Thomsen, F., Werner, S., Wittekind, D., Young, J.V. (2013) Monitoring Guidance for Underwater Noise in European Seas - PART I, II, III. 2nd Report of the Technical Subgroup on Underwater Noise (TSG Noise). November, 2013.

	<p>bands over a year) measured by observation stations and/or with the use of models if appropriate.</p>	<p>that exposure to elevated ambient noise from human activities could lead to the masking of biologically important signals. In the long term this could also induce stress in receivers which, in turn, may lead to physiological impacts.</p>	<p>maps) is the best way for Member States to ascertain levels and trends of ambient noise in the relevant frequency bands.</p>	<p>uncertainty on source levels to be used as the input for modelling.</p> <p><u>Modelling complementarity to monitoring:</u> The use of modelling for indicators and noise statistics, and possibly the creation of noise maps, ensures that trend estimation is more reliable and cost-effective</p>
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ANNEX: Comments of the Joint Noise Working Group

The Joint NWG has not had sufficient time to prepare a comprehensive contribution to this process.

As an initial step, a number of members of the Joint NWG who are also involved in the Technical Subgroup on Underwater Noise (TSG Noise) have provided information developed by the TSG for the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive - Good Environmental Status (MSFD-GES) process.

The Joint NWG needs time to familiarize with the monitoring guidance documents (which are pretty dense) before further comments and guidance can be drawn from the table.

The Joint NWG notes that TSG Noise is focusing on pressure indicators and suggests a very comprehensive database about noise in European waters. This is intended to give a detailed understanding of the noise budget in European waters. However, this information is not sufficient to give any idea about the impact on biota. Therefore, it is not possible to define or to reach a good environmental status with this information alone.

In order to prepare a more complete contribution that is relevant for the whole of the ACCOBAMS region (that includes EU and non-EU Members) the Joint NWG would appreciate:

- clear instructions about what is being requested, how the information will be used and what the timeframe is for delivery;*
- background information about the process that this work will contribute to;*
- clarity about if this information will require ACCOBAMS Party approval, or is for information or as general guidance; and*
- How is this intended to contribute to or compliment to ACCOBAMS Noise Guidelines.*

Despite these cautions, we trust the table provides an initial and informal contribution to the process – all-be-it an incomplete one.