

Accord Pelagos  
relatif à la création en Méditerranée  
d'un Sanctuaire pour les mammifères marins

Comité scientifique et technique Extra2025  
visioconférence, 29 juillet 2025



Accordo Pelagos  
relativo alla creazione nel Mediterraneo  
di un Santuario per i mammiferi marini

Comitato scientifico e tecnico Extra 2025  
videoconferenza, 29 luglio 2025

**Pelagos\_STCExtra\_2025\_Report\_SR**  
**English**  
**Distribution: 04/08/2025**

**REPORT OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE**  
**SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF THE**  
**PELAGOS AGREEMENT**  
**- 29 July 2025 -**

## SUMMARY

<b>OPENING OF THE MEETING .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>EXAMINATION OF THE PROPOSAL OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2026-2027.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>EXAMINATION OF THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2026-2027 .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CLOSING OF THE MEETING .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>ANNEXES .....</b>	<b>7</b>
ANNEX 1 – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS .....	8
ANNEX 2 – SUMMARY OF THE AGREED FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS.....	9

## Opening of the meeting

1. The Extraordinary Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Committee (STC) of the Pelagos Agreement starts on Tuesday 29 July 2025 at 10 a.m.
2. The list of participants is reported in [Annex 1](#) to this report.
3. Ms Maria Betti, Executive Secretary of the Pelagos Agreement welcomes the participants and thanks for the work of revision done on the provided document on the provisional budget 2026-27 (*Pelagos\_CST17\_2025\_Doc09\_Rev01\_Proposta\_di\_bilancio\_di\_previsione\_2026-2027\_REV(1)\_revSP*; *Pelagos\_CST17\_2025\_Doc09\_Rev01\_Proposta\_di\_bilancio\_di\_previsione\_2026-2027\_REV(1)\_revSP - Francese*) and proposal of programme of work 2026-27 (*Pelagos\_CST17\_Proposal\_Work\_Programme\_2026-2027\_RevIT\_finale(1)*; *Pelagos\_CST17\_Proposal\_Work\_Programme\_2026-2027\_RevIT\_finale(1) – Francese*)
4. Ms Caterina Fortuna, Chair of the STC, proposes to start from the examination of the proposal of the Programme of Work and then examine the provisional budget for the next biennium.

## Examination of the proposal of the Programme of Work 2026-2027

5. The Chair recalls that the document provided by the Secretariat only includes activities to be completed from the previous PoW and activities already planned for the biennium 2026-2027 in the Action Plan 2022-2027 presented during the COP8 in December 2021. ([Pelagos COP8 2021 Inf12 PROJET PLAN TRAVAIL PREMILINAIRE 2022-2027 ACCORD PELAGOS](#); [Pelagos COP8 2021 Inf12 BOZZA PIANO LAVORO PRELIMINARE 2022-2027 ACCORDO PELAGOS](#)). As this is a reference document dated 5 years ago, some of the activities reported in the two-year Work Programmes may have been modified or reformulated based on what was decided by the Parties during previous meetings of the MOP and the STC. Therefore, consistency between the current and previous documents has to be expected, but not complete equality.

The evaluation of the current status of the actions and sub-actions reported in the Action Plan is available in an [online document](#) updated regularly by the Secretariat in agreement with the Chair.

6. Ms Cristina Farchi, Head of the Italian Delegation, stresses the importance from the start of including in the online ‘living document’ of evaluation status all the activities outlined in the Pelagos Action Plan 2022-2027, including those planned for all upcoming biennia.
7. **The Secretariat agrees to update the online ‘living document’ on evaluation of the Action Plan with all the new actions and sub-actions scheduled for the biennium 2026-27.**
8. The Italian delegation underlines that the decision on the modalities of redistribution of the unspent budget to cover the activities of the next PoW is in the hands of the Parties, while the delegates to the STC give recommendations on the level of priority of the activities to be financed. For this reason, it asks that the residuals of voluntary contributions from Italy, currently assigned to some actions, be removed from the document while waiting for an indication from the Italian Party to the MOP.
9. **It is agreed that the Secretariat, in agreement with the Chair of the STC, will prepare a recommendation from the STC, specifying in the operational paragraph the indication to the Parties to use the savings of the ordinary fund and of the voluntary contributions to the Pelagos Voluntary Fund (PVF) to cover the activities of the PoW 2026-27.**
10. After a discussion moderated by the Chair that considered all actions and sub-actions with the estimation of the budget needed to cover them, it is agreed to amend the provisional PoW 2026-27 as follows:
  - ✓ A-2 “Collaboration with Universities”: the STC deems important to renew the “Best Theses Award” (for one Master and one Doctoral Thesis) on a biennial basis. This seems a good “value for money” action that keep the interest of universities alive and hold a spotlight on Pelagos.
  - ✓ A-3 “Promotion of the Pelagos Ambassadors”: all the sub-actions are reported in the same row/budget line in order to give to the Secretariat, in accordance with NFPs and STC, the

discretion on how to use the budget allocated to Action A-3. France agrees to keep the residuals of its voluntary contribution on this action.

- ✓ A-4 “Promotion of the Municipality Charter”: all the sub-actions are reported in the same row/budget line in order to give to the Secretariat, in accordance with NFPs and STC, the discretion on how to use the budget allocated to Action A-4. As per the request from Italy, the residuals of its voluntary contribution to this action will be removed, pending the input from the Italian Party at the MOP.
- ✓ A-6c1 “Transmission of collision data to IWC”: the action is reinserted as considered periodic, i.e. whenever there is a collision it will be validated by the WG Impact and reported to IWC by the Secretariat.
- ✓ A-6d “MoU with IMO”: STC recommend not to pursue this action as Pelagos already collaborates on IMO-related issues (i.e.: the NW Mediterranean PSSA) being included in existing PSSA working groups and by assisting France, Italy and Monaco on relevant matters. A specific MoU does not seem necessary nor feasible.
- ✓ A-8 “Cooperation with MPAs”: As per the request from Italy, the residuals of its voluntary contribution to this action will be removed, pending the input from the Italian Party at the MOP.
- ✓ A-9 “Cooperation with other SPAMIs”: France confirms that the cooperation with AGOA is no longer of interest. France agrees to keep the residuals of its voluntary contribution on sub-action A-9a1 “MoU with the Spanish Cetaceans Corridor”.
- ✓ A-9a2 “Organisation of communication events with other SPAMIs”: the sub-action is reintroduced to be reconsidered for implementation or deletion, given the limited overall funds and human resources.
- ✓ B-11 “Communication tools on EcoPorts”: is deleted as it will be concluded at the end of 2025.
- ✓ B-12 “Organisation of communication events”: As per the request from Monaco, the residuals of its voluntary contribution to this action will be removed, pending feedback from the Monegasque Party.
- ✓ B-13 all sub-actions are reported in the action whose title is reformulated in “Communication activities” which include the creation of contents for newsletter, social media, website, etc.
- ✓ B-14 “Creation of an App for citizen science”: The STC recommends that this action is deleted as it considers it no longer of interest nor a good use of funds, as already suggested during the STC Extra 2024.
- ✓ B-16b “Creation of information materials”: the sub-action is deleted as already concluded.
- ✓ C-17c1 “Emergency task force response team”: the sub-action is reintroduced to be reconsidered for implementation or deletion. In case of confirmation of this action, which entail the creation of a trilateral true coordination of National Teams, appropriate funds will be necessary for meetings, training and setting up of an agreed protocol (approx. 5.000,00 €).
- ✓ C-17-c5 “Training for Municipality personnel”: France confirms the intention to keep the residuals of its voluntary contribution on this action to produce a video-training on HQWW.
- ✓ D-18 and its sub-actions “Maps on species distribution and threats”: the Chair points out that these have been partially completed by the scientific consultancies just concluded (first phase) but not, for example, on the acoustic issue using the methodology of the MSFD and EcAp. She emphasizes the need to complete the full analyses of existing data, which should lead in the next biennium to the drafting of the first Pelagos Agreement Quality Status Report. In addition, in order to stimulate discussions of potential mitigation measure for human-induced pressures, there is a need to have up-to-date maps designed at the Pelagos Sanctuary appropriate temporal and spatial scales. Therefore, this action should always have a high priority. What has been achieved so far from the scientific projects is a first step that must be

continued and improved over the next biennium. Ms Azzellino, member of the Italian delegation suggests merging some sub-actions that can be covered by a single consultant, since some are, at least partially, collection and reorganization of existing data and spatial models available on online databases. Therefore, the STC decides to:

- Maintain sub-activities D-18e “Seasonality of intensity and of sources of acoustic pollution” and D-18f “Seasonality of fishing gears” separate, recommending a higher budget.
  - Merge sub-actions D-18d-g-h-i in a single sub-action called “Research and collection of existing information and its processing on maps at the level of the Pelagos Sanctuary” with the topics listed in bullet points, with a lower budget.
- ✓ G-25 “Best practices for mitigation of impacts”: the reported residuals come from a voluntary contribution from a whale watching operator that asks to use that budget for activities related to HQWW.
  - ✓ H-27 and its sub-actions, whose implementation is the responsibility of the Parties, it is not clear which concrete management measures are planned to be implemented. The Italian delegation suggests a more detailed description of these activities that can be extrapolated from the STC17 recommendations in order to reflect on feasibility and estimation of budget to be allocated.
  - ✓ J-30a “Research partnership”: the sub-action is reintroduced to be reconsidered for implementation or deletion, given the limited overall funds and human resources
  - ✓ J-30e “Systematic procedure for communications (internal and external)”: the Chair explains that the part for external communications has been already dealt with via newsletter, website and special web system for Pelagos municipalities (ongoing). Regarding the internal communications, the idea of establishing a more automated system that allows Parties to locate documents on the website more easily or receive automatic notices was already discussed and agreed. The implementation of an automatic alert system to notify selected contacts of new documents and enhancing online access to documents is still needed. Moreover, a more accessible and secure version of the online “living document” would be necessary also to simplify editing and save time to the Secretariat and the future Chair of the STC. These improvements require computer skills and a dedicated budget (estimated in 7.000,00 euros). Since there are already other communication tools dedicated to external stakeholders (newsletter, web platform for the Municipality currently being implemented), it is agreed that this action for the next biennium is intended exclusively for internal communication.
  - ✓ J-30f “Procedures for public consultation”: the STC agrees that such procedures will be defined by the WG on Governance and not WG on Communication, as this is a policy tool. The activity will be held in 2026 in order to have the procedure on the public consultation on the new Management Plan 2028-2033 ready to launch, in 2017 (J-30f1).
  - ✓ J-30f1 “Regular public consultation”: it is reformulated as “Periodic public consultations on the Management Plan 2028-2033” (for example, a mid-term and a final consultation to gather input of what has been working and what can be improved).
  - ✓ J-30h “Requests for derogations from the Habitats Directive (Article 16)”: the sub-action on the possibility from Parties to request the STC advice on specific request derogation (art. 16 of the HD) is reintroduced to be reconsidered by the MOP for implementation or deletion.
11. **The Chair requests the Permanent Secretariat to prepare an amended version of the proposal of Programme of Work 2026-2027 with all the agreed modifications to be shared among the members of the National delegations for their final approval and their recommendations on the level of priority of the actions and sub-actions.**
  12. The Secretariat reminds that the final document must be ready to be distributed to the MOP10 delegates at least 40 days before the beginning of the event (end September at the latest).

13. **National delegations will send the approved or amended document on proposal of Programme of Work 2026-2027 with the indication of the level of priority for its actions and sub-actions by 15 August 2025, so as to allow the Secretariat to finalise it in due time.**

### Examination of the preliminary budget for the biennium 2026-2027

14. As requested after the STC17, the Permanent Secretariat prepared a revised document of the preliminary budget for the functioning of the Agreement in the next biennium that was sent to the Delegations for comments before this meeting. ([Pelagos CST17 2025 Doc09 Rev01 Proposta di bilancio di previsione 2026-2027 REV \(1\) revSP – Francese](#)) ; ([Pelagos CST17 2025 Doc09 Rev01 Proposta di bilancio di previsione 2026-2027 REV \(1\) revSP](#))
15. The Executive Secretary presents the new amounts for the re-employment allowance (ARE) as indicated by the administration of the Monaco Scientific Centre, based on the current annual salary levels of the Executive Secretary and the Deputy Executive Secretary. Starting in 2025, the allowance will be paid for a maximum period of 18 months (instead of 24).
16. **The Italian delegation emphasizes the need to discuss, within the framework of the MOP, how to divide the ARE coverage period between the Pelagos Agreement and the Monegasque Party over a shorter time span equivalent to 18 months. Due to time constraints it was agreed to leave the relevant discussions on the preliminary budget for the biennium 2026-2027 to the MOP.**
17. Since some savings from the biennium 2024-2025 are present, the Delegations ask to the Chair and to the Secretariat to prepare a recommendation for the MOP suggesting the reallocation of the unspent budget from the ordinary fund and the voluntary contributions to the Pelagos Voluntary Fund (PVF) to cover the activities of the PoW 2026-2027.

### Closing of the meeting

18. **The Chair invites the Permanent Secretariat to forward the report to the participants following the conclusion of the meeting.**
19. The Delegations thank the Chair and the Permanent Secretariat for the organisation and conduct of the meeting.
20. The Executive Secretary thanks the Chair and the delegations for their availability.
21. The Chair thanks the Delegations for their participation and the staff of the Permanent Secretariat for the work and support and declares the meeting closed on Tuesday, 29 July at 12:45 p.m.
22. A summary of the agreed follow-up actions is reported in [Annex 2](#) to these minutes.

# **ANNEXES**

Annex 1 – List of participants				
NOM COGNOME	PRENOM <i>NOME</i>	FONCTION / <i>FUNZIONE</i>	ORGANISME/ <i>ENTE</i>	PRESENCE/ <i>PRESENZA</i>
FORTUNA	Caterina Maria	Président du CST <i>Presidente del CST</i>	ISPRA	Confirmée / <i>Confermata</i>
DELEGATION ITALIENNE / <i>DELEGAZIONE ITALIANA</i>				
FARCHI	Cristina	Chef de délégation <i>Capo delegazione</i>	MASE	Confirmée / <i>Confermata</i>
AZZELLINO	Arianna	Membre/ <i>Membro</i>	POLIMI	Confirmée / <i>Confermata</i>
PANTI	Cristina	Membre/ <i>Membro</i>	UNISI	Confirmée / <i>Confermata</i>
SARTORI	Silvia	Membre/ <i>Membro</i>	MASE	Confirmée / <i>Confermata</i>
TEPSICH	Paola	Membre/ <i>Membro</i>	CIMA	Confirmée / <i>Confermata</i>
DELEGATION FRANCAISE / <i>DELEGAZIONE FRANCESE</i>				
BURTSHELL	Lugdiwine	Chef de délégation <i>Capo delegazione</i>	MTEBFMP	Confirmée / <i>Confermata</i>
DELEGATION MONEGASQUE / <i>DELEGAZIONE MONEGASCA</i>				
ROUDAUT-LAFON	Armelle	Cheffe de délégation <i>Capo delegazione</i>	DAM	Confirmée / <i>Confermata</i>
SECRETARIAT PERMANENT / <i>SEGRETARIATO PERMANENTE</i>				
BETTI	Maria	Secrétaire exécutif <i>Segretario esecutivo</i>	SP Pelagos	Confirmée / <i>Confermata</i>
TEMPESTA	Milena	Consultante / <i>Consulente</i>	SP Pelagos	Confirmée / <i>Confermata</i>

## Annex 2 – Summary of the agreed follow-up actions

Paragraph N.	Agreed follow-up action	Responsible	Deadline
7	The Secretariat will update the online document on evaluation of the Action Plan with all the new actions and sub-actions scheduled for the biennium 2026-27.	Permanent Secretariat	After the meeting and before the end of September
9	The Secretariat, in agreement with the Chair of the STC, will prepare a recommendation from the STC, specifying in the operational paragraph the indication to the Parties to use the savings of the ordinary fund and of the voluntary contributions to the Pelagos Voluntary Fund (PVF) to cover the activities of the PoW 2026-27.	STC Chair & Permanent Secretariat	After the meeting and before the end of September
11	The Chair requests the Permanent Secretariat to prepare an amended version of the proposal of Programme of Work 2026-2027 with all the agreed modifications to be shared among the members of the National delegations for their approval and their recommendations on the level of priority of the actions and sub-actions.	Permanent Secretariat	After the meeting and before 15 August 2025
13	National delegations will send the approved or amended document on proposal of Programme of Work 2026-2027 with the indication of the level of priority for its actions and sub-actions, by 15 August 2025 so as to allow the Secretariat to finalise it in due time.	Delegations	By 15 August 2025
16	The Meeting agreed to leave to the MOP the discussion on the preliminary budget for 2026-2027. In particular, the Italian delegation emphasizes the need to discuss, within the framework of the MOP, how to divide the ARE coverage period between the Pelagos Agreement and the Monegasque Party over a shorter time span equivalent to 18 months.	Parties	During MOP10
18	The Chair invites the Permanent Secretariat to forward the report to the participants following the conclusion of the meeting.	Permanent Secretariat	After the meeting