

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



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

Comité Scientifique et Technique Extraordinaire  
visioconférence, 7 juin 2024

Comitato Scientifico e Tecnico Straordinario  
videoconferenza, 7 giugno 2024

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**REPORT OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE**  
**SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF THE**  
**PELAGOS AGREEMENT**  
**- 7 June 2024 -**

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## Agenda item 1 – Opening of the meeting and presentation of participants

1. The Extraordinary Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Committee (STC) of the Pelagos Agreement starts on Friday 7 June 2024 at 9 a.m.
2. Ms Caterina Fortuna, Chair of the STC, welcomes the participants and asks them to examine to provisional agenda.
3. The list of participants is reported in [Annex 1](#) to this report.

## Agenda item 2 – Examination and adoption of the provisional agenda

4. **The agenda is adopted by the Delegations without further changes, as presented in Annex 2 to this report.**

## Agenda item 3 – Mid-term assessment of the Management Plan and Action Plan 2028-2033: how to proceed

5. The Chair recalls that during last MOP (January 2024, Nice), an assessment on the current Management and Action Plan was requested to the STC, through Resolution 9.9, in order to initiate a discussion on how to develop the drafting process for the new Management and Action Plan (2028-2033). Recalling that, during last STC (April 2024, Rome), the Permanent Secretariat was asked to prepare a draft evaluation of the current Action Plan, the Chair gives the floor to the Secretariat to present such a document.
6. Ms Viola Cattani, Deputy Executive Secretary, recalling that the current Management Plan is particularly ambitious in terms of the financial and human resources available and that it was adopted on an experimental basis by the Parties, illustrates a first assessment of the Action Plan 2022-2027. She points out that most of the actions scheduled have been activated and/or completed since 2023 thanks to the hiring of five consultants and six teams of experts that are currently working on scientific and technical detailed ToRs set by the Agreement STC and NFPs and also the voluntary work of the Pelagos WGs members. Moreover, she stresses that the budget to cover these activities comes entirely from the Pelagos Voluntary Fund, as at present contributions from Contracting Parties only covers the running of statutory activities (i.e.: Meetings of the Parties, STC meetings, salaries of the Secretariat, etc.). Finally, she emphasises that few actions will probably not be finalised by 2027, being actions needing structural funds and additional human resources to be realised.
7. Ms Cristina Farchi, Head of the Italian Delegation, stresses the importance of finding the necessary budget to cover the communication action B-10 of the Action Plan, not yet started, as a standing activity to raise awareness by posting short videos on social media about the Pelagos Agreement.
8. **Considering the lack of budget for this specific action (B-10), the participants agree not to focus only on the creation of videos, but to look at less expensive digital storytelling tools (e.g., photo slides with text and music) for all social media of the Agreement. In this regard, they ask the Secretariat to discuss it with the Pelagos Communication WG and to submit some content proposals to the STC.**
9. **Concerning action B-14 of the Action Plan on the identification of an application for data collection from citizens, Ms Hélène Labach, member of the French Delegation, informs that**

several applications already exist, and, upon request of the Chair, she confirms that she could prepare a list of potentially useful ones to submit to the Parties. Therefore, this action will no longer be considered.

10. Concerning action F-24 of the Action Plan on the exchange of stranding data between the National Stranding Networks, Ms Labach informs that in France, the stranding network is coordinated by Pelagis and communication takes place effectively via a WhatsApp group. The Head of the Italian Delegation explains that in Italy the Ministry of the Environment is currently working with the Ministry of Health to reactivate the National stranding network and emphasises the importance of involving the network of *Istituti Zooprofilattici*. Finally, Ms Armelle Roudaut-Lafon, Head of the Monegasque Delegation, advises contacting Mr Ludvic Aquilina, member of the Monegasque Delegation, as for Monaco it is the Environment Direction that manages this type of activity.
11. **The Chair asks the Permanent Secretariat to discuss how to implement this specific action (F-24 of the Action Plan) with the WG coordinators of Impacts & Assessments and then proceed with contacting the responsible in the three Countries to decide the most appropriate means of communication, including a WhatsApp group.**
12. Finally, the Chair presents a possible way forward on how the STC could proceed to assess the current Action Plan and drafting the new Management and Action Plan (action L-36 of the 2022-2027 Action Plan). The proposed process includes building on: (a) lessons learned highlighted in the periodic evaluations and updates prepared by the Secretariat; (b) the Pelagos vision; (c) local perspectives of National delegations; (d) perceptions and expectations of the “external world”. Points (c) and (d) will be assessed via internal and external consultations.
13. Moreover, the Permanent Secretariat document on the periodic update on the activities of the Action Plan 2022-2027 - point (a) above - will be a ‘living document’, managed by the Permanent Secretariat and the STC, in which comments on success or unsuccess and suggestions for improvements or realignments of sub-actions/interventions will be included. [[link to presentation](#)]
14. **The STC agrees with the Chair's presentation and that the assessing questionnaires for the current Action Plan and in preparation for the next one should be online, short and easy to complete. The questionnaires will be sent to National Focal Points, National delegations, Working Groups, Municipalities signatory of the Pelagos Partnership Charter, Pelagos Ambassadors, partners and other relevant stakeholders.**

Milestones of this process will be:

- Permanent Secretariat document on “periodic updates on activities of the Action Plan 2022-2027” → online after the STC extra.
- Presentation of an update version of the assessment document on the Action Plan 2022-2027 and discussion on the upcoming consultations → STC17 (April-May 2025).
- Discussion on the results of internal and external consultations → STC18 (April-May 2026).
- Discussion on a final draft of the new Management and Action Plan to be presented to MOP11 for adoption (November-December 2027) → STC19 (April-May 2027).

## Agenda item 4 – 2024-2025 Programme of Work: merging activities by target and deliverables

15. As requested during STC16, the Permanent Secretariat presented a proposal to merge some activities of the 2024-2025 Programme of Work, with a small-allocated budget, to propose actions with wider scope and sufficient budget.
16. The Deputy Executive Secretary presents a proposal for three main events and one supporting consultancy, which were obtained by merging activities on the same overall topic and with complementary outputs, methodologies and objectives, as follows:
- **Pelagos-RAMOGGE Event** (15 October 2024): meeting targeting various Pelagos stakeholders (e.g., Pelagos Municipalities, Pelagos Ambassadors, MPAs managers and relevant stakeholders) focus primarily on pollution (Actions A-3c, A-4a & G-25a of 2024-2025 PoW; total amount: 30 000,00 €).
  - **Workshop on MPA- and N2k sites-related issues** (February-March 2025): meeting organised with the support of the Pelagos WG on MPA & SPAMI and SWG on Monk seal (Actions A-4f, A-8a, A-8b, A-8c, A-9a & B-16c; total amount: 41 000,00 €).
  - **Ecoports**: activities related to ecoports and boating that could be implemented thanks to the support of a consultant (Actions D-19c, B-11, G-25j & H-27\_1b; total amount: 30 000,00 €).
  - **25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pelagos Agreement** (November 2024): it is proposed to combine the anniversary with the workshop on the initial status of the populations in the Sanctuary (Actions B-12c2 & E-21c; total amount: 29 280,00 €).  
[\[link to presentation\]](#)
17. Ms Labach, member of the French Delegation, informs that France is preparing to organise an event in November 2024 for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the HQWW® label and the annual meeting of the national working group on ship strikes and it would be appropriate to combine the two events so as not to disperse forces and participants. An event could be organised over several days, where one day would be totally dedicated to the Agreement and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
18. The Head of the Monegasque delegation recalls that the organisation of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Agreement is a priority for Monaco and that, in case of need, Monaco could see if there is a possibility of allocating some budget for this activity. Moreover, she agrees that it would be preferable to have a combined meeting with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the High-Quality Whale Watching (HQWW®) label.
19. **The Chair proposes to ask the National Focal Points where they prefer to organise the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary event (Italy, France or Monaco) and in which format. That is, for example:**
- a. a ‘single day’ event only on Pelagos anniversary; or
  - b. the Pelagos anniversary linked to an event presenting the latest results of the scientific consultancies; or
  - c. a series of events during, for example, three days, including combined with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the HQWW®).

## Agenda item 5 – PSSA in the Western Mediterranean : how to move forward from a technical and scientific point of view.

20. The Chair recalls that this agenda item is about the question raised at the last CTS16 on how STC members could technically assist Parties in the PSSA discussions on its implementation.

21. In order to have a better view on what is foreseen on Pelagos PoW about the PSSA, the Deputy Executive Secretary highlights that the Focus Group on Collision and Shipping planned to implement the following actions during the biennium 2024-2025:
1. review of existing initiatives to prevent whale ship-collision (D-19c of 2022-23 PoW);
  2. review of the IWC collision database for the Med (F-24 of 2022-23 PoW);
  3. proposing measures to mitigate collisions in relation to the PSSA (G-25g of 2024-25 PoW);
  4. transmission of new collision event to the IWC database (A-6c1 of 2024-25 PoW), if any.

Moreover, some activities linked to the PSSA, for which the Agreement has a budget are foreseen in the 2024-2025 PoW. As far as action A-9a1 on the elaboration of a MoU with the Spanish Corridor is concerned, the Deputy Executive Secretary stresses that some communications are ongoing, but there are no plans to sign such a MoU in the short term. She also informs that a joint action with the RAMOGE Agreement is planned on sustainable recreational boaters (Actions H-27\_2b of PoW 2024-2025). [[link to presentation](#)]

22. The Head of the Italian Delegation informs that the coordination meeting on PSSA organised at ministerial level scheduled in Rome in mid-June, has been postponed to the beginning of September and that the Permanent Secretariat will be invited to participate since the Agreement could provide significant support to the implementation of the PSSA associated protective measures.
23. The Chair adds that the members of the STC and, in general, the Pelagos Agreement could support the implementation of PSSA governance measures through, for example, maintaining an archive on all initiatives and tools already existing and ongoing and providing regular updates to the Parties. The first 2024 technical meeting could be organised before the Ministerial one scheduled at the beginning of September, which could aim at preparing a short overview on these tools and initiatives. [[link to presentation](#)]
24. **The STC agrees to examine the Collision & Shipping Focus group document on existing initiatives to prevent whale-ship collisions (action D-19c of 2022-23 PoW) and to meet in early September in an informal technical workshop (in remote mode) to prepare suggestions and recommendations to the Ministerial technical meeting that will be held in Rome.**

## **Agenda item 6 Discussion on the opportunity of organising a Pelagos Scientific and Technical Congress**

25. The last STC briefly discussed of about organising a periodic Pelagos Congress. The Congress could allow the Agreement to showcase the progress made in each biennium, bringing together all Pelagos stakeholders to discuss it and keep all actors informed about ongoing activities and evolution of the Agreement.
26. **The STC agrees that the formalisation of the Pelagos congress could be part of the next Management and Action Plan and suggests that the event on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Agreement could be a kind of general rehearsal for a first Pelagos Congress.**

## **Agenda item 7 – Pelagos Working Groups: rethinking the methods of work in a better functionality**

27. The Deputy Executive Secretary introduces the activities of the Pelagos Working Groups and Sub-Groups to date. After the STC in Rome, the Secretariat organised bilateral meetings to define an agenda of activities for the biennium and in order to reactivate the work of the members to start the new Programme of Work-related actions.

28. Activities and deadlines were presented for each WG and sWG. [\[link to presentation\]](#)

### **Agenda item 8 – Pelagos Metaverse: discussion on content validation and external communication**

29. Ms Manila Di Giovanni, CEO and Founder of DWorld, presents the demo of the virtual experience of Pelagos. She emphasises the educational purpose of the tool, which focuses on the threats marine mammals face daily, rather than try to attempt a virtual replica of the beauty of the Pelagos Sanctuary.
30. **The Deputy Executive Secretary points out that all texts used in this virtual experience are extracted from the Agreement website, therefore, already approved by the STC. Once the final version is available, including actual sounds provided recently by the University of Pavia, a link will be provided to the STC delegations to review the overall product and provide a feedback on the “virtual Pelagos educational expedition”.**

### **Agenda item 9 – Any other business**

31. No other business is discussed

### **Agenda item 10 – Closing of the meeting**

32. **The Chair invites the Permanent Secretariat to forward the report to the participants following the conclusion of the meeting.**
33. The Delegations thank the Chair and the Permanent Secretariat for the excellent organisation and conduct of the meeting.
34. The Deputy Executive Secretary thanks the Chair and the delegations, as well as the interpretation and technical assistance service.
35. The Chair thanks the Delegations for their active participation and the staff of the Permanent Secretariat for the organisation and declares the meeting closed on Friday, 7 June at 12:30 p.m.
36. A summary of the decisions is reported in [Annex 3](#) 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>
TEPSICH	Paola	Membre/ <i>Membro</i>	CIMA	Confirmée / <i>Confermata</i>
DELEGATION FRANCAISE / <i>DELEGAZIONE FRANCESE</i>				
BARCELO	Alain	Membre/ <i>Membro</i>	Parc national de Port-Cros <i>Parco Nazionale di Port-Cros</i>	Confirmée / <i>Confermata</i>
GROSSET	André	Membre/ <i>Membro</i>	Préfecture maritime de la Méditerranée <i>Prefettura marittima del Mediterraneo</i>	Confirmée / <i>Confermata</i>
JOUANDON	Manon	Membre/ <i>Membro</i>	Préfecture maritime de la Méditerranée <i>Prefettura marittima del Mediterraneo</i>	Confirmée / <i>Confermata</i>
LABACH	Hélène	Membre/ <i>Membro</i>	MIRACETI	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>

BERAUD	Eric	Membre <i>Membro</i>	Centre Scientifique de Monaco <i>Centro Scientifico di Monaco</i>	Confirmée/ <i>Confermata</i>
SECRETARIAT PERMANENT / <i>SEGRETARIATO PERMANENTE</i>				
CATTANI	Viola	Adjointe au Secrétaire exécutif <i>Vicesegretario esecutivo</i>	SP Pelagos	Confirmée / <i>Confermata</i>
TEMPESTA	Milena	Consultante / <i>Consulente</i>	SP Pelagos	Confirmée / <i>Confermata</i>

## Annex 2 – Provisional agenda

**Friday, 7 June 2024 (9:00 a.m. –1:00 p.m.)**  
**Videoconference**

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>1. Opening of the meeting and presentation of participants</b>  | 9:00 a.m.  |
| <b>2. Examination and adoption of the provisional agenda</b>   | 9:10 a.m.  |
| <b>3. Mid-term assessment of the 2022-2027 Management Plan and Action Plan</b>                                 | 9:15 a.m.  |
| - SP's presentation on the state of the art  |            |
| - Chair's presentation on a proposed modus operandi  |            |
| <b>4. 2024-2025 Programme of Work: merging of the activities by target and deliverables</b>                    | 9:45 a.m.  |
| - Presentation of a proposal to merge activities   |            |
| <b>5. PSSA in the Western Mediterranean: how to move forward from a technical and scientific point of view</b> | 10:30 a.m. |
| - Presentation of ongoing activities in the Pelagos SWG on collision and Shipping                              |            |
| - Presentation and update on PSSA related activities funded in the 2024-2025 Pelagos PoW                       |            |
| - Discussion on the organisation of a technical update meeting   |            |
| <b>6. Discussion on the opportunity of organising a Pelagos Congress</b>                                       | 11:00 a.m. |
| <b>7. Pelagos Working Groups: rethinking the methods of work in a better functionality</b>                     | 11:30 a.m. |
| - Presentation of the ongoing activities within the Pelagos WGs & SWGs   |            |
| <b>8. Pelagos Metaverse: discussion on content validation and external communication</b>                       | 12:00 p.m. |
| <b>9. Any other business</b>   | 12:30 p.m. |
| <b>10. Closing of the meeting</b>  | 1:00 p.m.  |

## Annex 3 – Summary of the decisions

Agenda item	Agreed action	Responsible	Deadline
3 (paragraph 8)	Considering the lack of budget for action B-10, the STC extra 2024 agreed not to focus only on the creation of videos, but rather to think about publishing posts on the social media of the Agreement. The Committee asked the Secretariat to discuss it with the Pelagos Communication WG and to submit some content proposals to the STC.	Permanent Secretariat	After the meeting and before the end of the biennium
3 (paragraph 9)	Action B-14 of the Management Plan on the identification of an application for data collection from citizens, Ms H��l��ne Labach, member of the French Delegation, upon request of the Chair, confirms that she could prepare a list of potentially useful application to submit to the Parties.	Ms H��l��ne Labach	After the meeting and before the end of the biennium
3 (paragraph 11)	The Chair asks the Permanent Secretariat to discuss how to implement this specific action (F-24 of the Action Plan) with the WG coordinators of Impacts & Assessments and then proceed with contacting the responsible in the three Countries to decide the most appropriate means of communication.	Permanent Secretariat	After the meeting and before the end of the biennium
3 (paragraph 13)	<p>The Delegations agree with the Chair's presentation and that the assessing questionnaires for the current Action Plan and in preparation for the next one should be online, short and easy to complete. The questionnaires will be sent to National Focal Points, National delegations, Working Groups, Municipalities signatory of the Pelagos Partnership Charter, Pelagos Ambassadors, partners and other relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>This modus operandi would lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>STC17 (April-May 2025)</u> → presentation of an update version of the assessment document on the Action Plan 2022-2027 and discussion on the upcoming consultations;</li> <li>• <u>STC18 (April-May 2026)</u> → discussion on the results of internal and external consultations;</li> <li>• <u>STC19 (April-May 2027)</u> → discussion on a final draft of the new Management and Action Plan to be presented to MOP11 for adoption (November-December 2027).</li> </ul>	Delegations and Permanent Secretariat	Before STC18 (April-May 2026)
4 (paragraph 17)	The Chair proposes to ask the National Focal Points where they prefer to organise the 25 <sup>th</sup> anniversary event (Italy, France or Monaco) and in which format (single event only linked to Pelagos; scientific event with presentation of the results of the scientific calls and the workshop; or an event on several days combined with the 10th anniversary of the HQWW®).	Permanent Secretariat	Right after the meeting
5 (paragraph 22)	The Delegations agree to examine the Collison & Shipping sWG document on existing initiatives to prevent whale-ship collisions in the Pelagos Sanctuary and adjacent waters and to meet in early September to prepare suggestions to be presented to the technical meeting in Rome.	Delegations	By early September 2024

6 (paragraph 24)	The Delegations agree that the formalisation of the Pelagos congress could be part of the next Management and Action Plan and the event on the 25 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Agreement could be a kind of general test for a first Pelagos Congress.	Delegations	2028
8 (paragraph 27)	The Deputy Executive Secretary points out that all texts are extracted from the Agreement website and once the final version, with the real sounds provided recently by the University of Pavia, is available, a link will be provided to the STC delegations to review and/or make comments on the final version of the Pelagos virtually educational expedition.	Permanent Secretariat	After the meeting