



Terms of reference for the 2023 Call for Consultancy of the Pelagos Agreement

In view of the preparation of the Quality Status Report (2026-2027) and as part of the actions "Coexistence between marine mammals and uses of the sea" of the Management Plan and relevant Action Plan (2022-2027), the Permanent Secretariat is launching a Call for consultancy for the actions below, so that they can be adequately carried out within the required timeframe for the final reporting, also ensuring the highest quality in terms of results achieved in respect of funds made available.

I. Topics and amounts of the Call for Consultancy Services

The topics of the Call are listed below:

1. ASSESSMENT OF SPECIES ABUNDANCE, DISTRIBUTION AND HABITATS IN THE PELAGOS SANCTUARY, WITH A PRIORITY GIVEN TO THE CUVIER'S BEAKED WHALE, THE FIN WHALE, THE SPERM WHALE AND THE BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN - *Expert Consultancy Contract*

The assessment will be based on the analysis of data made available by: (i) the Parties (monitoring data under the Habitats Directive and the MSFD), (ii) the "ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative" (already available to the Permanent Secretariat), (iii) Pelagos partners and (iv) the organisations working in the Sanctuary wishing to join this initiative, as well as other data that may be identified by the proponents and to which they have access.

This assessment will provide:

- i. an overall estimate of species abundance within the sanctuary borders based on the data available, if possible, within three consecutive periods (e.g., before 2004; 2004-2013; 2014-2023).
- ii. a general distribution map for each of the priority species based on the data available, if possible, within three consecutive periods (e.g., before 2004; 2004-2013; 2014-2023).
- iii. maps identifying important habitats for priority species.
- iv. assessments of any trends in abundance and distribution within the Sanctuary over these periods.

Over the first six months of 2024, an interim analysis report will be prepared and submitted to the Working Groups (WGs) and the Scientific and Technical Committee (STC). Analyses shall be completed by the first half of 2025.

Data analysis methods will be confirmed by the Assessment WG coordinator in consultation with the STC Chairman when the work contracts are signed and depending on the data available.

The total financial resources available for this expert consultancy contract amount to € 20,000.00.

The proposal may be submitted by a maximum of two experts/organisations with complementary expertise. Depending on the expertise and proposals received, the Proposal Evaluation Committee reserves the right to consider suggesting a joint venture between different applicants, as well as suggestions for collaboration with successful applicants of other related projects..



2. ASSESSMENT OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF MARITIME TRAFFIC AND ANTHROPOGENIC UNDERWATER NOISE IN THE PELAGOS SANCTUARY AND INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS ON THEIR POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON THE PRIORITY SPECIES (CUVIER'S BEAKED WHALE, THE FIN WHALE, THE SPERM WHALE AND THE BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN) - *Expert Consultancy Contract*

The assessment will be based on the analysis of data made available by: (i) the Parties (monitoring data under the Habitats Directive and the MSFD), (ii) Pelagos partners and (iii) the organisations working in the Sanctuary wishing to join this initiative, as well as other data that may be identified by the proponents and to which they have access.

This assessment will provide:

- i. seasonal status maps (on commercial and recreational maritime traffic; anthropogenic underwater noise).
- ii. a maritime traffic and noise risk assessment, taking into account "co-occurrence" and "species vulnerability" (risk maps for the four species based only on existing knowledge of their distribution and, if possible, based on results from the Consultancy Service 1).
- iii. assessments should also include any seasonal and annual trends, where possible.

An interim analysis report will be prepared in the second half of 2024 and discussed with the WGs and the STC. Analyses will be completed by the first half of 2025 at the latest.

Data analysis methods will be agreed upon by the Impact Mitigation WG coordinator in consultation with the STC Chairman. Applicants are required to specify their analytical skills.

The total financial resources available for this expert consultancy contract amount to **€ 20,580.00**.

The proposal may be submitted by at least two experts/organisations with complementary expertise.

Depending on the expertise and proposals received, the Proposal Evaluation Committee reserves the right to consider suggesting a joint venture between different applicants, as well as suggestions for collaboration with successful applicants of other related projects.

3. ASSESSMENT OF CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL POLLUTION STATUS IN THE SANCTUARY - *Expert Consultancy Contract*

The assessment will be based primarily on analyses of data:

- (1) that have already been published, in particular (i) existing maps; (b) published data and reports on national and international projects funded by the Agreement; (c) information available in open-source databases; (d) relevant national reporting; (e) official data from the competent authorities; (f) peer-review publications, etc.
- (2) made available by: (i) the Parties (monitoring data under the Habitats Directive and the MSFD), (ii) the "ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative" (e.g. on marine litter distribution), (iii) Pelagos partners and (iv) the organisations working in the Sanctuary wishing to join this initiative, as well as other data that may be identified by the proponents and to which they have access.



Where possible taking into account seasonal pollution source assessments, the proposal will:

- i. identify important pollution sources.
- ii. map contaminants and assess potential the risk in relation to species (if possible) or suggest how this might be achieved in the future.
- iii. design and produce an information booklet on the topic.

The total financial resources available for the implementation of the actions above amount to **€ 35,000.00**.

The proposal may be submitted by a maximum of three experts/organisations with complementary expertise.

Depending on the expertise and proposals received, the Proposal Evaluation Committee reserves the right to consider suggesting a joint venture between different applicants, as well as suggestions for collaboration with successful applicants of other related projects.

4. PROTOCOLS AND ASSESSMENT OF PATHOLOGICAL EFFECTS, INCLUDING MORTALITY RESULTING FROM CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL CONTAMINATION IN CETACEANS IN THE PELAGOS SANCTUARY - Expert Consultancy Contract

The assessment will be primarily based on the analysis of data made available by: (i) the Parties (monitoring data under the Habitats Directive and the MSFD), (ii) Pelagos partners and (iii) the organisations working in the Sanctuary wishing to join this initiative, as well as other data that may be identified by the proponents and to which they have access.

The following activities will be implemented under the consultancy:

- i. taking into account any existing protocols (e.g., Ramoge, ACCOBAMS and EU), undertake the drafting of a proposal for a joint (FR, IT, MC) protocol that includes indicators for the long-term monitoring of chemical and biological contamination of cetaceans in the Sanctuary (including contamination from floriculture activities, intensive crops, livestock farming, industrial waste dumps, bathing areas, fuel oils, bilge water, anti-fouling paints, new contaminants), and assessment of the relation between these activities and the occurrence of pathologies.
- ii. preliminary assessment (test) of the proposed indicators for all Sanctuary's species.
- iii. overall assessment of (a) the level of key contaminants in the Sanctuary's marine mammals, (b) the relationship between their incidence (and any trends in these over time/area) and any actual or potential impact of pollutants on individual species' health, including the link with any pathologies.
- iv. development of an advisory fact sheet on the actual and potential impact of macro- and microplastics ingestion including relevant toxicological effects.

The total financial resources available for the implementation of the actions above amount to **€ 45,000.00**.

The proposals may be submitted by a maximum of three experts/organisations with complementary expertise.



Depending on the expertise and proposals received, the Proposal Evaluation Committee reserves the right to consider suggesting a joint venture between different applicants, as well as suggestions for collaboration with successful applicants of other related projects.

5. SUSTAINABLE PORTS IN PELAGOS SANCTUARY - *Expert Consultancy Contract*

The assessment will be based primarily on the analysis of data made available by: (i) the Parties (monitoring data under the Habitats Directive and the MSFD), (ii) Pelagos partners, (iii) the organisations working in the Sanctuary wishing to join this initiative; and (iv) on a bibliographic review.

The following activities will be implemented under the consultancy:

- i. overall assessment of the impact of tourist activities (bathing, recreational activities, boating, etc.) and associated pollution on habitat quality, with a focus on cetacean habitat.
- ii. drafting of advisory material (to be agreed with the Permanent Secretariat) to raise awareness among port authorities, shipping companies and tourism organisations on good practices in sustainable port activities, bathing and recreational activities (e.g., jet skiing), sustainable boating, etc.

The total financial resources available for the implementation of the actions above amount to **€ 52,000.00**.

The proposals may be submitted by a maximum of three experts/organisations with complementary expertise.

Depending on the expertise and proposals received, the Proposal Evaluation Committee reserves the right to consider suggesting a joint venture between different applicants, as well as suggestions for collaboration with successful applicants of other related projects.

6. ASSESSMENT OF FISHING-RELATED IMPACTS ON CETACEAN SPECIES AND THEIR HABITAT IN THE PELAGOS SANCTUARY: STATE OF THE ART - *Expert Consultancy Contract*

This activity will produce an initial evaluation on:

- i. the issue of ghost nets and cetaceans within the framework of existing national initiatives in the three countries of the Pelagos Agreement.
- ii. the present state of fisheries in the Sanctuary (type, fleet, target species, effort distribution, catches and assessments of any biomass reduction), where possible in the context of the past and likely future developments.
- iii. the problem of interactions between bottlenose dolphins and fisheries (especially artisanal) in the Sanctuary.

The total financial resources available for the implementation of the actions above amount to **€ 20,000.00**.

The proposals may be submitted by a maximum of two experts/organisations with complementary expertise.



Depending on the expertise and proposals received, the Proposal Evaluation Committee reserves the right to consider suggesting a joint venture between different applicants, as well as suggestions for collaboration with successful applicants of other related projects.

I. Evaluation Committee

The Evaluation Committee is made up of the Chairman and the Heads of Delegation to the STC, as well as the coordinators of the Impact Mitigation and Assessment WGs, with the support of the Permanent Secretariat, subject to necessary replacements in the event of conflicts of interest.

II. Selection procedure

The Permanent Secretariat, responsible for processing applications, will send them to the Evaluation Committee members, together with the results of the verification of compliance with eligibility criteria, within ten days of the deadline for submission of proposals.

The Evaluation Committee will meet to analyse the proposals received on the basis of the documentation sent by the Permanent Secretariat and will establish a merit ranking within thirty days of the deadline for submission of proposals.

Selection results will be forwarded to the National Focal Points and, in the absence of additional remarks, will be communicated to the participants.

A contract will be signed between the Permanent Secretariat and the lead applicants of the selected proposals.

As for topic No. 1, the coordinator of the Assessment WG - together with the Permanent Secretariat - will be in charge of supervising the analyses and verifying compliance with the contract. Topics 2 to 6 will be supervised by the coordinator of the Impacts Working Group with the Permanent Secretariat.

III. Required documents

The proposal must be filled in online in English (<https://forms.gle/x1Zev88zUdi1TK2g6>) and include a **focused** CV of the participating applicants (one per persons), with a short presentation of the organisations involved where relevant.

[Appendix 1](#) includes a form to facilitate the online procedure.

IV. Mandatory eligibility criteria

- a) The Call is open to government institutions, public and private research bodies and Institutes, non-profit NGOs and individuals with proven experience.
- b) The proposal shall be duly filled in to provide the information and documents required and shall be sent to the Permanent Secretariat by the deadline.

Experts and organisations may participate in a maximum of two calls.

V. Proposal selection/evaluation criteria

[Appendix 1](#) includes indications on evaluation criteria and scores.



In the event of a tie, priority will be given to proposals including the participation of experts from at least two countries signatory to the Agreement.

VI. Monitoring

The proposal will be subject to an interim evaluation report made by the consultants and sent to the Permanent Secretariat, and a final report with a short summary written in English. Upon receipt, the Permanent Secretariat will forward these documents to the Chairman and the Heads of Delegation to the Scientific and Technical Committee (to verify the actions performed and their compliance with the contract), as well as to the National Focal Points for information purposes. The final report will be submitted to the STC17 and the MoP10 for approval.

For all contracts, a short interim and final administrative report (max. 4 pages) will also be requested. The interim administrative report is to be submitted at the end of the year 2024. The final administrative report is to be submitted at the CST17.

VII. Allocation of funds

The funds allocated to the proposal will be paid by the Permanent Secretariat as follows:

- 30% of the total amount of the grant upon signature of the contract by the consultant(s) and the Permanent Secretariat of the Pelagos Agreement.
- 40% of the total amount of the grant after receipt of the interim report and after positive verification of the actions performed and their compliance with the contract by the Chairman and the Heads of Delegation to the Scientific and Technical Committee.
- 30% of the total amount of the grant after receipt by the Permanent Secretariat of the final report and the summary report drawn up by the lead partner (organisation), and after a positive final evaluation by the Chairman and the Heads of Delegation to the Scientific and Technical Committee.

Bank charges are covered by the Pelagos Agreement.

VIII. Submission of proposals

Proposals should be sent with the form as foreseen at point III from the 6th of October 2023 and until the 7th of November 2023 at 23:59 (UTC+1).

The closing date of the call has been extended to 17th of November 2023 at 23:59 (UTC+1).

IX. Additional information

For further information or communications relating to this call for tender, please contact the Executive Secretary of the Agreement by e-mail at cfavilli@pelagossanctuary.org