

Cercetari marine	I.N.C.D.M.	Nr. 35	2004	219 - 235
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## **THE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR DOLPHINS CONSERVATION IN ROMANIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The National Action Plan for the Conservation of Dolphins in the Romanian Black Sea waters lists specific actions and measures relying on ACCOBAMS Action Plan (provided as Annex 2 to that Agreement) and the "International Implementation Priorities" adopted by the First Meeting of the Contracting Parties in 2002 (Resolution 1.9).

The Action Plan is structured on seven strategic directions, grouping the majority of necessary actions, which can be implemented in the future, in order to attend the objectives:

- Assuring an appropriate protection level, conservation and, where possible, rehabilitation of the dolphin populations from the Romanian Black Sea waters.
- Managing human activities to mitigate negative impacts on dolphins.
- Appropriate protection and management of the dolphin specific habitats, including breeding, calving, feeding and wintering areas and also migration routes.

- Improvement of the scientific knowledge by research, monitoring and dissemination of information.
- Providing timely responses to emergency situations.
- Awareness, training and public involvement in local communities and professional associations with particular respect to dolphin protection and conservation programmes.
- Capacity building development.

**Key words:** Black Sea, Romanian littoral, dolphins, Life Nature, Action Plan

## INTRODUCTION

An Action Plan for the conservation of dolphins in Romanian waters is necessary for several reasons.

First, it is now well known that the presence of threats to dolphins particularly in the Black Sea (DI SCIARA, 2002) is evident and pressing. As a consequence, cetacean populations are at risk and show alarming rates of decline. Concern for this situation is fully justified, because the pressures exerted by humans on the marine environment are increasing. If action is not taken, very likely populations of cetaceans will disappear from the region (BIRKUN, 2002).

Second, Romanian territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone of Romania contain important and possibly critical habitats for Black Sea cetaceans. Thus an effort to conserve the cetacean fauna living in this area is going to provide a significant contribution to marine conservation throughout the region.

At last, Romania has to implement the Strategic Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea (GEF, 1996) in which the paragraph 62 reads: “With the aim of restoring populations of marine mammals, the following measures shall be taken:

- a) A ban on the hunting of dolphins will be enforced by all Black Sea states with immediate effect;
- b) Regular population assessments of dolphins shall be conducted. It is advised that these assessments be co-ordinated by the Istanbul Commission, through its Advisory Group on the Conservation of Biological Diversity;
- c) National centres and sanctuaries for the rehabilitation of dolphins shall be established;
- d) In order to avoid incidental dolphins catching, during normal operations, consideration shall be given to modify fishing practices. It

is recommended that the Istanbul Commission, through its Advisory Groups on the Conservation of Biodiversity and its Interim Advisory Group on Fisheries, develop a strategy for the reduction of by-catches of dolphins.

That is way the action viewing the preparation of National Action Plan for Dolphin Conservation (NAPDC) from the Romanian littoral was included within the Life-Nature Project entitled “Conservation of the dolphins from the Black Sea Romanian waters”, project achieved in partnership by the National Institute for Marine Research and Development (NIMRD) “Grigore Antipa”, NGO “Mare Nostrum” and Dolphinarium Constantza (RADU *et al.*, 2002).

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The proper activity started with an intense documentation carried out by the project team, which studied mainly the materials regarding the Mediterranean area, keeping a close collaboration with the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) Secretariat (UNEP, 1992, 1995, 2001, 2002; ACCOBAMS, 1996). It was consulted also with regard to the external consultants.

The project team prepared the first draft of NAPDC, being debated within NIMRD, and then sent to the external and internal consultants before the first related workshop.

The first NAPDC workshop scheduled and held between April 3-4, 2003, in Constantza/Mamaia (Romania). There were invited and participated, besides the consultants, representatives of the main authorities, institutions and organizations involved in management, exploitation or developing activities with impact on the status of living marine resources (Ministry of Waters and Environmental Protection - Directory of Biodiversitiy Protection and Conservation, Protected Areas and Monuments of Nature; Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests - Directory of Aquaculture and Fishing; Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority; Environmental Protection Inspectorate Constantza and Tulcea; County Council of Constantza, National Administration "Apele Romane" - Directory "Dobrogea Litoral"; County Inspectorate of Frontier Police; Administration of Maritime Ports Constantza; National Society of Petrol PETROM S.A. - Petromar Branch, Constantza, NGOs etc.).

The NAPDC designed within this first meeting was completed with the suggestions of participants, resulting the second draft. This one was subjected

to the discussions, observations and completions of NIMRD, and all of the project team members.

The second NAPDC final draft was sent to all of the persons who participated in the second workshop, for further suggestions and observations.

The second workshop for finalizing the NAPDC was held at NIMRD, on June 19, 2003. As during the first workshop, the representatives of main institutions and organizations interested in exploitation and management of the marine environment were invited and participated. The agenda was totally assigned to the discussions devoted to the NAPDC, the participants making their last suggestions and observations. The project team was charged to complete the Plan with these last suggestions.

The final version was sent afterwards to the Ministry of Waters and Environmental Protection - Direction for Pollution Control, Atmosphere, Soil, Nature Protection and Biodiversity Conservation. It was also translated into English and sent to the external consultants to make last comments.

So, the NAPDC for the Romanian Black Sea waters is now to be legalized through a Governmental Decision.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The NAPDC has the following structure and content:

FORWARD

I. OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

II. JUSTIFICATION

III. OVERALL OBJECTIVES

IV. ACTION PLAN

V. PRIORITIES

VI. RESPONSIBILITY AND STAKEHOLDERS

VII. PREREQUISITES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

VIII. EXPECTED PROBLEMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

IX. IMPLEMENTATION CALENDAR

X. BUDGET

XI. MECHANISM FOR PERIODIC ASSESSMENT

XII. INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

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Annex 1- ROMANIAN LEGAL PROVISIONS REFERRING  
TO THE DOLPHINS

Annex 2- CONVENTIONS AND INTERNATIONALLY RELEVANT AGREEMENTS WHICH ROMANIA IS PARTY TO

Annex 3- NATIONAL LAWS REFERIG TO OBJECTIVES OF THE NATIONAL PLAN FOR DOLPHIN CONSERVATION

Annex 4- STAKEHOLDERS WHO CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR DOLPHINS CONSERVATION

Annex 6- INSTITUTIONS AND PERSONS INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR DOLPHINS CONSERVATION

The overall objectives are to strengthen the framework concerning the effective conservation of dolphins by developing the technical and legal basis through:

- Assuring an appropriate protection level, conservation and, where possible, rehabilitation of the dolphin populations from the Romanian Black Sea waters.
- Managing human activities to mitigate negative impacts on dolphins.
- Appropriate protection and management of the specific dolphin habitats, including breeding, calving, feeding and wintering areas as well as migration routes.
- Improvement of the scientific knowledge by research, monitoring and dissemination of information.
- Providing timely responses to emergency situations.
- Awareness, training and public involvement of local communities and professional associations with particular respect to dolphin protection and conservation programmes.
- Capacity building development.

The National Action Plan is structured on seven strategic directions, grouping the majority of necessary actions, which can be implemented in the future, in order to attend the mentioned objectives.

## **1. Harmonization of economic policies with national legislation for dolphin protection.**

### ***1.1. Extend the legal protection to dolphins by:***

- 1.1.1. Adopting fishery policies that avoid the adverse effects of fisheries on the conservation status of dolphins in the Romanian waters;
- 1.1.2. Developing and implementing measures to minimize adverse effects of fisheries on the conservation status of dolphins. In particular, no

vessel shall be allowed to keep on board, or use for fishing, one or more drift nets whose individual or total length exceed 2.5 kilometres;

1.1.3. A ban on the large-scale use of fixed and drift nets;

1.1.4. Introducing and amending regulations with a view to preventing fishing gears from being discarded or left adrift at sea;

1.1.5. Prohibiting of any deliberate taking of cetaceans as well as ensuring enforcement of existing laws;

1.1.6. Regulating the constructive characteristics of fishing gears in order to minimize incidental catches;

1.1.7. Introducing the compulsory requirement to immediate release of dolphins caught incidentally in fishing gears in order to assure their survival.

1.1.8. Requiring the landing and reporting of any dead accidentally caught dolphins.

***1.2. Encourage, development and implement of national legislation for the establishment, protection and management of marine protected areas for dolphins through the introduction of the provisions of this Plan in the National Strategy for Integrated Coastal Zone Management (Ordinance of Urgency No. 202/2002).***

1.2.1. Encourage marine protected areas beyond territorial waters and transboundary reserves in order to establish a network of protected areas.

***1.3. Compulsory requirement for the impact assessment studies to be carried out in order to obtain the environmental agreement and environmental permit, for the maritime and land-based activities that may affect dolphins or their habitat in the Romanian waters (including fisheries, offshore exploration and exploitation, nautical sports, tourism and cetacean-watching) to include one chapter about the impact on cetaceans, as well as establishing the conditions under which such activities may be conducted for minimizing this impact***

1.3.1. Based on the scientific data obtained from the impact studies, practical actions for all the enumerated activities will be established.

***1.4. Urgent preparation and implementing of national and regional regulations regarding the discharge and storage of debris, toxic and dangerous compounds in the Black Sea area, in compliance with the provisions of Bucharest Convention and other revealing conventions.***

***1.5. Preparation of a directory of national and international legislation concerning dolphins.***

## **2. Baseline study and management of human-dolphins interactions.**

### ***2.1. Collection and analysis of data on direct and indirect interactions between humans and dolphins in relation to inter alia fishing, industrial and touristic activities, and land-based and maritime pollution.***

2.1.1. Develop systematic research programmes and a national database on dead, stranded, injured or sick animals to determine the main interactions with human activities and to identify present and potential threats (implementation of the ACCOBAMS priority action no. 15);

2.1.2. Encourage the elaboration and execution of cooperative research projects of regional importance, aimed at: assessment of fisheries-dolphins interactions, identifying marine dolphin's critical habitats, including migration routes;

2.1.3. Record environmental and anthropogenic factors potentially impacting dolphin populations such as vessel traffic, deployed fishing gear, and industrial activity;

2.1.4. Identify present and potential threats to dolphins.

### ***2.2 Elimination of catching and deliberate killing of cetaceans by:***

2.2.1. An urgent information campaign among fishermen in all areas where dolphins occur aiming at neutralizing their antagonistic impact on dolphins and win their support for protective measures;

2.2.2. Encourage the co-existence of fishermen and dolphins by developing programmes which control and regulate fishing activities and provide additional facilities and opportunities to local fishermen communities;

2.2.3. Strict enforcement of regulations prohibiting the use of dynamite for fishing operations, the carrying of firearms in boats, and the use of any other illegal fishing practices endangering dolphins;

2.2.4. Elaboration of some proposals for improving legislation against the deliberate killing of dolphins including controls and sanctions;

2.2.5. Carrying out campaigns among fishermen in order to urge them to release dolphins incidentally caught alive and to participate in the information networks on dolphins (report sightings, strandings, participation in monitoring programs, etc.);

2.2.6. Carrying out campaigns for fishermen and local populations to facilitate the implementation of legislation to ban the catching and trade/use of all products derived from dolphins, as well as to reduce mutilations and killings because of ignorance and/or prejudice;

2.2.7. Introducing a system of rewarding good conduct by awarding a title/label "Friend of a dolphin", "Dolphin's Week", etc.;

2.2.8. Establishment of a national network of observers and an efficient system for reporting of by-catch.

***2.3. Reduction the accidental catch and mortality by:***

2.3.1. Carry out proposals for annual regulation of fishing in the areas with high dolphin concentration;

2.3.2. The modification of fishing gears and methods; introduction of less destructive fishing practices;

2.3.3. Developing and implementing improved fishing methods and gears in which dolphins cannot become entangled in, and fishermen should receive the assistance necessary to convert and use such fishing nets;

2.3.4. Research on techniques to avoid harmful dolphins-fisheries interactions;

2.3.5. Set by-catch limits for known harmful fisheries above which the fishery is closed;

2.3.6. Adopt time/area fishing closures if the by-catch problem is highly localized and predictable in space and time;

2.3.7. Education/training of fishermen to correctly handle, release and record incidentally caught dolphins;

2.3.8. Promote eco-compatible mariculture such as fish farming as an alternative source of competitive fish products for human consumption;

2.3.9. Regulating speedboats in areas frequented by dolphins;

2.3.10. Adopt measures for regulation and a guide for dolphins visiting;

2.3.11. Establishing first-aid and rescue centers for the rehabilitation of sick and (accidentally or intentionally) injured cetaceans.

### **3. Protection and management of dolphin habitats**

***3.1 Identification and sustainable management of habitats important for dolphins biology (implementing ACCOBAMS priority no.4.)***

3.1.1. Establish criteria for identifying critical habitats for dolphins;

3.1.2. Urgently prepare an inventory of critical habitats for dolphins, including migration routes in the Black Sea; to be periodically revised with the improvement of knowledge;

3.1.3. Assess the status of these habitats according to the biological requirements of the dolphins;

3.1.4. Carry out management measures to improve habitats according to dolphin requirements;

3.1.5. Carry out and implement measures and regulations aimed at protecting critical marine habitats. In the case of calving and nursing areas,



such measures should be regulating public access, use of boats, use of artificial lights, noise, nautical activities;

3.1.6. The Black Sea coastal states (ACCOBAMS Party and non-Party), which have critical habitats for dolphins, should co-operate for appropriate protection, conservation and management of areas comprising such habitats.

### ***3.2. Establishment and management of special protection areas/reserves for dolphins.***

3.2.1. Identify suitable areas to be designated as special protected areas for dolphins;

3.2.2. All other human disturbance (e.g. by shipping, industry or tourism) of protected sites should be carefully regulated;

3.2.3. Encourage information campaigns directed at local authorities, residents, teachers, visitors, fishermen and other stakeholders, to enlist their participation in conservation efforts for dolphins;

3.2.4. Regulate impacting human activities through area or time closures;

3.2.5. Promote more compatible alternative activities and resource uses;

3.2.6. Prohibit or control fishing with nets and other techniques known to threaten or conflict with dolphins;

3.2.7. Restrict coastal development to compatible activities and avoid intensive tourist development in such zones.

### ***3.3 Creation of a national/regional network of marine and coastal protected areas for dolphins.***

3.3.1. A network of marine reserves should be created across the Romanian littoral, covering both existing and potential dolphin habitats;

3.3.2. Identification, selection, and preparation of documentation for declaring of new marine protected areas for dolphins along the Romanian littoral;

3.3.3. Establishment of the protected area network in the Black Sea (especially in the territorial waters of coastal states);

3.3.4. Co-operation with neighbouring countries, Bulgaria and Ukraine, respectively, for creating common protected areas (possibly extending the Vama-Veche - 2 Mai Reserve, and the "Danube Delta" Biosphere Reserve).

#### **4. Research, monitoring, and data dissemination with regard to the dolphins and their specific habitats**

##### ***4.1. Undertake coordinated, concerted research on dolphins in order to enhance their conservation in collaboration with the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee.***

4.1.1. Co-operate at sub-regional level to determine the migration routes, the breeding and feeding areas, in order to define areas needed to be specially regulated;

4.1.2. Evaluate the (qualitative and quantitative) feeding requirements of the dolphin species, in order to regulate the maximum admissible fish catches and fishing techniques;

4.1.3. Describe population ecology and habitats especially in relation to feeding, resting, mating, calving, nursing etc;

4.1.4. Standardize of methodologies to estimate demographic parameters for the analysis of population dynamics;

4.1.5. Identify critical habitats for each population and map location of habitat, size, and characteristics provided;

4.1.6. Assessment of noise impact and chemical pollution;

4.1.7. Establishment of parasite impact on healthy status of dolphins.

##### ***4.2 Monitor the cetacean status, specific habitats and special protected areas.***

4.2.1. Encourage scientific programmes for long-term monitoring of critical habitats and special protected areas;

4.2.2. Encourage the development of passive acoustic techniques for monitoring of dolphin populations;

4.2.3. Assess the status, dynamics and seasonal movements of the populations concerned, in order to determine the trends and their responses to the management practices;

4.2.4. Encourage the data collection with regard to dolphin's biology and ecology, and the interactions of dolphins with fisheries;

4.2.5. Encourage the use of a standard methodology to be used for surveys and data logging, as well as for the use of satellite telemetry, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), genetics, on-board observers, and modelling.

##### ***4.3. Establishment of a permanent national stranding program (Implementation of ACCOBAMS priorities no. 15, 17 and 18).***

4.3.1. Establish a national network of specialists for dead or alive stranded specimens, floating carcasses or accidentally entangled in fishing gears;

4.3.2. Establish a close connection with the Romanian Naval Authority and Frontier Police;

4.3.3. Work closely with the scientific community, alert and direct it to the standing event location by the Romanian Naval Authority and Frontier Police;

4.3.4. Implement the ACCOBAMS guidelines on strandings;

4.3.5. Conduct awareness campaigns to inform the general public about the information service (possibly reachable through a toll-free phone number) to enhance coverage by the program;

4.3.6. Develop the systems for collecting data on observations, incidental catches strandings, epizootics and other phenomena related to dolphins;

4.3.7. Enhance post-mortem investigative abilities of local veterinarians, anatomists and pathologists through capacity building and the availability of appropriate facilities;

4.3.8. Carry out full autopsies of stranded carcasses, in order to collect tissues for a regional tissue data bank;

4.3.9. Establish the possible cause of death, contaminant loads, disease incidents and any physiological or anatomical abnormalities;

4.3.10. Establish an inventory of national and international laboratories able to receive and analyze samples;

4.3.11. Facilitate the veterinary and CITES procedures to exchange samples.

## **5. Capacity building (Implementation of ACCOBAMS priority no.12).**

***5.1. Development and implementation emergency measures for situations with exceptionally unfavourable or endangering conditions (pollution, strandings, epizootics).***

5.1.1. Evaluate capacities necessary for rescue operations for injured or sick dolphins.

***5.2. Preparation of a code of conduct governing the function of centres or laboratories involved in emergency situations:***

5.2.1. Co-operate with all Black Sea coastal states and ACCOBAMS Parties to organize training courses and education programmes under the coordination of ACCOBAMS in collaboration with other competent international institutions or organizations;

5.2.2. Develop and implement training programmes on management and monitoring techniques;

5.2.3. Organize training courses for scientists and special protected area managers in dolphin conservation techniques.

***5.3. Dissemination of data and information about dolphins:***

5.3.1. Compile and evaluate all information obtained on dolphins on a national and/or regional basis, by an expert group under the auspices of Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS;

5.3.2. Encourage information exchange with Black Sea coastal states, as well as with ACCOBAMS Parties, participation in common research programmes, and assistance to research programs of other countries;

5.3.3. Prepare inventories of national authorities, research and rescue centres, scientists and non-governmental organizations concerned with dolphins;

5.3.4. Prepare a directory of existing national protected or managed areas, and of marine areas of potential importance for the conservation of dolphins;

5.3.5. Disseminate information by a specialized network.

***5.4. Capacity building and facilities for training and creating awareness of targeted groups of stakeholders.***

**6. Awareness, training and education of stakeholders**

***6.1. Preparation of a sub-regional or regional information bulletin on dolphin's conservation activities or contribute to an existing publication serving the same purpose.***

***6.2. Production of the informative material, ecological education and awareness.***

6.2.1. Editing the informative bulletins, magazines for large public or adapted to some age categories;

6.2.2. Produce a curriculum and materials supporting the environmental and dolphin conservation education for teachers;

6.2.3. Develop of itinerary exhibition about the Black Sea dolphins with equipment and educational multimedia softs;

6.2.4. Develop of a website with information concerning the dolphin conservation, at the public disposal, and create an interface for communication with it;

6.2.5. Carry out a video system within the Dolphinarium, focused on the ecology, aetiology and other problems of dolphin conservation.

***6.3. Preparation of informative material such as identification guides for distribution to the users of the sea including codes of conduct and guidelines designated to minimize disturbance to dolphins when the public comes in close contact with them.***

***6.4. Information on the National Action Plan and the structures involved in its implementation should be publicized.***

***6.5. Implementation of a public-awareness program, including the celebration of "Dolphin Week", in order to permit the general public to be involved in conservation actions for dolphins:***

6.5.1. Create leaflets and other materials on dolphins, that could be incorporated in a specific Web site;

6.5.2. Development of mass-media and promotional campaigns (leaflets, brochures etc.);

6.5.3. Development of knowledge competition broadcasting involving the scholar team from the coastal schools (Constantza, Mangalia, Eforie).

***6.6. Facilitation and regulation of the development of dolphin-watching activities outside marine reserves according to international standards.***

***6.7. Establishment of a long-term working programme with the assistance of ACCOBAMS and relevant partners.***

***6.8. Adoption of indicators to monitor progress in raising awareness for issues of dolphin conservation.***

## **7. Coordination, review and finances**

***7.1. Identification of existing structures helpful in the coordination and implementation of the National Action Plan.***

***7.2. Set up a co-ordination on:***

7.2.1. Collaboration with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat;

7.2.2. Open a dialogue through National Focal Points for Special Protected Areas, Fishing and Living Resources from the Black Sea, and

Biodiversity with fishing administrators and local people interested in the marine environment;

7.2.3. Create leaflets and other information material on dolphins, that should be incorporated in a specific Web site;

7.2.4. Establish a directory of dolphin specialists working in the Black Sea area;

7.2.5. Collect and evaluate data and published information relating to the conservation status of dolphins in the Black Sea area;

7.2.6. Disseminate information by publishing in national and international scientific journals and exchange information with national and international experts;

7.2.7. Assist and/or organize expert meetings on specific topics regarding dolphins in the Black Sea area;

7.2.8. Identification, selection and establishment of marine protected areas for dolphins;

7.2.9. Proposal of recommendations for the Central Environmental Authority aimed at the protection and conservation of dolphins in the Romanian waters;

7.2.10. Organize scientific and veterinary training courses in this field;

7.2.11. Create a generally accessible information network on the internet;

7.2.12. Facilitate national and regional research and conservation projects on dolphins;

7.2.13. Prepare the program of activities and financial proposals for Central Environmental Authority and for the Meeting of the Parties of ACCOBAMS.

***7.3. Co-ordination of existing and new activities for research, protection and management, will be facilitated by a person employed through voluntary offers or through projects or contract.***

***7.4. Support for the implementation of measures recommended by this Action Plan will be assured by the Central Environmental Authority and "Danube Delta" Biosphere Reserve Authority.***

***7.5. The Central Environmental Authority will assure judicious financial support and by external financing programmes.***

The National Action Plan has been prepared to cover most of the activities and measures needed to promote a favourable status of the populations of the three species of dolphins in the Romanian waters. The

criteria for prioritising are grouped in four categories, with equal weight in establishment of the level of priority for each action. These are:

- Necessity to protect the dolphin populations from the Black Sea effectively based on research;
- Economical and institutional efficiency;
- Social impact;
- Technical and financial feasibility.

Responsible for the implementation of the NAPDC is the Central Environmental Authority. The coordination of the activities provided is the ACCOBAMS Focal Point, together with GEF/Activity Regional Centre for Fishing and Living Resources of the Black Sea, or the Sub-group of the National Committee for Coastal Zone/National Advisory Committee for Fishing Sector, and other interested organizations.

Implementation of actions, according to their characteristics, will be distributed to different actors.

The NAPDC will succeed if a series of conditions are achieved, such as:

- Active involvement of the Central Environmental Authority (Department for Biodiversity Conservation) at all levels, through the Co-ordination Structure, is the most important. In order to achieve this task, an adequate allocation of human and financial resources is requested. Also, the participation of all control and supervision organizations is compulsory needed (i.e. Frontier Police, Fishery Inspection etc.);
- All stakeholders shall actively be involved, each of them being justified to contribute at success of the Plan through appropriate incentives;
- Involvement of the stakeholders becomes particularly necessary when conflicts occur between them;
- Identify the technical and scientific facilities necessary for Plan implementation. Encourage the selection of existent facilities considered appropriate for proposed tasks. The mechanisms for adequate keeping of equipment and tools will be provided;
- The capacity building and the actions for public education/awareness are also essential components of the conservation process;
- Moreover, a mechanism for periodical assessment of the results should exist, which has to include suggestions from the stakeholders, and which conducts the continuation of the work and future planning;
- The structure for coordination and management shall assure the maintenance of a corresponding flux of communication and coordination among the NAPDC actors and all stakeholders. The results of research efforts are to be taken into consideration as support for the decisional process;

- The financial support for all of the actions described in the NAPDC is the most important condition for success;

- All the activities achieved within the NAPDC are to be synchronized with the effort carried out at regional level by organizations or agreements such as ACCOBAMS.

The content of the NAPDC and its implementation shall be reviewed whenever necessary.

To monitor and analyze the efficacy of the NAPDC, a series of mechanisms will be established:

- At the end of each action, an assessment of results will be carried out, and consequently the NAPDC will be revised and readapted;

- Each action must be defined through objectives and indicators and/or criteria, which give the possibility to assess the performances and the achievement stage of the objectives.

The conservation status will be taken as "favourable" when:

- Population dynamics data indicate that dolphins in the Black Sea area are maintaining themselves close to the carrying capacity (< 80 %) on a long-term basis as a viable component of the ecosystem;

- The range of dolphins in the Black Sea area is restored to its original distribution, and is not likely to be reduced on long-term basis;

- There are, and will be in the foreseeable future, sufficient habitats in the Black Sea area to maintain dolphin populations in a favourable status of conservation on a long-term basis.

## CONCLUSIONS

- The presence of threats to dolphins particularly in the Black Sea is evident and pressing.

- Romanian territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone of Romania contain important and possibly critical habitats for Black Sea cetaceans.

- Romania has to implement the Strategic Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea (1996).

- The overall objectives of the National Action Plan are to strengthen the framework concerning the effective conservation of dolphins by developing the technical and legal basis.

- The National Action Plan is structured on seven strategic directions, grouping the majority of necessary actions, which can be implemented in the future, in order to attend the mentioned objectives.



- The National Action Plan has been prepared to cover most of the activities and measures needed to promote a favourable status of the populations of the three dolphins species in the Romanian waters.
- The criteria for prioritising are grouped in four categories, with equal weight in establishment of the level of priority for each action.
- The National Action Plan will succeed if a series of conditions are achieved.
- The content of this National Action Plan and its implementation shall be reviewed whenever necessary.

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