

## ICES Request Form

Request from	European Commission, DG MARE, Units D3 and C1
Contact within organisation	-
Content contact person	
Request announced	
Request received	
Answer deadline client	
Request code (client)	<b>23_09 (III) - Support for the implementation of the Action Plan (III) – Harbour porpoise in the Baltic Sea (Baltic proper)</b>
Request code (ICES)	
Request	Support for the implementation of the Action Plan (III) – Harbour porpoise in the Baltic sea <b>(Baltic proper)</b>
<p><b>Request to ICES:</b></p> <p>ICES is requested to:</p> <p>Concerning the Harbour Porpoise in the Baltic Sea,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. assess the fishing gears most likely to cause by-catches of harbour porpoise, based on experience and data from areas where the porpoises are abundant;</li> <li>b. map the fishing effort deployed using those gears in 2021 (and if possible 2022) at c-square resolution;</li> <li>c. develop a proxy for risk of incidental catches of Baltic Sea harbour porpoise based on the distribution of high-risk fishing effort and its overlap with the distribution of harbour porpoise as assessed in SAMBAH surveys or other means;</li> <li>d. rank the c-squares corresponding to the top 10, 20, 30, 40 and 50% of the Baltic Sea area in terms of risk caused to the porpoise population and present the resulting spatial patterns.</li> </ol> <p><b>Background:</b></p> <p>The European Commission has developed an Action Plan<sup>1</sup> under which it is recommending its Member States to, i.a.:</p>	

<sup>1</sup> [EUR-Lex - 52023DC0102 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

- By end of 2023, develop threshold values for the maximum allowable mortality rate from incidental catches of the species selected by Member States <sup>(2)</sup>, as part of the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) <sup>(3)</sup>. Adopt fisheries management measures to implement these threshold values without delay through national measures or, where relevant, by submission of joint recommendations.
- Adopt national measures or submit joint recommendations to the Commission to minimise by-catch (or reduce it to the level that enables the full recovery of the populations) of harbour porpoise in the Baltic Sea by end 2023 <sup>(4)</sup>;

The Commission requests ICES to perform urgently the corresponding analyses necessary to assist Member States in completing these tasks. Should ICES be unable to complete such analyses, it is requested to identify fully the additional work necessary to reach completion within or as close as possible to the stated deadlines.

Planning ICES	WKSUP: June 2024
Request (budget) accepted	
ICES contact person	<a href="#">_____</a>
WG(s) involved	WKSUP, WGMME, WGSFD, WKBB, WGBYC
Preparation timing	WGMME to assist with the compilation and quality assurance of data on probability of occurrence of Baltic porpoises. WGSFD to assist with the compilation and quality assurance of data on fishing effort at relevant temporal and spatial units. WKBB members to provide input on the application of relevant bycatch risk approaches. WGBYC to provide input on fishing gears most likely to cause by-catches of harbour porpoise and to review the main outcomes of WKSUP.
Review group	RGSUP: September or November 2024
Advice drafting group	ADGSUP: 5-7 November 2024
ACOM Webex	WC: 27 November 2024
Release date	6 December 2024

Grey cells to be filled in by ICES

<sup>(2)</sup> Namely, '[s]pecies of birds, mammals, reptiles and non-commercially-exploited species of fish and cephalopods, which are at risk from incidental by-catch in the region or subregion', Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848, Annex, Part II, Criteria and methodological standards, specifications and standardised methods for monitoring and assessment of essential features and characteristics and current environmental status of marine waters under Article 8(1)(a) of Directive 2008/56/EC

<sup>(3)</sup> Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive)

<sup>(4)</sup> For example, by fully implementing measures advised in ICES, 2023, EU additional request on mitigation measures to reduce by-catches of common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*) in the Bay of Biscay. In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2023. ICES Advice 2023, sr.2023.01. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.21946634> or measures with an equivalent effect.