



Ref.: SCBD/SAM/DC/JL/JA/JMQ/84623

4 June 2015

NOTIFICATION

Request for information on measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate the potential significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity

Dear Madam/Sir,

The purpose of this notification is to invite Parties, other Governments and competent organizations to submit information relating to measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate the potential significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity.

In response to decision XI/17 of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Secretariat convened an Expert Workshop on Underwater Noise and its Impacts on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity at the headquarters of the International Maritime Organization, London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, from 25 to 27 February 2014, with financial support from the European Commission. The workshop aimed to improve and share knowledge on underwater noise and its impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity, and to develop practical guidance and toolkits to minimize and mitigate the significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity. A background study was produced to support the workshop discussions. The report of the expert workshop, the background study and additional relevant background materials are available at: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=MCBEM-2014-01>.

The COP in its decision XII/23, paragraphs 2 and 3, welcomed the report of the above-mentioned expert workshop and encouraged Parties and other Governments, as well as indigenous and local communities and other relevant stakeholders, to take appropriate measures, as appropriate and within their competencies, and in accordance with national and international laws, to avoid, minimize and mitigate the potential significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity. The relevant activities listed in decision XII/23 (paragraph 3) are annexed to this notification for ease of reference.

Under the provisions of paragraph 4 of the same decision, the COP invited intergovernmental organizations, including the International Maritime Organization, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and the International Whaling Commission, to take measures within their mandates, if applicable, and to assist States in taking measures, limited to those that are within the mandates of the respective competent intergovernmental organization, to avoid, minimize and mitigate the potential significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal

To: CBD National Focal Points and SBSTTA Focal Points; International Maritime Organization; Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals; International Whaling Commission; indigenous peoples and local communities; and other relevant organizations.



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biodiversity, including, where appropriate, giving consideration to the activities listed in the annex to this notification.

In paragraph 5 of the same decision, the COP further invited Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to submit scientific and technical information concerning the elements listed in the decision (and annexed to this notification), as well as information on related measures taken by Parties, other Governments and competent organizations, to avoid, minimize and mitigate the potential significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity.

Pursuant to these requests, Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations are kindly invited to provide their submissions as soon as possible but no later than **30 September 2015** to the Executive Secretary via e-mail to secretariat@cbd.int or faxed to +1 514 288 6588, to enable timely compilation and collation of this information, which will be made available to the forthcoming twentieth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. Submissions may include relevant scientific and technical information, descriptions of specific measures taken, case studies, lessons learned, tools and guidance, and relevant management plans at sub-national, national or regional levels.

For ease of reference, you may refer to the information submitted in response to CMS notification 2015/14, issued by the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), which requests information on the implementation of CMS Resolution 10.24 on Further Steps to Abate Underwater Noise Pollution for the Protection of Cetaceans and Other Biota. CMS notification 2015/14 is available at: <http://www.cms.int/en/news/notifications>.

Thank you for your continued support for the work of the Convention.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias
Executive Secretary

Enclosure

Annex. Activities listed in decision XII/23 (paragraph 3)

- (a) Defining and differentiating types or intensities of underwater noise where there are adverse impacts, and characterizing noise by source;
- (b) Conducting further research on the remaining significant knowledge gaps relating to the impacts of underwater noise on aquatic life, including knowledge gaps relating to fishes, invertebrates, turtles and birds, characteristics of major sound sources, trends in the prevalence and magnitude, as well as the intensity and spatial distribution of underwater noise and the potential impacts of underwater noise on ecosystems and animal populations, including implications of cumulative and synergistic impacts of multiple sources of noise and other stressors;
- (c) Developing and transferring quieter technologies, and applying the best available practice in all relevant activities;
- (d) Including areas that are affected by different levels of sound when mapping the spatial and temporal distribution of sound;
- (e) Combining acoustic mapping with habitat mapping of sound-sensitive species with regard to spatial risk assessments in order to identify areas where those species may be exposed to noise impacts;
- (f) Mitigating and managing anthropogenic underwater noise through the use of spatio-temporal management of activities, relying on sufficiently detailed temporal and spatial knowledge of species or population distribution patterns combined with the ability to avoid generating noise in the area at those times;
- (g) Conducting impact assessments, where appropriate, for activities that may have significant adverse impacts on noise-sensitive species, and carrying out monitoring, where appropriate;
- (h) Including noise considerations in the establishment and development of management plans for marine protected areas within national jurisdiction and other relevant plans, as appropriate;
- (i) Considering thresholds as a tool to protect sound-sensitive species, taking into account their locations during critical life cycle stages as well as relevant results of research and additional information;
- (j) Standardizing metrics and sound measurements so that there are similar measures and approaches for all sounds and in all places;
- (k) Building capacity in developing regions where the awareness and scientific capacity to address this issue has yet to be strengthened;
- (l) Engaging industry and other relevant sectors, including the naval and mining sectors, when developing guidelines in order to increase their ownership and participation in the implementation of the guidelines;
- (m) Encouraging collaboration and communication among relevant international bodies to enhance synergies in addressing this issue; and
- (n) Linking relevant information on the adverse impacts of underwater noise on sound-sensitive species when harmonizing different processes related to marine spatial planning and area-based management.

The full text of the decision is available at: <http://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/default.shtml?id=13386>