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APPENDIX 14
VESSEL CODE OF CONDUCT (ITALY AND ALBANIA)

Introduction

This Vessel Code of Conduct has been produced to protect marine megafauna (namely, marine mammals, turtles and elasmobranchs (cartilaginous fish) within the vicinity of the offshore pipeline and cable construction and laying for TAP. The Code of Conduct is intended to reduce the potential for construction vessel and person-related impacts on marine megafauna populations, their natural behaviour and habitats within the nearshore, coastal and offshore areas. It to vessel traffic movements relating to the marine and coastal construction and installation works and is a live document which will be updated with further detail (e.g. number and type of vessels, marine coordination plans, responsibilities and points of contact, etc.) as it becomes available.

This Code of Conduct will be applicable to all marine areas.

Annex IV of the European Union Habitats Directive (92/45/EEC) classifies all cetaceans as European Protected Species (EPS). It also lists the Mediterranean monk seal (Monachus monachus) and five species of turtle including loggerhead, as they are classified as endangered, vulnerable or rare. Under Article 12 of the Directive, Member States are required to take the requisite measures to establish a system of strict protection for EPS in their natural range prohibiting:

- All forms of deliberate capture or killing of specimens of these species in the wild.
- Deliberate disturbance of these species, particularly during the period of breeding, rearing, hibernation and migration.
- Deterioration or destruction of breeding sites or resting places.

All project vessels that encounter any marine megafauna species are required to log all sightings, on standardised log sheets that will be provided to all vessels. These should then be passed to the Marine Co-ordinator and person responsible for biodiversity mitigation and management within the relevant in-country team.

Marine megafauna known to be present, or potentially occur, in the vicinity of the TAP Project Area include:

- Bottlenose dolphin (Tursiops truncatus)
- Short beaked common dolphin (Delphinus delphis)
- Striped dolphin (Stenella coeruleoalba)
- Risso’s dolphin (Grampus griseus)
- Sperm whale (Physeter macrocephalus)
- Cuvier's beaked whale (Ziphius cavirostris)
- Fin whale (Balaenoptera physalus)
- Loggerhead turtle (Caretta caretta)
- *Green turtle* (*Chelonia mydas)*
- *Leatherback turtle* (*Dermochelys coriacea)*.
- *Giant devil ray* (*Mobula mobular)*.

Many of the above have been identified as critical habitat triggering species or classed as priority biodiversity features.

This Plan should be read in conjunction with the EMP, Appendix 12 and Appendix 13.

**Restrictions and Operational Guidelines**

All vessels approaching, leaving or working in the coastal, nearshore or offshore construction areas shall stay within the pre-agreed operating corridors.

1. Any vessel and/or person(s) must attempt to maintain a minimum distance of 100m from any individual or group of marine megafauna. Vessels that are themselves approached by marine megafauna may remain, but should gear their engines into neutral providing this does not cause a safety hazard. In the case where a boat is working or otherwise, the behaviour of marine megafauna should be recorded and provided to the appropriate personnel, especially in the event of a change in the conduct of work on or immediately surrounding the vessel.

2. No vessel shall, when less than 100m from marine megafauna, exceed a speed of 5 knots, providing this does not cause a safety hazard.

3. No vessel shall alter speed or course suddenly when less than 100m from any marine megafauna.

4. No person or vessel shall deliberately approach to less than 100m any marine megafauna situated on land without consulting the appropriate persons (e.g. Environmental Field Monitor).

5. Persons ashore who are approached by marine megafauna shall carefully make the animal(s) aware of their presence and allow the animal(s) free access and ample opportunity to move into the water. Under no circumstances shall a person behave in an obtrusive or noisy manner around the animal(s).

6. No construction vessel shall use underwater acoustic transmitters, except navigational systems, or if deployed as part of the TAP marine mammal mitigation protocol acoustic deterrent devices, when less than 1000m from any marine megafauna.

7. No unauthorised divers should be allowed to enter the water within 100m of any marine megafauna. This will be in the interest of the health and safety of the divers as well as any marine megafauna. Any TAP or EPC contractor commercial divers working should be aware that they might be approached by marine megafauna during the course of their work.

8. Designated routes shall be agreed and managed by the marine coordinator. Designated routes shall include avoidance of any shipping exclusion zones and consider where practicable avoidance of designated sites and protected areas. Designated routes shall
be included in a Marine Traffic Management Plan which shall be approved by the authorities and TAP prior to construction.

9. Nothing in these guidelines shall operate to prohibit anything done for the preservation of life at sea or in the interests of public safety.

10. Nothing in these guidelines shall operate to restrict the obligations on persons and vessels to obey rules associated with local, regional and international safety conventions for handling vessels at sea.