Instructions for filling in the CA|RDS questionnaire

You may need to enable editing to begin to fill in the form.

The first three tabs of the CA|RDS Questionnaire Form are collecting some qualitative data on you, the reviewer, the site, and threats to the site and the river dolphin population.

The cells for these answers are coloured white (like the cell to the left).

The next seven tabs are a quantitative assessment of the Conservation Assured River Dolphin Standards (CA|RDS).

The CA|RDS question answer cells are coloured pink and contain a dropdown menu (like the cell to the left).

Each question is judged against a standardised scoring system

1	Recognised, achieved and/or action implemented or ongoing
0.75	Recognised and action initiated
0.5	Recognised and action being planned
0.25	Recognised but no action initiated
0	Not recognised to be of sufficient importance to receive management intention
N	Not Applicable (please clarify any in box below)

The last tab contains a glossery of terms used in the CA|RDS questions.

All cells outside of the answer cells are locked.

Name of Survey Respondent		Organisation	Position	Email	Date completed
First Name	Second Name				

PLEASE FILL IN AT END OF ASSESSMENT	Tick which describes sources used best			
Assess the importance of the following sources of data used in the assessment	Used for most answers	Used for a few answers	Not used	Please provide details
1. Research and monitoring	☐	☐	☐	
2. Staff experience	☐	☐	☐	
3. External expert knowledge	☐	☐	☐	
4. Community opinion/traditional knowledge	☐	☐	☐	

Site Name	Country	Date of first establishment of conservation/protected area	Is the site a legally protected area?	the IUCN Protected area management category (check all that apply, www.protectedplanet.	Is it Ramsar site or does it overlap with a Ramsar site (rsis.ramsar.org)?	Is the site a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA, see map: www.keybiodiversityareas.org/kba-data)

Location [GPS Coordinates from center of the site]		Site size (km2)	Length of river stretch protected (km)
Easting	Northing		

What species of river dolphin is present	If there is a second species of river dolphin present please select	What percentage of the total population in the country enhabits this site [1st species listed]?	What percentage of the total population in the country enhabits this site [2nd species listed]?	Are river dolphins prioritised in the site's conservation objectives	What is the estimated current dolphin population?			
					Have population estimates been carried out?	Number	Date of Estimate	Check if Unknown
								☐

Is there evidence of breeding in the last five years (e.g. have young been observed)?	Is the population trend stable, increasing or decreasing?

	Rank threats from 0-5 (0=Not a threat, 5 = A severe threat) from the list below for each of the rows (Current internal, Current external and Potential threats)																						
	Deliberate killing or hunting (e.g., for trophies, bait, meat, oil or to reduce competition in fishing)	Legal fisheries/bycatch	Illegal fishing practices (dynamite, poisoning, electrofishing)	Over fishing	Vessel strikes	Irrigation canals/pool strandings	Loss of genetic diversity (e.g. from fragmentation from dams)	contamination due to (legal/illegal) mining	Dams/barrages (fragmentation, reducing flows, water diversion)	Underwater noises (ferries, mining activities)	Sand / gravel mining	Coal, oil or gold mining	Agriculture pollution	Industrial pollution	Garbage and solid waste	Landuse changes/deforestation increasing silt	Disease	Household sewage and urban waste water	Climate change impacts (temperature change, droughts, floods etc)	Loss of cultural links, traditional knowledge and/or management practices	Water extraction	Other threats (please provide details right)
Current Internal threats																							
Current External threats																							
Potential threats																							

Please provide details on Other Threats	Do you consider the population associated with the site severely under threat?	If there is no conservation action, are the dolphins at this site likely to be completely extirpated (lost or nearly lost) within the next 20 years (Give a score between 1-5: with 1=not likely at all and 5=almost certainly)

1. Conservation needs, design and designation of the site		
Question	Information	Answer
1.1. The conservation status of the river dolphin population at the site is well understood and documented (e.g., in the management plan/system).	Conservation status refers to the present size, importance, proportion and degree of threat of extirpation of the population at the site in relation to the entire population of the species. See glossary for the definition of site and management plan/system.	
1.2. There is an effective legal system (e.g., capacity, laws, effective institutions) in place and implemented to ensure the protection and management of the dolphins, their prey and their habitat.	Aspects to be considered: •A supportive legal system. •The ability for trained rangers to take action against illegal activities. •Support from the police (e.g., investigating illegal activity and detaining those involved). •Support from the judicial system (e.g., effective prosecution rates and realistic sentences imposed for illegal activities).	
1.3. The site has legal status or other effective area-based conservation designation, with a defined border, and supports effective river dolphin conservation.	Either a recognised protected area or an "Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measure" (OECM), listed on the World Database of Protected Areas or the World Database of OECMs (https://www.protectedplanet.net/en) . See glossary for further details re protected areas, OECMs and defined boundaries.	
1.4. Critical areas for river dolphin conservation within the site are prioritised, managed, monitored and maintained.	Important areas or habitats within the site have been identified and mapped in the management plan/system, e.g., oxbow lakes, river stretches, river corridors, floodplains.	
1.5. A system is in place to monitor and engage with efforts or actions across the entire catchment that may impact (positively or negatively) the river dolphin population at the site.	This includes: •Effective river basin planning to balance needs across the catchment •Specific references to river dolphin conservation	
1.6. Functional connectivity corridors and habitat contiguity that support river dolphin movement to and from the site are mapped, maintained and monitored for infrastructure development threats, e.g., navigation, dams or barrages, encroachment on the floodplain.	The movement of river dolphins and their prey through the site and to other locations upstream or downstream is critical to the long-term health of the population at the site and as a whole. Connectivity corridors and habitat contiguity therefore aim to maintain, enhance, and restore ecological flows, species movement and dynamic processes across intact and fragmented environments.	

Please clarify any "N" (Not Applicable) answers in box below

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2. Management planning and capacity (equipment and staff)		
Question	Information	Answer
2.1. The site has an up-to-date management plan/system which sets realistic priorities, strategies and actions that explicitly supports effective river dolphin conservation.	See glossary for the definition of a management plan/system.	
2.2. The capacities required to effectively implement the management plan/system such as suitably trained staff, community members or volunteers are in place and implementing the plan/system.	Where no management plan/system is in place but actions are undertaken occasionally or indirectly the score given must be below 0.5	
2.3. Equipment and any necessary infrastructure, as outlined in the management plan/system are in place and sufficient to undertake effective river dolphin conservation.	See glossary for the definition of equipment and infrastructure. This might include a park ranger station on the riverbank to monitor river transport, illegal practices, etc. Where no system or plan is in place but actions are undertaken occasionally or indirectly the score given must be below 0.5.	
2.4. Systems for assessing management effectiveness are in place, and management is adapted in response.	This should include regular management effectiveness assessments following an agreed methodology and (for the highest score) evidence that assessments result in any necessary adaptive management.	
2.5. Suitable restoration sites have been identified, options discussed with rightsholders and stakeholders, and restoration actions implemented.	See glossary for definitions of rightsholders and stakeholders. Restoration could include actions such as dam removal to maintain flow, lining of canals to control water seepage, reintroduction of prey species etc. Some sites may mark the question as not applicable, if no restoration is necessary.	

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3. Financial systems and funding		
Question	Information	Answer
3.1. The capacity to manage funding for the site is adequate.	This refers to “internal” capacity to manage finances (within annual budgeting systems). This could include: •Accounting systems •Procurement •Reporting •Project management •Assessments	
3.1. Funding is adequate and sustainable and allows implementation of effective river dolphin conservation as outlined in the management plan/system.	This covers the entire costs budgeted in the management plan/system for managing the dolphin population. Where no system or plan is in place but funding is available occasionally or indirectly, the score given must be below 0.5.]	

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4. Human rights and equity		
Question	Information	Answer
4.1. River dolphin conservation and management is developed with involvement and support from rightsholders and stakeholders.	See glossary for definitions of rightsholders and stakeholders. This should include •Participatory processes •Regular meetings •Negotiated agreements •Access by all relevant groups assured	
4.2. The rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities are known, understood and respected in site management.	See glossary for definitions of Indigenous peoples and local communities. This includes in particular implementation of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for Indigenous peoples and equivalent safeguarding mechanisms for other local communities.	
4.3. A governance system exists that holds the appropriate agencies accountable to any joint management agreements for the site, including transboundary coordination if relevant.	"Governance system" refers to some coordinated form of management that helps ensure that actions between different bodies (e.g., different arms of government) are coordinated.	
4.4. Cultural values (e.g., local traditions, traditional rights and laws, cultural and religious uses of sites, etc.) are supported wherever possible (e.g., when not contradicting national laws or conservation aims).		
4.5. Outreach and education activities to explain, describe and profile river dolphins and their conservation needs are carried out with rightsholders and stakeholders.		
4.6. Conservation management is inclusive, transparent and accountable, and involves all relevant rightsholders and stakeholders.		
4.7. Benefit-sharing mechanisms are in place and monitored.	A benefit sharing mechanism refers to the system(s) or channel(s) through which monetary and/or non-monetary benefits are distributed. Aspects include timeliness of sharing of benefits, credibility, trust, financial soundness, and acceptability of the process. Here it could refer to equitable sharing of benefits from ecotourism, division of compensation for river dolphin damage to fishing gear, etc.	

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5. Resource use (fishing, hunting, river transport)		
Question	Information	Answer
5.1. Any resource use at the site is managed to balance river dolphin conservation objectives with local user needs.	Resource uses could include subsistence fishing, commercial fishing, sport fishing, legal hunting, sand mining, riverside agriculture, use of waterways as a transport system and tourist activities.	
5.2. Local fisheries are known, documented and impacts on river dolphins considered.		
5.3. Any fisheries, including aquaculture, within the site are managed in a sustainable manner (e.g., avoiding fish escapes or waste discharge, using native species), including to ensure the food supply of river dolphins.	Aquaculture activities should ideally be to the standard of the Aquaculture Stewardship Council or compliance with national regulations. Or apply approaches of Global FISH Alliance.	
5.4. Regulations to minimise the impacts of river transport on river dolphins, including noise reduction and impacts of navigational infrastructure and maintenance (e.g., ports, canalisation, dredging), are in place and implemented.		
5.5. Traditional practices and management which achieve coexistence between humans and river dolphins are known, monitored and supported.	Including, for example, subsistence fishing or subsistence hunting.	

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6. Pressures (by threats such as Infrastructure works, climate change, illegal practices, ...)		
Question	Information	Answer
6.1. Threats to river dolphins are monitored against agreed thresholds, with mitigation strategies ready to be applied if the threshold is exceeded.		
6.2. Appropriate management strategies to encourage co-existence and discourage Human Wildlife Conflict impacting river dolphins are planned and implemented.	For example: •Policies •Mitigation strategies •Management responses •Steps to understand conflict The main cause of Human Wildlife Conflict arises from loss of fisheries (perceived or real) from dolphin predation on fish stocks.	
6.3. The current and potential impacts of climate change at the site are understood and where possible action is taken to mitigate any negative impacts on river dolphins.		
6.4. An effective enforcement strategy for river dolphins is in place and implemented.	A strategy should be in place and actions implemented to apply the laws regarding the protection of the site, its habitats, the river dolphins and their prey, e.g., to enforce the prohibition of the use dolphins as meat in the Calophysus fisheries.	
6.5. Health and mortality in river dolphins is managed and monitored, according to agreed protocols.	Mortality is monitored, dead specimens are examined and samples taken to determine the causes. Remedial actions are taken to address the causes of mortality.	
6.6. Monitoring activities (which follow agreed protocols) include negative impacts on dolphin populations, prey, habitat and water quality from illegal and unsustainable activities.	Such activities could include, e.g.: •Illegal trade in freshwater turtles, caimans, fish and other species •Waterfowl hunting •Effluents from mining and nearby industries •Resource use.	
6.7. Tourism and visitor impacts have been assessed and do not conflict with river dolphin conservation objectives.	This is one of the few questions where some sites may mark the question as not applicable, if no tourism activities take place.	
6.8. Impacts of invasive fish and other invasive species are known and suitable management actions planned and implemented.		

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7. River dolphin and prey population monitoring		
Question	Information	Answer
7.1. River dolphin populations are well understood and periodically monitored, analysed and mapped according to agreed protocols.		
7.2. Prey populations, density and distribution are understood, monitored and mapped according to agreed protocols.		
8. Habitat and landscape approaches		
Question	Information	Answer
8.1. Freshwater systems have been conserved or are being restored to support river dolphin conservation.		
8.2. Specific and detailed river dolphin habitat management requirements are identified and used to inform management.		
8.3. River dolphin management considers prey availability in strategies and targets.		
8.4. River dolphin populations are managed as part of broader species and metapopulation management.	"Metapopulation" refers to the dolphin metapopulation. The “broader species management” refers to the dolphin management coupled with, e.g., otter or fish(eries), management	

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Term	Explanation of use in CA|RDS
Defined border	A border to a site, which is understood and mapped, and which may or may not be identified on the ground/water. It is theoretically possible that defining the border might be part of the CA|RDS implementation process, but a border is needed for CA|RDS to work, because it is applied to a designated site where understanding governance is a key part of management. Note that the physical location/borders of some protected and conserved areas may shift slightly, for instance if a river marks the border and its course changes over time, e.g., due to flood pulses.
Equipment	Used here to denote smaller items: computers, GPS, range finders, cameras, tools, etc.
Indigenous peoples	The definition in the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries includes: 1. *peoples who identify themselves as 'indigenous'* 2. *tribal peoples whose social, cultural, and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations* 3. *traditional peoples not necessarily called indigenous or tribal but who share the same characteristics of social, cultural, and economic conditions that distinguish them from other sections of the national community, whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions, and whose livelihoods are closely connected to ecosystems and their goods and services*
Infrastructure	Used here to describe dams, barrages, irrigation canals, navigation, water, chutes, weirs, hydro-electric systems, bunds, ditches and levees, buildings, industrial premises and similar built structures.
Local community	Literally the people or community who live in an area or space. They may not have particular ethnic, historical or cultural homogeneity, but all have a direct interest in the area. The term is usually used to describe groups other than Indigenous peoples.
Management plan/system	A document or series of documents which outline the interventions undertaken to manage the site. The plan/system should be developed with reference to national and regional river dolphin conservation strategies. It should clearly elaborate the site's goal, objectives and activities. Management plans/systems are usually implemented through annual operational plans.
Other effective area-based conservation mechanism (OECM)	Defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity as: "*a geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio–economic, and other locally relevant values* ". Likely in the future to be mapped nationally and internationally.
Protected area	Defined nationally and internationally by IUCN as: "*A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values* ".
Rightsholders	People socially endowed with legal or customary rights including with respect to land, water and natural resources.
Site	Site is defined here as a protected area, OECM or possibly other effective and delimited conservation area. CA|RDS is a site-based approach rather than something that describes measures, for instance, at national policy level.
Stakeholders	People who possess direct or indirect interests and concerns about a site (e.g., local communities, businesses/industries using water resources, researchers, NGOs, service providers), but do not necessarily enjoy a legally or socially recognised entitlement to them. In the context of CA|RDS, we use "stakeholders" to include both stakeholders and rightsholders.