

### Resolution No. 3

#### Activities of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee and Work Plan for the Triennium 2010-2012

*Reaffirming* the importance of cooperating with and complementing the work of other international bodies and the desirability of drawing upon their expertise;

*Recognising* that much progress is achieved by the commissioning of work by specialists, whether members of the Advisory Committee or otherwise;

*Reaffirming* that the Advisory Committee, as a body tasked to provide advice on scientific, policy-related and administrative matters, needs a balance of scientists, policy-makers and administrators to cover its role adequately;

*Stressing* that the successful work of the Advisory Committee depends on the ability of its members to allocate sufficient time to the work of the Committee and its working groups;

*Welcoming* the draft Work Plan for the Triennium 2010-2012 developed by the Secretariat and Advisory Committee;

*Noting* that resources are limited and that, while respecting the mandate of the Agreement, a focussed approach is necessary;

*Therefore welcoming* the strategy to focus ASCOBANS' work recommended by the Advisory Committee, which establishes clear priorities to guide the work of the Contracting Parties, the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat;

*Further welcoming* the elaboration of a Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Plan for the Agreement;

#### *The Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS*

1. *Agrees* that, subject to sufficient resources being provided, the Advisory Committee and Secretariat should carry out the Work Plan attached as Annex 1;
2. *Instructs* the Secretariat to provide reports on its progress with the implementation of relevant parts of the Work Plan to each meeting of the Advisory Committee;
3. *Supports* the direction proposed in the Strategy Paper attached as Annex 2 to this Resolution;
4. *Agrees* that there is a need to develop a more focussed approach towards a limited set of the most urgent priorities, while at the same time developments with respect to other issues are carefully monitored; in case of special events they might need additional care and attention of the Advisory Committee beyond this work plan;

5. *Decides* that the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat, with respect to the implementation of the activities requested of the Parties, should:

- (a) Focus a substantial part of available resources on two priority issues: bycatch and disturbance by noise;
- (b) Monitor general developments with respect to other issues at stake, and report if new urgencies arise;
- (c) Develop a practical road map and identify key opportunities to strengthen the co-operation with and interaction of the European Commission (DG Mare and DG Environment), other international organizations (e.g. ICES, HELCOM, ACCOBAMS, OSPAR, CMS), fishery and other economic sectors and non-governmental organizations;
- (d) Continue to reflect on ways to advance the objectives of the Agreement through the further elaboration of the Strategy Paper attached as Annex 2;

6. *Requests* the Advisory Committee to elaborate and agree at its meeting in 2010 a Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Plan for the Agreement and *encourages* Parties, stakeholders and the Secretariat to implement the recommendations of that Plan accordingly;

7. *Reiterates* its request that Parties:

- (a) Ensure that all nominated Advisory Committee members and their advisors can allocate time to attend Advisory Committee meetings, to intersessional work, and to participate in the intersessional Advisory Committee working groups;
- (b) Continue to ensure where possible suitable expertise within delegations to the Advisory Committee;

8. *Encourages* Parties to support the activities outlined in Annex 1 and the CEPA Plan to be agreed by the Advisory Committee by means of financial and in-kind contributions.

**Triennial Work Plan (2010-2012) – Tasks for the Secretariat / Advisory Committee (AC)**

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER
<b>Conservation issues</b>			
1. Review annually and as far as possible in conjunction with EU, ICES and IWC, new information on bycatch and make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action. This should include information provided by Parties and Range States on the implementation, efficacy and impacts of measures introduced to reduce bycatch, and on effort in relevant fisheries	AC (supported by Secretariat)	Annually	Proposed strategic priority in the Strategy paper
2. Continue to review annually new information on pollution and its effects on small cetaceans that occur in the ASCOBANS area and, on the basis of this review, provide recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities	AC	Annually	
3. Continue to review the extent of negative effects of sound, vessels and other forms of disturbance on small cetaceans and to review relevant technological developments and best practices with a view to developing guidelines which Parties may use to reduce disturbance by noise	AC (supported by Secretariat)	Annually	Proposed strategic priority in the Strategy paper
4. Review new information, as far as possible in co-operation with EU, ICES and IWC, on cetacean population size, distribution, structure, and causes of any changes in the ASCOBANS area and based on implications for conservation to make appropriate recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities	AC	Annually	

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER
5. Continue to evaluate progress in the implementation of the Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (Jastarnia Plan), establish further implementation priorities, carry out the periodic review of the Plan and promote the implementation of the Plan	Jastarnia Group (supported by the Secretariat)	Annually	Proposed strategic priority in the Strategy paper
6. Review the effectiveness of the ASCOBANS Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises in 2011. Jastarnia Group to draft revision of plan if necessary for AC preceding the MoP7*	Independent reviewer (e.g. R. Reeves) / Jastarnia Group	2011	
7. Incorporate the implications arising from the conclusions of the ASCOBANS/HELCOM Small Cetacean Population Structure Workshops in the development of the Jastarnia and North Sea harbour porpoise action plans and potentially other actions (to be elaborated by the Advisory Committee), taking particular note of the fact that the western Baltic, Inner Danish Waters and Kattegat areas are at present not covered by either plan	AC	AC17	
8. Promote and coordinate the implementation of the Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea, gather information on its implementation and the results obtained, inform the public and evaluate the effectiveness of the Plan every three years to update it*	Coordinator/Steering Group (supported by the Secretariat)	Throughout the triennium	Proposed strategic priority in the Strategy paper
9. Continue to consider how the work of ASCOBANS should be extended to take account of the new Agreement Area, which includes areas beyond national jurisdiction	AC (supported by Secretariat)	Throughout the triennium	

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER
10. Promote an informal Working Group of the Advisory Committee which shall summarise information on large cetaceans in the Agreement area and address aspects of their conservation (in accordance with the Terms of Reference proposed by MOP6 for this group)	AC	Throughout the triennium	
11. Review progress of bottlenose dolphin project (TURSIOPS SEAs) and guide as required	AC, led by UK		
<b>ASCOBANS Meetings and Workshops</b>			
12. Ensure the annual cycle of Advisory Committee Meetings, with papers circulated one month in advance of the meetings	Secretariat	Annually	Article 4.2
13. Seek to secure a host for the 7 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of Parties at least a year in advance of the meeting; otherwise arrange for it to be held in Bonn	Secretariat	2011	Article 4.2
14. Organize meetings of regional working groups (Jastarnia Group, North Sea Group) at intervals defined in each group's ToR*	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1, 4.2
15. If required by AC, organize a workshop, e.g. at an annual conference of the ECS, on a topic of priority interest to ASCOBANS*	Secretariat	During triennium	1. Habitat Conservation and Management

\* Depending on budget agreement, activities marked with an asterisk may require additional funding

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16. In conjunction with the European Cetacean Society and North Sea Foundation, organize one or more meetings to develop a constructive dialogue with the fisheries sector in the ASCOBANS area, in order to aid the Parties to progress bycatch mitigation measures in an effective manner. The first meeting is proposed to take place at the Annual Conference of the ECS in Stralsund in March 2010. To initiate the process, an intersessional Steering Group under the Advisory Committee Chair shall be established between MOP6 and AC17	AC (supported by Secretariat)	Throughout the triennium	Proposed strategic priority in the Strategy paper
17. Propose priorities for the coming triennium (2013 – 2015)	AC	2012	
<b>Budgetary and Administrative Issues</b>			
18. Report on budgetary and administrative issues to each meeting of the Advisory Committee	Secretariat	Annually	Article 4.2
19. Present a draft budget for the next triennium for consideration at an Advisory Committee meeting at least six months prior to the next Meeting of Parties	Secretariat / AC	2012	Article 4.1, 4.2
20. Prepare draft resolutions on budgetary and administrative issues for consideration at the last meeting of the Advisory Committee prior to MoP7	Secretariat / AC	2012	Article 4.1, 4.2
21. Encourage Parties and partner organizations to provide voluntary contributions for projects prioritised by the AC or outreach initiatives	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER
22. Assist in developing funding arrangements for projects covering themes prioritised by the Advisory Committee (see task 15) and Meeting of Parties	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1
<b>Communication, Education and Public Awareness</b>			
23. Develop a co-ordinated outreach programme, focussing particularly on activities that can help achieve the aims of ASCOBANS*	Secretariat/AC	2010	Proposed strategic priority in the Strategy paper
24. Report on outreach and communication issues to each meeting of the Advisory Committee	Secretariat	Annually	Article 4.2
25. Develop and implement CEPA to raise awareness of issues related to cetacean conservation in the Agreement Area*	Secretariat / Parties and observers	Throughout the triennium	5. Information and education
26. Continue to update and translate ASCOBANS information material into the languages of both Party and non-Party Range States*	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	5. Information and education
27. Continue to develop the ASCOBANS website, aiming to meet the needs of a wide range of target audiences and including educational material*	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	5. Information and education
28. Collaborate with partner organizations to develop joint actions in educational and promotional activities, and create synergy to provide added value while avoiding duplication of effort	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	5. Information and education
29. Assess the need for targeted information material on conservation issues facing small cetaceans in the region in consultation with Parties and appropriate other bodies, and develop material as necessary in close cooperation with these partners*	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	5. Information and education

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER
<b>Cooperation with other Organizations</b>			
30. Identify priorities and improve co-operation between ASCOBANS and the European Union institutions	AC / Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1, 4.2, Proposed strategic priority in the Strategy paper
31. Ensure close collaboration with the Secretariats of CMS and other CMS Regional Agreements on all issues of mutual interest, and contribute to the process of defining the future shape of CMS	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1, 4.2
32. Seek to cooperate with the HELCOM Secretariat in the creation and maintenance of a joint Baltic harbour porpoise database as part of HELCOM's online information system*	Jastarnia Group / Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1, 4.2
33. Continue to invite intergovernmental bodies such as IWC, ICES, CMS, HELCOM, NAMMCO, OSPAR, ACCOBAMS, the European Commission and other relevant international organizations to send representatives to Advisory Committee meetings	Secretariat	Annually	Article 4.1, 4.2
34. Ensure that the chairs of the Advisory Committee receive invitations to meetings of CMS and other CMS Regional Agreements	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1, 4.2
35. Explore the possibilities of further developing positive relationships with other stakeholders, especially the fishing industry and Regional Advisory Councils	AC / Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1, 4.2
36. Compile for each meeting of the Advisory Committee a list of Dates of Interest	Secretariat	Annually	Article 4.1, 4.2

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER
37. Insofar as budgetary provisions and guidance by the Advisory Committee allow for it, ensure proper representation at an appropriate level at meetings of other relevant organizations*	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1
38. Continue and improve effective communication with non-governmental and international organizations, such as OSPAR, HELCOM, ICES, ACCOBAMS, CBD and IWC	Secretariat / AC	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1, 4.2
<b>Institutional Issues</b>			
39. Promote the Agreement and its aims in Parties, Range States and with other relevant players *	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1
40. Promote accession of non-Party Range States and the European Commission to the Agreement	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1
41. Present to Parties, each year no later than 30 June, provided all reports have been received by that date, a compilation of Annual National Reports	Secretariat	Annually	Article 4.2
42. Present to the Meeting of Parties a summary of, <i>inter alia</i> , progress made and difficulties encountered since the last Meeting of Parties	Secretariat	2012	Article 4.3
43. Support Parties, Range States and Agreement bodies in implementing this Work Plan, in so far as primary responsibility does not lie with the Secretariat	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1

## Strategy Paper on the Options for Future Arrangements for ASCOBANS

### Introduction and objective of this paper

1. Since its establishment in 1992, ASCOBANS has made an important contribution to the conservation of small cetaceans and has the potential to do even more. ASCOBANS is currently the only intergovernmental organisation specifically involved in the promotion of favourable conservation status of small cetacean populations in the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas and should continue to make an important contribution to the reduction of threats to small cetacean species.

2. However, since 1992 several developments have changed the context within which ASCOBANS has to meet its objectives, the most important of which are:

- a. The increase of the number of Parties from the six that allowed the Agreement to enter into force in 1994 to currently 10 and a south-westward extension of the agreement area to include waters off France, Ireland, Spain, Portugal and areas beyond national jurisdiction, which entered into force in 2008.
- b. Since 2004 all Parties to ASCOBANS have been members of the European Union<sup>1</sup>, and are therefore obliged to implement the Habitats Directive (92/43/EC), as well as other European instruments that address or affect the conservation of small cetaceans and their environment.
- c. Within the CMS family several instruments have developed since 1992 that aim to protect cetaceans in various regions around the globe. These include ACCOBAMS (Mediterranean and Black Seas), the Pacific Islands Cetaceans Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and the Western African Aquatic Mammals MoU, which also covers Macaronesia.
- d. In 2000, Parties decided to integrate the ASCOBANS Secretariat into UNEP, and the Executive Director of UNEP became responsible for the management of the ASCOBANS Secretariat.
- e. In 2006 the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS (MOP5) decided that for the triennium 2007-2009 the CMS Secretariat would serve as the ASCOBANS secretariat pursuant to provision No. 4 of the ASCOBANS Agreement, and the Executive Secretary of CMS would be the Acting Executive Secretary for ASCOBANS.
- f. The 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Migratory Species decided to start a process to consider the future shape of CMS (UNEP/CMS/Resolution 9.13). This process will explore the possibilities for strengthening the contribution of CMS and the CMS Family of Agreements to conservation of the planet's wildlife.
- g. Within the United Nations, the management of environmental governance is also under review. In this context it has been asserted that the current framework of international environmental governance is weakened by institutional fragmentation and specialization and by the lack of a holistic approach to environmental issues and sustainable development. It has been suggested that environmental governance could be strengthened by, for instance, more strategic planning, a better division of labour between agreements, taking into account their respective mandates and strengths, as well as an improved cooperation between the secretariats of MEAs.

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<sup>1</sup> The Range of ASCOBANS would allow Norway and Russia to become Non-EU-Parties. However, at present neither appears interested in becoming a Party.

3. This paper has been drafted in the context of these developments; it aims to strengthen ASCOBANS' contribution to the conservation of cetaceans in the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas. As a secondary objective, it aims also to strengthen its contribution to wider cetacean conservation and to improve its contribution to the international MEA-community. In order to achieve these aims, this paper takes stock of the strengths and weaknesses of the Agreement, identifies future challenges and presents options for future arrangements for ASCOBANS, as a basis for discussion at the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties.

### Looking back: strengths and weaknesses of ASCOBANS

4. Over the years, ASCOBANS has been very successful in achieving good results. Several *strengths* of the Agreement can be identified which underpin these achievements:

- a. ASCOBANS has a well-developed scientific understanding with respect to the conservation of small cetaceans in the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas.
- b. ASCOBANS brings together both scientists and administrators and encourages a constructive dialogue.
- c. The Agreement provides a unique platform to integrate available data and to transmit the integrated data to other organisations and decision makers.
- d. ASCOBANS, particularly in the Baltic, has supported much education and awareness raising of the public. Its efforts have contributed to the awareness of the general public as regards the need to protect and conserve small cetaceans and their habitats.
- e. By building on its work in the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas, ASCOBANS contributes to the work of other international organisations and NGO's, e.g. through the exchange of best practices within the CMS family around the world in protecting small cetaceans.
- f. All current Parties to ASCOBANS now work from a regional focus and common EU-base.

5. However, notwithstanding the good results, it must also be acknowledged that there still is considerable room for improvement. Paraphrasing the ASCOBANS website in this respect: "*While much has already been achieved, much remains yet to be done*". This statement correctly and concisely sums up the agreement's record of achievements to date. However, an evaluation of its performance requires an answer to the question of how many of its goals ASCOBANS has actually been able to achieve during the past 15 years of its existence.

6. Five major weaknesses can be identified which undermine the effectiveness of ASCOBANS:

- a. Parties are not yet implementing fully many Resolutions that they have agreed.
- b. There has been insufficient progress in the reduction of bycatch of small cetaceans. Some progress has been made (often incidentally due to the contraction of the fishing sector), but much more could be done to reduce bycatch numbers.
- c. ASCOBANS has not been particularly successful in influencing other international organisations. At the same time it is clear that ASCOBANS only can be effective if it cooperates with other international organisations especially with the European Union, the competent authority for fishery management in European seas. But also with respect to other cetacean instruments within the CMS Family, there is

room for improvement, for example as regards an efficient use of limited resources and better scientific cooperation.

- d. ASCOBANS has not been very successful in creating an effective dialogue with economic sectors, notably the fishing industry. In order to achieve its objectives it is important that ASCOBANS works with fishery organisations active in its agreement area. Joint work programmes with these organisations focussing on common priorities would be beneficial to both.
- e. ASCOBANS needs to further improve the integration of science with policy decisions. Notwithstanding the constructive dialogue between scientists and administrators, there is often too strong a focus on scientific issues, without always properly addressing related policy issues. Good integration of both aspects is required to maximise the effectiveness of ASCOBANS.

### Looking forward: future challenges

7. In order for ASCOBANS to remain effective in the future and to live up to its expectations again, ASCOBANS needs to refresh itself and to address future challenges. Building on the developments in the context of ASCOBANS and in the evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses as presented earlier, the following future challenges need to be addressed:

- a. A first step in improving the effectiveness of ASCOBANS is to step up the implementation efforts of the Parties, in order to achieve the Agreement's objectives.
- b. Especially there is a need for Parties to ASCOBANS to better achieve its agreed bycatch commitments. Bycatch remains the biggest threat to small cetaceans in the ASCOBANS area and bycatch can be reduced with a willing and a concerted effort by Parties. While key recommendations have been made that have influenced European legislation, more needs to be done in order to achieve the objectives.
- c. Also with respect to disturbance by noise, the implementation needs to be more effective. It is urgently needed to explore whether or not disturbance of cetaceans by noise is a problem, and – if so – what would be practical ways to deal with it.
- d. ASCOBANS needs to better influence key decision makers, especially in the European Union. ASCOBANS needs to identify what kind of actions it would expect from the EU and what it can offer to the EU, e.g. by directly contributing to EU consultation exercises and commenting on proposals. For example, the European Union's Marine Strategy Framework Directive aims to achieve Good Environmental Status in Europe's seas by 2020. This Directive would fit in well with the desire for an improved habitat for small cetaceans. ASCOBANS could consider how it might help in implementing the Directive in order to ensure this outcome.
- e. ASCOBANS needs to re-establish a good working relationship with DG Mare and DG Environment of the European Commission. The exclusive competence of the European Commission to propose fisheries legislation makes this particularly important. Further consideration should be given to the benefits of the EU becoming a Party to ASCOBANS (they are Party to CMS and AEWA). Permanent participation by the European Commission at ASCOBANS meetings is important.
- f. ASCOBANS needs to develop a more focussed approach towards a limited set of the most urgent priorities. Resources and the time of experts are scarce, and not all problems – however important they are – can be effectively dealt with at the same time. ASCOBANS could be more effective in achieving its own objectives,

and in influencing the EU and other international organisations if it focussed its attention on agreed priorities. This does not mean that other areas are not important, nor that other items that currently occupy the agenda should not be discussed. The whole suite of issues should be on ASCOBANS rolling agenda, but the major part of the time and resources allocated should be devoted to the most urgent priorities.

- g. Furthermore, it is important to stabilise the situation with regard to the Secretariat and finance. This means that Parties will need to choose the most appropriate and cost-effective Secretariat structure for the future, taking into account the tasks of the Secretariat and the qualifications of its staff needed for this, the evaluation of the results of the merger so far, the opportunities for the future and ongoing discussions with respect to more effective governance at the UN and CMS level.

### **Focussing ASCOBANS' conservation efforts (priority issues and major tools in achieving these)**

8. Bycatch remains the priority issue for future ASCOBANS work:

#### **I. Bycatch**

Bycatch remains the greatest threat to small cetaceans in the ASCOBANS area. While we have made important analyses and key recommendations that have influenced European legislation, we believe that bycatch should be the key priority for the agreement for the foreseeable future. Efforts could be made to prioritise the issue of bycatch, increasing research and development in this area and making key evidence-based recommendations.

#### **II. Disturbance by noise**

A second priority is disturbance by noise. Regarding this priority ASCOBANS and its Parties firstly should focus on the examination of the effects of disturbance from underwater noise. Despite considerable research, no population level effects have been detected but nevertheless some concerns remain – especially in relation to increasing and relatively novel sources of sound. A working group on underwater noise is presently considering this issue. However, notwithstanding the scientific uncertainty, Parties agree that disturbance by noise can pose a substantial threat to small cetaceans. ASCOBANS should promote the exchange of best practices in dealing with these threats, including experiences with the development and use of guidelines in dealing with disturbance by noise.

9. In order to achieve our objectives in respect to the priority issues, ASCOBANS has two important tools to build upon:

#### **I. Management plans for harbour porpoises in the Baltic and North Seas**

A full and timely implementation of the two management plans is important in enhancing the effectiveness of the Resolutions made at earlier Meetings of the Parties of ASCOBANS.

#### **II. Education, publicity and outreach**

Raising the awareness of the key threats to small cetaceans and mitigation and conservation measures that might be utilised are significant tools. While there has been progress in these areas ASCOBANS could increase education and publicity and make it a priority over the next few years, building on measures that contracting governments have made. It is important that collectively we raise the profile and status of the organisation so that it has greater influence over decision-making. Therefore a co-ordinated outreach programme, focussing particularly on activities that can help achieve the aims of ASCOBANS should be a priority.

### **Increasing ASCOBANS effectiveness**

10. Parties need to step up their efforts to contribute to the achievement of ASCOBANS' objectives. Potentially effective ways forward in this respect are:

- a. To identify actions and measures, Parties can take within their territorial waters (12 mile zone) and their Exclusive Economic Zones or equivalent (as far as Parties have competence in their EEZs), in order to better protect cetaceans. Parties are responsible for an effective management of cetaceans and fisheries in coastal seas. This creates good opportunities for setting good examples in the conservation of small cetaceans, which can then be built upon in an EU context.
- b. To develop a mechanism within ASCOBANS to assist individual Parties – if appropriate – with advice as regards problems in conserving small cetaceans. If Parties and/or the Secretariat could provide individual Parties with advice regarding difficult (political) issues in managing their small cetaceans, the ASCOBANS community as a whole would make much better use of its scarce resources.

11. In order to better influence EU key decision makers, a practical road map could guide ASCOBANS activities with the European Union. Building on its discussions and conclusions the Meeting of the Parties could consider the following steps as elements for such a road map:

- a. Identify which products of ASCOBANS that are concluded at the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties would be suitable as a starting point for a revitalized cooperation with the EU. Possible candidates are in this respect the Management Plans for the conservation of harbour porpoises in the Baltic Sea and the North Sea.
- b. Identify, in the light of the priorities of ASCOBANS, the key processes within the EU and develop a collective ASCOBANS approach as regards its contribution to the conservation of small cetaceans through these processes. Possible candidate processes are the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, EU bycatch policies and the implementation of Natura 2000 at sea.
- c. Develop a proposal for regular contacts between the EU and ASCOBANS; this should be a combined effort of the Secretariat, the (vice) chair of the Advisory Committee and/or Parties (e.g. the Chair of the MOP).

12. In order to better influence key decision makers of other international organisations and economic sectors ASCOBANS needs to identify its strategic alliances, and also needs to develop a common future agenda in cooperation with these organisations and sectors.

13. ASCOBANS needs to develop its contribution to the process of defining the future shape of CMS. Similarly to the approach towards the European Union, ASCOBANS should identify which of its products could be key contributions of ASCOBANS to the future of the CMS family, which processes within other CMS Agreements or instruments are the most essential for ASCOBANS to co-operate with and which opportunities need to be developed for more regular contacts and cooperation with colleagues within the CMS family.

### **Consequences for the Triennium Workplan 2010-2012**

14. If the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties of ASCOBANS decides – in line with this strategy paper – to develop a more focussed approach on three priority issues, and to strengthen ASCOBANS' efforts to influence other international bodies, especially the EU, and economic sectors, the Triennium Workplan 2010-2012 needs to be adopted accordingly. Therefore the draft Triennium Workplan 2010-2012 indicates which actions would be priority actions if the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties wants to adopt the proposed strategic approach.

**Consequences for ASCOBANS' organisational structure**

15. Implementing a more strategic approach does not imply that ASCOBANS' organisational structure needs to be adapted. However, if the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties agrees to a more strategic approach, the way ASCOBANS operates needs to be more focussed towards the agreed priorities. Consideration might be given to greater prioritisation and particular issues only being discussed for every other (or third) Advisory Committee. In that way time could be freed up for the key strategic issues.

16. A more focussed and strategic approach of course would benefit from a more stabilised situation as regards the management of the Agreement's Secretariat. A more stable Secretariat would help improve cooperation within the CMS family.