

Agenda Item 4.5

Priorities in the Implementation of the
Triennium Work Plan (2010-2012)
Publicity and Outreach

Document 4-02 rev.1

**Report of the Secretariat on Publicity
and Outreach Activities**

Action Requested

- Take note of the report
- Comment

Submitted by

Secretariat



NOTE:
IN THE INTERESTS OF ECONOMY, DELEGATES ARE KINDLY REMINDED TO BRING THEIR
OWN COPIES OF DOCUMENTS TO THE MEETING

Report of the Secretariat on Publicity and Outreach Activities

1. In follow up of Resolution No. 8 (2006) on Educational and Promotional Activities and Resolution No. 3 (2009) detailing the Work Plan for the Triennium 2010-2012, the Secretariat has implemented various publicity and outreach activities since the 16th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee.
2. The Secretariat actively continued to seek and maintain contacts with relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions and organisations throughout the Agreement area over the last 12 months. The Executive Secretary has met with representatives of governmental institutions of various Parties, as well as with representatives of international organisations and the diplomatic corps in the host country. The ASCOBANS Secretariat also maintains a dialogue with the general public in the Bonn region.

Information Material

3. The Triennium Work Plans for 2007-2009 and 2010-12 stress the importance of outreach and education. Accordingly, the Secretariat is instructed to continue updating and translating information material and stepping up its awareness raising activities.
4. A variety of material has been produced since the 16th Meeting of the Advisory Committee or is under production:

- Newsletter: Five editions have so far been published and widely circulated, with the next is foreseen shortly after the 17th Advisory Committee Meeting.
- ASCOBANS Leaflets: Eight language versions (Danish, English, Finnish, German, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian) of the revised and updated ASCOBANS leaflets had already been presented at AC16. The remaining seven language versions (Dutch, Estonian, French, Latvian, Norwegian, Spanish, Swedish) were printed in early 2010. The translations and layouts have been paid for with parts of the German Voluntary Contribution for 2008.

Modest quantities are being printed for the use of the Secretariat and institutions in the respective countries by making use of the German Voluntary Contributions for 2008 and 2009. Regular large print runs will not be possible without dedicated budgetary provisions, which are currently not foreseen. Therefore, the Secretariat offers to provide a print quality PDF of each language version free of charge to governments or institutions who want to produce leaflets for their own use locally.

- ASCOBANS Exhibition: The new 10-banner exhibition presented to AC16 in English has been translated into German. The layout is ready and delivery of the banners is expected shortly. The German version is being produced in two sets, allowing the Secretariat to make one set available to interested institutions also when local outreach events are planned. The production has been financed from the German Voluntary Contribution for 2009.

The English language version of the exhibition is available in three sets, which have been in almost constant use since their production.

Interest has been expressed in producing translations of the exhibition also into Finnish, Lithuanian and Swedish. The translation into Swedish has been prepared as in-kind support by the interested institution, which has also offered co-funding of the production costs. Finland has kindly allowed the Secretariat to use part of their voluntary contribution for 2009 for the translation into Finnish. To date, however, the

necessary resources for the layout and production of these additional language versions have not been secured. Voluntary contributions supporting these initiatives would be greatly appreciated.

- Fisheries Leaflet: A draft text for a leaflet specifically targeting fishermen has been produced under a contract financed through the German Voluntary Contribution for 2009. It was revised based on comments received from the Jastarnia Group and participants in the ASCOBANS bycatch mitigation workshop held in the margins of the Annual ECS Conference in March 2010. Part of the German Voluntary Contribution for 2010 has been set aside for covering translation and layouting costs of the leaflet, once the text has been finalized by the Advisory Committee. The Secretariat will undertake targeted fundraising efforts for the printing of the leaflets once the final text and format has been decided.
5. The Secretariat has also shipped information material on ASCOBANS to 22 institutions for their activities. Exhibition material can be borrowed for several months, if desired.

Website

6. The further development of the ASCOBANS website is a further activity identified in the Triennium Work Plans for both the previous and the current triennia. The Secretariat has undertaken the following activities in this regard:
- The website was subject to regular maintenance. This includes the updating and correcting of texts and links, posting of documents and publications and checking of functionality.
 - 29 news articles and announcements have been published since AC16.
 - The option to sign up for the Newsletter through the website has been used by numerous people since AC17, bringing the total circulation up to over 220 people, excluding staff of the co-located Secretariats of the CMS Family.
 - 27 relevant contacts were made since AC16 by means of the contact form, which has been a long-standing feature on the website. The queries cover a wide range of issues. The Secretariat endeavours to answer all messages promptly and frequently refers interested people to sources of further information.
7. The modernization of the ASCOBANS website has only progressed slowly, but the first stage of the project is now nearing completion. The layout and structure are ready and all texts have been revised, updated and enhanced as necessary. This took considerable time and effort, however, and the Secretariat has found it difficult to devote sufficient attention to this while caring for its many other duties.
8. The construction of the new website is foreseen to start within a few days and it is hoped that the new website will be fully operational before AC17. This will also imply moving the website from its current location to a new server.
9. New features to appear on the ASCOBANS website in the first phase of the project include:
- Dedicated start page with basic information on the Agreement, latest news and quick links
 - Extended species pages
 - Extended sections on threats and actions the public can take
 - Basic information on ASCOBANS in all 15 languages of the Agreement Area

10. For later stages of the modernization the following new pages are planned:
- Dedicated pages on the Jastarnia and North Sea Plans
 - Information on appropriate live stranding response for the general public (including links to other pages)
 - Dedicated page on the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise
 - Section on projects supported through ASCOBANS and information on the application procedure
 - Section for children, making use of existing material (e.g. from the Year of the Dolphin campaign) and introducing interactive features
 - Separate download page offering a variety of material
11. Recommendations made in the ASCOBANS Communication, Education and Public Awareness Plan (revised draft to be published as AC17/Doc.4-04) will be taken into account.
12. Further, the recommendation to create a section of the ASCOBANS website (or a separate website hosted by ASCOBANS) to serve as a hub for information on bycatch-related issues in the ASCOBANS area, made in AC17/Doc.4-03, should be noted. The Committee's guidance on this would be appreciated.

The International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise

13. On Sunday, 17 May 2009, for the seventh year running, museums and aquaria in countries around the Baltic Sea celebrated the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise (IDBHP). The Secretariat was notified of six events taking place in Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. As each year, the Secretariat was pleased to assist the organisers by shipping out information and exhibition material. Events announced to the Secretariat in advance were advertised in the news section on the website. An updated report on IDBHP activities and suggestions for outreach events on that occasion, the "IDBHP Handbook", is available on the ASCOBANS website.
14. This year, the IDBHP Handbook has been extended to feature also the International Year of Biodiversity and the EU-funded project "Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise" (SAMBAH).
15. The 8th celebration of the IDBHP was held on 16 May 2010. The Secretariat alerted potentially interested institutions beforehand and encouraged them to organize an event. It also offered and shipped out information materials to support the events. Following the IDBHP 2010, reports were received from Poland Lithuania and Sweden. A summary has been posted on the website (http://www.service-board.de/ascobans_neu/files/Website_IDBHP2010_Report.pdf).
16. The Secretariat organized a local outreach event on 15 and 16 May at the Sealife Center in Königswinter, Germany. On both days, staff and interns from both the ASCOBANS and CMS teams were continually present and informed visitors about the situation of the harbour porpoise in the Baltic Sea. Information material was distributed and the new German language exhibition was displayed.

Other Outreach Opportunities

17. Wikipedia pages on the Agreement are now available in five languages: English, French, Spanish, Russian and German. A Norwegian version is close to finalization. Wikipedia is seen as a useful tool especially because of its potential for outreach to the public in non-

Party Range States. More language versions may therefore follow as the opportunity arises. Using Wikipedia requires regular monitoring of the pages, though, since anybody can make edits. The Secretariat has made all efforts to ensure inaccurate information was not retained and continues to monitor the pages.

18. The Secretariat has made arrangements for two recent publications to be distributed via the Conference Bags to be handed to participants in the 24th Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society in Stralsund (22-24 March 2010). These include the recently printed proceedings of the ASCOBANS/HELCOM Workshops on Small Cetacean Population Structure (online version available at http://www.service-board.de/ascobans_neu/files/Report_PopulationStructureWorkshops2007_small.pdf) and a poster on the IUCN Red List status of all toothed whales (available online at http://www.cms.int/reports/small_cetaceans/poster_download.htm). The production of the poster was co-financed by CMS, ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS, WWF and Loro Parque Foundation.
19. The new online review on distribution, behaviour, migration and threats of toothed whales, available at http://www.cms.int/reports/small_cetaceans/index.htm, has been co-sponsored by CMS, ASCOBANS, WWF and Loro Parque Foundation. This updated and extended version of the Review of Small Cetaceans published in 2004 now contains a summary article on cetacean conservation under CMS, prepared by the Secretariat, and features IUCN distribution maps for all toothed whale species. If sufficient funding can be obtained, it is hoped that a print version of the updated publication can be produced.
20. In early May 2010, the Secretariat met with staff of the Dolphinarium Harderwijk (Netherlands) to discuss options of cooperation in outreach. Besides the bottlenose dolphins kept here, the dolphinarium's SOS dolfinj foundation rehabilitates stranded porpoises and dolphins and also has non-releasable animals on public display. The facility is therefore ideally placed for informing the public about the harbour porpoise. It was agreed that an amended version of the ASCOBANS exhibition in Dutch would be proposed for displaying near the rehabilitation centre. The Secretariat currently awaits feedback from the dolphinarium's education department. Following the visit, ASCOBANS information material was made available for distribution to visitors of the facility. There may also be a possibility for wider outreach cooperation through the European Association of Aquatic Mammals, of which the dolphinarium is a member.
21. In cooperation with the project team, the Secretariat is currently finalizing a leaflet on the SAMBAH project (Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise – www.sambah.org). This leaflet is aiming at informing marine users throughout the study area about the project and is now being translated into the languages of all participating countries. It also contains information on ASCOBANS, the Jastarnia Plan and the Jastarnia Group and points readers to the Agreement's website.

Outreach to non-Party Range States

22. In October 2009, the special assistant of the CMS Executive Secretary went to Russia on a joint mission with officials of the German Ministry of Environment. She used her meetings with representatives of the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment also to promote accession to CMS and its relevant daughter Agreements. Regrettably, despite constant efforts over the last years, interest in an accession to ASCOBANS appears to be low. Considering the low densities of harbour porpoises in the Russian part of the Baltic, the Government does not see any benefits from participating in the Agreement in addition to their efforts to conserve the marine environment under HELCOM.

23. There has also been repeated contact with Norway, leading to the country's representation at the 6th Meeting of Parties and their expression of interest to finance the production and distribution of information material in Norwegian. Discussions on details of the needs and possibilities are ongoing.
24. Numerous contacts were made with all non-Party Range States, including encouraging them to attend ASCOBANS meetings and keeping them informed of developments.