

Agenda Item 4.5

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

Document 4-09

**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 MOP5 Resolution No. 8 (2006) on Educational and Promotional Activities and MOP6 Resolution No. 3 (2009) detailing the Work Plan for the Triennium 2010-2012, the Secretariat has implemented various publicity and outreach activities since the 17th 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. The Acting Executive Secretary has been in contact with representatives of governmental institutions of various Parties, as well as with representatives of international organizations 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 Plan for 2010-12 stresses 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. **ASCOBANS Leaflets:** The updated edition, finalised in all 15 languages in 2009 and 2010, has been in high demand throughout the ASCOBANS region. The Hel Marine Station in Poland requested the design files in order to be able to print them locally in larger quantities. The Secretariat is currently in the process of reprinting the Dutch, Finnish and French language versions.
5. Such modest reprints are only possible through making use of the German Voluntary Contribution. Therefore, the Secretariat offers to provide a print quality PDF of each language version free of charge to governments or institutions who want to reproduce leaflets for their own use locally, as was already done by the Hel Marine Station in Poland.
6. **ASCOBANS Exhibition:** The Secretariat holds three sets of the English language exhibition, which consists of ten pull-up banners. In addition, two sets have been produced in German. Both versions have already been used on various occasions by a variety of institutions. The exhibition can be requested from the Secretariat and is shipped out and returned on the expense of the requesting institution.
7. 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.
8. **Species Postcards:** Reprints of the ASCOBANS species postcards (four editions available, showing harbour porpoise, common dolphin, striped dolphin and killer whale) are currently being produced to ensure these materials remain available for outreach activities. Slight modifications to the colour scheme and backside of the postcards are planned in order to ensure a more contemporary design.
9. **Newsletter:** Regrettably, the Secretariat has not been able to produce a newsletter recently. The design adopted so far is quite time-consuming to prepare and other more

pressing matters always had to take preference. The Secretariat proposes to change the concept of the newsletter to a routine alert when something new has been published on the news section of the website.

Website

10. 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 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.
11. 11 news articles and announcements have been published since the last report on outreach and education was prepared for the Advisory Committee.
12. 15 relevant contacts were made since AC17 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.
13. The design, structure and all texts have been revised, updated and enhanced as necessary for the new ASCOBANS website, which was unlocked on 16 March on the web address www.ascobans.info. This address will only be used for a short period, in which both the old and the new website will be maintained in parallel to give Parties and partners the chance to comment. After that period, the official web address www.ascobans.org will be applied to the new website and the old version will go offline.
14. The Secretariat used the first weeks to cross-check links on all pages and then notified Parties and other AC participants to give them opportunity to test and comment on the new website.
15. The construction of the new website also implied moving the website from its current location on the server of UN Volunteers to an external server. Various hosting options were considered and the company Host Europe chosen, which besides excellent conditions is also certified as a climate-neutral enterprise.
16. New features on the revised ASCOBANS website 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
 - Section on projects supported through ASCOBANS and information on the application procedure
 - Separate download page offering a variety of material
 - Basic information on ASCOBANS in 14 languages of the Agreement Area (Russian pending)
17. In a second phase, attention will be given to further enhancement of the website. The following new pages are planned and will be developed as time and resources allow:
 - 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 for children, making use of existing material (e.g. from the Year of the Dolphin campaign) and introducing interactive features
 - Hub for information on bycatch-related issues in the ASCOBANS area, including information from draft fisheries leaflet presented to AC17 and suggestions made in AC17/Doc.4-03
18. Suggestions by the Committee on additional features desired, as well as guidance on the priorities for the development of additional pages would be welcome.

The International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise

19. On Sunday, 16 May 2010, for the eighth year running, museums and aquaria in countries around the Baltic Sea celebrated the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise (IDBHP). The Secretariat received reports of events in 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, along with the Secretariat's own event held 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..
20. An updated report on IDBHP activities of the last celebration and outstanding examples from previous years was produced. This new "IDBHP Handbook" is available on the ASCOBANS website and also includes suggestions for outreach events on that occasion, as well as information on the materials the Secretariat can make available to organizers. The IDBHP Handbook again also features the EU-funded project "Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise" (SAMBAH).
21. The 9th celebration of the IDBHP will be held on 15 May 2011. The Secretariat alerted potentially interested institutions beforehand and encouraged them to organize an event. It also offered to ship out information materials to support the events. Some institutions have already contacted the Secretariat to request materials.
22. This year, the Secretariat has decided to try a different concept for its own IDBHP activities. Several universities with relevant disciplines along the German Baltic coast were contacted to establish whether there was interest in a guest lecture on the biology and conservation of the harbour porpoise in the Baltic Sea. Arrangements were made with three universities – on 11 May the lecture will be given in Greifswald, on 12 May in Rostock and on 13 May in Kiel. The exhibition as well as information material will be taken along.

Other Outreach Opportunities

23. Wikipedia is seen as a useful tool especially because of its potential for outreach to the public in non-Party Range States. Pages on the Agreement are available in five languages: English, French, Spanish, Russian and German, with a Norwegian version still under finalization. More language versions may follow as the opportunity arises. Further plans of the Secretariat include the systematic adding of internal links from pages dealing with species covered by the Agreement, as well as adding information on the Recovery Plan for the Baltic Harbour Porpoise and the Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise in the North Sea on the page dealing with this species. 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.
24. Currently work is underway to publish a hardcopy version of the review on distribution, behaviour, migration and threats of toothed whales (Odontocetes: the toothed whales), which has been published on the CMS website in February 2010 (http://www.cms.int/reports/small_cetaceans/index.htm). This updated and extended version of the Review of Small Cetaceans published in 2004 was co-sponsored by CMS, ASCOBANS, WWF and Loro Parque Foundation. In conjunction with the online publication, a poster illustrating appearance, distribution and IUCN threat status of all 72 odontocete species was produced, co-financed by ASCOBANS. It can be viewed online at http://www.cms.int/reports/small_cetaceans/poster_download.htm.
 25. Following a visit of the Secretariat to the Dolphinarium Harderwijk (Netherlands) to discuss options of cooperation in outreach in early May 2010, the educational department of the dolphinarium has been working on an amended version of the ASCOBANS exhibition in Dutch. Once finalised, this will be displayed near the rehabilitation centre, where the SOS dolfijn 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. There may also be a possibility for wider outreach cooperation through the European Association of Aquatic Mammals, of which the dolphinarium is a member.
 26. In cooperation with the project team, the Secretariat has financed and contributed in-kind to the production of a leaflet on the SAMBAH project (Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise – www.sambah.org) in all nine project languages. This leaflet designed to inform marine users throughout the study area about the project, contains information on ASCOBANS, the Jastarnia Plan and the Jastarnia Group and points readers to the Agreement's website.
 27. Since the last Advisory Committee Meeting, the Secretariat had three noteworthy outreach opportunities to the general public.
 - On 23 October 2010, the UN Day was celebrated on a square in the centre of Bonn. ASCOBANS shared space in a big tent in which all UN agencies in Bonn presented their work to visitors, of which there was a steady stream throughout the day. They especially appreciated that ASCOBANS was also providing information material in German, something most other agencies are not doing.
 - On 14 December 2010, a group of English language students of a nearby adult education centre visited the joint CMS and ASCOBANS Secretariat. They were presented with information material in both English and German and listened to presentations on CMS, ASCOBANS and gorillas. As part of their preparation for this visit, they had already familiarised themselves with the Agreement's website.
 - Starting on 17 January 2011 and running until the end of February, the ten banner German language ASCOBANS exhibition was shown in the "Stadthaus" of the city of Bonn, where citizens need to go for all public administration. The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society also produced four banners on the topic of underwater noise, which were displayed simultaneously. Several hundred ASCOBANS leaflets and postcards, as well as WDCCS information material on their noise campaign, were picked up by the visitors. The exhibition was also announced via the official website of the city of Bonn and through their newsletter.
 28. The 25th Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society took place on 21-23 March 2011 in Cádiz, Spain. A report of the joint ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS workshop on pollution, which took place on 20 March, will be submitted separately as AC18/Doc.5-01. Throughout the conference, ASCOBANS had significant visibility, since final or interim results of several projects funded or co-funded by the Agreement were presented and

sponsors acknowledged. The Secretariat also used the occasion of the ECS conference to distribute ASCOBANS leaflets in both Spanish and English, as well as IDBHP postcards and CMS brochures. The author of "Odontocetes: the toothed whales" (see paragraph 24 above) displayed the poster developed under the project and took pre-orders for the print version of the book.

Outreach to non-Party Range States

29. Numerous contacts were made with all non-Party Range States, including encouraging them to attend ASCOBANS meetings and keeping them informed of developments. Special efforts were once again been invested in the Russian Federation in order to encourage someone to represent the country at the Advisory Committee Meeting. Germany has kindly allowed the Secretariat to use part of the annual voluntary contribution for sponsoring the attendance of representatives of the Baltic non-Party Range States.