

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 Outreach  
and Education 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 Outreach and Education Activities

1. In follow up to 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 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee.

### 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

2. In order to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of ASCOBANS in 2012, Peter Evans has been commissioned to prepare a publication on the Agreement and its species. This book, which we hope will be sold through normal bookshops, aims to be the most authoritative review of northern European cetaceans and the threats they face, whilst also giving insights into how an international Agreement is created, can function and also meet obstacles to progress. The launch of this book is foreseen for October 2012, coinciding with the ASCOBANS Meeting of the Parties.
3. The Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Plan of the Agreement (Annex 10 of the AC17 Report, available [here](#)) particularly emphasized events and mobile exhibitions as an effective way of engaging the public. In this respect, the Secretariat was pleased to be able to collaborate with the Whale Workshop and offer to Parties and other interested institutions a tailor-made roadshow featuring life-sized inflatable models of the majority of the species covered by ASCOBANS. An email with information on the offer was first sent in September 2011 and reminders and offers to assist have since been sent bilaterally. The Whale Workshop has to date not received any firm bookings through ASCOBANS.
4. The Secretariat is currently working with the organizers of the European Cetacean Society Conference in Galway to bring the whale and dolphin roadshow there for the weekend between the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee Meeting and the ECS Conference. This would be an excellent way of allowing the general public to participate in the two major cetacean events taking place in their city.
5. The Secretariat has also received an offer from the NGO Planet Whale to have ASCOBANS featured prominently during the WhaleFest 2012, which will take place in the days following the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties in Brighton, United Kingdom. The WhaleFest is expected to be the largest get-together of whale and dolphin people (NGOs, partnerships, whale watch operators, business and the public) there has ever been. We are working with the host government and the event organizers in order to find ways to realize these ideas.
6. In addition, the Secretariat is looking into options to bring the whale and dolphin roadshow to Bonn for a series of school events.
7. In order to cope with the additional workload generated through the activities related to the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Secretariat has hired a consultant. Ms Ana Berta Garcia has been on short-term contracts with ASCOBANS before, and besides handling the organization of events for which the Secretariat assumes responsibility, is also available to assist Parties and partners that wish to celebrate the anniversary. In addition, she supports Peter Evans with logistical matters related to the finalization and publication of the anniversary volume.
8. The Secretariat is still urgently seeking voluntary contributions in order to finance both the events mentioned above and material that can be handed out to the interested public as a memento of the event and as information, as well as to our meeting participants.

Suggestions include pens, highlighters, notepads, cotton bags, key rings, stickers or mugs.

### Information Material

9. 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. Since AC18, all available types of information material have been shipped to several institutions in Finland, Germany and Lithuania.
10. **ASCOBANS Leaflets:** The updated edition, which had been finalized in all 15 languages in 2009 and 2010 and reflects the Agreement's Amendment which had entered into force in 2008, has been in high demand throughout the ASCOBANS region. The Secretariat reprinted the Dutch, Finnish and French language versions in 2011 and is planning to reprint Estonian, German, Lithuanian and Swedish this year.
11. Such reprints are financed by using part of the annual German Voluntary Contribution and the quantities are therefore necessarily modest. Therefore, the Secretariat offers to provide a print quality PDF of each language version free of charge to governments or institutions that want to reproduce leaflets locally for their own use. So far, only the Hel Marine Station in Poland has made use of this option, which enables them to print leaflets locally in larger quantities.
12. **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 German version was displayed on the occasion of the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise in Duisburg Zoo and Aquazoo Düsseldorf, and was taken on a tour of three German universities along the German Baltic Sea coast (for details see subheading International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise). The exhibition can be requested from the Secretariat and is shipped out and returned on the expense of the requesting institution.
13. No progress has been made with respect to producing translations of the exhibition into other languages, despite some expressions of interest from Finland, France, Lithuania and Sweden. In the case of Swedish and Finnish, near-final drafts of the text are available, but no funding has been forthcoming for layout and production of these additional language versions. Voluntary contributions supporting these initiatives would be greatly appreciated.
14. **Species Postcards:** The four ASCOBANS species postcards (harbour porpoise, common dolphin, striped dolphin and killer whale) have been reprinted with slight modifications to the colour scheme and reverse of the postcards. Of each version, 2,000 copies were made, and these postcards are in regular demand by several institutions.
15. **Brochure "The Baltic Harbour Porpoise Needs Protection":** This brochure had originally been produced in English by Coalition Clean Baltic. A German version was produced in 2008, for which the Secretariat had provided the German translation, in exchange for free copies. These quantities have now been used up and reprints of 2,500 copies were made in 2011.
16. **Newsletter:** Since the design used for the first few editions of the newsletter proved to be too time-consuming to prepare and therefore other more pressing matters always had to take preference, the concept was changed to a shorter notification when something of particular interest has happened or been published on the news section of the website. Two editions of this "ASCOBANS NewsFlash" were published in 2011. The Parties' guidance on whether they would like to receive such a newsletter for more items that are

published on the web would be appreciated. In total, the mailing list for the electronic newsletter contains over 350 addresses. Ten people used the online subscription option since AC18.

17. **Visual Aids:** In order to help capture the attention of visitors to our information booths during outreach events, the Secretariat purchased three life-sized porpoises made from cloth. These two-dimensional models have been painted to convey a realistic impression of the animals and can be taped to walls or pinned to boards. They are lightweight and easy to transport. Three different sizes were purchased – one a 2-metre adult, the size range common around the Iberian peninsula, one a 1.7-metre adult, the average length in much of the ASCOBANS area, and one a newborn calf.
18. In November 2011, Andy Peters of the Whale Workshop kindly produced an inflatable life-sized porpoise for the Secretariat free of charge. Having such a lightweight three-dimensional model has great potential as an eye catcher for the public and an educational tool and the team is looking forward to opportunities for making use of the beautifully crafted model.

## Website

19. The further development of the ASCOBANS website is another activity identified in the Triennium Work Plans for both the previous and the current triennia. Besides the regular maintenance, which includes the updating and correcting of texts and links, posting of documents and publications and checking of functionality, the main development was the finalization of the revised website.
20. For a limited time, while the old website was still operational on the official URL, the new version had also been unlocked on an alternative address. During this three-month period, both websites were maintained in parallel. This gave Parties the opportunity to submit comments and request changes before the new website, for which design, structure and all texts had been revised, updated and enhanced as necessary, was presented to the public. The period for comments ended on 20 June and the official web address [www.ascobans.org](http://www.ascobans.org) was then applied to the new website, while the old version went offline.
21. 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.
22. A total of 17 news articles and announcements have been published since the last report on outreach and education was prepared for the Advisory Committee.
23. Since AC18, 16 relevant communications were received 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.
24. In future, depending on availability of time and resources, the Secretariat would like to enhance the website further. 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)

- 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
  - 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
25. Suggestions by the Committee on additional features desired, as well as guidance on the priorities for the development of additional pages would be welcome.
26. The CMS Secretariat at the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties presented a proposal to move towards a common web portal for CMS and its daughter Agreements. This proposal was welcomed by the Parties. The current technical set-up of all CMS and Agreement websites does not allow web content to be automatically shared between the CMS Family entities, nor can it be linked with databases or portals such as InforMEA. To resolve this shortcoming and with the help of a voluntary contribution from Germany, the CMS Secretariat has started working on the background databases necessary for a common web portal based on a content management system. With the new system envisaged, sharing information between the CMS Family entities and with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) through InforMEA and other external databases will be possible and greater compatibility and integration of data across the CMS Family ensured.
27. It should be noted that while the ASCOBANS Secretariat is participating in this project and is supporting the idea of greater harmonization and integration, one of our priorities is to ensure that the separate identities of the Agreements will be maintained.

### **The International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise**

28. On and around Sunday, 15 May 2011, for the ninth year running, institutions in countries around the Baltic Sea celebrated the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise (IDBHP). As each year, the Secretariat was pleased to assist the organizers 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 series of events.
29. An illustrated report of events that took place in Denmark, Finland, Lithuania, Poland and Germany can be accessed [here](#).
30. The ASCOBANS Secretariat celebrated the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise with a trip to the Baltic Sea to give guest lectures at three German universities, in Greifswald, Rostock and Kiel. The lecture covered background information on the biology of harbour porpoises, the distinctive Baltic population, conservation threats such as bycatch and underwater noise and how they are addressed, as well as an overview of the work of ASCOBANS. In each location the ASCOBANS exhibition was also shown. All in all more than 120 people listened to the information presented on these three days. The high level of interest in the harbour porpoise in the Baltic Sea and the problems it faces was reflected by the lively discussions following the lectures and the high volumes of information material distributed.
31. A new edition of the "[IDBHP Handbook](#)" was made available on the ASCOBANS website in order to help all institutions wishing to stage an event for future celebrations. It contains suggestions for outreach events on that occasion, as well as information on the materials the Secretariat can make available to organizers.
32. The 10<sup>th</sup> celebration of the IDBHP will be held on 20 May 2012. The Secretariat has already alerted about 120 potentially interested institutions and encouraged them to

organize an event. It also offered to ship out information materials to support the events. In addition, the ASCOBANS-themed roadshow (see the information provided under the subheading “20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary”) was drawn to their attention and they were encouraged to make use of this unique opportunity to bring the Agreement and its aims and species to the attention of the public.

### Other Outreach Opportunities

33. 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. No progress has been made with the Norwegian version, which exists in draft format, or with other language versions, which may follow as the opportunity arises. With the help of two interns, many pages dealing with species covered by the Agreement now link to the English-language Wikipedia page on ASCOBANS. 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.
34. A hardcopy version of the review on distribution, behaviour, migration and threats of toothed whales (Odontocetes: the toothed whales), which had been published as an online version on the CMS [website](#) in February 2010, was produced in October 2011 with co-funding from CMS, ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS, Loro Parque Foundation, WWF, Greenpeace and IFAW. The publication was announced through relevant email listservers and by means of a UNEP press-release, which was picked up by some major news agencies. Hardcopies can be ordered from [Earthprint](#) and the joint CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat has received sufficient free copies to supply participants of the 17<sup>th</sup> CMS Scientific Council and the 18<sup>th</sup> ASCOBANS Advisory Committee, along with other key contacts such as those supporting the two cetacean-related MOUs of CMS in the Pacific and western Africa. A poster illustrating appearance, distribution and IUCN threat status of all 72 odontocete species was also produced. It can also be viewed [online](#) and limited copies are still available from the Secretariat.
35. The educational department of the Dolphinarium Harderwijk (Netherlands) has produced an amended version of the ASCOBANS exhibition in Dutch, which is now on permanent display 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 thus aiming to inform the public about the harbour porpoise and gain their support for conservation and rehabilitation activities.
36. On 22 October 2011, the UN Day was celebrated on the market square in the centre of Bonn. ASCOBANS shared space in a large tent in which the 18 UN agencies in Bonn presented their work to visitors, of whom 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.
37. The 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS (Bergen, Norway, November 2011) also afforded an opportunity for ASCOBANS to display parts of the exhibition and set up a small information stand, on which leaflets in all languages and other material was displayed and picked up by delegates and other interested visitors to the hotel.