

Agenda Item 5.2

Review of Implementation of the ASCOBANS
Triennial Work Plan (2007-2009)

Report of the Secretariat

Document 5-02

**Triennial Report of the ASCOBANS
Secretariat 2007-2009**

Action Requested

- Take note of the report
- Comment
- Consider its implications for future budgetary and staffing arrangements

Submitted by

Secretariat



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

TRIENNIAL REPORT OF THE ASCOBANS SECRETARIAT 2007-2009

I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to Article 4.3 of the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas, the Secretariat hereby presents a summary report on, *inter alia*, progress made and difficulties encountered since the last meeting of Parties.

2. Issues relating to the Agreement's finances and administration will be reported separately in MOP6/Doc.8-02.

II. Service Function of the Secretariat

1. Meetings

3. One of the core functions of the Secretariat is to organize the meetings of the bodies of the Agreement, as well as any working group meetings or workshops as instructed by Parties. The following meetings were prepared and/or serviced by the Secretariat during the triennium:

- 3rd Meeting of the Jastarnia Group, 19-21 February 2007, Copenhagen, Denmark
- 14th Meeting of the Advisory Committee, 19-21 April 2007, San Sebastián, Spain
- ECS/ASCOBANS Workshop on Wind Farms and Marine Mammals, 21 April 2007, San Sebastián, Spain
- ECS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Workshop on Selection Criteria for Marine Protected Areas for Cetaceans, 22 April 2007, San Sebastián, Spain
- ASCOBANS/HELCOM Workshop on Small Cetacean Population Structure in the ASCOBANS Area, 8-9 October 2007, UN Campus, Bonn, Germany
- ASCOBANS/HELCOM Workshop on Genetics and Population Structure of the Harbour Porpoise in the Baltic, 10 October 2007, UN Campus, Bonn, Germany
- 4th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group, 25-27 February 2008, Kolmården, Sweden
- 15th Meeting of the Advisory Committee, 31 March - 3 April 2008, UN Campus, Bonn, Germany
- 5th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group, 23-25 February 2009, Turku, Finland
- 16th Meeting of the Advisory Committee, 20-24 April 2009, Brugge, Belgium
- 6th Meeting of the Parties, 16-18 September 2009, UN Campus, Bonn, Germany

4. At the time this document is being finalized, reports of all meetings and workshops listed above are available from the ASCOBANS website and upon request in hardcopy from the Secretariat, obviously with the exception of the 6th Meeting of the Parties.

2. Compilation of Annual National Reports

5. Article 4.4 of the Agreement instructs the Secretariat to “*present to the Coordinating Authorities, each year no later than 30 June, a summary of the Party reports submitted in accordance with Article 2.5.*”.
6. In the current triennium, the Secretariat presented the following compilations:
 - Compilation of Annual National Reports for the Year 2006 (11th Compilation)
 - Compilation of Annual National Reports for the Year 2007 (12th Compilation)
 - Compilation of Annual National Reports for the Year 2008 (13th Compilation)
7. The 13th Compilation has been finalized with some delay, due to the delayed submission to the Secretariat of one national report.

3. Promotional Campaign

8. Resolution No. 8 of the 5th Meeting of the Parties (2006) acknowledges that public support to the aims of ASCOBANS is critical to its success. Accordingly, Parties identified key areas for activities of the Secretariat. The actions taken on each of these recommendations is summarized below.
9. The Resolution encourages the development of information material in more languages of the Agreement Area. The following progress could be made during this triennium:
 - Following a request by the Advisory Committee at its 14th Meeting in 2007, the ASCOBANS Secretariat has started publishing an electronic newsletter. Five editions of the “ASCOBANS News” have so far been published and widely circulated. The website contains a form where people can subscribe to the newsletter and the total circulation list now includes about 180 addresses, excluding staff of the co-located Secretariats of the CMS Family. All newsletters can also be downloaded in a PDF version.
 - The Entry into Force of the Extension to the Agreement Area in February 2008 meant that the ASCOBANS leaflets needed updating. After consultations among Parties and partners, a revised text version was produced by the Secretariat and cleared by the Chair of the Advisory Committee. To date, eight language versions have been produced (Danish, English, Finnish, German, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian). The remaining seven language versions (Dutch, Estonian, French, Latvian, Norwegian, Spanish, Swedish) will be produced in a second instalment after all versions have been cleared. The production of the revised leaflets was made possible through Germany’s voluntary contributions.

All language versions will be made available on the website as PDFs for download. Further, limited quantities have been or will be produced in print. 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.
 - An updated and modernised exhibition for ASCOBANS has been produced in three sets in English and was presented to Parties at AC16. The format is compatible with the recently produced CMS multi-media exhibition and can be used in conjunction or on its own. It contains ten banners covering a range of topics, such as background information on the Agreement, the species

covered, the threats they face and what the reader can do to help cetacean conservation. It also contains a banner especially for children.

Two of the exhibition sets were shipped out to Lithuania and Sweden for activities related to the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise. The feedback received was positive and the institutions in both countries have expressed interest in developing a version in their own language. In addition, the Secretariat is also working on a German language version and is in touch with an institution in Finland about a possible production of a Finnish version.

- The Secretariat also produced a stand-up banner for the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise, which was first used on the margins of the CBD Conference of Parties in May 2008 in Bonn. Matching postcards have also been printed and can be ordered from the Secretariat.

Print-quality PDFs for this English-language version IDBHP banner and postcards can be obtained free of charge from the CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat (for non-profit use only). It is also possible to get the InDesign-file from the Secretariat, into which text can be inserted in the local language. Alternatively, the Secretariat offers to coordinate with the designer to produce the material in any language if the translation is provided.

- The Dolphin Manual is an educational brochure for children developed by WDCCS and CMS for the Year of the Dolphin campaign. The ASCOBANS Secretariat was not directly engaged in the production of its original eight language versions (Arabic, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Turkish). However, the translation into Portuguese and the production as a PDF were coordinated by the Secretariat.

Also for this publication, the Secretariat offers to assist with reprints of individual language versions or the production of print-quality PDFs in any other language.

- The Secretariat has provided a translation of the Coalition Clean Baltic brochure "The Baltic Harbour Porpoise Needs Protection!" into German as in-kind support. In return, two thousand copies of the publication were made available to the Secretariat free of charge for use in local outreach events.

10. Another key aspect of the outreach activities of the Secretariat is the maintenance and further development of the website (www.ascobans.org). The following new features have been added:

- Besides the regular maintenance of the website to keep it up to date, news articles are added regularly, covering a wide variety of issues and linking to further information where appropriate. These now also include pictures, where appropriate, to make the appearance of the page more attractive.
- Linked from the News and Events page, which is now the start page for the website, the ASCOBANS Newsletters can be downloaded.
- Upon request from one Party, all electronically available AC documents of previous meetings were posted on the website. In order to ease handling of the page, the meeting pages were also restructured. Reports of the first five AC meetings are at present only available as hardcopies from the Secretariat.
- A layout for a modernised appearance for the website, while ensuring continuity in design and content, has been produced and the work of updating and enhancing the website is progressing well. The new website will go online as soon as all pages have been checked, updated as needed, and some technical issues solved. After the transfer of the existing pages into the new layout and structure, further pages will also be added, e.g. more detailed pages on the species covered by the Agreement, specialised pages for

children and specifically on the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise.

11. The International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise (IDBHP) is a unique outreach event launched in 2002 and first celebrated in 2003. Since then, this annual event on the 3rd Sunday in May has been supported by a total of 14 institutions in the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea. Many of them are regular supporters. The Secretariat carried out the following related activities:

- The production of a stand-up banner and matching postcards has already been reported on in paragraph 9 above.
- The Secretariat offers its assistance to the institutions organizing events by sending out timely reminders about the IDBHP, shipping out information and exhibition material, announcing events made known to the Secretariat in advance in the news section on the website and producing an annual update of the "IDBHP Handbook", containing reports of IDBHP activities and suggestions for outreach events. PowerPoint presentations are also made available upon request.
- In addition, the Secretariat tries to organize an outreach event of its own whenever the personnel and budget situation permit it.

Accordingly, in 2007 a small exhibition was set up at Cologne Zoo and information material distributed.

In 2008, the Secretariat made use of the unique outreach opportunity presented by the 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (19-30 May 2008), which took place in Bonn. ASCOBANS shared a large tent with CMS and the other Agreements along the Plaza of Diversity outside the conference venue. Throughout the period, the new IDBHP banner was prominently displayed in the tent and matching postcards were distributed to the visitors. A "bycatch display" with a fishing net and plush dolphins triggered many curious questions from adults and children alike and many people, both delegates of the conference and locals, showed much interest in the work of the Agreement and took information material with them. Staff of CMS and all co-located Agreements cooperated in manning the tent.

12. Wikipedia is an increasingly important public information tool. Therefore, in July 2008, with the help of an intern, a greatly improved, comprehensive page on ASCOBANS was uploaded on Wikipedia in English and German. A Russian version, kindly prepared by an intern of the CMS Secretariat, followed in August. The Secretariat is currently also updating an existing French version, as well as preparing Spanish and Norwegian versions of the page to make fuller use of its potential for outreach also in non-Party Range States. More language versions may follow as the opportunity arises.

Using Wikipedia requires regular monitoring of the pages, since anybody can make edits. While the majority are helpful and improve the usability of the site, e.g. by linking it more extensively with related articles, on both the German and the English page some people have used this option to post factually wrong and often irrelevant material on more or less related subjects. The Secretariat has made all efforts to ensure inaccurate information was not retained and continues to monitor the pages.

13. The Secretariat also had opportunity to promote the Agreement at a number of other outreach opportunities:

- Following the 14th Advisory Committee Meeting, the ASCOBANS Coordinator stayed on in San Sebastián, Spain, to attend the 21st Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society. This opportunity was also used to promote ASCOBANS and the Year of the Dolphin at the conference venue and in the

San Sebastián Aquarium, a highly popular destination both among locals and holidaymakers. More than two thousand leaflets, calendars and posters and hundreds of postcards were distributed to the public and marine scientists alike. Also, two large exhibition panels were displayed prominently at the venue.

- The second ASCOBANS Award was given to the German NGO "Gesellschaft zum Schutz der Meeressäuger" (GSM – Society for the Conservation of Marine Mammals) for its outstanding role in raising awareness, educating as well as engaging the public and facilitating data gathering on cetaceans and other marine mammals. The handover of the glass reproduction of the ASCOBANS logo with the name of the Award winner engraved took place on the fifth Harbour Porpoise Day.
- ASCOBANS was invited by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) to man a joint information booth at the Ozeaneum from 27-30 October 2008. This exhibition presenting cetacean-related conservation work was set up in line with the autumn vacation activities of the Ozeaneum, which attract more than 4.000 visitors a day. Such joint endeavours illustrate the growing collaboration between IFAW and the CMS Secretariat, a partnership that has also greatly benefited ASCOBANS.
- The Secretariat gratefully accepted the design for the 2008 Season's Greetings, which was kindly donated by Mrs Carola Ahmed, an artist known by her pseudonym SAMACA. The electronic card was widely circulated and favourably received. Hardcopies were only produced and sent out in small quantities.
- ASCOBANS was a full partner in the 2007/2008 Year of the Dolphin campaign. A summary of the objectives of the campaign and examples of how these were fulfilled is contained in MOP6/Doc.5-05.
- In addition to these activities, the Secretariat continues to actively seek and maintain contacts with relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions and organisations throughout the Agreement area. The Executive Secretary meets with Members of Parliament, the European Commission, representatives of governmental and non-governmental institutions, the media and 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 by participating in local international events along with co-located UN organizations.

4. Representation of ASCOBANS

14. The Secretariat was able to represent the Agreement at the following conferences and meetings during the current triennium:

- 21st Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society, 22-25 April 2007, San Sebastián, Spain
- Year of the Dolphin Meeting, 27 April 2007, Bonn, Germany
- 20th Anniversary of the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat / Conference: The Wadden Sea and Climate Change, 30 August 2007, Wilhelmshaven, Germany
- 3rd Meeting of the Contracting Parties to ACCOBAMS, 22-25 October 2007, Dubrovnik, Croatia
- Year of the Dolphin in Europe – Conservation of Small Cetaceans and Marine Protected Areas, 29 October-1 November 2007, Stralsund, Germany

- 32nd Standing Committee to CMS, 8-9 November 2007, Bonn, Germany
- 22nd Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society, 8-12 March 2008, Egmond aan Zee, Netherlands
- 5th Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee, 17-19 April 2008, Rome, Italy
- 9th Meeting of the Conference of Parties to CBD, 19-30 May 2008, Bonn, Germany
- 33rd Standing Committee to CMS, 22 September 2008, Bonn, Germany
- 58th Session of the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee, 6-10 October 2008, London, UK
- 28th Standing Committee Meeting of the Bern Convention, 26 November 2008, Strasbourg, France
- 9th Meeting of the Conference of Parties to CMS, 1-5 December 2008, Rome, Italy
- Meeting on a Programme Support Cost Management Study, 12 January 2009, Geneva, Switzerland
- UNEP Governing Council, 16-20 February 2009, Nairobi, Kenya
- 23rd Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society (and associated workshops), 2-4 March 2009, Istanbul, Turkey
- “Blue Vision” Summit, 7-10 March 2009, Washington DC, USA
- 23rd Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society, 2-4 March 2009, Istanbul, Turkey
- Bonn Agreement Working Group on Operational, Technical and Scientific Questions concerning Counter-Pollution Activities, 26-28 May 2009, Rotterdam, Netherlands
- 61st Annual and Associated Meetings of the International Whaling Commission, 16-23 June 2009, Funchal, Madeira, Portugal

15. It should be noted that in many cases, ASCOBANS representation came as a benefit at no or much reduced cost, since staff members were travelling also on behalf of CMS and no extra charge was made to the Agreement. In some cases, representation was present only part of the total duration of the meeting or series of meetings. Reports on key issues of relevance discussed at all but the most recent of the meetings listed above can be found in AC15/Doc.36 and AC16/Doc.27. These documents also contain reports of some meetings where representation was ensured through participation of a member of the Advisory Committee.

5. Cooperation with Parties, Non-Party Range States, International Organizations, Non-governmental Organizations

A. Parties

16. The Secretariat has regular contacts with the coordinating authorities of all Parties, as well as members of the Advisory Committee. The effectiveness and efficiency of intersessional work partly depends on the time the Coordinators and AC members can devote to the Agreement, which generally constitutes only one of many dossiers they deal with. Due to the heavy non-ASCOBANS workload of the persons involved, deadlines for papers or comments to be submitted to the Secretariat are not always observed, causing delays in the work of the Agreement.

17. Upon request of the 14th Meeting of the Advisory Committee in 2007, the Belgian Coordinator Mr Paulus Tak has been supporting the Secretariat in the preparation of finance and administration reports. This included *inter alia* monitoring the Secretariat's progress with the time-consuming investigation of the accounting mistakes made in 2005, which took many months in 2007 and early 2008, reviewing the mid-term reports requested in Resolution 2d of 2006 and reviewing relevant documents prepared for the Advisory Committee Meetings before they were published. His constructive attitude and helpful observations were greatly appreciated by the Secretariat.

18. Working relations with Coordinators, AC members and members of the Jastarnia Group were not always smooth, as was observed also in the UNEP-led evaluation of the current Secretariat arrangements (MOP6/Doc.8-01). One of the recommendations made in this reports reads: "*A conscious effort needs to be made by all concerned to cast aside the soured relations that have resulted from the events that led to and followed the decisions of the Parties at MOP 5 to merge the ASCOBANS secretariat with that of CMS and to focus with renewed resolve on the implementation of the Agreement's programme work.*"

19. These conflicts as well as the antagonistic attitude the Secretariat has been confronted with by some individuals have been a significant hindrance to the work of the Secretariat. Not only does addressing the issues raised by some, often repeatedly, take a significant amount of time, but being in an almost constant state of conflict also sapped the energy and enthusiasm of the staff.

B. Non-Party Range States

20. Throughout the triennium, the Secretariat has been in touch with the non-Party States in the Agreement Area. Besides passing on invitations to all relevant ASCOBANS meetings and keeping the responsible departments as well as experts informed of developments, targeted recruitment letters were also sent to Estonia and Ireland in early 2008.

21. Estonia informed the Secretariat that it is taking steps towards joining the Agreement and has enquired about the annual subscription rate to be expected. The Secretariat promptly provided the estimates based on the budget proposal presented at AC16 and assured the country of any assistance the Secretariat might be able to give.

22. In September 2008, the letter to Ireland was followed up with a mission of the Executive Secretary, accompanied by the Coordinator and Mark Simmonds (WDCS) as advisor, to meet with officials from the Department of Conservation in Dublin. The main focus of the discussions was a possible accession to ASCOBANS.

23. During the triennium, the German Ministry of Environment kindly arranged two visits of delegations of the Russian Ministry of Environment at the Secretariat's premises. In both cases, the visitors were informed about the work of the Agreement and in particular aspects of interest to the Russian Federation. The follow-up is coordinated through the CMS Information Unit.

C. International Organizations

24. As can already be seen from the list of meetings at which the Secretariat was able to represent the Agreement, shown in paragraph 14 above, contacts with many International Organizations, including the long-standing partners HELCOM and OSPAR, have been maintained or even intensified.

25. There is frequent cooperation between the Secretariats; in the cases of CMS, ASCOBANS, the Western African Aquatic Mammal MoU and the Pacific Cetaceans MoU even shared staff. Wherever appropriate, members of the scientific advisory bodies get invited to the meetings of the bodies of the other agreements. This pertains specifically to CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS. Staff frequently represents the whole CMS Family at meetings of other MEAs.

26. The ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS Secretariats have enjoyed particularly good and constructive relations. The two Secretariats strive to cooperate as closely as possible and keep each other informed of relevant developments and initiatives. They also encourage coordination and synergies in scientific intersessional work carried out by working groups. In April 2007, a joint workshop on Selection Criteria for Marine Protected Areas for Cetaceans was held, as reported in paragraph 3 above.

27. The Secretariat has also strived to improve relations with the European Commission. The Executive Secretary undertook two missions to Brussels to meet with officials of DG Environment and DG Mare during the triennium. In both cases, ASCOBANS-related issues featured heavily on the agenda. The Secretariat also had repeated and productive contacts with the Commission on bycatch data. The representation of the EC at the 16th AC meeting and their registration for MOP6 are seen as a positive signal for closer cooperation in the future.

28. AC16 had encouraged ASCOBANS' participation in the Marine Strategy Coordination Group of the European Commission and had nominated Veronica Frank of IFAW for the participation. She informed the Group about ASCOBANS' interest in the ongoing work on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and distributed a written statement prepared by the Secretariat. In follow-up, the Secretariat has been in touch with the responsible officer in Brussels, who has now included ASCOBANS in the category "other marine co-operation fora" in the Coordination Group. ASCOBANS has also been included in the Working Group on Good Environmental Status (WG GES).

29. The Secretariat submits an annual joint progress report with CMS and ACCOBAMS to the International Whaling Commission. ASCOBANS benefits from CMS' cooperation with the IWC, e.g. through the possibility of being represented at the Commission Meetings and the good working relationship between the Secretariats, who since 2000 have had a Memorandum of Understanding.

30. The Secretariat staff also participates, on behalf of both CMS and ASCOBANS, in the IWC Ship Strikes Working Group (operating under the IWC Conservation Committee), and on behalf of CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS in a Correspondence Group on Noise from Commercial Shipping and its Adverse Impacts on Marine Life, set up by the Marine Environment Protection Committee of the International Maritime Organisation.

31. Cooperation with the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) was focusing on three main issues in the current triennium. The joint reporting continues, with HELCOM soliciting reports using the ASCOBANS format and an exchange of the information received. This is in line with HELCOM's acknowledgement of ASCOBANS as the lead agency for harbour porpoise conservation in the Baltic Sea, as also stated in the comprehensive Baltic Sea Action Plan. Further, two joint workshops were held in October 2007, as reported already in paragraph 3 above. The Secretariats have also been in touch regarding a joint database on harbour porpoise sightings, strandings and bycatch.

32. The OSPAR Secretariat, which also administers the Bonn Agreement, invited the Secretariat to speak at their technical working group about options for reporting of observation of small cetaceans as part of the Contracting Parties' routine aircraft

surveillance operations. The Parties to the Bonn Agreement conduct regular surveillance flights over the North Sea to look for any oil discharges. Belgium had suggested that these flights could also be made use of to collect sightings data of cetaceans and transmit this data to ASCOBANS. In a presentation to the meeting, the Secretariat explained why such data is valuable for the work of ASCOBANS and what kind of data would be needed in order to be useful. The meeting concluded that at least for some countries and parts of the flights, there would be options to gather such data. Follow-up was agreed and is ongoing.

33. All in all, cooperation with other intergovernmental organizations is one of the areas which the Secretariat would have liked to be able to give more attention to. Unfortunately, the reduced staff resources have not allowed sufficient time for these important activities. While some progress could be made and the Agreement specifically benefited from the participation of the CMS Secretariat in many conferences and meetings, more follow-up specifically for ASCOBANS could no doubt have achieved even better results.

D. Non-governmental Organizations

34. The Secretariat works in close collaboration with a number of NGOs.

35. The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDACS) was a full partner in the multi-stakeholder Year of the Dolphin 2007/2008 campaign and was pivotal in developing the educational material used for the campaign. WDACS also always stands ready to support the Secretariat with advice and through participating in intersessional work on as wide a range of issues as public information and underwater noise mitigation. For several years now, WDACS has seconded part of the time of a staff member to CMS to act as Marine Policy Advisor. Since the CMS "Marine Unit" is made up of the same professional staff as the ASCOBANS team, the seconded officer has also been able to support and provide advice on issues related to ASCOBANS.

36. As reported in more detail in MOP6/Doc.8-02, the ASCOBANS team has greatly benefited from an arrangement between CMS and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), who, based on a Memorandum of Cooperation, seconded a staff member to the CMS Secretariat for one year. Again, given the shared staff between CMS and ASCOBANS, the additional team member has been deeply involved in work wholly or partly relating to ASCOBANS. This arrangement came to an end in mid-June 2009. Nevertheless, close cooperation with IFAW continues.

37. The Sea Watch Foundation is another important NGO partner for ASCOBANS, providing generously of their time, expertise and resources and cooperating productively with the Secretariat.

38. All three of these major NGOs have also generously responded to a call for photos made in 2008 and have given the Secretariat permission to use many excellent photos for the new exhibition and the website.

39. The Secretariat strives to maintain and build contacts also with other NGOs throughout the Agreement Area. Examples of cooperation include the translation of the Dolphin Manual into Portuguese with the help of volunteers of Portuguese NGO CETUS, the in-kind translation of the Coalition Clean Baltic brochure "The Baltic Harbour Porpoise Needs Protection!" into German, for which two thousand copies of the publication were made available to the Secretariat free of charge, or cooperation with the German NGO Gesellschaft zum Schutz der Meeressäuger for the protection of the Baltic harbour porpoise.

40. Further, we maintain close links with the European Cetacean Society. For example, in April 2007 two joint workshops were held, one on Wind Farms and Marine Mammals and one on Selection Criteria for Marine Protected Areas for Cetaceans. The reports of both workshops were published as part of the ECS Special Publications Series (No. 48 and 49), with funding and coordination from ASCOBANS.

6. Conclusion

41. This report highlights the implementation of the actions requested of the Acting Executive Secretary in Resolution 2d of MOP5 (2006). While some aspects of the Secretariat's responsibilities would have benefited if more attention could have been given to them, the Secretariat is confident that it has addressed all aspects of its work plan to a satisfactory level, given the scarce financial and staff resources (see also the conclusions reached in the UNEP-led evaluation tabled as MOP6/Doc.8-01).