



Terms of Reference – Consultant

Preparation of a Draft Paper containing background information and proposed objectives and measures for the “gap area” currently not covered by the Jastarnia Plan

Closing Date: 31 July 2011

1. Background

Neither the original Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (Jastarnia Plan) of 2002 nor the revised and updated version adopted in 2009 contain any indication as to its exact geographical scope. It is, however, generally assumed that the Plan follows the definition used by the ASCOBANS Baltic Discussion Group, according to which the Baltic comprises “the waters in ICES Division III d east of the Darss-Limhamn ridge.” Since this definition excludes stretches of the western Baltic, the Danish Straits and the Kattegat, the coverage of the Plan has long been controversial and has repeatedly been on the agenda of the various ASCOBANS Agreement bodies. At its second Meeting (Stralsund, Germany, February 2006), the Jastarnia Group (JG) recommended defining the area covered by the Plan as coinciding with the HELCOM area.

The 13th Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC), held in Tampere, Finland in April 2006, picked up this recommendation, deciding that the area of application of the Plan should include the Belt Seas and the Kattegat up to a line running east from Skagen to Gothenburg, and that wording to this effect should be included in a draft resolution on the revision of the Jastarnia Plan to be submitted to the 5th Meeting of the Parties (MOP5, Netherlands, 2006). The relevant resolution adopted by MOP5 (Resolution No. 9, Implementation of the Jastarnia Plan), however, contains no wording to this effect and, in fact, does not address the issue of the Plan’s geographical scope at all. Nor was this question resolved in connection with the periodic review of the Jastarnia Plan undertaken from 2007 to 2009. The revised Jastarnia Plan adopted by MOP6 (Bonn, Germany, September 2009) therefore also does not define the area covered by the Plan.

On the other hand, the ASCOBANS Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea, adopted by the same meeting, contains an (implicit) definition of its geographical scope as it references the definition of the North Sea used by the 5th International Conference on the Protection of the North Sea (Bergen, Norway, 2002). According to this definition, the North Sea “comprises the body of water...northwards of latitude 57° 44.8' North from the northernmost point of Denmark to the coast of Sweden.” Consequently, the area comprising the Kattegat, Danish Straits and Baltic west of the Darss-Limhamn line is currently not covered by either of the plans.

This point was raised at MOP6 (Bonn, Germany, 2009) but the meeting did not resolve the matter. Accordingly, the Triennial Work Plan for the Advisory Committee/Secretariat annexed to MOP6 Resolution No. 3 requests AC17 (2010) to “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”.

In preparation for AC17, the 6th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group (Hel, Poland, February 2010) therefore discussed the question of how best to cover the gap and recommended that the present Jastarnia Plan be extended to cover the Baltic as defined by HELCOM, without prejudice to the provisions of the Plan with respect to harbour porpoises in the area east of the Darss-Limhamn Ridge.

The 17th Meeting of the Advisory Committee (Bonn, Germany, October 2010), endorsed an amended version of this recommendation, which reads as follows:

"The Jastarnia Group recommends that the Jastarnia Plan be extended to cover the Baltic as defined by HELCOM. With a view to enabling the adoption of a formal amendment of the Plan to this effect at MOP7, the Jastarnia Group should identify, by AC19 at the latest, measures geared to the situation of harbour porpoises in the extension area, i.e. the area to the west of the Darss-Limhamn Ridge. Measures to be taken in the extension area may deviate to the extent necessary from those applicable to the current area of application, i.e. the area to the east of the Darss-Limhamn ridge."

Therefore, at the 7th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group (Copenhagen, Denmark, February 2011), this issue was again extensively discussed. The Group reaffirmed the urgency of the question. In this context, reference was made to the recently published paper "Status of a harbour porpoise population – evidence of population separation and declining abundance" (Teilmann, Sveegaard & Dietz 2011, Annex 7 of the Report of the 7th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group, 2011) which contains an estimate of only 10,865 animals for the area concerned and indicates a decline of 60% in porpoise numbers since the previous survey eleven years earlier. The paper projects that the population might drop to 2,000 before a statistically significant trend can be established and recommends urgent action to ensure that a favourable conservation status is re-established for the Belt Sea harbour porpoise population.

Due to the shifting membership of the Jastarnia Group and the fact that it meets only once a year, it was decided that the Group could not undertake the necessary work solely by itself. The Group therefore adopted the following recommendation:

"A consultant should be commissioned to develop, with intersessional input from the Jastarnia Group, a draft paper containing background information and proposed objectives and measures for the "gap area" currently not covered by the Jastarnia Plan. This paper should be reviewed and refined by the 8th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group with a view to enabling formal adoption of such objectives and measures by the 7th Meeting of the Parties."

This recommendation was endorsed by the 18th Meeting of the Advisory Committee (Bonn, Germany, May 2011), which also agreed to make funding available for the consultancy.

2. Project Description and Output:

In line with the above-mentioned recommendation by the 7th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group, the consultant should develop, with intersessional input from the Jastarnia Group, a draft paper containing background information and proposed objectives and measures for the "gap area" currently not covered by the Jastarnia Plan. This paper should be reviewed and refined by the 8th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group (2012) with a view to enabling formal adoption of such objectives and measures by the 7th Meeting of the Parties (2012).

3. Responsibilities:

The scope of work for the consultant will include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following tasks:

- a) Cooperating and consulting closely with the Jastarnia Group, ASCOBANS Baltic Sea Coordinators and the Secretariat and bearing in mind the objective of this consultancy, the consultant will:
 - Compile a list of relevant publications/papers establishing status quo knowledge of harbour porpoises in the "gap area"
 - Compile and collate relevant passages of national reports of the three ASCOBANS Parties in the "gap area" (Denmark, Germany, Sweden)
 - Compile other relevant information, in particular through contacts with Coordinators and other national authorities, and the Jastarnia Group
 - Undertake further research as needed

- b) Based on the above research, the consultant will compile a draft paper for consideration by the 8th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group (January 2012)
- c) The consultant will attend the 8th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group
- d) Following the 8th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group, he/she will produce a final draft paper
- e) If possible, the consultant should attend the 18th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee (March 2012).

The consultant shall provide brief monthly progress reports on his work to the ASCOBANS Secretariat.

The compilation of scientific papers and collated national reports shall be available no later than 31 October 2011.

The draft paper, to which the list of relevant publications and the relevant passages of national reports will be annexed, shall be available no later than 1 December 2011.

The final draft paper shall be submitted to the ASCOBANS Secretariat no later than four weeks after the 8th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group.

4. Qualifications:

Applicants should demonstrate their relevant experience. In particular, the consultant is expected to have:

- An advanced university degree in a conservation- or policy-related subject
- Extensive experience in and a clear overview of small cetacean conservation issues
- Sound knowledge of the particular situation in the ASCOBANS Agreement Area, especially the Baltic Sea region
- Excellent communication skills in written and spoken English

Prior involvement in harbour porpoise conservation and/or with relevant stakeholders in the ASCOBANS region is an asset.

5. Duration:

The period covered by this consultancy extends from the day of signature of the contract (foreseen in August 2011) until 31 March 2012. The total number of working days to achieve the requested outcome is estimated by the UNEP/ASCOBANS Secretariat as 30 days; payment is dependent on delivery of satisfactory products, however, not time spent on the assignment.

6. Fee:

Applicants are requested to make an offer specifying the total expected fee. The fee will be paid in three equal instalments upon satisfactory completion of activities specified in paragraph 3 above, i.e. the timely submission of the outputs specified for 31 October 2011, 1 December 2011 and the final draft paper foreseen for February 2012, and presentation of invoices to the UNEP/ASCOBANS Secretariat.

7. Other Provisions:

Financial arrangements for any missions necessary under the assignment will be made separately and are subject to availability of funds.

Please send your offer to ascobans@ascobans.org.