

Agenda Item 5.2

Publicity and Outreach

Report of the Secretariat

Document 5.2.

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

Action Requested

- Take note
- Comment
- Provide guidance on priorities for future activities

Submitted by

Secretariat



**NOTE:
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 MOP7 Resolution No. 2 (2012) detailing the Work Plan for the period 2013-2016, the Secretariat has implemented various publicity and outreach activities since the 20th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee.
2. The majority of outreach and education related activities are only possible thanks to voluntary contributions by Parties. In the reporting period, Germany and the United Kingdom provided funds for outreach-related activities, which are gratefully acknowledged.
3. [AC21/Doc.6.2.b](#) on Activities Requiring Funding lists the activities that require voluntary contributions for their completion or implementation. Besides the children's website (see section *Electronic Media* below), these include the development of fisheries pages on the ASCOBANS website, also endorsed by past AC meetings. Additional funds will also be needed to reproduce information and promotional materials for outreach events in 2015.

Publications and Information Material

4. As in the past, and in line with Parties' instructions through the Work Plan, the Secretariat has continued to produce and re-produce outreach and information material, which is being used throughout the Agreement Area during our own events and by other institutions.

The following new material was produced:

5. **Marine Debris Leaflets:** A new leaflet entitled "Oceans Full of Plastic: Marine Debris – A global problem" was produced jointly with CMS for initial distribution at WhaleFest 2014 (see section *Public Events* below). Ten thousand English-language copies were produced; further language versions can be prepared upon request and if funding is available. The leaflet is aimed at the general public, including children, and contains helpful tips on how everyone can be part of the solution. It was well received at WhaleFest, where about 2,000 copies were distributed, and a further 600 made available to The Whale Workshop (www.whaleworkshop.org). The leaflet is also available as [PDF for download](#).
6. **Stickers 'ASCOBANS Kids':** In order to promote the new website for children, 'ASCOBANS Kids' (see section *Electronic Media* below), 10,000 stickers with the harbour porpoise mascot and the URL was produced. Approximately 1,500 stickers were distributed at WhaleFest in Brighton (see section *Public Events* below).

The following existing material was used:

7. **ASCOBANS Leaflets:** The Secretariat reprints leaflets as needed and as resources allow. It continues to offer providing a print-quality PDF of the language versions of the ASCOBANS leaflet free of charge to governments or institutions that want to reproduce leaflets locally for their own use. All 15 language versions are also available as [PDFs for download](#).
8. **All About Dolphins:** This brochure, which had been produced for the Year of the Dolphin campaign in 2007/2008 and is designed for children, continues to be available as [PDFs for download](#) on the ASCOBANS website in nine languages.
9. **Baltic Harbour Porpoise brochure:** In 2011, ASCOBANS helped to produce a German-language version of this brochure developed by the Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB). Some hardcopies remain available and are being used for outreach events within Germany, and a [PDF](#) is available for download.

10. **Postcards:** The Secretariat continues to maintain stocks of the four species postcards (harbour porpoise, common dolphin, striped dolphin and orca) and the IDBHP postcard. Approximately 500 were shipped out to organizers of IDBHP-related events and distributed at WhaleFest.
11. **Other Material:** For the 2012 anniversary year as well as use in our meetings, large quantities of promotional material, namely cotton bags, pens, pencils, A4 note pads and self-adhesive memo blocks, were produced. These materials continue being distributed, as appropriate, during outreach events.

The following material is under preparation:

12. **Anniversary Volume:** In 2011, Peter Evans was commissioned to prepare a publication on the Agreement and its species. This book, which is meant to 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 causes for delays in the production of the book, owing mainly to the author's health problems, were reported on last year. The author is planning to present a near final version to this meeting.
13. **Cotton Bags:** Always a popular item at meetings and public events, and one which helps reduce the threat of marine debris while raising awareness of the Agreement and its aims, the Secretariat's supplies of cotton bags are again running low. A revised edition is currently in production, featuring also the ASCOBANS Kids website and mascot (see section *Electronic Media* below).

Exhibition Material

14. **ASCOBANS Exhibition and Threat Banners:** The ASCOBANS exhibition, available in three sets in English and two sets in German and consisting of ten pull-up banners, has again been used widely. It can be borrowed from the Secretariat free of charge and is shipped out and returned at the expense of the requesting institution. The Whale Workshop continues presenting one of the English-language sets in all its shows of inflatable, life-sized models of cetaceans and other marine life in the Agreement Area.
15. In 2012 five banners on threats to marine species were co-produced by CMS and ASCOBANS, covering the topics climate change, fisheries, pollution, underwater noise and vessel traffic. The pull-up banners have been designed to harmonize with the general ASCOBANS exhibition and are being used in conjunction with it, where desired.
16. **Inflatable Porpoise and Bottlenose Dolphin models:** The Secretariat continues to make use of the true-to-life inflatable porpoise donated by The Whale Workshop, as well as the Year of the Dolphin inflatable dolphins donated by Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC) Germany, as the opportunity arises.
17. **Cloth Porpoises:** The three cloth porpoises purchased in 2011 also remain available for decoration at public events.

Public Events

18. 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.
19. Thanks to a voluntary contribution by the United Kingdom, the Secretariat was able to be a sponsor of the WhaleFest 2014, an event which took place in March 2014 in Brighton, United Kingdom. The event was attended by over 10,000 visitors, and 87 organizations exhibited. CMS and ASCOBANS shared expenses and a spacious exhibition area in the

“Ocean Wanderers” zone. The main theme of this year’s display was marine debris, of which plastic is the worst problem for migratory species. Decorated with both litter and natural material such as shells found on Brighton beach, the stand encouraged discussion on the topic of plastic pollution. The new leaflet, “Oceans Full of Plastic” (see section *Publications and Information Material* above), was presented to the public. Several other organizations chose to feature the same theme, so that a strong message was given to visitors.

20. WhaleFest was also the opportunity to present the new ASCOBANS Kids website to the public (for details, please see section *Electronic Media* below). Children were given the opportunity to explore it on one of the two computers kindly lent to ASCOBANS by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL).
21. Details on the Secretariat’s activities related to the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise in the anniversary year can be found below.
22. In 2013, the Secretariat again joined the other agencies in presenting our work during the UN Day celebrations on the market square in the centre of Bonn. A variety of information material was distributed and many interesting conversations held.

The International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise

23. The 12th celebration of the IDBHP was held on and around **18 May 2014**. As every year, the Secretariat invited potentially interested institutions around the Baltic Sea to participate, offering to make available information and display materials to support the events. In an effort to improve and modernize the running of the annual International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise campaign, a Facebook event page was created and organizers were invited to register their events for the IDBHP and upload their reports and pictures.
24. The Facebook page was used to announce and report on events in Middelfart, Denmark, in the Särkänniemi Dolphinarium in Finland, in the Lithuanian Sea Museum and at the Hel Marine Station in Poland, as well as a larger initiative of Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC) Germany and the Secretariat’s naming competition for the mascot of the “ASCOBANS Kids” website. An overview has been made available in the [news section](#) of the ASCOBANS website.
25. Instead of the annually updated PDF of the “IDBHP Handbook”, a [campaign section](#) was created on the new ASCOBANS website. After conclusion of AC21, the information provided there will be updated to include the events of 2014 and the general look of the pages improved. As the “Handbook”, the pages are intended as a help to institutions wishing to stage an event, containing suggestions for activities, as well as information on the materials the Secretariat can make available to organizers.
26. In 2013, the ASCOBANS Secretariat partnered with NGOs Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC), NABU and OceanCare for a competition targeting German-speaking areas. With the theme “The Last 300”, creative minds were given the opportunity to explore through their art and design work the importance they personally gave to having these unique animals in the Baltic Sea. Ninety-four entries were submitted and displayed on the dedicated website www.schweinswal.eu, where the public was asked to vote by 25 November. After this, a jury chose three winners from the ten entries with the highest number of votes. The winner of the competition was 15-year-old Laura Stattkus, who produced a stop motion film entitled “Hello, little whale”.
27. On 9 July 2014, representatives of the environmental organizations NABU, OceanCare and WDC, as well as ASCOBANS, met the German Federal Minister for the Environment, Dr. Barbara Hendricks. The Minister viewed the three winning entries of the creativity competition “The Last 300”. The three NGOs also used the meeting to

hand over a list of demands outlining urgently needed conservation measures for the critically endangered harbour porpoise population in the Baltic Sea.

Electronic Media

28. **ASCOBANS website:** The further development of the website is another activity identified in the Work Plan. A new CMS Family Portal website was launched in March 2014. The communication platform, which covers CMS including its out posted office in Abu Dhabi and AEWA, ASCOBANS, EUROBATS and the Gorilla Agreement, strengthens the corporate identity of these CMS Family instruments.
29. The new information tool allows individual maintenance and ownership while connecting and exchanging information between the sites and through an additional common website. A database system serves as the underlying structure and source of content for the websites and facilitates information sharing between the sites and a wider UNEP-wide project, InforMEA.
30. Participation in the CMS Family website project and creation of the underlying database structure were a major project which took a significant portion of the Secretariat staff time. While the majority of content has been uploaded by now, several sections of the website are still in a provisional state and are being tested, fixed, enhanced and improved step by step as time allows. Besides the workload created by the transition to the new system, the Secretariat also ensured the regular upload of new content and news. Since AC20, a total of 18 news articles and announcements have been published, some of which were featured through the sharing function from the CMS website.
31. **ASCOBANS Kids:** The Secretariat was pleased to be able to present a new online resource for children to the public in March 2014 – “ASCOBANS Kids” (www.kids.ascobans.org), developed with the kind support of the Ministry of the Environment of Germany. This new website contains a vast amount of information on whales, dolphins and porpoises tailor-made for children under 14 years of age. The website is currently still a work in progress, but it was already very popular with the children visiting WhaleFest, many of whom spent time exploring it. It includes information on the biology of cetaceans, threats they face, a species guide focused on ASCOBANS species and resources for teachers. More features, especially interactive games other learning tools, will be added in the future funds allowing. It is also hoped that it will be possible to translate the website into other languages of the Agreement Area.
32. ASCOBANS continues to be featured on **Wikipedia** in five languages: [English](#), [French](#), [German](#), [Russian](#) and [Spanish](#). Some updates are required and will be undertaken as staff capacity allows. Other language versions may follow as the opportunity arises, primarily with the help of interns.
33. In November 2013, ASCOBANS joined Facebook (www.facebook.com/ascobans) and has since been sharing news items of the website, relevant posts of other organizations and interesting facts and photos of the species covered. The Facebook page is also used for creating the event pages for the IDBHP celebrations (see section *The International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise* above). To date, ASCOBANS has been “liked” by 285 users throughout the Agreement Area and beyond. Relevant posts also continue to be shared on the CMS Facebook page (www.facebook.com/bonnconvention), which stands at almost 3,000 “likes”.
34. **Newsletter:** Two editions of the “ASCOBANS NewsFlash” have been published since AC20, with the next one foreseen shortly. In total, the mailing list for the electronic newsletter contains over 470 addresses. Five people have used the online subscription option since AC20.