

Agenda Item 4.5

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

Document 4-02

**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 Resolution No. 8 (2006) on Educational and Promotional Activities and Resolution No. 3 (2009) detailing the Work Plan for the Triennium 2010-2012, the Secretariat has implemented various publicity and outreach activities since the 16th 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 over the last 12 months. The Executive Secretary has met with representatives of governmental institutions of various Parties, as well as with 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.

Information Material

3. The Triennium Work Plans for 2007-2009 and 2010-12 stress 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. A variety of material has been produced since the 16th Meeting of the Advisory Committee or is under production:
 - Newsletter: Five editions have so far been published and widely circulated, with the next is foreseen shortly after the 17th Advisory Committee Meeting.
 - ASCOBANS Leaflets: Eight language versions (Danish, English, Finnish, German, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian) of the revised and updated ASCOBANS leaflets had already been presented at AC16. The remaining seven language versions (Dutch, Estonian, French, Latvian, Norwegian, Spanish, Swedish) have now also been finalised and the printed leaflets are expected to be available shortly after the publication of this report. The translations and layouts have been paid for with parts of the German Voluntary Contribution for 2008.

Modest quantities are being printed for the use of the Secretariat and institutions in the respective countries by making use of the German Voluntary Contributions for 2008 and 2009. 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.

- ASCOBANS Exhibition: The new 10-banner exhibition presented to AC16 in English has been translated into German. The layout is ready and delivery of the banners is expected shortly. The German version is being produced in two sets, allowing the Secretariat to make one set available to interested institutions also when local outreach events are planned. The production has been financed from the German Voluntary Contribution for 2009.

The English language version of the exhibition is available in three sets, which have been in almost constant use since their production.

Interest has been expressed in producing translations of the exhibition also into Finnish, Lithuanian and Swedish. Even though translations into Finnish and Swedish have been prepared as in-kind support by the interested institutions and one has also offered co-funding of the production costs, to date the necessary resources for the

production of these additional language versions have not been secured. Voluntary contributions supporting these initiatives would be greatly appreciated.

5. The Secretariat has also shipped information material on ASCOBANS to 15 institutions for their activities. Exhibition material can be borrowed for several months, if desired.

Website

6. 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 Secretariat has undertaken the following activities in this regard:
 - 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.
 - 23 news articles and announcements have been published since AC16.
 - The option to sign up for the Newsletter through the website has been used by numerous people since AC17, bringing the total circulation up to over 220 people, excluding staff of the co-located Secretariats of the CMS Family.
 - 18 relevant contacts were made since AC16 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.
7. The modernization of the ASCOBANS website has unfortunately only progressed slowly. While the draft layout is ready, it is taking considerable time to revise, update and enhance text of all pages and the Secretariat has found it difficult to devote sufficient attention to this while caring for its many other duties.
8. However, advanced drafts of most articles necessary for the first stage of the renewal of the website have been prepared and the structure of the new website has been agreed with the website company. As soon as the texts are cleared, the construction of the new website will start. This will also imply moving the website from its current location to a new server. The Secretariat expects to be able to complete the revision shortly after AC17.
9. New features to appear on the ASCOBANS website in the first phase of the project include:
 - Dedicated start page with basic information on the Agreement, latest news and quick links
 - Extended species pages
 - ASCOBANS leaflets available for download in all language versions
10. For later stages of the modernization the following new pages are planned:
 - 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 on projects supported through ASCOBANS and information on the application procedure
 - Section for children, making use of existing material (e.g. from the Year of the Dolphin campaign) and introducing interactive features

- Separate download page offering a variety of material
 - Basic information on the Agreement in all languages (drawing from the leaflet texts)
11. Recommendations made in the ASCOBANS Communication, Education and Public Awareness Plan (revised draft to be published as AC17/Doc.4-04) will be taken into account. Further, the recommendation to create a section of the ASCOBANS website (or a separate website hosted by ASCOBANS) to serve as a hub for information on bycatch-related issues in the ASCOBANS area, made in AC17/Doc.4-03, should be noted. The Committee's guidance on this would be appreciated.

The International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise

12. On Sunday, 17 May 2009, for the seventh year running, museums and aquaria in countries around the Baltic Sea celebrated the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise (IDBHP). The Secretariat was notified of six events taking place in Finland, Germany, 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. An updated report on IDBHP activities and suggestions for outreach events on that occasion, the "IDBHP Handbook", is available on the ASCOBANS website.
13. This year, the IDBHP Handbook has been extended to feature also the International Year of Biodiversity and the EU-funded project "Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise" (SAMBAH).
14. The next IDBHP will be celebrated on 16 May 2010. A reminder has already been sent to potentially interested institutions to encourage them to organize an event and highlight which materials can be made available by ASCOBANS to support it.
15. The Secretariat is currently in contact with the Sealife Center in Königswinter, Germany, to agree plans for a local outreach event on 15 and 16 May, also making use of the new German language exhibition.

Other Outreach Opportunities

16. Wikipedia pages on the Agreement are now available in five languages: English, French, Spanish, Russian and German. A Norwegian version is close to finalization. Wikipedia is seen as a useful tool especially because of its potential for outreach to the public in non-Party Range States. More language versions may therefore follow as the opportunity arises. 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.
17. The Secretariat has made arrangements for two recent publications to be distributed via the Conference Bags to be handed to participants in the 24th Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society in Stralsund (22-24 March 2010). These include the recently printed proceedings of the ASCOBANS/HELCOM Workshops on Small Cetacean Population Structure (online version available at http://www.service-board.de/ascobans_neu/files/Report_PopulationStructureWorkshops2007_small.pdf) and a poster on the IUCN Red List status of all toothed whales (available online at http://www.cms.int/reports/small_cetaceans/poster_download.htm). The production of the poster was co-financed by CMS, ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS, WWF and Loro Parque Foundation.
18. The new online review on distribution, behaviour, migration and threats of toothed whales, available at http://www.cms.int/reports/small_cetaceans/index.htm, has been co-sponsored by CMS, ASCOBANS, WWF and Loro Parque Foundation. This updated and

extended version of the Review of Small Cetaceans published in 2004 now contains a summary article on cetacean conservation under CMS, prepared by the Secretariat, and features IUCN distribution maps for all toothed whale species. If sufficient funding can be obtained, it is hoped that a print version of the updated publication can be produced.

Outreach to non-Party Range States

19. In October 2009, the special assistant of the CMS Executive Secretary went to Russia on a joint mission with officials of the German Ministry of Environment. She used her meetings with representatives of the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment also to promote accession to CMS and its relevant daughter Agreements. Regrettably, despite constant efforts over the last years, interest in an accession to ASCOBANS appears to be low. Considering the low densities of harbour porpoises in the Russian part of the Baltic, the Government does not see any benefits from participating in the Agreement in addition to their efforts to conserve the marine environment under HELCOM.
20. There has also been repeated contact with Norway, leading to the country's representation at the 6th Meeting of Parties and their expression of interest to finance the production and distribution of information material in Norwegian. Discussions on details of the needs and possibilities are ongoing.
21. Numerous contacts were made with all non-Party Range States, including encouraging them to attend ASCOBANS meetings and keeping them informed of developments.