

Agenda Item 4.1.2: Outcome of 2nd Meeting of Jastarnia Group

Terms of Reference for a Study on Fishing Effort in the Baltic

Submitted by: Secretariat



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

Secretariat's Note

The Jastarnia Plan states that ASCOBANS should commission, or persuade others to commission, a contract study to compile data on fishing effort in the Baltic. The Jastarnia Group reiterated this recommendation at its first meeting (Bonn, Germany, March 2005) and its second meeting (Stralsund, Germany, February 2006). An ad hoc working group established by the Stralsund Meeting discussed terms of reference (TOR) for this study.

The following TOR were drafted by the Secretariat based on the outcome of the working group. A number of changes were, however, subsequently requested by members of the working group. These suggested amendments are annexed to the draft TOR.

The Secretariat suggests that members of the drafting group attending the 13th AC Meeting gather for a brief meeting to revise the TOR in light of the above-mentioned comments and input received from the AC.

**Terms of Reference
for a contractor to compile standardized data on
fishing effort in the Baltic Sea as required by the Jastarnia Plan**

Background

Bycatch is the single most important threat to small cetaceans in the ASCOBANS Agreement area and bycatch mitigation is therefore an absolute priority for the Agreement. Specifically for the Baltic, the Jastarnia Plan states that “effort reduction (and other forms of bycatch mitigation) should be targeted on “high-risk” areas. Identification of such areas depends at least partly on knowing where, when, and how much fishing takes place. Therefore, it is recommended that ASCOBANS should commission, or persuade others to commission, a contract study to compile data on fishing effort in the Baltic.” The Jastarnia Group reiterated this recommendation at its first meeting (Bonn, Germany, March 2005) and its second meeting (Stralsund, Germany, February 2006).

Objective

To draft a contract study compiling data on fishing effort in the Baltic in order to identify “high-risk” areas for bycatch.

Time Frame

The report should be submitted to the ASCOBANS Secretariat within six months of conclusion of the consultancy contract. The deadline can be extended in case of delays beyond the control of the contractor.

Specific Tasks

The contractor will compile data on fishing effort based on information received from national contact points nominated by the Parties. The report must cover the three most recent years. Data should be broken down into the smallest possible units, at least down to ICES rectangles and months and should comprise the following:

1. Number of active fishing vessels by harbour:
 - a) Vessels < 10 m
 - b) Vessels > 10 m
2. Effort data for the vessels concerned

The contractor must be an appropriately qualified fishery expert.

Costing

The contractor will receive a fee of 70,000 Euro. Expenses incurred in connection with the contract study above and beyond the aforementioned sum will not be covered by UNEP/ASCOBANS.

Comments by Jonas Teilmann, received 12 April 2006

I think we need to be a little more specific in the project description. I have made a few comments in the attached file. I think that especially three things are important:

- 1) Are we really interested in all fishing effort or just the gillnet and set nets which are the only ones known to take a substantial number of porpoises? We may of course add other net types that are known to have bycatch, but if we ask for all fishing effort we may waste a lot of the contractor's time.
- 2) I think 12m vessel size is a much more obvious length as it is used in the EU regulation and therefore already applies to some parts of the Baltic Sea.
- 3) I think we need to specify that the unit of effort has to be comparable between countries otherwise we may not be able to assess the risk in the whole area.
- 4) We need to be specific about what type of information we want to have. Mesh size, net length, net height, number of nets tied together, twine thickness and net material may be a few.

**Terms of Reference
for a contractor to compile standardized data on fishing effort in the Baltic Sea
as required by the Jastarnia Plan**

Background

Bycatch in gillnets and set nets is the single most important threat to small cetaceans in the ASCOBANS Agreement area and bycatch mitigation is therefore an absolute priority for the Agreement. Specifically for the Baltic Sea, the Jastarnia Plan states that “effort reduction (and other forms of bycatch mitigation) should be targeted on “high-risk” areas. Identification of such areas depends at least partly on knowing where, when, and how much gillnet/set net fishing takes place. Therefore, it is recommended that ASCOBANS should commission, or persuade others to commission, a contract study to compile data on fishing effort in the Baltic.” The Jastarnia Group reiterated this recommendation at its first meeting (Bonn, Germany, March 2005) and its second meeting (Stralsund, Germany, February 2006).

Objective

To draft a contract study compiling data on gillnet and set net fishing effort in the Baltic Sea in order to identify “high-risk” areas for bycatch.

Time Frame

The report should be submitted to the ASCOBANS Secretariat within six months of conclusion of the consultancy contract. The deadline can be extended in case of delays beyond the control of the contractor.

Specific Tasks

The contractor will compile data on fishing effort based on information received from national contact points nominated by the Parties. The report must cover the three most recent years. Data should be broken down into the smallest possible units, at least down to ICES rectangles and months and should comprise the following:

1. Number of active gillnet and set net vessels by harbour:

- a) Vessels < 12 m
- b) Vessels > 12 m

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2. A common unit for fishing effort in all countries should be found to make comparisons possible.

3. Data on mesh size and net length and number of nets tied together.

4. The mean number of nets meters set per day for the vessels concerned.

5. Special attention should be given to the net types listed in the EU regulation as specifically dangerous to harbour porpoises.

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Costing

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Comments by Stefan Bräger, received 13 April 2006

I agree with Jonas and would like to add a little:

1. Set-netting appears to be of major (only?) concern, but we should make sure that all gill, trammel, and semi-driftnets are also included. Furthermore, I believe it to be very important that ALL such nets are recorded (inc. those of part-time and amateur fishers).
2. On top of the 12m vessel length, the regulation also uses the 15m vessel length (for observers), so that we may need four size classes: <10, 10-12, 12-15, and >15 m.
3. An obvious unit of effort appears to be "meter of net submerged per day" -- just counting vessels may be a good start but not quite sufficient.
4. My understanding (in Stralsund in February) was that (almost) all net types had specific type numbers for statistical purposes. Perhaps we could use those to define the TOR of the job?

I do not want to re-open the discussion, but my recollection of our sub-meeting in Stralsund was the following:

- On the one hand, a contractor should get a handsome amount to collect this much-needed information in all Baltic range states, because the national contacts are too busy to do it themselves.
- On the other hand, however, we agreed that any outsider without local knowledge (e.g. inside contacts) and limited language skills would have a hard time to receive anything without the national contact's help.

So, the extremes are that the poor contractor either spends years knocking on closed doors in a rather futile quest or she/he only collates whatever the national contacts deliver within a certain time frame. For some areas this may not be very much, I am afraid, simply because the majority of the work would rest again on the shoulders of the national contact.

Nevertheless, the TOR (under "Specific Tasks") indicate the latter method which, I believe for reasons mentioned above, will not provide the results listed under the first four points -- not even with such a financial lure. So, my question is: Are we not fooling ourselves with the proposed TOR (though our intentions are laudable)?

I do hope you can tell me that I am wrong!

Comments by Sara Königson, received 13 April 2006

I just wanted to add that I believe that the need for a national "inside contact" is crucial. The contractor can specify what kind of data he would like to have and the inside contact can specify what it is possible to hand out. We have tried to specify what kind of data is needed but I agree with Jonas that we also should include what kind of fishing gear.

When it comes to the length of the vessels, I recall we made a distinction between $>$ or $<$ 10 meters because that is dependent on how they report to the logbook. Boats less than 10 meters report less specifically than boats bigger than 10 meters (or they might not report at all depending on the country). Maybe we should not specify the length but just put down vessels that are or are not reporting to the EU logbook. Also I read quickly in Council Regulation 52/2006 that vessels over 8 meters in the Baltic should report to the EU logbook. Although countries may have interpreted this regulation differently because it was set concerning cod fisheries, and countries such as Finland do not catch any cod.