

Agenda Item 5.7.2

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

Publicity and Outreach

Report of the Secretariat

Document 22 rev.1

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

Action Requested

- Take note of the information submitted
- 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 September 2006, at the 5th Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS, Resolution No. 8 on educational and promotional activities was adopted. This document highlights key publicity and outreach activities of the Secretariat since the 15th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee.
2. The Secretariat continues to actively 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 and non-governmental institutions in Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom, as well as with the European Commission, 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.

Information Material

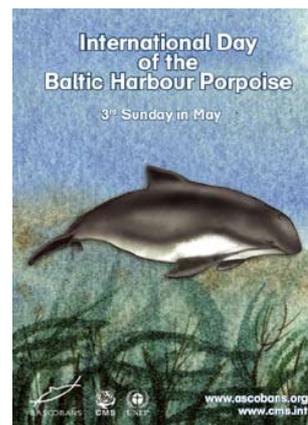
3. In line with the Triennium Work Plan 2007-2009, which instructs the Secretariat to continue translating information material and stepping up its awareness raising activities, a variety of material has been produced or is under production.
4. Following a request by the Advisory Committee at its 14th Meeting in 2007, the ASCOBANS Secretariat has started publishing a newsletter. Four editions have so far been published and widely circulated, with the next foreseen shortly after the 16th Advisory Committee Meeting.
5. AC15 had decided that an updated text for the ASCOBANS leaflets should be developed, which was to take the new Agreement Area in the west and some species occurring there into account. After consultations among Parties and partners, a revised text version was produced by the Secretariat and cleared by the Chair of the Advisory Committee. This version was then sent for translation. To ensure correct language, the translations were then circulated to our contacts in the various countries.

To date, eight language versions have been returned to the Secretariat. These are expected to be available at the time of the 16th AC meeting. The remaining versions will be produced in a second instalment after all versions have been cleared.

Contracts for the translations as well as the layout and printing of the revised leaflets have been paid for by using part of the voluntary contribution for 2008. This support is highly appreciated. Fourteen language versions are foreseen as PDF for download as well as in the following quantities in print: Danish 1,200, Dutch 1,800, English 6,000, Estonian 1,200, Finnish 1,200, French 2,400, German 6,000, Latvian 1,200, Lithuanian 1,200, Polish 1,200, Portuguese 1,200, Russian 1,800, Spanish 1,200, Swedish 1,200). These quantities are partly for use by the Secretariat, but most can be made available to institutions in the respective Range States. 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.

6. Also making use of the German voluntary contribution for 2008, an updated and modernised exhibition for ASCOBANS is under production. The format will be compatible with the recently produced CMS multi-media exhibition and can be used in conjunction or on its own. The new ASCOBANS exhibition is expected to be available at the time of AC16. For use in the new exhibition as well as on the website, the Secretariat issued a call for photos in the scientific community, which triggered many generous responses.

7. Further, a stand-up banner for the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise has been produced, 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.



8. We would like to reiterate that the files needed for print production of the Dolphin Manuals and the new banner and postcard for the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise can be obtained free of charge from the CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat (for non-profit use only). The Dolphin Manual is currently available in Arabic, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish (downloadable from www.yod2007.org). Should you wish to reprint one of those editions, please contact the Secretariat. The production of a print-quality PDF of any other language can also be coordinated through the Secretariat. Please approach us in order to get a quote from the designer. Sponsors, be it in-kind through translations or paying for production, will of course be acknowledged in the publication.

9. Print-quality PDFs for the English-language version IDBHP banner and postcards can also be requested from the Secretariat. Further, we would be happy to send to you the InDesign-file, into which you can have the text inserted in your own language. Alternatively, we also offer to coordinate with the designer here to produce the material in your language if the translation is provided by you. Please approach us in order to get a quote from the designer.

10. The Secretariat has also shipped information material on ASCOBANS and the Year of the Dolphin (leaflets, brochures, postcards and exhibition material) to over twenty institutions for their activities. Institutions interested in obtaining material should contact the Secretariat. Exhibition material can be borrowed for several months, if desired.

Website

11. The Triennium Work Plan 2007-2009 instructs the Secretariat to continue to develop the ASCOBANS website. This has been confirmed by AC15, when the Secretariat's plans for a re-design of the ASCOBANS website were endorsed and the addition of more information, e.g. on the species protected under the Agreement, was requested.

12. Besides the regular maintenance of the website, sixteen news articles, including updates, have been published since AC 15. These cover a wide variety of issues and link to further information where appropriate. Linked from the News and Events page, which is currently the start page for the website, the ASCOBANS Newsletters can be downloaded. Since AC15, sixteen people have signed up for the ASCOBANS Newsletter through the online form, bringing the total circulation list to over 170 people, excluding staff of the co-located Secretariats of the CMS Family.

13. The contact form, which has been a long-standing feature on the website, still enjoys frequent use by the public. Around 15 relevant contacts were made since AC 15 on a wide range of issues. The Secretariat endeavours to answer queries promptly and frequently refers interested people to sources of further information.

14. 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. As soon as all pages have been checked, updated as needed, and some technical issues solved, will the new website be able to go online. Throughout the year, further pages will be added, e.g. for children and specifically on the IDBHP.

The International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise

15. On Sunday, 18 May 2008, for the sixth year running, museums and aquaria in countries around the Baltic Sea celebrated the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise (IDBHP). A total of eight events were reported to the Secretariat, which took place in Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden. As each year, the Secretariat was pleased to assist the organisers by shipping out information material and exhibitions. 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.

16. 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, for the 2008 IDBHP event. 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.

17. The IDBHP in 2009 will be celebrated on 17 May. The Secretariat will again announce all planned activities for relevant events on the website and produce the updated "IDBHP Handbook" for future reference. Institutions are encouraged to contact the Secretariat about the use of the new exhibition and the revised leaflets.

Wikipedia Pages on ASCOBANS

18. Wikipedia is an increasingly important public information tool. Therefore, in July 2008, with the help of the Secretariat's intern Mona Ahmed, 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 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.

19. Using Wikipedia requires regular monitoring of the pages, though, 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, sadly 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.

Other Outreach Opportunities

20. 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 participation of ASCOBANS in this information week was highly successful. Visitors and staff alike took a profound interest in the approach ASCOBANS takes in international conservation measures. Information material and personal discussions helped to illustrate ASCOBANS' work and to inform people on progress implementing the programme of work agreed by the Parties.

21. 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.

Recruitment Efforts

22. The Acting Executive Secretary, accompanied by the Coordinator and Mark Simmonds (WDCS) as advisor, undertook a mission to Dublin to meet with officials from the Department of Conservation in September 2008, focussing on possible Irish accession to ASCOBANS. These official meetings were followed by meetings with an NGO and the Irish Marine Institute to further promote cooperation with the Agreement.

23. In March 2009, the CMS Secretariat was visited by a delegation from the Russian Ministry of Environment. The German Ministry had kindly arranged that meeting to facilitate progress towards the accession of the Russian Federation to CMS and the Agreements. The officials were informed about the work of the Agreement and issues of interest to the country. The follow-up is coordinated through the CMS Information Unit.

24. Numerous contacts were made with all non-Party Range States, including encouraging them to attend ASCOBANS meetings and keeping them informed of developments.

The Year of the Dolphin



25. ASCOBANS was fully involved in the Year of the Dolphin campaign, which was originally planned for 2007 and then extended to 2008. Worldwide, the official Partners CMS, ACCOBAMS, ASCOBANS, TUI and WDCS have accepted more than 40 official supporters. These supporters were and are active in research and conservation projects, awareness raising, fundraising, public events, publications, media and lectures.

26. Some Governments in the ASCOBANS Area have supported the YoD in form of voluntary contributions and other funding, distribution of information material or provision of dedicated websites. Activities such as public awareness raising among local communities and tourists, publications on the YoD, educational activities in schools, public events, research and dolphin conservation or launches were initiated in several countries in the ASCOBANS Area.

27. The objectives for YoD, as presented to the CMS Standing Committee in September 2006, were to:

- Increase general awareness in developed countries on dolphin conservation
- Provide coastal communities in developing countries with educational material on dolphin conservation
- Provide effective educational tools and information for children and their teachers on dolphin conservation, available on line
- Increase awareness and commitment of world governments on dolphin conservation, also with a view to national marine conservation agendas and plans
- Create partnerships and stimulate further action amongst non-governmental organizations dealing with marine conservation and support their advocacy role
- Directly involve a private business in a public awareness and conservation campaign, showing how UN objectives can be supported by and benefit private sector companies as well
- Increase environmental awareness in businesses
- Allow relevant conservation MEAs (Multilateral Environmental Agreements) to better fulfil their outreach and information mandate by reaching out to a broader audience

- Bridge the communication gap among private sector, UN agencies and non-governmental organization, by providing a common platform for joint activities and common goals
- Raise new and additional resources for dolphin conservation

28. A detailed report on how these objectives were met was prepared by the CMS Secretariat for the 9th Meeting of the Conference of Parties (UNEP/CMS/Conf.9.21, downloadable from http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop9/documents/meeting_docs/English/Doc_21_Report_YOD_&_future_species_campaigns_E.pdf).

29. In summary, for the first time communication and synergies between the corporate sector, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations were promoted on a wider scale in the CMS Family of Agreements, thus providing a common platform for joint activities and common goals. Educational bodies and academia were also involved in some of the YoD's events. Numerous NGOs and dedicated individuals were involved in the campaign, distributing educational material, organising beach clean-ups, and holding lectures at schools, to name only a few activities. More information on these activities can be found on http://www.yod2007.org/en/Start_page/index.html.

30. As further success indicators references in the media, the educational impact on tourists, schools and in developing countries generally, participation by interested organizations and individuals and conservation activities can be identified. The launch of the campaign was featured in more than 100 international media. YoD events received coverage in the form of press releases and television reporting in numerous countries, thus increasing awareness of dolphin conservation. Several press releases were distributed through the UNEP media list of European journalists and also featured on the UNEP website.