



Meeting of the Planning Group on Marine Mammals and Food Security

15 January 2015, Greenland Representation, Copenhagen

Participants: Amalie Jessen (GR), chair, Ásta Einardottir, (I), Ernst Olsen (FO), Geneviève Desportes, Christina Lockyer and Charlotte Winsnes from the secretariat.

1 & 2. Opening remarks for the Chair and adoption of the agenda

The chair welcomed the participants to the meeting. Guri Breigutu (N) was prevented from participating at the last minute. The agenda was adopted and Charlotte Winsnes acted as rapporteur.

3. Status as of 31.12.2014

The Chair gave a short summary of the background and reason for the present meeting. The Ministerial meeting in 2012 recommended NAMMCO to work towards a stronger focus on marine mammals as a food resource in general and specifically in relation to the issue of food security. A planning group was formally established at NAMMCO 22 in February 2014. Initially the idea was to organize a conference or an event. However, at the meeting in February 2014 the concept of the project was changed. The new idea was to develop a communicational tool that can be used to promote the idea of marine mammal as a healthy, ecologically, abundant, underutilized food resource. The project would consist of two main parts. Firstly, to produce a background document that would highlight the different aspects like stock status, health aspects, ecological aspects, food security in relation to human population growth etc. Secondly to communicate the message. The second part would encompass both development of how best to communicate/formulate the message and also thoughts on where to present this message.

The project applied for money both from NORA and NMR, and received funding from the latter. In June NORA declined with the explanation that the project seemed to be too ambitious within the presented budget.

The decline from NORA and especially more pressing work priorities both in the Secretariat and among the members of the planning group has prevented activity on the project up until now. During the summer and fall 2014 scattered and random information was circulated without any actions being taken before now.

Many food related initiatives both locally, nationally and regionally are and have been surfacing for some time (New Nordisk mat, Bioeconomy). Engagement is growing and there are conferences, festivals and other activities that celebrate and promote local food resources making it a good timing to introduce marine mammals as an undeveloped food resource.

4. Rethinking the project

Based on the present situation the Committee reconsidered the project and reconfirmed its commitment to the project as defined in the February meeting; i.e. to develop a communicational tool as described under agenda item 3.above. The Committee proceeded to discuss how to best approach the two different parts of the project.



Part one of the project – development of background documentation

The necessary and essential information already exists and the main work will be to compile and structure this information. The document must be reference based and have the most up to date information on the different subjects. It was agreed that the background document should be dynamic in such a manner that updating is easy as new information becomes available.

The Committee identified the following main themes for the background document:

Stock status

Resources used today

Food security in general in relation to human population growth

Ethics

Health aspects

Hunting methods, efficiency, safety etc

Ecological aspects

Creative food

Commercial marketing

It was decided to not establish a formal editorial board but rather task the Secretariat with developing a first draft of the background documentation. Member countries will contribute with relevant information during the process. Iceland drew attention to a newly designed webpage with FAQ, the site Inspired by Iceland and Greenland drew attention to the White paper on seals and whales that was published some years ago.

It was noted that the focus of the background document should be to meet the argumentation advocating that marine mammals should not be utilised. Marine mammals represent a food resource in its own right. It was also emphasised to keep in mind that marine mammals are not THE solution to the UN scenario on food security

Part two of the project: develop communication strategy and develop the message

The Committee agreed that it would be essential to get expert help to develop the message and a communication strategy. Several ideas were aired among them the possibility of making a documentary with reference to a documentary on seaweed, the website “Inspired by Iceland”, making power point presentations for downloading etc. Input on possible persons to contact were given to the Secretariat. The Committee agreed to ask Norway to investigate the possibility of getting expert help from the communication /information department in the Ministry.

The Secretariat was tasked with compiling a list of international conferences and meetings that would be possible arenas to deliver the message. IUCN, FAO/COFI were mentioned in this regard.

5. Timeframe and budget

The Committee agreed to stick to the time schedule as described in the application to NMR and NORA. The Secretariat will develop a first draft of the background document by mid-June.

With respect to the budget, the Secretariat was asked to approach possible funding sources, among others Indigenous Survival International and NORA.



6. Next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to mid-June, back to back with the FAC, probably in Copenhagen.

7. Adoption of report

The report was adopted by correspondence on 26 January 2015.