

REPORT FROM THE PLANNING GROUP ON MARINE MAMMALS AND FOOD SECURITY

Friday 28 February, Ministry of Trade, Industries and Fisheries, Oslo
09:00 – 14:00 hrs

Present were:

Amalie Jessen (chair) and Nette Levermann (G), Ernst Olsen (FO), Ásta Einarsdottir (I) and Einar Tallaksen, Guri Mæle Breigutu and Ole-David Stenseth (N). Christina Lockyer and Charlotte Winsnes participated from the Secretariat.

Opening remarks by the chair

Amalie Jessen welcomed participants to the meeting and reviewed the agenda and list of documents. The agenda was adopted. The report from the last meeting on 16 January had been approved by correspondence.

The present report does not follow the agenda (see explanation later) but is structured around the discussions and as such reflects the main decisions.

The project

Initially the idea had been to organise one international event. Two main scenarios had been tabled – organising a small one-day event with a couple of invited speakers as opposed to having a full-fledged international conference over 2-3 days. The rationale behind the small more limited event was that resources and time would be better spent on getting the message out and not on organising the event itself. The underlying assumption being that we already know what message we want to send, namely that marine mammals represents a valuable, nutritious and abundant food supply. When taking into account the FAO's prediction that in the next 40 years the world will need an increase in present food resources of more than 70 % it is irrational to disregard marine mammals as a food resource on the basis of public sentiments that in addition is mostly arising from well fed people in the rich part of the world.

Discussions emphasised the importance of getting the message out, brainstorming around possible high-profile events where our initiative could be back to back or organised as a side event. Actors like FAO, the EU Parliament and future international events and conferences like the IUCN were mentioned.

Taking all of the above into account the Planning Group agreed to change the focus from organising an event to producing a paper/report that would essentially lead up to the message of marine mammals as a valuable, environmental friendly food and nutrition resource. The process would be two-fold – one to produce the report and two to develop a “to the point”, attention-triggering method and manner in which to present the message to attract the intended audiences both locally, nationally and internationally. Conceptually the undertaking is more akin to a campaign where emphasis is on the message itself and the means to get it out. Target audience would be politicians, bureaucrats, businesses, retailers, NGOs, media, and the general public.

The meeting agreed to establish an Editorial Board with the task of defining the different themes that should be covered in the report, to identify possible contributors who could be commissioned to write and to oversee the work. The Editorial Board should consist of

renowned, international experts in addition to members from the Planning Group. Parallel to the development of the report, it is important to find ideas on how to disseminate the message in a successful and striking manner. Probably it would be advantageous to get some input and help from experts within public relations.

The Planning Group had previously agreed to seek external funding from NORA and NMR. The NORA's application date was 1st March – 3 days after the meeting and the Planning Group thus decided to use meeting time on developing the project proposal and the budget and abandon the agenda. This was later circulated to the members and the application was submitted.

Time frame:

Total: 1 January 2014 – 31 December 2016.

- April 2014 – August 2014: identify and establish the Editorial Board and contributors to the report. Defining content of the report.
- September 2014 – May 2015: development of the report, in parallel develop presentation form and strategy for dissemination
- May 2015 – 2016: Presentation of the message on various arenas and events

Follow up from the meeting:

- All members were tasked to confer with their network and come up with suggestions for members to the Editorial Board (EB).
- The Secretariat will contact Grimur Valdimarsson for his thoughts and input with respect to the EB and resources people who could be commissioned to write parts of the report.
- All members to produce a list of topics that they feel should be part of the reportⁱ.

The report was adopted on 7 April 2014.

ⁱ This was not really discussed in the meeting but is a suggestion from the Secretariat in order to get moving on the project.