

Marine Mammal as Food Resources

Meeting of the Planning Group

20 June 2016, Greenland Representation, Copenhagen

Meeting report

Present were: Á. Einarisdóttir (IS), J. Hansen and M. Jacobsen (FR), A. Jessen (GR), A. Tøvik Astroza (No), G. Desportes and C. Winsnes (Sec).

Actions arising

Faroes

- Circulate a translation of the document on the Faroese communication strategy regarding pilot whaling
- Jóannes will give input on issues like international treaties/agreements that entail peoples' right to utilise natural resources.

Greenland

- Amalie will circulate the Greenlandic communication Strategy regarding whaling and sealing, when she receives it from the information department.

Secretariat

- Remodel the present background document, so it focusses on MM as FR and food security only becomes one of the issue – to be circulated by August 1.
- Prepare a presentation based on the background document
- Make a proposition for a folder on the project based on the background document. The folder should be ready to be distributed at the Arctic Circle conference in 7-9 October
- Develop F&Q for the NAMMCO website (with the help of FAC and inspired from the present parties' F&Q sites on whaling/sealing)

All

- Inform secretariat and other parties on uprising media campaign on whaling or sealing
- Give comment to the remodelled background document by September 1.

1&2 OPENING REMARKS AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The chair welcomed the participants, the agenda was adopted and the documents reviewed.

3. PRESENTATION OF EXAMPLES OF OUTREACH AND CAMPAIGNS BY MEMBER COUNTRIES

Faroes

Have a well-defined communication strategy developed as a reaction and safeguard against mass protests (Sea Shepard) and boycott of Faroese goods and services. The main tools of the communication strategy have been:

- To go from being apologetic and defensive to offensive and proud
- Give the facts – there is nothing to hide and it is important to give information through a cautious, calm rhetoric
- Response policy – aim to answer all emails and letters
- Actively use social media – be first out with the news
- www.whaling.fo – website developed to target users, available in English, German, French and Spanish.
- A presentation – whaling in the media- targeting urban people and idealistic “environmental friendly” people
- Established a task force in the government where among others representatives from tourism, police, hunters and communication officers are used as a reference group when developing information material
- Know your target groups as the communication strategy needs to be targeted and different

In addition activities/relations of a more diplomatic/intergovernmental character take place. Visits to the Faroes from delegations of other countries are used as means to disseminate information on whaling issues and displaying the transparent attitude of the Faroes government. All the various actors – government, scientists, veterinary authorities, the whaling association etc – participate in meetings to give the full picture.

Recently DEFRA (UK Dept. for Environment, Food and rural Affairs) and the deputy ambassador of Germany visited the Faroes to get an update on pilot whaling.

A certificate is now needed to take an active part in pilot whaling operation.

The Faroese motto was: transparency and know your business, as well as involving all stakeholders.

Norway

The hunters have successfully established an association that promotes whale meat as the unique food resource. This brand association “Merkevareforeningen” has developed the website www.norskhval.no targeting the consumers aiming at increasing percentages in the food market. Part of this work has entailed developing a quality standard for the meat.

In 2007 the Government developed a webpage to inform about whaling in Norway, and little has been done since, probably as a result of Norway not being the target of international protest campaigns for many years. However this situation seems to be changing now. Most recently “Frozen in time” – a report against Norwegian whaling has been published by the three anti-whaling organisations Animal Welfare Institute (US), OceanCare (Z) and ProWildlife (DE).

Iceland

The market for whale meat in Iceland has been good resulting in no need for a marketing strategy to increase sales. On the contrary, some years whale meat has been imported from Norway. Recently a whale watching company bought shares in one of the larger supermarket chain in Iceland, taking whale meat out of the assortment in its shops. However, most of the whale meat is sold to restaurants and not through supermarkets.

The communication strategy in Iceland seems to be quite defensive compared to the Faroes. There is a governmental site on sustainable whaling in Icelandic waters, <https://eng.atvinnuvegaraduneyti.is/subjects/sustainable-whaling/questions-and-answers/> with a standard Question and Answer site, species fact sheets have also been developed. However when approached by people/organisations the policy is to not respond individually but send the link to the Q&A site.

Greenland

At the time of the meeting input from the information office in “Selvstyret” had not been received. The Greenlandic communication strategy will be circulated later when received.

The ministry for Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture has hired a new, common, person to deal among other things with information. One of the aim is to develop information sheets for the department website.

A major part of the information work undertaken in Greenland with respect to whaling and sealing has been the development of White papers. These papers have been and are developed by the department in cooperation with hunters (KNAPK) and scientists (NRI).

Attention was drawn to previous information campaigns like the “Tulugaq” campaign 15 years ago targeting the hunters and fishers in Greenland, the Inuit Sila campaign (<http://inuitsila.org/about/>) to fight the EU ban on sealskin trade, and the internal “Spis mere fisk” campaign focusing on the general public and schoolchildren in particular.

The response strategy with respect to all kinds of inquiries from the anti-sealing and whaling communities has been to send a standard reply giving the facts.

Comments:

The members of the planning group appreciated the exchange of information and especially drew attention to the successful communication work undertaken in the Faroes. The group saw the potential of learning from each other and agreed to continue to exchange information and documentation.

When asked the Faroese representative expressed the opinion that the most effective communication tools with respect to media and the outside world had been their focused and

increased activity on social media (facebook and twitter), and first and foremost the change of attitude from being apologetic and defensive to being proud and factual.

It was agreed that it was a good idea to systematically inform the Secretariat and the Parties of arising campaign and release of material, such as the report “Frozen in time”.

The NAMMCO members face very different internal policies related to social media. For instance in Greenland it is only the information department that are allowed to use Facebook and twitter.

NAMMCO (Secretariat and FAC) should develop A&Q for the NAMMCO website.

During the discussions the possibility of making an awareness campaign on whaling in the NAMMCO countries came up. This campaign would be outside the NAMMCO cooperation, and are therefore not reported here. Maybe NORA funding could be applied for.

4. REVIEW OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

GD apologised for not having adhered to the agreed time schedule and only circulate the document on Friday prior to the meeting. With not enough time to prepare, the members agreed that it would not be possible to discuss the content in full detail at this meeting.

GD presented the document, highlighting the changes agreed at the last meeting and the main structure and content of the document presented now.

The document was well received, and the main discussion resolved around the idea and goal of the document, and on the message to be sent.

The members agreed to restructure the document so that the main message is that marine mammal represent a food resource in line with other “accepted” food resources, and that food security, which is the main focus in the present document, becomes one of several underlying arguments.

The Secretariat was tasked to redraft the document according to the discussion, and circulate a new draft by 1 August. The members would have until 1 September to comment after which the finalising of the background document should be a reality.

5. EXAMPLE OF A MMFR PRESENTATION – TARGET GROUP MANAGERS IN NAMMCO COUNTRIES

GD presented an example of how a MMFR presentation could be build up.

The members agreed that it would be a good idea to develop a basis presentation that each member could mould and adjust to fit their individual needs and purposes. The Secretariat was tasked with developing such a presentation and the Faroese (Hansen) agreed to give input on issues like international treaties/agreements that entails peoples’ right to utilise natural resources.

6. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY, PRESENT IDEAS AND NEXT STEPS

The members agreed that step II of the project – developing a message and tool kit - had to involve contracting experts on communication. Both to develop the message based on the background document, to make a standard Power Point presentation and a small folder.

7. BUDGET

The 2016 budget is NOK 600 000 of which NOK 300 000 is salaries. So far the only incurred cost is salary for the Secretariat. The remaining 2016 budget represents NOK 100 000 meeting costs, NOK 200 000 development of communication strategy and message.

8. AOB

The report was accepted by correspondence on 26 August 2016.

There was no other business.

9. NEXT MEETING

Time to be decided later but in the fall/winter.