



NORTH ATLANTIC MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

TWENTY FOURTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

10 - 11 February 2016, Grand Hotel, Oslo, Norway

**DOCUMENT 23 REPORT FROM THE PROJECT ON MARINE
MAMMALS AS FOOD RESOURCES**

Submitted by: Finance and Administration Committee

The Finance and Administration Committee (FAC)

- **Recommends** Council to
 - Take note of the progress in the project
 - Provide input if desired

REPORT FROM THE PROJECT

MARINE MAMMALS AS FOOD RESOURCES

1. INTRODUCTION

The Ministerial Meeting in 2012 had emphasised the importance of an increased focus on marine mammals as a food resource. A Planning Group was established at NAMMCO 21 to advance this theme. The Planning Group had outlined two main parts – firstly, production of a background document reviewing and compiling the existing material on the topic, and secondly, to communicate the message. The second part required a strategy involving expert help, to develop the message.

2. ACTIVITIES SINCE NAMMCO 23 (FEBRUARY 2015)

The planning group has met twice since NAMMCO 23, on 2015 June 11 (Greenland Representation, Participants: Desportes (Sec), Einarsdóttir (IS), Jessen (GR), Winsness (Sec), and on 2016 February 07 (Oslo, Participants: Desportes (Sec), Einarsdóttir (IS), Hansen (FR), Jessen (GR), Tøvik Astroza (No), Winsnes (Sec).

The Secretariat had produced a draft background document and the June 2015 meeting focussed its discussions on the content of the document and on how to progress. It also defined some key elements and messages:

- The overarching principle for exploitation of natural resources should be sustainability. Either the hunt is sustainable or it is not sustainable.
There should be no reference to indigenous peoples or the concept of rights of small communities to hunt for special reasons.
- Exploitation of animals must take into consideration the welfare aspects of the hunt i.e. to carry out the hunt in a manner that minimizes animal suffering and waste of landed animals.
- **The goal of the project is to normalize marine mammals as food resources and to show that this food resource is equal to food from other marine resources. The working title was therefore changed from “marine mammals and food security” to “marine mammals as a food resource”. The issue of food security would be one of many concerns/issues deriving from this.**

The 2016 February meeting examined the progress achieved and the budget. The funds available to the project are NOK 325.000 in 2016 and NOK 220.000 in 2017. So far the only cost incurred has been salaries of the Secretariat and the time used by the Planning Group. The planning Group reviewed in some detail the Draft Background paper prepared by the Secretariat and presented by Desportes. The Group thanked the Secretariat for its work and commended the document produced.

3. STATUS OF THE PROJECT

3.1 Background document

The Group found that the document represented a very valuable and comprehensive tool, touching upon most aspects of the issue at hand. Numerous ideas for improvement were proposed and discussed by the group. As a principle, the document should continue not to refer to “indigenous people”, and the part on Indigenous rights should be moved in appendix.

It was decided that the Secretariat should incorporate the ideas brought up at the meeting and finalise a draft for Mid-March. The Planning Group would have until Mid-April for commenting on the document and give their input.

3.2 Part II. Communication strategy

On the base of the final draft, the communication and outreach strategy would be developed.

It was decided that this would be done by the Secretariat but with the cooperation of a journalist, thus using funds available to the project for this.

This strategy would be presented to the Group at its meeting in June. It should include for each target group identified, the relevant key messages to be delivered and the information best substantiating these key messages.

Together with this strategy a power point would be prepared and presented to the Group, as an example/test presentation. The target group for that specific presentation would be Managers in NAMMCO Countries.

The group should also defined what should be done at the level of NAMMCO and what should be done at the level of the Parties.

3.3 Founding ideas for the project

3.3.1 Outcome of the project and success criteria

The group also underlined the importance of defining the expected outcome from the project. In other words, what was the overall target group which should be reached and “moved” and moved where. This was important to define as it would be the basis for identifying success criteria and thus being able to evaluate the project and its progress.

It was agreed that the target group was “Group 2”, i.e., the group of people between those who accept sealing and whaling as normal providers of food resource and those “religiously” against the use of marine mammals. If the project succeeded in getting acceptance and respect, not automatically support, for these activities in group 2, then the project will have succeeded. It was underlined that often people built their opinion based on false premises or lack of information. Often when they are presented with well-founded facts, they may change their view and/or their level of acceptance.

3.3.2 NAMMCO & project visibility

The importance for NAMMCO of being pro-active in communication and visible on social media was underlined, as well as the necessity of being totally open and transparent. NAMMCO should be proud of its management, and its management results and the improvement in hunting methods and its observation scheme.

4. CONCLUSION

While the project has changed in character and has been delayed, the Group felt that it was now well on its way and that the present background document represented a very valuable base to work from.

The Group felt confident and positive in the outcome of the project and its chance of success. It was however, important to focus on the success criteria and to progress in logical steps, monitor progress and gaining experience on the ways. Finally, it was agreed that the individual Parties should learn from others success in public relations, such as the homepages from Norway on norskval.no and from the Faroes whaling.fo.