

## IWC Strandings Initiative Guidance for International Training and Emergency Response Requests

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INTERNATIONAL  
WHALING COMMISSION

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## ABSTRACT

This paper outlines the procedures and criteria proposed by the Strandings Expert Panel (SEP) of the IWC Strandings Initiative to (i) inform decision-making on training requests and (ii) outline Strandings Initiative procedures during emergency response requests. The Committee is asked to review these protocols and provide any comments or suggested amendments.

## INTRODUCTION

A key focus of the Strandings Initiative is to work in collaboration with governments, IGO, NGO and other partners in capacity building/training programmes for emergency response to significant mass and/or unusual mortality events. The training programme under development focuses jointly on strandings response and strandings investigation. Based on coordinator and SEP capacity, it is anticipated that up to three training workshops may be conducted each year, tailored to requests received from the requesting party. The Strandings Initiative also offers real-time virtual support and advice to response teams handling live strandings and strandings investigations. Subject to resources, the Strandings Initiative is likely to be able to provide funds and/or mobilised expertise for up to a further three international responses each year. In addition to this, the SEP can respond virtually via the Strandings Co-ordinator and SEP. Recognising the likelihood of there being more than three cases of training or emergency support requested per annum and limited resources to provide support, the SEP identified the need to define guidelines by which allocation of resources may be prioritised.

## TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

Upon the receipt of a training request, the following procedure was agreed upon by the Stranding Initiative SEP.

**Figure 1: Training Request Procedure**



The following matrix was further agreed by the Strandings Initiative SEP to guide prioritisation of requests as they are received by the Strandings Initiative.

**Table 1: Training Prioritisation Matrix**

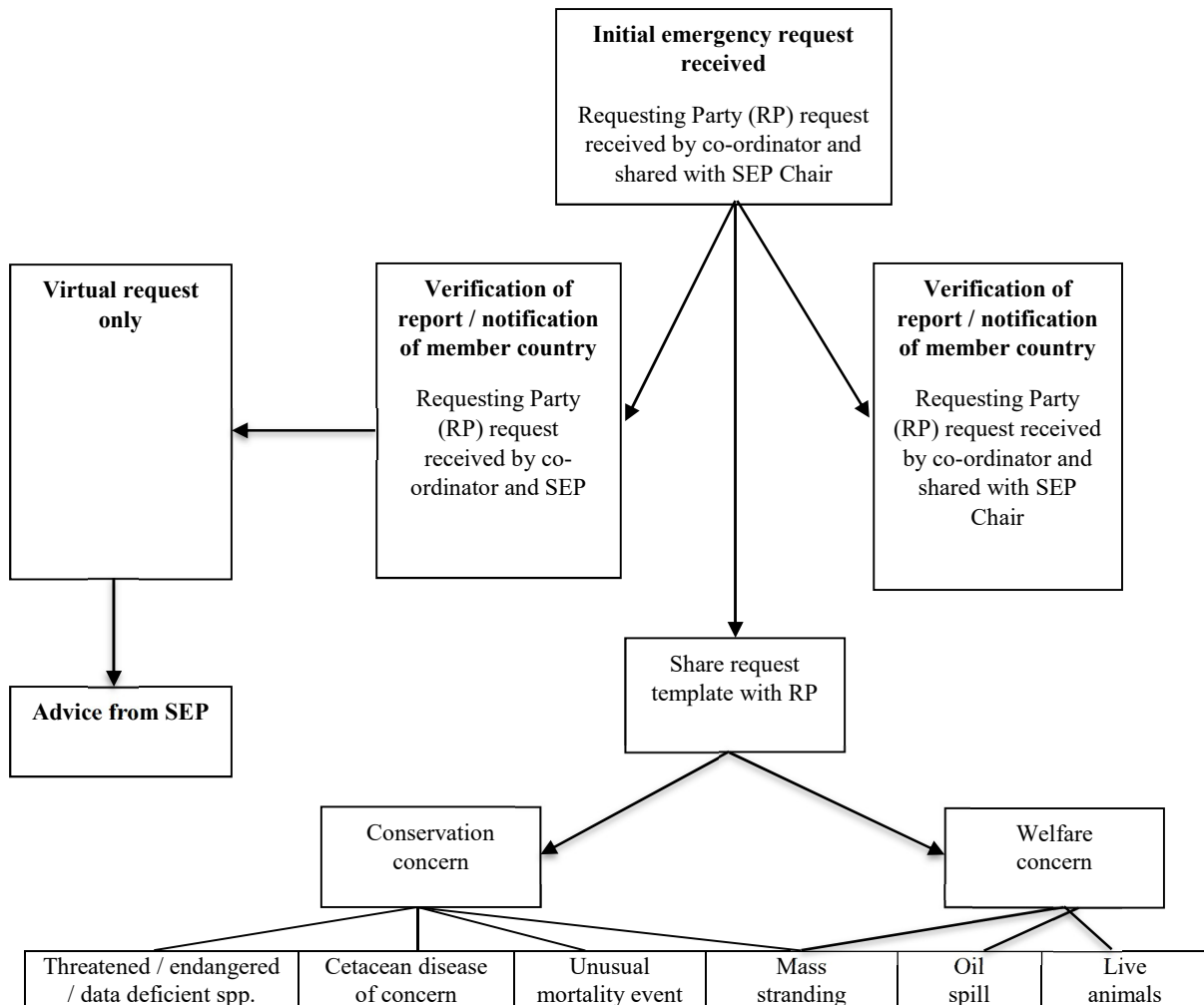
FACTORS	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Region	e.g. North America, Australia/New Zealand ACCOBAMS, ASCOBAMS	e.g. Asia	e.g. Africa, Central and South America
Existing risks and/or safety concerns to trainers/participants	Known e.g. conflicts, terrorism threat	Possible / Unknown e.g. logistical difficulties	None
Zoonotic disease presence/likelihood	None	Possible / Unknown	Known
Government support	No government input	Government supports training request	Government leads training request
Existing stranding networks	National/Regional	Local	None
Existing expertise (e.g. technical response specialists, veterinarians, biologists)	National/Regional	Local	None
Diagnostic laboratory capacity	Good e.g. lab/s with full diagnostic capability	Limited e.g. lab with partial capability	None
Existing facilities / infrastructure	Good	Limited	None
Welfare concerns (e.g., mass stranding event, limiting capacity/ logistical difficulties to response)	Low / Unknown	Limited welfare concerns	Significant welfare concerns
Conservation concerns (e.g. threatened / endangered, cetacean disease of concern, mass stranding event, unusual cetacean event)	None / Unknown	Some conservation concern	Significant conservation concerns
Recipient of previous strandings trainings	Several	Limited	None
Evidence/ likelihood of prior training uptake and/or improvement	No	Limited	Yes

Prioritisation is based on the sum assignment of either Low, Medium or High priority ranking to each of the listed factors. In addition to this ranking, the SEP further considers additional factors including (i) financial resources available, (ii) type of training being requested (e.g. live vs dead response, basic vs advanced level response), (iii) potential for joint training initiatives either relating to other IWC work programmes (e.g. entanglement) or in collaboration with third parties (e.g. IFAW), and (iv) opportunity for co-funding and cost sharing (e.g. by timing in with existing conferences, meetings etc). The SEP then discusses these factors and reaches a collective decision. If the SEP cannot agree, or several competing applications are in simultaneous review with no clear priority evident, then the SEP will vote, with the casting vote held by the chair.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Upon the receipt of a government or NGO request for emergency assistance, the following procedure was agreed upon by the Stranding Initiative SEP.

**Figure 2: Emergency Response Procedure**



An emergency response procedure was established by the SEP to guide the Standings Initiative during requests for emergency assistance. While the urgent nature of such events warrants a different approach and timeframe to decision-making, the need to understand what factors influence IWC engagement (beyond virtual advice) is still necessary (Figure 2). Again, in accordance with these considerations, the SEP further examines factors including (i) assessment of any safety concerns, (ii) capabilities and capacities of the requesting country, (iii) type of response being requested (e.g. technical advice, financial assistance) and the potential for response in collaboration with local and/or international third parties (e.g. IFAW).