



INTERNATIONAL  
WHALING COMMISSION

**Minutes of the Bureau Meeting  
Monday 24 January  
Virtual Meeting**

**16h00 to 19h00 UK time**

**Attendance:**

***Bureau Members:***

Andrej Bibic	(Chair, Slovenia)
Amadou Televiel Diallo	(Vice-Chair, Guinea)
Miguel Iniguez	(Argentina)
Holger Martinsen	(Argentina)
Lucia Scheinkman	(Argentina)
Francis Nunoo	(Ghana)
Michael Arthur-Dadzie	(Ghana)
Horace Walters	(St Lucia)
Branka Tavzes	(Slovenia)
Cat Bell	(CC & WGOE Vice-Chair, UK)
James Smith	(United Kingdom)
Tom Gleason	(United States)
Mi Ae Kim	(United States)
Lisa Phelps	(WGOE Co-Chair, United States)
Ryan Wulff	(F&A Chair, United States)

***Invited Participants:***

Lorenzo Rojas-Bracho	(CC Chair)
Alex Zerbini	(SC Chair)
Lindsay Porter	(SC Vice-Chair)

***Interpreters:***

Schéhérazade Matallah-Salah  
Warda Tazi

***Secretariat:***

Rebecca Lent	(Executive Secretary)
Nikki Bartmeier	(Head of Finance and Administration)
Moussa Ki Sow	(Database Manager)
Iain Staniland	(Head of Science, Conservation, & Mgt)
Mark Tandy	(Head of External Affairs)

**Apologies:**

Adam Clark	(BSC, Australia)
Martin Krebs	(BSC Vice-Chair, Switzerland)

## **1. Welcome and Introduction**

The Chair welcomed participants to the virtual meeting, with a special welcome to the new Commissioner and Alternate Commissioner from Ghana, Professor Francis Nunoo and Mr Arthur-Dadzie, respectively. The Chair reminded participants that the Bureau meeting was convened in line with Rule of Procedure B.4.

Executive Secretary Rebecca Lent introduced Nikki Bartmeier, who joined the IWC Secretariat as the Head of Finance and Administration in October 2021. Nikki is a private industry Chartered Accountant and also holds an MBA.

## **2. Review and Adoption of the Bureau agenda and minutes of the previous Bureau meeting**

The agenda, which was circulated to the Bureau on 8 December 2021, was adopted with one addition under agenda item 8, notably a discussion of recent communications between the Chair and observers.

The minutes of the previous Bureau meeting held on 6 July 2021 had already been adopted by correspondence and can be accessed via the following link: <https://archive.iwc.int/?r=19306>.

## **3. Designation of rapporteur**

It was agreed that as usual, the Secretariat would serve as rapporteur for the Bureau meeting.

## **4. Discussion of the Commission's financial situation and the process for the 2023-24 budget to be adopted at IWC68**

### **4.1 Budget proposal for 2023-24**

On behalf of the BSC, the Secretariat provided an update on progress and the next steps for developing balanced budget proposals for the next biennium. Fully costed proposals will be prepared for discussion with the Bureau at the next meeting. Bureau members were reminded that the Commission is facing a financial deficit totalling £352k over the biennium 2023/24, stemming from frozen contributions and the rising costs of keeping IWC activities at current levels. The proposed sale of the Red House will not resolve this basic budget crisis, as these revenues will be used strictly as a buffer for short term cash flow problems.

The two budget discussion groups held over the past year under the BSC leadership provided the basis for setting three options:

- Option 1: Reduce expenditure
- Option 2: Increase income
- Option 3: Combination of Options 1 and 2

These options will be developed further along with consideration of the impact of each, as part of developing a budget proposal for IWC68. Outreach will be conducted as much as possible in the run-up to IWC68 in collaboration with Bureau members to communicate the budgetary options.

In discussing the biennium budget, it was noted that there are several sub-options within Options 1 and 3 in terms of where reductions may be made, as reflected in the range of views expressed in the small budget discussion groups.

## **4.2 Update on status of contributions**

The Secretariat provided an update on contributions, noting that the trend over the past few years is a decline in the percent of member governments that have fully paid their contributions. At the time of the Bureau meeting, there were 56 member governments with no arrears, which is 64% of 88 countries.

In the ensuing discussion, concerns were raised regarding the suspension of voting rights for countries in arrears. While the Commission is currently quorate for a vote, some Bureau members felt that the outcome of a vote could reflect the representation of those with voting rights as opposed to the Commission as a whole. There was also discussion of establishing a payment plan for countries in arrears that would include reinstatement of voting rights once the plan is agreed.

The Chair noted that the issue of suspension of voting rights was discussed at the [Virtual Special Meeting](#) (VSM) at which it was agreed that no votes would be held until IWC68, and this would be the first item of business at IWC68. Prior to IWC68, the Working Group on Operational Effectiveness (WG-OE) will take up this matter, as noted under the next agenda item on the WG-OE.

## **5. WG-OE updates**

Co-Chair Lisa Phelps provided an update on the WG-OE plans over the period leading up to IWC68. The Co-Chairs are conducting a review of the voting rights issue for consideration by the WG-OE as they were tasked by the Commission at the VSM. A zero draft will be provided to the WG-OE for discussion.

As presented at the VSM, the Co-Chairs will work with the co-drafters to finalise the four other papers for review by the WGOE at the end of March 2022, with the goal of having final papers available before the 60-day deadline for IWC68. The Co-Chairs had planned to hold an in-person meeting in the margins of the SC meeting, however alternate plans will be explored given the virtual status of the SC meeting (see Agenda item 6). The Co-Chairs invited advice from the Bureau on finalising these proposals.

## **6. SC Updates**

### **6.1 Plans for the 2022 SC meeting (SC68D)**

The Chair of the SC told the Bureau that the original plan was to hold SC68D in a 'hybrid' format. However, given the increasing COVID-19 infection rates in Slovenia, uncertainty around travel, the costs of on-site testing, and the risk of having to quarantine at the meeting, this plan was reconsidered. After consultation with the Chair and the Secretariat, it has been decided that the meeting will be virtual for a third year in a row. This is not only disappointing, but a challenge for some topics that cannot be fully addressed in a virtual format. The Convenors will be consulted in revising plans for the meeting, which will include a revision of the agenda.

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the SC will travel to the Red House, if possible, for the virtual meeting, as was done by the IWC Chair for the VSM.

If possible, a few small in-person meetings of SC subsidiary bodies may be held shortly after the SC meeting. This could be in Cambridge or other appropriate locations, with the option of incorporating these into the SC report following review by the SC national delegations.

### **6.2 SC request to provide scientific advice for a proposed listing of a cetacean species as endangered**

The Vice-Chair of SC and the Chair of the SC Sub-Committee on Small Cetaceans provided an overview of a draft document that would respond to a call for scientific information from the US government (NOAA). The request is for relevant scientific information to inform the agency's decision on whether to list the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*) under the Endangered Species Act.

The draft document is a compilation of information from Commission-adopted SC reports. Providing this compilation ensures that the breadth of scientific information from the SC is readily available as part of this process.

Following discussion of this document, the Bureau agreed that providing the IWC science is important, and the document needs to present solely a compilation of existing factual, scientific information.

The SC Chair and Vice-Chair will make the appropriate edits and submit the comments to NOAA.

## **7. Preparations for IWC68**

The Bureau reviewed and discussed the schedule of pre-meetings and Plenary sessions for IWC68, as well as the relevant deadlines in the run-up to the Commission meeting. The Chair noted that the Bureau would meet in the afternoon of 13 October, before the pre-meetings begin. Bureau members were reminded of the agreement at the October 2019 Bureau meeting to request that Commissioners voluntarily submit their proposals for decisions ca. 10 days prior to the posting date to facilitate preparation and translation prior to the posting deadline.

A draft IWC68 agenda will be presented to the Bureau at a late June/early July 2022 Bureau meeting for review. This discussion will be informed by the outcomes of the SC68D and WG-OE meetings, and possibly additional information from the BSC regarding budget options. The timeline will help ensure that the Secretariat can post the draft agenda prior to the 100-day deadline on 9 July 2022.

The Secretariat will be including the 100-day, 90-day and 60-day deadlines in a Circular, as well as information regarding any potential changes and requirements due to COVID-19. The Chair noted, as the host country, that the hotel has held meetings during periods when COVID-19 restrictions were in place with appropriate social distancing and other requirements, and that there should be more definitive information by July.

## **8. Communications from Contracting Governments for circulation to the Commission**

The Chair introduced this agenda item in light of recent circulars containing communications from member governments. These circulars have raised concerns regarding appropriate messaging and the possible need for guidance for the IWC Chair in considering these communications.

The Secretariat provided a draft set of guidelines in a 'Code of Conduct' for both written and verbal communications in order to suggest some criteria for assessing written and verbal communication. This document builds upon a Code of Conduct that was presented to the F&A Committee at IWC67. Further edits to the document were made in light of views expressed about certain interventions at the VSM in 2021 and written communications since the VSM.

The WG-OE Co-Chairs indicated that they could consider taking up this issue as another element in their work in the lead-up to IWC68, which will then be forwarded to the F&A Committee. The IWC Chair asked that Bureau members provide any comments to the Secretariat on this document by 7 February 2022. Following that review, the document will be forwarded to the WG-OE.

As requested at the adoption of the agenda, the Bureau also discussed recent communications received by the Chair from a non-member government (accredited observer) in response to the EU statement regarding the grind hunt in the Faroe Islands. The Chair noted that as a matter of practice, the IWC does not distribute communications from observers or other stakeholders, as this practice is reserved for member governments.

## **9. Update from the Secretariat**

The updates from the Secretariat covered the impacts of the pandemic, an update on plans to sell the Red House and personnel changes. While COVID-19 conditions are improving in the UK, the staff will continue to work primarily from home. Eventually the Secretariat will implement a plan for transitioning to regular back-to-the office days in accordance with Secretariat priorities.

The Red House is still on the market and there have been numerous viewings.

A number of personnel updates were provided, including the Lead for Modelling and Statistics, a Projects Coordinator and an F&A Administrative Assistant. The Secretariat will also be recruiting a replacement for the Bycatch Coordinator position.

The Bureau members asked that the Bureau minutes reflect their deep appreciation for the excellent work and many contributions from outgoing staff members Marguerite Tarzia, Cherry Allison and Katie Penfold.

## **10. Date of next Bureau meeting**

The Chair suggested that the Bureau members make a note in their calendars of the following schedule of future Bureau meetings:

- April 2022 – virtual meeting focused on budget
- Late June/early July 2022 – in-person or hybrid meeting on the IWC68 agenda and budget
- Meet on 13 October prior to IWC68

## **11. AOB**

There were no items.

## **12. Meeting adjourned at 18h30 UK**