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## PROJECT PROPOSAL REQUEST

### 1 . PROPOSAL TITLE

Please provide the title of the project or the name of the workshop/meeting.

*Annual Meeting of the Abundance Steering Group: Review of Estimates and Status of Stocks Website*

### 2 . BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL AND ITS EXPECTED OUTCOME

Give a very brief overview (max 150 words) on your proposal and its expected outcomes. Use bullet point to list outcomes. Be succinct and clear as this may be used to summarise your project for the report.

*We propose pre-meetings prior to 2023 and 2024 SC meetings (or approximately the same time of year, in the absence of a SC meeting) for the Abundance Steering Group (ASG) and relevant experts to meet to advance the two primary objectives of ASI: the intersessional review of abundance estimates required by the SC's various subgroups, and development of the SC's Status of Stocks Website. In 2019, ASI recommended that a permanent pre-meeting for ASG be established as a normal component of the Annual Meeting of the Scientific Committee (JCRM 21(Suppl), 2020, Annex Q). The SC has endorsed this, and meetings of 2-4 days have been held annually since then.*

### 3 . RELEVANT IWC SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE GROUPS OR SUB-GROUPS

List all the IWC Scientific Committee groups or sub-groups that the outcomes of this work would be relevant to and provide a brief (1-2 lines) explanation of how it would contribute more widely to their ongoing programmes of work. Where possible, do not simply list only the sub-committee within which or for which the project proposal was generated.

*Relevant to the following groups: ASI, ASW, CMP, EM, IST, IA, NH, SH, SM, who receive and use abundance estimates to advance their work in the SC. The convenors of these groups are the members of the ASG, which oversees intersessional review of abundance estimates for the SC. The Status of Stocks Website is a SC initiative, and as such is relevant to the whole SC (especially the subgroups listed above), the Secretariat, and the Commission.*

### 4 . TYPE OF PROJECT (PLEASE TICK)

Research project	
Modelling	
Workshop/meeting	X
Database creation/maintenance	
Compilation work/editing (e.g. on whalewatching regulations, SOCER, etc.)	
Other (please specify below)	

**5. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL AND ITS CONNECTION WITH SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS (DO NOT EXCEED 1500 WORDS)**

**(A) BACKGROUND, RATIONALE, AND RELEVANCE TO THE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY THE IWC SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE:**

*Provide a clear explanation of the background and rationale for the proposal and its relevance to Scientific Committee identified priorities. Clearly identify the most relevant and recent Scientific Committee recommendations.*

*The Standing Working Group on Abundance Estimates, Status and International Cruises (ASI) was established to formally review abundance estimates submitted to the Scientific Committee across all of the Committee's subcommittees and working groups. ASI has also been tasked to develop a process to provide advice on the status of whale stocks to the Commission, which has evolved into the Status of Stocks Website project. At the 2019 meeting (SC68A), ASI developed a process, including the formation of an Abundance Steering Group (ASG) to facilitate the review of abundance estimates. At the 2020, 2021, and 2022 meetings, ASG has held multi-day pre-meetings to review abundance estimates (making recommendations to ASI) and to advance the Status of Stocks Website project. The SC has endorsed this process as a permanent component of its annual meeting.*

*This ASG meeting is needed annually to evaluate abundance estimates on behalf of the relevant SC subgroups (ASW, CMP, EM, IST, IA, NH, SH, SM) that use endorsed estimates. In 2022, ASI is again recommending that these meetings continue. Even if the SC does not meet in a year, an ASG workshop will be needed to avoid a backlog in the review/endorsement process which would create problems for the next SC. Although in-person discussions are optimal for the review process, ASG evaluation relies on many diverse species-level experts to provide advice on specific whale populations, so a hybrid format will likely be required. The extra time provided by ASG meetings to supplement ASI review of abundance estimates enables a more careful, deliberative process that ensures the quality of final ASI endorsements. The ASG pre-meeting also has a proven track record of reducing workload for ASI and enabling more efficient progress in ASI. Thus, altogether, ASG makes ASI work better and faster.*

*ASI has made substantial progress in 2021/22 with the Status of Stocks Website, including very productive engagement with the Secretariat's communication and information technology teams. Thus, ASI is ready to accelerate website content development. At this stage, there are highly technical details of assessment modeling specification, and summary of results, that are more effectively handled by a small, in-person technical working group comprised of ASI/ASG members such as Punt, Butterworth, Givens, Donovan, Allison and Katara. This will also provide real-time feedback between the computing experts (Punt, Allison, Katara) in that group and the remaining members of that group as they determine specifications for model runs, as well as dedicated time for the computing experts to produce results for consideration by the group. Moreover, the design of the website itself benefits from the sort of rich, immediate, in-depth collaboration best achieved by an in-person meeting. This component of the proposed meetings cannot be facilitated well by Zoom only; in-person discussion is critical. The participants listed here are also essential participants for the abundance estimate review process discussed above.*

*The computing work discussed and conducted for the Status of Stocks Website project also provides an excellent opportunity for Katara to familiarize herself with a variety of (sometimes quite old) assessment modeling exercises conducted by the SC.*

**(B) SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OR TOR AND DELIVERABLES/OUTCOMES:**

Provide the specific objectives and the expected deliverables. In the case of workshops and meetings, include the Terms of Reference (ToR) and expected outcomes.

*The workshops will conduct an initial review of abundance estimates, as requested by SC convenors, following the process outlined in the 2019 Report of the SC, Annex P, as amended by the SC in 2021 and 2022. The workshops will write reports with recommendations for consideration by ASI at the following SC meeting. The workshops will also develop status assessment specifications, generate assessment results, and develop additional content for the Status of Stocks Website.*

#### (C) METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH/WORK PLAN/ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Specify the methods to be applied (novel methods require more explanation than standard ones) and the broad workplan – the detailed timetable appears under Item 5 below.

In the case of workshops and meetings, include the broad work plan including any pre-requisites for the workshop/meeting to take place (apart from funding, e.g. completed analyses, papers etc.) and administrative details (e.g. location, dates, number of participants).

*Three-day workshops or pre-meetings would occur, roughly, in April of 2023 and 2024, immediately prior to any SC meeting that year, or at about the same time of year should an SC meeting not be held. These workshops would require the attendance of the SC Chair, SC Vice-Chair, Head of Science Conservation and Management, Lead for Modeling and Statistics, at least one convenor of ASW, CMP, EM, IA, IST, NH, SH, SM, plus Givens and New (Convenors of ASI), Punt, Butterworth, Allison, Donovan, and potentially 2-5 invited experts. The additional experts would be chosen for their expertise about abundance estimation or the particular species for which reviews are underway. Funding for up to 21 participants is requested to cover per diem and hotel. It is assumed that transportation costs would be covered by participants, since they would already be intending to attend the SC meeting. Note that some of the participants are national delegates and their countries would cover their costs.*

*In the event that an SC meeting does not occur, a reduced-size hybrid format workshop would occur instead. Since transportation costs would need to be covered for in-person participants in this circumstance, the in-person invitations would be extended only to the small Status of Stocks expert group listed above (Allison, Butterworth, Donovan, Givens, Katara, Punt). All of these people have indicated that they will participate. The budget below assumes that this does **not** occur.*

*At an in-person meeting, far more can be accomplished, more quickly, than via Zoom, due to the absence of competing responsibilities and time zone conflicts. With the hybrid format envisioned for the review/endorsement portion of the meetings, these benefits are partially lost, but we believe such issues can be mitigated with careful timing of coverage of specific species, to coincide with availability of experts, due to the small number of participants involved. Abundance estimation review would occur at times when Zoom is possible, and the Status of Stocks project would be scheduled for the remaining periods of the day.*

**(D) SUGGESTIONS FOR OUTREACH**

Please, note that successful proponents will be requested to produce ad hoc material that will be used by the IWC Secretariat for dissemination and outreach.

*The conclusions from the workshops will be disseminated as workshop reports for SC members, in time for consideration at the annual SC meeting(s) that would follow.*

**6 . TIMETABLE FOR ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS**

Specify the timetable for project activities and expected outputs separately. For projects with multiple distinct elements please indicate interim goals and timeframes. Add as many rows as you need to the tables below. If publications are an expected output please note whether you will submit the manuscript to the IWC's Journal of Cetacean Research and Management.

Activity to be undertaken	Key person(s)	Start(mm/yy)	Finish (mm/yy)
Review of abundance estimates	ASG	January 2023	May 2024
Recommendations on endorsement of estimates, 2022/23	ASG workshop 1	~April 2023	~April 2023
Recommendations on endorsement of estimates, 2023/24	ASG workshop 2	~April 2024	~April 2024
Develop Status of Stocks Website	ASG workshop 1	~April 2023	~April 2023
Continue Development of Status of Stocks Website	ASG workshop 2	~April 2024	~April 2024

Expected outputs	Completion date (mm/yy)
Workshop 1 report	May 2023
Workshop 2 report	May 2024

## 7. RESEARCHERS' (OR STEERING GROUP) NAME(S) AND AFFILIATION

Please, also specify if the project team has any direct connection (e.g. same research group or institute, collaborator on common project) with people involved or likely to be involved in taking the funding decision (e.g. IWC SC heads of delegations, SC convenors, etc.). Add as many rows as you need to the table below.

Membership of the ASG and needed additional experts are listed below. In the event that the convenor of a subgroup cannot participate, a co-convenor of the same subgroup would be invited. The additional invited experts would be identified by the ASG based on their expertise with abundance estimation techniques and/or with the particular species for which ASG reviews are underway.

Name	Affiliation	Connection with decision
Geof Givens	Givens Statistical Solutions, USA	ASI and ASG Convenor
Leslie New	Ursinus College, USA	ASI Co-convenor, statistical expert
Iain Staniland	IWC Secretariat	IWC Head of Science, Conservation and Management
Isidora Katara	IWC Secretariat	IWC Lead for Modeling and Statistics
Lars Walløe	University of Oslo, Norway	ASW Convenor
Bob Brownell	Southwest Fisheries Science Center, NOAA, USA	CMP Convenor
Toshi Kitakado	Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology, Japan	EM Convenor
Greg Donovan	IWC Secretariat, retired	IST Convenor
Debi Palka	Northeast Fisheries Science Center, NOAA, USA	IA Convenor
Jooke Robbins	Center for Coastal Studies, USA	NH Convenor
Jen Jackson	British Antarctic Survey, UK	SH Convenor
Lindsay Porter	Sea Mammal Research Unit, Hong Kong	Vice-Chair of SC and SM Convenor
Alex Zerbini	Alaska Fisheries Science Center, NOAA, USA	Chair of SC
Andre Punt	University of Washington, USA	Expert
Doug Butterworth	University of Cape Town, South Africa	Expert
Cherry Allison	IWC Secretariat, retired	Expert
2-5 invited experts	various	Experts

## 8 TOTAL BUDGET

PROJECT BUDGET					Please indicate when funds will be needed		Co-funding funds only
	Description	Cost per unit £GBP	Number of units	Total Cost £GBP	2023 £GBP	2024 £GBP	Co-funding £GBP
(1) Salaries (by person)							
(2) Travel/subsistence (by person or est. total for IPs)	<b>See budget note below.</b> Per diem and hotel for up to 21 participants, for 2 annual 3-day pre-meetings, assuming 2023 and 2024 SC meetings occur as planned	540	42	22680	11340	11340	
(3) Services (by item)							
(4) Reusable equipment							
(5) Consumables							
(6) Shipping & Customs (by Item)							
(7) Insurance (by item)							
(8) Other	Funds re-allocated from previous ASG pre-meeting cancelled due to the covid-19 pandemic						
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>22680</b>	11340	11340	

### Co-funding Memo:

Source	Purpose of Funding	Cost £GBP	Secured/Tentative?
<b>TOTAL</b>			
<b>Total value of project:</b>		<b>Cost £GBP</b>	
Funds requested from IWC		<b>22680</b>	
Co-funding			
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>22680</b>	

Budget note. Anticipated costs have increased from the funded SC69A pre-meeting. There are two reasons for this.

1. We have been advised from the Secretariat Head of F&A to use 130/day for hotel (UK Government standard rate for Cambridge) and 50/day for per diem (IWC standard). This totals 180 per person per day, compared to 143 budgeted last time.
2. The participant list has grown from 14 to 21, even though the number of intended unnamed invited experts is unchanged. This occurred because: Allison is essential but no longer a member of ASG; the convenor of CMP has been added to ASG; Punt and Butterworth are essential, and were moved from the list of optional unnamed experts to be named participants; and the previous proposal planned for 2-5 invited experts but budgeted for 2, whereas here we budget for all 5.

## 9 . DATA ARCHIVING/SHARING

Please state your plans for data archiving and sharing. Note that data collected primarily under IWC grants are considered publicly available after an agreed period of time for publication of papers, usually about two years. The work of the IWC depends on the voluntary contribution of data to the various databases and catalogues IWC supports. Please consult the Secretariat ([secretariat@iwc.int](mailto:secretariat@iwc.int)).

*Not applicable.*

## 10 . PERMITS (PLEASE TICK)

Do you have the necessary permits to carry out the field work and have animal welfare considerations been appropriately considered?	N/A
Do you have the appropriate permits (e.g. CITES) for the import/export of any samples?	N/A

*If 'Yes' please provide further details and enclose copies where appropriate:*