



INTERNATIONAL
WHALING COMMISSION

**Minutes of the Bureau Meeting
Tuesday 5 July 2022
Virtual Meeting**

13h00 to 16h00 UK time

Attendance:

Bureau Members:

Andrej Bibic	(Chair, Slovenia)
Amadou Televiel Diallo	(Vice-Chair, Guinea)
Miguel Iniguez	(Argentina)
Lucia Scheinkman	(Argentina)
Horace Walters	(St Lucia)
Branka Tavzes	(Slovenia)
James Smith	(UK)
Cat Bell	(CC & WGOE Vice-Chair, UK)
Mi Ae Kim	(United States)
Madison Harris	(United States)
Lisa Phelps	(WGOE Co-Chair, United States)
Ryan Wulff	(F&A Chair, United States)
Martin Krebs	(BSC Vice-Chair, Switzerland)

Invited Participants:

Alex Zerbini	(SC Chair, Brazil)
Lindsay Porter	(SC Vice-Chair, UK)
Adam Clark	(BSC, Australia)

Interpreter:

Yassine Oulamine (COMHAFAT)

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:

Francis Nunoo	(Ghana)
Michael Arthur-Dadzie	(Ghana)

1. Welcome and introduction

The Chair welcomed all to the Bureau meeting and reminded participants that the Bureau meeting was convened in line with Rule of Procedure B.4. In addition, the Chair noted that Chairs and Vice-Chairs from the Scientific and Conservation Committees, and the Budgetary Sub-Committee were also invited to join this Bureau meeting, as allowed under the Rule of Procedure M.9.

2. Review and adoption of the bureau agenda and minutes of the previous bureau meeting

The agenda, which was circulated to the Bureau on 23 May 2022 for their input and revised accordingly, was adopted.

The minutes of the previous Bureau meeting held on 20 April 2022 had already been adopted by correspondence and can be found here <https://archive.iwc.int/?r=19427>

3. Appointment of rapporteur

It was agreed that, as usual, the Secretariat would serve as rapporteur. The draft minutes will be sent to the Bureau for their review prior to finalization, translation and posting.

4. IWC Budget

4.1 Update on status of contributions

The Secretariat noted that with payments made recently for the 2022 financial year contributions, the Commission is quorate for voting. There remains approximately £500K outstanding for five years up to 2021, and another £500K is outstanding for 2022. The Secretariat reported that delays in payment of contributions continue to present financial challenges to the running of the Secretariat.

In the discussion of this point on the agenda, the Bureau was reminded of the sensitivity surrounding the loss of the right to vote due to arrears in contributions, which tends to impact primarily lower income countries, and the fact that those member governments with the right to vote are not representative of the full range of views of the Commission. The Chair reminded the Bureau members that there was a commitment at the Virtual Special Meeting (VSM) in September 2021 to discuss this issue at the start of the IWC68 meeting in order to agree a way forward, at least for the IWC68 meeting.

4.2 Proposal for the 2023-24 budget, to be considered at IWC68

Adam Clark (Australia), Chair of the Budgetary Sub-Committee (BSC) provided an overview of the budget paper which presents three options to reach a balanced budget in the 2023/24 budget year:

- (1) Reduce expenditures to match current levels of contributions.
- (2) A combination of reduction in expenditures and increased contributions
- (3) Increase contributions to match current level of expenditures.

The BSC Chair noted a few changes to the budget proposal document since the April 2022 Bureau meeting. First the underspend of the Scientific Committee has been reframed as a credit to a lower deficit. With this lower deficit, it is proposed that the SC use these funds to hold an SC meeting in 2023 or 2024, should the Commission agree to an immediate transition to biennial SC meetings. Second, this revised budget paper reflects some changes to Secretarial budget figures to further explain the

impact of the reductions in that budget. Additional information is provided on the sale of the Red House vis-à-vis the budget situation.

The BSC noted plans to have the budget proposal paper further revised, translated, and shared Commission-wide via active outreach. As usual, the Bureau's support with this outreach is greatly appreciated. There will also be an exercise to demonstrate to each Commissioner what might be the increase in their contributions under Options 2 and 3. Following that outreach, the budget proposal paper could be modified.

The Bureau members discussed several aspects of the budget proposal, the analyses of a very practical range of options, and offered to assist with regional or individual consultations. The Bureau noted the difficulty of raising contributions for developing countries, and that there is no clear consensus yet as to which of the three options is preferred. The issue of rate of inflation in the UK was raised in terms of the level used for the budget projections. The Secretariat responded that a rate of 2% was used for the 2023/24 budget calculations, whilst actual inflationary rates will be much higher (up to 9%) for 2023 and beyond.

The Bureau thanked the BSC for its work and concurred that the BSC should send the three budget options forward to the Commission.

4.3 Bureau review of UK document to be circulated announcing voluntary contribution.

The UK delegation requested that the Bureau review a letter to be circulated regarding their voluntary contribution of £300K. Half of this contribution would be provided for the general fund of the IWC to address immediate pressures on the budget. The other half would be divided equally between two voluntary funds, notably for the Voluntary Assistance Fund to support participation by delegates from Groups 1 and 2 in IWC events, and the Voluntary Conservation Fund (VCF), to be allocated under the guidance of the VCF Steering Group.

The Bureau thanked the UK delegation for their generous contribution.

5. Working Group on Operational Effectiveness (WG-OE): Status of Papers, Proposals to Table at IWC68

The WG-OE Co-Chairs Lisa Phelps (USA) and Cat Bell (UK) provided an update to the Bureau on the work underway by WG-OE as well as the more recently-assigned task of analysing options for addressing voting rights for member countries in arrears in contributions. A revised first draft of a voting rights paper was sent out to the WG-OE and reflects comments made on the zero draft. The proposal includes short term approach to be used just for the IWC68 meeting and longer-term approach that would align voting rights suspension with the biennial meetings calendar. The WG-OE recognizes that this would have cash flow risks for the IWC Secretariat.

The Co-Chairs noted that the WG-OE continues to work on proposals to be sent to the Commission in August by the 60-day deadline pre-IWC68. A virtual meeting will be held for a final review of the four papers as well as the Voting Rights paper will be held WG-OE on 19 July. In addition, there is a pre-meeting of the WG-OE on Thursday 13 October 2022 in Portoroz.

The WG-OE Co-Chairs urged the members of the Bureau to reach out to their fellow Commissioners and encourage active engagement in the WG-OE process. This ensures a more informed discussion at the IWC meeting in October.

6. Preparations for IWC68

6.1 Review of the proposed agenda

The Chair noted that he has worked with the Secretariat to prepare the IWC68 draft agenda for the 100-day deadline which has been shared with the Chair of F&A and the Bureau for their input. Once the IWC68 and other draft agendas are posted, feedback will be requested within 30 days and then a revised annotated draft agenda will be circulated 60 days prior to the start of IWC68. At the start of IWC68 meeting itself the Rules of Procedure allow for additions to the agenda at its time of consideration and adoption.

There was a version of the draft agenda proposed, following historical Commission agendas, and a version which allowed more time to address issues raised by delegations as current priorities. Presenting the latter version, the Chair noted revisions to the IWC68 agenda relative to historical Commission agendas, reflecting the need to allow time for presentation of four years of SC reports and two years of CC reports. In addition, time will be needed to address critical issues related to the budget and the work of WG-OE. The Bureau reviewed the revised agenda and offered comments. The Chair underscored that in the first item on the agenda, there will be a discussion on voting rights immediately following the opening statements.

The agenda is structured such that on the first day of Plenary, there will be initial presentations by the Scientific and Conservation Committees, the WG-OE on Governance Review, and the Finance and Administration Committee. These agenda items would remain open for further discussion at a later point in the agenda. The Chair also proposed that the adoption of the reports of each committee/sub-committee will be done under its designated agenda items rather than the usual practice of adopting all reports towards the end of the agenda. Having F&A meet earlier in the meeting allows consultation with capitals also on budget matters.

6.2 Expected Resolutions and Schedule Amendments and other possible decisions

The Chair stated that while the deadline for proposed Resolutions and Schedule Amendments is not until 18 August, it would be helpful to know soon whether Bureau members are aware of any such proposals. The Bureau was informed of possible proposals for a South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary, a resolution of food security, and a resolution on ocean plastics. These are all still under discussion by the potential proponents. The Chair underscored that decisions will be necessary on the budget for 2023/24 in addition to the WG-OE proposals.

6.3 Other preparations for IWC68

The Bureau asked the Secretariat to prepare the information necessary for countries wishing to host future IWC meetings.

7. Updates from the Secretariat

7.1 Budget process

The Secretariat noted its engagement in the IWC budget reform process, offering savings to the Commission's budget through reductions in the coverage included in staff compensation packages. These include the proposal to drop private health insurance (using a cash plan instead), reduce the Commission's contributions to the employees' retirement scheme, and reduce life insurance.

7.2 Fund raising

The Secretariat continues to make progress in the plans for short- and long-term fund raising, as authorised by the Commission. The areas of work to be covered through these funds reflect the work programmes adopted by the Commission.

7.3 Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and related documents

The Secretariat indicated the following relevant items which will be taken to the Commission for consideration and possible agreement at IWC68:

- 1) MoU with COMHAFAT/ATLAFCO;
- 2) Letter of Intent (LoI) with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (which has been approved by IOTC);
- 3) MoU with the UNEP SPAW protocol in the Caribbean;
- 4) Letter of Agreement (LoA) with the FAO for implementing the four-year GEF/FAO/ABNJ Common Oceans II project addressing cetacean bycatch in the Indian and Western Pacific Ocean tuna fisheries.

7.4 Red House

The Secretariat noted that the Red House has been on the market for over a year. Two unconditional offers have been received thus far, however these were slightly below the minimum price set at the time of the Commission vote to proceed with the sale. The building is not being used very frequently since Covid, whilst the running costs are only increasing, making this even more of a financial and logistical burden on the Secretariat. Given the current financial climate and the chances of higher interest rates, a sale by the time of IWC68 is unlikely. Based on a simple calculation of return on investment, the Secretariat will prepare a document for IWC68 to request that the Commission accept an offer at either the highest bid received thus far or a lower agreed minimum price.

7.5 Personnel update

Dr Cecilia Passadore has joined the Secretariat as the Bycatch Coordinator. As was done last year, a 'Crankstart' intern from Oxford University will be joining the Secretariat in the summer to work with Isidora Katara and the SC Vice Chair Lindsay Porter on a data retrieval project. The Secretariat is also working with COMHAFAT to recruit an intern for September/October 2022, to be funded by the Voluntary Assistance Fund.

8. Date of next Bureau Meeting

The Bureau will meet just prior to IWC68 on the evening of 13 October 2022 in Portoroz. The Chair notes that the Bureau will most probably need to meet each day of the IWC68 meeting.

9. AOB

Nothing to report.

Meeting was adjourned at 16h00 UK time.