

Report on the Voluntary Assistance Fund for Governments of Limited Means

Submitted by: The Secretariat

1. Background

- 1.1. Resolution 2016-6 established the creation of a fund to strengthen the participation of Governments of Limited Means in the work of the IWC (the Voluntary Assistance Fund).
- 1.2. It allows for voluntary funds to be utilised to facilitate the full participation of eligible Governments categorised in capacity to pay Groups 1 and 2 of the Commission funding formula who are not EU or OECD members and not in arrears.
- 1.3. IWC financial regulations require a biennial update to the Commission on the progress of the fund. This paper seeks to:
 - ✓ Provide this update, including the participation funded to date and any lessons learned so far.
 - ✓ Provide options for discussion on further means to support the increased participation of Governments of Limited Means.

2. Review of the fund

- 2.1. The fund was established in 2016 using £23,288 of unspent funds in the former 'Operations Fund', which supported the 'Future of the IWC' process. Since then, voluntary contributions have been gratefully received as follows:

Government of France (EUR 10,000)	£ 8,596
Government of The Netherlands (EUR 15,000)	£ 13,011
Government of the United States (USD 45,000)	£ 39,313
Government of The United Kingdom	<u>£ 75,000</u>
Total	£135,920

- 2.2. Contributions from the Governments of France and the Netherlands were given specifically to fund participation at the biennial Commission Meeting only.
- 2.3. For the 2022 Commission meeting, 7 participants, from 5 countries, have been funded at an approximate cost of £28,170.
- 2.4. Full details on the balance of the fund are given in Annex A to this report, along with details of participation to date.
- 2.5. To date, funds have been sufficient to cover all applications for support, however, as awareness of the fund increases this may not always be the case.
- 2.6. Table 1 below shows the total number of Contracting Governments eligible to apply for voluntary assistance funding (correct to 31 July 2022):

Table 1: Eligibility to apply for funds

	Total	Not eligible due to arrears	Not eligible due to OECD / EU status	Eligible to apply
Group 1	24	20	0	4
Group 2	33	14	5	14
Total	57	34	5	18

3. Internship with COMHAFAT / ATLAFCO

- 3.1. As agreed at the April 2022 IWC Bureau meeting, the two Secretariats have launched a pilot programme for hosting internships from a CONHAFAT / ATLAFCO member country. This will be funded using £6,000 from this fund, considering the priority for using these funds for participation in the IWC68 meeting.
- 3.2. The pilot will be an intern who will join the IWC Secretariat for one month prior to IWC68 to assist in the preparations for the Commission meeting, followed by attendance and participation in the IWC68 meeting as part of the IWC Secretariat team.
- 3.3. A competitive process was undertaken and only Contracting Governments who were fully paid up on their contributions were permitted to apply.
- 3.4. The successful candidate comes from Morocco and will be starting at the IWC Secretariat on 12 September 2022, subject to visa approval.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1. The Finance & Administration Committee is asked to note the utilisation of Voluntary Assistance funds to increase developing country participation to date.

ANNEX A – Detailed analysis of the Voluntary Assistance Fund (correct at 31 July 2022)

	Commission Participation	Governance Review Participation	COMHAFAT Intern	Unassigned	Total	Notes
Project Code	VO001					
Opening Balance 01/01/2021	11,524	2,013	-	39,740	53,277	
<u>Income</u>						
Voluntary Contributions					-	
Transfer of Budget					-	
<u>Expenditure</u>						
Funding Participation					-	
Bank Charges & Currency Adjustments	(48)				(48)	
Transfer of Budget	58			(58)	-	
Closing Balance 31/12/2021						
Opening Balance 01/01/2022	11,534	2,013	-	39,681	53,229	
<u>Income</u>						
Voluntary Contributions	75,000				75,000	Govm't of the UK
Transfer of Budget			6,000	(6,000)	-	
<u>Expenditure</u>						
Funding Participation					-	
Bank Charges & Currency Adjustments					-	
Transfer of Budget					-	
Current Balance 31/07/2022	86,534	2,013	6,000	33,681	128,229	
<u>Commitments</u>						
IWC68 Participation	(28,170)				(28,170)	
COMHAFAT Intern costs			(7,000)		(7,000)	
Uncommitted Balance to 31/07/2022	58,364	2,013	(1,000)	33,681	93,059	