

Strandings Steering Group Zoom Call

15th August 2022 – 18:00 to 19:10 BST

Meeting Report

Attendees: Fabia Luna (Chair), Mark Simmonds (UK), Danielle Cholewiak (E Co-convenor), Tom Butler (NZ), Lorenzo Rojas (Chair CC), Jan Henderson (Chair WKM&WI), Lindsay Porter (Vice Chair SC), Emma Neave-Webb (Strandings Coordinator), Imogen Webster (IWC Secretariat), Matheus Lopes Soares (technical support)

Apologies: Helena Herr (Germany), Sandro Mazzariol (Chair SEP)

1. Welcome and Steering Group Update

Luna welcomed all attendees and thanked everyone for making the time to join the meeting. A round of introductions was made given the steering group has new membership.

2. SEP Workplan approval

It was confirmed that the SEP workplan was approved by the steering group. Simmonds highlighted that the SSG has seen the workplan through all its iterations and therefore, there is no need to look at it in-depth.

3. Steering Group membership

Rojas queried whether there was a circular asking people to join the SSG and if not, would it be sensible to do one to ask governments/NGOs to nominate members? Webster said she would check when the last circular was sent out but didn't think there had been any responses. However, it can be circulated again asking for nominations/suggestions. It was suggested that circulars can also be targeted to organisations like ACCOBAMS, NAMMCO etc. The previous list can also be reviewed to see who was involved and see if they would still like to be.

ACTION POINT: Webster to check circular and recirculate

Henderson asked for clarification of what size of group the SSG should be and what representation should look like? Would the steering group work with a small core of about 10 or 12 members and going beyond that might make it unwieldy? Simmonds agreed that it doesn't need to be a very large group and perhaps they should target areas of the world with no representation at present. Cholewiak responded that the E subcommittee did highlight the need to increase membership from African and Asian countries. Rojas agreed that they can target where they want members to come from, i.e., target specific organisations in specific regions. Luna asked the Secretariat to assist but also requested if anyone had ideas of countries to include or names to suggest, please submit them via email to the Secretariat.

ACTION POINT: All to submit any suggestions of potential members to the Secretariat

4. IWC68

Neave-Webb will add to the report that the workplan is still approved by the group. Rojas asked whether it will be presented? Webster confirmed that will be no time to put it through SC but they hoping to get it through Welfare as more time. Porter said they will do best to get it into SC if needed but is worried it will get lost. Webster confirmed plan to get it into Welfare agenda.

5. SEP Training update

Neave-Webb gave an update on the training programme including online versions, the background to Mauritius and the reformation of the training sub-committee. There are currently six modules planned. Theory lectures will be recorded and will include a printed manual. Neave-Webb has been talking to Mark Tandy regarding how it can be packaged. Simmonds highlighted that in the early days of live strandings response and trainings in the UK, there was a lot of experience gained from the live strandings approach in New Zealand (Project Jonah and DOC).. Henderson queried whether there is experience of remote training within the SEP rather than in-person training and how has this worked previously.

Rojas agreed that the advice for the treatment of live strandings will be an ongoing issue as laws differ between countries and any training will need to be adapted as such. Neave-Webb agreed and confirmed that this will be taken into account and modules adapted as required. Porter highlighted that they have been involved with remote training in Cambodia via SEP and despite poor internet connectivity, they could still supervise necropsies and provide support to people on the ground. Neave-Webb confirmed that some remote training has been carried out by members in the past and the plan is to back any remote training up with in-person practical training and have ongoing support through WhatsApp and the Regional Focal Point contacts. BDMLR have provided live stranding training in the past in many countries, and it is possible this section could be covered by them. Simmonds highlighted that in the early days of live strandings training in the UK, there was a lot of contact with New Zealand (Project Jonah) to help set up BDMLR as well as IFAW more recently in Cape Cod.

6. SEP workshop proposal

Neave-Webb and Webster gave an update on the proposed SEP workshop. Simmonds argued that the SSG should have a view on this and that they should be strongly encourage the workshop and it should go ahead. He queried whether it would do any harm to put a proposal through even if scant in detail? Henderson strongly supported Simmonds's comments. The SSG decided the workshop proposal should be submitted and get it as far as possible and then Neave-Webb can flesh out the details.

ACTION POINT: Neave-Webb to draft proposal.

7. Funding

There was much discussion on funding sources and steering groups members will compile a list of potential donors. Webster highlighted the need to doublecheck on eligibility and acceptance of funds from groups.

ACTION POINT: Webster to share acceptance of funds document

Webster reminded all that within the Secretariat, they now have Harriet Pinder who is funding based. If anyone knows of any funding pots, get in touch with Harriet and she can take a look to see if they suitable etc.

Luna pointed out there is an improved network in Brazil with support from oil companies. Could this initiative be used in other countries where they have oil exploration or port expansion etc – could build it into the project that they have to support a strandings network? Simmonds suggested the SSG needs to look at ethical guidance and have a further discussion before we launch forward. Porter confirmed they had been looking at them recently and the guidelines are fairly straightforward.

Henderson called attention to the fact that eligibility for funding is not just limited to the SSG and strandings. With the financial situation of IWC and how we are going to go forward, one of the ideas is to look for a lot more voluntary funding for the organisation. The SSG needs to ensure what they come up with for SI, needs to align with other IWC voluntary funds and the group should find out what is happening in the wider IWC before getting progressing. Simmonds agreed this sounds very sensible. Perhaps there is a need for a specific SSG meeting prior to IWC68 to discuss this specifically. Luna agreed and will circulate a Doodle Poll to all.

ACTION POINT: Luna to circulate Doodle Poll for SSG funding meeting

8. A.O.B.

Nothing raised.

Luna thanked everyone for attending the meeting and it ended at 19:10 (BST)