

Voluntary Welfare Fund: Process and Roles

Intersessional Working Group on Welfare

1. Aim

The aim of this paper is to review the governance arrangements of the Voluntary Welfare Fund, including project categories and allocation process.

The Whale Killing Methods and Welfare Issues Working Group (WKMWI WG) is invited to discuss the recommendations for consideration at IWC68 including changes to the Financial Regulations as appropriate.

2. Background

In 2016, at IWC66, the WKMWI WG made a series of recommendations following a [workshop](#) considering the non-hunting related aspects of cetacean welfare. This included the establishment of a dedicated funding stream to help progress the assessment and mitigation of non-hunting threats to cetacean welfare.

At IWC67, the Commission endorsed changes to Rules of Procedure and Financial Regulations to reflect the agreed allocation process for the Voluntary Conservation Fund (VCF). As the Voluntary Welfare Fund is separate to the VCF, the Intersessional Working Group on Welfare (IWGW) recommended the development of a clear process for allocating resources for consideration at IWC68. Given both are voluntary funds with similar governance structures in place, the proposal is for the allocation of the Voluntary Welfare Fund to follow broadly the same process as has already been agreed for the VCF.

As of 17/08/2022, the uncommitted balance of the Voluntary Welfare Fund is £96,504 (£78,108 for general welfare work, £2,718 for strandings coordination, £2,135 for strandings workshop and £13,543 for entanglement work).

[N.B. [Guidelines on Acceptance of Funds](#) have been established to ensure funds are only accepted from appropriate sources and will advance work that is consistent with IWC objectives. A [Code of Ethical Fundraising](#) was also endorsed by the Commission in 2018.]

3. Project Categories

3.1 Key issues

- a) The purpose of the Welfare Fund is to help progress the assessment and mitigation of non-hunting threats to cetacean welfare.
- b) In 2014 the WKMWI WG developed a Welfare Action Plan (found [here](#)) to direct the programme of work to address some of the key human activities with the potential to adversely affect cetacean welfare. With this in mind, rather than retain specific project categories it may be more straightforward to agree that any project which contributes to the delivery of the Welfare Action

Plan can be funded by the Welfare Fund. This will also account for any future changes to the Welfare Action Plan.

4. Allocation Process

4.1 Key issues

- a) In terms of allocation, there are two functionally different types of project:
 - i. Specific projects recommended by the WKMWI WG/IWGW, which have been endorsed by the Commission. These projects are higher priority than any open call for funding.
 - ii. Projects which are a result of an open call for projects that more generally support the outcomes identified in the Welfare Action Plan (if there are funds remaining).

- b) To be consistent with the VCF process, a possible allocation process is outlined below.
 - i. **Project proposals submitted to the IWGW:**
Project templates proposed by the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Strengthening Finance used to submit proposals to the IWGW. The IWGW in turn endorses costed projects for funding and/or work plans for project development, prioritising if necessary. The IWGW subsequently allocates the funds, taking into account any fund earmarking. The Secretariat would then draw up contracts and administer funds.

- c) The proposed evaluation criteria for potential projects can be found in Annex A. Prior to detailed evaluation by the IWGW, each project will be screened to ensure it passes the general eligibility criteria (found in Annex B). Part of this screening will include a check that any conflicts of interest are declared, and where there is an actual or perceived conflict the proponent will recuse themselves and leave the discussion.

- d) Roles of groups:
 - *Finance and Administration Committee* – To endorse the overall process of allocation and project evaluation. As projects will not be applying for central funding, we would not require sign-off from the F&A committee on each individual proposal.
 - *Intersessional Working Group on Welfare* – To assess the robustness of proposed projects and provide recommendations on what projects to fund.
 - *Secretariat* – To deal with contractual arrangements and to administer the funds as instructed by the IWGW and to advise on budgets as necessary.

4.2 Proposed actions

- 1) Endorse the evaluation criteria in Annex A (consistent with VCF criteria endorsed at IWC67).
- 2) Endorse the proposed allocation processes to endorse and put forward a proposal to add an appendix in the Rules of Procedure and Financial Regulations to reflect the process of the Voluntary Welfare Fund (Annex C).

Annex A – Proposed evaluation criteria

	Criteria	Weighting	Score
1	How well will the outcomes of the project address the identified outcomes in the Welfare Action Plan?	0 – Not addressed 1 – Poorly addressed 2 – Reasonably addressed 3 – Well addressed 4 – Very well addressed 5 – Excellently addressed	
2	Does the methodology outlined effectively and efficiently address the objectives outlined in the proposal?	0 - Not demonstrated 1 - Poor methodology 2 - Reasonable methodology 3 - Good methodology 4 - Very good methodology 5 - Excellent methodology	
3	Does the project involve good participation and engagement of regional participants?	0 - Not demonstrated 1 - Poor engagement proposed 2 - Reasonable engagement proposed 3 - Good engagement proposed 4 - Very good engagement proposed 5 - Excellent engagement proposed	
4	Is the proposed project feasible, well organised and timeline achievable?	0 - Not demonstrated 1 - Feasibility, organisation and timeline unrealistic 2 - Feasibility, organisation and timeline not properly addressed 3 - Feasibility, organisation and timeline sound 4 - Feasibility, organisation and timeline demonstrated well 5 - Feasibility, organisation and timeline very well demonstrated	
5	Do you consider that the project leads have demonstrated that they are capable of carrying out the proposed work and disseminating the outcomes accordingly?	0 - Not demonstrated 1 - Poor record 2 - Reasonable record 3 - Good record 4 - Very good record 5 – Project leads have an excellent record relevant to the proposed work	
6	How well does the project demonstrate good value for money?	0 – Not demonstrated 1 – Poor value for money 2 – Reasonable value for money 3 – Good value for money 4 – Very good value for money 5 – Excellent value for money	

Annex B – Eligibility Criteria

Projects eligible for IWC endorsement will be those that can be demonstrated to be consistent with the principles also established for financial arrangements in the Financial Regulations paragraph C2(a) (*programmes or activities decided on by the Commission and/or to advance programmes and activities which are consistent with the objectives and provisions of the Convention*), particularly projects supporting the outcomes in the Welfare Action Plan, AND:

- a) can be demonstrated to deliver concrete outcomes, with additional priority given to projects targeting cetacean populations and species most at risk;
- b) clearly identify targets and milestones;
- c) are technically and financially coherent and feasible and provide value for money;
- d) have identified funding partners and institutional affiliations (with in-kind contributions clearly demarcated);
- e) have identified a project team and team members' credentials with clear illustration of the capacity to produce quality research that will be communicated to a wide range of stakeholders;
- f) have been endorsed by the process to be determined in accordance with the fifth term of reference;
- g) have the endorsement of one or more range states;
- h) are consistent with legislative responsibilities of any relevant range states;
- i) incorporate mechanisms to ensure periodic review and reporting;
- j) have an outreach and capacity building component targeting identified stakeholders and local communities (where appropriate);
- k) meet appropriate ethical guidelines with respect to the treatment of animals involved, ensuring interference with cetaceans is within acceptable levels and does not cause distress to cetacean individuals intersecting with the project;
- l) research methods are non-lethal only;
- m) fund only actions that are not otherwise the core responsibility or business of governments or industry, and that do not subsidise commercial enterprises.

Annex C – Proposed appendix for inclusion in the Financial Regulations

VOLUNTARY WELFARE FUND

Purpose

The purpose of this voluntary fund is to support the International Whaling Commission's initiatives related to non-hunting threats to cetacean welfare. This is a dedicated IWC fund, to ensure financial transparency in monitoring and auditing the use of any voluntary contributions made for the purposes above.

Voluntary Contributions

The Commission welcomes contributions to the fund from Contracting Governments, non-Contracting Governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations and other entities as appropriate.

Acceptance of contributions from entities other than Contracting Governments will be subject to the Commission's procedures for voluntary contributions as described in the Financial Regulations.

Donors, including Contracting Governments, may further specify a particular purpose for their contribution in accordance with the outcomes in the Welfare Action Plan, as endorsed by the Commission. The Commission may not accept funds for which the earmarks would undermine the Commission's ability to carry out objectives established by the Commission.

The Secretariat will administer the use of such funds in accordance with Commission procedures, including relevant audit processes. The Secretariat will notify all Contracting Governments on receipt of such voluntary donations, providing information about the donor, donation amount and any earmarked purpose. The Secretariat will inform donors as appropriate when their contribution has been utilised unless other arrangements have been made.

Distribution of Funds

The Intersessional Working Group on Welfare will oversee the selection of projects and distribution of funds in accordance with the guidance in the terms of reference for the Group and:

- the established Eligibility Criteria
- the established Evaluation Criteria
- the established Allocation Process

The Intersessional Working Group will be responsible for allocating funding for projects which support the non-hunting welfare initiatives of the Commission and reporting the progress of project outcomes to the Finance and Administration Committee.