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CIRCULAR COMMUNICATION TO COMMISSIONERS  
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**Collection of background information for the RMS Expert Drafting Group**

You will recall that at the 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting in London last month, the Commission agreed to establish an Expert Drafting Group (EDG) to work intersessionally to prepare a consolidated draft for the replacement of Chapters V (Supervision and Control) and VI (Information Required) of the current Schedule for consideration at the 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting.

It was agreed that the EDG would comprise Antigua and Barbuda, Denmark (Henrik Fischer as Chairman), Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the UK, the US and the Secretariat, and that it would meet in Cambridge before the end of the year. The Secretariat is working with the EDG members to identify a convenient meeting date.

To enable EDG discussions to progress as efficiently as possible with respect to developing an effective and practical inspection and observation scheme, it is essential that sufficient background information is available. Although we will need to develop a generic inspection and observation scheme, this should take into account/be based on existing and/or potential commercial whaling operations. **It would therefore be very helpful if Governments who have current commercial whaling operations or who anticipate that they may establish such operations in future could provide the information described in the attached document.** In the meantime, the Secretariat will collect and collate up-to-date information on other international inspection and observer schemes also for use by the EDG.

**Information on current or possible future commercial whaling operations should reach the Secretariat by 28 September 2001.** Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Dr. Nicky Grandy  
Secretary to the Commission

cc: Non-member Government Observers (for information)

# Collection of background information for the RMS Expert Drafting Group

To enable discussions of the RMS Expert Drafting Group (EDG) to progress as efficiently as possible with respect to developing an effective and practical inspection and observation scheme it is essential that sufficient background information is available.

This document:

- outlines the type of information that would be useful in two areas: (1) existing or potential commercial whaling operations; (2) other relevant inspection and observation schemes; and
- identifies further action required by relevant Contracting Governments and by the Secretariat.

## 1. INFORMATION ON COMMERCIAL WHALING OPERATIONS

Although we will need to develop a generic inspection and observation scheme, this should take into account/be based on existing and/or potential commercial whaling operations. It would therefore be helpful if information on the general nature of actual or likely commercial whaling operations could be compiled to provide background information for the EDG discussions. The type of information sought is outlined in the table below. **The Secretariat is aware that there may well be considerable variations in the vessel types and models of operation, even within one national operation. Any information provided therefore needs to clearly identify the range as well as ‘typical’ information, where appropriate.**

Item	Comment
<p><b>(1) Vessel information</b></p> <p>(a) Number of vessels operating/likely to operate;</p> <p>(b) Length/GRT distribution of vessels;</p> <p>(c) No. of persons the vessels can accommodate (give crew and ‘others’ separately);</p> <p>(d) Typical equipment on vessels (e.g. SatNav system; communications – fax, e-mail, radio etc)</p>	<p>This information is important in giving an idea of: how many observers might be required; the level of any accommodation problems in the context of national inspectors and international observers. The size distribution of vessels is useful for comparison with other international schemes. The equipment already onboard is of value in the context of what additional equipment, if any, may be required. <b>If there is a great difference in the nature of equipment by vessel or vessel type, this should be indicated.</b></p>
<p><b>(2) Operational information</b></p> <p>(a) Are quotas allocated/likely to be allocated by vessel?</p> <p>(b) Is whaling the only function of the vessels during the season?</p> <p>(c) How many days at sea is a typical trip?</p> <p>(d) How many trips expected per season?</p> <p>(e) What is the length of a typical season for a vessel?</p>	<p>This information is important in giving an idea of: how many observers might be required; the amount of time observers may need to be on vessels; the amount of time they may spend ashore. <b>Where ‘typical’ information is asked for, the estimated range by vessel or vessel type should be indicated.</b></p>
<p><b>(3) Processing</b></p> <p>(a) Are animals processed on land or at sea (this may vary by vessel)?</p> <p>(b) How many points of landing are there?</p> <p>(c) Are products distributed from fixed points of landing?</p>	<p>This information is important in giving an idea of: relative levels of inspection required at land or at sea; consideration of possible ways of dealing with problems of accommodation on vessels; the nature of the duties of observers.</p>

<p><b>(4) National DNA registers</b></p> <p>(a) Is a national DNA register in operation or foreseen?</p> <p>If yes,</p> <p>(b) How does it operate or is it expected to operate?</p> <p>(c) What kind of information will be publicly available and how will it be made available?</p> <p>(d) Who is responsible for requested comparisons with animals in the database?</p>	<p>This information is important in giving an idea of possible mechanisms for linking national and international schemes should they be so desired. Some information was published in JCRM 3 (Suppl.): 316-23 so this may just need updating.</p>
<p><b>(5) National inspection systems</b></p> <p>(a) How do they operate or are they expected to operate?</p> <p>(b) What qualifications do inspectors need?</p> <p>(c) Who is to be responsible for their appointment?</p> <p>(d) What tasks are they expected to perform?</p> <p>(e) What data/samples do they collect?</p>	<p>This information is important in giving an idea of: the practicalities of current inspection schemes; the qualifications required; the selection procedures used and their duties. This may be useful in developing a model for the appointment of international observers.</p>

## 2. OTHER INTERNATIONAL SCHEMES

It is important to obtain up-to-date information on other relevant international schemes. This needs to be targeted on appropriate comparisons (e.g. with respect to the nature of operations and vessels) and should include *inter alia* information on: selection criteria for observers; method of appointment (including dealing with objections to individuals); tasks of observers; relationship with national observers; equipment requirements; Secretariat requirements (e.g. in monitoring incoming data); procedures for assessing infractions; and financial aspects.

## 3. ACTION REQUIRED

### ***By Governments:***

Governments who have current commercial whaling operations or anticipate that they may establish commercial whaling operations in the future are invited to provide the information listed in the table in Section 1 above. ***This information should be provided to the Secretariat by 28 September 2001.***

### ***By the Secretariat***

The Secretariat will collect and collate data on other international inspection and observer schemes as outlined in Section 2. ***The Secretariat will circulate this information to the EDG (cc all Contracting Governments) by 28 September 2001.***