

Secretariat paper for Bureau Meeting on 2 October 2023

1. Budget update – *Bureau Agenda Item No. 4*

a. Status of Contributions

Annex A shows countries with and without voting rights as at 09:00 11 September 2023. The arrears balance totals nearly £989k, which is approximately 58% of the IWC annual contributions budget. Not receiving contributions on time is critical for the Commission to be able to operate and pay its obligations as they fall due.

b. Number of members eligible to vote

For 2023 financial contributions, the Commission has received 41 payments, 47% of the members. The due date for 2023 invoices was 30 June 2023. This means that the Commission is NOT currently quorate and therefore cannot hold a vote if this becomes necessary.

c. Voluntary contributions update:

All voluntary contribution funds have been updated to 31 August 2023 and a summary paper is available to view on the IWC website under Finance & Funding: (<https://iwc.int/commission/iwcfinancing>).

2. Preparations for IWC 69 – *Bureau Agenda item No.6*

a. Peru have offered to host the IWC69 meeting, likely the week of 23 September 2024 (to be confirmed). The timeline and steps for developing the draft IWC agenda (and ASW-relevant documents) are provided in Table 1 at the end of this report. Major agenda items anticipated thus far: ASW, Biennial budget for 2025-26, WG-OE proposals, possible review of previous Resolutions.

b. In considering options for organizing the meeting, the Secretariat has reviewed decisions adopted at IWC68 by the Working Group on Operational Effectiveness (WG-OE) and the Budgetary Sub Committee (BSC)

SC Option 1.5 called for virtual pre-meetings (including BSC, F&A, CC, ASW, WKM&WI, Infractions and possibly PComms) and a 4-day Commission meeting. The total budget available is £212,700; additional funding is not available to cover any core meeting cost overspend. The current estimate of meeting costs in Peru would allow a total of 5 days of meetings. Interpreters and Rapporteurs would work remotely for the pre-meetings and the reports of the pre-meetings could be made available a week prior to the Commission meeting. Secretariat staff participation in the Commission meeting would be reduced.

The WG-OE suggested a revised Commission meeting structure as follows: Commission meeting starts with a Plenary session in the morning and PComms in the afternoon as needed. All proposed Schedule Amendments or Resolutions must be tabled in the first session. Day 2 could be used to hold additional pre-meetings of committees and/or adoption of pre-meeting reports. The last three days of the week would be for Plenary.

3. Other updates from the Secretariat – Bureau Agenda Item No. 7

- a. The sale of the Red House and completion of rental agreement is still underway, with the move anticipated for November 2023.
- b. The new Executive Secretary will start on 16 October 2023.

4. AOB – Bureau Agenda Item No. 8

- a. Letter received by the Secretariat from the Government of Poland

The letter describes environmental impacts of the military conflict in Ukraine and requests the IWC consider banning the Russian Federation membership of IWC or suspending Russia's right to vote. The Secretariat has learned that some other international organisations have received a similar letter.

- b. Letter from Sea Shepherd Conservation Society

The letter requests observer status for SSCS. Information is provided about the NGO's collaboration with the Government of Mexico on conservation of vaquita in the Gulf of California.

Annex A – Status of Contributions as of 11 September 2023

Countries with full voting rights:		Countries without full voting rights:		Countries without full voting rights:	
1	Australia	1	Antigua and Barbuda (2)	42	St Lucia (1)
2	Austria	2	Argentina (1)	43	St Vincent & The Grenadines (+)
3	Belgium	3	Belize (+)	44	Suriname (2)
4	Brazil	4	Benin (1)	45	Tanzania (+)
5	Cambodia	5	Bulgaria (1)	46	Togo (2)
6	Colombia	6	Cameroon (+)	47	Tuvalu (+)
7	Croatia	7	Chile (1)		
8	Cyprus	8	China, P.R of (1)		
9	Czech Republic	9	Congo, Rep (+)		
10	Denmark	10	Costa Rica (2)		
11	Dominican Republic	11	Cote d'Ivoire (+)		
12	Estonia	12	Dominica (+)		
13	Finland	13	Ecuador (3)		
14	France	14	Eritrea (+)		
15	Germany	15	Gabon (+)		
16	Guinea-Bissau	16	Gambia, The (+)		
17	Iceland	17	Ghana (+)		
18	Ireland	18	Grenada (1)		
19	Israel	19	Guinea (+)		
20	Italy	20	Hungary (1)		KEY
21	Korea, Rep of	21	India (2)		1 = 1 year in arrears
22	Luxembourg	22	Kenya (2)		2 = 2 years in arrears
23	Mexico	23	Kiribati (1)		3 = 3 years in arrears
24	Monaco	24	Lao PDR (1)		+ = more than 3 years in arrears
25	Morocco	25	Liberia (+)		
26	Netherlands	26	Lithuania (1)		
27	New Zealand	27	Mali (2)		
28	Nicaragua	28	Marshall Islands (1)		
29	Norway	29	Mauritania (+)		
30	Palau	30	Mongolia (2)		
31	Poland	31	Nauru (2)		
32	Slovak Republic	32	Oman (2)		
33	Slovenia	33	Panama (3)		
34	South Africa	34	Peru (1)		
35	Spain	35	Portugal (1)		
36	St Kitts and Nevis	36	Romania (1)		
37	Sweden	37	Russian Federation (1)		
38	Switzerland	38	San Marino (1)		
39	United Kingdom	39	Sao Tome & Principe (+)		
40	Uruguay	40	Senegal (1)		
41	USA	41	Solomon Islands (+)		

Table 1
IWC Timeline/deadlines for 2024

NB: First day of IWC69 Plenary is PLEone

Dates tied to PLEone are expressed as PLEone minus xx days

Date	Event/Deadline	ASW-specific
Ongoing		Secretariat works with ASW Contracting Governments to update Descriptions of Hunt when needed and make available on the IWC website.
April 2024 Two weeks prior to SC69B		Only in case of any proposed change in strike/catch limit ASW Contracting Governments submit any proposal for consideration of changed strike/catch limits (including carryover provisions) to the SC.
April/May 2024	Scientific Committee, Bled, Slovenia	<p>(1) SC reviews new scientific information on ASW stocks</p> <p>(2) For each stock, SC determines whether an early Implementation Review is required.</p> <p>(3) Appropriate <i>Implementation Reviews</i> completed.</p> <p>(4) Progress on relevant activities under workplan (e.g., ongoing regular and early Implementation Reviews)</p> <p>(5) Publication of advice in SC report</p> <p>If any proposal from an ASW Contracting Government is received in sufficient time before the 2024 SC meeting, the SC will evaluate it against the relevant agreed <i>Strike Limit Algorithm</i> and include advice in its report, or outline any further work and develop a workplan to be able to provide this advice by the 2024 SC meeting.</p>
May 2024 3 weeks after close of the SC69B meeting		Only in the case of any proposed changes to strike/catch limits, Secretariat to send Circular Communication to IWC Contracting Governments and observers to highlight: (a) any proposed changes to strike/catch limit

		<p>(b) SC advice on sustainability of ASW strike/catch limits proposals or its workplan to complete analysis of proposals; and, (c) availability of 'Descriptions of the hunts' relevant to ASW strike/catch limit requests on the website.</p> <p>The Circular will request written comments related to proposed strike/catch limits at least 30 days before the Biennial Commission plenary meeting and invite interested governments to attend the ASW Sub-committee meeting.</p>
PLEone minus 100	Secretariat to Circulate the draft agenda for IWC69	
PLEone minus 90		<p><u>Only in case of any proposed changes in strike/catch limit or other proposed amendment to Schedule paragraph 13.</u></p> <p>Proposed strike/catch limit and associated schedule amendments are provided by ASW Contracting Governments, made into Commission documents, and placed on meeting website. Updated Descriptions of Hunts published on website as needed.</p>
PLEone minus 75	Secretariat requests all proposed Schedule Amendments and Resolutions for IWC69 to be sent 75 days prior to PLEone in order to process, translate, and post.	
PLEone minus 60	Deadline for the Secretariat to post proposed Schedule Amendments and Resolutions for IWC69	
PLEone minus 60	Deadline to post the draft IWC69 Agenda	
PLEone minus 30		<p><u>Only in case of any proposed changes in strike/catch limit and/or other proposed amendment to Schedule paragraph 13.</u></p> <p>Submission of written comments on proposed strike/catch limit changes from Contracting Governments and Accredited Observers. These may be made</p>

		into documents for the ASW Sub-Committee meeting.
PLEone minus 10		<p>Only in case of any proposed changes in strike/catch limit and/or other proposed amendment to Schedule <u>paragraph 13</u>:</p> <p>Written responses by ASW Contracting Governments to comments received above provided to IWC, made into ASW Sub-committee documents and placed on meeting website.</p>