

CIRCULAR COMMUNICATION TO COMMISSIONERS
AND CONTRACTING GOVERNMENTS
IWC.CCG.720

**Further information on the September 2008 meeting of the
Small Working Group (SWG) on the Future of IWC**

Following Circular Communication IWC.CCG.712 of 16 July 2008, I am writing to provide further information on the September meeting of the SWG. I am also writing to remind Contracting Governments regarding requests for input to the SWG (see section on documents).

Timing and venue of SWG meeting

The SWG will meet from 15-19 September 2008 at the TradeWinds Resort, St. Pete Beach, Florida, USA.

SWG Chair

Bill Hogarth, Chair of the Commission, has appointed Ambassador Alvaro de Soto to chair the working group under his supervision. Neither of the other two outside experts (Professor Calestous Juma or Ambassador Raúl Estrada-Oyuela) will be present on this occasion.

SWG membership

Following IWC/60 in Santiago, three more Contracting Governments have joined the SWG, i.e. the Czech Republic, Côte d'Ivoire and St. Lucia. The membership of the group is now as follows:

1.	Antigua and Barbuda	15.	Italy
2.	Argentina	16.	Japan
3.	Australia	17.	Korea, Republic of
4.	Brazil	18.	Mexico
5.	Cameroon	19.	Netherlands
6.	Chile	20.	New Zealand
7.	China	21.	Norway
8.	Costa Rica	22.	Palau
9.	Cote d'Ivoire	23.	Panama
10.	Czech Republic	24.	St. Kitts & Nevis
11.	Denmark	25.	St. Lucia
12.	Germany	26.	South Africa
13.	France	27.	Sweden
14.	Iceland	28.	USA

Documents

At its organisational meeting in Santiago on Friday 27 June, the SWG agreed that it would be useful to develop the following three documents:

1. A background paper summarising the current status of discussions within IWC on each of the 33 elements/issues identified during IWC/60 as being of importance to one or more Contracting Governments in relation to the future of IWC (see IWC/60/24, Annex B, Table 1). This paper was to be developed by the Secretariat (based on existing documentation) and circulated to the SWG and Contracting Governments by 15 August 2008.
2. A background paper collating input from Contracting Governments on what they understand is meant/covered by each of the 33 elements/issues (see IWC/60/24, Annex B, Table 2). The Secretariat will compile the responses and circulate them to the SWG and Contracting Governments before 15 September.
3. A draft of the discussion document referred to in the Terms of Reference for the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Issues Related to the Scientific Committee (ICG) – see IWC/60/24, Annex C. The Chair of the Scientific Committee, the IWC Head of Science and a ‘core group’ of SWG members (see Circular Communication IWC.CCG.712) will compile an initial draft that will be circulated to all Contracting Governments and SWG and ICG members as far in advance as possible of the SWG meeting.

The first background document is attached to this Circular Communication, i.e. *‘Document IWC/S08/SWG 3: An overview of the elements/issues identified as being of importance to one or more Contracting Governments in relation to the future of IWC’*. The Secretariat apologises for the delay in distributing the document, but its development was a larger task than had been anticipated when discussed in Santiago.

With respect to the draft of the discussion document referred to in the Terms of Reference for the ICG, Contracting Governments were invited to provide comments/suggestions on any or all of the four areas identified by **15 August**. Twelve Governments have provided input. Given the holiday season (at least in the Northern Hemisphere), we have extended the deadline for comments to **1 September 2008**. Please note that only those governments responding will continue to be included in subsequent correspondence (and will therefore comprise the intersessional correspondence group).

With respect to the background paper collating input from Contracting Governments on what they understand is meant/covered by each of the 33 element/issues, comments from governments (e.g. in the order of a few paragraphs on some or all of the elements) were requested as soon as possible but **by 1 September at the latest**. I look forward to receiving your input.

A draft agenda for the September SWG is being prepared and will be circulated in due course.

All documents prepared for the meeting, and source material referenced in Document IWC/S08/SWG 3 that has not been published, will also be made available on IWC’s website.

Dr Nicky Grandy
Secretary to the Commission