

Review of Scientific Committee Governance and Procedures Proposed Terms of Reference

Executive Secretary

Background

The Heads of Delegation to the Scientific Committee met on 14 June 2013 to discuss the process used for allocation of the IWC's research budget. One of the agreements from that meeting was to request the Secretary 'to review the governance rules, procedures and practices of the Scientific Committees of other Inter-Governmental Organisations for identifying research priorities and allocating funds accordingly and report back to the Committee in 2014 in order to consider options...'.¹

During a subsequent meeting on 15 June the Heads of Delegation emphasized that the process for allocating research funding should allow them to play a more substantial role, and that the process should also allow for the development of alternative options for consideration by the Commission.

The Governments of Australia, New Zealand and United Kingdom wrote to the Secretary in August 2013 to *inter alia* indicate support for the review of governance rules, procedures and practices in response to Circular Communication IWC.ALL.198. These Contracting Governments considered that any recommendations for changes to the Scientific Committee's working methods should be considered by the Commission at its next meeting.

Scope of the Review

The scope of the review as requested by the Heads of Delegation was to examine the 'governance rules, procedures and practices'.

Governance is the provision of oversight and accountability of an organisation's work¹. It includes the structure and relationships which determine direction and performance². These definitions suggest that within the IWC the function of governing the Scientific Committee would naturally fall to different groups. These include the Commission (who provide ultimate oversight, set priorities and provide financial resources), the Heads of Delegations (who expressed an interest to act in a greater role as the Commission's agents in transmitting priorities), the Chair of the Scientific Committee in overseeing the Committee's operations, and the Convenors in managing the day to day business of running and reporting on sub-committee meetings.

Within this context the following specific areas have been mentioned for inclusion in the review, either during the Heads of Delegation meetings, or through letters from Contracting Governments, or during recent Scientific Committee discussions on working methods:

On setting of priorities, budgets and work plans

- The process for identifying the Commission's research priorities and advice needs, and the subsequent setting of the Scientific Committee's work plans
- The relationship between the Scientific Committee and other subsidiary bodies of the Commission
- The role of Heads of Delegations in providing guidance on Commission priorities, particularly with regard to work planning and allocation of financial resources within the Scientific Committee
- Methods of working for Heads of Delegations
- The level of independence of the Scientific Committee
- The role of Convenors in provision of specialist scientific knowledge and advice to the Committee as a whole to assist Committee discussions of future priorities and work plans

¹ Managing without profit: Leadership, management and governance of third sector organisations.

² <http://corp.gov.net/library/corporate-governance-defined/>

- The process for allocation of research funding, particularly with regard to the process for reconciliation with the Commission's priority research aims and the associated approach for ranking projects in terms of their relevance and overall importance

On Scientific Committee operations

- The process for identifying and allocating funding to Invited Participants
- The role of Invited Participants
- Responsibilities of and duration of appointment of Convenors
- Relationship between sub-groups and the Plenary

On Scientific Committee reporting and review

- The style and objectives of Scientific Committee (and sub-group) reporting including reporting to biennial Commission meetings
- The option of using a specialist rapporteur service to assist the writing of the Scientific Committee's report

Choice of organisations to support the review

The review requested by the Heads of Delegations requested comparison with the rules, procedures and practices of the Scientific Committees of other Inter-Governmental Organisations.

The following organisations are proposed for comparison³:

Organisation	Name of Scientific Committee
Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)	Scientific Committee
North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO)	Scientific Committee
International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)	Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS)
Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)	Scientific Advisory Committee
Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)	Scientific Committee
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WPCFC)	Scientific Committee
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA)
Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS)	Scientific Committee
Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS)	Advisory Committee

Process and timescale for Review

The following process is proposed for completing the review:

September 2013: Terms of Reference discussed and formulated by Bureau

October 2013 Terms of Reference distributed to Heads of Delegation & Convenors for comment

³ These organisations have been selected as examples of IGOs which are conserving and managing natural resources (particularly marine natural resources) on the basis of scientific advice

Nov 2013- Mar 2014	Review undertaken, and draft report circulated to Heads of Delegation and Convenors for comment
May 2014	Review submitted to SC65b for comment
September 2014	Review presented to IWC65