

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE DRAFT PUBLIC FACING STRATEGY 2016 – 2026

Submitted by the Chair of the Conservation Committee

SUPPORTING RATIONALE

At its 2015 planning meeting, the Conservation Committee agreed to develop an outward facing strategic plan. A draft Strategic Plan has been developed as a simple and visual description of the Committee's purpose, work, priorities, and its relationship to other committees and bodies. It has been designed as a public and forward focused document, which can act as an overarching guide for more detailed internal thematic strategic plans and work plans being developed under the Committee and its working groups.

A draft of this Plan was presented to the Conservation Committee planning meeting in June 2016, and feedback was sought from Committee members between June and September 2016. This final draft Plan will be considered at the Conservation Committee meeting scheduled for 21 October 2016.

A brief rationale behind each component of the Plan follows (including supporting web text at the end). Suggested feedback questions have been included where relevant (in *italics*).

PAGE ONE

The first page of the draft Plan provides the vision, objectives, priorities and measures of success for the Committee.

Vision

This component has been drafted based on our understanding of the Committee's overarching role. We have followed best-practice in keeping the vision statement as short as possible.

Objectives

These are intended to encompass the high level and long term objectives of the Committee over the next ten years and beyond.

Priorities

This component includes priority management actions and priority threats, which have emerged based on analysis of the Committee's draft internal work plan, information on the Commission's website and feedback from the 2016 planning meeting.

There is a need to balance inclusion of all possible priorities with the practicalities relating to the Committee's scope of influence and resourcing. A footnote has been included to this effect.

In trying to meet this balance, Australia, UK and Mexico have noted that some of threats can be directly addressed by the Committee, but that it has limited ability to influence others, for example, chemical pollution and climate change. Our view is that it is still useful to understand the implications of these other threats, particularly if this assists in framing more comprehensive conservation advice.

Further discussion and agreement on the inclusions and exclusions under priorities should be encouraged at the next Committee meeting. In particular:

- Cetacean strandings are not included in this document or the draft internal work plan, but are one of seven priorities listed under the Committee's Voluntary Conservation Fund.
- Bycatch is prioritised in this document and under the Voluntary Fund's priorities, but has not been listed separately in the work plan.
- Entanglements have not been separately included in this document or the internal work plan, but are mentioned along with bycatch under the Voluntary Fund's priorities. Australia's view is that entanglements are already prioritised under the themes of both marine debris (for non-active gear) and bycatch (active gear), but we welcome Committee members' views on whether it should be mentioned under one or both.
- Some feedback questioned whether intentional killing should be considered as a threat. Australia, UK and Mexico's view is that intentional killing is more appropriately addressed through the moratorium on commercial whaling and scrutiny of other types of whaling through the Commission and Scientific Committee. Including this as a priority threat would pose sensitivities within the Commission and would not be constructive given the conservation focus of the Committee. This is therefore mentioned in the footnote as an example of a threat not currently prioritised within the Committee.
- The conservation and management – environmental concerns section of the Commission's website also has pages on cetacean diseases and marine renewable energy developments as potential threats. These have been included as examples in the footnote.

Measures of success

These include near and long term measures, with the near term measures intended to be more tangible and the long term measures more aspirational.

Near term measures

'Near-term' has been used because some measures have an annual focus, while others at minimum could be reviewed at the five year mid-term review for this Plan. The near term measures have been synthesised from the aims and deliverables/action columns of the draft internal work plan previously presented by the UK.

Robust measures of success should ideally be specific, measureable, achievable, relevant and timely (S.M.A.R.T.). At the same time, any efforts to tighten these measures so they are S.M.A.R.T. should not come at the expense of flexibility in ensuring successful delivery of the Plan. Some language therefore remains in square brackets and/or options for wording are included for discussion within the Committee.

Long term aspirations

The long term measures are intended to be aspirational for the Plan's ten year period and beyond, providing a bridge between the more tangible near term measures and the Committee's vision. Initial feedback has noted that it will be challenging to measure progress against these indicators.

PAGE TWO

The second page provides detail on how the Committee intends to implement the Plan outlined on page one.

Structure

This component reflects the current structure of the Committee, to be updated as required (for example, it might be preferable in future to establish groups which more directly align with the priorities listed on page one). The Committee's place within the broader structure of the Commission has been included with greyed boxes. Suggested text on each working group is based on the original terms of reference for each group where possible.

Partnerships

This component outlines relationships between the Conservation Committee, the wider Commission and external stakeholders. This provides a tangible link back to the third proposed objective on conservation agenda collaboration, which has been recognised as a goal since the establishment of the Committee.

Resourcing

This outlines the current sources of funding available for conservation initiatives through the Commission, to be updated as required. Initial feedback indicated some confusion as to how these funds are structured. The Secretariat has confirmed that this section is broadly correct, and has indicated that the Secretariat's new head of finance commencing in October will be working to further clarify the voluntary funds structure. As the Plan is intended as a live document, Australia suggests the current wording be endorsed, but noting that the Committee will contact the Secretariat again once this work has been undertaken to check on any updates (for example, to check whether the name and objectives of the 'other work fund' have been clarified).

OVERALL BRANDING AND WEBSITE TEXT

The Committee will need to ensure that this Plan is effectively promoted, consistent with the Commission's website and other publications. The following IWC website text is proposed to provide better context around the publication of the Plan, including the Committee's commitments to implement the Plan. These proposed commitments, including to regularly review key threats and meet annually, will be subject to discussion at the Committee meeting.

It is anticipated that the finalised Plan and associated web text will be published with in-house graphics/design assistance from the Secretariat.

[Before link to plan] "Why do we need a Strategic Plan?"

The *International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling* provides that the Commission may adopt measures with respect to the conservation of whale resources (Article V(1)(a)). The Conservation Committee was established in 2003 as a way to meet this objective under the Convention.

This Strategic Plan sets out a renewed vision for the Committee, and specifies a program of work and the outcomes to be delivered, over the next decade, to support healthy, well managed, and fully recovered

cetacean populations worldwide. The Strategic Plan will also guide and inform the detailed internal thematic strategic plans and work plans of the Committee and its various working groups.

The Strategic Plan can be found here [LINK/thumbnail to PDF].

[After link to plan] The Conservation Committee's commitments in delivering this Plan

1. The Committee will provide advice on, and implement as required, conservation initiatives to support the Commission in safeguarding for future generations the great natural resource represented by cetaceans.
2. The Committee will [regularly] review the key threats facing cetaceans, with a view to prioritising management advice and promoting effective mitigation within its scope of influence over the next 10 years.
3. The Committee will meet [annually] to review the work of its subsidiary bodies delivering its programs against the Committee's priorities, and to facilitate collaboration with key partners.
4. This Plan will be a 'live' updatable document that evolves with the Committee's priorities. It will be subject to a mid-term review in 2021.
5. The products and guidance developed by the Committee, including this Plan, will be made available on the Commission's website for use by Contracting Governments and other interested parties."