



Circular Communication to Commissioners. Contracting Governments and  
Members of the Scientific Committee  
**IWC.ALL.299**

**Request for information for the IWC Whale Watching Handbook**

At IWC66, the Commission agreed to complete the development of the IWC's Whale Watching Handbook by its 67<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting in 2018. At the request of the Chair of the Standing Working Group on Whale Watching, this Circular provides an update on progress with the Handbook to date, and requests input from members on whale watching in their countries.

Circular IWC.ALL.280 of 17 March 2017 issued an Invitation to Tender seeking a contractor to take forward the development of the Whale Watching Handbook. I am pleased to report that Gianna Minton has been recruited to this role and has commenced work on the Handbook.

**Request for information on whale watching in your country**

The Whale Watching Handbook will be an online, interactive tool to support sustainable management of whale watching. Its key target audiences are regulators and policy makers, whale watch operators and members of the public planning a trip. The Handbook will include a searchable map featuring information on whale watching in countries around the world. This Circular invites you to provide the following information on whale watching in your country and/or sovereign territories:

- General Information on whale watching in your country for example:
  - Which species of whales or dolphins can be observed;
  - Which seasons are best for observing whales or dolphins in your country/region;
  - Maps that highlight specific towns/regions/areas where visitors can participate in whale watching trips;
  - Links to national and/or regional tourism websites that feature whale-watching information;
- Particular whale watching-related concerns or issues that could be highlighted from your country or more generally;
- Updates to whale watching regulations/guidelines if any have been issued since the last compendium in 2012 - both national or specific to a region/territory in your country;
- A case study from your country that highlights either very good/successful whale watching practice, or potential pitfalls to be avoided, or both;

- Any additional materials including high resolution photographs of whale watching activities in your country; links to websites on whale watching tourism in your region; downloadable species guides for your region; education or outreach materials about whales and dolphins or responsible whale watching tourism, etc.

Please note that information on individual tour operator companies is not sought and will not be included in the Handbook.

The countries to feature in the Handbook will be predominantly IWC members but may also include some non-members e.g. additional Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species or the Indian Ocean Rim Association. The intention is to include at least 30 countries in the first draft of the Handbook. If you prefer your country not to be featured, please contact Secretariat before 1 October 2017. Otherwise the Secretariat will assume that all IWC member countries give consent to be included in the Whale Watching Handbook.

Please send information to the IWC Secretariat ([secretariat@iwc.int](mailto:secretariat@iwc.int)) and Gianna Minton ([gianna.minton@iwc.int](mailto:gianna.minton@iwc.int)).



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Interim Executive Secretary

*c.c. Accredited observers to the IWC*