SC/67b/RP06

E - Workshop on marine debris. Improving techniques and addressing marine debris through increased international cooperation

.

INTERNATIONAL
WHALING COMMISSION

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PROJECT PROPOSAL REQUEST

1. PROPOSAL TITLE

Workshop on marine debris – improving techniques and addressing marine debris through increased international cooperation.

2. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL AND ITS EXPECTED OUTCOME

There remains an urgent need to better understand and address the threats posed by marine debris to cetaceans. The most effective way to do this, building on earlier work by the IWC and taking into account the greatly expanded interest in this topic by many other international bodies, would be to hold a a carefully themed workshop.

It is proposed that the workshop would be run in Barcelona **in December 2019** just before the World Conference on Marine Mammalogy (the joint meeting of the SMM and ECS). This will facilitate attendance by interested experts who would be attending this conference anyway and help to save on costs.

Specifically, the workshop would

i. Make an assessment of the latest information and data gaps;
ii. Identify best practice in research;
iii. Take into account the latest international commitments;
iv. Identify ways in which to enhance data collection including identifying a clear role for the IWC; and
v. critically review mitigation approaches.

The immediate outcomes would be a workshop report to the Scientific Committtee and potentially one or more publications in the scientific literature.

**NB Debris here relates to all kind of materials derived from human activities, including lost, abandoned or discarded fishing gear and associated equipment.*

3. RELEVANT IWC SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE GROUPS OR SUB-GROUPS

Marine debris is a standing item on the agenda of the Scientific Committee and the workshop's outputs will be relevant to the Working Group on Environmental Concerns and potentially the working group on Human Induced Mortalities. There is also a strong interplay between this issue and that of bycatch, noting that much marine debris originates from fishing activities.

This particular workshop will be aimed at not only improving and stimulating data collection in order that the scale of impacts on cetaceans can be better understood but also further building links with other international bodies and critically reviewing mitigation approaches.

4. TYPE OF PROJECT (PLEASE TICK)

Research project	
Modelling	
Workshop/meeting	TICK
Database creation/maintenance	
Compilation work/editing *(e.g. on whalewatching regulations, SOCER, etc.)*	
Other *(please specify below)*	

5. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL AND ITS CONNECTION WITH SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS (DO NOT EXCEED 1500 WORDS)

(A) BACKGROUND, RATIONALE, AND RELEVANCE TO THE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY THE IWC SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE:

The significance of the threats posed by marine debris (both macro- and micro-), and especially plastics, to marine life has become increasingly apparent in recent years. This threat for marine wildlife, including cetaceans extends to both ingestion and entanglement, although the precise nature of the threat and its conservation significance requires further work

Growing recognition of the threat posed by marine debris to marine wildlife has recently provoked high-level attention and action in a variety of international fora. For example, marine litter was recognised by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in resolution A/60/L/22 of November 2005. This called for national, regional and global actions to address the problem. At its 65th Session in 2010, the UNGA again urged States to cooperate regionally and sub-regionally on this issue and to support measures aimed at preventing, reducing and controlling sources of marine debris. More recently, at the 69th Session, action being undertaken to address marine litter by UNEP, FAO and IMO was acknowledged and welcomed by resolution A/69/245 (December 2014). The work of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) on assessing the impacts of marine debris on cetaceans was also noted in this resolution. A separate resolution (A/69/109) relating to Abandoned, Lost or otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) was also adopted and this acknowledged the serious impacts on the marine environment caused by ALDFG and encouraged Member States to accelerate action to reduce ALDFG and other fishing related litter. Furthermore, at the 3rd meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) in 2018 a resolution on marine litter and microplastics was adopted that established an expert group that will identify the range and feasibility and effectiveness of different national, regional and international response options.

At its 65th meeting in 2014 the International Whaling Commission (IWC) agreed to add marine debris as a standing agenda item for its Scientific Committee (SC), and marine debris was also identified as a possible topic for an IWC 'Conservation Management Plan', although this approach has not been pursued.

At its last meeting, the Scientific Committee agreed to establish a process that would lead to a proposal for a workshop on marine debris. This proposal has been further developed through an intersessional correspondence group and the review of the available published information (e.g. please see papers on marine debris submitted to this year's meeting).

Marine debris is also a priority issue for the IWC Conservation Committee.

(B) SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OR TOR AND DELIVERABLES/OUTCOMES:

The Workshop will bring together relevant experts from around the world in order to –

i. Make an assessment of the latest information relating to interactions between debris and cetaceans, with a specific focus on the impact of plastic pollution, establishing baselines and identification of data gaps;
ii. Identify best practice in how information is being collected, including by considering work on other species (e.g. turtles and birds);
iii. Take into account the latest international commitments in this sphere and consider how to develop synergies between them;
iv. Identify ways in which to enhance data collection and sharing generally and specifically within the sphere of the IWC (including establishing a leadership role for the IWC in this matter and how it can contribute to ongoing work by other IGOs); and
v. critically review mitigation approaches in the light of the above, including *inter alia* the Ocean Clean-Up (https://www.theoceancleanup.com/)

The primary deliverable will be the workshop report to the Scientific Committee, Conservation Committee and Commission – additional delverables could include enhanced relations with other relevant international organisations also addressing this issue area and also a contribution in the scientific literature.

Note also that the identification of best practices in the study of marine debris would be widely shared, including with IWC member nations, and help to establish standards allowing studies to be compared.

(C) METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH/WORK PLAN/ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

A steering committee would be appointed by the Scientific Committee to

- further develop an agenda;
- identify a suitable location (there is a standing offer from Austria to host such a meeting);

- identify and ultimately invite relevant experts; and
- convene the workshop (including overseeing the timely production of its report.)

The initial overview of interactions between cetaceans and debris can be completed via an extended review to be made available before the workshop and building on recent work undertaken under the auspices of ACCOBAMS. Likewise, information can be amassed on methods, including mitigations ahead of the meeting. The IWC Secretariat will also be able to report on their interactions with other international boodies.

(D) SUGGESTIONS FOR OUTREACH

A number of other international organisations, including the FAO, CMS and ACCOBAMS, are interested in this issue and the steering group will oversee outreach to them.

6. TIMETABLE FOR ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

Specify the timetable for project activities and expected out puts separately. For projects with multiple distinct elements please indicate interim goals and timeframes. Add as many rows as you need to the tables below. If publications are an expected output please note whether you will submit the manuscript to the IWC's Journal of Cetacean Research and Management.

Activity to be undertaken	Key person(s)	Start(mm/yy)	Finish (mm/yy)
Steering group and chair to be appointed by SC	SC – E subcommittee	April 2018	April 2018
Steering group finalises agenda and sends out invitations	Steering Group	April 2019	October 2019
Background documents/reviews completed	Convenor/Steering Group	April 2019	November 2019
Convene workshop	Steering Group	December 2019	December 2019
Report back to SC	Convener/Workshop report	April 2020	April 2020

Expected outputs	Completion date (mm/yy)
Workshop Report	March-April 2020
Possibly associated scientific papers in the peer-reviewed literature	2020

7. RESEARCHERS' (OR STEERING GROUP) NAME(S) AND AFFILIATION

Please, also specify if the project team has any direct connection (e.g. same research group or institute, collaborator on common project) with people involved or likely to be involved in taking the funding decision (e.g. IWC SC heads of delegations, SC convenors, etc.). Add as many rows as you need to the table below.

Name	Affiliation	Connection with decision
Simmonds	University of Bristol	-
Baulch	EIA	-
Ferris/Smith	IWC	
Fossi	University of Sienna	
Hall	SMRU	
Holm	Switzerland	
Mattila	Province Town	
Leaper	Scotland	
Others??		

8. TOTAL BUDGET

Breakdown into: (1) salaries/wages (include name/position of each individual and breakdown of time and duties i; (2) travel/subsistence expenses (breakdown by person and justification) unless for IPs for workshops where a total estimate based on an average for the total number of IPs is acceptable; (3) services (e.g. aircraft/vessel time, consultancy fees, ARGOS fees, etc.; (4) reusable capital equipment (e.g. reusable equipment such as a hydrophone, cameras, etc. Note that this equipment will have to be registered at the IWC Secretariat and will remain property of the IWC at the end of the project), (5) expendable capital equipment (e.g. consumables, tags, stationery), (6) shipping costs, (7) insurance costs, (8) in kind co-funding (specify whether other funding is available for personnel/name, equipment, venues, etc.). Note that "Overheads" are not admissible. Add as many rows as you need to the table below.

Type	Detailed description	Cost in GB pounds
(1) Salaries (by person)	-	0
(2) Travel/subsistence (by person or est. total for IPs)	Travel and subsistence for ~10 funded invited participants. (It is envisaged that others will attend at their own costs and full attendance would be in the region of 20 people)	18,000
(3) Services (by item)	Costs associated with event (no costs anticipated for room hire)	2,000
(4) Reusable equipment	Minor equipment costs	500
(5) Consumables	Minor consumables	500
(6) Shipping (by Item)	-	
(7) Insurance (by item)	Workshop insurance – set against cancellation	200
(8) Co-funding	0	
(9) Other	Contingency fund	1000
Total		22,200

9. DATA ARCHIVING/SHARING

Please state your plans for data archiving and sharing. Note that data collected primarily under IWC grants are considered publicly available after an agreed period of time for publication of papers, usually about two years. The work of the IWC depends on the voluntary contribution of data to the various databases and catalogues IWC supports. Please consult the Secretariat (secretariat@iwc.int).

10. PERMITS (PLEASE TICK)

Do you have the necessary permits to carry out the field work and have animal welfare considerations been appropriately considered?	NA
Do you have the appropriate permits (e.g. CITES) for the import/export of any samples?	NA

If 'Yes' please provide further details and enclose copies where appropriate:

Appendix 2 – DRAFT SCORING SHEET

If a project presents multiple primary objectives which are achieved using sub-projects, a sheet should be used to evaluate each single sub-project. Note that not all criteria are equally applicable depending on the nature of the project (e.g. field work versus workshops).

IWC SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE PROPOSALS FOR FUNDING - REVIEW CRITERIA - TEST				
TITLE OF THE PROJECT/sub-projects:				
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:				
Key criteria		**Explanation of scoring**	**Score**	**Supporting Remarks**
Relevance to Scientific Committee priorities				
1	How well aligned are the scientific outcomes of the project/activity with the current SC priority areas?	1 - Not aligned/poorly aligned (e.g. too vague or generic reference to general SC priorities) 2 - Reasonably aligned (e.g. some aspects may be vague or links are not clear) 3 - Well aligned (e.g. outcomes clearly deliver in the most part on priority areas, may also address longer term or potential future issues). 4 – Closely aligned (e.g. of interest for multiple sub-groups or delivers on specific SC high priority topics/recommendations in the immediate or short term).		
2	To what extent will the outcomes of the project/activity contribute to improvements in the conservation and management of cetaceans?	1 - Not at all 2 - Poorly 3 - Reasonably or over the longer term 4 - Well or over the medium term 5 - Excellently or to almost immediate effect		
Note: if in each of the two above key criteria under this section the project does not score singularly at least 2 points, do not proceed in further evaluation. Of course, proposals within a sub-group would only be developed if in their estimation scores were of 4 or above.				
Approach and methodology				
3	What degree of scientific merit/value is there in carrying out the work?	1 - Not demonstrated or of low scientific value 2 - Useful/basic scientific value 3 - Very good scientific value 4 - Excellent/innovative scientific value		
4	Is the proposed methodology scientifically sound and feasible in terms of field and analytical methods?	1 - Feasibility unrealistic & poor methodology or not properly addressed 2 - Feasibility & methodology acceptable but would benefit from some substantial amendments		

		3 - Feasibility & methodology good, some small changes beneficial 4 - Feasibility & methodology excellent or a highly promising innovative approach to an important question facing the Committee		
5	What is the likelihood of success based on the proposed overall approach and methodology?	1 – No chance of success 2 - Low chance of success/better approaches available 3 - Medium chance of success/some changes to the approach necessary 4 - High chance of success/little or no changes to the approach necessary		
5a	Are objectives of the research likely to be achieved within the proposed time-frame?	1 – No or unlikely 2 – Partially or potentially ambitious 3 - Yes with some minor suggestions 4 – Yes		
5b	Are any proposed intermediary targets timely and achievable?	1 – No or unlikely 2 – Partially 3 - Probably 4 - Yes		
5c	Is the proposed time-frame/work necessary (e.g. can the project produce results in a shorter time period)?	1 – No or unlikely 2 – Partially 3 - Probably 4 - Yes		
5d	Is the sample size adequate to achieve the stated objectives?	1 – Not demonstrated/not properly addressed 2 – No or unlikely (too low/too high) 3 – Probably (additional analysis needed) 4 - Yes		
6	Is the project likely to affect adversely the population(s) involved?	1 - Not properly addressed/ unknown 2 - Yes severely 3 – Possibly at a low level 4 - No		
6a	**IF YES**, are analyses provided on simulations of the effects using different time-frames for the project if applicable?	1 – No 2 – Partially 3 - Yes		
Note: if in each of the above key criteria under this section the project does not score singularly at least 2 points, do not proceed in further evaluation. Of course, proposals within a sub-group would only be developed if in their estimation scores were of 3 or above.				
Project team and Project management				

7	To what extent does the team have the relevant expertise, experience, and balance?	1 – Poor or not demonstrated 2 – Sufficient 3 - Very good 4 - Excellent		
8	Contingency plan: To what extent have potential problems/risks been considered and appropriate mitigation proposed?	1 – Poor or not demonstrated 2 – Sufficient but could be improved 3 - Fully or requiring only minor suggestions or not applicable		
Value for Money				
10	Does the project represent good value for money?	1 – No or significant amendments would be needed 2 – Yes but with some minor amendments 3 – Yes		
11	Have sufficient links been made to the wider research community/other organisations/capacity building.	1 – No 2 – Some but significant amendments needed 3 – Yes but with some minor additions 4 – Yes or not applicable		