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Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)
Sustainable Whale and Dolphin Watching
Tourism Network

Adam Clark, Hilary Anderson, Suzi Heaton



INTERNATIONAL
WHALING COMMISSION

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Sustainable Whale and Dolphin Watching Tourism Network

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ABSTRACT

The IORA Sustainable Whale and Dolphin Watching Tourism Network was endorsed by the IORA Committee of Senior Officials in 2016. The Network aims to foster regional cooperation on sustainable whale and dolphin watching tourism, including through sharing information, capacity building, and providing access to expertise. A concept note for the Network was circulated to IORA member states in February 2018 inviting nominations to the Network. Australia will support the Network in its first year of operation by producing a biannual newsletter. This paper invites members of the Scientific Committee to provide content for the newsletter.

INTRODUCTION

Whale and dolphin watching tourism is one of the fastest growing marine tourism sectors in the world. When managed well, whale and dolphin watching tourism creates economic, social and environmental benefits such as inclusive economic growth, livelihoods, and job creation for communities, while also encouraging the safeguarding of marine species and habitats.

Whale and dolphin watching tourism in the Indian Ocean region ranges from well-established and regulated industries to nascent operations with little or poor regulation.

In February 2016, a workshop was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, entitled “Building sustainable whale and dolphin watching tourism in the Indian Ocean region.” The workshop was jointly hosted by the Government of Sri Lanka and the Government of Australia in collaboration with the International Whaling Commission Secretariat, the Sri Lankan Institute of Policy Studies, Murdoch University’s Cetacean Research Unit, and the IORA Secretariat. 16 IORA member states attended the workshop. Eight of the 21 IORA member states are members of the Commission.

The workshop recommended that a sustainable whale and dolphin watching tourism network (the Network) be established for the Indian Ocean region. Establishment of the Network was endorsed at the IORA Committee of Senior Officials meeting in May 2016, and at the 2016 and 2017 meetings of the Working Group on Trade and Investment.

At SC66b, the Scientific Committee welcomed the report of the Sri Lankan workshop and agreed to establish an intersessional working group to help provide advice to IORA, and to facilitate communication between IORA and the Committee.

At IWC66, the Commission also agreed to support the Network by:

- Sharing information, best practice, experience and expertise with IORA Member States, including through the development of the Whale Watching Handbook, including with case studies relevant to the IORA region
- Providing capacity-building and training for IORA and its Member States, as appropriate
- Providing guidelines and best practice and other IWC resources to the IORA Secretariat for circulation among IORA Member States
- Seeking to engage with the IORA Secretariat and the Network through scientific and technical cooperation and, where appropriate, seeking funding, to support sustainable whale watching in the IORA region.

In February 2018, a concept note for the Network ([Attachment A](#)) was circulated to IORA member states inviting nominations to the Network and content for the newsletter.

PURPOSE AND OPERATION OF THE NETWORK

The purpose of the Network is to:

- Provide a regional forum for key stakeholders to facilitate the exchange and sharing of national experience, information, best practice and expertise on whale and dolphin watching
- Provide access to best practice guidance and management advice
- Facilitate capacity building, training and education opportunities on sustainable whale and dolphin watching management

- Strengthen scientific, academic and technical cooperation, including connecting whale and dolphin research in IORA member states, and supporting collaborations, such as with the Commission
- Communicate funding opportunities for capacity building.

The Network will be driven by IORA member states who will take turns coordinating it on a voluntary basis. The Australian Government's Department of the Environment and Energy will coordinate the Network for the first 12 months. The Network will work in partnership with the International Whaling Commission.

Information relevant to the Network will be disseminated through a biannual newsletter. The first issue will be circulated before IWC67.

Further information on the operation of the Network can be found in the concept note.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FROM MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Members of the Scientific Committee have a wealth of expertise and experience in sustainable whale and dolphin watching tourism.

The draft Whale Watching Handbook includes case studies, information on the benefits of sustainable whale and dolphin watching tourism, and a database of whale and dolphin watching tourism guidelines and legislation that would be particularly valuable to the Network. Members of the Scientific Committee are encouraged to use the Network's newsletter as a means of disseminating relevant information from the Whale Watching Handbook to IORA member states.

Members of the Scientific Committee are also invited to provide additional content for inclusion in the newsletter, such as:

- Details of training and workshops that Network members could attend
- Opportunities for collaboration between Network members and the Commission
- Capacity building opportunities to support Network members to improve whale and dolphin watching tourism practices in their countries and the region.

A mock-up of the first issue of the newsletter is at [Attachment B](#).

Content for the first issue of the newsletter is invited by 30 June 2018. Australia welcomes the continued operation of the intersessional working group to help facilitate submission of this content.

Indian Ocean Rim Association Sustainable Whale and Dolphin Watching Tourism Network
CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Whale and dolphin watching tourism is one of the fastest growing marine tourism sectors in the world. When managed well, whale and dolphin watching tourism creates economic, social and environmental benefits such as inclusive economic growth, livelihoods and job creation for communities, while also encouraging the safeguarding of marine species and habitats. Sustainable whale and dolphin watching tourism can contribute to the Blue Economy.

Whale and dolphin watching tourism exists across the Indian Ocean Rim region, ranging from established and mature industries to nascent or emerging industries considering a new form of tourism development. Indian Ocean countries face common challenges in managing their whale and dolphin watching tourism, including lack of capacity and resources for compliance and enforcement of domestic regulations, where they exist.

In February 2016, a workshop was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka entitled “Building sustainable whale and dolphin watching tourism in the Indian Ocean region”. The workshop was jointly hosted by the Government of Sri Lanka and the Australian Government in collaboration with the Sri Lankan Institute of Policy Studies, the International Whaling Commission Secretariat, Murdoch University’s Cetacean Research Unit and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Secretariat. Among other things, the workshop recommended that a sustainable whale and dolphin watching tourism network be established for the Indian Ocean region (**Attachment A**). At the IORA Working Group on Trade and Investment meeting in October 2017, it was agreed that the IORA Secretariat would develop the Network.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

The purpose of the Network is to foster regional cooperation on sustainable whale and dolphin watching tourism, including through sharing information, capacity building and providing access to expertise. The Network aims to ensure the economic, social and environmental sustainability of whale and dolphin watching tourism in the region.

Based on the outcomes of the 2016 workshop in Sri Lanka, the Network will:

- Provide a regional forum for key stakeholders to facilitate the exchange and sharing of national experience, information, best practice and expertise on whale watching
- Provide access to best practice guidance and management advice
- Facilitate capacity building, training and education opportunities on sustainable whale and dolphin watching management
- Strengthen scientific, academic and technical cooperation, including connecting whale and dolphin researchers in IORA Member States, and supporting collaborations such as with the IORA journals, Indian Ocean Academic Group, IORA Centre of Excellence in Ocean Sciences and the Environment, and with the International Whaling Commission and Murdoch University
- Communicate funding opportunities for capacity building.

Membership

The Network will be driven by IORA Member States who will take turns coordinating the Network on a voluntary basis. The Australian Government’s Department of the Environment and Energy proposes to coordinate the Network for the first 12 months.

Membership is open to all IORA Member States on a voluntary basis. The formal Network will be an email contact group of nominated IORA national focal points and other nominated parties.

A collaborative approach will be required in order for the Network to be successful and sustainable –the private sector, local communities, governments and others will need to be engaged. This includes commercial tourism operators, intergovernmental organisations, non-government organisations, academics and tourism industry bodies.

The Network will work in partnership with the International Whaling Commission. The Commission is the global body responsible for whale conservation and has a wealth of expertise and experience in sustainable whale and dolphin watching tourism. The Network may wish to establish relationships with other key partners who are willing to assist with knowledge and expertise for the sustainable development of the industry, and work with other bodies agreed by participants at the Sri Lanka Workshop (**Attachment A**).

Operation and Responsibilities

Information relevant to the Network will be disseminated through a newsletter. A proposed structure for the newsletter is provided at **Attachment B**. The newsletter will be developed at least twice a year.

IORA Member States will support the operation of the Network by:

- Nominating one main focal point and up to other six representatives from the tourism, marine and fisheries, academic and science sectors
- Working towards strengthening whale and dolphin watching tourism practices in the Indian Ocean region with the assistance of the Network.

Nominated focal points will (as appropriate):

- Provide material for the newsletter
- Share national experiences with other Network members
- Disseminate information to other stakeholders in their countries.

The IORA Secretariat will support the operation of the Network by:

- Working with Member States to create and maintain a list of focal point and other contacts and broader distribution list for the newsletter
- Circulating the Network's newsletter and information on proposed activities
- Working with Member States to support the development of partnerships, such as those recommended during the Sri Lanka workshop.

Partners will (as appropriate):

- Contribute material for the Newsletter
- Provide advice on best practice
- Support the develop links to other information, expertise and/or stakeholder groups that can contribute to the Network.
- Support and facilitate capacity building activities
- Communicate funding opportunities and disseminate new research.

Indicators of success

It will be important to monitor progress of the Network. Indicators of success could include:

- Identifying focal points and representatives in all IORA Member States as a first step towards operationalisation of the Network
- Developing and circulating the Newsletter as a shared resource to improve knowledge and resources
- Improving information-sharing and regional collaboration as demonstrated by numbers of resources shared by focal points through the Network
- Circulating examples of guidelines and legislation from Member States with other Member States who have not yet developed their own mechanisms
- Closer collaboration with key stakeholders as measured through resources shared, collaborative efforts and projects undertaken
- Harnessing regional efforts to ensure the whale and dolphin watching tourism industry is socially, ecologically and economically sustainable in the long term and that countries can learn from each other and create an Indian Ocean best practice approach.
- Implementing new practices and improved management of whales and dolphins in the Indian Ocean through self-reported accounts.

ATTACHMENT B



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

'It is a long established fact that a reader will be distracted by the readable content of a page when looking at its layout.'

Many desktop publishing packages and web page editors now use Lorem Ipsum as their default model text, and a search for 'lorem ipsum' will uncover many web sites still in their infancy. Various versions have evolved over the years, sometimes by accident, sometimes on purpose (injected humour and the like). It is a long established fact that a reader will be distracted by the readable content of a page when looking at its layout.

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The President

THIS ISSUE

CASE STUDY Page.2

It has survived not only five centuries, but also the leap into electronic typesetting, remaining essentially unchanged. It was popularised in the 1960s with the release of Letraset sheets containing Lorem Ipsum passages, and more recently with desktop publishing software like Aldus PageMaker including versions of Lorem Ipsum.

RELEVANT RESEARCH/STUDY Page.3

It is a long established fact that a reader will be distracted by the readable content of a page when looking at its layout. The point of using Lorem Ipsum is that it has a more-or-less normal distribution of letters, as opposed to using 'Content here, content here', making it look like readable English. metimes on purpose (injected humour and the like).

PERSONAL PROFILE Page.4

Contrary to popular belief, Lorem Ipsum is not simply random text. It has roots in a piece of classical Latin literature from 45 BC, making it over 2000 years old. It has survived not only five centuries, but also the leap into electronic typesetting, remaining essentially unchanged. It was popularised in the 1960s with the release of Letraset sheets containing Lorem Ipsum passages.



CASE STUDY

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CASE STUDY—SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS

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TRAINING/WORKSHOPS

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CREDITS

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