



Circular Communication to Commissioners and Contracting Governments **IWC.CCG.1363**

Minutes of the April 2019 Bureau Meeting and Update on the Financial Situation

The IWC Bureau met at the Red House, Cambridge on 24 and 25 April 2019. The Minutes of this meeting are attached below.

As has been the practice following Bureau meetings in 2017 and 2018, it is particularly important to draw the attention of all Contracting Governments to the latest information and discussions on the Commission's budget.

Contracting Governments will recall that, at IWC67, the Commission took a difficult decision to cut the Scientific Committee budget by 28%. This reduced, but did not fully address, the 2019-20 budgetary shortfall and therefore a deficit budget was agreed for this period. An overall budget of £3.5M was agreed by the Commission, recognising this to be the cost of delivering its two year work plan.

The Commission also recognised that this was a short-term fix and further work would be required to develop a long-term solution to the IWC budgetary shortfall. This work is ongoing through the Budgetary Sub-committee, working closely with the Working Group on Operational Effectiveness, the group charged with evaluation and implementation of Governance Review reforms.

Contracting Governments will be aware that the Government of Japan is leaving the IWC this year which necessitates a recalculation of 2020 member contributions. Contributions can fluctuate during the two-year budgetary period for several reasons. One factor is whether any member governments join or leave the organisation which spreads the agreed budget amongst a larger or smaller number of countries.

As the largest contributor to the IWC, Japan's departure creates a relatively large percentage increase but, in actual terms, this will equate to between c.£295 and c.£10,000 depending on the Capacity to Pay Group of an individual country.

Full details of these discussions are recorded in the attached Minutes of the Bureau meeting. It is important to note that the Bureau is proposing to follow the approach laid out in the Rules of Procedure and Financial Regulations of the IWC. It is also important to note that alternative approaches were discussed and discounted due to their complexity, and that the Bureau understands that any increase in contributions may prove difficult to absorb.

This is a challenging time for the IWC, but it is also a great opportunity to re-assess our processes, structure and efficiency. Engagement is vital if we are to move forward and I encourage all Contracting Governments to read the Minutes and contact the Secretariat or members of the Bureau with any questions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrej Bibič'.

Andrej Bibič
Chair, IWC

c.c. Accredited observers to the IWC