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Sub-committees/working group name:

Update from the Conservation Committee Working Group on Cetaceans and Ecosystem Functioning

Submitted by the Chair of the CC Working Group on Cetacean and Ecosystem Functioning



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ABSTRACT

The Commission endorsed at IWC68 all recommendations of the socio-economic workshop. The Conservation Committee working group on cetacean and ecosystem functioning established an advisory group to develop Terms of Reference (ToR) and a tender to contract a consultancy to develop a pilot project. The pilot project is aimed to assess the socio-economic values of a single (or set of) species or populations of cetaceans to the well-being of people and the rest of nature. A proposal of selected candidates for species/population to be assessed are being presented to the IWC Scientific Committee meeting for endorsement.

INTRODUCTION

Since 2016, the IWC Conservation Committee has been directed to review the “ecological, management, environmental, social and economic aspects related to the contributions of cetaceans to ecosystem functioning for people and natural systems, as a matter of importance” (IWC Resolution 2016-03).

The IWC has conducted two workshops, one led by the IWC Scientific Committee on cetaceans and ecosystem functioning (SC/68C/REP/03) that reviewed concepts on nutrient circulation, ocean fertilization, whale falls and cetaceans as predators and another led by the IWC Conservation Committee on the socio-economic values of the contribution of cetaceans to the ecosystem functioning (CC/68/REP/SEVCEF/01).

Last year, a report of the CC workshop on socio-economic values was presented at the 68D Scientific Committee virtual meeting. This report summarizes the work conducted by the CC Cetacean and Ecosystem Functioning after last SC meeting.

PROGRESS/UPDATES

The report of the CC workshop was also presented at the Conservation Committee and the Commission at the 68th biennial meeting of IWC. The workshop proposed in the short-term the development of a pilot project to assess the socio-economic values of a single species to simplify the number of services to be valued.

In the medium to long term, the workshop proposed:

- to associate valuation methods to specific ecosystem services and assess socio-economic potential (starting with the pilot project);
- to consider the impacts of climate change and any other threat that may affect the role that cetaceans play in ecosystem functioning and model potential socio-economic impacts on different scenarios (through time); and
- start a discussion on the development of financial and institutional frameworks (e.g. Common Asset Trusts) to integrate socio-economic valuation into the cetacean decision-making process and advance proposals to create conservation funding sources that benefit from the ecosystem services provided by cetaceans.

At its 2022 meeting, the IWC endorsed all its recommendations in principle, which included, inter-alia, the development in the short-term of a pilot project to assess the socio-economic values of a single (or set of) species or populations of cetaceans to the well-being of people and the rest of nature. The proposal to advance the pilot project included two stages, initial steps and then contracting a consultancy. The IWC agreed to a workplan that included the development of initial steps before any consultancy could be endorsed. It agreed that the proposed pilot project

required further discussion and development before the CC could recommend it be taken forward. It recommended that this proposal be brought to the next SC meeting for input and endorsement and discussed further at the CCPG meeting intersessionally (Chair's report, 2022).

Therefore, an Advisory Group was created to develop Terms of Reference (ToR) for the consultancy and open a call for applications. The CC Cetacean and Ecosystem Function Working Group, with assistance from the Secretariat, developed a list of potential participants and distributed invitations. The Advisory Group includes, but is not limited to, experts in ecological, biological, and economic sciences. A List of participants can be found in Annex 1. Membership of the Advisory Group may remain open for further interested participants.

The ToR for the Advisory Group are:

- to work in consultation with the Conservation Committee Cetacean and Ecosystem Functioning Working Group, the Scientific Committee Working Group on Ecosystem Modeling, and the IWC Secretariat;
- to identify and select cetacean species/populations to be assessed from a socio-economic perspective for their contributions to ecosystem functioning.
- to develop Terms of Reference for the consultancy and contracting services;
- to submit a report to the IWC Scientific Committee and the Conservation Committee Planning Group during 2023.

The Advisory group has met virtually three times. It is currently working on the selection of the species/population to be assessed, the draft ToR and tender for consultancy. The Secretariat has also compiled and provided a list of abundance estimates available for several species.

A decision matrix was developed to select the species or population (s) that have suitable information that could be targeted on the pilot project (Annex 2). This matrix has been shared with experts that attended the 2021 IWC-CMS workshop on cetaceans and ecosystem functioning to invite them to suggest a suitable species/population that could be assessed, where there should be sufficient associated data.

At the time of this report is being drafted, the decision matrix is still being completed. Results will be analyzed during the upcoming weeks and a proposal of selected candidates for species/population will be presented to the IWC Scientific Committee meeting.

SC INPUT TO CC -- WORKPLAN

The work of the advisory group is focus on preparing all necessary documents to open a call for application for the consultancy.

The species selections are one of the first steps that need the input from the scientific committee during April/May 2023 where a decision should be taken regarding the best candidates to be assessed. The draft tender for consultancy will be distributed to the CCPG for endorsement after SC meeting.

QUESTIONS FOR THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

The Scientific Committee is asked to provide:

1. *advice on the ongoing work*
2. *endorsement to proposed candidates of species/population to be assessed by the consultancy.*

ANNEX 1 – List of Participants Advisory Group

Butterworth, Doug
Chami, Ralph
Constanza, Robert
Cook, David
Duarte, Carlos
Galletti, Barbara
Johnston, Robert
Kitakado, Toshihide
Pearson, Heidi
Roman, Joe
Shubert, DJ

