

Annex Q

Report of the ad hoc Group on Progress Reports and the Online Data Entry Portal

Members: Double (Chair), Allison, Chilvers, Cooke, Iñíguez, Leaper, Miller, Miyashita, Ritter, Roel, Rojas-Bracho, Rowles, Santos, Stachowitsch, Vikingsson.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE ONLINE DATA ENTRY PORTAL

Brendan Miller of the IWC Secretariat was commended for the further improvements to the online data Portal and the ongoing support of national coordinators in the submission of data.

It was noted that much of the information that used to be included in National Progress Reports is no longer requested. The electronic submission system is suitable for some data (e.g. reports of direct takes or bycatch) but is much less suitable for highlighting key research efforts such as sightings surveys.

The Working Group recognised that specific recommendations for the collection of data on marine debris and euthanasia protocols be included in National Progress Reports (see Annex K, Item 11.1.2 and Annex J, Item 6.2).

The Working Group discussed improvements to the current Portal and suggested the following changes.

- (1) Following initial data entry but prior to finalising data submission by the national coordinator, the system should generate a report in a format similar to the previous hard copy report. This will facilitate data validation and allow circulation of report information within countries. This automatically generated report could also be combined with any other information that was being provided that was not in electronic format to generate a report document.
- (2) Allow national coordinators to edit all fields prior to the submission of the final report to the IWC.
- (3) Allow the submission of information on sighting surveys with a similar structure and information content as collected through the previous hardcopy progress report process – e.g. a description of the surveys that have taken place including survey effort rather than just a list of sightings.
- (4) Allow explicit spatial and temporal information (e.g. date, latitude/longitude) to be reported for records of incidental anthropogenic mortality including entanglements, ship strikes.

- (5) Provide a field to identify whether a record has been identified as a possible ship strike in the non-direct anthropogenic mortality tables.
- (6) Encourage the submission of ‘zero records’ when no events were reported in that calendar year to distinguish a reported number of 0 from no data being entered.

SUBMISSION OF REPORTS

The Working Group noted that 16 countries had submitted reports for consideration at IWC SC/65b although the data submitted were not necessarily for the 2013 calendar year; some countries delay the submission of data by one or two years. Between 2010 and 2012, 22, 18 and 20 countries submitted national reports. The Working Group suggested that the Secretariat should discuss with national coordinators of Heads of Delegation whether there are any logistical barriers to the submission of information.

INTERSESSIONAL WORK

An intersessional correspondence group composed of the meeting participants and national coordinators will be established to provide further advice to Miller and test modifications to the Portal. This group will:

- (1) review a ‘how to’ document prepared by Australia for the online portal;
- (2) review a comparison of the information collected under the current online data portal and the previous hardcopy national reports (to be prepared by Double);
- (3) discuss the recommendations provided by the Environmental Concerns Working Group (Annex K, item 11.1.2) and the Human Induced Mortality Working Group (Annex J, item 6.2); and
- (4) assist Miller in developing a ‘report generating’ tool that would facilitate data checking by data providers and produce a document from each report that would be available for review at the Annual Meetings.

If necessary, the group will provide recommendations to the 2015 Annual Meeting on further amendments to the online portal.