

**Discussion document regarding Scientific Committee matters: a follow-up to the
Intersessional Correspondence Group on Issues Related to the Scientific Committee**

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

1. BACKGROUND

The Commission agreed at its Intersessional Meeting on the Future of the IWC held in Heathrow, UK in March 2008 that the provision of sound scientific advice is essential to the functioning of the IWC. The Commission also acknowledged that (1) the work of the IWC Scientific Committee is internationally recognised as providing the best available knowledge on conservation and management of cetaceans, and (2) the Scientific Committee has a good record in achieving consensus on nearly all of its recommendations to the Commission. Nevertheless, the Commission also saw benefit in exploring ways to strengthen the effectiveness of the Scientific Committee and its relationship with the Commission and decided to establish an Intersessional Correspondence Group on Issues Related to the Scientific Committee (ICG) to address the following issues: (1) consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of separating the annual meeting of the Scientific Committee from that of the Commission; (2) consideration of ways to increase participation in the Scientific Committee of scientists from developing countries in the work of the Scientific Committee; (3) consideration of ways in which the Scientific Committee can assist in improving the knowledge and technical capability of scientists from countries where cetacean research is in its infancy so that they can better contribute to the work of the Scientific Committee and to conservation and management issues within their region; and (4) review of the process for inviting participants to the Scientific Committee. Contracting Governments were requested to provide input to the ICG by submitting comments on the four issues described above.

The ICG's report (IWC/M09/5) was submitted to the March 2009 intersessional meeting of the Commission held in Rome. Sixteen countries responded to the request for comments. From the responses received, there was general agreement that the Scientific Committee worked effectively and that its processes were sound, but that ways should be investigated to: (a) further identify the advantages and disadvantages of separating the annual meeting of the Scientific Committee and make recommendations; (b) further identify ways to improve communication between the Scientific Committee and the Commission and make recommendations; (c) facilitate the participation of suitably qualified scientists from developing countries in the priority work of the Scientific Committee and to ensure that the priority work included issues relevant to a broad range of countries and make recommendations; and (d) facilitate capacity building for scientists in developing countries with respect to cetacean conservation and science and make recommendations. After reviewing the ICG's report, during which there was support in particular for separating the meetings of the Scientific Committee and the Commission, the Commission agreed that the Scientific and Finance and Administration Committees should, at their meetings at IWC/61 in 2009, review the issues raised in the report and forward their recommendations to the Commission who would establish a small group to continue the work.

The Scientific Committee's comments at IWC/61 on the ICG report are summarised in sections below. The F&A Committee did not have time to adequately consider the financial and administrative implications of the ICG's report and requested the Secretariat to develop proposed terms of reference for the small group who would continue the work up to IWC/62. The Commission subsequently agreed the following terms of reference for a joint Scientific and Finance and Administration working group on Scientific Committee matters:

- (1) To build upon the discussions and progress made by the ICG, the Scientific Committee and the Finance and Administration Committee;
- (2) To examine further the financial, logistical and other implications of the discussions of:
 - a. Separating the annual meeting of the Scientific Committee and the Commission;
 - b. Ways to increase the participation of scientists from developing countries in the work of the Scientific Committee;
 - c. Ways to improve knowledge and technical capability of scientists from developing countries to enable them to contribute to the work of the Scientific Committee and conservation and management issues within their region;
 - d. A review of the process for inviting participants to the Scientific Committee;
 - e. To consider other relevant documents from the 2009 Annual Meeting (e.g. IWC/61/8rev¹)
- (3) To provide a discussion document for the Commission at the 2010 Annual Meeting, including a full analysis of financial implications, and where appropriate making recommendations to the Commission.

¹ Australian comment on the Intersessional Correspondence Group on issues relating to the Scientific Committee.

The Group was to work by correspondence and its composition was to be arranged by the Chair of the Commission.

Unfortunately due to pressures of work resulting from the intersessional meetings related to discussions on the future of the IWC since IWC/61 last year, the Joint Working Group was never established. This document has therefore been prepared by the Secretariat as a basis for discussion by the Commission at IWC/62. It has the following sections:

- Section 2: Separating the Annual Meeting of the Scientific Committee and the Commission;
- Section 3: Increasing the participation of developing country scientists in the Scientific Committee's work and building capacity in their regions;
- Section 4: Reviewing the process for inviting participants to the Scientific Committee;
- Section 5: Summary and suggestions/recommendations.

2. SEPARATING THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND THE COMMISSION

In recent discussions, whether in the Scientific Committee, other subsidiary bodies of the Commission, or in the Commission itself, there has been agreement that the Committee should continue to meet annually given its current workload. Support has also been expressed, particularly by members of the Commission, for the separation of the meetings of Scientific Committee and the Commission. During discussions, the main benefits foreseen from this separation were that this would:

- Allow more time for editorial work to finalise the Committee's report and to develop an Executive Summary that would explain the background to discussions as well as the most recent discussions themselves. Both of these activities would help to improve the communication between the Scientific Committee and the Commission (and make the Committee's report more accessible to all, including the general public).
- Allow more time for Contracting Governments to consider the report of the Scientific Committee before Commission meetings thus providing for better informed discussions and decisions. Time would be available to allow Commissioners to consult with their national scientists and other experts on the Committee's report and for well-informed consultations with government decision-makers.

The main perceived disadvantages identified in separating the meetings were:

- the possibility that the participation of some scientists would be precluded if the Scientific Committee meeting is held during peak research periods – this therefore is an issue of timing;
- the potential for alternative views challenging the findings of the Scientific Committee coming forward independently for consideration by the Commission;
- the potential for the confidentiality of the Scientific Committee's report to be compromised;
- an increase in logistical work and costs for the Secretariat in having to arrange two separate large meetings possibly in different venues and countries; and
- the potential that extra costs might be incurred by the Secretariat (and therefore the Commission) and by Contracting Governments who currently send scientists to meetings of both the Scientific Committee and the annual meeting of Commissioners.

These perceived disadvantages are explored further in the sections below.

2.1 Timing of the Scientific Committee and Commission meetings to enable appropriate participation

At IWC/61 last year, the Scientific Committee stressed that should the Commission decide to separate its meeting from that of the Commission, careful consideration needed to be given to the timing of the Committee meeting so as to avoid peak research periods. While it is of course dependent on the nature of the research and species involved, in the Northern Hemisphere the peak period is between June and September (the Alaska bowhead surveys occur earlier, from April to May) while in the Southern Hemisphere it is from around November to March. Given that a number of scientists have academic teaching responsibilities, it is also important to schedule meetings such that the attendance of these scientists, many of whom provide key expertise to the work of the Committee and of the Commission, is also not precluded. The Committee has noted that the current timing, May/June is feasible for all of its scientists. The timing of the Scientific Committee will determine the timing of the meeting of the Commission and its other subsidiary bodies. Suggestions from

countries providing input to the ICG process were that a period of between 2 and 5 months between the Scientific Committee meeting and the Commission meeting would be required to allow for the necessary consideration of and consultation on the Committee's report and the preparation of any proposed amendments to the Schedule and/or Rules of Procedure and the submission of draft Resolutions, all of which now require 60-days notice (see Commission Rules of Procedure J.1 and R.1).

On further reflection, if there is to be a separation, then a gap of only 2 months between the end of one meeting and the start of the next is probably not sufficient, while 5 months is probably unnecessary (and see Item 2.2. below). A gap of 3-4 months would seem more appropriate. If the Scientific Committee continues to meet in May/June, this would suggest that the Commission could meet in or after September. Clearly, careful consideration also needs to be given to the timing of the meetings of the Commission and its other subsidiary groups so as to avoid clashes with the meetings of other IGOs and bodies with whom there may be an overlap of participants. Input from Contracting Governments on where clashes should be avoided would be very useful.

It is important that account should be taken of the Scientific Committee's request that it be given advanced warning of *at least* one meeting of any change to scheduling. This is especially important if its meeting were to take place earlier than as at present as this will affect its ability to complete proposed intersessional tasks on time; e.g. with respect to the strict timetable for RMP *Implementations*.

2.2 The potential for alternative views challenging the findings of the Scientific Committee

Input to the ICG and discussions within the Scientific Committee last year identified that separating the Committee and Commission meetings might lead to additional analyses being undertaken subsequent to the Scientific Committee meeting and being presented directly to the Commission without the Committee's ability to comment on such analyses. It was noted that the longer the gap between meetings, the greater the likelihood of additional analyses being presented to the Commission.

It may be appropriate for a rule of procedure to be developed to prevent such situations arising.

2.3 Confidentiality of the Scientific Committee report

Currently Commission Rule of Procedure Q.1 regarding confidentiality applies to the report of the Scientific Committee, i.e.:

1. Reports of meetings of all committees, sub-committees and working groups of the Commission are confidential (i.e. reporting of discussions, conclusions and recommendations made during a meeting is prohibited) until the opening plenary session of the Commission meeting to which they are submitted, or in the case of intersessional meetings, until after they have been dispatched by the Secretary to Contracting Governments and Commissioners. This applies equally to member governments and observers. Such reports, with the exception of the report of the Finance and Administration Committee, shall be distributed to Commissioners, Contracting Governments and accredited observers at the same time. Procedures applying to the Scientific Committee are contained in its Rules of Procedure E.5.(a) and E.5.(b)².

When providing input to the ICG, most governments commented that the confidentiality rules would need to be changed if the meeting of the Scientific Committee and Commission were to be separated (e.g. to follow the current rule for intersessional meetings) and many questioned the need for confidentiality. Reasons given in the past for requiring confidentiality have included: the need for Commissioners to receive the report first as they are the responsible body and the need to avoid manipulation or misrepresentation of the Committee's work.

Given the general support for increased transparency that has arisen out of the discussions on the future of the organisation a review of the need for confidentiality of the Committee's report may be timely. One practical option would be to extend the rule concerning intersessional workshops to the annual Scientific Committee report i.e. it remains 'confidential until it has been dispatched by the Secretary to the full Committee, Commissioners and Contracting Governments.

2.4 Logistical and workload implications

2.4.1 Pre- and post meeting arrangements

FOR THE SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat believes that if the meetings of the Scientific Committee and Commission were separated in time and held in different countries, the workload involved in arranging for the meetings (e.g. in relation to site visits of potential venues, discussions with the host government, arranging for audio-visual equipment, photocopiers, computers, freight, liaison with the travel agency regarding hotels) would be double that currently involved. If the meetings were held in the same country, the workload would be higher than at present, but probably not double since it should be possible to deal with some service providers only once.

² Note that Scientific Committee Rules of Procedure E.5(a) and (b) deal with other procedural matters, not confidentiality.

Currently most of the pre-meeting arrangements are done by one member of staff who works (or tries to work) part-time. The member of staff involved nominally works full time for the period February to July and part-time during the period August to March³. However, this year given the many intersessional meetings that have been held (for which logistical support in meeting preparation has been needed) the member of staff has been required to work full time. Clearly, if the Scientific Committee and Commission meetings are separated, this will have quite significant implications to the work of the Secretariat.

An inconvenience caused by separation of the meetings would be that for each meeting, up to 2 weeks needs to be allowed at either end of each meeting for the transfer of freight to and from the venue. If both meetings were to be held at the same venue, the possibility of leaving some equipment on site after the Scientific Committee meeting finishes could be explored with the likelihood of reducing freight costs (although storage costs may be incurred).

FOR HOST GOVERNMENTS

If a government were to host both the Scientific Committee and Commission meetings, separation of the meetings would increase its workload. If the Scientific Committee and Commission meetings were hosted by different governments the Secretariat anticipates that workload for each in preparing the meetings would be somewhat less than at present.

2.4.2 Servicing the meeting(s)

FOR THE SECRETARIAT

While the staff members who would be needed at both meetings would incur more travel days, the overall duration of both meetings would be similar to at present, since three working days are allowed between the end of the Scientific Committee meeting and the beginning of the sub-group week. One of these days is set aside for the meeting of the convenors of the Scientific Committee sub-committees to complete sub-committee reports, and to discuss the draft agenda and Committee structure for the following year. The following two days are used for preparation of the Scientific Committee report and preparation for the subsequent meetings. If the Scientific Committee meeting was separated from the Commission meeting, the convenors' meeting would still be needed and perhaps another day for the Head of Science and the Chair to work together but the Scientific Committee report could be finalised at the Secretariat's offices in Cambridge. The fact that a large number of paper copies would not be required will of course bring (significant) cost savings since it would reduce the length of time for which copying machines would need to be hired. It will also ultimately save on paper (assuming that governments and observers would print off their own copies once the report was finalised and placed on the IWC website).

It may also be possible to reduce slightly the overall number of staff that are required to travel to meetings.

FOR HOST GOVERNMENTS

For governments hosting only the Scientific Committee or only the Commission, the workload for servicing the meeting would be less than at present, while for governments hosting both, the workload would remain similar or might be slightly greater.

2.5 Financial implications

2.5.1 Costs

Separating the Scientific Committee meeting from that of the Commission will increase meeting costs, principally through increased freight and Secretariat travel costs as explained in 2.4 above. It is difficult to predict the level of any increase since the costs for these items can vary quite dramatically from year to year⁴ but these costs would be significant. Such increases might be offset by the Commission and its other sub-groups (Conservation Committee, Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Sub-committee etc.) moving to meeting every two years as has been under discussion for a number of years and as is included in the Proposed Consensus Document to Improve the Conservation of Whales from the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Commission (IWC/62/7rev). However, it has also been suggested as part of the proposed Consensus Decision (IWC/62/7rev) that other Committees than the Scientific Committee may need to meet annually – this of course has important cost implications and may, if most or all met annually, negate most of the cost savings of moving to biennial meetings.

Savings against computer costs (for the Secretariat office on location) could be made if the Commission purchases dedicated computers which could be used for 2-3 years before needing to be replaced. Currently such costs are in the order of £10,000 per meeting.

³ About 65% of his time is spent on Annual Meeting preparations.

⁴ Freight costs for IWC/58 (St. Kitts and Nevis), 59 (Anchorage), 60 (Chile) and 61 (Madeira) were around £27k, £26k, £57k and £51k respectively. Secretariat travel costs (economy class) for the same meetings were £13k, £17k, £14k, and £4k.

Costs will increase marginally (i.e. through increased travel costs) for those Contracting Governments whose scientists attend the meetings of both the Scientific Committee and the Commission.

2.5.2 Budget provision

The longstanding practice of the Commission is that, irrespective of the actual or proposed location of the venue of an Annual Meeting, the budget provision is based on the costs of running an Annual Meeting at a 'generic' venue in the United Kingdom. When a meeting is held outside the UK at the invitation of a Contracting Government, it is understood that any costs additional to those budgeted will be met by the host Government unless the Commission has specifically agreed to some other arrangement, or the host Government's invitation includes covering all (or a very substantial portion) of the costs. The Commission has known for many years that the current level of budgetary provision for the Annual Meeting would not be sufficient to cover the costs of an Annual Meeting in the UK and that in recent years, host Governments have incurred additional expenses (which in some cases were significant). This matter was last explored at IWC/58 in 2006 when the Secretariat prepared a paper for the F&A Committee, i.e. IWC/58/F&A 7: Review of the budget provision for Annual Meetings. The Secretariat estimated that the real cost of hosting an Annual Meeting in the UK based on 2006 prices would be between £530,000 and £771,000, i.e. 1.6 to 2.4 times higher than the provision for 2006 (which was £326,000). However, given that offers were still forthcoming from Contracting Governments to host meetings despite money allocated from IWC being insufficient to cover all meeting costs, the Commission agreed not to increase the budget provision.

With respect to the separation of the Scientific Committee from the Commission, some thought will need to be given to how the budget provision would be allocated between the two meetings. If the meetings are of roughly the same length of time, it may be easiest to simply divide the provision equally between the two.

2.6 Other

When the possibility of separating the Scientific Committee meeting from that of the Commission was discussed by the Budgetary Sub-committee at IWC/60 in 2008, some concern was expressed as to whether Contracting Governments would wish to host the Scientific Committee meeting rather than the plenary and if not, whether it might be necessary to host these meetings in the UK. Clearly if no Government issued an invitation, the Secretariat would need to arrange for the meeting to be held somewhere, but from input to the ICG and discussions within the Scientific Committee and elsewhere, strong support has been given to moving the location of the Scientific Committee to different countries to facilitate attendance by local/regional scientists (see also section 3). The disadvantage of the Secretariat having to arrange for meetings, whether of the Scientific Committee or the Commission, in the absence of offers from Contracting Governments, is that the budget allocation (if continued at the current level), is likely to be insufficient regardless of where meetings are held (as indicated in section 2.5.2).

3. INCREASING THE PARTICIPATION OF DEVELOPING COUNTRY SCIENTISTS IN THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE'S WORK AND BUILDING CAPACITY IN THEIR REGIONS

Finding ways to increase the participation of scientists from developing countries in the work of the Scientific Committee (Term of Reference 2(b)) and ways to improve the knowledge and technical capability of scientists from developing countries to enable them to contribute to the work of the Scientific Committee and conservation and management issues within their region (Term of Reference 2(c)) are clearly linked and are addressed together in this section.

It is clear from the input to the ICG and from discussions of the Scientific Committee that there is a strong view that the primary function of the Committee is as an advisory body to the Commission rather than an education body. Nevertheless there is also clear support for measures to improve the scientific capability of cetacean researchers around the world, but particularly in developing countries, and to increase the participation of qualified scientists from developing countries in the work of the Scientific Committee.

With respect to participating in Scientific Committee meetings, in its discussions last year, the Committee stressed that if increased participation is through the invited participant process, then the current rules for selection should apply, i.e. the decision process is via the Committee Chair, Head of Science and convenors, taking into account priority topics on the Committee's agenda. The rotation of the Scientific Committee meetings between regions is also seen as a way to encourage participation by scientists from countries which may not normally attend the Committee and also provide a regional focus for some of the sub-committee's work (e.g. whalewatching and small cetaceans). Noting the suggestion in the ICG report that selected scientists should attend a Scientific Committee seminar before attending a meeting for the first time, the Committee considered that this might be difficult but that the 'Scientific Committee Handbook' under development will be

a valuable briefing tool for new members. The Handbook is web-based and will include special sections on the Committee's work and key references. A draft Handbook is available on IWC's website at: http://www.iwcoffice.org/sci_com/handbook.htm.

With respect to capacity building, previous discussions centred on the use of regional workshops and the provision of various types of documentation. Last year the Scientific Committee noted *inter alia* that many of its members already participate in regional training workshops around the world and was of the view that such workshops may be the most effective way to build capacity in developing countries. Regarding documentation, the Secretariat is making arrangements for up to two libraries in developing country members to receive a complete set of IWC volumes and the *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management*. It is also investigating the costs involved in digitising all of the Scientific Committee papers for easier access. Initiatives such as that by France, who is developing a document, in French, that collates information on whale populations as a contribution towards improving communication within the IWC will also be useful material for capacity building.

The ability to address the issues above is dependent principally on the availability of appropriate human and financial resources. In this respect, it may be that savings made if the Commission meets every two years could provide an additional source of funding. Furthermore, the proposed Consensus Decision also includes an IWC Co-operation Programme which may provide an appropriate mechanism to support these activities.

4. REVIEWING THE PROCESS FOR INVITING PARTICIPANTS TO THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

The Terms of Reference for the ICG required that under this item it consider: (a) the objectives for inviting participants; (b) the reasons for the non-inclusion of IWC-funded participants on national delegations of developed countries; (c) the selection process and advice; and (d) financial aspects.

From input to the ICG and discussions within the Scientific Committee last year, there was general agreement that the primary purpose of invited participants is to assist the Committee in providing advice to the Commission on key issues, particularly when there is expected to be a shortfall in expertise from scientists on member country delegations. The Committee itself stressed that invited participants who receive IWC funding play an irreplaceable role in its work and represent exceptional value for money as they receive funds only for travel and subsistence. It is, however, sensitive to the need to improve the participation of scientists from developing countries (see section 3). Regarding the non-inclusion of IWC-funded participants on national delegations of developed countries, input to the ICG suggested that the reasons for this may be varied and included the right of governments to choose their own delegations and the right of scientists who are not government employees not to be bound by any conditions set by a particular government.

Finally, regarding the selection process for invited participants, input to the ICG showed general agreement that the current process was a good basis for any review should one be initiated. Some Governments did provide some suggestions as to how they felt the procedure might be improved. These included: (1) improved transparency in how invited participants are selected; (2) that while selection should reflect the priorities of the Commission the process should be sufficiently flexible to include new initiates; (3) that external sponsorship should be sought; and (4) that self-invited/self-funded participants should be kept to a minimum and identified separately to those participants receiving IWC funding. The Committee itself keeps its procedure for inviting participants under regular review. Last year the Scientific Committee noted that it undertook a major review of its process for inviting participants at its meeting in 2002 at which time a new rule was adopted that enabled invited participants from developing countries to become national delegates. The full rule of procedure for invited participants is very detailed and is Rule A6 of the Committee's rules.

Any further review of the process for inviting participants to the Scientific Committee should take note of the above.

5. SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Separating the meetings of the Scientific Committee and Commission

The potential benefits from separating the meetings of the Scientific Committee from the Commission (i.e. allowing more time for finalising the Committee's report, for developing an Executive Summary that would make the report accessible to all, for digesting the contents of the report and its recommendations and for enabling wider consultations to inform discussions and decision-making in the Commission) are important.

There are potential solutions to several of the perceived disadvantages. Those requiring further thought in particular are:

- (a) The timing of the Scientific Committee and Commission meetings and the time gap required between them;
- (b) The increased workload for the Secretariat in pre-meeting preparation;
- (c) The likely increase in costs;
- (d) The allocation of budget provision to the two meetings; and
- (e) The timing of when the meetings would be separated.

With respect to timing of the meetings, it is suggested that consideration be given to the Scientific Committee meeting in May and the Commission in September or October.

With respect to costs and workload for the Secretariat, it is difficult to predict with any certainty the real implications of the separation of the two meetings since these vary from year to year and from venue to venue. There inevitably will be a 'learning by doing' process. However, both costs and workload would be ameliorated should the Commission decide to meet every two years, although as noted earlier, if it is decided that additional Committees should meet more often this would not be the case. With regard to costs, of course, there would not be an increase for the Commission if governments continue to host meetings and agree to cover expenses above the budgeted allocation – in fact if the Scientific Committee and Commission meetings are hosted by different governments, the additional costs for each meeting would be less than if one government hosts both meetings and would share out the costs more widely among member governments. It is important to note that if no governments offer to host meetings, the increased cost to the Commission will be substantial. With regard to workload, it would assist the Secretariat greatly if decisions on venues could be made two years in advance. This would provide a more flexible time frame within which to complete the necessary preparatory work.

With respect to the allocation of the budget provision to the Scientific Committee and Commission meetings, it is suggested that if the meetings are of similar duration and until further information is available on actual costs, the simplest approach would be to divide the provision equally.

With respect to the timing of a separation of the meetings, it is suggested that this should not occur until after 2011. If the timing of the Scientific Committee remained as at present (May/June), separation of its meeting from that of the Commission already in 2011 would be feasible from the Committee's perspective, but would put significant pressure on the Secretariat from a logistical perspective.

Before moving ahead with separating the meetings, consideration needs to be given in particular to: (i) the confidentiality of the Scientific Committee report; (ii) a mechanism to avoid the situation where additional analyses are undertaken subsequent to the Scientific Committee meeting and presented directly to the Commission without the Committee's ability to comment on such analyses; and (iii) the procedure for finalising the Scientific Committee report and the structure and content of any Executive Summary. Items (i) and (ii) could be addressed by revisions to or new Rules of Procedure.

With respect to the confidentiality of the Scientific Committee report, it is suggested that the Commission consider applying the same rules as currently applied to reports from intersessional meetings, i.e. the report would be confidential until dispatched to Contracting Governments and Commissioners. This, however, would require that the report (but not necessarily any Executive Summary) is made available soon after the end of the Scientific Committee meeting.

Considerably more thought would need to be given to (ii). For example, while a strict Rule of Procedure may appear to be the solution, if outside bodies produce reports (that if correct may have important consequences) and make these public, considerable pressure may be put on the Commission to consider them.

With respect to the procedure for finalising the Scientific Committee report and the structure and content of any Executive Summary, it is suggested that the Commission consider establishing a small working group comprising the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Scientific Committee, the Head of Science and the Advisory Committee to develop proposals.

5.2 Improving the involvement of developing countries in the work of the Commission and in regional cetacean conservation and management activities

This is a challenging area to address and is dependent particularly on the availability of appropriate human and financial resources. It is also an issue included in the discussions on the future of the organisation. Several aspects related to the Scientific Committee have been discussed above. It would seem appropriate for the Commission to establish a small working group to address this issue in more depth. It could also be placed on the agendas of the other Commission Committees and Working Groups to obtain their input.