

Options for agreeing a budget in the situation where the Commission meets after the start of the Financial Year

The Secretariat

At IWC/63 in 2011 the Commission endorsed an F&A Committee recommendation that in principle the meetings of the Scientific Committee and Commission be separated by a period of 100 days or longer. The timing of the Scientific Committee would remain fixed in its current window of mid-May to mid-June, and the Commission would meet in September/October.

The Commission's Financial Year runs from 1 September to 31 August. Thus if the Commission meets in September/October it will be required to approve a budget for a financial period which has already commenced.

The Budgetary Sub-committee may wish to discuss the acceptability of the timing difference. Possible solutions include:

- 1) Making a recommendation that because the period of time is likely to amount to only two months that the timing difference is acceptable. However this will mean that invoices for Contracting Government fees could not be prepared until after the Commission has met, and so in practice would be sent to Contracting Governments in October, two months later than at present. The due date would remain as end of February, as at present.
- 2) Alternatively the BSC may wish to recommend that the Commission changes the timing of its financial year to coincide with the calendar year (1 January to 31 December). This would allow the Commission to agree a budget in advance of the financial year, and may also assist many Contracting Governments whose financial year is also coincidental with the calendar year.

If the BSC does wish to recommend a change to the timing of the Financial Year it may be appropriate to request the Secretariat to prepare a brief paper indicating the changes required to the Financial Regulations and identifying options for dealing with the transitional 16 month period. The BSC should also advise the Secretariat on how to act at the start of the 2013/14 financial year, before a change of financial year dates could be agreed and enacted.