

Guidelines for administration of funding from the Voluntary Assistance Fund to facilitate Governments in Capacity to Pay Groups 1 and 2 that are not EU Member States or members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development to participate fully in the work of the Commission

Introduction

The purpose of the Voluntary Assistance Fund is to facilitate Governments in Capacity to Pay Groups 1 and 2 that are not EU Member States or members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development to participate fully in the work of the Commission.

1. Definitions

Capacity to Pay Groups 1 and 2 – means the groups identified by the Commission in calculating the financial contributions from each Contracting Government.

Voluntary Assistance Fund to facilitate eligible Governments in Capacity to Pay Groups 1 and 2 to Participate fully in the Work of the Commission (“Voluntary Assistance Fund”) – means the fund of the same name identified in IWC Financial Regulation C(1)(f) and Appendix 4.

2. Eligibility

Eligible countries are Contracting Governments in Capacity to Pay Groups 1 and 2 that are not in arrears and are not European Union Member States or members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, (hereinafter eligible Groups 1 and 2 Governments). In any given year, the categorization of Groups 1 to 4 will be taken from the most recent Commission Circular allocating Contracting Governments to capacity to pay groups.

Funds provided to eligible Governments under the Voluntary Assistance Fund must be used for the purposes identified in each respective application.

Contracting Governments may request funds relating to travel and subsistence for full participation in IWC meetings and activities including capacity building exercises, scientific research, and conservation and welfare activities.

For the purpose of these guidelines, full participation entails that a sponsored delegate from the eligible Contracting Government:

- Takes forward the work of the Commission as an officer of the IWC or its subsidiary bodies; as a member of the Bureau; as a member of an IWC Working Group or subsidiary body; by making a presentation; or by reporting back from one of those bodies; or
- Attends an IWC activity for the purposes of training and capacity building for the benefit of the Contracting Government.

Funds from the Voluntary Assistance Fund may not be used to pay salaries of Contracting Government employees or payment of Contracting Governments’ annual subscriptions and other financial contributions.

If funds are requested for travel to IWC meetings, allocations from the Fund will be in accordance with the lesser of the amount provided for in the International Civil Service Commission’s Daily Subsistence Allowance and UN travel rules, or the amount provided for in the domestic rules of the eligible Groups 1 and 2 Governments, so that all sponsored delegates receive fair and consistent treatment from the IWC.

Requests shall be limited to funding necessary for the attendance of one member of the delegation per eligible Groups 1 and 2 Government at each meeting. The participant must be an official member of the Contracting Government delegation.

3. Application process

The Secretariat shall notify Contracting Governments no less than 180 days in advance of the meeting of the dates and venues of Commission meetings.

Applications for funding from the Voluntary Assistance Fund must be received 90 days before the date on which the activities to be funded are expected to occur.

Applications for travel to a meeting or event shall include a budget based on the lesser of the amount provided for in the International Civil Service Commission's Daily Subsistence Allowance and UN travel rules, or the amount provided for in the domestic rules of the eligible Groups 1 and 2 Governments.

Applications for funding from the Voluntary Assistance Fund must specify:

- the activities to be funded;
- estimated travel costs including air fare and per diem expenses;
- if the application is for travel to a meeting or event, the total number of delegates eligible Groups 1 and 2 Government will be sending to that meeting or event;
- if the application is for capacity building, scientific research, and conservation and welfare activities, how those activities contribute to IWC work plans;
- the applicant's experience, qualifications, and expected contribution to that meeting or event;
- declaration of interest, i.e. any funding or support received from elsewhere; and
- that the applicant eligible Groups 1 and 2 Government has determined the amount of expenses to be accurate.

Application forms will be made available through the IWC website and applications should be sent to secretariat@iwc.int

Where funds have been requested for travel to IWC meetings, based on the funding available and the prioritisation procedure set out below, the Secretariat will prepare a list of sponsored delegates. The final list of delegates that may be supported will be dependent upon the funds raised and funding is not guaranteed for all eligible countries. Delegates will be notified at least 30 days before the meeting whether or not they will receive funding from the Voluntary Assistance Fund.

4. Disbursement of funds

Where funds have been requested for travel to IWC meetings, upon approval of an application consistent with Section 3 above, the Secretariat will hold the funds until such time as each respective Government provides instructions to the Secretariat to effect the payment. Upon receipt of instruction from each respective Government, the Secretariat will purchase travel tickets as previously determined in each respective application. The Daily Subsistence Allowance and terminal expenses will be disbursed, based on actual presence and actual receipts respectively, after closure of the meeting.

Where funds have been requested for purposes other than travel to IWC meetings, the Secretariat will disburse funds in a timely manner to the Government while ensuring adequate oversight of all disbursements.

5. Prioritisation

In the event of a shortfall in funding to support the participation of all eligible Groups 1 and 2 Governments, the prioritisation process below shall be followed:

The following principles shall be applied to the allocation of funding from the Fund: i.

Eligibility (section 2 above)

ii. Priority for eligible Group 1 Governments

iii. Balanced representation of a range of views and interests

iv. Balanced distribution across the activities of the IWC in line with the priorities identified by the Commission; and

v. Consideration shall be given to provision of partial funding in order to maximise the number of funding recipients.

At any time in applying these criteria, the Secretariat may seek advice from the Chair and Bureau in order to support a funding decision.

6. Reporting

The Secretariat will provide a progress update to each Commission meeting on work to support countries of limited means to participate in the work of the Commission, including administration of the Voluntary Assistance Fund. The Secretariat will also report on the criteria used to allocate the Voluntary Assistance Fund, including any amendments needed in the event of a shortfall of Funds.

