



MINUTES SSC/2020/33
August 13, 2020
11:00 AM EDT - Via Zoom Conference Call

Participants:

Dr Tammy Warren, Commission Acting Chair
Mr Frederico Cardigos, Commissioner
Prof Stephen de Mora, Commissioner
Sen Wilfred Moore, Commissioner
Prof Howard Roe, Commissioner
Mr Mark Spalding, Commissioner
Dr David Freestone, Executive Secretary
Ms Teresa Mackey, SSC Secretariat
(Apologies, Mrs Rochelle Newbold, Commissioner)

1. Minutes of 18 June 2020 Meeting (MOS/SSC/2020/32)
 - Approved.

2. **Executive Secretary** presented an update of Work Programme implementation to-date:
 - 1.1. Signatories
 - The second virtual Signatories call was held on July 29. The USA suggested that the Signatories convene an internal working group to review their rules of procedure. The USA, UK, Canada, Bahamas, and the Azores agreed to collaborate on a first draft which will be shared with the Commission for comment.
 - Tess circulated the Sargasso Sea Commission rules of procedure to the Commissioners for their information.

 - 1.2. Commission
 - **Commissioners Warren, Moore, and Cardigos'** terms are expiring this year and all were eligible for re-appointment. Dr Warren and Mr Cardigos were re-nominated by their respective governments and Senator Moore received the

support of Canada after he self-nominated. Comments on the nominees are due from the Signatories and Collaborating Partners to the Executive Secretary by 30 September. Then the files and result of the consultation will be passed to the Government of Bermuda, which is responsible for making the appointments.

1.3. Secretariat

- Nothing to report.

1.4. Collaborating Partners

- The University of Exeter Global Systems Institute is the latest Collaborating Partner. The Secretariat also had a productive meeting with Dr Carlton Watson, Dean of Pure and Applied Science of the University of the Bahamas and extended them an invitation to become a Collaborating Partner.

1.5. Fisheries

- **The Executive Secretary** has been in contact with the Secretariat of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) and has drafted an MOU which is currently being considered by the NAFO Council.
- **Laurie Kell and Brian Luckhurst** participated in the SCRS Ecosystem Subcommittee, which was held virtually from 4-6 May. They gave a presentation on their work developing ecosystem indicators, and submitted a number of papers which were circulated to the Commission and will be posted on the SSC website. Currently due to COVID-19 concerns, the ICCAT SCRS and Commission meetings initially scheduled for this fall are canceled.
- **Commissioner Warren** recommended that the Secretariat contact UK DEFRA about the Commission's ICCAT work, and will share a contact.

1.6 Shipping

- Nothing noted.

1.6. Sea Bed

- The MoU between the Secretariats of the International Seabed Authority and the SSC has been finalized and signed by both parties. The **Executive Secretary** noted that this was a Secretariat to Secretariat MOU that related to collaboration on information exchange etc. There is no agreed internal process for these, which have been seen as part of the executive functions of the Secretariat.

1.7. Migratory Species

- The SSC has supported the development of a "zero draft" of the European Eel Single Species Action plan (that was authorised by the CMS COP in February 2020). It has been circulated to the Range States for comment The Secretariat is working with the CMS Secretariat to plan a series of virtual meetings with

regional groups to discuss the zero draft action plan. Both the EU Commission and the Government of Sweden have expressed interest in joining Monaco in supporting this process.

1.8. Finance and Fundraising Report

- The Secretariat shared a presentation of the funding and budget for the Secretariat over the past five years with the Commissioners.
- The contribution agreement with the Department of Fisheries & Oceans Canada to provide \$118K CAD of operational funding to the Secretariat this fiscal year ended in March 2020. The Secretariat have had very positive discussions with DFO staff about a renewal.
- Thanks to support from the French biodiversity agency (AGF), the French **Global Environment Facility (FFEM)** is currently considering a joint proposal from the Sargasso Sea Commission and the Costa Rica Thermal Dome project, with the Ocean University in Brest, for a 3 million Euro grant over 5 years. The final proposal received a favourable review from the Scientific and Technical Committee in September and the FFEM Steering Committee in November 2019. The Secretariat has been working on the appraisal stage with the FFEM consultants, who will be assisting with writing the final project document.
- The Secretariat expects that the final document for approval by the FFEM Steering Committee will be ready in September 2020, with contracts to be signed thereafter (possibly in October/November). It is proposed that the FFEM grant agreement will be signed with SSPI, Inc. (the nonprofit arm of the Secretariat) and then passed to IUCN for implementation as usual. The Executive Secretary noted that c 240,000 EUR over five years was built into the FFEM proposal to support staff time.
- The “Common Oceans” Programmatic Proposal for ABNJ was approved by the GEF Secretariat during their GEF Council Meeting from 2-3 June. This included a \$3m allocation to the Sargasso Sea. UNDP has appointed the International Oceanographic Commission (IOC) as the Executing Agency for the Sargasso Sea Project and IOC will receive a \$100k Project Preparation Grant (PPG) from GEF. This PPG will allow the IOC to hire consultants to prepare the final project document to be sent for GEF CEO approval within 12 months from the time of GEF Council approval.

1.9. Mapping and Monitoring

- Nothing noted.

1.10 Communications

- The Secretariat Programme Manager, **Ms Tess Mackey**, reported that the latest edition of the newsletter was released during World Oceans Week. Commissioners are encouraged to submit photos and blurbs of recent

happenings to the newsletter. The next edition will be released in early September.

- The Odyssey Connect “Hackathon” now renamed Momentum has been moved to a fully virtual format, and will be held 13-15 November, with a number of preparatory meetings first. We have connected the organizers with JP Rouja and Andrew Stevenson about media and communications for the event.

3. Any Other Business

- Several of the Commissioners and Secretariat staff have attended webinars on the topic of Sargassum recently. Commissioners agreed based on updated Sargassum research that the Commission may need to tweak their messaging on the issue. The Commission has signed on as a member of the Sargassum Information Hub, and is updating their website to include a revised “Great Atlantic Sargassum Belt” page. Commissioner Spalding mentioned that Ben Scheelk at The Ocean Foundation is working on a project on Sargassum in the Dominican Republic, and the Secretariat will schedule a call with him to discuss.

4. Date of Next Meeting

- As agreed on the call, the next SSC meeting will be **September 23 at 11 AM EDT.**