



MINUTES SSC/2021/38

April 21, 2021

11:00 AM EDT - Via Zoom Conference Call

Participants:

Dr Tammy Warren, Commission Acting Chair

Prof Stephen de Mora, Commissioner

Sen Wilfred Moore, Commissioner

Mr Mark Spalding, Commissioner

Prof Howard Roe, Commissioner

Dr David Freestone, Executive Secretary

Ms Teresa Mackey, SSC Secretariat

(Apologies, Mrs Rochelle Newbold, Commissioner)

1. Minutes of 16 March 2021 (SSC/2021/37)

- Approved.

2. **Executive Secretary** presented an update of Work Programme implementation to-date:

1.1. Signatories

- A virtual Signatories meeting was held on April 1. Lead GEF Consultant **David Vousden** gave a brief update presentation on the progress on the full GEF project document. He reviewed the Table of Contents that outlines all the sections and annexes that are required for the project document. Much has already been completed by himself, the SSC Secretariat, and other consultants. The deadline for project document submission is June 2021, however due to COVID-19 there is an optional 3-month extension should we need it. David Vousden hopes to circulate these documents to the Signatories for comment in May 2021. There will also be a validation workshop held to finalize the full project document.
- The Signatories previously decided to convene a working group to review and update the rules of procedure to clarify roles, responsibilities, and communications of among the Secretariat, Commission, and Signatories. The working group has met and are collaborating on a first draft revision, and the next step will be continued revisions and sharing a draft with the

Commission for comment before the Signatories take a final decision and adopt.

1.2. Commission

- The terms of two Commission members (**Commissioners Mark Spalding and Stephen de Mora**) will be expiring in 2021. Both are eligible for reappointment this year and have expressed interest in continuing to serve on the Commission if reappointed. The Executive Secretary opened the call for nominations at the end of March 2021. **Commissioner Frederico Cardigos** has also resigned as a Commissioner due to his new position with the Portuguese Ministry of the Sea, so one additional seat on the Commission is eligible to be filled this year. The Commission would like to thank **Commissioner Cardigos** for his years of service, and congratulate him on his new position.
- The Executive Secretary circulated the invitation for nominations to fill the vacancies. Nominations should be sent to the Executive Secretary from the participating governments, through their focal point, by 31 May 2021. By 15 June 2021 the Secretariat will inform the Signatories and Collaborating Partners of the list of nominees and their full nomination packages and request written feedback by 30 July, 2021. In the light of any comments received, the Government of Bermuda will announce the initial Commission appointments after approval by the Bermuda Cabinet.

1.3. Secretariat

- Nothing noted.

1.4. Collaborating Partners

- The Secretariat has sent a draft MoU to REV Ocean for their review.
- The SSPI Board had reviewed the Mission Blue champion agreement, which was revised by the Mission Blue legal team, and unanimously agreed to sign the agreement. Programme Manager Tess Mackey is following up with their communications team on the “re-launch” of the Sargasso Sea Hope Spot.
- The **Executive Secretary**, with support from **Commissioner Newbold**, is in discussions regarding an MOU with the University of The Bahamas. They have sent a signed draft, which was circulated to the Commission prior to this meeting. Commissioners present unanimously agreed that the Executive Secretary should sign the MOU.

1.5. Fisheries

- **The Executive Secretary** has drafted a Secretariat to Secretariat MOU with the Secretariat of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) which is currently being considered by the NAFO Parties. No response is

expected till mid-2021. The Executive Secretary will also follow up with NAFO about the trawling ban extension for the northern seamounts.

- The virtual ICCAT SCRS is scheduled for May 2021, and Laurie Kell and Brian Luckhurst plan to attend. **Commissioner Warren** reminded that contact needs to be made with the UK FCO about the delegation; and will be following up.

1.6 Shipping

- The Secretariat and invited experts have had further meetings with CEVEN-protect, the winners of the Odyssey Momentum challenge. The project proposal is still being assessed and fine-tuned to decide it is ready for the next stage of the Odyssey process – Odyssey Ignite.

1.6. Sea Bed

- Nothing noted.

1.7. Migratory Species

- The SSC has supported the development of a “zero draft” of the European Eel Single Species Action plan, which was authorised by the CMS COP 13 in India in February 2020. It was circulated to the Range States for comment. The Secretariat has engaged Dr Matt Gollock as a consultant and 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.
- As part of the 2020-21 DFO contribution agreement, the Secretariat is in discussions with DFO about a virtual American eel workshop to be held in May 2021.

1.8 Finance and Fundraising Report

- The Commission would like to express its thanks to Angel Braestrup and the Curtis & Edith Munson Foundation board for the renewal of their grant of \$25,000 USD.
- The contribution agreement with the Department of Fisheries & Oceans Canada was finalized to provide \$165K CAD of operational funding to the Secretariat the current fiscal year ended in March 2021.
- The final project document was approved by the FFEM Steering Committee in December 2020, with contracts to be signed in early 2021. Implementation partners will include BIOS, Duke, and Imperial College London. The first meeting of the FFEM project core team was held last month. The project has been named SARGADOM.
- 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. IOC as the Executing Agency received a \$100k Project Preparation Grant (PPG) from GEF. The IOC has now hired David Vousden as the lead consultant to prepare the final project document to be sent for GEF CEO approval within 12 months from the time of GEF Council approval. Additional consultants are being hired to assist Dr Vousden. There is also an optional 3 month extension due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.8. Mapping and Monitoring

- Global Fishing Watch held a private demo of their new Global Marine Reserves tool for the SSC Secretariat and invited experts.

1.10 Communications

- The Secretariat Programme Manager, **Ms Tess Mackey**, encouraged Commissioners to submit photos and blurbs of recent happenings to the newsletter. Tess Mackey, the SSC Programme Manager, reported that the Commission has a growing social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. The latest edition of the newsletter was released to commemorate the 7th anniversary of the signing of the Hamilton Declaration on March 11.
- Tess Mackey also collaborated on an article with Mission Blue featuring the Sargasso Sea Hope Spot and the Commission's work, which was released last month. The Secretariat also submitted an article of the UN Ocean Decade special edition of ECO Magazine in partnership with IOC-UNESCO, which is scheduled to be published in May 2021.

3. Any Other Business

4. Date of Next Meeting

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