



**MINUTES SSC/2021/41**

**October 13<sup>th</sup>, 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 Ana Colaço, Commissioner**

**Dr David Freestone, Executive Secretary**

**Fae Sapsford, SSC Secretariat**

**Absent – Mrs Rochelle Newbold, Commissioner**

1. Minutes of August 25<sup>th</sup> 2021 (SSC/2021/40)
  - Further edits needed before publicizing
2. The **Executive Secretary** welcomed the newest commissioner appointment, **Commissioner Colaço**, and welcomed back **Commissioner Spalding** and **Commissioner De Mora**, who had been appointed for third terms. The Commissioners exchanged introductions.
3. **Executive Secretary** presented an update of Work Programme implementation to-date:
  - 1.1. Collaborating partners
    - Nothing to report
  - 1.2. Fisheries
    - The **Executive Secretary** reported that Dr. Laurie Kell took part in the ICCAT eco-card sub-group meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of October, 2021. **Commissioner Warren** noted that it was not an official ICCAT intersessional meeting, and that the work on ecosystems began in Spring '21. She reported that they were supportive of the DPSIR model. The

**Executive Secretary** reported that the Secretariat had scheduled a meeting with the SSCF ICCAT subgroup next week in order to discuss the meeting.

- The **Executive Secretary** reported through Dr. Brian Luckhurst the National Marine Fisheries service group, the Secretariat had been granted access to their fish tagging data. Initial questions about maintaining confidentiality of the data had been resolved. This data will be useful for the GEF project.
- The **Executive Secretary** reported that the NAFO restrictions on midwater demersal fishing and closure of the sea mounts in the Sargasso Sea had been extended to 2024. The NAFO Commission supported an MOU with the Sargasso Sea Commission, and it had been sent to their science group for further comments and to add detail.

1.3. Shipping

- Nothing noted.

1.4. Seabed

- Nothing noted.

1.5. Migratory species

- Nothing noted

1.6. Finance

- The **Executive Secretary** reported that the Secretariat had submitted a year-end report to the Munson Foundation on the \$25,000 grant received in January.
- The **Executive Secretary** reported the receipt of €20,000 (c \$23,000) from the Principality of Monaco. The Azores Government has also promised to give the Secretariat €25,000.

FFEM

- The **Executive Secretary** reported that the FFEM agreement has now been signed. The focus is now on finalizing the implementing partner agreements with BIOS, Duke and Imperial. The Executive Secretary reported that The University of Brest, a partner of the FFEM project, had agreed to sponsor a Marie Curie postdoc fellow. Their candidate is Francesca Santaniello. The fellowships are funded by the EU for outstanding women scholars. The Secretariat and other partner organizations met with her and made suggestions on her research proposal.
- The Executive Secretary reported that the Secretariat had commissioned NLA International to produce a report on the challenges and opportunities

presented by the possible use of “Big Data” and Artificial Intelligence systems for the management and conservation of high seas ecosystems.

- This was made possible by a Swedish grant given to IUCN for 400,000 kroner, or c\$45,000 USD, which IUCN made available to the Commission. The Secretariat held a kick off meeting for the report on October 4<sup>th</sup>, which included the project management team from NLAI, and members of an expert group put together by the Secretariat, including Professor Pat Halpin (Marine Geo-Spatial Ecology Lab, Duke University), Dr David Kroodsma (Global Fishing Watch), Dr Vardis Tsonetos (NASA Jet Propulsion Lab, COVERAGE programme), and Professor Alex Rogers.
  - NLAI has been given a sole-source contract for this, amounting to \$25,000. The grant stipulates that the money must be spent by the end of the year. The Secretariat and NLAI will also hold an expert workshop early in the new year to review the Report.
  - NLA has drafted a user survey and was asking the Commissioners to complete it as soon as possible.

#### GEF

- The **Executive Secretary** reminded the Commission that the GEF validation workshop was scheduled to take place on October 20<sup>th</sup>, from 10am-1pm EDT.
- The **Executive Secretary** explained that after the validation workshop took place, the final document would be sent to the GEF CEO for final sign off.
  - The **Executive Secretary** reported that NOAA was becoming an important partner for the GEF project through the work of the Okeanos “North Atlantic Stepping Stones” and, “Windows to the Deep” cruises.

#### 1.7 Communications

- **Fae Sapsford** gave a communications update:
  - The website had been updated with a new ‘latest news’ module, where the Secretariat would publish news items in order to keep the front page current. The video on the front page had been updated to a video Andrew Stevenson made for World Ocean Day 2021. Various pages had also been updated, including the project pages and the NAFO page.
  - The September newsletter was released with a 40% open rate, including blurbs on the new Commissioner appointments and the SARGADOM kick-off event.
  - The Commission had made a number of new posts on social media, including popular ones for World Habitat Day and World Cleanup Day.
  - A long-form poem was released by Steve Ely on the European Eel – a recording of a reading of some of the

poem can be found on the Commission's 'Creative Responses' page

The **Executive Secretary** has facilitated discussion among the Commissioners and the Signatories of the draft Rules of Procedure. A joint meeting is scheduled for the 14<sup>th</sup> of October.

3. Any Other Business/Date of Next Meeting

- The date of next meeting will be agreed by email correspondence.