
ELIGIBILITY OF CHAIRPERSONS AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONS FOR IOTC WORKING PARTIESPREPARED BY: SECRETARIAT

PURPOSE

To seek guidance from the Commission on whether individuals that are not representatives of a CPC are eligible to be elected as a chairperson or vice-chairperson of an IOTC working party.

BACKGROUND

IOTC scientific working parties operate under the Scientific Committee, a subsidiary body of IOTC Commission, on the basis of technical expertise. Participants are not required to provide credentials and do not sit behind member flags.

While scientists sent by CPCs account for most of the working party attendees, there is an increasing level of participation from experts that are not related to a CPC.

Having external experts present at working party meetings has obvious benefits in terms of the scientific exchange, and to-date this approach has served the Scientific Committee well.

THE ISSUE

Working party chairpersons and vice-chairpersons are elected by the working party attendees and may serve two terms of 2 years. Over time, the working parties have elected individuals to the roles of chair and vice-chair that are competent experts, but not necessarily associated with an IOTC CPC. This has included individuals that were independent scientists (including consultants), retirees, NGO employees, and even staff of the Secretariat.

Rule VI.2 of the IOTC Rules of Procedure states that: *The meetings of the Scientific Committee, the sub-commissions, the committees, working parties and other subsidiary bodies, which may be established, shall be open to Delegations only unless otherwise decided by the Commission.*

While the Commission has never directed that a working party meeting should be open only to delegations, this rule could be inferring that chairs or vice-chairs ought to be part of a delegation, because there could be a time when a working party could be open only to delegations.

The procedures accorded to Sub-Commissions and the Scientific Committee are clearer. These bodies are governed (mutatis mutandis) by the Rules of Procedure of the Commission whereby nominees for Chairperson and Vice-chairperson must be delegates or alternates attending the meeting.

Given the rules surrounding the eligibility of working party chairpersons and vice-chairpersons are not clear, the Commission is invited to consider whether the roles of working party chairpersons and vice-chairpersons should be open only to individuals that are representatives of a CPC, and whether their determination should be applied to all working parties (e.g. those related to science, compliance and other areas of work in the future).

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Commission:

- a) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2019–S23–05 which provided background on the current approach used by scientific working parties to fill the roles of chairs and vice chairs.
- b) **PROVIDE GUIDANCE** on whether individuals that are not representatives of a CPC are eligible to be elected as chairpersons or vice-chairpersons of all IOTC working parties, and whether the Rules of Procedures should be updated.