

The Inter-Sessional Working Group on the Future Shape of the CMS (ISWGoFS): the chair's report to the Standing Committee of CMS on the first step of the Future Shape Process.

In implementing CMS COP Resolution 9.13 and its Addendum, the Inter-Sessional Working Group on the Future Shape of the CMS was set up. The members are Australia (vice-chair), France, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Morocco, Cuba, Peru, Yemen and India, and Switzerland was elected chair of the Group. Saudi Arabia and Ghana, as chair and vice-chair of the Standing Committee (StC) of the CMS are ex officio members of the Group.

In February 2009, the chair paid a visit to the Secretariat of the CMS in order to discuss the way forward and examine initial information materials which the Secretariat provided. This was the opportunity to make acquaintance with the Secretariat members designated to support the work of the ISWGoFS (Francisco Rilla, Laura Cerasi and Robert Vagg) and also meet the Executive Secretary of CMS and representatives from Agreements under the CMS (see the minutes of the meeting).

The work of the first phase started with a questionnaire being elaborated by France and the United Kingdom, which was sent to all secretariats and coordination units of the CMS family (Agreements, MoU, etc.).

The ISWGoFS then decided that it was unavoidable to engage a consultant to manage the first step of the Process, which is the assessment of the current situation regarding the organization and activities of CMS and the CMS Family. Thanks to a generous financial contribution from France, ERIC, a UK-based consultancy firm, was appointed and started work in August 2009.

At this point, I have to thank the CMS Secretariat and the secretariats and coordination units of the CMS family for their very valuable contributions to the Process. They had to provide a lot of information in a very short time, in addition to the heavy work load they have to accomplish through the year and the tasks of the Secretariats to run the Agreements and MoU they are responsible for.

The late start of the first step of the Process and the burden of the evaluation of the assessment results by the ISWGoFS made it impossible to have the report ready for the CMS StC at the time it was planned to gather. I am therefore very grateful to the StC and its Chair for having postponed the meeting.

The ISWGoFS met on 19-20 October 2009 in Bonn and discussed the draft report on the first step submitted by ERIC. The meeting was made possible thanks to a generous financial contribution from Germany. Unfortunately, it was not possible to have all members of the ISWGoFS present at this first meeting, of which the StC has received a report (see the minutes of the meeting).

This meeting of the StC is the opportunity to review the draft report, which the ISWGoFS considers to be a working document, in order to complete and improve it by the beginning of next year, 2010 (it has fortunately been possible to extend the contract with ERIC with available funds).

The ISWGoFS has discussed the way forward and the planning of the future steps II and III. The planning of these future steps that will lead to a consolidated proposal with three options

to be considered first by the StC at its last meeting before the next COP and finally by the COP itself at its 10th meeting has several implications on other work to be accomplished according to COP9 resolutions and vice versa.

These related tasks decided by COP9 are: reviews to be undertaken under Res. 9.2, the new Strategic Plan and the work on the Flyways being done in parallel by the Scientific Council (ScC). The ISWGoFS has submitted some proposals with respect to these tasks. For the Res. 9.2 reviews the ISWGoFS has outlined two options in document no.14. For the new Strategic Plan, the ISWGoFS has drawn up two proposals which are included document no.11. The liaison between the ISWGoFS and the Working Group on Flyways is ensured by the fact that the two WGs share two members, including me. The two WGs are currently cooperating to coordinate their remits.

The planning as proposed by the ISWGoFS contains the following steps:

- Step 2 to begin in December 2009.
- Working Group meeting tentatively in June 2010.
- Completion of Report on Step 2 by September 2010
- CMS Standing Committee in October or November 2010
- Step 3 starts November 2010
- Working Group meeting in February or March 2011 at the latest
- Draft recommendations to the COP ready by April 2011 (six months before COP10)
- COP10 late 2011

Olivier Biber, 30th November 2009