



International Oil Pollution  
Compensation Funds

<b>Agenda item 1</b>	IOPC/NOV25/1/4	
<b>Date</b>	22 September 2025	
<b>Original</b>	English	
<b>1992 Fund Assembly</b>	92A30	●
<b>1992 Fund Executive Committee</b>	92EC85	●
<b>Supplementary Fund Assembly</b>	SA22	●

## MEETINGS OF THE IOPC FUNDS' GOVERNING BODIES

### WORKING PRACTICES

#### Note by the Secretariat

<b>Summary:</b>	<p>The Secretariat regularly reviews its working practices in relation to the delivery of the IOPC Funds' meetings, particularly with regards to its ability to continue to produce quality documents and Records of Decisions in a timely manner in all three official languages of the organisation.</p> <p>The Secretariat is trialling a number of new practices in this regard at the November 2025 sessions of the governing bodies. This document details how those practices may impact delegations.</p>
<b>Action to be taken:</b>	<p><u>1992 Fund Assembly, 1992 Fund Executive Committee and Supplementary Fund Assembly</u></p> <p>Information to be noted.</p>

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Secretariat regularly reviews its working practices in relation to the delivery of the IOPC Funds' meetings, particularly with regards to its ability to continue to produce quality documents and Records of Decisions in a timely manner in all three official languages of the organisation.
- 1.2 Since 2016 the time allocated for regular sessions of the governing bodies has reduced from five days to four days and the extraordinary sessions have for a number of years been reduced to three days in the absence of any intersessional working groups. These timings work well, allowing sufficient time for items on the agenda and reducing the time required of delegates at meetings. However, the reduction in days has impacted the internal practices of the Secretariat during the week of the meeting since there is less time for the drafting, approval, translation and proofreading processes required to produce the Record of Decisions in time for the final day of the meeting.
- 1.3 As a small Secretariat, it is not possible to organise a shift pattern and rotate members of staff in order to deliver the documents. Instead, it has become standard practice for those staff members responsible for producing the Records of Decisions to work through the night to ensure the full text is available for delegates to review in all languages for the adoption of the Record of Decisions.

1.4 Acknowledging the hard work and commitment of the Secretariat to meet the deadline at every meeting, the Director is nevertheless keen to revise practices and find ways to continue to deliver the Record of Decisions in a more efficient way. The Secretariat therefore intends to trial a number of new approaches to producing the documents during meeting week at the November 2025 sessions of the governing bodies in an effort to improve efficiency and ensure staff are able to finish at a reasonable time of night.

1.5 This document details how those new practices may impact delegations.

## **2 Impact of new internal practices on delegations**

2.1 The Secretariat has explored the practices of other organisations with small secretariats including the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO), the International Coffee Organization and the International Cocoa Organization and all have different approaches to the production and translation of Records of Decisions.

2.2 The IOPC Funds has three official languages: English, French and Spanish. Under Rule 31 of both the 1992 Fund Assembly and Supplementary Fund Assembly's Rules of Procedure, all reports of the Assemblies and their subsidiary bodies and all supporting documents to agenda items of the Assemblies and their subsidiary bodies shall be issued in the official languages.

2.3 The Secretariat is proud that all documents, websites, publications and other public materials are available in all three languages and it is often commended for the availability and quality of translations. This is not something the Secretariat is looking to compromise on for the Record of Decisions. It already has a strong pool of external translators who work regularly with the in-house Associate Editors. This pool has recently been expanded to ensure workloads can be distributed effectively, and the focus now is on optimising processes and tools to make best use of these existing resources.

2.4 The main difficulty faced in preparing the Record of Decisions is the size of the document. Despite the reduction in meeting days, we have seen a significant increase in the word count over the years. The Secretariat has always endeavoured to offer Records of Decisions which contain sufficient background and details of discussions at the meeting to provide delegations and future readers sufficient context and for the paper to be read as a standalone document. However, the level of detail must be reduced and returned to a manageable length for the Secretariat to continue to produce a quality report in three languages overnight.

2.5 The Secretariat will look to further integrate the use of artificial intelligence in the production process wherever appropriate (see document IOPC/NOV25/7/5).

2.6 Since documents are no longer printed but shared with delegations electronically, it is far easier to refer to background information by inserting references to previous documents which are linked directly to the relevant file. Where appropriate the Record of Decisions will therefore contain limited background information going forward.

2.7 Under the debate section of any agenda item, efforts will be made to more frequently summarise and group comments which are aligned together, rather than detailing the comments of individual delegations. If delegations wish to have their specific point reflected individually and verbatim they should indicate this at the time of making their intervention and provide the wording to the Secretariat by email at the closure of that agenda item. This is a practice which is already established but which will be more strictly enforced in future meetings.

- 2.8 Any statement made during the meeting and provided to the Secretariat will only be included in the original language in which it is made for the purpose of the adoption of the draft Record of Decisions. It will be translated and included in all languages in the final version which is issued two to three weeks after the meeting.
- 2.9 In order to protect the wellbeing of staff, as a general guide the Director would like to aim for all staff members to cease working no later than around 1am on report night. Since the final English text is often not finalised until late into the evening, the likelihood is that, even with the reduction in word count and the exclusion of statements for translation, the document and all its annexes are unlikely to be finalised until the following day in French and Spanish. This will mean that the adoption of the Record of Decisions is more likely to take place in the afternoon the following day and not in the morning as has sometimes been the case.
- 2.10 It is possible that the time available to the production team will only allow for limited proofreading. In the worst-case scenario, translation of some sections of the working papers may be incomplete by the time of the adoption session.
- 2.11 An advantage of holding meetings in hybrid format from November 2025, is that the Director is obliged to allow for a five-day correspondence period for review of the draft Record of Decisions. The purpose of this is to cover the risk that anyone participating in the meeting remotely suffers a disruption to their connection and is unable to intervene at the time of the live adoption. However, it could, in the event necessary, allow further time for any incomplete sections to be translated and uploaded for review prior to finalisation.
- 2.12 In any case, the final Record of Decisions, which is normally published within two weeks in English and three weeks in French and Spanish, will have been complete and have undergone a full and thorough proofread in all languages.

### **3 Director's considerations**

- 3.1 The Secretariat is committed to producing documents which are accessible, reader-friendly and of high quality in all official languages of the IOPC Funds. At the same time, the Director considers it timely to review internal practices to ensure that the current demands on staff to deliver such documents are reasonable and take into account staff wellbeing. The Chairs of the 1992 Fund Assembly and the Supplementary Fund Assembly have expressed their firm support on this point.
- 3.2 The Director considers that the impact of the new practices, which will be introduced on a trial basis at the November 2025 sessions, are necessary and he is grateful to delegations for their understanding and support in this regard. He welcomes any feedback from delegations on the impact of the changes described above after the November 2025 meeting so that it can be taken into account for future sessions.

### **4 Action to be taken**

#### 1992 Fund Assembly, 1992 Fund Executive Committee and Supplementary Fund Assembly

The governing bodies are invited to take note of the information contained in this document.

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