



International Oil Pollution
Compensation Funds

Agenda Item 1	IOPC/OCT22/1/4	
Date	28 September 2022	
Original	English	
1992 Fund Assembly	92A27	●
1992 Fund Executive Committee	92EC79	
Supplementary Fund Assembly	SA19	●

INFORMATION ON THE FORMAT OF MEETINGS

Note by the Secretariat

Summary:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the refurbishment of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) meeting facilities, the IOPC Funds' governing bodies held five remote meetings via the e-conferencing platform KUDO during the period December 2020 to March 2022.

Since April 2022, the IMO conference facilities have been back in full use and the IMO building is now fully open to visitors. As such, it has been possible for the IOPC Funds to return to the established practice of holding in-person meetings, with the October 2022 meeting being the first fully in-person event to be held by the organisation in three years. This event will not provide a hybrid element for remote attendance.

Since the IOPC Funds use IMO meeting facilities, this document provides an update on the current practice followed by IMO and the format of its meetings following the pandemic.

Action to be taken:

1992 Fund Assembly and Supplementary Fund Assembly

- (a) Take note of the information provided; and
- (b) give the Director any instructions as they may deem appropriate.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Since December 2020, the IOPC Funds governing bodies have held five remote meetings via the e-conferencing platform KUDO, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the refurbishment of the IMO meeting facilities in the first quarter of 2022^{<1>}.
- 1.2 At each of these meetings, the governing bodies decided to temporarily suspend or amend a number of Rules of Procedure that presupposed in-person meetings to allow the meetings to take place remotely^{<2>}. These procedures were closely aligned to those implemented by IMO as contained in the Interim guidance to facilitate remote sessions during the COVID-19 pandemic adopted by the IMO Council and Extraordinary Session of All Committees (ALCOM) (IMO documents C/ES.32/D, Annex 3 and ALCOM/ES/5/1, Annex 1).

<1> The governing bodies convened remote meetings in December 2020, March 2021, July 2021 and November 2021 (documents IOPC/NOV20/11/2, IOPC/MAR21/9/2, IOPC/JUL21/9/2 and IOPC/NOV21/11/2).

<2> Documents IOPC/NOV20/1/3/1, IOPC/MAR21/1/3, IOPC/JUL21/1/3 and IOPC/NOV21/1/3.

- 1.3 In addition, the Secretariat provided practical information on the conduct of remote meetings and guidance on using the KUDO platform, which was also the platform IMO was using at the time^{<3>}.
- 1.4 During the November 2021 meeting of the IOPC Funds governing bodies, the election of the next Director took place in person by roll call, however, delegates were still required to log in via KUDO, and therefore the meeting was still considered a fully remote meeting.
- 1.5 There were significant challenges in adjusting to remote working methods and the limited timetable and direct contact between delegates did impact the discussions of governing bodies. However, there was an increase in meeting attendance, both in terms of participants and the number of Member States represented.
- 1.6 Since April 2022, the IMO conference facilities have been back in full use and the IMO building is now fully open to visitors. As such, it has been possible for the IOPC Funds to return to the established practice of holding in-person meetings, with the October 2022 meeting being the first fully in-person event to be held by the organisation in three years.
- 1.7 Since the IOPC Funds use IMO meeting facilities, this document provides an update on the current practice followed by IMO and the format of its meetings following the pandemic.

2 Current practices and format of meetings at IMO

Hybrid meeting capabilities

- 2.1 The IMO Council, at its 127th session, agreed to complement in-person meetings from September 2022 for a trial period of one year; to apply the Rules of Procedure of the Council and the Interim guidance to facilitate remote sessions of the IMO Council during the COVID-19 pandemic, as appropriate; and that only representatives of the Members attending a meeting in person at IMO Headquarters would be allowed to vote (IMO document C 127/D, paragraph 17.3.1–17.1.2).
- 2.2 The IMO Council also requested that the Secretary-General put in place the necessary arrangements for the conduct of hybrid meetings, including the option on the Online Meeting Registration System for Member States to indicate whether the participation is in-person or remote (IMO document C 127/D, paragraph 17.3.4).
- 2.3 The refurbishment of the audio-visual facilities at IMO in early 2022 included the installation of a 'hybrid infrastructure' in the Main Hall. The hybrid infrastructure is designed to adapt to e-conferencing platforms, including KUDO, however, IMO has been using Zoom, which can now host multilingual meetings.
- 2.4 A review of the experience gained from hybrid meetings will be reported to the 128th session of the IMO Council in November 2022.
- 2.5 For further information on IMO hybrid meeting capabilities, see IMO Circular Letters No.4623 and No.4627.

<3> Documents IOPC/NOV20/1/4, IOPC/MAR21/1/4, IOPC/JUL21/1/4 and IOPC/NOV21/1/4.

3 Director's considerations

- 3.1 The Director notes that, having gained experience of attending meetings of the IOPC Funds' governing bodies remotely since 2020, Member States may wish to consider the format of future IOPC Funds meetings. However, noting that the trial period for hybrid meetings held by IMO is set to continue until September 2023, and given that any change in format would require the IOPC Funds governing bodies to amend a number of Rules of Procedure, the Director considers it prudent to first monitor the developments within IMO before taking any decisions in this regard.
- 3.2 It is therefore the intention of the Director to continue to liaise with the IMO Secretariat on a regular basis; to take note of the outcome of the interim review of IMO's experience which is expected to be reported to the IMO Council in November 2022; and to report developments to the governing bodies at their May 2023 sessions.

4 Action to be taken

1992 Fund Assembly and Supplementary Fund Assembly

The 1992 Fund Assembly and Supplementary Fund Assembly are invited to:

- (a) take note of the information provided; and
 - (b) give the Director any instructions as they may deem appropriate.
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