



International Oil Pollution
Compensation Funds

Agenda Item 7	IOPC/NOV20/7/2	
Date	24 July 2020	
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1992 Fund Assembly	92A25	●
1992 Fund Executive Committee	92EC74	
Supplementary Fund Assembly	SA17	●

INFORMATION SERVICES

Note by the Secretariat

Summary:

Since the October 2019 sessions of the governing bodies, as part of its commitment to increasing awareness of the international liability and compensation regime and improving engagement with all Member States, the Secretariat has been exploring ways in which the organisation can widen its audience by creating information and training opportunities which are accessible remotely. Furthermore, demand for such remote services has inevitably increased in recent months following the global COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent restrictions on gatherings and travel.

This document sets out the options explored by the Secretariat and its planned activities for 2020 and 2021 in that regard. New, ongoing and future projects relating to the website are also described, and an update on the latest publications and other projects completed or under development is provided.

Action to be taken:

1992 Fund Assembly and Supplementary Fund Assembly

Information to be noted.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 As part of its commitment to increasing awareness of the international liability and compensation regime and improving engagement with all Member States, the Secretariat has been exploring ways in which the organisation can widen its audience by creating information and training opportunities which are accessible remotely. Demand for such remote services has inevitably increased in recent months following the global COVID-19 pandemic and the Secretariat has taken this into account in its planning. This document sets out the options explored by the Secretariat and its planned activities for 2020 and 2021 in that regard.
- 1.2 Developments in respect of the Funds' website (www.iopcfunds.org) and publications, as well as information on other projects undertaken throughout the year are also described.

2 Webinars

- 2.1 One of the options available to the organisation to provide training more widely and to meet the increased demand for online services is to organise a series of short webinars covering the key areas which form the bases of the IOPC Funds and the work of the organisations, such as claims handling or oil reporting and contributions. These webinars would be open to a limited number of participants at a time and would involve a single presenter from the Secretariat presenting via a weblink. Having signed up to join the webinar in advance, the audience would view the presentation and listen to the audio on their chosen device. They would be able to pose questions via their device which could be dealt with during the presentation, at the end during a dedicated question and answer session, or after the event via email.

- 2.2 The Funds already have the necessary equipment to comfortably run such a webinar and have experience presenting as contributors to online events organised by others, such as the GI WACAF webinars on oil spill preparedness and response, which took place in July 2020. The Secretariat expects to host its first webinar in September and will inform Member States when plans have been confirmed.

3 Streaming of group presentations

- 3.1 On occasions when presentations are delivered to a visiting group, such as university and other student visits, it would be possible to provide remote access to the event via a weblink. The set up would be similar to that described in paragraph 2.1, with some additional technical and equipment requirements.
- 3.2 While it would be possible to deliver this type of streaming easily, to ensure it is delivered to a high standard, the Secretariat is reviewing costs and requirements, such as lighting and camera equipment before committing to streaming these events.

4 Providing remote access to the Short Course or Induction Course

- 4.1 Following requests by a number of Member States, the Secretariat has also explored the possibility of providing remote access to the IOPC Funds annual Short Course and the Induction Course. Both events are hosted in London.
- 4.2 For the Short Course, which is a week-long event, the location is important not only because it is the base of the Secretariat, but because it is also home to the other stakeholders who support the course by delivering presentations themselves or by organising external visits during the week to other relevant London-based premises and activities, without which the course would be a far less rich experience.
- 4.3 The Short Course is in its 10th year, it remains very popular and continues to be oversubscribed each time. It is true however, that the cost and time of travelling to the UK for this course may well prevent a number of State representatives from attending. However, given the external visits which take place on the Tuesday and the interactive practical exercise which takes place on the Friday of the course, it would only be possible to stream three of the five days of the course. In addition, taking into account the number of presenters each day, the risk of technical failure cannot be ruled out, which could prove quite disruptive to the in-house participants and unreliable for the remote participants. With this in mind, the Secretariat is of the view that it would not be practical to provide remote access to this course. Instead, it is exploring the possibility of running a second version of the course in an alternative location to facilitate the attendance of other States.
- 4.4 In order for such a course to meet the same standards as its London-based counterpart, it would need to include the same level and variety of content, presenters and activities. The Secretariat has therefore held initial discussions with the supporters of the London-based course to determine whether they would have resources available or contacts in other locations who would be willing to contribute to the course in an alternative location. The results of these initial discussions have been positive and the Secretariat plans to continue to explore options with the hope of identifying a suitable location and date in due course.
- 4.5 With regard to the Induction Course, this is a half-day course designed specifically to prepare new delegates shortly before the IOPC Funds' meetings. Since it is for a much shorter duration than the Short Course, takes place in one location and involves internal speakers only, it could be an option to make the course accessible to remote users. However, one of the main beneficial points of both the Short Course and the Induction Course is the interactive aspect. Participants ask many questions throughout the courses and there are tabletop/practical exercises.
- 4.6 One option could be to develop short interactive online exercises that remote users could undertake, allowing them to share the same experience to those on-site. These exercises could cover the topics of claims submission and oil reporting, could be developed for multiple training purposes and could be added as a new feature on the Funds' website.

- 4.7 The Secretariat will look further into how it could ensure remote users would be able to benefit from the Induction Course in the same way as local participants and will keep delegations informed of developments.

5 Website

Traffic

- 5.1 For the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, the IOPC Funds' website attracted some 22 000 unique visitors, representing 42 000 sessions and 108 000 page views. Of these visitors, 68% viewed the English site, 18% the Spanish site and 14% the French site.

Social media presence

- 5.2 The IOPC Funds have continued to actively use Twitter to post relevant news and information, provide key facts and figures relating to the liability and compensation regime and share interesting posts from fellow organisations and industry colleagues. This Twitter account greatly assists with the Secretariat's efforts to improve communication and increase awareness of the work of the organisation. To widen its reach further still and to keep aware of developments, the Secretariat has now also started to engage with followers on LinkedIn. Delegates to the Funds' meetings are therefore encouraged to follow the [@IOPCFunds](#) account on Twitter and the IOPC Funds page on LinkedIn.

Short introductory video

- 5.3 In May 2018, the Secretariat released an introductory video, covering the role, structure and activities of the IOPC Funds, as well as an overview of the legal framework behind the international liability and compensation regime. The video which is available in English, French and Spanish, each with subtitles, under the About Us section of the website, is intended to provide a general introduction for those not familiar with the organisation and its work. It was updated in July 2020 to include the latest figures and has also been divided into chapters, which have recently been added to the relevant pages of the website, such as the oil reporting and contributions page and the compensation page.

Document services accounts

- 5.4 Despite the various benefits to account holders, particularly in terms of meeting document notifications and registration, there remain a significant number of delegates to recent meetings who have yet to register for an IOPC Funds' document services account. In addition, only a small number of delegations have begun to make use of the online credentials submission facility when registering, and some fail to register at all for the meetings until their arrival on the opening morning. Given that plans for the next meeting are having to evolve in line with the global situation with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the fact that usual procedures for IOPC Funds' meetings will undoubtedly be affected, the Secretariat will be providing vital information via the document services section. The Secretariat would therefore urge delegates to register for an account to avoid missing key updates and are encouraged to use the online system to upload their credentials. Further information regarding the format of the meeting and essential changes to procedures will be provided in a separate document in due course.

Ongoing projects

- 5.5 Detailed country profiles are published under the Membership section of the website. In January 2016, Circular IOPC/2016/Circ.2 was issued formally inviting Member States to submit copies of relevant national legislation to the Secretariat at their earliest convenience for inclusion in the country profiles in the form of a link to the relevant pages of a government website or in the form of a PDF. Such documents are made available in their original language unless the State is in a position to provide them in English, French and/or Spanish.

5.6 As at 24 July 2020, the following States had submitted copies of their national legislation to the Secretariat.

Australia	France	Nicaragua
Bahamas	Ireland	Philippines
Bulgaria	Italy	Poland
Canada	Japan	Republic of Korea
China (HKSAR)	Mexico	Turkey
Denmark	Netherlands	United Kingdom

5.7 The submitted information for these States has been made available via their country profiles.

6 Publications

Recent publications

6.1 The Annual Report 2019 was made available in March 2020 and, having been produced in a more reader-friendly format in 2019, and for the benefit of Funds' stakeholders with a particular interest in the Funds' audited accounts, the Financial Statements of the 1992 Fund and Supplementary Fund were published as an online publication for the first time in January 2020.

Future publications

6.2 Since stock of the Claims Information Pack is now depleted, the Secretariat intends to reprint the pack later this year, to include the 2019 editions of the Claims Manual, Fisheries Guidelines and Tourism Guidelines, which have so far only been made available electronically.

7 Action to be taken

1992 Fund Assembly and Supplementary Fund Assembly

The 1992 Fund Assembly and the Supplementary Fund Assembly are invited to take note of the information contained in this document.
