Proposal for an Intersessional Process to Review the Use and Maintenance of the Multi-Year Strategic Work Plan

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Summary

At ATCM XLIV (2022), the Parties expressed an intent to consider how the Meeting could use, maintain, and optimise the Multi-Year Strategic Work Plan. In support of this effort, the co-sponsors of this Working Paper propose that an intersessional process, using the Secretariat’s online discussion forum, be established for Parties to review the use and functioning of the Work Plan and to identify opportunities for improvements to further support the Meeting’s work.

Background

Following discussions at ATCM XXXV (2012) and ATCM XXXVI (2013), the Parties adopted the first Multi-Year Strategic Work Plan (MYSWP) under [Decision 5 (2013).](https://www.ats.aq/devAS/Meetings/Measure/551) The preamble to the Decision reflects the Parties’ recognition that such a Work Plan may “contribute positively to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (‘ATCM’), so that the ATCM focuses on matters of priority and timely importance, operates more effectively and efficiently and schedules its work appropriately”.

The Annex to Decision 5 (2013) sets out principles to guide the implementation and further development of the Work Plan. These note that the purpose of the Work Plan is to ‘complement the agenda by assisting the ATCM to identify a limited number of priority issues and to operate more effectively and efficiently’. At subsequent ATCMs, the Parties have continued to reaffirm their commitment to the Work Plan and its principles and have adopted annual updates.

At ATCM XLIV, the Meeting noted that the Work Plan had been in place for ten years and considered it timely to dedicate attention to the Work Plan. The Meeting requested the Secretariat to review the Meeting’s use of the Multi-year Strategic Work Plan and report its findings back to ATCM XLV. That report is presented in Secretariat Paper 10.

Proposal

The co-sponsors of this Working Paper propose that the Meeting establish an intersessional process, using the Secretariat’s online discussion forum, to review the current use and functioning of the Work Plan and to identify opportunities for improvements to further support the Meeting’s work. Draft terms of reference are provided below. For instance, the review could examine the issues raised in Secretariat Paper 10, or questions such as how items are distributed across future years, the clarity of priorities and actions in the Work Plan, how it is maintained and updated at the Meeting, and the retention of items that have not been actioned. If agreed, Australia would be pleased to co-ordinate such an intersessional process, in consultation and collaboration with other Parties.

Intersessional Contact Group to Review the Use and Maintenance of the Multi-Year Strategic Work Plan

*Draft Terms of Reference*

* The Intersessional Contact Group will be coordinated by Australia, via the Secretariat’s online discussion forum.
* The aims of the Intersessional Contact Group are:
  + To review the use and functioning of the MYSWP to date, including with reference to the issues identified in SP 10, and.
  + To identify and discuss opportunities for improvements to further support the Meeting’s work.
* Observers and Experts participating in the ATCM would be invited to provide input.
* Australia will prepare a report back on the discussion and findings of the Review to ATCM 46.