

**REPORT OF THE VIRTUAL WORKING GROUP
ON REVIEW OF RULES OF PROCEDURE (VWG-RRP)**
Online meeting 24 June 2021

1. Opening of the meeting

The Commission Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all the participants, recalling that during the last meeting of the VWG-RRP held on 8 July 2020, the Group agreed to meet again in 2021 to discuss the nomination and election process of ICCAT Commission Officers.

The Commission Chair, in lieu of an agenda, encouraged participants to speak on the key issues stemming from the proposal circulated on 30 May 2021.

2. Appointment of Rapporteur

Canada volunteered to be Rapporteur for this meeting of the VWG-RRP.

3. Request for comments by Contracting Parties (CPCs) on nomination and election process of ICCAT Commission Officers.

The Commission Chair encouraged CPCs to comment on the document provided on 30 May 2021 and identify potential areas of concern or interest.

All participants thanked the Chair and the Secretariat for their work to develop a draft proposal and for coordinating this meeting. Many CPCs agreed that, while the proposal circulated by the Chair is a good starting point for discussion, it is too complex to consider as is.

All CPCs agreed that, to the extent possible, the Group should avoid complexity and develop an approach that is clear and transparent. Other key points to consider were: geographical representation among officers (not only based on geography but also between developed and non-developed countries), and the need to ensure there is a shared understanding of how to identify candidates for election.

There was general agreement that the current system is not broken, but that it has imperfections and needs to be modernized, perhaps through a combination of general revisions to the rules of procedure and the development of more specific guidelines. Some CPCs expressed concern regarding how it worked in the past; in particular, Iceland referred to 2019 when it seemed as though a core group of CPCs identified candidates for Officer positions but not all CPCs were consulted. Iceland stressed the importance of inclusion and adopting a formalized process to mitigate this in the future. CPCs agreed to take the past practice into consideration when developing improvements to the election process and procedures and that any revised approach must ensure transparency and inclusion.

There was some discussion on whether or not there was a need to set out specific qualifications for potential candidates. While it was not considered important or desirable for candidates to submit a CV, they should have relevant experience, including the necessary skills for effective chairmanship. The Working Group agreed to continue this discussion via correspondence.

4. Identification of key issues

The four key issues for this process identified to date are: 1) ensure that all CPCs are involved, 2) improve the transparency of the process, 3) ensure a balanced geographical representation of candidates to the extent possible, and 4) take into consideration the current language in the Rules of Procedure and the steps, including deadlines, required to propose amendments to the rules of procedure if that is determined to be necessary.

5. Identification of issues which may need consideration

In order to make progress at the VWG, the Chair proposed that a smaller sub-working group be created to review the submissions and interventions made by CPCs, and to develop a consolidated draft proposal. This would then be circulated to the broader VWG-RRP for consideration. All CPCs agreed with this approach; the European Union, Japan, Morocco, Canada, and the United States volunteered to participate in this group.

6. Proposed way forward and next steps

It was agreed that the Chair would send an email to VWG-RRP participants requesting that any and all comments, key issues, or priorities on the nomination and election process be sent to the Commission Chair within one week.

Following the deadline, a friends-of-the-Chair sub-working group would be convened to summarize the key points and prepare a proposed way forward, including the development of draft text. Once finalized, the draft approach would be circulated to the broader Working Group participants for consideration via correspondence.

CPCs and the Secretariat agreed that this work should be CPC led, with the Secretariat offering support for translation.

7. Date of next meeting of the WG

Another virtual meeting of this Working Group may be held to finalize the draft document, though participants agreed to work via correspondence in the meantime.

8. Conclusions and closure

The participants agreed with the Commission Chair's proposed next steps and thanked him for his work on this issue.

The Chair adjourned the meeting, thanking participants and interpreters for their goodwill and understanding in this challenging virtual working environment.