

Ms Catherine Day
Director General
EC DG-Environment
200, rue de la Loi
1049 Brussels
BELGIUM

Our Ref: G.16/JP/LS

23 January 2004

Dear Ms Day,

In response to your letter of 25 September 2003 requesting scientific information concerning the impact of sonar activities on cetaceans and on fish, I am pleased to inform you that ICES is willing to provide this scientific information and advice. This work will be conducted under the umbrella of the MoU between the EC and ICES. This MoU, which is in the form of an exchange of letters between our organizations, provides for cooperation, with ICES providing scientific input to the work of the EC.

The proposal for the conduct of this work is as follows:

1. Establishment of an Expert Group to work by correspondence and collect relevant scientific literature and prepare contributions on the subject. This group will be open to participation by experts from all member countries of ICES, but the results of studies outside the ICES area will also be considered relevant.
2. The Co-chairs of the Expert Group will compile the material submitted into an overall report and submit it for review by the members of the Expert Group, working by correspondence.
3. The final report of the Expert Group will be reviewed by a Review Group comprising the Co-chairs of the Expert Group plus four persons chosen on the basis of their expertise. This review will be conducted at a two-day meeting, held preferably in Copenhagen. The Review Group will draft conclusions, identify gaps in knowledge and research needs, and prepare draft advice, if applicable.
4. The Advisory Committee on Ecosystems will conduct a review by correspondence of the conclusions and draft advice, in the light of the full report, and prepare final advice.

Direct telephone:

The approximate timetable will be as follows:

- a) February 2004: establishment of the Expert Group and initiation of collection of material;
 - b) April 2004: preparation of Expert Group report;
 - c) Early May 2004: convening of Review Group;
 - d) Mid-May 2004: ACE review by correspondence.
5. The ICES costs (to be covered by the European Commission) for travel, per diem, and secretarial assistance involved with this process will include: a meeting of the Review Group: **€9,500**; professional assistance from the ICES Secretariat, including ACE review: **€5,500**; DG Environment and ICES will together review the budget and expenditures and by mutual agreement reallocate any possible savings. The Parties agree that the total budget represents the absolute limit.

Yours sincerely,

David Griffith
General Secretary