

**3rd Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee
Valdivia, Chile, 25 to 29 January 2016**

FAC-03-07

**Budget categories for “Scientific Support” and “Developing States”
(Secretariat)**

The Secretariat would like to explore the possibility of routinely transferring unspent funds of the Scientific Support and Developing States items into an account for accumulation up to a defined level or moving them forward to the following financial year.

Currently, Scientific Support is set at 20 000 NZD per year. Possible expenses under this item are costs for invited experts, meeting costs, and IT support, among others. However, so far very little has been actually used to assist the SC. Therefore, at its 2015 meeting the SC discussed that “*having a reserve of funds for high-priority issues would be advantageous so that activities highlighted in the research programme can be effectively pursued. One example high-priority activity would be support for the age-determination workshops that are planned within the next year.*”

The Developing States budget item (currently at 20 000 NZD per year) is intended to assist delegates from developing States with travel costs for their participation at SPRFMO meetings. Although the present annual level only allows coverage of the travel costs for two or three delegates, so far applications have been rare and the annual funds have never been exhausted. However, in view of the unpredictable nature of such requests and the high variability of travel costs, the Secretariat considers it would be beneficial if any unused amounts were allowed to be transferred to the next year to increase the overall amount available.

If Members find the general idea acceptable that after having used these appropriations as mandated, a possible surplus would be allowed to accumulate, the Secretariat proposes that the Financial Regulations be amended to implement this intent. A possible text for this purpose could be the following:

Financial Regulations 3, new paragraph 2(bis): “For the budget categories “Scientific Support” and “Developing States”, unspent appropriations may accrue between financial years, up to a limit of \$X. Beyond this level such funds shall be treated as surplus and transferred to the accumulated surplus account. The Commission will review these categories once the defined level has been reached or after 4 years, whichever occurs first, and at least every four years thereafter.

Financial Regulation 3.2, add new wording (underlined): “Appropriations shall remain available for 12 months following the end of the financial year to which they relate to the extent that they are required to discharge obligations incurred during that financial year. At the end of the 12-month period, any unliquidated prior year obligations, except those described under 3.2(bis), shall be cancelled, or, where the obligation remains a valid charge, transferred as an obligation against current appropriations.”

To make such an approach work in practice, the Secretariat would create a separate account for each of these two items. At the end of the financial year any unspent appropriations for “Scientific Support” and “Developing States” would be transferred into these accounts until the level determined by the Commission has been reached, after which any remaining monies for these items would be treated just the same as those of all other items and recorded in the Accumulated Surplus Account.