



To: Mme Veronika Veits, Director MARE-B, International Ocean Governance and Sustainable Fisheries

Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries  
Rue de la Loi 200  
B-1049 Brussels  
Belgium

By e mail

BSAC 2019-2020/

Copenhagen 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019

Subject: ACs request for flexibility in our budget management – receipt of instalments

Dear Mme Veronika Veits,

As a collective, we want to thank you for the Inter-ACs meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and for the well-prepared and coordinated agenda. This gave ACs the chance to present current practices and ways of working and to exchange experience and learn from each other.

Time did not allow us to delve into the more technical and financial issues. We hope to have the opportunity to do so at a later date.

At our ACs pre-meeting to prepare for the Inter ACs meeting we did discuss one particular financial issue and we agreed to raise it in this joint letter to you.

It concerns the procedure in place for all ACs when applying for the second instalment of 120,000 EUR (we can do this once 70% of the first instalment of 120,000 EUR is spent, and subject to providing a mid-term progress report and a statement of expenditure).

We appreciate the flexibility already shown by your services by no longer requiring an auditor approved statement when delivering the mid-term statement of expenditure.

However, with tight timescales and the need to ensure a smooth flow of activities and meetings in the ACs, and ongoing coverage of the expenses and running costs of the ACs, it is a challenge to ensure that the second instalment arrives in a timely fashion, without the potential for experiencing liquidity problems.

We would like to suggest to your services that it would lighten the load of the ACs if the Commission can pay the two instalments in one go at the start (240,000 EUR). At the same time, the Commission would continue to require and be provided with the mid-term report, as well as mid-term statement of expenditure after, for example, the first 120,000 EUR are spent. This would ensure that the ACs remain fully accountable to the Commission by providing a transparent explanation of our activities and use of public funds. The Commission would still withhold the remaining 60,000 EUR until the end, and final calculation of the use of funding would be done after the AC has provided a final statement of expenditure, including the auditor's certificate, as well as the final report.

Many of the ACs have been in successful operation for at least 10 years and have been responsible in their use of funds and accounting. We feel that this justifies one more demonstration of flexibility on behalf of the Commission.

This request has the support of our chairs and vice chairs.

We hope it meets a favourable response, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,



Sally Clink  
Executive Secretary of the BSAC

Signed on behalf of all the Secretariats of the Advisory Councils above and after each has completed internal consultation.

Copy to Mme Martine Aussems, Mme Mounia Belhaj and Mme Pascale Colson, DG Mare