

Future of the WSC

Report Three, October 2017

This report follows up on the first Future of the WSC report, which contained ideas for improving conversation throughout the Conference cycle and for decision-making at the WSC.

Improving Conversation Throughout the Conference Cycle

The World Service Conference marks both the end of one Conference cycle and the beginning of the next. Ideally the WSC is a culminating event where participants measure consensus on items they have been discussing throughout the course of the cycle and set direction for the two years ahead.

The first Future of the WSC Report contained a number of ideas for communicating throughout the cycle, and we will briefly reiterate them here. We are working to improve dialogue and conversation among participants throughout the cycle, but we still have a long way to go. Please see WSC Conference Cycle timeline on next page.

For the first time this cycle, we formalized a method for Conference participants to give input to the NAWS Strategic Plan. We have always sought input informally and used what we have heard at workshops and through conversations with delegates and other members to help shape planning priorities. But this year, we distributed a survey to regions about internal and external challenges and successes. The results of the survey are helping to shape next cycle's strategic plan. We will look forward to discussing the process further with Conference participants and getting ideas about how to increase participation.

As this report is being published, we are finalizing the *Conference Agenda Report* for publication in English and subsequent translations. There are 25 regional motions for this year's CAR. The Board is not forwarding any CAR motions. We will have essays in the CAR, however, about the *Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust* and the Future of the WSC, among other things.

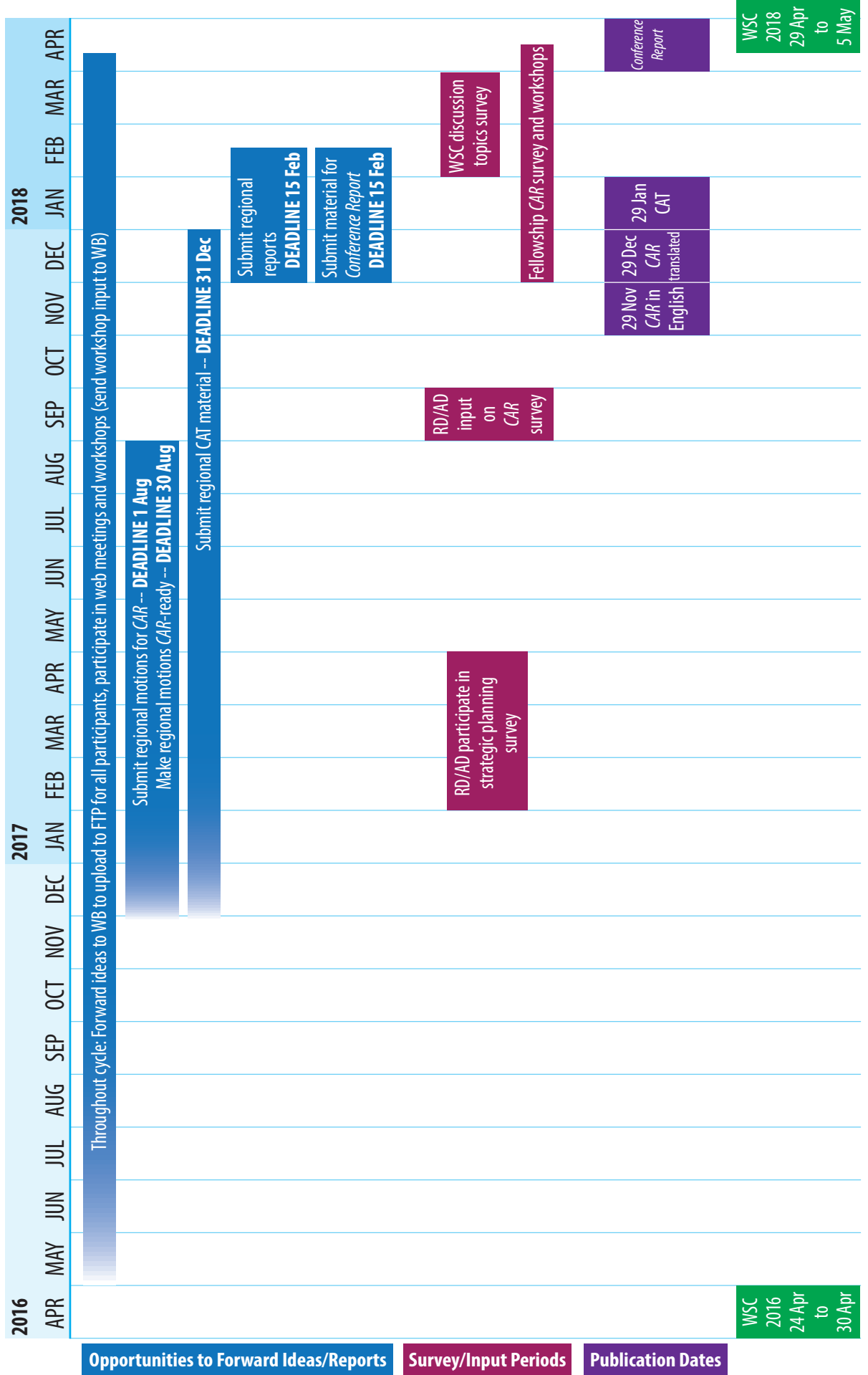
We continue to believe that the key to a discussion-based Conference is being able to talk about ideas throughout the cycle, not just forward items in the CAR for yes-or-no decision. This is still our weakest area.

Participants still have several opportunities to share their ideas with the Conference population before the WSC convenes.

- ❖ **CAT mailing:** Beginning last cycle, we have opened up the Conference Approval Track mailing to include ideas forwarded by regions.
- ❖ **Conference Report:** Regions are also able to submit material to be included with the *Conference Report*.
- ❖ **FTP Site:** Another new vehicle for Conference participants to share ideas is the FTP site at any point in the Conference cycle. At any point, a delegate can forward material to the Board for uploading to the site, and the Board will send an email to all participants letting them know something new has been uploaded. We know the FTP site is not the most user-friendly mechanism for some of you, but we are trying to work with what we have for now. There are a number of other platforms available to try if this is something Conference participants might actually use.

WSC Conference Cycle

Timeline for Forwarding Ideas & Discussion



We also plan to

- ❖ Survey Conference participants about possible WSC session and/or by webinar topics

And we will

- ❖ Continue to use a *CAR* survey to get a sense of Fellowship priorities for recovery literature, service tools, and Issue Discussion Topics. As we did last cycle, we distributed a draft of the survey to participants for their ideas before publishing it in the *CAR*. Thank you to those who sent input to improve the survey.
- ❖ Continue to hold Conference participant web meetings to help prepare for the WSC and encourage discussion on current issues.

Improvements in WSC Decision-Making Processes

The first Future of the WSC Report also proposes a number of changes to the business sessions of the Conference, and this report follows-up on those ideas. We've heard a lot of positive feedback about the proposals in Future 1 and we have had conversations with the Cofacilitators. Here is what we believe we will be recommending for WSC 2018:

For Old Business:

- Rename the session *CAR* Discussion and Decisions
- Eliminate **formal** Old Business
- If a motion has consensus in the first straw poll, give the Conference the option to discuss and decide on that motion without any changes (amendments) if participants wish.

For New Business:

- Make a distinction between the decisions related to material in the Conference Approval Track and the new business proposals submitted at the WSC.
- Address CAT-related decisions in the same way described above for *CAR*-related decisions, including renaming the session CAT Material Discussion and Decisions.

New proposals submitted at the WSC

The question of how to handle the new proposals submitted at the WSC is a bit more complicated. We suggested in Future of the WSC 1 that Conference participants could prioritize the new proposals submitted at the WSC and discuss some limited number of them. There seems to be support for that idea, and since then, we have had further discussion about the details of how that might work.

We are suggesting the following process:

1. Prioritize the list of new proposals submitted at the WSC.

We will develop a template for participants to use when submitting proposals or ideas for discussion (as we have done in the past for proposals and motions, with perhaps some changes to reflect that the goal of discussion is not necessarily a yes/no decision). After the new proposal deadline:

- All participants will receive a packet of all proposals and supporting information as well as a ballot.
- Each participant will be asked to identify, yes or no, the proposals they want to discuss.
- Responses will be tabulated. Proposals with the most yes votes will be prioritized for discussion in small groups.
- If it seems logical to do so, we will group proposals that have similar themes if those issues rose to the top. We will present the results and any proposed grouping to the Conference and seek concurrence on what proposals will be discussed.

The principle idea is to give the Conference a mechanism to talk about what participants really want to have dialog about. Participants will get to choose what they want to discuss.

2. Address only the number of proposals that can be addressed in the time allotted.

- New proposal discussions will take place in two 90-minute breakout sessions on Friday.
- This will, of course, limit the number of items that will be discussed. But it's important to keep in mind that there are many opportunities before the Conference week itself (listed above) to put ideas before Conference participants.
- Proposals that were submitted and not discussed will be included in an appendix to the Conference minutes as we have in the past for motions or proposals submitted but never presented for a decision.
- If there are proposals that more than half of participants want to discuss that we do not have time to get to, we can make a collective decision, as a Conference, about how to carry those ideas or concerns forward after the WSC, perhaps as a webinar topic, for instance.

3. Breakout Discussions

- There will be two sessions for breakout discussions, which will take place in the five rooms available, as was the case in the past two Conferences—two for RDs, two for ADs, and one for Spanish speaking participants.
- Proposal discussions need not be decision-oriented. Some could be about framing a discussion for the Fellowship or Conference participants. Some could be about focusing the work in the cycle ahead in some way. Others could lead to a decision in the Saturday Moving Forward session.
- We like the idea of tools to help small group facilitation and standard wrap up questions for each breakout session. However, given the potentially huge variety of proposals, it's not clear to us what those common tools and questions might be. We are still thinking through this part of the process. (Any ideas are welcome!)
- Regardless, there will be time at the end of each breakout session to get concurrence within each room on summary thoughts/synthesis/next steps recommended.

4. Conclude these sessions by 6:00 pm Friday. Full-group, wrap-up discussions will take place on Saturday.

- Saturday morning will be an opportunity to report back to the large group and cement a shared understanding.

We will ask the Conference's concurrence to try these new business processes at WSC 2018. Prioritizing new proposals and discussing them in breakout rooms will be a radical departure from how new business has functioned in the past, and as with anything new, we will all no doubt learn how to make the process even better next time if the Conference decides this is an approach to take in the future. Having time set aside on Saturday to discuss the results of the break-out sessions together as a large group should help clarify where the WSC as a whole is on the issues and what are the next steps. New business at the last couple of Conferences has been long, at times frustrating, and not terrifically fruitful. We are excited to try a new approach.

Voting majority

One other proposed change described in the Future 1 report was to create a standard voting threshold. We continue to believe a consistent two-thirds voting threshold for all Conference decisions (other than elections) makes sense. We have not heard any objections to that proposal, and you can expect to be asked to affirm that idea at WSC 2018 as well.

Orientation

We are planning an orientation webinar before the Conference to help everyone get ready for the business and discussion sessions. We will record the webinar and make it available for viewing afterward as well.

You can find this report as well as the first two Future of the WSC reports online at www.na.org/future.