

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Fifth Meeting of the Parties</b> <i>Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain, 4 - 8 May 2015</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Review of Translation Costs</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Secretariat</b></p>
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### **SUMMARY**

At MoP4 the Secretariat was requested to review options for reducing the cost of translation services, due to these costs being a significant component of the annual budget. A review was undertaken of the existing policy on the translation of documents, recent trends in the number and size of documents requiring translation, costs involved and issues associated with quality control.

The review found that the cost of translation services has been reducing in recent years due to a reduction in the number of meeting documents being submitted and as a result of savings of approximately 30% being achieved through the engagement of a new service provider.

A number of options are presented for the consideration of MoP5 to further reduce the cost of translation services.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Meeting of the Parties review the options presented for reducing the cost of translation of meeting documents.

## **1. BACKGROUND**

### **1.1. Discussions at MoP4**

At MoP4 it was noted that the cost of translating documents was a significant component of the budget. The meeting requested the Secretariat to prepare a policy on the translation of documents, with a view to reducing the cost of this item to the Agreement's budget (para 7.9.4, [MoP4 Report](#)).

Argentina noted the difficulty that all Parties face when confronted with a large number of documents in their non-native language. It highlighted the value of having relevant Working Group documents containing significant proposals translated into the Agreement languages (para 6.2.6, MoP4 Report).

## **1.2 Current policy on translation of documents**

The current policy on the translation of documents is contained in the rules of procedure (RoP) for the Meeting of the Parties (MoP) and the Advisory Committee (AC).

Rule 6 (1) of the MoP RoP states that English, French and Spanish shall be the official working languages of the Sessions.

Rule 6 (3) states that the official documents of the Sessions shall be distributed in the working languages. Information papers will not normally be translated, with the exception of information papers commissioned by either the Advisory Committee or the Meeting of the Parties.

Rule 7 (2) states that any document submitted to the Secretariat in any language other than a working language shall be accompanied by an accurate translation into one of the working languages.

Rule 15 (3) of the AC RoP state that the official documents of the meeting shall be distributed in the working languages. Information papers will not normally be translated.

## **2. ISSUES CONSIDERED IN DRAFTING THE POLICY**

### **2.1. Length and number of documents requiring translation**

A review was undertaken of the number and length of documents submitted to ACAP meetings. The review showed that the number of meeting papers submitted to meetings increased steadily until 2009, but that the number has been decreasing since then. In relation to the size of documents submitted, the review revealed that most meeting documents were less than 1,000 words, with the exception of reports, such as meeting reports and implementation reports, which typically ranged in size from 1,000 - 10,000 words in length.

### **2.2. Cost of translations**

The cost of translation services were also reviewed. Following MoP4 a competitive tender process was held for the provision of the Agreement's interpretation and translation services. The successful tender was substantially cheaper than the existing provider, resulting in savings of approximately 30% in the cost of translation services. Details of savings made against budget allocations are shown in the draft budget for 2016 - 2018 (**MoP5 Doc 18**). Further savings may be achieved through the use of translation software packages. The Secretariat is currently assessing the practicality of using such software with our service provider.

### **2.3 Quality of translations**

The accuracy of translations is periodically reviewed to ensure the quality of translations is maintained. The development of a glossary of words and terms commonly used in the Agreement is seen as a key tool in maintaining the quality of translations. A glossary is currently being developed by our translation services provider, with the aid of Masters students from language schools, who undertake internships in the Secretariat on a regular basis.

### **2.4. Translation of Working Group Documents**

In response to Argentina's observation at MoP4, highlighting the value of having relevant Working Group documents containing significant proposals being translated into the Agreement languages, the Secretariat initiated a trial, seeking the submission of abstracts for these documents. The abstracts of working group documents were translated into the Agreement languages for the last two meetings of the PaCSWG and SBWG.

## **3. OPTIONS FOR CHANGES TO THE POLICY ON THE TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS**

A number of options are available to further reduce the cost of translations to the Agreement's budget. These include:

1. Placing a limit on the number of words/pages of working documents that will be translated;
2. Only translating the abstracts and recommendations of working documents;
3. Reducing the length of meeting reports e.g. by not recording the discussion under individual agenda items and only listing outcomes/decisions made.