



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Fifth Meeting of Advisory Committee

Mar del Plata, Argentina, 13 – 17 April 2010

**Allocation of funds to the AC Work Programme:
Lessons learnt and recommendations to improve the process**

Grants Sub-Committee, Secretariat

**ALLOCATION OF FUNDS TO THE AC WORK PROGRAMME:
LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE PROCESS**

GRANTS SUB-COMMITTEE

During AC4 it was agreed that the allocation of funds for the 2009 Work Programme would be undertaken in consultation with the Parties in a manner to be resolved intersessionally due to there not being an Advisory Committee Meeting during that year (see paragraph 15.2.1 of AC4 report). During MoP3 a procedure for allocating funding for the AC Work Programme was discussed and adopted (MoP3 Doc 13 rev 3). The actual process followed in 2009 is described in a separate document (see AC5 Inf 06).

No significant changes are proposed to the process adopted at MoP3 however Parties recommended that experience with implementing the procedure should be used to improve it in future. Following this recommendation, the present document is introduced to the Advisory Committee with the purpose of (1) identifying difficulties and lessons learnt along the process, and (2) proposing improvements to facilitate implementation of the process. Parties also recommended that the outcomes of each project be reviewed as part of the assessment of implementation of the Agreement. To that end a separate document is presented to the Advisory Committee compiling the outcomes of projects supported during 2008 (refer to AC5 Inf 1).

LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following requests from some Parties for further time to submit applications and the difficulties occurring as a result of the ACAP website being closed down by a virus attack, the schedule for the evaluation and allocation of 2009 funds was postponed by two weeks. In spite of this, the schedule followed was still very tight (especially during the evaluation phase). For the next call for applications a more relaxed schedule should be considered for specific stages, particularly for the evaluation of projects. However, it should be considered that it is difficult to set *a priori* a schedule given that the timing of some stages in the process for the allocation of funds are very dependent on the number of applications received.

During 2009, because there was no AC meeting, the process was conducted intersessionally. Hence, revisions of proposals were coordinated by the WG Convenors, and the Grant Sub-Committee conducted conference calls to compile all evaluations done within the different WGs. For obvious reasons this process was slower and required additional work compared with revisions and discussions that can be held in person during years with AC meetings.

Some of the proposals were considered valuable by the reviewers but required certain modifications (*e.g.* in the proposed experiments) or clarification (*e.g.* missing sections in the application or more detailed budget explanations needed). In particular cases it was decided to request additional information from the applicants - this delayed substantially the final decision for several applications.

- *Recommend the National Contact Points and international organisations check that all required sections are included in future applications prior to submission to ACAP.*

The call for applications referred to priority projects in the AC Work Programme and also indicated approximate funds available for each one. There was a perception that identifying indicative funding produced an undesirable effect on the budget in some applications.

- *Recommend that indicative funding should not be included in future.*

Reviewers used a table for the evaluation and ranking of the proposals. Those evaluations were compiled by the WG Convenors and by the Grants Sub-committee afterwards. The table shown in this document is not the one used during the evaluation but an amended version that considers the inputs received along the process.

- *Recommend that this amended table (Annex 1) be used in future.*

MoP3 Doc 13 Rev 3 considers the possibility of appointing external reviewers during the evaluation. Due to the tight schedule and the complexity of an intersessional call in 2009 (conducted intersessionally for the first time) it was impossible to include external referees. External reviewers would reduce the risk of conflicts of interest between applicants and reviewers and would help cover areas of expertise not broadly represented within the Working Groups.

- *Recommend that the Grants Committee consider the circumstances when participation of external reviewers would benefit assessment in future.*

Costs associated with the translation of proposals were not considered in the past and should be taken into account in future. During the call for 2009 applications three applications submitted in the Spanish language were sent for translation. In future years even more proposals might need translation, either depending on the language the proposals are written or the language capabilities of a potentially changing referee panel.

- *Recommend that a minimum of AUD\$ 5,000 be allocated from the total budget in order to cope with these potential costs, such as the translation of documents.*

ACTION REQUIRED FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. Endorse the recommendations (*italised* in the text above) to improve the procedure to allocate funds to the Advisory Committee Work Programme in 2010 and future years.
2. Advise on areas where funds should be allocated for the call for applications for 2010 and 2011.



Acuerdo sobre la Conservación
de Albatros y Petreles

**Procedure for the Allocation of Funds to the Advisory Committee Work Programme
Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels**

Working Group:

Name of Member:

Project # and applicant	Merit ^(a) (1-5)	Relevance ^(b) (1-10)	Team ^(c) (1-3)	Project feasibility ^(d) (1-5)	Budget feasibility ^(e) (1-3)	Score ^(f)	RANK	Comments	
								Strengths	Weaknesses

Notes

- (a) Scientific, technical or other merit of the proposal, such as the potential for capacity building (high = 5, low = 1);
- (b) Extent to which the project addresses the AC Work Programme and areas specified in the current call for applications (high = 10, low = 1);
- (c) Expertise of the team (particularly the Senior Researchers) who would undertake the proposed project (high = 3, low = 1);
- (d) Project feasibility (is the project capable of being achieved within the proposed timeframe) (high = 5, low = 1);
- (e) Budget feasibility (is the proposal capable of being achieved within the budget sought) (high = 3, low = 1);
- (f) Scoring standard: “unsatisfactory” [1], not to be considered further; “possibly unsatisfactory” [2], needs clarification or improvement before it could be considered satisfactory; “satisfactory” [3], a feasible but not strong/high priority proposal; “above average” [4], a competent proposal; “excellent” [5], competent, good value and contributes to high priority tasks.