

Call for Project Proposals: Long-term albatross and petrel research to examine potential impacts from offshore renewable energy activities

Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels -
Renewables Environmental Research Initiative (ACAP-RERI)

Closing date: 16 October 2026, 23:59 AEST

This document provides background information and application guidelines to assist applicants in submitting a project proposal.

1. Introduction

The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) has initiated a four-year, \$2.5 million, research partnership with the Australian Government (through the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)). This partnership is part of Australia's broader Renewables Environmental Research Initiative (RERI), which aims to support a more efficient transition to onshore and offshore renewable energy in Australia while protecting biodiversity. The ACAP-RERI partnership will fund projects to investigate the potential impacts of offshore wind developments on albatrosses and petrels and other Procellariiformes species.

2. ACAP Background

ACAP is a multilateral agreement that seeks to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels by coordinating international activity to mitigate known threats to their populations. The ACAP-RERI partnership aligns with the Agreement's commitment to international cooperation and the exchange of information and expertise to implement effective conservation measures for these globally threatened seabirds.

3. RERI background

RERI is an Australian Government programme to support a more efficient transition to onshore and offshore renewable energy while protecting biodiversity. Wind power is a key source of new electricity generation and part of the renewable energy transition. While there is a significant growth potential for offshore wind developments, there remain substantial knowledge gaps regarding how these developments affect southern hemisphere seabirds, particularly albatrosses and petrels; migratory species that traverse national boundaries. To mitigate and effectively manage any potential impacts on such species associated with offshore wind developments, robust decision-making grounded in rigorous scientific knowledge and data is needed.

Offshore wind developers in Australia must, in most cases, undertake extensive environmental assessments and obtain approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act) before a project can proceed. Yet, there is currently limited comprehensive, long-term baseline data for species including

albatrosses and petrels and other Procellariiformes species that breed and/or forage in Australia's maritime jurisdiction. It is critical that Australia understands the population trends and ongoing threats to these species over time to accurately monitor population health and the effects of offshore wind developments.

The overall objectives of RERI are to ensure:

- Better scientific data and information are available to assessment officers and proponents to support robust and faster decisions and approvals under Australian environmental laws.
- Regulatory guidance and tools developed will support assessment officers and proponents to better understand environmental impacts from renewable energy projects and support faster decisions and approvals under Australian environmental laws.
- Robust and up-to-date species data and information are incorporated into statutory documents.
- An informed approach to adaptive management and cumulative impact assessment is developed, to consider and manage impacts at a regional/national scale.
- Improved monitoring and compliance of renewable energy projects.
- Increased consistency and engagement with Australian State and Territory assessments for renewable energy projects.
- Greater consistency for proponents through alignment with international regulatory approaches for renewable energy.

4. ACAP-RERI partnership

The ACAP-RERI is a collaboration between the ACAP Secretariat and DCCEEW, with engagement from ACAP's Advisory Committee and Population and Conservation Status Working Group (PaCSWG).

The ACAP-RERI partnership will deliver a suite of targeted projects to provide new and better environmental information on albatrosses and petrels and other Procellariiformes species most vulnerable to the impacts of offshore wind developments. The ACAP-RERI will complement another RERI - *Filling information gaps on albatrosses and petrels to support offshore wind farm assessments and decisions under the EPBC Act* to enable a better understanding of the potential long-term impacts offshore wind developments in Australia may have on these species.

The projects will draw on lessons learned from around the world and will inform regulatory guidance, including the assessment and approval of offshore wind farm developments in Australia under the EPBC Act. Accordingly, project proposals must satisfy the following two overarching criteria:

- **Relevance to the EPBC Act:** Proposals must clearly articulate how project outputs will support one or more of the following areas: environmental assessment,

regulatory decision-making, or management approaches relevant to the implementation of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes in Australia.

- **Relevance to ACAP Species and Impact Mitigation:** Proposals must clearly articulate how the project is relevant to the assessment, understanding, mitigation, or management of impacts on ACAP-listed albatross and petrel species. While projects do not need to focus directly on ACAP-listed species, applicants must clearly demonstrate how the proposed research, methods, tools, or findings will inform, support, or be transferable to the conservation and management of ACAP-listed species.

This ACAP-RERI call for proposals encourages applicants to propose projects that focus on the following themes and topics, aligning with the overall objectives of the RERI.

THEME 1: Improve understanding of the size, structure and population trends for albatrosses and petrels and other Procellariiformes species breeding and/or foraging in Australia's jurisdiction:

- Support the ongoing development of long-term datasets and improve current population estimates, to enable the assessment of population-level impacts of offshore wind farms and the establishment of a comprehensive monitoring framework.
- Obtain demographic data for each breeding and foraging population, where feasible.
- Identify options to expand the range of innovative, cost-effective techniques for collecting and analysing population trend data and demographic data for populations.

THEME 2: Improve understanding of the potential impacts to albatrosses and petrels and other Procellariiformes species from offshore wind farms:

- Collect multi-year data on the source populations and at-sea distribution (including migratory pathways), local abundance, and flight height ranges of species foraging in Australian waters to identify the most at-risk species and populations, and the seasonal timing of occurrence for adults (including non-breeding birds) and juveniles.
- Identify the spatial and temporal extent of foraging ranges within Australian offshore wind declaration areas to inform the collision risks for current and likely future placement of wind turbines (e.g. flight heights, flight speeds, diurnal/nocturnal activity, flapping/gliding/shear-soaring behaviour).
- Identify likely barrier and/or displacement effects from offshore wind farms.
- Identify potential responses of species to artificial lighting on turbines and support vessels, and the potential of offshore wind farms to attract species by acting as fish aggregation devices (FADs).

THEME 3: Support the management of potential impacts to albatrosses and petrels and other Procellariiformes species from offshore wind farms:

- Identify effective avoidance and mitigation measures for offshore wind farms, including consideration of current and likely future wind farm configurations and turbine designs.
- Identify effective technologies for real-time monitoring and curtailment of offshore wind farm operations where bird strike risk exceeds a threshold level.

THEME 4: Translate findings into targeted, accessible formats to support evidence-based decision-making:

- Support updates to relevant EPBC Act regulatory guidance based on new information.
- Develop ACAP guidelines for offshore windfarms using ACAP nomenclature.
- Develop educational materials for use by ACAP Parties using ACAP nomenclature.
- Support the preparation of, and public access to, data obtained and developed under the project (such as tracking data seabird distribution maps) for a broad range of stakeholders, including regulators, industry and researchers.

5. Project period and amount

This funding call is a once-off and projects must be completed by **June 2030**.

The total funding available through the ACAP-RERI partnership is \$2.5 million. The amount of funding to be awarded to individual projects will be determined based on the information provided in the proposal within the Grant Application form. As the awarding authority, ACAP will assess each submission in accordance with the evaluation criteria (Section 7), including but not limited to project scope, feasibility, impact, cost-effectiveness; alignment with ACAP-RERI key themes and overall objectives of the RERI; and satisfactory responses to the two overarching criteria.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to form multi-institutional research collaborations and/or consortia to leverage a broader range of expertise, methodologies, or research areas to be addressed. Proposals involving complementary partners may be better placed to meet the full scope and assessment criteria of this call. Collaborative projects and/or consortia may include research institutes, universities, industry partners, third-sector organisations, or other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate. Collaborations can be formed internationally, and lead organisations/applicants are not required to be based in Australia.

The final amount granted to individual projects may differ from the amount requested in the application. As the awarding authority, the ACAP reserves the right to adjust the grant amount at its sole discretion, taking into consideration available budget, overarching needs of the initiative, and the relative merit of proposals received.

Formal notification of the amount awarded to a project will be issued in writing by ACAP in the form of a grant funding agreement, should the application be successful.

6. Data management requirements

Successful applicants must comply with the following data management policies. These requirements may be updated, and ongoing compliance is a condition of continued funding.

Key expectations include:

- **Access and licensing:** Applicants will retain full ownership of all pre-existing and any new intellectual property (IP) created through the project. However, the Australian Government operates an open-sharing policy with its partners, meaning project data and outputs should be shared for research and collaboration purposes. By submitting a proposal, applicants agree that any data, results, or IP generated through the project ("Project Data") will be made available to the Australian Government under a royalty-free, perpetual, irrevocable, non-exclusive licence at no extra cost. Data should be released as early as possible and no later than two years after project completion, except where temporary embargoes are justified. After the two-year period, all data must also be made publicly available.
- **Data storage:** Applicants are encouraged to store data in the Australian Antarctic Data Centre (AADC) and metadata in the Catalogue of Australian Antarctic and Subantarctic Metadata (CAASM), BirdLife International Seabird Tracking Database, or in another repository, subject to approval by ACAP. Should applicants choose to store data elsewhere, appropriate security measures to prevent loss, corruption, or unauthorised access must be maintained. Data, tools, algorithms, code, and scripts will need to be published and preferably be open source, once quality control is complete.
- **Findability and preservation:** Data must be publicly findable, persistently accessible, and free to access, using stable formats, persistent identifiers, and repositories with long-term preservation plans.

7. Project selection process

There are three types of eligibility criteria: selection criteria, award criteria, and compliance and verification. Any proposal must first meet the selection criteria and award criteria before it proceeds to compliance and verification.

Selection criteria

Applications must include documentation or evidence showing the following criteria:

- Contact information and organisation details.
- Verified organisational and business registration details (as applicable).
- Professional ability.
- CVs and references for all key personnel involved in the project - as PDF attachments alongside the Grant Application Form.
- Conflicts of interest.

- Disclosure of any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest, including with the offshore renewables industry.
- Proposed project management mitigation measures relating to the risk matrix in the Grant Application Form.

Award criteria

Additionally, grant funding will be awarded following assessment against the following criteria:

- **Project Detail:** a description of project objectives, expected outcomes, proposed outputs, and fitness for purpose.
- **Project Alignment:** demonstrating that the project is aligned with and complementary to ACAP-RERI key themes and broader RERI objectives, includes satisfactory responses to the two overarching criteria, and is non-duplicative of other RERI-funded activities.
- **Project Impact:** demonstrating where and how the project is filling a knowledge gap, and how the research will improve understanding of the impacts of offshore wind farm developments on albatrosses and petrels and other Procellariiformes species in the southern hemisphere.
- **Methodology:** a clear, feasible, and cost-effective methodology, with a well-structured study design, appropriate data sources and analytical methods, and sufficient detail to demonstrate rigour and deliverability.
- **Data Management:** a clear approach to data management, covering data collection, storage, protection, and sharing.
- **Timeline of Work:** a realistic yet flexible project timeline with project milestones.
- **Progress Reporting:** Grant recipients will be required to submit six-monthly progress reports covering the periods 1 January–30 June (due in July) and 1 July–31 December (due in January), for the duration of the project, until the submission of a Final Report.
- **Permits and Approvals:** identification of all required permits, licences, and regulatory approvals, and evidence of ability or plan to obtain them.
- **Approvals:** any form of animal use must follow local guidelines and include details of relevant ethical review and approvals.
- **Risk Management:** identification and mitigation of potential high risks associated with the project.
- **Ongoing Compliance:** a demonstrated ability to monitor, report, and maintain required records throughout the project duration.
- **Project Budget:** please download and complete the [Project Budget Template](#) to outline costs associated with the project, including disclosure of in-kind or co-

contributions brought to the project. The completed template should be submitted alongside the Grant Application Form.

- **Overhead Costs:** these may not exceed 15% of the total proposed budget. Applicants seeking a higher rate must provide a clear and compelling justification demonstrating exceptional circumstances that warrant consideration. Please add overhead costs under the 'other' section of the budget template.
- **Value for Money:** demonstrating the project's value for money and cost-effectiveness.
- **Capital Assets:** an outline of the management of ACAP-RERI-funded capital assets valued over \$5,000 after project completion.
- **Payment Schedule:** an outline of the proposed grant payment schedule.

Compliance and verification

Should the proposal successfully meet the selection and award criteria and be selected for funding, the award will be subject to the completion of compliance and verification requirements. The following information must be submitted to satisfy these requirements:

- **Financial Standing:**
 - **For organisations:** Most recent set of audited annual accounts, including (but not limited to) balance sheet, profit and loss statement, cash flow statement, and notes to the accounts.
 - **For individuals:** a self-declaration that the individual is not bankrupt or subject to insolvency proceedings.
- **Labour Compliance:** Evidence of ethical employment practices.
- **Work Health & Safety Compliance:** A statement of intent, policies, or practices demonstrating systematic management of work health and safety. Details of how the risk of injury or illness from workplace operations will be mitigated.
- **Insurance:** Evidence of suitable insurance coverage for the proposed project.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility Compliance:** Evidence of corporate or workplace sustainability governance, policies or practices.
- **Probity and Transparency:** Controls or policies against fraud, corruption and misappropriation of funds.

8. Application Process

Please download and complete the [ACAP-RERI Grant Application Form](#), follow the instructions and submit your application to acap-eri-apply@acapsecretariat.org.

Submissions after the deadline **16 October 2026 23:59 AEST** will not be considered.

Applicants are requested not to submit or email any additional documents. If an error or missing information is found, clarification or additional information may be requested that will not change the nature of your application.

For any queries, please contact the Project Coordinator at acap-reri-info@acapsecretariat.org.

9. Assessment procedure

The ACAP-RERI Project Team and a Technical Advisory Group of international seabird experts will review the submitted proposals.

When assessing proposals, consideration will be made whether the project:

- aligns with the overall RERI objectives and ACAP-RERI key themes
- satisfies the data management requirements in Section 6
- meets the selection criteria and the award criteria in Section 7
- passes the compliance and verification process in Section 7
- has an acceptable level of associated risk, and whether its implementation is manageable.

10. Decision

The ACAP-RERI Steering Group, which include representatives from the ACAP and DCCEEW, will determine the final approval of project funding. Successful applicants will be contacted by the ACAP Secretariat directly. Feedback is not guaranteed for unsuccessful applicants.

11. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All personal, confidential, or sensitive information provided in your application will be handled in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), and any other applicable laws. The information you provide will be used solely for the purpose of evaluating your application and administering the grant process.

Access to this information will be restricted to authorised personnel involved in the monitoring, management or review of the ACAP-RERI. Appropriate technical and organisational measures will be implemented to protect the information from unauthorised access, disclosure, alteration, or loss.

By submitting an application, you consent to the collection, use, and storage of your personal information for the purposes stated above.