

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p>Thirteenth Meeting of the Advisory Committee <i>Edinburgh, United Kingdom, 22 – 26 May 2023</i></p> <p>Opportunities to enhance Advisory Committee reporting to the Meeting of the Parties</p> <p><i>Advisory Committee Chair</i></p>
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SUMMARY

Reporting by the Advisory Committee to sessions of the Meetings of Parties (MoP) is guided by the Articles of the Agreement, MoP Resolutions, and MoP decisions. Since the reporting format was first determined for the Advisory Committee (Resolution 1.5, 2004), the number, structure and complexity of reports linked to the subject matter listed in Annex 1 to Resolution 1.5, have changed, and significantly. Recognising, that Article IX (6) d) i) anticipates that the Advisory Committee will keep its reporting arrangements under review, and noting that the Agreement will have been in force for 20 years in 2024, it is timely that the Advisory Committee should undertake a review of its reporting to the MoP.

Should the Advisory Committee agree to a review, then an intersessional working group of Committee members, guided by Terms of Reference drafted and agreed at AC13, could progress the review and report to AC14.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Advisory Committee agrees to initiate a review of Advisory Committee reporting to MoP.

1. BACKGROUND

Reporting by the Advisory Committee to sessions of the Meetings of Parties (MoP) is guided by the Articles of the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), MoP Resolutions, and MoP decisions.

Article VIII (12) of the Agreement states, among other things, that:

At each of its ordinary sessions, the Meeting of Parties shall:

- a) consider reports, advice and information from any of its subsidiary bodies;*
- b) consider actual and potential changes in the conservation status of albatrosses and petrels, and the habitats important for their survival, as well as the factors that may affect them;*
- c) review any difficulty encountered in the implementation of this Agreement; ...*

The Advisory Committee reports to the MoP, as a subsidiary body under the Agreement. Article IX (6) a)–c) provides instructions to the Advisory Committee about reporting to the MoP:

The Committee shall:

- a) provide scientific, technical and other advice and information to the Meeting of the Parties and, through the Secretariat, to the Parties;*
- b) endorse a standard reference text listing the taxonomy and maintain a listing of taxonomic synonyms for all species covered by the Agreement;*
- c) make recommendations to the Meeting of the Parties concerning the Action Plan, implementation of the Agreement and further research to be carried out;*

Further, Article IX (6) d) indicates, among other things, that:

The Committee shall:

d) prepare a report to each ordinary Meeting of the Parties after the first on the implementation of the Agreement, with particular reference to the Action Plan and the conservation measures undertaken. Each such report shall include a synthesis of such information as Parties are required to submit to the Committee through the Secretariat under Article VII (1) c), and an assessment of the status and trends of albatross and petrel populations, but:

- i) the format of such reports from the Committee shall be determined by the first session of the Meeting of the Parties and reviewed as may be necessary at any subsequent session of the Meeting of the Parties; and the nature of the information to be provided by the Parties shall be determined by the Committee at its first meeting, subject to any direction from the Meeting of the Parties, and reviewed as may be necessary at any subsequent meeting; ...*

At its first session in 2004, the MoP adopted [Resolution 1.5](#) on the establishment of the Advisory Committee. Annex 1 to the Resolution provides the format expected for Advisory Committee reports to the MoP. Paragraph 6 of the Resolution also states that the MoP agrees:

'that the Advisory Committee review the reporting format detailed in Annex 1 during the intersessional period and if required submits a revised report format for adoption by the Meeting of Parties using the intersessional voting procedures of the Meeting of the Parties.'

2. CURRENT REPORTING TO MEETINGS OF THE PARTIES

In the nearly twenty years since Resolution 1.5 was agreed, the number, structure and complexity of reports presented by the Advisory Committee or linked to the subject matter listed in Annex 1 to Resolution 1.5 have changed, and significantly. At MoP7, essentially three reports covered this information; these were:

[MoP7 Doc 9 Advisory Committee report to the MoP](#)

[MoP7 Doc 10 Implementation report to the MoP](#)

[MoP7 Doc 16 Indicators to measure the success of the Agreement](#)

While the format of the Advisory Committee report (MoP7 Doc 9) mostly follows that stipulated in Annex 1 to Resolution 1.5, the content of several sections as identified in Annex 1 is now presented in the separate Implementation and Indicator reports (MoP7 Doc 10, MoP7 Doc 16).

3. REVIEW OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTING

Recognising the expectation stated in Article IX (6) d) i), and noting that the Agreement will have been in force for 20 years in 2024, it is timely that the Advisory Committee should undertake a review of its reporting to the MoP.

A review would provide confidence that the Advisory Committee is providing information and recommendations in a manner most suited to MoP sessions and wider audiences. For example, currently the Implementation Report is a large and complex document covering many somewhat disparate reporting obligations, some retrospective, some prospective. At MoP7 this report was 37 pages and included 63 sections and 33 figures and tables. Like the Advisory Committee and Indicator Reports, the Implementation Report covers many important issues concerning the success of the Agreement yet, arguably, the information, if presented differently could be more approachable, impactful and influential.

Importantly, the three Advisory Committee reports are information-rich and are the product of reporting obligations under the Agreement, as well as many years of careful consideration by the Advisory Committee, its Working Groups, the Secretariat and instructions from the MoP. Accordingly, a wholesale review of the specific content of these reports may not be appropriate. Rather, a review may:

- consider whether all the reporting against Section 5.1 of the Action Plan remains necessary and adequate and if reporting against all items is required at each MoP.
- assess and revise the Committee reports, to ensure the questions remain relevant, they are well structured and approachable, deliver information succinctly, avoid duplication of information or topics, aggregate related issues, and provide clear, well-justified recommendations.

Advisory Committee reporting should also aim to facilitate greater engagement within both the Advisory Committee and the MoP. While revised reporting formats must be tailored for the MoP audience, the reports could also serve to enhance within-Party communications, as well as engagement with other organisations and the public.

4. CONCLUSION

The Advisory Committee, its Working Groups, the Secretariat, other experts and agencies develop a large body of information aimed at informing the MoP and Parties to the Agreement. It is a considerable challenge to deliver this large body of technical information and recommendations in a manner that is best suited to the MoP.

With the approaching 20-year anniversary of the Agreement entering into force and noting Article IX (6) d) i) it is timely for the Advisory Committee to review its reporting to the MoP with a focus on ensuring the information is delivered in a format that is effective, efficient, informative and influential.

Should the Advisory Committee agree to a review, then an intersessional working group of Committee members, guided by Terms of Reference drafted and agreed at AC13, could progress the review and report to AC14.