



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Fifth Meeting of Advisory Committee

Mar del Plata, Argentina, 13 – 17 April 2010

Advisory Committee Work Programme - Summary of Projects granted in 2009

Grants Sub-Committee

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During the Fourth Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC4) it was agreed that the allocation of funds for the Work Programme during 2009 would be undertaken intersessionally (paragraph 15.2.1 of AC4 report). For details on the procedure followed for the selection of projects funded see AC5 Doc 30.

Given the level of funding available for the current call for applications (approximately AUD\$ 140,000 following Secretariat's advice) one important item from the 2010 programme has been brought forward to 2009 (item 5.2, "improve seabird bycatch data collection from observers in South America"). A reflection of this change in the schedule is the project ACAP 09-10 detailed below.

What follows is a list of the projects granted during the 2009 call for application, along with detailed information of objectives, granted funds and comments provided by referees and the Grants Sub-Committee along the evaluation process. A total of \$120,046 has been allocated to these projects (AUD\$ 18,216 of which are subject to final approval at AC5).

ACAP 09-01. Development of ACAP database-generated Implementation Reports (ACAP Secretariat).

FUNDS REQUESTED: AUD\$ 5,000

APPROVED: AUD\$ 5,000

OBJECTIVE: In order to assist the Advisory Committee in improving the Parties' reporting process, the Secretariat will engage a database developer to facilitate the entry and extraction of data for Parties' reports on implement of the Agreement. This project will utilise existing and new data to provide a standard template for compiling and submitting reports on the implementation of the Agreement by Parties directly via the ACAP data portal.

EVALUATION: Project relevant to the Agreement, will provide a useful tool to improve and facilitate Parties' reporting on implementation.

ACAP 09-02. Improving Waved Albatross Conservation: Monitoring Changes in Population Size and Vital Rates (Kathryn Huyvaert, Colorado State University, USA).

FUNDS REQUESTED: AUD\$ 16,950

APPROVED: AUD\$ 16,950

OBJECTIVE: The goal of this proposal is to address the "Population Monitoring" action highlighted in the Waved albatross Plan of Action which is to develop and undertake a monitoring program focused on population size, adult survival, juvenile survival and reproductive performance at Waved albatross colonies on Española.

EVALUATION: Comments provided by the reviewers and the Grants Subcommittee were generally very positive, recognising the importance of long term population and demographic monitoring of

ACAP species. There were queries however in relation to the capacity of this program to continue in the long term. Further information provided by Dr Huyvaert clarified the concerns about needs to maintain this monitoring in the long term.

ACAP 09-04. Responding to the evolution of Peru's artisanal longline fleet: characterising fleet mechanisation and introducing weighted swivels (Jeff Mangel & Joanna Alfaro-Shigueto, Pro-Delphinus, Peru).

FUNDS REQUESTED: AUD\$ 16,890

APPROVED: AUD\$ 20,974

OBJECTIVE: The project has two objectives: (1) to characterise the recent fleet mechanization in the Peruvian artisanal longline fleet and its potential impact on Waved albatrosses and other threatened albatross and petrel species, and (2) to introduce weighted swivels (and safe leads) as an improvement of gear design.

EVALUATION: Good concepts and strong proposal generated by a team that have already demonstrated their capacity to deliver. A very relevant proposal to an endangered ACAP species. Project should be granted subject to proponents agreeing to use safe leads instead of weighted swivels (due to safety concerns associated with use of weighted swivels). Given that safe leads are more expensive, the Grants Subcommittee recommends that applicants should be asked to review the AUD 16,890 budgeted and increase it if necessary. A sample of six safe leads was posted to Lima to allow a proper assessment of its implementation in the fishery under investigation. Revised proposal received from Pro-Delphinus with an adjusted budget due to the inclusion of safe leads in mitigation.

A revised proposal from Pro-Delphinus was received few weeks later with the inclusion of safe leads in mitigation and an adjusted budget (to AUD\$ 20,974). Applicants demonstrated willingness to comply (not in the whole fleet since part of it uses multifilament longline, not suitable for safe leads). Following previous discussions with referees within the SBWG, the grant sub-committee, and very recent advice from the SBWG convenor, the proposal was strongly recommended to be funded.

ACAP 09-05. Seabird interactions with trawl fishery for Peruvian hake in northern Peru (Liliana Ayala, APECO, Peru).

FUNDS REQUESTED: AUD\$ 25,512

APPROVED: AUD\$ 20,056

OBJECTIVE: This project will evaluate the interactions between the trawl fishery and albatrosses (and petrels) and the variables to understand the behaviour of seabirds attending vessels during fishing operations in northern Peru.

EVALUATION: Project is relevant to an endangered ACAP species. However, it was noted that salaries and observer fees are a very high proportion (80%) of the costs. Concern was expressed about the lack of coordination with other local NGOs active in this field and also about the lack of Government engagement. After meetings with Peruvian stakeholders in Lima, those questions were clarified and a revised application with new, more balanced budget (AUD\$ 20,056) was submitted.

ACAP 09-06. Fact sheets for best practice techniques to mitigate seabird bycatch in pelagic longline, demersal longline and trawl fisheries (Ben Sullivan, BirdLife International).

FUNDS REQUESTED: AUD\$ 18,216 (**AUD\$ 18,216 grant subject to approval at AC5**)

OBJECTIVE: To develop together with ACAP a number of mitigation fact-sheets to inform and influence technical advisors and fishery managers of national and regional fishery organisations who are responsible for developing measures in fisheries under their jurisdiction.

EVALUATION: The development of the mitigation fact sheets is seen by the reviewers and the Grants Subcommittee as an important tool for dissemination of information to Parties, RFMOs, fishery managers and fishers, and has the support of ACAP. Given that the fact sheets are co-branded by BirdLife International and ACAP, it was recommended to get the fact sheets reviewed by the SBWG and the proposal endorsed by the Advisory Committee before granting and proceeding with the translation.

ACAP 09-09. Implementation of a Scientific Observer Programme to Evaluate the Interaction of Seabirds with Demersal Fisheries in the South of Chile (Jorge Azocar, Instituto de Fomento Pesquero, Chile).

FUNDS REQUESTED: AUD\$ 10,000

APPROVED: AUD\$ 10,000

OBJECTIVE: To train a body of observers from the Institute of Fisheries in Chile (IFOP) tasked in demersal fisheries in order to establish a permanent programme to monitor the interaction between these fisheries and seabirds, specifically Procellariiforms.

EVALUATION: The project proposal originally submitted to ACAP was incomplete and all reviewers found it difficult to assess as sections were missing. On the information presented, the application could not be supported. Because it was felt that the Chilean trawl fleet undoubtedly needs investigation, and in light of the likelihood that a more detailed application has been prepared (following reviewer's advice), it was recommended that a full proposal be requested from the applicants.

After receiving and translating the (complete) project, it was sent to the referees in the SBWG. The Working Group Convenor reported back to the Grants Sub-Committee with a recommendation to fund the project, subject to the following understanding with the proponent:

- (a) That ACAP funding is provided on the basis that the proposal will contribute towards putting a system in place and building capacity for a long-term observer programme, which will benefit seabird bycatch mitigation in both the targeted fisheries and more broadly;
- (b) with this in mind ACAP is providing 'seeding' funding only, and future ACAP funds will not be provided to keep the observer program going. It is assumed that once protocols have been developed and evaluated through this project, the Chilean government will support an ongoing observer program;
- (c) training on collection of seabird bycatch data should be incorporated into the project (keeping in mind that a regional workshop will be conducted in South America addressing specifically observer programme characteristics and development of protocols); and
- (d) the extent of the work proposed is clarified i.e. is the proposal simply to train observers or to operate an observer program? Most reviewers (and me) seem to have assumed it is the latter but we need to be clear on this before funds are allocated.

The Grants Sub-Committee agreed with the recommendation and further comments to the applicant.

ACAP 09-10. Regional workshop “Improving data collection on incidental mortality of seabirds from South American Observer Programmes” (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay).

FUNDS REQUESTED: AUD\$ 23,000

APPROVED: AUD\$ 23,000

OBJECTIVE: To improve and standardize the data collection on incidental mortality of seabirds in fisheries by the observer programmes in South America. To that end, the first phase of this project will consist in a workshop for Heads and Coordinators of observer programmes where data protocols and methodologies will be discussed and unified.

EVALUATION: This proposal received strong support.

ACAP 09-11. A stepped approach to evaluating the effectiveness of a fast sinking line-weighting regime (Graham Robertson, Australian Antarctic Division, Australia).

FUNDS REQUESTED: AUD\$ 5,850

APPROVED: AUD\$ 5,850

OBJECTIVE: to determine if it is possible to modify the existing line weighting regime to permit vessels targeting tuna and swordfish to set during daylight hours in the 30-35° S latitude band. During a first stage, experiments will be conducted to determine the effect of a heavier, faster sinking, line weighting regime on the catch rate of target and non-target fish (not seabirds). If no effect is detected, the second stage will be to permit fishing for a trial period during daylight hours to test the seabird deterrent effectiveness of the new regime. The funds are requested to cover the costs of the first stage only.

EVALUATION: The objectives are very relevant to research priorities defined by SBWG during its last meeting.