



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Fifth Meeting of Advisory Committee

Mar del Plata, Argentina, 13 – 17 April 2010

ACAP Capacity Building Strategy

Chair Advisory Committee, New Zealand, Secretariat

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1- Background

In Article IV, the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) addresses capacity building by saying that *“the effective implementation of the Agreement requires assistance to be provided to Parties and Range States for the implementation of conservation measures for albatrosses and petrels and their habitats, for the management of those habitats as well as for the establishment or improvement of scientific and administrative institutions”*. Moreover, the same article states that *“Parties shall give priority to capacity building, through funding, training, information and institutional support, for the implementation of the Agreement”*. In relation to this concept, words like education and technical training, among others, are repeatedly referred to in the text of the Agreement and its Action Plan.

During the Second Meeting of the Parties, Capacity Building was identified, among others, as an issue of high priority for the Agreement. During that meeting, the Parties expressed a wish for the Advisory Committee to prioritize capacity building in its work programme. In response to MoP’s request, the Secretariat of the Agreement requested Parties (through their National Contact Points) to identify both needs and opportunities for capacity building, by answering a series of questions relating to capacity building in the context of ACAP. The main purpose of the questionnaire was to offer talking points to aid discussion on capacity building during AC3 (AC3 Doc. 16). In response to the questionnaire, the Parties put forward some useful initiatives for Capacity Building including developing a network of suitably trained scientists and policy-makers, maintaining adequate training of observers onboard fishing vessels and raising awareness of ACAP and National Plans of Action – Seabirds (NPOA) between governments and fishing industries. It was also suggested by Parties that one or two chairs/officers might be appointed to interact with Parties and coordinate development of a Capacity Building strategy. In response to the Meeting of the Parties’ request, the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee facilitated a secondment, supported by New Zealand through a voluntary contribution, to explore the potential of developing capacity building projects in South America (AC4 Doc. 26). However, in spite of discussions at AC4 and the support of some

CCBB projects by the Advisory Committee, the strategy was neither drafted nor discussed until MoP3 where document MoP3 Doc 18 presented to the Parties its main components.

According to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, 1992) capacity building encompasses the country's human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capabilities. The concept was also addressed by CMS in its strategy recently adopted by the Conference of Parties (Resolution CMS/ 9.12). A question is, why is capacity building needed, and particularly why does the Agreement need a capacity building strategy? To date, work on capacity building has been largely ad-hoc, matching the Agreement's short term needs with available opportunities (see appendix A). However, a strategic approach will (1), allow the development of a long term Capacity Building programme to be analyzed, agreed, and endorsed by Parties, and (2) make a rational and more efficient use of ACAP's limited human and financial resources.

The key components of the ACAP Capacity Building strategy should be (a) definition of capacity building, (b) objectives, (c) principles that will define priorities for areas to be covered and actions undertaken, (d) methods, (e) funding, and (f) governance.

2- Definition of capacity building

Despite capacity building being often referred to, it was clear from the discussions at meetings that there was confusion and/or disagreement about what it means. Hence, an agreed definition of this term and its adoption by Parties to the Agreement is essential to allow the drafting of clear objectives and methodologies for a strategic, long-term programme. This issue was considered at AC4 where the following definition, elaborated in AC4 Doc. 26, was taken into account: "*Capacity Building means assistance to Parties or Range States for research, administration, training and monitoring for implementation of conservation measures for seabird's listed under Annex 1 through funding, training, provision of information and institutional support. Such assistance is an ongoing process that will be provided to individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, agencies or governments and will facilitate management of the relationship between sectors (public, private and community) in a way to guarantee the implementation of the Agreement*".

The definition above comprises actions in areas such as: (a) the development of systems for collecting, analyzing and exchanging data; (b) the exchange of information regarding adoption and

enforcement of legislative and other management approaches; (c) the implementation of education and awareness programmes; (d) the design and implementation of comprehensive programmes for public information; (e) the development and implementation of training programmes on conservation techniques and measures to mitigate threats; and (f) the exchange of expertise, techniques and knowledge. However, in view of the disagreement on the definition of capacity building during the Advisory Committee meetings, it remains critical that a definition of capacity building is agreed that will provide a framework for actions undertaken by the Agreement.

2- Objectives

The objective of this strategy is to provide the Agreement with an outline that will guide its actions on capacity building in order to assist Parties and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. Range States, observers) in research, administration, training and monitoring programmes/ activities that would lead to the development and/or implementation of conservation measures for albatrosses and petrels listed in Annex 1 of the Agreement. This strategy will help in the optimization of the use of limited ACAP's financial and human resources and contribute in raising the profile of ACAP's agenda in all Parties and Range States.

3- Principles

Capacity building activities will be developed in the frame-work outlined by the following general principles:

3.1. The assistance provided or received may include either training, provision of information, institutional support, or funding in those cases where financial assistance would be needed to help the achievement of actions.

3.2. Capacity building is an ongoing process provided to individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, agencies or governments that will facilitate management of the relationship between sectors (public, private and community) in a way to guarantee the implementation of the Agreement.

3.3. Capacity building actions will be guided by the outcomes of the prioritisation process (refer AC5 Doc 27) and the priorities agreed by the Advisory Committee.

3.4. Capacity building needs and resources will be identified and revised on an annual basis with tasks and specific timeframes incorporated in the Advisory Committee Work Programme.

4- Methods

In terms of the identification of fundamental actions, the prioritization process presented in AC5 (AC5 Doc 27) will be essential in feeding the capacity building strategy by indicating where the actions should be focused. However, the Advisory Committee should have flexibility to cope with opportunities and political contexts that might favor the development of certain actions and benefit the conservation status of ACAP species in spite that those actions may not be within the top priorities indicated by the strategy.

In order to gather information from Parties and Observers on their needs for capacity building, as well as on the assistance they can provide to others with capacity building, two surveys were conducted, the first one in the year 2007 before AC3 (refer to AC3 Doc. 16) and a second one right after MoP3 in 2009. Neither the Secretariat in the first case nor the Chair of the Advisory Committee got a significant response so it was difficult to make a comprehensive analysis of the main areas of need and expertise and the drafting of a capacity building network. From the last survey, the results were clear in that some Parties can provide expertise in areas such as the (1) development and implementation of mitigation, (2) outreach, training for observers and development of observer programmes, (3) engagement with the fishing industry, and (4) advice in raising awareness, among others. However, a complete response is needed in order to conduct a comprehensive analysis. To that end, the proposal is that this analysis would be conducted in the margins of AC5 in order to define the main areas where ACAP capacity building actions should concentrate.

One other point to be considered in this section is the Secondments conducted in the Secretariat and supported by the Secretariat and voluntary contributions. Until now, the concept of Secondment was restricted to trainings or projects developed in the Agreement's Headquarters in Hobart. The adoption of a more flexible approach contemplating the possibility of developing secondments in other Countries will broaden the possibilities for secondees and in many cases make a more efficient use of limited funds.

Based on previous projects supported and funded by the Advisory Committee, it is also worthwhile to emphasize that proposals contributing towards putting a system in place and building capacity for long-term programmes (such as observer programmes) may be supported (depending on the actual merits of a given proposal) on the basis that those projects will work as triggers of long-term projects that will then be supported by the Countries. That is, ACAP will not be supporting long term programmes whose resources should be provided by a given Party.

5- Funding

Until now, ACAP capacity building actions have been supported through funds from the Secretariat, the Advisory Committee Work Programme. Examples can be found in a number of secondments supported by the Secretariat (Appropriation 1) or other capacity building projects funded by the Advisory Committee's budget (Appropriation 4).

Besides these sources, voluntary contributions provided by Parties have supported secondments and training programmes and should be considered as another possibility although the availability of these funds are, in most cases, uncertain from year to year. In this regard, the Agreement should construct a list of prioritised projects/actions that would allow the allocation of funds that become available at short notice. However, it should be accepted that in some cases a Party providing or offering funds might be interested in developing a project on a certain topic. The Advisory Committee or the Secretariat should be flexible and receptive in this regard.

Funds provided by other Organisations are another possibility that has been briefly explored and should now be thoroughly analysed. The recent experience of a training programme for Ecuadorian observers funded jointly by the Advisory Committee and BirdLife International is the most recent example of the way ACAP could move in order to get the most from the combined expertise and resources of ACAP Parties and other Organisations committed to the objectives of the Agreement's Plan of Action.

6- Governance

A long-term programme on capacity building will be needed to define the way in which the strategy will be led and directed. Here we propose the creation of a Capacity Building Sub-Committee

constituted by the Chair of the Advisory Committee, the Executive Secretary, and three AC Members (one per region, i.e. European, South American, African-Australasian) that will discuss the allocation of funds and make recommendations to the Parties and Advisory Committee on the projects and actions to be supported. It should be considered that the allocation of funds will be guided by the actions in the Advisory Committee Work Programme and the results of the prioritization process.

7- Recommendation

- 7.1. That the Advisory Committee adopts the definition of capacity building stated in this document.
- 7.2. That the Advisory Committee endorses the methods and governance procedures described above.
- 7.3. That the approval of ACAP Parties be sought intersessionally for the adoption of this strategy in order that it may be brought into effect as promptly as possible.
- 7.4. That a subgroup meets at AC5 to analyse and subsequently propose to the Advisory Committee the main areas where ACAP capacity building actions should concentrate, based on the extant needs and capacities within the ACAP Parties, Range States and other Organisations engaged with the Agreement's agenda.