

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Fifth Meeting of the Parties <i>Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain, 4 - 8 May 2015</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Conflicts of interest and bias</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Australia, New Zealand, Uruguay</i></p>
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SUMMARY

An intersessional contact group of the Advisory Committee (AC) is working on developing a procedure concerning conflicts of interest and bias, and how these matters would be managed practically, feasibly and effectively if they arose during the work of the Advisory Committee and its working groups. As an interim measure, AC8 has adopted an interim procedure concerning conflicts of interest for its working groups. The procedure requires participants on each working group to declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest at the outset of the meeting, and that any conflicts of interest are managed during the course of the meeting. The interim procedure does not apply to Parties or their representatives.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations are provided for the consideration of the Meeting of the Parties:

1. Endorse the action by the Advisory Committee towards developing a procedure concerning conflicts of interest and bias, and how these matters would be managed if they arose during the work of the Advisory Committee and its working groups.
2. Note the implementation of an interim procedure concerning conflicts of interest for the working groups of the Advisory Committee.
3. Note that the Advisory Committee does not propose to apply the interim procedure to Parties or their representatives.
4. Provide comment about the form and content of procedures concerning conflicts of interest and bias.

1. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND BIAS

The Eighth Meeting of the Advisory Committee: Punta del Este, Uruguay, 15-19 September 2014 (AC8) discussed the development of a procedure concerning conflicts of interest and bias, and how these matters would be managed if they arose during the work of the Advisory Committee and its working groups (AC8 Final Report, paragraph 19.1). Although positive steps are already being taken in the working groups concerning conflicts of interest, these remain informal. AC8 agreed to intersessional work being conducted on procedures for conflicts of interest and bias by a contact group comprising Australia, New Zealand and Uruguay.

As an interim measure, AC8 agreed that the Convenor(s) of each Working Group would bring the following information concerning conflicts of interest to the attention of the participants in the working group for their consideration and action at the beginning and during the course of the meeting:

Conflicts of interest

1. A conflict of interest may arise in work undertaken under the Agreement. This may happen where an individual has a direct or indirect interest which could impair the individual's impartiality, objectivity or independence in carrying out his or her role and functions under the Agreement. A conflict of interest may be actual or perceived.
2. Any individual with a potential or actual conflict of interest must declare the conflict of interest at the outset of a meeting. The individual may take part in the discussions at that meeting as long as there are no objections, but cannot:
 - a. for that aspect of the meeting, participate in making of recommendations and related matters; and
 - b. chair that aspect of the meeting where the conflict of interest arises.

These procedural steps provide reassurance that any conflict of interest matter is managed practically, feasibly and effectively.

The above interim procedure does not apply to the Parties or their representatives.

AC seeks the timely implementation of a procedure to manage actual and potential conflicts of interest and bias that may affect the work conducted by the Advisory Committee and its working groups under the Agreement, including the opportunity for reviewing the effectiveness of the interim approach for each working group.