 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ninth Meeting of the Advisory Committee</b> <i>La Serena, Chile, 9 - 13 May 2016</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Allocation of funds to the AC Work Programme</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Grant Sub-Committee, Secretariat</i></b></p>
---	---

### SUMMARY

The present document outlines the processes followed for the allocation of funds within the Agreement's Small Grants Scheme and the Secondment Programme. Two secondments were supported using a total of AUD 26,034; one was Patricia Pereira Serafini (CEMAVE, Brazil) to the British Antarctic Survey and the University of Exeter, and the other was Veronica Cortez (University of Barcelona, Spain) to the Albatross Task Force, Chile. Some other proposals were not adequately structured or presented with missing documentation and/or signatures, or unclear description of products and actions linked to the AC Work Programme. These issues could be addressed by adding guidelines to the application form to assist applicants in future calls.

Regarding the Small Grants Scheme, the process followed guidelines and procedures already adopted and used in previous calls for applications. However, an issue raised in relation to one project during the final stage of endorsement prevented the implementation of the complete programme. This issue could not be resolved through negotiation. Discussions to find a way past the underlying problem so as to avoid this unfortunate and undesirable outcome in the future are expected during AC9.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Advisory Committee is requested to:

1. Note the progress in implementing the Secondment Programme and discuss possible ways and mechanisms to refine it.
2. Further discuss the issues preventing the implementation of the Small Grant Scheme in 2015, seeking solutions to prevent them occurring in future rounds.
3. Analyse the merits of the proposal outlined in section 4 so it could be implemented in the next call for applications.
4. Endorse the schedule for call for applications proposed in **Figure 1**.

## 1. BACKGROUND

In 2009, MoP3 adopted a procedure for allocating funding to the AC Work Programme (**MoP3 Final Report**). The Advisory Committee Small Grants Scheme was successfully applied and refined in the following years, with a schedule of two calls per triennium endorsed at AC7 (**AC7 Final Report** 12.2.2). The latest review of project applications received and granted was presented to the Advisory Committee Meeting in 2014 (see [AC8 Doc 21](#), Annex 1).

In addition to the small grants, and in order to further build capacity in the Agreement, MoP4 approved a new approach to the Secondment Programme. The programme principles and criteria were further developed by the Advisory Committee (see [AC8 Doc 25](#)). The new approach allows secondments to occur either in the Agreement's Headquarters in Hobart, or at institutions in other countries, requests that the Secondment Programme is coordinated between the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee, and should follow the schedule of two calls every three financial years in line with the Small Grants Scheme.

In this paper, we present information regarding the implementation of both programmes, lessons learnt with the implementation of the secondment programme following the new approach, and issues that prevented the implementation of the Small Grants Scheme.

## 2. SECONDMENTS PROGRAMME - LESSONS LEARNT

The Secretariat advised that AUD 51,429 was available for the 2015 call. A total of five secondment applications were received, two of which were granted after a thorough evaluation conducted by the review panel (comprised of the Secretariat and the Grants Subcommittee). It should be noted that conflict of interest precluded the participation of one of the Grants Subcommittee (GSC) Members in the review. Total funds requested were AUD 46,804 out of which AUD 26,034 were granted. One secondment was by Patricia Pereira Serafini (CEMAVE, Brazil) on seabird pathogen surveillance, with the British Antarctic Survey and the University of Exeter as host institutions (AUD 13,000 granted). The other secondment supported was by Veronica Cortez (University of Barcelona, Spain) in collaboration with Albatross Task Force, Chile (AUD 13,034 granted).

All secondment proposals were reviewed by the panel following the guidelines and criteria described in **AC8 Doc 25**, addressing the relevance of objectives in relation to the Agreement's work programme, the international nature of the proposal and its capacity building focus, among others.

Some proposals were not adequately structured or were presented with unclear description of products and actions linked to the AC Work Programme. This may, at least partially, be improved by adding further text to the application form guidelines to assist applicants. In other instances, the panel noted that projects had more of a research and academic profile, but with no clear capacity building component.

Also, some applications were missing pieces of information and/or supporting documentation such as applicant's CV or signature of Heads of Institution. Lack of details (or uncertainties) about implementation or costs budgeted were also noted by the review panel. Some of these application issues could be addressed by emphasizing in the application template or introductory letter the importance of including all of these components.

### **3. ISSUES PREVENTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SMALL GRANTS SCHEME**

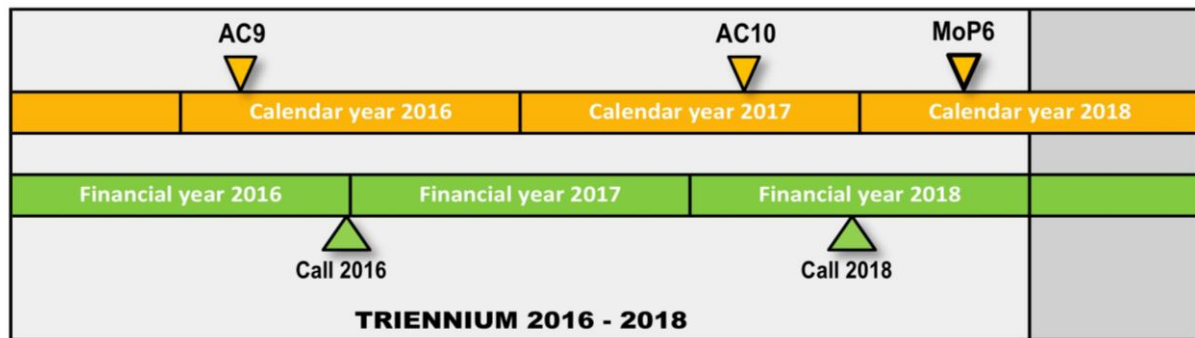
A total of 14 Small Grant applications were received during the 2015 call, totalling AUD 224,787. The Secretariat advised that AUD 80,000 was available for 2015. Following previous experience and procedures already endorsed by the Advisory Committee, referees from PaCSWG and SBWG initially assessed the proposals. In a second stage, the GSC compiled all assessments and proposed to the Advisory Committee a list of eight projects to be granted, totalling AUD 107,275. In order to reach that sum, the GSC proposed to use the AUD 80,000 available plus AUD 27,275 transferred from the secondment funds. The approach was endorsed by the Advisory Committee.

During the final stage of endorsement of approved projects by the Advisory Committee, an issue was raised in relation to one proposed project (ACAP 2015-02). This issue could not be resolved through negotiation. Given that according to Rule 14(1) of the Advisory Committee Rules of Procedure, consensus is required on any decision regarding financial matters, this has prevented the Agreement from transferring funds to any successful applicants and led to the complete cancellation of the Small Grants Scheme in 2015. The GSC communicated this to all applicants after endorsement was given by the Advisory Committee. Further discussions to find a way past the underlying problem so as to avoid this unfortunate and undesirable outcome in the future are expected during AC9. The Small Grant Scheme has been one of the great successes of the Agreement and it would be very unfortunate if it was lost entirely.

### **4. FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF SECONDMENT AND GRANT SCHEMES**

The GSC discussed ways to further improve the effectiveness of the Grant and Secondment schemes, including the implementation of a mechanism to support the presentation of project outcomes at relevant fora including conferences and workshops. This may enhance both schemes by, (1) improving networking and communication channels for the Agreement, and (2) demonstrating the practical ways in which ACAP and its Parties applies its resources. Applicants from already granted projects could be eligible for such sponsorship on an ad hoc basis. Each application would be assessed on project outcomes by the GSC and the Secretariat. Sponsorship could be either partial or in full and may depend on needs and/or funds available. The implementation of this sponsorship scheme will require funds to be set aside from the Small Grant and Secondment Programmes. It may also require some consideration to be given to the fora and audiences to be targeted. The Advisory Committee is requested to analyse the merits of this proposal so it could be implemented in the next call for grant and secondment applications.

Following the schedule of two calls every three years already followed in recent years, and assuming that a solution to the problem described in section 3 above is agreed, it is proposed that the next call for application for Small Grants and Secondments should take place during the second half of 2016 (**Figure 1**). Inputs from AC9 regarding priority actions and areas should be taken into account in the selection of proposals.



**Figure 1.** Timeline for call for applications (both conservation and secondment projects) in relation to the meetings plan currently in place.