Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Third Meeting of the Parties

Bergen, 27 April – 01 May 2009

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Procedure for the Allocation of Funds to the Advisory Committee Work Programme

Author: Advisory Committee

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Background

The Third Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC3) endorsed a proposal from Australia for the development by the Secretariat of a consistent and transparent procedure for (1) identifying and prioritising each working group's requests to the Committee for funding, and (2) recording the Committee's decisions. Under this procedure, project proponents would use a standard form to submit funding proposals to the relevant AC working groups, which in turn would review and rank the projects and present a written summary of their funding proposals - including a description of the work proposed to be undertaken, the funding sought and how it accords with agreed priorities under the AC Work Programme and the objective of the Agreement - to the Committee. These requests would then be consolidated into a work programme and budget for the Committee, which would then decide on which proposals would be funded, what funding each would receive, and what the priorities would be for further funding intersessionally, should additional funding become available. The Secretariat, in consultation with the Advisory Committee's leadership, developed an interim procedure for use at the Fourth Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC4). In the development of this procedure it was recognized that there are a number of important considerations, such as how funding requests are sought and how they are assessed, that warrant further consideration by the Advisory Committee. To elaborate these issues, a paper (see AC4 Doc 53) was prepared by the Secretariat in close consultation with the Advisory Committee's leadership to aid discussion on these issues by the Advisory Committee, with a view to reaching agreement on a procedure to be adopted for use in future years.

During AC4 the Advisory Committee allocated funds to specific projects by following the funding application process outlined in AC4 Doc 53. The result was satisfactory, with the allocation of AUD $128,750 from Appropriation N°4 to seven projects. However, the Advisory Committee recognised that the process could be improved and agreed to work on this issue intersessionally. This paper presents to the Meeting of Parties a revised procedure that could be followed by the Advisory Committee for the allocation of funds that takes account of the experience and discussions of AC4.

Proposed principles relevant to the allocation of funding by the Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee and the Secretariat will operate in accordance with the following general principles when allocating funds to proposals to undertake tasks in the AC Work Programme or to achieve the objective of the Agreement:

1. To make projects and funding management more consistent, the allocation of funds by the Advisory Committee will occur at approximately the same time each year, either at meeting of the Committee or intersessionally as required.

2. If needed, the Advisory Committee may establish a Grant Sub-committee, chaired by the Chair of the Advisory Committee, to oversee the process and provide it with recommendations on what projects to allocate funding to.

3. Once established, such a sub-committee will be responsible for all stages of the process except the initial ranking of the projects evaluated which shall be a matter for the Working Groups, and the final decision about funding, which shall be a matter for the Advisory Committee;

4. While funds will primarily be allocated for projects that specifically address tasks in the AC Work Programme, a small amount of the available funds (around 10%) may be used to fund innovative ideas not in the AC Work Programme, but directly relevant to the objective of the Agreement.

5. Prioritising actions/ tasks in the AC Work Programme will be guided by the outcomes of the conservation measure prioritisation process, which is currently under development (refer MoP3 Doc 20) and the priorities agreed by the Advisory Committee.

6. Where possible, an indicative amount of funding will be identified for each task in the AC Work Programme, where applicable, to aid the allocation process.

7. The amount of funding allocated to the AC Work Programme (Appropriation No. 4) will be determined by the Meeting of Parties, as part of the triennial budget approval process.

8. The Advisory Committee will review its Work Programme annually, either at meetings or intersessionally, taking into consideration tasks completed or partially completed, and may identify tasks which are the highest priority for the next call for project proposals.

9. Proposals may be submitted by members of the Advisory Committee and its Working Groups, or by any observer.

10. Proposals shall be submitted to the Secretariat through the National Contact Points with the exception of those presented by International Organisations.

11. The use of the following criteria and scoring standard should guide the Working Groups during the ranking process:

Criteria:

- the scientific, technical or other merit of the proposal, such as the potential for capacity building;
- the extent to which the proposal will assist in achieving the objective of the Agreement (*i.e.* favorable conservation status of ACAP species);
- the extent to which the project specifically addresses the agreed AC Work Programme and the priorities agreed by the Committee and its working groups;
- how high the value of the project is to the AC Work Programme (priority will be given to projects which contribute the most value for funding and implement the highest priority tasks);
- the expertise of the team (particularly the Senior Researchers) who would undertake the proposed project; and
- the budget and project feasibility (is the proposal capable of being achieved within the time and budget sought).

Scoring standard:

- "unsatisfactory", not to be considered further;
- "possibly unsatisfactory", needs clarification or improvement before it could be considered satisfactory;
- "satisfactory", a feasible but not strong/high priority proposal;
- "above average", a competent proposal;
- "excellent", competent, good value and contributes to high priority tasks.

12. If required, external experts may be called upon to provide independent review of the proposals submitted.

13. Either at its meetings or intersessionally, the Advisory Committee may allocate tasks/funding directly to a project, working group or the Secretariat, if it considers this appropriate. In these particular occasions, it will use the format of a formal application keep the records of fund allocations and reporting.

14. The Secretariat is responsible for providing administrative support for the operation of the application process.

Proposed procedure

The following procedure is proposed for the allocation of funds to the AC Work Programme.

1. Four months before the next Advisory Committee (AC) meeting or, in the event no meeting is to be held, at a date agreed by the Advisory Committee, the Secretariat electronically distributes a circular, calling for project proposals, to Working Groups and National Contact Points for

distribution as they consider appropriate. A description of the application process and the standard application form will be included in the circular;

2. Approximately two months prior to the next AC, or by the date agreed by the AC, completed project proposals will be submitted to the Secretariat through the National Contact Points if required according to the stated in the principles.

3. The Secretariat will electronically send project proposals to the relevant Working Group(s) as soon as possible, whose Members (with the right of voting) will review and rank the proposals.

4. At least one month prior to the next AC meeting, or at a date agreed by the AC, the Convenor of each Working Group will present a list of proposals rated satisfactory or better and their rankings to the Advisory Committee or its Grant sub-committee if established. If a project is unable to be ranked for any reason, it shall also be submitted to the Advisory Committee, or its Grant sub-committee if established, for consideration.

5. Proposals ranked by the pertinent Working Group(s) will be compiled by the Advisory Committee's Grant sub-committee (if established), which will recommend to the Advisory Committee what proposals to fund and how much funding each proposal should receive. The final approval of funding will be by the Advisory Committee during its regular meetings or intersessionally.

6. As soon as possible after the completion of the AC meeting or intersessional decision, the Secretariat will write to all proponents advising of the AC's funding decisions. Successful proponents are also provided with details of the funding agreed, the conditions for its disbursement and any other relevant information.

7. Within one month of receiving advice of the above decision, proponents must advise the Secretariat of their willingness to accept the funding and conditions; those proponents who do not reply within this timeframe will be deemed to have withdrawn their proposal and that funding may be allocated to another proposal.

8. On an annual basis, the Grant Sub-committee will (a) evaluate the reports of projects funded previously, and (b) review progress achieved against the current Work Programme;

Recommendation

That Parties recommend the adoption of this procedure by the Advisory Committee.