



**Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels**

## **Third Meeting of the Parties**

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### **Proposed Indicators to Measure the Success of the Agreement**

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# **Proposed Indicators to Measure the Success of the Agreement**

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### **Introduction**

This paper seeks to update, and seek the views of, the meeting of the Parties on progress on the development of indicators to measure the status of the species covered by the Agreement and the contribution that the Agreement and its work programme to that status. It builds upon AC2 Document 20, jointly submitted by New Zealand, South Africa and Birdlife International, subsequent discussions at AC4, and recommends that MoP3 agree to further intersessional work to produce the necessary indicators.

### **Legal requirements**

Article IX 6(f) of the ACAP Agreement requires the Advisory Committee to develop a system of indicators to measure the collective success of the Parties to the Agreement in achieving and maintaining a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels listed in Annex 1 of the Agreement.

Under the Agreement, a species is said to be in favourable conservation status when the following conditions are met:

- i. population dynamics indicate that the migratory species is maintaining itself on a long-term basis
- ii. the range of the migratory species is neither currently being reduced, nor is likely to be reduced, on a long term basis
- iii. there is, and will be in the foreseeable future, sufficient habitat to maintain the population of the migratory species on a long-term basis; and
- iv. the distribution and abundance of the migratory species approach historic coverage and levels to the extent that potentially suitable ecosystems exist and to the extent consistent with wise wildlife management

### **Background**

The development of indicators was considered at AC1 (Doc 17), AC2 (Doc 20) and AC4 (no document), but, consequential from timing and data availability constraints and recognition of the need to align any indicators a priority framework which has yet to be agreed, a suite of indicators has yet to be developed. The meeting of the Parties has previously agreed that the IUCN threat status should be used as an interim indicator. Most recently, at AC4, it was recognised that the development of indicators should take account of work to prioritise the effort of Parties, the Advisory Committee and its working groups, and the Secretariat. The prioritisation process is the subject of another paper to be considered at MoP3, Doc 20, which will be discussed under the item preceding this paper's consideration at agenda item 7.4.

## **Key principles**

At the outset of the discussions to develop indicators, guiding principles need to be agreed in order to provide a framework for these discussions. Those guiding principles could include:

- a) To focus their assessment and to enable validation, the number of indicators should be kept to a minimum;
- b) The indicators should be measurable, realistic and meaningful and not open to varied interpretation;
- c) The indicators should ensure that information is comparable and not lead to increased reporting obligations (data should be available from that already provided in national reports, but where that is not sufficient to assess the achievement of an objective, new questions may need to be added to the reporting format in line with adopted indicators);
- d) be applicable at a national and international level (i.e. their suitability should not be limited to individual Parties); and
- e) be capable of disaggregation (to species groups, species and sites).

## **Consideration**

Given the time taken to date to develop indicators and the difficulty of developing workable and meaningful indicators based on available data, Parties should not seek to produce a comprehensive set initially, but rather a short list of indicators that can be tested and built upon subsequently.

The short list should take account of the work to agree priority areas of action, but based on the definition of favourable conservation status, indicators might logically consider to what degree pressure/state/response indicators should be developed to focus on the following key areas:

- a. Existence of and confidence in baseline data
- b. Population numbers
- c. Range and Breeding sites
- d. Threats and threat management.

To enable data to be collected without unduly, and unnecessarily, increasing reporting burdens, no more than three indicators should be agreed for assessment against each key issue.

It may also be appropriate to consider the lessons learnt from the development of indicators in other CMS Agreements or other multilateral environmental agreements.

Given the passage of time the Advisory Committee should work as expeditiously as possible, once a priority framework has been agreed, to develop a suite of indicators that take account of the above key principles and considerations. The indicators should be available in time for agreement at AC6 so that data can be gathered in time for an initial assessment at MoP4. The initial short list of indicators suggested can

then subject to an assessment and be modified, reduced or increased as the Parties deem necessary.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that MoP3 :

- a. reaffirm the importance of indicators to assess the conservation status of species listed on the Agreement, and the contribution that the Agreement and its work is making towards this;
- b. endorse the view of AC4 that further development of indicators is required, and that this should be done taking account of the development of a framework for the prioritisation of actions necessary to achieve the objectives of the Agreement;
- c. endorse in principle the principles, options and timeframe for developing and reporting on the necessary indicators as presented in this paper; and
- d. agree to intersessional work by the Advisory Committee to develop and test the required indicators.