



IWC Southern Ocean Research Partnership Research Fund Call for Proposals 2024/25 GUIDELINES

The closing date for applications is midnight UTC, Thursday, 29 February 2024.

Applications received during this Call for Proposals will be assessed prior to and during SC69B (April 2024), submitted for approval at IWC 69 (September 2024). If approved, successful projects can only commence in January 2025, at the earliest.

Part 1 - General Information

1. Background

The IWC's Southern Ocean Research Partnership (IWC-SORP) is an integrated, collaborative consortium for non-lethal whale research. The Partnership aims to maximise conservation outcomes for Southern Ocean whales through an understanding of the post-exploitation status, health, dynamics and environmental linkages of their populations, and the threats they face. Participating scientists are developing and applying novel, powerful, non-lethal research methods, as well as important ecological theory and analyses.

The IWC-SORP ethos is one of open collaboration, communication and data sharing.

2. Research Themes and Theme Contacts (2024-25)

There are seven current and ongoing research themes. Details of these and the objectives of the Partnership and its component projects can be found at: <https://iwc.int/sorp> and <http://www.marinemammals.gov.au/sorp>.

The Call for Proposals (2024 - 25) will consider proposals related to the seven current IWC-SORP themes:

- *Theme 1: Antarctic blue whale project*
Contacts: Dr Mike Double mike.double@aad.gov.au; Dr Nat Kelly nat.kelly@aad.gov.au
- *Theme 2: Distribution, relative abundance, migration patterns and foraging ecology of three ecotypes of killer whales in the Southern Ocean*
Contacts: Dr Giancarlo Lauriano giancarlo.lauriano@isprambiente.it; Dr Luciano Dalla Rosa l.dalla@furg.br

- *Theme 3: Foraging ecology and predator-prey interactions between baleen (minke and humpback) whales and krill: a multiscale comparative study across Antarctic regions.*
Contact: Professor Ari Friedlaender ari.friedlaender@ucsc.edu
- *Theme 4: Acoustic trends in abundance, distribution, and seasonal presence of Antarctic blue whales and fin whales in the Southern Ocean.*
Contacts: Dr Danielle Harris dh17@st-andrews.ac.uk; Dr Susannah Buchan sjbuchan@gmail.com
- *Theme 5: The distribution and extent of mixing of southern hemisphere humpback whale populations around Antarctica.*
Contact: Professor Rochelle Constantine r.constantine@auckland.ac.nz
- *Theme 6: The right sentinel for climate change: linking foraging ground variability to population recovery in the southern right whale.*
Contacts: Dr Els Vermeulen els.vermeulen@up.ac.za; Dr Emma Carroll e.carroll@auckland.ac.nz
- *Theme 7: Recovery status and ecology of Southern Hemisphere fin whales.*
Contact: Dr Helena Herr helena.herr@uni-hamburg.de

Proposals directly related to any of the objectives of one (or more) of the seven IWC-SORP Themes will be considered, however, proposals are encouraged that address the following priority areas:

- *Research that informs ongoing or upcoming population and/or stock assessments for priority Southern Ocean whale species, inter alia, abundance estimation.*
- *Research that enhances understanding of krill consumption rates, spatial distribution of cetaceans and their krill swarm-preferences, and/or baleen whale interactions with krill fishing operations.*

3. Eligibility

There are **13 IWC-SORP Partner** countries: *Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa and the United States of America.*

- The Principal Investigator **must be from an institution located in an IWC-SORP Partner country.**
- All applicants are **strongly encouraged** to liaise closely with relevant IWC-SORP Theme Leader(s) when developing proposals (see Section 2 above for contact details).
- Applicants are **strongly encouraged** to submit proposals that are collaborative in nature.
- Recipients of funding from previous Calls are eligible to apply for further funding.

- Applicants are **strongly encouraged** to seek co-investment, and preference may be given to projects demonstrating such an arrangement.
- Applicants will be bound by IWC-SORP data availability protocols <https://www.marinemammals.gov.au/sorp/protocols-data-sharing-and-resources/>
- Institutes receiving funding are responsible for obtaining ethics approval and relevant permits. Details **must be** provided within the application and copies of permits will be required should a project application be successful.
- Applicants will be bound by IWC Scientific Committee conflict of interest procedures (see Section 4 below)

4. Conflict of Interest

Potential or perceived ‘conflict of interest’ within the IWC SC will be avoided, especially with regards to membership of evaluation groups (e.g., IWC-SORP and SMRF funding). These rules apply to both applicant and members of the fund review panel.

As part of their application, applicants are required to declare to the best of their knowledge any conflict of interest that would impact on, or prevent, the applicant from proceeding with the project or any contract they may enter into with the IWC.

Where an applicant identifies that an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest exists or might arise in relation to this application for funding, the applicant must inform the IWC Secretariat in writing immediately. A conflict of interest may exist, for example, if the applicant or any of its personnel:

- *Has a relationship (whether professional, commercial or personal) with a party who is able to influence the application assessment process, such as an Assessment Panel member;*
- *Has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicant in carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently; or*
- *Has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain as a result of the allocation of funding from the IWC-SORP Research Fund.*

Assessment Panel members are also required to divulge any conflict of interest to the IWC and IWC-SORP Secretariats, Chair of the IWC-SORP SSC and the Chair of the IWC/SC prior to assessment of applications. The Chair of the IWC/SC will decide on a case-by-case basis if the member(s) should be excluded from the assessment of individual project(s). A conflict of interest includes:

- *Any financial interest in the applicant(s) or application(s);*
- *Any relatives or friends with a financial interest in the applicant(s) or application(s);*
- *Any personal bias or inclination which would affect a decision in relation to applicant(s) or application(s);*
- *Any personal obligation, allegiance or loyalty which would in any way affect a decision in relation to the allocation of funding from the IWC-SORP Research Fund; and*

- Any close, long-standing personal or professional relationship with the applicant(s).

5. Closing Date

Applications are to be submitted electronically by **midnight UTC, Thursday 29 February 2024**. Applications submitted after this deadline will not be accepted.

6. Procedure and Timeline

The Principal Investigator(s) of the proposal will be informed once the application has been received. There may be a requirement to submit additional information. Any such requests will be made via email from either the IWC Secretariat or the fund manager. Proposals will be assessed by members of the review panel prior to SC69B and final assessment will take place during the SC69B meeting (April 2024).

All submissions will be assessed and ranked according to the detailed procedures in Part 2 of this guide. Projects shall be recommended for funding as per rank and available funding. The Principal Investigators of all projects will be informed of the decision made by the SC in early May 2024. Recommended projects will be submitted to IWC 69 (September 2024) for approval. If approved, the Secretariat will prepare contracts in November-December 2024, to commence no earlier than January 2025 (Figure 1).

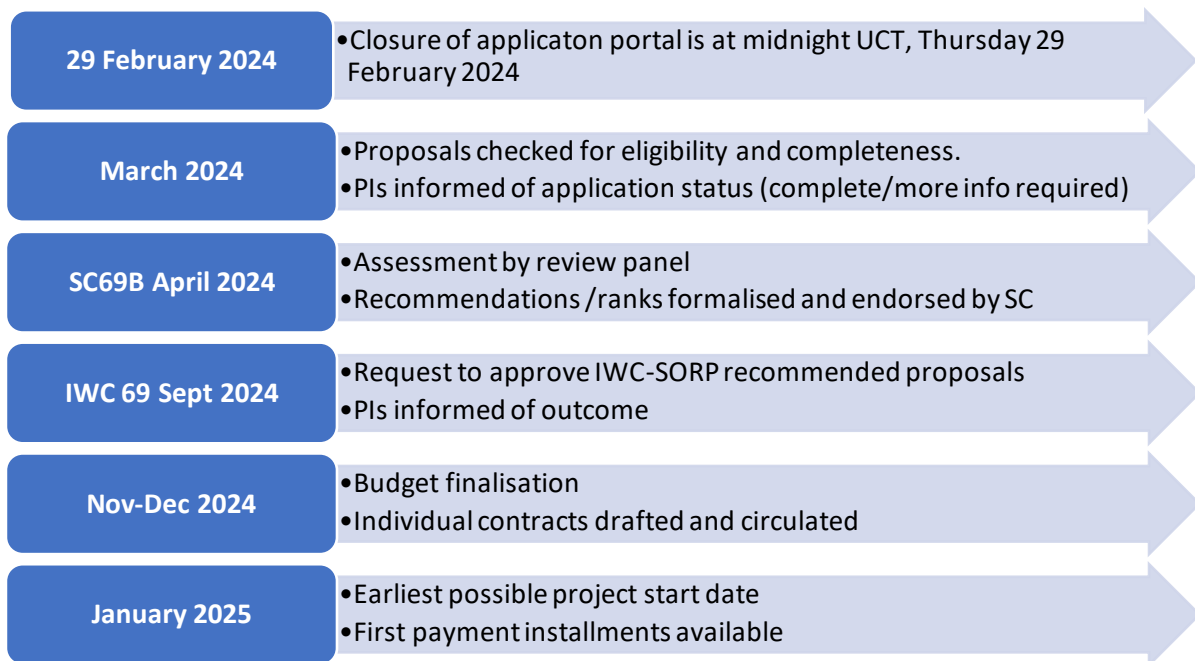


Figure 1. Funding procedure timeline and key dates

7. Appeals

Appeals will be considered only against process issues relating to the application. They will not be considered against Assessment Panel decisions. Appeals must be lodged through the administering organisation's research office and be received within 28 days of the date of notification of the outcome of applications (IWC 69 September 2024). The appeal should state the grounds for appeal and be signed by the appellant. The signed appeal should be sent to the IWC Secretariat at projectproposals@iwc.int

8. Contract

The Principal Investigators (PI) of successful proposals will be required to sign a contract with the International Whaling Commission (IWC).

- The contract will cover the project budget, financial and performance acquittal, milestone activities, reporting, intellectual property, assets and data requirements.
- Milestone activities will include interim and final reports to the IWC Scientific Committee detailing performance to the date of the milestone. The milestone dates will be linked to the IWC Scientific Committee meeting schedule.
- Payments will be linked to milestone activities, which must be successfully completed before funds are released.
- By signing the contract, the PI (s) and their institution(s) (when applicable) will be agreeing to the clauses set out within the contract.
- An alternate or replacement PI must be named in the contract, who has the authority to assume the PI's role in the event the original PI leaves the contracted team/institution or is no longer able to act as PI.

9. Reporting

All IWC-SORP funded projects are required to submit interim and final reports annually to the IWC Scientific Committee via the IWC-SORP Secretariat.

- The interim and final reports will outline to what degree the funding received from the IWC-SORP Research Fund has achieved the objectives, outputs and outcomes identified in the approved project application.
- Interim and final reports will be submitted as per the dates/milestones agreed in the Contract (Section 8). These milestone dates will be linked to the IWC Scientific Committee meeting schedule.
- At the end of a project, the final report will be assessed by the IWC-SORP Scientific Steering Committee (as a Working Group of the IWC Scientific Committee) to determine if the project achieved the objectives, outputs and outcomes as stated in the original project proposal. A satisfactory assessment of the final report is required to release the final payment. In addition, for any future funding application from the Principal Investigator, the outcome of previous assessments will be considered.
- The final report will be made publicly available on the IWC website.
- Excerpts from interim and/or final reports may also be included in the IWC-SORP Annual Report prepared by the IWC-SORP Secretariat and submitted to meetings of the IWC Scientific Committee.

- Successful applicants are encouraged to submit primary papers concerning funded projects to the IWC Scientific Committee for consideration where appropriate, as well as manuscripts for publication in the Journal of Cetacean Research and Management, or other peer-reviewed scientific journals.

10. Disclosure

The Principal Investigator's name and institute, a synopsis of the proposal and the funding amount for all projects considered will be publicly available in the Scientific Report published in the year the application was made. All applicants' names, project details, funding amounts and the purpose for which the funds were granted will be publicly announced for approved funding proposals. This will include naming all parties to the successful application. These details will be published on the IWC website immediately after the contract takes effect.

11. Enquiry Contact Details

All applications must be submitted via the online portal. If there are any technical issues or questions relating to the portal, please contact projectproposals@iwc.int

If there are any questions relating to proposal theme or eligibility, please contact the relevant chair of each fund:

IWC-SORP Secretariat, Elanor Bell elanor.bell@aad.gov.au

Small Cetacean Fund Review Panel, Lindsay Porter lindsay.jp@gmail.com

Part 2 - Detailed Guidelines for Online Submission, Budget and Assessment

Previously, submissions to the IWC-SORP fund were made via downloadable documents. An online form is now available for all fund applications and is in the same format as the previous application document. The online system is aimed to standardise application submission across all funds, ease the submission process for the applicant and assist the Secretariat and fund managers to process the growing number of applications received in a more timely and efficient manner.

If there are any technical issues with the online submission process, or an online submission is not practical (e.g., if you are in a remote area with poor connectivity) please contact projectproposals@iwc.int for assistance.

1. Application Form

The IWC-SORP Research Proposal Application electronic form can be accessed at [Fund Application Form](#)¹ (Figure 1).

**SMALL CETACEAN AND IWC-SORP
2024 Research Proposal Form**

* Required

Project Overview

Research Area

1. Project Title *

Please provide a brief description of the project (30 word limit)

Enter your answer

2. Which research fund is the application for *

Please select the relevant fund for your proposal

Select your answer

- Small Cetaceans Research Fund (SMRF)
- Southern Ocean Research Project (IWC-SORP)

3. Please indicate type of Project - select multiple options if necessary

Figure 1. First page of the form. Note the dropdown menu to select relevant fund.

¹ <https://forms.office.com/e/z7RkSfY9ke>

1.1. Named Personnel

The second page of the form is for the Principal Investigator (PI) details. There can be only one PI.

The Principal Investigator must also name an alternate or second investigator within the project team/institute who can take over if the Principal Investigator becomes unavailable or leaves the institute. This is not on the application form but should be considered as it will be part of the contract with IWC.

At the end of the second page, there is a check box for additional named investigators (Figure2).

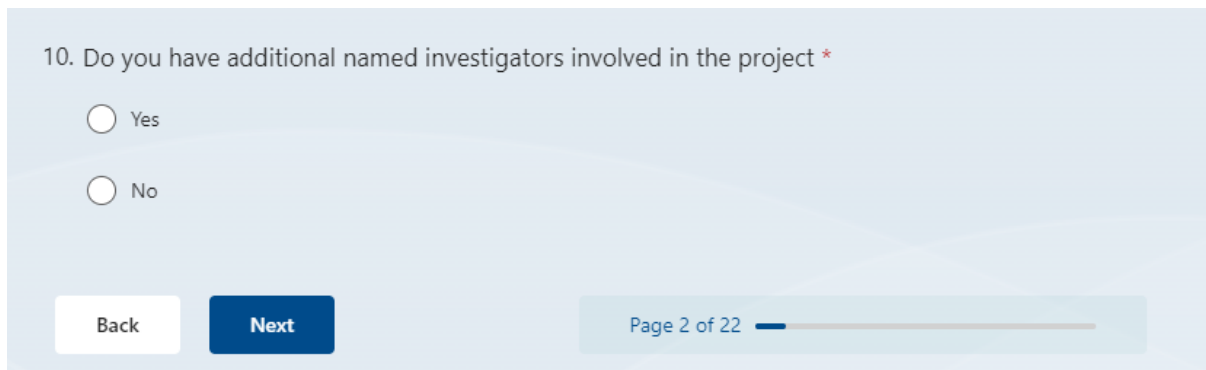
The image shows a screenshot of a web form. At the top, it asks question 10: "10. Do you have additional named investigators involved in the project *". Below the question are two radio button options: "Yes" and "No". At the bottom left of the form area are two buttons: "Back" (white with black text) and "Next" (dark blue with white text). At the bottom right, there is a progress bar indicating "Page 2 of 22".

Figure 2. Checkbox that autogenerates new pages for CoI and Stakeholders. A maximum of three (3) CoI detail pages and ten (10) Stakeholder pages can be generated.

If “yes” is clicked, you will be taken to the Co-Investigators page. If there is more than one Co-I, keep clicking “Yes” when prompted and you can add up to three (3) Co-Investigators.

If “No” is clicked (either from PI or CoI details pages), you will be taken to the “Stakeholders” details page. As for CoI details, if you have more than one Stakeholder, keep clicking “Yes” at the end of each page. A maximum of ten (10) stakeholders can be added.

See Section 3 (below) for Project Personnel definitions and roles.

1.2 Project Description

At the beginning of “Background to the proposal” section, state the relevant SORP Theme. This is the only part that is word limited (2500 words) (Figure 3).

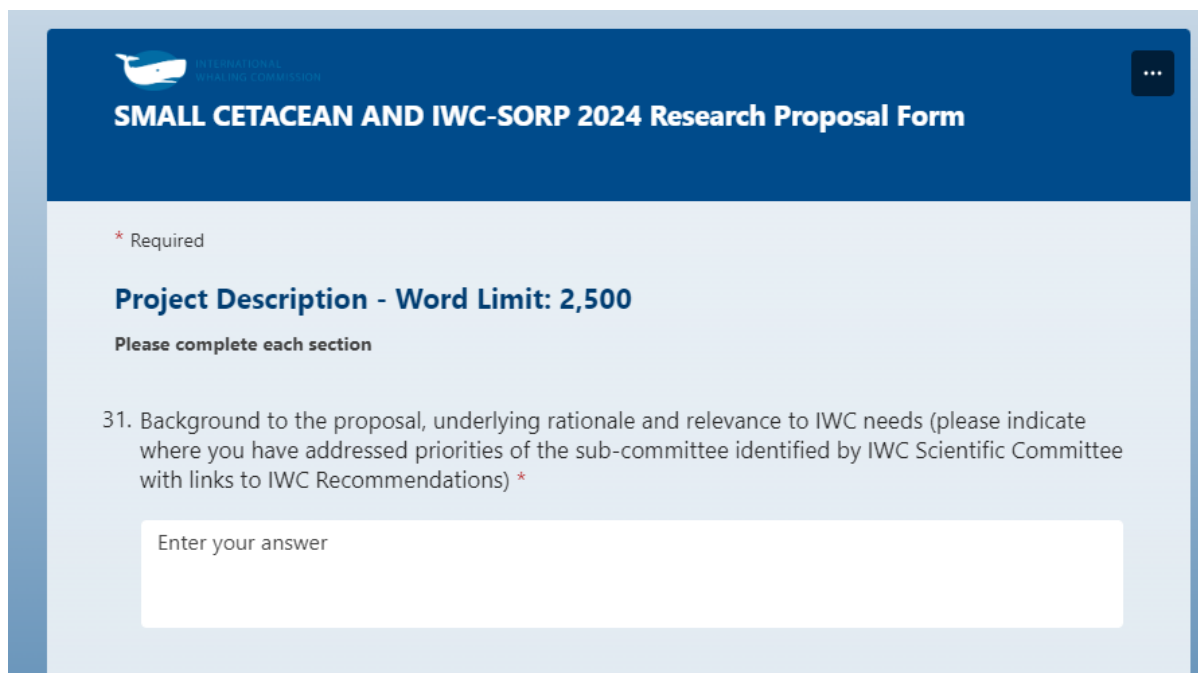
The image shows a screenshot of a web form titled "SMALL CETACEAN AND IWC-SORP 2024 Research Proposal Form". At the top left is the logo for the International Whaling Commission. Below the title, there is a section for "Project Description - Word Limit: 2,500". A note says "* Required" and "Please complete each section". The question number 31 is followed by the text: "Background to the proposal, underlying rationale and relevance to IWC needs (please indicate where you have addressed priorities of the sub-committee identified by IWC Scientific Committee with links to IWC Recommendations) *". Below this is a large white text input box with the placeholder text "Enter your answer".

Figure 3. Project Description word limited box.

1.3 Summary of work plan

The workplan page has nine (9) spaces for activities. If you do not have nine activities, input NA into the activity section and a dummy date into the date line (apologies, form will not let us enter a non-date!) (Figure 4).

When the proposal is assessed, all NA/dummy dates shall be removed so the review panel will have a tidy proposal.

If there are more than nine (9) activities, please contact the IWC-SORP Secretariat, Elanor Bell elanor.bell@aad.gov.au

1.4 Expected Output

There is space for five (5) expected outputs from the project. If you do not have five expected outputs, input NA into the output section and a dummy date into the date line (apologies, form will not let us enter a non-date!) (Figure 5).

When the proposal is assessed, all NA/dummy dates shall be removed so the review panel will have a tidy proposal.

If there are more than five (5) expected outputs, please contact the IWC-SORP Secretariat, Elanor Bell elanor.bell@aad.gov.au

45. Completion Date Activity 4

1/7/2024

January 2024 ↑ ↓ ×

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Go to today

46. Name of Investigator Responsible for implementation

47. Please input date (M/d/yyyy)

54. Activity 9 Description and Name of Investigator Responsible for implementation

Enter your answer

55. Completion Date Activity 9

Please input date (M/d/yyyy)

[Back](#) [Next](#)

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Never give out your password. [Report abuse](#)

Figure 4. A date must be entered for each proposed activity (even non-activities!)

64. Description Expected Output 5

xx

65. Date Completion Expected Output 5

1/7/2024

Figure 5. A date must be entered for each expected output (even non-outputs!)

1.5 Permits

Research permits and/or ethics approval must be in place or in process when the application is being assessed. This section requires affirming permits/processes are in place. Please note: you do NOT have to upload permits at this time (Figure 6).

* Required

Permits

53. Do you have the appropriate permits for the importation of the samples?
e.g. CITES **Note: Project proponents need to provide copies of their relevant permits prior the beginning of the project ***

Yes

No

54. Do you have the appropriate permits to carry out the fieldwork, including if necessary, animal welfare considerations? Please give details on each relevant permit.

*

Enter your answer

Figure 6. Permit section (permits are not required to be uploaded but will be requested if the project is to be funded)

1.6 Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Applicants must be able to provide evidence of relevant research experience of a high order.

All investigators need to include a short biographical statement within the online form, outlining experience and history relevant to the project. Formal CVs are not required, instead a short biographical statement is required for the PI (250 word limit only).

For CoIs, all can be included in the second box – again **each** CoI bio must only be 250 words (Figure 7). Full CVs, including publications, may be requested at a later date.

* Required

CV

SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL CVs FOR EACH NAMED INVESTIGATOR (1 PARAGRAPH, FOCUSED ON RELEVANCE TO PROJECT)

68. CV of the PI (250 word limit) *

Enter your answer

69. Short Bio for each Co-Investigator (250 word limit) *

Enter your answer

Figure 7. The CV page has two boxes, one solely for the PI and the other for all CoI. short bios. There is no need to provide Stakeholder bio/information.

1.7 Budget

The budget must be submitted as a separate spreadsheet (RS21909_IWC Budget Cost Estimate Final 2024) which can be downloaded [here](#)². (Figure 8)

Project Budget Template. NB All Fields are in £GBP
Please complete Co-Funding and years for requested funding

| | Cost Per Unit | No. of Units | Total Cost | Co-Funding | Please indicate when funds will be required | |
|--|---------------|--------------|------------|------------|---|-------------|
| | | | | | 2024 Budget | 2025 Budget |
| Salaries | | | £ - | | | |
| | | | £ - | | | |
| | | | £ - | | | |
| | | | £ - | | | |
| | | | £ - | | | |
| | | | £ - | | | |
| Sub-total Salaries | | | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ - |
| Travel/Subsistence (per person) | | | £ - | | | |
| | | | £ - | | | |
| | | | £ - | | | |
| | | | £ - | | | |
| | | | £ - | | | |
| Sub-total Travel | | | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ - |
| Services (per item) | | | | | | |

Figure 8. The downloadable budget spreadsheet has two pages, both of which must be completed.

All sections must be filled in and after submitting the online form, the excel file must be named <PI-Surname>.xlsx and emailed to projectproposals@iwc.int

The **online form section regarding budget must also be completed** (Figure 9).

1.7.1 Salaries

Applicants may request IWC-SORP funding to pay all or part of the salary of personnel involved in the research project.

- Salary will only be funded for that portion of time for which personnel are engaged in work for the particular project (e.g., a technical officer spends 2 days a week engaged in work relating to the project in question, so funds for 40% of annual salary are sought).
- Funding sought for a research/technical support position should show the official designation of the position and provide justification for the classification sought.
- **Local practice** is to be followed in respect of salary classifications and levels. Funds for part-time or short-term appointment may also be requested.
- Salaries requested at consultancy rates must be clearly justified. If the person seeking a salary works for a University, then the salary sought should be the salary received from the University.

² <https://archive.iwc.int/?r=21909&k=2826dc9f01>

- For each position requested the budget should show separately the actual salary of the position and the organisation's allowance for salary on-costs (worker's compensation insurance, payroll tax, leave loading, service allowances, etc.).

1.7.2 Costing

- Costs should be based on current market values, expressed in whole British Pounds Sterling (GBP), and should be **inclusive** of goods and services/ sales taxes (e.g., GST, VAT etc.) where applicable.
- If costs are based on formal quotations, please provide summary figures. Do not send quotation documents.
- Once a grant is approved it is not possible to provide additional funds, i.e., for salary or equipment cost increases.
- Applicants are **strongly** encouraged to seek co-investment, and preference may be given to projects demonstrating such an arrangement.

1.7.3 Ineligible expenses

Funds will **not** be granted for:

- Organisation overheads or administration fees (exceptions may apply, please justify in form).
- Consulting fees or honoraria paid to the Chief Investigator in addition to normal salary.
- The hire of computer time on a computer within the applicant's/applicants' own organisation(s).
- Acquisition of assets (exceptions may apply, e.g., procurement of specialised equipment. Strong justification must be submitted in the form).

1.7.4 Justification

- Applicants must provide a detailed justification for all items requested together with accurate costs (See Figure 9). Failure to provide sufficient justification will jeopardise the success of the application. Applicants must not simply provide a list of itemised costs.
- The justification should demonstrate the relevance of all requested items to the scientific and operational scope of the project. It should also summarise:
 - How equipment or consumables will be used.
 - Why travel is necessary and provide the type or class of travel, number of nights of accommodation, and associated living costs.
- Funds for personnel must be fully justified in terms of the nominated person's expertise and experience and the role they will play in creating successful project outcomes.
 - For research and technical personnel costs, the applicants must also provide the basis of payment, such as, local industrial awards or professional salary scales.

Budget

Please complete all sections of the Budget Excel Template

70. Please ensure that you download, complete and email the Excel Budget Spreadsheet to projectproposals@iwc.int as soon as you submit the application *
 (<https://archive.iwc.int/?r=21909&k=2826dc9f01>). Please save and name your budget file with the surname of the PI and send to projectproposals@iwc.int

Completed Budget Overview Excel Template

71. Total Budget Amount *

Enter your answer

72. OVERALL JUSTIFICATION FOR BUDGET (NOTE PLEASE GIVE BRIEF JUSTIFICATIONS FOR EACH OF THE IDENTIFIED COSTS) *

Enter your answer

73. OTHER GRANTS HELD FOR THIS OR OTHER RESEARCH, OBTAINED OR SOUGHT WITHIN THE PREVIOUS THREE YEARS (GIVE AMOUNT, TITLE OF PROJECT AND COMPLETION DATE)

Figure 9. Online form budget detail requirements

1.8 Schedule

This section is to detail the anticipated completion date (expected date of submission of the final report – not project fieldwork or activities completion) and proposed publication plans (Figure 10).

* Required

Schedule

74. Expected completion of the final report
Note that an annual progress report is required *

Please input date (M/d/yyyy)

75. Will you submit a manuscript on the results to the Journal of Cetacean Research and Management upon completion of the work?

Whilst this is not a pre-requisite of a successful application, it will be taken into account. *

Yes

No

76. If not, please state your publication plans

Enter your answer

77. Will you agree to IWC use of the results of your study?

If requested by the IWC Scientific Committee under its Data Availability Agreement that protects the first publication rights of the researchers. *

Yes

No

Figure 10. Schedule section, including publication plans.

1.9 Referees

This section is to detail two project referees. Full name, affiliation and email contact must be provided. Please seek approval of referees before submitting the proposal. Please note conflict of interest guidance (Part 1, Section 4) (Figure 11).

Referees

Please give contact details of two referees who could be approached

78. First Referee

Enter your answer

79. Second Referee

Enter your answer

You can print a copy of your answer after you submit

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Figure 11. Referee section. Space is provided for two referees who have agreed to and are aware of the project content.

This is the final step for the online form. The form can be scrolled through and checked before final submission.

The Principal Investigator will be notified once the application is received and checked.

2. Period and level of funding

- Funding for this Call is intended to facilitate work that will be undertaken within a **maximum three-year** project period.
- Approximately **£110,000 GBP** is available for allocation from the IWC-SORP Research Fund to projects commencing no earlier than January 2025.
- The amount of funding that can be awarded to individual projects is based on quality and is not limited to a specified amount. However, applicants can expect to receive a maximum of **£25,000 GBP** toward projects.

3. Project Personnel

Applicants must be able to provide evidence of relevant research experience of a high order.

All investigators need to include a short biographical statement within the online form, outlining experience and history relevant to the proposal (250 words). A full CV, including publications, may be requested at a later date.

3.1 Principal Investigator

- The Principal Investigator must provide evidence of liaison with IWC-SORP Theme Leaders.
- The Principal Investigator must take primary personal responsibility for designing, writing, conducting and completing the project.
- The Principal Investigator is expected to take responsibility for the day-to-day running of their project, provide the required reports, data, samples and publications to the IWC-SORP Secretariat.
- The Principal Investigator is responsible for supervising their co-Investigators and stakeholders and for informing them of their obligations under IWC-SORP funded projects.
- The Principal Investigator must name an alternate or second investigator within the project team/institute who can take over if the Principal Investigator becomes unavailable or leaves the team/institute.

3.2 Co-Investigators

- Co-Investigators are the individuals nominated in the application to participate in the proposed project under the direction of the Principal Investigator.
- Co-Investigators *do not* have to be based at institutions located in an IWC-SORP Partner nation.

3.3 Stakeholders

- In cases where stakeholder engagement is a critical component of the research, it is highly desirable to formerly include a representative of the stakeholder community on the proposal.

4. Assessment Process and Criteria

The IWC-SORP Research Fund has limited funds and competition for these funds is high. To be eligible for funding, projects should contribute to one or more of the seven IWC-SORP research themes and/or the priority areas listed in Part 1, Section 2 of the guidelines.

4.1 Assessment Process

The IWC and IWC-SORP Secretariats will assess the eligibility of the applicants and applications. Eligible applications will subsequently be assessed for their scientific merit by an Assessment Panel comprising members of the Scientific Committee of the IWC and the IWC-SORP Scientific Steering Committee (IWC-SORP SSC).

Proposals that are assessed by the Panel to have adequately met the assessment criteria will be presented to the annual meeting of the IWC Scientific Committee in April/May 2024 and the biennial Commission meeting in September 2024 for consideration and endorsement.

Following IWC consideration and endorsement, applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application and, if successful, the funding allocation.

Contracts will be established between successful applicants and the IWC in liaison with the IWC-SORP Secretariat. Successful projects will be able to commence from January 2025 onwards.

4.2 Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed and scored on scientific merit and relevance for IWC-SORP and Scientific Committee priorities (a maximum of 35 points). Proposals will be ranked based on these scores and a threshold score for funding will be identified based on quality and available funds.

Generally, only projects that score 3 or above for Criterion 1, will be considered for funding.

The applications are assessed for scientific merit against seven criteria, each of which is scored between 0 - 5 as follows:

| | Criteria | Weighting [Each criterion is scored to a maximum of 5 out of 35. Applicants must score 3 or above for Criterion 1 to be considered for funding.] |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How well will the scientific outcomes of the project contribute to IWC-SORP and IWC/SC research priorities for Southern Ocean cetaceans? | 0 No contribution 1 Poor contribution 2 Reasonable contribution 3 Good contribution 4 Very good contribution 5 Excellent contribution |
| 2 | Will the project deliver novel studies or analyses facilitated by broad collaboration within the IWC-SORP Partnership and the IWC/SC? | 0 Existing, stand-alone project with no apparent need for broad collaboration 1-2 Collaboration within the IWC/SC but less apparent need for collaboration within IWC-SORP 3-4 Collaboration apparent between some IWC-SORP Partners and IWC/SC members 5 Highly collaborative project including many IWC-SORP Partners and IWC/SC members |
| 3 | Does the project have a wide geographic scope and/or applicability across multiple regions? | 0 Project has little applicability to Southern Ocean research 1 Project focusses on a single, relatively restricted geographic region and has little applicability elsewhere 2 Project focusses on two or more regions but has little applicability elsewhere 3 Project captures two or more regions and is applicable across a wider geographic area 5 Project captures multiple regions throughout the Southern Ocean and/or has demonstrated circumpolar relevance |
| 4 | Does the proposal demonstrate that the proposed methodology and data analyses are suitable to deliver the stated objectives? | 0 Not demonstrated 1 Poor methodology/data analyses 2 Reasonable methodology/data analyses 3 Good methodology/data analyses 4 Very good methodology/data analyses 5 Excellent methodology/data analyses |
| 5 | Have the applicants demonstrated financial or <i>in kind</i> co-investment or the potential for the project to leverage co-investment/vessel time etc. if funded? | 0 Not demonstrated 1 Little co-investment demonstrated 2 Partial co-investment demonstrated 3 Partial co-investment and potential for leverage 4 Full co-investment ³ but no potential for leverage 5 Full co-investment demonstrated and potential for leverage |

³ Full co-investment is defined as external contributions to the proposed project that are approximately equal to or exceed that requested from the IWC-SORP Research Fund. Partial co-investment is defined as external contributions that are cumulatively less than that requested. Co-investments can include both financial and/or in kind support, e.g. scientific equipment, personnel, vessel time/berths.

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| 6 | <p>Is the research proposed feasible, well budgeted, well organised and with a timeline allowing for the achievement of all objectives?</p> | <p>0 Not demonstrated 1 Feasibility, budget, organisation and timeline unrealistic 2 Feasibility, budget, organisation and timeline not properly addressed 3 Feasibility, budget, organisation and timeline may not allow all main objectives to be achieved 4 Feasibility, budget, organisation and timeline indicate that most main objectives are likely to be achieved 5 Feasibility, budget, organisation and timeline very likely to result in all objectives being achieved</p> |
| 7 | <p>Do you consider the Principle Investigator and research team to have appropriate track record/s, including publishing in peer reviewed literature and/or delivery into the policy and management arena?</p> <p><i>Please consider early career research scientists relative to their stage of career. Scores must also accommodate consideration of career maturity and/or career breaks.</i></p> | <p>0 Not demonstrated 1 Poor record 2 Reasonable record 3 Good record 4 Very good record 5 The CI and research team have excellent track record/s including publishing, management delivery and grant performance</p> |
| | <p>Overall total out of 35</p> | |