

# IWC VOLUNTARY FUND FOR SMALL CETACEAN CONSERVATION RESEARCH



# BACKGROUND

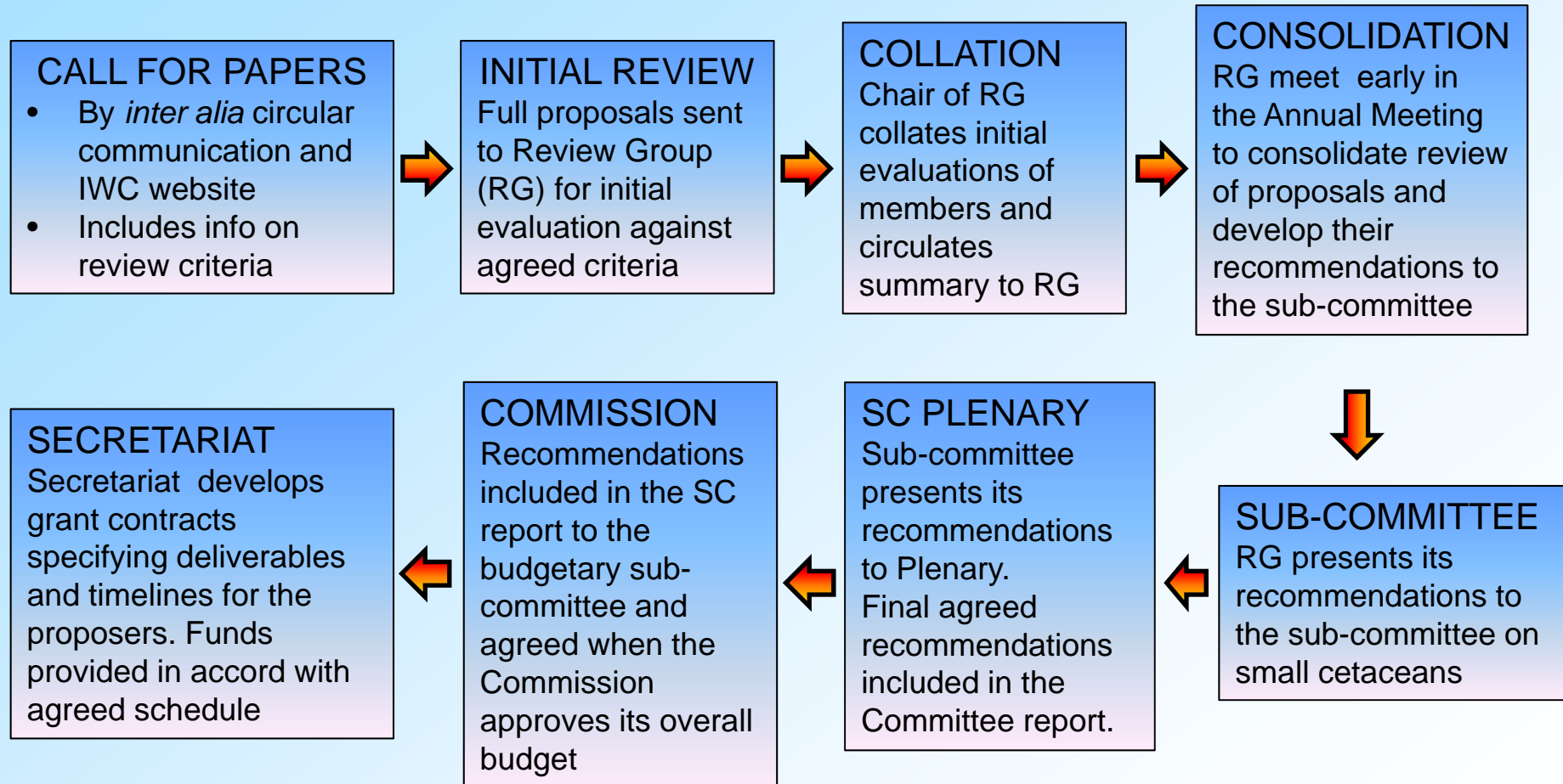
- **2009** : Australia makes generous donation (about £250,000) to the **IWC Small Cetacean Conservation Research Fund**.
- **2010**: Commission funds first project recommended by SC:
  - **Threatened franciscanas: improving estimates of abundance to guide conservation actions**
- **2010**: SC proposes and Commission endorses:
  - **process** to guide awarding of grants

## General principles:

- research that links to **improving conservation outcomes** for small cetaceans globally, particularly for species & populations threatened or especially vulnerable to human activities;
- **capacity building** is an added value;
- projects in line with **recommendations** made by the Small Cetaceans Sub-Committee;
- any single proposal must be limited to a **maximum** of **£ 34,000**.



# EVALUATION PROCESS



- Review Group: seven members (including chairs of SC and SM)

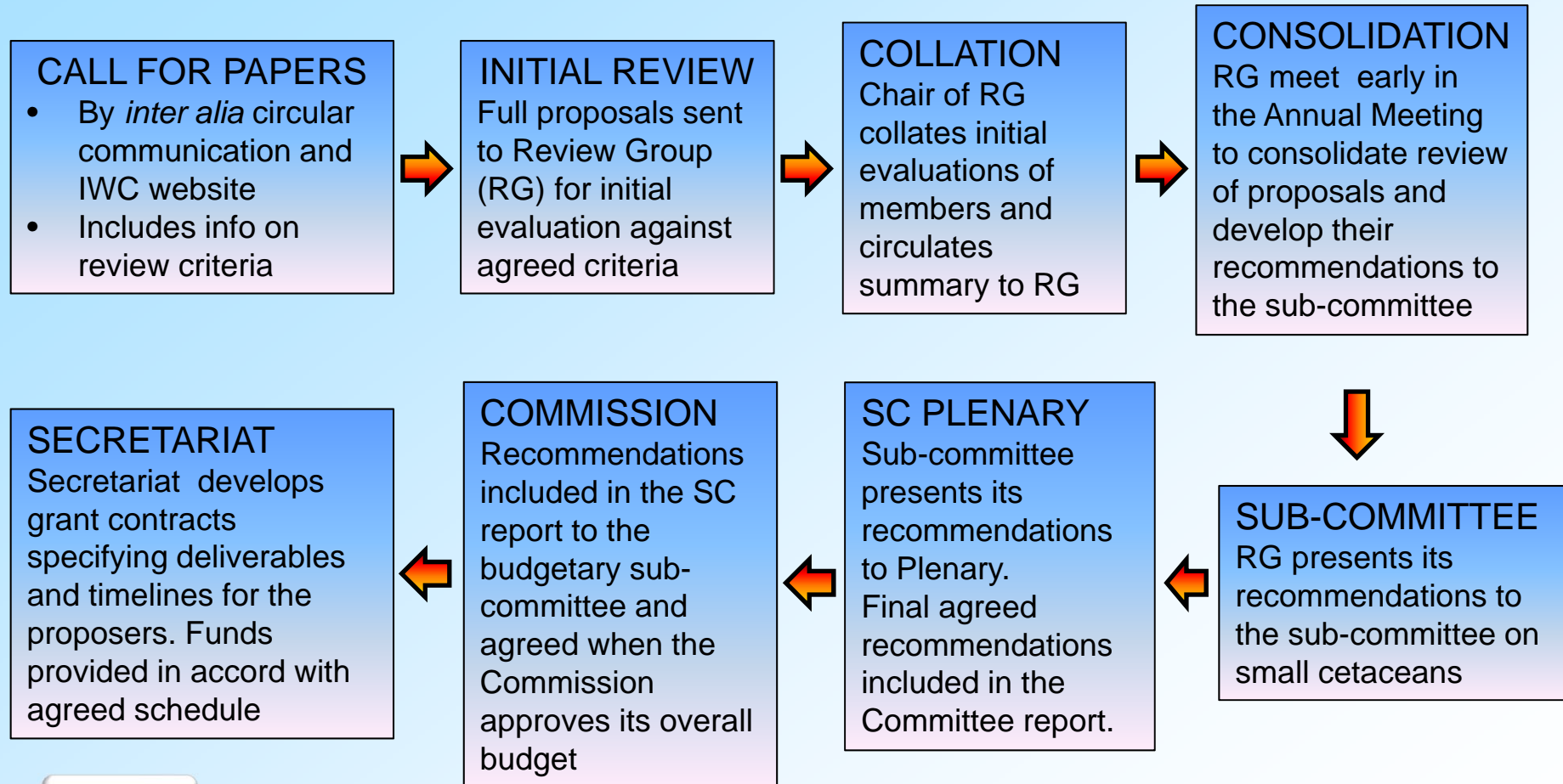
# EVALUATION PROCESS (2)

## **Evaluation criteria:**

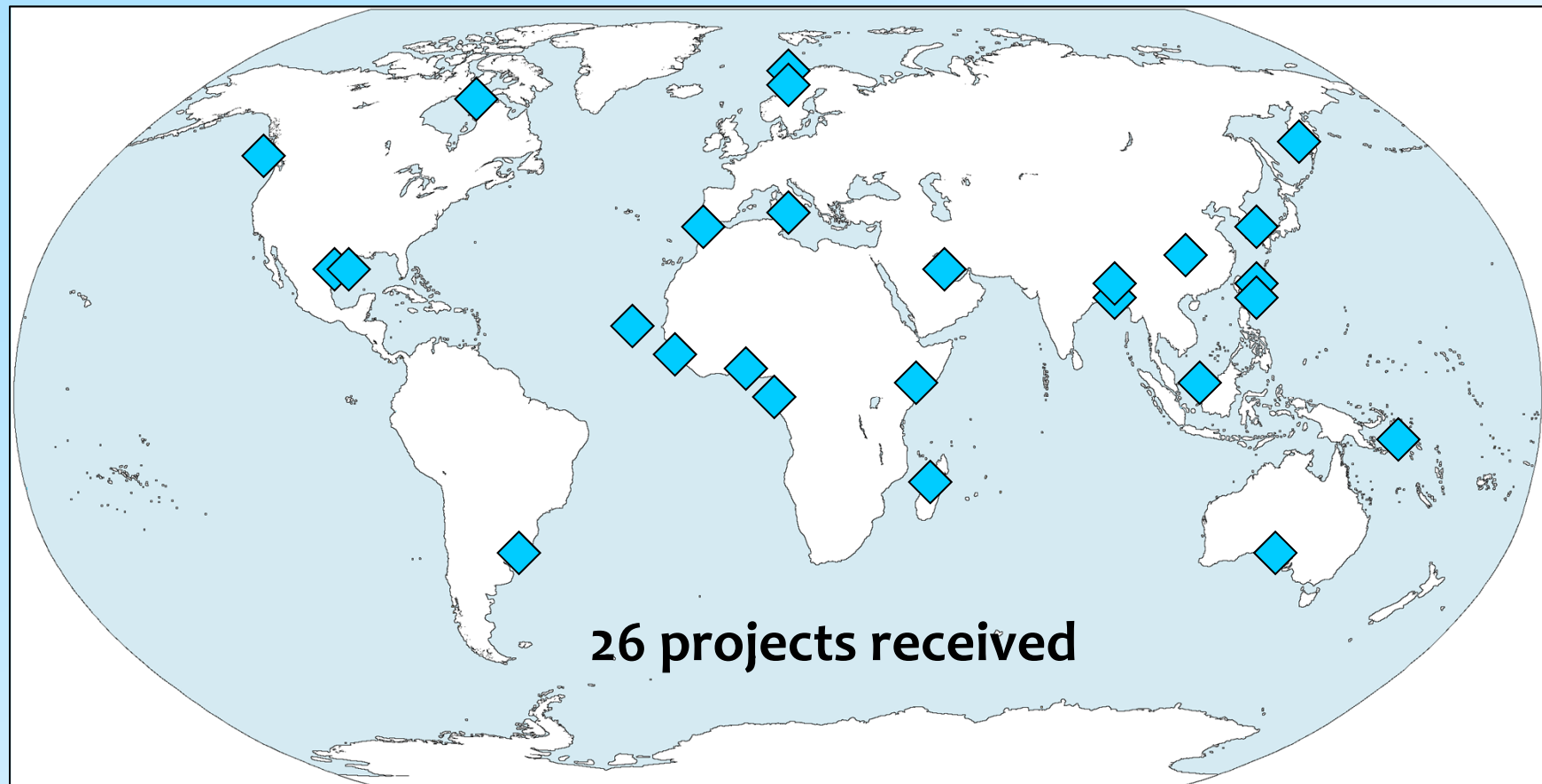
- intrinsic scientific and conservation value;
- relevance of the outcomes for SM priority topics & previous recommendations;
- methodology;
- level of involvement and engagement of regional participants;
- feasibility;
- capability of PI and research team.
- based on the Committee's existing approach for reviewing proposals– see the Scientific Committee Handbook



# EVALUATION PROCESS



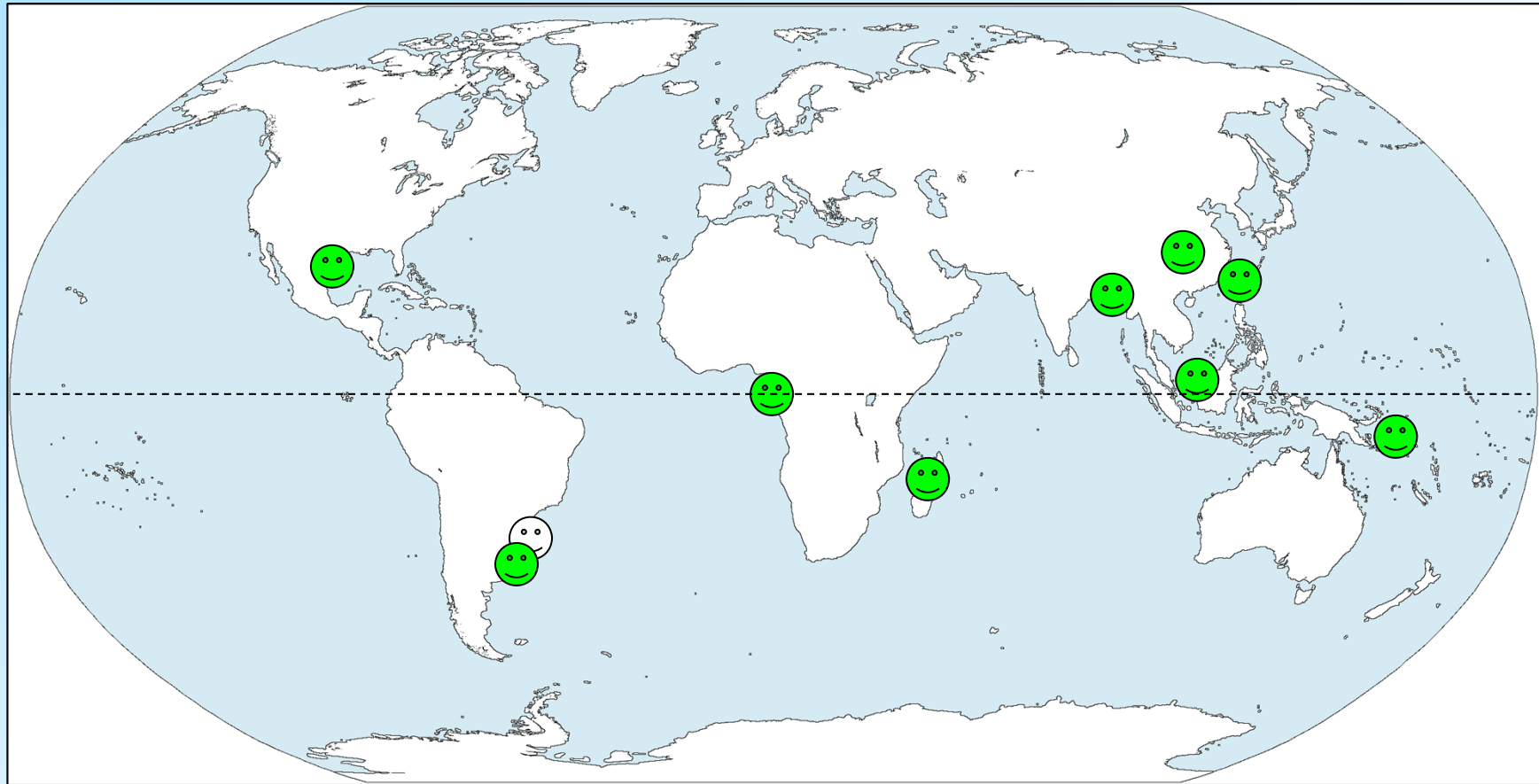
# EVALUATION PROCESS (4)





# EVALUATION PROCESS (5, 6)

- Nine projects **recommended** to the Commission:
- **all supported by local and national Authorities**



# ECOLOGY, STATUS, FISHERIES INTERACTIONS AND CONSERVATION OF COASTAL INDO-PACIFIC HUMPBACK AND BOTTLENOSE DOLPHINS ON THE WEST COAST OF MADAGASCAR

- **Duration:** 3 years
- **Funding requested:** £33,900
- **Available funding:** £2,500 (1<sup>st</sup> year)
- **Main objectives:**
  - **Assess status, distribution and habitat preference**
  - **Assess the extent of artisanal fisheries interactions** with coastal dolphin populations, for both **incidental by-catch and directed hunting**.
  - Respond to identified threats through a series of **community workshops and outreach measures** in four targeted villages.





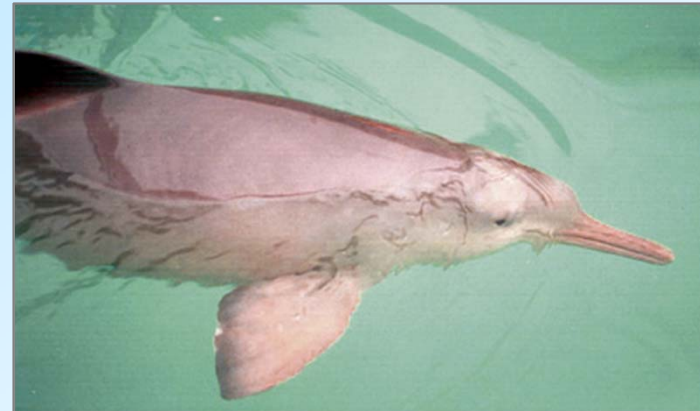
# ABUNDANCE AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE ATLANTIC HUMPBCK DOLPHIN IN GABON AND CONGO, WITH A FOCUS ON IMPROVING FIELD-SURVEY METHODS AND MONITORING PROTOCOLS

- **Duration:** 1 year
- **Funding requested:** £27,900
- **Available funding:** full
- **Main objectives:**
  - To **estimate abundance**
  - To assess **distribution and habitat preferences**, including identification of **critical habitat and migratory corridors**.
  - To **assess threats** and **map their distribution**.
  - To **provide an opportunity for regional collaborators to participate in the work**, as well as report and publication development.



# ESTIMATING ABUNDANCE OF AN ISOLATED POPULATION OF THE THREATENED FRANCISCANA: MOVING TOWARDS CONSERVATION ACTIONS

- **Duration:** 1 year
- **Funding requested:** £30,900
- **Available funding:** full
- **Main objectives:**
  - the **first estimate of abundance of franciscanas in area**
  - provide basis to **evaluate the long-term viability of this isolated franciscana population.**
  - Provide information on **distribution and relationships with environmental variables** - reveal **critical habitat(s)**



# MONITORING AND THREAT ASSESSMENT OF COASTAL CETACEAN POPULATIONS IN SARAWAK, MALAYSIA

- **Duration:** 1 year
- **Funding requested:** £20,440
- **Available funding:** full
- **Main objectives:**
  - Fine scale data on **distribution** and **habitat preference**, relative and absolute **abundance estimates**;
  - Opportunities for sample collection and ground-truthing of cetacean by-catch data through **active engagement of fishing communities as partners** in research.
  - **Monitoring** cetacean populations and water parameters in the face of construction of major flood mitigation channels and coastal resorts (Kuching), industrial parks, deep-water ports and aluminium smelter plants (Similajau).



# GENETIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT OF DOLPHINS TAKEN IN LIVE-CAPTURE AND TRADITIONAL DRIVE-HUNT IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS



- **Duration:** 1 year
- **Funding requested:** £28,250
- **Available funding:** full
- **Main objectives:**
  - to gain an improved understanding of the **population status and dynamics of *T. aduncus*** and other species.
  - to contribute to a **robust science-based assessment of the sustainability of current authorised levels of live-capture removal;**
  - to provide the Government of Solomon Islands with capacity building and scientific advice, to **inform management decisions on the removal of dolphins from their wild populations.**

# ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVE FISHING GEARS FOR REPLACING GILLNETS THAT CAUSE BYCATCH OF VAQUITA IN THE UPPER GULF OF CALIFORNIA, MEXICO

- **Duration:** 1 year
- **Funding requested:** 33,270 £
- **Available funding:** full
- **Main objectives:**
  - monitor the **biomass yield** of 15 fish aggregating devices (**FADs**) installed at known coastal fishing grounds in Upper Gulf during winter 2009.
  - **assess the catch efficiency and selectivity** of various gear types for shrimp, crab, fish, elasmobranchs & octopus **around FADs**.
  - determine the **maximal economic yield** for each alternative gear tested.



# INVESTIGATION OF POPULATION IDENTITY OF INDO-PACIFIC HUMPBAC DOLPHINS IN THE NORTHERN BAY OF BENGAL, BANGLADESH AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POPULATION-LEVEL CONSERVATION AND TAXONOMY OF THE SPECIES

- **Duration:** 2 years
- **Funding requested:** £31,700
- **Available funding:** £15,850 (1<sup>st</sup> year)
- **Main objectives:**
  - Determine the **population identity**;
  - Evaluate **implications** of genetic results on the taxonomy of the species complex;
  - **Build local capacity** to conduct molecular studies on cetaceans;
  - Contribute scientific information needed for **conservation and management**.





# PHOTO-IDENTIFICATION MONITORING OF THE EASTERN TAIWAN STRAIT POPULATION OF INDO-PACIFIC HUMPBAC DOLPHINS

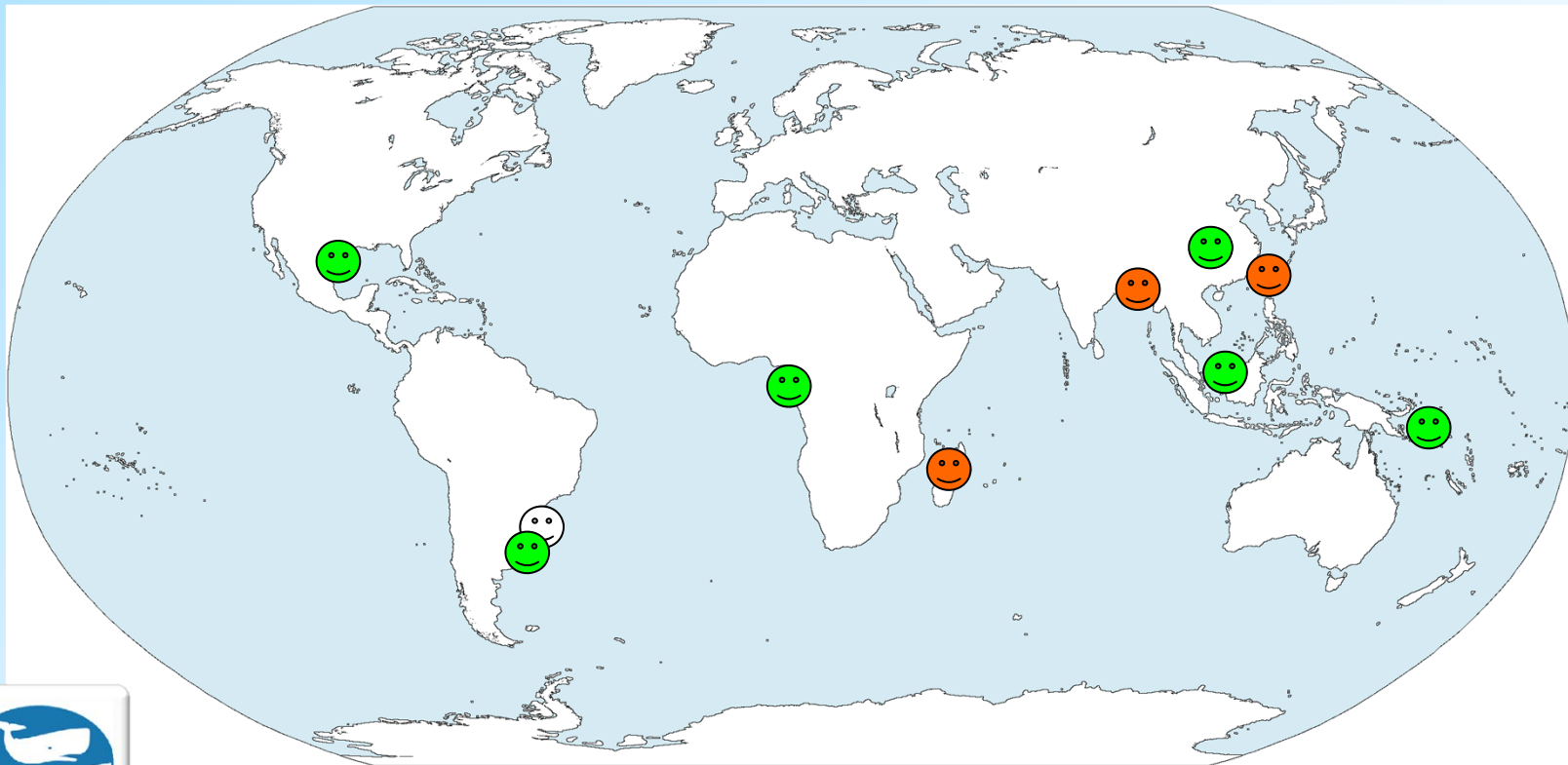
- **Duration:** 2 years
- **Funding requested:** 32,500 £
- **Available funding:** £16,250 (1<sup>st</sup> year)



- **Main objectives:**
  - To continue a **long-term**, photo-identification **monitoring** project on this **critically endangered population** (initiated in 2007)
  - to determine if **suspected population decline is real** given the myriad of serious threats it faces
  - Also examine **ranging patterns**, finer-scale distribution and some aspects of **social structure** if data are sufficient.

# FUNDING STATUS

- About **£45,000** are still needed to fully cover 3 projects
- **More systematic funding** would be welcomed to **re-build the Fund** for the envisaged 2013 call for proposals



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

- But more importantly...
- **thank you for your promises of additional funds!**