

Disbursement of funds from IWC-SORP Research Fund

*Document Submitted by the Chair of the Scientific Committee in conjunction with the
IWC-SORP Steering Committee*

This paper summarises aspects of the IWC's Southern Ocean Research Partnership implementation that are relevant to the F&A Committee. In particular, the Scientific Committee requests the Commission's endorsement on three issues:

- Approval of an updated procedure for allocation of funds from the IWC-SORP Research Fund. The procedure is set out at IWC/66/Rep01, Annex W and introduced at item 2 of this document.
- Approval for allocating a total of £144,058 GBP from the IWC's SORP voluntary fund ahead of 2016-2017 austral summer survey season according to the interim procedure developed and implemented by the Scientific Committee *[see Item 3-5 of this document]*; and
- Development of recommendations for future intersessional allocations of funding *[see Item 6 of this document]*.

1. Background on IWC-Southern Ocean Research Partnership

The IWC's Southern Ocean Research Partnership (IWC-SORP) was proposed to the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in 2008 with the aim of developing a multi-lateral, non-lethal scientific research programme that would improve the coordinated and cooperative delivery of science to the IWC. Currently, there are 11 member countries in the Partnership: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, France, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa and the United States. IWC-SORP is an open Partnership that welcomes new members. Its ethos is one of open collaboration, communication and data sharing.

The scientific objectives, research plan, and procedural framework for the Southern Ocean Research Partnership (IWC-SORP) were developed through a workshop held in Sydney, Australia in March, 2009. Subsequently, a framework and set of objectives for IWC-SORP were endorsed by the IWC at its Annual Meeting in June 2009 (IWC 60). Project plans were presented to the IWC in 2011 and 2012, and reports summarising the activities of IWC-SORP research projects have been presented annually to the Scientific Committee since that time.

There are currently five endorsed and ongoing IWC-SORP Projects: 1) 'The Antarctic Blue Whale Project'; 2) A project aimed at describing the 'Distribution, relative abundance, migration patterns and foraging ecology of three ecotypes of killer whales in the Southern Ocean'; 3) The 'Foraging ecology and predator-prey interactions between baleen whales and krill' project; 4) A project to investigate the 'Distribution and extent of mixing of Southern Hemisphere humpback whale populations around Antarctica?' focused initially on east Australia and Oceania; 5) and The 'Acoustic trends in abundance, distribution, and seasonal presence of Antarctic blue whales and fin whales in the Southern Ocean' project.

2. The IWC-SORP Research Fund: current balance and revised long term disbursement procedure

Current Balance

In 2009, the IWC Secretariat established an IWC Southern Ocean Research Partnership Research Fund (IWC-SORP Research Fund).

To date this fund has received voluntary contributions from Australia, the Netherlands, the United States and the International Fund for Animal Welfare. IWC-SORP has also received support from the French and Chilean Governments for meetings and symposia.

The current balance is **£ 777,483** [*Residual balance from previous projects: £1,529; the Netherlands contribution (June 2015): £17,629 (EUR 25,000); Australian contribution (June 2016): £758,325 (AUD 1,491,000)*]. An additional contribution of USD 10,000 (approx. £7,500) from IFAW is expected to be on the IWC account before the next Commission meeting.

Revised Disbursement Procedure

The process for the allocation of funds from the IWC-SORP Research Fund was originally adopted by the Commission following Annex R (IWC/SC/62).

At SC/66b in June 2016, the Annex was revised and **endorsed by the Scientific Committee** (IWC/66/Rep01, Annex W). The **F&A Committee is invited** to consider this revised procedure for managing the SORP Fund **and advise** the Commission on its endorsement or otherwise.

3. Background on Scientific Committee discussion and interim funding mechanism

In making their recent contribution to the IWC-SORP voluntary fund, the Government of Australia requested that up to 20% of the contribution be allocated to IWC-SORP related projects before the start of the 2016/17 austral field season.

The Australian Government also requested that about £280,000 of their total voluntary contribution be assigned to whale/krill research.

Given the timing of Australia's voluntary contribution, it was not possible to issue a Call for Proposals, and subsequently review the proposals, during the recent Scientific Committee meeting (SC/66b), as per usual Scientific Committee processes. Therefore, **the Scientific Committee endorsed** the following interim process for the allocation of funds from the IWC-SORP Research Fund:

1. IWC-SORP Secretariat will put out a Call for Proposals after SC66b.
2. The proposals will be assessed by the IWC-SORP SSC according to the principles laid out in Item 1.2 of Annex W (IWC/66/Rep01) and the funding criteria outlined in Annex 1.
3. The proposals, a summary of their evaluation and the proposed budget associated with successful applications will be submitted for consideration by the Commission in October 2016 (IWC 66).
4. Subject to the views of the Commission, the IWC Secretariat will develop funding agreements with the successful proponents in accordance with existing Scientific Committee procedures.
5. Successful proponents will provide project reports to the next meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC/67a).

This process aimed to provide robust scientific oversight and probity whilst meeting the request of the Contracting Party making the voluntary contribution.

A Call for Proposals was subsequently opened on 26 July 2016. See Annex 1 for all details on this call.

The Call for Proposals closed on 17 August 2016. Eleven proposals were received by the IWC-SORP Secretariat and assessed for eligibility in accordance with criteria clearly stated in the guidelines associated with the Call (**Annex 1**). All 11 proposals were deemed eligible and were distributed to the IWC-SORP Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) along with guidelines regarding how the proposal assessments should be conducted (**Annex 2**).

The IWC-SORP SSC is a Working Group of the IWC Scientific Committee. The composition of the group is presented in Appendix 1 of Annex W (IWC/66/Rep01).

Nine members of the IWC-SORP SSC reviewed the proposals following the same assessment process adopted by the Scientific Committee in similar circumstances (e.g., the Small Cetaceans Voluntary Fund). The review included a determination of how well the proposals aligned with IWC-SORP objectives and priorities. In addition, the SSC considered any conditions associated with voluntary contributions as specified by donors.

4. Measures taken to ensure probity and handle Conflict of Interest.

Proponents were required to declare as part of their proposal application Conflicts of Interest that would impact on or prevent the applicant from proceeding with the project or any Contract it may enter into with the IWC. Where a proponent subsequently identified that an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest exists, or might arise, in relation to their application for funding, the applicant was required to inform the IWC Secretariat in writing immediately. See Annex 1 for more details on this process.

IWC-SORP SSC members that were involved in the proposal review process were also required to declare any conflict of interest to the IWC-SORP Secretariat and Chair of the IWC-SORP SSC prior to assessment of applications. The Chair of the IWC-SORP SSC decided on a case-by-case basis if the member(s) should be excluded from the assessment of individual project(s). See Annex 2 for more details on this process.

In total, nine Conflicts of Interest were declared by four IWC-SORP reviewers. These reviewers did not assess the proposals for which a conflict of interest had been declared. Given these declared conflicts of interest the overall evaluation process was coordinated by the SC chair.

5. Funding allocation proposed by the IWC-SORP SSC under the interim procedure

Table 1 lists all proposals received, the funding requested and the funding allocation recommended by the IWC-SORP SSC. It is important to note that Proposals 2, 4 and 5 will contribute to understanding the relationship between baleen whales and their prey (Antarctic krill).

The Scientific Committee **is seeking support/endorsement** from the F&A Committee and the Commission on the agreed procedure and all aspects of its implementation (Items 3 and 4), including the proposed allocation of funding outlined in Table 1 (this Item).

A brief summary of each project proposal is provided in the box below.

PROPOSAL 1 – BAKER ET AL. BEACHED BONES: ASSESSING GENOMIC DIVERSITY AND POPULATION DIFFERENTIATION OF HISTORICAL BLUE WHALES

This proposal will strengthen the analysis of historical genomic diversity by increasing the sample size through the analysis of 93 blue whale bone samples collected from the Antarctic Peninsula and nearby islands. Comparison of historical data with contemporary blue whale samples will be undertaken to assess the effect of exploitation on genetic diversity and population differentiation. The proposal is scientifically extremely interesting and, although not central to IWC-SORP priorities and objectives, will enhance our understanding of endangered blue whales and contribute to the IWC-SORP Antarctic Blue Whale Project. The proposal received strong support for **partial funding**: £14,567 were requested; it is recommended that **£11,000** be allocated.

PROPOSAL 2 – CONSTANTINE ET AL. HABITAT USE OF HUMPBACK WHALES AND THEIR ANTARCTIC FEEDING GROUNDS: AREAS V, VI & I

This highly collaborative proposal will analyse satellite tracking data collected by IWC-SORP researchers during the 2015 field season and incorporate these data with other available satellite tracking data, to identify important habitat for humpback whales; to consider how whale distribution might be affected by Antarctic ecosystem change by undertaking predictive habitat modelling; and to elucidate factors behind different population recovery rates. This proposal is closely linked to the priorities and objectives of two IWC-SORP projects, the Humpback Connectivity and Baleen Whale Foraging Ecology projects, as well as including a PhD training component. It was highly recommended for **full funding**: **£7,740**.

PROPOSAL 3 – DE BRUYN AND REISINGER. HABITAT USE OF KILLER WHALES AT THE PRINCE EDWARD ISLANDS

This proposal aims to deploy up to 10 satellite tags on sub-Antarctic killer whales around the Prince Edward Islands (in particular Marion Island) and to use the resultant data to address four objectives: to determine the distribution, movement and behaviour of killer whales at Marion Island; describe their diving behaviour and integrate this information with habitat use models; investigate spatial overlaps between killer whales and longline fishing vessels; continue efforts to develop 3D measuring techniques to inform population demographic analyses. The proposal will make an interesting contribution to the IWC-SORP Killer Whale Ecotype project but greater integration with wider project priorities is necessary, therefore, partial funding was recommended. £15,300 were requested but it is recommended that **£9,900** be allocated toward the purchase of 3 SPLASH satellite tags and associated ARGOS satellite tracking costs.

PROPOSAL 4 – FRIEDLAENDER ET AL. FORAGING ECOLOGY AND PREDATOR-PREY INTERACTIONS BETWEEN BALEEN WHALES (HUMPBACK AND MINKE) AND KRILL: A NOVEL ANALYSIS OF LONG-TERM DIVE DATA TO QUANTIFY FEEDING RATES

This proposal will use existing data collected by collaborators on the IWC-SORP Baleen Whale Foraging Ecology project in a quantitative analysis to describe the diving behaviour of baleen whales throughout the Antarctic summer and autumn, commensurate with changes in krill behaviour and environmental conditions. It will also allow an assessment of how the feeding rates of whales change throughout the feeding season allowing greater predictive capacity to determine energetic needs and gains and critical periods during the feeding season. The proposed work will make a very important contribution to the IWC-SORP Baleen Whale Foraging Ecology project and involves data collected in a highly collaborative manner. It was, therefore, recommended for **full funding**: **£20,883**.

PROPOSAL 5 – HARCOURT ET AL. ANTARCTIC BLUE WHALE-KRILL INTERACTIONS: AN ANALYSIS

This proposal will facilitate the analysis and publication of datasets collected during Southern Ocean research voyages conducted under the auspices of the IWC-SORP Antarctic Blue Whale Project. It will allow characterisation of the density, distribution and availability of krill swarms measured during the multi-national, 2015 NZ-Australia Antarctic Ecosystems voyage conducted under the auspices of IWC-SORP; compare prey fields in the vicinity and far away from Antarctic blue whales tracked using passive acoustics and visual observations; determine the utility of combining passive and acoustic surveys for prey field mapping around Antarctic blue whales; and allow the design of future surveys to be refined to optimise data collection on future IWC-SORP voyages. The proposed work was considered to be extremely high priority, tightly linked with the IWC-SORP Antarctic Blue Whale Project and will make additional contributions to the Baleen Whale Foraging Ecology project. It was also noted that the data to be analysed was collected in a highly collaborative manner. **Full funding** was recommended: **£18,804**.

PROPOSAL 6 – MILLER ET AL. AN ANNOTATED LIBRARY OF UNDERWATER ACOUSTIC RECORDINGS FOR TESTING AND TRAINING AUTOMATED ALGORITHMS FOR DETECTING SOUTHERN OCEAN BALEEN WHALES

This proposal concerns the detailed analysis of hundreds of thousands of hours of long-term acoustic recordings, collected collaboratively, to produce a library of Southern Ocean acoustic recordings that have been fully annotated and can subsequently be used to train and test automated signal-processing methods, such as Deep Learning. This work will have long-term benefits for the IWC-SORP Acoustic Trends Project and wider IWC Scientific Committee acoustic projects, in providing, e.g., insights into the life histories of many Antarctic whales. It is also a fundamentally important initial step toward developing an automated tool that could be applied to the enormous quantity of acoustic recordings that have been, and continue to be, collected by acousticians globally. **Full funding** was recommended: **£22,000**.

PROPOSAL 7 – MOLLER ET AL. POPULATION GENOMIC STRUCTURE OF ANTARCTIC BLUE WHALES IN THE ANTARCTIC FEEDING GROUNDS

The proponents propose to use a genome-wide dataset of thousands of single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) to clarify the number and distribution of populations of Antarctic blue whales at their feeding grounds in the Antarctic using biopsy samples currently available from the IWC. The work will provide the best assessment of stock structure to date for Antarctic blue whales which is important for in-depth population assessment and will make an important contribution to the Antarctic Blue Whale Project. **Full funding** was recommended: **£19,381**.

PROPOSAL 8 – OLSON. PHOTO-IDENTIFICATION OF ANTARCTIC BLUE WHALES

This proposal concerns the analysis and identification of individual Antarctic blue whales in 220 new photographs that have been submitted to the IWC's Antarctic Blue Whale Catalogue. The project will add an estimated 30-35 new blue whale identifications to the photo-ID database and contribute toward the sample-size needed to conduct a capture-recapture analysis of Antarctic blue whale abundance. This work is central to the IWC-SORP Antarctic Blue Whale Project and the work of the wider IWC Scientific Committee, e.g., the in-depth assessment of blue whales. The proponent is considered one of the world's leading experts in photo-identification and her curation of, and continued addition to, and re-analysis of photographs in, the Antarctic Blue Whale Catalogue is fundamentally important. The Catalogue represents *the* key tool required to achieve the objectives of the Antarctic Blue Whale Project. The proposal offers excellent value for money and **full funding** is recommended: **£2,250**.

PROPOSAL 9 – PATON ET AL. WHO ARE THE REAL EAST AUSTRALIAN (E1) BREEDING GROUP OF HUMPBACK WHALES? GENETIC CHARACTERISATION OF E1 AND THE INFLUENCE OF E1 ACROSS OCEANIA

This interesting proposal seeks to further our understanding of the stock structure of Oceania humpback whales by collecting and analysing primary genetic samples from the East Australian (E1) breeding ground. The current lack of such samples limits our ability to characterise the E1 population and how it might be interacting with other sub-populations in Oceania, in particular the New Caledonia breeding ground (E2). The proposed work will provide information that is important to the IWC-SORP Humpback Connectivity project and the work of the wider IWC Scientific Committee. Many of the proponents have been involved in successful collaborations with IWC-SORP in the past. **Partial funding** is recommended. £30,000 were requested; an allocation of **£23,000** is recommended.

PROPOSAL 10 – SAMARAN ET AL. IWC-SORP PROJECT 5. ACOUSTIC TRENDS IN ABUNDANCE, DISTRIBUTION AND SEASONAL PRESENCE OF ANTARCTIC BLUE WHALES AND FIN WHALES IN THE SOUTHERN OCEAN: 5-YEAR STRATEGIC MEETING

This proposal regards holding a meeting of the Acoustic Trends Working Group (ATWG) to evaluate progress on data analysis and tool development; assess the status of the current data collection; update information; draft a blueprint of standardised methods for analysis of large datasets; prepare a fully coordinated forward-looking 5-year strategy; discuss funding and opportunities for growth of the project. The proposed meeting is of fundamental importance for maintaining the momentum, collaborations, data analysis and publication of data generated by the IWC-SORP Acoustic Trends Project and to strategically plan for the future. £17,000 were requested but **partial funding** of **£9,000** is recommended because it is likely that there will be a co-contribution from the IWC Scientific Committee to support this event as a pre-meeting associated with IWC/SC 67a in May 2017. Such co-investment will reduce the costs associated with the attendance of approximately half of the stakeholders who are already funded to attend the Scientific Committee meeting.

PROPOSAL 11 – VIRTUE ET AL. DIET AND RANGE OF KILLER WHALES IN SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIAN WATERS: INSIGHTS FROM SATELLITE TAGGING, PHOTOGRAPHY, SIGNATURE FATTY ACID AND STABLE ISOTOPE ANALYSIS

The proponents propose satellite tagging, photo-ID and genetic sampling of south-eastern Australian killer whales to provide important life history information. Although scientifically very interesting, the proposed work focusses solely on Australian waters, hence, does not fit with IWC-SORP priorities for work on Southern Ocean whale species. Therefore, **an allocation of funds was not recommended**.

6. Future intersessional allocations of funding

The Scientific Committee seeks also guidance from the F&A Committee and the Commission on how best to obtain the Commission endorsement for any proposed expenditure exceeding £15,000 during the 2017/18 intersessional period. Under the existing and revised IWC-SORP procedure for allocation of funds there is only the option for a limited "discretionary allocation of funds" (see IWC/66/Rep01, Annex W, Item 5). Under this 'rule' the SSC is able to allocate a discretionary amount of not more than £15,000 per budget period, in order to ensure the smooth running of approved programmes.

Should a suitable process be identified by Commission (e.g. F&A working document on "Guidelines for allocation and use of Commission Funds", F&A Committee agenda item 3.6), a call for new proposals may be issued prior to SC/67a. The proposals will then be reviewed by the IWC-SORP SSC and their recommendations will be presented to the Scientific Committee. The proposed expenditure would then be allocated according to the process specified by the Commission.

Table 1: List of the proposals received, the funding requested and the funding allocation recommended by the IWC-SORP SSC (alphabetic order)						
Proposal number	Chief Investigator	Co-Investigators	Title	Requested amount (£)	Recommended amount (£)	Type of funding
1	Baker, C. Scott	Sremba, Angie; Jackson, Jen	Beached bones: assessing genomic diversity and population differentiation of historical blue whales	14,567	11,000	Partial
2	Constantine, Rochelle	Zerbini, Alex; Riekkola, Leena; Friedlaender, Ari; Andrews-Goff, Virginia	Habitat use of humpback whales and their Antarctic feeding grounds: Areas V, VI & I	7,740	7,740	Full
3	de Bruyn, Nico	Reisinger, Ryan	Habitat use of killer whales at the Prince Edward Islands	15,300	10,000	Partial
4	Friedlaender, Ari	Weinstein, Ben; Double, Michael	Foraging ecology and predator-prey interactions between baleen whales (humpback and minke) and krill: a novel analysis of long-term dive data to quantify feeding rates	20,883	20,883	Full
5	Harcourt, Robert	Miller, Elanor; Cox, Martin; Miller, Brian; Double, Michael	Antarctic blue whale-krill interactions: an analysis	18,804	18,804	Full
6	Miller, Brian	Samaran, Flore; Sirovic, Ana; van Opzeeland, Ilse;	An annotated library of underwater acoustic recordings for testing and training automated algorithms for detecting Southern Ocean baleen whales	22,000	22,000	Full
7	Moller, Luciana	Attard, Catherine; Beheregaray, Luciano	Population genomic structure of Antarctic blue whales in the Antarctic feeding grounds	19,381	19,381	Full
8	Olson, Paula		Photo-identification of Antarctic blue whales	2,250	2,250	Full
9	Paton, Dave	Baker, C. Scott; Dietrich-Steel, Debbie; Garrigue, Claire; Noad, Michael; Childerhouse, Simon	Who are the real East Australian (E1) breeding group of humpback whales? Genetic characterisation of E1 and the influence of E1 across Oceania	30,000	23,000	Partial
10	Samaran, Flore	Stafford, Kate; Miller, Brian; van Opzeeland, Ilse; Harris, Danielle; Findlay, Ken; Sirovic, Ana; Buchan, Susannah; Gedamke, Jason	IWC-SORP Project 5. Acoustic trends in abundance, distribution and seasonal presence of Antarctic blue whales and fin whales in the Southern Ocean: 5-year strategic meeting	17,000	9,000	Partial
TOTAL				192,679	144,058	
Not recommended for funding at this point						
11	Virtue, Patti	Sellers, Benjamin; Donnelly, David	Diet and range of killer whales in south-eastern Australian waters: insights from satellite tagging, photography, signature fatty acid and stable isotope analysis	24,754	0	None

ANNEX 1 - IWC Southern Ocean Research Partnership Research Fund – Call for Proposals 2016

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.

There are five current and ongoing research projects. 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>.

2. Priority research areas

This Call will only consider proposals related to the five current IWC-SORP projects that have already been endorsed by the IWC Scientific Committee and Commission. Favourable consideration will be given to proposals directly related to:

- Determination of diet/foraging ecology, age, length, pregnancy and maturity of whales.
- Improvement of the efficiency of satellite tagging and biopsying of small Antarctic whales.
- Development of bio-energetic and ecological models – including information on the abundance and distribution of whales derived from historical commercial whaling data.
- Development of techniques to locate and study rare whales (e.g., acoustic or remote sensing), as well as determination of long-term population recovery trends in rare whales.
- Establishment of links between whale breeding and feeding grounds.
- Investigation of movement and distribution of whale populations.
- Analysis and publication of existing data sets developed through existing IWC-SORP projects.

Applications that can be used to facilitate research in the 2016/17 austral field season are encouraged.

3. Eligibility

- The Chief Investigator must be from an IWC-SORP Partner nation. All applicants are strongly encouraged to liaise closely with IWC-SORP Project Leaders* in developing proposals. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit collaborative proposals with other researchers.
- 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 <http://www.marinemammals.gov.au/sorp/protocols,-data-sharing-and-resources>
- Applicants will be bound by Scientific Committee conflict of interest procedures (<https://iwc.int/scientific-committee-handbook>; J. Cetacean Res. Manage. 17 (Suppl.), 2016, Annex S).
- Institutes receiving funding are responsible for obtaining ethics approval and relevant permits. Documentation demonstrating this should be provided with their application.

*Project Leaders and their contact details are listed under individual projects on: <http://www.marinemammals.gov.au/sorp>.

4. Application Form

The *IWC-SORP Research Proposal Application* pro forma can be downloaded from: <https://iwc.int/sorp>, <http://www.marinemammals.gov.au/sorp>, or requested directly from the IWC-SORP Secretariat (sorp@aad.gov.au).

All applications should be submitted to the IWC-SORP Secretariat electronically in Word using the downloadable pro forma (sorp@aad.gov.au). Please do not forward scanned Word documents.

Please adhere to the format for each section as indicated on the Application pro forma and provide all applicable information.

Any grant documentation that is greater than the specified word limit will be truncated.

The IWC-SORP Secretariat will acknowledge receipt of applications via e-mail to the Chief Investigator.

5. Closing Date

Applications are to be submitted electronically by **midnight UCT, 17 August 2016**.

Applications submitted after this deadline will not be accepted.

6. 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.

Up to a total of **£155,000 GBP** are available for allocation from the IWC-SORP Research Fund in this Call.

The amount of funding that can be awarded to individual projects is based on quality and is not limited to a specified amount. Examples of funds previously awarded to individual projects range from £2500 to £23,889 GBP.

Additional Calls for IWC-SORP project proposals will be made in 2017.

7. Completion of Budget Request

The IWC-SORP Project Budget Application must be completed as follows:

7.1 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 for that financial year, 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.

7.2 Ineligible expenses

Funds will not be granted for:

- Organisation overheads or administration fees.
- 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 major assets valued at greater than £2,000 GBP.

7.3 Justification

Applicants must provide a detailed justification for all items requested together with accurate costs. 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. Summarise why each person or equipment item is essential for the successful execution of the project.

For example, for equipment items or consumables summarise how the items will be used.

For travel and accommodation, summarise why the travel is necessary and provide the type or class of travel, number of nights of accommodation and associated living costs.

For research and technical personnel costs, provide the basis of payment such as local industrial awards or professional salary scales. 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.

8. Project Personnel

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

The Chief Investigator must provide evidence of liaison with IWC-SORP Project Leaders.

The Chief Investigator must take primary personal responsibility for designing, writing, conducting and completing the project.

Chief Investigators are 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.

Chief Investigators are responsible for supervising their co-investigators and for informing them of their obligations under IWC-SORP funded projects.

Co-investigators are the individuals nominated in the application to participate in the proposed project under the direction of the Chief Investigator.

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

All investigators need to submit a CV (limited to one page only), outlining experience and history relevant to the proposal and the last five years of publications (including grey literature).

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

9. Contract

Successful applicants will be required to sign a Contract. This Contract will cover the project budget, financial and performance acquittal and reporting, intellectual property, assets and data requirements.

Contracts will be linked to milestone activities. These milestone activities are interim and final reports to the IWC Scientific Committee detailing performance to the date of the milestone. The milestone dates are linked to the IWC Scientific Committee meeting schedule.

Milestone payments will be linked to milestone activities within the Contract.

By signing the Contract, applicants are agreeing to the clauses set out within the Contract.

10. 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 how the funding received from the IWC-SORP Research Fund has contributed to progress toward achieving the objectives, outputs and outcomes identified in the approved application.

Interim and final reports will be submitted at milestone dates agreed in the Contract (Section 9). These milestone dates will be linked to the IWC Scientific Committee meeting schedule.

At the end of a project period, the final report will be assessed by the IWC-SORP Scientific Steering Committee (as a Working Group of the IWC Scientific Committee) to determine how the funding contributed to achieving the objectives, outputs and outcomes of IWC-SORP. A satisfactory assessment of the final report is required to ensure any future request for IWC-SORP funding will be considered.

Final reports will be posted on the IWC website.

Excerpts from interim or final reports will also be included in the IWC-SORP Annual Report prepared by the IWC-SORP Secretariat and submitted to the annual meeting of the IWC Scientific Committee for consideration.

Successful applicants are encouraged to submit additional primary papers concerning funded projects to the IWC Scientific Committee for consideration where appropriate, as well as manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

11. Disclosure

Applicant names, funding amounts and the purpose for which funds were granted will be announced for successful applications. This includes parties to successful applications of IWC-SORP funding. Information on individual grants will be published on the IWC website immediately after the contract takes effect. Final project reports submitted by successful applicants will also be published on the IWC website.

12. 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 the IWC-SORP research priorities outlined in Section 2.

12.1 Assessment Process

The IWC-SORP Secretariat will assess the eligibility of the applications. Eligible applications will be assessed for their scientific merit by the IWC-SORP Scientific Steering Committee (IWC-SORP SSC). The assessment criteria are listed in Section 12.3.

Proposals that are assessed by the IWC-SORP Scientific Steering Committee to have adequately met the assessment criteria will be presented to the IWC biennial Commission meeting in October 2016 for consideration.

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 Secretariat in liaison with the IWC-SORP Secretariat.

12.2 Conflict of Interest

IWC-SORP Scientific Steering Committee members are required to divulge any Conflict of Interest to the IWC-SORP Secretariat and Chair of the IWC-SORP SSC prior to assessment of applications. The Chair of the IWC-SORP SSC 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 applicants or applications;
- Any relatives or friends with a financial interest in the applicants or applications;
- Any personal bias or inclination which would affect a decision in relation to applicants or applications;
- 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).

Applicants are required to declare as part of their application, existing conflicts of interest or that to the best of their knowledge there is no conflict of interest, including in relation to the examples below, that would impact on or prevent the applicant from proceeding with the project or any Contract it may enter into with the IWC.

Where an applicant subsequently 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 IWC-SORP SSC 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.

12.3 Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed and scored on scientific merit (a maximum of 30 points). Projects must meet a threshold score to be considered for approval for funding. Generally, only projects that rank 20 or above on this scale will be considered for funding.

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

	Criteria	Weighting [Each criterion is equally weighted and scored to a maximum of 5 out of 30]
1	Is the intrinsic scientific value of the project of a high standard?	0 Not demonstrated 1 Low scientific value 2 Useful/basic scientific value 3 Good scientific value 4 Very good scientific value 5 Excellent/innovative scientific value
2	How well will the scientific outcomes of the project address the nominated priority areas in terms of current knowledge?	0 Not addressed 1 Poorly addressed 2 Reasonably addressed 3 Well addressed 4 Very well addressed 5 Excellently addressed
3	Does the methodology outlined effectively and efficiently address the research questions in the proposal?	0 Not demonstrated 1 Poor methodology 2 Reasonable methodology 3 Good methodology 4 Very good methodology 5 Excellent methodology
4	Will the data analysis described address the objectives of this project?	0 Not demonstrated 1 Poor data analysis proposed 2 Reasonable analysis proposed 3 Good analysis proposed 4 Very good analysis proposed 5 Excellent analysis proposed

5	Is the research proposed feasible, well budgeted, well organised and timeline achievable?	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 sound 4 Feasibility, budget, organisation and timeline demonstrated well 5 Feasibility, budget, organisation and timeline very well demonstrated
6	Do you consider the Chief Investigator and research team to have appropriate track record/s, including publishing in peer review literature and/or delivery into the policy and management arena? <i>Please consider early career research scientists relative to their stage of career. Scores accommodate consideration of career maturity.</i>	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
Overall total out of 30		

13. Assessment Timetable

Expected Date	Event
25 July 2016	Call for proposals opens
Midnight UCT, 17 August 2016	Close of Call
19 August – 9 September 2016	IWC-SORP SSC assessment of proposals
20 September 2016	Submission of project assessment scores and proposed funding allocation to IWC 2016
24-28 October 2016	Commission consideration of proposed allocation of funds from the IWC-SORP Research Fund
November 2016	Applicants advised of outcome of applications
November-December 2016	Contract negotiations with successful applicants
January 2017	Disbursement of funds from IWC-SORP Research Fund

14. Appeals

Appeals will be considered only against process issues relating to the application. They will not be considered against IWC-SORP SSC 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. The appeal should state the grounds for appeal and be signed by the appellants.

The signed appeal should be sent to: IWC-SORP Secretariat, Australian Antarctic Division, 203 Channel Highway, Kingston, Tasmania 7050, Australia.

An electronic copy of the signed appeal can be sent to: sorp@aad.gov.au

Annex 2 - IWC-SORP Scientific Steering Committee - Guidelines for Assessing Scientific Proposals

Scope of the Call

When assessing the proposals, keep in mind that this Call can only consider proposals related to the five current IWC-SORP projects that have already been endorsed by the IWC Scientific Committee and Commission. Favourable consideration should be given to proposals directly related to:

- Determination of diet/foraging ecology, age, length, pregnancy and maturity of whales.
- Improvement of the efficiency of satellite tagging and biopsying of small Antarctic whales.
- Development of bio-energetic and ecological models – including information on the abundance and distribution of whales derived from historical commercial whaling data.
- Development of techniques to locate and study rare whales (e.g., acoustic or remote sensing), as well as determination of long-term population recovery trends in rare whales.
- Establishment of links between whale breeding and feeding grounds.
- Investigation of movement and distribution of whale populations.
- Analysis and publication of existing data sets developed through existing IWC-SORP projects.

Applications that can be used to facilitate research in the 2016/17 austral field season have also been encouraged.

Eligibility of proposals

The IWC-SORP Secretariat will filter the proposals received by the Call closing date for eligibility prior to disseminating for assessment. However, when assessing the proposals please note that:

- The Chief Investigator must be from an IWC-SORP Partner nation.
- All applicants were strongly encouraged to liaise closely with IWC-SORP Project Leaders in developing proposals.
- Applicants were also strongly encouraged to:
 - submit collaborative proposals with other researchers; and
 - to seek co-investment.
- Applicants are bound by IWC-SORP data availability protocols <http://www.marinemammals.gov.au/sorp/protocols,-data-sharing-and-resources>
- Applicants are bound by Scientific Committee conflict of interest procedures (<https://iwc.int/scientific-committee-handbook>; J. Cetacean Res. Manage. 17 (Suppl.), 2016, Annex S).
- Institutes receiving funding are responsible for obtaining ethics approval and relevant permits. Documentation demonstrating this should be provided with each application.

Assessment criteria

Applications should be assessed and scored on scientific merit.

- Please assess the proposals for scientific merit against the six criteria outlined in the separate Proposal Assessment Template document provided.
- Each criterion is scored between 0 – 5; Maximum score = 30 points.
- Projects must meet a threshold score to be considered for approval for funding. Generally, only projects that rank 20 or above on this scale will be considered for funding.
- Please also address the questions regarding additional considerations specific to this Call, as outlined in the Proposal Assessment Template.

Conflict of Interest

IWC-SORP SSC Conflict of Interest

IWC-SORP Scientific Steering Committee members are required to divulge any Conflict of Interest to the IWC-SORP Secretariat (sorp@aad.gov.au) and Chair of the IWC-SORP SSC (Mike Double: mike.double@aad.gov.au) prior to assessment of applications. The Chair of the IWC-SORP SSC 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 close, long-standing personal or professional relationship with the applicant(s).
- Any financial interest in the applicants or applications;
- Any relatives or friends with a financial interest in the applicants or applications;

- Any personal bias or inclination which would affect a decision in relation to applicants or applications;
- 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.

Applicant(s) Conflict of Interest

Applicants are required to declare as part of their application, existing conflicts of interest or that to the best of their knowledge there is no conflict of interest, including in relation to the examples below, that would impact on or prevent the applicant from proceeding with the Project or any Contract it may enter into with the IWC.

Where an applicant subsequently 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-SORP 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 IWC-SORP SSC 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 Timetable

Please return Proposal Assessments (one per project application assessed) to the IWC-SORP Secretariat (sorp@aad.gov.au) by **midnight UCT, 1 September 2016**.

	Action	Deadline
1	Call for Proposals opens	25 July 2016
2	Close of Call for Proposals	17 August 2016
3	Send out applications to IWC-SORP SSC	19 August 2016
4	Assessments returned by SSC to IWC-SORP Secretariat	1 September 2016
5	Compilation of assessments by IWC-SORP Secretariat	2-4 September 2016
5	IWC-SORP SSC teleconference to discuss final decisions	5-8 September 2016 depending on SSC availability
6	Final agreement by SSC returned to IWC-SORP Secretariat	9 September 2016
7	Summary document prepared for F&A Committee by the IWC-SORP Secretariat and approved by IWC-SORP SSC	12-19 September 2016
8	Submission of document to F&A Committee	20 September 2016
9	F&A to consider document, develop recommendations and prepare report for Commission	22 October 2016
10	F&A Report received by Commission during Plenary	24-28 October 2016
11	Commission's decision publicised	Early November 2016
12	Inform Proponents of the outcome of their application	November 2016
13	IWC-SORP Secretariat and IWC Secretariat to draw up draft contracts	November 2016
14	Contract negotiations with Proponents	November – December 2016
15	Disbursement of funds from IWC-SORP Research Fund	January 2017