



IWC Southern Ocean Research Partnership Research Fund

Call for Proposals 2017

The closing date for applications is midnight UCT, Friday, 5 January 2018.

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 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>.

2. Priority research areas

This Call will consider proposals related to the five current IWC-SORP themes. New themes can be proposed through this Call. However, a new theme will only be accepted if there is sufficient scientific justification and evidence of long-term commitment to the theme from a well-supported, collaborative team.

Favourable consideration will be given to proposals directly related to:

- Determination of whale foraging ecology in relation to krill distribution and behaviour
- Determination of age, length, pregnancy and maturity of whales.
- Improvement of satellite tagging and biopsying methods for 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.
- Determination of movement, distribution and structure of whale populations.
- Analysis and publication of existing data sets relevant to existing IWC-SORP themes.

3. Eligibility

- The Chief Investigator must be from an institution located in an IWC-SORP Partner nation. All applicants are strongly encouraged to liaise closely with IWC-SORP Theme 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.

*Theme 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, Friday 5 January 2018**. 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.

Approximately **£500,000 GBP** is 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 £2,500 to £23,889 GBP.

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 assets unless the proposal includes a very strong justification for the procurement of specialised equipment.

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. It should also 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 Theme 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 with the International Whaling Commission (IWC). This Contract will cover the project budget, financial and performance acquittal, milestone activities, reporting, intellectual property, assets and data requirements.

Contracts will be linked to milestone activities. These 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.

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

By signing the Contract, applicants will be 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 and met IWC Scientific Committee priorities. 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 made publically available 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 then 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). The assessment criteria are listed in Section 12.3.

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 2018 and the biennial Commission meeting in September 2018 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 in liaison with the IWC-SORP Secretariat.

12.2 Conflict of Interest

Assessment Panel members are required to divulge any conflict of interest to the IWC-SORP Secretariat, 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 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 Assessment Panel;
- 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 and relevance for the 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 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 but no potential for leverage 5 Full co-investment ^s demonstrated and potential for leverage
6	Is the research proposed feasible, well budgeted, well organised and with a timeline allowing for the achievement of all objectives?	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
7	Do you consider the Chief 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? <i>Please consider early career research scientists relative to their stage of career. Scores accommodate consideration of career maturity and/or career breaks.</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 35		

[§]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.

*There are currently five IWC-SORP Themes (formerly referred to as Projects) covering 1) blue whales, 2) killer whales, 3) baleen whale foraging, 4) humpback connectivity and 5) blue and fin whale acoustics. New themes are classed as those projects that could not be carried out under the auspices of these five existing themes.

13. Assessment Timetable

Expected Date	Event
05 September 2017	Call for Proposals opens
Midnight UCT, 5 January 2018	Close of Call
January – March 2018	IWC-SORP SSC assessment of proposals
April – May 2018	Presentation of project assessment scores and proposed funding allocation to the Scientific Committee of the IWC
Late August 2018	Submission of project assessment scores and proposed funding allocation to IWC 67 (2018)
September 2018	Commission consideration of proposed allocation of funds from the IWC-SORP Research Fund
October 2018	Applicants advised of outcome of applications
October-December 2019	Contract negotiations with successful applicants
January 2019	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 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. The appeal should state the grounds for appeal and be signed by the appellant.

The signed appeal should be sent to: The 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