Terms of reference for the contracting of scientific input to develop a strategic intervention plan to tackle invasive alien species for seabirds in key islands in Cabo Verde (West Africa)

Contracting organisation: BirdLife International  
Project name: Conserving Cabo Verde Seabirds  
Project code/ID: 4941  
Project duration: November 1st, 2022, to October 31st, 2025

Background

Seabirds are amongst the world’s most threatened group of birds, subject to threats across their breeding, feeding, and wintering grounds. Cabo Verde is of huge importance for seabirds at a global scale, because the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem (CCLME) is a critical migration flyway and wintering area for large numbers of other Atlantic seabirds (breeding in both the northern and southern hemispheres). Cabo Verde is of high global importance for breeding endemic threatened seabirds, such as Cabo Verde Shearwater Calonectris edwardsii (Near Threatened - NT).

Historically the research and management of these species in Cabo Verde have not received a lot of attention among other reasons due to their discreet breeding behavior, the location of their nests in inaccessible steep valleys and deserted islands, and their long forays out to sea.

Seabirds play an ecologically significant role and are crucial indicators of the health of marine ecosystems. However, the survival and successful reproduction of seabirds in Cabo Verde is threatened by many threats that come from land (habitat destruction, illegal harvest, invasive species predation, light pollution) and sea (fishery bycatch, depletion of fish stocks, marine pollution).

In the past 10 years, various initiatives have been carried out in Cabo Verde to determine the status of these seabirds, especially their distribution and threats both at breeding sites and at sea, as well as to mitigate key threats and strengthen advocacy efforts and awareness.

Invasive alien species (IAS), bycatch, and climate change are the identified threats that affect a greater number of globally threatened or near-threatened species and a greater number of individuals. The main threat factors on land acting at colony level are non-native invasive species, hunting/catching and disturbance. In Cabo Verde, the problematic species for seabirds are mainly cats, dogs, rats, and mice. Predators of adults, chicks, and eggs, these species have been responsible in the past for the decline or disappearance of seabird populations in certain sites/places and are still responsible for its currently reduced distribution.
BirdLife International and local partners in Cabo Verde received funding from various donors including the Darwin Initiative, a UK Government fund, to enhance marine conservation through fostering community stewardship and implementing marine conservation measures while addressing land- and sea-based threats posed such as by IAS and fishing activities.

**Purpose of this work**

In the context of the background described above, the overall aim of this work is to improve the knowledge on seabird threats on land, preserving biodiversity and the health of coastal ecosystems with a focus on seabird populations, against the threat of invasive alien mammal species. The work seeks to provide a baseline on current knowledge and data of Cabo Verde's IAS and their associated impacts on seabird species populations and to apply existing good practices, techniques and methods in the identification, management and monitoring of these threats, according to the context of the Cabo Verde Islands.

**Specific objectives**

Specifically, this work will aim to:

- Build capacity of local actors regarding all the stages of an identification, management and monitoring programme to tackle invasive alien mammal species. This should include best practice, project design, implementation, data collection and monitoring as well as the establishment of effective predator proof fences and associated principles and techniques.

- Identify and make recommendations for an effective biosecurity plan to ensure the highest risk species (cats, rats, and other predators) do not spread to islands in Cabo Verde where they are not currently present.

- Conduct a preliminary assessment of existing baseline data on IAS (species identification, behaviour and ecology, geographical distribution, and abundance, impacts on seabirds and the ecosystem, control measures, potential social challenges and opportunities to their successful management).

- Through consultation with local stakeholders, identify priority sites on the largest islands of Cabo Verde where predator proof fences might be appropriate to help protect seabird colonies and other priority species.
- Identify the requirements of a rapid response plan to ensure Cabo Verde partners can effectively respond to new incursions of the highest priority species.

Expected results

- Local actors trained in all phases of an identification, management and monitoring programme to tackle IAS. This should include best practice, project design, implementation, data collection and monitoring, the establishment of effective predator-proof fencing and associated principles and techniques.
- Recommendations are identified and provided for an effective biosecurity plan to ensure that the species most at risk (cats, rats and other predators) do not spread to islands in Cabo Verde where they are not currently present.
- A preliminary assessment of existing baseline data on IAS (species identification, behaviour and ecology, geographical distribution and abundance, impacts on seabirds and the ecosystem, control measures, potential social challenges and/or opportunities for successful management).
- Consultation with local stakeholders and priority sites identified on Cabo Verde's largest islands where predator-proof fencing might be appropriate to help protect seabird colonies and other priority species.
- Requirements are identified for a rapid response plan, to ensure that Cabo Verde's partners can respond effectively to new incursions of the highest priority species.

Geographical scope of the study

This work will cover the following islands in Cabo Verde: Santo Antão, São Vicente, Santa Luzia, São Nicolau, Sal, Boa Vista, Santiago, Fogo, and Brava (see map below).
### Timeframe and outputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Period</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Consultant selection process</strong></td>
<td>- TOR finalised and validated</td>
<td>Q4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Shortlisted consultant invited</td>
<td>Q1 Q2 Q3</td>
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<td><strong>Notification to the selected consultant</strong></td>
<td>- Technical and financial proposal evaluated and validated</td>
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<td>- Consultancy contract signed</td>
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<td><strong>Development of the strategic intervention plan</strong></td>
<td>- Strategic intervention plan developed and validated</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation of the strategic intervention plan</strong></td>
<td>- Preliminary assessment of existing baseline data on IAS</td>
<td>Q4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- Local actors trained regarding all the stages of identification, management and monitoring of IAS
- Priority sites are identified in close consultation with local partners, where predator-proof fencing may be appropriate to help protect seabird colonies and other priority species
- Requirements identified for a rapid response plan to ensure that local partners can respond effectively to new incursions of the highest priority species.

**Submit the 1st draft report of the consultancy**
- Report on the implementation of the strategic intervention plan

**Submit the 2nd draft report of the consultancy**
- Report on the implementation of the strategic intervention plan

**Submit the final report**
- Report on the implementation of the strategic intervention plan
- Recommendations and next steps

**Research ethics**

Any data collected within this project should meet BirdLife International's code of practice on ethical standards for scientific research which includes guidance on data collection and use, including informed consent – which would require any participant that contributes data to be aware of how data will be used and agree to the terms, and one of these points could be with BirdLife International for conservation purposes.

**Intellectual property**

1. The consultant(s) can maintain the ownership of the data used within this study if those were not collected within the project. Any use of such data set will be first explicitly
approved by the data owners involved with the data sets to be further used for any other objective not included in this TOR.

2. Any new data collected and any output and intermediary products with the project will be made openly available and not restricted or subject to permissions prior to future use. Such data will be uploaded as pre-approved for BirdLife's use in conservation efforts.

Consultant Profile (skills & knowledge)

For this study, BirdLife International will consider individual applications as well as consortia. Potential candidates for this consultancy must have the following profile:

- A minimum of 10 years of professional experience in seabird conservation, invasive alien species, and land threats on seabirds, or equivalent demonstrable evidence of expertise (e.g., years of Ph.D./post-docs in a similar subject/analysis).
- A good scientific knowledge of West Africa, in general, and Cabo Verde especially in the context marine and coastal conservation.
- A good knowledge of the Cabo Verde seabird species including their ecology, distributions, behaviour, land threats they face, etc.
- A good knowledge of approaches for assessing social dimensions of issues related to invasive species management.
- Familiarity with local conservation policies and environmental regulations in Cabo Verde.
- A good knowledge and experience of predator-proof fencing methods and techniques.
- Excellent English written skills (knowledge of Portuguese would be an asset).

Applications

Candidates can submit their application to recruitment-west-africa@birdlife.org

The deadline to apply is October 27th, 2023, at 12:00 am GMT

Applications should consist of a proposal (not exceeding 10 pages, excluding CVs) including the following elements:

- A brief proposal based on a clear understanding of the terms of reference, outlining the methodology to be used, how the milestones will be delivered, and how the reporting requirements will be met.
- The background of the consultant or team members and relevant experience in performing similar work, including links to any reports or other documents produced.
- A preliminary financial offer, including daily rates for consultancy services and proposed expenses, as well as the time required to carry out the work.