Prior assessment of a proposed Antarctic Specially Protected Area at Danger Islands Archipelago (North-eastern Antarctic Peninsula)

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(North-eastern Antarctic Peninsula)**

**Working Paper submitted by Germany and the United States of America**

***Summary***

A prior assessment for a proposed multi-site Antarctic Specially Protected Area (ASPA) at Danger Islands Archipelago (North-eastern Antarctic Peninsula) has been carried out by Germany and the United States of America. The proponents recommend that the CEP: (1) agrees that the values within the proposed ASPA merit special protection, (2) endorses the development of a Management Plan for the area, and (3) encourages interested Parties to work with Germany and the United States of America informally during the intersessional period in the development of a Management Plan for submission to CEP XXV.

***Introduction***

In accordance with the provisions in Annex V to the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (the Protocol), Germany and the United States of America propose the establishment of an Antarctic Specially Protected Area (ASPA) at Danger Islands Archipelago (North-eastern Antarctic Peninsula).

The proposed ASPA would be a multi-site ASPA intended primarily to protect a range of values.

*Environmental values:*

* Area in which > 50 % of the Adélie penguin (*Pygoscelis adeliae*) population of the Antarctic Peninsula Region exist;
* Area with 1.2 % of the global population of Antarctic shags (*Phalacrocorax atriceps*);
* Area of high biodiversity with breeding sites of 8 additional bird species.

*Scientific values:*

* Key area for population monitoring of Adélie penguins (55 % of the population of CCAMLR subarea 48.1);
* Key area for understanding the ecology of the regional ecosystem with its Adélie penguin population as a regional hotspot and representative for the relatively stable Weddell Sea region colonies (compared to those in other areas);
* Large deposits of ornithogenic soils provide high potentials for studying paleoecology.

*Wilderness values:*

* Low or medium human footprint for the different sites of the area.

*Aestethic values:*

* Medium because of spectacular geomorphological formations in some areas.

***Prior assessment***

Following discussions at CEP XX (2017), the *Guidelines: A prior assessment process for the designation of ASPAs and ASMAs* were updated to include a non-mandatory ASPA prior assessment template to facilitate the provision of information consistent with the Guidelines (CEP XX report, Appendix A). Germany and the United States of America have completed the prior assessment template for the proposed ASPA (see Attachment A), which includes maps, photos and a list of relevant publications.

If the CEP agrees that the area merits special protection, Germany and the United States of America intend to develop intersessionally a Management Plan for the proposed ASPA in collaboration with all interested parties to be submitted for consideration during CEP XXV.

***Recommendations***

Germany and the United States of America recommend that the CEP:

1. notes the completed prior assessment for a proposed multi-site Antarctic Specially Protected Area at Danger Islands Archipelago (North-eastern Antarctic Peninsula) at Attachment A;
2. agrees that the values within the proposed ASPA merit special protection, as described under Annex V to the Protocol;
3. endorses the development of a Management Plan for the Area, led by Germany and the United States of America; and
4. encourages interested parties to work with Germany and the United States of America informally during the intersessional period in the development of a Management Plan for submission to CEP XXV.