Suggested guidelines for the   
de-designation of Antarctic Specially Protected Areas (ASPA)

# Suggested guidelines for the de-designation of Antarctic Specially Protected Areas (ASPA)

Working Paper submitted by Norway, Australia, China, New Zealand,   
the United Kingdom, and the United States

## Summary

This Working Paper with its attachment puts forward a proposal for guidelines for the de-designation of Antarctic Specially Protected Areas (ASPAs). Norway, Australia, China, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States propose that the CEP endorses these guidelines for ASPA de-designation for use and guidance by Members and the Committee. It is also suggested that these guidelines be included as part of the package of guidance material to be considered in the upcoming programme of work to review and rationalise the existing protected area guidance materials.

## 1. Background

The Protocol does not include provisions that expressly address de-designation of ASPAs, but nor does it actively disallow such a process. Annex V to the Protocol requires that each ASPA must have a management plan identifying a period of designation, if any (Article 5.3(d)). Management plans must undergo periodic review (Article 6.3), and can be amended or revoked (Article 6.4). While these provisions indicate the option for ASPAs to be time-limited or de-designated, Annex V does not outline a de-designation procedure. Still, as of today all ASPAs have been designated for an “indefinite” period.

In recent years, the Committee has been asked to consider proposals to de-designate ASPAs including the following:

* ASPA 107: Emperor Island, Dion Island – refer to discussion reflected in para. 133-137 of the final report from CEP XIX
* ASPA 118: Summit of Mount Melbourne, Victoria Land – amalgamated into ASPA 175 (Measure 13 (2014))
* ASPA 130: Tramway Ridge, Mount Erebus, Ross Island – amalgamated into ASPA 175 (Measure 13 (2014))
* ASPA 114: Northern Coronation Island, South Orkney Islands – the values were no longer there (Measure 16 (2014))
* ASPA 144: Chile Bay (Discovery Bay), Greenwich Island, South Shetland Islands – pending.

The Committee has agreed on the importance of the Antarctic protected area system being dynamic but has also recognised that de-designations should not be taken lightly, and that rigorous consideration is required.

The Committee has welcomed Norway’s stated intention to develop suggested guidance/criteria for de-designating ASPAs, first raised as a potential need at the meeting of the Committee in 2014, and as subsequently reflected in the Five-Year Work Plan adopted by CEP XX (2017).

At CEP XXI, Norway advised that it was continuing to work on the guidance/criteria. At CEP XXII, in cooperation with Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, it brought forward a proposal for consideration. The Committee welcomed the proposal and emphasised the importance of discussing and formulating criteria for the de-designation of protected areas. The Committee agreed that some further work on the guidance/criteria was required and welcomed the offer from Norway to continue to lead the intersessional work with the aim to report back to the CEP XXIII.

On the basis of further intersessional work, Norway, Australia, China, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States have refined the proposal and put forward guidelines for de-designation of ASPAs for the consideration of the Committee.

## 2. Intentions with the guidelines for de-designation of Antarctic Specially Protected Areas (ASPA)

The guidelines are intended to be used by Parties and the CEP as the basis for the consideration of the de-designation of ASPAs. The decision to advise the ATCM to de-designate an ASPA is a decision to be made by the CEP. Any such decision by the CEP needs to be made on the basis of solid assessment and consideration by one or more Parties. These guidelines provide Parties with the basis for such an assessment process, and the CEP with guidance on the procedures for any de-designation consideration. With guidelines as suggested, the CEP can ensure a coherent and consistent process in considering any de-designation proposals.

## 3. Recommendation

Norway, Australia, China, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States propose that the CEP:

* endorse the guidelines for ASPA de-designation and make use of them when considering any future de-designation processes; and
* include these guidelines as part of the package of guidance material to be considered in the upcoming programme of work to review and rationalise the existing protected area guidance materials.

Attachment: Suggested guidelines for de-designation of ASPAs