


# ATAP/SOSF call for proposals to investigate the movement

# behaviour of elasmobranchs in South Africa

# *Closing date*: 27 September 2024

*Successful applicant informed by*: 25 October 2024

*Transmitter order placed by*: 22 November 2024

**Preamble**: The Acoustic Tracking Array Platform (of the South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity, SAIAB) is a collaborative marine science programme which aims to (i) provide a service to the greater marine science community, (ii) monitor the movements and migrations of inshore marine animals, and (iii) contribute to the understanding and conservation of these animals. The platform comprises an expanded network of automated data-logging acoustic telemetry receivers that are moored at a series of node sites along South Africa’s coastline, from St Helena Bay on the cool temperate Atlantic coastline, to the Mozambique border on the sub-tropical east coast. The Save Our Seas Foundation (SOSF) provides integral support for the ATAP platform, in the form of running expenses. In addition, SOSF has made a grant available to fund the purchase of acoustic transmitters, which will be awarded to the successful applicant, to conduct **research on elasmobranchs (sharks, rays and skates) within the ATAP array**. The ATAP hereby invites applicants to submit a research proposal for the award of 15 to 20 acoustic transmitters (quantity is exchange rate dependent; standard coded internal transmitters OR negotiable to the same monetary value) compatible with the ATAP array. For more information on ATAP see <https://saiab.ac.za/platforms/acoustic-tracking-array-tracking/> and on SOSF see [www.saveourseas.com.](http://www.saveourseas.com/)

**Support offered:** This award comprises 15 to 20 acoustic transmitters (standard coded internal transmitters OR negotiable to the same monetary value; the specifications of which to be decided by the successful recipient). No capital equipment or logistical support will be provided or funded through this call. Technical advice, if required, can be provided by ATAP staff. Applicants are required to provide their own equipment for the capture and tagging of the animals, as well as running expenses for the project.

**Conditions of the offer:** The following criteria will apply to the funded project:

1. Only proposals for elasmobranch species will be considered
2. All transmitters must be deployed (on/in the proposed species) by 31st December 2025
3. All animals must be tagged within the existing ATAP receiver array (i.e. St Helena Bay to South Africa/Mozambique border)
4. Proposals must include approval of the proposed study by a relevant animal ethics committee, or efforts must be made towards gaining ethical approval
5. Only one application will be accepted from each principal investigator
6. Transmitters may not be sold, given away or used on a species or in a location other than identified in the successful proposal without written approval from ATAP management
7. An annual progress report will be required by 31 October of each year for the duration of the project. Progress reports must be emailed to atap@saiab.ac.za
8. Two blogs must be provided to ATAP, for distribution by ATAP and SOSF. These are to accompany the progress report due by 31 October of each year for which the project is running, emailed to atap@saiab.ac.za
9. At least **10 high-resolution digital images** must be supplied to ATAP by 31 December 2025, for use by ATAP in reporting. Images will be duly acknowledged. Images to be emailed to atap@saiab.ac.za or via a suitable file sharing system
10. Details of all animals tagged must be submitted to atap@saiab.ac.za after tagging (at a minimum reporting on tag details provided by the manufacturer, length measurements of the animal tagged, sex of the animal, tagging location (including GPS coordinates) and date and time of tagging)
11. Copies of all manuscripts, popular articles and theses stemming from this grant must be submitted to atap@saiab.ac.za at the time of publication
12. SOSF and ATAP must be acknowledged in any outputs stemming from this funding (acknowledgement text to be provided by ATAP)

**Proposal evaluation**

Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of:

1. Feasibility of catching sufficient numbers of animals of the species within the given time period
2. Research team (including students) demographics to meet transformation objectives
3. The proposed location(s) of capture and tagging, relative to existing ATAP receiver stations
4. Likelihood of obtaining sufficient detections for meaningful analyses
5. Infrastructure, resources and manpower required (and available) to implement the study
6. Applicant’s contribution to study, in terms of acoustic receivers/additional transmitters
7. Proposed scientific, peer-reviewed outputs that will be generated through the proposed study

The weighting of each category will be as follows:

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| Criteria | Weighting (%) |
| **Feasibility** – Can animals be caught? | 20 |
| **Locality** – Will animals be tagged close to existing receivers? | 5 |
| **Analyses** – Will collected data be enough for meaningful and robust analyses? | 10 |
| **Infrastructure** – Is there sufficient equipment and manpower available? | 5 |
| **Applicant contribution** – Are there receivers or transmitters the applicant can contribute to the study? | 10 |
| **Outputs** – Will this study result in scientific and popular outputs? | 10 |
| **Transformation** – Research team (including student) demographics to meet transformation objectives | 30 |
| **Novelty** – Are new species being tagged, or is a previously unknown aspect of a currently tagged species’ movements being studied? | 10 |

**Application process:** The deadline for applications is **27 September 2024**.Interested applicants should send the completed application form below (in pdf format) by email to atap@saiab.ac.za. Additional space may be used where necessary.


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Completed applications in PDF format should be returned to atap@saiab.ac.za by no later than **27 September 2024.**

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| **1. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR NAME, AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS** |
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| **2. COLLABORATOR NAMES, AFFILIATIONS AND ADDRESSES** |
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| **3. PROJECT TITLE** |
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| **4. PROPOSED SPECIES** |
| 4a. Species name |
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| 4b. Status of knowledge on the species |
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| 4c. Conservation/management challenges for the species |
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| **5. AIM** |
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| **6. PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS (List top 3)** |
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| **7. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEAERCH**Describe the significance of the research for the conservation/management challenges for the species |
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| **8. RESEARCH APPROACH**How will you answer the three primary research questions? |
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| **9. RESEARCH PLAN, AND METHODS AND MATERIALS FOR CAPTURE, HANDLING AND TAGGING**Include any field work that has already been completed (if any) |
| 9a. Proposed tagging locations |
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| 9b. Methods of capture and handling |
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| 9c. Transmitter attachment/implantation methods (in detail) |
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| 9d. Ethical clearance of proposed study (attach approval where possible) |
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| **10. FEASIBILITY OF PROPOSED TAGGING**Clearly outline how you will ensure that all transmitters are deployed within the given time frame, and the resources you have available to achieve this |
| 10a. Feasibility of catching all proposed individuals within the given time period (i.e. before 31 December 2025) |
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| 10b. Provide timeline of tagging activities up to 31 December 2025 |
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| 10c. Infrastructure available (boats/aquaria/holding tanks, etc.) |
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| 10d. Manpower available (capture/tagging, etc.) |
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| **11. APPLICANT’S OWN CONTRIBUTION** |
| 11a Acoustic receivers other than ATAP receivers (applicant’s own receivers) |
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| 11b. Running expenses budget |
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| 11c. Additional transmitters |
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| **12. REFERENCES** |
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| **APPLICANT** | **DIRECTOR/MANAGER/RESEARCH DIRECTOR** |
| Name |  | Name |  |
| Signature |  | Signature |  |
| Date |  | Date |  |