



**WP 16**

Agenda Item: 2.2.7

Person Responsible: J Baeseman

**EXCOM 2015**

**Tromsø, Norway 27-28 August 2015**

# **SCAR**

## **Scientific Research Programme**

### **External Performance Review Process**



## Executive Summary

**Title:** SCAR Scientific Research Programme External Performance Review

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**Introduction/ Background:** As agreed by the Delegates in 2004, all of SCAR's Scientific Research Programmes (SRPs) are to be reviewed internally every 2 years and externally every 4 in order to ensure that SCAR is obtaining good value for its investment and that results are emerging at an appropriate rate.

**Important Issues or Factors:** The SRP Astronomy and Astrophysics from Antarctica (AAA) was externally reviewed in 2014. The process outlined herewith follows the procedure AAA followed.

The following are due for review in 2016:

- Antarctic Climate Change in the 21st Century (AntClim21)
- Antarctic Thresholds - Ecosystem Resilience and Adaptation (AnT-ERA)
- Past Antarctic Ice Sheet Dynamics (PAIS)
- Solid Earth Responses and influences on Cryospheric Evolution (SERCE)
- State of the Antarctic Ecosystem (AntEco)

**Recommendations/Actions and Justification:** ExCom is asked to review the process outlined in the following pages and comment. Once agreed, the Secretariat will follow up with review process as agreed.

**Expected Benefits/Outcomes:** Reviews should be ready for consideration by the SCAR Delegates 2016 meeting. The external reviews should help to increase the effectiveness of the SRPs and their outcomes.

**Budget Implications:** Most work will be done via email and online meetings so no direct costs are foreseen, but it will take up considerable staff time and also time for reviewers.



## SCAR Scientific Research Programme External Performance Review



### Introduction

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The SRP Astronomy and Astrophysics from Antarctica (AAA) was externally reviewed in 2014. The following are due for review in 2016:

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SCAR recognizes that the success of SRPs depends primarily on science carried out, funded and peer-reviewed within national programs and there is no wish to duplicate the scientific review process of national activities. SCAR adds value to national efforts by facilitating international collaboration and communication that might not otherwise occur. An assessment of the extent to which that value has been added through such collaboration is the objective of the review process, providing a basis for prioritizing the many competing demands on SCAR's limited resources. If an SRP is judged to be deficient in its performance, SCAR will recommend changes to improve performance, or it may redirect funds to other more deserving activities. SRPs are also to be of a finite duration (6 to 8 years) allowing for the renewal and reinvigoration of the SCAR scientific portfolio on a regular basis. Reviews and assessments are used to encourage this replenishment.

The external review process is not meant to be unduly burdensome and should be proportional to SCAR-provided funds. SRP leaders report biennially to the meetings of the Standing Scientific Groups and the SCAR Delegates. In the intervening years SRPs report to the Chief Officers of their Standing Scientific Groups who then report to the SCAR Executive Committee. Where feasible, SRP leaders should personally report to the SCAR Delegates. However, it is recognized that time and resources may not allow this, so the relevant Chief Officer of the SSGs can present the SRP reports on behalf of the SRPs.

For the external review, an independent external review group will vet the reports of each SRP being reviewed. The reviews and annual reports will be available as soon as possible to enable the Delegates to report their rankings before the meeting and to allow for constructive discussion at the meeting.

## The Form of the Annual Report for the Review

The report from the SRP should be no more than 5-6 A-4 pages long (excluding appendices and references). It should list the rationale for the programme, the major tasks, and the time frame and progress against tasks with explanations for delays. The report must include a list of the members of the Steering Committee (including term, position held, gender, and country) and any changes since the last report. The report must provide the following basic information:

### 1. Introduction ~ 1/2 page.

Outline the overarching objectives and structure of the SRP (refer to appendices if further details are required).

### 2. Deliverables and Milestones ~ 4-5 pages.

- I. Up to five key achievements
- II. Primary publications in peer-reviewed journals (use appendices if necessary)
- III. Major reports, including linkages to major SCAR activities (e.g. advice to the Treaty or IPCC)
- IV. Other reports and grey literature
- V. Workshops and other key meetings
- VI. Capacity building and education activities
- VII. New data and/or meta-data (including plans for archiving)
- VIII. Communication activities, outreach, brochures, and other materials
- IX. Linkages to other SCAR groups, international programmes and other activities
- X. Expenditure on project activities and plans for unspent funds

### 3. Future Plans ~ 1/2 page.

Outline the major objectives of the SRP over the next period, referring to the Implementation plan or appendices if necessary.

### 4. Appendices (including members of the Steering Committee) and References

## The Review Process

The report from the SRPs being reviewed will be due by 31 March 2016.

The report will then be sent to three external reviewers, selected by EXCOM, with requests for review returned by 29 May 2016.

To the extent possible, external reviewers should not be directly involved in the programme under review but should be knowledgeable about the demands of science in the Antarctic region. SSG and SRP leaders will be asked for suggestions on nominees.

Reviewers will evaluate the report based on the criteria in Annex 1. They will be asked to comment on the extent to which the SRP has met the Terms of Reference given in Annex 2.

Reviewers' comments will be provided to Delegates on the SCAR website by 10 June 2016.

The SCAR Delegates will use the external reviews and their own judgement to rate the projects into categories (A, B, C or D - see Annex 3). The Delegates will decide whether projects should continue, when they should end, to what extent they should continue to be funded, and the level of funding.

If revisions to the SRP are required, the SRP leaders will be asked to present an action plan for such revisions for consideration at the next scheduled Executive Committee meeting, usually one year after the review.

SRP leaders will be invited to present their work at the Delegates Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (29 August 2016). If they are unable to attend the Delegates meeting, another member of the SRP or the SSG Chief Officer responsible can make presentations on their behalf.

**Annex 1. Evaluation criteria for SCAR Scientific Research Programmes**

*Reviewers should complete this page, expanding the text boxes where necessary, but to no more than 2-3 pages of A-4 including this page.*

<p><b>Science quality.</b> Recognising that the national science on which the research was based has already been peer-reviewed, do the scientific highlights and published papers indicate that the internationally collaborative research stimulated by the programme has produced science that is excellent, good, or fair? (please provide a brief justification for your choice).</p>
<p><b>Science importance/relevance/timeliness.</b> Has the work advanced scientific understanding and been in accordance with the SCAR Strategic Plan (<a href="http://www.scar.org/about/futureplans/">http://www.scar.org/about/futureplans/</a>)? (Yes or no; please provide a brief explanation for your choice).</p>
<p><b>Data archival and access.</b> Is the programme adequately addressing the issues of data archiving and data access, and are its data accessible to the wider community? (Yes or no; please provide a brief explanation of your choice).</p>
<p><b>Outreach - Public/policy profile.</b> Is this programme enhancing the public profile of SCAR? (Yes or no; please provide a brief explanation of your choice).</p>
<p><b>Education.</b> Is the work contributing to education about Antarctic science? (Yes or no; please provide a brief explanation of your choice).</p>
<p><b>Building capacity across all SCAR Member countries.</b> Has the programme contributed to building the capacity of countries with less well developed Antarctic programmes and/or early career scientists a lot, modestly, little, or not at all? (please provide a brief explanation of your choice).</p>
<p><b>Value for Money.</b> Considering that SCAR is only able to invest ~\$20-25,000 USD per year in each SRP, do the results indicate excellent/good/fair/poor value for money? (please provide a brief justification for your choice).</p>
<p><b>Terms of Reference.</b> To what extent do you feel the SRP has met the Terms of Reference given in Annex 2.</p>

## Annex 2. Scientific Research Programme

### *Terms of Reference*

The Terms of Reference for a SRP will be:

- to oversee and guide the development and execution of the programme's implementation activities, adjusting and optimizing the science and implementation plans in the light of events and progress.
- to actively seek support of the programme's implementation through national and international mechanisms
- to ensure the delivery of agreed/approved scientific outcomes, including synthesis activities and public/policy outreach
- to respond to requests for expert advice/support from the SCAR Executive Committee in a timely and effective manner
- to ensure appropriate exchange and archival of data generated as a result of the programme
- to establish scientific liaison and logistic cooperation with other Antarctic activities as appropriate
- to advise the SCAR Executive Committee and Delegates on progress and on the use of funds

### *Criteria for Membership of the SRP Steering Committee*

The membership of a SRP will be:

- explicit
- appointed by the Executive Committee in consultation with the Meeting of Delegates
- based primarily on internationally recognized scientific expertise fulfilling required mix of skills and experience with geographical and gender mix taken fully into consideration
- for a 4-year term with the possibility of extension depending on contribution and performance
- governed by a phased rotation scheme



### **Annex 3. Delegates' Evaluations of SRPs**

Based on their analysis, and consideration of external reviews if available, Delegates will evaluate the SRPs into the following categories:

- A. The SRP is adding significant value to SCAR's portfolio of activities, and needs no significant revision. Good progress is being made.
  
- B. The SRP is adding value to SCAR's portfolio of activities. Good progress is being made but there is a need for some minor revisions or clarifications.
  
- C. The SRP does not appear to be adding significant value to justify SCAR's continued support or endorsement without significant revision.
  
- D. The SRP does not appear to be adding significant value to justify SCAR's continued support or endorsement, and funding should be withdrawn.