



WP 42

Agenda Item: 13.7

Person Responsible: P Convey/
J Baeseman

XXXIV SCAR Delegates Meeting

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 29-30 August 2016

Update on SCAR Development Council

Executive Summary

Authors: Pete Convey and Jenny Baeseman

Important Issues or Factors:

The main activity of the Development Council (DC) in the past year has been to try to encourage engagement by existing SCAR Delegates, programmes and groups in the search for resources to enhance SCAR's activities. Known opportunities are now advertised more widely through the SCAR webpages and contact lists.

Recommendations/Actions and Justification:

Delegates and SCAR group leaders are asked to actively engage with the search for opportunities within their own countries and wider scientific networks to enhance the funding that can be used to support SCAR scientific activities. The DC can then provide advice and support in the coordination of group responses to such opportunities found, but cannot be seen as a 'proposal writing group' in itself. We ask that the DC is given the ability write letters of support for grants, in consultation with the Executive Director.

Budget Implications:

We request (a) agreement of an ongoing funding stream to support one annual meeting of the now smaller executive group of the DC (\$5K; likely in a European location, ideally Cambridge), (b) allocation of a small sum (\$500) to support creation and maintenance of an accessible database of potential support sources (e.g. using a short-term 'intern' appointment within the SCAR Office, and (c) acknowledgement from the Delegates of the desirability of being able to draw more flexibly on SCAR funds should a rapid response need for e.g. a 'writing group' be identified in relation to a specific large funding opportunity.

Introduction/Background

The SCAR Strategic Plan 2011-2016 called for the formation of a committee to identify sources of external funds and develop a strategy to diversify SCAR's financial resources beyond membership fees, resulting in the creation of the Development Council (DC). The DC also acts as an 'umbrella' for circulating and advertising information relevant to developing possible SCAR funding proposals, as well as a means of ensuring that accidental duplication of effort or internal competition in applications is avoided from the outset.

The DC had a very large, but also largely non-participatory, membership when first created. In the last two years, with its existence in place, this has been pragmatically reduced down to an 'executive' group, reporting directly to the SCAR Executive Director and EXCOM. Current membership of this group is therefore Peter Convey (UK, Chair), Jenny Baeseman (USA, SCAR Executive Director), Karin Lochte (Germany, SCAR VP), Olav Orheim (Norway), and Jose Xavier (Portugal). We are interested in encouraging additional volunteers, particularly those with connections to different stakeholders and industry.

Progress 2015/16

The main activity of the Committee in the past year has been to try to encourage engagement by existing SCAR Delegates, programmes and groups in the search for resources to enhance SCAR's activities. This has been done through writing personal letters to all SCAR National Delegates and the leaders of all SCAR groups, explaining the rationale for existence and aims of the Development Council, and in particular emphasising that Delegates and Group Leaders are primarily the best-placed members of the SCAR community to be aware of relevant national, disciplinary and other funding opportunities that may be appropriate for SCAR engagement. In our view, SCAR's Delegates in particular are largely an untapped resource in terms of engaging with national and possibly other funding opportunities that would expand SCAR programmes, particularly the Visiting Professorship and Fellowship Schemes.

The letters were sent out electronically in December 2015 (copies appended for record). While generating a number of positive and enthusiastic responses from recipients, it is fair to note that, disappointingly, no actual new funding opportunities have yet been notified to the DC by this route. In the meantime, both the SCAR Office centrally (Executive Director) and the DC have brought a number of different possible funding streams to the attention of the SCAR groups and mailing lists. One of particular interest in recent weeks relates to opportunities to fund climate-change-related research and capacity building in south-east Asia, and we strongly encourage engagement with this 'Asian-centred' opportunity to be led by SCAR's Asian members.

Future Plans

At the OSC Business Meetings, we will again bring to the SSGs and associated groups, and the Delegates, the practical need for their engagement in identifying opportunities and bringing them to the attention of the DC (for SCAR centrally), in order that appropriate groups within SCAR can be alerted to opportunities they may otherwise not be aware of. As

is always the case, the leaders and major players in all SCAR groups, including the DC are voluntary, and it has to be up to appropriate members of the different SCAR groups to take the opportunities that arise and run with them. We propose that the DC be given the ability to supply letters of support for applications for funding SCAR activities, in consultation with the Executive Director.

As a next step to the letters sent to SCAR Delegates and leadership, we plan to design a short prospectus on the SCAR Fellowships and Visiting Professor Scheme. This document will then be sent to various institutions, agencies, etc. that may be interested in contributing to and thereby enhancing this important SCAR activity.

Now that the new redesigned SCAR website is up and running, we will increasingly use the DC page to advertise new opportunities we become aware of, along with the appropriate links. We also propose to establish a funding 'database' so the community can easily see upcoming deadlines and search for opportunities – as well as add new ones they find.

The Brochure created by the DC for SCAR was intended to be used as a 'marketing tool' to prospective donors. The brochure will be updated and we ask SCAR to provide funds to have more printed and to remind the community that they are available and to make use of them.

We also plan to establish connection with IAATO to see if they can provide our brochure during cruises. We are also hoping to initiate discussions with IAATO and other NGOs (e.g. National Geographic) to further develop our relationship, and in particular to explore the possibility of joint or named Fellowships to enhance SCAR's current Fellowship programme.

Expected Benefits/Outcomes: The intention is that ideas generated from our approach to SCAR Delegates and Groups will help to identify additional funding sources for SCAR – thus providing opportunities to increase SCAR's activities. One specific example we see that could prove very effective would be if Delegates could encourage their national organisations to commit funding to the SCAR Fellowship and Visiting Professorship schemes – if a number of member countries were each prepared to sponsor even a single such position, SCAR could rapidly look to double or more the number of these that could be awarded, which would have a major and visible impact across the SCAR community.

Partners: Delegates, other National Committee representatives, SCAR group leaders and committee members.

Budget Implications: Now that the DC is in existence, with a smaller executive group much communication can be achieved electronically. It is advised that funding be allotted, as in the past, for an in-person meeting of the DC to help facilitate activity. A further area that might be appropriate to consider is that of 'rapid' application for SCAR reserve funding; this might reasonably arise where a strong funding opportunity is identified that would benefit from a workshop-style concentrated writing meeting involving key stakeholders. At present no such opportunity is on the table, but the ability to take this approach if/when required would be advantageous.