

**Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research**

# **Roles and Responsibilities of SCAR Science Groups**



# Roles and Responsibilities of SCAR Science Groups

## General Background

Science Groups were created during the re-organization of SCAR in the early 2000s to simplify the large numbers of Working Groups and to encourage scientific disciplines to interact synergistically by building partnerships and collaborations. It was recognized that past disciplinary boundaries were a barrier to the growing inter- and cross-disciplinary nature of high priority scientific questions that were emerging. At that time, three (3) groups were created: Geosciences, Life Sciences and Physical Sciences. To encourage broad participation, SCAR members were asked to appoint four (4) national representatives per Science Group. The cost of participation and attendance in Science Groups is borne by each member nation. The groups are led by a Chief Officer, a Deputy Chief Officer and a Secretary, elected by the group membership every four (4) years.

## Responsibilities of Science Group Leaders

As the meeting space for the SCAR science community, Science Groups are tasked with formulating and managing activities to produce outcomes that support the dual missions of SCAR of international scientific coordination and provision of authoritative, science-based advice to decision-makers. Responsibilities, overseen and organized by the Chief Officers and Secretary, include:

### 1. *Member Meetings*

In the even-numbered years, an in-person Science Group business meeting is traditionally convened at the time of the biennial Open Science Conference, just prior to the SCAR Delegates Meeting. It is recommended that a virtual meeting be convened in the alternate years, so the groups meet annually at a minimum. The Chief Officers develop an agenda for these meeting and chair the meetings, directing discussion and ensuring that decisions are made and implemented. The outcomes of the business meetings are reported to the Delegates.

### 2. *Group Budgets*

Chief Officers are tasked with managing the Group's budget as allocated by the Delegates. This includes formulating and recommending group budget requests to the Standing Committee on Finance. The budget cycle is two years.

### 3. *Action and Expert Groups*

Action and Expert Groups are the vehicles for the Science Groups (SGs) to accomplish their work. SGs are tasked with creating and overseeing Action and Expert Groups:

- a. **Action Groups (AGs)** are convened to address short-term needs that arise. The duration of an Action Group is to be two but not more than four years and groups are to be disbanded when the stated need is addressed. AG membership is to be based on

the expertise needed to address the question at hand and ensure geographic and gender diversity. AGs report annually to the SG.

- b. **Expert Groups (EGs)** are convened to address longer-term needs that arise. The duration of an Expert Group will normally not exceed 6 years and groups are to be disbanded when the stated need is addressed. EG membership is to be based on the expertise needed to address the question at hand and ensure geographic and gender diversity. EGs report annually to the SG.

#### **4. Convening of Symposia**

Science Groups are tasked with convening quadrennial Scientific Symposia (i.e., the Biology Symposium and Earth Sciences Symposium (ISAES)). The SG is to widely advertise the opportunity to host Symposia, solicit proposals for organizing Symposia, review proposals to host (including budgets and proposed sources of funds), and select the host. Once awarded, the SG is responsible for overseeing the successful staging of the Symposium, working closely with the host and the organizing committee. The SG is to also to carry out a “lessons learned” analysis and report post-Symposium to assist in improving future meetings.

#### **5. Scientific Advice**

SCAR’s scientific-advice activities are coordinated by the Standing Committee on the Antarctic Treaty System (SCATS). While SCATS membership often includes the expertise necessary to address requests for scientific advice to decision- and policy-makers, additional expertise is sometimes needed. In these instances, the SCATS Chief Officer will initiate a request to the most pertinent Science Group for assistance. These requests may include assistance in identification of an expert to add as an ad-hoc member of SCATS, assistance in identifying nominees to serve on SCATS, and/or a request for the SG to form an Action Group to address a specific need. If the need is ongoing, an Expert Group may be formed.

#### **6. Programme Planning Groups**

SCAR’s flagship science programmes are formulated as Scientific Research Programmes (SRPs). SRPs have a duration of six (6) years and are cyclically ended and new ones approved. The Science Groups are expected to encourage and nurture the development of proposals for SRPs within their communities by forming exploratory Programme Planning Groups (PPGs). PPGs are tasked with formulating the scientific basis for potential SRPs; identifying and recruiting potential SRP members; and developing full proposals for new SRPs for consideration by the Delegates. Often PPGs come together from the work of Action and Expert Groups and are seen as a path to a more coordinated and focused group to address the highest priority and most complex scientific questions.

#### **7. Convening Workshops and Thematic Meetings**

On occasion, there is a need to assemble a temporary group of experts to move an issue or theme forward. For example, these might take the form of an assessment of the “state of the science” of a particular issue. These one-time meetings/workshops are often useful to assess the status of progress towards stated scientific goals/outcomes and can be useful

for formulating specific actions by the Science Group, such as the need for AGs, EGs, and/or PPGs.

## **8. *Communications and Membership***

Science Groups are to develop a communications plan that includes both internal and external communications strategies. This communications plan should be coordinated with and advised by the SCAR Secretariat Communications and Information Officer and the SCAR Communications Plan. SG leadership is to regularly provide news items and announcements to the Secretariat for the Newsletter and the website. The SG should have a plan to communicate regularly to its members and encourage SCAR members to nominate representatives to the SG.

## **9. *Inclusion and Diversity***

In all activities and actions, Science Groups are to encourage inclusion and diversity, both geographic and gender. SG activities are to include opportunities for early-career researchers and under-represented groups. Representatives from more mature Antarctic programmes are to mentor developing- or nascent-programme representatives and make efforts to include less-resourced national programmes in their activities. Chief Officers should regularly take a census of membership and approach those SCAR members that have not named representatives to the SG and encourage them to do so.

## **10. *Representatives to other SCAR activities***

A range of SCAR activities often relies on the participation of members drawn from various subsidiary groups. For example, some members on SCATS are designated as representatives from other SCAR groups. This increases cross-organization communication and coordination. The SG is responsible for identifying and nominating these representatives. Representatives are responsible for reporting to the SGs on their activities.