



Selection and Evaluation of Scientific Research Programmes



Scientific Research Programmes (SRPs) are transformative scientific initiatives that address compelling issues and emerging frontiers in Antarctic or Southern Ocean science of regional and global importance. SRPs are SCAR's highest level of investment in science. SRPs advance scientific questions that are expected to require sustained efforts by international teams of scientists and researchers for six to eight years. SRPs are developed and proposed by Programme Planning Groups (PPGs) fostered by one or more Standing Scientific Groups (SSGs). A PPG develops a proposal for an SRP based on wide consultation with the community.

SCAR can only financially support a finite number of SRPs. All SRP proposals are subject to an extensive and rigorous evaluation and selection process to ensure the highest quality. The selection process is managed by the Secretariat in consultation with the Executive Committee with final approval by the Delegates.

To ensure a transparent, objective, and equitable evaluation and selection process, all SRP proposal submissions must carefully follow the instructions below.

Proposal Content

The maximum all-inclusive page length for a proposal is 12 pages of 11-point type. Proposals that exceed the page limit will be returned for revision.

Cover Page (1 page)

1. Name of the proposed SRP
2. Name(s) of the lead proponent(s) (including affiliations and contact information)
3. Sponsoring SSG(s)
4. Summary of the duration and budget request (in US\$ per year)
5. Abstract (250 words or less)

Proposal (10 pages - percentages indicate the relative importance of each section)

- a. Introduction - scientific objectives and statement of task (including contributions to SCAR's Strategic Plan) [10%]
- b. Background - foundational knowledge [10%]
- c. Scientific approach and rationale (including synergies with other SCAR programmes and products) [25%]
- d. Experimental section and methodologies [15%]
- e. Management and reporting (including a Scientific Steering Committee) [10%]
- f. Milestones, outcomes, and results (including metrics of performance) [10%]
- g. Data management plan [15%]
- h. Capacity building, education and training plan [5%]
- i. References

Supplemental information (1 page)

- i. Short biosketch and homepage URL for proposed Chief Officer(s) and lead investigator(s)
- ii. Justification for SCAR sponsorship (why does SCAR support add value?)



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- iii. International involvement and partnerships
- iv. Budget justification (other potential sources of funds)
- v. Other information (information useful to evaluators)

2012 Timeline

The timeline for submission of SRP proposals in 2012 is:

Deadline	Action
13th Feb. 2012 (T-23 weeks)	Proponents submit a 'letter of intent' to the SCAR Secretariat declaring the intention to submit a proposal to the 2012 Delegates' Meeting. Proponents identify of a minimum of 5 external reviewers for consideration by EXCOM.
April 16th 2012 (T-14 weeks)	Final proposals submitted to the Secretariat.
	The Secretariat requests external evaluations of the Plan in consultation with the SCAR Executive Committee. Proposals are forwarded to the SCAR Delegates for initial evaluation.
May 28th (T-8 weeks)	External and Delegate Evaluations due to the Secretariat.
	Evaluations are distributed to the Delegates, SSGs, Standing Committees, and Proponents.
16th July (T- 1 week)	Proponents present proposals to the SSG plenary and provide responses to evaluations.
	SSGs provide proposal evaluations in reports to the Delegates.
23rd July	Final presentations of SRP proposals to the Delegates followed by Approval or Rejection.

External reviews by experts will be solicited. The SSGs and Standing Committees will evaluate SRP proposals and report their evaluations to the Delegates. The Delegates will be given the opportunity to consider and comment on proposals prior to the Delegates' Meeting. Proponents will be provided evaluation comments and afforded an opportunity to respond to comments during the biennial meetings' presentations.

The Delegates will be provided with the proposals, all evaluations, and responses to



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evaluations as available. SSG leadership (or proponents) will present their programs to the Delegates and answer questions followed by approval or rejection of proposals by the Delegates.

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation criteria are listed in order of importance (questions are included to assist in applying the criteria):

- **Scientific merit and quality** - Does the SRP address fundamental scientific objectives that will produce transformative results? Do you expect the SRP to advance Earth System Science? How does this SRP topic compare with other important research in the polar regions? Is innovative and high quality science proposed that builds on previous knowledge in the field? Will frontiers in science be advanced at the conclusion of the SRP? Will the SRP enhance and/or improve the profile and relevance of SCAR science?
- **Soundness of the approach and likelihood of success and impact** - How likely is success in addressing the scientific objectives? Do you see significant barriers to success not recognized by the proponents? Are plans to communicate SRP outcomes to a wider audience sufficient? Will scientific outcomes support scientific advice to policy and decision makers? Is SCAR's support for the SRP critical to the success of the research? Is the SRP feasible from an operational and technical viewpoint? Do the data/observations exist to support the program objectives? Is there significant activity in this area by National Antarctic Programs that will ensure the success of the program? *Note: COMNAP may be asked to comment on those programmes where there is a significant logistical component.*
- **Contribution to SCAR's Strategic Plan** - Does the SRP materially contribute to SCAR's Strategic Plan? Does the SRP strengthen SCAR's scientific portfolio? How significant and practical are the proposed interdisciplinary elements? Does the SRP fill a gap in SCAR's scientific activities? (<http://www.scar.org/strategicplan2011>)? Is there adequate leverage of SCAR funds with other sources of funding?
- **International Involvement and Partnerships**- Does the SRP involve, or have the potential to involve, multiple SCAR nations and/or nations beyond SCAR? Are there significant links to relevant international programmes external to SCAR? Is a substantial community involved in and likely to benefit from the program's outcomes?
- **Data Management Plan** - Does the plan adequately address issues of data archiving and access? Are data management plans sufficient to ensure preservation of data and wide availability? Does the plan support the SCAR Data and Information Management Strategy? Is there a direct link to SCADM? Are SCAR products utilized when relevant? (http://www.scar.org/publications/reports/Report_34.pdf).
- **Capacity Building, Education and Training Plan** - Does the proposal adequately address issues of capacity building, education and training? Does the program support the SCAR CBET Plan? Are nations with less well developed Antarctic



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Programmes likely to participate and contribute? Are Early Career scientists likely to participate?

Evaluation Classification

Based on the above criteria, evaluators are asked to classify each proposal into one of the three categories:

- A. **THE SRP SHOULD BE APPROVED-** Excellent science in terms of quality, importance and timeliness with a good “fit” to SCAR’s Strategic Plan. Data management, CBET, and outreach plans are in place and likely to succeed. The SRP will raise SCAR’s international profile and be an important addition to the SCAR science portfolio. The SRP as described is feasible and is likely to enhance international and interdisciplinary connections and partnerships. There may be some minor revisions or clarifications needed (communicated to the proponents), but *the SRP is ready to proceed.*
- B. **THE SRP SHOULD BE CONDITIONALLY APPROVED -** Excellent science in terms of quality, importance and timeliness with a good “fit” to SCAR’s Strategic Plan. Data management, CBET, and outreach plans are in place and likely to succeed. BUT there are some improvements that have been suggested by evaluators that must be addressed. SCAR Delegates or the next SCAR Executive Committee meeting, whichever comes first, should be provided with a revised proposal for re-evaluation. *The SRP is fundable, but is not ready to proceed in its present form.*
- C. **THE SRP SHOULD NOT BE APPROVED-**The plan does not meet the standards required to justify SCAR’s support or endorsement. The SRP needs significant revision based on the evaluations before resubmission. A resubmission will be subjected to the entire evaluation and selection process. *The SRP is not fundable in its present form.*

As SCAR can only financially support a limited number of SRPs, the Delegates would benefit from the evaluators opinion whether:

...the proposed program; from the perspective of scientific objectives, scope, community served, participation, and impact; rises to the level of a SCAR SRP or could the same results be realized through alternative mechanisms (e.g., Action Group, Expert Group, etc.)?

Additional written comments from evaluators are valued and encouraged and will greatly assist proponents in responding to any perceived deficiencies in the proposals.