



Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research

Creating New Action or Expert Groups

Background

SCAR's mission is to advance Antarctic research, including observations from Antarctica, and to promote scientific knowledge, understanding and education on any aspect of the Antarctic region. To this end, SCAR is charged with the initiation and international co-ordination of Antarctic and Southern Ocean research beneficial to global society. In addition, SCAR provides independent and objective scientific advice and information to the Antarctic Treaty System and other bodies and acts as the main international exchange of Antarctic information within the scientific community.

SCAR's vision is to create a legacy of Antarctic research as a foundation for a better future. Through scientific research and international cooperation, SCAR aims to establish a thorough understanding of the nature of Antarctica, the role of the Antarctic in the global system, and the character and effects of environmental change and human activities on Antarctica.

In 2014, SCAR sponsored the 1st Antarctic and Southern Ocean Science Horizon Scan to identify the most important questions that the Antarctic community needs to address. The results from this community-based effort have been published in [Nature](#) and [Antarctic Science](#) and serve as a platform for future SCAR research planning, and feed into science priorities for many national programmes.

The 2017-2022 Strategic Plan lays out high-level objectives for the organization in the years ahead. It can be downloaded here: <http://www.scar.org/about/futureplans>.

The work of SCAR in achieving its mission is carried out by its many and varied groups. SCAR is currently composed of three permanent, disciplinary Science Groups (Geosciences, Life Sciences and Physical Sciences), six flagship Scientific Research Programmes focusing on high priority topical areas, four Standing Committees to handle ongoing business of a permanent nature, and over 30 specialized subsidiary Expert and Action groups serving to address various scientific needs over a limited timeframe. All SCAR groups are allocated budgets for their activities and are governed by the [Rules of Procedure for Subsidiary Bodies](#). They are periodically reviewed to help focus SCAR outcomes on the most important priorities and products needed. The work of these groups advances understanding of all aspects of the Antarctic region and may result in seminal publications and feeds into the advice given to the Treaty System and other policy makers.

Subsidiary Expert and Action groups are established by the main Science Groups, or in some cases by the Executive Committee, to address specific research topics of interest to the community. Researchers propose new groups when they identify areas where current

research is lacking or more coordination is needed. Groups report to their parent Science Group and membership is open to any interested researchers from SCAR member countries. Action Groups address one specific issue and are short-term, usually with a lifetime of between two and four years. Expert Groups have a broader focus and a longer lifetime of around six to eight years, with the option of renewal. Groups are asked to report activities yearly to the SCAR Executive Committee and Delegates Meetings. Internal review of Expert Groups is conducted every four years and an external review is conducted if the Expert Group wishes to extend for another six- or eight-year term. Current groups are listed in the Appendix of the SCAR Membership Guide (see www.scar.org/library/admin/2856-membership-guide-2017/) with a brief description of their remit. More detailed information is available via <http://www.scar.org/science/science>.

This document lays out the process and procedure for the proposal of new Expert and Action groups.

The Process of Proposing a New SCAR Expert or Action Group

The first step to proposing a new group is to gather a small group of people to work together to develop an idea of what the group would aim to do and in what timeframe.

Once such a group is formed, they should get in touch with the SCAR Secretariat and/or the Chief Officer of the Science Group they would fall under; Geosciences, Life Sciences or Physical Sciences. Humanities and Social Science focused groups should contact the SCAR Secretariat, as should groups interested in policy, capacity building, outreach and other topics. This initial interaction should include a short summary of what your group wants to do and will open a dialogue as to how the group could fit into the larger SCAR structure. This process will provide guidance for the group in putting together the proposal for a new group.

The proposers of the new group should plan to attend the Science Group or other meeting where the decision on approval of the group will be taken. Proposed groups not falling under Geo-, Life or Physical Sciences should contact the Secretariat for the appropriate meeting to attend. Group leaders may request a short (~10-15 minute) presentation from the proposers and ask them to participate in a discussion with the larger Group.

After consultation with the Chief Officer(s) or other SCAR group leaders as appropriate, a proposal should be prepared and be submitted to the SCAR Secretariat three months before the next Delegates Meeting. The Secretariat will then distribute the proposal to the appropriate Science Group and the SCAR Delegates for discussion at the upcoming meeting.

After the presentation and discussion, the overarching group will decide whether or not they wish to bring the proposal forward to the SCAR Delegates. If the proposal will be brought forward, the Delegates will discuss the creation of the group and make a final decision.

Shortly after the Delegates Meeting, the proposers will be notified of the decision.

If the group is approved, the SCAR Secretariat will set up a webpage for the group and provide any additional administration help the group might need (eg. a mailing list). Group leaders are asked to work with the Secretariat to provide the information needed, and also to help write a short news item for the SCAR website and newsletter announcing the creation of the group and how interested researchers might get involved with the groups activities.

Groups are expected to send a short update yearly for the SCAR Executive Committee/Delegates Meeting reporting on progress and plans as well as use of funds and future funding needs. There is a short template provided for the reports. These reports are not meant to be cumbersome but sufficient to provide information on the group's activity. Every other year, at the Business Meetings held in conjunction with the Open Science Conference and Delegates Meeting, group leaders are asked to participate in the relevant Science Group meetings or meetings of other relevant groups they are associated with and report their progress, discuss future plans, etc.

Three months prior to a group's end date, they should get in touch with the Secretariat to discuss the process of closing the group. A final report from the group will be needed to archive the group's achievements as well as recommendations for future SCAR efforts in the topic area. This report will be published on the group's website and included in the SCAR newsletter.

Expert Groups, or groups with a longer duration (four years or more) will have an internal review halfway through their term. This internal review will involve the officers of the Science Group looking at the past reports of the group, as well as the proposed activities, and making recommendations on future group activities.

If an Expert Group wishes to extend its lifetime for another six- to eight-year duration, an external review will need to be conducted before the Delegates Meeting at which their group was originally expected to end. For example, if a group was created in 2010 for eight years and wanted to extend for another eight-year term, they would need to contact the Science Group Chief Officer and the Secretariat at least six months before the Delegates meeting in 2018. A plan will then be constructed to conduct a simple external review where people outside the group, and ideally outside of SCAR, will look at the achievements of the group and their future plans and send comments back to SCAR. A discussion will then be had at the Science Group meeting to decide if an extension of the group is desired and, if so, will be passed along to the Delegates for further discussion and decision.

If an Action Group wishes to extend its lifetime for another two years, they should contact their Science Group Chief Officers and the SCAR Secretariat three months before their end date. The group will undergo an internal review by the Chief Officers and Executive Committee and a discussion will take place at the Science Group Business Meeting and the Delegates Meeting and a decision on an extension made.

Action Groups are expected to terminate when their tasking is completed. In the case where there are compelling reasons for related activities to continue, a group should consider whether a new Action or Expert Group is appropriate, under advice from the appropriate Science Group Chief Officers and the Secretariat.

If there are any questions, please contact the Secretariat.

Description of the Proposal Requirements

The proposal for a new group should be less than five pages, including the cover page. The information below provides some guidelines on what is required for each section of the proposal. Should you have any questions, please contact the SCAR Secretariat.

Title Page

Name of the Proposed Group:

Please provide the name of your group and include if it is an action or expert group.

Name(s) of the lead proponent(s)

Please list the contact information for the people leading this application. Include first and last name, affiliation, country and email address. These people do not necessarily need to be the leaders of the group or future chairs.

Sponsoring Science Group(s) or Standing Committee(s):

Please list which of the overarching SCAR groups will be sponsoring your proposed group. It is not necessary to have discussed your group with the sponsoring group chief officer before the application is submitted, but it is highly recommended. Sponsoring groups can be: Life Sciences, Geosciences, Physical Sciences, SCATS, SCADM, SCAGI, CBET, the Development Council and the SCAR Executive Committee. If you are unsure which overarching group you would fall under, please contact the Secretariat.

Summary of Group:

Please provide a very short summary (50 words or less) of the purpose of your group and what you aim to do. This should be written so anyone with a general science knowledge base can understand, not just an expert in your field.

The Proposal

Introduction and Background

Please provide a brief summary of the importance of the research topic your group will focus on, in general terms. Also include an explanation of what your group will do and why it is important that this is done now. Please also discuss how your group will contribute to SCAR's mission and strategic plan, etc. and any linkages to other SCAR groups and groups or activities beyond SCAR. This should roughly be 1 to 1.5 pages in length (11pt font, single spaced).

Aims, Goals and Objectives

Please list the specific aims, goals and objectives of the proposed group (i.e. What you hope to accomplish).

Proposed Milestone Activities with Timeline

Please provide a brief outline of the proposed steps that will be taken to achieve your project goals and a rough timeline for activities.

Capacity Building, Education and Outreach Plans

Capacity building and education are central to SCAR's mission. One of the goals of each of our groups should be to help build international capacity in some area of research, including supporting the development of the next generation of scientists. Please provide a short summary (~300 words) of the types of activities your group would engage in to help with these areas.

Data Management Plans

SCAR encourages the free and open access of data generated for Antarctic research. Please describe what type of data might be generated from your group and how you plan to ensure it is shared with the larger community. If your group will not be generating data, please provide a short description of how you will share information generated from your group's activities.

Terms of Reference

Each SCAR group needs to have terms of reference under which they operate. To help guide you in developing these, we suggest starting with the short summary of your group,

adding bullet points of your goals and objectives, then including information on who can be a member of your group (ie is it a closed group or can anyone interested participate?) and also include a concluding statement on the proposed duration of your group, its management and your plan for leadership turnover*.

**A note on Leadership turnover:*

There is no limit to the length of time someone can chair an action or expert group, so your leadership turnover plan is up to you to decide. We mainly ask for a note on your plan to be included to prevent a situation where a chair(s) may not be active for various reasons and to keep the group moving forward and to task, it may be necessary to review the leadership. If your group is short term (i.e. an action group), you may likely have the same leaders throughout the duration of the group. If you are proposing an expert group or one with a longer duration, you should include a statement on how long the chair/co-chairs terms will be and how you will approach finding new leaders.

Two simple example statements may be:

- We propose our expert group to last for eight years with objectives and activities guided by two co-chairs and a small five-person steering committee. At least one member of our steering committee will be early career. After four years we will undergo an internal SCAR review. As part of this review we will examine the leadership of our group to see if the chairs want to continue or if anyone else is interested in leading the group and address turnover accordingly.*
- We propose our group to last for two years. During this time we will have the same chair. Should a need arise to replace the chair, the group will decide on someone to fill the post. Group activities will be steered by a small group, including several early-career researchers from countries with developing Antarctic programmes.*

Budget and Justification

Typically Expert and Action groups have yearly budgets between \$1000-5000 USD. Please include a short description on how much funding you might require and what specifically those funds would be used for.

Confirmed and/or Potential Members

*Please provide a list of people who have agreed to be part of this group or those that have expressed interest. Include first and last names, affiliations, countries and email addresses. Indicate Confirmed Members with * and Early Career Members with **.*

Webpages and Communication Plans

SCAR provides a website for all its groups, as well as access to GoToMeeting, an online communication platform that groups can use to conduct business, and can also create a mailing list for your group if that is of interest. Please provide any comments you have for these initial set-up items. You should also be prepared to send photos that can be used on your webpages. An example statement for this section could be: We are pleased SCAR will provide our group with a webpage and will send information upon approval. We would also like to have a mailing list set up and would like advice on communicating our activities via social media and other channels.

Other notes and comments

If you have other points for the Science Groups and Delegates to consider, please include them here. If there are none, you can delete this section from your report.



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Name of the Proposed Group:

Name(s) of the lead proponent(s)

Sponsoring Science Group(s) or Standing Committee(s):

Summary of Group:



Proposal for the Creation of Group Name

Introduction and Background

Aims, Goals and Objectives

Proposed Milestone Activities with Timeline

Capacity Building, Education and Outreach Plans

Data Management Plans

Terms of Reference

Budget and Justification

Confirmed and/or Potential Members

Webpages and Communication Plans

Other notes and comments