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To: Nominated Members of SCOR, Affiliated Organizations, Interested International Organizations, Sponsors, Chairs of SCOR Subsidiary Bodies

From: Ed Urban, Executive Director

### **2012 Call for Working Group Proposals**

The XXXI<sup>th</sup> SCOR General Meeting will take place in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada on **21-23 October 2012**. Details about the meeting will be posted at <http://www.scor-int.org/2012GM/2011GM.htm> as they become available. The meeting will be held in conjunction with a symposium celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bedford Institute of Oceanography.

The SCOR Secretariat will accept proposals for new working groups from now until **15 April 2012**. I have appended a document to help those submitting proposals, reflecting discussions at recent annual SCOR meetings. Model proposals and other information about working groups can be found at <http://www.scor-int.org/wkgrpinfo.htm>. It is very important that individuals wishing to submit a proposal submit a draft before the deadline so that obvious problems in the proposal can be identified before the proposal is officially submitted.

Each proposal will be evaluated by national SCOR committees in terms of scientific merit and quality, timeliness, and achievability of the proposed terms of reference, as described in the appended document. National SCOR committees are an important aspect of SCOR's operation and can play a key role in reviewing working group proposals and in seeking new funds to pay for working group activities.

Proponents who wish to attend the 2012 SCOR meeting are welcome to do so, but should be aware that they will be asked to leave the room when their proposal is discussed. SCOR started this practice in 2005 to avoid any appearance of favoritism toward proposals that are represented at the meeting by a proponent.

Please contact me if you have any questions about the process for working group proposals.

## Submitting a Proposal for a SCOR Working Group

SCOR approves new working groups each year at its annual meeting. The number of proposals funded each year depends on both the results of the proposal review process and the availability of funding. In recent years, 1-3 proposals have been funded in any given year. SCOR is an organization that promotes science that comes from the “bottom up” from the ocean science community and working groups are an important vehicle to bring attention to the important ocean science issues identified by the global community of ocean scientists.

### **Proposal Review Cycle**

The timing of the proposal process depends on the timing of the annual meeting to some extent, so it is best to check the SCOR Web site and announcements from the SCOR Secretariat about the schedule in any given year.

### **Call for Proposals**

The call for working group proposals is usually made in late January or early February each year. The call is distributed through the SCOR email list and the *SCOR Newsletter*. Anyone in the global ocean science community is eligible to submit a proposal and there is no limitation to individuals from nations that pay dues to SCOR. The deadline for proposals is set 2-3 months after the call for proposals is distributed. We strongly recommend that individuals interested in submitting a proposal contact the SCOR Secretariat or a SCOR Executive Committee member early and often in the process for feedback about the working group idea and how it might fit with other past and current activities of SCOR and the activities of other organizations, and to avoid common mistakes that will make it difficult for national SCOR committees to rank the proposal highly (see below).

### **Review by National SCOR Committees and Others**

A few days following the deadline for proposals, the set of proposals is posted on the Web site for the upcoming annual SCOR meeting and the review period is opened for several months. SCOR welcomes review comments from national SCOR committees, partner organizations, and anyone in the global ocean science community who wishes to comment. The review of proposals is seen as a specific responsibility of national SCOR committees (who provide funding for the working groups through their dues) and many committees make proposal review a focus of their annual meetings.

The call for review comments asks national SCOR committees and others to consider the following:

- Is the proposal timely?
- Is the topic a priority for ocean science and for SCOR?
- Is a SCOR Working Group a good mechanism to advance this topic?
- Are the terms of reference appropriate?
- Are the membership suggestions appropriate?
- How would you rank the priority of SCOR funding for these proposals?

A working group proposal will receive higher priority if it also has some of the following characteristics (in addition to being global): would not happen without SCOR endorsement and/or financial support; involves several countries; requires more than 2 or 3 people to implement, includes capacity-building activities, etc.

### **Discussion at Annual SCOR Meeting**

Before the annual SCOR meeting, a member of the SCOR Executive Committee is assigned to each proposal, to present the proposal and to summarize comments from national SCOR committees at the meeting. To be fair to proponents who cannot send someone to the meeting, any proponent or proposed member of a working group is asked to leave the room before discussion of their proposal. Each proposal is discussed individually and ranked in terms of the desirability for the SCOR funding available that year.

Particular issues that need special attention include

- **Topic**—The topic should be important for the advance of ocean science globally. Regional topics are rarely successful, except when the case can be made that a regional process has global effects.
- **Terms of reference**—The terms of reference must be achievable in 3-4 years by a group of 10 Full Members meeting three times, at most. SCOR allocates US\$45000 per group, a relatively limited amount of funding, so the scope of the group's work should be realistic. Each term of reference should be written as a single short sentence described one overarching goal of the group. It should be obvious when that term of reference has been achieved. The group will be asked each year about their progress in achieving terms of reference; funding for future meetings will depend on the group making progress toward meeting its terms of reference and describing a reasonable path for achievement for the terms of reference that remain.
- **Products**—A reasonable set of products described that will have significant impact on the topic. There should be some kind of product after each meeting and the proposal should note who is responsible for each product.
- **Timeline**—A timeline for activities should be presented, including where each product and meeting fits in.
- **Membership**—No more than 10 Full Members can be proposed. The number of Associate Members is not limited, but the number of Associate Members should be justified in the proposal. The Full Membership should have the expertise to complete the proposed work, a balance of senior and junior members, geographic balance, and attention to inclusion of qualified members of both sexes and from developing countries and countries with economies in transition (Commonwealth of Independent States and Eastern Europe). A frequent complaint of national SCOR committees in recent years is that there are not enough females proposed or that the membership is concentrated in Europe and North America. A membership that is not properly balanced can, at best, cause an approved proposal to be referred back to the proponent for adjustments in the membership and, at worst, may cause the proposal to be rejected.
- **Capacity Building**—Each proposal should explain what the group will do to contribute to capacity building on their topic, such as membership of the group, meetings and/or workshops held in developing countries, etc.