

Operating Instructions for SCOR Working Groups

The Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR) forms working groups to advance new areas of ocean science and to overcome technical problems related to ocean measurements. SCOR working groups also may document the state of the science in particular topics, identify priority research questions, and/or identify observations needed. Working groups include no more than 10 Full Members, and a small number of Associate Members (who do not receive travel support to participate in working group activities.) The groups hold up to three meetings over four years to fulfill their terms of reference and to produce a publication in the peer-reviewed literature and/or a book by a major publisher. The groups may be sponsored by SCOR alone or may have other co-sponsors. (Instructions for preparing proposals for new working groups can be found at <http://www.jhu.edu/scor/NewWGs.pdf>). SCOR has developed the following information to help the groups do their work efficiently and effectively.

Meeting Planning

The working group chair (and/or designated local host) should work with the SCOR Executive Director to ensure that the expenses for each working group meeting will fit within the finances that SCOR has approved for the working group meeting (normally US\$15,000 per meeting from all sponsors). Additional information about meeting planning and budgeting can be found at <http://www.jhu.edu/scor/WGMeetings.PDF>.

Travel

Working groups should consider the travel requirements of the working group's financial sponsors. For example, U.S. funding sources have requirements for use of U.S. air carriers and prohibit charging alcoholic beverages to grants. Most working groups receive some funding from U.S. sources. More detailed SCOR travel guidelines are given at <http://www.jhu.edu/scor/WGTravel.pdf>.

SCOR Reporter

Each SCOR working group is assigned a reporter from the SCOR Executive Committee. It is the responsibility of working group chairs to keep the Reporter informed of the group's progress between the annual written reports. The best approach is to include the reporter in all emails that are sent to the entire working group. The responsibility of the Reporter is to be knowledgeable enough about their assigned group(s) to be able to report about the group at the annual SCOR meeting and to advise SCOR on the appropriate actions to be taken in relation to any requests from the group. The Executive Committee Reporter for each group is listed at <http://www.jhu.edu/scor/wkgroups.htm>.

Acknowledging SCOR and Financial Sponsors

All written products and Web pages from SCOR working groups and projects should acknowledge not only SCOR's sponsorship, but also financial support from the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) and other national and international agencies that provide funding for the activity. Most SCOR working groups receive some funding from NSF or other agencies. If your activity receives support from NSF, please include the following statement:

"This document is based on work partially supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation under Grant No. _____." (Check with the SCOR Secretariat for the appropriate grant number.) Unless your document is a paper in a professional journal (or special issue), the following statement is also required: **"Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of SCOR, the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) and other sponsors."** The working group number (e.g., WG 1xx) should also be included somewhere in the document. These statements can be included in a preface to the document, introduction, or footnote. Please feel free to contact the SCOR Secretariat if you need information about your specific working group or project. When SCOR files its annual progress reports with NSF, we are required to list each published document and to state whether each document contains an appropriate acknowledgement of NSF's sponsorship. SCOR needs to acknowledge its sponsors.

Other Issues Related to Reports

When a working group chair or member is selecting a publisher for their group's reports, they should keep the following in mind:

- SCOR normally does not pay for publishing costs, so some other source of funding must be arranged. Typically, working group reports are published as special issues of commercial journals or by commercial book publishers, so that the publisher or authors (through page charges) bear the costs of publication.
- Attempt to negotiate production of less-expensive book versions (e.g., pdf, paperback and/or CDs) for distribution to scientists and libraries in developing countries. Publishers may be willing to do this if the less-expensive publication is issued some time after the original publication. For example, discussions with Cambridge University Press indicate that they are willing to consider such less-expensive publications for hardcover books they publish, after a reasonable moratorium period to sell hardcover books. We hope to identify other publishers that will do the same.
- The WG person in charge of negotiating the contract with the publisher should involve the SCOR Executive Director so that he/she can provide the SCOR logo and appropriate language about the group's funding.
- Contact the SCOR Secretariat before the book or special issue is published to determine whether the Secretariat would like to purchase multiple copies of the document at a reduced, pre-publication price. SCOR occasionally budgets funds for the purchase of SCOR reports for libraries in developing countries.
- Arrange for 2 copies of the report to be sent to the SCOR Secretariat.

Reporting to SCOR

Working groups must provide written reports to SCOR each year. They will be requested by the SCOR Secretariat well in advance of annual meetings of SCOR. These reports allow the SCOR Executive Committee and other participants at annual SCOR meetings to evaluate the progress being made by each group and whether they merit continuation. Working group reports should include the following:

1. Outcome of the most recent working group meeting, particularly in relation to fulfilling the group's terms of reference.
2. Any requests from the group to SCOR in relation to changes in membership and/or terms of reference or other issues.
3. Plans for work between meetings.
4. Plans for the next working group meeting. If the time of the next meeting is significantly longer or shorter than one year from the previous meeting, please provide justification. The group should provide a budget to show how they will be able to stay within the SCOR allotment (normally US\$15,000 per meeting) for their upcoming meeting.
5. Overall progress of working group in completing its terms of reference, in reference to the initial time schedule for the group.

SCOR does not provide funds for representatives of working groups to present their reports at annual SCOR meetings. If a group wishes to make an "in-person" report at a SCOR meeting, travel funds must come from some other source. The reporter for the working group will always make an oral report on behalf of the group, so it is imperative that he/she be kept informed of the group's activities and progress.

Lessons Learned from Previous Working Groups

Some lessons can be learned from the performance of past working groups, particularly the failures (the text in italics was submitted by former WG chairs/members during a 2002 review of SCOR working group performance):

- The focus of the WG has to be sharp, and the (minimum) deliverables have to be specified: *"I have reviewed the papers I have on file from WG90 (Chemical and Biological Oceanographic Sensor Technology), and was surprised to re-read the terms of reference, which are not particularly clearly defined: comparison with the experience of getting WG109 (Biogeochemistry of Iron in Seawater) approved, and with discussions at recent SCOR meetings I have attended suggest that SCOR has become much more aware of the need for clearly defined and achievable terms of reference. Interestingly, no deliverable (report, book, review article...) was identified in SCOR's decision to set up the WG. Again, this is in contrast to current practice where SCOR is rightly very keen to see that the expected output of the WG is defined from the beginning."* It is important that the group finish their work within the expected four years, so as to not lose momentum and leadership of the field. In order for a group to finish in four years, its terms of reference must be clear and achievable and SCOR should ensure that it has enough funding available for annual meetings of its working groups. The topic should truly be a "hot topic" which the working group can help to advance significantly.
- The success of a WG depends critically on the Chair, who must be chosen with great care. The chair must be passionate about the topic and known to be organized and productive. Working groups are not merely discussion groups.
- Members must be told explicitly what is expected of them.
- Make sure that the members have the necessary expertise. For example, in relation to WG 89 (Sea Level and Erosion of the World's Coastlines): *I suggested several names for potential committee members based on their research on the topic of WG89, and a few of them were appointed. SCOR selected other members, mainly from third-world countries,*

individuals I had not known previously. This resulted in a somewhat schizophrenic committee, with half of the members having a reasonable scientific knowledge of how coasts respond to sea-level changes, the focus of WG89. The other members were concerned mainly with the social impacts of sea-level rise, and although of interest as the background motivation for WG89, these members were only able to make limited contributions when we dealt with the scientific and engineering issues.

- The time line is important. The working group should be monitored closely and reduce annual progress, not activity, reports.