**SOOS Regional Working Groups – Process for Proposal of New WGs**

SOOS has put in place a multi-step process for development of Regional Working Groups. The process is designed to provide transparency, enhance participation and ensure significant community input on the Terms of Reference. Although some activities and outputs will be regionally-specific, SOOS has identified a number of objectives that will likely be common to all Regional Working Groups. These are available in the Regional Working Group Terms of Reference template.

The process for Regional Working Group development is outlined below:

**1) Identifying the Need**

This may come from SOOS or from the Southern Ocean community. In all cases, WGs will be developed and driven by the relevant communities, not SOOS. SOOS may therefore identify the need for a WG but if there is no community interest then the WG will not be developed.

**2) SSC Sponsorship**

Once a need has been identified, interested members of the community need to approach one or more Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) members to act as "sponsors" for the WG. The core role of the SSC Sponsor is to advise the group throughout the development of WG, and to act as liaison to the SOOS SSC and EXCOM.

**3) Draft Terms of Reference (TORs)**

The Working Group initiators work with the SSC Sponsor to develop draft TORs, based on the Regional Working Group Terms of Reference template.

**4) Initial Approval**

The WG SSC Sponsor submits the draft TORs to the SOOS Executive Committee for initial feedback and, following any required modifications, approval. This initial approval ensures that the WG falls within the scope of SOOS Regional WGs and provides the WG initiators with the imprimatur to build WG membership. SOOS EXCOM will ensure feedback is provided within 1 month of receiving the proposal.

**5) Building Membership**

After receiving initial approval, WG initiators build the membership of the WG, including identifying up to 3 Co-Chairs (of different nationality and expertise) to lead the group. Where possible, all nations active in the region of interest and all disciplines (Biology, Biogeochemisty, Physics) should be well-represented. Membership should be open and flexible throughout the development and life of the WG, but should strive to maintain gender and geographic balance where possible (in alignment with SOOS Sponsors, SCAR and SCOR).

**6) Finalise TORs**

Once membership has been established, the draft TORs should be finalised with input from all members.

**7) SSC Review**

The WG SSC Sponsor will submit the finalised TORs to the SOOS SSC for final review and approval as an official SOOS WG. The SSC review process takes place 3 times a year and feedback is provided within two months of submission.