

SOOS Governance Terms of Reference

1. Scientific Steering Committee (SSC)

The Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) has 3 governance levels represented by the Executive Committee (EXCOM), the Scientific Committee, and Ex-Officio advisors. The scope and expectations for each governance level differ as outlined in the following sections.

1.1 Executive Committee

Role

- Oversight of the Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) membership and operation
- Oversight of membership and operation of all additional governance levels
- Strategic guidance to the International Project Office (IPO)
- Monitoring of the overall strategic direction of SOOS
- Management of SOOS performance in accordance with the SOOS Science and Implementation Plan and SCAR/SCOR expectations
- Approval of annual budget, work plan and reporting of the IPO
- International advocacy for SOOS objectives and activities
- Oversight and guidance in funding of SOOS activities and the SOOS IPO

Expectations of EXCOM members

- Attend annual SSC meetings, except in extenuating circumstances, play a lead role in convening the SSC meetings, and lead/participate in SCC discussions (see below under Scientific Steering Committee Member for the SSC meeting schedule)
- Operate in accordance with SOOS values
- Participation in EXCOM video conferences (approximately 2 hours monthly) and virtual SSC meetings held in addition to the annual SSC meeting
- Engagement with the Executive Officer

Composition

The EXCOM comprises 2 Co-Chairs, 2 Vice Chairs, and the SOOS Executive Officer (ex-officio position) all of whom are full members.

Term of Membership

The Vice Chair and Co-Chair positions are for a maximum of 2-years each, for a combined maximum EXCOM membership of 4 years.

Process and Criteria for selection of EXCOM members

Criteria to be met when selecting a new EXCOM member:

1. Maintenance of expertise, nationality and gender diversity
2. Expertise and/or proven interest in strategic oversight, governance and the whole-of-SOOS program
3. Reputation for operating according to SOOS values
4. Length of time already served on the SSC combined with EXCOM time not to exceed 9 years
5. Vice Chairs are expected to commit to serving as Co-Chair for a maximum total term of 4 years.

Vice Chairs selection process:

1. Self-nominations and/or nominations from the SSC and Regional Working Group (RWG) Co-Chairs are requested. In the event that no appropriate nominations are received, nominations may be sought from other SOOS groups or the broader community
2. Evaluation of nominees by the SSC
3. Consideration of nominations and SSC comments by EXCOM, and selection of candidate
4. Submission of selected nominees to SCAR and SCOR for approval
5. Successful nominees who are serving in other SOOS leadership roles must resign from these roles when appointed to the EXCOM

Co-Chairs selection process:

The preference is for Vice Chairs to progress to Co-Chairs to ensure continuity, serving in each role for two years (pending approval from SCAR/SCOR). However, this progression must follow due process to ensure any concerns that are raised are met and that an active, efficient, effective and harmonious EXCOM is maintained. Co-Chairs selection therefore follows the process:

1. Vice chairs are asked whether they wish to be nominated for the Co-Chair position
2. If the Vice Chairs agree, the SSC and other EXCOM members are invited to provide comment on the progression of the vice chairs to Co-Chairs, including raising any concerns, and are asked to approve or disapprove the progression to Co-Chair

3. If no concerns are raised and the progression of the Vice Chair to Co-Chair is approved by a 2/3 majority of the SSC, the nominations are submitted for approval by SCAR and SCOR
4. If the Vice Chair does not wish to be considered for the Co-Chair role, or if there is not a majority (2/3rds) consensus from the SSC that the Vice Chair should progress to the Co-Chair position, then a new Co-Chair is selected following the process for Vice Chair selection above, taking into account the need for understanding of SOOS operations and objectives
5. In the situation that there is an SSC consensus against a Vice Chair progressing to the Co-Chair role, the Executive Officer will provide impartial documentation to SCAR and SCOR EXCOMs for their information.

Acknowledgement of EXCOM contribution

The home institution for an EXCOM member will be acknowledged as a SOOS sponsor, in recognition of the time dedicated to SOOS by an EXCOM member.

The attendance of full EXCOM Members at the annual SSC meetings is supported by SCAR/SCOR funding. The attendance of the IPO Executive Officer is supported by the SCAR/SCOR funding if funds are available, or otherwise IPO operational funds will be used to support attendance.

1.2 Scientific Steering Committee Member

Scientific Committee Member Role

- Stimulate the formation of communities in support of SOOS implementation activities
- Identify key priorities and specific requirements for investment of SOOS effort
- Develop and promote the SOOS agenda
- Oversee and support activities of SOOS working groups
- Facilitate effective integration and coordination of national and international projects and programs, across traditional disciplinary boundaries and between nations
- Host SOOS workshops, represent SOOS at meetings, provide guidance to national Southern Ocean observing activities, and communicate SOOS activities and products
- Facilitate and support the SOOS data strategy
- Oversee and support activities of the SOOS IPO
- Support efforts to identify funding opportunities for activities and the IPO
- Review of endorsement proposals

Expectations of Scientific Committee Members

- Participate in virtual SSC meetings (bimonthly for 1.5 hours) held in addition to the annual hybrid SSC meeting (annually for approximately 2 days), except in extenuating circumstances
- Operate in accordance with SOOS values
- Engage with national Antarctic organisations and funding bodies, in support of SOOS objectives and activities
- Engage as an active and vocal community (national or thematic) representative for SOOS
- Engage with the IPO, including regular communication in support of SOOS activities

Process and Criteria for selection of Scientific Committee members

A SSC composed of 10 Scientific Members is considered to be optimal to provide coverage of required disciplinary range and geographic representation.

Criteria to be met when selecting Scientific Committee Members:

1. Scientific excellence and international standing in a field of Southern Ocean science that is relevant to at least one of the SOOS Science Themes
2. Ability and willingness to undertake activities that develop and promote SOOS
3. Representation or involvement in other international programs of relevance to SOOS
4. A reputation for operating according to the SOOS values
5. Maintenance of disciplinary, geographic, gender and age balance

Process for selection of Scientific Committee Members:

1. International, open call for nominations distributed by the IPO
2. Submission of nomination by individuals (including self-nominations), organisations or existing SSC members
3. Recommendations by existing SSC members
4. Evaluation of SSC recommendations by EXCOM and selection of new members
5. Approval by SCAR/SCOR Executive Committees

Term of Membership

SSC terms are for 3 years, with the potential for renewal for an additional 3 years following the process below:

1. Indication of interest to serve a second 3-year term
2. EXCOM review of SSC member's engagement and contribution to SOOS during the first term
3. Recommendation to SCAR/SCOR for approval

The attendance of Scientific Members at the annual SSC meetings is supported by SCAR/SCOR funding.

1.3 Ex-Officio Members

There are 3 types of Ex-officio members to the SSC, each with different roles and processes.

Regional Working Group Co-Chairs

Each Regional Working Group (RWG) is led by two Co-Chairs. This provides 10 RWG Co-Chairs as ex-officio representatives to the SSC.

Role

- Maintain oversight of working group communication, leadership, reporting and activities, towards achieving its objectives
- Act as points-of-contact for the working group members, other working groups, and the broad community
- Represent the working group in the SOOS RWG Consortium
- Represent the RWG at SOOS SSC meetings and contribute to strategic oversight of the RWG work plan

Expectations of RWG Co-Chairs

Expectations for RWG Co-Chairs are:

- Familiarity with objectives and work plan of the working group, and engagement with the other working group members to achieve them
- Responsiveness to emails and correspondence
- Ensure regular communication with the Leadership Group and broader membership of their working group
- Participate regularly in video conferences and meetings where possible
- Ensure regular engagement with the SOOS IPO
- Attend the annual SSC meetings as possible (virtual, bimonthly, 1.5-hour meetings and annual hybrid, approximately 2-day meeting)
- Attend RWG Consortium Meetings (quarterly, 2-hour meetings), except in extenuating circumstances

Term of Membership:

The RWG Co-Chair terms are defined by the working group and appointed for a 3- or 4-year term, with the potential for reappointment to a second term following the process:

1. Indication by the Co-Chair of interest to serve a second term
2. Consideration by the other working group Co-Chair and leadership team, with consideration of diversity and representativeness of the position
3. Review by SOOS EXCOM, taking into consideration their engagement and contribution to SOOS during their first term.

4. Approval by EXCOM

No working group leadership member can serve for more than a total of 8 years. New co-chair members are selected from working group leadership members who are still in their first 4-year term on the leadership team.

Process and Criteria for selection of RWG Co-Chairs

Criteria for selection of RWG Co-Chairs:

1. Scientific excellence and international standing in a field of Southern Ocean science in the region relevant to the working group region that relates to at least one of the SOOS Science Themes
2. Ability and willingness to represent the RWG in all required activities and roles
3. Reputation for operating according to the SOOS values
4. Demonstrated commitment and engagement in the RWG activities (if existing member of Leadership Group) or relevant experience in representation or leadership of international programs or groups (if selection from external communities)

Process for selection of RWG Co-chairs:

1. Call for nominations within the working group leadership team (self nominations only)
2. Solicitation of comments by current Co-Chairs on the nominations received before making a recommendation for consideration by SOOS EXCOM.
3. Consideration of leadership recommendations by EXCOM and selection of new members

If no appropriate nominations are received, an external nomination call can be made, following the same requirements for nomination of leadership group members, whilst noting the successful candidate should have strong leadership experience that allows engagement in the Co-Chair position

The attendance of one RWG Co-Chair per RWG at the annual SSC meetings is supported by SCAR/SCOR funding.

Data Management Sub-Committee (DMSC) Co-Chairs

The DMSC is led by two Co-Chairs, who are ex-officio representatives to the SSC.

Role

- Maintain oversight of DMSC communication, leadership, reporting and activities, towards achieving its objectives
- Act as points-of-contact for the DMSC members, other working groups, and the broad community

- Represent the DMSC in meetings and events
- Represent the DMSC at SOOS SSC meetings (virtual, bimonthly, 1.5-hour meetings and annual hybrid, approximately 2-day meeting) and contribute to strategic oversight of the DMSC work plan

Expectations of DMSC Co-chairs

The DMSC leadership members are active drivers of DMSC activities and are expected to:

- Be familiar with objectives and work plan of DMSC, and work with the other members to achieve them
- Be responsive to emails and correspondence
- Ensure regular communication with the DMSC
- Participate regularly in video conferences and meetings where possible
- Ensure regular engagement with the SOOS Data Officer and IPO
- Attend the annual SSC meetings where possible

Term of Membership:

The DMSC Co-Chair term is 2 years, with the potential for renewal for an additional 2 years following the process below:

1. Indication by the Co-Chair of interest to serve a second 2-year term
2. EXCOM review of Co-Chair engagement and contribution to SOOS during the first term
3. Recommendation to SCAR/SCOR for approval

Process and Criteria for selection of DMSC Co-Chairs

Criteria to be met when selecting DMSC Co-chairs:

1. Expertise and knowledge in developing collaborative data management systems for large multinational, multidisciplinary scientific data observation programs
2. Ability and willingness to represent the DMSC in all required activities and roles
3. Reputation for operating according to the SOOS values
4. Demonstrated commitment and engagement in the DMSC activities (if existing member) or relevant experience in representation or leadership of international programs or groups (if selection from external communities)

Process for selection of DMSC Co-chairs:

1. Call for nominations within the DMSC (self nominations only)
2. If appropriate nominations are made, existing Co-Chairs can ask for comments on the nominations received before making a recommendation for consideration by SOOS EXCOM.

3. Consideration of Co-Chair recommendations by EXCOM and selection of new members

If no appropriate nominations are received, an external nomination call can be made, following the same requirements for nomination of DMSC members, whilst noting the successful candidate should have strong leadership experience in order to step directly into Co-Chair position.

The attendance of one DMSC Co-Chair at the annual SSC meetings is supported by SCAR/SCOR funding.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Group Representative

The SOOS Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group is led by two Co-Chairs who serve in ex-officio positions to the SSC and are invited to attend the SSC meeting (virtual, bimonthly, 1.5-hour meetings and annual hybrid, approximately 2-day meeting). SSC meeting attendance for an EDI Group Co-Chair who is also an SSC or DMSC member or RWG Co-Chair will be funded according to the arrangement for those roles. In the instance that neither of the EDI Co-Chairs are current SSC members, an SSC member can be appointed to act as EDI Group Liaison. This individual should be an SSC member who is involved in the EDI Group. The EDI Group Liaison ensures that, in the instance that the EDI Co-Chairs are unable to self-fund attendance at the SSC meeting, the views and inputs from the EDI Group are represented.

EDI Co-Chairs are selected based on the process and criteria outlined for the DMSC. The SSC EDI Group Liaison position will be managed through an open call for nominations from existing SSC members, with selection by the EDI Co-Chairs and approval by EXCOM.

Sponsor Representatives

SOOS has a number of governing and sponsoring partners who have ex-officio status on the SSC. In this instance, membership is based on a position rather than a specific individual, therefore membership terms are not applicable.

The membership positions include:

- SCAR and SCOR Executive Directors
- Director of International Project Office host institute
- Agreed representative from core and operational sponsors

Sponsor representative attendance at annual SSC meetings is at their own expense.

2. SSC Observers

Capability Working Group Co-Chairs

Capability Working Group (CWG) Co-Chairs are not officially members of the SOOS SSC, but are invited to the annual SSC meeting as Observers (at their own expense). SOOS recommends appointment of two Co-Chairs for each CWG, however this may vary depending on the specific requirements of the group. Co-Chairs are generally proposed by the CWG members at the time of CWG proposal to SOOS. Terms for Co-Chairs are also defined by the group and may in some instances be for the life of the CWG (e.g. 3-5 years). EXCOM provides oversight on the governance and membership of the Co-Chairs and group, based on stated expectations below. If a CWG needs to elect a new Co-Chair during the life of the group, the process will follow that of the DMSC above.

Role

- Maintain oversight of working group communication, leadership, reporting and activities, towards achieving its objectives
- Act as points-of-contact for the working group members, other working groups, and the broad community
- Represent the CWG (if possible) at SOOS SSC meetings and contribute to strategic planning of the SOOS work plan

Expectations of CWG Co-Chairs

The CWG leadership members are active drivers of working group activities and are expected to:

- Be familiar with objectives and work plan of the group, and work with the other members to achieve them
- Be responsive to emails and correspondence
- Ensure regular communication with the Leadership Group and broader membership of their working group
- Participate regularly in video conferences and meetings where possible
- Ensure regular engagement with the SOOS IPO and SSC
- Attend the annual SSC meetings where possible (virtual, bimonthly, 1.5-hour meetings and annual hybrid, approximately 2-day meeting)
- Ability and willingness to represent the CWG in all required activities and roles
- A reputation for operating according to the SOOS values

Task Team Chairs

Task Teams (TT) Chairs are not officially members of the SOOS SSC, but are invited to SSC meeting as Observers at their own expense (virtual, bimonthly, 1.5-hour meetings and annual hybrid, approximately 2-day meeting). Task Team leadership is dependent on the specific requirements and objectives of the task team. The TT Chairs and membership are proposed when the TT proposal is submitted to SOOS for consideration and approved when the TT is established. Terms for TT Chairs and members are usually 1 to 2 years and are dictated by the time required to meet the objectives of the TT.

National Representatives

Engagement of all nations in the strategic direction and oversight of SOOS is important. However, with limited positions available for the SOOS SSC, not all nations can be represented. The National Representative role has been developed for any nation wishing to develop or strengthen its representation in SOOS. This will aid communication between national communities and SOOS, and to ensure their nation's input into SOOS efforts.

Normally, there will only be one national representative for a country. However, multiple representatives may be considered based on the scope and specific representation needs within a country. National Representatives are invited to all SSC meetings (virtual, bimonthly, 1.5-hour meetings and annual hybrid, approximately 2-day meeting).

Role

- To advocate for and promote the strategic direction and oversight of SOOS within their respective countries.
- Encourage national PIs to request SOOS endorsement of ongoing or future Southern Ocean research projects relevant to SOOS.
- There is an expectation that the National Representative will have awareness of relevant Regional Working Group activities.
- The National Representative will provide updates to SOOS on that nation's activity - possibly - through the appropriate Regional Working Group.
- Provide awareness and advocacy for funding support for SOOS from within the National Representative's home country.

Expectations of National Representatives

It is expected that National Representative will be responsive to SOOS communications and participate at least annually in SOOS SSC/RWG meetings.

Term of Membership:

The National Representative term is 3 years with a possibility for renewal for an additional 3-year term(s). Upon the conclusion of their term or resignation, they may nominate another representative from their country, subject to agreement with the SSC. In the absence of agreement, the SSC will initiate a call for expressions of interest and select a new representative. Unfortunately, due to funding constraints, any National Representative travel must be funded from the National Representative side.

3. SOOS Alumni

All ex-SOOS leadership team members (including members of EXCOM, SSC, RWG /CWG /DMSC /Task Team Co-Chairs and leadership team members) will be offered the opportunity to remain connected with SOOS as a “SOOS Alumni” at the completion of their term length in their leadership position. SOOS Alumni will receive SOOS leadership updates as well as communications that go to all SOOS members. SOOS Alumni can take on roles and activities for SOOS on an ad-hoc, voluntary basis. SOOS Alumni may be invited to attend part or all of an SSC meeting(s) as an observer if required.