

Annex 1: Functions of ICSU Regional Offices

24 April 2013

ICSU Regional Offices¹

Strengthening international science for the benefit of society

ICSU Regional Offices

The ICSU 27th General Assembly (September 2002) decided to establish four ICSU Regional Offices for Developing Countries to replace the ICSU Committee on Science and Technology in Developing Countries (COSTED). This decision was based on recommendations from a review of COSTED.

Functions of the Regional Offices

The ICSU Regional Offices will promote the further development and strengthening of science in the context of regional priorities and bring the science of developing countries closer to ICSU. The Offices will support the work of ICSU and its Scientific Unions, National Members in the Region, Interdisciplinary Bodies and Joint Initiatives as well as its partners such as UNESCO and the World Academy of Sciences (TWAS). The Offices will collaborate with and build on scientific networks in the region and help strengthen them as appropriate.

The work programme and strategic directions of the Regional Offices will be aligned with the mission of ICSU: To strengthen international science for the benefit of society. Both regional ownership of the process leading to priority setting, and a focus on realistic outcomes, are essential if the work of the offices is to be successful and sustainable. In addition, effective partnerships within the ICSU family and with other key partners will help ICSU to function as a truly global organization involving the scientific communities in all countries and regions of the world.

The Regional Offices shall:

- Ensure that the views of the scientific communities in the regions are taken fully into account in the development of ICSU's strategic priorities and promote and implement actions in line with these priorities;
- Support integration of ICSU's regional and global activities;
- Assist ICSU in strengthening science and capacity building in developing countries through South-South and North-South collaboration, and
- Promote increased participation of developing country scientists and regional scientific organizations in the implementation of the ICSU *Strategic Plan 2012–2017*.

¹ A description of the functions of the Regional Offices and their *modus operandi* was decided on by the ICSU Executive Board at its 86th meeting (February 2003). This up-dated version of the document has been revised following recommendations from the Committee for Scientific Planning and Review (CSPR) based on an integral analysis of the three ICSU Regional Office Reviews in 2011. It was approved at EB 109 on 24 April 2013.

In line with these aims, the following types of activities would be appropriate functions for the Offices:

- i. Help facilitate the adherence as ICSU National Members of institutions in countries of the region that do not yet adhere to ICSU;
- ii. Develop and maintain links with national and regional scientific institutions, societies, academies and governments, including current National Members, in order to strengthen ICSU collaboration with them;
- iii. Support relevant scientific networks in the region and initiate new networks, as necessary, within the framework of the ICSU strategic plan and regional priorities;
- iv. Facilitate the free flow of scientists and scientific knowledge across borders; Assist ICSU Members in their strategic planning for activities in the regions and ensure that their plans and activities are well linked to the science community in the regions, relevant networks and organizations and reflect regional priorities;
- v. Assist the ICSU family in identifying scientists for membership of committees and participation in activities within the ICSU family through the establishment of a database of experts;
- vi. Act as a focal point for regional programme activities of ICSU and its members;
- vii. Ensure efficient information transfer from ICSU and its family members to the scientific community in the region; and
- viii. Share information and develop collaborative partnerships with UNESCO Regional Offices for Science as well as with other strategic ICSU partners such as TWAS and the InterAcademy Panel (IAP) on International Issues.

Regional Offices have been established for:

- Sub-Saharan **Africa**, currently based at the National Research Foundation, Pretoria, South Africa
- **Asia and the Pacific**, currently based at the Malaysian Academy of Sciences, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- **Latin America and the Caribbean**, currently based at the Mexican Academy of Science, Mexico city, Mexico.

Director of the Regional Office

The Regional Offices will have a Director appointed by the Executive Board in close consultation with the Regional Committees and in accordance with the agreements between ICSU and the host institutions. The Director of the Regional Office is part of the ICSU Secretariat, under the direction of the ICSU Executive Director. The Director of the Regional Office is an *ex officio* member of the Regional Committee. The Directors of the Regional Offices are responsible for keeping ICSU-Paris fully informed of the activities of the Offices. Likewise, ICSU-Paris has special responsibility to keep the Regional Offices fully informed about the activities of ICSU at the international level. It is the responsibility of the ICSU Secretariat as a whole to facilitate information flow between the ICSU family and the Regional Offices.

Regional Committees

ICSU Regional Committees provides advice on regional priorities and activities based on the ICSU *Strategic Plan 2012–2017*.

Priority setting will involve a consultative process of National Members and key organizations in non-member countries. This may be done through Consultative Fora to which representatives of National and Scientific Union Members as well as Interdisciplinary Bodies/Joint Initiatives will be invited. Key partner organizations will also be involved in the consultation. The Consultation process will be organized by the Regional Offices under the guidance of the ICSU Regional Committees.

The Regional Committee will advise on a yearly work-plan. It is necessary that the work-plans for the Regional Offices are both visionary and realistic, reflecting the available resources. The core support from ICSU and the host institution/country should serve as a basis for the initiation of targeted activities and, where necessary, additional external support should be sought. It is essential that the work-plans of the Regional Offices be developed primarily on the basis of the ICSU strategy and not overly influenced the availability of external funds.

The ICSU Executive Board (EB) appoints members of ICSU Regional Committees based on nominations received from National Members in the regions and in close consultation with the relevant Regional Committee. The EB can appoint additional scientists from the region to ensure good coverage of the various disciplines as well as the representation also of scientists from countries without a National Member organization. Regional Committee members are appointed for periods of three years, with potential renewal once.² The Chair of each Regional Committee will be appointed by the Executive Board for a period of three years.

The ICSU Regional Committees are responsible for promoting the objectives and activities of the Regional Offices. Their function is mainly one of providing scientific advice and support rather than management. The Regional Committees will develop and approve annual work-plans and the chair shall report to the ICSU Executive Board annually at the meeting of ICSU Officers, Regional Chairs and Directors.

Hosting and funding arrangements

A formal agreement is negotiated between the host country/institution and ICSU for a specified period of time. The Regional Offices are based in existing scientific institutions in the host country and do not have their own legal identity. Thus, all staff will be employed by the local institution and the terms of employment will be similar to other staff in that institution.

The host country/institutions support the Regional Offices by making staff and premises available plus catalytic financial support for programme activities. In addition, the Regional Offices receive core funding from ICSU, (€50k in 2012, rising to €75k p.a. from 2013 onwards). The Regional Offices should also set targets for in-kind and/or financial contributions from other countries in the Region.

The Director of the Regional Office is responsible for fund raising for additional activities and specific programmes under the general guidance of the Regional Committee. All fund-raising should be done in ICSU's name and should contribute to the overall delivery

² At least 40% of Regional Committee membership should be rotated off each time.

of ICSU's mission. ICSU-Paris will assist the Regional Offices in fundraising activities as appropriate.

The host institution is responsible for keeping the books on income and expenditure in such a way that the finances of the Regional Office can be readily separated from the rest of the finances of the host institution³. Before the end of March each year, the host institution shall provide ICSU with audited accounts for the previous year.

References:

ICSU 2002: International Council for Science. 2002. *Report of ICSU's CSPR Panel for Review of Committee on Science and Technology in Developing Countries (COSTED)*. 39 pp.

³ Staff travel, regional committee travel and meeting costs should be reported as separate budget items.