



**International
Science Council**

Regional Focal Point for
Asia and the Pacific

HOSTED BY



**Australian
Academy of
Science**

STRATEGIC PLAN


2023-2028

RAISING THE VOICE OF SCIENCE



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE ISC RFP-AP AIMS TO ENSURE THAT THE UNIQUE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION ARE INTEGRATED INTO THE GLOBAL SCIENTIFIC DIALOGUE.

Established in 2018 through the merger of the International Council for Science and the International Social Science Council, the International Science Council (ISC) is a global non-government organisation with a vision to advance science as a global public good. The ISC Regional Focal Point for Asia and the Pacific (ISC RFP-AP) is hosted by the Australian Academy of Science (AAS), functioning within the broader framework of the ISC.

The ISC RFP-AP, operating from 2023 to 2028, aims to ensure that the unique needs and priorities of Asia and the Pacific region are integrated into the global scientific dialogue. Encompassing countries from South Asia, East Asia, South-East Asia, and the Oceania region, the focal point seeks to amplify the voice of science within and beyond the region.

The ISC RFP-AP will align its programs and activities with ISC program priorities and the themes in the Unleashing Science and Flipping the Science Model reports. The ISC RFP-AP will implement two flagship programs tailored to the priorities and needs of the region, one focusing on Asia and one focusing on the Pacific. The flagship programs will run for the duration of the grant period. In addition to the two flagship programs, several shorter and more targeted programs and

activities will be designed, emphasising the importance of 'how to better integrate and elevate the voice of science' in achieving sustainability goals. Programs and activities will be developed around three pillars: knowledge generation, capacity building, and science communication and translation.

The strategic plan emphasises engagement with existing partners, aligning with the United Nations (UN) International Decade of Science for Sustainable Development, and ensuring a pathway to impact.

The program design principles stress that the ISC RFP-AP is not a research grant organisation but aims to elevate and amplify the impact of science within existing regional initiatives. Program development involves engagement with ISC member organisations, leveraging local expertise, aligning with regional priority areas, and building capacity to elevate the voice of science.

The ISC RFP-AP seeks to serve as a platform to coordinate and elevate our region's active participation in global scientific endeavours, addressing regional challenges through collaborative, transdisciplinary approaches while aligning with the broader goals of the International Science Council.

2. INTRODUCTION

IT CATALYSES AND CONVENES SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE, ADVICE, AND INFLUENCE ON ISSUES OF MAJOR CONCERN TO BOTH SCIENCE AND SOCIETY...

2.1 THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE COUNCIL

The ISC is an international non-government organisation created in 2018 as a result of a merger of the International Council for Science and the International Social Science Council. It catalyses and convenes scientific expertise, advice, and influence on issues of major concern to both science and society, through a unique global membership of natural and social sciences and the humanities. The global membership brings together more than 245 international scientific Unions and Associations, national and regional scientific organisations including Academies and Research Councils, international Federations and Societies, and Young Academies and Associations. The ISC headquarters is located in Paris, France.

2.2 ISC REGIONAL FOCAL POINTS

In order to deepen the ISC's engagement with Members and individual scientists across the world, the ISC is establishing Regional

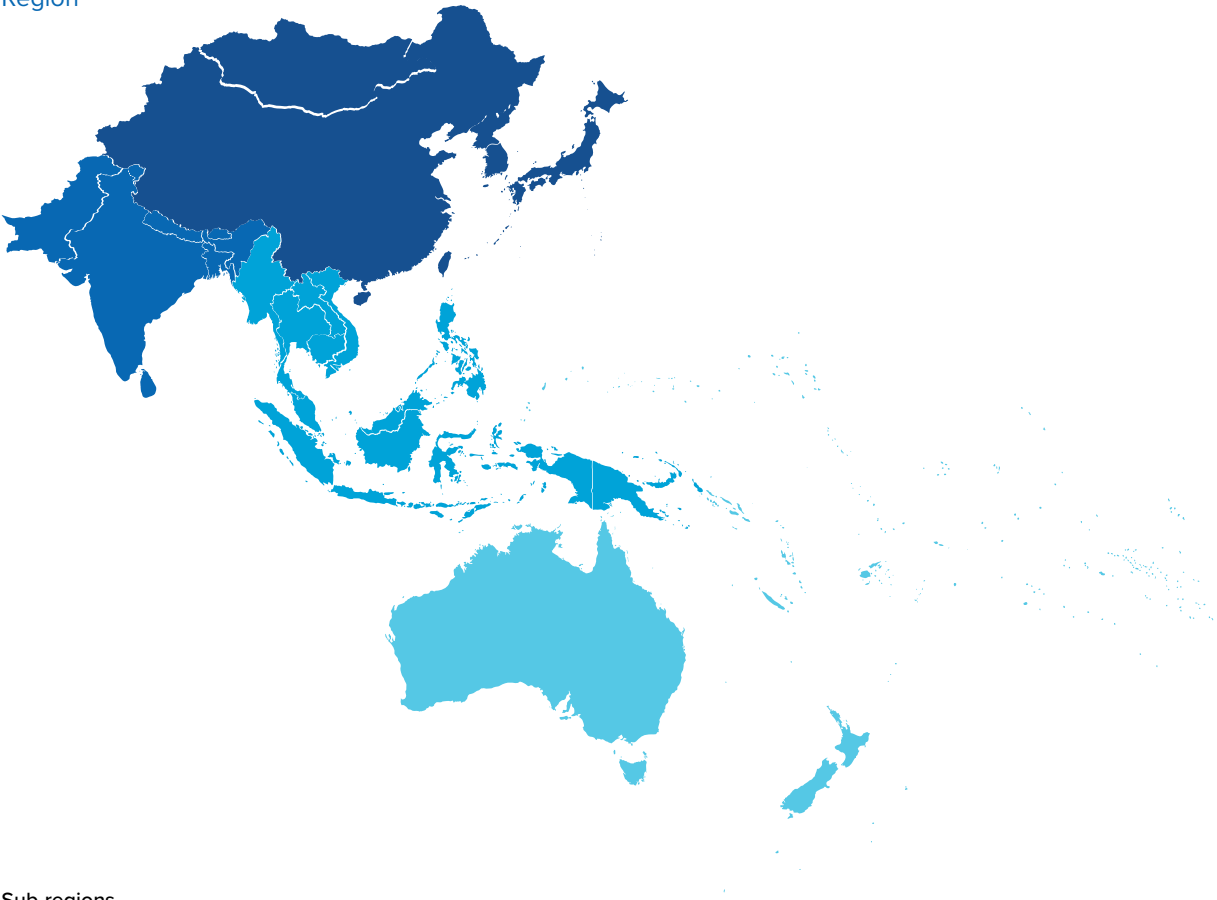
Focal Points to ensure region-specific opportunities and priorities are being considered in the global scientific dialogue. A Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean was established in 2022, and conversations are currently taking place regarding an African Focal Point and a Middle Eastern Focal Point.

2.3 ISC REGIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

From 2023–2028, the Australian Academy of Science (AAS) is hosting the ISC RFP-AP.

The RFP-AP encompasses current and future Members from South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan), East Asia (China, Japan, Mongolia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea), South-East Asia (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste) and the Oceania region (Pacific Island nations, New Zealand, Australia).

Figure 1: Map of the ISC Regional Focal Point for Asia and the Pacific Region



Sub-regions

- East Asia (China, Japan, Mongolia, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea)
- South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan)
- South-East Asia (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste)
- Oceania region (Pacific Island nations, New Zealand, Australia)

3. VISION, MISSION, AND CORE VALUES

The ISC RFP-AP sits within the ISC Strategic Plan. Its vision, mission and core values are anchored to those articulated for the ISC.¹

The ISC is an organisation with a vision to advance science as a global public good. Its mission is to act as the global voice of science and to ensure that science is a powerful force in shaping policies that address the challenges of our time. At the global level, the ISC is actively engaged in science policy, including providing crucial advice to UN bodies on the Sustainable Development Goals.

The ISC RFP-AP shares the ISC vision and will promote science as a strong and trusted voice in shaping policies that impact Asia and the Pacific region. It will work to ensure that regional needs and priorities are adequately represented in the ISC’s global agenda, that regional voices are actively engaged in the governance and management of the ISC’s work, and that the region benefits from the results.

3.1 REALISING THE MISSION

To ensure that regional needs and priorities are represented, and that the existing and deep knowledge of the Asia and Pacific region is heard, our mission is to amplify the voice of science within and beyond our region. Our objectives are to ensure that:

- Regional needs and priorities are adequately represented in the ISC global agenda
- Regional voices are supported to be actively engaged in the governance and management of the ISC work and the region benefits from that work

- Regional knowledge holders are engaged and facilitated to contribute towards national, regional, and international policy
- The ISC is seen as the key coordinator of scientific input and advice in the region.

The ISC RFP-AP will determine and pursue objectives that are beneficial to Australia, Asia, and the Pacific region as well as the ISC using a framework that brings together stakeholders, enhances cohesion across scientific activities, and provides a forum for navigating diverse interests and priorities. Promotion of existing local and regional expertise and peer to peer mentorship will be encouraged.



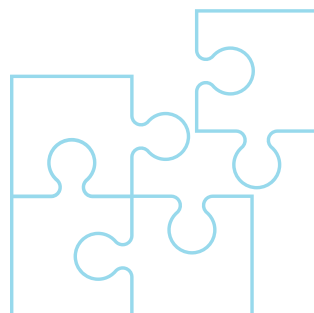
¹ International Science Council. Advancing Science as a global public good. High level strategy.

Programs and activities will be organised around three pillars:



Knowledge generation

- Through transdisciplinary research and enquiry, including Indigenous and other knowledge systems, to address regional and global challenges.
- Leverage of global and regional scientific networks, such as Future Earth, World Climate Research Programme, and The Pacific Community (SPC).



Capacity building

- Support the development of local expertise by developing access to expert knowledge and by developing mechanisms for evidence to inform decision making.
- Support linkages across private, public, and state stakeholders in the region.
- Strengthen knowledge systems, including Indigenous, civil, and science knowledge systems.
- Support and promote transdisciplinary research practice and open access of science.



Science communication and translation

- Deliver a source of authoritative and influential advice for and from the region to promote evidence-informed decision making at the regional and international level, including across the UN.
- Enable evidence-informed regional and national decision making, connecting policy with science and science with policy
- Strengthen trust in science and fight misinformation.
- Strengthen science diplomacy.

...PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES FOCUSING ON CAPACITY BUILDING IN AREAS SUCH AS SCIENCE COMMUNICATION, SCIENCE FOR POLICY ADVICE, TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH PRACTICE, AND STRONG SCIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS WILL BE DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED.

The ISC RFP-AP will develop, design, and execute two major flagship programs tailored to Asia and Pacific Island nations’ priorities, capabilities, and resources. Flagship programs will be co-developed with regional stakeholders and the ISC and run for the duration of the grant period.

Flagship programs will align with ISC priorities and the themes in the Unleashing Science report. They will be implemented using the framework outlined in Flipping the Science Model. As articulated in the Flipping the Science Model, there will be a focus on the ‘how’ rather than the ‘what’. This approach recognises that there are a multitude of existing processes and programs that have

already identified the most pressing sustainability challenges, including Future Earth, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the Earth 4All and regional organisations such as the Pacific Community (SPC). What is required now is developing the mechanisms needed to achieve the desired outcomes,² through supporting, amplifying, and elevating the voice of science.

In addition to the larger flagship programs, projects and activities focusing on capacity building in areas such as science communication, science for policy advice, transdisciplinary research practice, and strong science and knowledge systems will be developed and implemented.

Sixty scholars from across the Pacific gathered in Apia, Samoa, in October 2023, and agreed to the establishment of a Pacific Islands Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

(Photo: Soonalote Eti).



² International Science Council. Flipping the Science Model: A Roadmap to Science Missions for Sustainability <https://council.science/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Flipping-the-Science-Model-1.pdf>

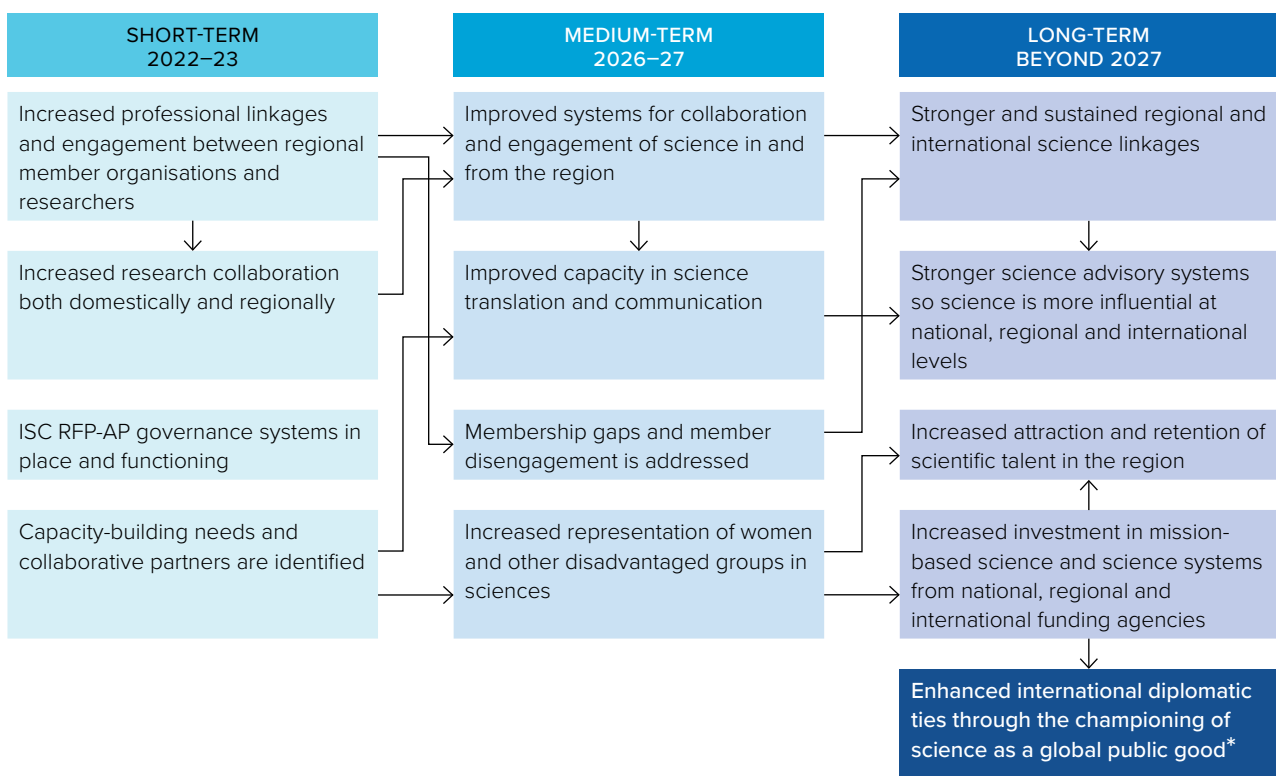
PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL

VISION: Asia and the Pacific region are active partners in the ISC vision of advancing science as a global public good

ASSUMPTIONS	OBJECTIVES	WHAT WE DO	PRIORITY ACTIVITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science needs a regional voice Science can find an audience Science is a privileged social partner Science is a critical partner for realising the Sustainable Development Goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional needs and priorities are adequately represented in the ISC global agenda Regional voices are supported to be actively engaged in the governance and management of the ISC work and the benefits from that work Regional knowledge-holders are engaged and facilitated to contribute towards national, regional and international policy ISC is seen as the key coordinator of scientific input and advice in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify specific priority activities and capacity-building needs that aim to elevate and amplify the voice of science Build systems and capacity to support the generation, distribution and communication of evidence through scientific and other knowledge systems Promote and build transdisciplinary research practice to support transformation towards sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build and maintain strong relationships with ISC regional Member organisations Engage with existing member organisations to develop flagship programs that promote knowledge generation, capacity building and science communication Develop activities and programs that are designed to raise the voice of science in Asia and the Pacific Support freedom and responsibility in science

MISSION: Asia and the Pacific has a strong scientific voice with the power to influence international, regional and national policies that address the challenges of our times

OUTCOMES: THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE



*out-of-scope for evaluation purposes

Program assumptions:

- Stakeholder interest and engagement from ISC regional member organisations
- Collaboration with other countries will provide benefits separate to those from domestic collaboration
- Funded projects achieve public-good outcomes.

External factors:

- Australian Government priorities (including strategic research priorities) remain aligned to the program objectives
- Actions by other countries
- Global events (eg. international security environment, economic events)
- Changes in diplomatic relations between Australia and other countries.

4. KEY FOCUS AREAS AND PRIORITY THEMES

THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IS TO SUPPORT THE INTEGRATION OF SCIENCE AND EVIDENCE INTO THE SOLUTION OF THESE FOCUS AREAS AND MISSIONS.

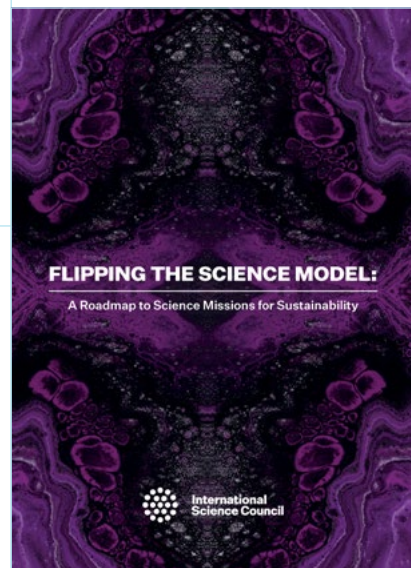
The ISC has identified focus areas as well as priority science missions.

Following extensive consultation and engagement, the ISC's new Statutes offer seven key areas of work, which the Regional Focal Point will align to:

- i. Evidence-informed decision-making
- ii. Interdisciplinary collaboration
- iii. Articulating scientific knowledge
- iv. Science diplomacy
- v. Equal advancement of scientific rigour
- vi. Assisting the scientific community in the evolution of science systems and
- vii. Free and responsible practice of science.

The Unleashing Science, Delivering Missions for Sustainability report articulates five sustainability science missions:

- Food: Eating adequate, healthy diets without consuming nature's bounty
- Water: Replenishing nature's reservoirs to provide enough clean water for all
- Health and Wellbeing: Being whole and well in body, mind, and nature
- Urban Areas: Thriving in places while stewarding the natural environment



- Climate and Energy: Shifting to clean energy while restoring a safe climate.

It is not the role of the ISC RFP-AP to articulate priority research questions within these areas or missions.

The primary objective of programs and activities of the ISC RFP-AP is to support the integration of science and evidence into the solution of these focus areas and missions.

Programs will be designed to address questions such as:

- Where and how do we raise the voice of science to achieve these activities and missions?
- How do we design transdisciplinary research programs to achieve solutions to pressing regional and global sustainability challenges?

5. IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

5.1 PROGRAM DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The ISC RFP-AP will seek to engage with existing partners and organisations to identify programs and activities. It is not a research grant organisation. Its core objective is to elevate and amplify the impact of science within effective existing

regional initiatives. The programs will align with the principles of the UN International Decade of Science for Sustainable Development, and the ISC framework 'Mission Science for Sustainability'. Programs will have a pathway to societal and sustainability impact.

Participants from 31 countries came together in Kuala Lumpur on October 2023 for the ISC Global Knowledge Dialogue, the first to be held in Asia and the Pacific. (Photo: Academy of Sciences Malaysia).





The first in-person meeting of the Pacific Establishment Committee was held in Auckland in April 2024.

(Photo: SAVS photography).

1. The core principles include:

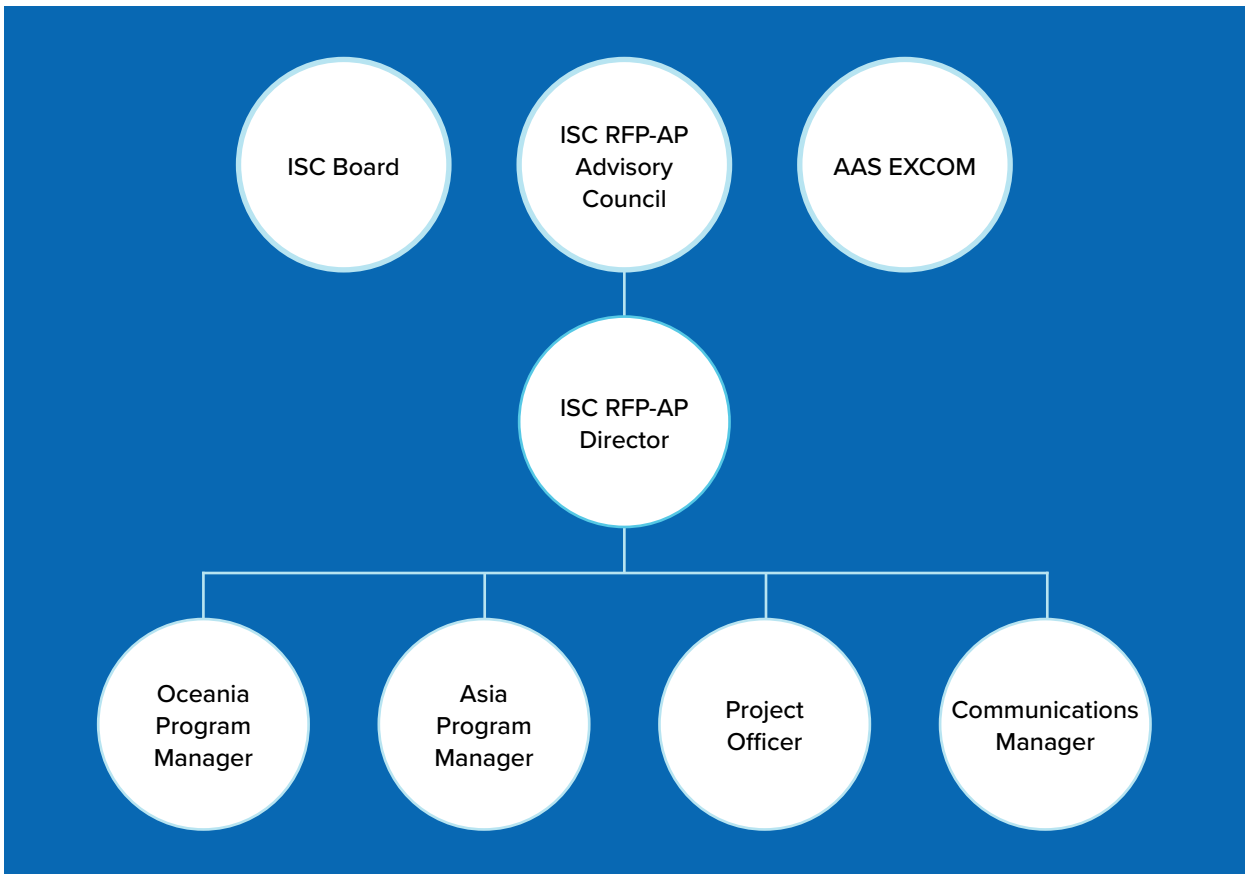
- 1.1. The ISC RFP-AP is not a research grant funding program
- 1.2. The ISC RFP-AP will seek to engage with existing partners and organisations to identify programs and activities where increased engagement and capacity of science and scientists will amplify the impact of the program
- 1.3. The ISC RFP-AP programs will align with the principles of the UN International Decade of Science for Sustainable Development, and the ISC framework 'Mission Science for Sustainability'
- 1.4. The ISC RFP-AP programs will have a clear pathway towards improved ecosystem and societal sustainability.

2. Processes for determining priority programs and activities that fall under the Australian Government grant include:

- 2.1. Does it involve priority countries for Australia?
- 2.2. Does it leverage Australian expertise?
- 2.3. Is it part of the ISC priority areas or key focus areas?
- 2.4. Does it leverage or catalyse existing programs and activities that involve ISC Members or affiliated bodies and organisations?
- 2.5. Does it build capacity or systems to help raise the voice of science?

6. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

<p>The ISC RFP-AP secretariat consists of a director and four staff members and operates under the advice and guidance of a nine-member Advisory Council (including two co-chairs, four subregional members, two strategic members, and the RFP-AP director as ex-officio member). The Advisory</p>	<p>Council is co-chaired by a delegate from the Executive Committee (EXCOM) of the AAS and a delegate from the Board of the ISC. The agreement with the ISC stipulates that the Council is an Advisory Council. In the unlikely event that consensus is not reached, disputes,</p>	<p>disagreements, or major issues are to be resolved by the AAS EXCOM or the ISC Board. Issues relating to contractual risk with Department of Industry, Science and Resources or reputational risk for the AAS are to be settled by EXCOM.</p>
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