REPORT

6th Meeting of the Committee on Scientific Planning and Review (CSPR)

10-11 June 2003
ICSU Secretariat, Paris

Present: D.A.D. Parry (Chairman), A. Buttimer, A.M. Cetto, M. Clegg, F. Gros,
K. Kurokawa, J. Marks, G. Mehta, K. Mokhele, E. Odada, G. Pearman,
R. Ramasamy, P. Ritchie, T. Rosswall (ex officio)


Apologies D. Rees

1. Opening of the meeting

The Executive Director explained that some of the documents for the meeting had been
circulated late for a variety of reasons – a failure of the ICSU Server, staff illness and late
receipt of solicited inputs from CSPR members. In future all papers would be posted on the
web-site a minimum of two weeks prior to a meeting

2. Adoption of the Agenda

It was agreed that a working lunch be taken on the first day, so that members could read any
project summaries that they had not seen previously.

Decision:
The agenda was adopted

3. Report of the 5th Meeting of the CSPR and Matters Arising

The minutes had been approved by the Chairman but not previously circulated to members.
Members were now asked to suggest any further amendments as necessary and give final
approval to the report.

Decision:
The report was approved without amendment as an accurate record of the previous meeting.
To circulate meeting reports for approval by email within a reasonable period of time.
There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda
4. **ICSU Strategy Development**

ICSU is committed to produce a strategic plan for the next General Assembly in October 2005. The Deputy Executive Director introduced a paper describing an outline structure for that document and a timetable for completion of the ongoing strategic planning activities, which will feed into the overall document. CSPR members were asked to consider this outline in the light of its implications for the planning activities for which CSPR is responsible.

Members made a number of suggestions for consideration by the Secretariat:

- The plan should be for six, as opposed to five, years to be in line with ICSU’s General Assembly periodicity;
- Some indication of previous achievements and performance should be included;
- ICSU’s vision should be included in the introduction;
- The ICSU family should be consulted earlier, rather than later in the process; a preliminary draft might be circulated after the Executive Board meeting in September, 2004.

In the light of these suggestions, the Secretariat agreed to modify the outline plan and produce a consolidated timetable.

**Decision:**

The outline plan was approved, subject to the suggested amendments.

5. **Emerging Issues**

Following discussion at the General Assembly in September 2002 and at the 5th CSPR meeting in February 2003, all ICSU members and interdisciplinary bodies were contacted and asked for specific input to help define future priorities for ICSU. A number of responses were received and these were included in the papers for this meeting. A preliminary analysis of these responses was also included in the papers and presented by the Executive Director and the Chairman at the meeting. Members were asked to advise on any emerging priorities that were immediately apparent from this information and to consider the further process for refining priorities, including any further requests for information.

Overall, members were pleased with the response to date. A number of common themes, reflecting mainly ‘needs driven’ priorities could already be identified. In several of these areas, ICSU was already carrying our priority area assessments or reviews and the collected information would help those processes. In other areas, the major challenge was to identify what new scientific developments were necessary or were already occurring that would have a significant impact and where ICSU might have a role to play. In order to tease out these emerging scientific issues, it was agreed that CSPR members would have to provide some structured guidance and examples for members to consider and add to in the next stage of consultation. A brief analysis of the reasons for past successes and failures might also be informative for some themes. It was suggested that some additional expertise in questionnaire design might be helpful in eliciting more specific responses from members, although the initial framing of questions would have to be done by CSPR.
**Decision:**

It was agreed that a summary of the information collected to date and description of the future consultation process should be made available immediately on the ICSU web-site.

With regards to the future process, it was agreed that the paper provided by the Secretariat, which collected together the various suggestions under a small number of priority area headings, should be developed further with input from CSPR members on what the emerging scientific developments might be in each priority area. This paper should then be circulated to all ICSU members with specific questions designed to identify emerging scientific developments, where ICSU might have an impact.

The input from CSPR to the paper should be completed by end August, in order that further consultation could take place before the next CSPR meeting and prior to the Union’s meeting in February 2004.

**6. Consortium for Science and Technology for Sustainable Development**

The Consortium partners (ICSU, ISTS, TWAS) had now agreed on the composition of the Ad hoc Advisory Group. The group would be co-chaired by Khotso Mokhele (South Africa) and Robert W. Corell (USA) and would meet for the first time in July 2003. It was expected that three meetings of the group would be needed and the timetable was given in the Terms of Reference. The group would report back in the latter part of 2004, so that the results could be taken into account in the development of an ICSU strategy for presentation at the 28th General Assembly.

It had been agreed that, on a trial basis, the Secretariat function for the advisory group would be divided among the Consortium partners. At ICSU, the new Science Officer replacing Sachiko Ishizaka would be responsible. It was expected that US$275,000 would be needed for the planning phase. ICSU would contribute US$50,000 in 2003 from the Packard grant and a draft proposal to other funding sources was being prepared by the Consortium partners.

France had put science and technology on the agenda for the G8 Summit in Evian and ICSU and IGFA had provided input to the planning. South Africa had suggested that OECD Ministers make a statement on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development at their meeting in January 2004. A formal proposal has been circulated to OECD Member States.

ICSU has co-sponsored a SCOPE planning meeting on indicators for sustainable development.

In response to members questions on the Consortium, the Executive Director clarified that the membership of the Consortium could be extended at a later stage and that there were many groups who could usefully contribute in this regard. The links between the Consortium and the potential funding community, including the development aid organisations, would also need to be established.
Decision:
The Terms of Reference, time table and the composition of the Ad hoc Advisory Group were noted.

Professor Mokhele agreed to act as liaison between the Consortium and CSPR

7. Energy and Sustainable Societies

A Scientific Forum was held at the 27th GA based on a proposal from the French Academy of Sciences and the Science Council of Japan for ICSU to start a new project on Energy and Sustainable Societies. A Resolution was adopted by the GA requesting the EB to establish an ad hoc committee that would make an evaluation in preparation for a new ICSU initiative on energy and sustainability, would develop a plan of action for ICSU, and would report back to the 28th GA.

The Executive Board at its meeting in February decided to establish a Task Force to define what action ICSU should take in the area of energy. The Executive Board has appointed members of the Task Force which will report back to the Board in February 2004.

Members noted that energy had come through strongly as a major priority theme under emerging issues. It was a broad and complex area and any ICSU initiative would have to be clearly focussed on specific objectives and outcomes. Potential additional expertise and members for the ad hoc committee were suggested

Decision:
The Executive Board decision was noted

8. Report on the Meeting of the PAA on Environment in Relation to Sustainable Development

The Assessment Panel on Environment in Relation to Sustainable Development had its 2nd meeting on 21-24 February 2003. ICSU Interdisciplinary Bodies gave presentations to the Panel and the report outline was drafted. The Panel members were all assigned writing tasks for the report, with a deadline at the end of June. Analysis of answers to the questionnaire was ongoing and an outline of the final panel report was presented to CSPR for information.

Some concern was expressed as the proposed length of the final report and it was agreed that the text should be reduced if possible. It was explained that a science writer had been recruited to compile the report from the inputs provided by the various panel members.

Anne Buttimer expressed her concern that the different perspectives of the social and natural sciences were not being fully addressed in the review. In this regard, Dr Arizpe should be strongly encouraged to remain on the review panel.

Decision
The report was noted
9. **PAA’s on Data and Information and Capacity Building**

The ToR and membership for the PAA on scientific data and information had been agreed at the last meeting of CSPR, subject to additional suggestions from the Executive Board. The finalized Background document for this PAA was now included in the papers. PAA members had been invited and an oral up-date on who had accepted was given at the meeting.

The ToR for the PAA on Capacity Building had been subject to further consultation and modified as agreed at the last CSPR meeting. CSPR was asked to approve these ToR prior to circulation to members with a request for nominations to this PAA panel.

With regard to Capacity Building, Professor Mehta informed members that the IAC report would include a strategy on how to involve governments, funding agencies and NGOs in future initiatives. This report would not be formally released until December but he would try and ensure that ICSU had access to an embargoed version by end August.

**Decision:**

A new chairman and additional members were agreed for the PAA on data and information. The final membership should be agreed with the Chairman and CSPR liaison member – Pierre Ritchie.

Nominations for the PAA on capacity building should be sought from all ICSU members before 15th September. It was agreed that R. Ramasamy will be the CSPR liaison member. The final membership should then be approved by tele-conference with Odada, Pearman, Ramasamy, Mokhele and Cetto being involved in the discussion.

10. **The ICSU Grants Programme**

10.1 Review of applications for 2004

The closing date for applications was 1 March 2003. A total of 36 applications were received, 18 under category 1, and 18 under category 2, and the total sum requested under both categories is US $3,495,931. The budget for the 2004 grants programme was US $850,000. The Lead Reviewers, in consultation with Supporting Reviewers, had provided a consensus grade and a summary note for each application explaining the strengths and weakness of the proposal.

As each proposal has already been reviewed in depth by members, lengthy discussions of the majority of proposals was not necessary. During the meeting, where the reviewers were in agreement that a particular proposal should be declined ’C’ or below, the Committee was invited to endorse this recommendation immediately unless any objections were raised. In this way, any detailed discussion at the meeting was focused on those proposals which were potentially fundable and where consensus was difficult to reach.

After members had declared any conflicts of interest, all proposals were graded and ranked. Those proposals that were B+ and near the funding cut-off line were subject to independent assessment by all members and graded on the basis of an average numerical score.

It was suggested that the Statement and Schedule needed more clarity. Members were invited to discuss in depth at the meeting and consider whether any new priority should be included.

There was a general discussion of the review procedure during which the following points were emphasised:

- The consensus method using three reviewers was effective but it depended on the reviewers consulting each other before the meeting about any discrepancies. Where a consensus score could not be reached, after consultation, it was entirely appropriate to flag this up for discussion by the whole committee;
- Members were welcome to consult external reviewers at their own discretion, particularly where they consider a particular disciplinary input to be necessary;
- A finer scoring system, incorporating A+/-- and B+/--, was considered appropriate at the initial independent review stage, but lead reviewers should establish a consensus grading of A, B, C or F for consideration at the meeting;
- The reports from lead reviewers should be made available to the whole committee at least two weeks before the meeting;
- Comments from designated reviewers should focus on strengths and weaknesses, which would not only help the lead reviewer but would also improve the final summary assessment report which is fed-back to applicants.

With regards to the grant applications themselves a number of issues were identified that needed to be incorporated into revised guidelines and application forms for the 2005 programme:

- The guidelines on eligibility of standard research proposals and funding for specific items, such as web-sites, need to be made clearer;
- In future, any single ICSU body or members should normally only be eligible for funding for one category 1 proposal and 1 category 2 proposal (although submission of up to 2 proposals in each category would still be allowed);
- Series of proposals, e.g. annual workshops, should not normally be funded in the future and new partnerships should be encouraged;
- The application form should be revised and made into a more structured template that encourages applicants to address the review criteria. It should be made available on a web format only;
- Better information is still required from supporting applicants detailing their contribution to a project. The emphasis should be on developing new partnerships and these should be included in the revised application template.

It was also agreed that the final reports on grants should be considered by CSPR and that this should be on the agenda for the next meeting.

The priorities for the grants programme in 2005 were discussed in the light of the proposal from several Unions that “health and wellbeing” be a primary focus for funding. Members acknowledged that this was an important theme but considered that it could already be incorporated into the five established priority areas. As the emerging issues exercise was already underway and the whole ICSU family was being consulted about new priorities, it
was agreed that it would be premature to significantly change the five established priorities. However, it was agreed that the wording under priority 1 – Science and Technology for Sustainable Development – should include reference to the UN WEHAB (water, environment, health, agriculture and biodiversity) priorities.

Finally, the issue of small block grants for capacity building was raised. The Chair stated that no changes in the current granting system could be made for 2004. It was agreed that this item could be discussed at the next meeting.

### Decisions

Grant applications were graded and ranked and funding recommendations made as listed in Annex 1

The grant application form and guidelines should be revised and in future all submissions should be electronic.

Final reports on grants should be reviewed by CSPR.

The priority areas for the Grants Programme for 2005 should remain as for 2004, although the wording should be changed to more explicitly incorporate health.

### 11. Dates and Places for the Future meetings

**Decision:**
The future meetings will be held at the ICSU Secretariat in Paris on:
3-4 December 2003 and 8-9 June 2004

### 12. Any Other Business

*An Initiative for Multi-Union Collaboration*

This was considered under item 10

### Adjournment

The meeting was closed at 1300hrs.