

# CSPR Assessment Panel on Environment and its Relation to Sustainable Development

International Council for Science

Report of the CSPR Assessment Panel on Environment and its Relation to Sustainable Development

by

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(Excerpt from pages 24-25)

## **5.3 Thematic organizations**

### **5.3.1 Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR)**

SCOR was founded in 1957 to further international scientific activity in all branches of oceanic research. It was one of the first IBs of ICSU, and every oceanographer is familiar with at least some of SCOR's impressive list of accomplishments. This organization has a rich history of successes with working groups that have vetted methods of sample collection and analysis, and brainstormed topics for future research. Well known is the reputation of SCOR for its extensive outreach to scientists, laboratories, and research organizations in the developing world. Over the last 45 years, many developed country oceanographers made their first contacts with developing country scientists through SCOR meetings and reports. Prior to its first major programmatic accomplishment - the Indian Ocean Expedition in the early 1960s - major oceanographic expeditions were largely the works of individual nations or individual laboratories. SCOR, more than any other organization, is responsible for the widespread international cooperation that is characteristic of modern ocean science. In view of the successes of the GEC programmes (e.g. IGBP and WCRP) in the 1990s, the advent of the Internet and virtual meetings, one could ask "does SCOR still have a role to play?" SCOR sponsorship remains still the best way to bring oceanographers of all disciplines to the table. The development of ocean projects within the GEC programmes was considerably facilitated by the work of SCOR. The roots of the international underpinnings of Tropical Ocean and Global Atmosphere (TOGA), World Ocean Circulation Experiment (WOCE), Joint Global Ocean Flux Study (JGOFS), and Global Ocean Ecosystem Dynamics (GLOBEC) can be traced to SCOR initiatives. Similarly, SCOR is currently a partner in the development of potential new projects like Global Ecology and Oceanography of Harmful Algal Blooms (GEOHAB), Surface Ocean Lower Atmosphere Study (SOLAS), and Integrated Marine Biogeochemistry and Ecosystem Research (IMBER). In conclusion, SCOR has demonstrated flexibility in its focus as ocean science has evolved, and the success of future ICSU projects and activities related to the ocean would be significantly diminished without the

scientific integrity and experience of SCOR. Ocean science is inherently global, and SCOR is the instrument by which good local ideas in this field become global. Also in this regard, the Panel finds the successes of SCOR in capacity building to be highly meritorious. SCOR should continue in its efforts to enhance the development of international science within the oceanographic community, and to bring the strongest possible representation into ongoing and future projects of the GEC programmes. The Panel encourages SCOR to explore prospects for joint capacity building initiatives with START.