

Terms of Reference for ISP scientific reference groups

Background

The International Science Programme at Uppsala University, hereafter called ISP, aims at assisting developing countries to strengthen their domestic research capacity within the Chemical, Mathematical, and Physical sciences.

ISP focuses on least developed and low-income countries.

Applications for funding from ISP can be submitted by invited research groups and scientific networks. The applications are assessed by the scientific reference group members, together with the responsible ISP program director and – if applicable – assistant program director. In the assessment, the scientific quality, the conditions at the targeted institution, as well as known and applicable policies and strategies should be considered. The ISP board makes the final decision on the applications and – if granted – support is given for maximum three years at the time. During the final year of each granting period the work of the research group/network is assessed, and the research group/network may be invited to apply for new funds.

The support is usually given on a long-term basis to enable the research groups and networks to finally become self-sustainable. The support is adjusted to the needs of the individual activities, and may comprise support for equipment, consumables and literature, exchange of scientists, and postgraduate education on a sandwich basis. The work is carried out in cooperation with one or more strong research groups in Sweden, in the rest of Europe, or in the regions.

Purpose

ISP needs professional, impartial assistance from experienced scientists in the evaluation and assessment of the application and performance of the research groups and networks in question, in perspective of the conditions under which the groups and networks are aiming to develop activities.

Composition

Each subprogram (Chemistry, Mathematics, and Physics) at ISP shall have a scientific reference group, consisting of minimum four and maximum six members, out of which at least 50% should be scientists from developing countries. The remaining reference group members should be affiliated with universities in Nordic countries. The exact number of members is decided by the ISP Board, taking into account the number of supported research groups and networks by the sub program in question.

Qualifications

Reference group members shall have an academic title of associate professor (“docent”) or professor, and shall have experience from building up and/or leading research groups, and from supervision of PhD-students. Experience from South-North research collaboration is desirable.

The reference group members shall be prepared to:

- Assist in identifying suitable research groups and networks to invite for application, in accordance with ISP strategy;
- Assess applications from research groups and networks, following given criteria; beside the scientific quality also the development potential is essential to consider.
- Assist in providing feedback to research groups and networks;
- Participate in the formulation of recommendations to the board of ISP for decisions on the applications from research groups and networks;
- Visit research groups and networks to provide mentoring and guidance, and to gather more knowledge about the work conducted;
- Assist ISP to plan exit strategies for support to research groups and networks.

Appointment and term of office

The ISP Executive Committee shall nominate reference group members, after proposal of candidates endorsed by the existing reference group. The Board of ISP appoints reference group members for a term of five years. The maximum length of service is three terms. The membership of a reference group shall be formalized through a written Agreement between the member and the concerned Program Director. These Terms of Reference shall be appended to the agreement.

A reference group member that has been unable to participate in two consecutive annual reference group meetings, for whatever reasons, can be relieved of her/his duties by written notice.

A reference group member can resign unconditionally at any time by written notice.

Meetings and visits

Each reference group shall meet timely after the application deadline, upon request by the director of the program in question to assess the applications submitted to ISP. The program director shall chair this meeting. Other staff members of ISP, relevant for the operation of the program may attend.

ISP will cover all costs for travel, accommodation etc., in connection with meetings and visits, including subsistence allowance according the Swedish government’s regulations for business travel. Apart from this, an honorarium may be paid after separate agreement.