



## **AMAP Expert/Assessment Groups: The role of experts, procedures for nominating and supporting experts, appointing reviewers and conducting peer reviews**

The AMAP Working Group applies the following arrangements and procedures in relation to AMAP established expert/assessment groups, and nomination and appointment of experts and reviewers, and conduct of (peer) reviews.

## **AMAP Expert Groups**

AMAP Expert/Assessment Groups (EGs) work under the direction of, and report to the AMAP Working Group (WG). AMAP EGs are responsible for:

- performing assessments (and drafting related scientific assessment reports);
- assisting the AMAP Working Group in tasks, including *inter alia*, reviewing information, responding to requests, formulating monitoring and research needs, and contributing to outreach efforts;
- informing the AMAP WG of new information that may be of relevance for AMAP to fulfil its mandate and strategic objectives.

AMAP Expert Groups are comprised of independent experts (i.e. individuals acting in their capacity as scientists or experts in specific fields, and not representing the views of any country or organization). Each group has co-leads (typically two co-leads) appointed by the AMAP WG; normally the co-leads are from countries that are identified as 'AMAP lead countries' for the task or issue concerned.

AMAP assessment guidelines dating back to 2001 (*Guidelines for the AMAP Phase 2 Assessments, AMAP Report 2001:1*) identify AMAP 'experts' as belonging to two main categories: Key national experts (KNEs) and designated/contributing experts (DCEs).

Following recent discussions by the AMAP WG, KNEs can be viewed as 'core' membership of the AMAP EGs, with DCEs comprising a wider pool of experts that can be called upon to provide specialized knowledge and contributions to supplement the existing available expertise.

### **Key national experts (KNEs)**

Key national experts (KNEs) have primary responsibility for the preparation of AMAP assessments and related assessment (scientific/technical background) reports. Related tasks include:

- compiling relevant information and drafting scientific assessment reports;
- ensuring comprehensive utilization of existing data and information in the assessments, including addressing quality assurance aspects and utilizing data management and quality assurance expertise as needed;
- ensuring that the assessment is prepared according to decisions made by the AMAP WG;
- drafting science based, policy-relevant recommendations for actions in relation to the assessment under their responsibility, for communication to the AMAP WG.
- reviewing derivative products (overview reports, policy-makers summaries, outreach materials) to ensure that these are compatible with the scientific assessment and accurately reflect the content of the scientific assessment;
- identifying suitable external experts as possible peer reviewers;
- responding to (and documenting the response to) peer review comments as appropriate.

KNEs may be asked by national Heads of Delegation (HoDs) to participate in AMAP WG meetings or other relevant meetings to provide expert input on specific subjects.

### **Designated/contributing experts (DCEs)**

Designated/contributing experts (DCEs) are identified experts with specialist knowledge that can add to or fill gaps in the expertise available within the EGs. DCEs are typically individuals responsible for specific studies or components of monitoring activities, including modelling studies, research projects, socio-economic studies, and traditional/local knowledge compilation. DCEs can be requested to deliver contributions summarizing the results of their work for incorporation in assessments or other EG activities.

## **Other specified responsibilities**

### *Expert Group Leads*

The (co-)leads of the EGs are KNEs appointed by the AMAP WG with special responsibilities for coordinating the EG activities and reporting to the AMAP WG regarding work of the EG.

EG leads are expected to attend meetings of the AMAP WG and other meetings (e.g., outreach events) when this is necessary in connection with ongoing work.

### *National Data Managers*

Countries are encouraged to identify (national) data-managers and/or key contacts for providing national data. Ideally these individuals should be nominated as KNEs.

National data managers (together with AMAP Secretariat/AMAP Thematic Data Centre data managers) have special responsibilities to:

- collate, check and submit information concerning NIP projects in the AMAP Project Directory;
- update the national information entered in the AMAP Project Directory at regular intervals;
- facilitate contact between persons responsible for data archival and persons producing AMAP assessment products;
- facilitate and coordinate other flow of information upon request from AMAP WG HoDs;
- coordinate and arrange for reporting of data to designated AMAP thematic data centres.

### *Peer Reviewers*

Peer reviewers can be considered a sub-category of DCEs. Peer reviewers are appointed by the AMAP WG. Where possible, one or two peer reviewers will be identified for each major section (e.g. substantive chapter) of a scientific/technical assessment report, with additional peer reviewers charged to review the entire report to ensure overall consistency, etc.

### *AMAP Secretariat*

The AMAP Secretariat has the responsibility for:

- assisting the WG to oversee and coordinate the work related to the assessment;
- assisting the EG leads in the drafting of assessments;
- assisting in arrangements to provide special inputs to assessments;
- arrangements for drafting the Executive Summary and/or parts of the assessment addressing conclusions and recommendations, under the guidance of the WG;
- arrangements of the national review, circulating drafts to the WG members and observers for comments on completeness and correctness of inclusion of national data and information;
- arrangement of the peer review, circulating drafts to peer reviewers
- arrangements for receiving and compiling comments and making them available to the assessment experts;
- drafting specific parts of the scientific assessment reports if so instructed by the WG.

## **Expert Group Meetings**

When assessments are undertaken, the relevant EG(s) will normally convene one or more meetings to organize and arrange the assessment work. EG meetings are normally attended by KNEs; however, DCEs may also participate (subject to agreement of the EG leads) if they have the possibility (including resources) to attend and meeting logistics allow for additional participants.

Increasing use is also being made of teleconferences/videoconferences to replace some face-to-face EG meetings and allow wider participation in meetings by KNEs and some DCEs.

Although there is no specific requirement for EGs to hold regular face-to-face meetings, the AMAP WG has recognized the value of such meetings for maintaining EG 'cohesion' and facilitating ongoing work tasks between major assessments.

To ensure 'cross fertilization' between disciplines/assessments, meetings of EGs may be collocated. Smaller meetings of 'lead author drafting groups' are often arranged in connection with report production work.

The timing of EG meetings will be decided by the AMAP WG Chair/Secretariat in consultation with EG (co-)leads.

### **Nomination of experts**

Nomination of experts to AMAP expert groups (EGs) is an open process. Nominations may be submitted by Arctic countries, Arctic Council Permanent Participants, Arctic Council Observing countries and organizations, and others (including proposals from members of the expert groups themselves).

Nominations should be submitted to the AMAP Secretariat and include the contact information for the expert concerned, a CV of the individuals field of expertise including scientific experience related to Arctic research or monitoring.

Nominations for (co-) leads of the EGs are normally made by the lead countries for the topic concerned.

It is recommended that prior to making a nomination, those responsible for the nomination approach the individual concerned to ensure that the person is willing to be nominated and is aware of the possible workload, responsibilities, and support and organizational matters involved, in particular the availability of sufficient financial resources where appropriate.

### **Appointment of experts**

Nominations are reviewed by AMAP Secretariat and the EG (co-) leads with respect to the expertise required to fulfil tasks assigned to the EGs. The EG (co-) leads and the Secretariat will, in addition to expertise, take into account the desire to achieve balanced diversity (e.g., geography and gender) within the groups.

Prior to appointment of the expert, the Secretariat informs the HoD in question in case of issues regarding financial support. For experts from non-Arctic countries and organizations, this feedback is sent to the contact person responsible for the nomination and/or financial support for the nominee. AMAP Secretariat is also responsible for notifying the nominated expert about the eventual decision, and providing any additional information that may be necessary concerning their role in the work.

Nominees not selected to participate in an EG should be considered for roles in review processes. Lists of members of AMAP EGs are maintained by the Secretariat and periodically reviewed by HoDs. Additional experts may be solicited/appointed at any time to fill identified gaps in available expertise.

### **Responsibilities of nominating bodies**

When countries/organizations nominate EG KNEs (and/or EG co-leads), they are responsible for:

- (1) confirming with the individual concerned his/her willingness to undertake a 'significant' role in an AMAP assessment or other EG task, including providing the nominated KNE with a realistic estimate of the work that this is likely to involve;
- (2) identifying (either directly or indirectly) the resources necessary to allow that individual to fully participate in the work of the EG;

(3) ensuring the nominees employer/manager also endorses and support the individuals nomination as a KNE;

In the case of nomination of DCEs, the associated workload involved is less, and therefore the demands on those responsible for making the nominations are less rigorous, and essentially covered by item (1) above. The engagement of DCEs in the AMAP EG is likely to be enhanced, however, if they have the support of their employers/managers and/or some access to resources to facilitate this.

Countries/organizations are encouraged to promote, where possible, the nomination of suitably qualified young/early career scientists/experts to AMAP EGs; this is an important consideration with regard to 'refreshing' the EGs.

#### *Resource requirements*

The resources required by KNEs are likely to be those associated with their time commitment to the AMAP project work, and funding for their attendance at relevant EG meetings.

In the case of the EG (co-)leads, the (lead) countries/organizations responsible for the nomination/appointment of EG leads should anticipate a responsibility for identifying the financial resources necessary not only to allow the co-lead to perform this role, but also to cover associated logistical and administrative responsibilities (e.g. hosting some related EG meetings, providing 'scientific/Secretariat' capacity to support the EGs work.

The resources identified by countries/organizations to facilitate involvement of experts in AMAP EGs constitutes part of the 'in-kind' contribution of the countries/organizations concerned to the work of AMAP.

#### **Responsibilities of experts**

Experts participating in AMAP EGs are essentially making 'voluntary contributions' to AMAP work, and these contributions are at the core of AMAP's ability to deliver on its commitments. It is expected that experts appointed to AMAP EGs:

- Contribute to the work in the capacity of 'independent expert', i.e. bring their knowledge and expertise to the process, reflecting their own views and not promoting other institutional/national perspectives;
- Act with the highest standards of professional integrity.

Experts engaged in some AMAP activities may be requested to sign 'agreements' regarding their responsibilities in this connection. These agreements are intended primarily to make sure that all experts are aware of their responsibilities.

#### **Expert recognition/acknowledgement**

The benefits to experts of their participation in AMAP work are largely intangible. In several cases, the careers of individual scientists have been advanced through the experience and international connections that they have developed through their engagement in AMAP work. It is naturally hoped that all AMAP KNEs and DCEs find the work professionally rewarding. Every effort is also made to recognize expert contributions in the form of identifying authoring or other contributions to AMAP reports, including peer reviewers unless they wish to remain anonymous. Authors of AMAP assessment reports are encouraged to also prepare articles for the scientific journals based on their AMAP work, and this provides some experts with (needed) recognition in terms of publications in the scientific literature, presentations at international scientific conferences, and for some, career development in the form of postgraduate studies associated with AMAP work.

## **Process for the review of AMAP scientific assessment reports**

AMAP scientific assessment reports are produced by groups of experts; these experts are typically members of relevant AMAP Expert Groups, in some cases supplemented by additional experts nominated through an open nomination process (see above).

AMAP assessment groups are responsible for preparing scientific assessment reports (and in some cases other products) that represent the collective views of the group, and that are reviewed in a two-phase process involving:

- (i) a national review process, which is intended to ensure that all relevant national data and information have been considered/included and correctly reflected, and
- (ii) an independent, international scientific peer-review process, which is intended to ensure an independent scientific 'quality assurance' of the products.

Ideally, the two reviews should be done sequentially so that the outcome of the national review can be used to update the assessment report before it is subject to the international peer-review. In practise, however, sometimes these two-process are run in parallel.

### **The national review**

The purpose of the national review is to ensure completeness and correctness of inclusion of national data and information. It should ensure that all relevant national data have been included and correctly interpreted. The review is organised by HoDs of the AMAP WG (including Permanent Participants (PPs) and observers), and the process is supported by the AMAP Secretariat.

The individual HoDs and PPs will receive the materials to be reviewed and are responsible for circulating them among relevant (national) agencies and experts. The HoDs and PPs are further responsible for compiling/consolidating comments at a national level before returning them to the AMAP Secretariat and leads of the assessment group concerned.

The AMAP Secretariat will supply the HoDs and PPs of the AMAP WG with the assessment report as PDF files, and the outcome of the review will be returned in templates provided as MS-WORD compatible (e.g., .docx or .rtf) electronic files.

### **The international peer-review**

The purpose of the independent scientific international peer-review process is to ensure that AMAP products have the highest degree of scientific quality and credibility. Peer review is conducted by individuals with relevant expertise and competence comparable to those responsible for preparing the assessment reports, but who have not themselves been involved in preparing the assessment.

Typically the international peer-review is organised by the AMAP Secretariat under the direction of the AMAP WG Board. The AMAP WG may also choose to appoint a dedicated Review Committee, normally Chaired by an AMAP HoD.

### **Nomination of peer reviewers**

The call for nomination of peer reviewers is sent out through any relevant channels, internationally as well as nationally. This includes the channels/networks accessible through the AMAP HoDs, PPs, observers, and international organizations. In principle 'anyone can nominate anyone' as a peer reviewer as long as the nominee has the necessary credentials. Typically the call will request a short CV for the candidate, describing his/her field of (relevant) expertise. It will also ask the candidate to confirm his/her independence of the drafting process. The availability and willingness of candidates to participate in the peer review should be clarified before a nomination is made. Candidates should also be informed that a nomination is subject to confirmation by the selection committee, who will

take into account the desired composition of the overall peer review group, etc., so nomination does not necessarily imply that an individual will actually be selected.

Nominations should be submitted to the AMAP Secretariat where the names will be compiled and mapped to the content of the assessment report prior to their consideration by the selection committee.

### **Selection of peer reviewers**

The selection process will aim to appoint a minimum of two to three peer-reviewers for each major section (e.g., substantive chapter), with additional peer-reviewers charged to review the entire report to ensure overall consistency, etc.

Selection of reviewers should take into account not only relevant expertise in the subject matter to be reviewed, but also aim to ensure a balance in terms of the geographic/national origin of reviewers.

The Secretariat and selection review committee, seeking additional advice where necessary, will draft a proposal for the composition of the peer review group. The proposal is presented to and approved by the AMAP WG/Board.

### **Peer review process**

The AMAP Secretariat will supply selected peer reviewers with the text of relevant chapters or the assessment reports, according to the overall plan for the peer review. A realistic time schedule will be established for conduct of the peer review. Texts will be provided as PDF files, and the outcome of the review will be returned to the AMAP Secretariat as MS-WORD compatible (e.g., .docx or .rtf) electronic files.

The assessment report authors will consider each review comment provided, adjust the report texts if appropriate, and maintain a documentation of how each comment was handled. A record of the peer-review process including comments and responses is kept by the AMAP Secretariat and can be made available.

### **Anonymity and acknowledgement**

The review process is by default anonymous, and the AMAP Secretariat has responsibility for making relevant technical arrangements to ensure this when returning comments to the authors. If a peer reviewer chooses to waive this anonymity, they will be credited by name as contributor to the assessment report.

### **Remuneration**

Peer reviewers do not normally receive any financial recompense for their services. This is an important consideration with respect to ensuring 'independence' of process. Reviewers may, however, receive some small compensation for their services in the form of copies of the reports produced, or in some cases waiving of fees for attending AMAP organized conferences, etc.