**BRICS OCEAN AND POLAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WORKING GROUP**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**BACKGROUND**

The Earth sciences are in the forefront of science and technology and have the potential to provide solutions to global challenges for the society, such as climate change and anthropogenic deterioration of the environment. Given that the oceans, as well as the high-latitude regions, play extraordinarily important role in the Earth system, the ocean and polar science and technology   
are of utmost importance.

During the second BRICS STI Ministerial Meeting in March 2015 in Brazil, the BRICS member countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on STI cooperation. This MoU made provision for three governing structures: the BRICS STI Ministerial Meeting, the BRICS STI Senior Officials Meeting and the BRICS STI Working Groups. The latter are responsible for promoting cooperation activities in the designated priority areas.

Following the comprehensive dialogue held within these bodies the BRICS STI Ministers at their 3rd STI Ministerial Meeting in October 2015 in Russia adopted the Moscow Declaration encouraging new initiatives, in particular, cooperation on Ocean and Polar Science and Technology.

**MISSION**

The mission of the BRICS Ocean and Polar Science and Technology Working Group is to promote cooperation between BRICS member countries in the field of ocean and polar science and enabling technologies through joint activities of government, universities, research institutions, and industry, as relevant, in order to generate new knowledge, train human capital, develop new technologies and applications, and improve public understanding of ocean and polar science.

**FUNCTIONS**

1. To steer work to help designate and implement effective cooperation between all BRICS member countries in the field of ocean and polar science and technology;

2. To keep under review the current scientific and technological developments in BRICS member countries in the field of ocean and polar science and technology;

3. To propose priority research topics in the field of ocean and polar science and technology for BRICS Call of R&D collaboration implemented under BRICS STI Framework Programme;

4. To identify and promote training needed;

5. To promote exchanges of students and research staff;

6. To develop technical guidance to improved and standardized research methods, tools and operational practices as well as objective protocols for their verification and assessment;

7. To promote and coordinate joint activities of the BRICS member countries in expeditionary field work in the ocean and polar regions (“BRICS cruises”).

**MEMBERSHIP**

BRICS Ocean and Polar Science and Technology Working Group is composed of government officials or their designated representatives supported by the focal points on ocean and polar science and technology and experts from BRICS member countries.

**SECRETARIAT AND MODE OF OPERATION**

Focal points of BRICS Working Group on Ocean and Polar Science and Technology of Russia and Brazil jointly act as the Secretariat to the Ocean and Polar Science and Technology Working Group responsible for:

* Dissemination of information to the Working Group using various media;
* Coordinating organization of annual meetings (providing a venue and meeting facilities, meeting agendas and relevant documents, coordinating experts, etc.);
* Maintaining proceedings of the Working Group.

The representatives of the host country will chair the Working Group meetings.

Every side designates a national focal point to facilitate communication between the members of the Working Group

The Working Group will normally meet at least once a year, unless otherwise decided by the members.

The expenses related to hosting the meetings and mobility of members of the Working Group on Ocean and Polar Science and Technology shall be covered in accordance with the common rules and regulations prescribed and adopted by BRICS STI SOM and BRICS STI Ministers synchronized with other BRICS WG’s. The on-site logistics will be provided by the host country.

All decisions shall be taken by consensus and in line with the BRICS rules of procedures.

The working language of the WG on Ocean and Polar Science and Technology is English.

The Terms of Reference may be reviewed upon request of one or more of BRICS member countries.

**REPORTS**

Every WG meeting shall produce a report. Reports on the activities of the BRICS Ocean and Polar Science Working Group will be submitted by the Chair of the WG meeting to the BRICS STI Senior Officials Meetings.