

Report on Putting into Effect the Recommendations of the SCAR Review 2000

The 20 recommendations from the 2000 Review of SCAR are numbered below.

The actions taken against each recommendation are given in italics.

1. SCAR'S mission remains valid and SCAR continues to play an important role in fostering and coordinating science in Antarctica and in advising the Antarctic Treaty System and other organizations concerned with the Antarctic and Southern Ocean, but SCAR must take a more active and assertive leadership position in all matters related to science in Antarctica.

SCAR has developed the biennial SCAR Open Science Conference, the first of which takes place in Bremen, July 2004.

SCAR is taking a prominent role in the development of plans for the International Polar Year 2007-2008, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of the organisation.

SCAR is developing a number of partnerships with other (global) organisations having Antarctic or Southern Ocean interests, so as to ensure that SCAR can benefit from the global dimension on the one hand, and provide advice on the role of Antarctic in the global system on the other hand.

SCAR is developing a Long-Term Strategic Plan (2004-2010) to clearly set out its role and priorities and to indicate how these are to be achieved so that it can establish and maintain the active and assertive leadership role called for in the review. The Plan will be the product of consultation with Delegates, Secretariat, Executive, and Science Groups. It will be revised at each biennial meeting of the Delegates.

2. SCAR should update its mission in four areas by:
 - i. Increasing emphasis on the scientific capacity of all national groups working in Antarctica and on outreach to younger scientists;

As part of the Long-Term Strategic Plan SCAR is calling for the creation of an ad hoc Capacity Building and Education Group to devise and cost a comprehensive Capacity Building and Education Plan for the organisation, to include consideration of outreach to younger scientists. One of the Vice Presidents will take responsibility for Capacity Building and Education.

- ii. Taking a more proactive stance with the Antarctic Treaty System in providing the highest level independent advice on scientific aspects of issues affecting the governance and management of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean;

SCAR will increase its efforts to actively bring to the attention of the ATCM issues emerging from greater scientific understanding that should be brought to the attention of policy makers. Since 2003, SCAR has been providing the ATCM with an annual SCAR/COMNAP Lecture on key topics of interest.

- iii. Taking a more proactive position in the analysis of the impact of global change on the Antarctic region and in the contribution of science in Antarctica to the overall understanding of global change;

The ‘new’ vision of SCAR is: “to contribute to the peaceful and environmentally sound exploration of the Antarctic region through scientific research and international cooperation to ensure that the full potential of scientific research is used to understand the nature of the region and its processes, the role of Antarctica in the Earth System, and the effect of global and human change on Antarctica, and to exploit the unique location of Antarctica for the scientific study of space weather, Sun-Earth interactions and astronomy.”

SCAR’s mission has been redefined as: “To be the leading edge independent organisation for facilitating and coordinating scientific research in Antarctica, and identifying issues emerging from greater scientific understanding that should be brought to the attention of policy makers”.

SCAR’s primary objective has been redefined as: “to initiate, develop, and coordinate leading edge international scientific activity in the Antarctic region, and on the role of the Antarctic region in the Earth system”

- iv. Increasing the dissemination of knowledge about Antarctica and about SCAR and its activities to scientists, national leaders, and the public.

SCAR is in the process of developing a Communications Strategy to define how it will improve dissemination of information. One of the Vice Presidents will be made responsible for Communication Policy. The new SCAR web site was launched in time for the SCAR Open Science Conference (July 26-28, 2004). Keynote speeches from the Conference will be published as a Special issue of the Journal “Antarctic Science”.

3. SCAR delegates – at the delegate level – must become more actively engaged in the management of SCAR at SCAR meetings and also intersessionally.

The Delegates Committee on Scientific Affairs will be actively involved in reviewing the SCAR Scientific Research Programme proposals and providing feedback in advance to the Delegates meeting. Delegates will be actively involved in consultations on the development of the Long-Term Strategic Plan. [See also recommendation 18]. Delegates should arrange for SCAR’s overall performance to be reviewed at around 8 year intervals.

4. Four delegate-level committees should be established, each chaired by a SCAR vice president, with the following portfolios: Scientific Affairs, Outreach and Education, Scientific Liaison, and Internal Affairs

Two Delegate Committees have been established for Scientific Affairs and for Standing Committees, the latter covering the Standing Committees on the Antarctic Treaty System and on Finance, and also Data and Information Management (through JCADM). It was not considered necessary to form separate committees for scientific liaison, or internal affairs.

It is intended that Outreach and Education be handled through a proposed ad hoc Capacity Building and Education Group, and that the ‘Communications’ aspect of ‘Outreach’ be developed by the Secretariat operating under the oversight of one of the Vice Presidents.

5. SCAR Vice Presidents should have titles corresponding to their portfolios, e.g., Vice President for Scientific Affairs.

Two Vice Presidents currently have titles corresponding to portfolios: (i) for Scientific Affairs, and (ii) for Finance. It is proposed that two others take responsibility for (iii) Capacity Building and Education, and (iv) Communications. However, it is also recommended that these portfolios may be rotated between members of the Executive Committee from time to time. The President will take responsibility for interaction s with the ATS.

6. The SCAR Executive Committee should be retained. In addition to processing business that comes before it presently, the Executive Committee should act intersessionally on advice or recommendations of the Delegate Committees or refer such recommendations to SCAR's next plenary session.

The Executive Committee is meeting between 2 and 3 times per year. A great deal of its business is being carried out intersessionally by e-mail. Greater effectiveness is being achieved through the participation of the Chief Officers of Standing Scientific Groups and the Antarctic Treaty System Standing Committee in Executive Committee meetings.

7. All SCAR officers are encouraged to seek a greater level of support at their home institutions through a greater level of in-kind and other administrative assistance, but SCAR should also increase its budget for these purposes.

In order for SCAR to be able to carry out effectively the full range of activities required of it by Delegates, not least in response to the additional activities imposed by acceptance of the recommendations of the Review, an increase in the annual subscription will be needed.

8. The past president of SCAR should serve ex-officio for one but no more than two years instead of serving a four-year term ex-officio.

The revised Constitution will call for a 2-year term for the past President.

9. While the scientific-level structure of working groups and groups of specialists has served SCAR effectively in the past, this structure should be replaced by a system of operating groups that can respond quickly and flexibly to emerging scientific opportunities in Antarctica and to changing demands on SCAR.

SCAR has created a new system of Standing Scientific Groups, within which Action Groups can be created for activities of short duration (2-4 years), Expert Groups for activities of moderate duration (4-6 years), and Scientific Research Programmes for activities of long duration (up to 10 years). Standing Scientific Groups are encouraged to work together to develop Scientific Research Programmes at the boundaries between the disciplines. Each scientific activity should be reviewed at intervals of around 5 years.

10. SCAR must adopt practices that create a timely circulation of documents and reports and must plan a meeting schedule that improves its ability to make informed decisions.

To allow Standing Scientific Groups time to develop their plans, and Delegates time to reflect on them, SCAR's scientific meeting has been separated from the Delegates meeting by a period of 8 weeks. Reports for the Delegates meeting will be circulated at least 3-4 weeks in advance.

11. The Delegate Committee on Internal Affairs must give immediate attention and high priority to the increased efficiency and effectiveness of internal communications in SCAR.

Internal communications have improved through greater use of e-mail, especially group e-mailings, and improvements to the central SCAR web site and its satellites for the different Standing Scientific Groups. List Servers are being developed. Further improvements await the recommendations of the SCAR Communications Strategy (see item 2(iv) above).

12. SCAR must greatly improve its external communications with other scientific organizations, ATS, national committees or other adhering bodies and the public so that science in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean and the activities of SCAR are more widely known.

External communications are already improving through the improvements to the SCAR web site. Extensive discussions in recent months have led to close relationships being developed with the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR), and the Partners for an Integrated Global Observing Strategy (mostly space agencies and UN agencies). Further improvements await the recommendations of the SCAR Communications Strategy (see item 2(iv) above).

13. SCAR should appoint an ad hoc group of SCAR delegates who do not have English as a first language to make recommendations to SCAR to maximise the effective use of English as the SCAR language of record and communication.

To facilitate understanding of the discussions on individual papers during Delegates meetings, the documents will be made available in English well in advance of the Delegates' meetings, and at the meetings will be projected through a computer onto a screen.

14. The SCAR secretariat should be upgraded to an Executive Office headed by an Executive Director with duties comparable to Executive Directors of similar international scientific organizations.

An Executive Director has been appointed. On the retirement of the present Executive Secretary, an Executive Officer will be appointed to assist in implementing policies. These two positions are supported by an existing Administrative Assistant.

15. SCAR must improve its infrastructure and capability to use information technology for internal and external communication.

SCAR has greatly improved its web site. It is regularly using PowerPoint presentations. Through the web site it makes available SCAR PowerPoint

presentations and a SCAR PowerPoint template containing the SCAR logo for use by the SCAR community.

16. A more proactive SCAR Executive Office will require larger facilities and upgraded support services.

The Scott Polar Research Institute has provided an additional office for the Executive Director. The Secretariat is using the best available information technology for its task. Full support services are provided free by the Geography Department of Cambridge University.

17. SCAR should expand its financial resources by actively seeking philanthropic funds for some activities.

Careful analysis of funding opportunities suggests that it is unrealistic to expect substantial income from philanthropic sources. However, there are good prospects for raising new funds from targeted external agencies and foundations. The Long-Term Strategic Plan calls for the creation of an ad hoc Task Team on Resources, comprising experts designated by Members, to assist the Secretariat in the search for additional financial resources.

18. Recognizing that they must weigh many factors in the selection of SCAR delegates, national Antarctic committees and other bodies adhering to SCAR should appoint delegates with current scientific expertise in Antarctic research.

To ensure that SCAR gets the best possible scientific advice and leadership, a proposal has been made to modify the Rules of Procedure with the following requirement: "both the proposed Delegates and Alternate Delegates should be scientists directly involved in Antarctic science."

19. National Antarctic committees and other bodies adhering to SCAR should continue to give more attention to participation of younger scientists both in research in Antarctica and in SCAR's scientific operating groups.

This is an ongoing concern for national Antarctic committees.

20. In order to proceed expeditiously with the implementation of the changes recommended in this report, SCAR should consider waiving appropriate parts of its present Constitution and Rules of Procedure for two years, during which time the new structure will be put in place. After the structure and procedures evolve, the Constitution and Rules of Procedure should be amended as necessary.

The revised Constitution and Rules of Procedure will be presented to the Delegates meeting in October 2004.