



International Arctic Science Committee  
Box 50003  
104 05 Stockholm  
Sweden  
iasc@iasc.se  
www.iasc.se



Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research  
Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road  
Cambridge CB2 1ER  
United Kingdom  
info@scar.org  
www.scar.org

---

November 1, 2007

## **A Proposal for a Joint IASC/SCAR Bipolar Action Group**

**(SCAR Circular 767)**

**Dear SCAR Delegate / IASC Council Member**

**Please note that this letter requires a response at the latest by November 30.**

In accordance with the conditions of the Letter of Agreement signed in 2006, SCAR and IASC are now working closely together to ensure that both communities together make an integrated and comprehensive contribution to meeting the goals of the International Polar Year (IPY). The IASC/SCAR Letter of Agreement recognizes that there are many common interests between SCAR and IASC in scientific research in the polar regions and that there is much to be gained from developing a synergy between SCAR and IASC in polar and bipolar research. This synergy will become even more important during the IPY and the post-IPY process. IASC and SCAR have already started to take over some responsibilities in the IPY process by organizing the mid-term IPY Conference (2008 SCAR/IASC IPY Open Science Meeting). Both, IASC and SCAR are ex-officio members on the IPY Joint Committee (JC) and, thus, are already vehicles for translating IPY science into policy advice to the ATCM and the Arctic Council.

To assist IASC and SCAR in thinking about how they might work yet more closely together in future, and how they might best contribute to the IPY and its legacy, it is proposed that a Joint Bipolar Action Group (BipAG) be formed with the following terms of reference:

- to advise the SCAR and IASC Executive Committees on the development of instruments such as workshops, programs and networks to address bipolar issues (in consultation with IASC and SCAR bodies and other partners as appropriate).
- to advise the SCAR and IASC Executive Committees on the development of mechanisms to nurture the IPY legacy, with a special focus on the roles of IASC and SCAR.

The second of these tasks will be quite demanding, given the range of potential IPY legacies. In a recent paper entitled "Broadening the Legacy of IPY", David Hik and Karen Kraft Sloan list the following legacies that have most often been articulated:

- Establishment of permanent observation and monitoring networks (e.g. through umbrella groups like SAON in the Arctic and PANTOS in the Antarctic)
- Managing the explosion of data that IPY will create and ensuring access to it
- Raising the public profile of the polar regions
- Training the next generation of polar researchers
- Sharing logistical information more broadly and more efficiently
- Coordination of funding for polar science by various national and international agencies
- Improving the links between observation and monitoring and modeling
- Improved understanding of environmental issues.
- Increasing the capacity of Arctic residents to support and engage in research activities

All but the last of these are highly relevant for both IASC and SCAR. Advice from BipAG would help SCAR and IASC to contribute to ensuring that the IPY leaves a valuable legacy, and to position themselves to manage that legacy to the extent possible.

IASC is currently undergoing a major restructuring as suggested by the IASC Review and Strategy Group and the proposed SCAR/IASC AG would become an important element in the new IASC structure as well as in the SCAR structure.

This proposal was endorsed by the SCAR Executive Committee at its meeting in Washington DC, July 2007, and by the IASC Executive Committee at its meeting in Stockholm, October 2007, as well as by the Joint Committee for the IPY at its meeting in Quebec City, October 2007.

It is envisaged that SCAR/IASC would fund one BipAG meeting per year with a budget of around \$10,000, and that most of the work would be done by e-mail or by meeting in the margins of other meetings. The group should be formed by year-end 2007, should hold its first one-day meeting in St Petersburg during SCAR's science business week (between 5-6 July), and should report to the next meetings of the two Executive Committees (SCAR in July 2008, and IASC in October 2008).

The group will comprise three persons each from IASC and SCAR, plus two ex officio members comprising the Executive Director of SCAR and the Executive Secretary of IASC. The Director of the IPY International Programme Office or his representative will be invited as a guest. The chairmanship would rotate annually between the IASC and SCAR members.

**This letter is to solicit possible nominations for BipAG from the Members of IASC and SCAR.** The nominations will be considered by the two Executive Committees so that BipAG reflects a broad range of polar science disciplines and an appropriate geographic and gender balance.

If you wish to nominate a candidate for consideration, please send the name and contact details either to the IASC Secretariat in the case of an IASC nominee, or to the SCAR Secretariat in the case of a SCAR nominee. **Nominations must be received by November 30.**

We look forward to hearing from you,  
Yours Sincerely



Colin Summerhayes  
Executive Director, SCAR



Volker Rachold  
Executive Secretary, IASC