

**Antarctic Science and Policy Advice
in a Changing World
Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research
Strategic Plan 2011-2016
(rev. 5.1)**

Summary

This Strategic Plan for the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) covers three biennial cycles from 2011-2016. SCAR is a non-governmental, international, interdisciplinary body of the International Council for Science (ICSU) and a Charity registered in the United Kingdom. SCAR's mission is grounded in Antarctic science and the use of this science to formulate policy in the Antarctic region. SCAR's scientific interests include the study of Antarctica¹, understanding the linkages between Antarctica and the Earth system, and observations of and from the Antarctic region. Not only is Antarctic an amazing place, but it is also an unparalleled "natural laboratory" for vital scientific research activities which are important in their own right and impossible to carry out elsewhere on the planet. The study of Antarctica has never been more important as the region is experiencing dramatic changes that are of global importance.

SCAR's strategic vision is *"for a world where the science of Antarctica is used for the benefit of all, excellence in science is valued, and scientific knowledge is effectively linked to policy making"*. SCAR plays a key role in leading the international Antarctic science community, implementing new scientific initiatives, discerning emerging scientific themes, promoting international cooperation and partnerships, and engaging with policy-makers and other sectors of society. As a Scientific Body of ICSU, SCAR contributes to the strategic vision and mission of ICSU.

SCAR's mission is two-fold. *"SCAR's mission is to be the leading, independent, non-governmental facilitator, coordinator, and advocate of excellence in Antarctic research. Secondly, SCAR's mission is to provide independent, scientific advice to the Antarctic Treaty System and other policy makers. The advisory mission includes identifying emerging issues and bringing them to the attention of policy makers."* SCAR re-dedicates itself to its vision and mission that have served the organization well for more than 50 years. In order to reach its vision; identified strategic goals for each aspect of SCAR's mission have been identified.

SCAR aims to sustain and encourage excellence in Antarctic research AND develop the next generation of innovative, international Antarctic science programs that address issues of regional and global importance. As a key component of our planet, there remain major gaps in understanding how Antarctic functions as a system and what role Antarctica plays in the larger Earth System. These vital scientific unknowns are best addressed through collaborative research efforts. To this end, SCAR initiates, develops, and coordinates international research activities that are conducted in and from the Antarctic region. SCAR provides forums for presenting knowledge about Antarctica and for debate of the most pressing issues being addressed by Antarctic research. SCAR promotes the establishment of

¹ Antarctica is defined as including the continent, the adjacent islands, the Southern Ocean, and the dependent and associated ecosystems.

advanced, scientific observatories in the region as essential contributors to modern Earth system science. Scientific frontiers often lie at the interfaces between disciplines; therefore SCAR encourages multi-disciplinary approaches and aims to diversify disciplinary involvement in Antarctic research. SCAR will sponsor a regular review of frontiers in Antarctic science by the world's leading scientists and encourage publication of scientific results in highly regarded periodicals to improve communication of the importance of Antarctic research to all audiences.

SCAR aims to provide objective and independent scientific advice to the Antarctic Treaty Parties and other organizations on issues affecting the conservation and management of Antarctica AND expand its advisory sphere of influence in non-Treaty venues. Historically SCAR has primarily advised the Antarctic Treaty Parties (ATP) and this remains unchanged. SCAR both initiates and responds to requests for information and advice. Scientific advice related to Antarctic climate change and its impacts has and will continue to receive attention and SCAR is committed to being the leading advisor on this issue. SCAR works with other advisory bodies within the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) to ensure the widest possible consultation drawing on the best available expertise during the advisory process and this cooperation will be enhanced. SCAR will expand its sphere of influence by actively engaging in and influencing the initiatives of ICSU, the United Nations, other bodies; encourage the publication of Antarctic science in peer-reviewed journals and the popular press; and produce compendia of scientific knowledge on emerging issues.

SCAR aims to partner with organizations with complementary skills, technologies and interests to best address the complex, global issues of our time AND act as a leading organization with others in preserving the legacies of the IPY. SCAR partners with ICSU bodies, Antarctic Treaty System advisory bodies, organizations with a polar mission, and global programs with polar interests. SCAR will review all partnerships and enhance interactions with active partners, end relationships with inactive partners, and solicit new partners as warranted. SCAR is committed to assisting the community in preserving and building on key aspects of the legacy of the International Polar Year of 2007-2008. Preservation of the IPY legacy will be pursued in close cooperation with the International Arctic Science Committee to ensure a bipolar perspective.

SCAR aims to encourage free and unrestricted access to Antarctic scientific data and information AND improve its role as a portal to Antarctic data repositories. SCAR recognizes the critical importance of the stewardship of data and information within national and international programs and its accessibility to all. SCAR will implement a Data Policy based on its Data and Information Management Strategy and work with National Programs to implement the recommendations contained therein. The Data and Information management Strategy will be reviewed, assessed as to progress toward explicit objectives, and revised to improve SCAR performance in this area.

SCAR aims to foster and develop the capacity of all of its Members, especially students, early career scientists, underrepresented groups, and emerging programs to participate in Antarctic research AND to promote the incorporation of Antarctic science into education at all levels. SCAR will continue and expand its Fellowship Programs, awards and recognition activities, its partnerships, and create a Visiting Professors program. SCAR will enhance its partnership with the Association of Early Career Scientists to

accomplish its goals in capacity building, education and training. The Capacity Building, Education and Implementation Plan will be reviewed, assessed as to progress toward explicit objectives, and revised to improve SCAR performance in this area.

SCAR is committed to effective internal and external communication and utilizes the latest electronic technologies to do so AND will review the effectiveness of and improve its communication tools. SCAR will explore mechanisms and technologies to improve communication of its mission, relevance and accomplishments. SCAR is committed to transparency in all of its actions. The SCAR Communication Plan will be reviewed, assessed as to progress toward explicit objectives and revised to improve SCAR performance in this area.

SCAR will review its organizational structure to ensure maximum effect and synergy AND align organizational structure with its mission, enhance interdisciplinary activities, and eliminate administrative barriers to success and cross-fertilization of ideas. SCAR is committed to continuous improvement of the effectiveness, efficiency and flexibility in all aspects of the organization and its management. SCAR encourages wide participation in the decision-making process and in its activities. SCAR accomplishes it works through subsidiary bodies and decision making is informed by meetings; workshops; symposia; standing scientific groups; committees and programs; it members and the scientific community. The administrative functions SCAR are administered by the Secretariat staff. SCAR will implement procedural changes to stream-line meetings, maximize time utilization, and encourage strategic thinking throughout the organization.

SCAR adheres to the highest accounting and ethical standards in all of its financial activities while ensuring balanced budgets and a reserve AND aligns financial allocations with SCAR's strategic goals. SCAR faces a challenge in matching available funding to demands on resources while maintaining a healthy and vibrant organization. SCAR's greatest resources have been, and will continue to be, the willingness of the community to volunteer time and the in-kind support provided by its Members, but these resources are not limitless. SCAR's core funding comes from membership fees and grants and contracts from external sources. External funds minimize increases in membership fees but often come with additional tasks. Yearly financial information is presented based on aspects of the mission and this information will be used to assess the alignment between allocation and organizational goals. Inflation and the increased costs of doing business will require an increase in membership fees or a reduction in activities.

SCAR aims to mentor and nurture the next generation to ensure continuity in leadership and build capacity AND engages in continuous improvement through review, assessment as to progress, and revision of plans as necessary. The Strategic Plan will be reviewed at the biennial SCAR Delegates meetings and revised as necessary. A Work Plan and budget will be presented to the Delegates at biennial meetings as components of an overall implementation plan. Strategic and implementation plans for Communications; Data and Information Management; Capacity Building, Education and Training; and other aspects of the SCAR's mission will regularly be reviewed, assessed as to progress toward explicit objectives, and revised to adjust to changing conditions.