



XLI ANTARCTIC TREATY
CONSULTATIVE MEETING
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Presented by: New Zealand,
SCAR
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Antarctic Environments Portal: Progress Report

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Information Paper submitted by New Zealand and SCAR

Summary

The Antarctic Environments Portal provides access to high quality information on a range of issues relevant to the work of the Committee for Environmental Protection. This Information Paper provides a progress report to the CEP XXI on developments since CEP XX and updates the Antarctic Environments Portal Content Management Plan.

The Committee and Members are invited to provide feedback on the Content Management Plan and to nominate a representative to fill a vacancy on the Portal Editorial Group.

Introduction

The Antarctic Environments Portal (the Portal; www.environments.aq) continues to provide the Committee and Antarctic Treaty Parties with easy access to reliable information on a range of issues relevant to the management of Antarctic environments. Information that is available through the Portal is prepared by Antarctic experts and is rigorously peer-reviewed before being published.

The Portal also facilitates SCAR's mandate to provide objective independent advice to bodies of the Antarctic Treaty System on issues of science and conservation affecting the management of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean.

The purpose and value of the Portal were acknowledged by the ATCM through Resolution 3 (2015).

The Portal is currently managed through the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand and is overseen by a Management Board.

Developments since CEP XX

Portal Content

Since CEP XX, three Information Summaries (IS) and three Emerging Issue (EI) summaries have been added to the Portal website. These are:

- Antarctic Marine Biodiversity (IS);
- Environmental Remediation (IS);
- Non-native Microbial Introductions: What Risk to Antarctic Ecosystems? (IS);
- The Impacts of Trampling and Ground Disturbances on Antarctic Soils (EI);
- Micro-pollutants in Antarctic Waters (EI),
- Geothermal Environments in Antarctica (EI).

Content management plan

CEP XX expressed its support for the Antarctic Environments Portal Content Management Plan (ATCM XL / IP 14) and welcomed further opportunities to consider the Content Management Plan at future CEP meetings (paras 20 and 21 of the report of CEP XX).

The Content Management Plan has been updated and is attached to this Information Paper for the information of the Committee and Members.

The Portal Management Board welcomes any further feedback on the planned content for the Portal.

Tinker Foundation

The Antarctic Environments Portal has been designed to be a relatively low-cost initiative. Since 2015 funding to support the Portal has been generously provided by the US-based Tinker Foundation. In December 2017, the Tinker Foundation approved the funding for the final year of its three-year grant for the Portal.

The funding supports the costs associated with a part-time editor, translation of all published material into Spanish and Russian, and web hosting and website technical support. For 2017/18 funding has also been used to support a part-time editorial assistant to support the editorial process and assist with outreach for the Portal.

France generously provides in-kind support to translate all published material into French.

The Antarctic Environments Portal and SCAR

The funding provided by the Tinker Foundation is not transferable and is required to be spent through the grantee (the University of Canterbury, Christchurch). Nonetheless, the Portal Management Board continue to explore cost-neutral options for SCAR to take over the operational management of the Portal on conclusion of the Tinker Foundation grant.

Some offers of support to assist with SCAR's future oversight of the Portal have been forthcoming and are gratefully received. The Portal Management Board will continue to liaise with potential donors and seek additional offers of funding and in-kind support ahead of CEP XXII.

Portal Editorial Group

The Portal Editor is supported by an Editorial Group, the purpose of which is to support the editor in the selection and scoping of content for the Antarctic Environments Portal and to review near-final Information Summaries and Emerging Issue articles to ensure they meet the criteria for publication. The Editorial Group is comprised of two SCAR representatives and two environmental / policy representatives.

There is currently a vacancy on the Editorial Group following the stepping down of one of the environmental / policy representatives. The Portal Management Board would be pleased to hear from any CEP Representative who is interested in serving on the Portal Editorial Group.