Communications and publications

This short information paper has been prepared as an update to SCAR Communications and Publications since the last Delegates meeting in Hobart, 2006.

One of SCAR’s five primary goals is “to communicate scientific information about the Antarctic region to the public.” (see SCAR Communications Plan: http://www.scar.org/members/xxix/IP05xxixscar.pdf).

SCAR mainly communicates to its members and the general public through the web, through SCAR publications, and through SCAR Members and the Secretariat attending (and organizing) scientific meetings. Strategic partnerships with organisations also help to raise SCAR’s profile and help with communicating the SCAR message to different audiences. In particular our recent MoU with the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS) allows us to target audiences such as younger/early career scientists as well as schools and other education establishments.

The web is probably the main outlet with which we communicate with the general public and scientists interested in SCAR’s work. Press Releases and News Items are posted on a regular basis and we receive a wide range of requests for information through the info@scar.org email address. We averaged 125 thousand hits on the website for the six months prior to the St Petersburg Open Science conference, almost 30 thousand more than in the run up to the Hobart meeting in 2006. SCAR, in a similar manner to APECS and the IPY, also has groups on social networking sites such as Facebook, a resource used especially intensively by younger scientists and the general public. The SCAR quarterly Newsletter is widely circulated.

With regards to SCAR publications we continue to publish in electronic format whenever possible, with core reports being made available on http://www.scar.org/publications/ and additional SCAR material also available through the SSG and SRP websites. A notable exception has been the publication of a SCAR brochure, copies of which are available to the delegates. Costs for this were relatively low (~$700) and copies were printed on 100% recycled paper. A 50th Anniversary book is being produced that looks at SCAR’s contributions over the past 50 years (see IP 08) and a draft of the Antarctic Climate Change and Environment review (ACCE) has also been made available to delegates (IP04). This will be published as a book early in 2009, and will be a significant contribution to the IPY. SCAR also reports to ATCM and CEP, and our reports are available to the public on our web site and through the ATS web site.
Currently SCAR keeps certain information on the secure Members page. It would seem worth reviewing this practice in the interests of making the organisation more transparent to the wider scientific community and the interested public. There seems little reason for holding national reports on a secure site, nor SCAR Circulars. Delegates are asked to consider what might be moved from the secure site onto the public pages.