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Summary of SCAR's Strategic Plan 2023-2028

Summary of SCAR’s Strategic Plan 2023-2028, “Urgent Messages from the South: Antarctic and Southern Ocean Science and Policy”

Information Paper submitted by SCAR

Summary

The Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR)'s new Strategic Plan 2023-28, “*Urgent Messages from the South: Antarctic and Southern Ocean Science and Policy*”, focuses on the climate crisis and the role of SCAR as the leading scientific organization on Antarctica.

Summary of SCAR’s Strategic Plan 2023-2028

SCAR’s vision is to create a lasting legacy of Antarctic science and knowledge to provide a sustainable future for our planet. For more than six decades, SCAR has sought to establish a more complete and detailed understanding of the most critical elements of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean's physical, chemical and biological systems, and how they are interconnected.

Every five years, SCAR updates its Strategic Plan. While the mission of SCAR has remained largely unchanged, the context within which SCAR strives to realize its mission and vision has significantly changed, and changes are accelerating. SCAR must adapt to the environment within which it operates and as such renews its strategic approach on a five-year cycle. The new plan for 2023-2028, “*Urgent Messages from the South: Antarctic and Southern Ocean Science and Policy*”, along with SCAR’s climate-focused Scientific Research Programmes (SRPs) launched in 2021, and the “*Antarctic Climate Change and the Environment: A Decadal Synopsis and Recommendations for Action*” (ACCE Update) published in 2022, will serve as the three main pillars of SCAR's climate research for the next five years.

The urgency of the climate crisis is summarized in the SCAR’s ACCE update presented to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties at the XLIV Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting in May 2022¹, and its policy and research recommendations serve as a framework for SCAR’s new plan.

SCAR will focus on seven main objectives over the next five years:

Objective 1 - Promote SCAR’s leadership in science by strengthening and expanding high-quality collaborative, visionary and societally-relevant research through international partnerships; address the globally urgent priority to reduce uncertainty in the projections of the contribution of the Antarctic Ice Sheet to global mean sea-level rise; continue to explore how processes in lower latitudes influence and feedback to the southern polar regions and vice versa; and encourage national Antarctic programmes to support research in such topics as well as in terrestrial and marine biodiversity at the population, species, and community levels.

Objective 2 - Provide independent scientific advice to the Antarctic Treaty System and other international bodies in response to science and knowledge needs identified by policy- and decision-makers. Continue to bring to the attention of policy-makers expected changes in the Antarctic and the Southern Ocean and communicate the urgency of the

¹ ATCM XLIV IP072 *Antarctic Climate Change and the Environment - A Decadal Synopsis and Recommendations for Action*, attachment ATT111

need for additional research to narrow uncertainties about cryospheric change, its rate, and the implications for society.

Objective 3 - Encourage and facilitate unrestricted and free access to Antarctic research data and samples in support of all the above objectives.

Objective 4 - Enhance and expand research capacity in SCAR member countries, recruit new members, and encourage the support of research that addresses the above imperative.

Objective 5 - Increase and improve public awareness and understanding of Antarctic issues and the essential role of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean in the Earth's climate system through communication of the outcomes of Antarctic and Southern Ocean climate change-related research and why this research is essential for policy-makers and informed environmental conservation, protection, and management.

Objective 6 - Ensure equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) principles to all SCAR activities and actions, including SCAR management, structure, and realisation of SCAR's missions and vision.

Objective 7 - Encourage carbon footprint reduction in SCAR research activities and SCAR meetings, and continuously monitor conformity to ISC's² Sustainability Principles.

SCAR will accomplish the above objectives by taking the following actions (non-exhaustive):

- Support the Scientific Research Programmes (SRPs) and disseminate their key scientific and policy outcomes.
- Advance recommendations from the “*Antarctic Climate Change and the Environment: A Decadal Synopsis and Recommendations for Action (ACCE)*” and update the SCAR Horizon Scan to identify research-focus areas.
- Foster interdisciplinary and cross-cutting research, especially integrating social sciences and humanities.
- Engage the international Antarctic science community through new initiatives, grassroots actions, and multinational, multidisciplinary Scientific Research Programmes.
- Liaise with national Antarctic programmes, international organizations, and programmes to identify common research priorities, promote SCAR science products, and foster collaborations.
- Enhance the biennial SCAR Open Science Conference and expand the diversity of themes for SCAR symposia to highlight Antarctica's role in the global system.
- Encourage the use of remote technologies to enhance data collection, reduce costs, broaden participation, and reduce environmental impact.
- Address human impacts on Antarctica by translating knowledge into policy-ready formats and clear messaging.
- Publicize and reward excellence in SCAR research through medals, fellowships, and scholarships.
- Provide scientific advice and strengthen relationships with international agreements, organizations, and initiatives.
- Respond to information requests and provide policy and research recommendations to policy bodies and national Antarctic programmes.
- Manage the Antarctic Environments Portal to deliver concise science summaries for policy-makers.
- Establish a mentoring programme and partner with organizations to promote involvement of early-career researchers in SCAR.

² International Science Council - <https://council.science/publications/sustainability-principles/>

- Engage with SCAR subsidiary groups to enhance the community's understanding and awareness of EDI issues.

SCAR rededicates itself to its founding values and will undertake its role as a trusted provider of scientific advice in and about Antarctica and the Southern Ocean. SCAR will facilitate international collaboration and cooperation in research and promote capacity development, and the resources that enable such development, while optimizing engagement and synergy with partners in the Antarctic and Southern Ocean community and beyond.

The full version of SCAR's Strategic Plan 2023-2028 is available online:

(<https://www.scar.org/strategic-plans/5912-scar-strategic-plan-2023-2028/file/>)