



EXCOM/COs Meeting 2011
Edinburgh, 16,18,19th July 2011

Agenda Item: 7
Person Responsible: R Badhe,
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Communications and Publications

Executive Summary

Title: Communications and Publications

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Relevant URLs or references to other reports:

<http://www.scar.org/communications/>

<http://www.scar.org/publications/reports/25/Report25.pdf> (Communications Plan)

<https://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2514526253>

Introduction/ Background: Through communication, SCAR increases the visibility of the organization and its activities; develop cooperation with partners; mobilize resources; effectively link the Secretariat staff with SCAR's Executive Committee, scientific activities, and other Antarctic organizations; ensure that all SCAR members are aware of opportunities to participate in SCAR; and establishes SCAR as the preferred source of scientific information for policy makers, scientists and journalists looking for information with respect to scientific issues in the Antarctic region.

Partners: Other organizations with an interest in disseminating information on Antarctica (COMNAP, CCAMLR etc.)

Expected Benefits/Outcomes: Increased visibility for SCAR, and dissemination of information in a range of manners, in order to create maximum impact.

Budget Implications: A standard publication budget of \$2000; additional requests are made as required. In order to update the SCAR website (a high priority) \$10,000

Communications and Publications

Introduction

SCAR aims to improve knowledge of the benefits of Antarctic science that affect the wider community in member countries; promote better understanding by governments, the media, academia, the general public and others of Antarctic and Southern Ocean issues; and improve communication with funding institutions about key Antarctic research initiatives and future directions. The task of communicating SCAR's message is shared between the SCAR Secretariat acting internationally and SCAR National Committees reaching national communities. SCAR encourages each national member to establish a web site and communication protocols and to regularly disseminate news about SCAR activities.

Strategic partnerships with other organizations also raise SCAR's profile and help to disseminate the SCAR message to an even wider range of audiences (see IP 6). SCAR partners with organizations such as the Science Media Centre in London to disseminate news about Antarctic science.

Methods of Communication

SCAR mainly uses electronic means to communicate, publish and distribute news and materials of interest. All material is made available on-line for both reduction in the use of paper, and ease of access. The Antarctic Climate Change and Environment review (ACCE, 2009), is available online as a free download. In 2010, the "Polar Science and Global Climate" report, co-sponsored by SCAR was published. A 50th Anniversary book, that looks at SCAR's contributions over the past 50 years, is currently being published. SCAR has also supported the publication of the IPY Summary book in 2011. 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.

The ever popular "Notes from the President", is a monthly email written by the SCAR President directly to the SCAR Delegates focusing on issues of importance to SCAR Members. Additional information about SCAR activities is available at numerous Standing Scientific Group and Scientific Research Program web sites. SCAR communicates its message through a variety of meetings that include business meetings, conferences, symposia, workshop, and other meetings. In addition, individual SCAR groups commonly arrange workshops or seminars that may be held in association with other major events. SCAR Open Science Conferences have been well attended and most importantly, draw together an interdisciplinary community including early career researchers. SCAR also has groups on social networking sites such as 'Facebook', a resource used extensively by younger scientists and the general public, and 'LinkedIn', which is aimed at the business community.

SCAR's goal is near "real time" transmission of documents that support decision making, and has adopted a procedure of posting Working and Information Papers in support of the biennial Delegates and Business Meetings in advance. SCAR is committed to streamlining its meetings by preparing documents in standard formats with page limits, providing all presentations as slide shows with simplified text for non-native English speakers, and producing a guide to the Delegates Meeting that contains an annotated agenda and one-page, standardized summaries of the contents of all papers.

General polar news items (both scientific and others) and Press Releases are posted on a regular basis, both on the SCAR website, Facebook page, as well as through various mailing lists (ClimateL, BiodiversityL, DCMC, CCF, etc) for optimum dissemination of information. A newsletter is issued quarterly and several SCAR programmes issue their own newsletters. The SCAR newsletter has been updated and given a professional look. In addition SCAR responds to a wide range of requests for information received at info@scar.org.

SCAR merchandise is now updated, with a SCAR tie (in two designs) and will be expanded to further establish the SCAR brand and image.

The SCAR Website

The SCAR web site is the major outlet for the organization to communicate with its members, the general public and scientists interested in SCAR's work. However the current version is out of date and is very much internally focused at SCAR groups.. The next generation SCAR website will be designed to appeal to a much wider audience, including the general public, educators, policy makers, and journalists. SCAR will explore techniques used for marking-up the content and fostering cross-linkages between the SCAR site and others to improve search engine rankings. The updated SCAR web site will include dynamic features within, or as an adjunct to, the static web pages (e.g. use of drop-down menus and inclusion of multimedia material). SCAR will explore how to make its web site a collaborative work-space. The web site will be designed to allow additional management and administration of SCAR meetings and conferences. EXCOM will need to approve the additional funds required to carry out this important activity.

The SCAR Communications Plan

Effective communication with those that have an interest in SCAR is essential and SCAR utilizes a range of tools to ensure timely and frequent contact with various communities and entities. SCAR aims to explore mechanisms and technologies to improve communication of its mission, relevance and accomplishments and is committed to transparency in all of its actions. The SCAR Communication Plan identifies target communities each requiring specifically tailored messages. However looking at the speed of changing ways of communications, it suggested that the SCAR Communications plan be revised (via the CBET committee in the first instance, and EXCOM). A revised plan will be submitted to the Delegates' Meeting in July 2012.