



**Paper No:** 22  
**Agenda Item:** 13.1  
**Person Responsible:** M. Ravichandran

## **SCAR Delegates Meeting 2021**

**Online**

# **Capacity Building, Education and Training Report**

### **Report Author(s)**

M. Ravichandran, Eoghan Griffin

### **Summary**

The CBET Committee has worked to advance SCAR activities in building capacity where possible, and in particular in addressing some of the issues arising from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic through 2020. The annual Fellowships and Visiting Scholar schemes have been reviewed, while issues of diversity and inclusion have also been addressed through the establishment of a scoping group to advise on the best approach.

In partnership with Polar Educators International (PEI), the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS) and the International Arctic Scientific Council (IASC), the Polar Resource Book project has been advanced and a website launched to make the materials from the original book freely available.

The SCAR Medals are being reviewed before the launch of the next round in 2021, to be presented at the OSC in Hyderabad in 2022.

### **Recommendations**

Delegates are asked to consider making additional voluntary contributions to the Fellowships and Visiting Scholar schemes to allow extra awards, following the example of India, Korea, Switzerland and France.

Delegates are also asked to authorise development of an Action Group to tackle Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues, to work with the CBET Committee and to report to the Vice President for CBET.

## Update on the activity of the CBET Committee

As the Committee has in recent years mainly worked collaboratively through online meetings, the Covid-19 pandemic did not significantly reduce those opportunities, and meetings have been held in February/March 2020, July 2020, December 2020 and February 2021. In order to capture the availability of the current Committee, each meeting has been split into two sessions to allow participation from different time zones.

Following the cancellation of the Open Science conference in Hobart in 2020, it was not possible to hold an in-person workshop on CBET activities, however, a dedicated workshop was delivered as part of the SCAR 2020 Online meeting on Thursday, August 6<sup>th</sup> to highlight Capacity Building opportunities. This included personal testimony from previous Fellows and Visiting Scholars. The full session is available at <https://www.scar2020.org/workshops>.

The Committee discussed many Covid-19 impacts on SCAR activities through 2020, including the early findings of the project and survey undertaken by the SC-HASS group, led by one of the Committee members. These considerations were fed back to the Executive Committee, and a number of initiatives resulted, including specific additional financial support for both the Fellowships and Visiting Scholar schemes. A small group also discusses a comprehensive Messaging Board proposal that would alert the community at large, and ECRs in particular, to opportunities for research and funding both internal and external to SCAR. Discussions with SOOS, SC-HASS, the EPB and APECS are continuing to move the proposal forward. More general advice to SCAR Groups was also encouraged to confirm flexibility in the use of funds in support of Group aims, to allow direct support for ECRs to be considered.

The Committee worked in partnership with Polar Educators International (PEI), the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS) and the International Arctic Scientific Council (IASC), on a project to update and publicise the Polar Resource Book, which was produced project has been advanced and a website launched to make the materials from the original book freely available. The full content of the original PRB has now been published (see <https://polareducator.org/featured-resources/prb-2/>), and feedback will be gathered to help progress the next phase of the project.

The Secretariat and Committee members met with the newly elected APECS Executive Council to discuss ways to build on the existing and historical joint activities to ensure SCAR groups were aware of their responsibilities to ECRs and the clear benefits to an inclusive approach.

The CBET Committee has also discussed the upcoming development of the next SCAR Strategic Plan, which will cover 2023-2028 and will need to be approved at the Delegates Meeting in Hyderabad in 2020. To meet this timeline, it is likely that drafting of the Plan will need to commence in 2021, and the CBET Committee expects to play a key role in ensuring it addresses capacity building appropriately.

The Capacity Building pages on the SCAR website have also been revised and updated to reflect revisions to the Awards schemes and to include more relevant resources.

## Overview of the Capacity Building Schemes

Both the Fellowships and Visiting Scholar schemes benefitted from support in the form of additional Voluntary Contributions in 2019. India, Korea, Switzerland and France all committed funds towards the schemes, allowing additional awards to be made.

### The SCAR Fellowship Scheme

In 2019, 37 Fellowship applications were received (compared to 49 in 2018, 38 in 2017). This appears to indicate the record number of applications in 2018 was in part related to the exposure and promotion of the scheme at the Polar2018 meeting and the timing of the closing of applications. India provided support to fund one full Fellowship, and the Republic of Korea contributed to another, which was allocated to an applicant from a country that had been under-represented in the SCAR Fellowship scheme to date. Following the receipt of the extra support through these AVCs, a total of eight awards were made.

In 2020, 21 applications were received, which was a significant drop from the 37 received in 2019. The closing date for applications was extended to the end of August so that the scheme could be advertised and explained as part of the SCAR 2020 Online Capacity Building workshop, and leave sufficient time for applications to be received. Further support for applicants was provided during the APECS workshop held online after the SCAR 2020 Online meeting.

While it is believed that the Covid-19 pandemic was the primary reason for the drop in applications, it will be important to monitor the levels once normal travel conditions are achieved.

In order to address concerns regarding the difficulty in planning travel during the Covid-19 pandemic, it was made clear that applicants could propose Fellowships without a travel component and where the collaboration with the hosts was undertaken remotely. Recipients were also informed that there would be flexibility in the timing of visits taking place, reflecting the ongoing travel restrictions.

Four awards were made after the Executive Committee approved additional funds to complete the offers in 2020.

2019 Fellows were also supported with extensions to the timeline for Fellowships to reflect the difficulty in making travel arrangements through 2020.

### The SCAR Visiting Scholar Scheme (formerly Visiting Professor)

In 2019, there were 21 applications (compared to 26 in 2018) with 11 of the applicants female (7 in 2018), continuing the improvement in gender balance in applications for the awards. Due to the extra funding provided through AVCs from India and Switzerland, it was possible to award three Visiting Scholarships in 2019.

In 2020, there were nine applications and, as with the Fellowships scheme, it is believed that the Covid-19 pandemic was the primary reason for the drop in applications.

There were two female applicants amongst the nine applications, which is a lower proportion than in the previous two years, however the significance of such a small sample is unclear.

two awards were made in 2020 and again the Executive Committee approved the increased funding to secure the second award.

While the overall number of applications was reduced, the clarification of the purpose of the scheme and simplification of the process of application appeared to help address the issue of applications each year paying little or no attention to the basic mission of the scheme.

As with the Fellowships scheme, the number of nominations will be monitored to ensure that in normal times the number of applicants returns to those before the pandemic.

### **The SCAR Medals – 2020 Awards and review of nominations for 2022**

Three SCAR medals were awarded at the closing ceremony of SCAR 2020 Online. The 2020 SCAR Medal for International Scientific Coordination was awarded to Dr Carlota Escutia. The 2020 SCAR Medal for Excellence in Antarctic Research was awarded to Dr W Berry Lyons. The 2020 SCAR Medal for Education and Communication was awarded to Dr Huw Griffiths.

Nominations for the SCAR Medals to be awarded at the Hyderabad 2022 meetings will be launched in Autumn 2021, following a full review of the nomination process. This will likely involve both the proposed EDI Action Group and CBET Committee working together on recommending and implementing changes for this round. It is envisaged there will be a much shorter initial nomination phase, from which a shortlist of the finalist for each Medal will be determined.

Active encouragement of nominations either from or motivated by SCAR senior leadership will be sought in light of the generally low level of nominations overall and specifically lack of diversity within those nominations.

### **Establishment of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) scoping group**

Following the global reaction to diversity issues in early summer 2020, and the issuance of a statement from the ISC, SCAR issued a statement in support which read:

SCAR has at its core the values set out in this statement. And we have already commenced with further dialogue to identify concrete steps aimed at correcting systemic discrimination in science.

Following this, a scoping group was convened to investigate the best way forward for SCAR in addressing the issues. The membership drew on the experience of EDI issues as well as SCAR, and recognised similar efforts in other polar organisations, sharing membership in the case of SOOS.

The membership is currently:

M. Ravichandran (SCAR Vice President, Chair)  
Renuka Badhe (European Polar Board)  
Morgan Seag  
Meredith Nash  
Paola Delben

Steven Diggs (SOOS)

Chandrika Nath (SCAR Executive Director)  
Eoghan Griffin (SCAR Executive Officer)

The scoping group has discussed a variety of approaches and issues, including changes to the SCAR mission statement, a community survey to gather information of relevance to EDI issues, the role of Codes of Conduct and training for the Secretariat and Executive Committee.

Potential formats for changes to the SCAR mission statement were discussed, one challenge is to bring the ambition from the examples found into a text that relates it specifically to SCAR.

On codes of conduct, the group established contact with COMNAP and requested that existing national codes be made public, but this requires permissions and is in process. The group acknowledged that SCAR couldn't impose requirements on national programmes but could set out a series of principles that it expected to be reflected in codes established by all programmes.

The main proposal from the scoping group was for a dedicated SCAR Action Group on EDI to be recommended to SCAR Delegates, which would take forward the areas identified by the scoping group. The idea would be to present these to the new Action Group to ensure they aren't having to go through development from scratch, and can then decide on the final content and format.

The idea of training provision around EDI issues and best practice for an organisation such as SCAR was identified as a way forward. This would be for the SCAR Executive Committee, Secretariat and Action Group leadership and would ensure that all were aligned in the responsibilities for the Action Group as well as the desired outcomes.

## **Future Plans – Outstanding issues for the Committee**

The Committee will support the three new SRPs starting in 2021 in broadening membership and including ECRs in their strategy. There will hopefully also be a broadening of the pool of reviewers for Fellowships.

Work with the APECS Executive Council will continue. Integrating the mentoring support provided by APECS and SCAR to support not just Fellowship applications, but follow-ups to the opportunities for collaboration identified through the application process and other areas of complementary opportunities to provide support.

The PRB project will move to the next phase, looking to source and fund the development of new and updated resources.

As mentioned earlier, a specific review of the nominations process for SCAR Medals will be undertaken in 2021, along with the regular reviews of the Fellowships and Visiting Scholar schemes.

## **Membership**

The current members of the Committee are:

M. Ravichandran (SCAR Vice President, Chair)  
Rahul Mohan  
Jose Xavier  
Daniela Liggett  
Hanne Nielsen (APECS)  
Alexander Thornton (APECS)  
Gabriela Roldan (APECS)

Eoghan Griffin (SCAR Executive Officer)  
Louise Huffmann (Polar Educators International)

## Budget

### **Planned use of funds for 2021 and 2022**

The small (USD\$3,000 annually) central CBET budget is used strategically to support relevant activities identified by the CBET Committee and authorized by the VP CBET. It is envisaged that the proposed Action Group on EDI issues will similarly have a budget assigned, at a level to be determined by the Executive Committee.