



**XXXI SCAR Delegates Meeting**

**Buenos Aires, Argentina, 9-11 August 2010**

Agenda Item: 5.6

Person Responsible: Sergio  
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# **Report on the King George Island Action Group**



## Executive Summary

### Title: Report on the king George Island Action Group

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**Relevant URLs or references to other reports:** <http://www.scar.org/researchgroups/physicalscience/>

#### **Introduction/ Background:**

King George (25 de Mayo, Rey Jorge or Waterloo) Island holds the highest density of research stations (nine) in a single place of the whole Antarctica. It provides to SCAR the best opportunity to strengthen the individual scientific capacity by means of a holistic international collaboration programme. Ideally it would include the shared use of research facilities and equipment, standardized measurements and observations, interchange of data and of course the development of multinational research projects on the island and surrounding areas.

The King George Island Action Group (KGI-AG) was formally established during the XXX SCAR Delegates Meeting in Moscow after a previous informal meeting held in Saint Petersburg in the previous week.

The approved TOR's are in the SCAR webpage (<http://www.scar.org/researchgroups/physicalscience/>).

The SCAR President prepared a document about King George Island science during the 2009 COMNAP Meeting in Punta Arenas. At the same venue S. Marensi and COMNAP Vice-President Christo Pimpirev chaired an open discussion session with a good number of attendees among COMNAP representatives.

During the end of 2009 austral summer the SCAR President visited several stations at KGI and discussed this initiative with the scientists.

There were no progress in core TOR's numbers iv, vi and vii during the present inter-sessional period.

**Important Issues or Factors:** The level of involvement in this group, based on the responses received from its members, was low. It may have been a lack of time of the CO for the group to push this initiative forward and/or a lack of real interest in the actions proposed for this AG.

It is necessary to explore the interest of SCAR members in this group, its actions and aims.

**Recommendations/Actions and Justification:** Delegates should consider whether to maintain this AG, reinforcing its mandate and encouraging broad participation or to disband the AG. Delegates may review the list of members and propose changes as needed. Delegates should encourage all members interested in KGI science to provide input on the approved TORs and to activate the cooperation with COMNAP regarding this issue.

**Expected Benefits/Outcomes:** Scientific programmes in the region would contribute more effectively to SCAR scientific initiatives. National members will benefit by reducing operational costs, at same time their research projects would benefit by means of increased international collaboration.

**Partners:** This is a truly cross-linkage group within SCAR. The group may also benefit by including representatives from COMNAP.

**Budget Implications:** There are not funds requested. At this stage all work can be done by e-mail and meetings being scheduled during biennial SCAR meetings.

## Report on the King George Island Action Group

King George (25 de Mayo, Rey Jorge or Waterloo) Island is the site to the greatest concentration of national research facilities in Antarctica.

One of SCAR's initiatives is to assist as appropriate in facilitating scientific partnerships among SCAR nations in ways that are mutually beneficial. Toward this end, SCAR has organized a King George Island Action Group to consider how scientific programmes in the region might more effectively contribute to SCAR scientific initiatives.

KGI provides to SCAR the best opportunity to strengthen the individual scientific capacity by means of a holistic international collaboration programme. Ideally it would include the shared use of research facilities and equipment, standardized measurements and observations, interchange of data and of course the development of multinational research projects on the island and surrounding areas.

To avoid any undesirable interference with National Antarctic programmes, SCAR must make clear its commitment not to intervene or comment on the national scientific priorities or the quality of the science being carried out on KGI by its member nations, but SCAR can play a role in enhancing communication and cooperation among countries when common interests are being pursued in the same or a similar location.

### *TORs and members*

At XXX SCAR the Delegates agreed with the proposals of the KGI July 2008 Workshop (reported as Delegates paper WP 12(ii)) that the Terms of Reference for the Group be revised, and its membership be upgraded to include the COs of the three SSGs or their representatives, so as to ensure a close connection to SCAR science programmes.

Based on the outcomes of the KGI workshop in July 2008, and considering Working Papers 12 (i) and (ii) on the Delegates meeting web page, the revised Terms of Reference and membership for the KGI-AG are:

- (i) to develop a mechanism to convey to KGI scientists and operators the main themes of SCAR science, and to encourage them to work together in such a way that their activities contribute as much as possible to those themes, such that KGI activities form useful subsets of wider ranging SCAR programmes.
- (ii) to identify suggestions for the science operators via COMNAP for some common goals that would enable them to make a contribution to ongoing SCAR programmes and activities.
- (iii) to urge national SCAR representatives to broadcast widely the message that to the extent possible we need local (KGI) science to be devised in so as to make a significant contribution to SCAR science programmes.
- (iv) to delineate ways in which different national groups on King George Island could share information about their research plans, so as to avoid unnecessary duplication of costly activities; this might include for example considering to what extent cooperation under the Admiralty Bay ASMA, and cooperation mechanisms on Svalbard could be used as models for KGI science.
- (v) to prepare a working paper on the main scientific themes that could be addressed by coordinated scientific activities on KGI, in consultation with SCAR delegates, for presentation at the COMNAP meeting in Punta Arenas (June 2009), as the basis for a discussion with operators on how such coordination might be achieved, and by what means.
- (vi) to complete the inventory of scientific activities and scientific results began by the initial KGI-AG, by XXXI SCAR, including determining what activities are currently being coordinated bilaterally or multilaterally.

- (vii) to create a comprehensive interdisciplinary dataset of current and historic scientific observations of King George Island parameters, as the basis for an understanding of the meteorological and climatic variability on KGI and in the region.
- (viii) to encourage use of the SCAR KGI Geographical Information System as a tool for analysing the various shared data sets.

The group's members currently include S. Marensi (Argentina), Jorge Carrasco (Chile), Doris Abele (Germany), Viktor Lagun (Russian Federation), A. Setzer (Brazil), Gennadi Milinewsky (Ukraine), A. Tatur (Poland), K. Ki Youn (Korea), J. Smellie (UK).

Although COMNAP was contacted by the former SCAR ED Colin Summerhayes, they did not answer our offer of nominating a representative to this group.

### ***Actions***

According to TOR (v), the SCAR President prepared a document about King George Island science, which was presented during the 2009 COMNAP Meeting in Punta Arenas. At the same venue, S. Marensi and COMNAP Vice-President Christo Pimpirev chaired an open discussion session with a good number of attendees among COMNAP representatives.

During the end of 2009 austral summer the SCAR President visited several stations at KGI and discussed this initiative with the scientists. At the outset, it is recognised that there are already good examples of scientific cooperation between different operators on KGI, for example: in creating an archive of meteorological and upper air data; in analysing climate parameters; in coordinating glaciological research on the age of the KGI ice cover; in conservation and environmental monitoring in Admiralty Bay; in permafrost dynamics; and in analysing sea surface temperatures. A good example of scientific cooperation is also the Dallmann Laboratory at Jubany Station shared by Argentina, Germany and the Netherlands. However, much more could still be accomplished.

Some AG members interchanged views about the possibility of taking Svalbard as an example for KGI. The opinions were coincident on that they represent two different cases. Further discussion in this regard is still needed.

There were no progress in core TOR's numbers iv, vi and vii.

### ***Conclusions***

The opportunities for KGI operations to support and enhance SCAR science programmes are many and varied. Close cooperation between KGI operators and SCAR science programmes will add value to KGI studies by providing a regional, continental and global context for interpretations and comparisons. Standardized techniques and measurements, common sets of variables, and open access to data will be essential for cross-comparison of data sets from diverse locations and scientific teams, not only at KGI but also more broadly in Antarctica. Because of the extensive life science, geoscience, and physical science studies being conducted at KGI, inter- and multidisciplinary integration is possible that cannot be achieved at most other locations. Unforeseen synergies and assimilation of coordinated scientific research will most assuredly be an outcome of closer collaboration, coordination, and partnership. These outcomes will benefit all national programmes on KGI, as well as SCAR. Mutually beneficial cooperation and partnerships can be realized at KGI if duplication of efforts is minimized, infrastructure and logistics are shared to reduce costs and impacts, and standard techniques and sets of variables are agreed between national scientists collaborating with each other and with SCAR science activities. The realization of these opportunities can only occur if there is a desire for mutually beneficial partnerships and if bi- and multi-lateral agreements to advance common goals can be negotiated.

The level of involvement in this group, based on the responses received from its members, was low. It may have been a fault of the leading person and/or a lack of real interest in the actions proposed for this AG.

It is necessary to explore the real interest of SCAR members in this group and a stronger commitment of its members.

Delegates should consider whether to maintain this AG active, reinforcing its mandate and encouraging broad participation or to disband this AG. In the first case a review of the list of members is required as well as to propose changes as needed. Delegates should encourage all members interested in KGI science to provide input on the approved TORs and to encourage an active cooperation with COMNAP about this issue.