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Report on Partnerships and Co-Sponsored Activities

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Summary

This report provides an update on SCAR's partnerships and co-sponsored activities. Since the last SCAR Delegates meeting the SCAR Executive have approved the Antarctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (ANMAP) as a co-sponsored group. SCAR has continued to grow its formal and informal links with existing and new partner organisations. A key focus of the coming year will be to strengthen links with regional bodies, for example in Southeast Asia and Latin America.

Co-sponsored Activities (Highlights)

Antarctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AnMAP)

In June 2023 the SCAR ExCom approved the Antarctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AnMAP) as a new co-sponsored group under SCAR. AnMAP has been established in recognition of the planetary chemical pollution crisis, and the unique value of the Earth's Polar Regions as barometers of Planetary Health. AnMAP has been co-developed with the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), will be hosted by Griffith University, and is a UN Ocean Decade Project ([see the UN Decade and DCC Report here](#)).

The principal function of AnMAP is to facilitate sufficient and reliable chemical observation data from the Antarctic region, in order to advise international chemical policy. It will do so via four foundation research pathways identified through a horizon scan by the SCAR ImPACT group published in The Lancet Planetary Health, namely: i) Input pathways of chemicals to Antarctica; ii) Biogeochemical cycling of chemicals in a changing climate, iii) Toxicological impact to Antarctic biota, and iv) Surveillance. AnMAP was a founding objective of the SCAR ImPACT group, and the two SCAR bodies will work closely to facilitate standardised, quality-assured, continuous chemical observation data is generated and synthesised for policy.

SOOS

The Southern Ocean Observing System (SOOS) recently held its inaugural SOOS Symposium, "Southern Ocean in a Changing World", from the 14th to 18th August 2023 in Hobart, Australia. The Symposium had 300 attendees from 25 nations with good spread of representation across career stages (including 29% ECRs). A [community statement](#) highlighting the need for a sustained and coordinated Southern Ocean observing system was released at the closing of the Symposium (translated into over 10 languages), and was the focus of a media release and a media conference the same day. This community statement and associated media activities has had great uptake throughout Australian media (including front page of [The Guardian](#)) as well as good international reach. A special issue from the Symposium is now being prepared with more information on how to contribute coming soon.

SOOS recently received (and was approved by SCAR and SCOR) a bid for the continued hosting and sponsorship of the SOOS International Project Office (IPO). The bid was for sponsorship of the SOOS IPO for the 2024 calendar year (\$332,500 AUD) from the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies/University of Tasmania (IMAS), the Australian Antarctic Division, Tasmanian State Government, CSIRO and the Australian Antarctic Program Partnership with hosting of the IPO at the IMAS.

SOOS is current planning for delivering into policy forums in collaboration with SCAR including COP28 (after successful partnerships delivering impactful events at COP26 and COP27), CCAMLR and looking towards activities at the ATCM in 2024.

ICED (Integrated Climate and Ecosystem Dynamics)

Highlights of recent ICED activities include:

- **Marine Ecosystem Assessment of the Southern Ocean (MEASO)** – a key output of ICED, which has produced a series of papers on key species and drivers to support scenarios, projections, and governance in a MEASO Special Issue. A summary for Policy Makers will be presented at SC-CCAMLR 2023.

- **UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development** – ICED is a member of the Southern Ocean Task Force. Key contributions of ICED to the UN Decade will include continuation of MEASO outputs and a multi-year international campaign on sea ice ecosystems in collaboration with SCAR and In Sync.
- **Antarctic krill modelling** – ICED and the SCAR Krill Action Group have been developing two community papers following the 2021 krill modelling workshop (outputs include WG-EMM-2021/23; Murphy et al. 2022) and held a joint ICED-SKAG session at AGU Oceans 2022.
- **ICED is a stakeholder in two new international projects**, PolarRES, an EU Horizon 2020 programme (Polar Regions in the Earth System: The Role of Local and Regional Polar Processes in Changing the Polar Climate and the Global Climate System) and BIOPOLE (Biogeochemical processes and ecosystem function in changing polar systems and their global impacts, 2022-2027) www.biopole.ac.uk.
- **Contributions to major international events** – ICED convened and co-convened two sessions at the SOOS symposium – “*Taking the pulse of the Southern Ocean: an internationally coordinated, circumpolar, and year-round mission*” and “*Observations to improve predictions of Southern Ocean ecosystems in the global context*”; Information on MEASO was delivered in a presentation in the Polar Oceans event at COP27.

Partnerships

The SCAR secretariat coordinates SCAR’s links with a wide range of partner organisations, via MOUs or informal arrangements. This report provides details of partnerships where notable developments have taken place since the last SCAR Delegates meeting and are not covered in other reports submitted to this meeting.

SCAR is currently part of nine formal agreements, as detailed in the [2022 SCAR Delegates Meeting report](#). Some highlights of activities under these agreements since the 2023 Delegates meeting include:

- **APECS** (Association of Polar Early Career Scientists) provided a representative (Dr Gwenaëlle Gremion) as the Early Career contact point for the Decade Collaborative Centre for the Southern Ocean Region (DCC-SOR), which is managed by SCAR. APECS organized a Portuguese language webinar in support of applicants to the 2023 SCAR Fellowships scheme. APECS nominated a representative to join the International Science Organising Committee for the upcoming 2024 SCAR Open Science Conference. SCAR is currently working with the National Committee of APECS Chile to organise a side meeting and mentorship programme for the conference.
- **EPB** (European Polar Board) have provided 5000 Euros in support of SCAR’s work within the UN Decade of Ocean Science, including the DCC-SOR. SCAR’s Project Officer contributed to a session organised by EPB at ASSW 2023 and to a subsequent article submitted to Ocean Best Practices System (OBPS).
- **Polar Initiative** – SCAR is working closely with the PA2 Foundation on the Polar Initiative. Further details are provided in the [Other Policy-Related Activities Report 2023](#).

- **IASC** (International Arctic Science Committee) – SCAR and IASC are working closely together in the context of discussions on the next International Polar Year. Further details are provided in the [International Polar Year Update](#).
- **AFOPS** (Asian Forum on Polar Research) – SCAR is in discussion with AFOPS colleagues in Korea about sending a SCAR representative to the next AFOPS AGM there, to foster closer links between the two bodies.

SCAR is finalising an MOU with the working group on Antarctic Water UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme on Antarctic Water Sciences under which the two organisations have agreed to work together to promote knowledge exchange on Antarctic water sciences through a variety of joint activities including capacity building, sharing of best practice, and cooperation on outreach activities. Further information on SCAR's MOUs can be found on the Partners page of the SCAR website: <https://www.scar.org/about-us/partners/overview/>

SCAR maintains close links with a wide range of partner organisations, coordinated by the SCAR secretariat.

Recent highlights include:

- **COMNAP** – The SCAR Executive Committee held a productive joint meeting with the COMNAP Executive Committee in June 2023 and it is planned that these will take place more frequently moving forwards (after a gap due to the pandemic). Items for discussion included planned meetings in 2024, and the inclusion of a joint symposium with COMNAP in the programme for the SCAR Open Science Conference; the proposed fifth IPY and longer-term issues of mutual interest, such as the data management implications of increasing science; and measures to improve communication between the two organisations. In addition, SCAR, IAATO and COMNAP are working closely to coordinate communications relating to Avian Influenza, which is predicted to reach Antarctic in the 2023/2024 field season.
- **International Science Council** – over the past year the SCAR secretariat has held a number of productive discussions with ISC colleagues to identify areas for collaboration. Plans are under discussion for SCAR to present further information about its work to other ISC affiliated bodies. The Project Officer attended the mid-term meeting of Members in Paris in May 2023 and delivered a presentation highlighting SCAR's ongoing efforts and upcoming initiatives. This gathering provided a platform for engaging in discussions about the key needs of the affiliated bodies with the ISC and present opportunities for ISC members to engage in the activities of SCAR. Following the release of the ACCE report, the SCAR Secretariat worked with the ISC on a [blog post](#) summarising the report's key messages. ISC colleagues have been working with SCAR plastics group and the SCAR secretariat to find ways of supporting its engagement with the work of the Second Session of the International Negotiating Committee on plastic pollution. This included publication of a blog piece on plastics in Antarctica (<https://council.science/current/blog/plastic-at-the-end-of-the-earth/>).
- **International Climate and Cryosphere Initiative (ICCI)** – SCAR has continued to work closely with working closely with the ICCI on input to the COP and UNFCCC meetings. Further details are available in (insert link to 'other policy activities')

- **Polar Educators** – SCAR continues to run a monthly social media feature in collaboration with Polar Educators to highlight education and outreach initiatives in and from the Antarctic research community.
- **International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO)** – The SCAR/IAATO Systematic Conservation Planning (SCP) project was initiated in 2018 to create a tool for developing conservation management policies for the Antarctic Peninsula. The SCP is aimed at facilitating the concurrent management of biodiversity, science and tourism. SCAR presented an update on the SCP to the XXV meeting of the Committee for Environmental Protection (Information Paper 48), prepared jointly with IAATO. CEP members were informed that the code developed by this project (the 'decision support tool') would be released before their 2024 meeting and would be open access, allowing any Member to test it. Use of the code will require specific expertise from scientists familiar with this type of conservation planning approach. Since the ATCM/CEP meeting in May, Jasmine Lee and Steven Chown have been working on writing two manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed journals. It is anticipated that these manuscripts will be completed before the 2024 ATCM. A draft of the first manuscript, Conservation values of the Antarctic Peninsula, has already been shared with SCAR (authors: Jasmine Lee, Justine Shaw, Yan Ropert-Coudert, Aleks Terauds and Steven Chown). SCAR is also working with IAATO and COMNAP to progress the dissemination of the outputs of the Antarctic Wildlife Health Network (of EG-BAMM) on avian influenza (see the [EG-BAMM report](#)).

Future Plans

SCAR is taking steps towards developing closer links with RAPAL (a Latin American forum for the coordination of scientific, logistical and environmental activities in the Antarctic area). An initial meeting took place between RAPAL representatives, the SCAR ED and the SCAR VP Finance in August 2023. The possibility of SCAR delivering a presentation at the biennial meeting of RAPAL in Brazil September 2024 was discussed.

The ED is working with the new Director of CliC (Climate and Cryosphere project of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) to develop closer links between the two organisations and an initial meeting took place in August 2023.