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**ENG**

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## **Draft SCAR Code of Conduct on Geosciences Field Research Activities in Antarctica**

Attachments:

Atem42\_att090\_e.doc: Attachment A: Draft SCAR Code of Conduct on Geosciences Field Research Activities in Antarctica



# Draft SCAR Code of Conduct on Geosciences Field Research Activities in Antarctica

Information Paper submitted by SCAR

## Summary

SCAR has reviewed earlier advice to geoscientists undertaking field research in Antarctica. The advice has been updated with the preparation of a draft SCAR Code of Conduct on Geosciences Field Research Activities in Antarctica (see Attachment A). SCAR would welcome further input and comments from CEP Members, including COMNAP, with a view to submitting the Code of Conduct at CEP XXIII for possible endorsement by the ATCM through Resolution.

## Introduction

At ATCM XXXVII, the United Kingdom, Argentina, Australia and Spain submitted WP 35 The Antarctic Protected Area system: protection of outstanding geological features. The WP highlighted that exposed rock constitutes only c. 0.3% of Antarctica's area, yet it is within these ice-free areas that the majority of human activity occurs. Potential threats to geological features of environmental or scientific value by field researchers might include:

- Oversampling of rare rocks, fossils and minerals for scientific purposes.
- Inadvertent damage to the scientific values of a location by movement of rock and fossils out of their stratigraphical context (e.g. movement of a surface fossil from one location to another may give false information of the presence of that organism in the stratigraphic record).

The CEP acknowledged the importance of guaranteeing protection of geological values and welcomed further discussions on the matter (CEP Final Report 2014).

With the establishment of the SCAR Action Group on Geological Heritage and Geoconservation in 2016, SCAR commenced wider consultation within the Antarctic geosciences community regarding conservation of geological values.

## Draft Code of Conduct

SCAR has an established record of developing Codes of Conduct that provide non-mandatory advice to those undertaking research activities in Antarctica (see: <https://www.scar.org/policy/scar-codes-of-conduct/>). The Codes of Conduct are often considered useful in planning, including during the environmental impact assessment process, and undertaking activities within the Treaty area.

Examples of SCAR Codes of Conduct include the:

- Code of Conduct for the use of Animals for Scientific Purposes in Antarctica;
- Code of Conduct for Activity within Terrestrial Geothermal Environments in Antarctica (Resolution 3, 2016);
- Code of Conduct for the Exploration and Research of Subglacial Aquatic Environments (Resolution 2, 2017); and
- Environmental Code of Conduct for Terrestrial Scientific Field Research in Antarctica (Resolution 5, 2018).

SCAR has previously provided advice to researchers undertaking geosciences research in Antarctica through the SCAR Geological Sampling Code of Conduct (GeoReach Newsletter, SCAR Geosciences Standing Scientific Group Vol. 7 May, 2008). The original Code of Conduct, generated over a decade ago, concentrated predominantly on geological sampling with little or no consideration of other issues relevant to

geosciences fieldwork. Following wide consultation within the geoscience community, SCAR has now updated the advice and expanded the scope to produce a draft *SCAR Code of Conduct on Geosciences Field Research Activities* (see Attachment A). The draft Code of Conduct includes issues worthy of consideration before going into the field, once in the field and once fieldwork is completed. It also highlights issues relevant to geological work on fossils, geomorphological features, meteorites and the use of specific techniques including cosmogenic analysis and other geophysical methodologies (e.g. seismic surveys, electrical resistivity tomography or radar surveys).

## **Conclusions**

With substantial input from the Antarctic geosciences community, and incorporating earlier SCAR advice to geoscientists, SCAR has prepared a draft *SCAR Code of Conduct on Geosciences Field Research Activities in Antarctica*. SCAR would welcome further input and comments from CEP Members, including COMNAP, with a view to submitting the SCAR Code of Conduct at CEP XXIII for possible endorsement by the ATCM through a Resolution.

## **Reference**

Hughes, K. A., López-Martínez, J., Francis, J. E., Crame, J. A., Carcavilla, L., Shiraishi, K., Hokada, T., and Yamaguchi, A. (2016). Antarctic geoconservation: a review of current systems and practices. *Environmental Conservation* 43: 97-108. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0376892915000387>