

18 December 2020

Dr Andrew Kaniki
ED: Knowledge Fields Development

Dear Dr Kaniki

Year Report: South African National Committee for The Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR)

Below please find an overview of some of the activities of the SANC for SCAR for 2020. As a committee, we wish to express our sincerest gratitude for the continued support from the NRF / DSI and the ISC. Without your support, our committee and broader community would not be able to make the contributions to SCAR, and Southern Ocean, sub-Antarctic and Antarctic research that we are currently making.

SCAR activities are broadly divided into four main research domains (Life, Physical, Geological, and Social Sciences), with data management across all of these domains. Many of the larger research programmes within these domains come to an end in 2020, with new Scientific Research Programmes (or SRPs) proposed (and approved by the SCAR Executive) that are more cross-disciplined and outcome orientated. One such a programme is Ant-ICON (Integrated Science to Inform Antarctic and Southern Ocean Conservation) that specifically aims to provide science to address pertinent and relevant research questions, but also to address conservation and policy needs. This programme is designed around three research and one synthesis theme, including the current state and future projections of Antarctic systems, species, and functions (R1), sustainability and impact mitigation of human activities in the region (R2), socio-ecological approaches to conservation in the region (R3), and science synthesis for decision making and policy development (S1).

No in-person meetings took place during 2020, and the large SCAR gathering that includes the Open Science Conference as well as various Programme and Delegates meetings were cancelled. The Programme meetings continued online (Life, Physical, Geological), and South Africa submitted our reports and took part in discussions and voting. The Delegates Meeting will take place in March 2021 (Bettine van Vuuren and Tracy Klarenbeek to attend). The Open Science conference moved to an online platform, with an option to move submitted abstracts to the online platform. South Africa had a strong presence here, and a large number of researchers and students presented their results. In addition to yearly meetings, various of the committees have monthly meetings (including the Standing Committee on Antarctic Data Management – SCADM; which also presented various workshops during the SCAR Online Conference). The Data Group is especially active, and members have been commenting and contributing to the SCAR data policy. Our members also attended a polar biodiversity data management workshop run over 4 days by the Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences (the hosts of the SCAR Antarctic Biodiversity Data Portal). South Africa has representation on the *Perceptions of Antarctica* working group within the SCAR COVID 19 Project Team and have made valuable contributions here.

A few other noteworthy items include active participation in the Antarctic Cities (Hobart, Punta Arenas, Ushuaia, Christchurch, and Cape Town) Youth Expedition that took place early in 2020 – our South African Youth Antarctic Ambassador is Rudzani Silima, an MSc student from NMU in Physical/Chemical Oceanography; Rudzani was selected as the Top Student during the 2019 SEAmester Cruise (see e.g. <https://antarctic-cities.org/the-expeditioners/>). The South African branch of the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS) held an online webinar to provide some career advice to Early Career Researchers (ECRs), and various of our researchers participated in this event. Ria Olivier also received the Mentor Medal from SCAR (motivation submitted by APECSSA). Our SANAP biennial meeting could not take place during 2020, but some content was moved to an online platform. Our community is also actively participating in, and driving aspects of, the South African Polar Research Infrastructure (SAPRI) framework development.

Lastly, we wish to extend our thanks to Tracy Klarenbeek (NRF, and Vice-chair of SANC for SCAR) and Busiswa Molefe (ICS NRF) for always being willing to assist with queries and logistics. Tracy also readily distributes information and opportunities to the broader community.

Should you wish additional or comprehensive information on additional items or any of the points above, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely yours

Bettine van Vuuren on behalf of the SANC for SCAR

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