
REPORT OF THE ANTARCTIC PROTECTED AREAS WORKSHOP

Tromsø, Norway
23 May 1998

1. Background

At ATCM XVII a report (XVII ATCM/WP4) was tabled by SCAR and IUCN, containing the recommendations of a 1992 SCAR/IUCN workshop which had examined the Antarctic protected area system. Based on a number of these recommendations, the UK presented a paper to ATCM XXI (XXI ATCM/WP10) containing a number of proposals for improving the protected areas system, including a proposal for a further workshop on this topic.

It was agreed at ATCM XXI that a workshop should be convened, and that its Terms of Reference should be:

- i. compare the protected areas currently designated against the categories of areas set out in Article 3 (2) of Annex V in order to identify gaps in the existing system;
- ii. examine the SCAR ecosystem classification matrix for protected areas to identify the changes that are needed so that the matrix better incorporates the categories of areas set out in Article 3 (2) of Annex V;
- iii. identify, where possible, areas which might be designated to fill any gaps found in the existing system; and
- iv. examine, and where possible identify ways to improve, the procedures for developing and reviewing proposals for ASPAs

It was also agreed at ATCM XXI that participants attending the workshop should have appropriate expertise and include representatives from Treaty Parties, and interested Observers and Experts (e.g. SCAR, IUCN).

The workshop was organised by a small Steering Committee chaired by the UK, and comprising representatives from Australia, Chile, Norway, SCAR and IUCN.

Norway offered to host the workshop which was held on Saturday 23 May 1998 in Tromsø. The workshop was attended by 50 people from 18 Treaty Parties and 3 non-governmental organisations. This Working Paper provides an executive summary of the meeting and a list of the principal recommendations.

2. A workshop - a new way of looking at protected areas at an ATCM

This was the first time that a protected areas workshop involving Treaty Parties and non-governmental organisations had been organised immediately before an ATCM. The majority of participants at the workshop are now delegates at ATCM XXII. The workshop involved talks by experts followed by discussion groups and a general plenary discussion. This new way of working was highly productive. It provided:

- delegates with updated information concerning the problems and opportunities associated with the protected area system;

- wide participation with many people getting involved during the day as speakers, leaders of discussion groups or as discussion group rapporteurs;
- an excellent way of achieving rapid, widespread agreement on the recommendations coming out from the workshop.

3. Major issues

The workshop noted the following issues:

- There is an urgent need for Annex V to be ratified by all the ATCPs.
- That there is no Antarctic protected areas strategy to develop a network of protected areas in accordance with the requirements of Annex V.
- There is a pressing need for management plans for existing SPAs and SSSIs to be developed and updated in accordance with Annex V, Article 5.
- That the status and successes of the Antarctic protected area system had not been communicated adequately by the ATCPs. This had led to a lack of recognition of what has been achieved.

4. Recommendations

The principal recommendations of the workshop were:

Comparison of protected areas against categories identified in Article 3(2) of Annex V

It was apparent to the workshop that there are gaps in the system with some protected areas categories as set out in Article 3(2) of Annex V very poorly represented or not represented at all. It was noted that designation of a site as an ASPA is only one of the possible ways of providing environmental protection.

Recommendation 1

That the ATCPs, the CEP, SCAR, and if appropriate CCAMLR, take urgent steps to identify possible new protected areas in the following categories: areas kept inviolate from human interference (Annex V, Article 3(2a)); representative examples of ecosystems (Annex V, Article 3(2b)).

Consideration of the SCAR ecosystem classification matrix

The workshop agreed that the SCAR ecosystem classification matrix is useful in some instance in evaluating protected area proposals. However, a revised classification system is now required which takes into account all the categories of areas that can now be designated under Article 3(2) of Annex V. There is considerable experience outside of Antarctica in developing systems for the classification of protected areas.

Recommendation 2

That the CEP, in collaboration with SCAR and IUCN, should develop new systems for classifying protected areas in Antarctica making good use of existing knowledge and methods.

Identification of possible new areas

Given the limited time available at the workshop a list of possible new protected areas was not developed. Instead, the workshop concentrated on defining the processes that should be undertaken to identify new areas. Such processes could include the establishment of a database of protected areas, compiling information on a range of values to be used in identifying new areas, establishing criteria and undertaking a gap analysis.

Recommendation 3

That the ATCPs, through the CEP, examine ways of establishing and maintaining a database on Antarctic protected areas, which could be made accessible electronically.

Recommendation 4

That the ATCPs, through the CEP, undertake a gap analysis based on the values for site protection identified in Article 3 of Annex V, in order to make recommendations for new protected areas.

Developing and reviewing proposals

The workshop examined ways of improving the process for the production of protected area management plans. Better guidance is needed for those preparing management plans, and those engaged in all stages of the review process. Adequate consultation prior to the submission of the plan is important in reducing delays. It was noted that as part of the 5 year review of management plans it was desirable to inspect the site under review and use any data gathered.

Recommendation 5

That the ATCPs, the CEP, SCAR and COMNAP should consider means by which adopted management plans and the Guidelines on the Preparation of Management Plans can be made as widely available as possible.

Recommendation 6

That the CEP should develop criteria for the 5 year review of management plans as required by Article 6 (3) of Annex V, and establish a standardised reporting system for the exchange of information as required by Article 10 (1c) of Annex V.

Recommendation 7

That the CEP should consider how it can best review plans for ASPAs proposed because of their wilderness, aesthetic or historic values given that consideration of such values lie outside the relevant competence of SCAR and CCAMLR.

ASPAs - the role of the CEP

Given Article 12 (g) of the Protocol, there was agreement at the workshop that the CEP has a clear mandate to advise the ATCM on elements related to protected areas. The workshop was of the opinion that because: (a) some issues relating to protected areas could be readily identified at present, and (b) required specific expertise. that the CEP

should consider the establishment of some form of sub-group(s), tasked to address specific issues.

No precise recommendation was made on the composition, or functions of such a sub-group though there was support that the group should:

- i. be open-ended, but composed only of relevant experts;
- ii. work intersessionally, by appropriate means;
- iii. report to the CEP on its findings, to enable the Committee to then provide advice to the ATCM.

Terms of Reference for such a group would need to be established by the CEP, but could include the task of reviewing plans for consistency and clarity.

Recommendation 8

That the CEP consider establishing a sub-group(s) to address elements of the protected areas system, and select appropriate convenors for such sub-groups.

Recommendation 9

That the Terms of Reference of any sub-groups be determined by the CEP.

Recommendation 10

That the CEP should examine the timelines for the submission and processing of proposed management plans with a view to improving the process, where possible.