

The Annual Report to HCA for the Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs (COMNAP)

COMNAP is the organisation of National Antarctic Programs which brings together, in particular, the Managers of those Programs, that is, the national officials responsible for planning, conducting and managing support to science in Antarctica on behalf of their respective governments, all Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty.

COMNAP has grown into an international association whose Members are the National Antarctic Programs from 28 Antarctic Treaty Parties from Africa (1), the Americas (7), Asia (4), Australasia (2) and Europe (14).

COMNAP's Constitution asserts its purpose: to develop and promote best practice in managing the support of scientific research in the Antarctic. As an organisation, COMNAP acts to add value to National Antarctic Program's efforts by serving as a forum to develop practices that improve effectiveness of activities in an environmentally responsible manner, by facilitating and promoting international partnerships, and by providing opportunities and systems for information exchange.

COMNAP also strives to provide the Antarctic Treaty System with objective, practical, technical and non-political advice drawn from the National Antarctic Programs' extensive pool of expertise and their first-hand knowledge of the Antarctic.

Increasingly complex science questions are being posed which can only be answered by multi-disciplinary and often multi-national science teams. This complexity, along with more demanding environmental measures and, in some cases, reduced funding, contribute to added pressure on National Antarctic Programs and to an even greater need for international collaboration. COMNAP works in support of greater collaboration between National Antarctic Programs and recognises the need for robust partnerships with organisations with similar goals. COMNAP has also progressively assumed responsibility for the production of a number of practical tools related to safety and information exchange.

Highlights and Achievements for 2010

COMNAP/SCAR Action Group

This Action Group (AG) was formed at the joint Executive Committee meeting in August 2009, Punta Arenas. The AG met formally in March 2010 and developed a list of areas to collaborate together. These areas include education, outreach and communications, sustainability, non-native species, and the King George Island Project, to name only a few.

Inaugural COMNAP Research Fellowship

Noting that education and capacity-building was an area of mutual interest to both SCAR and COMNAP, and in recognition of the depth and breadth of talent within National Antarctic Programs, COMNAP has established, in conjunction with SCAR, the first COMNAP Research Fellowship. The COMNAP Research Fellowship was jointly launched with the Annual SCAR Science Fellowships, is being promoted jointly and applications will be reviewed by a joint selection panel. This inaugural fellowship was made possible by a grant from Antarctica New Zealand to COMNAP. The deadline for applications was 15 May 2011. It is hoped COMNAP can offer a Research Fellowship on an annual basis.

COMNAP Symposium

The "Responding to Change through New Approaches" Symposium took place on 11 August, in Buenos Aires. Over 120 people attended, with 12 presentations and 15 posters that were selected by a Symposium Review Committee. Symposium Proceedings were published and distributed to all COMNAP Members in November 2010 (ISBN 978-0-473-17888-8). Copies can be obtained by contacting the COMNAP Executive Secretary.

Non-native Species Workshop and the Non-Native Species Checklists for Supply Chain Managers

The COMNAP/SCAR Non-native Species Workshop was convened by Dr. Yves Frenot on the margins of the COMNAP Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2010 (8 August 2010, Buenos Aires, Argentina) in order to continue to raise awareness of the risks of non-native species introductions by human vectors. The preliminary results of the IPY “Aliens in Antarctica” project were discussed. COMNAP took very seriously the discussions held during the workshop and noted, especially, the need to develop simple and inexpensive awareness tools which could be used by National Antarctic Program supply chain managers (see COMNAP ATCM XXXIV Working Paper *Raising awareness of non-native species introductions: Workshop results and checklists for supply chain managers*). The checklists were made available to all National Antarctic Programs in November, are available in many formats for ease of use, in both English and Spanish, and copies of the checklists can be found at www.comnap.aq/nnsenvironment. At the COMNAP AGM, August 2010 in Buenos Aires, it was noted by the Environmental Expert Group leader that cooperation with the CEP on the issue of the introduction of non-native species into the Antarctic was, the most significant, current environmental issue and also said that engaging in the CEP's work program on non-native species was considered a high priority task. COMNAP through its Environmental Expert Group continues to focus attention on education regarding non-native species and on sharing best practice as regards prevention of non-native species introduction in the Antarctic region.

Energy Management Workshop

Considering the discussion that took place at ATCM XXXIII and the discussions and recommendations of the ATME, it was agreed that a COMNAP Energy Management Workshop would be held on 8 August 2010, in Buenos Aires. The workshop, convened by Energy and Technology Expert Group Leader, David Blake with oversight from COMNAP EXCOM Vice Chair, Kazuyuki Shiraishi included presentations and also allowed time for discussion in order to share best practice related to energy management in Antarctica.

IPY Outreach Workshop

COMNAP Outreach Expert Group members met in Tromsø and Oslo in June 2010 on the margins of the IPY Science Conference. The group held workshop meetings, provided ‘masterclass’ sessions for the Association of Early Polar Career Scientists (APECS) colleagues, and worked together in the IPY Press Centre to promote the science and operations from members’ organisations. These combined activities afforded the Expert Group sufficient time together to share best professional practice and discuss past examples of successful joint communication and outreach projects and examine in-depth how this network would continue to work successfully post-IPY.

Medical Expert Group – Workshop and Restructure

The Medical Expert Group met on the margins of the AGM on 8 August in Buenos Aires to discuss pandemic management in Antarctica. The Expert Group on Human Biology and Medicine, Life Sciences Standing Scientific Group of SCAR and the Medical Expert Group of COMNAP proposed to combine the two groups in order to be more effective and reduce duplication of efforts. The proposal was first discussed by the joint Executive Committees, and in November 2010, the COMNAP EXCOM agreed to the proposal. The combined group will be known as the Joint Advisory Group on Antarctic Human Science and Medicine. It will remain responsive to the needs of both SCAR and COMNAP, but will have a reporting line via COMNAP alone.

COMNAP Products and Tools

COMNAP Ship Position Reporting System (SPRS)

The SPRS (www.comnap.aq/sprs) is an optional, voluntary system for exchange of information about National Antarctic Program ship operations. Its primary purpose is to facilitate collaboration between National Antarctic Programs, however, it can also make a very useful contribution to safety with all SPRS information made available to the Rescue Coordination Centres (RCCs) which cover the Antarctic region, as an additional source of information complementing all other national and international systems in place.

The Antarctic Flight Information Manual (AFIM)

AFIM is a handbook of aeronautical information published by COMNAP as a tool towards safe air operations in Antarctica as recommended by the ATCM Recommendation XV-20 *Air safety in Antarctica*. An in-depth review of the AFIM is in progress. The AFIM continues to be updated via information from National Antarctic Programs and revisions are prepared and distributed on an annual basis to all National Antarctic Programs and to other subscribers.

Antarctic Telecommunications Operators Manual (ATOM)

ATOM is an evolution of the handbook of telecommunications practices to which ATCM Recommendation X-3 *Improvement of Telecommunications in Antarctica and the Collection and Distribution of Antarctic Meteorological Data* refers. COMNAP members and Search and Rescue authorities have access to the latest version (March 2011) at www.comnap.aq/membersonly/atom (login required).

Accident, Incident and Near-Miss Reporting (AINMR)

Information on problems encountered in Antarctica has always been exchanged. The very first ATCM recommended in Recommendation I-VII *Exchange of Information on Logistics Problems* that this should be so (effective 30 April 1962). COMNAP Annual General Meetings offer an opportunity for Members to exchange such information and also a new, comprehensive AINMR System is under development as one of COMNAP's projects. The AINMR's primary objective is: To capture outline information about events that had, or could have had, serious consequences; and/or reveal lessons to be learned; and/or are novel, very unusual events. So that National Antarctic Programs can learn from each other to reduce the risk of serious consequences occurring in the course of their activities.

For more information, please visit COMNAP's web site at www.comnap.aq or email us at info@comnap.aq.

Appendix 1. COMNAP officers, projects and expert groups

Executive Committee (EXCOM) The COMNAP Chair and Vice-Chairs are elected officers of COMNAP. The elected officers plus the Executive Secretary, compose the COMNAP Executive Committee as follows:

Position	Officer	Term expires
Immediate Past Chair	José Retamales (INACH) jretamales@inach.cl	Aug-2011
Chair	Heinrich Miller (AWI) heinrich.miller@awi.de	AGM 2014
Vice-Chairs	Kazuyuki Shiraishi (NPRI) kshiraishi@nipr.ac.jp	Aug-2011
	Maaïke Vancauwenberghe (BELSPO) maaike.vancauwenberghe@belspo.be	AGM 2012
	Yuansheng Li (PRIC) lysh@pric.gov.cn	AGM 2013
	Mariano Memolli (DNA) drmemolli@gmail.com	AGM 2013
	Brian Stone (US NSF) bstone@nsf.gov	AGM 2014
	Juan Jose Danobeitia (CMIMA) jjdanobeitia@cmima.es	AGM 2014
Executive Secretary	Michelle Rogan-Finnemore michelle.finnemore@comnap.aq	30 Sept 2015

Table 1 – COMNAP Executive Committee.

Projects (2010)

Project	Project Manager	EXCOM officer (oversight)
Antarctic glossary	Valerie Lukin	Mariano Memolli
AFIM – Consideration of the results of the review	Brian Stone & Giuseppe De Rossi	Maaïke Vancauwenberghe
AINMR Reporting System & implementation	Robert Culshaw	Kazuyuki Shiraishi
King George Island project (APASI)	Michelle Rogan-Finnemore	Jose Retamales
Energy standard terminology development	David Blake	Kazuyuki Shiraishi
Identifying Risk from Tsunami to Coastal Antarctic Infrastructure	Michelle Rogan-Finnemore	Jose Retamales
Review of equipment available at Antarctic stations for oil spill response	To be determined	Mariano Memolli

Table 2 – COMNAP Projects currently in progress.

Expert Groups (2010)

Expert Group (topic)	Expert Group leader	EXCOM officer (oversight)
Science	Heinz Miller	Jose Retamales
Outreach	Linda Capper	Michelle Rogan-Finnemore
Air	Giuseppe De Rossi	Maaïke Vancauwenberghe
Environment	Sandra Potter	Maaïke Vancauwenberghe
Training	Veronica Vlasich	Mariano Memolli
Medical	Iain Grant	Mariano Memolli
Shipping	Juan Jose Danobeitia	Jose Retamales
Safety	Robert Culshaw	Kazuyuki Shiraishi
Energy & Technology	David Blake	Yuansheng Li
Data Management	Michelle Rogan-Finnemore	Jose Retamales
External Relationships	Michelle Rogan-Finnemore	EXCOM All
Strategic Framework	Michelle Rogan-Finnemore	Jose Retamales

Table 3 – COMNAP Expert Groups.

Appendix 2. Meetings

Previous 12 months

9 - 12 August, 2010, COMNAP Annual General Meeting (COMNAP XXII) & IX Symposium, Buenos Aires, Argentina hosted by the COMNAP member for Argentina, Direccion Nacional del Antartico (DNA).

17 – 19 November, 2010, COMNAP Executive Committee (EXCOM) Meeting, Shanghai, China hosted by COMNAP Vice Chair, Yuansheng Li of the Polar Research Institute of China (PRIC).

1 – 3 August, 2011, COMNAP Annual General Meeting (COMNAP XXIII), Stockholm, Sweden, hosted by the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat. In conjunction with COMNAP XXIV, two workshops will be held on the margins of the AGM. These are “The Management Implications of a Changing Antarctica” and “Inland Traversing”.

Upcoming 12 months

2012 COMNAP Annual General Meeting (COMNAP XXIV), Portland, Oregon, USA (16 – 20 July, 2012) in conjunction with the SCAR Open Science Conference and associated meetings.

2012 COMNAP Symposium, Portland, Oregon, USA (15 July, 2012) “Sustainable Solutions to Antarctic Challenges: Supporting Antarctic Research in the 21st Century”. Open event.