ASOC Report
XXXVI Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting
Brussels, Belgium
20-29 May 2013

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XXXVI Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting  
Brussels, Belgium, 20-29 May, 2013

Summary

The XXXVI Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) was conducted in Brussels, Belgium from 20-29 May, 2013. ASOC was represented by 17 experts on the ASOC delegation and four delegates as NGO representatives on national delegations. Many ASOC delegates had a primary interest in CCAMLR Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and attended the ATCM in anticipation of the special CCAMLR meeting in Bremerhaven in July 2013. ASOC submitted eleven information papers and one background paper on topics including shipping, climate change, wilderness, human impacts, tourism, biological prospecting, the Ross Sea MPA proposal, and repair and remediation of environmental damage, in addition to the report of ASOC to the XXXVI ATCM. ASOC also co-authored a Working Paper on visitor guidelines for a site at Deception Island.

The selection of themes of the information papers reflected the key priority issues identified by the Coalition. Salient points of the ATCM from an ASOC perspective include:

• Regardless of attempts by Parties, a resolution to give support to the CCAMLR MPA process and the CCAMLR Bremerhaven meeting, co-sponsored by Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands was not agreed, signalling that Parties still have significant disagreements on MPAs going into Bremerhaven.

• A workshop on a multi-year strategic workplan for the ATCM yielded weak results, despite a two-day workshop and multiple additional formal and informal meetings. The final version of the workplan covers just the first year of work, and will require even more discussion next year, which is likely to further delay the ATCM from making substantive decisions.

• An intersessional contact group on climate change was established in response to the SCAR update on its Antarctic Climate Change and the Environment (ACCE) and several ASOC papers.

• The first ever special workshop on Search and Rescue (SAR) met for one day, with excellent representation of experts from various country coast guards. The workshop helped frame numerous gaps in the existing SAR setup and steps towards improved capacity, which were reflected in a Resolution.

• The time allotted to the Tourism Working Group and its agenda were shortened due to the SAR and strategic workplan workshops and overall discussion was limited. The TWG agreed on a Decision aiming to increase electronic information exchange regarding the types of activities that take place at particular sites, to add to other information on tourism provided to the Electronic Information Exchange System.

• Several recent official inspections highlighted the gap that exists among different Antarctic programs about standards of environmental protection and the quantity and quality of science conducted at those stations.

• A Resolution on biological prospecting was agreed, signalling that the ATCM is the appropriate forum to deal with biological prospecting in Antarctica. There was no progress on actually starting discussions on this issue, which does not even appear in the strategic workplan.
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- An ASOC paper on black carbon, which was introduced in a special event on the first week, received considerable attention and support - it is the first time this issue was before the ATCM.

Wider concerns raised at the meeting were:
- Increase in tourism spread into new areas;
- Increase in the number of tourists staying in camps overnight from vessels;
- Countries proposing to open new bases including Korea, China and Turkey;
- Failure of ATCM to respond to adverse inspections of bases;
- Failure of the ATCM to respond to the CEP report on Repair and Remediation. There needs to be greater awareness of the CEPs work by the ATCM.
- The need to progress wilderness areas as a protection mechanism.
1 Introduction

The XXXVI Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) was conducted in Brussels, Belgium from 20 – 29 May, 2013.

This Report on the XXXVI ATCM focuses on the key issues for ASOC member groups. It does not intend to be an exhaustive report, but rather to complement the official report of the ATCM. The report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 contains an overview of the XXXVI ATCM;
- Sections 3 – 10 report in more detail on some of the key issues at XXXVI ATCM.
- Section 11 contains conclusions.
- Appendix 1 lists commonly used Antarctic acronyms. Appendix 2 contains a list of ASOC documents submitted to the meeting. Appendix 3 summarizes the discussions of management groups for Antarctic Specially Managed Areas. Appendix 4 lists the Strategic Priorities for the Multi-Year Strategic Work Plan.

2 Overview of the XXXVI ATCM

2.1 ATCM structure

ATCMs give effect to obligations under the 1959 Antarctic Treaty, and the 1991 Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty.

ATCMs are hosted by Consultative Parties (the full voting members – currently 28) in English-language alphabetical order. There are also 19 Non-Consultative Parties – non-voting members, some of which are active in Antarctica and the Antarctic Treaty System although the majority are not. The ATCM lasts one and a half weeks, and conducts its business through a number of Working Groups – presently on Legal and Institutional, Tourism, and Operational Matters. In addition, the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) meets during the ATCM.

The Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC) has Expert status at ATCMs, the only environmental non-governmental environmental organization with such access.

The ATCM received 67 Working Papers and 111 Information Papers tabled by Parties, Observers and Experts, as well as a set of Secretariat papers dealing with operations of the Secretariat and a reviews of the status of ATCM recommendations. It produced a Final Report containing 21 Measures (mainly management plans for protected/managed areas and

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1 This report was written by Claire Christian, Rod Downie, Jessica O'Reilly, Pam Pearson, Ricardo Roura, Paula Senff and Barry Weeber.
2 Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the USA and Uruguay. In Brussels, the Czech Republic was accepted as the 29th Consultative Party.
3 Austria, Belarus, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Korea (DPRK), Monaco, Papua New Guinea, Romania, Slovak Republic, Switzerland, Turkey, and Venezuela.
4 Formally ASOC is an “Expert” to the ATCM and an “Observer” to the CEP meetings. In practice the role of ASOC is that of observer, as the term is commonly used outside the ATS.
5 A Measure is legally binding once it has entered into force.
historic sites and monuments); 6 Resolutions (of which 4 are of particular interest); and 7 Decisions (of which 2 are of some interest). Electronic copies of these documents are available on the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat website - http://ats.aq/. Information Papers are available in the original language, and Working Papers are available in the four official languages - English, French, Spanish and Russian.

The Final Report of the Meeting on the ATS website provides an official record of key discussions and decisions on all matters discussed. As an overall comment on how ASOC’s team performed, our 12 substantive Information Papers were widely commended, and were used and referred to in the ensuing debates.

2.2 ASOC delegation

ASOC was represented by delegates either on the ASOC delegation or as NGO representatives on national delegations. The ASOC delegation was composed of:

Jim Barnes (ASOC Executive Director and Head of Delegation, France); Jill Barrett (British Institute of International and Comparative Law, UK); Claire Christian (ASOC Secretariat Director, US); Steve Campbell (Antarctic Ocean Alliance, Australia); Andrea Kavanagh (Pew Environment Group, US); Geoff Keey (Antarctic Ocean Alliance, New Zealand); Gerry Leape (Pew Environment Group, US); Rob Nicoll (Antarctic Ocean Alliance, Australia); Dr. Ricardo Roura (ASOC Senior Advisor and CEP Representative, The Netherlands) ; Dr. Tina Tin (ASOC Advisor, France); Dr. Rodolfo Werner (Antarctic and Southern Ocean Advisor, International Policy / Pew Environment Group, Argentina)

In addition, four government delegations included NGO representatives from ASOC:

Denise Boyd (representing Australian NGOs) on the Australian delegation; Rod Downie (WWF-UK) on the UK delegation; Dr. Jessica O’Reilly on the US delegation; and Barry Weeber (ECO-NZ) on the NZ delegation

2.3 Materials submitted

ASOC submitted eleven information papers and one background paper. Additionally, ASOC co-authored a Working Paper on site guidelines for Deception Island, together with several Parties and IAATO, and submitted a report to the ATCM summarising its activities over the previous year.

The ASOC team published three issues of the international newspaper ECO.

The ASOC information papers and ECOs are available on the ASOC website (http://www.asoc.org/news-and-publications/archives).

2.4 ASOC priorities

ASOC’s general priorities for the XXXVI ATCM were to promote:

• Increased momentum towards a network of MPAs in the Southern Ocean at the CCAMLR special meeting in Bremerhaven in July 2013.

6 A Resolution is hortatory.
7 A Decision is an administrative action, usually relating to a short-term event, and like a Resolution, hortatory.
8 Exact text of these Resolutions and Decisions can be obtained from the ATS website’s official Report of the Meeting.
• Significant progress on developing comprehensive tourism regulations in the context of a clearly formulated vision for Antarctic tourism.

• A renewed focus on mitigating climate change in Antarctica and around the world, with attention paid to emerging climate issues such as the impact of short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs).

• A substantive multi-year strategic work plan that would lead the ATCM to make effective progress on environmental protection.

• Fuller implementation of the Environment Protocol, including repair and remediation of environment damage.

• Continued progress towards the goal of preserving wilderness values and limiting the human footprint in Antarctica.

• Serious attention to the need to strengthen the current Polar Code draft to ensure that it is meaningful for the Antarctic.

2.5 Key outcomes

Positives

• The one-day workshop on search and rescue (SAR), though not making enormous progress, did agree to recommend that CCAMLR discuss further how to make VMS information available to rescue coordination centres (RCCs), an issue which has been controversial in the past. Additionally, COMNAP was tasked with some actions to improve SAR coordination.

• An intersessional ICG on climate change was convened to consider the recommendations from the ATME on climate change in light of the recent update on the ACCE from SCAR and other papers on climate change, including papers from ASOC.

• Some Parties made fairly strong statements regarding harvesting in ASMAs and ASPAs, which were reflected in suitable report language. Based on the approval by CCAMLR of CM 91-02 Protection of the values of Antarctic Specially Managed and Protected Areas in 2012, the CCAMLR representatives suggested appropriate language for the draft management plan for ASMA 1 that would help to ensure that no harvesting takes place in this area - a precedent for other specially managed or protected areas adopted by the ATCM.

• The adoption of a repair and remediation manual.

Negatives

• A resolution to support CCAMLR’s upcoming Bremerhaven meeting focused on the Ross Sea and East Antarctica proposals, co-sponsored by Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, was not adopted. However, the report language on the proposal was fairly positive and reflects the intent of the failed resolution.

• The workshop on the multi-year strategic work plan (MYSWP) failed to produce a substantive document, and in fact the resulting document is essentially a single-year work plan with very few items of work.
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- Very little substantive progress was made on key ASOC issues including the Polar Code, wilderness, and tourism.

- A trend of infrastructure expansion recorded across the board, including proposed new bases, a hard rock airstrip, and several ‘historic’ sites, some of which have dubious historic value.

- Russia and India reported an incident in which a substantial amount of equipment and fuel was lost at sea, following the collapse of an ice barrier. The paper was not submitted to the CEP and was not discussed in the Operations Working Group.

Presently indeterminate

- The approval of a resolution on tourism, regarding information exchange about the activities that take place at particular sites, represents some modest progress, once it is implemented.

- Similarly, the approval of a resolution on biological prospecting is a positive step, compensated by the unwillingness of some Parties to discuss this issue in any substantive detail or to include it in the strategic workplan for the ATCM.

Key instruments approved

The Measures, Resolutions and Decisions approved of particular importance for ASOC are:

- Decision A on Information Exchange on Tourism and Non-governmental Activities, which revises the Electronic Information Exchange System (EIES) to allow Parties to input more detailed information about the type of activities taking place and the numbers of people taking part in them.

- Decision I on a Multi-Year Strategic Work Plan for the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, which put forward an initial plan describing cooperation in various work areas that would take place over the intersessional period and during the 2014 meeting.

- Resolution A on an Antarctic Clean-up Manual, which recommends that Parties disseminate and encourage the use of the manual approved by the CEP.

- Resolution H on Biological Prospecting in Antarctica, which reaffirms that the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) is the appropriate framework for managing bioprospecting activities, and recommends enhanced reporting to the ATS on any bioprospecting activities by Parties.

- Resolution K on Site Guidelines for visitors, which updates the list of sites subject to Site Guidelines and approves the modified site guidelines for a number of sites.

- Resolution M on Improved Collaboration on Search and Rescue (SAR) in Antarctica, which reiterates the importance of the cooperation of the ATS with international organizations such as the IMO, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and other relevant fora to promote SAR procedures relevant to the Antarctic context.

2.6 Operation of the Antarctic Treaty System

Update on Non-Consultative Parties

The Czech Republic became a consultative party. Colombia, Turkey and Venezuela all had substantial delegations; of these, only Venezuela has regularly sent representatives in recent
years. All reported some level of Antarctic activity in cooperation with various ATCPs, and progress made on adhering to the Protocol. The first two announced their interest to build new stations in coming years.

**Future ATCM hosts**
The XXXVI ATCM will be held in Brasilia, Brazil from 12 – 21 May 2014.

### 3 Meeting of the Committee for Environmental Protection –

#### 3.1 Strategic Discussions on the Future Work of the CEP

New Zealand’s Antarctic Environments Portal, which was co-sponsored by Australia and SCAR, was better received this year. Some Members, particularly Argentina, expressed concern about the ownership and content of the Portal, which may be seen as reflecting the consensus of the CEP on certain issues (e.g. maps of the South Atlantic area, topographic names), when in fact it would be managed by a number of independent individuals. Overall the Environments Portal is a very useful tool and will provide a new way to communicate Antarctic realities to the public.

#### 3.2 Annex I – Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

No CEEs were submitted this year. Two IEEs were submitted: an IEE for a Princess Elisabeth Land camp from China, and an *Initial Environmental Evaluation for Establishment of the Ground Station for Earth Observation Satellites at the Indian Research Station Bharati at Larsemann Hills, East Antarctica*, submitted by India.

India has submitted a couple of IEEs in recent years that expand from their previous CEE, which raises questions as to why their project keeps expanding. The Chinese IEE also raised some questions since it concluded that a new facility built in a pristine area and operating for at least ten years will not have more than a minor or transitory impact.

Additionally, Brazil submitted *Terms of Reference of the Initial Environmental Evaluation (IEE): Reconstruction and Operation of Ferraz Station (Admiralty Bay, Antarctica)*. The Brazilian navy rebuilt a temporary station on their old helipad, using a rather large number of containers, and pending the process to rebuild their station entirely. Logistically it has been quite a feat - the temporary station is now fully functioning, and is larger than some of the permanent stations in the area - but the overall environmental impact - as shown on a short movie - has been substantial, because of the fire and the hurried demolition/reconstruction works. No word of a CEE yet or to where exactly on the Keller Peninsula the new station would be built.

*Mitigation measures of environmental impacts caused by Jang Bogo construction during 2012/13 season* from Korea - one of the few EIA follow ups submitted to the CEP. Unfortunately Korea had a substantial fuel spill, which they contained as best as they could. Their openness is welcomed, albeit it confirms the lasting impact that results from building a new station in a near-pristine site.

*First steps towards the realization of a gravel runway near Mario Zucchelli Station: initial considerations and possible benefits for the Terra Nova Bay area* from Italy - this would be quite problematic if built. It is going to cause a huge impact on the construction stage, and its operation would substantially increase and expand human activity in the area. It is apparent that Korea would have an interest in having such an airstrip too, although the trigger for its construction has been a progressive reduction of US logistic support to the Italian Antarctic
programme, partly a consequence of decreasing quality of the sea ice runway used by USAP. The project does not bode well considering that the Italian Antarctic program is very short of funds.

There were several papers from Russia about the drilling at Lake Vostok. This was complemented by a proposal to designate the drilling tower as a historic site that was subsequently adopted by the ATCM. Meanwhile Russia has not responded to inquiries about their clean up plans concerning the borehole.

Overall, the papers presented under this agenda item indicate that some Parties’ activities are not in accordance with the spirit of the Protocol with respect to assessing and mitigating environmental impacts. For many Parties EIAs have become a procedural issue and are not treated seriously, while a large number of Parties don’t ever prepare EIAs at all.

3.3 Annex II – Conservation of Antarctic Flora and Fauna

The UK submitted Identification of potential climate change refugia for emperor penguins: a science-based approach, which recommends the use of remote sensing techniques for monitoring emperor penguin colonies, with the aim of identifying climate change refugia.

3.4 Annex V – Protected Areas

Russia made several interventions linking the adoption of revised management plans with the need to carry out prior monitoring of those areas, and in particular of the natural features that were used as the bases to establish ASPAs - in other words, ASPA proponents had to justify the ongoing designation of the ASPA based on monitoring outcomes.

China submitted a proposal to establish an ASMA around Kunlun Station in Dome A, the highest point in Antarctica. This is a very large area (equivalent to a square 140 km a side). The proposal is based on the models used by the US at the South Pole and SW Anvers Island - i.e. that of a very large area, managed by a single party. Parties were not convinced about the need for an ASMA - there was no apparent conflict of activities or current environmental threats - and were not prepared to adopt it. However, China noted that the area had been adopted on precautionary grounds to anticipate future developments. Eventually, Parties agreed to hold informal discussions through the year to improve the proposal.

The issue of fishing in ASMAs and ASPAs was discussed in passing. The revised management plan for ASMA 1 Admiralty Bay will be reviewed over the intersessional period, and the hope is that it will become very clear to everybody that no harvesting should take place there. This would be a good precedent for other areas. ASOC spoke against harvesting in ASMAs or ASPAs and the US made also a fairly strong remark regarding ASMA 1. The CCAMLR representatives were supportive of efforts to establish a process to ensure fishing did not occur in ASPAs and ASMAs in the future.

**Human footprint and wilderness values**

New Zealand presented WP 35 "Possible guidance material to assist Parties to take account of wilderness values when undertaking environmental impact assessments". During his presentation, Dr. Harry Keys linked up the informal intersessional discussions (while acknowledging ASOC’s contribution) with Belgium's WP 39 on inviolate areas for future microbial research and with ASOC's IP 60 on wilderness mapping. There was overwhelming support from Australia, Netherlands, Germany, France, Belgium and the USA. Norway, which provided solid input during the intersessional work, did not enter into the discussion. Essentially, New Zealand now has the mandate to produce a wilderness supplement to the
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EIA guidelines that could be part of the process of the guidelines review. New Zealand was asked informally whether it could lead a formal ICG but it declined and now, on the 5-year plan, only committed to continuing the discussions informally.

New Zealand and Australia welcomed ASOC’s IP 60. The Netherlands went as far as endorsing our recommendations. There was not much discussion following the presentation of ASOC's IP since most discussion of the topic had taken place after the New Zealand presentation.

**CEP agenda item 3 Strategic discussions of the CEP**

ASOC presented IP 61 on human impacts. Russia, Argentina and the UK welcomed the paper. Argentina and the UK underlined that the Antarctic Treaty has achieved a lot in terms of environmental protection. Belgium gave the most clearly supportive intervention.

**Management plans and site guidelines**

A large number of management plans previously examined by the SGMP was agreed, and an equally large number was sent to the SGMP for consideration next period between sessions.

Spain and UK introduced a paper highlighting the limited compliance by many ASPA users with reporting obligations required following visits to ASPAs. This highlights limitations of the systems in place with respect to gathering the information that is required for the assessment of cumulative impacts resulting from visitation to these areas.

**MPA Issues**

Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands prepared WP *The Antarctic Treaty role regarding the development of a comprehensive system of Marine Protected Areas*, which included a resolution that indicated the support of the ATCM for the development of a system of MPAs and encouraged Parties who are represented at CCAMLR to send delegates to the special meeting in Bremerhaven. Despite several attempts to revise the Resolution, it could not be agreed, even with watered-down language. (It should be noted that the Resolution was almost entirely constructed with approved text from earlier documents of either the ATCM or CCAMLR.) Tempers flared during the reading of the report, regarding the degree of support the CEP had actually given to CCAMLR's work on MPAs (despite the non-approval of the Resolution). Nonetheless the CEP report language is still quite upbeat and records that the CEP welcomed the continued work of CCAMLR on MPA - that is, the original intent of the Resolution - but that it did not have time to agree on the content of a resolution. This is also reflected in the ATCM report. Of course, the diplomatic language does not necessarily reflect the reality, which is a lack of consensus on this matter among ATCPs and CCAMLR Members.

Other MPA issues concerned reporting on the Workshop on Circumpolar MPAs, and an intervention made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium. CCAMLR noted that work on MPAs is now taking place in all nine planning areas.

During the meeting there were a number of bilateral and side discussions on CCAMLR MPAs, as well as opportunities for the ASOC team - many of whom attended the ATCM with a primary or sole interest on CCAMLR MPAs - to lobby representatives from key countries, including those who also attend CCAMLR meetings. Furthermore, some CCAMLR-only delegates also travelled to Brussels to meet their colleagues on the margins of the ATCM.
4 Multi-Year Strategic Work Plan

The Multi-Year Strategic Work Plan (MYSWP) workshop was chaired by Belgium and Australia. Its beginning was marked by much debate over the listing and prioritization of topics. The four primary areas initially worked out included: cooperating in 1) ensuring a robust and effective ATS; 2) strengthening protection of the Antarctic environment, 3) studying and addressing the impacts of climate change, and 4) the effective management and regulation of human activities. The area of climate change was robustly debated regarding its level of importance, and relevance as a subtopic under the human activities priority, or as a science priority. This debate consumed most of day one of the two-day workshop.

Day two was marked by tension over two subgroups of Parties, one group debating action items underneath the major priorities discussed the day before, and the other group continuing to debate the major priorities and the concept behind a MYSWP. Action items were listed under the main priority headings, from which climate change was eventually removed as a main priority (and resituated under “action items”). The chairs produced a list of action items for the workshop participants to discuss.

There was robust discussion about liability in terms of repair and remediation, with some Parties wanting this listed as an action step and others concerned about making an international priority over what are now domestic legislative concerns. Some Parties wanted to include the ASOC-suggested debate over establishing a common vision for the Antarctic, but this was ultimately deleted in favour of more pragmatic but less ambitious action steps. Bioprospecting continued to be a source of contention, with many Parties in support of its discussion, but some parties were not willing to discuss this topic within the Antarctic Treaty System.

Near the end of the workshop, the chairs produced a chart listing the priorities and actions, with the intent of having the participants fill it in with a 5-year work plan. Due to time constraints some participants formed a contact group, which met for several hours over the remaining first week of the ATCM. There was however no consensus on the 5 year work plan and several Parties refused to entertain any action steps beyond the next year, even though others proposed several ways of noting the flexibility of the multi year work plan (i.e., brackets, italics, color coding). The ultimate output of the workshop was a plan for only one year of work. There were also discussions over the content of action steps. Some Parties wanted to schedule when WPs and IPs would be presented to facilitate focused discussions, and considered the production of such papers to be sufficient as action steps. Others wanted more substantial benchmarks besides the discussion of WPs and IPs. In the end, the tasks for 2014 were the only “action items” that remained in the text (for details on strategic priorities see Appendix 4).

In sum, the MWSWP ended up being less productive and substantive than the intersessional work might have suggested. Key controversial areas were deleted instead of Parties deciding to give them more focused attention in light of their contentious nature. The MWSWP as it currently stands will take time from each ATCM as the Parties will need to debate the work for each coming year instead of consolidating this planning work during the workshop in Brussels. However, some key areas of interest for ASOC, including climate change and tourism, remain in the document as agreed-upon work priorities.
5 Inspection reports

There were three inspections in the 2012-13 season, one of which had a first phase in the previous season. Their findings generally highlighted the gap that exists among different Antarctic programs regarding the standards of environmental protection and the quantity and quality of science conducted at various stations. This gap has been apparent in inspections from one or more decades ago. There are differences among National Antarctic Programs (NAPs), and there seem to be some regional difference in standards between the stations in the Antarctic Peninsula and those in Queen Maud Land - where newer stations are located - with some Parties receiving poor scores for their facilities in both regions.

One of the inspections noted the changing patterns of operations, with two national research stations not run by NAPs but by other operators (an NGO and a satellite company).

6 Climate Change Issues

Climate change issues were somewhat more prominent this year than in the past. The SCAR update on the Antarctic Climate Change and the Environment Report, plus ASOC’s three papers on climate change, received a fair amount of discussion. This led to the formation of an intersessional contact group on climate change, and the terms of reference included mention of ASOC’s papers. The ICG will be discussing the recommendations from the ATME on climate change in light of the ACCE report and other recent information.

**RACER Trial for the Antarctic:** WWF is currently leading an exciting trial, looking at the applicability of RACER in the Antarctic. At ATCM XXXV (2012), the Parties endorsed a trial of RACER in the Antarctic, noting its potential to complement existing Antarctic conservation tools. With funding from the UK Government and support from the Norwegian Polar Institute, RACER is currently being trialled in one ecoregion (specifically Antarctic Conservation Biogeographic Region 3 - North-west Antarctic Peninsula). Initial progress was communicated in IP 73 (UK and Norway) and in a presentation during a side event at ATCM XXXVI, where it was positively received by those Parties present and SCAR. Outcomes of the full trial are expected to be shared next year at ATCM XXXVII in Brazil.

**Black Carbon and Short-lived Climate Pollutants:** The potential impacts of short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs) was introduced at a number of different venues during the Brussels ATCM. An Information Paper (IP 65) drafted by new ASOC member International Cryosphere Climate Initiative (ICCI) was circulated prior to the meeting, and presented at the CEP. Four governments (Sweden, Norway, Belgium and The Netherlands) in their subsequent interventions explicitly supported the inclusion of work on black carbon in the CEP’s agenda and at the ATCM.

ASOC sponsored a side event presenting basic information about SLCPs and their impact on Antarctica, including new modelling sponsored by ICCI that shows a strong contribution to radiative forcing on Antarctica by two black carbon sources (cookstoves and off-road diesel transport). Much of this forcing seems to arise from black carbon suspended in the atmosphere. Ice core studies published within the past year however also show levels of deposited black carbon, especially on West Antarctica and the Peninsula. Although these levels are only about a tenth of observations in the Arctic, they are rising on Antarctica, while Arctic black carbon has fallen in recent decades. Increased southern hemisphere forest fires and near-Antarctic shipping are two potential reasons for this rise.

In the MYSWP, an attempt to introduce black carbon work as a specific point of work failed,
as national delegations chose a more general approach to future work that included little meaningful detail (see separate point). The two delegations objecting in side conversations afterwards clarified that their objections were on those grounds, as opposed to any opposition to MYSWP black carbon work per se.

7 Tourism Issues

The tourism discussion was generally dull. It mostly centred on reports from two intersessional contact groups concerning information exchange and the diversification of tourism activities, for which the substantive discussion had largely taken place intersessionally. This was complemented by discussions on site guidelines and yachts - the usual diversion from more substantive matters involving the activities of the mainstream tourism industry. The issue of a track at Aitcho/Barrientos Island was discussed again this year, although more succinctly than in the previous ATCM.

IAATO documents reported on two developments of interest. The first is an increase on fly-sail operations to King George Island and beyond, which have resulted in a spike of tourist landings (i.e. fewer tourists and ships than some years back, yet more landings). Reportedly this results from demands from "time poor" tourists that cannot afford the extra time involved in crossing the Drake Passage back and forth. It also results from an increase in docking prices in Ushuaia, which in turn results from internal economic issues. Apparently the relatively new instrumentation at the airstrip, which enables all-weather landings, are only used for military/NAP aircrafts and not used for commercial tourism operations. A second development is that overnight camping is now a very common activity whereas a very few years ago it was something offered occasionally by a company or two.

Together, these two trends illustrate the continued process of diversification and expansion of Antarctic tourism. The meeting agreed on a Resolution that requests additional detail be provided to the Electronic Exchange of Information System run by the Secretariat on the activities conducted at various sites. There is already a search function in the ATS website that provides information about some sites, showing which operators have been where and when, within the past few years; information on the activities that take place there will provide additional detail and "texture" to this information. Over time this would help build a picture of what happens at some key sites, which would lead to a better understanding of potential cumulative impacts, although not to an identification of actual impacts. This is not an uninteresting outcome, but not a major one either, and reporting systems still need to be developed before being implemented.

8 Shipping Issues

A special working group on search and rescue (SAR) was held during the ATCM. Many Parties had representatives from relevant government agencies (Navy, Coast Guard, Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres, etc.) in attendance, which ensured good representation from SAR practitioners. ASOC presented IP 63, An Antarctic Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System, which reiterated ASOC’s call for the ATCM to require all vessels in the Treaty Area to operate Automatic Identification Systems (AIS), to transmit long-range information and tracking (LRIT) data to an appropriate data centre, and to develop an Antarctic vessel traffic monitoring and information system to improve SAR efforts, beginning with the Peninsula area. ASOC also presented IP 59, Update to Vessel Incidents in Antarctic Waters, which reviewed vessel incidents and mapped their location. ASOC recommended:
specific requirements for equipment, procedures and training for oil spill response; additional training for all personnel on ships in polar waters; support through the IMO Standards of Training and Watchkeeping (STW) Subcommittee for advanced training in ice-covered waters; and inclusion of fishing vessels in the Polar Code.

ASOC presented IP 66, *Discharge of sewage and grey water from vessels in Antarctic Treaty waters*, which expressed concerns that the current system for the management of sewage and grey water waste streams may not be sufficient to provide adequate protection for Antarctic ecosystems and wildlife. ASOC encouraged members to work to include within the Polar Code a prohibition on the release of untreated sewage or untreated grey water in Antarctic waters.

Parties were in general not overly supportive of the ASOC papers, however, they were able to support a resolution recommending that CCAMLR discuss further how to make VMS information available to rescue coordination centres (RCCs), an issue which has been controversial in the past. Additionally, COMNAP was tasked with some actions to improve SAR coordination. The working group was thus a good first step towards improving SAR operations in the Antarctic.

9 Liability

Eight Parties have now ratified Annex VI, with the UK, New Zealand and Norway all announcing that they have ratified at the meeting. The Annex will probably not enter into force before the next ATCM.

10 Other Issues

10.1 SCAR Lecture

Dr. Chuck Kennicott presented the SCAR lecture, which was on subglacial lakes. It provided an overview of the different subglacial lake drilling projects and drilling methods.

10.2 Dutch research facilities at Rothera

Dutch officials made a presentation about their new facility at UK’s Rothera during an event at the Dutch embassy. It consists of four mobile labs/containers that can be slotted inside a "docking station". For a number of reasons - including liability about environmental damage - the outer building and its foundations are British; only the containers are Dutch. It seems like an innovative model of cooperation and sharing of facilities, albeit one in which the station owner retains almost complete control on all matters except what research is carried out at the labs.

10.3 Meetings of management groups

Three ASMAs are managed by the various Parties active there, with ASOC and IAATO acting as observers. These Management Groups discuss issues electronically through the year, and meet on the margins of the ATCM to discuss key issues.

The discussions are very specific to particular sites and reflect local management issues, but they are also symptomatic of developments in Antarctica concerning the interface between science, tourism, fishing, and environmental protection. The discussions are summarised in Appendix 3.
10.4 Keynote Speakers

Prince Albert II of Monaco spoke at the opening of the ATCM, focusing on the threats posed by climate change and the need to create Antarctic marine protected areas. He endorsed CCAMLR’s pending proposals to designate MPAs in the Ross Sea and East Antarctica, saying "All of us must cooperate to ensure protection – the future of us all is in the balance." Ex-Prime Minister Michel Rocard of France spoke passionately about the importance of the Environmental Protocol and the advantages of pooling resources to reduce our ecological footprint. Noting that logistics and infrastructure have outweighed the research by national programs, he said "It is up to us to strike a better balance between our strategic interests and science. Prince Albert and I have decided to open an action on this, to improve the use of logistics in support of science. We are convinced that reinforcing scientific cooperation will result in better science as well as promoting better cooperation."

11 Conclusions and Future actions by ASOC

This section reviews some of the intersessional activities and/or future discussions for the ATCM/CEP in which ASOC would need to engage:

- SGMP - particularly review of ASMA 1 management plan.
- Informal discussions on Chinese proposed ASMA.
- ICG on review of ATCM Recommendations on Operational Matters with the aim of updating relevant ATCM Recommendations and Measures annexed to WP 1.
- ICG on climate change.
- New Zealand has the mandate from the CEP to develop a wilderness supplement to the EIA guidelines. We need to see how this contribution will progress now that Harry Keys will not be leading this work.

Other issues for which there was no progress include:

- Greater collaboration between countries on joint use of bases and logistics;
- Tourism management, the expansion of tourist into new areas and increase in over-night stays from ships;
- Greater recognition of wilderness across Antarctica.
# Appendix 1 – Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASMA</td>
<td>Antarctic Specially Managed Area</td>
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<td>ASOC</td>
<td>Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition <a href="http://www.asoc.org/">http://www.asoc.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>ASPA</td>
<td>Antarctic Specially Protected Area</td>
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<td>ATCM</td>
<td>Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting</td>
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<td>ATCP</td>
<td>Antarctic Treaty Consultative Party</td>
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<td>ATS</td>
<td>Antarctic Treaty System</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMMISSION</td>
<td>Commission for CCAMLR</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEE</td>
<td>Comprehensive Environmental Evaluation</td>
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<td>CEP</td>
<td>Committee for Environmental Protection (of the ATCM) <a href="http://www.cep.aq/">http://www.cep.aq/</a></td>
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<td>EIA</td>
<td>Environmental Impact Assessment</td>
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<td>IAATO</td>
<td>International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators <a href="http://www.iaato.org">http://www.iaato.org</a></td>
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<td>ICG</td>
<td>Intersessional Contact Group</td>
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<td>IEE</td>
<td>Initial Environmental Evaluation</td>
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<td>IMO</td>
<td>International Maritime Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>Information Paper presented to either the ATCM or CCAMLR</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPY</td>
<td>International Polar Year</td>
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<td>IUCN</td>
<td>World Conservation Union (formerly International Union for Conservation of Nature) <a href="http://www.iucn.org">http://www.iucn.org</a></td>
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<td>IWC</td>
<td>International Whaling Commission</td>
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<td>MARPOL</td>
<td>International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships</td>
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<td>MEPC</td>
<td>Marine Environment Protection Committee (of IMO)</td>
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<td>MSC</td>
<td>Maritime Safety Committee (of IMO)</td>
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<td>SGMP</td>
<td>Subsidiary Group on Management Plans (of CEP)</td>
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<td>WG</td>
<td>Working Group (currently Legal and Institutional, Operations, and Tourism)</td>
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<td>WP</td>
<td>Working Paper</td>
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### Appendix 2 – List of substantive documents submitted by ASOC to ATCM XXXVI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Abstract</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IP 59</td>
<td>Update to vessel incidents in Antarctic waters</td>
<td>This Information Paper updates ASOC’s XXXV ATCM/IP53 and provides additional information and analysis of vessel incidents, including a map and case studies of several recent incidents. The case studies point to a number of inadequacies in the current draft Polar Code. ASOC recommends that Parties work toward addressing these inadequacies at the International Maritime Organization as a matter of priority if the final Polar Code is to be useful in the Antarctic.</td>
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<td>IP 60</td>
<td>Mapping and modelling wilderness values in Antarctica: Contribution to CEP’s work in guidance material on wilderness protection using Protocol tools</td>
<td>This Information Paper summarizes the recommendations of the report “Mapping and modelling wilderness values in Antarctica” produced by the Wildland Research Institute. The report reviews existing literature on how wilderness quality is mapped and modelled worldwide, using Geographical Information Systems (GIS). IP 60 recommends that the CEP adopt the universal basic premise that wilderness conditions are seen to exist where a location is remote from settlement and mechanised access, and relatively free from human-induced changes to land cover.</td>
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<td>IP 61</td>
<td>Human impacts in the Arctic and Antarctic: Key findings relevant to the ATCM and CEP</td>
<td>At the IPY Oslo Science Conference in 2010, two writing projects were launched, involving 50 international experts exploring the subject of human impacts and future scenarios for the Antarctic environment. The vast majority of future scenarios concur that existing environmental management practices and the current system of governance are insufficient to meet the obligations of the Environmental Protocol to protect the Antarctic environment. If the Antarctic Treaty System is to satisfactorily address the challenges facing a warmer and busier Antarctic in the 21st century and beyond, significant improvements are required.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IP 62</td>
<td>An Antarctic climate change report card</td>
<td>Climate change research has many implications for Antarctica’s environment, and it is critical for the Antarctic Treaty System to understand the latest findings so that they can incorporate them into management decisions. IP62 summarizes these recent results regarding environmental and ecosystem changes, and finds that changes are occurring in a variety of areas, from the pH level of seawater to the stability of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet. Despite the complexities of global climate change, the ATS can take action in a number of areas to mitigate its impact on the Antarctic environment and on Antarctic species.</td>
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<td>IP 63</td>
<td>SAR-WG: An Antarctic Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System</td>
<td>ASOC’s XXXIV/IP082 called on the ATCM to adopt a Resolution or Decision on development of an Antarctic Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System (VTMIS). IP63 updates the information and includes a proposed Decision calling for all vessels operating in the Treaty Area to install and maintain constant operation of Automatic Identification Systems (AIS), to transmit long-range information and tracking (LRIT) data to an appropriate data centre, and to develop an Antarctic VTMIS, beginning with the Antarctic Peninsula area.</td>
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<td>IP 64</td>
<td>Biological prospecting and the Antarctic environment</td>
<td>Biological prospecting is completely unregulated at present and there is limited response by Parties to the information requirements of Resolution 7 (2005). More information is needed to understand and regulate biological prospecting and to assess its environmental impacts. ASOC recommends greater use of the EIEs; EIAs; and environmental monitoring as they apply to biological prospecting activities. A mechanism should be established to identify harvesting of marine living resources in the Southern Ocean related to biological prospecting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IP 65</td>
<td>Black carbon and other short-lived climate pollutants: Impacts on Antarctica</td>
<td>Black carbon and other short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs), especially from local and southern hemispheric sources, may be hastening warming and melting in Antarctica. Conversely, emission reductions from these sources could provide the possibility of slowing warming in the near-term, though only when combined with longer-lived greenhouse gas mitigation actions. Analysis of the extent of SLCP emissions and impacts on Antarctica, especially from local sources, should be a priority for ongoing research, and included in the Strategic Workplan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IP 66</td>
<td>Discharge of sewage and grey water from vessels in Antarctic Treaty waters</td>
<td>This information paper provides information on discharges of black (sewage) and grey water from vessels, expresses concerns that the current system for the management of water waste streams may not provide adequate protection for Antarctic ecosystems and wildlife, and summarises the current regulation. Concerns are not restricted to vessels carrying the greatest numbers of</td>
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9 ASOC also submitted IP 106, *The Report of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition*, but this IP is largely a summary of the other papers.
people i.e. cruise vessels that have the largest discharges. The paper proposes that ATCPs consider further the need for more stringent management of the disposal of water discharges from vessels.

| IP 67 | Management implications of tourist behaviour | Many actual and potential impacts of tourism result from the behaviour of individuals, within the broader context of how tourism is conducted, regulated and managed. An understanding of basic tourist behaviour is relevant to inform management decisions. However, behaviour can be very diverse and cannot be regulated minutely, particularly in the context of tourism expansion and diversification. In this context, ASOC suggests that ATCPs tackle tourism regulation and management primarily from a strategic perspective, including through using ASPAs and ASMAs proactively as tourism management tools. |
| IP 68 | Reuse of a site after remediation. A case study from Cape Evans, Ross Island | The reuse of a remediated site may undo the effects of remediation. IP68 makes suggestions relevant to impact assessment and site management based on a case study of a small site that was remediated and is now being reused. |
| IP 69 | Update: The future of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet (IP 69) | This paper updates from IP07 presented at the ATME on Climate Change in 2010 and concludes that:
1. WAIS is losing mass, and this loss is accelerating.
2. Widespread glacier retreat may already be set in motion.
3. Changes to WAIS are happening now and are related to anthropogenic climate change.
4. WAIS is likely to survive mostly intact for this century, but a “collapse,” if and when it happens, will raise sea level at least 3 meters.
5. A West Antarctic Tipping Point threshold is likely to exist, though the science is not settled. The WAIS can disintegrate more quickly than the Greenland Ice Sheet. |
| BP 17 | Antarctic Ocean Legacy Update 1: Securing Enduring Protection for the Ross Sea Region | In October 2011, the Antarctic Ocean Alliance (AOA), of which ASOC is a member, proposed the creation of a network of marine protected areas (MPAs) and no-take marine reserves in 19 specific areas in the Southern Ocean. Subsequently, the AOA outlined a vision for marine protection in East Antarctica and the Ross Sea that in addition to the seven areas proposed by Australia, France and the EU, included four other areas to be considered for protection in the coming years, and proposed the creation of a fully protected marine reserve of approximately 3.6 million square kilometers in the Ross Sea region. BP17 summarizes the AOA’s Antarctic Ocean Legacy Update Report, “Securing Enduring Protection for the Ross Sea Region”. |
Appendix 3 – ASMA Management Group Discussions Summary

**ASMA 1 Admiralty Bay** (BR, EC, PE, PL, US, ASOC, IAATO)- The most significant issue was the ongoing discussions (also discussed elsewhere in this report) regarding krill fishing events inside the ASMA. Several of the Parties active in the ASMA have repeatedly expressed concern about these events - particularly Brazil, Poland and more recently Peru. ASOC submitted a paper on this topic at the 35th ATCM in Hobart in 2012. The issue was discussed by CCAMLR in 2012, resulting in Conservation Measure 91-02 requesting operators to inform their fishing operators about the location of ASMA and ASPA, and apologies by some of the Parties whose fishing vessels operated in these areas. In parallel, the management plan for the area was reviewed by the management group and submitted to the CEP for review by the SGMP during 2013-2014. The US, based on its experience trying to limit fishing at ASMA 7, suggested text that allows fishing subject to a number of requirements and coordination with the ASMA management group. During side discussions at this ATCM the CCAMLR Science Officer suggested alternative text that would, in theory, allow the management plan to be accepted smoothly by CCAMLR while ensuring that no fishing would take place there. It is likely that the issue will be resolved positively, both for ASMA 1 and also for other ASMA or ASPA in which harvesting is not explicitly allowed. This would be a very important precedent for the future - until this is resolved there is a risk that ASMA and ASPA will be ignored by fishers.

**ASMA 2 McMurdo Dry Valleys** (IT, KO, NZ, US, ASOC, IAATO; [http://www.mcmurdodryvalleys.aq/](http://www.mcmurdodryvalleys.aq/)) - Korea joined the group for the first time. The key issues discussed included identifying sites of past activities in the area as well as current level of activity inside ASPA; the possible adoption of a large new ASPA; and the request of IAATO to replace the current tourism landing site, which can only be accessed by helicopter, by a raft of other sites into the Dry Valleys. IAATO argued for "responsible sharing" of the area, noting that their opportunities for tourism in the Ross Sea area have been curtailed further by a new ASPA at Silverfish Bay (well outside the ASMA) that excludes tourism; and that variable ice conditions require a range of tourism sites at a range of distances from the ice edge (i.e. the further offshore the ice edge, the greater the limitations to reach sites located inland). NZ noted that their request may be denied for reasons of "responsible management". ASOC noted that the Dry Valleys are the only part of the Antarctic closed to tourism, aside from ASPA, and that it would be important to have an idea of what is the long term plans for the ASMA if tourism is allowed at a number of new sites e.g. would the plan be to camp there overnight, trek between the sites, or what? It would also be important to identify a process by which this change is formally proposed.

**ASMA 4 Deception Island** (AR, CL, ES, NO, US, ASOC, IAATO; [http://www.deceptionisland.aq/](http://www.deceptionisland.aq/)) - Issues discussed included the status of penguin colonies in the island, recently surveyed by Oceanites; concerns about ongoing landings at Baily Head, which is experiencing a substantive decline (possibly due to climate change, but that might be exacerbated by tourism); concerns about yachting expressed by some Parties and IAATO; and some events of non compliance with guidelines reported by IAATO, aimed at non-IAATO operators. Some of these issues will be discussed intersessionally, including (perhaps) the need to restrict visitation at Baily Head to a viewing point rather than entering the colony. This is something proposed by ASOC and which found little support by IAATO and others, although it was supported - at least as something that merits further discussion - by the
outgoing chair, Norway. The group agreed that meeting one hour a year on the margins of the ATCM was not sufficient to address all issues.
## Appendix 4 – Strategic Priorities for the Multi-Year Strategic Work Plan

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<tr>
<td><strong>Ensuring a robust and effective ATS</strong></td>
<td>Conduct a comprehensive review of existing requirements for information exchange and of the functioning of the Electronic Information Exchange System, and the identification of any additional requirements</td>
<td>Secretariat to prepare a summary including the outcome from informal CEP discussions on EIES Invite Parties, experts and observers to prepare working and other papers</td>
<td>Dedicated discussion of this topic in the Legal and Institutional Working Group including presentation by the Secretariat on Electronic Information Exchange System Consider updating Resolution 6 (2001) Establishment of an ICG, if required, to address any unresolved issues</td>
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<td>Consider coordinated outreach to non-party states whose nationals or assets are active in Antarctica</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Share and discuss strategic science priorities in order to identify and pursue opportunities for collaboration as well as capacity building in science, particularly in relation to climate change</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strengthening protection of the Antarctic environment</strong></td>
<td>Consider the advice of the CEP on addressing repair and remediation of environmental damage and consider for example appropriate follow up actions with regard to liability</td>
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### ASOC Report on XXXVI ATCM

<table>
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<tr>
<th>The effective management and regulation of human activities</th>
<th>Assess the progress of the CEP on its ongoing work to reflect best practices and to improve existing tools and develop further tools for environmental protection, including environmental impact assessment procedures (and consider, if appropriate, further development of the tools)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Address the recommendations of the Antarctic Treaty Meeting of Experts on Implications of Climate Change for Antarctic Management and Governance (CEP-ICG)</td>
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<td>Strengthen cooperation among Parties on current Antarctic specific air and marine operations and safety practices, and identify any issues that may be brought forward to the IMO and ICAO, as appropriate</td>
<td>Secretariat to provide a compilation of existing ATCM Recommendations and Resolutions on safety issues</td>
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<td>Invite Parties, experts and observers to prepare working and other papers</td>
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<td>Invite the IMO to provide an update on the Polar Code negotiations at ATCM XXXVII</td>
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<td>Request ICAO and the IMO to present their views on air and maritime safety issues</td>
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<td>Review and assess the need for additional actions</td>
<td>Parties, Observers and Experts prepare and</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>Dedicated discussion on issues related to land-based</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working Group</td>
<td>ASOC Report on XXXVI ATCM</td>
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<td>regarding area management and permanent infrastructure related to tourism, as well as issues related to land based and adventure tourism and address the recommendations of the CEP tourism study.</td>
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<td>working Group</td>
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<td>submit working and other papers on land-based and adventure tourism CEP Intersessional work on Recommendations 3 and 6 (on site sensitivity methodology and monitoring). The Secretariat to produce a digest of previous ATCM discussion and Measures and Resolutions relating to land based and adventure tourism. and adventure tourism in the Tourism and Non-Governmental Activities Working Group taking into account issues raised in the papers submitted, as well as issues previously raised in the TWG and ICGs. Consideration of any interim report material received from the CEP.</td>
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