



## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON ANTARCTIC RESEARCH\*

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### SCAR Circular Letter 788

#### Support for SCAR-MarBIN and ANTABIF

To: SCAR National Committees  
Permanent, Alternate and Associate Delegates

7 November 2011

Dear Colleague,

**We request that SCAR National representatives urge their national funding agencies and other institutions to engage as partners with the SCAR Marine Biodiversity Information Network (SCAR-MarBIN) and the Antarctic Biodiversity Information Facility (ANTABIF).**

Antarctica is being subjected to amplified global change due to its unique place in the Earth System. Southern polar ecosystems are expected to respond, and in some cases are already responding to rapid environmental change. Understanding biodiversity – the variety of different forms of life within a given ecosystem and their interactions – is important for maintaining healthy and stable ecosystems. Despite this vital importance, the implications of global change for biodiversity in the region remain a major unknown. In order to assess the current status of ecosystems, predict future ecosystem response, and inform ecosystem-based management decisions, it is essential to obtain baseline biodiversity information. Change can only be recognised or predicted if the current status of biodiversity in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean is documented and understood. Biodiversity data is collected in the Antarctic by a distributed, world-wide network of researchers and scientists and a challenge is to bring this information together within a coherent and standardized framework. Since 2005, the SCAR Marine Biodiversity Information Network (SCAR-MarBIN) has maintained a dedicated data portal ([www.scarmarbin.be](http://www.scarmarbin.be)) that provides free and open access to biodiversity information deposited by the community. Recently, the initiative expanded towards the terrestrial realm through a second project, the Antarctic Biodiversity Information Facility (ANTABIF, [www.biodiversity.aq](http://www.biodiversity.aq)).

The data portal offers tools to facilitate access to biodiversity data from southern polar marine, terrestrial and limnetic ecosystems. The ANTABIF architecture is built upon an open source philosophy that ensures free and open access to all

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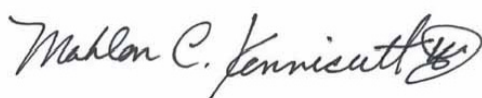
Antarctic biodiversity data by providing:

- (i) a central data portal ([data.biodiversity.aq](http://data.biodiversity.aq), in development) with innovative search and geospatial engines offering immediate access to 7,200+ datasets including 2.7+ million records from 30,000+ types of organisms (taxa);
- (ii) a set of informatics tools that allow the community to manage and rapidly share customized biodiversity syntheses ([ipt.biodiversity.aq](http://ipt.biodiversity.aq), [scratchpads.biodiversity.aq](http://scratchpads.biodiversity.aq) - all resources available through web services); and
- (iii) a set of data visualisation products including the Antarctic Field Guides ([afg.biodiversity.aq](http://afg.biodiversity.aq)) and the Biogeographic Atlas of the Southern Ocean ([atlas.biodiversity.aq](http://atlas.biodiversity.aq), in development).

SCAR-MarBIN and ANTABIF encourage integration and collaboration across programmes, across nations, and across disciplines. Treaty Parties (e.g. CEP X, Kiev 2008) and Observers have recognised the need for easily accessible biodiversity data to advance initiatives such as CCAMLR's Southern Ocean bioregionalisation process and creation of Marine Protected Areas. SCAR-MarBIN and ANTABIF are also key supporting elements of the next generation of SCAR Scientific Research Programmes and the Southern Ocean Observing System (<http://www.scar.org/researchgroups/>).

SCAR-MarBIN and ANTABIF receive most of their funding from a single source, the Belgian Science Policy Office, but this base funding ends in July 2012. SCAR-MarBIN and ANTABIF seek to broaden their support base by introducing a new funding model where support is provided by a consortium of partners (data users) that benefit from the programme's outputs. Various support levels are proposed based on partner interests and utilization (in Euros): Main Partner - 25,000 or more; Partner 10,000 or more; Associate Member 5,000 or more and Friend - in-kind support to be negotiated. Details can be found in the attached brochure and the subscriptions will be managed by the SCAR Secretariat. Your assistance in this important effort is greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact SCAR, or the SCAR-MarBIN and ANTABIF Scientific Coordinator, Bruno Danis at [bruno.danis@scarmarbin.be](mailto:bruno.danis@scarmarbin.be).



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