Response to comments on the draft Comprehensive Environmental Evaluation (CEE) for the Scott Base Redevelopment

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**An information paper submitted by New Zealand**

***Summary***

A draft Comprehensive Environmental Evaluation (CEE) was prepared by New Zealand for the proposed Scott Base Redevelopment. The final CEE was approved under New Zealand’s Antarctica (Environmental Protection) Act (1994) and the Parties were notified through Secretariat Circular 12/2021 on 14 October, 2021 that New Zealand is proceeding with the Scott Base Redevelopment, based on the final CEE. This paper provides a response to the comments received from the Intersessional Contact Group (ICG) established in accordance with the [Procedures for intersessional consideration of Draft CEEs](https://documents.ats.aq/recatt/att630_e.pdf) (CEP XX Final Report, Appendix 3).

***Background***

A draft Comprehensive Environmental Evaluation (CEE) was prepared by New Zealand for the proposed Scott Base Redevelopment. On 12 February 2021, New Zealand notified the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) Chair of the availability of the draft CEE for the ‘Scott Base Redevelopment’. Notification of the availability of the CEE was circulated via CEP Circular 5 (16 February, 2021). The draft CEE was made available, in English, for download via the CEP Workspace on the website of the Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty: <https://www.ats.aq/devAS/EP/CEPWorkspace> and the Antarctica New Zealand website: <https://www.antarcticanz.govt.nz/sbrceedraftfornotification.pdf>.

In accordance with the [Procedures for intersessional consideration of Draft CEEs](https://documents.ats.aq/recatt/att630_e.pdf) (CEP XX Final Report, Appendix 3) an Intersessional Contact Group (ICG) was established, convened by Spain, to review the draft CEE. ICG correspondence is available to CEP Members and Observers via the CEP Forum, which also provided the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) translated into the official Treaty languages.

New Zealand appreciates the efforts of ICG participants who provided valuable comments on the draft CEE, and thanks Spain for convening the ICG and providing an excellent summary of the responses (ATCM XLIII, [WP10 Report of the intersessional open-ended contact group to review the draft Comprehensive Environmental Evaluation prepared by New Zealand for the ‘Scott Base Redevelopment’](https://documents.ats.aq/ATCM43/wp/ATCM43_wp010_e.docx)).

The comments from the Parties’ feedback from the ICG, from discussions during the meeting, from the CEP advice and from the New Zealand general public were addressed in the final CEE and where available, the final CEE incorporated further design and construction information that became available since the circulation of the draft CEE. A response to the ICG comments is provided in Attachment 1.

There were no significant changes to the predicted environmental impacts and the conclusion of the CEE remains that the proposed activities are likely to have a ‘*more than minor or transitory impact on the Antarctic environment*’. The final CEE was approved under New Zealand’s Antarctica (Environmental Protection) Act (1994) and the Parties were notified through Secretariat Circular 12/2021 on 14 October, 2021 that New Zealand is proceeding with the Scott Base Redevelopment, based on the CEE.

***Future updates on progress with the Scott Base Redevelopment***

New Zealand will provide periodic updates to the CEP on the Scott Base Redevelopment project as it progresses. It is anticipated that the information provided will consist of the final design and construction methodology, information on the RIWE replacement, data and results from the monitoring programme as the project progresses and any changes to the activity (in line with the Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment in Antarctica (Resolution 1 (2016)). In addition, we will make the final Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and sub-plans and the Project Safety Plan available.

All reasonable attempts will be made to facilitate an independent audit of the proposed Scott Base Redevelopment. Representatives from one or two National Antarctic Programmes will be invited to Christchurch and Scott Base to audit the Scott Base Redevelopment activity against the assessment provided in the CEE. Key elements of the audit will be to assess whether the mitigation measures are being applied and that the monitoring programme is effective and being undertaken as described. The audit will also be used as an opportunity to review the effectiveness of the impact assessment process that was undertaken for the Scott Base Redevelopment project and to identify any improvements that can be made. The findings of the audit will be reported to the CEP.