Review of information related to Education & Outreach available through the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat webpage

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Working Paper submitted by Spain, Bulgaria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Portugal and UK

***Summary***

At ATCM XLII (2019), the Meeting agreed to continue the intersessional contact group on Education and Outreach for another intersessional period, one of the terms of reference for this intersessional period was “*discuss the possibility for the creation of an Antarctic Education and Outreach section on the ATS website*”.

This document includes recommendations to enable the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat web page to enhance the ‘discoverability’ of content relating to Education & Outreach (E&O) and to promote further the exchange of information relating to E&O among the Parties.

***Background***

After the outcomes of the workshop on Education and Outreach held during the ATCM XXXVIII (2015), the Meeting agreed to add Education and Outreach as an additional priority issue for the Multi-Year Strategic Work Plan; moreover, the Meeting decided to establish an ICG on education and outreach within the ATCM Forum (paragraph 374 of the Final Report).

Since then, the ICG has provided three reports to the ATCM (ATCM XXXIX/WP25; ATCM XL/WP24; ATCM XLII/WP20) with the outcomes of the ICG.

Several Parties have underlined their continued commitment to education and outreach as one of the core elements of Antarctic cooperation.

At ATCM XLII (2019) was agreed to continue the ICG on Education and Outreach for another intersessional period. One of the agreed Terms of Reference for the 2019-2020 intersessional period was to “*Discuss the possibility for the creation of an Antarctic Education and Outreach section on the ATS website*” (paragraph 208 of the Final Report).

In addition, the establishment of a strategy and guidelines for exchanging information between Members on Education and Outreach for long term perspective is recognized as priority 3 in the CEP five year work plan.

As stated in Xavier et al. (2019) “a longer-term goal is to create synergies, reproduce activities in different languages, and embody the Antarctic spirit of cooperation in the domain of outreach and education.” Therefore, easy access to the educational resources of the Parties through the ATS website would support this ambition. In addition, with the global increase in digital engagement, Parties wishing to develop new online educational activities may benefit from ‘signposting’ resources in the ATS website

***Proposal***

The Antarctic Treaty Secretariat website is a valued information and document resource to exchange information between Parties. It is attractive also as a source of information to the media and general public.

After reviewing the ATS web page, we offer suggestions and recommendations to enhance the visibility of the excellent work and resources created by the Parties; and more generally, improve ‘discoverability’ through search engine optimisation techniques. These suggestions and recommendations are intended to contribute to the ATS mission to provide and disseminate information about the Antarctic Treaty system and Antarctic activities.

At present, to discover any links to educational resources, visitors to the website need to navigate to the “tools and resources” section <https://www.ats.aq/e/links.html>. This area of the site would benefit from providing a more inclusive list of links to resources created by the Parties.

Whilst users performing a search under ‘education’ can find helpful links to papers where this word is mentioned, none of the specific content relating to this subject including the Intersessional Contact Group for Education & Outreach, or the tools and resources content are revealed in search. If the ATS wishes to improve the visibility of these activities or resources, we suggest the addition of metadata tags for ‘Education & Outreach across relevant content within the site.

***Recommendations***

The ICG would recommend that the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting:

* Require Parties to provide the Secretariat with link(s) to their web page(s) with educational and outreach resources;
* Request the Secretariat to include these links in its “educational resources” section; and
* Request the Secretariat to present a short report of implemented changes and site visit statistics annually during the ATCM.

***Reference***

Xavier JC, Mateev D, Capper L, Wilmotte A, Walton DWH (2019) Education and Outreach by the AntarcticTreaty Parties, Observers and Experts under the framework of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative meetings. Polar Record 55:241-244