THE IPF AT THE 2008 SCAR-IASC MEETING

© SCAR IASC

This year, the 30th edition of the Scientific Committee for Antarctic Research (SCAR) meeting, was co-organized with the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) and the International Polar Year (IPY) 2007-08, with the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) as co-sponsors.

This important event, known as the SCAR-IASC-IPY Open Science Conference, was hosted by the city of St Peterburg in the first two weeks of July and attended on behalf of the IPF by Alain Hubert (Chairman), Gigi Johnson-Amin (Vice-President, International Affairs), and Jean de Pomereu (journalist for SciencePoles.org and IPY Education & Outreach sub-committee member).

With over 1,400 scientists, logistics experts, programme managers, and other polar research related experts from 64 countries in attendance, the conference served as a platform for a whole host of science, logistics, and strategy focused side-meetings. It also saw some 550 science presentations, as well as 640 posters relating to recent or ongoing polar research programmes and findings. These focused on all of the principle IPY themes, with a growing emphasis on the effects of climate change on the Arctic and Antarctic ecosystems, as well as the Polar Regions as privileged barometers of change.

On the opening day of the conference, SCAR medals where awarded to Vladimir Kotlyakov (Russia), Claude Lorius (France), and Angelika Brandt (Germany).

The event also served as a unique and timely opportunity for the Polar Research community to discuss and exchange ideas on a range of important (and in some cases urgent) science-related topics and issues, including:

- The need to sustain Polar Research funding in order to properly address climate change - And the increasingly important role played by outreach and communication in this achieving this goal
- The rapid rise in oil prices and its very negative impact on fuel dependant polar research and logistics
- The scientific, data, educational and policy legacies of the IPY 2007-08 - including the IPY Oslo Science Conference in June 2010
- The instigation of a 'Polar Decade'.