

AntSDI: The Coolest SDI on Earth? - Towards a Spatial Data Infrastructure for Antarctica

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Key words: Spatial Data Infrastructure, Antarctica, Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research

SUMMARY

Antarctica is the coldest, driest and most inaccessible continent on earth. The extreme climate, the remoteness and the sparse human presence distinguish the white continent from the rest of the world. Yet we argue there is an urgent need for a an Antarctic Spatial Data Infrastructure (AntSDI).

Scientific activities in Antarctica are coordinated by the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR). The SCAR Geospatial Information Group coordinates mapping and geospatial information management in support of research in Antarctica. The current endeavour of the group is to establish AntSDI.

This paper introduces the institutional background for AntSDI and describes existing components of AntSDI such as the SCAR Feature Catalogue, framework data sets, the SCAR composite gazetteer of Antarctica and the Antarctic Master Directory.

Critical for the success of AntSDI is the open standards based approach, the focus on enabling specifications and procedures and capacity building within the information community.