



Report 1999–2002 / Working Programme 2003-2006

Report 1999 – 2002

Advancement in the Organisation of Alpine Research in Alpine Countries

Since the Convention concerning ISCAR has been signed 1999 in Lucerne, national boards to co-ordinate and promote alpine research have been created in following countries (underlined = ISCAR-Partners):

<u>Austria:</u>	National Committee Alpine Research in 2001 (<u>Austrian Academy of Sciences</u>)
<u>Germany:</u>	Scientific Committee Mountain Research in 2001 (<u>Bavarian Academy of Sciences</u>)
<u>Italy:</u>	<u>Istituto per la Ricerca scientifica ed tecnologica sulla montagna INRM</u> in 2001 (Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research)
<u>Switzerland:</u>	Interacademic Commission for Alpine Studies ICAS in 1999 (<u>Swiss Academies of Sciences & of Humanities and Social Sciences</u>)

Further, in France has been created in 2001 the Mountain Institute in Chambéry hosted by the University of Savoy. In Slovenia no specific organisation of alpine research has been established until now.

Conclusion: The ISCAR-Convention had a significant impact on the organisation of alpine research in most of the alpine countries. Within 4 years a network of national boards, which are able to lead common actions, has been established.

Alpine Convention: ISCAR accepted as official observer

Due to the support of the Swiss Presidency of the Alpine Convention (1999-2000), ISCAR was accepted by the Alpine Conference 2000 in Lucerne as official observer of the Alpine Convention in order to represent the scientific community. Since the 2000 Alpine Conference, *ISCAR was present at all 7 meetings of the Permanent Committee as well as at the biannual Alpine Conferences 2000 in Lucerne/Switzerland and 2002 in Meran/Italy (Roland Psenner, Flavio Ruffini, Thomas Scheurer)*. Members of ISCAR collaborated in some Working Groups of the Alpine Convention: Permanent Secretary (Flavio Ruffini); Implementation (Engelbert Ruoss); Protocol Population and Culture (Iwar Werlen, Roland Psenner); SOIA (Thomas Scheurer, Flavio Ruffini).

Conclusion: Contacts with AC have been established and some concrete actions are planned to be driven (AlpAtlas, CODALP; see projects). However, to participate at meetings and to cooperate within Working Groups is quite intensive in time and depend on the availability of ISCAR-members or ISCAR office. That is why contributions from ISCAR had to be concentrated.

ForumAlpinum

After Switzerland (1994), France (1996) and Germany (1998), the conveners of the two recent ForumAlpinum were:

- **Italy in 2000** (“Traffic & Living Space”): Bergamo & Presolana, organised by Evk2-CNR (ca. 300 participants & contributors) and
- **Austria in 2002** (“The Nature of the Alps”): Alpbach, organised by the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Zoology, University of Innsbruck (270 participants & contributors). This Forum was the contribution of ISCAR to the International Year of Mountains 2002. ISCAR was responsible for the scientific programme, while the Office gave support to the organisers (Programme, Website, Administration).

The Report from ForumAlpinum 2000 has been published in 3 languages:

Comitato Ev-K²-CNR, 2001: Atti del ForumAlpino/ForumAlpin/AlpenForum 2000. Supplemento al n. 248 della *Revista della montagna*. Centro Documentazione Alpina, Torino. From both, ForumAlpinum 2000 and 2002, a documentation with all press releases has been established.

Just before the ForumAlpinum in Alpbach, the Slovenian Academy of Sciences decided to host **ForumAlpinum 2004 in Slovenia**. The organising committee will be chaired by Dr. Anton Brancelj (National Institute of Biology, Ljubljana).

Projects, Co-operation

To promote information bases for Science and for Alpine Convention, especially following the tasks of SOIA, ISCAR took up planning for two projects: (1) Elaboration of cartographic information on the whole of the Alps for selected topics (**AlpAtlas**). This project will be planned as an extension of the current Austrian project RAUMALP, led by Prof. Axel Borsdorf. (2) The establishment of a co-ordinated data collection and data base on alpine research projects (**CODALP**). For both projects, the partnerships are partly established, but funding has still to be found (eventually by Interreg).

To promote the conservation of biodiversity in the Alps – one of 200 WWF-Ecoregions worldwide – WWF organised, with the help of ISCAR, CIPRA and the Alpine Network of Protected Areas, the workshop **"Biodiversity Visions for the Alps"**. The workshop took place in May 2002 in F-Gap and assembled around 60 scientists from all alpine countries. The results from Gap have been presented and discussed at the ForumAlpinum in Alpbach.

Further, ISCAR-members organised some international and national conferences on mountain topics, as the Symposium "Mountain Regions: A Research Subject" held in F-Autrans within the World Mountain Forum in 2000 in France (Bernard Debarbieux), the Young Scientists Conference in I-Trafoi in 2001 (Flavio Ruffini), the symposium "Cities in Mountains – Mountains in an urbanised world" (Iwar Werlen, ICAS/Swiss Interacademic Commission for Alpine Studies) or the conference dedicated to the International Year of Mountains 2002 held in Munich and organised by the Scientific Committee on Mountain Research of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences (Horst Hagedorn, Dietrich Herm).

Public Relations, Networking, Promotion

European Union: On February 17, 2000, ISCAR and the Alpenforschungsinstitut (Germany) organised a presentation of mountain and alpine research with Prof. Bruno Messerli, Prof. Bernard Debarbieux, Dr. Christian Patermann and Dr. Peter Eggensberger for representatives of several General Directions in Brussels.

Due to the connection of Denis Peter, Prof. Roland Psenner and Prof. Bernard Debarbieux participated at the meeting "EU Policies and Mountains" in Brussels (17./18.10.2002), organised by several EU-Commissions.

Institutions: Members of ISCAR and its office were regularly in contact with alpine or mountain organisations and institutions as Mountain Research Initiative, CIPRA, WWF, Rete Montagna or the Alpine Network of Protected Areas.

Promotion: By lack of time, promotion and public awareness rising of ISCAR could not be taken in hand sufficiently. At least, in 2002 ISCAR presented a poster at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg, at the ForumAlpinum in Alpbach, at the Conference of the Bavarian Academy in Munich, at the World Mountain Summit in Bishkek and at the Alpine Conference in Meran.

Partners, Meetings of the Committee, Members, Office

At the 2nd Meeting of ISCAR Partners (27.9.2002 in Alpbach) all partners agreed to extend the ISCAR Convention, signed at the 1st Meeting of ISCAR Partners on 12.10.1999 in Lucerne, for two years. Since ISCAR started its work in 1999, the Committee assembled for 7 meetings dedicated mainly to the preparation of 2 ForumAlpinum (17.18.3.1999, 11./12.10.1999, 14.9.2000, 18./19.1.2001, 18./19.10.2001, 21.6.2002, 27.9.2002).

The Presidency was held by Prof. Paolo Cerretelli (1999-2000) and Prof. Roland Psenner (2001-2002) and was linked with the chair function of the ForumAlpinum. After ForumAlpinum 2002, Prof. Ivan Kreft took in hand the presidency of ISCAR from Roland Psenner.

In 2000 Kurt Hanselmann (CH), Hanns Wolfgang Weinmeister (A), Wolfgang Haber (D, ancient president) and Mitja Zupancic (SI) retreated. They were replaced by Engelbert Ruoss (CH), Georg Grabherr (A), Axel Borsdorf (A) and Andrej Udovc (SI).

The office in CH–Berne gave administrative and organisational support to main ISCAR activities (office manager Thomas Scheurer 20%, secretary Vera Kaufmann 20%) and seized opportunities for project co-ordination and co-operation.

Working programme 2003-2006

This Working Programme completes or replaces the Working programme 1999-2002 (12 October 1999).

General focus

The main focus of ISCAR will be **integrative regional studies covering the whole of the Alps**. The elaboration of an Alp Atlas, Cultural Diversity or Human Impacts are potential topics. Such topics should be promoted as far as they enable the development of new methodologies, help to detect future problems or research gaps or lead to new research questions.

Nevertheless, **co-operations with other mountain ranges** (e.g. UNEP: Carpates) and with global projects or programmes (e.g. MRI) should be established, if scientific interests or know-how transfer look promising.

Research activities related to the **Alpine Convention (AC)** have to be discussed in detail, as far as the Alpine Convention expresses concrete research needs (e.g. related to protocols such as 'Population and Culture' or 'Indicators of Environmental Quality'). Following some suggestions for a co-operation between AC and ISCAR recently made by German representatives of AC, ISCAR will be open to take in charge specific studies in commission of AC.

Organisation of alpine research, ISCAR-Partners

To continue work on an alp-wide level, ISCAR needs support from all partners. Since, at the moment, France and Slovenia are not in charge of a well founded national institution for alpine research, one of the main objectives in this period is to animate and support the building up of such institutions in these countries. In France, the Mountain Institute in Chambéry could be appropriate while in Slovenia scientists have to express such intentions.

Another aim concerns the association of research institutions from the Principalities of Liechtenstein and Monaco to ISCAR.

Alpine Convention (AC)

ISCAR activities related to AC could be a permanent scientific controlling process to evaluate the implementation of the objectives of the different protocols of the Alpine Convention. Furthermore science-based expertises for the Boards of AC could be elaborated in commission of AC. As far as the Permanent Secretary of AC will be established in 2003, perspectives for co-operation have to be discussed with the Head of the Permanent Secretary.

ForumAlpinum

To come to an end with the "rotation" of the ForumAlpinum through all alpine countries, the next Forum will take place in Slovenia in 2004, hosted by the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and organised by the National Institute of Biology (Dr. Anton Brancelj).

The continuation of ForumAlpinum after 2004 has to be the topic of a fundamental debate, which should end at the ForumAlpinum 2004, so that decisions can be taken there. Perhaps ForumAlpinum will be linked closer with the Alpine Convention, with science or NGOs, may be it will be extended to a European or Global MountainForum – first discussions on a network of Mountain Research in Europe had been lead at the ForumAlpinum in Alpbach – or it will be stopped.

Projects

Some activities begun in the first planning period will be carried on, as **AlpAtlas** and **CODALP** (Common Database on research projects). Based on CODALP, information on current research projects focused on the Alps will be actualised and published (if possible on the Web).

The RAUMALP project, which until now only financed projects dedicated to the Austrian part of the Alps, shall be internationalised. The objective is to create data bases and instruments for a continuous observation and information system for the Alpine region. Methodologically organised as a bottom-up process RAUMALP will carefully look for gateway to SOIA in order to allow a fruitful co-operation. Further, ISCAR plans to build up or continue partnerships for projects dealing with all aspects of diversity in the Alps (cultural diversity, biodiversity, geodiversity), seen from an alp-wide perspective. In this context, ISCAR will continue the co-operation within the WWF Alpine Programme "Biodiversity Vision for the Alps".

Promotion/Public Relations/Networking

Promotion of alpine research as well as of ISCAR have to be improved and intensified in this coming period. Therefore, ISCAR has

- to initiate presentations on alpine / mountain research in Europe (e.g. at conferences);
- to look for a better presentation and positioning of ISCAR with the help of a flyer, posters or a homepage (all still have to be created) to inform at manifestations;
- to clarify the relationship between ISCAR and the existing national boards for alpine research (e.g. by common logos or acronyms)

Furthermore, ISCAR will continue existing and establish new partnerships.

Committee and Office

In the actual Committee (2002), natural sciences are not represented sufficiently. As soon as members have to be replaced, the partners should pay attention to this.

Compared with planned actions, the capacity of ISCAR-Office (20% office manager, 20% secretary) is quite limited in time. ISCAR should look for further financial support – at all from EU Programmes – to improve the promotion of ISCAR activities by the office or by members engaged.

31.10.2002 / TS