

TOWARD A CANADIAN ANTARCTIC RESEARCH PROGRAM

1. INTRODUCTION

In November 1995, the Canadian Polar Commission (CPC) arranged a small meeting to discuss steps to develop a Canadian Antarctic Research Program (CARP). An earlier version of this report, under the title, *Draft Business Plan for the Canadian Antarctic Research Program Committee*, was prepared as a background document for those discussions. This revised version incorporates the results of those discussions and acknowledges the contributions of the participants (Annex 1).

The impetus for the meeting and the preparation of the report stems from the mandate of the CPC which, according to the Canadian Polar Commission Act, is "...to promote the development and dissemination of knowledge of the polar regions...", including the Antarctic. The report seeks to link this legislative mandate to specific objectives, and to a set of tasks aimed at fulfilling that mandate with respect to Antarctica. The report also discusses the allocation of resources, organization, and accountability. It builds on past accomplishments, but the focus is on **planning for the future**.

Is it possible to establish a new research program in a period of severe financial constraint? The answer is Yes, as such periods also afford an opportunity for reflection and consideration of new approaches. Canada's science effort in Antarctica ought to be reassessed in view of the requirements of the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty¹ which Canada has signed. The current science effort is likely to be found wanting. Additional funding will be required to change this, and new and innovative ways of finding resources will be required. However, compared with the federal S&T expenditures of some \$ 6 billion per year, the amounts involved are not large. The required change in attitude—the way we look at Canada's role in the Antarctic—may pose a greater challenge.

¹ Also known as the *Madrid Protocol*.