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Dear Colleague,

DESIRABILITY OF REINSTATING THE SOUTH AFRICAN ANTARCTIC ASSOCIATION

South Africa has been involved in research 'down south' for many years, yet there is presently no independent association to support the interests of South African Antarctic and sub-Antarctic researchers. A South African Antarctic Association existed from about 1962 until 1977, when its committee was concerned about "the poor response to public meetings and payment of subscriptions" and stated that the "future of the association is uncertain". From 1964 to 1976 the SAAA produced 41 issues, in two volumes, of its bilingual publication, the *Antarktiese/Antarctic Bulletin*. The bulletin contained notes and news of South African activities in the south as well as short articles describing field trips, research projects and the like.

Since 1977 the South African Antarctic community has received its news from 'official' sources only. The monthly newsletter of the South African Weather Bureau publishes sometimes edited versions of the monthly news telexes sent out from Marion, Gough and SANAE, and from 1981 to 1989 the South African Scientific Committee for Antarctic Research produced 35 issues of the *SASCAR Newsletter*. Now that the Department of Environment Affairs has assumed responsibility for the scientific management of South Africa's Antarctic and sub-Antarctic research, the *SASCAR Newsletter* is no longer being issued by the Foundation for Research Development of the CSIR, and its future existence and form are under review.

It is true that an "Antarctic Club" exists in South Africa, but as far as I know, this serves as a social 'old boys' group only and has no specific interest in science and management down south. Also, membership is apparently by invitation only, to the level that not all ex-team members receive invitations to join. There is also an active RSA Antarctic Philatelic Society, which produces a newsletter called the *Penguin Post*, but this is hardly a medium for scientists!

It seems to me that there is both the scope and the desirability for reinstating the South African Antarctic Association and the *Antarctic Bulletin*. There are now many more South African researchers involved and/or interested in Antarctic and sub-Antarctic matters than there were in 1977. Also, southern research is spread across a number of disciplines, so there is no single forum in the country that links all the interests of researchers. Yet there are a number of disciplines and activities of at least potential interest to all. History, exploration, mapping, place names, geography and logistics spring to mind.

I therefore write to request a few moments of your time to fill in the attached simple questionnaire. Based on the reponse, an attempt may be made to reinstate the SAAA and its bulletin to act as the independent forum I think we need.

I look forward to hearing from you

With kind regards and best wishes for 1990

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Cooper". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends to the right.

John Cooper