

## Terms of Reference for SAON Committees

### 1. Background

In order for SAON to fulfill its vision of supporting robust international observing networks for the Arctic region, SAON must first and foremost develop capacity to facilitate coordination of all Arctic observing and data assets. Practical solutions are increasingly needed in order to ensure consistent and possibly even standardized data collection and subsequent science information delivery to circum-Arctic and global stakeholders.

The foundations of SAON are existing networks and programs that already provide high quality Arctic observations. During the initial development of SAON, it was revealed that present Arctic observing sites did not adequately cover the Arctic region, observing data are fragmentary and not easily available and only a part of the Arctic observing is funded on a long-term basis.

The Arctic Council (AC) and the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) have established SAON to lead the facilitation of international collaboration among government agencies, researchers, and northern residents, including indigenous people, and to promote a sustainable, and effectively coordinated pan-Arctic observing system.

The SAON Board has recognized the need to establish two SAON Committees focused on (1) Observations and Networks (CON), and (2) Information and Data Services (CDIS). These committees shall address issues that transcend individual Arctic observing and data platforms and all national/sub-national/regional and organizational capabilities. The Committees should prepare overall strategies to improve the situation within the Northern areas regarding:

- 1) Collection of data/information from Arctic social, economic, health and environmental sciences and observations, including permission to access geographical areas and platforms, and to present financial options for long term funding of platforms and operations.
- 2) Free and easy access to data and information.

The two committees (CON and CDIS) will provide advice to the Board regarding how to secure and improve the observations and networks, and the accessibility to information and data services. The Committees will serve as a technical platform for ongoing SAON Tasks and affiliated Networks.

Members of the Committees are:

- The Leads of the Tasks and associated Networks, which are suitable members for the respective Committees;
- Two members of the SAON Board, appointed by the Board;
- External members. These memberships should be proposed by the Committees and are to be approved by the SAON Board.

The Committee should appoint a Chair person, but the Committees are otherwise free to organize their work in the way they find necessary. In the situation where a Committee does not reach consensus in its recommendations, it may present several alternatives to the Board. The Committees will be supported by the SAON Secretariat.

## **2. Committee on Observations and Networks (CON)**

The Committee should give advice to the SAON Board on how to fund, coordinate and expand the scope of arctic observational activities and address the questions of how to ensure sustainability of observational platforms in the Arctic and how easier access to them can be achieved. It should also ensure the promotion of community-based monitoring within SAON and work on best practices for the utilization of traditional knowledge within Arctic observing activities.

In addition to this, the Committee should provide advice to the Board with regards to observations and networks on the following items:

- Acceptance criteria for new Tasks, Networks and Programs to be affiliated with SAON;
- Applications for new Tasks, Networks and Programs to be affiliated with SAON, and their suitability for inclusion in SAON;
- Needs for new Tasks and Networks to be affiliated with SAON.

## **3. Committee on Information and Data Services (CDIS)**

The SAON Vision is that users should have access to free, open and high quality data that will realize pan-Arctic and global value-added services and provide societal benefits. The Committee should give advice to the SAON Board on how to meet this vision from the point of view of information and data services, keeping in mind the IASC Statement of Principles and Practices for Arctic Data Management<sup>1</sup>. When the work involves traditional and local knowledge of Arctic Communities, particular consideration has to be given to sharing practices for sensitive information.

In addition to this, the Committee should provide advice to the Board with regards to information and data services on the following items:

- Acceptance criteria for new Tasks, Networks and Programs to be affiliated with SAON;
- Applications for new Tasks, Networks and Programs to be affiliated with SAON, and their suitability for inclusion in SAON;
- Needs for new Tasks, Networks and Programs to be affiliated with SAON.

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.innovation.ca/sites/default/files/Rome2013/files/IASC%20Statement%20on%20Arctic%20Data%20Management\\_2013.pdf](http://www.innovation.ca/sites/default/files/Rome2013/files/IASC%20Statement%20on%20Arctic%20Data%20Management_2013.pdf)

## **Appendix 1: Draft Work Plan for the Committees**

The first Task of CON will be to develop a strategy for how SAON can identify/develop funding opportunities to the benefit of SAON Tasks and affiliated Networks.

The first Task of CDIS will be to approve a Polar Metadata Profile on basis of the work of the SAON Task 'Polar Metadata Profile'.

Other Tasks may follow, including develop protocols for data dissemination that recognize the particular requirements of traditional knowledge data management.

## Appendix 2: List of SAON Tasks and Networks associated with the Committees

The list below is a tentative attempt to associate existing SAON Tasks and Networks with the two Committees. It should be noted that the Tasks/Networks are free to associate themselves with the Committee which they believe that they belong to. A Task/Network can also be associated with both Committees.

Tasks/Networks	Committee association (proposal)
<i>Tasks</i>	CON
Role of Remote Sensing in Arctic Monitoring	CON
Establishing an Arctic network on environmental monitoring of hazardous substances	CON
An International Review of Community-Based Monitoring in the Context of Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks Process (Canada and ICC)	CON
CBM Inventory (CAFF)	CON
Metadata profile	CDIS
The Canadian IPY Data Assembly Centre Network: A Case Study	CDIS
Polar data and information management principles and practice (workshop)	CDIS
Coordination of existing Arctic relevant Meta-databases and Project Directories	CDIS
Development of Community-Based Monitoring Classification to Improve Standardization of Vocabularies	CDIS
PEOPLE – ACE	CDIS
Arctic Ocean Structure (IPY)	CDIS
Expand Historical Climate Analysis to the Pacific Sector of the Arctic	CDIS
Contribution to the Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON) through the WMO Rolling Review of Requirements	CDIS
<i>Networks</i>	
Arctic Marine Biodiversity Monitoring Plan (CAFF/CBMP)	CON
IPA workshop on data user requirements definition for permafrost observing GTN-P	CON
Circumpolar Health Observatory	CON
INTERACT (SCANNET)	CON

International Arctic Systems for Observing the Atmosphere (IASOA)	CON
Arctic Biodiversity Coalition (ABC)	CON
Distributed Biological Observatory	CON
A Research Coordination Network for Very Interdisciplinary Arctic Data and Information	CON
Eye on Earth - Polarwatch	CON
A Research Coordination Network for Very Interdisciplinary Arctic Data and Information	CDIS
Eye on Earth - Polarwatch	CDIS