

# Meeting of Committee on Observations and Networks (CON)

# 26th November 24 16-17 CET / 10-11 am EST / 15-16 UTC

# Teleconference

# Draft minutes

### 1. Welcome to the call. Introductions. Membership

Alice Bradley (co-Chair) welcomed the participants to the meeting, and the participants introduced themselves. The agenda and list of participants are found in Appendix 1 and 2.

Jan Rene Larsen (SAON Secretary) outlined the background for the work of the CON, noting that it was one of two Committees under SAON, the other being the Arctic Data Committee (ADC). Alice Bradley, Heikki Lihavainen and João Canario had recently been elected co-Chairs of CON, but due to the pause of the Arctic Council, CON had not met for some time.

Alice Bradley added that CON is in a re-building phase, and part of doing that would be to establish an overview of what capacity and willingness there is to engage in CON, and from this, it should be possible to define in more realistic detail what CON should be focusing on.

### 2. Role of national committees

Alice Bradley noted past efforts going back to 2021 to formulate visions for national SAON structures. The question to the participants was what exists at the national level in terms of committees or similar for SAON. The other question was to what extend the CON could expand its membership to organizational members.

Libby Larson (USA) described the role of the US AON office, a sub-body of the US Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee[[1]](#footnote-1) (IARPC). Work is ongoing on a gap analysis and benefit assessment of Arctic work.

Bart Luks (Poland) described how initiatives in Poland are based on a bottom-up approach; there are several organisations involved in Polar research and monitoring, mainly in Svalbard and with a close connection with SIOS. The umbrella organisation is the Polish Polar Consortium.

Anna Irrgang (Germany) put emphasis on the EU-funded ArcticPASSION project led by AWI and which include SAON-related activities. AWI is doing most of Germany’s polar research.

Kjetil Tørseth (Norway) highlighted the role of SIOS, the Norwegian Polar Institute’s *Research in Svalbard[[2]](#footnote-2)* (RiS) and the Norwegian engagement in the IASC ICARP IV process. In terms of monitoring, he highlighted IASOA and the EU funded projects POLARIN[[3]](#footnote-3) and EU-PolarNet. He also mentioned the effort Review of Observation Capacities and Data Availability for Black Carbon in the Arctic Region[[4]](#footnote-4). He proposed creating an overview of these large initiatives.

Heikki Lihavainen (SIOS, co-Chair) described how SIOS is a central hub in Svalbard.

Tuukka Petäjä (Finland) described national efforts to coordinate within the atmospheric and environmental infrastructure field, in particular on air quality and greenhouse gases, which are traditionally connected to the European ESFRI infrastructures. There is separate coordination on marine activities. He mentioned in particular FMI activities in Pallas and activities in Antarctica. He also described the PEEX[[5]](#footnote-5) initiative, which coordinates observations in boreal and Arctic environments and includes scientists from China, Europe, Russia, and the USA. In support of this, an AASCO[[6]](#footnote-6) event is organised in February 2025 to identify gaps in atmospheric, marine, and terrestrial observing.

Tetsuo Sueyoshi (Japan) described the Japanese Consortium for Arctic Environmental Research (JCAR[[7]](#footnote-7)), which is a community of Arctic researchers in Japan. Japan has had a national observation programme since 2011, working on a wide range of topics within Arctic research, and which include app. 250 researchers. Institutions in the consortium are Hokkaido University, JAMSTEC, and NIPR[[8]](#footnote-8). He also mentioned the Asian Forum for Polar Sciences[[9]](#footnote-9), which also covers Antarctica and meets annually.

Zen Mariani (Canada) referred to the WMO Year of Polar Prediction (YOPP), which had expanded Canadian observing capacity, mainly in Whitehorse and Iqaluit. Due to different circumstances and COVID, there had been reductions in this capacity.

Jan Rene Larsen finally mentioned the Registry of Polar Observing Networks[[10]](#footnote-10) (RoPON), which is a web-facility that seeks to organise information about polar observing assets. It was agreed to ask the organisers to present this facility at an upcoming meeting. Jan Rene Larsen noted that the organisers are asking for *use cases* for this facility and would ask CON to formulate these.

### 3. Role of organisational members

Jan Rene Larsen briefly outlined the 5 objectives of SAON CON as they are described in the 2018 SAON Implementation Plan[[11]](#footnote-11) :

1. Conduct an inventory of national observational capacities.
2. Complete an assessment of adequacy of Arctic observational capacity in support of Arctic Societal Benefit Areas (SBAs).
3. Provide recommendations for a roadmap for future Arctic observational capacities.
4. Create opportunities to develop and implement observations in support of Arctic Societal Benefit Areas (SBAs).
5. Develop a long-term repository for relevant project deliverables.

He also described an inventory among the SAON nations to contribute to these objectives, which had been reported in the *Summary Report of State of Readiness on Arctic Observations[[12]](#footnote-12)*.

On the discussion of objective 1) (‘Inventory of national observational capacities’), Kjetil Tørseth believed that a question had always been if CON should focus on research capacities or limit CON to long term observational activities. He believed that the challenges with research activities it that it is difficult to have an overview of these, while long term observational activities have institutional support and are easier create overviews over.

Anna Irrgang believed that such an exercise could be organised at the national level, but also noting that international networks like GTN-P is already existing. Bart Luks believed that this should be organised at a topical level, noting that many such thematic inventories already exist. Tetsuo Sueyoshi believed that the distinction between research and long-term observational activities would also be relevant in this case. He noted that, like other non-Arctic countries, Japan is mainly engaged in research, but that certain activities for instance marine observations were part of a longer effort and reported to DBO.

Libby Larson addressed the question of CON engagement with non-national organisations, and she believed that this would be especially relevant when it comes to indigenous knowledge; she specifically mentioned networks like ELOKA.

Alice Bradley concluded that there was a certain amount of interest and capacity to organise this information at the national level. The question about engaging organisations that are doing this work was also discussed, and INTERACT, POLARIN and WMO were mentioned, as were the satellite organisations like ESA and NASA and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA). Actions to the participants were to identify other coordinating organisations, especially topical ones that are organising inventories that should be involved in these discussions.

The was finally a discussion about the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), and Jan Rene Larsen explained that SAON has been engaged in GEO for a number of years through the ArcticGEOSS initiative.

Actions/decisions:

* Consider observation networks and topical organisations that might be of relevance to CON;
* Invite RoPON to the next meeting and consider *use cases* for the facility;
* Consider boundaries when it comes to research versus long-term monitoring.

## Appendix 1: Agenda

Meeting of Committee on Observations and Networks (CON)

26th November 2024 16-17 CET / 10-11 am EST / 15-16 UTC

Telephone conference (Teams - link below)

Draft agenda

1. Welcome to the call. Introductions. [Membership](https://www.arcticobserving.org/committees/con/members)
2. Role of national committees.   
   *Capacity and willingness to engage in tasks*
3. Role of organisational members  
   *Capacity and willingness to engage in tasks*
4. Possible additional groups/organisations:

* DBO
* INTERACT non-profit
* CEN - (Canada stations)
* GRISO

Pre-reads:

* [SAON CON Terms of Reference](https://www.arcticobserving.org/images/pdf/Committees/CON/Terms_of_Reference/CON_ToR_agreed_version_5th_May_2017.pdf)
* In the [SAON Implementation plan](https://www.arcticobserving.org/images/pdf/Strategy_and_Implementation/SAON_Implementation_Plan_version_17JUL2018_Status_approved.pdf), CON’s work plan is described under Goal 1: *Creating a roadmap to well-integrated Arctic observing system*. The document describes five tasks.
* In 2020 and 2021 SAON organised a series of governance workshops
  + CON was addressed 30th November 2020 - [meeting notes here](https://www.arcticobserving.org/images/pdf/Board_meetings/20210210/08_CON_Workshop_Report_Final_February_5_2021.docx)
  + National structures / organisations were addressed 14th April 2021 - [meeting notes here](https://www.arcticobserving.org/images/pdf/Governance_Review/SAON_National_Structures_workshop_final_report_vApril_28.pdf)

Teams link: <https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ZGU5MjliMGUtMTNhMy00ZDYwLWJiZTctYjY4NTM4MTE2YmNj%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e85164ec-9598-49a2-98a1-709a3f29cfc6%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22201df34a-7bdc-4596-b7a2-09094429e16e%22%7d>

## Appendix 2: List of Participants

**List of Participants**

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| Name | Affiliation | Email |
| Jan Rene Larsen | SAON Secretary | jan.rene.larsen@amap.no |
| Bartłomiej (Bart) Luks | Institute of Geophysics, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland | luks@igf.edu.pl |
| Kjetil Tørseth | Norwegian Institute for Air Research (NILU), Norway | kt@nilu.no |
| Anna Irrgang | AWI, Germany, GTN-P, GVW | anna.irrgang@awi.de |
| Alice Bradley | Williams College, USA, CON Co-chair | alice.c.bradley@williams.edu |
| Heikki Lihavainen | Svalbard Integrated Observing System, SIOS, CON Co-chair | director@sios-svalbard.org |
| Tuukka Petäjä | University of Helsinki, Finland, PEEX | Tuukka.Petaja@helsinki.fi |
| Libby Larson | NASA, USA | [libby.larson@nasa.gov](mailto:libby.larson@nasa.gov) |
| Tetsuo Sueyoshi | NIPR, Japan | [sueyoshi.tetsuo@nipr.ac.jp](mailto:sueyoshi.tetsuo@nipr.ac.jp) |
| Zen Mariani | Canada | Zen.Mariani@ec.gc.ca |

More information about Committee members and their affiliation is found at https://www.arcticobserving.org/committees/con/members

1. <https://www.iarpccollaborations.org/index.html> and [https://usaon.org](https://usaon.org/) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://researchinsvalbard.no/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://eu-polarin.eu/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://nilu365-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/kt_nilu_no/EbgHzAsqeTlNq3NDB1YvdWgB84D7s80Q8TfYnUvEfgTTkw?e=hkyuE7> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.atm.helsinki.fi/peex/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.atm.helsinki.fi/peex/index.php/aasco/> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://www.jcar.org/e/> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <https://www.nipr.ac.jp/arcs2/e/> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://afops.org/home/about> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <https://polarobservingregistry.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. https://www.arcticobserving.org/images/pdf/Strategy\_and\_Implementation/SAON\_Implementation\_Plan\_version\_17JUL2018\_Status\_approved.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. <https://arcticobservingsummit.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/AOS2020_white_paper_short_statement_047.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)