

Forum of Arctic Research Operators, FARO

Terms of Reference

Background

Forum of Arctic Research Operators, FARO, was initiated by 24 operators from 11 countries in August 1998, as a forum for logistics and operational support for scientific research in the Arctic. Annual meetings are held during the Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW), in close collaboration with other organizations involved in Arctic research.

Mission

FARO is an international forum for information exchange, establishment of cooperation and development of new ideas among the national operators in countries with Arctic research activities.

FARO aims to encourage and optimize logistics and operational support for scientific research in the Arctic. The forum encourages international collaboration, for the benefit of all those involved in Arctic research.

This mission will be achieved by:

- Networking of national operators;
- Exchange of best practices in facility development and operations, including environmental concerns;
- Encouraging and supporting science-led international programs by offering opportunities for planning and coordination, and by facilitating communication and access to facilities;
- Encouraging and supporting coordination of logistics and sharing of operational resources;
- Encouraging exchange and dissemination of scientific data and information on the marine, terrestrial and human environment of the Arctic;
- Encouraging means of initiating, coordinating and maintaining long-term Arctic observational programs;
- Promoting interaction between the Arctic science community and those concerned with Arctic policy;
- Providing expert advice to scientists, policy makers, and other organizations regarding operations and logistics in the Arctic

Membership and observers

Any country engaged in Arctic research may request membership in FARO. Currently in 2013, there are members from 18 countries: Canada, China, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russia, Sweden, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, and USA. Each member country nominates a national representative (point of contact). For countries with extensive Arctic research portfolios, this will be a leading Arctic operator with a national network to other operators. Each member country is entitled to a maximum of 3 delegates.

IASC and COMNAP shall always be invited to FARO plenary meetings. Meetings are normally also open for other invitees and observers; however, the number of meeting participants should be kept to a level that is suitable for dialogue and exchange of ideas.

FARO members do not serve terms. They represent their national programs as long as they hold appropriate national positions. They may, on occasion, send a designee when they are unable to attend.

Structure

The Forum selects a Chair and an Executive Committee (ExCom), each to serve for three-year terms. The executive composed of the Chair, the ExCom, and the secretariat (see below) meet at least once during the year, in person or by remote means, to plan for the next meeting and take action on other business as necessary. The Forum meets annually, normally at the time of the Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW).

Meetings

FARO plenary meetings are normally held annually during the ASSW. The draft agenda for the annual meeting will be submitted to members at least one month in advance. Members shall present additional items for the agenda in advance, as instructed by the secretariat. Members are responsible for their own travels and related expenses incurred while attending FARO meetings.

Each country has one vote. Decision making during meetings is by consensus.

Secretariat

FARO has a secretariat within one of the member countries. The secretariat is responsible for supporting the Forum and its programs and objectives. It does so by:

- Organizing the annual plenary meeting;
- Preparing and printing the meeting minutes and the annual report;
- Identifying ways to enhance cooperation among members;
- Identifying ways to enhance interaction with the Arctic science community;
- Identifying ways to enhance interaction with global programs engaged in science and observational systems;
- Participating in the International Coordinating Group of the ASSW and organizing aspects of the ASSW; and
- Maintaining the budget in consultation with the Steering Group.

Finances

The secretariat is funded by the member countries, according to annually revised agreements. Unless otherwise agreed, the costs will be shared evenly by member countries.

Funding supports:

- Secretariat staff and office costs: currently an executive secretary and academic secretary (both part-time);
- Travel for the secretariat;
- Meeting costs;
- Web site maintenance and other information efforts;

- Other travel and expenditures as deemed necessary by the Executive committee.

The Executive committee shall review the activities and economy of the secretariat at its regular meetings.

Projects/Activities

The Forum may provide and encourage funding for activities to promote research support in an area where there is a perceived need. These projects must be international and pan-Arctic in nature.

Relationship with other International Science Organizations

FARO maintains active linkages with the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) and its Working Groups. FARO also engages in sharing of information and experiences with Antarctic colleagues, most notably the Council of Managers of Antarctic Programs (COMNAP). In addition, FARO maintains informal ties with other Arctic organizations, including the European Polar Board (EPB), the Pacific Arctic Group (PAG), and the Arctic Council.

Review and Evaluation

FARO will appoint an external review group to provide input and advice at least once every five years.