

Forum of Arctic Research Operators
Meeting minutes
ASSW 2009, Bergen, Norway
27 March 2009, 14:00-18:00
Scandic Hotel, Teatergaten, Bergen

1 Opening and reporting session

1.1 Welcome and introduction

The Forum of Arctic Research Operators (FARO) chair, Simon N. Stephenson, welcomed the attendees and briefly outlined the intention of the meeting and suggested a brief round of introduction.

1.2 Approval of last meeting's minutes in Syktyvkar, Russia

The chair asked for suggested changes to the minutes of last FARO meeting in Syktyvkar, Russia. The minutes were approved without comments.

1.3 Adoption of the agenda

It was suggested by Simon N. Stephenson to switch items 4.1 and 4.2 on the agenda. The revised agenda was then adopted without further comments.

1.4 Report from FARO chair Simon N. Stephenson

The report of FARO's activities is covered in the report from members in the information session.

1.5 News from secretariat

Morten Rasch gave a brief overview of the secretariat work since the last meeting.

It has been a year of many changes. Last year it was announced that Morten Rasch would step back as executive secretary due to the fact that Danish Polar Center had become a part of the Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation and as such was no longer a logistics operator. By 31 December 2008 Danish Polar Center was closed and the logistics department was moved to National Environmental Research Institute (NERI) at University of Aarhus. NERI was interested in keeping on hosting the secretariat.

Besides running the daily business, the secretariat has also been involved in the SAON Initiating Group, has liaised with EPICOM and participated in the ASSW 2009 planning committee.

Until 31 December 2008, Helle Poulsen from Danish Polar Center took care of the practical run of the FARO Secretariat. She has not been replaced when the FARO Secretariat was moved to NERI, and at the moment the secretariat is therefore solely run by Morten Rasch.

2 Information session

2.1 Short news from each country on items of relevance to other members

Each member gave a short presentation on logistical items of relevance to the other members.

Denmark: Morten Rasch informed that Denmark had allocated 70 mills. DKK for IPY projects (2007-8), mainly in Greenland. This is a very significant increase as compared to the normal funding given to Danish arctic research, and as a result the different providers of research logistics has experienced two very busy years.

At Zackenberg, increased funding for logistics during IPY was spend on an extension of the field seasons in both 2007 and 2008 from the normal three months to six months. The extension of the field season resulted in several interesting and very surprising scientific results.

[Morten Rasch's presentation](#)

China: Wang Young informed that China considered the Third Chinese Arctic Marine Survey, carried through in July – September 2008, as an important part of China's IPY programme. The surveying team had carried out marine investigations from the research vessel R/V Xuelong at 132 sites and long-term sea-ice-atmospheric observations and short term sea-ice investigations at eight sites in Bering Sea, Chukchi Sea, Chukchi Platform and Canadian Basin. In total 122 persons were involved in the project.

Japan: Hiroshi Kanda from National Institute of Polar Research informed that National Institute of Polar Research will have a new icebreaker ready for operations in the Arctic and the Antarctic in May 2010.

Korea: Dong-Min Jin from Korea Polar Research Institute (KOPRI) presented the status report of the Korean Icebreaker Araon. In these days 85% is completed, it will be delivered in September. The exact schedule is not fixed yet. KOPRI will have an annual polar science symposium in June, focused on the 'Expedition using the Araon'. In the symposium international joint cruise will be discussed. In this state the plan for Araon's schedule is, she will go to the Antarctica for her ice trial in January 2010 and after returning to Korea, she will go the Arctic area through the Bering seas in 2010. Any comment or recommendation will be welcomed.

KOPRI scientists had visited Canadian Resolute Base during the summer season 2008 to discuss future collaboration. As one of the results, some scientists will visit the Resolute Base in the coming season. A Korean scientist had participated in the SIOS workshop in Oslo in February 2009. KOPRI has intention to participate in the project.

Canada: Marty Bergmann from Polar Continental Shelf Programme informed that 2008 was a busy year for IPY in Canada with numerous Canadian Coast Guard icebreakers conducting work in the Canada Basin and Lancaster Sound. The CCG Amundsen completed its 2007/08 over-winter work (Canadian Flaw Lead study – IPY) and returned to southern Canada in the fall of 2008. In 2009, the Government of Canada announced 85 mill CAD of funding to upgrade and enhance 20 arctic research facilities throughout Canada's Arctic. Information about the allocation of this Arctic Research Infrastructure funding is found at www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/mr/nr/j-a2009/nr000000262-eng.asp

Sweden: Anders Karlquist from the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat informed that Sweden in 2008 cooperated with Russia on the project 'International Siberian

Shelf Study 2008' with focus on methane and carbon dioxide exchange in Barents Sea, Kara Sea, Laptev Sea and East Siberian Sea.

Anders Karlquist also informed that the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat now have a new extended function and as such has taken over the administration of Abisko Scientific Research Station.

'Oden' is the most important logistics tool run by Swedish Polar Research Secretariat. This summer (2009) 'Oden' will operate in cooperation with Denmark on United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea at the Lomonosov Ridge.

United Kingdom: John Pye from British Antarctic Survey informed that UK was increasing its emphasis on arctic science. Following a review of polar priorities, the National Environment Research Council (NERC) had established an Arctic Office at BAS to help focus and facilitate the science of the 20 or more UK universities and institutes that undertake Arctic research. UK had also signed a MoU with Canada to improve collaboration and access to Arctic facilities and the BAS infrastructure in the Antarctic.

The IPY Office, hosted by BAS, was due to continue until October 2010. NERC and a number of other nations were contributing funds to run the Office. Confirmed funding had been secured to maintain the office until April 2010, and further money was promised but not yet committed to cover the costs for the final period.

Norway: Harald Loeng from Institute of Marine Research and The Norwegian National Polar Committee gave a short update concerning the Polar Research vessels operated by Norway (F/F G. O. Sars, F/F Johan Hjort, Lance and Jan Mayen) and informed about the Norwegian plans for construction of a 93 m long icebreaker to be ready for operation in 2012.

Harald Loeng also informed that Norway is leading the ESFRI project SIOS (Svalbard Integrated Arctic Earth Observing System). The goal of the SIOS proposal is to establish an Arctic Earth Observing System in and around Svalbard that integrates the studies of geophysical, chemical and biological processes from all research and monitoring platforms. 35 institutions from 12 different countries have joined the SIOS consortium preparatory phase.

Finally, Harald Loeng gave a short briefing about the very extensive Norwegian activities during IPY in Longyearbyen and Ny Aalesund on Svalbard.

[Harald Loeng's presentation.](#)

USA: Simon N. Stephenson informed shortly about the US-NSF activities during the last year.

The Netherlands: Mr. Louwrens Hacquebord from Arctic Centre, University of Groningen informed that The Netherlands has extended its station in Ny Aalesund with another house and discussions are taking place with Germany to share a station in Ny Aalesund.

The Netherlands is investing in an automatic weather station on The Greenland Ice Sheet. The weather station is considered important for the ice core research.

There are ongoing discussions with the Dutch Minister of Education, Science and Culture about a substantial increase of the budget of the Dutch Polar Program as a legacy of IPY.

Germany: Hartwig Gernandt from Alfred Wegener Institute informed about missions accomplished with Research Aircraft Polar 5 and the icebreaker Polarstern in 2008 and the schedules for the same vehicles for 2009. 2009 schedules for Polar 5 and Polarstern are attached. In 2008 Polar 5 operated in Northern Canada in May-June, on Svalbard in July and in South America in October. Polarstern operated in the Greenland Sea, the Fram Strait and the Arctic Ocean.

Hartwig Gernandt continued with a short report about the activities at the two arctic stations operated by Germany and France in cooperation, i.e. Samoylov Station in Siberia and AWIPEV Arctic Research Base in Ny Aalesund.

[Hartwig Gernandt's presentation.](#)

Poland: Jacek Jania from Committee of Polar Research informed about the Polish research platforms in Svalbard. Poland runs the Polish Polar Research Station in Hornsund (accommodates 30 scientists) and the smaller stations The Stanislaw Baranowski Field Station on Wedel Jarlsberg Land and The Seasonal Polar Station on Kaffiøyra, Oscar II Land. Besides that Poland operates the two research vessels Horysont II and Oceania. During 2008 Poland has experienced coastal erosion problems and problems with a very high frequency of polar bear visits at the Hornsund facility.

[Jacek Jania's presentation.](#)

European Science Foundation: Paul Egerton from European Science Foundation and European Polar Board gave a presentation of European Polar Board current polar infrastructure activities with focus on The Polar Climate (a research call under European Polar Consortium with Climate variability, Snow and ice and Impacts on ecosystems as major themes), INFRAPOLAR (a large-scale strategic coordination initiative to support the networking, synchronisation and transnational access to European and International research stations in polar regions) and ERICON (European Polar Research Icebreaker Consortium – Aurora Borealis).

[Paul Egerton's presentation.](#)

Russia: Sergey Priamikov from Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute informed about the Russian activities in the Arctic Ocean during 2008 including the ARCTICA 2008 research expedition with RRV 'Akademik Fedorov' and the 'North Pole 36' drifting station.

[Sergey Priamikov's presentation.](#)

Italy: Roberto Azzolini from European Science Foundation informed that Italy will need a new member in FARO to replace him. A possible nomination of a new Italian representative shall be made by Dr. Giuseppe Cavarretta, Director of Earth and Environment Department in CNR.

2.2 Discussion

There was no discussion.

3 Incoming items

3.1 Canadian High Arctic Research Station

Danielle Labonté from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada talked about Canada's Northern Strategy and Arctic Science. Canada is responding to arctic change with strengthened science and technology with a Northern Strategy including: Sovereignty, Economic and social development, Protection of the environment and Governance. The Canadian Government has committed to build a world-class high-arctic research station that will be on the cutting edge of arctic issues. Canada already has several minor research stations in The North, but the new plan is to establish a major facility either at Pond Inlet, Cambridge Bay or Resolute Bay. The budget for a feasibility project running for the next 18 months is 2 mills. CAD. Besides that a total of 85 mill. CAD has been allocated to enhance the existing arctic research infrastructures in Canada during 2009-11.

[Danielle Labonté presentation](#)

3.2 Polar Continental Shelf Programme

Marty Bergmann from Polar Continental Shelf Programme gave a presentation about Polar Continental Shelf Programme (PCSP). PCSP was established in 1958 and delivers logistics for c. 10 mill. CAD per year. Most of the activities are based out of Resolute in North West Territory. PCSP supports research projects with package solutions including transportation, accommodation, establishment of camps and other logistics. In 2007 and 2008 PCSP supported respectively 25 and 42 IPY projects. Arctic research is highly prioritized in Canada at the moment, and as a result Canada has allocated substantial means for improvement of existing research infrastructure in Canada.

[Marty Bergmann's presentation.](#)

3.3 Aurora Borealis

Nicole Biebow from Alfred Wegener Institute and the ERICON (European Research Icebreaker Consortium) gave an update concerning the icebreaker, drilling platform and multi purpose research vessel Aurora Borealis. The project is coordinated by European Science Foundation with 15 European partners. At the moment, the consortium is working on the strategic, legal and organisational framework for European ministries and funding agencies to decide on. This project has 48 month duration with a budget of 4.5 EURO.

The design of the ship is at an advanced stage. The ship will have a length over all of c. 200 m; it will have a cruising speed of 12 knots and it will be able to drill 1000 m long cores in up to 5000 m water depth under closed sea-ice cover.

[Nicole Biebow's presentation.](#)

[Aurora Borealis I](#)

[Aurora Borealis II](#)

3.4 SCANNET – A Circumarctic Network of Terrestrial Field Bases

Morten Rasch gave a presentation concerning the network, SCANNET, of terrestrial field stations in the Arctic. SCANNET started in 2001 as a North-European /

Scandinavian network of field bases with the purpose of facilitating cooperation on different science and operational issues between, at that time nine field stations. Today the network has extended to include 24 field stations, and not only in northern Europe/Scandinavia but throughout the Arctic. The network is chaired by Professor Terry Callaghan, Director at Abisko Scientific Research Station, and the network is hoping to be playing a role in the international coordination of monitoring and research at arctic field sites which has, during recent years been, suggested in several international recommendations (e.g. ACIA, ICARP-II, AON, and SAON).

[Morten Rasch's presentation.](#)

3.5 Discussion

There was no discussion.

4 Other Business

4.1 Forum of Arctic Research Operators as a member organization?

Simon N. Stephenson introduced a draft for new Terms of Reference for FARO. Simon N. Stephenson suggested that FARO should be transferred into a member organization for logistics operators. Simon N. Stephenson put forward that the members should represent relevant organizations in relevant countries – but not the countries themselves.

Most of the meeting participants were positive about this and would be willing to pay a share of the necessary financing of FARO as a member organization.

Paul Egerton suggested that the Term of Reference should allow for organizations like European Polar Board to join the table. Harald Loeng asked why EU should participate by it self, when the relevant member countries had the opportunity of being represented.

Simon N. Stephenson concluded that there is a need for clarification of some issues before FARO can convert into a member organization. He therefore asked the secretariat to initiate a survey among the members concerning their expectations for FARO as a member organization. To allow for this process to complete, US National Science Foundation will continue to finance the FARO secretariat until ASSW 2010.

4.2 Discussion of future relationship to IASC – after the establishment of the new structure for IASC

After a short discussion it was concluded that FARO sees its future role as a forum of organizations supporting science, i.e. not as a science organization. As such FARO finds it most natural to stay outside of IASC.

5 Election

5.1 Election of a new chair for the FARO Executive Committee

Marty Bergmann was nominated by Andreas Karlquist as chair of FARO. Marty Bergmann accepted the nomination. No other nominations were made. Marty Bergman was elected unanimous. Marty Bergmann thanked for the election and expressed his content with the leadership carried out by Simon N. Stephenson.

6 Closure

Simon N. Stephenson, thanked the secretariat and the members for good cooperation during the last year.

Participants

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