



Forum of Arctic Research Operators

FARO Annual Meeting 2020

30 March 2020, 09:00 -13:00 (UTC)

Online meeting using ASSW Zoom

Minutes

1. Opening and reporting Session (Jennifer Mercer, FARO Chair)

Jennifer Mercer welcomed all participants to this FARO Annual meeting 2020, with more than 30 participants online. All attendees were asked to introduce themselves and give a short update or status on how Covid-19 has and will affect their operations in the Arctic.

Many projects in the Arctic planned for the spring season (April-May) have already been cancelled. Depending on the Covid-19 status, Arctic projects and operations planned for the summer season 2020 might also be cancelled or postponed. Other main points:

- Concerns about the replacement of the winter crew for many stations. It may be difficult to bring people back and send out new staff without risking spreading of Covid-19, and hence some staff/technicians may have their stay extended.
- Funding agencies may extend grants for one year to 2021.
- SIOS has a website with Corona virus information for Svalbard, see https://sios-svalbard.org/News_20200330.
- It is important not to bring Covid-19 to the Arctic communities, which often have limited health resources.

Meeting minutes from FARO Annual Meeting 2019 in Russia were approved.

The Agenda for FARO Annual Meeting 2020 was approved without any amendments.

Report from the Chair:

During the last year, ExCom held meetings almost every month, including one in-person meeting in Reykjavik, during the Arctic Circle conference in October 2019.

Over the past year, the ExCom has:

- Worked to recruit NPOC's where needed.
- Worked to identify reviewers of FARO.
- Secretariat worked to engage with NPOCs regularly through social media, etc.

FARO had also planned a workshop together with ARICE and INTERACT: “*Workshop on International Access to Research Infrastructure in the Arctic*” that was to be held on March 29, during ASSW 2020. Due to the Covid-19 situation with only online participation at ASSW, the workshop has been postponed until ASSW 2021 to be able to have active in-person discussions and break out groups.

Interfacing with IASC

- Jennifer met with IASC president and secretariat to discuss ways in which FARO and IASC can work together. It was suggested that FARO could announce posts on the situation of Covid-19 on the FARO website and social media.
- Jennifer provided a presentation for the IASC council meeting and participated in discussions.

Not all tasks planned for 2019 were accomplished by the ExCom and the FARO secretariat. We will continue to work on these during 2020; e.g. developing best practices guidelines.

All participants are encouraged to send any info and updates on the Covid-19 status in the Arctic to the FARO secretariat to keep the FARO community updated on the situation.

2. IASC Strategic Plan as it relates to FARO (Henry Burgess)

Henry is a member of the IASC Executive Committee and participated in the meeting between FARO and the IASC council on March 29, 2020, where potential links between FARO and IASC was discussed. Members of IASC are national science organisations (usually national academies of science). At present 23 countries are represented, of which 21 are also members of FARO. The IASC Strategic Plan for the period 2018-2023 identified three key scientific focus areas:

1. The Role of the Arctic in the Global System.
2. Observing and Predicting Future Climate Dynamics and Ecosystem Responses.
3. Understanding the Vulnerability and Resilience of Arctic Environments and Societies and Supporting Sustainable Development.

The strategy will be implemented through the three pillars:

1. Facilitating Arctic Research Cooperation
2. Promoting Engagement
3. Ensuring Knowledge Exchange

An implementation plan tracks completed and future actions. IASC is in the process of establishing an IASC Carbon Action Group. This group is open for participation from external parties and should be operational very soon.

Jennifer noted, that the FARO mission is supportive of the IASC Strategic Plan. FARO needs to make sure that IASC and the community are aware of what FARO does; increase access, share new technologies, advancing the state of the art logistics, sharing of infrastructure, etc.

Discussion

The IASC Carbon Action Group was found to be highly relevant and interesting to FARO members. This is something that FARO should also focus on, as operations in the Arctic are very costly in terms of carbon footprint. It was generally agreed that FARO and IASC should work together on this. It would be important to agree on how the footprints are calculated, and maybe look into COMNAP set up and metrics used within their Carbon footprint work.

Sharing of logistics is important, i.e. in Antarctica there is a barter system, to ensure full capacity on ships, stations, etc. It is also important to focus on both the 1) scientific projects, and 2) operators, including energy efficiency, transport, data, etc. FARO should contribute to the work related to the operational level. It will be important to include the engineering scientists involved in FARO in this task. It was also suggested that FARO should look towards the EU projects ARICE and INTERACT, which also have funding from EU to work on best practices and are pan-arctic.

A Polar Technology Conference (PTC) is planned in the US, which could be used as a forum for this type of discussion. The Polar Technology Conference brings together polar scientists, technology developers, and field technicians. It is organized by the National Science Foundation's Office of Polar Programs, the Arctic Research Consortium of the United States, and the Polar research community. The goal of the meeting is to link experts in polar science and technology development to discuss current technological resources for polar research and identify barriers to research and application of technology for problems unique to polar regions. See more on the website for the conference: <https://www.arcus.org/logistics/2020-polar-technology>

Anyone interested in joining the IASC action group on carbon footprint should contact the FARO secretariat, so we can make sure to include a FARO representative. FARO will then inform Henry/IASC.

3. Updates from Countries

NPOC's had received suggested guidelines for the country presentations and should focus on infrastructure access and availability for international researchers, including the following types of information:

- High-level overview of existing infrastructure.
- Look ahead for large campaign and infrastructure plans (next 3-5 years).
- Number of international visitors and guests per year.
- Info on travel and practicalities for international users.
- Experience with international access/availability for access.
- Include one slide on the financial support for the national infrastructure.
- Include one slide that expands on the 'number 1 operational challenge'.

All country presentations are available on the FARO website for:

- Canada, China, France, Germany (including updates for The Netherlands and France as well), Greenland, Denmark, Japan, Korea, Norway (oral presentation), Poland, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, UK, USA.

Main operational challenges from the country updates 2020:

- Germany: Main challenge is to keep the MOSAiC expedition running. Replacement of Polarstern II.
- France: Access, mutualize our assets. Advancing new technologies. Limited funding for access.
- China: shrinking annual operational budget vs. the expansion of infrastructure.
- Italy: Lack of funding for infrastructure improvements. Lack of young scientists.
- Portugal: Lack of funding, no Arctic infrastructure and need to strengthen collaborations.
- Norway: The staff at Ny Ålesund has expanded their engineering group, to continue measures and help others who need engineers in this current situation with Covid-19.
- Switzerland: Complications with access to the field due to geopolitical interests and permit procedures.
- USA: Ageing infrastructure, advancing new technologies.

4. Identifying pan-Arctic challenges and FARO initiatives – using challenges from country updates (Jennifer Mercer, 15 min)

From the country updates and discussions during the meeting, some pan-arctic challenges were identified:

- Carbon footprint in the Arctic.
- Optimizing assets and access.
- Retrieval of samples, instruments and data.
- Advancing technology (need to incorporate engineering).
- Budget constraints.
- Asset replacement (vessel, aircraft, buildings).
- Attracting young scientists, training next generation.

These issues will be addressed in the FARO Excom and will be something to work on within the next year.

Jennifer thanked all participants for participating in the FARO annual meeting and closed the Open session. All NPOC's were asked to stay for the closed session.

5. Internal business (Jennifer Mercer, FARO Chair)

i. The FARO Secretariat - 2019 finance report

Elmer from the FARO secretariat presented the 2019 finance report, with a small surplus in the annual account balance of \$3,462 USD. Last minute changes to the finance report were received by the secretariat just before the annual meeting. A final finance report will be distributed with the minutes from the meeting.

The Secretariat is located in Denmark and the annual fee is collected in Danish Crowns – 10.900 Dkr per year. The budget and accounts are presented in USD. Differences in exchange rates over time means that it can be difficult to compare approved budgets with expenditures, if the exchange rate changes during the year. From 2021 FARO will therefore change the fee to € instead of Danish crowns, as agreed on at the FARO annual meeting 2019 (note from last meeting: in 2021 the fee will be 1500 €). The exchange rate used for the finance report is an average over the year.

Three members still do not pay the FARO fee: Russia, The Netherlands and Austria. Dirk will contact The Netherlands. Piotr had also contacted the Austrian NPOC, but did not receive any answer. There is, since last year, not any NPOC from Iceland, and if anyone has suggestions for a potential Icelandic NPOC, please inform the secretariat.

ii. 2020 budget

In the budget, the hours for the FARO secretariat has increased by 37 hours, and is now budgeted with 222 hours per year due to increased outreach activities at conferences, etc. On the other hand, the travel expenses have decreased due to NSF travel funding for Jennifer, and hence the annual budget for 2020 is in total: \$26,850 USD. Expected income 2020 (17 member payments): \$27,574 USD.

All participants were asked if they had any concerns for the budget 2020, and the proposed budget for 2020 was temporarily approved, but with the note that any update of the budget should be circulated with the minutes to the NPOC's before a final approval.

iii. FARO Review and Evaluation of FARO

ExCom has identified potential members for the review of FARO, but due to the current situation, no members were contacted before this meeting.

Jennifer also asked if NPOC's would allow FARO to spend \$5,000 USD for a review of FARO in 2020. This was not spent last year as planned, and there were no objections to use this money in 2020 instead.

The FARO ExCom will continue to work for a review of FARO and soon establish a review committee.

iv. Election of one new FARO ExCom member for the period 2020-2023

Dirk nominated Jérôme Chappellaz (France) as a new ExCom member. All supported this nomination and Jerome agreed to be a member of the FARO ExCom 2020-2023 (rotating out at annual meeting 2023). All welcomed Jerome to the FARO ExCom.

v. Next FARO Annual meeting

Will be held during ASSW2021 in Portugal, March 19-26.

Teresa is looking forward to welcoming all FARO members to Lisbon in 2021.

vi. Any other business

No further items. Jennifer thanked all participants for lots of good discussion and information being shared.

Participants:

Jennifer Mercer, FARO Chair and NPOC USA
Kate Ruck, US NSF (moderator)
Marie Frost Arndal, FARO secretariat (minutes)
Elmer Topp-Jørgensen, FARO secretariat
Maria Teresa Cruz Mera Vitoriano Cabrita, NPOC Portugal
Piotr Glowacki, NPOC Poland, ExCom
Jan Pechar, NPOC Czech Republic
Sony Choi, representing NPOC Korea
Danièle Rod, NPOC Switzerland
Dirk Mengedoht, NPOC Germany
Jérôme Chappellaz, NPOC France
Jim Drummond, NPOC Canada
Mauro Mazzola, NPOC Italy
Morten Rasch, NPOC Denmark, ExCom
Nalan Koc, NPOC Norway, ExCom
Sandy Chan, NPOC China
Takuji Nakamura, NPOC Japan, ExCom
Steen Lund, Greenland (observer country)

External:

Barbera Barzycka
Bettina Ovggaard, Joint Arctic Command
Chaerin Jung, KOPRI
Dariusz Ignatiuk, SIOS
Franc Rack, NSF
Karl Newyear
Mattis Henaf
Naomi Whitty
Olga Konovalovo
Paula Kankaanpaa
Taoli
Tervo Aoki